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BIOGRAPHY.

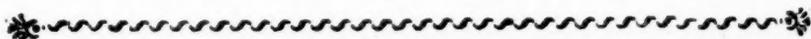
LIFE OF THE REV. WILLAM TENNENT

CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 16.

Mr. Tennent was a man of the most scrupulous integrity, and though of a very grave and solemn deportment, he had a remarkably cheerful disposition, and generally communicated his instructions with so much ease and pleasantry, as greatly to gain the confidence and affection of all with whom he conversed, especially of children and young people. In all his intercourse with strangers and men of the world, he so managed his conversation, that, while he seldom neglected a proper opportunity to impress the mind with serious things, he always made them covet his company, rather than avoid it; well knowing that there is a time for all things, and that even instruction and reproof, to be useful, must be prudently and seasonably given.

An instance of this disposition occurred in Virginia. The late Rev. Mr. Samuel Blair and Mr. Tennent were sent by the Synod on a mission into that province. They stopped one evening at a tavern for the night, where they found a number of guests, with whom they supped in a common room. After the table was cleared, our missionaries withdrew from it. Cards were then called for, and the landlord brought in a pack and laid them on the table. One of the gentlemen very politely asked the missionaries if they would not take a cut with them, not knowing that they were clergymen. Mr. Tennent very pleasantly answered, "With

nying influence of his Spirit give it success; to him, let us resign his own work. He hath the hearts of all men in his hand; and will accomplish his purpose. Let us be far from supposing that the word is preached in vain, unless its good effects are immediately visible. The Lord may be opening the hearts of our hearers to attend to the word spoken: serious resolutions may be formed, or a permanent change effected, under the sermon which we have considered lost. Wherefore, in the morning sow thy seed and in the evening withhold not thy hand; for thou knowest not which shall prosper, this or that. *Preach the word.*



ACCOUNT OF MR. JERVAS.

THE readers of the *Virginia Religious Magazine*, may perhaps, recollect the old Gentleman, who related the melancholy story of poor Jack Vincent, published in the fourth number of the second volume. It is my design, at present, to give some account of this worthy man. And if my readers feel as I do they will be glad to meet with him again. It has frequently been remarked by the neighbours, that no man ever yet went to the house of Mr. Jervas, who did not regret that he was obliged to leave it, and feel anxious to return. This remark was fully verified in my own experience. I visited the old Gentleman frequently, and soon became intimate in the family. It was the dwelling of piety, of peace and hospitality. Every thing was conducted with regularity and order. The old gentleman had raised a numerous race; his children, all but one amiable daughter, were married and settled near him. The young lady, whom I have mentioned (who was called Lucia) watched the declining years of her aged parents and waited on them with all the affection of a daughter. The hall was often filled with children's children, who visited their grandpapa, to share his affection, and to receive the benefit of his instructions. I had never formed an idea so perfect of a happy old age, as I saw here realized. After I had been long enough an inmate of the family to make it proper for me to request such a favour, I desired the venerable old gentleman to give me an account of his life, and particularly to explain to me how it was, that he had attained to an old age of greater happiness than most people enjoy in their youth. I was also particularly desirous to know how he

had trained up thirteen children, so that all seemed to be treading in his footsteps, and likely to attain that happiness which their father seemed so fully to enjoy. Mr. Jervas's modesty at first led him to refuse my request; but upon being gently pressed by me, he hesitatingly assented, and spoke as nearly as I can recollect, as follows.

My father was a pious man, in that situation of life which every wise man wishes to be his own, he had "neither poverty nor riches." My mother was one of the most exemplary christians that I have ever known. The constant object with both my parents, was to train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. We were accordingly, in our infancy dedicated to God in the ordinance of baptism; and I think it but justice to say, that I have never known any person so sensible of the obligations which parents bring upon themselves in this ordinance, as my mother was. In truth, her whole soul seemed to be devoted to the discharge of her duty to us; she could hardly be more anxious for her own salvation, than she was for ours. In every plan for our education, in every scheme for amusement, her first enquiry was, will it promote, or will it obstruct this object which lies so near my heart? I perfectly, recollect at this moment, many of the instructions which she gave me in my early youth; and one incident which made an indelible impression upon my mind, it may be worth while to relate. My mother had a private closet, to which she used often to retire, for meditation and secret prayer. On a certain day, after a retirement longer than usual, she called me to her, and seizing my hand, with a countenance glowing with affection, and eyes beaming with benevolence, she led me to her closet, and placing me by her side addressed me thus. "My dear child I have often told you before that I have given you to the Lord in Baptism. You do not belong to me, you belong to the Lord. It is my purpose again to give you up to God;" then kneeling down, and causing me to kneel by her side, she in the most fervent and affectionate, yet plain and simple language, committed me to the Lord, and with eyes streaming with tears, implored the blessing of Heaven upon me, and prayed that I might be a child of God, and from my very infancy learn to love and serve him. Her words, her looks, her actions all spoke to my heart.—The old man's lips here began to tremble, a tear trickled down his cheek, he was too much agitated to proceed—But recovering himself he went on—This scene I never shall forget: the impression

which it made will never be erased. I then determined that I would devote myself to that God whom my mother served, and to whom she had given me. But I shall be tedious if I detain you by a minute relation of particulars. My father took care that I should receive a good education, and was still more careful in training me up to habits of industry and sobriety. One of the earliest lessons which he taught me, and one which he inculcated with very great earnestness, was *that no man could be respectable or happy except so far as he was useful*. The application of this maxim is very extensive; agreeably to its import, I was taught cheerfully to engage in any thing which would be useful in the family, and never to despise any office, however menial it might be thought, which would add to the comfort of my fellow creatures.

I remember also to have heard it frequently in the month of my father that the youth of our land would be ruined *by being too proud to work*. Accordingly he taught his children, that the received notions of honour and delicacy on this subject were utterly false. He did not however urge his children to labour, with the unrelenting rigor of an Overseer, but with the kindness of a parent who was anxious to train them up to habits of industry. Thus we acquired the practical knowledge in farming, which long experience had given him, and we were not under the necessity of depending upon a mercenary hireling, to superintend our affairs: We knew what a servant ought to do, and when we ought to be satisfied with his labour. In this way my parents trained me up. At the age of sixteen I came forward and by my own act ratified that covenant which had been made at my Baptism.

The various scenes of my youth need not be described. I continued under the parental roof, until the age of twenty-four. At this period I entered into the married state and — Pray sir said I, begging pardon for interrupting you, what were the maxims which regulated your choice in this important affair? Why sir, replied Mr. Jervas, my maxims on this subject would, by the world at large, be esteemed ridiculous, but to a christian, who believes that the disposal of every event is with the Lord, I am persuaded that they will appear reasonable. When I first began to think seriously of matrimonial affairs, I made it a subject of prayer: No concern of life appeared to me more weighty, and I could not reasonably expect happiness, in a

connection so intimate, if it should be thoughtlessly entered into. In the next place, I resolved that the person, to whom I should be attached for life, should be as far as I could judge, a christian, and a member of that society, to which I myself belonged. For how could I hope for happiness, if the partner of my heart were an enemy to my Saviour? and how could I hope for union of designs and councils, for uninterrupted harmony, and unrestrained freedom of intercourse, if my wife should differ with me in religious sentiments? Marriages of this kind are always imprudent. In a wife I also wanted a *companion* and not a mere *domestick*. I resolved therefore that the girl of my choice should have the accomplishments necessary for agreeable social intercourse. On the subject of accomplishments, however, I set much more value upon *intellectual* than *external* accomplishments. I therefore placed piety and good nature in the first rank: a good understanding improved by reading and reflection was set down in the second; and lastly, though by no means unimportant, I arranged a similarity of habits, manners, and sentiments. Having formed these opinions and reflected on them until they became deeply fixed in my mind, I went to the work of *observation*. It was long before I was suited to my mind. A detail of my disappointments would be needless. At length having called to visit an acquaintance, who laboured under a malignant fever, I there met with a young lady, whose countenance and manners affected me strongly. She was a near relation of my sick friend, and altho' the fever was believed to be highly infectious, she with the benevolence of a christian, and the fearlessness of a hero, attended his bedside; and with her own hand wiped off the "cold sweat which glazed his forehead," and applied moisture to his lips, which were parched with the burning heat of the fever. Her eyes beamed tenderness, and her face glowed with the ardor of her feelings. And when his departing spirit left the body, when she heard his last convulsive groan, she raised an eye of faith towards heaven, which seemed to say, "The will of the Lord be done." After the first effusions of grief, I attempted to administer consolation to the bereaved, and found her mind so instructed in the doctrines of religion, so filled with faith and resignation, so patient, so meek, and so affectionate, that I was filled with astonishment. To this young lady I paid my addreses, and without any tedious detail, I have just to say that her arm has been, for this fortieth

winter, locked in mine, and now I feel for her something like the *ardor of juvenile passion*.

In training up my children, I endeavoured to imitate that example, which was set me by my mother. Without any unnecessary delay, they were presented in the church for baptism. And as soon as their reasoning powers began to act, I began to teach the simple, but most important doctrines of religion. This I knew to be contrary to many modern theories; but the maxims of Solomon are surely as much to be relied upon as the speculations of unbelieving theorists—my endeavor then was to “train up my children in the way in which they should go.” The method, in which I began was this. I had remarked that the relation between cause and effect, was one of the earliest relations observed by children. Taking advantage of this, I endeavoured to turn their attention to a variety of circumstances in which this relation was very obvious. It is easy thus, very early, to induce the habit of inquiring into the causes of things—and sooner than one would suppose, they acquire pretty correct opinions on this subject. Tell a child of three years old that the top with which he is playing was manufactured by a knife, his reply probably will be that a *knife has no sense*. In the effect produced, he clearly perceives the necessity of an intelligent agent. As soon as I saw that my children had acquired this knowledge, I directed their attention to some of the most obvious changes in the natural world, and to some of the most striking properties of those which were familiar to their senses. I endeavoured to show the uses of many of the processes of nature, and the benefits resulting to man from them. Who made it so? was a question very frequently proposed to me. From these enquiries occasions were taken to lead their minds to the great first Cause, I endeavoured to shew them the marks of his wisdom, power, and goodness, and to associate in their minds ideas of God with all the objects of sense. In this affair, however, there was need of particular care, never to mention the name of the Deity, without a due sense of his majesty and glory. If parents irreverently speak of the supreme Being, children will certainly do so too. But if we always keep our minds deeply impressed with God’s awful glory, those who look up to us for instruction, and who endeavour to imitate us, will rarely speak of him lightly. I now recollect a little incident which, at the time when it occurred, afforded me great pleasure; more, however, as a proof of the success of my plan, than on any other account.

After a drought of unexampled severity, we were favoured with a slight shower: immediately after which, the children ran out to play. Very soon, one of my little ones came running in, and with a countenance expressive of the highest pleasure exclaimed "Do papa come see here. I followed him to the garden, and he bade me observe, when he struck a colewort leaf, that the large drops which were standing on it, would roll down the stem of the leaf, and drop just at the stalk. Do you not see says he that the leaves slant upwards from the stalks, so that almost all the rain which would have fallen on the hill, has been carried to the stalk, and the ground just about it is right wet. Just as I was going to make some remark for his improvement, he exclaimed, "See papa the wonderful goodness of God!" This was spoken in so feeling a manner, that I was confident, that he was strongly impressed with a sense of what he had said. Well my son, said I, let us retire to some secret place, and return thanks to God for his goodness. Come papa, says he, let us do so. He followed me, and during the service I think I never saw a child so affected. I mention these minute affairs, that your question how I trained my children may be fully answered. It is proper for me however to observe that I did not expect by my own wisdom in planning, and assiduity in executing, to make them christians. I knew by experience the depravity of human nature and the necessity of regeneration, and I fully believed the doctrines of grace. My duty, and, I trust, my desire was to be a worker together with God. At least I wished to obey that command of the Scriptures "Bring them up in the nurture, and admonition of the Lord." In giving instructions concerning the Deity, I always endeavoured to mix practical, with speculative truth; and to enforce the necessity of loving, and serving, as well as knowing God. And when I observed their hearts, in any degree, affected with a sense of duty; when I thought, from external appearances, that they were making resolutions to serve the God of their fathers. I brought to mind the reluctance which they had so frequently shown to engage in these things; and took occasion from this, to explain to them the doctrine of human depravity, the lost and ruined condition of man, and the danger of everlasting destruction, to which every soul of the human race is exposed. But in doing this, I endeavoured to imitate the conduct of my mother. She did not harshly thunder out eternal damnation, and warn us to fly from hell, in an angry tone of

voice ; but in the mildest accents, and with the most affectionate tones ; frequently with eyes streaming with tears, she would clasp us to her bosom, and warn us to fly from the ruinous, the fatal courses of sin. Parents frequently chide their children for some trespasses against them, and for sinning against God at the same time ; but this often produces unhappy consequences : My mother never did so. And, as I said, I endeavoured to follow her example ; and always to let them see that in giving religious advice I aimed only at their advantage. In this, as in every part of the religious education of my children, I was chiefly indebted to their mother. The peculiar structure of the female mind, perhaps, makes it more susceptible of pious affections, than ours ; and that in winning softness, and sweet insinuating manner of address, peculiar to the sex, gives them the readiest access to the heart. Religious truth falling from the lips of a pious mother, makes an impression when all other means seem to fail.

When our children discovered any meltings of soul under a sense of their depravity, we took occasion to display to their minds, the glory, and grace, of the blessed Redeemer of sinners. I confess to you, however, that the task of training them up in this way, was no easy thing. I met with many difficulties, and had to suffer many discouragements. Often did I almost despair of ever accomplishing my purposes ; but the grace of God enabled me to persevere ; and the extraordinary zeal, patience, and perseverance, of their beloved mother often animated my fainting hopes, and revived my desponding mind. So true is that saying of the wise man “ Who so findeth a *wise* findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord.” But the task of educating children as they should be, will always be found arduous. There is need of great patience in bearing with their froward humours ; there is need of great watchfulness, to guard them against dangers ; there is need of great attention, to observe the proper times to instill wholesome doctrines ; there is need of nice, and accurate observation, to discover the peculiar structure of their several minds ; there is need of great skill, in accommodating instruction to their different capacities ; and there is need of unbending fortitude, and perseverance to bear one up, amidst all difficulties and discouragements. Thus, however we went on, and as our children were growing up, they were taught that excellent summary of christian doctrine and practice, the Assembly’s Shorter Catechism. But

I have always observed, that just to oblige a child to commit this manual to memory, is of very little service. I therefore obtained of the pastor of our congregation, who was a pious and learned man, a course of plain, familiar lectures, on the catechism; these I required each child to transcribe for his own use, and to read and study with such diligence, that they should be able, when called upon, to relate to the minister the substance of them. When this work was accomplished, I procured for my family several valuable treatises upon the evidences of christianity, such as Berkley's Minute Philosopher, Beattie's and Paley's Evidences, The Gospel its own Witness; and Leslie's Short Method: These also I required them to study, so that they could retain all the important arguments contained in them; not for the purpose of disputation with others; but that they might be grounded and established in the truth. My reason for this was, that I had observed many parents to undervalue this study; and suffer their children to grow up in total ignorance of the evidences upon which divine revelation rests its authority; and when they go forth into the world, the first subtle attack of the infidel overwhelms them at once. I therefore, took care that my children should be well furnished with arguments in defence of christianity. When this work was accomplished I set them up, on a course of ecclesiastical history, requiring them diligently to read Prideaux's Connection, and Mosheim's history of the Church. Having made this preparation I set them to the study of the Holy Scriptures. For this purpose, I procured that invaluable work, Doddridge's family Expofitor, and required the diligent perusal of it by every member of the family. I every evening also read a section of it before family prayer. There is now an excellent family Bible which I had not then the benefit of perusing, nor the opportunity of putting into the hands of my family; I mean Scott's Bible, which together with the family Expofitor, would make a pretty good Library for a private christian. In this way I taught all my children, both sons and daughters. The reason for teaching my sons was obvious, and I thought it important that my daughters should be made wise unto salvation, and be able to instruct their children (should they be married) in the doctrines of Religion. In this business besides the constant and unwearied attention of Mrs. Jervas, I received considerable assistance from other quarters. As I had a number of children to educate, and as the habits of domestic education in this country,

render it very difficult to keep up that discipline which is necessary in publick schools, I determined to employ a private teacher; and by the good providence of God, I was enabled to obtain a young man of piety, of science, and of genteel easy and manners. I soon discovered that his opinions coincided with mine in every point of importance. His principal aim, and that to which he directed his most strenuous efforts; was to inspire them with a regard to God, and to imbue their minds with the fear of their Creator. The philosophy which he taught was calculated to lead the minds "Through nature up to nature's God." And his preceptswere so constantly enforced by an example of piety, of meekness, of patience, and christian sweetness of temper, that they had powerful influence upon all who were under his direction. And his heart was so warm, so formed for the exercise of generous and tender affections, that he gave a turn to the dispositions of the whole family, and my children were under him trained up to the exercise of friendship. I have frequently observed a very important deficiency in this very point. And perhaps the general complaint with regard to the selfishness of men, and their incapacity for the exercise of that real generous genuine friendship,

—Which no cold medium knows,

But with one love with one resentment glows,
arises from a total neglect of this affair, in systems of education. Often have I and Aspasio and my children, sat for hours in the long winter evenings and enjoyed those domestic delights, that home born happiness which Cowper so admirably describes in his inimitable poem.

[See Cowper's Task, Book 4, from line 120 to 190.]

Another auxiliary, from whom I derived not a little assistance, was the Pastor of our church. His character I may hereafter give you at large. The principle trait in it, which I shall now mention, is the attention which he has uniformly been disposed to bestow upon the young people in the congregation. Although his circumstances were narrow, his salary small, and he was fettered by a school, which he was under the necessity of teaching, yet was he unwearied in the discharge of clerical duties. From the time that he took charge of the congregation, the people began to improve in religious knowledge. The young were instructed in the doctrines of the religion of Jesus, and the old were made wiser. Though he was a man of deep research, and profound science, yet such was his condescension, that he would let himself down to the weakest

capacity ; he would invite the timid by his familiarity, repress the wanton by his gravity, and by cheerfulness of countenance and communicativeness of disposition, he would draw the young around him, and with a sweetness and benevolence peculiar to himself, he would insinuate wholesome truth into their minds. I always thought it a privilege when I enjoyed his company, and I never can be sufficiently thankful to God for placing over us such a Shepherd. It was our care by every attention and respect, to induce him frequently to visit us. Servants, children, and all loved and revered him, and with delight have a thousand times listened to the words of reproof and consolation which fell from his lips. But it is time for me to conclude this long narrative, in which I have so frequently had occasion to mention myself, as almost to make it disgusting, even in an old man. Thus you see, in the general, how my children were trained up ; these were the means which I used, but without the blessing of God they would have been ineffectual : To his name therefore be the glory.

The subject of *accomplishments* was incidentally mentioned by you said I in the course of your narrative, may I learn what are your maxims on this subject, and how you regulated the affair in your family ? It has always been a maxim with me, replied Mr. Jervas, that pleasing manners, and agreeable forms of address are of great importance to both young and old. And while we are united in society, this will ever be the case. To the young they are important, because they serve to recommend them to the affection, if not to the esteem of others ; and to the old, they are equally so, because thus they are enabled with more ease and with greater success, to transact business, and carry measures of utility. But this is a point on all hands conceded. The question of principal importance, and that which has been most warmly disputed, is what is the best, and *safest* method, for the acquirement of those accomplishments, which by all are judged necessary. On this point I remark that there has been a very general error. Politeness is always manifested by the exterior conduct : and therefore the general rule has been to begin with the regulation of the actions and movement of the body. A certain set of motions have been called graceful, these are taught with great sedulity. Certain things are reckoned unpolite, these are required to be avoided with all care. And when these attainments are made it is believed that a polite education is fully completed. Thus the politeness of most people is a

mere artificial thing, in which nothing of the heart is shewn. *And those are generally reckoned most polite, who can most completely conceal the sentiments of the heart.* This indeed is universally understood, in what is termed the *polite* world, for no sooner does a person who has been treated with the most flattering marks of attention, and around whom a thousand graceful motions have been made, leave the room than a thousand keen and sarcastic remarks are made upon his person, his dress, his manners, his estate, his parentage and I know not what. And then it is the part of this spurious politeness to deal out scandal, and bring railing accusations. I say, therefore, that the general practice on this subject is entirely preposterous. True politeness originates in the heart; and to be successful, you must begin with its cultivation. Inspire it with genuine benevolence, eradicate the selfish passions, let a young person wish to promote the ease, and comfort of all with whom he associates, and if he has good natural sense there need be no fear of his wanting politeness. When this object is attained, I have no objection that some attention be paid to the manner in which this disposition is manifested. The exterior may be polished, when there is solidity enough to admit a polish. But here again there is room for enquiring what is the best way to give this external polish? How shall graceful motions be most easily acquired. On this I remark that they must be acquired by imitation, and that it is necessary that a good model be presented for imitation. But I never would recommend it to a friend of mine to imitate the artificial movements of a dancing master. Nor would I ever insinuate to the young, that when this can be done successfully, they have attained true politeness. Parents can I think accomplish all that is necessary on this point, by giving their children suitable cautions what awkwardness they should avoid, and how in particular they should act. If any should object to this as exceedingly troublesome, I only observe that parents, who think it important that their children should be graceful and easy in their manners, and who think it too troublesome to give attention to this point, are not fit to be parents. The most polite person I ever met with, was trained up in the way which I recommend. And on the other hand, I have more frequently had my feelings wounded, among those who made the greatest pretensions and, who were trained up in this *high style of politeness*, than by any others I ever associated with. I therefore determined never to put my children under a dancing master. For I do not think it is

the best plan for accomplishing the point in question, and am of opinion that it is not *consistent with a religious education*. Those parents who place a due value on the souls of their children, whose highest object and whose ardent wish is to train them up *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*, will be cautious how they expose them to the allurements of the world, to the follies and dissipations of routs and dancing assemblies— Excuse me sir said I for interrupting you. But suppose that the head of a family, should, for the purpose in consideration, employ a dancing master in his own family, just as you employed the worthy gentleman, whom you mentioned, as your private tutor. What objection could be made to such a plan? This I acknowledge, said Mr. Jervas, is the least objectionable form, in which this matter can be carried on. And I would not be for excommunicating parents who acted thus. I think a charitable, liberal spirit, would incline us to suppose, that such persons after the best examination in their power, believed that this was the best way, in which they could give that external polish, which is desirable. For my own part, I consider this as a point, in which good and pious men may differ in sentiment; and therefore, as I said, I would bear with it. But I could not act thus, with a clear conscience. In the first place, because it would hurt the feelings of weak christians, and, I think, the Apostle Paul teaches us to pay great respect to them. It is a part of christianity, and I may say a part of true politeness, to do so. In the next place, because I might thus throw a stumbling block in the way of others. I could not bear to hear it said by a person whose children frequented places of revelling, and dissipation, “Why old Mr. Jervas sends his children to the dancing school too.” In the third place, I should be afraid that my children would acquire a taste for vain amusements, for dancing, and frolic, which would materially obstruct their progress in the way to Heaven. For these reasons I could not adopt the plan you propose; though I acknowledge that many things are tolerated in christian families, which I think much worse than this. Such as misspending of Sabbaths, and the total neglect of religious education which prevails so generally in this country. But do not suppose that I am vindicating one offence by others which are worse.

As to other accomplishments, they may be dispatched in a few words. As for painting, it is mere folly to teach the art to children who have not a *turn* for it. And, in fact, those who undertake to teach our daughters, are mere

daubers, who have neither taste nor ingenuity: and the knowledge of the art, which they acquire, only spoils their taste, and puffs up their vanity; so that I resolved to have nothing to do with it. Of solemn music I am a great admirer. I think it has a tendency to soften the heart, and to refine the taste. And I would gladly have instructed my daughters in it, but for one reason. Public institutions are not at all patronized by the Legislature, and are not in general liberally supported by individuals. A few generous men are heavily taxed for this important purpose. I therefore in deliberating on this point, though it more becoming a good man and a christian, whose business it should be to "*do good and communicate*" to appropriate the price of a Piano, and the fees of a Music Master, to a Public Charity. I consulted my wife and daughters on this subject; and, to my great satisfaction, found that they coincided with me in opinion. And I believe we have never yet had reason to repent the determination. Lucia my dear said he, turning to his daughter, when young Freeman was taken the other day from poverty, and distress, and was placed in the charity school to be educated for the ministry, did you repent that you had never learned music? The young lady blushed, and replied, every arrangement that you have made Papa, has perfectly satisfied your family.

If, said Mr. Jervas turning to me, you rank literary attainments, under the general term accomplishments, I did pay the most scrupulous attention to them. I took care, that not only my sons, but my daughters too, should be educated. They were accordingly, instructed in the principles of Arithmetic, Grammar, Criticism and Logic, Natural Philosophy, Astronomy, Geography, and History. My object, however I succeeded, was to make them suitable companions for men of learning and piety, and proper persons for the instruction of children, at that time of life, when the earliest and most durable impressions, are made on the human mind. Thus sir I have groan old, in performing, in my poor way, the duties of a parent. Divine Providence has, in some degree, crowned my labours with success, and I enjoy a happy tranquility in old age, for which I can never be sufficiently thankful to him from whom every good thing cometh. I returned thanks to the old Gentleman for his edifying narrative, and for the present took my leave. But not long afterwards called on him again, at which time several interesting matters occurred, which shall be communicated in the following No.

THE
VIRGINIA
RELIGIOUS MAGAZINE.

No. 3] FOR MAY & JUNE 1807. [VOL. III.

BIOGRAPHY.

EXTRACTS FROM THE LIFE OF GEORGE WHITEFIELD.

THIS pious and extraordinary minister was born at Gloucester, December 16, 1714. His father who was bred to the wine-trade at Bristol, removed from thence to Gloucester, and kept an inn. He had six sons and one daughter. Of the sons George was the youngest, who was only two years old when his father died; and he was brought up with great tenderness by his mother.

When he was between twelve and fifteen, he had made some progress in classical learning; and, we are told, that even then his eloquence began to appear in some puerile compositions written for the amusement of his school-fellows. But his rising genius was deprived of the usual means of improvement, through the decrease of his mother's trade; and he was obliged to assist her in carrying on the business of the inn. His turn of mind, however, though depressed, could not be extinguished; and in this very unfavorable situation, we are told, that he composed several sermons, and that the impressions of religion were very strong upon him. When he was about seventeen, he received the sacrament, and employed as much of his time as he could in prayer and reading, in fasting and meditation, and in all those devout exercises, which are the food and the delight at once of every religious mind.

About eighteen, he entered at Pembroke College in Oxford, where he continued three years. At twenty-one, he was sent for by Dr. Benson, Bishop of Gloucester, who told him, "That though he had purposed to ordain none under three and-twenty, yet he should reckon it his duty to ordain him whenever he applied. Upon which, at the earnest persuasion of his friends, he prepared for taking

me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it." Whereas, if the heart is contracted, if the selfish affections prevail, if we are intent only upon our own gratifications, we may expect that the blessing of Heaven will be withheld; and our land, though fertile as the garden of Eden, will be converted into a desolate wilderness. It is reasonable to expect, that what God foresees will be spent in luxurious enjoyments, or hoarded up with miserly care, will be denied; but that the liberal soul shall be made fat. We know that calls are often made on your charity; but God is unceasingly bestowing good upon you. We know that solicitations of this kind are frequently repeated; but we know that the love of heaven is endless. "Honour the Lord then with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase, so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine."

Finally, Brethren, be heartily engaged in the cause of God. Endeavour to be useful in the church of Christ.— Be not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. Let your faith in our divine Master be strong; and give all diligence to add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance godliness, and to godliness patience, and to patience brotherly-kindness, and to brotherly-kindness charity.— May these things be in you and abound, so that you shall be neither barren nor unfruitful. To God we commit you, and may grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, be with your spirit.

Signed, by order of the Presbytery,

CONRAD SPEECE, *Moderator.*

JOHN H. RICE, *Clerk.*



▲ SABBATH EVENING, AT MR. JERVAS'S.

AT the time alluded to in the last Number, I had attended a sermon, and rode a considerable distance, that I might have the pleasure of Mr. Jervas' company on Sabbath evening. When I arrived at the house, I found the whole family collected in a spacious Hall. The company was composed of Mr. Jervas and his lady, miss Lucia, three or four grand children, and about 30 servants, who

were all arranged round the Hall. They had just taken their seats when I arrived. I feared that I had come in at an unseasonable time; but Mr. Jervas received me with his usual benignity, and requested that I would take a seat among them. I accepted the invitation, and sat an attentive spectator of the scene. It was new to me, and highly interested my feelings. The old gentleman was seated in his great arm chair, with the venerable and dignified mien of an ancient Patriarch; beside him sat the worthy companion of his joys and his sorrows; next was their amiable daughter, whose eyes sparkled with intelligence and whose countenance was sobered by piety; next were arranged their grand children, who watched every gesture and regarded every word of their venerable ancestor, then followed the servants, healthy, decently clad, and contented. I was following the train of ideas which this scene suggested when Mr. Jervas surprised me, by asking his daughter to give us an account of the sermon, which she had heard on that day. This request made me wish I had not intruded, and I confess that I felt considerable pain for the young Lady, who, I feared, would be not a little embarrassed. But what was my surprise when I heard her, without confusion, and yet with most unaffected modesty, mention the text, state clearly the heads of discourse, give a distinct abridgement of the the arguments under each division, and run through several practical inferences which the preacher had drawn from his subject! This facility of remembering, and relating what she had heard, was acquired, as I afterwards learned by habit. It being the custom with Mr. Jervas always to require this of his children: and though, said he, at first scarcely any thing more than the text was recollected, yet, in process of time, every important idea of a discourse was treasured up in the memory, and detailed with ease.—In the next place the grand children were called upon to say their catechism; which was promptly done, and a brief, simple, and appropriate exhortation was delivered to them. After this a number of black children stood up, and said a few questions in the catechism, which had been taught them by their parents. Mr. Jervas gave them also some words good advice. Miss Lucia was then called upon to read one of the Village Sermons (1) to the family, which being

(1) The Village Sermons, lately printed by Wm. W. Woodward of Philadelphia, are strongly recommended as

ended, the old gentleman concluded the whole business with family prayer. Opportunity being then afforded for conversation, I enquired whether every Sabbath evening were spent in that way, or if this were any extraordinary affair. Every evening replied he, since I was master of a family has been spent in a way nearly similar to this. And I find it both more pleasant, and more profitable thus to spend the evening of the Lords day, than in sleep, in idle conversation, or foolish amusement. But said I, did not you find it, at first, a very difficult task, to induce your servants to attend, and when you compelled their attendance, did they not frequently sleep during the service? Nothing valuable, replied Mr. Jervas, can be obtained without labour. I acknowledge that it was one of the most difficult tasks that I have ever undertaken. For several years, I found great reluctance in the blacks to give the attendance that I required. "But hard labour conquers every thing." By persevering in my plan, by sometimes giving correction, and sometimes admonition, I prevailed upon them to submit to my regulations. Those that were young were trained up in this way from their infancy. I took care to have them all taught to read the scriptures, and furnished them with Bibles. Every servant that has been born in my family for thirty years, has also been taught the Assembly's shorter Catechism; and as well as I was able, I instructed them in the doctrines of our holy religion. My efforts were not without success. One and then another embraced religion. The work then became more easy. I had greater encouragement to proceed. And now I have not a servant who does not long, throughout the week, for sabbath evening to come. But give me leave to ask, said I, if you were not afraid, that giving them such instructions would inspire them with high notions of liberty, and make them both troublesome and dangerous? Not at all replied he—not at all. The knowledge of the precepts of christianity, and the practise of its duties will never lead men to rebellion or insurrection. So far from it, that the readiest way to incline them to act as they ought, is to train them up according to the precepts of the gospel. He who knows that servants are enjoined in the gospel to be obedient to their own

well suited to be read on such occasions. They are short, plain, highly impressive, and fervently pious. No head of a family ought to be without them.

masters, not with eye service, as men pleasers, but in singleness of heart, as unto Christ, surely will not be a worse servant, than he whose only motive to action, is the dread of an overseer's lash. For my own part, I know from many years experience, that the best and most enlightened christians, are the best servants. And this is confirmed not only by my own observations, but also by the declarations of others. A gentleman, who holds a very large number of slaves, informed me the other day, that he had by sufficient experience proved the truth of these remarks. And I have heard of an excellent old lady, who frequently observed, that the preachers, who instructed her servants in the doctrines and duties of religion, were of much more advantage to her, than all the overseers she ever employed. But I can relate a particular instance of this kind, which will furnish very strong proof of the correctness of my opinions. I have a servant, who was, for some years, the most passionate, obstinate, and perverse being I ever had to manage. When offended with any arrangements of the family, she appeared more like a bedlamite than a reasonable being. But a few years ago, by the blessing of God on my labours and instructions, she became pious, and I have never seen a more valuable servant than she now is. Patient, meek, submissive, and obedient, she zealously obeys all my orders, and serves me with the utmost faithfulness, and honesty. How blind, then, and preposterous is that conduct, which neglects the religious education of servants? And how much pleasure do we lose by this neglect? There are some people, who look upon this unfortunate race of men with a most unreasonable, and malignant jealousy. If a negro appears contented and happy, it seems to irritate them beyond measure. If he seems anxious to enjoy the benefit of Christian ordinances, they think him proud and impudent. In short, it appears to be the opinion of many, that these creatures were only made to work, to be cursed, and to be beaten. This conduct is both inhuman and impolitic. It is inhuman, because negroes have immortal souls, and Christ died as much to redeem them, as to redeem us. It is impolitic, because every servant is thus made an enemy; or to say the least, no servant has any motive but that of fear to induce him to discharge his duty. But sir, said I, do you not find that indulgence spoils them? Are they not indolent and worthless? I have frequently heard the maxim, "Treat a negro well, and you ruin him." If, rejoined Mr. Jervas, you call the treatment which I

have mentioned, indulgence, I do not find that it does. I have been a house-keeper forty years, have raised thirteen children, and have in no year, been obliged to buy provisions for my family: and for the most part have been able to sell. This is a sufficient proof that my servants have not been spoiled by indulgence. I know that some humane men, the mildness of whose disposition cannot bear that their servants should be cut to pieces with the scourge of an unrelenting overseer, and who have never thought of stimulating them to industry by any other motive than that of fear, have been ruined by the indolence and dishonesty of their slaves. But in my mode of training servants, I have universally insisted upon that maxim, that "*if any will not work, neither shall he eat.*" I have taught them the reasonableness, and necessity of industry; and have always endeavoured to show myself so much interested in their protection, their health, their comfortable lodging, eating, &c. and their instruction in religious doctrine, that I have had a claim upon their gratitude, and have interested them in my welfare. I have no notion of indulging any in idleness. It is no kindness to do so. Neither do I, on the other hand, require unreasonable labour from them, as if they were brutes. Multitudes have objected to me, that my plan would not do, that it required an intolerable labour, to which no man could submit. I know by long experience, that it requires labour. But surely to ameliorate the condition, and to add to the enjoyments of the unfortunate, is an object worthy of labour: and it is undoubtedly worth a man's while, to labour incessantly, while his life lasts, to be the means of saving one soul. I do not find that our Saviour refused to undertake, and prosecute the great work of preaching the glad tidings of the kingdom, and of accomplishing our salvation, because it was laborious. And those who profess to follow him, ought to tread in his foot steps. I will take the liberty, however, to observe, said I, that there are in our country many wealthy persons, who hold such numbers of slaves, that it is absolutely impossible for them to train them up, in the way that you have done. How can a man, who has two or three *quarters*, instruct his servants in the doctrines of religion?

Sir, said Mr. Jervas, the duties of masters and servants are reciprocal. It is the servant's duty to honour and obey his master, and serve him with all fidelity. It is the master's duty to protect, feed, and clothe his servant, and give

him such instruction as is necessary for salvation. If the servant fails on his part, the law allows compulsory measures; if the master fails in his duty, what can be done? Shall it be said, he has so many that he cannot discharge the duties which he owes them? I fear that in the bar of conscience, the validity of this excuse can hardly be admitted. The only question here is, do the duties which I have mentioned, result from the relation of master and servant? If they do, then, no accidental circumstance can destroy the obligation. If you have too many for your care, who forced them upon you? At the day of *judgment*, it will hardly be enquired, how many servants we possessed; but how we discharged the duties which we owed them. But if the relation does not imply the obligations which I mentioned, then the matter is decided at once. We are by the gospel of Christ, at full liberty to neglect them as we please: and he is equally meritorious, who permits his slaves to live as heathen, with him who trains them up in the fear of God, and instructs them in the knowledge of a Saviour.— Which conclusion, I think, few Christians are willing to admit. For my own part, I cannot bear to hear a man, who, under the influence of a worldly spirit, is continually adding to his possessions of this kind, excuse himself for the neglect of an acknowledged duty, by saying that he has too many, to be able to act as he ought towards them, when, at the same time, it is perfectly known that there is not even an effort made to do that which is conceded to be right.

But to give a more direct answer to your question; if matters are so situated with any person, that in present circumstances, he cannot give his personal attention to this important affair shall it be entirely neglected? I think not.— In the case supposed, it is equally impossible to give personal attention to worldly affairs. Are they therefore neglected? No certainly. But the most industrious, active and intelligent man that can be obtained, is engaged to superintend them. Why then might not the master, when bargaining with an overseer, pay some regard to the best, the immortal interests of his servants, as well as to his own temporal concerns? From these remarks, I think that the following conclusions may be drawn. 1, That it is the duty of every slave holder, to use his utmost exertions to employ as overseers, men of piety. 2, To furnish them with some plain elementary books in religion, which, on sabbath days, they should be obliged to read to the negroes.— 3, To encourage them, by suitable rewards, to instruct the

negroes in reading, so far, that they shall be able to read the scriptures; and to catechise them. And 4, That masters, when they visit their plantations, for the purpose of examining into the state of affairs, and inspecting the conduct of their overseers, should also pay that attention to this business, which its importance, and the solemnity of the obligation requires. I know that this scheme is attended with formidable difficulties, and, indeed, to a timid mind, it may appear entirely impracticable. But I am persuaded, that if it were prosecuted with that activity and ardor, that unwearied perseverance, and unremitting diligence, with which men prosecute their plans of wealth and aggrandisement, that much good might be done. When men are really intent upon the attainment of any object, they discover a subtilty, an ingenuity, and a fruitfulness, in resources perfectly astonishing. Thus would it be in this business, if every man had a just view of the worth of souls, of the solemn obligations imposed upon him, of the awful account *one day* to be rendered. Thus would it be, if every man instead of *living for this world, lived for ETERNITY*. But though much might be done both for the present and eternal advantage of this unhappy race, and I am persuaded too, for the *present* and *eternal* advantage of their masters, yet hardly an effort is made. How we can answer before God for such an omission of duty, I know not. And how we can expect that the judgments of Heaven will be averted from us, I will not pretend to say. For my own part, I have most gloomy apprehensions. But please to observe, that I am saying nothing now, as to the lawfulness of the holding of slaves by the people of this country in present circumstances. My own conduct on this subject, sufficiently manifests my opinion. But the only question before us is, how we should treat them while they are in our possession? I have given you my opinions freely. And my reasons for holding them.

Do you not sir, said I, carry your opinions on this subject to an extent which may be called rigid. Would it not be sufficient to permit our servants to attend divine worship on the sabbath?

Ah sir, said he, nothing can be called sufficient, *unless it is the very best thing that we are able to do*. And besides this, who does not know the disadvantages that these poor mortals labour under, when they have the liberty to attend preaching? It often happens, that they are obliged to give way to the *whites*, as it is proper that they should. But

what benefit can they derive from preaching, which they cannot hear? But if matters are so arranged, that they can hear, for the most part they are ignorant of the fundamental doctrines of christianity, which every clergyman is obliged to suppose, that his people are acquainted with, that they understand not the discourse. It requires a mind of some cultivation, to be able to follow a train of reasoning, and take up those ideas which are rapidly delivered. Very ignorant people *whether young or old, must be catechised*, or they will remain forever ignorant of Christian doctrines. Wherefore, I have always admired the institution of an *order of catechumens* (2) in the early ages of christianity. It is I think much to be lamented that there is not such an order now in our church. But I am about to digress from the subject. Negroes, I can assure you from experience, must be catechised.

(2.) In the early ages of Christianity it was thought necessary to divide Christians into two orders, Believers and Catechumens. Believers were those who were so instructed in the doctrines of Christianity, and so grounded and established in the truth, as to be admitted to the full enjoyment of all the privileges of the church. Catechumens were such as were not fully instructed in the doctrines, and of course were not admitted to the ordinances of the church. These were committed to the care of men eminent for their gravity, wisdom, and piety, to be trained up in the knowledge of Christian truth; and when it appeared that they were sufficiently instructed, they were admitted into the number of believers. Now if all men were christians, and if all christians were sufficiently careful to give their children religious instruction, there would be no necessity for such an order; but this is far, very far from being the case. There are, however, I believe, many who are in some degree impressed with religious truth, but too ignorant of religion to be admitted to the privileges of the church, or even to be much profited by attendance on public worship; yet they would gladly receive those instructions which are necessary to make them wise unto salvation. I submit, therefore, this question to those who are concerned, for the welfare of the church. "Whether, in the present state of affairs, it would not be expedient to institute an order of Catechumens, and appoint Catechists, whose duty it should be to take care of the Catechumens, and give them suitable instructions?"

I have only one question more to ask, said I, on this subject. I have known the majority of black people, who made a profession of religion, to have very strange and ridiculous notions on the subject. Nothing can persuade them that they have not seen strange sights, such as the devil, chasing them with balls of fire. Hell opening to receive them; Jesus dying on the cross for them; and I know not what. Has it not been difficult for you to eradicate such foolish notions from their minds? Something like this has occurred in my family, said Mr. Jervas, and the only remedy, which I have found for it, is instruction in the doctrines of religion. *Ignorance is the parent of these wretched superstitions, which are so often substituted for religion. And they never will be destroyed until men are better taught.* They have at present a most disastrous influence in our land; and I greatly fear that this influence will be extended, rather than diminished. There are thousands of black people, and many of the whites, who profess religion, and are no more influenced by it's precepts, in their daily walk and conversation, than *Turks* or *Heathens* are. See them at church, and they are full of zeal; you would suppose them about to take Heaven with a holy violence; but see them elsewhere, and they are utterly unchristian. And there is nothing wonderful in this; for the only foundation of their hope is, that they have, as they firmly believe, seen some strange sight, which filled them with dreadful agony; and afterwards, in some miraculous way, have been delivered from their fears. This at once secures Heaven to them, and they may live as they please. It is a little wonderful, that any who undertake to preach the gospel, and have the management of church affairs, should encourage or even tolerate such dangerous absurdities. They have a very unhappy effect in many respects; and not the least evil resulting from them is, that in any attempt to christianize the blacks in Virginia, the owners of them, seeing so little piety, honesty, integrity, and humanity, in those who profess religion, would treat the plan with great coldness. Whereas if all those who are called christians, were properly instructed and taught the necessity of that faith, which worketh by love, even those masters, who neglect their own souls, would see such a difference between these, and those who were not thus taught, that for the sake of their own interest, they would cheerfully contribute to the promotion of such a design. And if the time were once come, when all the slaves in Virginia were christianized,

and made acquainted with those truths which are necessary to a holy life, all nations in the earth might call us blessed. Plots and insurrections, and all the horrid ideas, which now haunt the minds of so many misguided people, would no more be apprehended, servants would then do their duty, and even if buffeted for well doing, would take it patiently. I am persuaded, sir, that I have several negroes now, who would not be tempted to leave us, by the price of freedom. "My master, they say, and my mistress are my best friends; I have a plenty to eat and to wear, I have a good warm house, I am nursed when I am sick, and I am taught how to love, and serve God, and what more do I want?" In the time of our revolutionary war, when the British tempted our slaves to leave us, for the sake of an experiment, I collected my family together, and informed them that if they chose it, they might now be free. The British invite you to come to them, go if you please. I shall do nothing to hinder you. This speech seemed greatly to affect them all. Numbers burst into tears, and enquired what they had done to offend me. An old African whose fidelity I had often experienced, came up to me, and seizing my hand kissed it, then laying his hand on his breast he exclaimed, "Massa, me will spilla my blood for you; me will live and die for you; me no leava you." I was scarcely ever more affected, than by this strong proof of generous attachment. I dismissed them with assurances of my regard and of my determination always to consult their best interests. But it is time to retire to rest. Good night, sir. May you enjoy comfortable repose.

On taking my leave the next morning, I was invited by Mr. Jervas, to dine with him on the ensuing Christmas, as he then expected a company of select friends to be with him. In a following number I design to communicate what passed on that occasion.



A CONVERSATION, AT MR. JERVAS'S.

On my arrival at Mr. Jervas's, at the time appointed, I found there, besides several of his children, three clergymen. It will be proper to introduce these to the acquaintance of the readers of the Religious Magazine. The eldest of them had been a preacher ten or fifteen years, is endowed with faculties of the highest kind, and has cultivated

them with great assiduity. No man of his age has greater extent or variety of information, His powers are peculiarly fitted for the investigation of truth. With a sound judgment, a vigorous understanding, a quick perception, and great compass of thought, he has the capacity of holding his mind in suspense, until a subject is viewed in all its bearings and relations; and until the rays of evidence, however widely they be dissipated, are all brought to a focus on the point under investigation. Possessing such intellectual powers as these, he is animated with a love of truth, and thirst after knowledge, which prompts to unwearied diligence in research, and unremitting application to study. His knowledge then must be considerable. His taste is refined, his imagination rich in imagery, his elocution copious, and his trains of reasoning are close and logical; his eye sparkles with intelligence, and his voice is melodious as the notes of the nightingale. But in addition to all these excellencies, he is remarkably modest; it is impossible for you to be in his company without seeing his superiority, and yet such is his modesty that it gives you no pain to acknowledge it. I shall, for the sake of distinction, call him Paulinus.

The second is a younger man and a younger minister.— He also possesses real genius. The most remarkable quality of his mind is vigor; in argumentation he reminds one of the Ajax of Homer, armed with his mace of iron, and at every vibration overthrowing whole troops of Trojans.— His conception is very clear, and of course he is perspicuous, precise, and fluent in his elocution. From the comparison just used, however, it is not to be supposed that there is any thing of coarseness or vulgarity in his mind.— Far from it. His imagination is delicate, and his taste refined. I shall call him Philander. The piety of both these gentlemen is warm and unaffected. They have hearts formed for friendship. Possessing the highest talents and the best means of information that Virginia could afford, they would have been capable of filling any office; and might have risen to the first eminence in the state. But such was their devotion to the cause of Christ, that they left all and followed him.

The third gentleman is a young man of good education, of lively talents, and promises considerable usefulness in the church of Christ. His name is Merton.

The usual salutations and compliments of the season, introduced a conversation on the subject of observing holidays, such as Christmas, Easter, and other seasons of this

kind. The young clergyman expressed a wish that they might be abolished, for, said he, the observance of them gives occasion to a great deal of dissipation, foolish mirth, noisy frolic, and unreasonable waste of time.

Your remark, said Paulinus, furnishes a very just objection against the manner in which these times are spent; and this I admit is utterly indefensible. But while this admission is made, I would by no means advocate the abolition of these days. The zeal which many have displayed, against what are called superstitious observances, has been carried to an unreasonable length. While human nature continues in its present state, days appointed by proper authority, or agreed upon by general consent for religious employments and exercises, are of considerable advantage; and it would undoubtedly produce very happy effects, it, at that season of the year, when Angels from Heaven proclaimed, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will to men," all were suitably employed in meditation on the inestimable blessings which Jesus Christ came to bestow upon the human race. The same observations may be applied to Good Friday, Easter Sunday, and other days of this kind. Nor is it a just argument to object, that there is danger of these becoming mere formal observances; for this, if admitted, will apply to the Sabbath, to the preaching of the word, and to every institution of the Christian Church. For my own part, then, I would not have them abolished; but I think it desirable that publick teachers should turn the attention of their people to such seasons as these, and instruct them in the proper use to be made of them. The company acquiesced in these sentiments.

Philander then remarked that in several points, with regard to the mode of conducting divine worship, and the houses appointed for that purpose, he differed much from many in our country. It is quite a common saying of a house intended for worship, that it is good enough for a *meeting house*, when in truth there is not a church in this part of the state as good as a *Dutchman's barn*. They are generally poor, miserable leaky hulls, which let in wind and water on every occasion; and it is almost impossible at any season to accommodate a congregation tolerably, I will not say comfortably, for that is out of the question, in buildings set apart for publick worship. In Roman Catholic countries, they would be thought proper places to do penance in.

Merton. Places of worship should at least be so constructed, as to be comfortable to the audience at any season. This

is necessary to a profitable attendance on divine ordinances.

Philander. But I carry my ideas farther on this subject, than merely to take in what is comfortable. Churches ought to be elegant buildings, and constructed in such a taste of simple grandeur, as to inspire worshippers with awe and solemnity. It is impossible to feel that composure of mind when sitting in an open house, with the wind whistling around our ears, which we feel when in a stately edifice, such as I have mentioned. And though instrumental musick in churches is exploded, among us, yet were I to consult my own taste, I would have a good organ at every place of worship. Its deep and solemn tones compose the mind, draw off the thoughts from worldly cares, and admirably prepare us for the solemn duties of prayer and praise. What sir, (addressing himself to Paulinus) is your opinion on this subject?

Paulinus. In this point I agree with you; but would go still farther. At the period of the reformation an intemperate, undistinguishing zeal against the corruptions of popery, destroyed many things which are in their own nature indifferent, and many which might be useful. Of this number I consider paintings in churches. The objects of sense have such an influence upon us, and so universally affect our feelings, and influence the determinations of the mind, that it would be a happy thing accomplished if we could enlist the senses in the cause of religion. The history of the old and new Testament, furnish so many excellent subjects for the Artist, that there could be no difficulty, on this score, in furnishing churches with suitable pieces. If in describing the passion of our Lord, for instance, we could point our audience to a master-piece of painting on this subject, it is highly probable that our words would have a more powerful effect, than at present they have. And if every part of our houses were so furnished with sacred subjects, that in whatever direction we should turn our eyes, objects connected with religious truth were presented to them, it is also highly probable that our congregations would be more serious, when in the house of God, than they generally are. Among Roman Catholicks, there is almost universally to be found more zeal, at least more appearance of devotion, and piety, and more attachment to religion than among Protestants. I think that this can be accounted for, only from the circumstance that among those people, the senses, as I said, are employed in the service of religion.

Philander. I beg leave to ask whether, upon this plan, there would not be danger of the people's being satisfied with the mere form, without the life and power of religion? We know that among the Protestants, the superstitions of the Catholics have long been proverbial, and it has frequently been charged upon them, that their religion consisted more in pagentry and show, than in any thing else.

Paulinus. There is not that danger to be apprehended from these circumstances, which many imagine. I know indeed that in all situations, we are to guard against formality and superstition. But the most effectual barrier against these, are learning, piety, and refinement among the clergy; and instruction in the doctrines of religion freely communicated to the people. Among the ignorant there will be superstitions, and where there is superstition there will be observances, which have no tendency to promote true piety. In our own country there are thousands who know nothing of popery, and whose worship is so simple, that *art* has not been employed, to build a house for them to worship in, and yet among these, it is no breach of charity to say there are formal professors, and superstitious observances. In the plan that I would propose of managing the affairs of religion, I would have the people well instructed from their infancy in its doctrines. Now the facts recorded in scripture history are so connected with the doctrines of religion, that the latter do absolutely depend on the former. The person then who is well instructed in religious doctrine, will have the facts upon which these doctrines depend, strongly associated together in his mind. And when any object of sense, for instance a good piece of painting, or even a ceremonial observance, brings to his mind the historical fact, by the principle of association, he will be led to dwell on the doctrine connected with it. It appears to me, that so far from promoting superstition and formality, this might have a happy tendency to advance the cause of piety. At least I think it may be affirmed, that the person imbued with religious knowledge, and trained up in the fear of God, surrounded in a church, with objects intimately connected with the important truths which belong to his soul's salvation, would hardly be so lightly employed as many persons now are, while sitting in the church.

Phil. These observations are new to me, but I have no doubt of the justness of them.

Mr. Jervas. I beg pardon for interrupting you gentlemen, but as we can have no hope of seeing the service of

God thus conducted in our day, suppose that we lay aside these speculations, and come to something nearer home—something of practical utility. The conversation between you has turned my mind very strongly to the state of religion in Virginia. As you have lately visited various parts of the country, I propose that you give a view of this subject, and devise something for the amelioration of matters among us—some remedy for the evils of which we complain. I have observed that most friends to religion, when they feel the evils which press upon the church, complain heavily, but make few exertions for the amendment of what is wrong. I am an old man, more used to practice than to speculation, *I love to engage in schemes of practical utility.* Let us then in the first place hear your remarks upon those evils which threaten the church, and then let the remedies be suggested. And let Merton begin first. This proposal being accepted, Merton began as follows. “That which struck me as most remarkable in the religious character of this people, while on my missionary tour among them, was their ignorance of christian doctrines. I often found it difficult to know how to preach to them, as I discovered that they were totally ignorant of the meaning of the terms most commonly in use in Christian discourses, such as Regeneration, Sanctification, Adoption and the like.— It was necessary to begin at the very first principles of the gospel, and explain them as I would to a child in a catechetical lecture. And what is a little extraordinary, this ignorance is not confined to careless persons, but is to be found even among the professors of religion. I know not whether this can be much wondered at, when such numbers of those, who undertake to be teachers, are so ignorant. I once found very great difficulty in making a *preacher* of the gospel sensible of the difference between regeneration and sanctification. But it would look like bitterness and ill nature, to detail anecdotes on the subject of the ignorance of the clergy. The world would call me bigot if I were to do so; and yet there are bishops of churches in Virginia, in the same state of ignorance with the famous bishop in the tenth century, (I think) who being called upon to affix his signature to some piece of writing, was obliged to place his mark instead of his name. While this state of affairs continues, it cannot be expected that religious instruction, will be widely disseminated. The next thing that struck me in a very unfavourable point of view, is the number of sects in Virginia. This may properly be denominated *the land*

of divisions: and multitudes among the people, have all the bigotry, the rancour, and illiberality of sectarians, without the zeal or the piety, which are sometimes found among them. A vehement spirit of profelytism prevails. In the section of the country through which I travell-d, there are many preachers who never deliver a discourse without introducing the peculiar tenets of their party, and urging them with as much zeal as if the salvation of souls depended upon them. I have frequently observed the bad consequences of these unfortunate divisions, both upon professors, and careless persons. To the enemies of our holy religion, they furnish a pretext for objecting against it. And in addition to the narrowness and illeberality, which christians contract from the endless controversies to which these divisions give rise, the insilling so much upon the peculiar doctrines of a sect, by the public, and allowed teachers of Christianity, is very apt to turn the attention of the sectarian, chiefly to his distinguishing tenets. The regard to these is frequently substituted for the great and weighty matters of the law, and the gospel, faith and judgment and mercy. It is much more easy to an unregenerate man, to regard one or two religious rites, than to live a life of faith on the Son of God, and daily to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Another very discouraging fact on this subject is, that although this country was at its first discovery, settled by christians, and the gospel has, from a very early period, been preached among us, yet the number of professors of religion bears a very small proportion indeed to the population of the country. There are multitudes, who are bitter enemies to the gospel, and more, who are mere indifferentists; while very few indeed are warmly interested in its support. And of those who do appear interested, the majority seem to pay no regard to the promotion of religion in general, but only to the extension of their own society. These are the remarks which I have had occasion to make on this subject. I shall be glad to hear the opinion of those who have had longer time for observation, than I myself have had."

Mr. Jervas. According to the order agreed upon it is Philander's time next to speak on this point.

Philander. Our friend Merton has already detailed a pretty large catalogue of evils which afflict the Church. But certain circumstances have brought to my knowledge, and pressed upon my consideration some others which he

has not noticed. In the first place then, in addition to what he has said, I remark that in this country, it is most unfortunate, that those men, who devote themselves to the labour of preaching, are so scantily supported. I do not know a single clergyman who receives a competent support for a family. I know that I am here furnishing a theme for railing accusations. The avarice of the clergy, their monstrous wealth, and tyrannical exercise of power, have been subjects of declamation for many a sterile wit, who could find nothing else to laugh at. But the whole world knows that we are guiltless of the crime of *being rich*. And it is truly ridiculous, for men to talk of the avarice of those, who after they have spent their little patrimony, and the prime of their lives in the acquisition of knowledge, and exhausted their constitutions, and ruined their health by laborious study, have to suffer under the pressure of poverty, and scuffle out their lives with the help of one hundred pounds per annum. And indeed sometimes with the half of that sum. These are melancholy facts. And accordingly we find that very few indeed have the disinterestedness, the fortitude and self-denial to engage in the ministry. Nor is it wonderful; for this profession uniformly presents us with the barren and comfortless waste of poverty; while on the other hand, to every man of genius and learning, the other professions of our country open the door to honours and emoluments, to high offices and considerable wealth; and I myself know men who toil thro' the laborious life of a clergyman, with the pitiful salary of one hundred pounds, who possess genius and activity, and industry, which would in the profession of the law, produce an annual amount ten times as great. I therefore greatly fear that the clerical office will in process of time be deserted by men of learning and genius, and filled with *unlearned clerks*, who will only burlesque their profession, and bring religion into contempt.

Another evil of which we have reason to complain, is that in most of those few congregations, which are willing to give any thing to the support of their pastors, the money can only be raised by the miserable and deceptive shift of an annual subscription. Thus when a minister settles at any place, he must toil through the first year as he can; at the end of it, the collection is begun to be made; a few dollars are received at one time, a few at another, a beef, a shoat, a piece of Virginia cloth is offered in payment: thus the second year is more than half gone before

the collection for the first is made ; but in the mean time some person is disgusted with some unwelcome truth, delivered by the preacher, and withdraws his subscription ; another follows his example : thus is the sum reduced from the *pompous hundred a year* down to fifty or sixty pounds, and often to less. These are real facts without exaggeration. Nay, I have known a man worthy to succeed an apostle, having a large and expensive family which he was with difficulty able to support, labour for years in succession, without receiving a cent more than twenty-four pounds per annum, and sometimes not the half of it. And yet he was abused by many as a money preacher. These things are certainly unfavourable, and I cannot suppose that the fears heretofore expressed are ill grounded. There is in Virginia a population of eight hundred thousand souls, and except a few Episcopalians, and about thirty Presbyterians, how many men of learning are in the ministry ?

The circumstances which I have mentioned, produce in another way, a very bad effect. Ministers must live. If they are not supported by the people, they must make a support for themselves. They must either resort to farming, to merchandize, or to school-keeping. Here then that time is completely occupied, which ought to be spent in theological studies, in visiting the people, in catechising, in lecturing, and in the discharge of all the duties resulting from the pastoral relation. And after a week spent in exhausting labour, the clergyman must ride a dozen miles, and preach just what he can, and how he can. The business of teaching, which is the common resort of our clergy, though it has been thought peculiarly suitable, is on many accounts objectionable. Besides the compleat occupation of time and the laborious drudgery of the employment, the office of a school-master, if not disreputable, is not honorable in this country. Nay, among many it is thought contemptible ; and he who is called school master, with an air of contempt, will hardly be heard in the pulpit, by the majority of people, with that respect, which the sacred office merits. And besides this, there will inevitably be dissatisfactions and uneasiness on account of the treatment of children ; the price of teaching ; the progress of scholars (for the parent you know always blames the teacher if his child does not learn) and many such things. And if the teacher finds it necessary to board his pupils, here is another source of uneasiness and dispute. So that the endless perplexities and vexations of this business, the time which it occupies, the confinement

which it requires, the disputes to which it may give occasion, seem to make it a very unsuitable profession for a minister of the gospel. And if it be so, I know not in what way they are to procure a living unless they could live upon air, as the camelion is said to do.

Mr. Jervas. But you surely would not wish to see an establishment of religion, and bishops rolling in the splendor of nabobs? Neither do I imagine you would desire the clergyman's office to be a sinecure.

Philander. By no means. Nor can such inferences be made from any thing which I have said. All that I desire, is that those who preach the gospel, should live of the gospel. In other words, I wish to see the clergy so supported, that they will neither be abject to the rich, nor haughty to the poor; neither needy nor luxurious. Now any house-keeper knows, or easily may know, how much is necessary in this country to support a family decently, without the necessity of vexatious cares and perplexities. This is what I wish for myself, this is what I want, for all who labour in the vineyard of the Lord. If every congregation had a good fund, which would annually produce from two to three hundred pounds, and which should be punctually paid to the pastor, I should be fully satisfied.

Mr. Jervas. But this would be called an establishment, and would be as strongly censured, as any establishment that ever was made.

Philander. Men might call it what they please; it would not be the worse for that. And from such an *establishment* as this, I am sure that no evils could be apprehended.— You will please to observe, that according to my plan, the living would be in the hands of the congregation; and the minister, of course, would always be dependent on the people. Should he labour with that zeal, that assiduity, that diligence, should he exhibit that pattern of patience, of faith, of charity, and disinterestedness, which becomes a minister of the gospel, his flock would, without doubt, continue that support which they might have engaged to give. Should he become worldly minded, negligent, and faithless, they could easily discard him. For at the farthest, any minister, at least, any one in our church, can be removed from his place in one year. And while this order of things continues, there can be no ground for apprehension of mischief from the clergy. But we are wandering from the point before us, I shall be glad to hear the observations of our friend Paulinus on this subject. It is true that between Merton

and myself a pretty dismal catalogue has been drawn out; but let us know the worst of the matter that no evil may come upon us unexpectedly.

Paulinus. I have little to add to what has already been said on this subject. I shall just observe, that there are some circumstances which increase the evils which you have mentioned, and which strongly counteract any remedies which may be applied to them. In the present order of affairs, the evils of which you complain, can only be removed by wise and vigorous measures adopted, and pursued for some time. You cannot expect to change the religious habits and sentiments of a people in any short period. But there is so great an emigration from our country, such a perpetual change of the inhabitants, that the young generation, which you begin to instruct and train up in the knowledge of religion, will, by the time they are old enough to take their places in the church, be wandering in the wilds of Louisiana, or seeking a habitation on some distant frontier. So that you will be perpetually beginning your schemes, and never bring them to a conclusion. Only think what a change has taken place in the inhabitants of this part of the country in the space of twenty years. This shifting and moving of the people, in fact, stops the progress of every kind of improvement whether of religion, literature, agriculture, or manufactures. And centuries will elapse before any amelioration can be expected.

Mr. Jervas. We have now had a view of the evils under which our church labours. Let us next hear the remedies by which you propose to counteract them.—But a servant informs me that dinner is ready.



FOR THE VIRGINIA RELIGIOUS MAGAZINE.

ON DRESS.

By what rules does religion require us to govern our conduct in regard to dress? The subject is by no means undeserving the attention of a serious mind: and the following observations may perhaps serve to throw some light upon it.

Some believe that we are expressly forbidden to wear gold, pearls, and in general, all costly or splendid apparel. This opinion is grounded on the following texts. "I will

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FROM THE ASSEMBLY'S MISSIONARY MAGAZINE.

BIOGRAPHY.

EZRA STILES was the son of the Rev. Isaac Stiles, and was born at North-Haven, in Connecticut, on the tenth day of December, 1727. In his youth he was distinguished for his good humour, engaging manners, and retentive memory; and, though of a feeble constitution, he made such progress in learning that at the age of twelve years he was prepared to enter Yale College.

At college he enjoyed the highest honours which industry and talents could obtain, and all the respect and esteem which the most polished manners, the best informed mind, and the most unexceptionable conduct could command. At the termination of his collegiate life, he was appointed by the president to deliver the Cliosophic Oration; and at the public commencement he acquired distinguished honour by a most able defence of the following *Thesis* :

Jus regum non est jure divino hæreditarium.

Soon after he graduated, he was admitted a member of his father's church at North-Haven, and went to reside as a Batchelor of Arts at the University, where he was esteemed one of the most perfect scholars that had ever received the honours of that seminary. In 1749, he was chosen a tutor of the college, and was inducted into office on the 25th of May. At the commencement he received the degree of Master of Arts, and pronounced the Valedictory Oration. The same year he was licenced to preach the gospel, by the New-Haven association of Ministers, and went on a mission to the Housatunnuk Indians, at Stockbridge.

In November 1753, Mr. Stiles was admitted to the practice of the law in the courts of Connecticut. At this period he had carefully examined the *jus civile*, and was well vers-

But our veneration for the character of this distinguished man is most irresistably demanded, when we view him as the humble follower of the meek and lowly Jesus. The most sincere piety, like a golden chain, has served, at once, to give connection and ornament to the work, which genius, learning, and the most refined morality could never have furnished. Was any one of his christian graces to be discriminated, it would, perhaps, be his humility. His deep contempt of human pride, is discernable in the following passage in his own writings. 'How absolutely contemptible is man glorying in some little eminence among his fellow worms; while, in comparison with the immensity of the Universe, in the view of superior spirits, and, above all, in the contemplation of God, he must appear nothing, less than nothing, and vanity.' As a christian believer he gloried in nothing so much as in the Cross of Christ, and next to his own immortal interest, his zeal and talents were unitedly employed to bring others to the saving knowledge of divine truth. Living daily under the influence of the precepts of his divine Master, supported through life by his promises, and having that hope in death which they inspire, he nobly finished his course, and, with triumph, received the summons to his heavenly mansion. E.



CONVERSATION AT MR. JERVAS'S—*Continued.*

No. IV.

THE hospitable board of Mr. Jervas was well furnished, but there was no parade, no ostentation, no luxury, no strong drinks to whet the exhausted appetite, nor high seasoned dishes to promote drinking. The food was prepared for health and sustenance, not for pleasure only, and the whole company seemed to be more desirous of improvement from the conversation of the clergymen, than of any thing else.

As there will necessarily be some interruptions to discourse, said Mr. Jervas, we will wave the subject on which we have been just now conversing, and talk of something else during dinner.

Agreed, said Philander, and I propose that our friend Paulinus, inform us, what is the best evidence for the determination of the question, *Am I a Christian or not?*

Mr. Jervas. The very question I meant to propose! I have frequently remarked, that preachers lay down a great

variety of evidences on this subject; the one most frequently insisted upon, is a particular experience, as it is termed, this is conducted in a manner evidently artificial: the preacher very frequently states what he believes ought to be experienced; and conducting the soul along, step by step, brings it, at last, to joy and peace and transport. Now, as there are differences in the character, disposition, and structure of mind, in different persons, it is not to be imagined, that any one man's experience is just like another's. This method, it appears to me, will have bad effects in various ways. The honest, humble soul will often be discouraged, because his experience does not come up to the standard established by his minister: while the weak enthusiast will, in an artificial way, work up his feelings to the standard of the minister's experience, and conclude at once that he is converted.

Paulinus. The mode of preaching, which you mention, has not been too strongly reprobated. It has, in many respects, a very unhappy tendency. I have hardly been able sometimes, to repress my indignation upon hearing the vagaries of a wild imagination, and of a mind disordered by enthusiasm, set up as the standard of Scripture, declared to be the word of God, and their reception urged on the people at the peril of eternal damnation. Thus the minds of the multitude are led off from the truths of the scripture, are kept ignorant of religious doctrines, and are turned from the cultivation of pious, holy affections, and from the works of faith, of charity, and patience, to the business of working up the passions, and by various artifices—exciting those feelings, which the preacher declares to be necessary. Preaching of this kind has been too common throughout our country, and even in our own church; so that now, the majority of christians do not go to church, to be instructed in the duties which they owe to God and their fellow-creatures, to be taught the high and holy doctrines of our religion, to learn how to overcome temptation, and stand firm amidst the assaults of the Devil, and the allurements of the world: *but they go with the intention of having their feelings excited.* In short, they do not go to church to *learn* their duty, but to *do* it. And this done, they are satisfied until next sabbath; When they go to church to do their duty again.— And thus the whole of a life of piety, is *to go to church and weep, and cry out, and shake hands, and go home again.*

Merton. Do you mean to affirm that this is universally the case with professors of religion in this country?

Paulinus. By no means. But what I affirm is, that this

kind of preaching has a tendency to produce these effects; and that in many cases it has produced them. But in answer to the question asked by Mr. Jervas, my reply will be brief and simple. He who habitually has a love of universal holiness is a Christian.

Merton. That this rule is a just one, is indisputable.— But a question may arise in the minds of many respecting its application. How shall I know that I have this love of universal holiness.

Mr. Jervas. Do sir let us hear what you will say on this subject; for it is a point on which I have often had difficulties.

Paulinus. In judging of our religion, I would recommend it to every person not to take into consideration *his present frame* of mind, for thus he may perpetually be deceived, but to examine the *general tenor of his conduct*. If we have a love of holiness, it will show itself in our lives and conversation; a uniform desire to obey the laws of God, will, in the general, produce obedience; if, then, we are about to engage in the work of self-examination, let us take a particular period of time, the week past, for instance, and examine whether a regard to God and to his authority, has influenced our conduct, and guided our actions; whether we have aimed at his glory, and have endeavoured to “do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.” It may universally be laid down as a rule, *that religious affections, as far as they are genuine, will produce good works*. As far as they do not produce good works, they are mere enthusiastic movements of the soul, which are neither profitable to man, nor well-pleasing in the sight of God. In this way, by comparing the course of our conduct with the motives which influence it; and comparing both actions and motives with the law of God, we may ascertain the point in question.

Mrs. Jervas. I do not observe sir, that in determining the question, you take into view an experience of grace, as it is called.

Paulinus. Why madam, the course which I recommend will lead us to a constant observance of the work of grace on our hearts, and of those effects of it which we experience. But I think it a very bad plan indeed, to resort only to the exercises which we had, at the time when we suppose that we were converted, and depend only upon them. This is injurious to a holy life: it has a tendency to prevent our regarding that precept of the apostle, which requires us to be careful to maintain good works.

Miss Lucia. Do you think sir, that in order to our having good evidence that we are Christians, it is necessary for us to know when we were converted.

Paulinus. No madam, I do not. There is nothing in scripture, or in the nature of the case, to warrant such an opinion. And I have been surprised at the confidence with which it has been maintained. I do not indeed deny the possibility of our knowing the time when we are renewed by the grace of God; but am very apt to believe, that many, who speak so confidently on this subject, are mistaken: because the circumstances, which they relate as evidences of this change, are, in fact, no good evidence of it. Those high flights of affection which are spoken of, may take place, and yet there may be a total want of true piety.— While, therefore, I fully believe that the christian may feel such an admiration of the divine character, such a high and holy reverence for the name of God, so cordial an approbation of the character of Christ, and of the scheme of salvation offered in the gospel, and so fixed a determination to live to the glory of God, as to be enabled to say with the apostle Paul, “ I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep, that which I have committed to him until that day;” While I fully believe this, I am just as certain that a great many pious people are unable to point out the precise time when they were converted, and it is fully sufficient for any of us to be able to say, “ One thing I know whereas I once was blind, now I see.”

By this time dinner was over; and after some desultory conversation, Mr. Jervas proposed that the former subject should be resumed.

To this proposal Philander remarked that he had no sort of objection; but he wished to have this subject discussed only by Paulinus. All therefore agreed in the request that Paulinus should propose the remedies, which he thought most likely to be efficacious in putting a stop to those evils, which threaten the church.

Paulinus. You have imposed upon me a task much above my powers. It is beyond my abilities to propose remedies for the evils which afflict us. Some indeed are so connected with the physical state of our country, that, for the present, no remedy can be applied to them. But, at the request of my friends, I will communicate such things as have occurred to me on this subject: at least I will propose what I think practicable. In the first place, then, I think that it would be a very important step if the num-

ber of clergymen of liberal minds and enlarged understandings could be increased. If, throughout our country, the people could, every sabbath, be instructed by men of piety and learning, who would explain the true doctrines of the gospel, lay open the principles and enforce the duties of morality, and inculcate that justice, that sobriety, that charity, that patience and meekness and quietness of spirit, which our religion requires, it would certainly have a powerful effect in repressing those evils which prevail to an extent so alarming in our young nation. I do therefore fully believe, that this is an affair which belongs to every man in the state, and that all are interested to promote such a design.

Philander. But how is this scheme to be effected, when there are no inducements to any man of learning and genius to engage in the ministry?

Paulinus. In the present state of affairs, I can think of no plan to bring about an object so desirable, but the establishment of a charity school, where young men of piety and genius, who are too poor to educate themselves, shall be trained up to the gospel ministry. In this way I think that many who now languish in obscurity and poverty might have their own situation in life ameliorated, and might be made useful members of society.

Philander. But how shall such an institution be established? Whence will you derive funds?

Paulinus. From the liberality of those few generous men, who have supported those institutions, which the piety and benevolence of their forefathers have erected. Upon these we can calculate with certainty. Already has an effort been made in a certain portion of our country, which has been crowned, thus far, with considerable success. Twenty-four hundred dollars, I am informed, have already been subscribed; and had not this been a year of unexampled difficulty in this country, I have no doubt but that subscriptions to a considerable additional amount might have been raised. For my own part, I am persuaded that if the scheme be pursued with vigor and industry, it will ultimately be crowned with success. And if by the exertions of the present day, the institution can be established, I think we may expect that the funds will increase in various ways. Pious and benevolent persons, will be fond, on their death beds, to leave little legacies to a school, which will be beneficial to the latest generations. Some of those who have now contributed their mites, may perhaps, hereafter add to the stock of the charity school. And it is not altogether chimerical to hope, that when once the good effects of the scheme are vi-

sible, many, who now are disposed to withhold their contributions, will come in and increase the funds of the institution.

Mr. Fervas. Well sir, and how will you dispose of the money which may be collected for this purpose?

Paulinus. Why sir, it shall be vested in some productive stock, and the interest of it shall forever be applied to the purpose specified.

Mr. Fervas. You propose then that it shall be a permanent school do you?

Paulinus. Certainly sir. It would be a matter of very little importance, if the whole sum thus collected should be at once expended. We look farther forward sir, and hope that it will be beneficial to generations yet unborn. He who contributes, then, to such an institution, will be a benefactor to his country for centuries yet to come.

Philander. Well, sir, I wish you to propose the plan of education for young men, who may be admitted into such a school.

Paulinus. In the first place, as piety is essential in the qualifications of a minister of the gospel, none should, by any means, be admitted into the institution, who could not, on this point, give satisfactory evidence of their being properly qualified. In the next place, I would propose, that it be laid down as a fundamental maxim, that none be hurried through a course of study, for the sake of supplying the present scarcity. *We will make learned ministers, instead of making them rapidly.* A young man therefore should receive the elements of an education, such as are commonly taught in the public schools in this country. I would wish him to lay a broad foundation, that his mind might be enlarged and liberal. Let the languages of Greece and Rome be familiar to him; let his mind be invigorated by mathematical studies; and let him extend his researches to the latest discoveries in philosophy; and, though I would not have him an adept in chemistry, in botany, in natural history, and the various other branches of natural philosophy, yet I would have him understand the general principles of these sciences. After conducting him through this wide range, to give expansion to his mind, I would limit his pursuits. Let him then turn his attention to the original languages of the scriptures, and study them with fixed attention. After having acquired such a knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew, as would enable him to read the Old and New Testament critically, he should undertake the study of scripture history, beginning with Genesis, and in passing let him

make himself acquainted with all the objections which have been made to it, and the answers which have been given.— In connection with this, he ought to study the antiquities, laws, customs, rites, and ceremonies of the Jews, and of other nations, mentioned by the sacred historians. When this work is ended, let the student of divinity then study with care, the evidences upon which our holy religion rests, so that he will be able to maintain the truth, and divine authority of scripture against the attacks of its enemies. I place this study in this order, because it is connected in a considerable degree, with that last proposed. When this labour is completed, I would recommend the study of ecclesiastical history, embracing the events which have befallen the church, and its doctrines, rites and ceremonies, controversies, heresies, and schisms in various ages. I would enjoin a very particular attention to the doctrines of the church in primitive times. Here then would be a proper time to read the works of the primitive fathers, such as Clemens Romanus, Tertullian, Chrysostom, Origen, &c. When this study is completed, and the civil history of the world well understood, as far as it is connected with the state of the church; and not till then, would I have the student seriously set to the study of the doctrines of the scriptures, and these I would have him learn from the scriptures themselves. Let the professor of divinity, only point out the order in which he should prosecute his researches, and the books he should consult, and let him learn scripture doctrine by consulting scripture. While this is doing, and by way of relaxation, I would have my student, for the refinement of his taste, and for the storing of his mind with imagery, read the best of the Latin and Greek classics, and the best writers in poetry and belle-lettres, among the moderns. With a mind then enlarged by history and philosophy, with a taste refined by familiar acquaintance with fine writers, and with a judgment matured by deep study, and diligent research, I would send him forth to instruct men in the knowledge of the truth, to teach the sublime doctrines of our holy religion, and guide them in the way to heaven.

Why sir, said I, after the completion of an education, it would require at least four or five years to finish this course of study.

Paulinus. Yes sir, it certainly would. But this length of time is by no means unreasonable, if we consider the extent and variety of knowledge necessary to a preacher of the gospel. And after all this study, this diligent research, my young clergyman, if he has just views of the importance

of the sacred office, will exclaim in the language of St. Paul, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Nay, he would find, that he had just then laid a proper foundation for his future studies. And it would be one part of his daily business, to extend his views still farther, and dive deeper into the depths of knowledge and the mysteries of redemption.

How contrary, remarked I, is this to the opinion of many! It is most confidently believed by multitudes in our country, that nothing more is necessary to a preacher of the gospel, than that he should be a man of piety; let him *if he is called, go forward and preach*, and the Holy Spirit will give him utterance.

Paulinus. These opinions sir, are most unreasonable, and highly injurious to the interests of religion. What shall a mere novice, an illiterate man, whose mind is unstored with knowledge, whose soul is covered with the dark clouds of ignorance, who knows nothing, and has nothing to communicate, be set up as a public teacher, as an instructor of the people? Shall I commit myself to the guidance of such a man, in affairs where my soul is concerned? I would not intrust an illiterate *quack* with the care of my body when sick. I would not suffer a *pettyfogger* to plead my cause in a court of justice, and shall I receive, for religious truth, the absurd and incoherent ravings of an ignorant enthusiast? The opinion is absurd; the question is an insult; and as for the opinion that he who *is called to preach* is inspired by the Holy Spirit, it is both foolish and impious. I conceive it to be highly injurious to the honour of the Blessed Spirit, to charge upon him all the nonsense, which babblers utter in the pulpit. But let those who pretend that they are inspired, give us the evidence which Paul and the other apostles gave of their inspiration, then we will believe them.— Let them raise the dead, heal the sick, restore the lame— but if they can do no such thing as this, let them forego their pretensions, learn the humility which becomes them, and sit at the feet of those who are able to instruct them.* I have given you my plan for the increase of learned and



* On this subject see a very excellent pamphlet, entitled *Christ's warning to the churches, to beware of false prophets, by Dr. Lathrop a divine of New England, whose writings are doing service to the cause of truth and piety. It would be well worth while to have this book distributed through this country.*

pious clergymen, I have delivered my opinions with warmth and earnestness, because I am persuaded, that the interests of religion are deeply concerned in these matters, and that the prosperity of our country is involved in them. Vice and ignorance, hand in hand, are advancing upon us with rapid strides: and it becomes every man, whatever his religious sentiments are, to step forward, and exert himself to throw a barrier in the way of that wide-wasting torrent, which threatens to overwhelm us. In an affair of this kind, I would lay aside the little differences which separate various denominations in this country. I would have all men, of all creeds, to unite in one general effort to support the church of Christ. It would matter but little with me, to what particular church my young clergyman might unite himself, only let him be a man of real piety, a man of liberality, a man of profound knowledge and deep research, a man capable of instructing the people, of enlightening the public mind, and giving a turn to public sentiments. I propose therefore that all of us, in our several places, use the most vigorous exertions, to bring about the establishment of charity schools, for this important purpose.

Philander. But what would you do sir with your clergymen, when thus educated? There is no support for them in our country. They must, then, toil through their days in poverty, and to a man thus enlightened, to a taste thus delicate, to a soul of sensibility, such as your young clergyman would certainly have, the gripe of poverty, the frowns of fortune, "the insolence of office, the rich man's contumely, and all the wrongs which modest merit of the unworthy takes," would be severe indeed. Where, then will you station your ministers?

Paulinus. It is a difficult question: but not entirely unanswerable. Our clergy must give up all and follow Christ. *It is to the honour of the true ministers of Jesus Christ, that they are the men to make sacrifices.* But I beg leave to remark, that men endowed with such qualifications, would, in many parts of our country, meet with some encouragement; and, as for the rest, they would have to make a support for themselves, by their own ingenuity; they must do, as you and I do, sir. It is better for ministers to be teachers of schools, than that there should be no ministers at all, as unsuitable as I think the two professions are. It ought to be remembered too, that these men would actually be placed in a better situation, than if they had never been thus brought forward in our theological school.

Philander. You may rely upon it sir, that the bigotted,

narrow-hearted, ignorant sectarians throughout our country, will, in every shape, oppose your institution.

Paulinus. Sir we expect it, and they are welcome to all the comfort which such opposition can afford them. We have counted the cost, and are determined at all hazards to proceed. It is a matter of such primary importance that nothing ought to induce us to lay it aside. Why sir, unless the friends of learning and true piety exert themselves to the utmost extent of their powers, in a few years our country will become a mere hot-bed of enthusiasm. Outrageous fanatism will be universally prevalent. Our wives and daughters will become elect ladies; and posterity will see acted over again the scenes of desperate madness and frenzy which disgraced the madmen of Munster. Shakerism has already been the precious fruit of camp-meetings in one part of our country. We see every year, long pompous catalogues of these meetings published in our Gazettes, and every effort made to recommend them. The friends of religion then must come forward, and make those exertions on behalf of true piety, which are made to increase fanaticism, and extend the reign of ignorance.

Philander. Well sir, what plan do you in the next place propose. I am satisfied as to this, and am resolved to use all the little influence which I have in its support.

Paulinus. My next proposal concerns the ministers who already possess the proper qualifications. Let them, as far as they possibly can, make a sacrifice of their worldly interests; and more earnestly than ever engage in the work of the ministry. Much could be done by them, I have no doubt by proper exertions. Let them not be satisfied with preaching on the sabbath: but let them catechise children, deliver lectures, hold evening meetings, where it is suitable, write letters of instruction to their people, let them frequently and earnestly press home upon the consciences of parents, the necessity of training up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Notwithstanding the many changes which are made in our country, I think that great good would result from this course of conduct in the ministry. Some few families are stationary; they would, in their successive generations, derive great benefit from such ministerial labours, while those who might remove, would carry with them the advances which they had received.—But in order to promote religious knowledge still farther, I propose that every congregation should unite, and procure a library of the best practical and doctrinal books in the English language, which should be held as

joint property by the congregation. this would go far to supply that scarcity of books, under which almost every family in our country labours. The preacher then in his lectures might mention, in each head of doctrine, the author who has written best on that subject, and earnestly recommend the perusal of the book to his people. Thus would a taste for reading be acquired, a spirit of enquiry would be excited, and the congregation would make progress in religious knowledge. The advantages to be derived from this course of instruction, the having a minister who would exert himself thus, would be a motive with some pious people to continue where they are, rather than remove to a place where it would be uncertain whether they would find a preacher who could instruct them; where their children might perhaps grow up in ignorance.

Merton. It appears to me highly probable that this plan would produce good effects. But who could support the labour of it? For a man constantly to give the necessary attendance on domestic and plantation affairs, to give the necessary attention to a school, to study two sermons, and compose a lecture every week, and at the same time prosecute those general studies, which are necessary for the preacher, for a man to do all this, he must have *ribs of brass and an iron heart.*

Paulinus. Sir, we know not how much we can endure before the experiment is made. I know that the labour will be great, and great will also be the reward; not indeed in this world, but in a better; and great let me add to this, is the object to be obtained, even here: the banishment of ignorance, the destruction of error, the increase of divine knowledge and piety, the training up of the young in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, these are the important objects to be attained: He who sees the value of them, and is animated by the hopes of an eternal reward, can make great sacrifices, and endure much for the attainment of them.

Merton. Well sir, I am satisfied as to this point; will you be good enough to propose any farther remedies for the evils of our church.

Paulinus. The next thing sir which I shall mention belongs chiefly to the people, as the last did to the ministers. In some congregations in this country there are funds established, by which the minister is supported; his salary is regularly paid, and whatever changes may take place, the fund remains certain. This undoubtedly is a great advantage, because that congregation which has a fund is always

certain of a good minister. But where the preacher is supported by subscription, a few deaths and removals in the congregation, break the whole scheme, and the minister is removed. I propose therefore that, in every congregation, those men who are zealous for the support of the gospel, and are anxious that their children after them may enjoy the means of grace, should unite, and pay as much into a fund as would, by vesting the money in some publick stock, produce what they pay annually. This would at least be a good beginning. The fund would probably increase, and in no long period, our congregations would have in their hands, good livings to bestow on faithful, learned, and worthy men who would discharge the duties of their station. Here, as was remarked before, by Philander, *the living would be in the hands of the people*, who could when they please withdraw their support from unworthy men, should such obtrude themselves upon the sacred office.

Philander. There is one capital difficulty in the way of this plan. Our congregations are not corporate bodies. Whatever property they might hold then, would be forever insecure. Some avaricious villain might mark it out as an object of prey, and you would soon be stripped of your funds.

Paulinus. This difficulty has been foreseen. I have often wondered at the extreme jealousy, which has uniformly induced our Legislature, to refuse charters for the holding of property of this kind. Though I have never been able to discover the danger, which our quick-sighted politicians see in this measure. The benefits of the law might be extended to every denomination; and I would wish it to be so. The funds of the congregation might be limited by the law, so as to prevent the accumulation of church property to too great an amount. And, I repeat it, *the gift of the living would forever remain with the people*; so that I am utterly at a loss to know upon what reasonable ground such a measure could be opposed.—In the state of New-York, I am informed, that much more liberal sentiments prevail. In that portion of our country every congregation, of whatever denomination, as soon as formed, according to the rules of the church to which it belongs is, *ipso facto*, a corporate body, with the right of holding property, of suing and of being sued. Now, I have never heard that any mischief has befallen the state on account of this law. Every thing seems to go on at least as well *there* as it does *here*. We may hope then, that the time will come, when this unreasonable jealousy will be removed; and I think

we may with sufficient confidence, use our endeavours to establish funds, in the various congregations in our state. These are the only plans, which have occurred to me, as in any shape practicable, in the present state of affairs. To the accomplishment of these, I think we ought to direct our best efforts, and look to the great Head of the church for a blessing upon our labours.

Here the conversation for the evening closed, and we retired to rest. Never, said I to Merton, was a Christmas evening spent so pleasantly.

“ Oh ! evenings worthy of the God ! Exclaim'd
The Sabine bard. Oh ! evenings, I reply
More to be prized and courted than yours,
As more illumin'd, and with nobler truths,
That I, and mine, and those we love enjoy.”



ON SELF-DECEPTION, FROM THE CASE OF JOHN THE BAPTIST'S HEARERS.

WHEN John the Baptist preached repentance, we are informed in Scripture, that “ Jerusalem and all Judea, and also all the region around about Jordan, were baptized of him, confessing their sins.” Each individual of this vast multitude, made, in words at least, the due confession of his iniquity. How came it to pass that repentance and confession of sin were at this time so general among the Jewish people? The doctrine of repentance, it seems natural to suppose, must at all times be unpopular; for to repent, even in the lowest sense of the word, implies an acknowledgement of having done wrong: and is the bulk of mankind disposed to this admission? Surely men may be converted to any sentiment more easily than to this. Let us then enquire how it probably came to pass that so great a multitude made profession of repentance. There is a certain fashion in religion. Men follow the stream. Does an extraordinary preacher appear? How many fly to hear him, and (what is more remarkable) how unanimous are they in his praise! They will hear perhaps the most obnoxious truths from his lips, and will become professors of those doctrines by which they themselves are condemned. For they feel complacency at the thought of agreeing with the preacher, and do but imperfectly consider what he says: they do not at least perceive all the bearings of his doctrines; they do not follow it out into all the practical con-