

REVIEW
OF A
SERMON,

ENTITLED,

**"THE CHRISTIAN BISHOP APPROVING HIMSELF UNTO
GOD : IN REFERENCE TO THE PRESENT STATE OF
THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH
IN THE UNITED STATES."**

PREACHED

BY BISHOP HOBART,

**AT THE CONSECRATION OF HENRY U. ONDERDONK, D. D.
ASSISTANT BISHOP OF PENNSYLVANIA.**

BY WILLIAM WISNER,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN ITHACA, N. Y.

ITHACA,

PRINTED BY D. D. SPENCER.

1828

65 16985.5001



Peabody Fund

It is due to the author of the following review, to state, that the quotations from the Bishop's Sermon are in the language of that Sermon, as it appeared in the Gospel Messenger—an Episcopal paper published at Auburn. As this can scarcely be considered an *official* copy—and as the reviewer has not been able to procure a copy of the Sermon, in the pamphlet form—if any of the quotations are incorrect, such errors are chargeable to the publisher of the above mentioned paper. It is believed, however, that no such errors will be found.

REVIEW.

Though this discourse is not distinguished by any depth of thought, or novelty of illustration, or strength of argument, yet there is one consideration, which renders it interesting to the religious publick, and entitles it to a serious review. The Right Rev. Author of this production is a man, who, by the depth of his political management, the boldness of his plans, and his untiring industry in giving currency to his sentiments, has not only become the head of the Episcopal church in the state of New York, but the prominent leader of the High Church party in the United States. His sermon, therefore, may be considered as an expose of the sentiments and plans of that party; and is well calculated to admonish the christian world of what they would have a right to expect, if such men should gain the ascendancy.

The design of this sermon is obvious from its title. The Bishop, when writing it, saw something in the present state of his church to alarm his fears; and adapted his discourse to her peculiar circumstances, that he might instruct the Bishop elect and his other clerical brethren, how to meet the danger to which she was exposed.

We are none of us at a loss, as to those peculiar circumstances of the church, which have so greatly alarmed the fears of her Bishop. God, in his gracious providence, has raised up in that church a goodly number of Evangelical ministers and devout christians, who believe and love those soul-humbling truths of God's word, which, our author says, "are, by a strange anomaly, sometimes distinguished as the doctrines of grace." Those men will aid in circulating the Bible without note or comment; they will attend prayer meetings, and rejoice in the out pourings of the divine spirit. These are the dangers which the preacher perceives; and which he says, "It would be treachery to the cause not to look forward to."

But it is time to let the sermon speak for itself.

The text is from II Timothy, II. 15: "Study to show thyself approved unto God."

After an introduction of an ordinary length and of a respectable character, the Preacher proceeds, under thirteen particulars, to point out the manner in which a Christian Bishop must "approve himself unto God."

Under the first particular, the Bishop very properly places "the faithful preaching of the distinguishing doctrines of the Gospel." But the christian reader will not be a little surprised, when he comes to find, that, in the preacher's summary of "distinguishing doctrines," there is no mention made, either of the doctrine of the trinity, justification by faith, the resurrection, the day of judgment, or future punishment. These, with the necessity of repentance, and some other kindred truths, were probably considered by our author as belonging to that class, which, "by a strange anomaly, are sometimes distinguished as the doctrines of Grace;" which, he says, a Bishop must not be afraid to oppose. But this is not all: he has not only excluded from his summary of distinguishing doctrines which a Bishop must preach, in order to "approve himself unto God," a very large proportion of the great truths of the Bible; but has so explained what he calls, "the fundamental doctrines of original corruption, divine atonement, and spiritual renovation," as to strip them of their scriptural and distinguishing character altogether. That the reader may be able to judge for himself, I will now place before him the Preacher's views of "the three fundamental doctrines; and first, of original corruption." On this point his words are, "No love of applause, as the advocate of what is mis-called liberal and rational christianity; and no fear of censure for opposing what, by a strange anomaly, are sometimes distinguished as the *doctrines of Grace*, will prompt him" (the christian Bishop,) "on the one hand, to make man, the gold of whose nature has become dim, as bright and pure as when his maker's image was impressed on his soul; nor, on the other, to degrade that image into native hatred of God and goodness, to the likeness of a fiend, and so to bind man in the chains of his corrupt passions, as to fix his crimes and his final perdition on the God of purity and boundless goodness."

Here we are told,

1st. That a Bishop must not let his love for "applause, as the advocate of liberal and rational christianity," prompt him to make

man "bright and pure, as when his maker's image was impressed upon his soul." That is, in plain English, that a Bishop must not preach, that unconverted men are now as holy and as pure as Adam was before the fall. Is it possible that Bishop Hobart believes that there are men in this country, who would applaud such a representation of our fallen character? Or, that he considers it necessary to caution a Bishop of the Episcopal church, not to represent the fallen character of man in this light?

2d. We are told, that "the gold of man's nature has become dim" by the fall. And is this all? Does the gold still remain? Has man received no other injury by the fall, only that of having the gold of his nature made dim? This is indeed the view, which the Bishop of New York has given us, of what he calls the "fundamental doctrine of original corruption:" for he tells us,

3d. That a Bishop must not, from a "fear of opposing the doctrines of grace," degrade the divine image in fallen man, "into native hatred of God, and goodness." That is, he must not represent fallen man, as opposed, in his heart, either to God or to goodness. Though the "gold of his nature has become dim, or the holiness of his heart is less bright and refugent than before the fall, yet he is still holy. The moral image of his maker is yet on his soul, though less perspicuous and bright than when first impressed there. How different was the sentiment of one, who taught his followers that, "The carnal mind is enmity against God, is not subject to his law neither indeed can be."

On the Bishop's second fundamental doctrine, which he calls divine atonement, he writes thus; "On the one hand, he will not wrest from the divine justice its sceptre, and from the divine government its sanctions, by extending pardon to sin without the vindication of that offended justice; or reparation to that insulted government; nor on the other, limit that atonement to God's violated justice and sovereignty, which is more than of value for the salvation of millions of worlds, to but a small portion of the ruined race who require it." Here the reader will perceive, that the Bishop is a little ambiguous, as the word "require" has two meanings: the first, to demand as a matter of right; the second, to stand in need of. Now, if we understand him as using the word in the first

sense, then his sentiment is, that we must not limit the atonement to a small portion of those who have the hardihood to demand it; but if in the latter, which is undoubtedly his meaning, then we must consider him as cautioning the Bishops and inferior clergy, not to limit the atonement to a small part of those who need it; or, in other words, that they must preach the atonement as extending to the whole human family. Now to this I should have no objection, if we were not bound, by the Bishop's own words, to consider him as using the word atonement for satisfaction. His words are: "that atonement to God's justice and sovereignty." Now if the atonement, or sanctification, has been made to God's insulted justice and sovereignty (for the whole human family,) according to the natural import of the Bishop's language; then the Christian Bishop may extend pardon to the whole of our race, or preach Universal Salvation, without "wresting from the divine justice its sceptre, or the divine government its sanctions;" for, according to the Preacher's own words, that satisfaction for sin, both to divine justice and divine government, must not be restricted to a small part of those who require, or need it. The amount, then, of the whole exposition of the divine atonement, is this: The justice and government of God are satisfied for the sins of the whole world; and now, pardon may be extended to all.

Let us now examine the Bishop's third and last fundamental doctrine, viz; "Spiritual renovation." Here, he tells us that the Christian Bishop must not, "on the one hand, represent man's powers and affections as standing in no need of the invisible and incomprehensible, but transforming, power of supernatural grace; nor, on the other, exhibit this spiritual death unto sin, and new birth unto righteousness, as effected but by the application of human reason and human resolution, guided and sanctified by the influences of the Divine Spirit, secretly but powerfully dispensed in the use of moral means and external pledges." Here, it will be perceived that the powers and affections of man are placed on the same footing; they both, we are told, need the transforming power of supernatural grace. A critic on the passage might ask, what grace is not supernatural? But as we have a higher aim than that of verbal criticism, we would enquire, what transformation a man's affections can need, if they are neither opposed to God or goodness, but are comparable to gold. I have heard of the alchemist's spending much time, in finding a way to transform the baser met-

Satisfaction

als into gold; but have never, until I read the Bishop's sermon, heard of any one, who thought it necessary to transform gold into any other metal. If it has indeed, as the Preacher admits, become dim by the fall; let it be burnished, or rubbed up, "by the use of moral means and external pledges." But if the gold is transformed, we must suffer loss.—But to pass by the Preacher's inconsistency with himself, I would call the attention of the reader to his entire departure from "the faith once delivered to the saints." Whatever change he may intend to express, by his "spiritual death unto sin, and new birth unto righteousness," he ascribes to the reason and resolution of the individual in whom such change is effected. It is true, we are told that these are "guided and sanctified by the influences of the Divine Spirit secretly but powerfully dispensed in the use of moral means and external pledges;" but still, the reason and the resolution, are the causes of which the new birth is the effect. The Apostle John tells us that such as receive Christ are not "born of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." The Apostle Paul, speaking to those who had experienced this new birth, says, "and you hath He" (that is God,) "quickened, who were dead in trespasses and in sins." But the Bishop tells us that "the gold of our nature has" only "become dim" by the fall, and that all the change which is necessary is effected by the application of human reason and human resolution, guided and sanctified by the "influences of the Divine Spirit, secretly but powerfully dispensed in the use of moral means and external pledges;" or in other words, that if a man will exert his reason and resolution so far as to attend upon, what the Preacher calls, "the divinely constituted ministrations and ordinances" of the Episcopal Church, he will meet with such assistance from the Spirit in the use of those moral means and external pledges, as will effect all the change which is necessary to salvation.

The reader now has before him the Bishop's views of the gospel, as they are exhibited under his first head or particular of discourse. If this is a fair specimen of the theology of High Churchmen, we cannot wonder that Mr. Wilberforce should have said, in relation to these men, "The peculiar doctrines of christianity have altogether vanished from their view;" or that he should have lamented the "unseemly discordance" which prevailed among such Preachers, "between the prayers that preceded, and the sermon

which followed." The truth is that though the three doctrines which the Preacher names are highly distinguishing, and truly fundamental; yet as they are explained and presented to the public in this sermon, they have nothing either distinguishing or scriptural about them. The first, for aught I can see, might consistently be adopted by a Mahomedan or a Hindoo. The second, if it contains any distinct sentiment, it is, that all men will be saved. The third, though it is entirely agreeable to the sentiments of Roman Catholics, and of the loosest kind of Socinians, yet it will never be owned by christians as bearing the faintest resemblance to any one of the doctrines of the Bible. If the peculiarities of the christian system are, that salvation is offered to ruined sinners through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that men are made willing to accept of this salvation by the regenerating power of the Holy Ghost, then it will be seen that the Bishop's religion is not the christian religion, and that the preaching which he would enjoin upon his Clergy, if it is any where alluded to in the Scriptures it is under the name of that other gospel which was preached in Gallatia in the absence of the Apostle Paul. It would have been just ground of complaint if the Bishop had merely excluded from his professed summary of the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel, all mention of the Trinity, of the necessity of repentance, of justification by faith, of the resurrection from the dead, of the final judgment, and of future punishment; but when in addition to all this he explicitly denies that the hearts of fallen men are opposed either to God or to goodness, and asserts that all the change which is necessary to salvation is effected by human reason and human resolution, his sentiments ought to be held up to the world as anti-christian altogether, and as conveying to the mind of the sinner false and delusive representations of his own state, hiding from his view his real danger, and keeping him in fatal ignorance of the only remedy which has been provided for dying men by the infinite mercy of his God, and the dying love of his crucified Redeemer.

On the second head of discourse, the Bishop, while he is speaking of the church being the body of Christ, breaks out in the following strain; "How much derided, how odiously and contemptuously branded are all researches into the mode, by which, in this *divine* body of the Redeemer, power is to be derived to minister in

its holy concerns." Now, after reading so serious a charge, it is natural to inquire, to whom is it intended to refer? No one ought to complain because those who are guilty suffer; but it seems hardly consistent, for a Christian Bishop to bring so heavy a charge against the public in general. This, however, is not the only objection to this extract. The Bishop, it will be perceived, calls the church the "*divine* body of the Redeemer." This I should have considered a mere slip of the pen, or mistake in the printer, if I had not found, under the same head, the church called a "divine society;" and, under the fourth head, mention made of the "divine powers of the ministry." Now, however plausibly this language may be explained, it seems to me very exceptionable; and sounds so much like the pretensions of the Church of Rome, that one would almost expect that the way was preparing for a claim to infallibility.

The third head of discourse I will pass over, with two brief inquiries.

The first is, what authority has a Christian Bishop to quote the words of the Apostle Paul, "always keeping the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," as the prayer of our Saviour?

The second is, what are we to understand by a Bishop's "enforcing the church?" The passage to which I refer, in the last inquiry, is this: "How imperious the duty, in the Bishop of our church, to enforce and maintain her."

I will pass over the fourth head, with the remarks I have already made, respecting the "divine powers of the ministry."

Under the fifth head of discourse, an attempt is made, to prove that the Episcopal Church is more "conformed to the world" than any other Church in our country.

The Preacher's introductory remarks are these; "Another pleasing part of the particular duty of the Bishop of our Church, is, his illustrating and maintaining the accordance, in all important points, of our ecclesiastical government, with the civil constitutions of our country." Now, when I recollect that the Preacher contends, very zealously, that the Episcopal Church, with its ministry and institutions, is of Divine appointment; it seems a little curious,

to learn, that it is the particular duty of a "Bishop, to illustrate and maintain the accordance" between the government of that Church, and the "civil constitutions of our country." If Episcopacy is of Divine right, we ought to expect that the duty of the Bishop would be pointed out by God; but if God has made it a part of his duty to illustrate and maintain the accordance between the ecclesiastical polity of the Church, and the civil constitutions of the country in which such Church may happen to be located; then, it must be the duty of the Church, to conform itself to the government under which it may dwell; or, of the Bishop, to "illustrate and maintain the accordance," where no such accordance exists. But if it should be admitted that God has not enjoined such a duty, then it must be enjoined by some one of the canons of the Church; or, the Bishop of New York must have added it to the list of Episcopal duties, in order to increase the popularity of his Church, among political men. If the last be the fact, it may not be amiss to see whether this new duty can be performed in good faith; or whether it is true, that there is an "accordance, in all important points," between "the ecclesiastical government" of the Church, and "the civil constitutions of our country."

It is true, that, in the Episcopal Church, the legislative power is divided between two houses; and that there is a single responsible executive. But it is also true, that the one house is created by the Bishop; and that the other is composed of men, who are so far dependent on the Priests, that any one of them may, at any moment, be suspended from his Church privileges by his Rector. And it is further true, that the Bishop is appointed or chosen for life, by these two houses, thus constituted. Here, then, we see that the house of lay delegates is dependent upon the house of Priests and Deacons; and the house of Priests and Deacons, are dependent on the Bishop. Now let me ask, if this ecclesiastical polity is so much like the republican constitutions of our country, that any candid man can undertake to maintain the "accordance, in all important points," between the one and the other. It is not a little singular, that while the Prelates of the English Church should uniformly maintain the maxim of the perjured James—"no Bishop no King"—it should be the "*particular duty*" of the Prelates of the Anglo-American Church, to maintain the accordance of Episcopacy with our republican institutions.

The sixth particular relates to what is called "the worship" of the Church; by which, we are to understand—its forms. Of this book of forms the Bishop expresses himself on this wise: "Singular, and I must say, alarming is its situation." After telling us that this "first of all human books" is in great danger, he goes on to say that "not a voice is heard but in its praise,"—"dearer appear all its features, as they shine forth, with a lustre and a strength exalted and increased by age"—"the numerous objections with which, in times past, the contracted spirit of prejudice assailed it, have vanished before the enduring lustre of its unrivalled excellencies." By this time, the reader will probably be ready to ask, what singular danger can threaten a book, thus fortified by its own intrinsic excellency, and surrounded by a unanimous and increasing host of admirers? The danger is expressed in the following words: "And yet, while many an unlicensed hand deals with this general object of affection, as caprice, or prejudice, or real or supposed exigency may dictate, and even deform it by the mixture of extemporaneous effusions, the arm of legal authority may not even reverently approach it, to save it from the rude assaults that must, sooner or later, weaken its salutary influence, if not diminish the esteem and confidence in which it is held."

The amount of all this, is, that some zealous churchmen will, sometimes, from the warmth of their religious affections, offer an extemporaneous prayer, and the *legal arm* is not as yet prepared to punish the bold transgressors. If it be true that nothing but the *legal arm* can prevent even churchmen from preferring extemporaneous prayer to this formulary, is it not a proof that the judgment and pious feelings of christians, are against being shackled with forms of prayer; and that the making known of our requests and desires to God, in the language dictated by our own hearts, is more pleasant, than to be confined to the language of another? At all events, if the book of common prayer cannot commend itself to the judgment and consciences of churchmen, without the aid of "the arm of legal authority," it is to be hoped that churchmen, like other christians, will be allowed to offer up their own prayers to God, in their own way.

The seventh particular relates to the exercise of the ordaining powers of the Bishop. On this subject, our author warns the Bishop elect, and his other brethren, against those candidates for

the ministry, who come to be ordained "with the purpose, secret or avowed, of mixing with its primitive doctrines, the dogmas of modern theology; of superseding, on many occasions of worship, its liturgy and its ministers, by the extemporaneous effusions of unordained men." If I may be allowed to interpret the technical language of the Bishop, as used in this place, I must suppose that his "primitive doctrines" are such as he has explained to us, under his first head of discourse; that the "dogmas of modern theology," are those sentiments, "which are, by a strange anomaly, sometimes distinguished as the doctrines of grace;" and that superseding "the worship," the "liturgy," and the "ministers" of the Church, means, sometimes inviting a layman to lead in prayer. If I have rightly explained the Preacher's words, we perceive that the plan of operation to be adopted, is, to put down, by the strong arm of Episcopal proscription, the doctrines of grace; the liberty of praying without a form; and inviting lay brethren to lead, occasionally, in prayer meetings. Men who would favour either of these, must be excluded from the ministry; for the Bishop says that their "repulsion will be approved of God."

The eighth and ninth particulars will be passed over without remark.

Under the tenth particular, the Preacher informs us, that the Bishop, under the hope of being approved of God, will be supported in discharging his duty to his Church, 'in condemning popular practices which tend to subvert her institutions, and to injure the course of rational and fervant piety.' He then proceeds to mention the most prominent of these popular and injurious practices. And what popular practice would one naturally suppose a Christian Bishop would select as most deserving the vigilant attention, and decided opposition of the overseers of the Church? Attendance at the Theatre? No. Dancing? No. Gambling? No. Attending the Theatre, or the ball-room, or the card-table, with all those other fashionable vices, which are so common in our great cities, hold, at most, but a secondary rank, and are all overlooked; while the eagle-eye of this professed watchman of Israel, is fixed on something, which he seems to esteem more dangerous to the interests of the Church than they all; and that is, the little social prayer meeting. And has it come to this? May the Bishop and his Clergy attend rich dinner parties, and wine parties; and the

youth of their congregations attend the Theatre, and the ball-room ; while a few pious professors cannot meet in a private house for social prayer, and make their requests known in the language dictated by their pious feelings, without having this conduct held up by this Diocesan as calculated to subvert the institutions of the Church? Corrupt, indeed, must those institutions be, which can be subverted by such meetings as these. But let us hear the Bishop's objections to prayer meetings. "They are," he tells us, "generally, and from the constitution of human nature, almost necessarily, the theatres in which spiritual ambition and ostentation indulge their unhallowed aims." I had really thought, from the Bishop's exposition of the "doctrine of moral pollution," that he expected better things of human nature, than that the place selected for us to humble ourselves before God, would, "almost of necessity, be the theatre, where spiritual ambition and ostentation would indulge their unhallowed aims." But what evidence does the Bishop bring against them? Why, he tells us that Doctor Scott and Mr. Newton were dissatisfied with a meeting which used to be held at Olney ; and that some other Episcopal clergymen in England, had thought that the prayer meetings there, were of a bad tendency. Why did not our worthy Bishop bring some witnesses, to prove that prayer meetings, in this country, produced the results which he has ascribed to them. Why did he not prove that High Churchmen, who abhor prayer meetings, are usually more humble and devout, and less assuming than Low Churchmen, who attend them? Or why did he not institute some mode of reasoning, to prove that prostrating ourselves before God in a prayer meeting, and confessing our sins, has a tendency to inflame the pride of the human heart?

His eleventh particular is directed against revivals of religion.

Though it is not my intention to insinuate that the Bishop has taken either his opinion or plan, from a little anonymous pamphlet which was printed in this village under the signature of *Honestus*; yet, it is difficult for any one, who has read that production, not to recur to it immediately, on reading the Preacher's remarks against revivals. The plan of both these writers, is ; first, to extol and exalt what they call the worship of the Episcopal Church ; and secondly, to vilify and abuse those out pourings of God's spirit, which have obtained the appropriate name of "revivals of religion."

When Jesus and his disciples were teaching the people and calling out crowds to hear them, the Rabins cried up the traditions of the elders as derived from Moses, and vilified and slandered the Saviour and his followers. When the Spirit was poured out in the time of the apostles, and hundreds and thousands were added to the Church in a day; those primitive Preachers were charged with madness, and with "turning the world upside down;" while the forms and ceremonies of the Jewish Church were held up as "the mean and pledge of salvation to the faithful." The same course exactly was pursued by the Pope and his clergy in the time of the reformation; and by the Primates and other Prelates of the Church of England, in those days of proscription and persecution, which compelled our godly forefathers to leave their homes and take refuge in the American wilderness.

Now, this is exactly the course pursued by the Bishop and his compeers; they first cry up the forms and ceremonies of *the church*, as if the book of common prayer had, like the image of Diana, "fallen down from Jupiter;" * and then raise the cry against revivals, as Demetrius did in the days of the Apostle Paul, † representing them not only at war with this divinely constituted Church, and what he calls, the "divine powers of her clergy, but with every thing that is lovely or of good report."

But it is time to let the reader see the Bishop's own words on this subject. Under this particular, after extoling in his usual manner, the ordinances and ministrations of *the church*, he makes the following admission; "But there may be times of more than ordinary attention in a congregation, to spiritual objects. Some dispensation of providence may arouse the thoughtless and secure; and the sinner, who has long resisted the monitions of conscience and the strivings of God's Spirit, may at length yield; and awakened and convicted he may inquire, with deep earnestness and solicitude concerning the things that belong to his eternal peace. By the influence of moral causes, as well as by the blessing of God's grace, the concern may extend to others, and thus the number of those may be enlarged who are prosecuting, with a supreme devotedness, the infinitely momentous enquiry, "what shall I do to be

* Acts XIX, 35. † Acts, XIX, 25, 26, 27, 28.

saved." Here it will be perceived that the Bishop admits there might be such a thing as a genuine revival in the *Church*, if it was only commenced by some providential dispensation which should "arouse the thoughtless."

It is not at all surprising, that men, who preach such sentiments as the Bishop advocates, should feel the need of some tremendous providence to arouse their thoughtless hearers: their ignorance of the power of the gospel, is as great as their opposition to its distinguishing doctrines; and they cannot conceive how any careless sinner should be aroused from his stupidity by any thing but some awful providence. How different from this, were the views of those inspired men, who represented the gospel as "the power of God unto salvation;" and as "a fire and a hammer, breaking the flinty rock in pieces." The truth is, all true christians know that the word of God is "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword;" and that, when it is preached in its purity, it is more likely to arouse the thoughtless, than any providential dispensation.

In the next paragraph, the Bishop writes thus: "It is against these popular religious excitements, to which the term of "revival of religion" is usually applied, that the Bishop of our Church must, in duty to the highest interests of rational and fervent piety, bear his testimony—revivals got up by those popular arts that always excite the passions; and pursued and extended by a bold and unlicensed and constant employment of every means by which animal sensibility may be aroused, and the sympathies of our nature made to catch the false fires of enthusiasm." Passing by the vulgar cant of "revivals being got up," I will state, for the satisfaction of those who belong to congregations that have never been blessed with revivals of religion, what those popular arts and bold and unlicensed means, of which the Bishop speaks, are. These maybe summed up as consisting in the pungent and plain preaching of the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel; the earnest and agonising prayer of the people of God; and such faithful instruction and reproof, administered from house to house, as is calculated to lead sinners to see their danger and their duty. That it may be seen that these are the usual means which the Lord makes instrumental, in producing revivals of religion, I will copy an account of them from the pen of an enemy, the author of the anonymous pamphlet to which I have

already alluded. The writer of that pamphlet, who is evidently a High Churchman, writes thus: "There is so much similarity in the general management of these things," (meaning revivals) "that a single instance will give a pretty fair exhibition of the whole system of excitements in religion." He then tells us, that the specimen which he is about to give, is one which may be relied on; and then proceeds as follows: "A clergyman of great worth and respectability, and one of the most distinguished for his zeal and success in the denomination to which he belongs, was anxious to see a revival in his congregation. He had conducted his flock through several, but now there had not been one for about four years; and the state of religion was represented by him to be very low, cold, and unpromising. On a certain Sunday, which I have good reason for remembering, he preached to his people on the necessity of an awakening; and, among other things, remarked upon the fact, that four years had passed away since the last excitement; and he had no doubt, that if a like space of time should intervene, before another was enjoyed, many of the souls of those then before him, would be in hell." Here it will be seen that the good clergyman brings up the danger of his flock, not only to awaken sinners, but to excite christians to pray for them. The next thing, in this array of means, is given in the following words—"In the conclusion of the sermon of this respectable minister, he enjoined it upon all heads of families, especially those who were communicants, to retire the next day, at a certain hour of the afternoon, from all their ordinary employments, to call in their households, and to spend at least one hour in solemn exercises, and in prayer for a revival." All this Mr. Honestus heard and well remembered. Here, then, was a whole church, engaged at their own houses in worshipping God, and praying for the out pouring of His Spirit.

The next step was, after a short interval, "to assemble for evening worship and special prayer, in the building usually devoted to such purposes." Now this, if we may believe a High Churchman, who seems to be a man after the Bishop's own heart, is a fair specimen of the means usually adopted; and these means, he tells us, were so greatly blessed, that at the first evening meeting, there was "a throng of persons already excited." These, on the testimony of an enemy, are the means which the Bishop is pleased to stigma-

tize, as popular arts, that always excite the passions. Now let me ask, whether they are more likely to excite the passions, than the preaching of the Saviour, when he said "ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" The truth is that men who object to revivals of religion, on the ground that the feelings or passions of men are disturbed, can have no correct view of the work of the Holy Ghost upon the heart. It is the province of the Comforter to convince men of sin, and of righteousness, and of a judgment to come. But how can a man be convicted of sin—not merely suppose that his gold has become dim—but see and feel that he is "dead in trespasses and sins," that he is in a state of condemnation and death, and that "the wrath of God abideth on him" and not have his feelings or passions excited? * The Bishop has indeed invented a religion, to which men may be converted without having their fears, or any other passions excited, but the converts to this religion will, in the day of judgment, curse their teachers for not preaching a gospel, which 'like a fire and a hammer,' would have broken the flinty heart in pieces.

After giving this account of the manner of commencing and conducting revivals, the Preacher goes on to give their tendency, in these words: "But evils, sad evils are they; bearing devastation and desolation in their course—in the spiritual world, sweeping before them the courtesies of society, the affections of domestic life, the fair forms of rational and sober piety, and leaving, at last, the waste of disorder, misrule, and fanaticism, where the human passions riot, over which the friends of genuine religion mourn, and the scoffer raises the laugh of scorn."

Here we have what professes to be a true statement of the sad effect of those revivals of religion, in the gross, which have blessed our country for many years past. Now, is it not truly painful to see the Bishop of the state of New York outrage all those "courtesies of society" of which he speaks, and represent the friends of revivals as the enemies of every thing that is valuable or lovely, either in religion, or in social life; and the places where revivals have prevailed, as possessing nothing but the "waste of disorder, misrule and fanaticism, where the human passions riot," without controul. It is devoutly to be hoped, that this foul misrepresenta-

* Acts XIV, 29, 30.

tion will produce no other sensation, in the minds of those who are acquainted with revivals, than pity for the man who made it; and that those who are not acquainted with them, will inquire for themselves, into the truth of the Bishop's assertion. Every one who is acquainted with revivals, knows, that their tendency is to render men more courteous and kind to their neighbours, more affectionate and tender in their families, and more spiritual and heavenly in their devotion; and that those congregations where the most powerful revivals of religion have prevailed, instead of exhibiting the 'waste of disorder, misrule, and fanaticism,' and being given up to the rioting of human passion, have been redeemed from much of the disorder and misrule which formerly prevailed therein; and that what yet remains, exists chiefly among those men, who, like Bishop Hobart, would first misrepresent revivals of religion, and then raise the laugh of scorn at the deformed picture which themselves had drawn. I have been familiarly acquainted with such seasons of refreshing, ever since I have been in the gospel ministry; and I have usually found, that while the great body of the congregation were deeply affected, the scoffers, with a very few exceptions, were the men who believed and felt with the Prelate whose sermon I am reviewing.

The thirteenth and last particular of the Bishop's sermon, is principally occupied in contrasting the fair form of his own religion, with a man of straw of his own making; and showing how much better martyrs the Bishop elect and his adherents would make, than those who had gone before them; but there is a curious article near the close of the discourse which is deserving of a little notice. He tells the Bishop elect that, "There may come a time, when the enemy is not only at the gate of the citadel, but has gained its walls; and when it will be the sad duty of the watchmen who guard them, to sound the alarm, the cause of the Lord and his truth against the mighty—and when all orders of men in our Zion must harness themselves for the battle. Yet the weapons will not be carnal nor guided by human passion. God forbid. They will be those of the spiritual powers which he has vested in his Church, of the constitution and of the Laws, and they will be exerted in his fear. If these fail, THEN COMES THE AWFUL BUT IMPERIOUS RESOLVE, TO PRESERVE AT ALL HAZARDS, the precious deposit of primitive faith, order and worship." Now I am at a loss to know what we are to understand by that "awful resolve to preserve

the Church at all hazards," by which, it seems, the Bishop and his party have bound themselves. If his spiritual weapons fail, does he mean to threaten that the dernier resort, to support Episcopacy in this country, shall be the opposite of what he calls the spiritual powers? Will he indeed call in the secular arm, as Laud and his associates in cruelty, did in the days of Charles the first? I could really hope that the Bishop has no such thought, and I would not be understood as asserting that this is his meaning, and yet it would well agree with the spirit which breathes through his discourse.

I have now gone through with my review of this sermon. If I have misrepresented the Bishop in any thing it has not been intentionally. If I have understood him he is calling upon his Episcopal brethren to aid him in resisting and putting down three powerful and dangerous enemies. These enemies are, "The doctrines of grace," "Prayer meetings," and "Revivals of religion." In this warfare he intends to use, first, the spiritual *power of the Church*, and if these fail then comes the "*awful resolve to preserve the precious deposit* of primitive faith, order and worship, *at all hazards*" His allies and friends in this conflict are the Deist, the Universalist, the Socinian and the Roman Catholic.* And the men upon whose heads the fury of this united host is to be poured out, are evangelical christians of all denominations. This war is not only declared, but the battle is begun, and the missiles of the enemy are flying thick around us, but as all have not chosen their sides, and as there is time yet for those who have resolved on joining the alliance to sit down and count the cost, I would earnestly intreat, even the friends of Bishop Hobart, to pause and once more examine the whole ground before they proceed further. I would intreat them to compare the doctrines advanced in this sermon with the doctrines of the Bible, and then to compare the prayer meetings and revivals which are there so rudely opposed, with the prayer meetings† and the revivals‡ of the Scriptures, and when they have made these comparisons, I would ask them to inquire of their own consciences whether they had better unite with the Bishop in this unholy war.

* It is not intended that there is any treaty of alliance among these sects, but that they are all agreed in their feelings and operations against the common enemy.

† See Acts, I, 13, 14—XII, 5, 12—XVI, 13. ‡ Acts II from 37 to the end, IV, 5—XI, 20, 21.—XIV, 1.

I would not be understood as opposing Episcopalians, I love the evangelical members of that Church as my brethren. It is not against Episcopacy that I am writing, but against a corrupted christianity, which is more dangerous to the soul than the impurities of open infidelity itself. I hesitate not to say that the religion which is exhibited in this sermon may be embraced by the whole thoughtless world without their sacrificing any thing which the maxims of that world would not condemn. It does not possess one feature which is peculiar to christianity in her primitive form. It manifests hostility to nothing but the truth of God's word, the operations of his Spirit, and a life of prayer and self denial. It is a system which, while it assumes the sacred name of christianity and wields the perverted authority of Jehovah himself against his own dear children, cries peace to the gay and thoughtless multitude, as they move carelessly along in the broad road that leads down to the chambers of eternal death.

It is from such a religion as this the Church of God has much to fear. It was just such a religion which called the kings and judges of the earth around the *successor of Saint Peter** to take counsel against the Lord and against his anointed, and "to wear out the patience of the Saints." It was just such a religion which, from the Reign of Queen Elizabeth to the accession of William and Mary, filled the prisons of England with the bodies of the poor Puritans, manured the soil with their blood, and almost banished every vestige of constitutional liberty and protestant christianity from that Island. And it is just such a religion which, we have a right to expect, towards the winding up of the great drama of human affairs will draw around its standard the various modifications of infidelity and heresy which prevail in the world, and, under the species pretence of carrying into effect the "AWFUL RESOLVE," of preserving "at all hazards the sacred deposit," of what the Bishop now calls "the primitive doctrines and worship," make war with the Saints of the most High.

* The Pope.

Errour.—6th page, 11th line, for *sanctification*, read *sati-faction*.

REVIEW OF A PAMPHLET,

ENTITLED

"REVIVALS OF RELIGION, CONSIDERED AS MEANS OF
GRACE; OR A SERIES OF PLAIN LETTERS TO
CANDIDUS, FROM HIS FRIEND
HONESTUS."

The writer of this review wishes to have it explicitly understood, that he is not entering the arena of controversy with the anonymous author of the letters above alluded to. He does not consider either the talent, or the spirit, exhibited in that production, as entitling it to a serious refutation. But when he reflects that there is a class of men in community, who are so strongly prejudiced against revivals of religion, and those doctrines which are called Calvinistic, that opposition either to the one or the other, like the fabled zone of Venus, will, in their view, beautify and adorn the work in which it may appear; he has thought that good might result from noticing the pamphlet in question, so far as to shew those for whom it was intended, that however well its author might deserve from his decided hostility to truth and Godliness, he has nothing else to recommend him.

The "Letters," though they were written by a man who makes high professions of piety, and who is probably in Holy orders, and are indebted, for the little currency which they have obtained, to clerical recommendation and influence, are an open attack, not only upon revivals, but upon those cardinal doctrines of our common christianity, which have been the bond of union among evangelical Christians in all ages.

Let it be distinctly understood, that our letter-writer has not undertaken to convince his friend that some misguided men have pursued an injudicious and improper course in seasons of revivals; but he has entered the lists against revivals themselves, as you will

perceive from page 34. This being the case, it must be seen that if any of those revivals, with which the church has been so copiously watered in the days that have gone by, were the fruits of the Spirit, our pamphleteer, with his abettors and patrons, must be considered as opposing the work of the HOLY GHOST. Having taken this fearful responsibility upon himself, it was natural to expect that our author would, at least, have *undertaken* to prove, in a clear and logical manner, that what are called revivals of religion are not of God. Yet, strange as it may appear, he has attempted no such thing; but has been guilty of shamefully begging the question, and taking for granted what every candid man would have felt himself bound to prove.

Having thus declined a duty which he probably felt unable to perform, he finds himself at leisure to write thirty-eight pages, abounding in false insinuations, misrepresentations, fallacious reasoning, historical inaccuracy, corruption of sentiment, and low vulgar abuse; but not containing one logical argument, from beginning to end.

For instances of *false insinuations*, I would refer you to pages 5th and 6th, where he would lead his readers to believe, that the friends of revivals, like the Quakers, discourage the use of the Holy Scriptures, and discarding the authority of the word of God, rely entirely on their own feelings and impulses; to page 9th, where he represents the friends of revivals as setting down such as will not subscribe to certain doctrines, as being beyond the hope of mercy; to page 11th, where he insinuates that all who are converted in revivals are weak and ignorant ones, who are not accustomed to study the operations of nature; and that the friends of revivals make a distinction between those converts who were awakened in a throng, and those who were awakened under other circumstances.

In relation to all these, and many more which might be named, I have only to say, that they are utterly and totally false.

Now let us examine a few of his *misrepresentations*. On pages 14 and 15, he gives an account of a certain clergyman, who told his congregation, that "if there should be no revival among them for the space of four years, he had no doubt that many of the souls then before him, would be in hell." To this representation of the good clergyman, our author tells us he has strong objections.—

"What authority," he asks, "has any man for limiting the favour of God to a limited time;" and then adds—"I do not feel justified in telling any man that there is a day, beyond which he shall not have the mercy of God, however long he may live." Now it is evident that he means to represent the clergyman in question, as saying the things which he here mentions as unauthorised and objectionable; and it is just as evident that the clergyman's words, as quoted, amount to no such thing; but express the strong probability that many of the congregation would die within four years; and that if there should be no revival there, it was to be feared that some would die in their sins and go to hell.

The next instance which I would give is, the use which is made of the purloined and garbled correspondence of Dr. Beecher and some of his friends. Any man, on reading the pamphlet, who knew nothing of the matter previously, would suppose that Dr. Beecher was quoted as an authority against revivals of religion; while it is a fact, well known to our author himself, that though an unhappy difference of opinion has existed between the Doctor and some others, in regard to the best method of conducting in time of a revival; and though this difference has led to some unguarded remarks, which the friends of Zion will mourn over, and the enemies of revivals feed on, for a long time to come; the Doctor has always been, and is now, a warm friend and advocate of revivals of religion.

But the most glaring misrepresentation of the whole is found on page 25, where Mr. Honestus represents the author of the narrative of a revival in the Presbyterian Church in Ithaca as saying—"If men should tell sinners to lay down the arms of their rebellion, and repent, and have faith, they would be guilty of a total perversion of scripture." The words of the narrative are—"It is the duty of all men to pray, lifting up holy hands; but it is an awful insult to have the impenitent rebel, lift up his polluted hands toward the throne of the Eternal, while his heart is rankling with enmity against God. Every impenitent sinner is the rebel enemy of Heaven, and if you set him to doing any thing as a means of becoming reconciled to God, you divert his attention from the *immediate duties of repentance and faith.*"

You see that the author's objection to setting the awakened sinner to perform some outward duty, before he lays down the

arms of his rebellion, and repents and believes, is the fear of diverting his mind from the immediate duties of repentance and faith; and yet this *honest man* represents him as saying, "If you tell the awakened sinner to repent and have faith, you pervert the scriptures."

The next thing in order, will be to give you a few specimens of fallacious reasoning.

The first specimen will be taken from the 5th page, where the author is attempting to prove that the revival on the day of Pentecost, was not analogous to revivals of the present day. Speaking of the friends and advocates of revivals, he says—"They represent the outpourings of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the preaching of Saint Peter, and other instances recorded in the sacred volume, as cases of revival similar to those of modern dates." He then goes on, and says—"How any candid man can bring his mind to the introduction of these scripture instances, as sustaining the propriety of modern excitements, has always been a matter of astonishment to me. That there is any analogy between revivals, and the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, and the effects produced by the preaching of the Apostles, I could never believe; and unless men are prepared to prove that the power of miracles is still extended to us, they must abandon this ground." Now let us look a little at the logic of our pamphleteer. He first tells us, that the outpourings of the Spirit, in the days of the Apostles, are considered as analogous to modern revivals. He next tells us, that he is astonished that any candid man should think so. He then informs us that he cannot believe it; and then comes his logical conclusion, that unless men will prove that the power of miracles is still with us, the friends of revivals must give up this ground. Now do see how this self-appointed champion for the enemies of revivals has come to his conclusion. He cannot see and he does not believe, and therefore the friends of revivals must give up their ground.—This is the first time I have ever seen or heard the unbelief and short sightedness of a man urged, *by himself*, as a reason why his opponent should yield the ground to him.

On the same page, he tells us that some have the boldness to insist that every conversion of a sinner is a miracle. He next says—"If they would see the conclusion drawn from this position, they would be careful how they insist on this point." Then comes another corollary—"If the present is an age of miracles, we have no

use for the Bible." How does he get at this conclusion?—By any course of reasoning? Certainly not. But is that position true? No. The position is as false as the argument is defective. The Apostles lived in the day of miracles, and yet they made daily use of the Holy Scriptures; and Peter, when speaking of a miracle which he had seen, says—"We have a more sure word of prophecy, to which we do well to take heed."

On pages 27 and 28, we find an attempt to show that the doctrine of the reformers was the cause of all that Socinianism and Infidelity which has prevailed in Europe since the reformation.—As a specimen of our author's reasoning powers, I will attempt to follow him in what I suppose he considers as argument on this subject.

Speaking of the reformation, he says—"That glorious event, clouded as it sometimes was in the course of its benign progress, by those imperfections always attendant upon all the endeavours of men, brought the christian church to a sense of her condition."—Here the reformation is said to have brought the christian church to a sense of her condition. He next tells us, that "the result was one of the most splendid and glorious that has ever found a place in human records." Here is a glorious result spoken of. I would ask, what is it the result of? It must either be the result of the reformation, or of the christian church coming to the sense of her condition. If the former, I would ask, what result of the reformation was more glorious than the reformation itself? But if the latter, as the language would seem to import, then I would ask what this result was? It could not be the reformation itself, because that would be speaking of an event producing an effect, which effect resulted in the cause that produced it. But the writer proceeds, without telling us what this result was, to inform us, that—"Could the minds of men be contented with the clear, consistent, and scriptural exhibitions of the religion of the cross, furnished by that event, there could be nothing to equal the happiness that would follow." Now what were the exhibitions of the religion of the cross, which were furnished by the reformation? They could have been nothing less than those exhibitions which were made by the reformers in their doctrines and lives. But it is a fact, known to every historian, that all the first reformers, except Erasmus, (who vacillated between the Pope and the reformation,) were what our author calls Calvinists. If this sentence, then,

means any thing, it means that if men could now be satisfied with those clear, consistent and scriptural exhibitions of religion, which Calvin and the other reformers furnished, nothing could equal the happiness which would follow. After establishing this hypothesis, in which I fully agree, he tells us, that—"In this, as well as in all the affairs of men, there must be those who fancy themselves capable of improving upon the works and designs of Heaven."—The natural construction of this is, that there must be men now, who think they can improve upon that glorious exhibition of religion made by our Calvinistic reformers. It would seem, then, that these innovators must be anti-Calvinists. Now who would believe, that in the next two sentences, our author would charge the reformers with giving such a distorted view of christianity, as to drive Europe and Germany to deny the Lord who bought them? I say Europe and Germany—for our author writes as if he did not consider Germany as belonging to Europe. His words are—"The distorted views of christian doctrine given by the Genevan reformer, soon drove a large portion of Europe into a denial "of the Lord that bought them." In consequence of a similar course, protestant Germany took a like direction." This certainly appears as if our pamphleteer does not consider Europe as embracing Germany; but means to tell us, that while Calvin was making Socinians in Europe, Luther and his associates were manufacturing them in Germany. But, this criticism out of the question, if he means to charge the reformers with such abominable corruption, what are we to understand by those "consistent, clear and scriptural" exhibitions of religion which were made at the reformation?

In the next sentence he tells us, that "the melancholy state of religion, as exhibited at this day in Switzerland and Germany, may be easily traced to the cause he has mentioned." In confirmation of this assertion, he asks—"Is it not a singular coincidence, that while skepticism and Socinianism have been gaining ground in papal Europe, the same result has followed the course of Calvinistic Protestantism, in those divisions of the continent where these doctrines were formerly inculcated."

Here, if he had been candid and well-informed, he would have told his readers that those Calvinistic doctrines were formerly preached in all protestant Europe; and then his singular coincidence, would have been, that Socinianism had prevailed, both in papal and protestant Europe. Now I ask every candid reader, if

he can perceive any thing like argument in all this mighty effort of our pamphleteer.

It is easy to understand, by reading the whole of this page, (27), that the writer means to charge all the corruptions of Europe to the Godly reformers. But no man will pretend that this foul slander upon the character of those deceased men of God is supported by a single argument. On the contrary, those acquainted with the history of the church, know that Socinianism, has spread much more rapidly in Europe since the spread of Arminianism, than it ever did before. And those who are acquainted with the religious history of New England, know that Socinianism there has invariably fled before the plain preaching of those doctrines which our pamphleteer condemns, and the power of Almighty God, through the instrumentality of such preaching, is, this day, carrying consternation and dismay into the very camp of that heresy:

But we must look a moment at the *historical accuracy*, or rather inaccuracy, of our author. On the 6th page, he tells us, that "In the 2d vol. of Trumbull's History of Connecticut, we shall find an account of the first revivals of which notice is taken by any writer in his knowledge." Now this is probable enough; and I should find no fault with his limited information, if he had not had the arrogance, a little further on, to take it for granted that there was no earlier history of revivals than that which had come to his knowledge. His words are—"It is, you see, less than one hundred years since this mode of promoting religion was adopted." How do we see it? Why because he knows of no earlier history than Trumbull's. Now this is so far from being correct, that there were five revivals of religion in Northampton in the days of Mr. Stodard, the grandfather of President Edwards; the first of which was in 1676, fifty-six years earlier than our writer ever heard of.—But if he were acquainted with the history of the Church of England, he would have learned that there was so great a revival under the preaching of Mr. Perkins, minister of Christ at Cambridge, that Mr. Bolton, a very noted Episcopal clergyman, was so awakened that he fell to the ground, and cried out with anguish of spirit.—Or if he had read "The fulfilling of the Scriptures," he would have known that there were powerful revivals of religion in Ireland, Scotland, Holland, and France, in the beginning of the seventeenth century, and some of them as early as 1625. The truth is, that when the church has enjoyed the faithful administration of

God's word, she has always had her revivals, or seasons of the out-pouring of the Spirit. It was this which enabled the Godly reformers to sustain themselves against their numerous enemies; and it has been this which has preserved the purity of the Church in all ages.

I come, next, to notice the *corruption of our author's sentiment*. In one place, he gives us to understand that he does not believe in irresistible grace, nor instantaneous conversions. In another, that he does not believe in total depravity, but thinks Christ was speaking of the unconverted, when he said—"These are they, who, in an honest and good heart, having heard the word keep it." Consequently, we must understand him as saying that impenitent sinners, have good and honest hearts; and that when they hear the word they keep it. Now if this be so, then sinners may be justified without a change of heart; for surely a good and honest heart does not need changing.

On the 12th page, he tells us that the awful decisions of the day of judgment are to turn upon this very question, whether we have improved the means of grace and obeyed the Divine laws. Now, if this be correct, then those, and those only, will be justified, who, in addition to keeping all the Divine laws, have improved the means of grace. Here let me ask, why is it necessary to have any thing to do with the means of grace, if we have kept the Divine laws? The language of the law is—"The man who doeth these things shall live by them."

But let me ask again, who will be saved on this plan? Or, to use the writer's own words, will be able to look for the reward of obedience? The Apostle tells us, that "by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified." But this letter-writer says, that the judgment is to turn on this very point, whether we have improved the means of grace and obeyed the Divine laws; and his objection to what he calls irresistible grace is, that those who should be saved in that way, "could, in justice, look for no reward of obedience."

Readers, is this such a gospel as you are willing to have your children taught? Would not the Apostle have called this another gospel, and pronounced the anathemas of God on the man who should preach it?

I come now to notice the *low, vulgar abuse* of this paragon of

modesty and gentleness—this man who had prayed that there should be, “in nothing which he might say, a departure from that gentleness of temper, and respect for the feelings of others, which should characterise the disciples of a divine Master.” Now let us see what this gentleness, of which we have heard so much, is.

On page 18, speaking of the Western Recorder, he vents the tender and christian feelings of his heart by calling it—“*that most intrepid advocate of fanaticism ; that most accomplished CHAMPION OF RIBALDRY AND VULGARITY, and PUERILE ABUSER OF ALL WHO DIFFER FROM HIM.*”

I shall give but one more instance, and that is from page 31.—Speaking of the New-Lebanon convention, deliberating “whether it was right to abuse men who did not agree with them, and call them hard names;” he adds—“We see the determination of some in that body not to give up this privilege, *no doubt delightful to them*, in their reason for declining to vote.” That my readers may appreciate the gentleness of this dove-like man, I will give the reasons assigned by Messrs. Lansing and Aikin, who are the gentlemen aimed at in this ungentlemanly thrust. “The undersigned do decline voting on the foregoing particular; not because they do not unequivocally condemn such personality in preaching as makes an invidious exposure of individuals; but because they suppose that the article in question may be liable to such construction, as to lead many to say, that such characteristic preaching is condemned by this convention, as is adapted to make sinners suppose that their individual case is intended.” These are the reasons in which our writer sees a determination not to give up the privilege of abusing men who did not agree with them; which, he says, was no doubt delightful to the gentlemen who declined voting. “O, shame, where is thy blush!” * * * *

NOTE.—This review was originally published in the Western Recorder.

REMARKS
UPON THE
REV. EZEKIEL G. GEAR'S REPORT
OF THE REVIVAL OF RELIGION WHICH PREVAILED IN ITHACA,
IN 1826 AND 1827.

This report is published in the Journals of the Convention of the Episcopal Church of the state of New York, for 1827, and may be found on the 44th page, and is as follows, to wit:

"Since my last report, my services have been confined principally to the congregation in Ithaca. Circumstances of a peculiar nature with regard to religion have rendered this measure more necessary. The annals of fanaticism would scarcely present a parallel to the scenes which have been acted here during the last year. Every wheel in the mighty engine of a revival of the highest order, was directed against the venerable forms, and sober worship, of the Church; and every art and trick was practised by its managers, to seduce and alienate the affections, and weaken the attachments of her members and friends. I have endeavoured, by God's assistance, to do my duty in sincerity,"—"and the result has been an increased attachment to the doctrines and worship of the Church, and a more serious attention to the duties of the christian life."

It is really distressing to see how this professed ambassador of Christ can play off the airs of his Diocesan. He can speak of revivals with as much contempt as the Bishop himself, and while he cries up the "venerable forms and sober worship of the Church," can with as little apparent compunction deal out his calumnies against those who are friendly to the out-pourings of the spirit of God. If Mr. Gear had confined his slanders to bar rooms and barbers' shops, respect for the people of his charge would have induced me to bear with him, but when he comes forward under his own

name, and publishes the friends of revivals in Ithaca not only as a set of wild fanatics, but as men who have basely descended to every art and trick to seduce and alienate the affections of Episcopalians from their Church, respect for his people ought no longer to shield him from the charge of unkind and unchristian conduct, to call it by no harsher name. When such publications go abroad under the responsible name of a professed minister of the gospel, and receive the indorsement of the Bishop of New York, the publick ought to be informed, that in the vocabulary of these gentlemen fanaticism is applied to every religious affection which rises above the temperature of a Laodicean spirit. With this kind of fanaticism Mr. Gear was very much troubled in the time of the revival. Almost the whole population of Ithaca were induced to believe that religion was a solemn reality, and that it consisted of something more than "*venerable forms*."—A great part of the inhabitants of the place conducted as if they considered religion the chief concern of life. It was common then for christians to weep over sinners, to intreat them with tears to become reconciled to God, and to spend many agonizing hours in pleading for them at the throne of Grace. It was common for crowded assemblies in the sanctuary of Jehovah to sit with the stillness of the grave, and listen to the distinguishing truths of the gospel. It was common for anxious sinners to beseech christians to pray for them, and to meet frequently at some convenient place to inquire of the Pastor and Elders of the Church what they must do to be saved. Such scenes as these were common in Ithaca, and though to one who felt the 'preciousness of the redemption of the soul,' and had himself known experimentally the "*terrors of the Lord*," they would appear rational and interesting, yet to Mr. Gear they were great annoyances,—they were scenes of fanaticism, or religious phrensy. He appears to have had the same view of them, that some had of a similar work on the day of Pentecost, when they mocked and said "these men are full of new wine." For this part of his communication, therefore, I am prepared to offer the apology that, "a deceived heart hath turned him aside;" but when he charges us with descending to "every art and trick" to seduce his people from their allegiance to their "*venerable forms*," the abuse seems so unprovoked, and his assertions so wholly unfounded, that I can find no excuse for him. It would seem that he had adopted the Jesuitical maxim, that "the end will justify the means." It was not com-

mon for the leaders of the Presbyterian society in the time of the revival, to visit the members of the Episcopal congregation at all; and if they may occasionally have done so, yet I venture to say that they never adopted a proselyting policy. For my own part, when I have had the members of Mr. Gear's congregation come into my church and request the prayers of God's people, though they were persons whom I respected, and for whose salvation I felt and still do feel a deep interest, yet lest my "good should be evil spoken of" I refrained from visiting them. The truth is that however deeply we may have felt to see our friends and neighbours cut off from, and prejudiced against that work of grace by which hundreds were in a few weeks, (as we have reason to believe,) brought to embrace the Saviour, yet the members of Mr. Gear's congregation do know that no arts or tricks were ever practised upon them.

I for one do highly esteem some of Mr. Gear's hearers, and it will appear in the day of judgment that the tender regard which I have always felt for the salvation of their souls has been illy requited; but still, as they have attached themselves to another communion, I should despise myself if I could descend to little *arts* or *tricks* to seduce them from their attachment to the forms, and the church, and the ministry, which they have chosen. Such charges made by their Rector against my congregation and myself, I trust they will not themselves approve; at all events it affords me some satisfaction to believe that they know them to be false.

But before I conclude let me ask the enemies of the revival, what has been its effects upon our village?

Mr. Gear himself admits that its results upon his congregation have been salutary,—it has produced "a more serious attention," among his members, "to the duties of the christian life." Now if the reflex influence of the revival upon the Episcopal Church has been salutary, notwithstanding all the opposition which their Rector could make to it, as all the other denominations acknowledge, with heart felt gratitude to God, the lasting benefits which they have received from it, what ground has any man to complain?—Or how dare Mr. Gear ascribe this wonder working reform which has taken place among us, to an evil spirit?