

THE
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TO THE EDITOR OF THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE.

MR. EDITOR,

THE present lamentable decay of vital godliness, amidst such a profusion of what is termed Evangelical preaching and writing, seems to call for a serious investigation. To me, at least, it appears, that nearly the whole may be readily charged to the want of a lively and faithful ministry; the conspicuous sign of which is, a vigorous and decided opposition to the growth and influence of error; to those errors, in particular, from which the least danger is suspected, on account of their being patronized by such as pass for pious, good Christians; having only the form of godliness, without the knowledge or the power of it. Till the errors of Arminianism (which is become the fashionable religion of the day) be considered, and felt as the enemies of the essential truths of the Gospel; be dreaded as much as Socinianism and Deism, and treated accordingly; a flimsy, indiscriminate method of declaring the truth will prevail; which will not only prove that our love is waxed cold, but afford an easy progress to the growth of every corrupt principle of which Pelagianism can boast. And while zeal and diligence in the propagation of truth is exceeded by that of error, it is easy to determine the consequences will be, what they have been for the last twenty years back. Should we continue to sleep much longer, Arminianism, one of the prominent features of the Beast, will, in all probability, overspread the nation; and our posterity may be chastised for our criminal supineness, in the treatment of truths, which have been delivered to us through the blood and sufferings of our pious ancestors.

In addition to this cause of the universal decline of lively, practical religion, I beg leave to mention the departure of the Spirit of grace and supplication: for the one cannot possibly sub-

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sist,

sist, indue perfection, without the other; and the one must, indeed, be supported by the other. *Acts* vi. 4. To plead before men, however, for the importance of divine truth, without a heart to do the same before God, and warmly to discuss in public, what seldom brings us earnestly upon our knees in private, is preposterous and hypocritical. We may defend truth, and declaim against errors, with the zeal and abilities of the chiefest of the Apostles; but, unless we possess something of the same spirit of love to Christ, of dependence on him, nearness to him, communion with, and delight in him; unless, in fact, we are devoted as much to prayer, as to the support and defence of the doctrines of Grace; our attempts will never get beyond the breath of popular applause among the advocates for the same doctrines; and error will gain ground, and laugh at our most indefatigable resistance. We ought not to forget, that the glorious and eternal Author of Truth must be its alone effectual protector and preserver; and there can be little just hope of engaging his omnipotent aid in behalf of the doctrines we profess to revere and love, but in the way of supplication before him. Satan, the father of lies and errors, will prove stronger than the strongest efforts we can use to overturn his kingdom, without the super-addition of that one piece of armour, which he most dreads, *all-prayer*, *Eph.* vi. 18. A *perseverance* in this, must give energy and effect to every argument we advance, to every doctrine we propagate, in defence of the cause of God: and if this be omitted, we oppose the prince of darkness upon terms of inadequacy; for the opposition of truth and error is not so much between us and our heterodox neighbour, as between Christ and the devil.

A servant of Christ, which is only another name for a steward of the mysteries of his kingdom, ought therefore to be *given to prayer*, as well as to the ministry of the word. And I can easily conceive it possible, to be never so zealous in the support of truth, and yet to come short of all its distinguishing advantages and comforts in our own ease, as well as to fail in establishing its influence and dominion in the minds of others; for want of that frame of soul, which the proper knowledge of it always inspires, and which the proper defence of it never fails to encourage and increase. I fear the languor of this vital pulse of real religion, is but too prevalent in the professing world; and I shall despair of ever seeing the fatal and lamented errors of the day yield to the force of Divine Truth, either from our pulpits, or from our pens, but in proportion as this spirit of prayer revives.

H. K.

The Editors of this Magazine hope that the following Observations, written by a Clergyman, will not be deemed a political disquisition. Our worthy and reverend Friend strikes very justly at that which is the cause of our national visitation; namely, sin. And we join him in supplicating the throne of Mercy, to bestow on the inhabitants of this once highly-favoured land the gift of repentance. God is our witness, that it never was our intention to exhibit any party of men in our periodical production. We consider truth, like the first pair in the state of innocence, not ashamed to be seen naked; or divested of those false embellishments of artificial dress usually introduced to conceal deformity or defect.

A REMARK ON THE TIMES.

O! mens quæ stabili fata regis vice, &c. CASIMIR. B. iv. Od. 23.

[Translated by Dr. Watts.]

“ Eternal Mind, who rul’st the fates
Of dying realms, and rising states,
With one unchang’d decree,
While we admire thy vast affairs,
Say, can our little, trifling cares,
Afford a smile to thee?

Thou scatterest honours, crowns, and gold;
We fly to seize, and fight to hold,
Th’ bubbles, and the ore:
So Emetics struggle for a grain;
So boys their petty wars maintain,
For shells upon the shore.

Here a vain man his sceptre breaks,
The next a broken sceptre takes,
And warriors win and lose:
This rolling world will never stand,
Plunder’d, and snatch’d from hand to hand,
As power decays or grows.

Earth’s but an atom: greedy swords
Carve it amongst a thousand lords,
And yet they can’t agree:
Let greedy swords still fight and slay,
I can be poor; but, Lord, I pray
To fit and smile with thee.”

EUROPE, the most distinguished quarter of the globe, the seat of science, where the arts, liberal and mechanical, are arrived almost to the summit of perfection, and seem hardly capable of any farther improvement by the united

united efforts of human intelligence. Thou happy, miserable region!—Happy, by the discriminating favour of Heaven—wretched, through thy own pride and folly. In thee, from ambition, and innumerable lusts*, spring discord, animosity, and contentions; issuing in slaughter and devastation! What rivers of blood, of human blood, have flowed in thee? What millions hast thou, by the sword of war, consigned over to the grave, in the very prime of their days! How seldom does the murderous instrument cease from reeking with the blood of the slain? Is it thy privilege, thy honour, to be the slaughter-house of the world, and to exhibit bloody scenes of human kind, no where else to be found, no, not among the most savage Heathens? Is this the advantage thou gatherest from thy superior mental improvement, to be ingenious in bringing a thousand miseries and premature death upon mankind? Is this suitable to thy character of Christendom? Didst thou learn this pride, and implacable disposition, from the lowly, the meek, and condescending Redeemer, who came, “not to destroy men’s lives, but to save them?” O criminal, sanguinary Europe, dost thou tread in the footsteps of the Prince of Peace? Or, rather, hast thou not deeply imbibed the bloody spirit of the Prince of Hell, “who was a murderer from the beginning †?” Surely, the Spirit of Christ is a loving, yielding, forbearing Spirit.

How little do you consider this, ye rulers and people of Europe, who, upon the slightest grounds, fly to arms, as the unthinking “horse rushes into the battle.” Conceive you, that the flimsy pretences of national honour, the possession of a little more territory, preserving the ballance of power, or the empty precedence upon the ocean, will be valid pleas before the tribunal of God, when he shall make inquisition for blood ‡? Valid pleas for the sending of millions into eternity in an unprepared state? What is now artfully among you, to blind the eyes of the undiscerning multitude, termed “a just and necessary war,” being oftentimes the very reverse before the omniscient God, will then be manifested to have been a scene of devastation from first to last, when the Earth shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain ||? Then thousands of pretended patriots, whose wars were founded in pride and ambition, without any regard to national utility, will be found to be murderers, and the blood of the slain will cry for vengeance upon them.

* James iv. 1. † John viii. 44. ‡ Psa. ix. 12 || Isai. xxvi. 21.

And thou, "proud Albion!" so called by thine enemies, as haughty as thyself, know, O know, the "day of thy visitation, and the things that belong to thy peace, before they be hid from thine eyes!" O Britain! Great Britain! lifted up to heaven in privileges, tremble for thyself, lest thou be thrust down into hell*, for thine aggravated transgressions! By the bounty of Heaven, drawn from obscurity, exalted on high, and made considerable among the nations of the earth; blessed, and scourged, and awefully threatened, yet mercifully preserved still, thou hast already drank deep "of the cup of the wrath of Almighty God," by his fore judgments of war and pestilence, and with threatened famine! Thousands of thy pleasant sons have been swept away from off the face of the earth by the besom of destruction: thy trade is decaying, poverty increasing, and, what is infinitely worse, God himself is forsaking thee; thou art not humbled for thy iniquity, and so not prepared for peace: hence it is denied thee by the "God of Peace," who has mercifully granted it to other contending nations. These consuming judgments are the fruits of thy pride, luxury, dissipation, and impiety. O England! England! bethink thyself! "Gird thee with sackcloth, lie prostrate in ashes;" no longer play the hypocrite with a jealous God. Thou hast fasted, and seemingly mourned, but not after a godly sort; thou hast not discovered thy contrition by "bringing forth fruits meet for repentance;" thou hast not loosed the bands of wickedness, or undone the heavy burdens, and let the oppressed go free, nor broken every yoke†; thou still persistest in the horrible traffic, detested by heaven and earth, and buyest and sellest the bodies and souls of thy equals, thy own flesh and blood. Tear the destructive mischief from off thy neck, otherwise it is a millstone that will sink thee. Hear, O inconsiderate nation! the voice of the Lord's controversy—Shew mercy, and enjoy mercy—"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." How deplorable is thy present situation! thy prospect still more terrible!--Thy Prime Minister tells thee, "thy all is at stake!" The present contest, he says, "is for our constitution, laws, liberty, religion, and existence as a nation." Say, humanly speaking, that thou shouldst be able to defend thyself against the assaults of the enemy, yet how affecting is the alternative, to be obliged to slay thy thousands, or be annihilated thyself! May repentance be given to you, O ye people! and may you reform your doings, and put away your

* Matt. xi. 23.

† Isa. lviii, 6, 7.

abominations from before the Lord! Exert yourselves, O ye rulers! for the oppressed and needy; hear the sighs and groans of the miserable men of colour, as ever you hope to find mercy at the hands of their Maker. Bring to a speedy end the infamous slave-trade, and so take away the accursed thing from amongst us*. Your national fasts, and external humiliations, are nothing but solemn mockeries before the Supreme, while you countenance such cruel inhumanity. In vain do you pray for averting national judgments, and for national blessings, while your sins are calling louder for vengeance and destruction. Ye children of Zion, who sigh and cry for all the abominations of the land †, cease not to wrestle with God for these guilty realms; you see, God is come very near to us in judgment, yet have we not returned unto him. Severely have we been scourged; and, in the prolongation of the war, his "hand is stretched out still." Your prayers alone can save the country from condign destruction: *you* only can pray; *you* only are heard. Blessings of Nature, Providence, and Grace, are bestowed in answer to *your* supplications, for on *you alone* the spirit of grace and supplication resteth. And O! thou injured, insulted Sovereign of the universe! who hast "bathed thy sword in blood," and given it a commission to slay its tens of thousands, cease, O cease from thy just indignation! command the reeking sword into its scabbard! Thou God of Jacob, "break the bow, and cut the spear in sunder, and burn the chariot of war in the fire, and command wars to cease unto the ends of the earth!" And thou, "Spirit of Wisdom, of Counsel, and of Might!" return, O return, and rest upon our King and his advisers! Vouchsafe unto them discernment, and give them a pacific spirit; and excite them to pursue, by all means, the "things which make for peace!" and may they discern, that the wisdom and true glory of a kingdom are displayed by condescension and benevolence, and thus learn to conquer our enemies by love!—*Rom. xii. 18, ult.*

CLERICUS.

(*By way of Supplement to the above, we here present our Readers with the following Extract, taken from the Life of Edmund Burke, just published, in Quarto:.*)

"This globe," says that great writer, "in ancient and modern times, may truly be called an aceldama. Every page of history is blotted and confounded by tumults, rebellions, massacres, assassinations, and proscriptions; the whole at-

* Josh. vii. 13.

† Jer. ix. 4.

tended with a series of horror beyond description." He then proceeds to compute, that the total of those killed in battle, from the beginning of the world to the time in which he wrote, may be modestly put at a thousand times more than he has particularized; that is, about thirty thousand millions. To justify his calculations from the charge of extravagance, he says, he need not enlarge on the torrents of silent and inglorious blood, which have glutted the thirsty sands of Africa, or discoloured the polar snow, or fed the savage forests of America for many ages; nor should he inflame the account by those general massacres, which have devoured whole cities and nations—those wasting pestilences, those consuming famines, and all those furies that follow in the train of war. If, then, the present population of the whole earth be computed at five hundred millions at the most, the slaughter of mankind, as he states it, amounts to upwards of seventy times the number of souls remaining this day on the globe.

STRIKING MATTER OF FACT,

RELATED FOR THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF WELL-DOING.

ABOUT eight years back I was visited with a heavy affliction, which served to convince me, among many other things, of the duty of considering the Poor far more than I had ever done. With a straitened income, and numerous family, I came, therefore, to good Jacob's resolution of appropriating, at least, one-tenth of what I yearly possessed to the benefit of the Lord's poor, and other benevolent uses. When I named this purpose to an elderly Minister of Christ, he gravely admonished me to relinquish it; and laboured to prove, that the proportion was much too great for my circumstances, and would be a violation of duty, rather than a furtherance of it. His arguments, however, had little weight; and I believe I have considerably exceeded my calculation, in adhering to the purport of my determination. Many times, when I have not had more than a shilling or two in the house, cases of urgency appeared to me to claim a share, which I could not withhold. Whether some may feel disposed to pronounce this conduct rash, imprudent, and presumptive, injurious to my family, a tempting of God, &c. I found little difficulty in trusting to the Divine sufficiency, while

while I thought I was obeying the Divine injunction—
 “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”

Thus, pursuing what appeared to me the line of duty, I happened to meet with a little Tract, published by T. Gouge, and recommended by several eminent Ministers of the last century; the title of which is—“*Giving to the Poor, the surest and safest Way of Thriving.*” Whether this title may not be likely to betray some readers into a bad motive, in the performance of a good duty, I will not take upon me to determine: but the book served to confirm me in the scriptural propriety of my practice; and I am thankful to say, I am one of those, by the kind providence of the Lord, in whose case it has been strikingly exemplified. It is an instance of this—the reader will perhaps bear with me—I relate.

A few years back, I was solicited, in conjunction with several others, to become responsible for a considerable sum of money, which was fallaciously represented to serve the cause and interest of Christ. Myself and friends depended upon the integrity of the party; and had a faithful promise, that the bond would be cancelled in the course of a few months. For plausible reasons assigned, we ventured to lend our joint signatures to the instrument. Though this step of conduct was undoubtedly imprudent in the extreme, in my circumstances, and was soon followed with a train of complicated difficulties and troubles; yet the object seemed of importance, and the motive was good.

After having paid a serious sum, to secure us from the danger of losing a much greater, (which, by the way, had been paid me a few days before, and was a debt I never expected to receive) I was unexpectedly called upon to advance a much larger, in the course of a day and a half, for the same purpose. This was no little trial of faith; as I knew not where to apply, with the certainty of obtaining twenty pounds. I spent the first forenoon of the short time allowed me to raise the sum in prayer, and found my faith quite equal to the difficulty before me. The whole afternoon, however, yielded me very little fruit of my labour. Every one I applied to, complained of the want of money; and I had not courage to be explicit in stating my case, and to be urgent and importunate in requesting the necessary assistance, nor was I quite sure whether I should ever be able to return it, without reducing myself to very considerable distress. Necessity now obliged me to return to my dernier resort, the

Throne

Throne of Grace and the Promises of God. These supported me till near nine in the evening, when my fears began to prevail; and the great enemy of souls tried to laugh me out of my confidence, and to persuade me that it was nothing but wicked presumption, which the Lord would never answer. The suggestion, how could I again preach, or urge a dependence on God, seemed to arise out of my circumstances, and was felt like a dagger at my heart; having been accustomed comfortably to trust in the Lord, and warmly to recommend and enforce the same confidence.

The evening, which was about the middle of February, was formidable with heavy gales of wind, and a great fall of snow. It was, however, between nine and ten o'clock, when I had given up all hopes for the day, a servant of a person with whom I had no acquaintance, knocked at my door, up to her knees in snow, with a note, which was to acquaint me, that if I were in any particular difficulties, a certain sum was at my service. This most kind and striking providence answered every purpose I could wish. My painful circumstances and mind were relieved, my great enemy disappointed, my conscience restored, and my soul filled with a sweet mixture of surprize, gratitude, and joy, which continued with me through the whole night: it was also of particular use to me in every future stage of this afflictive trial. The undertaking, from various circumstances, seemed to move on in a very awkward course, after all; and we had cause to fear the loss of the whole we had advanced, and much more. We, therefore, thought it most prudent to make an offer of a considerable sum to quit the business: and, upon mature deliberation and different altercations, we preferred the alternative of losing 400l. amongst us, rather than be any longer annoyed by the caprice of a set of men, who seemed to want both reason and principle. To this, however, the assignees would not consent; but were resolved we should have the premises, right or wrong, by allowing them a certain exorbitant consideration. After some abatement of this unconscionable demand, we agreed to the measure, for the sake of peace; and, to our surprize and their mortification, we soon disposed of them for such a price as left us no losers. Thus terminated, by a very peculiar providence, what had been entered upon with simplicity and uprightnes of heart; but what had cost the enterprizers much perplexity, sorrow, and fear, besides the inconvenience of advancing, and being out of monies for several years. "He that is surety for

a stranger, shall smart for it;" is an infallible maxim of Scripture, which was both interpreted and applied by our joint experience. But, for my own part, notwithstanding our suffering, I have to thank the Lord, that it has turned out to my advantage much every way. By it I have obtained a saving of near 80l. and it has given rise to a knowledge and experience of the Lord's rich faithfulness, tenderness, and goodness, far more valuable than thousands of gold and silver, which will be of singular use to me, I trust, as long as I live. I am also supplied with more means than ever for the relief and comfort of the Lord's poor; and have happily learned, that what we lend to Him, by acknowledging his, he will return with interest; and that he who calls upon him in the day of trouble, and trusteth in him, shall not be ashamed of his hope, and shall not want for comfort, support, and joy.

LITTLE FAITH.

The Divine Authority of the Scriptures demonstrated from Prophecy.

[Concluded from page 424.]

WHEN Jeroboam,* the son of Nebat, made the ten tribes fall away from Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, that they should have no occasion to return to their allegiance by resorting to Jerusalem to worship there, he reared an altar in Bethel, contrary to the law of God. "† And behold," saith the history, "there came a man of God out of Judah, by the word of the Lord unto Bethel: and he cried against the altar, Thus saith the Lord, Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Jofiah by name, and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places, that burn incense upon thee, and mens bones shall be burnt upon thee. And he gave a sign the same day, saying, This is the sign which the Lord hath spoken: Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out." This prophecy was fulfilled in each individual article by Jofiah, three hundred years afterwards. When † Jofiah, according to our history, had so done, he saw a certain tomb, and asked whose it was, intending to have burnt the bones of him that lay there, as he had done those of the other priests in Bethel; but when he was informed that it was the tomb of the man of God, who had foretold those things

* 1 Kings xii. † 1 Kings xiii. 2, 3. ‡ 2 Kings xxii. 17, 18.

so many years ago, he forbade any man to touch it. Besides, as this prophecy was written some time before the coming of Josiah, it could be no forgery; for who could have been so very fortunate as to hit upon his name? and, if it was written after, and devised upon the event; how came the said tomb to be made at the same instant? Or, was there no easier method to be found, would it not have been sufficient to have said, One Josias should come, &c. without making mention either of the death of the man of God, or of his meeting with the lion, or of his conversation with the prophet of Samaria? Would not what is here related have discovered the fraud, had there been one? and would not the Samaritans have been able to trace the tomb from its original? But this prophecy is so very punctual in all respects, both as to name, place, and circumstance, that the denial of its Divine Author would be absurd to the last degree. And, as a further confirmation of the purity of the said Scripture, we find it recorded, that this very man of God was slain by a *lion, for turning back to eat with the prophet of Samaria, contrary to the word of the Lord: now, how very improbable is it, that he should be the author of a forgery or lie, who, to tell the truth, did not scruple to dishonour the remembrance of so great a prophet, and whose sincerity, in such a variety of circumstances, was so very apparent?

Isaiah, in those events which he foretelleth concerning the kingdom of the Messias, and the calling of the Gentiles, seems rather an evangelist than a prophet. And when he threateneth Jerusalem with the captivity of Babylon, or consoles them with the hopes of their deliverance, he utters his predictions as one who had been an eye-witness to them both: for he saith not—"The Lord will do—The Lord will call—The Lord will destroy, &c." but, "He doth—He calleth—He destroyeth." Nay, and oftentimes—"He hath done—He hath called—He hath destroyed," and so forth; as though he spake not of things that were but only near their accomplishment.

However, if any should still cavil at those prophecies, I would ask, by what Spirit could Isaiah say—"I am the Lord that maketh all things; that saith of Cyrus, † he is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure; even saith to Jerusalem, thou shalt be built; and to the temple, thy foundation shall be laid?" And again—"† Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right-hand I have holden, to sub-

* 1. Kings xiii. † Isaiah xlv. 28. † Isaiah xlv. 1, 2, 3, 4.

due nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates, and the gates shall not be shut: I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in funder the bars of iron; and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places; that thou mayest know, that I the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me." How many wonders do these few words contain? In what lofty and remarkable forms are the actions which this great prince was to perform, and the deliverance he was destined to bring about in favour of the people of Israel, described? and how punctually did the Almighty perform his promise, by putting the mightiest kingdoms of the earth under his subjection?

The prophet Isaiah, with great exactness, foretels not only the captivity of the people of Israel, the sacking of the city, and the overthrow of the temple; but also the destruction of the Chaldeans by the Persians, and the building up of Jerusalem, and the temple, by them again. Suppose we should allow it possible for a man to have a tolerable foresight of events, the accomplishment whereof is near at hand, yet surely, with the deepest penetration, he cannot see some hundreds of years before him; nor pry into affairs, during the whole continuance of a mighty monarchy, as Isaiah doth, who calleth Cyrus by his name, a hundred years before he was born, to deliver Israel. Let the greatest enemies of the truth consult their own consciences, and tell me what artful contrivance, what stratagem, there could be in those things? They cannot say, these prophecies were forged upon the event. For, by the removal of the Jews to Babylon, the laws, prophecies, and writings of Israel, which were common among that people, were conveyed into divers places of the world; among which, they had this prophecy before Cyrus was born; and as this was in divers men's hands, it was impossible to be a forgery.

Moreover, the Prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel, though they were in places far remote from each other, the one in Jerusalem, the other in captivity at Babylon, foretel the very same events. Jeremiah, however, is the more wonderful in this particular: for he prophesieth expressly, that the people which were carried away captive, should be brought home again

again at the end of * threeſcore and ten years, notwithstanding the improbability of ſuch a revolution: and yet he aſſerts it with ſuch confidence, that one might ſay, he led them by the hand into Jeruſalem. And the event was answerable; for, at the expiration of that term, the people were carried home again, as if Cyrus had been ſent on purpoſe to verify the prophet's predictions.

The prophecies of Daniel likewiſe cannot but be a very convincing argument of the divine authority of the ſacred Scriptures, ſince they are ſo very plain, that he rather ſeemeth an hiſtorian than a prophet; for he ſpeaketh of the tyranny of Antiochus, the profanation of the temple, and ſeveral other important articles, which came to paſs ſome hundreds of years after his deceaſe, as of tranſactions ſome time paſt. And if there be any ſo ſcrupuloys as to diſpute the Jewiſh chronicles, wherein it is recorded, that the prophecy of Daniel was read to Alexander the Great, when he firſt entered Jeruſalem, to ſhew him what was foretold of him; yet it cannot be denied but that, when Ptolemy cauſed the Scriptures to be tranſlated, the prophecy of Daniel was extant, and was tranſlated with the reſidue, long before the tyranny of Antiochus, which is as plain a proof of its validity as can be required.

I ſhall paſs by a multitude of the prophecies of Daniel, to make room for the mention of one in particular, which was very ſurprizing, and truly remarkable. In the very firſt year of the reign of Darius, Daniel ſaid unto him—" + Behold, there ſhall ſtand up yet three kings in Perſia, and the fourth ſhall be far richer than they all: and by his ſtrength, through his riches, he ſhall ſtir all againſt the realm of Grecia." Theſe few words contain the hiſtory of near one hundred and threeſcore years. Now, could the wiſeſt man on earth foreſee how many kings ſhould ſucceed him on the throne, and much leſs foretel the actions of the fourth? But hear him further—" And a mighty king," ſaith he, " ſhall ſtand up, that ſhall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will." How plainly doth this point out Alexander's coming out of Greece againſt Darius? " And when he ſhall ſtand up," adds he, " his kingdom ſhall be broken, and ſhall be divided towards the four winds of heaven, and not to his poſterity; for his kingdom ſhall be plucked up." What hiſtorian could have painted the monarchy of Alexander in more lively colours, which was but as a ſlaſh of lightning, that paſſeth from the

* Jeremiah xxv. * Daniel xi. & ſeq.

west unto the east, and concluded in itself, since it was divided into many kingdoms, as Macedonia, Thrace, Syria, and Egypt, and conferred on princes that were not of his race? Had any one been disposed to have made an abstract of the history of the monarchy of Greece, he could not have done it in more proper words than the foregoing.

Any one will easily perceive, that other prophecies, as remarkable as these, might have been added, could they have been comprised within the short compass of an Essay. The destruction of Babylon would have furnished us with very convincing arguments for the validity of the sacred Scriptures; but, for brevity sake, we shall refer our readers to Rollin's Ancient History, Vol. II. where they will meet with entire satisfaction in this particular.

Since these things are beyond dispute, what alienation of mind from divine things must be in those men, who oppose themselves to such full conviction; and will not allow those writings to come from God, which bear such an incontestible stamp of their Divine original; and record such things as neither men nor angels could ever pry into, and nothing less than Infinite Knowledge could foretel?

We have purposely declined speaking of the many prophecies relating to the mission of *St. John the Baptist, or the life, passion, death, and resurrection of Christ; because, as those momentous articles are so well known, a repetition of them would be needless to those, who either attend the service of the sanctuary, or consult the sacred Scriptures in their closet.

Having collected a small number of prophecies—small, in comparison of what might be produced—which are proved to be fulfilled in a wonderful and miraculous manner, principally extracted from the Old Testament; at some future time, I probably may select such passages as are recorded in the New which are most liable to exception, but which, when examined, will justify the truths they have recorded. Let us, therefore, with the Apostle Peter, boldly maintain, that—
“The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”
B.

* See the Prophet Isaiah throughout, and compare him with the Gospels.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE.

SIR,

IT is most devoutly to be wished, that your truly Gospel publication, which is a performance that inculcates unadulterated truth, might be univerfally known, and the beauties of celeftial knowledge by it (under the energy of the Spirit) be deeply impreffed on the minds of millions. Every found vital Chriftian, and particularly every faithful Miniſter of Chrift, ſhould take and recommend it to all his connections: this would extend the reception of precious truth unmutilated, and raiſe a barrier againſt thoſe pernicious errors which abound through the proud, crafty, temporifing ſpirit of faithleſs men.

Do you know, Mr. Editor, that the religious world are about to be favoured with a new Magazine? I have recently ſeen a very curious advertiſement of it; which, I ſuppoſe, is to offer free-will incenſe to Nature's dignity, and an high tribute of praife to the tottering idol of Self-righteouſneſs.

I aſſure you, Sir, I believe it will be a curious anti-Chriſtian phenomenon: appear, they ſay, it will very ſoon, and is to be called the "New Arminian Magazine;" to be like the Old Arminian and Evangelical Magazines; and to contain the ſame doctrines. Now, how is this?—Here are the New and Old Arminian Magazines, and both like the famous Evangelical Newſpaper!

Surely, if they are all alike, then are they altogether a motley maſs of refined error; braſs, and not gold—dross, and not ſilver—water, and not wine—chaff, and not wheat—ſaid the Lord.

I could compare the old Arminian pages to a putrid lake of poiſonous water, which in fine weather hath a ſmooth, transparent, pleaſing appearance, until the faithful blaſts of Gospel truth ſet all in agitation; when, behold, all its filth riſes to the ſurface! Well, then, I conclude the Old Arminian ſheets is the ſpring-head—the New one is the full fountain of merit—and the Evangelical is the half-purified ſtream, finely diverſified, and *ſuperficially* gliding along over the choice pearls of Gospel truth. May your efforts evermore confound theſe muddy ſtreams; ſince you are ever determined to diſcover, and ever hold faſt, the whole council of God. The ever-memorable Toplady once obſerved, that ſome preachments and writings were like water; others like wine and
water;

water; and some few like pure wine. Let what will resemble the two former, may your Magazine be a lively emblem of the latter. An Evangelical one should ever dwell upon the following most important and reviving themes, and not hold a criminal silence about them for years together:—this is it that makes Arminians so mighty fond of our anti-Calvinistic publications---

An Evangelical production should explain, enforce, and defend the eternal covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son, in favour of all the Elect. This is the foundation-stone of all hope, holiness, and happiness—the source of all real religion, doctrinal, experimental, and practical. This covenant provides for our justification, adoption, sanctification, and glory. Such religious colours will display the glories of electing-love, as the cause of the Saviour redeeming his own out of all nations; making them a peculiar people, zealous of good works. It is the current doctrines of the sacred pages, that Christ died for all the sins of all whom his Father gave him.

A production, worthy the high appellation of Evangelical, ought ever to dwell on the surety and righteousness of Christ; the perfection of Christ's mediatory offices; and the sovereign freeness of his restoring love—the depravity of the soul, in all its powers, in the highest imaginable degree—its blindness, enmity, criminality, and total inability, by sin, to love God, and spiritual things—the invincible energy of the Saviour's new-creating Spirit—the light, life, love, and liberty, arising from his operation—the sanctity, security, and eternal salvation of every soul, chosen by the Father, bought by the Son, and blessed with the graces of the eternal Spirit—These form the essentials of a Gospel Magazine; and sure I am, were some writers not shy of these precious truths, Arminianism would soon shake off their acquaintance. For these self-mortifying sentiments make old Van Harmin totter on his sable throne of human worth, merit, and power!

Scores of professors are fast verging towards that spirit of Pharisaism which is exactly counter to the glorious Gospel, and subverts the œconomy of the covenant, and eclipses the grandeur of reigning grace. Let us rouse and rise, and be bold for all the truth, as it is in Jesus. Ah! woe, woe to the faithless watchman, who lets the evening wolf of error open his jaws against the citizens of Zion, the objects of sovereign Grace, while truth is fallen in our streets!

Doubt-

Doubtless, he is the happiest, who keeps the noiseless tenor of his way through the sequestered vale of humble private life—who sees the Saviour's glory, communes with his God, and feels the sacred, secret flame of never-dying love mounting his rapt spirit to glory, to happiness, and to God. Nothing but the cause of God, the defence of truth, can call such an one from his much-loved, sweetest solitude. Truth is the ground of his hope, the source of his joy, the center of his affections and desires. The pearl of great price, is the light of his eye, strength of his arm, the felicity of his heart, and his treasure for ever.

Every thing, therefore, which depreciates the glories of the Cross, awakens a burst of holy indignation in his soul, in proportion as he knows and esteems the Author and Finisher of our faith. Though mingled with high pretences to charity, and varnished over with the cant of modern candour, he views error as a black, portentous cloud, without water, concealing from his eyes the unfading charms of celestial verity. Indeed, whoever corrupts, palliates, or conceals the truth, will one day be found guilty of conspiracy against Immanuel, the fountain of truth.

That your valuable and faithful Magazine, which hath been recently so useful to many trembling sinners, ready to perish, may still continue to honour a pure Gospel, and pour joy, peace, life, and salvation into the bosom, bleeding from the wounds of an anguished conscience, is the wish of

Your's, &c.

A CHRISTIAN.

ANIMADVERSIONES TRENICÆ;

OR PACIFIC REFLECTIONS.

[By Mr. TOPLADY, from his MSS.]

THE principal subjects of present controversy may be reduced to these six general ones:—1st. Of the way and manner wherein salvation was *obtained* for us by Christ. 2dly. Concerning the *application* of this salvation thus obtained. 3dly. Concerning justification. 4thly. Of the nature and genius of the Covenant of Grace. 5thly. Concerning the utility of holiness and good works. 6thly. Of the preaching of the Law and Gospel. Under these principal heads are included many lesser controversies; each of which we shall endeavour distinctly to explain. And, first, with regard to the obtainment of salvation, the following enquiries present themselves for

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explanation: 1st. Whether only the *penalties*, due to the elect for their sins, were translated to Christ as a surety; or whether *the very sins themselves*, both *guilt* and *defilement*, were placed to his account, and laid upon him? 2dly. Whether Christ, in consequence of this imputation of *their sins* to Him, is, and ought to be, esteemed and called *as great a sinner*, as any or all of the elect; yea, *the greatest of all sinners*? 3dly. Whether, by the suretyship of Christ, there ensued a reciprocal commutation or *exchange* of persons? 4thly. Whether the translation of sin to Christ, and his bearing it, commenced at *the crucifixion*, and ceased at his resurrection? 5thly. Whether Christ, when he bore the sins of the elect upon the cross, was *separated* from God, became *odious* and *abominable* in his sight; and whether God, at that time, *deserted* his Son, but acknowledged him again as such, when he raised him from the dead? 6thly. Whether Christ, by taking upon himself the sins of the elect, and satisfying Divine Justice for them, absolutely merited for them eternal salvation, so as that they shall certainly enjoy it; or, whether he only procured for them a *possibility* of salvation, and *actual* salvation, *if they believe*? In the decision of which questions, I shall, as much as possible, study method and perspicuity.

In order, then, to our better understanding of Christ's mediatorial undertakings, it may be proper to look back to *that* which was their primary, original cause; namely, *election*. We lay it down as an axiom, that the great and blessed Lord did, from all eternity, resolve to manifest his wonderful and glorious benignity, in the deliverance of some particular persons (known to himself by name) from sin and death, and in their everlasting salvation. This salvation was to be *obtained* for them by his only begotten Son, and *applied* to them by the life-giving Spirit. Now, as God, in every act and determination of his will, is absolutely *sovereign*, and entirely *independent*, being the Supreme Judge of all, both men and things; and since he is likewise the only Author and Dispenser of every thing that is good, and consequently the alone Cause of whatever is holy and excellent in man; moreover, since he confers grace when and on whom he pleases, working all things, and this among the rest, according to the counsel of his own will; it follows, that no foreseen faith, no future holiness, nor any excellency in the persons elected, was the reason why they were taken, and others left: but the sole cause of their designation to happiness, is, and must be, re-
solved

solved into the absolute sovereignty, and the immense freeness of his grace, who is not accountable to any of his creatures. Add to this, that, since the counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, and being unchangeable, whatever his wisdom ordains, is surely and effectually brought about by his almighty power, whereby he bends and inclines the wills of all men which way he pleases, yet without the least infringement of their rational liberty: it follows, that those persons cannot but sooner, or later, arrive at the enjoyment of salvation, who were from eternity appointed thereto.

Now, that this his purpose, according to election, might take place, and be accomplished in the salvation of its objects, not only without the least shadow of injury to any of the Divine attributes, but even in a way that should bring glory to them all, and set them in the highest view; the Father, by the same eternal act of predestination, decreed to give his co-eternal and co-equal Son to these elect persons, to be their Saviour and Redeemer; which divine Person should in due season take their nature upon him, and sustain and represent their persons, as their surety and bondsman; in their name and stead, satisfy the infinite justice and insulted majesty of God, by paying the twofold debt of *perfect obedience* and *condign punishment*; and, finally, having first conquered Sin, Pain, and Death, to be the *glorified* Head of his Elect to all eternity in heaven. And, since all the divine Persons, being essentially one, act in perfect concert with each other, and that which is the will of one, is the will of all; the Son of God, from eternity, freely and spontaneously offered and presented himself as the surety and undertaker for his elect, and bound himself to fulfil every part of this engagement to the utmost. And in this reciprocal consent of will, we see, as it were, the likeness of a mutual convention or covenant. By virtue, therefore, of this DIVINE TREATY, God laid all the sins of all his chosen people upon Christ his Son, considered as the Mediator.—I say, laid their *sins*; for that is the phrase of Scripture—*Isai. liii. 6, 11, 12.* *1 Pet. i. 124.* This bearing of sin by Christ, was anciently typified by the imposition of hands, and transaction of iniquities, on the beast which was devoted to sacrifice, and slain instead of the offerers: hence, the victim is sometimes called *חטאת*, and *זבח*, *Sin*, in the abstract; and the sacrificial beast, through its typical bearing of sin, was deemed so impure, that the very persons who were employed in the ministerial

nisterial rites relating to it, and who only touched it, were likewise looked upon to be legally unclean. This was the case, not only with him who led away the scape-goat into the wilderness—*Levit. xvi. 26.*—but also with those who were concerned in sacrificing the heifer, and burning the piacular goat without the camp—*Numb. xix. 7, 8. Levit. xvi. 28.*—Inasmuch that the Priests, who ate of the sacrifices, were said, in a remote, improper sense, to bear the iniquity of the congregation, *Levit. x. 17.* Without doubt, all these things were typical of Christ, and relative to him. Thus we read, *Isai. liii. 10.*—*If his soul should lay itself down as guilt; or, as it may be otherwise rendered, by way of address to the Father—If thou, Lord, shouldst lay down his (i. e. Christ's) soul, as guilt.* To the same effect is that of Paul, *2 Cor. v. 21.* God hath made him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us; *that is,* as the entire victim, though without blemish or defect, became sin and mere guilt, by its vicarious substitution in the sinner's stead, when God, in satisfaction to his justice, deputed it to that office: in like manner, Christ, though perfectly holy in himself, and free from all personal iniquity, was substituted in the room of his sinful people, and made sin; *that is,* an offering for sin, that he might bear it away, and atone for it; thereby doing that *actually*, which the legal victims did *typically*.

It should be observed, that the sins of Christ's people are so imputed to him, that although he was not the actual committer of them, yet they may safely and truly be called the sins of Christ. Hence those words of our Lord himself—*Psalms lxix. 4, 5.*—“I restored that which I took not away. O God! thou knowest my guiltiness; and my sins are not hidden from thee.” I take it for granted, that this psalm contains a prayer of Christ; for that it has immediate relation to the Messiah, is evident not only from the genius of the psalm itself, but from the frequent citations made from it in the New Testament. Our Lord complains of his sufferings, and of the insolence of his unjust enemies: he avers, that this calamity did not come upon him through any fault or offence of his own; but that, on the contrary, he had *restored that which he took not away.* However, he makes mention of his own guiltiness; which was therefore his own, because he had taken upon himself the character and capacity of a surety for others: as if he had said—“’Tis true, O my God, that I sustain iniquity, and am made a curse; but thou knowest all those

those sins, even the minutest of them, for which I am about to atone; and that not one of them is really my own, though as surety and mediator, I call them mine." So likewise, in Psalm xl. 12, (and we have St. Paul's authority for saying that this psalm is spoken of Christ) our Lord says—"Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head; therefore mine heart faileth me."

SELECT AND ORIGINAL OBSERVATIONS.

No. XII.

1. CHRIST compares the errors of the Pharisees to leaven. Why so? Because of its secret mixture with the wholesome bread. You do not make your bread all of leaven; for then none would eat it: but you mingle it skilfully; and, by that means, both go down together. Thus our Lord intimates, that the Pharisee mixt their errors with many truths; and, therefore, directed them to beware, lest, with the truths, they swallowed the errors also.

2. When thou art at the greatest emergency, strength shall come. When the last handful of meal was dressing, then was the prophet sent to keep the widow's house.

3. Well may God suffer thee to lose thy locks, when thou darest wilfully to lay thy head on the lap of temptation.

4. This is properly to be *righteous overmuch*, when we pretend to correct God's law, and superinduce explications of our own, to his rule.

5. The nearer a Christian comes to heaven, the less he loves or esteems the world; just as a mariner when he leaves port, the land he has left behind him appears less and less in his view, till it seems to shrink to a point, and at last totally disappears.

6. The servant is not above his master; nor can we expect to have our way strewd with flowers, when Christ's was strewd with thorns.

7. Dr. Goodwin once going along the street, heard a man swearing at a shocking rate: the Doctor pulled off his hat, and taking the man by the hand, said—"Sir, you are praying God to damn your soul; I pray God to save your soul." The words came with such power, that they were the means of the man's conversion.

8. If we trust God for our heavenly inheritance, we may well trust Him for our daily maintenance; which he vouchsafeth to the birds of the air, to the beasts of the field, and even to his enemies. He that feedeth a kite, will he not feed a child? He that supplies his enemies, will he not take care of his family? You would think that person monstrously cruel, who should feed his dogs, and starve his children. This cannot, without blasphemy, be imagined of our gracious and heavenly Father.

9. Luther had this passage in his last will and testament—
 “ Lord God, I thank thee, for that thou hast been pleased to make me a poor and indigent man upon earth. I have neither house, nor land, nor money, to leave behind me. Thou hast given me wife and children: whom I now restore to thee. Lord, nourish, teach, and preserve them, as thou hast me.”

10. The creatures, like deceitful streams, frustrate the thirsty traveller's expectation. They delude us, like the monument of Semiramis, with many a promising motto, as if they would give us peace, and ease of heart: but when we come to look within, instead of contentment, they afford us nothing but conviction of our folly in expecting satisfaction from them, or from any thing short of God.

11. The pillar, by which the Israelites were conducted through the wilderness, may be looked upon as an emblem of the safe conduct, which the church, in all ages, may expect from Jesus Christ.—As in that pillar there were two different substances, the *fire* and the *cloud*, yet but one pillar; so there are two different natures in Christ: his divinity, shining as fire; his humanity, darkening as a cloud; yet but one person. As that pillar departed not from them, by day or by night, all the while they travelled in the desert; so whilst the church's pilgrimage lasts in this world, the safe conduct of Christ, by his spirit and ordinances, shall be continued. But as, at their entrance into Canaan, a type of heaven, the pillar is thought to have been removed; for when Israel past over Jordan, we read not of the pillar, but of the ark going before them; so, when the church shall arrive at heaven, her resting-place, the mediatorial guidance of Christ is to cease, and the ordinances, which are here of use, shall disappear for ever.

12. My soul, thou art now as a bird in the shell; in a shell of flesh, which will shortly break, and let thee go.
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This feeble vessel of the body will certainly, ere long, be split upon the rock of Death: and then must thou, its present pilot, forsake it, and swim to the shore of Eternity. Therefore, O everlasting creature, see, and be sure, thou content not thyself with a transitory portion. R. W.

THE ARMINIAN CREED.

"I believe not in God's gracious Election of his People; nor is this opposite to Paul, Peter, and Jesus—See Jer. xxxi. 3; 1 Pet. i. 3. Eph. i. Rom. viii. 9—II. I believe not in peculiar Redemption; nor in the everlasting Covenant; nor that Christ was set up, from everlasting, as the Federal Head of his People. I believe not in the invincible power of Grace; nor that man's will is wholly corrupt; but that he hath a self-determining power, and can do many excellent things, as conditions of life and heaven. I believe not in the perseverance of the saints; they are not kept by the power of God, through faith, to salvation. I believe not in the decrees of an omniscient and omnipotent God, although the Spirit says—God worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will.—
 AMEN.

MR. EDITOR,

I Tell you above what our modern refined Arminians ought to say; yea, what I have heard them assert, viz.—“I am for no election; no eternal covenant; no peculiar redemption; no imputed righteousness; no invincible grace; no universal weakness of the will; and no perseverance of God's chosen ones to final joy.” Here behold the fashionable monster of the day! Arminianism at once contradicts the word of truth. May God be pleased to arm his servants with the love, boldness, and fire of the primitive Christians and Ministers against this painted, popular, pestilential mother of harlots! and grant that Arminianism, which came from Rome, may soon return, and receive its full reward! Now, Sir, I come to a second class of grosser heretics. Their language is—“Orthodoxy is indifferent: Calvinists want candour: the faithful Christian's fulfilling the law is unnecessary: faith and repentance are conditions of pardon: men have cause to complain, if the doctrine of election be true: election implies tyranny: none are chosen before conversion: better to be a Turk, Infidel, or an Heathen, than a Calvinist: eternal covenant

covenant with Christ is false, and Antinomianism: imputed righteousness is immoral and nonsense: faith is our righteousness: salvation—in part, at least—is by our works of merit: justification is incomplete: to be justified is the same as to be born of God: Christian believers are free from sin: some complain not of a body of sin and death: perseverance is deadly poison.” These, Mr. Editor, are some of the prodigious beauties of the modish religion of the present professing multitudes which adorn our highly-favoured isle!

I have been shocked, Sir, with hearing—from the pulpits of Arminian Perfectionists—things more outrageous against the Doctrines of Grace than any I have mentioned. I shudder on recollection—I will not stain my paper with what my ears have heard. They are bold champions for flesh-pleasing opinions. Their pamphlets, pulpits, and presses, teem forth a flood of opposition against the glory of sovereign Grace.

May the God of all grace, truth, and power, arise and plead his own cause; display the charms of celestial truth; and destroy, by his Spirit, the pernicious delusions of error! Oh! may all the true friends of Jesus, of every name, feel the power of Grace—constraining them more earnestly to contend for the Truth, once delivered to the saints! Let our prayers, hearts, tongues, lives and all, be zealously employed in the promotion of that Gospel, which has been always opposed, which always will triumph over all opposition, and which can never totally fall.

Your's in the Truth,

P. F.

MACGOWAN'S LETTER *to the* REV. DR. PRIESTLEY.

L E T T E R VI.

REV. SIR,

IT is far from my design to misrepresent your meaning, or to make use of unworthy cavils, in order to render you odious to your fellow Christians; neither would I willingly err in the least, in point of fairness, as you think your other antagonists have done: but you must give me leave to say that you have written many things without any meaning at all, unless indeed you intended to vindicate the doctrine of atonement so long exploded by Rational Christians. That the latter was the case, will not easily be believed; and, therefore, I shall admit the former, and shall shew from good

good and authentic records, that it is even possible for a Rational man to write without meaning. "When the mind has been tinctured," says my author*, with any false notions of God, it is hardly possible that they should ever be practically rectified; because the same names will continue to suggest the same ideas, and to excite the same feelings, whatever reason may dictate to the contrary." I think it is pretty plain that those many, who you say, talk of God like Arminius or Socinus, and think of him much like Austin and Calvin, can have no meaning in what they say, seeing their words are a contradiction to the dictates of reason within them. Dr. Priestley also informs us, that formerly he had his mind tinctured with those unworthy notions of God, commonly called Orthodoxy; therefore it is impossible that they should ever be practically rectified. This may serve as an apology with the Rational Dissenters for the many Orthodox sayings gleanable in the extensive fields of his productions, of which it may be said that they spring up in as little time as mushrooms; whether those of them that are upon divine subjects are likely to be of longer duration, I cannot certainly determine. However, the dictates of the Doctor's reason being diametrically opposite to every sentiment of Orthodoxy; it follows, reader, that wherever you meet with an Orthodox sentence in Dr. Priestley's works, you need not be offended with it, for it is only the influence which the former tincture of his mind has upon him, and in reality the author meant nothing by it.

It is, indeed, my opinion that many of your sayings, respecting the sufferings of Christ, are very orthodox, and some of them even strictly Calvinistic. Surely it will be the wonder of the age if you should at last come over to the Calvinists. Really, Doctor, I do not despair of your conversion; for I think it impossible, notwithstanding all that the Rev. Mr. Venn and the Protestant Dissenter have pleaded to the contrary. Should I prove you a Calvinist, and expose you to the persecutions of your Rational brethren, what would you say, Sir? Would not you allow me to have some pretensions to reason myself, although numbered even amongst the Orthodox?

But, before I proceed farther upon this head, give me leave to observe, that I am as great an enemy as you can be, to the burning of bodies for heresy; that is, putting people to death for the glory of God, and the good of the church;

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* Preliminary Discourse, page 19.

and have the murder of Servetus in equal abhorrence with yourself, notwithstanding Calvin was therein an accomplice. Nevertheless, when I consider that all the enemies of Calvin's doctrine, who have written from Bellarmine down to Dr. Priestley, have carefully recorded this instance, and industriously held him up to public infamy for it, it convinces me that Mr. Calvin must have been a man of the most irreproachable conduct and spirit in every other part of his life, seeing his avowed enemies have been able to find nothing else against him but that infamous act, of his consenting to the death of mistaken Servetus; so that the very reproaches of his enemies serve only to embellish his character, and to advance his reputation. I am not certain whether Dr. Priestley would give his consent to the burning of the Orthodox Dissenters at a stake for their bigotry; but if we may give credit to his own testimony, he is very willing that they should burn in hell-fire for their orthodoxy; for he is fully persuaded, that Jesus Christ will do by them, just as he did by the Pharisees in his time; the children of the kingdom, who were cast out into utter darkness, where is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. After such an expression of your charity, really, Sir, your censure of John Calvin hath not the most favourable appearance. Most people will be apt to conclude, that your spirit possesseth a degree of rancour, at least not inferior to that spirit which persecuted Michael Servetus; but it is well for the Orthodox that there is a great difference between Calvin's influence and that of the Rev. Doctor Priestley. I might indeed ask you, if those who are now called Orthodox are the only people who have had the honour of burning heretics, and whether the Arians themselves, in the days of their Orthodoxy, did not see the same necessity of glorifying God by destroying those who differed from them? Indeed, Sir, there are few sects among us who have not a lawful claim to the honour of having murdered their brethren for the good of the cause: and I am very much mistaken, if, even in our own days, we could not be furnished with divines who would very willingly take this method of reclaiming the refractory, were they but blessed with a government favourable for such a purpose.

But, leaving the shocking scenes of pious murder, I shall give due attention to your doctrine of atonement, as I find it scattered in your prolific pages; and I rejoice to see it forcing
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its evidence through the labours of the most strenuous opposition, and making even Dr. Priestley himself act in subservience to the great designs of truth. The first passage I shall quote relates to the mission of Jesus, shews to what end he was sent into the world, and is found in page 20 of your Considerations of Differences of Opinion. "A sense of our obligation to our Lord Jesus Christ, also as a person commissioned from God to redeem; that is, to deliver, save, or rescue us from a state of sin and misery." Now, Sir, whatever meaning you had, or whether you really have any meaning at all in these words, you must not be offended if I take the sentence according to its grammatical construction, and apply it to the purpose in view. The phraseology is truly Calvinistic, and Calvin himself could not have better expressed his own meaning than you do, even when you are labouring to root out Calvinism from the face of the earth. I am afraid, Doctor, that the Rational Christians will compare you to David Simple's brown-cow, which having given a good pailful of milk, kicked it down with her foot. It is true, you have laboured to soften that inflexible word *redeem*; but, in fact, it will appear that your explanation has but very little promoted the interests of Rational religion. Has really befriended what you call Orthodoxy, and not overturned it, as you humbly expected.

"To redeem us from a state of sin and misery," is the text. "To deliver, save, or rescue us from a state of sin and misery," is your commentary upon it. Give me leave to comment on your commentary, before I meddle with the text. And I assure you, I do not illustrate it by my own authority only, but bring with me the authority of Dr. Samuel Johnson, in his almost unliftable Dictionary, whose testimony, as a Dictionary-maker, is generally held to be good and authentic. He tells me, that to deliver, is to save or rescue; so that we have here no less than three words given in order to make clear the sense of one. Would not these three words, heaped thus together, seem to convey the idea of some great and imminent danger to which the parties, thus to be delivered, saved, or rescued, stood exposed? Also, does not the idea of something very great and hazardous in the undertaking of him who was thus commissioned to deliver, save, or rescue, suggest itself from them? In order to deliver, save, or rescue us from a state of sin and misery, must not what he did, who was thus commissioned, be in some way or other accounted to us, and rendered available by some kind of application? But ought we

we not, in explaining a word or sentence, to come up as near as possibly we can to its real sense, if we are not able fully to express it? This you avoided in the present case: notwithstanding your gloss upon the word *redeem*, expresses much more than is favourable to the Rational scheme. Permit me to review the word *redeem* in its common acceptation, and consider the Saviour's commission accordingly; that I may thereby teach you either to become Orthodox yourself, or leave our phrases to our own proper use.

1. To redeem. To ransom; to relieve by paying a price.
2. To redeem. To make atonement.
3. To redeem. To save the world from the curse due to sin.
4. To redeem. To rescue, to recover.

I am, Rev. Sir, your humble Servant,

J. MACGOWAN.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE.

DEAR SIR,

I Have recently had the pleasure of making known your valuable Miscellany in a circle of near one hundred miles, because I thought it calculated to succeed my preaching amongst thousands of dying men.

I am a poor, plain, country parson. I delight in my work, and often weep for joy in preparing for my pulpits. My work, Sir, you must also know, is the major part of my wages. Mr. Editor, I have laboured ten years, at more than ten places occasionally—besides my stated exertions—and have never received ten shillings reward, if money may be called a reward: it is, perhaps, so esteemed by not a few, and “*verily they have their reward.*” But, Sir, is it not hard that I should be often thrown into confusion, and most of my hearers, by the very disorderly behaviour of a few barking professors?

As a great friend to Gospel order, as well as to you, your Magazine, and the Christian world at large—as I must not complain when I ought to preach bitter things—I beg of you to insert Mr. Robinson's very seasonable remarks. “Just as the preacher is going to utter that one word on which the sense of a whole period depends, out issues a cough from some wide mouth, that shakes all the air, prevents the hearing of five hundred people, and gives half the assembly the headache. They who have very bad coughs should keep at home; they who cough by rote should be reproved; and they who have

have colds, and yet think proper to attend a sermon, should cough into an handkerchief, and so lessen the noise. Every cough is a kind of an attack upon the preacher's voice, and it is miserable for him to stand up merely to be coughed down. The best a public speaker can do, in such a case, is to utter his sermons by periods; and, by making proper pauses between each, to give folks time to ease their lungs. People, also, who come in late, after the worship is begun, are great disturbers, and they ought either to leave off that lazy habit, or to sit down at the entrance.

I am your fast friend,

A DISTURBED COUNTRY MINISTER.

A S S E R T I O N I I I .

GOD is a Fountain of happiness for man.

We say *a* fountain, rather than *the* fountain; for after having proved that all creation is unsatisfactory, we have nothing but the Creator left: to *him* we turn, and ask solicitously—"Is there true felicity!" We ask, and obtain an affirmative reply—"God is a Fountain of happiness for man."

Let us more fully state, and demonstrate the truth of, and draw a few inferences from, this Assertion.

By the word *God*, we intend not at present a covenant three, nor do we advert to the moral perfections of Jehovah, but confine ourselves simply to the Creator and Upholder of universal nature.

To have an apprehension of his eternity, infinity, immutability, omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence, a spiritual discernment of his wisdom and benevolence, manifested by the effects of his power in creation, at the same time possessing a warrantable consciousness of being in his favour, going forward to contemplate him in his works, with adoration, confession of our inferiority, supplication for blessings, and acknowledgment of those which have been already given; this we conceive to be the essence of felicity.

We must ask credit of the friends of Truth, entreating them to believe, that we design not intentionally to write one sentence militating against the doctrines of Grace; and we hope, by Divine assistance, that when our plan is completed, these Assertions will stand as the glory and honour of it. We likewise further intreat a full, impartial, and humble attention--

tention—an attention accompanied with fervent petitions unto the Father of light, taking his word for a criterion, and by *ibat* approving or rejecting.—“ Good and upright is the Lord; therefore will he teach *sinners* in the way.”

Let it again be observed, that we mean not to affirm at present, whether this favour may, or may not be lost: we assert that, independent of such a consideration, it is real felicity; the same as when a voluptuary, sitting at a banquet, enjoys his food, although he may not be able to ascertain, whether to-morrow shall be as this day, and less, that it shall be more abundant.

If a man sees that there is an abundance, which he can never lose but by his own fault, his felicity may from hence be increased; and such a conception is correspondent to the metaphor, *a fountain*, “ which flows, and flows, and will for ever flow;” nevertheless, this prospect is not what we conceive to be the *essence* of bliss.

If from a state of condemnation to death, a criminal be restored to favour; or in a starving condition, the wretched wanderer is brought again to domestic comfort; if the means of restoration was expensive, and when restored, he has an assurance given, that as there is an abundance, so likewise he can never lose it more; these circumstances will partly *augment* his happiness, yet neither of these are so properly the *essence* of it. In short, what we design to assert is, man's true felicity consists *essentially* in a consciousness of his Creator's favour; and in this Creator there is a never-failing spring of true felicity for the creature.

We must be allowed moreover to premise, that by the particle *for*, it is not our design to assert that man has naturally a *legal right*, or a *liberty gratis* to apprehend that he is in it; nor shall we assert now that he has not. These considerations have nothing to do with the present subject; our intention is, to convey an idea that this favour is *suijeto the purpose*; so that in the possession of it, man's true happiness consists.

DEMONSTRATION FROM THE SCRIPTURES:

“ The Fountain of living waters.”

“ In thy favour is life.”

“ In thy presence is the fulness of joy.”

“ In the light of the King's countenance there is life.”

“ Have I been a barren land unto Israel, a land of darkness?”

“ I lead

“ I lead in the way of righteousness, that I may cause those who love me to inherit substances.”

“ She is more precious than rubies, and all the things thou canst desire, are not to be compared unto her.”

“ Her ways are ways of pleasantness.”

“ Love her, and she shall promote thee; she shall exalt thee to honour when thou dost embrace her.”

“ Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.”

“ Eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.”

“ Thou shalt make him exceeding glad with the light of thy countenance.”

“ There be many that say—“ Who will shew us any good? Lord, lift up thou the light of thy countenance upon me.”

“ Thou hast put gladness into my heart, more than when their corn, or their wine, or their oil increaseth.”

In all these, and a numberless variety of other Scriptures, particularly as they are applicable to the human nature of Christ, we conceive that our Assertion is evidently declared to be true.

We further attempt to demonstrate it from the Creator's perfections, and man's natural powers.

Man's soul is *immaterial*—God is a *spirit*.

Man is a *rational* creature—God is enjoyed by a *true perception*.

Man is *social*—God is the most dignified and illustrious *companion*.

Man's soul has a keen sense of *approbation* or *disgust*, and that in proportion to the dignity and penetration of the object apprehended to be looking on its exercises—God is supreme in authority, and infinite to discern; he is also impartial to *approve* or *disapprove* of what is right or the reverse.

Man's desires are *unbounded*—God is an *infinite* good; his presence unlimited, his wisdom incomprehensible, his power omnipotent, his approbation delight inexpressible.

Man's soul is *immortal*—God is from eternity to eternity.

Man's soul, as to the faculties of it, is ever *the same*; these are necessary to the soul's existence. God is *unchangeable*; yesterday, to-day, and for ever, the same.

INFERENCES.

1. Man's natural pursuit of felicity, is with his *back* towards

wards the point; so that the farther and the faster he runs, the greater his distance, and this distance the sooner attained.

2. It evidently appears, that we are all naturally ignorant of our own best interests, however we may naturally suppose ourselves to be *profoundly sagacious*.

3. Those who seek felicity in God, are *truly wise*; because, in the highest sense, they consult their own advantage.

4. If man's powers are formed by God, for the enjoyment of his favour, then they are *degraded* and *cheated*, when employed in any other pursuit than that of *him*, for happiness; those only *respect* and *treat them properly*, who employ them in the pursuit of his favour; none but the latter live up to the rational dignity of human nature.

5. A pursuit of science, although in the acquisition of it we attain to great knowledge of our Creator's works, and even admire his wisdom and power manifested in them, is, nevertheless, without this *sensibility of his favour*, an *unsatisfactory* employ: the studious are no more happy than the inattentive.

6. The *most important* of all enquiries must be—"Am I in my Creator's favour, or am I not? If *in it*, where shall I see most of his glory manifested? If *not*, is there a possibility of my attaining to it? What are the best means suited unto such a valuable end?"

7. Whoever or whatever it may be that calls us from God for felicity, is, in the superlative degree, an *enemy*; on the other hand, those persons, or they which call us unto him, are our real *friends*.

8. Whatever we may *lose*, by seeking our felicity in *this*, or whatever *temporal evils* we may incur, yet it is wisdom to persevere; because whatever we lose is *comparative vanity*, what we incur is not *essential misery*.

9. Should providence bereave us of every other comfort, yet having *this*, we are full and abound; whereas, if indulged with every thing beside, and *this* denied, we are empty and in abject poverty.

10. If men are *really* and upon *solid ground* conscious of their being *in this* favour, we shall see it by their countenances and their conduct: such will be *serene*, and their course directed unto a further enjoyment of it; such will *press on*, though against both wind and tide.

11. If the mind is in equilibrio, we may be certain that it is at best but *half enlightened*; for what a man sees plainly to be best for him, that he will chuse *readily*.

12. Those

12. Those who are led seriously to delight in seeking after God, will *soresly lament* their remaining propensity to seek happiness in the creature; this tendency of soul will be considered as an *essential evil*.

13. In proportion to the enjoyment of our Creator's favour, will a propensity to seek felicity in other objects be subdued; and while the fleshly propensity is lamented, desire after God will prevail upon the soul, to *seek first and chiefly* the true enjoyment.

14. The more we know and enjoy of God, the more must our felicity increase: those who live the most in his embrace, and seek the most intensely after him, are the happiest of creatures; those who dwell in heaven, enjoy unmixed felicity, and will be increasingly happy through everlasting ages.

A.

A RECENT ANECDOTE.

[Communicated by a MINISTER of the GOSPEL.]

AFTER having preached at a certain place, about eight miles from home, every other Sunday forenoon, for seventeen years, with little apparent success; I began to feel some dispute in my mind, whether it was my duty to leave my people at home, to attend this congregation any longer. One Sunday morning, however, this doubt made a stronger than usual impression; and during my ride thither, I could scarcely think of any thing else in earnest. With some dejection of mind, and with much prayer, I revolved the matter over again, as I proceeded on my way; and came at length to the resolution of proposing my scruples to a few of my spiritual friends, and of requesting their judgment and prayer on the occasion, and of abiding by their decision. As these Christian Brethren have found it a trial to be left destitute of public ordinances, during the times of my visit to the place alluded to; there is much reason to believe, every thing considered, that the bias of their own mind would have inclined them to give it against my going any more. It pleased God, however, to supersede the use of this projected expedient, by a gracious interposition of his hand, just at the crisis of need, and to satisfy me of the path of duty in a very unexpected manner: for that very morning a woman, who, like several others, had

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attended

attended for many years without any real benefit, was so struck with the word as to cry out, during the last prayer, with the anguish and agonies of a deeply-convicted sinner. The congregation, as might have been expected on such an occasion, were all in a state of commotion and agitation. A solemn awe seemed to sit on every countenance; of which, after having prayed and conversed with the woman, I tried to avail myself of this opportunity of impressing upon their minds the importance of those truths they had many of them heard so long with so little effect: noticing, at the same time, the grief and discouragement I had felt on the occasion, and the deliberations with which I had been exercised on my way thither. It may suffice to remark, that the woman was relieved and comforted, and the people extremely melted; and, altogether, I was thankful to perceive the whole wrought benignly through the blessing of God, and yielded me a promising prospect of future increasing usefulness. I returned home with much satisfaction and joy, encouraged to pray and persevere in my labours, with a vigour of confidence and hope beyond what I had ever before felt. It is now many months since this happened; and I ought to observe, with peculiar gratitude to the Lord, that the prospect of usefulness has increased with the congregation ever since in an unusual manner; of which there are some hopeful pledges and joyful witnesses, who have united themselves to our church, and come seven or eight miles to partake of the Lord's supper—this poor woman among the rest.

Every reader will be at liberty to make his own reflections on this particular providence. The instruction it has suggested to the writer is, that patient continuance in well-doing, among the people the Lord has seemed to appoint us over, ought to surmount discouragements and difficulties; and the more we are tried in this way, the more earnestly we should pray. And it occurs to our enquiry, whether a patient waiting for answer to numerous and long-continued intercessions, amidst many inconveniences and temptations, would not eventually turn out better than frequent removals? Those ministers, who may be without a prevailing inclination to pray, and who feel indifferent as to the measure of their usefulness, and the spiritual welfare of their flock, may be satisfied with observing their place pretty well filled, their salaries competent to their circumstances, and their hearers always willing to commend them. But they who "travail in birth till Christ be formed in them;" who are susceptible of dejection, affliction, and fear, by every unpro-

unpromising appearance of their people, and whose satisfaction and pleasure in their work is regulated by the degree of their *evident* usefulness, will feel interested in the question: and to such I hope the relation here given, of the condescending attention of the Lord to a desire to be a blessing to souls, though molested with occasional painful fears to the contrary, and with strong inclinations to remove, will prove of service.

H. K.

ORIGINAL POETRY.

THE FIRST PSALM.

BY J. W. LL. D.

HOW blest his case, who dares not bend
To wickedness his ear,
With Satan's drudges joins not hand,
Nor sits in scorner's chair:

But in the Gospel of his God
Can find his chief delight;
Makes it his guide throughout the day,
His solace thro' the night.

Behold yon tree, by copious streams
Luxuriously fed;
How large its fruit, how broad its shade,
How verdant is its head!

Well may that plant describe the state
Of one knit close to God;
Its fruit the works of one disclose
Thus constituted good.

Now, with ungodly men, I deem
The case cannot be so;
They, like the chaff, by ev'ry blast
Are wafted to and fro.

Summon'd before God's judgment-seat,
Afraid to hold up hand:
Say, in th' assembly of his saints,
Shall such presume to stand?

No--

No—for the Lord discerns their ways,
 And knowing, disapproves;
 Whose province is to guard his own,
 And foster whom he loves.

ON A TOMB-BOARD,

AT HENDON, MIDDLESEX.

HERE lies *poor* RALPH, beneath this rood,
 And sure he must be blest;
 For tho' *he never could do good,*
 He always did his best.

THOU MAINTAINEST MY LOT.

PSALM XVI. 5.

O THOU, my fond and anxious heart,
 Why art thou always on the plot,
 With all thy little childish art,
 To carve and fashion thy own lot?

Know thou, the sov'reign High decree,
 Before the universe began,
 Hath fix'd the lot ordain'd for thee;
 Unerring Wisdom laid the plan.

Grand is the plan which time displays;
 Yet grander shall the prospect be,
 When thou shalt all *Jehovah's* ways,
 Finish'd in full perfection, see.

Then *live by faith*, and not by sense:
 Away with all thine idle fears!
 Thy plaints are mere impertinence,
 An insult on thy God, thy tears.

Thy God hath bought thee with his blood,
 For thee not sparing his own Son;
 Will he with-hold a lesser good,
 Who hath for thee so great things done?

Shame not thy God—shame rest on thee,
 If thou shalt ever murmur more:
 Hence, silent and submissive be,
 Be humble, and thy God adore.

R. W.

REVIEW OF RELIGIOUS PUBLICATIONS.

A Check to the Dangerous Opinions of Baron Swedenborg, and other Mystical Writers, extracted from the Works of the late Bishop HORNE, and the late Rev. JOHN WESLEY; with a Preface and Notes, by the Rev. W. WILLIAMS, B. A. Curate of High Wycombe, Bucks, &c. Robinson and Griffiths. 1s.

WHEN we hear of John Wesley detecting the errors of Swedenborg, it puts us in mind of a common adage, which says—"Set a thief to catch a thief." A great part of Mr. Wesley's life was taken up in opposing the Divine Sovereignty, and in purloining the crown of a sinner's salvation from the head of the Redeemer. There are as curious reveries, and jumble of inconsistencies, in some of Mr. John's writings, particularly in what he calls his Journals, as can be met with in the Baron's absurdities, or in Jacob Behmen's Divine Philosophy.

The Author's Preface shews the design of the pamphlet; which is certainly laudable, and deserving of approbation.

The Refuge, by the Author of the Guide to Domestic Happiness. 3d edition, enlarged. Button. 4s. 6d. boards.

THIS book most truly comports with the title; it points out a fallen son of Adam laden with guilt, and sensible of his lost condition, to the only hope set before him in the Gospel.

The subject, in our opinion, is written with minuteness, perspicuity, and brilliancy, accompanied throughout with no inconsiderable share of merit. It is printed with an elegant type, on a hot-pressed paper, and embellished with a beautiful frontispiece. We particularly recommend it as an excellent present, or New Year's Gift, to put into the hands of serious young persons. The following extract from it, will give our readers no unfavourable idea of the author's abilities—

"Whence originates that distrust of forgiveness with which many of those who have been eminent for vice are perpetually harassed, but from a consciousness of enormous guilt! It is not, in this case, my being a sinner merely, but my being so great a sinner, that is the ground of discouragement; which is virtually saying, Were I less guilty, I should have more hope. But this conclusion is fallacious. It is true, I may have been notoriously

notoriously profligate, and when contrasted with others, a monster in wickedness; but it should be remembered, that the commission of one sin, though not attended with the same degree of guilt, nor deserving the same punishment, will as certainly bar the way to heaven as the perpetration of a thousand. The felicity first promised to man, was connected with perfect obedience to the divine precept. The question therefore is—Am I a transgressor? If so; I am excluded from all hope of pardon on the ground of personal desert. The law of God, as a covenant promising life, is abrogated; and the only concern it has with me as a sinner, is to denounce sentence of death. Future blessedness is therefore as far out of the reach of the comparatively virtuous, as the completely vicious. Neither of them can obtain it on the ground of merit: they must, if candidates for the divine favour, both stand indebted to absolute Grace: and as it is no more difficult with God to remit, in virtue of an atonement, enormous than trivial offences; the most abandoned wretch has, in application for mercy, the same foundation on which to build his hope, and as much encouragement to expect forgiveness, as he that may be properly denominated the least of sinners. The one indeed will have much forgiven, and should endeavour to proportion his gratitude to his grace; but the other will, notwithstanding, have to ascribe his salvation to the same source, and be under equal obligation to adore the hand which, if it have not rescued him from the same depths of iniquity, has nevertheless graciously refrained him from the desire, or the opportunity of committing it.

“ If the Lord has laid our iniquities upon Christ—if he has been made sin and a curse for us—if he has indeed been wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities; and has really paid the price of our redemption—surely every attempt to obtain forgiveness in any other way must be highly offensive to the Majesty of heaven. Thus to act, is not to glorify God’s wisdom in providing this way of escape from ruin, nor the work of him who is styled emphatically the way—but to disparage both the one and the other. It is, as the celebrated Owen expresses it, “ to take the work out of Christ’s hands, and ascribe salvation to other things—to repentance—to duties. Men do not *say* so, but they *do* so. The commutation they make, if they make any, is with themselves. The work that Christ came to do in the world, was to bear our iniquities, and to lay down his life a ransom for our sins. What greater dishonour then can be done to the Lord Jesus, than to ascribe this work to any thing else?”