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SERMON,

DELIVERED IN THE ROTUNDA OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA.

ON SUNDAY, MAY 24, 1829.

ON THE OCCASION OF THE DEATHS OF NINE YOUNG MEN, WHO FELL
VICTIMS TO THE DISEASES WHICH VISITED THAT PLACE
DURING THE SUMMER OF 1828, AND THE
FOLLOWING WINTER.

BY REV. WILLIAM MEADE, D. D.

ASSISTANT BISHOP ELECT FOR THE DIOCESE OF VIRGINIA.

☞ THE profits of this Sermon will be devoted to the
Protestant Episcopal Church Missionary Society, of Virginia.

CHARLOTTESVILLE:

PUBLISHED BY F. CARR, AND CO.

1829.

EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA, *to wit* :

* BE IT REMEMBERED, that on the first day of August, in the fifty-
* fourth year of the Independence of the United States of America,
* L.S. THOMAS NELSON, of the said District, hath deposited in this of-
* fice the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as proprietor,
* *****
in the words following, to wit :

‘Sermon, delivered at the Rotunda of the University of Virginia, on Sun-
day, May 24, 1829. On the occasion of the deaths of nine young men, who
fell victims to the diseases which visited that place during the summer of
1828, and the following winter.—By Rev. William Meade, D. D. Assistant
Bishop elect for the diocese of Virginia.’

In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, entitled
“An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps,
charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the
times therein mentioned.”

RD. JEFFRIES,

Clerk of the Eastern District of Virginia.

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TO THE DISEASES WHICH VISITED THAT PLACE DURING THE
SUMMER OF 1828, AND THE FOLLOWING WINTER.

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PREFACE.

IN presenting the following discourse to the public, the author deems it proper to offer a few words of explanation.

He has hitherto declined the publication of it, in opposition to the wishes and advice of many of his brethren and friends, for reasons which seemed sufficient to himself, and which need not be mentioned. He is now satisfied that the publication is required in justice to himself, to correct erroneous views which have already been taken of it, and to prevent the increased circulation of the same. It will become the candid reader of it to remember, that a minister of Almighty God, on whom the most solemn vows were laid, at all times to deal faithfully with his fellow men, and '*not to do the work of God deceitfully,*' was specially invited by the officers of an interesting and important public institution, to deliver a discourse on the occasion of two most afflictive dispensations of Providence, which had swept into untimely graves, a number of the hopeful youths confided to their care. The invitation itself imposed upon him the solemn duty of endeavoring, to the best of his ability and judgment, to make the most suitable improvement of which the occasion was susceptible. In order to do this he was bound, as one who must draw his arguments and proofs from the revealed world of God, to '*turn to the law and to the testimony*'—'*for if any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.*' He felt bound to apply the great principles of religion, and the past dealings of Providence with man, to the particular subject before him, and thus endeavor to secure His blessing,

without which, no good could be expected. Neither was he inattentive to the sentiments and practice of learned and pious divines in different ages of the world, but, diffident of his own judgment, carefully inquired how they had applied the word of God to the events of His Providence which were continually occurring.

How far he has succeeded in '*rightly dividing the word of truth,*' and properly applying it to a very delicate and difficult occasion, and how faithfully he has copied after the highest and holiest examples of God's most successful ministers in different ages, is left to the judgment of a candid public. The author meant to do right; he wished to do the greatest good in his power; to say that which the occasion, the place, and all past and present circumstances of it seemed to require. He feels deeply interested for his native State; he looks upon the youth of it with lively concern, as the hope of our land; he regards with fearful anxiety all its literary institutions, well knowing how the formation of the youthful character depends upon them; he is verily persuaded that the influence of religion must pervade all their regulations, and exercises, or the morals, the piety, and even the literature of our State must greatly suffer; and therefore he felt it to be his first duty, to exhibit in the strongest terms that truth would justify, the danger and the evil of attempting any work of man without the aid of Heaven. If he has erred in the choice of his text and subject, or the manner of applying them; if he has gone beyond the word of God; if he has seemed presumptuously to interpret the ways of God; he desires to be corrected, that he may do so no more. Some improvement was requested at his hands; some useful lesson was to be pointed out; a minister of God was called upon to apply the word of God to the affliction and the afflicted. He endeavored to select from the many and gracious designs, which Providence doubtless ever has in such dispensations, those which seemed to the eye of faith most probable and most important, and to impress the same upon those most deeply concerned. He thinks that he has adopted a safe

course ; that no evil can, and much good may, result from regarding the calamitous events commemorated, in the light in which they are viewed in the following discourse.

It is superfluous to add, what will so soon and so clearly be perceived, that there is nothing new or striking as to matter or manner in this discourse. The author has followed an old and beaten track, and therefore feels more confident that he will not lead any astray. Novelty, on a subject where morals and religion are concerned, would be no recommendation of a discourse to those whose approbation is of any real worth. He would have been glad, indeed, to have had the privilege of some alteration and improvements, but the circumstances of the case require, that it be published just as it was delivered. Such as it is, it is committed to the friends of science and religion, and even to their enemies, if any there be, but especially to the youth of Virginia, in the hope that they will not so much consider its imperfections, as the good intention which dictated it, and the important subjects it presents to their candid consideration.

JULY 9, 1829.



SERMON.

AMOS, III. 6.

SHALL A TRUMPET BE BLOWN IN THE CITY AND THE PEOPLE NOT BE AFRAID?
SHALL THERE BE EVIL IN A CITY AND THE LORD HATH NOT DONE IT?

HAVING been already forewarned of the subject of this day's discourse, you are at no loss, my hearers, in conjecturing whither our text will lead.

It is known to you all, and must be deeply felt by many, that within less than twelve months, the place wherein we are assembled has been twice visited by sickness and mortality. In the first instance, the attack, though violent and destructive among the youth of this institution, was not confined to them, but, extending its ravages around, clothed many families with the habiliments of grief. In the latter, the young and interesting tenants of these buildings, with the families of their instructors, were the sole sufferers. In the former, beside the mortality around, three of the youths of this institution were suddenly cut off, and numbers hurried away before the appointed time; fleeing as before the face of death. I need not tell how the hearts of fond parents and brothers and sisters were agonized by the dreadful intelligence, that those from whom they had so lately parted in tears, hoping soon to meet in smiles, were to be seen no more upon earth. I need not tell how the hearts of friends and professors sunk down within them, at the thought of the calamitous effect which this dispensation might produce on the institution itself. These I pass hastily over, and come to the second and more appalling visitation.

At the appointed period, a goodly number of youths re-assembled at this seat of learning, and the hearts of friends and teachers and patrons were encouraged. None dreamed of sickness at a season when health is every where a common blessing; but even

at this time of fancied security, a second and heavier wo was at hand. A disease, uncommon in some of its features, most malignant in its character, and often baffling the skill of physicians, appeared within the inclosures of this institution; and six more are now numbered among the dead. Again must the hearts of fond parents and brothers and sisters be agonized. Again must numbers hasten away from the place of death; some, alas! bearing to their homes the fatal disease, and only permitted to yield to their unhappy parents and relatives, the melancholy satisfaction of beholding them die. And now again must the halls of instruction be closed, and the hearts of the boldest friends and defenders die away within them. They must look upon these magnificent buildings and think upon all the monies so generously bestowed on their erection, and they must ask, are we to forsake them? Are they soon to be as the long deserted seats of ancient learning, or as the ruins of some dilapidated castle? Thus soon must all our high hopes come to an end? Such thoughts were natural. Who could wonder at or blame them?

But in justice to those who doubtless indulged them, it must be said, they surrendered themselves not up to despair. As in duty bound, they sought out diligently the cause of this calamity—as with a candle, they sought it out—again and again they sought it, applying every discovery of science and every rule of art, till at length, despairing to find any secondary cause which might be brought within the reach of man and be removed by human skill, they have looked up to the great cause of all causes, and humbly bowing before it, have said, and publicly said it, ‘This is a visitation of divine providence; the hand of God hath done it.’ As such, they have resolved at this religious meeting, to acknowledge and celebrate it; and I come before you, this day, with a feeble effort to make the desired improvement.*

And have not these most afflictive events and this public acknowledgement, that the hand of God was in them, and a request that a religious improvement be made of them, all pointed the preacher to the words of our text? ‘Shall a trumpet be blown in the city and the people not be afraid? Shall there be evil in a city and the lord hath not done it?’

The meaning of this passage, whether applied more particularly to the Jews, or more generally to all nations upon earth, is too plain to be misunderstood. The application of it to the present occasion is too just and scriptural to be objected to by any but infidels.

* See Appendix, note (A)

The doctrine of God's particular providence, especially in those judgments which we are unwilling to consider as visited upon our sins, is here set forth in opposition to any other method of accounting for such things. The improvement to be made of such judgments is more than intimated; 'Shall not the people be afraid?' Shall they not humble themselves under the mighty hand of God? Shall they not reform? Shall they not learn righteousness and turn away the anger of God from them?

We propose, therefore, to assert this day, on the authority of God's word, his moral government of the world, to be seen in every dispensation of his providence, notwithstanding all the objections of infidelity and philosophy, falsely so called. We propose to show by an appeal to facts, the practical advantages of this doctrine over its opposite, that of Atheism, which either denies the existence of God, or excludes him from any concern in the affairs of man. And then we purpose to apply this doctrine to the very distressing events which we are commemorating.

And first, we assert the general and particular providence of God; the former, necessarily including the latter.

The philosophy of the Bible, on this subject, teaches that there is one eternal, self-existent, omnipotent Being, who, by the word of His power, made out of nothing all things that are; the mightiest planet that rolls in the highest heavens, and the most trivial insect that floats in the air; that as he first made, so he still preserves and governs every thing, permitting nothing to escape his notice or get beyond the reach of his government; granting no independent existence or power to the greatest or least object in the universe; that every thing which occurs is under his direction. This divine philosophy declares, that *in God we live, move, and have our being; that the very thoughts of our hearts are known to him, the hairs of our heads are numbered by him, and that he makes all things work together for good to those who love him.* There is not, however, so much difficulty in gaining a general assent of the mind to this benevolent superintendence of the Deity, where all is love on the part of God, and no guilt is implied on the part of man. It is when evil comes upon man, that we are most unwilling to acknowledge, that the Lord hath done it, lest we thereby confess that man has deserved it. Here, indeed, is to be observed the marked distinction between the language of the Bible and that of man. Here it is that even professed believers sometimes fail, and adopt the language of Atheism. Their belief in providence is too partial, the assent of their minds is too slow, the sense of God's presence too faint on their hearts. We must go

to the land of miracles, of prophets, of visions, of angelic embassies, of remarkable mercies and judgments, and we must open the book where these things are written down by men of God, in order to correct and strengthen our faith in God's providence. There we find God every where and in every thing, moving and directing, blessing or cursing. *I form the light and I create darkness; I make peace and I create evil; I the Lord do all these things.* Those dreadful evils which sometimes scourge the earth and afflict mankind, such as war, famine, pestilence, volcanoes, God calls his great plagues; with these did he often chasten his people Israel, and with these did he pour out fury upon their enemies. Sometimes he would send an army of locusts and caterpillars to devour the fruits of the earth. Before them would be a fruitful field, behind them a barren wilderness. Blasting and mildew at his command, would wither before their eyes the fairest prospects of the husbandman. Again a long and distressing drought would parch the earth and dry up the springs of water, and then *it was the Lord who made the heavens as brass and the earth as iron, that it could not rain.* These are the things which the wisdom of man ascribes altogether to natural causes, while the word of God scarce notices these inferior agents. God alone is announced as doing them, and therewith correcting his ungrateful and rebellious creatures. Some things there are apparently so uncertain in their issue, and some which occur so unexpectedly and so contrary to all human calculation, and which cannot be reduced to any laws of man, or ascribed to any regular known causes in nature, and, of course, about which we are all in darkness;—these, instead of referring to the decision and providence of God, we give into the hands of some unintelligible thing called chance, or fortune, or accident. But let us see what our divine Philosophy says. How often do we see the clouds which are filled with fatness for the earth, and to which the husbandman looks with longing eyes and anxious heart, carried hither and thither, high above our heads, by contending winds; now they seem about to pour their treasures on this field and now on that; a thousand hopes are disappointed, a thousand calculations falsified;—who shall say whither they will fall, to what distance they may be hurried away, leaving far behind the murmuring expectants. It is all chance, says the Atheist. These clouds are the sport of winds, and may yet fall on the very place where they are least needed. We have a book, Christians, which tells us, that '*It is the Lord who causeth it to rain on one city, and it is the Lord who causeth it not to rain on another city:*' and in all this has he some gracious moral design. Let us take another instance; when one man, by an un-

lucky blow, undesignedly takes the life of another, we call it chance ; but the Scripture says, *the Lord hath delivered such an one to death.* ‘*As when a man goeth into the wood with his neighbour to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the axe to cut down the tree, and the head slippeth from the helve and lighteth upon his neighbour that he die :*’ this is chance saith the Atheist. ‘*The Lord hath delivered him into the hands of him who slew him,*’ saith the Scripture.

Let us take another example, and that from an evil custom too prevalent in our land. What more common than lotteries, or games of chance, as they are styled. But surely God is not in these? The lovers and advocates thereof have never dreamed that God exerted a superintending care over such things. To many, this would be no commendation of them. Let us open the first and truest of histories, and there we shall learn their divine origin, and how entirely they are subjected to the Providence of God, and there may we also see how shamefully they have been diverted from their first and holiest purposes, and prostituted to Atheism and crime, and made the instruments of fraud, of beggary and wretchedness.

The lot, or lottery was appointed by God himself, for the decision of certain questions not so readily or happily determined in the usual way. It was the method which God adopted for declaring his own will in the question to be decided. The appeal was religiously made to him who has said, ‘the lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.’ Thus were the lands of Canaan divided by lot to the several families of Israel. Thus when Judas fell from the apostleship by transgression, the appeal was made to God by lot, whether Matthias or Barnabas should be chosen. Abused as this ordinance has been to purposes of most unrighteous gain, or unhallowed pleasure, still God has not put it away from him or set it at liberty from his hands. The whole machinery is still in his hands and the disposal of every card, and ticket, and die, is of the Lord. O, little does the infatuated gambler know, that a holy God is so near him, overlooking his hand, disposing the cards, arranging the dice and turning the wheel of fortune, as it is called. He thinks that he is appealing to some other Deity or principle, or mysterious unintelligible thing, called chance, or fortune, which decides his fate, but in reality it is the one only true God who decides the game according to his righteous judgment. He does not look on with complacency, my brethren, he does not bless this unworthy and forbidden means of acquiring that honest livelihood which we are commanded to earn by the sweat of our brow ; he cannot ap-

prove this coveting our neighbor's goods, or this shameful waste of our own precious time; but still he is present; and so far from ministering to our vices or giving countenance to the same, he does most dreadfully revenge this abuse of his own institution; this Atheistic appeal to some unknown God. Our pleasant vices are made instruments of severest scourging. Has not God poured out his fury on this profanation, my brethren? O, think upon the thousands and hundreds of thousands in our land, who have been utterly ruined in soul, body and estate by this very evil. O, think upon the fair prospects of hopeful youths, which have been blasted by maddening play! O, think upon the beggared wives and children, the ruined families, and alienated estates, and blasted characters, which may be ascribed to this very Demon of play, and then say if God hath not terribly avenged himself on those who have worshipped another God; or else acknowledge that this God of chance is some horrid Juggernaut, said only to smile when he beholds the blood of the victims who are crushed beneath the wheels of his car, or some bloody Moloch who delights in little infants cries.

Let what has been said, suffice to establish the doctrine of Scripture on this subject; and now let us briefly consider the doctrine of men in relation to the same.

Many there be who deny not the existence of a God and his general superintendence of the world, who yet cannot believe that he takes part in all the trivial affairs of men, and actually appoints all the accidental and seemingly irregular occurrences of life. To them he is '*a God afar off, and not near at hand*. It is beneath his state to enter into all the details of government. These must be consigned to subordinate agents and left to secondary causes. In this God we do not live, and move, and have our being, except in some very philosophical and figurative sense. But surely, my brethren, a moment's consideration must show this to be as unreasonable as it is unscriptural. Can God attend to all the generals in the world, and neglect the particulars which make up the generals? How can he take care of the whole human race without taking care of each individual? How superintend the whole life of a man without watching over each moment of that life? Let us not thus dishonor God and attempt to bring him down to a level with weak and ignorant man. This would be as one has well said, to make God the God of logical terms, of genus and species, but not the God of his creatures, who are all individuals.* What an unworthy idea that is of God, which supposes him either

* Bishop Sherlock.

unable or unwilling to attend, most particularly and perfectly, to every the minutest object in the Universe. Did he first make all things, and is he now unable to govern and preserve them? Is it not a part of his greatness and glory to be able, at one and the same moment, to give a full and undivided attention to every the most minute object of his creation, and to plan, and direct, and execute every the most trivial accident in the world. To deny this particular oversight to God, instead of exalting, debases him, brings him down toward the level of man, robs him of the attributes of omniscience and omnipotence, and must diminish our confidence in his government. How does this belief of God differ from that of the Epicureans of old, who acknowledged a God, yea many Gods, but did not allow them to know any thing of the affairs of men? These Gods were supposed to live at a great distance from men, in a state of profound ease and enjoyment, concerning not with the affairs of mortals. And again, how does this belief of a general superintendence, but denial of a particular providence, differ from the popular belief of the antients in chance or fortune? For if God does not interfere in ordinary cases, who does determine and guide those thousand daily occurrences which are confessedly beyond the control of man, baffling all his wisdom, contradicting all his plans, and disappointing all his hopes? Some invisible power must be supposed, or man is a poor, deserted, helpless creature, tossed to and fro, at the mercy of every wind and wave of life.

Who would wish to live in such a world? Well did the good Marcus Aurelius (and he a Pagan Emperor) exclaim, 'I could not bear to live another day in the world, if it were not under the government of providence.'

Others there are, more dignified and philosophic in their theory. They imagine some great intelligent principle, by which all things were either created or reduced to order. Then it was that all things were endued with their specific virtues or powers; then were the laws of nature established; then the order of the universe was settled, and all things have since moved onward, by the immutable principles then laid down, nor is there need of change. Not chance or fortune, but fate or necessity, is the providence which they worship. To such a God as this, my brethren, to such an inexorable being, what need of prayer? Can we believe in such a God? Is he the God of nature, and yet does he let loose from his hands all natural causes to operate upon man, his noblest work upon earth, without his own special direction, or do *fire and hail, snow and vapour, and stormy winds, fulfil his word, 'who rides in the whirlwind and directs the storm?'* Why not permit

God to sit at the helm and guide us through the perilous sea of life? Why not allow God to rule over his own world, and manage the exquisite machinery which his own hands have made? Brethren, all this is disguised Atheism, it is shutting God out of the world; as well say 'there is no God.' For the most part these philosophic Deists do not consider God as the self-existent, eternal Being, by whom all things were made. They believe the material world to have been coeval with Him, not made by Him. At best he is only the soul of the world, not the creator of it. He is the master-spring of the grand machine, not the maker of it. He is not independent of the world of matter, but rather inseparable from it, and bound down by necessary laws, or fate. O! this is not the God of christians; not Our Father who art in Heaven; not the God who visits the children of men, not Immanuel God with us; not the Being whom we can pray to with faith and hope, and whom we can love. O, who could bear the thought of being fast bound in the chains of inexorable fate, or of hard, pitiless necessity? Are not all these views of the Godhead only different modifications of that Atheism, which, without actually denying the existence of God, robs him of those attributes which make his existence a matter of deepest concern to man?

Having thus, according to the plan proposed, considered the scriptural doctrine on this subject in comparison with that of unbelievers, we shall now examine the tendency of the two systems, not by inquiring in an abstract way what would be the probable result, but rather by looking to effects which have actually resulted. And never did any contend on such high vantage ground as we do in this case. Unbelievers, indeed, decline the contest and concede the point at once. Strange and inconsistent as it may seem, yet have infidels, even while zealously asserting the truth of their scheme and the falsity of its opposite, acknowledged that theirs would not answer for mankind; that it would neither promote the virtue nor happiness of mankind; and that it would be better to encourage the delusion of Christianity, by reason of the kindlier influence which it exerts over the order, the peace, the purity and happiness of mankind. It becomes us to be thankful for the concession and to give them all due credit for that generosity which would leave us in possession of a sweet and purifying hope, which all their arguments are unable to shake. But we cannot forbear, in return, to ask them, what idea is this which they must entertain of the all wise and great and true God, who cannot lie, that he should have so constructed the moral world, that falsehood, a mere fabrication of priestcraft, should exert a happier and more moralizing influence over it than truth itself? Let infidels think of this

and then be ashamed of the God in whom they believe, or else disown the system which they have devised. Can that man lay claim to reason, especially can he arrogate to himself the freest and noblest use of it, who shall concede that falsehood is better than truth, and on that ground shall consent that the superstitions of Christians should be encouraged rather than the pure principles of Philosophers? And yet, brethren, so evident has it been in every age that the system of Freethinkers would demoralize and disorder mankind, that the more benevolent, or the more timorous among them, have not ventured to wish or endeavor the general prevalence of their system. Epicurus was so well aware of the corrupting tendency of his Atheistic system, that he advised his followers earnestly against meddling with public affairs, well knowing what would be the consequence of their being employed in offices of trust. Some of his followers, however, being men of restless and ambitious tempers, put his system to the trial. And what was the consequence? If we may credit Cicero, Plutarch, and others, several of the cities of Greece, where they were employed were forced to drive them out as incendiaries and pests of the commonwealth, by severe edicts and proclamations. A modern writer, who has accurately investigated the history of irreligion, and has ably portrayed its horrible effects, has told us, 'it was late before the Atheism of Epicurus gained footing at Rome, but its prevalence was soon followed by such scenes of proscription, and confiscation and blood, as were then unparalleled in the history of the world, from which the republic being never able to recover itself, after many unsuccessful struggles, exchanged liberty for repose.'*

On this subject there has been one sentiment in every age and country, among the wise and good, the friends of order and virtue; and that is, that the firm persuasion of some superior being or beings, superintending the affairs of men, punishing vice and rewarding virtue, both here and hereafter, is most favorable to the welfare of mankind. Corrupted as have been the various superstitions upon earth, and though some of them actually permitted, and even encouraged certain vices, yet is it, I believe, the decided opinion of those best qualified to judge, that the most corrupt system of Paganism ever embraced among men, is preferable to Atheism, or the rejection of all religion. Some precious remnant of that holy truth first delivered to man in Paradise, and afterwards renewed to the Patriarchs, coming down by tradition through

* Robert Hall, an eminent Baptist minister of England, who was the author of a celebrated sermon on infidelity, soon after the French revolution.

successive generations, was to be found in all the Mythologies of the Heathen world. Some virtues did they inculcate, although they permitted some vices. Some restraining fear of present and future punishment, some purifying hope of present and future reward from their Deities, was cherished among them, and society felt the benefit thereof. But where will you draw any such fears or hopes from the Atheistic system. I defy any man fairly to deduce from it the condemnation of a single vice, or the approbation of a single virtue. What has the disciple of this school to fear, or what to hope, from his God? We must not judge of this system altogether from the conduct of those professing it while among Christians. It must be taken out of christendom, far away from the land of Bibles; where it may have full scope and be free to speak, and free to act; and then would be seen to what acts of unbridled licentiousness it would lead; then it would be seen 'to what vile affections those would be given up who refuse to retain God in their knowledge.*' Although I am a Christian Minister, and speaking to an assembly of Christians, I cannot refrain from adducing, on this occasion, the remarkable testimonies of some ancient Pagan writers in support of the doctrine I would impress on the minds of my hearers. And with what propriety may I do it while we are assembled in this house, built after the model of that at Rome, once the temple of all the Gods, now, blessed be the Almighty, consecrated to the worship of the one living and true God. What says Polybius, the Roman historian? 'Among all the useful institutions that demonstrate the superiority of the Roman government, the most considerable, perhaps, is the opinion which people are taught to hold concerning the Gods; and that which other men regard as an object of disgrace, appears in my judgment to be the very thing by which this republic is sustained.' What says Cicero, that prince of orators and purest of heathen moralists? 'This has ever been the persuasion of our citizens from the beginning, that the Gods are the proprietors and rulers of all things, and that those things which are done, are done by their judgment and power, and they are very kind to men, that they inspect every man's character, and that they make a distinction between the good and the evil.' He calls Jove 'the greatest and the best of beings, by whose nod and pleasure, the heavens and the earth and the seas are ruled, who frequently, with violent winds and hurricanes, and with excessive heat and intolerable cold, has afflicted men, demolished cities and destroyed the fruits of the

* See Appendix, Note (B).

earth, and who, on the other hand, gives us all our blessings.' 'Who is there,' he says, 'so mad when he takes a view of the heavens, who does not perceive that there is a God, and should think that those things which are made with so much wisdom that human art can hardly attain to a knowledge of their order and revolutions, were made by chance, or having discovered that there is a God, does not also discover that it is by his Providence, that this whole empire was founded, increased and preserved.' When this great man, who was equally the patriot and wise philosopher, had defeated a daring conspiracy against the commonwealth, see how he ascribes it to the same Providence. 'Who is there, O Romans, so averse from truth, so presumptuous, so bereft of his senses, as to deny that all these things which we see, and especially this city, are managed by the power and Providence of God. If I should say that it was I who defeated these conspirators, I should take too much upon me, and my arrogance would be insufferable. It was the Supreme God, it was he that defeated them; it was his will to preserve our capitol; his will to preserve this city and these temples. It was under the conduct of the immortal God, that I formed this judgment and determination, and made such a discovery of the plot.' The same Cicero said to the Atheists of his day, 'If the Gods neither can, nor will assist us, nor take any care of us; if they take no notice of what we do, and nothing can proceed from them which affects the life of man, why should we pay them worship and honor? why should we pray to them?'

When we read such sentiments from the writings of unenlightened heathens, and think how many, even professing Christians, fall short of such pious faith in God's Providence, we cannot but exclaim, 'O, for a Pagan zeal in christian hearts.' However defective classical education may be, as conducted in our schools and colleges; however objectionable many things which we read in the ancient poets and historians, yet must it be confessed, that there is often, even generally, to be seen in them a spirit of piety, a reverence for the Gods and all holy things, which is calculated to cherish in the youthful breast a respect for religion. Impious men are there represented as wicked and dangerous persons, who regard not the sanctity of oaths, and therefore are not to be trusted. In vain do we look for the same spirit of piety in too many of the fictitious and sentimental poems and novels so popular in Christendom.*

The best of the ancient poets, historians and philosophers, were strengthened in their religious sentiments and encouraged to

* See Appendix, Note (C).

promote a reverence toward all holy things, by perceiving the character and conduct of those who despised them. We have already mentioned the Atheism of Epicurus, and the dreadful consequences of it, wherever it prevailed. There is but one other instance of such infidelity embodied in a system and embraced by a sect in ancient times; and that is to be found in the Saducees of Judea. They were the Epicureans of Israel, acknowledging, perhaps, the existence of a God, but denying his particular concern in the affairs of mortals, and affirming that there was no resurrection of the body, no separate spirit, no judgment, no hereafter. 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die,' was their motto. And they did eat and drink, and in every thing, they acted as those who were to die to-morrow, and to be accountable to no one for the actions of to-day. Josephus, the Jewish historian, informs us that they were, without doubt, the most licentious, cruel, inhuman and ferocious beings of that age. Ah! what would the ancient world have been, had all been Epicureans or all Saducees. Corrupt as it was, yet must we believe, if these Atheistic sentiments had generally prevailed, the wickedness of man would have reached far beyond any thing yet seen, and the human race must, by its own lusts and violence and bloodshed, have been nearly extinguished.

But, perhaps, some may say, these are distant things; you go far back into the history of man; we cannot prove so certainly how these things were. But admit that they are, as recorded in history, has not philosophy been improved; have we not become wiser than the ancients? Dare you bring such charges against modern infidelity, many of whose disciples have been ornaments to society and benefactors to mankind? For the real tendency of any system, brethren, we must look to the general effects resulting from it, in some case or cases where it is fully tried. Has any such occurred in more modern times under the improved system of infidel philosophy? Yes, brethren, it has pleased the Almighty ruler of the universe, to permit this experiment to be made on a larger scale than at any previous period in the history of man, in order, no doubt, to furnish to the later ages of the world, another and most impressive evidence of the awful crime of renouncing his faith and fear. In a certain nation of Europe, famed for arts and sciences, and for all that is polite, and refined, and heroic, there arose, during the last century, a number of the most subtle, ingenious, learned, philosophical, and withal most diligent, indefatigable and daring enemies of all religion which the world ever witnessed. They appeared at a time when every thing was most favorable to their enterprise; when the corruptions of true

religion had prepared the minds of men for rejecting all religion. Deep laid were their schemes, and well concerted all their plans. Their war was against every thing holy, every thing venerable, against every throne and every altar; but their favorite motto was, O, how I shudder to utter it, 'crush the wretch,' meaning thereby the blessed Author of our Religion.* This, brethren, was the watchword of Voltaire and his impious band of sworn foes to religion. They made France, and the countries around, to swarm with books, and magazines, and papers, and small tracts, which insidiously dealt out the deadly poison in such portions and with such mixtures as was deemed most advisable. The poison took effect; the contagion spread far and wide; among all classes a general infection prevailed; a restlessness and discontent under all institutions, civil and religious, began to agitate the minds of men. Reformation, change, was the cry on every side, and throughout the land. The new philosophy was filled with mighty promises of the return of golden ages, or of still more enchanting ones, under the guidance of reason. The perfectibility of man, was the beautiful theme on which the philosophers delighted to descant; and the lovely vision which floated before the fancies of their deluded votaries, to be realised when all the follies, and prejudices, and dull ceremonies of religion should be done away. I need not tell you, my brethren, that there was a public, national renunciation of religion by the decree of the leaders in this heaven-daring revolution; that the holy Sabbath was abolished or extended to a longer period; that the temples of God were shut up, and his priests murdered; that death was proclaimed to be an eternal sleep; that the goddess of reason was set up in form of a lewd prostitute in the great hall of Atheistic legislation, as more worthy to be worshipped than the great Jehovah; that profane hymns were sung in honor of deified reason. And need I tell you, my hearers, of other events that were transpiring at that time, or soon followed after in the train of such awful impieties? Need I ask, where, in the history of man, are to be found such horrible atrocities as were then committed, and in the sacred but abused names of liberty and reason? It pleased the Almighty to let loose these monsters of impiety against each other after they had been maddened with the blood of those more innocent ones, who were the first victims of their fury. The slightest difference of sentiment, or the least opposition of interest, was enough to rouse all their rage against each other, and they were executed by thousands, on a new and improved method of decapitation. The streets of

* See Appendix, Note (D).

Paris flowed, and the rivers of France were deeply dyed with the blood of her citizens, till, at length, wearied with crime, sickened with carnage, and seeing no hope of better things, the poor deceived nation, which had waged war against all government, and all religion, sunk down into the arms of a military despotism, and returned back to the bosom of the corruptest church in Christendom. The nation could not exist without religion. Such ever has been, and ever must be, the issue of every attempt on the part of man, whether as a sect of philosophers or a nation of infidels, to renounce allegiance to Heaven and live without God, in the world.* But it is high time that I come to the application of this discourse.

We have asserted the doctrine of God's moral government of men by means of those afflictive dispensations which are called his judgments. We have intimated that one obstacle to the acknowledgment of this, is, that it seems to imply guilt on the part of the sufferers, and great anger on the part of God towards them. The contrary doctrine is a quieting to our fears, and a relief to our consciences. Although a candid acknowledgment has been made by those most deeply interested in this Institution, that God hath done this thing, yet in some minds there may be a reluctance to admit it in all its moral bearing, lest it should seem to imply that this Institution is an offence unto God, and that he wills its destruction. Let us see whether such a conclusion must be drawn from such an act on the part of God. The Almighty has been pleased, sometimes, to cause the earth to open and swallow up whole cities, with the inhabitants thereof, and at others to rain hail stones, and coals of fire which have burnt up the cities with the inhabitants thereof. Theatres have been wrapped in flames, and the unhappy votaries of pleasure have been consumed almost in a moment. But let it be remembered, that temples erected to the living God have also been consumed by fire from heaven, whose lightning hath blasted them and the pious worshippers therein. Shall we say, then, that such dispensations are manifest proofs that God is so angry with all such places as to will their destruction, and that they should never more rise from their ruins? God forbid. Such a rule as this would condemn the holiest institutions, equally with the unholyest. We must adopt some other method of judging the unlawfulness of every work of man. We must take it to the revealed law and testimony of God, and, judging it by that, determine whether it be right or wrong. Having thus decided the lawfulness or unlawfulness of things, we are then

* See Appendix, Note (E).

more competent to estimate, aright, the intent of God's judgment in relation to the same. If the things be right in themselves, judgments befalling them do not make them wrong, but are only intended for the correction of some evil in their conduct, or for their greater perfection. If the things be wrong in themselves, God's law deciding, then may we indeed infer the worst from the judgments of heaven; then should we utterly abandon the work of our hands, which ought never to have been undertaken, for God is against it. That the Almighty is angry at institutions of learning so as to will their destruction, while they pursue, in a proper manner, the great purposes for which they are designed, can never be supposed. In all ages he hath blessed them too abundantly, and religion is too deeply indebted to literature, as is literature to religion, to admit such a thought. Too many able defenders of the faith have been trained up in the seats of learning, and too many noble works have issued from their halls, and too many youths have there become wise unto salvation, to allow the supposition, that God is against them. Only let them be conducted in his fear, and to his glory, by educating the young for usefulness in this life and glory in the next, and no institutions upon earth can be more dear to God.

The design of God, therefore, in these dispensations, and the use to be made of them by us, are as plain as they are important. When God visits us with the rod of affliction, it is that we may search our hearts, and try our ways, and turn to him. When his judgments are abroad in the earth, it is that the inhabitants may learn righteousness. Does it not, then, become all concerned in this institution to ask, may not these judgments have been intended to stir us up to more zeal in rendering it holy and acceptable to God? Should they not ask, with what views and hopes have we entered upon this work? Did we acknowledge the Almighty and feel that, without his blessing, we could not prosper; or was our hope from the talents and favor of man? Have we not only invoked the aid and placed it under the guardian care of God, but sincerely dedicated it to him, wishing to make it an instrument of glory in our land by training up youths, not merely in human literature, but in the sublimest of all sciences, and the noblest of all virtues, the knowledge and love of God? If such have not been the principles on which this institution was reared, or on which it is now conducted, is it superstition or weakness to ask, whether these visitations have not been sent to show the rulers thereof, their entire dependence upon God? See how easily the Almighty can blast all their high hopes and dash all their noble schemes to the earth. See how quickly he can send a plague or pesti-

lence through these buildings, and scatter far and wide the young tenants thereof, and strike such a panic through the hearts of parents and friends, that you can scarce recall them. O! it is a hazardous experiment to undertake the conduct of such an institution, in which the minds of young immortal, and rational beings are to be instructed, and their passions restrained, and their actions regulated, without constantly and earnestly imploring and seeking the aid of God in the way of his appointment. It cannot be done. With all the assistance that heaven is pleased to grant in answer to humble supplication, and in aid of faithful endeavors, it can scarcely be done. I know the difficulties of this work; I am well aware of the peculiar difficulties of it in this place; and am not upbraiding those who are sincerely desirous to do all that is right. But still, as the minister of God, requested to speak on this occasion, I can take no other view of the subject than that which has been presented; and am firmly convinced from the word of God and the past history of man, that any attempt to succeed in such a work without invoking and securing the blessing of God, must fail of permanent success. In every age of the world, the instructors of youth have been deeply impressed with the importance of inculcating reverence to the Gods, and making religion take its due part in their public exercises. The philosophers of Greece and Rome, Socrates and Plato, Seneca and Epictetus, failed not in this duty. The Rabbis of Judea made this a principal science in their schools. And has it pleased the Almighty to clear away all the shadows and clouds and reveal the true light to us? Has he visited the earth and brought life and immortality to light by the gospel? Has he set this in opposition to all the wisdom of man, philosophy, falsely so called, saying, 'Where is the wise, where is the scribe, where is the disputer of this world?' Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? And shall this be neglected and left out of the wide range of scientific research? Shall we be content to be wise for a few years only, and not for everlasting ages? From the circle of sciences, shall the most important, and sublime, and interesting be excluded? In an institution bearing in its very name a determination to take the widest range of intellectual improvement, shall that be omitted in which all are equally, because all are infinitely, concerned? Shall the roving and adventurous mind of youth be permitted to wander through all the labyrinths and mysteries of science without the sure light of heavenly truth to guide it? O, might I be permitted to speak to all the friends, and patrons, and directors of this college in the language of plain but affectionate entreaty, I would beseech them, as they would have it to find favor with God and

man, and be a mighty blessing to our State and country, that they solemnly dedicate it to Almighty God and place it under his guardian care. In his name, and by his laws let them rule over it. Let them see that the high motives and awful sanctions of religion be continually and eloquently presented to the minds of the youth committed to their care. Let the divine philosophy of the Bible be here studied. Let the morality here taught, be the morality of the Bible.* Let the Bible, the Bible, which is the religion of Protestants be the text book of first esteem and most constant reference. Let the history of our religion be learnt; let the proofs of Christianity be investigated; let the prophecies of the most antient and venerable of books be read and compared with all other histories which attest their fulfilment. Let it not merely be said, that nothing is taught contrary to Christianity; that the mind is left free to its own choice; rather let it be announced to the world, that every thing which can be said, is said in its behalf, and every thing which can be done, is done, in order to lead those immortal souls, who come hither for the high improvement of their faculties, to the saving knowledge of him, who is 'the true God and eternal life.' Then, indeed, may we be assured that this institution enjoys the smiles of a gracious Providence, and will be as others in our land, the fruitful nursery of Christian patriots, of learned defenders of the faith, of able and eloquent ministers of the Gospel, as well as of those who shall adorn by their worth and talents all other professions of our land, and shed a mild lustre over the most private walks of life. Then will the most anxious Christian parents, and the most fearfully jealous Christian ministers, cherish it with fondness, as the favored of God, and with confidence commit, as to a fostering mother, the sons whom they have dedicated to heaven, and would have to be trained up in its holy nurture and admonition; and then will those pious youths who have here been advancing in all divine, as well as human wisdom, ever look back to these seats of science with delight, and reckon among the happiest and best of their days, those spent within these consecrated walls.†

I have trespassed long on your patience, my hearers, but is there not a cause? Did not the subject justify, nay demand, the devotion of a few moments more than are usually given to such exercises? Nor can I, even now, part without one word of affectionate counsel to the youth of this institution, for whose benefit I am sure this discourse was chiefly requested. I have had them

* See Appendix, Note (F.)

† See Appendix, Note (G).

in my view during the whole of this argument, and trust that they have assented to its truth. To you, my young friends, the voice of this visitation has spoken in melting accents. Death has been twice in the midst of you, and at each visit has borne away some loved companion. On some of you, perhaps, was its cold hand laid, and you had thought to follow it into eternity; but one who had the power of death undid its grasp and bid you live yet longer. And wherefore have you been spared, ye young immortals? Wherefore, but that you may be the better prepared when next it comes, and none may bid it spare you more? In order to this, I beseech you to give a most solemn consideration to the subject this day discussed. Examine for yourselves, and examine well, whether Christianity be true or false, be the work of God or the mere artifice of man. On this subject call no man master upon earth, for it is an affair in which your immortal souls are concerned, beyond all possible description or conception. Beware, I entreat you, one sentiment too commonly sported among the youth of our country, that the great and the learned usually reject Christianity, or merely support it as an useful artifice. An assertion more unfounded never yet was made; a deception more base and cruel, never yet was practised on the ingenuous mind of youth. We are bold to affirm that the very contrary is the fact; that the great mass of learning, talent and true greatness, has ever been on the side of revelation. Shew us one such who disbelieves, and we will produce you thousands who believe. And of those who disbelieve how many have destroyed the weight of their testimony by the most absurd opinions, or the most wicked practices.* How many of them have either by their writings evinced, or by their own declaration confessed, that they had never carefully studied the holy Scriptures? Not thus was it with a Locke, who having in early youth read and believed, devoted the last fifteen years of his life almost exclusively to the study of the Scriptures, and who left this memorable testimony behind him, 'Search the Scriptures, they have God for their author, salvation for their end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for their matter.' Not thus was it with a Newton, who admitted nothing into his system but on the surest proof, and who declared the Bible to be the best attested of all books. Not thus was it with a Hale, the glory of the English bench, who for four successive reigns sat upon the highest tribunal of justice in England, weighing testimony, and deciding upon the lives and fortunes of men, and who, during all that time and till his latest breath, took the Bible for the rule of

* See Appendix, Note (H).

his faith and the law of his life. Not thus was it with Lord Bacon, the father of that philosophy which laid aside all the vain logic of the schools, and utterly rejected all idle speculations, and called for proof before any thing was admitted as true, and who believed Christianity for the very reason, that it brought with it the proofs which the mind in search of truth demanded. Nor was it thus with Sir William Jones, who studied various languages, explored the customs and manners of many nations, read many books, searched into the antiquities and mythologies of the East, and declared that in every antient book, and every Eastern land, he still found something which testified to the truth and inspiration and beauty of the Holy Scriptures.* Think not, for a moment, then, young men, that Christianity will not bear the searching light of science. She is herself the light of the world. By no term do the inspired writers so much delight to call her. The opposite system is darkness. Her enemies are they who hate the light. She dares them to come forth in the full blaze of day.

When and where did Christianity first appear? At an age the most enlightened, the age of poets, philosophers and historians, when they had carried their improvements to the highest pitch, when men began to discover and ridicule the weakness and falsities of Heathen Mythology, and to desert the Oracles of the Pagan Deities. At such an age did it appear. And where did it arise? This thing was not done in a corner, but on a high hill, Mount Zion; in the very centre of the civilized, commercial and literary world; in the midst of the nations. There did Christianity first arise, thence came she boldly forth, and lifting up her voice, she cried aloud, 'Where is the wise, where is the scribe, where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?' She marched up to the gates of Rome, and Athens and Corinth, the seats of antient learning. She challenged their priests and their philosophers to the combat, and convicting the one of fraud and the other of folly, converted the more candid and honorable to the faith. Nor has she ever sought the shades of night since that period. When darkness overspread the nations of Europe, then indeed was her glory eclipsed; but when the light broke forth, then re-appeared her glory. And who, let me ask, kindled that light? Who established schools and colleges, and studied antient languages, and read antient books, and wrote modern books; who encouraged the arts and sciences; who dived into the bowels of the earth, and pried into the secrets of nature, and analysed and sifted the most subtle essences of things? Who

* See Appendix, Note (I).

but Christians did, and ever have done, these things ; for they have ever found that the more science and history and mythology and true philosophy are investigated, the more clearly will it appear that our religion is the revelation of God to man, worthy of its divine author, and in perfect conformity to all his works? And does Christianity fly from investigation? No, young men, it is Infidelity that flies from the light. It is Infidelity which rejects testimony the most conclusive, and, unable to reason, resorts to wit, and would make ridicule the test of truth; or else bewildering herself and attempting to bewilder her opponents in the inextricable mazes of unintelligible metaphysics, at length lies down in utter despair. Trust her not, my young friends. Beware lest any man deceive you by a vain and deceitful philosophy. See to what atrocities of moral conduct, to what awful catastrophies she has ever led. Be warned by the experience of past ages, and choose that religion which has proved itself the best friend of man. Seize strong hold of it; grapple it to your souls, and see if it will not prove the power of God to your salvation. Make trial of it, each one on your own hearts, whether it be true or false, of God or man. If it be false and vain, then reject it; but if it be true, then hold it fast, for it is your life. Fear not the faces of men, despise their ridicule; dare to be singular, if singular you must be, in the noblest of causes. Let God's word be your daily study; daily bend your knees before his glorious majesty; never be ashamed to plead the cause of religion. Do not fear religion, my young friends. Think not that it is some dull and gloomy cloud overhanging the mind, and awing it into fearful silence. It is cheerful as the light of day, and happy as the smile of heaven. Come to it then, with all the desire of your souls, and drink deeply of this sacred fount, and you shall thirst no longer after the vain delights of earth. Young as you are, and prone to rejoice in the pleasures of this world, you will find that there are pleasures nobler far at your command. Is there, upon earth, a sight so interesting as that of a young man at a seat of learning, in the midst of temptation, surrounded by other youths of widely differing sentiments, yet steadily holding on the even tenor of his way, resisting pleasure, avoiding evil communication, acting from religious principles, and not ashamed to call himself by the name, and seal himself with the seal of Christ? Have you seen none such, my young hearers? Amidst all your young associates, was there not one who loved his Saviour—not one whom you all loved, all esteemed—whom you could not but love, but esteem; and who was a witness to the truth of that which I have spoken this day? Was young Temple less beloved by you

all, because young Temple was a Christian ; because a portion of his Sabbaths was spent in teaching the young and ignorant ; because the Bible was his daily study ? and when death was sent to summon him away, was he less happy ? Which one of you present, now in your minds most hostile to religion, and in your conduct farthest removed from it, but would, if called to die, rather be as young Temple was, than as you now are ?* And others there were, I am told, who, with their dying voices testified to the truth and excellency of religion ; who endeavored, and oh ! may it appear in the great day, not in vain, to cast themselves on the Redeemer's mercy. O ! young men, survivors of these loved companions, believe the testimony of their last and honest hour. Take heed to the latest and best counsel which they gave, and give yourselves up, earnestly and truly, to that religion, which is the most exquisite happiness of youth, the noblest honor of riper years, the crown of glory to old age, and the everlasting and inconceivable bliss of the redeemed in heaven.

* See Appendix, Note (J).

APPENDIX.

NOTE (A).

The author finds himself mistaken as to the public declaration here said to have been made by the Faculty. This allusion was, primarily and chiefly, to a statement of the Professors in the public papers in the month of March last, relative to the sickness which had dispersed the students. The author has never, until within a few days, seen this statement, having only heard of it from others. The impression made upon his mind by the report of this publication, was the same which has been conveyed in the sermon. In this view of it, he was confirmed, by receiving an invitation soon after, to commemorate the event in a religious manner; and by the pious reflections of the person chosen to make the request. On referring to the publication, it appears that there was a simple announcement, that such a disease had existed; that the causes of it were not to be discovered, and that such things had often occurred without any permanent causes of unhealthiness in the places where they had appeared. The author, having acknowledged this unintentional error, rests the view which he has taken of such dispensations on the general principles of Christianity and the consent of the pious in every age.

NOTE (B).

The following note is taken from the writings of Thomas Hartwell Horne, and is found in his chapter on the necessity of Revelation.

While Hume and Bolingbroke were propagating these sentiments in England, Voltaire, Diderot, D'Alembert, Frederick II. King of Prussia, and other distinguished writers, had confederated for the avowed purpose of annihilating the Christian Religion. Their writings are too numerous to admit of extracts; but it is in the posthumous works of the King of Prussia, that we see a faithful delineation of the real tenets and opinions of the most celebrated philosophers of the continent, of the founders and legislators of the great empire of infidelity, with the philosophic monarch

himself at their head. Every secret of their hearts is there laid open in their familiar and confidential correspondence with each other; and there, we see, that they were pretended deists, but *real* atheists; that although the name of a Supreme Being was sometimes mentioned, yet it was seldom mentioned but with ridicule and contempt; and that they never conceived Him to be any thing more than the principle that animates all nature, the source of life and motion, the sensorium of the universe; but in other respects totally unconnected with this earth and its inhabitants. 'In consequence of this doctrine, their philosophers, of course, rejected all idea of a providence, and a moral governor of the world. They ascribed every effect to fate or fortune, to necessity or chance; they denied the necessity of a soul distinct from the body; they conceived man to be nothing more than an organised lump of matter, a mere machine, an ingenious piece of clock work, which, when the wheels refuse to act, stands still, and loses all power of motion for ever. They acknowledged nothing beyond the grave, no resurrection, no future existence, no future retribution; they considered death as an eternal sleep; as the total extinction of our being; and they stigmatised all opinions different from these with the names of superstition, bigotry, priestcraft, fanaticism and idolary.' Such are the various, contradictory and impious tenets promulgated by the most eminent champions of what is called Deism, (and which have been repeated in various ways by the opposers of revelation in our age) concerning religion, the worship of God, and the expectations of mankind respecting a future state. We shall only add, that though the infidels of the present day profess to be the disciples of nature, and to receive her unerring instructions, yet they differ from each other with an almost endless variety. Having gradually receded from true Christianity to false, some are unbelievers in the nature, some in the providence, and others even in the existence of a God; but all of them are unanimous in rejecting the divine testimony, and in renouncing the God of the Bible.

NOTE (C).

Some late Christian writers have drawn the attention of the religious world to the great danger of the past and present mode of conducting a classical education, in which the minds of youth are too exclusively confined to the Heathen Mythology, and the imagination too conversant with descriptions and scenes of a demoralizing cast. That Christianity should be neglected during any

period of education from infancy to manhood, is an evil which can never sufficiently be deplored. Nothing can compensate for this deficiency. If all other things must be slighted, or even utterly neglected, in order to do ample justice to this, who would hesitate a moment what to do? But is this necessary, and may not both be duly attended to? While it is confessed that Christianity has been, and still is, most criminally neglected by classical teachers, yet it may be questioned whether some persons have not undervalued Pagan literature, and been too fearful of the Heathen Mythology; not knowing or remembering how it stands connected with sacred truth, furnishing to the advocates for Christianity, arguments which the infidel finds it impossible to elude or oppose. The apostate Julian, the bitter foe and persecutor of Christianity, forbid the use of the Heathen classics to the primitive Christians, saying, 'these men quote our books against us.' All the Mythologies of the antient world testify to the leading facts recorded in the Old Testament, and to the most striking features of the Patriarchal and Jewish dispensations; for, in truth, they were originally derived from these sources, and are only corruptions of the same. As the nations which descended from Noah were dispersed through the earth, they carried with them the traditions and religious ceremonies of their great ancestor, the corruptions of which constituted the Mythologies of the Heathen world. There is yet wanting, for the use of our schools and colleges, a popular work, tracing the striking resemblances between the two.

NOTE (D).

The following sketch of the character of Voltaire, is from a brief but animated view of the history of the Christian Church, by the Rev. Mr. Croly.

In the midst of this tempest of scorn, an extraordinary man arose, to guide and deepen it into public ruin. Voltaire, a personal profligate, possessing a vast variety of that superficial knowledge which gives importance to folly; frantic for popularity, which he solicited at all hazards; and sufficiently opulent to relieve him from the necessity of any labors but those of national undoing. Holding but an inferior rank in all the manlier provinces of the mind, in science, poetry and philosophy; he was the prince of scorners. The splenetic pleasantry which stimulates the wearied tastes of high life, the grossness which, half concealed, captivates the loose, without offence to their feeble decorum; and the easy

brilliancy which throws what colors it will on the darker features of its purpose, made Voltaire the very genius of France. But under this smooth and sparkling surface, reflecting like ice all the lights flung upon it, there was a dark and fathomless depth of malignity. He hated government; he hated morals; he hated man; he hated religion. He sometimes bursts out into exclamations of rage and insane fury, against all that we honor as best and holiest, that sound less the voice of human lips than the echoes of the final place of agony and despair.

A tribe worthy of his succession, showy, ambitious and malignant, followed; each with some vivid literary contribution, some powerful and popular work, a new deposit of combustion in that mighty mine on which stood, in thin and fatal security, the throne of France.

NOTE (E).

The following is also from the pen of the Rev. Mr. Horne. See his chapter on the necessity of the Christian Revelation.

The only instance in which the avowed rejectors of revelation have possessed the supreme power and government of a country, and have attempted to dispose of human happiness according to their own doctrines and wishes, is that of France during the greater part of the revolution, which, it is now well known, was effected by the abettors of infidelity. The great majority of the nation had become infidels. The name and profession of Christianity was renounced by the legislature. Death was declared, by an act of the republican government, to be an eternal sleep. Public worship was abolished. The churches were converted into 'temples of reason,' in which atheistical and licentious homilies were substituted for the proscribed service, and an absurd and ludicrous imitation of the pagan mythology was exhibited under the title of the 'religion of reason.' In the principal church of every town, a tutelary goddess was installed with a ceremony equally pedantic, frivolous and profane; and the females to personify this new divinity were mostly prostitutes, who received the adorations of the attendant municipal officers, and of the multitudes whom fear, or force, or motives of gain, had collected together on the occasion. Contempt for religion or decency, became the test of attachment to the government, and the gross infraction of any moral or social duty, was deemed a proof of civism and a victory over prejudice. All distinctions of right and wrong were con-

founded. The grossest debaucheries triumphed. Then proscription followed upon proscription ; tragedy followed after tragedy, in almost breathless succession, on the theatre of France ; almost the whole nation was converted into a horde of assassins. Democracy and Atheism, hand in hand, desolated the country, and converted it into one great field of rapine and of blood ! The moral and social ties were unloosed, or rather torn asunder. For a man to accuse his own father was declared to be an act of civism worthy of a true republican ; and to neglect it was pronounced a crime that should be punished with death. Accordingly, women denounced their husbands, and mothers their sons, as bad citizens or traitors. While many women, not of the dress of the common people, nor of infamous reputation, but respectable in character and appearance, seized, with savage ferocity, between their teeth, the mangled limbs of their countrymen. France, during this period, was a theatre of crimes, which, after all preceding perpetrations, have excited, in the mind of every spectator, amazement and horror. The miseries suffered by that single nation have changed all the histories of the preceding sufferings of mankind into idle tales, and have been enhanced and multiplied without a precedent, without a number and without a name. The kingdom appeared to be changed into one great prison ; the inhabitants converted into felons ; and the common doom of man commuted for the violence of the sword and the bayonet, the sucking boat and the guillotine. To contemplative men, it seemed, for a season, as if the knell of the whole nation was tolled, and the world summoned to its execution and its funeral. Within the short time of ten years, not less than three millions of human beings are supposed to have perished in that single country, by the influence of Atheism. Were the world to adopt and be governed by the doctrines of revolutionary France, what crimes would not mankind perpetrate ? What agonies would they not suffer ?

The following account is found in the *Life of Napoleon*, by Scott. See first volume, seventeenth chapter.

An unhappy man, named Gobet, Constitutional Bishop of Paris, was brought forward to play the principal part in the most impudent and scandalous farce, ever acted in the face of a national representation.

It is said that the leaders of the scene had some difficulty in inducing the bishop to comply with the task assigned him, which, after all, he executed, not without present tears, and subsequent remorse. But he did play the part prescribed. He was brought forward in full procession, to declare to the Convention, that the religion which he had taught so many years, was, in every res-

pect, a piece of priestcraft, which had no foundation, either in history or sacred truth. He disowned, in solemn and explicit terms, the existence of the Deity, to whose worship he had been consecrated, and devoted himself in future to the homage of Liberty, Equality, Virtue, and Morality. He then laid on the table his Episcopal decorations, and received a fraternal embrace from the President of the Convention. Several apostate priests followed the example of this prelate. The gold and silver plate of the churches was seized upon and desecrated; processions entered the Convention, travestied in priestly garments, and singing the most profane hymns; while many of the chalices and sacred vessels were applied by Chaumette and Hebert to the celebration of their own impious orgies. The world, for the first time, heard an assembly of men, born and educated in civilization, and assuming the right to govern one of the finest of the Europeans nations, uplift their united voice to deny the most solemn truth which man's soul receives, and renounce unanimously the belief and worship of a Deity. For a short time the same mad profanity continued to be acted upon. One of the ceremonies of this insane time stands unrivalled for absurdity, combined with impiety. The doors of the Convention were thrown open to a band of musicians, preceded by whom, the members of the Municipal Body entered in solemn procession, singing a hymn in praise of liberty, and escorting as the object of their future worship, a veiled female, whom they termed the Goddess of Reason. Being brought within the bar, she was unveiled with great form, and placed on the right of the President; when she was generally recognised as a dancing girl of the Opera, with whose charms most of the persons present were acquainted from her appearance on the stage. To this person, as the fittest representative of that Reason whom they worshipped, the National Convention of France rendered public homage.

This impious and ridiculous mummery had a certain fashion; and the installation of the Goddess of Reason was renewed and imitated throughout the nation, in such places where the inhabitants wished to show themselves equal to all the heights of the Revolution. The churches were in most districts of France, closed against priests and worshippers. The bells were broken and cast into cannon, the whole ecclesiastical establishment destroyed, and the republican inscription over the cemeteries declaring death to be perpetual sleep, announced to those who lived under that dominion, that they were to hope no redress even in the next world.

Intimately connected with these laws affecting religion, was that which reduced the union of marriage, the most sacred engagement which human beings can form, and the permanence of which leads most strongly to the consolidation of society, to the state of a mere civil contract of a transitory character, which any two persons might engage in and cast loose at pleasure. If fiends had set themselves to work to discover a mode of most effectually destroying whatever is venerable, graceful or permanent in domestic life, and of obtaining, at the same time, an assurance that the mischief which it was their object to create, should be perpetuated from one generation to another, they could not have invented a more effectual plan.

NOTE (F).

It was not designed to confine the attention of the students of Moral Philosophy, strictly to that system of morals, and that rule of duty, which God has been pleased to reveal to us in the sacred Scriptures. In all such institutions a wider range has been taken. The faculties of the mind, and the affections of the heart, and all the propensities of our nature have been brought under consideration, and the speculations of philosophers, antient and modern, have been critically examined. When this is done soberly and humbly, and not in a spirit of scepticism and proud independence of revelation, good, and not evil, will be the result. All such inquiries must end in a conviction that the morality of the Bible is that which is adapted to the nature of man, by him who formed that nature, and who knew what was in man. Any speculations at variance with this, and contrary to this great and inspired text book, must be wrong, or else this book is wrong. The celebrated Doctor Chalmers, the great moral philosopher of Scotland, has adopted for the use of his class, the able and excellent work of Butler, which shows the striking analogy between natural and revealed religion. The Bible, then, the Bible which is the religion of Protestants, contains the moral law which is for our hearts and lives, and however lawful and proper it may be to show the excellency of this, by noticing its suitableness to our nature, and its superiority to all other systems ever devised by man, it can never be lawful to deviate from it. The more constant our reference to it, the more surely will we embrace the true morality. Infidels have indeed departed widely from it, and have given to the world, as will be shown in a subsequent note, some monstrous doctrines in its place.

NOTE (G).

Some explanation is necessary, to prevent misconception of the author's meaning, in relation to the introduction of religion as a part of that extensive circle of sciences proposed to be taught at the University. Although the general terms used by him might be so construed, he did not design to convey the idea that there should be a Professor of Theology, who should teach the whole subject of divinity, in all its branches, so as to educate young men as for the ministry. This has for many years past, by the common consent of Christians in our country, been transferred to Theological Schools, having regular Professors, entirely devoted to this duty. Such institutions are greatly preferred on many accounts. The author was only pleading for such attention to religious worship during the days of the week, and such religious instructions on the Sabbath, and such religious government of the institution at all times, as would afford to all the youth belonging to it, every possible opportunity and inducement to become wise unto salvation. This is done in most of the Colleges in our country, by means of the Professors; such of them at least who are pious men, or ministers of the Gospel. These, by turns, perform religious services morning and evening, at which the students are required to be present, and, on the Sabbath, divide the students into classes, and instruct them in the history contained in the Bible, the true meaning of the most important parts of it, the evidences attesting the truth of it, and the conformity of the word, to the works of God. This might be effected, to a certain extent at least, by the appointment of a suitable individual as Chaplain to the institution, who should be entirely devoted to this duty, and who should be as firmly supported in the discharge of it as any Professor. To this, I am well aware, it will be objected, that as this is an institution of the State, belonging equally to all its citizens and to all denominations of Christians, it would be difficult to make such appointment without exciting the jealousies and fears of rival sects. To which I reply, that in an affair confessedly so important, and in which there is such danger of offending Heaven and losing its favor, and the favor of the most pious of our citizens, we should not be too easily deterred from attempting, at least, to perform what promises so much good. Perhaps in this, as in many other instances, it might be found that our fears were greater than they need have been. Let us look for encouragement to some other public institutions in our land, which have set us the example. The Congress of the United States and the Legislatures of the different States, are composed of all denominations,

and are supported out of the public treasury, and yet the most of them have Chaplains to perform religious duties each day, and on the Sabbath. The institution at West Point and our public armed vessels, are similarly constituted ; and these also have Chaplains ; nor have we heard of any difficulty attending their appointments, or any complaints made against them. There may have been, but the author is not aware of them. He fears, indeed, that as much good has not resulted from these appointments as could be desired ; but neither was as much to have been expected as from one in a literary institution, where there is a faithful co-operation on the part of all the Professors and rulers, in order to give due efficacy to the appointment, without which co-operation, indeed, but little is to be expected. Other institutions there are in our land, holding out yet greater encouragement to this experiment, and calculated to diminish our fears of provoking the jealousy of rival interests. There are Colleges in our land under the patronage of State Legislatures, and others which have been reared and are supported by persons of different religious sentiments and sects, all of which are of course exposed to this same difficulty and liable to the same danger of giving offence in attempting to appoint ministers of the Gospel to take part in the literary as well as religious conduct of the institution, and yet they have encountered the difficulty, and escaped the danger, and accomplished the good. The author could mention some, and doubts not there are many others. Some years since, in travelling through the United States, he visited different Colleges, and found ministers of the Gospel taking part in their management. In the College of South Carolina, a Baptist minister presided and an Episcopal minister was Professor. In Chapel Hill College, of North Carolina, a Presbyterian minister presided, and an Episcopal minister was Professor, and each took part in the religious services of the College. In various Colleges to the north, the same union of different denominations took place in the government. In the College of Carlisle, Pennsylvania, the same has ever been, since the author's recollection. And shall Virginia alone be unable to do this ? Because the University is an institution of the people or the Legislature, must it necessarily be devoid of this feature ? I, for one, am ready to say, let the experiment be made, and let it be seen whether the Christians of Virginia are so selfish and jealous, and narrow-minded, as to object ; if so, let the shame rest upon them and let infidels triumph. I trust the believers of the Gospel, in all the different denominations, will not suffer themselves to be misled by the artful and the bigoted who profess to be Christians ; neither by the irreligious who

would gladly embroil them in a contest which must end in disgrace to the cause. Christian parents will surely wish to see the institution to which they would send their sons, under such religious government, as, by the blessing of God, will carry on that work, which they have been endeavoring to foster in their hearts at home. Is there not reasonable ground for the belief, that such daily worship of God, on each morning and evening, in short and suitable prayers, accompanied by a few well selected verses out of the book of God, and the devotion of a part of each Sabbath to religious exercises and instructions, would tend to the preservation of order during the week, to the increase not only of religious knowledge, but of all useful science, to the redemption of the Sabbath from profanation (which, unless the best, is always the worst day of the seven) and to the promotion of all the best interests of the institution. We can see no evil likely to result from the trial, and we think we can see much probable good.

NOTE (H.)

This note is also from the Rev. Mr. Horne's work.

The following sentiments of some leading infidels, will show into what errors and absurdities they run who reject the Bible.

Lord Herbert declared, that the indulgence of lust and anger is no more to be blamed, than the thirst occasioned by the drop-sy, or the drowsiness occasioned by lethargy.

Mr. Hobbes asserted, that the civil or municipal law, is the only foundation of right and wrong; that when there is no civil law, every man's judgment, is the only standard of right and wrong; that the sovereign is not bound by any obligation of truth and justice, and can do no wrong to his subjects; that every man has a right to all things, and may lawfully get them if he can.

Lord Bolingbroke taught, that ambition, the lust of power, sensuality and avarice, may be lawfully gratified, if they can be safely gratified; that man lives only in the present world, and is only a superior animal; that the chief end of man is to gratify the appetites and inclinations of the flesh; that modesty is inspired by mere prejudice; that polygamy is a part of the law, or religion of nature.

Mr. Hume, the immorality of whose principles is discovered in his 'Private Correspondence,' lately published, maintained, that self denial and humility are not virtues, but are useless and mischievous; that pride, self valuation, ingenuity, eloquence, quickness of thought, easiness of expression, delicacy of taste, strength of body, are virtues; and consequently to want honesty, to want

understanding, and to want virtue, are equally the subjects of moral disapprobation ; and that suicide and adultery are perfectly allowable.

Voltaire and Helvetius advocated the most unlimited indulgence of the animal appetites ; and the former acted according to his principles. Rousseau resorted to his feelings as the only standard of morality. 'I have only to consult myself,' said he, 'concerning what I do. All that I feel to be right, is right ; whatever I feel to be wrong, is wrong. All the morality of our actions lies in the judgment we form of them.' And just before the French revolution broke out, it is a known fact, that the idea of moral obligation was exploded among the infidel clubs that existed in every part of France. Such is the morality taught by some of those, who, in the last century, claimed to be received as the masters of reason.

With regard to the influence of Deism on individuals, we may remark, that the effects which it produces are perfectly in unison with the principles which its advocates had maintained. In order to accomplish their designs, there is no baseness in hypocrisy to which they have not submitted. Almost all of them have worn a mask of friendship, that they might stab Christianity to the heart. They have professed a reverence for it, while they were aiming to destroy it. Collins, though he had no belief in Christianity, yet qualified himself for civil office by partaking of the Lord's supper ; and Shaftesbury and others were guilty of the same base hypocrisy. Such faithless professions, such gross violations of truth, in Christians, would have been proclaimed to the universe by these very writers, as infamous desertions of principle and decency.

The morals of Rochester and Wharton need no comment. Woolston was a gross blasphemer. Blount solicited his sister in law to marry him, and being refused, shot himself. Tindal was originally a protestant, then turned papist, then protestant again, merely to suit the times ; and was, at the same time, infamous for vice in general and the total want of principle. He is said to have died with this prayer in his mouth : 'If there is a God, I desire that he may have mercy on me.' Hobbes wrote his *Leviathan* to serve the cause of Charles the first, but finding him fail of success, he turned it to the defence of Cromwell, and made a merit of this fact to the usurper, as Hobbes himself unblushingly declared to Lord Clarendon. Morgan had no regard to truth, as is evident from his numerous falsifications of Scripture, as well as from the vile hypocrisy of professing himself a Christian in those very writings in which he labored to destroy Christianity. Voltaire in a letter now remaining, requested his friend D'Alembert, to tell for him a direct and palpable lie, by denying that he was

the author of the Philosophical Dictionary. D'Alembert, in his answer, informed him that he had told the lie. Voltaire has indeed expressed his own moral character in the following words: 'Monsieur Abbé, I must be read, no matter whether I am believed or not.' He also solemnly professed to believe the Catholic religion, although at the same time he doubted the existence of a God: and at the very moment he was plotting the destruction of Christianity and introducing the awful watch word of his party, *Ecrasez l'Enfame*—at that very moment, with bended knee and uplifted eye, he adored the cross of Christ, and received the communion in the church of Rome.

The dishonest perjury, and gross profligacy of Rousseau, who alternately professed and abjured the Roman Catholic and Protestant religion, without believing either, and who died in the very act of uttering a notorious falsehood to his Creator, as well as of Paine and other advocates of infidelity, are too notorious to render it necessary to pollute these pages with the detail of them.

NOTE (I).

To the great and good men mentioned in the sermon, we may add two names, which must be dear to the youth of Virginia, Washington and Henry. The former, in his Farewell Address to the People of the United States, thus writes of religion. 'Of all the dispositions and habits, which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labour to subvert these great pillars of human happiness—these firmest props of men and citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connexions with private and public felicity. Let it be simply asked, where is the security for property, for reputation, for life,—if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths which are the instruments of investigation in the courts of justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of a peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect, that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.'

Of the sentiments of Patrick Henry on this subject, the following extract from Mr. Wirt's Life of this great orator and patriot, will give us a just idea.

'A friend who visited him not long before his death, found him

engaged in reading the Bible : ' here,' said he, holding it up, ' is a book worth more than all the other books that were ever printed ; yet it is my misfortune never to have found time to read it, with the proper attention and feeling, till lately. I trust in the mercy of Heaven, that it is not yet too late.' He was much pleased with Soame Jenyns' View of the Internal Evidences of the Christian Religion ; so much so, that about the year 1790, he had an impression of it struck at his own expense, and distributed among the people. His other favorite works on the subject were ' Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul,' and ' Butler's Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed.' This latter work, he used at one period of his life, to style, by way of pre-eminence, *his bible*. The selection proves not only the piety of his temper, but the correctness of his taste, and his relish for profound and vigorous disquisition.'

NOTE (J).

The interesting youth here alluded to, was from Essex county, Virginia, and so truly pious and conscientious was he in his whole character and conduct, that all who knew him, were constrained to love and esteem him. In his life, and in his death, he illustrated the beauty of holiness in an eminent degree.

The author cannot conclude, without recommending to the young men, whose benefit has ever been kept in view, during the preceding discourse and notes, the memoirs of two talented, and pious youths, who have been within a few years past, suddenly taken from the colleges of Scotland, and removed to higher seats of learning and piety in the kingdom of Heaven. He alludes to the memoirs of Durant and Urquhart, which have been republished in this country, and ought to be found in all our schools and colleges. Perhaps this hint may lead some Christian parent to obtain them for his son, or some youth of Virginia to procure them for himself ; if so, it will not be in vain.

☞ In consequence of a mistake in the manuscript, an error escaped, page 32, in a part of this edition. The error is this ; Note E. is divided, the reference to the subsequent note being inserted in it. The reader is requested to mark out the words " Note F." on page 32 ; and observe, that Note E. commences on page 31, and ends on page 34, where Note F. properly commences.

CONCLUSION :

THE sentiments of some eminent men on the subject of Christianity, or rather their faith in it, having been briefly declared in the foregoing discourse, the author feeling deeply concerned that the youth of Virginia should have this subject fairly and fully presented to them, cannot forbear to add the following statements.

John Locke. This enlightened man and profound reasoner was most firmly attached to the Christian religion. The sacred Scriptures are every where mentioned by him with the greatest reverence; and he exhorts Christians to betake themselves in earnest to the study of the way of salvation in those holy writings wherein God has revealed it from heaven and proposed it to the world. In a letter written, just before his death, to a person who asked the question, 'What is the shortest and surest way for a young man to attain the true knowledge of the Christian religion?' he says, 'Let him study the Holy Scriptures, especially the New Testament. Therein are contained the words of eternal life. It has God for its author; salvation for its end; and truth without any mixture of error for its matter.' This advice was conformable to his own practice. For fourteen or fifteen years he applied himself in an especial manner to the study of the Scriptures, and employed the last years of his life hardly in any thing else. He was never weary of admiring the great views of that sacred book, and the just relation of all its parts; 'he every day made fresh discoveries in it, that gave him fresh cause of admiration.' The consolation which he derived from divine revelation is forcibly expressed in these words: 'I gratefully receive and rejoice in the light of revelation, which has set me at rest in many things, the manner of which my poor reason can by no means make out to me.' On the day before his death, he particularly advised all about him to read the Scriptures; and especially exalted the care which God shewed to man, in justifying him by faith in Jesus Christ; and in particular, returned God thanks for having blessed him with the knowledge of that Divine Saviour.

Sir Isaac Newton. Of this celebrated mathematician and extraordinary genius, it is said, that in learning mathematics he did

not study Euclid; he understood him almost before he had read him; a cast of the eye on the theorems was sufficient to make him master of them. Several of his works mark a profundity of thought and reflection that has astonished the most learned men. He was thoroughly persuaded of the truth of Revelation; and amidst the great variety of books which he had constantly before him, that which he loved the best and studied with the greatest application, was the Bible. He was, indeed, a truly pious man; and his discoveries, concerning the frame and system of the universe, were applied by him to demonstrate the being of a God, and to illustrate his power and wisdom. He also wrote an excellent discourse to prove, that the remarkable prophecy of Daniel's weeks, was an express prediction of the coming of the Messiah, and that it was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. He died in the eighty-fifth year of his age. In his principles and conduct through life, he has left a strong and comfortable evidence, that the highest intellectual powers harmonize with religion and virtue; and that there is nothing in Christianity but what will abide the scrutiny of the soundest and most enlarged understanding.

Lord Bacon, high chancellor of England. The following account of this celebrated philosopher, is taken from Addison. Sir Francis Bacon was a man, who for greatness of genius and compass of knowledge, did honor to his age and country; I could almost say, to human nature itself. He possessed at once, all those extraordinary talents which were divided amongst the greatest authors of antiquity. He had the sound, distinct, comprehensive knowledge of Aristotle, with all the beautiful lights, graces and embellishments of Cicero. One does not know which most to admire in his writings, the strength of reason, the force of style, or the brightness of imagination. I was infinitely pleased to find among the writings of this extraordinary man, a prayer of his own composing, which for the elevation of thought and greatness of expression seems rather the devotion of an angel than of a man. The following brief extract will suffice to shew its character.

‘Remember, O Lord, how thy servant has walked before thee; remember what I have first sought and what has been principal in my intentions. I have loved thy assembly; I have mourned for the divisions of thy Church; I have delighted in the brightness of thy sanctuary; I have ever prayed unto thee, that the vine which thy right hand hath planted in this nation, might have the former and the latter rain; and that it might stretch its branches to the seas and to the floods. Thy creatures have been my books, but thy Scriptures much more so. I have sought thee in the courts, the fields and the gardens; but I have found thee in thy temples.

Thousands have been my sins, and ten thousand my transgressions; but thy sanctifications have remained with me, and my heart, through thy grace, hath been an unquenched coal upon thine altar; be merciful unto me, O God, for my Saviour's sake, and receive me into thy bosom and guide me in thy ways.'

Sir William Jones. 'The mind of Sir William Jones,' says his pious and elegant biographer, Lord Teignmouth, 'was never tainted with infidelity; but there was a period before his judgment was matured, and before he had studied the Scriptures with close attention, when his belief in the truth of revelation was tinged with doubts. But these were the transient clouds, which for a while obscure the dawn, and disperse the rising sun. His heart and his judgment told him, that religion is a subject of supreme importance, and the evidence of its truth worthy of his most serious investigation. About the twenty-third year of his age, he sat down to the inquiry without prejudice, and rose from it with a conviction, which the studies of his future life invigorated and confirmed. The completion of the prophecies, relating to our Saviour, had impressed upon his youthful mind this invaluable truth, that the language of Isaiah and of the Prophets was inspired; and in this belief, to which fresh proofs were progressively added, he closed his life. At the end of his Bible, he wrote the following note, which, coming from a man of his profound erudition and perfect knowledge of the oriental languages, customs and manners, must be considered as a powerful testimony, not only to the sublimity, but to the divine inspiration of the sacred Scriptures. 'I have,' he says, 'carefully and regularly perused these holy Scriptures, and I am of opinion that this volume, independently of its divine origin, contains more true sublimity, more exquisite beauty, more true morality, more important history, and finer strains, both of poetry and eloquence, than can be collected from all other books, in whatever age or language they may have been written.'

The following extract, from one of his prayers, found among his papers, will at once shew the grandeur as well as the humility of his mind.

'Eternal and incomprehensible mind, who by thy boundless power, before time began, created innumerable worlds for thy glory, and innumerable orders of beings for their happiness, which thy infinite goodness prompts thee to desire, and thy infinite wisdom enabled thee to know! we, thy creatures, vanish into nothing before thy supreme majesty. We hourly feel our weakness; we daily bewail our vices; we continually acknowledge our folly; thee only we adore with awful veneration; thee we thank with the most fervent zeal; thee we praise with astonishment and rapture;

to thy power we humbly submit; of thy goodness we devoutly implore protection; on thy wisdom we firmly and cheerfully rely. We do but open our eyes, and instantly we perceive thy divine existence; we do but exert our reason, and in a moment we discover thy divine attributes; but our eyes could not behold thy splendor, nor could our minds comprehend thy divine essence; we see thee only through thy stupendous and all perfect works; we know thee only by that ray of received light, which it has pleased thee to reveal.' It concludes with the following eloquent words: 'And as with our living voice and our dying lips, we will express our submission to thy decrees, adore thy providence and bless thy dispensations; so in all future states to which we reverently hope thy goodness will raise us, grant that we may continue praising, admiring, venerating, worshipping thee more and more, through worlds without number and ages without end.'

Sir Robert Boyle. The celebrated Boerhaave has passed the following eulogium upon him: 'Boyle was the ornament of this age and country. Which of his writings shall I commend? All of them. To him we owe the secrets of fire, air, water, animals, vegetables, fossils; so that from his works may be deducted the whole system of natural knowledge.' He was urged by Lord Clarendon to enter the Church, but not feeling within himself any motion or tendency of mind which he could safely esteem a call from the Holy Spirit, he did not venture to take holy orders, lest he should be found to have lied unto the Holy Ghost.' Moreover, he thought that he could render more service to religion as a layman than as a clergyman. By his munificent donations and patronage, he materially promoted the propagation of religion throughout the world. The great object of his Philosophical pursuits was to promote the cause of religion, and to discountenance atheism and infidelity. His intimate friend, Bishop Burnet, makes the following observations on this point: 'He appeared to those who conversed with him on his inquiries into nature, that his main design was to raise in himself and others more exalted sentiments of the greatness and glory, the wisdom and goodness of God. This design was so duly impressed on his mind, that he concludes the article of his will which relates to the Royal Society, in these words. 'I wish them a happy success in their attempt to discover the true nature of the works of God; and I pray that they and all other searchers into clerical truths, may cordially refer their attainments to the glory of the great Author of Nature, and to the comfort of mankind.' On another occasion, the same person speaks of him thus. 'He had the most profound veneration for the great God of Heaven and Earth that I ever observed in

any man. The very name of God was never mentioned by him without a pause and observable stop in his discourse.' So bright did the example of this great and good man shine through his whole course, that Bishop Burnet, on reviewing it, in a moment of pious exultation, thus expressed himself: 'I might challenge the whole tribe of libertines, to come and view the usefulness, as well as the excellence of the Christian religion, in a life that was entirely dedicated to it.'

To the above testimonies of men whose blameless and beneficent lives have endeared them to the hearts, as did their talents to the heads of all men, let me add the dying testimony of two great geniuses, who were brought to feel and acknowledge the inestimable value of religion in the awful hour. The first is that of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, who lived in the dissolute age of Charles the second. He was a man of great abilities and fine education. He was (says the Earl of Clarendon) a man of noble presence. He had great liveliness of wit, and a peculiar faculty of turning serious things into ridicule. He had no principles of religion, virtue and friendship. Pleasure, frolic and extravagant diversion, were all that he regarded. He had no steadiness, nor conduct; he could never fix his thoughts, nor govern his estate, which was at one time the greatest in England. He was bred about the King, and at one time had a great ascendant over him; but at length he drew a lasting disgrace upon himself, and ruined both body and mind, fortune and reputation. It appears to have been in this degraded and deserted state, mournfully looking over a life spent in vice and folly, that he wrote the following letter to a particular friend, Doctor Barrow, a short time before his decease.

'Dear Doctor,—I always looked upon you to be a person of true virtue, and know you to have a sound understanding; for however I may have acted in opposition to the principles of religion and the dictates of reason, I can honestly assure you I have always had the highest veneration for both. The world and I shake hands, for I dare affirm we are heartily weary of each other. O, what a prodigal I have been of that most valuable of all possessions, time! I have squandered away with a profusion unparalleled; and now, when the enjoyment of a few days would be worth the world, I cannot flatter myself with the prospect of half a dozen hours. How despicable, my dear friend, is that man who never prays to his God, but in the time of distress! In what manner can he supplicate that Omnipotent Being in his afflictions, whom, in time of prosperity, he never remembered? Do not brand me with infidelity, when I tell you that I am almost ashamed to offer up

my petition at the throne of Grace, or to implore that Divine mercy in the next world, which I have scandalously abused in this. Shall ingratitude to man be looked upon as the blackest of crimes, and not ingratitude to God? Shall an insult offered to a King be looked upon in the most offensive light, and yet no notice taken when the King of Kings is treated with indignity and disrespect? The companions of my former libertinism would scarcely believe their eyes were you to show them this epistle. They would laugh at me as a dreaming enthusiast, or pity me as a timorous wretch, who was shocked at the appearance of futurity; but whoever laughs at me for being right, or pities me for being sensible of my errors, is more entitled to my compassion than resentment. A future state may well enough strike terror into any man, who has not acted well in this life; and he must have an uncommon share of courage, indeed, who does not shrink at the presence of God. The apprehensions of death will soon bring the most profligate to a proper use of his understanding. To what a situation am I now reduced! Is this odious little hut a suitable lodging for a Prince? Is this anxiety of mind becoming the character of a Christian? From my rank, I might have expected affluence to wait upon my life; from religion and understanding, peace to smile upon my end; instead of which I am afflicted with poverty, and haunted with remorse; despised by my country, and, I fear, forsaken by my God!

‘There is nothing so dangerous as extraordinary abilities. I cannot be accused of vanity now, by being sensible that I was once possessed of uncommon qualifications, especially as I sincerely regret that I ever had them. My rank in life made these accomplishments still more conspicuous; and, fascinated by the general applause which they procured, I never considered the proper means by which they should be displayed. However, to procure a smile from a blockhead whom I despised, I have frequently treated the virtuous with disrespect, and sported with the holy name of Heaven, to obtain a laugh from a parcel of fools, who were entitled to nothing but contempt. Your men of wit generally look upon themselves as discharged from the duties of religion, and confine the doctrines of the Gospel to people of meaner understanding. It is a sort of derogation, in their opinion, to comply with the rules of Christianity, and they reckon that man possessed of a narrow genius, who studies to be good. What a pity that the holy writings are not to be made the criterion of true judgment; or that any person should pass for a gentleman in this world, but he that appears solicitous about his happiness in the next!’

‘I am forsaken by all my acquaintance; utterly neglected by the friends of my bosom, and the dependants on my bounty: but no matter! I am not fit to converse with the former, and have no ability to serve the latter. Let me not, however, be wholly cast off by the good. Favor me with a visit as soon as possible. Writing to you gives me some ease, especially on a subject I could talk of for ever. I am of opinion this is the last visit I shall ever solicit from you; my distemper is powerful. Come and pray for the departing spirit of the poor unhappy

BUCKINGHAM.’

Lord Rochester. At the age of thirty-one, this highly talented man had, by a series of dissipations, brought himself to the brink of eternity. But it pleased the Almighty to make him a monument of grace during his last sickness. He was blessed with the acquaintance of Burnet, to whom, in his extremity, he addressed the following letter.

‘My most honored Doctor Burnet,—My spirits and body decay equally together, but weak as I am in person, I shall write you a letter. If God be yet pleased to spare me longer in this world, I hope by your conversation to be exalted to such a degree of piety, that the world may see how much I abhor what I once so much loved, and how much I glory in repentance and in God’s service. Bestow your prayers upon me that God would spare me, if it be his good will, to shew true repentance and amendment of life for the time to come; or if the Lord please soon to put an end to my worldly being, that he would mercifully accept my death-bed repentance, and perform that promise he has been pleased to make, that at what time soever a sinner doth repent he would receive him. Put up then, prayers, most dear Sir, for your most obedient languishing servant.’

Bishop Burnet accordingly visited him, and had much intercourse with him during the remainder of his life, which was not very long, though long enough for the purpose of obtaining a saving faith and genuine repentance. He highly reprobated that foolish and absurd philosophy propagated by the late Hobbes and others, which the world so much admired, and which had undone him and many persons of the best parts in the nation. His hope of salvation rested solely on the free grace of God through Jesus Christ. He expressed great esteem for the Holy Scriptures, and resolved that if God should spare him, he would frequently read them and meditate upon them; for having spoken to his heart, he acknowledged that all the seeming absurdities and contradictions, which men of corrupt and reprobate judgment supposed to

be in them, were vanished, and now that he loved and received the truth, their beauty and excellency appeared. He expressed much concern for the pious education of his children, and wished his son might never be a wit, 'one of those wretched creatures,' as he expressed it, 'who pride themselves in denying the being or providence of God, and in ridiculing religion.' To a friend who came to visit him, he said, 'you and I have been friends and sinners a great while, and therefore I am the more free with you. We have all been mistaken in our conceits and opinions; our persuasions have been false and groundless; therefore, God grant you repentance,' striking his hand upon his heart, 'I hope God will touch your heart.' He caused the following solemn declaration to be drawn up, which he signed with his own hand.

'For the benefit of all those whom I may have drawn into sin by my example and encouragement, I leave to the world, this my last declaration, which I deliver in the presence of the Great God who knows the secrets of all hearts, and before whom I am preparing to be judged; that from the bottom of my soul, I detest and abhor the whole course of my former wicked life; that I think I can never sufficiently admire the goodness of God, who has given me a true sense of my pernicious opinions and vile practices, by which I have hitherto lived without hope and without God, in the world; having been an open enemy to Jesus Christ, doing the utmost despite to the Holy Spirit of Grace, and that the greatest testimony of my charity to such is, to warn them in the name of God, and as they regard the welfare of their immortal souls, no more to deny his being and his Providence, and despise his goodness; no more to make a mock at sin, and condemn the pure and excellent religion of my ever blessed Redeemer, through whose merits alone, I, one of the greatest of sinners, do yet hope for mercy and forgiveness. Amen.

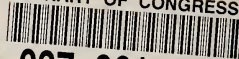
J. ROCHESTER.'

'Declared and signed in the presence of

*Ann Rochester,
Robert Parsons.'*

He lived to feel happily assured of the mercy of God through Jesus Christ. For a further account of him we refer our readers to a small volume published by Doctor Burnet, entitled 'Some passages of the life and death of John, Earl of Rochester.' A book, which, as Doctor Johnson says, 'the critic ought to read for its elegance, the philosopher for its arguments, and the saint for its piety.'

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