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THE
General Baptist Repository,
COMPREHENDING
Biographical and Historical Memoirs,
ESSAYS,
THOUGHTS ON SELECT PASSAGES IN SCRIPTURE,
Anecdotes,
QUERIES AND SOLUTIONS,
Correspondence, Extracts,
DEATHS,
MISSIONARY and RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.
ORIGINAL POETRY;
A REGISTER OF
GENERAL BAPTIST OCCURRENCES;
AND
Miscellaneous Information.

—
PUBLISHED

At the request of the MINISTERS and REPRESENTATIVES of the NEW
CONNECTION of GENERAL BAPTISTS.

BY ADAM TAYLOR.

VOL. VIII.

—
London :

PRINTED FOR THE EDITOR, BY W. C. DRAKE, (LATE SKIRVEN,)
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1818.

ADVERTISEMENT.

Sixteen years have now elapsed since the commencement of the publication of the G. B. R. During this period the work has had to struggle against many difficulties, and has sometimes been on the eve of extinction. It has, however, at length weathered the storm, and for several past years enjoyed the steady countenance of that Connection, for the benefit of which it was undertaken. The Editor feels grateful to the goodness of Divine Providence, and the patronage of his indulgent friends, by which he has been enabled, for so long a time, to support, under numerous disadvantages, a work, which, he flatters himself, has not been altogether useless in promoting the prosperity of that cause to which it has been invariably devoted. Gratitude for favours received, and a wish to secure future approbation will induce him, to make every effort to render the succeeding numbers more worthy of the improving circumstances, and the increasing numbers of the New Connection. With this view he most respectfully but earnestly solicits the kind assistance of those who are qualified to instruct and entertain their brethren from the press; and assures them that communications of a serious, practical, and experimental nature, if not too long, will be gratefully received, and tend much to improve the work. He trusts also that young men, setting out in the ministry, will avail themselves of this miscellany to exercise their talents in composition and reasoning; as he is persuaded, that it would be the best means of fitting them for more important services in future life. The Editor himself being set at liberty from a literary task, which has long pressed on his time, will be able to devote more attention to the G. B. R.; and he trusts, that future volumes, if it please God to enable him to publish them, will evince that he has not neglected to improve this opportunity to the advantage of the work.

In succeeding numbers it is proposed to continue occasionally the papers which are designed to illustrate scripture from manners, laws, and history of the ancient inhabitants of the

East: and it is hoped, that recent publications will supply new and interesting materials for this design. It is also intended, if proper information can be obtained, to insert accounts of those churches which stand as candidates for admission into the New Connection; as well as interesting portions of General Baptist History, which could not conveniently be included in the work on that subject, recently published. And measures have been adopted to obtain Memoirs of several venerable Ministers of our own churches, who have lately been called to their reward.

It is a pleasing reflection that since the commencement of this Miscellany, thirty churches have been added to the New Connection, and the number of its members has been nearly doubled. The sale of the work has not, however, increased in due proportion; and its very title and design limit its circulation to its own denomination. The Editor hopes that he shall be excused for venturing to hint, that the beginning of a new volume offers a very appropriate opportunity for making successful efforts to extend its circulation. He therefore entreats that the friends of the publication will improve this occasion, both to augment the subscriptions in those churches which have already subscribed, and to introduce it into those societies which, having lately joined the union, are probably unacquainted with the existence of such a work. And it will afford him sincere pleasure, when the increase of the sale shall enable him, with justice to himself, to devote a part of the profits to the support of the Itinerant Fund.

That the great Head of the Church may bless this feeble attempt to promote the prosperity of his cause, and the real edification of every reader, is the sincere and earnest prayer of

THE EDITOR.

SHAKESPEAR'S WALK,
Aug. 17, 1818.

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THE
GENERAL BAPTIST REPOSITORY.

No. XLIII.—Vol. VIII. May 1st. 1817.

*A GLANCE at the ACCOMPLISHMENT of our
SAVIOUR'S PREDICTIONS, respecting the last
SIEGE of JERUSALEM.*

IN our last number we noticed the exact fulfilment of the prophecies of our Saviour, respecting the events that preceded the final destruction of Jerusalem; we shall now briefly review the no less accurate accomplishment of his predictions, respecting the events of the siege of that once favoured city, and its consequences.

Our Lord frequently denounced awful threatenings against the nation of the Jews, on account of their wickedness; and their obstinate rejection of his authority. After enumerating various instances of their stubbornness and rebellion, he solemnly declares, "Verily I say unto you, that all these things," or the punishment due to all these crimes, "shall come upon this generation:" and then breaks out into this tender expostulation, "O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate," Matth. xxiii. 37, 38. In various of his parables also, he exhibited the dreadful calamities that were impending over this guilty people, in consequence of their refusing his mission and persecuting his person. Thus, when the guests refused to come to the marriage supper, and killed the servants who were sent to invite them, "the king was wroth, and sent forth his armies and destroyed these murderers, and burnt up their city." Matth. xxii. 7. When the husbandmen refused to surrender to their Lord, the fruits of his vineyard, ill-treated his servants, and murdered his son, our Saviour assures them, that the lord of the vineyard "shall come and miserably destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the

vineyard to others:" Luke xx. 16. So forcibly indeed, were the guilty hearers struck with the propriety of this denunciation, that, "perceiving that he spake of them," they involuntarily exclaimed, "God forbid!" Matth. xxi. 43. Luke xx. 16.

But the most full and particular predictions which our adorable Redeemer uttered on these subjects, were occasioned by his disciples desiring him to observe the grandeur of the buildings of the temple. Instead of joining in their admiration, he exclaimed "See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." This solemn assertion, made a deep impression on the minds of the hearers, and four of his most favoured disciples, following to the mount of Olives, which commanded a full view of the temple and city, took occasion from the prospect to inquire respectfully into the time and circumstances of the awful events, which he had just before denounced. In reply to this inquiry, he delivered that remarkable discourse, which is contained in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, which we request the reader to peruse carefully, together with the corresponding passages in the other evangelists, before he proceeds to the subsequent observations. In these we shall endeavour to shew the remarkable accomplishment of those interesting prophecies; premising only, that most of the facts which will be stated, are recorded by Josephus, the Jewish historian, who was himself a principal actor in many of these transactions, and present through the whole of the siege.

Our divine Prophet fixes the *time* when this dreadful calamity shall fall upon this nation. "Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things shall be fulfilled; heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Matth. xxiv. 34, 35. When these words were spoken, the Jews were in a tranquil state, in peaceable subjection to the Romans; and ambitious of shewing their loyalty to the emperor, cried out, "We have no king but Cæsar." "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend; whoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar." John xix. 14, 12. Yet, in less than forty years, these very Jews threw off their allegiance to Cæsar, maintained an obstinate rebellion against the Romans, and brought on their state and city utter destruction.

There is also a plain intimation of the *power* by which this

ruin would be caused, "Wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together," Math. xxiv. 28. The eagles were the standard of the Roman legions, and our Lord probably intends to intimate that, wherever the Jews were found, at that time, they would be the objects of the most deadly vengeance of the Roman troops, who would pursue them with as keen a desire of carnage, as that ravenous bird does the carcases of animals; a prediction most literally verified in the experience of that devoted race.

Our blessed Lord likewise foretold, that the degree of affliction and misery which would then be felt would be *unparalleled* in the history of mankind. "In those days there shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created, unto this time, neither shall be," Mark xiii. 19, Matth. xxiv. 21. "There shall be great distress in the land and wrath on the people," Luke xxi. 23. "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me," said the blessed Jesus, while carrying his cross to Calvary, "but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming in the which they shall say, blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the breasts that never gave suck," Luke xxiii. 28, 29. Such was the strong language employed in predicting this calamity: let us examine whether the event justified it.

At the feast of passover, A. D. 70. Titus, the Roman general commenced the siege of Jerusalem, with an army of sixty thousand men: at that time, the city was crowded with Jewish families from all parts of the country, who had assembled there to celebrate that solemnity. These were all shut up in the place, by the vigilance of the enemy. A demand for provisions was thus produced, which quickly brought on a famine. Factions also raged in the city with deadly animosity, the partizans of which were as active in destroying each other as in repelling the Romans. They wantonly burnt several large magazines of corn and other provisions, which might have furnished a supply for a long defence. This increased the scarcity, and no food could be exposed to sale, without being instantly seized by the factious troops; who searched also the shops and even the private houses. If they discovered any stores, they tortured the owners for denying them; and if they found nothing, they still exercised the same severity on the inhabitants, under

a pretence, that they had concealed their provisions. These crafties obliged the Jews to venture out of the city in quest of subsistence; but these famishing beings were no sooner observed by the besiegers, than they were seized, dreadfully scourged, and then crucified before the walls, as a terror to their fellow-citizens. Five hundred perished in this manner in one night, and frequently a greater number were executed; till room was literally wanting to erect the crosses.

The famine increasing, whole families were consumed by it. At first the bodies of the dead were buried, but growing too numerous, they were afterwards thrown over the walls, or carried out at the gates and laid in heaps all round the city, to the great annoyance of the assailants. The mortality increased to such a height, that it was ascertained, that, from April 14, to July 1, no fewer than one hundred and fifteen thousand eight hundred and eighty dead bodies had been carried out at one gate; and it was computed, that, in the same interval, six hundred thousand corpses, at least, had been conveyed by different means out of this devoted town. At last, the survivors became too few and too much exhausted, to transport the bodies of the dead to the walls, and they laid them in heaps in the large empty houses, closing up the entrances as well as they could.

In this extremity, many of the wretched inhabitants ventured to desert to the Romans; but, though Titus wished to save them, most of them died in the most miserable manner; some perished by excessive eating after long fasting; but a more cruel fate awaited others. The besiegers, suspecting from certain circumstances, that these fugitives had swallowed their gold, in order to secure it, seized them whenever they could, cut open their bodies, and searched in their entrails for the hidden treasure. And, though the Roman general expressed the utmost abhorrence at this barbarous proceeding, and most strictly forbade it, yet, such was the ungovernable avarice of the troops, that more than two thousand Jews perished in this horrid manner, in one night. In the mean time, the distress within the walls became intolerable; the poor were driven to search the dunghills and sewers, and greedily devoured whatever refuse they found; and the rich were unable to procure supply. A female of good family and connections, was driven by the pressure of hunger, to kill her own sucking child, and devour it, to preserve a miserable existence.

At length, after an obstinate resistance, the Romans made themselves masters of this unhappy city; and, as orders had been issued to give no quarter, a most terrible slaughter took place, till the soldiers grew weary, and Titus forbade that any should be slain who were not taken in arms. The troops, however, to prevent the trouble of guarding what would yield them no profit, dispatched all the aged and infirm. Those who were in the prime of life, were driven in crowds to the temple, and shut up in the court of the women. A Roman officer was appointed to examine these captives and determine their fate: but, while the investigation was proceeding, eleven thousand of the wretched prisoners perished for want of food. The judge ordered many to be executed, and many to be sold for slaves, numbers were condemned to work in the mines of Egypt, and numbers were sent into the various provinces of the empire as presents to the governors, to be exhibited in their public theatres, and destroyed on the stage by the sword or wild beasts. The whole number of captives was ninety-seven thousand; but the number that perished by famine and the sword, was estimated at eleven hundred thousand. Thus awfully was our Saviour's prediction accomplished: "There shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people, and they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations," Luke xxi. 24. And well might the Jewish historian observe, in almost the express words of this adorable Prophet, "The multitude of those who perished on this occasion exceeded all the destructions that men or God ever brought on this world."

But our Lord had foretold, not only the distress of the people, but also the utter demolition of the temple and city. Of the former he had declared, that "There should not remain one stone upon another, which should not be removed?" and of the latter, "Thine enemies shall cast a trench round about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and thy children within thee; they shall lay thee even with the ground, and they shall not leave one stone upon another, because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." Luke xxi. 6. xix. 43, 44. Now, though it very rarely happens, that the capture of a city issues in its immediate and total destruction; yet, in this, as Jesus had predicted, so the event was. Titus had, during the whole siege, been very desirous of preserving

the temple uninjured, as a trophy of his conquest; and strictly enjoined his officers to protect it from violence; but the mad despair of the Jews, or the rage of the Romans, disappointed his care. By some means it caught fire in the confusion of an attack; and, though Titus instantly hastened to the spot, and issued directions to stop the progress of the flames, yet his orders were either not heard or disobeyed. The edifice was consumed, together with an immense quantity of treasure, and six thousand deluded persons, who had been decoyed thither by a false prophet, on the assurance that, if they went that day up to the temple, they should see the deliverance of God. The victors afterwards, suspecting that the Jews had hid their riches under ground, dug up the foundation of the temple, and found great treasures, which had been concealed there as in a place of safety. This success excited them to greater diligence; and they were so careful in their search, that it is said by some of the Jewish writers, that they actually tore up the ground on which the temple stood, with a plough, lest they should leave any portion of the spot unexplored, or one stone unturned. Titus, before he left the country, gave orders for the city to be demolished: indeed the fire had already laid it in ruins. He however directed, that the buildings and the wall should be overthrown to their very foundations: and even the foundations themselves were dug up, like those of the temple, in quest of hidden treasures. "Summon up your thoughts," said an eye witness of this desolation, to the Jews, a few months after the awful event; "consider what is become of your glorious metropolis, your mighty walls and fortifications, your impregnable towers and castles, your vast treasures and magazines yet too small for your stores, your prodigious multitudes of men. What is become of your holy place too, known by the name of God's house? Is it not all torn up by the roots, and nothing to be seen of it but the ruins, and a few unfortunate old men mourning over the ashes of the temple?" So literally and so awfully were the denunciations of our blessed Lord accomplished.

Another particular displays, not only the accurate foreknowledge which Jesus Christ possessed, but also his tender care for the safety of his disciples. In the course of his prophecy, he had given them this admonition, "When ye shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, then let them which are in Judæa

flee to the mountains:" &c. Matth. xxiv. 15, 20; that is, when ye shall see the standards of the Romans, to which divine honours were frequently paid, planted within the limits of Jerusalem the holy city, then lose no time in providing for your safety, by fleeing from the approaching calamity. This sense is confirmed by the parallel passage, Luke xxi. 21, which reads, "When ye shall see Jerusalem encompassed with armies." Now it was very improbable that, when the besiegers had advanced into the city, there would be an opportunity for the christians to effect their escape: yet so it happened. The Roman general Cestius, provoked by the factions and seditious of the Jews, marched with his whole army into Jerusalem, and encamped opposite the royal palace. This movement caused great consternation among the inhabitants; and Josephus says, "had he then attempted to force his way, he would have won the city presently, and put an end to the war." But he was dissuaded from the attempt by some officers who had been bribed by a rival to retard his operations; and imprudently withdrew beyond the walls. This encouraged the Jews to pursue him, they soon overtook him and routed him with great slaughter: insomuch that he was obliged to burn his baggage and kill his horses. This success highly elated them, and allured them to a fatal persuasion of their final triumph; but the christians viewed it with different sentiments. They had seen Jerusalem encompassed with armies, and the abomination of desolation standing where it ought not, and remembered the advice of their divine Master. They therefore seized the opportunity, afforded by the retreat of Cestius, and leaving Judea, retired to Pella, a place beyond Jordan. As Titus did not commence the siege of Jerusalem till three years after this repulse, full space was allowed for these disciples to withdraw: and, it is highly probable, that not one faithful servant of Christ was ultimately shut up in this devoted place. The dreadful calamities of the sword and famine that ensued, were confined to those who persisted in the disposition which dictated that horrid imprecation, "His blood be on us, and on our children." Matth. xxvii. 25.

Lastly. Our Saviour intimates, that the misery of this siege would have been much greater, had not its duration been shortened. "Except these days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake they shall be

shortened," Matth. xxiv. 22. And the attentive reader will perceive, that various unusual incidents concurred to hasten the fatal catastrophe. The madness of the Jews, in wantonly consuming their own provisions, their cruel butchering of one another, and indeed, almost the whole of their conduct, tended to prevent them from holding out so long as they otherwise might have done. But what, in the opinion of Josephus, had the greatest effect in putting a speedy end to this horrid contest, was this singular circumstance. When the temple had caught fire, the Jews, who had collected all their force to defend it, threw themselves into three strong towers, which were supposed to be proof against all attacks except famine. Titus therefore, was obliged to prepare for besieging them in a regular manner, and much time would probably have been spent in reducing them; but, just when the Romans were ready to commence the attack, a sudden, groundless and unaccountable panic seized the defenders, who on all former occasions had fought with desperate bravery; and, to the astonishment of all, they forsook these strong holds, and betook themselves to a disorderly flight. This closed the struggle. No material resistance was afterwards made; and so conspicuous was the hand of providence in this event, that Titus, though a heathen, exclaimed, when he surveyed the towers which the Jews had deserted, "If God had not fought for us and with us, we could never have been masters of these forts; it was God who drew the Jews out of these strong holds; otherwise no power of man or machines could ever have prevailed against these fortifications." Thus for the elect's sake these days were shortened.

We have now made a cursory review of the awful predictions of our blessed Redeemer, respecting the events that preceded and accompanied the final overthrow of the Jewish city and state, and the exact and awful fulfilment of them. Surely this review, imperfect as it has been, must excite sentiments of pious gratitude and sacred fear in every serious mind. Who can reflect without gratitude on that kind providence which first induced Josephus, an enemy to Christianity, to publish, immediately after the event, and in circumstances that secured the accuracy of his account, a history of transactions which have such direct tendency to establish a religion, which he has studiously avoided mentioning in any part of his works; and has preserved the writings of this historian, amidst the vicis-

situdes and destruction of eighteen centuries, to confirm the faith of the followers of Jesus, and confound the presumption of his enemies? Who can read the affecting details of the Lord's vengeance on this obdurate people, "who denied the Holy One and the just, and killed the Prince of life," without feeling a sacred fear, lest, after he has received the knowledge of the truth, he should, by falling away from grace and sinning wilfully, "crucify to himself the son of God afresh, and put him to open shame?" lest like these hardened Jews, whose calamities we have just considered, he find, when it is too late, that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." For the same infallible Being, whose threatenings against Jerusalem were so exactly and awfully executed, has declared, "He that believeth on the Son hath life, and he that believeth not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

And let us all recollect that an important period is approaching, of which our Lord himself has taught us, to consider the affecting scenes that we have been contemplating as the type and forerunner, "when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up:"—"when the Son of man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him, and shall sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations:"—"when all the dead, small and great, shall stand before God, and be judged every man according to his works,"—when those who have despised the Saviour and rejected his authority, shall say to the rocks and mountains, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?"—when the judge shall say to those on his left hand, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; and they shall go away into everlasting punishment." May every reader be earnest in preparing to meet his God; for as certainly as the woes that fell upon Jerusalem justified our Saviour's predictions, so will the transactions and decisions of that tremendous day correspond with these alarming descriptions.

A SERIOUS ADDRESS

To Professors of Religion in general, and to Members of Churches in particular.

It is of little consequence who is the writer of this address; he can truly say that he feels an earnest concern for the glory of Christ, for the salvation of his fellow-men, and for the prosperity of the church at large; and particularly for those churches with which he has the honour to be more intimately connected. He thinks he could most cheerfully sacrifice his life, if that sacrifice would be a means of reviving among our churches the cause of primitive apostolical Christianity; for life has to him few attractions, unconnected with the important end for which it is prolonged, and to which, he conceives, it should be primarily devoted. Believing his continuance here will not be long, and living in the daily expectation of his great change, his mind is more seriously and deeply affected with the vast importance of everlasting concerns, and the comparative littleness of all earthly things; he feels a sincere desire to communicate his impressions to his fellow-christians; and to be instrumental in arousing them from that lethargy which has become so prevalent, and to excite them to that diligence which their eternal and complete salvation demands.

Among the subjects which have successively engaged his attention, his thoughts have frequently taken a turn among the churches in the New Connection of General Baptists; and more especially among those that are situate in the midland counties; with whose situation he is better acquainted, for whose welfare he makes frequent supplication to the God of all grace: and it has occasioned him many painful sensations, arising from the too evident appearance of a growing spirit of secularity, conformity to the world, inordinate attachment to life, anxiety for worldly prosperity, an undervaluing the christian ministry, ministers, and other privileges, and an awful neglect of the most precious means of grace. In looking back to the period when he was first called by the gospel, (the mercy of which, he wishes most gratefully to acknowledge) and was induced, on a conviction of conscience, to unite himself to a church of the living God, he thinks he perceives a dreadful dereliction from the simplicity, the purity, the life and zeal, that the members of the different churches then displayed; and

he frequently sighs for the return of such times, and such indications of pure, genuine christianity. O! what undisguised simplicity, what open familiarity, what real friendship, what equality, what unanimity did then prevail! The taste for preaching was not then vitiated; there was not that fastidiousness in hearing, that speculativeness, that fondness for novelty, that attention to manner, to persons, to elegance, as prevails at present, and betrays a sickly appetite. The *truth*, the *truth as it is in Jesus Christ, and him crucified; the being justified by grace, through faith, &c.* were the subjects which every one expected to hear, on which their attention hung with exquisite delight; and without which they would have returned from the house of God disappointed, grieved and dissatisfied. And these topics, though treated with great simplicity and plainness, unadorned with the beauties of rhetorical composition, were productive of the most beneficial and gracious fruits, in the department of those who listened to them and embraced them; fruits, which, to the great grief of the most pious and reflecting, are not now so generally seen. O what can compensate for such a change! so painful a dereliction! Is not the picture according to life? You, who were members of our churches thirty or forty years ago, bear witness. How often has the retrospective view of past times made me sigh for their return, fixed a gloom on my mind, and made me pour out my sorrows before God. Glad should I be, (but what can an individual effect without the concurrence of others?) could I be in a small degree instrumental in restoring our churches to that state, and my fellow-christians to that purity, spirituality, life, and zeal, which characterized our predecessors, and which many of us experienced in a larger measure at an early period of our profession. He can assure the reader, that what he has written, is in the near view of eternity, with the most anxious desire for his everlasting welfare; and he would think himself amply repaid, and highly gratified, could he infuse the same views and feelings into others, as now possess and deeply affect his own heart.

What can be done, my brethren, to promote a revival of vital religion among us?—O! for an out-pouring of the spirit from on high, in a greater measure than we have of late been accustomed to enjoy, or some of us perhaps to expect! There could not be a surer indication, in my apprehension, of a happy re-

vival, than the prevalence of such a deep conviction of the low state of vital, practical, devotional religion among us, as would excite us to the most fervent and frequent supplication to the Father of mercies, with whom is the residue of the spirit, and who is the Giver of every good gift, by individuals in retirement, by the domestic circle, and by our more public and general assemblies. Were such means to be earnestly resorted to, and steadily persevered in, we might hope to see, in a short time, a happy change effected. And, O, my brethren! shall we be backward to supplicate God in behalf of ourselves, our families, our brethren, and the interests of religion at large? particularly when we are commanded to pray, and even invited to "*come boldly to a throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and grace to help in time of need.*" May we have for asking, and shall we, *can we refuse?* Besides, does not all success, and all prosperity depend on the divine blessing? Is our heavenly Father willing to impart his blessing, and to send prosperity on our asking, and does it become us to be negligent and slothful in applying to him? Let shame cover our faces, that we are not more alive to this important duty, abounding as we do in opportunities and incentives. Alas! there is too much reason to suspect, that we are taken up with our own little, petty, temporal interests and concerns; we are seeking our "own things, not the things that are Jesus Christ's;" we are so intent to obtain "the meat that perisheth," as to neglect "the bread that came down from heaven," the "meat that endureth to everlasting life." We are anxious to promote the establishment, and aggrandizement of our families, and "weep not for the afflictions of Joseph." If our own affairs do but go on prosperously, we care not for the distractions, the divisions of our churches, the embarrassments of our ministers, and the distresses of our poor brethren. My friends, ought these things so to be? and is not their existence undeniable? Can such a carnal, groveling, selfish disposition be pleasing to God, or evidential of a growing meekness for heavenly glory? is this the "mind that was in Christ Jesus?" While professors act in such a manner, and remain in such a lifeless and inactive state, it is in vain to expect the communication of God's spirit, the light of his countenance, or his blessing on the means of grace. He will turn our blessings into curses; he will sooner or later "blow upon" the fruit of our parsimony; and our mi-

nisters, who are sent by him to "make us wise unto salvation," and train us up for the heavenly inheritance, will, after having languished out their lives in labour, sorrow, poverty and disappointment, be swift witnesses against us to our everlasting confusion and disgrace.

In order to effect a reformation among us, every individual member of our churches, should endeavour to arouse himself. Let him seriously consider his profession, his character, his mercies and his responsibility. Let him seriously and impartially attempt to weigh the importance of things temporal with those that are eternal. Let him balance the interests of a day with those of a never-ending duration. Let him frequently anticipate the moment which cannot be far distant, and which may be very near, when he will most assuredly view objects, and aims, and interests in their true light: when he must enter into the invisible world stripped of all earthly possessions, stand before the awful tribunal of him who has told us he will "give to every one according to his work;" and fix our station in heaven or hell, as we have "neglected the day of our visitation," or given "all diligence to make our calling and election sure." Let him consider how an angel from heaven would act, if he were to assume a body like ours, and associate with us. Let him ask himself, what is the course I shall wish I had pursued, the objects I shall wish I had secured, the part I shall wish I had acted, the choice I shall wish I had made, when extended on a bed of sickness, and taking an interesting retrospective view of the past, or awfully and solemnly anticipating the future; when no blandishments will have power any longer to fascinate; and every object will appear in its true relative importance, and I am forever to be separated from all that I have held dear in this world, and join disembodied spirits?

We should deal honestly and faithfully with ourselves. Why do we make a profession of religion, if we be not solicitous to feel its power, to enjoy as much as possible of its influence, and secure all its advantages? We can surely distinguish betwixt names and things, betwixt profession and possession. Why do we espouse the cause of Christ at all, if we be not hearty in it, if we be not devoted to it, if we do not consider it the most important concern? Do we not know, that the cause and glory of Christ is the main end for which we should live; that we give him the ascendancy in our hearts, and that except we

"forsake all that we have, we cannot be his disciples?"—Why do we profess to own him as our Lord and Saviour, and betray him, espouse his cause and desert it, separate from the world, and suffer it to enslave us,—declare ourselves "dead to sin," yet allow ourselves to be contaminated by it? Our religion is a nonentity, a mockery, while we live in this manner.

We are practising a cheat on ourselves, if we call this religion. Will this glorify Christ, adorn the gospel, or lead us to heaven? Is this being "lights of the world," or "the salt of the earth?" Is this "minding the things of the spirit," having our "conversation in heaven," and setting our "affections on things above?" O let us not deceive ourselves "God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Can any one be so infatuated as to believe, in defiance of the express and reiterated language of scripture, that a cold attention to external duties, however regular, without *the devotion of the heart*, will ever take him to heaven?

The power of religion consists in, the choosing, loving, and delighting in God, as our God and Father, our present and everlasting Portion, and maintaining a holy and watchful care to please him; from prevailing grateful love, cordially approving, accepting, and relying upon Jesus Christ as our sacrifice, Saviour and Lord; living habitually by faith on him, and yielding unreserved obedience to him; desiring and seeking most earnestly the comforting, sanctifying, and strengthening influences of the holy spirit, to enable us to perform our various duties, deny ungodliness, subdue our passions, and glorify God; seeking and enjoying communion with him, through our Lord Jesus Christ; esteeming his favour above life, pursuing his glory as our highest end, and labouring to please him in the whole of our conduct. The *good word of God* must be our only and invariable guide, which we should daily read, and seriously meditate on what we read; seeking that divine direction and assistance therein, which is graciously promised, and will be freely afforded. How superlatively precious is God's book! a jewel of incalculable worth! but how dreadfully is it neglected! Many read it so cursorily, so thoughtlessly, so rarely, and sometimes so captiously, and with so little looking to God for his blessing on it, that they derive little advantage from it.

A standing, faithful, spiritual, searching ministry, is one of the greatest blessings with which a nation, a village, or a family

can be favoured; and dreadful is the spiritual darkness that prevails where that favour is wanting. But is this precious blessing sufficiently appreciated among us? Are *ministers* respected, esteemed, and encouraged by us as they ought to be? Are they considered as "*men of God,*" the "*servants of Jesus Christ,*" and in an inferior sense, his "*ambassadors?*" Are their labours regarded as peculiarly necessary, important and useful to our own souls, our families, and our neighbours? Is a due attention paid to their comfort, and that of their families? Is it duly considered that they "*watch for our souls,*" that they are the bearers of God's messages and instructions to us; that they are especially engaged to promote our best, our everlasting interests; and that their constant prayers, care and efforts are to serve us; and, in short, their best endeavours, their very life is devoted to that object? How seldom, I fear, do we reflect, how often, and how fervently they pray for us, and for our families; how much we are upon their hearts, and how solicitous they are for our everlasting welfare. Do we treat them kindly, speak of them respectfully before our children and servants, give them our friendship, our confidence, and offer for them our most fervent prayers? Is it seriously believed that an undervaluing of their labours, a rejection of their instructions, a disrespect of their persons, a neglect of their peace and comfort, and the comfort of their families, will be regarded by Christ as an offence to him, and as done to him? Are not men who *pray* for us, *watch* for us, *study* for us, *labour* for us, *live* for us, are ready on every occasion to *counsel* us, and *intercede* for us; are not, I say, such men deserving of our confidence and respect? Are we not, verily, their debtors? Can we be indifferent whether they bear witness for or against us before the tribunal of Christ? Is it our duty to make our servants and labourers comfortable, and remunerate them equitably for *their* services, and shall we neglect those whose labours are of inexpressibly greater importance, from which, if our selfishness and carnality do not prevent, advantages will be secured to an endless duration? Let it be remembered, that "*we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ,*" We must meet our ministers there, and our treatment of them will be taken as given to Christ. O let us beware that the sight of them there, does not cover our faces with conscious guilt and shame; arising from

the painful recollection of having contemned their ministry, and neglected their personal comfort.

The *means of grace*, as appointments of Christ, the Lord and head of the church, ought to be held in the highest estimation. Was a professor ever known to be eminently lively, spiritual, holy and zealous who neglected them? And is it not notorious, that many members of our churches are criminally negligent in their attendance? Let our Lord's day morning opportunities, our week day lectures, our church meetings, prayer meetings, and even our Lord's supper days bear witness. Let the late attendance, the drowsy appearance, and the impatience for the conclusion of the service, manifested by many, also testify. What frivolous excuses, what trifling circumstances, are deemed sufficient to justify persons, to their own consciences, in neglecting public opportunities! But can conscience be awake when it is so? Has not a fatal drowsiness or numbness seized it? Our ministers are expected to be in *their* place, and to be there *in time*, whether there be many or few to address; and the pleas by which *we* attempt to excuse our absence, or late attendance, would be thought utterly inadmissible in them. Some make no difficulty in rising two hours earlier to go to a market, a fair, or any other journey; and seldom indeed are they diverted from their purpose, by a cold day, or a drizzling shower, or a slight indisposition; but, how many suffer such petty difficulties to deter them from going to the "house of God," from meeting the "Lord of hosts in his sanctuary;" from attending a divine ordinance, and meeting to deliberate on the affairs that concern the prosperity of his kingdom, the peace of Zion, and the order and welfare of his family, though he has condescended to promise to meet them, and bless them? Instead of rising earlier on a Lord's day morning, to prepare for an early attendance on the worship of God, some indulge themselves in lying an hour or two later in bed, and either come very late to the service, or not at all. Dear brethren, is such conduct right? does it indicate a love of devotion; a proper estimation of christian privileges; or a desire for the presence of and communion with God? Does it manifest a growing life, zeal and diligence; increasing spirituality, maturity for the heavenly state? Does it not rather betray a cold heart, an alarming insensibility to divine and spiritual things? Is there no reason to fear that such are either in a declining state, or

are already dead? And that there is an absolute necessity for them to "repent and do their first works, lest they be hurried into eternity, and perish for ever?" Such, surely, cannot think they are in a state of mind fit to die; they are, probably, hoping and purposing to be more attentive and earnest, and diligent sometime, in order to pacify conscience for their present neglect. But to how many has this rash expedient been fatal? Can you be ignorant what numbers, on their death bed, have bitterly bewailed their neglect, been stung with the most cutting remorse, and pressingly importuned, with looks of distraction, for a further trial? O how rash, how presumptuous, how daring is such trifling with God, the soul, and everlasting concerns! You have read the book of Psalms; did David act thus? To "dwell in the house of God," was the highest privilege he desired. He "was glad" to hear them say "let us go to the house of the Lord." "A day in his courts, was sweeter and better to him than a thousand" spent elsewhere. He had rather perform the meanest office, or fill the lowest station in the house of God, than dwell in the tents of wickedness, though sanctioned by the attendance of the opulent, the learned, or the great. The reason was, he had a spiritual mind, a heart alive to God; he possessed a true love to God and his service, and enjoyed exquisite delight in communion with him. This he earnestly sought, highly valued, and could not live without it. Hence arose his sedulous and punctual attention to the means appointed for securing these advantages. "They that wait on the Lord, shall renew their strength." Was it not formerly so with the Baptists? Let our aged members testify. There was a time, when they could travel on foot many miles, and yet be early in their attendance on the worship of God. They did not then complain of *long services*; they did not cry, "what a weariness it is." The word of God "was precious in those days;" they found such opportunities to be "seasons of refreshment from the presence of the Lord." They returned late in the evening, conversing on the things they had heard; they "feared the Lord, and spoke often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard." They felt their souls to be as "a watered garden;" they "went on their way rejoicing;" marched "from strength to strength," and were daily advancing in "the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost." Such punctuality in attendance,

such listening attention, such solicitude for spiritual progress; gladdened the hearts of their ministers; animated their zeal, and made them strong for labour. They found of a truth that the Lord God was among them; and had no reason to complain that "they laboured in vain, and spent their strength for nought." O! my aged brethren! how must it grieve you to behold so great a change; so awful a dereliction! You did not then behold a disposition so disputatious, so critical, so captious, so fastidiously nice, as now; but you witnessed a longing desire for "the bread that came down from heaven;" a "thirsting for the water of life;" a labouring for "the meat that endureth unto eternal life." "O!" say you, "that it were with us as in years past," "when we took sweet council together," when we "walked to the house of God in company." Then were the labours of our ministers owned, and the churches grew in numbers and in grace; "walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, they were multiplied."

[*To be continued.*]

FRIENDLY ADMONITIONS.

To the EDITOR of the G. B. R.

MY DEAR SIR,

He who has commonly been esteemed the wisest of mere men, and who spake also under the influence of the Holy Ghost, has said, "Open rebuke is better than secret love." Let me hope that this important maxim will be esteemed a sufficient sanction for my taking the liberty to animadvert on one or two evils, that I have observed amongst some of my religious connections.

The first of these is the giving way, even after the most solemn services, to a light and trifling spirit. We need not be surprized, at seeing this in those whose views are bounded by the present world; who act on the mere worldling's principle, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die;" but surely professing christians, if cheerful, should be wise. A light and trifling mind, is most inconsistent with the christian character: and most baneful in its influence. Religion degenerates into form, and devotion becomes a burden, where this spirit is in-

dulged. A consistent christian must look with sorrow on those professors of the Gospel, who seem to forget that they are on the edge of an eternal world, that there is

No room for mirth or trifling here,
 For worldly hope, or worldly fear,
 If life so soon is gone;
 If now the judge is at the door,
 And all mankind must stand before
 Th' inexorable throne.

The prevalence of this spirit appears, when we view its various mischievous effects, a most serious evil. Yet, permit me to say, that in some of our churches, much of it is apparent. The most impressive devotional exercises do not seem to check it. After services so solemn, that hundreds of faces had been wet with flowing tears, I have known this baneful evil so displayed, that it might reasonably have been questioned in the afternoon, whether those professors who appeared under its influence, had been at the house of God or at the theatre in the morning. How widely different from this sinful lightness is the spirit and conduct called for in holy writ!

The other evil on which I wish to animadvert, is, a neglect of imploring the blessing of God, on those provisions, with which his bounty spreads our tables. When Jesus miraculously fed the assembled multitudes, he looked up to heaven and blessed and brake. So reasonable is this expression of gratitude, that multitudes, who have not the smallest portion of real piety, present, at least at some of their more regular meals, a formal offering to the God of heaven. Yet, sir, perhaps you who live so far from these midland counties, may be surprized to hear, that on different occasions, I have known professors of the gospel, meet and attend the worship of God in public; then retire to the house of a friend. and sit down to a plentiful repast, with as much apparent neglect of the great Giver, as even the brutes that perish can manifest. I have known this done in different families, yet, the heads of those families members of our churches, and the friends that were joining with them members also. I have known some of a more serious disposition grieved at this ungrateful neglect of the most High, even when, being almost strangers in the families to which they had been kindly invited, they made no public remark upon it. Now

surely these things ought not so to be. Human beings ought not to meet and partake of the goodness of God, without some expression of gratitude; much less should professing Christians, when assembling from different places, at peculiarly important seasons, thus neglect the great Supreme. It can be no excuse, at such a time, that a minister is not present; while one member of a church is there. Yet, where such neglect is allowed, doubtless, a great part of the blame must rest with the master or mistress of the family. It is peculiarly their duty to see that the devotions of the table be attended to, and that themselves and their guests, do not sit down to the bounties of heaven, forgetting God, their Maker.

Wishing sincerely, that vital piety may increase among our churches,

I remain, dear Sir, yours, &c.

G.

DERBYSHIRE.

QUERIES.

To the EDITOR of the G. B. R.

SIR,

I have long thought, that there is a great defect in our churches, in the mode of excluding members. It is too often done in a hasty manner, at a church meeting, when but a very small proportion of the members are present; and when once the vote of expulsion is past, little more notice is taken of the transaction. It appears to me to be highly desirable, that as many of the church as possible, should be witnesses; that it should be a season of peculiar humiliation, fasting and prayer; and that every means should be adopted to make it operate to the conviction, and awakening of the offender, and as a warning to the rest. The Old General Baptists of the seventeenth century, were very serious, and careful in administering, what they termed, the ordinance of excommunication, and perhaps it might tend to the edification of the churches, if something of their mode of proceeding was revived. Permit me, then, through the medium of the G. B. R. to call the attention of your judicious friends to this subject, by requesting an early answer to the subsequent query. "Which are the best modes for a church of Christ to adopt, in the excluding of disorderly

members, in order to promote the spiritual advantage, both of the offenders themselves, and of those who remain?"

As you have favoured us with several papers on the Lord's prayer, which have contributed both to the profit and entertainment of your readers, may I presume on your friendship, to find room for another query, to which a plain and conclusive answer would, I have reason to be persuaded, be peculiarly acceptable to many of your readers. It is, "Why do not our ministers in general, conclude their public supplications with the Lord's prayer?"

Hoping, that some of your able correspondents will oblige me, by favouring your readers, as soon as convenient, with their sentiments on these questions, I remain,

Yours affectionately,

GNAHIM.

DEAR SIR,

Several conscientious professors, who wish to adorn the doctrine of God, their Saviour, in all things, would esteem themselves highly obliged to any of their better informed brethren, for a satisfactory answer to the following query. "Is it right for the members of christian churches, to send their dinners to the bake-house, to be cooked on the Lord's day?" As the querists are seriously desirous of learning their duty, a serious reply will oblige, yours,

DUBITANTES.

NEWS FROM FRANCE.

EXTRACT from a letter, lately received from M. LE JEUNE, the French Captain, who a few years ago, was baptized, and added to the Church at Ashby de la Zooch.

Meslay le Vidame, Oct. 28th, 1816.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Thanks be to the Lord, I have, at this time, a convenient opportunity of transmitting you a letter safely; which is not often the case, as many letters are intercepted or lost. I received, in March last, blessed be the Lord! a very affectionate and comforting letter from our dear Mr. G. in answer to mine. The perusal of which gave me great cause to rejoice; especi-

ally as it assures me that our friends are well, and are rejoicing in the strength of the Lord Jesus Christ, their hope and ours. It is a subject of daily gratitude to God, that I know my friends in England are, without ceasing, concerned for me at the throne of grace. I hope they will not indulge the least thought, that I should forget or forsake them; No, my friend, it is not so with me; and how could it be, unless I forsake the Lord my Redeemer. I daily feel thankful to the Lord, that he has condescended to make me acquainted with them, for my present and eternal good. The remembrance of them often rejoices my heart, and gives my soul much comfort, knowing that our friendship springs from the most valuable and excellent source; the unspeakable love of God in his dear Son. May the Lord our help, the giver of every good and perfect gift, who hath, by his grace brought us to the enjoyment of the same lively hope in Christ Jesus, keep us all constantly united in the bonds of peace and love. To him be Glory. Amen.

My situation here is always the same—very uncomfortable. The language of the people I live with, and their conduct too, hurt my feelings very much. Indeed, this is a trying place which together with the plague of my own evil heart, daily convinces me, that “It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps;” that, “Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.” It is boundless grace that has supported me unto this day. “He healeth the backslidings of his people. He raiseth up them that are bowed down” His gracious ear is continually open to their cries; and he delivers them out of all their troubles—“his mercy endureth for ever.” What daily cause have I to praise him for his faithfulness and truth; and I hope the good work he hath begun in me, he will carry on unto the end.—His gracious promises are my only refuge and comfort. May his Holy Spirit strengthen me daily, and preserve me in the arms of his everlasting love in Christ Jesus, unto the day of his glorious appearing.—Amen.

I have lately visited the protestant church at Patay, but I feel sorry to say, I have no favourable account to give of them. I have not seen nor heard any thing among them, but what recommends them to the pity and mercy of the Lord Jesus. Let us pray that the Lord would graciously smile upon them, and send them ministers after his own heart.

Some time ago, I received a very pleasing letter from the pastor of the protestant Church, at Montpellier. His language is very different from that of any protestant I have heard in this country, and gives me reason to hope he is a serious christian.

The New Testament for the catholics is now out of the press, our countrymen begin to receive it favourably.

I long to leave my present situation; but where to go and pitch my tent, I know not. May the Lord direct me. I long to see you, and all my good friends in England; and if the Lord permit, I shall take a step over next spring. My Christian love to all the friends, &c. Remember me at a throne of grace.

I am, your Brother in Christ,

HON. LE JECNE.

*The HISTORY and CHARACTER of the
PATRIARCH JOSEPH.*

“ He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant,” Psa. cv. 17.

It is a pleasing and profitable exercise to trace the dealings of a gracious providence towards his saints in various ages; and to contemplate the surprizing manner in which he has often accomplished his purposes of love towards them that feared him. “ Remember,” says the psalmist in the context, “ the marvellous works which the Lord hath done; his wonders and the judgments of his mouth.” Such a recollection has a happy tendency to increase our humility, strengthen our faith, support our patience, and enliven our gratitude. For these sacred purposes, let us review the Life of Joseph, on which the inspired poet seems to dwell with peculiar complacency; and endeavour to derive some useful instruction from that interesting story. See Gen. ch. xxxvii.

Joseph is first introduced to our notice at seventeen years of age: an important period, when the passions have attained strength and the character becomes fixed. at this early age he was employed with his brethren in keeping their father's flocks at some distance from home. He was already decidedly religious, for when his associates acted in opposition to their

duty, he refused to join in their wicked designs; and, regardless of their scorn or resentment, "brought unto his father, their evil report." Such proofs of virtue and attachment in the son of his beloved Rachel, gained the affection of Jacob, who was now advanced in years, and began to feel some of the weaknesses of age. This partiality however was highly reasonable: duty and affection ought to gain the possessor the advantage over disobedience and insensibility. But prudence should have taught Jacob not to have made his preference too obvious. Some of the elder sons had already given sufficient proofs of their vicious and cruel dispositions to have convinced him of the danger of exposing this inexperienced youth to their envy: yet, consulting only his fondness for a darling son, he not only avowed the partiality he felt for him; but, as a professed mark of his superior love, distinguished him from the rest of his children by dressing him in a splendid vesture, a coat of many colours. This ill-judged distinction had the effect that might have been expected on the depraved and ferocious minds of his brethren: "they hated him and could not speak peaceably unto him." If the youthful heart of Joseph was elated with the gaudy trifle with which the imprudent fondness of a father had decorated him, the awful scenes that followed must have taught him the folly of such a sensation.

A circumstance happened soon after which heightened the ill-will of Joseph's brethren against him. He had two remarkable dreams; not composed of the inconsistent reveries with which dreams in general abound, but plain indications that he should be exalted to a station far above that in which he then moved, and that his brethren and even his parents should prostrate themselves before him. With all the simplicity of youth, he told these dreams to his brethren: who instantly, perceived the tendency of them and exclaimed, "shalt thou indeed reign over us?" No wonder that, with tempers like theirs, "they hated him still more for his dreams." Even Jacob, partial as he was to the youth, rebuked him; but "observed the saying;" as an omen of some important future event.

Some time after these dreams, the elder sons of the Patriarch drove their flocks to a considerable distance, in search of pasture. No tidings from them reaching their father for a long interval, he began to be anxious on their account. For what-

ever partiality he entertained for the son of his old age, he always evinced a truly parental affection for all his children. He therefore sent Joseph to enquire after their welfare. The youth, on his arrival at the place where he expected to find them, discovered that they had removed to a still greater distance. Desirous of completing the object of his journey, he followed them; and at last came within sight of their tents. He appears to have approached with all the feelings of a brother, wholly unsuspecting of the violent enmity that inflamed their hearts against him. But they no sooner perceived him from afar, drest in the hated many-coloured coat, than all the past circumstances of irritation were recollected. "Behold," they said to each other, as he drew near, "this dreamer cometh. Come now therefore, and let us slay him; and cast him into some pit; and we will say some evil beast hath devoured him: And we shall see what will become of his dreams." This cruel and inhuman proposal met with no opposition: and the youth appeared doomed to instant destruction. But God, who had great purposes of love towards him, graciously interposed, by softening the heart of Reuben, his eldest brother, and inspiring him with the generous desire of delivering him out of their hands. Seeing that it would be in vain openly to oppose their bloody projects, he advised them to cast him into a pit and there leave him to perish by famine, rather than imbrue their hands in the blood of a brother: hoping to find some means of releasing him from his comfortless situation and restoring him to his father. Reuben's proposal was agreed to by the rest; and no sooner did the unfortunate Joseph come up to these inhuman relatives, than regardless of the anguish of his soul and his affecting entreaties, they instantly stript him of his coat of many colours; and then cast him into a pit near at hand which providentially contained no water.

His brethren, leaving him thus to the horrors of famine, sat down in the most unfeeling manner to regale themselves; probably on the provisions which their unhappy brother, had brought to them from their father. During their repast, a caravan of Arabian merchants passed in sight, when Judah, actuated probably by avarice disguised under the mask of humanity, suggested the propriety of selling Joseph to these merchants. This scheme was immediately adopted; and their tender brother, being drawn out of the pit, was barbarously

sold for a slave to strangers who immediately marched off with their purchase.

Reuben was absent during this transaction, contriving how to effect Joseph's escape; and visiting the pit into which he had been cast, to his surprize and disappointment, discovered that he had been removed. He hastened to his brethren and abruptly exclaimed: "The child is not; and I, whether shall I go?" But, informing him of the fate of the youth, they joined in a plot to keep their aged parent ignorant of the horrid crimes of which they had been guilty. They dyed the coat of many colours in the blood of a goat; and sent it, in that state, to Jacob, with this message: "This we have found. See now whether it be thy son's coat, or not!" Jacob had gazed too often with fond delight on this badge of his affection when worn by his favourite to hesitate. He immediately recognized the robe in which Joseph had set out to visit his brethren; and exclaimed, in an agony: "It is my son's coat, an evil beast hath devoured him: Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces." The afflicted old man tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his loins and gave himself up to an excess of grief proportioned to his excess of fondness for the beloved object whom he thought he had for ever lost. His family endeavoured to soothe his mind and restore him to tranquility; but he rejected all their efforts, and answered to all their consolations: "I will go down into the grave to my son, mourning."

Let us here suspend the narrative, and examine what useful instruction may be drawn from it.

1. Young persons of every class, who are unhappily associated with wicked characters, should learn, from the example of Joseph, not to conceal the sins of their companions, through fear of either their hatred or contempt. A tale-bearer is indeed a despicable character; but, when a pious youth is privy to acts of dishonesty and injustice, duty requires that he bring their evil report to those who have a right to know it. To conceal crimes of this nature is often cruel to the guilty themselves; who might, if exposed in due time, perhaps be reformed: and it is always injurious to the party who neglects to discover them, as it defiles the conscience, and makes him, in a sense, partaker in the guilt.

2. How admirable was the goodness of God in affording to Joseph, such plain intimations of his future prosperity! What

a support must the prospect afford that good man, during the afflictions and sorrows which he was called afterwards to endure! And does not the meanest believer in Christ enjoy the same privilege? Under all the tribulations and troubles, the difficulties and perplexities of life, he can look forward to an inheritance in glory, that will far excel the splendour to which Joseph arrived in the court of Egypt: and this he expects to enjoy, not from the vague interpretation of a dream; but on the word and oath of Him that cannot lie. "He ought therefore not to faint: for his light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

3. How necessary it is to guard against the first motions of the evil passions. Probably Jacob's elder sons felt, at first, only a sort of envious dislike to their brother. They were vexed that he would not conceal their unjust proceedings, and they could not be content that their father should distinguish him with such peculiar marks of his favour; but they vented their resentment only in unkind speeches, and would have been shocked at the thoughts of doing him any serious injury. Yet how soon, by indulging instead of resisting these hateful tempers, they became capable of the most unnatural, treacherous and bloody designs. So completely had the diabolical passion of revenge engrossed the minds of these abandoned men, that, when they had been for some time absent from their homes, and a messenger unexpectedly visits them, they have no leisure for inquiries respecting their wives, their children or their aged parents; their whole hearts are occupied by malice, and all their thoughts employed in devising means to satisfy it. And when they had thrown an affectionate and tender brother into a deep pit, and had left him to perish by hunger, they could sit down unconcernedly to eat bread; and probably entertained themselves with scoffing at the dreamer, and turning his dreams into ridicule. How awfully depraved is human nature when left to itself! How completely does sin brutalize the carnal mind! How necessary to guard against its first approaches! How important to keep the heart with all diligence: for out of it are the issues of life!

4. How weak is the malice and cunning of man when opposed to the designs of the Almighty! How easily can he influence and over-rule the councils of the wicked to accomplish

his own gracious purposes! Reuben, who could without remorse inflict the deepest wounds on the heart of a father, is here touched with compassion for a brother; and labours, with real solicitude, for his safety. Reuben wished to restore the youth to his father; but the views of providence were very different. God designed that Joseph should be useful and eminent in a distant country; and it was necessary that he should be conveyed to the scene of his future glory. When Reuben's humanity therefore has snatched him from instant death, the avarice of Judah is excited, by the passing of the Ishmaelites. He begins to calculate. "What profit is it, if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? Let us sell him!" And the gaining of twenty pieces of silver made him forget, that if the life of the dreamer was spared, his dreams might yet be fulfilled. Avarice overcomes caution: and Joseph is sold for a slave. Thus the wickedness of man is over-ruled to promote the purposes of God: and the wrath of man is made to praise him. How securely then, may we commit our way to the Lord; and trust in him to bring it to pass!

BRIEF ACCOUNT of the SOCIETY for the RELIEF of the necessitous WIDOWS and CHILDREN of PROTESTANT DISENTING MINISTERS.

As several of our correspondents have expressed a wish, that the above laudable Institution was better known among our churches, we beg leave to insert the following outline of its nature and present state; drawn from the publications of the society itself.

This charity was established in 1733: and embraces the families of such Presbyterian, Independent, or Baptist Ministers, as, at their death, stood accepted and approved as such by their brethren in the ministry of their own denomination, and died without leaving a sufficient subsistence for their widows and children. Before a widow can be admitted on the list of pensioners, the above facts must be attested by one or more ministers. At the first, the sum given to each English widow was five pounds yearly, and to each Welch widow three pounds; but the liberality of the friends of religion have enabled the managers, from time to time, to encrease the relief: and since the year 1811, the annual pension to an English widow has

been fifteen pounds and to a Welsh widow, eleven pounds. The number of widows relieved, in 1816, amounted to *two hundred and six*. Besides the regular pensioners, the managers are empowered, to a certain extent, to grant prompt relief to widows whose cases demand immediate assistance, and to aid in placing out the children of deceased ministers, as apprentices. English widows, who possess an income exceeding thirty pounds per annum, and Welsh widows possessing more than eighteen pounds per annum, are deemed not proper objects of this charity, unless they have one child to support; five pounds per annum additional income is allowed to each English widow, and four pounds to every Welsh widow, for every two children dependent on her for support, before she be considered as excluded from the benefits of this charity.

This Institution is conducted by a Treasurer, a Secretary, and twenty seven Managers, who are chosen annually, at a general meeting of the members of the society. A subscription of five guineas or upwards constitutes a person a member for life; and an annual subscription of one guinea, gives the subscriber a right to the privileges of a member, during the continuance of his subscription.

The Funds of this society rise from the subscriptions, donations and legacies of benevolent christians. Important assistance has also been received from the collection after a sermon which has annually been preached for its benefit, ever since its formation: and efforts have lately been made, with considerable success, to obtain an annual collection, in aid of its funds, from the principal dissenting congregations in the kingdom. The income derived from these sources has been liberal, and it has been as liberally dispensed. The number of widows have greatly increased, and the allowance to each has been gradually augmented to three times its original amount. We are so sorry to state, that the number of applications and the urgency of the cases have induced the managers to exceed their regular incomes, and, that for several years past, they have been obliged to diminish their stock in order to meet the pressing demands. The regular Income and the Expenditure; for the last year, as stated in a circular, signed by the Treasurer, and dated, February 28, 1817, stand Thus:

Receipts.

Dividends on Stock.....	1504	12	8
Donations and Collections...	300	8	10
Subscriptions.....	247	4	6
Legacies.....	123	14	6

Total Income £2176. 0 6

Payments.

To 166 Widows at 15£.....	2490	0	0
To 38 Ditto at 11£.....	418	0	0
To 4 Extra Cases.....	50	0	0

Total Expenditure £2958 0 0

It is, therefore, obvious, that unless a permanent addition is soon made to the Funds, it will be impossible to continue the present annual pension: and it would be painful indeed to be under the necessity of diminishing it, at a season, when the peculiar pressure of the times calls for an increase. We trust the liberality of a generous public, will supercede the necessity of resorting to this afflicting measure; and shall be extremely happy, if the insertion of this plain account, in this miscellany, should excite an attention to this laudable Institution among the churches in our Connection, and tend, in any measure, to promote its prosperity and utility.

A CONCISE ACCOUNT of the CHRISTIAN FUND.

To the EDITOR of the G. B. R.

DEAR SIR,

Some time ago, you requested me to give you a history of the rise, progress, and present state of an institution, which has long been established at Fleet, called *The Friendly Connection, or Christian Fund*: in compliance with your request, I transmit, for your insertion in the G. B. R. a short sketch of this useful society.

The Friendly Connection, or Christian Fund, was first projected by the late Mr. Melbourn, a member of the G. B. Church, at Fleet, in the year 1773. The spirit and principle of this institution is fully set forth in the preamble to the articles, which states, that "This institution is intended, in some good measure, to promote the excellent pattern left us by

the primitive Christian, to be of one heart and soul ; to mourn with those who mourn, and to have a special desire of alleviating the difficulties of our poor brethren in distress, particularly under bodily affliction."

As all party spirit is designed to be excluded by the members of this society, and none is deemed unworthy to be a partaker of its benefits whatever his religious opinions or sentiments may be, provided his conduct, in some good degree, manifests that he lives under the influence of Christian principles, it was thought not unsuitable to prefix the following quotations as a Motto, designating the principle upon which this institution is founded. It professes to be composed, though not exclusively, of various societies of *Protestant Dissenters*.

" By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." *Jesus Christ.*

" Remember the words of our Lord, Jesus Christ, how he said, that it is more blessed to give than to receive." *Paul.*

" Let party names no more the Christian world o'erspread." *Beddome.*

The Christian Fund was carried into effect by a few members of the G. B. Church, at Fleet : a considerable proportion of whom entered themselves as *Honorary* Members ; and it has been by the disinterested conduct of Members of this description supported throughout, by which it has been enabled to afford more effectual relief to the poor members, in various cases, which the original articles was framed to include, besides bodily afflictions. It was found from experience, that the articles were too multifarious ; and that after the members became so numerous, the finances of the Fund could not meet the demands which the articles had provided for ; in consequence of which they have undergone various subsequent alterations and modifications. In the beginning of the year 1815, it was judged by a committee chosen from amongst the different churches to revise the articles, that it would be more eligible and impartial, as all subscribed equally, to confine its benefits principally to illness, or to such circumstances as rendered the members incapable of following their usual occupations.

This institution commenced with twenty-seven members of the Church, at Fleet. For several years it did not attract the

notice of neighbouring churches, nor gain any great accession of members; and, at one time, through some unpleasant occurrences, it was on the point of being broken up, and entirely annihilated; but from the good sense and spirit of some of its members, it was prosecuted with fresh vigour. Though subsequent to this convulsion, it has been nearly in a state of insolvency, it has arisen again, and is now in flourishing circumstances. It is now extending its beneficial influence, in a greater or less degree, through the churches of Fleet, Luton, Wisbeach, Spalding, Gosberton, Sutterton, Boston, Coningsby, Morcot, and Peterborough. The present number of members, (after the church at Tydd St Giles's have withdrawn, in order to establish a similar institution themselves) is upwards of two hundred and fifty.

I will now state a few facts as to its real utility; what it has done, and is capable of doing. The first year's disbursements were under two pounds. In subsequent years, the members have experienced greater afflictions, and have received benefits proportionate: in one year, it included more than seventy cases, which amounted to upwards of £230. The aggregate disbursements since its commencement have been near £3000. It has only been since the year 1800, that the members so much extended; and, since that period, upwards of £2200. have been distributed from this Fund.

From this short statement, I will leave your readers to make their own comments, as to the value of this institution, and how far other churches, not connected therewith, may think it worthy of their imitation.

There has been a similar institution established for some years at March, some of whose members were previously connected with this society.

With respect to the finances of this Fund, I may observe; that it is not the wish of its members to accumulate a large stock; but having about £100. in hand, besides the subscriptions of the current year, they wish to render it as beneficial to the poor members as possible. If the demands during the year fall much short of its receipts, it was its original intention, and is not lost sight of, though it has not been practicable for many years before the last, to return to such of the poorer members as have not needed its assistance during the past year, from five to seven shillings of their subscriptions.

The following abstract of the Articles of this society may conclude this sketch. It is provided that candidates for admission shall be in health, under forty-five years of age, of approved moral character, and regular attendants on some place of religious worship; that members shall be elected by a majority of votes: that one fifth of the members shall be *honorary*; or such as subscribe for the benefit of others; and that each honorary member have the privilege of recommending four others: that each member shall pay monthly one shilling, subject to the usual penalties for neglect: that any member incapacitated from following his or her usual employment, shall receive ten shillings weekly, for one year if necessary; but that all future relief be referred to the discretion of a select committee;* that three guineas be given on the death of a member towards the funeral; and from one to three guineas to his surviving dependants, according to the direction of the succeeding annual meeting: that one pound be paid to a member on the birth of a child: that immoral members, when proved to be such, shall be excluded: that a Treasurer be chosen to transact the pecuniary concerns of the charity, and Sub-Treasurers in each district to assist him: and that an annual meeting be held, in January, at Fleet, to choose officers, audit accounts, &c.

A Sermon suitable to the occasion, is preached, on the day of annual meeting by a member of this Fund, for which he is entitled to one guinea. As we generally have the company of several neighbouring ministers and friends, we have preaching on the preceding evening, and also on the evening of the same day. We generally dine near one hundred members and friends: and I may venture to say, we always find this annual interview both pleasing and profitable. I may just add, we always make a general collection for some extra necessitous cases unconnected with the Fund. Having now, Sir, given you a short sketch of our proceedings relative to this institution,

I remain, your's sincerely,

WILLIAM STANGER, *Treasurer.*

Fleet, Jan. 22nd, 1817.

* It is pleasing to state, that through the divine blessing no case has yet occurred, that has acquired the application of the latter part of this rule.

OBITUARY of MR. THOMAS BARRON.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE G. B. R.

DEAR SIR,

Probably you have heard of the removal of my highly esteemed friend the Reverend. THOMAS BARRON, of Melbourn, Cambridgeshire, who was for many years a member of the London Conference, till age and bodily weakness prevented him from attending our meeting. He had been upwards of sixty years in the ministry, and was universally respected by all who knew him, for the peaceableness of his disposition, and the uprightness of his conduct. His labours, as a Preacher and a medical man, were great; he went about doing good, and was willing to spend and be spent in so laudable an employment. Having frequently preached for him when visiting my friends in that neighbourhood, I have often witnessed his tender regard for his afflicted neighbours, who came to his house after public worship to receive his kind assistance, which was often administered gratuitously. His labours were not confined to Melbourn: the surrounding villages heard the joyful sound from his lips. He preached and administered the Lord's Supper many years at Fulbourn and Saffron Walden, in conjunction with Melbourn; but when he preached more stately at the latter place, the Church and congregation greatly increased. The last time I saw him, he spoke much of the goodness of God in reviving his cause since I preached at the opening of his meeting house; which I think has been twice enlarged. His health has been gradually declining for some time past; but he continued to preach till within five or six weeks of his death, which happened February 1, 1817, in the 78th year of his age. Funeral Sermons were preached on the occasion by Mr. Wm. Carver, minister of the Independent church, at Melbourn, from Matt. xxv, 21; Mr. Wm. Richardson; from Isa. vi, 7; and by his highly esteemed friend, Mr. George Compton, from Nehemiah, vii, 2, last clause. "He feared God above many," which truly described his character. Such was the esteem in which he was held by all ranks, that the following appeared in the Cambridge Chronicle of the ensuing week.—"On Friday last, died, Aged 77, Mr. Barron, of Melbourn, in this county—His peaceable demeanour

our and virtuous habits were manifest to all who knew him; and his excellent and amiable disposition gained him universal respect. It may be truly said of him that he was an "Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile."

It has been asserted, that our venerable friend "was formerly a General Baptist, but in the latter part of his life, he preached the Calvinistic doctrine." This statement I believe is incorrect. That he embraced and preached the doctrine of the New Connection of General Baptists, I readily admit; and that he continued steadfast therein to the end I have no doubt. In order to shew the state of his mind in the prospect of eternity, and his unshaken attachment to his friends and brethren in the Connection, of which he was so long a worthy and esteemed member, I beg leave to subjoin the copy of a letter I received from him, October 1st, 1816.

"My dear and much esteemed friend and brother in the Lord Jesus Christ,—I was glad to hear by brother G. Compton, of your welfare; and, after much neglect in me, attempt to scribble a line to inform you, that I, a poor vessel, remain yet in the living; though very infirm, and in a manner useless and unable for any thing. I stand in need of your prayers for me, and the prosperity of Zion: for we are in a low estate. Jacob is small: by whom shall he arise, but by the God of Jacob? The Lord, he alone is able to help us; and to him may we look and seek for that grace which is able to make us stand. There is none else can do us good. Pray for us; I pray for you, and your prosperity; and shall be glad to hear that the Lord is with you and yours. Give my kind respects to Mr. Sexton, and all friends in the Connection. I do not expect to see them any more on this side of Jordan. I am waiting for the great change. May God, whom I serve, and wish to serve to the end, be with me, and prepare my soul for a blessed meeting; and the enjoyment of that bliss and glory which is promised to all them that love his appearing. I know not how to sit, nor what to write. May God bless you and yours. Believe me, sincerely your old affectionate, though infirm friend, and well-wisher in the Lord.

THOMAS BARRON."

Thus wrote my venerable friend, a few months before his decease, and this letter furnishes sufficient evidence with what party the good old man classed himself. May the church over

which he presided, he directed to a successor, who shall be eminently useful in building up the walls of Zion.

I am, dear Brother, Your's truly,

*Berkhamstead,
April the 14th, 1817.*

JOSEPH HOBBS:

GENERAL BAPTIST OCCURRENCES.

OBITUARY.

MRS. SARAH DAWKINS, wife of Mr. William Dawkins, a respectable farmer, at Snareston, Leicestershire, a village near Measham, after having been exercised with six months tiresome affliction, departed this life, August 13th, 1816. She had for several years been a member of the Baptist congregation at Packington and Measham, and during the whole of her profession adorned the doctrine of God her Saviour in all things. Could this be said of all professors, how happy would our churches be, and how amiable among men, would every member of them appear: their light would shine and it would glorify their father who is in heaven. As a neighbour, she possessed a tender sympathy for the poor. She often relieved their wants with her own hands; and besought her husband to grant them greater favours than were in her own power. She possessed a happy equanimity of mind, equally remote from the raptures of extacy, and the disquietude of mental gloom. Her confidence in her Saviour was steady; she knew in whom she believed, and was persuaded that he was able to keep that which was committed to his trust. During her whole profession, she was scarcely ever known to utter an expression unfavourable to any of her christian friends. How different from the practice of those who deal in evil surmisings; and secret whisperings against their brethren; and who are too often engaged in strifes and debates, envying one another, provoking one another. Her regard for the holy scriptures was pre eminent. The book of Psalms, the prophecy of Isaiah, and the New Testament were her daily delight. Every evening she read some portion; and in her sincere and artless way explained it, as she went along. She was perhaps, a better textuary than many divines. The writer of this article, who frequently had interviews with her; and especially in her

illness, seldom attempted to quote a passage of scripture for her comfort, but she would, in a solemn manner, join in reciting it, and would often repeat some of the following verses herself. Her children, who then paid but little attention to the best things, she often seriously admonished in the language of scripture, and particularly bid them to beware lest they became fuel for everlasting burnings. May her reasonable advices, strengthened by her holy life and conduct, which they long witnessed, be blessed to their future good. Her views of herself and the way of salvation were congenial with the gospel. Her ideas of the purity of God and the hateful malignity of sin led her to say, notwithstanding her outward circumspexion, that she was a Magdalen sinner. When the minister talked with her concerning her views, and concerning Christ being the friend of sinners, "Aye," said she, "that he is; he is my friend, I have nothing else, I desire nothing else, No, no; I desire nothing else."—The text, expressive of her views and hopes, which was spoken from at Measham, on the following Lord's day, was Col. iii, 4, "When Christ who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

J. G.

CONFERENCES.

April 8, 1817, the MIDLAND CONFERENCE was held, at *Friar Lane, Leicester*. Mr. Preston opened the meeting with prayer; Mr. Stevenson preached, from Psalm cxxii, 9; and Mr. Hoe concluded. In the evening, Mr. Goafby delivered a discourse, on 1 Cor. xiv, 40, 'The public services, it is hoped, were both satisfactory and beneficial to the numerous auditors. At this conference a case from Forncett St. Peter's near Norwich was recommended to the churches who had not assisted in the purchase of the chapel in that place; a similar case from Kirton in Lindsay was recommended to the particular attention of the association; and Mr. Kingsford of Portsea was advised to address the churches separately which had not contributed to the enlargement of the meeting house at Portsea. Two letters were read from Dyserth-Hall, near St. Asaph's, in South Wales, stating the formation of a General Baptist church in that neighbourhood, with a brief account of their leading sentiments; and requesting assistance from the new

connection in completing a meeting house which they had begun to build. This conference requested Mr. J. Deacon to write to Mr. Evans of Newcastle-yn-Emlyn', who had baptized some of these new converts, and to whom they had referred, for a further account of their state and character. A request was also presented at this meeting, from two of our churches, requesting them to review the Rules for excluding churches and individuals from the connection, which were adopted at the last annual association; but it was thought that this business properly belonged to the association, and it was therefore referred to the next meeting of that assembly.—At the suggestion of the church at Loughborough, it was resolved, that it might contribute to the advancement of the cause of Christ among us, if our young ministers were to be under the direction of the committee of the Itinerant Fund, for at least one year after they leave the academy; and it was agreed to recommend this measure to the consideration of the next association. In consequence of a case presented by an individual, it was unanimously resolved, "That this conference views, with the deepest emotions of regret, the instances in which our pulpits and chapels have been lent to preachers of other denominations, for the express purpose of attempting to establish their own separate interests in the midst of us and often at our expence; by which much evil has resulted to our cause in various instances of late; that it deprecates the folly and imprudence of those churches or individuals that have facilitated such measures:—and, as it is understood that there are, at present, several applications of this nature before our churches, it begs leave earnestly to recommend that the churches take care that there be no repetition of such improprieties, lest they should occasion a further extent of inconvenience." The next conference to be held at Nottingham on Whit-Tuesday. Inn: the Swan in the market place.

The LINCOLNSHIRE CONFERENCE was held at *Sutton*, April 10, 1817; and was attended by most of the ministers in the district. In the morning, Mr. Rogers preached from Eph. 1, 5, 6; and in the evening, Mr. Jarrold, from Acts xiii, 39: Messrs Binns and Ewen engaged in prayer.—At this meeting, some rules were modified for the management of the Fund for the benefit of the widows of G. B. ministers connected with the Lincolnshire Conference.—Mr. Binns was

requested to visit the Friends at Peterborough to examine the propriety of their attempting to introduce preaching into a neighbouring village, previous to its being recommended, by the conference, to the patronage of the Itinerant Fund. The cause at Chatteris was agreed to be recommended to the same Fund. It was reported, that the Friends at Boston intend to establish an Auxiliary Missionary Society in aid of the Institution formed at the last Association: and it was determined to attempt the establishment of two other Auxiliaries; the one at Wisbeach, and the other at Spalding. Ministerial supplies were arranged for St. Ive's, Chatteris and Gedney-Hill. The next conference to be at March, on the first Wednesday in June.

The LONDON CONFERENCE was held at *Wrotham*, in *Kent*, April 9, 1817; and was well attended. Mr. G. Compton preached, on the Tuesday evening, from John iii, 16. On the Wednesday morning, Mr. Bicknell of Tooting, preached from John ix, 5; and in the evening, Mr. Farrent, of Great Suffolk Street, from Col. 1, 27, 28. On the following evening, Mr. Hobbs of Berkhamstead administered the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, and delivered a discourse, from John xxi. 15, 16, 17. The auditors at all the services, were serious and attentive; and, on the Wednesday evening, considering circumstances, numerous and encouraging. The state of the churches connected with this Conference were read with much satisfaction: and it appeared that the kingdom of the Redeemer is advancing among them. The united churches of Sardon and Staplehurst applied for admission into the Conference; which was cheerfully granted: and the Conference congratulated their friends in Kent on this union, and on their avowed determination to continue in the faith of their worthy forefathers. Mr. Hobbs was requested to draw up a letter to be read at the next meeting on the most effectual means of securing the attendance of the ministers at those meetings. After expressing a high veneration for the memory of their late worthy associate, Mr. Dan Taylor, through whose exertions this Conference was first formed; it was unanimously resolved, that a Memoir of that minister's life and character is highly desirable; and that a case should be presented, by this Conference, to the ensuing Association, requesting their attention to this subject. Messrs. J. Heard and A. Taylor, of London, were requested to prepare a plan for the future regulation of

this Conference, and read it to the next meeting for their consideration. The next Conference to be at Great Suffolk Street, Southwark, on the second Wednesday in October next. Mr. Hobbs, or, in case of failure, Mr. Ewen, of Tring, to preach on the Tuesday evening; and Mr. E. Sexton, or, in his absence, Mr. Purcell, on the Wednesday evening.

The YORKSHIRE CONFERENCE was held at *Birchcliff*, Dec. 25th, 1816, when Mr. Ellis preached from Prov. xv. 3. At this meeting supplies were arranged for Lidgate: Mr. Hollinrake was engaged to visit Nantwich for two Lord's days: the friends at Queenshead were advised to continue their efforts at Apperley Bridge; and something was said respecting the introducing of our cause into Manchester, Stockport, Ashton, and Doncaster.

The next meeting of this Conference was held at *Halifax*, April 8th, 1817, when Mr. Hollinrake preached, from John viii. 37. Supplies were at this meeting arranged for Lidgate and Apperley Bridge. The minutes of an extra meeting held Feb. 8th, to caution our churches against encouraging pretended reformers were read and approved: and several important private cases were considered.

AUXILIARY G. B. MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

Feb. 12th, 1817, a meeting was held, at the Meeting House in Great Suffolk Street, Southwark, Mr. John Heard in the chair; when it was unanimously resolved, 1, "That we highly approve of the object of the G. B. Missionary Society, formed at the last Association; and wish to exert ourselves in the promoting of its success." 2, "That an Auxiliary Society be now formed, to assist the Funds, and aid the exertions of the G. B. Missionary Society, under the denomination of *The London General Baptist Auxiliary Missionary Society.*" A number of regulations for the conducting of this new formed Institution were then read and approved: Mr. J. Heard was chosen Treasurer; and Mr. A. Taylor, Secretary; and a committee of twelve persons nominated as Managers, six from the friends at Church Lane, and six from the friends at Great Suffolk Street. A monthly prayer meeting for the success of missionary exertions was also established, to be held alternately at Great Suffolk Street and Church Lane. Though

this society is yet in its infancy, and the peculiar circumstances of the two churches have greatly retarded its operations; yet, it is hoped, that it may, under the divine blessing, be made, in some degree, conducive to the diffusion of gospel light among the nations that dwell in pagan darkness.

ORDINATION.

June 12th, 1816, Mr. James Mead was ordained to the pastoral office over the G. B. Church, at Downton, Wilts. Mr. J. Barton, of Portsea, opened the service by prayer and reading the scriptures. Mr. J. Clear, of Downton, delivered an introductory discourse. Mr. T. Clark, of Lyndhurst, proposed the questions to the minister and the church: offered the ordination prayer, with imposition of hands; and then gave the charge to the minister, from 1 Tim. iv. 16. Mr. Russel, of Broughton, addressed the church, from 1 Cor. xvi. 10. And in the evening, Mr. T. Priestley, of Fordingbridge, preached to a crowded congregation, from Deut. xxxii. 4.

NEW CHURCH AT LIDGATE.

It had been, for some time, observed, by the friends at Shore, that many persons attended their seasons of public worship, from the valley that stretches towards Todmorden, and even from places beyond that village: and many of the inhabitants who did not attend at Shore, expressed much affection for the General Baptist ministers, and approbation of their doctrines. Mr. Spencer, the aged pastor at Shore, communicated these observations to Mr. James Taylor, of Heptonstall Slack; in consequence of which, Mr. Taylor visited Todmorden; and finding encouragement, preached there, Dec. 3rd, 1814. For some time, no further advance was made; but an individual exerted himself, with much zeal, to form an union of a few friends of the cause to hire a convenient room for public preaching. At length, he accomplished his object; a room was hired, at a place called Lidgate, about two miles from Shore. The subject was then submitted to the Yorkshire Conference, held at Staley Bridge, Nov. 6th, 1815, and met with approbation and encouragement. A number of ministers engaged to supply the place in rotation, and the patrons of the undertaking were

exhorted to persevere. Preaching was therefore continued; the congregations were large and respectable, and there was reason to hope that serious impressions were made on several. The succeeding Conferences therefore continued to encourage the attempt; but, as supplies could only be obtained for the Lord's day morning and evening, the friends were advised to employ the afternoon in an experience meeting. This proved an excellent help to those who had begun to set their faces Zion-ward, and greatly facilitated their growth in grace and knowledge. These young christians soon begun to wish to enjoy the privileges of communion; and presented a case to the Conference at Shore, Aug. 27th, 1816, desiring to become a regular church. After due consideration, it was concluded that it would be most prudent to form them into a separate society, and Messrs. Ellis, Hollinrake, Hodgson, and Dean, were requested to visit Lidgate in order to carry this design into effect. Accordingly, they went, Nov. 30th, 1816; when Messrs. Ellis and Hollinrake baptized eight persons; Mr. Hodgson preached, from Acts ii. 47. Mr. Dean gave a lecture on church order; and Mr. Ellis administered the Lord's supper. The spectators and hearers behaved with seriousness and attention; and the opportunity was solemn, and it is believed, edifying to all concerned. Since this time, several additions have been made to this infant church, and the cause of the Redeemer appears likely to obtain permanent success in this neighbourhood. May the Lord count, when he writeth up the people, many that were born here!

REVIEW OF NEW PUBLICATIONS.

DISSENT from the CHURCH of ENGLAND vindicated: in a DIALOGUE between a FATHER and his SON. By SAMUEL DEACON.

This is a posthumous work from the pen of a writer, with whose manner many of our readers are well acquainted. Like his other productions, it contains much good sense and sound argument, though sometimes expressed with a quaintness which appears to have been natural to him. It is well worthy of the careful perusal of those who have any doubts on the subject.

A MEMOIR of MR. JOHN SEXTON, late of CHESHAM.

18 mo. pp. 18, price 3d. Nisbet and Kent, London.

Mr. John Sexton, the subject of this brief Memoir, was the son of Mr. Edward Sexton, the worthy pastor of the G. B. church at Chesham: and died, Nov. 11. 1816, when he had just completed his twenty first year. He appears to have been a pious, humble, active and useful young man; and a sincere christian. At the early age of seventeen, he was baptized and admitted a member of the church under the care of his father; and continued to walk worthy of his profession till death called him to the church above. He was peculiarly diligent in promoting the success of two benevolent institutions, in the church to which he belonged: the one for relieving the distressed poor in his own neighbourhood; the other, for aiding the finances of the G. B. Itinerant Fund. Should any profits arise from the publication of this small tribute of fraternal affection, it is proposed, out of respect to the memory of the deceased, to devote them to the aid of the two little institutions which, during his life he so sedulously cherished. We trust this proposal will extend the circulation of this Memoir.

 LOST MINUTES.

The *Minutes of the Annual Association*, held at *Halifax*, in 1780, being by some neglect, never entered in the Association Book, the Author of the *History of the General Baptists* has hitherto been unable to procure a sight of them: he, therefore, begs the favour of any of the readers of the G. B. R. who may possess a copy of them, either in manuscript or in print, to accommodate him with the Loan of it, for a short time; and he will cheerfully defray any expence incurred by sending it to the Editor, and carefully return it to the owner.

 MODERN POPERY.

At a time when there exists great difference of opinion respecting the genuine principles of the Roman Catholics of the present day, it is thought, that the following authentic document will decide the question, and discover the true spirit of Modern Popery. For this purpose, it deserves to be universally circulated.

THE BULL AGAINST BIBLE SOCIETIES.

Issued June 29th, by Pope PIUS VII. to the Archbishop of Gnesn, Primate of Poland.

VENERABLE BROTHER,—Health and apostolic benediction.

In our last letter to you we promise very soon, to return an answer to yours; in which you have appealed to this Holy See, in the name of the other Bishops of Poland, respecting what are called *Bible Societies*, and have earnestly inquired of us what you ought to do in this affair. We long since, indeed, wished to comply with your request; but an incredible variety of weighty concerns have so pressed upon us on every side, that, till this day, we could not yield to your solicitation.

We have been truly shocked at this most crafty device, by which the very foundations of religion are undermined; and having, because of the great importance of the subject, conferred in Council with our venerable brethren, the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, we have, with the utmost care and attention, deliberated upon the measures proper to be adopted by our Pontifical authority, in order to remedy and abolish this pestilence as far as possible. In the mean time, we heartily congratulate you, Venerable Brother, and we commend you again and again in the Lord, as it is fit we should, upon the singular zeal you have displayed under circumstances so dangerous to Christianity, in having denounced to the Apostolic See, *this defilement of the faith so imminently dangerous to souls.* And although we perceive, that it is not at all necessary to excite him to activity who is making haste, since, of your own accord, you have already shown an ardent desire to detect and overthrow the *impious machinations of these innovators; yet, in conformity with our office, we again and again exhort you, that whatever you can achieve by power, provide for by counsel, or effect by authority, you will daily execute with the utmost earnestness, placing yourself as a wall for the House of Israel.*

With this view we issue the present Brief, viz. that we may convey to you a *signal testimony of our approbation of your excellent conduct*, and also may endeavour therein still more and more to excite your pastoral solicitude and diligence. For the general good imperiously requires you to combine all your means and energies to *frustrate the plans which are prepared*

by its enemies for the destruction of our most Holy Religion: whence it becomes an Episcopal duty, that you first of all expose the wickedness of this nefarious scheme, as you have already done so admirably, to the view of the faithful, and openly publish the same according to the rules prescribed by the Church, with all the erudition and wisdom which you possess, namely, "that the Bible printed by Heretics is to be numbered among other prohibited Books, conformably to the Rules of the Index: (§ No. 2, and 3,) for it is evident from experience, that the Holy Scriptures, when circulated in the vulgar tongue, have, through the temerity of men, produced more harm than benefit;" (Rule IV.) And this is the more to be dreaded in times so depraved, when our holy Religion is assailed from every quarter with great cunning and effort, and the most grievous wounds are inflicted on the Church. It is therefore necessary to adhere to the salutary Decree of the Congregation of the Index (June 13th, 1757) that no versions of the Bible in the vulgar tongue be permitted, except such as are approved by the Apostolic See, or published with Annotations extracted from the Writings of holy Fathers of the Church.

We confidently hope, that in these turbulent circumstances, the Poles will give the clearest proofs of their attachment to the religion of their ancestors; and, by your care, as well as that of the other Prelates of this kingdom, whom on account of the stand they have wonderfully made for the depository of the Faith, we congratulate in the Lord, trusting that they all may very abundantly justify the opinion we have entertained of them.

It is moreover necessary that you should transmit to us as soon as possible, the Bible which Jacob Wuiiek published in the Polish language with a commentary, as well as a copy of the edition of it lately put forth without those annotations, taken from the writings of the holy fathers of our Church, or other learned Catholics, with your opinion upon it; that thus, from collating them together, it may be ascertained, after mature investigation, that certain errors lie insidiously concealed therein, and that we may pronounce our judgment on this affair for the preservation of the true faith.

Continue therefore, venerable Brother, to pursue this truly pious course upon which you have entered; viz. dili-

gently to fight the battles of the Lord for the sound doctrine, and warn the people intrusted to your care, that they fall not into the snares which are prepared for their everlasting ruin. The Church demands this from you, as well as from the other Bishops whom our rescript equally concerns; and we most anxiously expect it, that the deep sorrow we feel on account of this new species of tares which an adversary has so abundantly sown, may, by this cheering hope be somewhat alleviated: and, we always very heartily invoke the choicest blessings upon yourself and your fellow Bishops, for the good of the Lord's flock, which we impart to you and them by our Apostolic benediction.

Given at Rome, at St. Mary the Greater, June 29th, 1816,
the 17th year of our Pontificate.

Pius P. P. VII.

THE PASTOR'S FAREWELL.

The late Mr. S. Deacon, of Barton Fabis, closed his labours in the ministry, Feb. 18th, 1816, by a Sermon, from Acts xv. 29, "Fare ye well." On the same day he completed his seventieth year; and fourteen days afterwards, he finished his earthly course, after having been the minister and pastor of the G. B. Church, at Barton forty years. The concluding Address of his last Sermon, and the Hymns then sung, which were composed by himself, have been kindly handed to us, and will we doubt not be acceptable to our readers.

THE MINISTER'S "RESIGNATION."

LORD I resign! thy will be done!

Age and infirmities come on!

Which quite-unfit thy feeble worm,

A Pastor's duty to perform.

Yet cast me not away, dear Lord;

Thy saving grace to me afford;

I cannot labour now for thee,

But thou canst plead,—O plead for me.

Fit me for my eternal home,
 And cheer my heart with joys to come,
 That I may run, with steady pace,
 Till thou shall close and crown my race.

Then in the world of bliss may I
 Behold my Saviour's face with joy ;
 While He, with a celestial smile,
 Forgives my sins, rewards my toil.

And may this Church and Neighbourhood,
 Have helps sufficient for their good ;
 That crowds of precious souls may come,
 And find salvation and a home.

Till they with me and I with them,
 Meet in the new Jerusalem ;
 Where age, infirmities and pain,
 Shall never make us sigh again.

Then will we sing, with cheerful tongues,
 The sweetest of the Heav'nly songs ;
 To him who wash'd us in his blood,
 To reconcile our souls to God.

THE VOYAGE COMPLETED.

COMPANIONS and friends, why weep you for me ?
 My Spirit ascends, lo, yonder I see
 My Admiral standing my soul to receive ;
 And shall I fear landing, or tempests to leave ?

I've fought a good fight. I've finish'd my course ;
 My faith has been right, I feel by its force ;
 For well I discover its pow'r in my heart ;
 And now the war's over, I long to depart.

Adieu, my friends ! a hearty farewell ;
 Be steady and true ; in harmony dwell ;
 In all your behaviour let candour prevail ;
 Till you to the Saviour triumphantly sail.

You soon shall have done, with troubles and woes ;
 With sword and with gun, with fighting and foes ;
 The World of enjoyment will soon be secure ;
 And all your employment to love and adore.

Then dry up your tears, for why should you weep ?
 Your doubts and your fears, commit to the deep :
 In all your distresses to Jesus apply ;
 Till safe you arrive at the Haven of joy.

CONCLUDING ADDRESS.

“ NOW Brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace ; which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. I hope, I can say, I have coveted no man’s silver, or gold, or apparel. Ye, yourselves know, that these hands have ministered to my necessities, and to them that were with me. According to my ability and opportunity, I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. I am conscious, that the time of my departure approaches, probably is nigh at hand : then take heed to yourselves. You are in a corrupt body, an ensnaring world ; and your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goes about, seeking whom he may devour. Keep near to God by a steady perseverance in his ways. Lay, and keep fast hold on him by faith, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving ; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Hear the voice of the good Shepherd, and follow him. Abide in Christ, and love one another. I beseech you, Brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, in its tempers, fashions, superstitious, gratifications, carnal customs, (I need not say vile practices ;) but be ye transformed, by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove, experimentally and happily prove, what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God. Be ye not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. Heaven, and God, and Christ, and Glory, will make amends for all. Amen.”

(To be continued.)

THE
GENERAL BAPTIST REPOSITORY.

No. XLIV.—Vol. VIII.—August 1st. 1817.

A SERIOUS ADDRESS

To Professors of Religion in general, and to Members of Churches in particular.

(Continued from page 18 of the last Number.)

IS there no reason to fear that *increasing opulence* has had a hurtful effect? Has it not produced in many a fondness for elegance in dress, furniture, table, and an unbecoming distance and reserve towards their poorer brethren? In the article of visiting, is not a preference given to carnal neighbours of the richer and gayer glass, to other poor brethren, however pious, who are unable to entertain them again in an equal style of elegance and profusion? What real pleasure can a truly serious person feel in the company of the worldling; or what solid advantage can they expect to derive? It becomes a christian to shew a decided preference for the acquaintance of the pious and conscientious; of such as love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; and can converse seriously and experimentally on religious subjects; or, at least, would be glad to listen to their more intelligent brethren on such subjects. David would be "a companion of all them that feared God;" and esteemed such "the excellent of the earth," however low in rank, or mean in appearance. Nor would he "stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scorners," however elevated, gay, or polished. Whom did our Lord select for his most intimate acquaintance, and with what sort of characters did he associate? He appreciated men according to their characters; and has left it on record for the admonition of his followers, that the humblest and holiest are the highest in his esteem; and adds, "he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven, the same is my mother, my sister,

my brother." His whole life cast a shade on the accidental circumstances of birth, rank, riches, and all those exterior appendages to man, which have not the smallest relation to moral and spiritual excellence; and which are but rarely seen connected with them. Should the marked approbation of God, the example of Christ, the consideration of relationship, and the hope of the most intimate and permanent friendship, have no influence in determining our judgment and practice, in the choice of our acquaintance? If we truly fear God, and love our Lord Jesus Christ, and have a sincere delight in communion with them; and a growing desire for the prosperity of the Redeemer's kingdom; shall we not be constrained, from congeniality of taste, of principle, of feeling, and of interest, to shew a marked partiality to those who have attained to a spiritual understanding, and can converse experimentally on the riches of divine grace, and on the glories of the eternal world?

Many, I fear, who possess "the wisdom of this world," and are pursuing the enjoyments of another with languor and indifference, as if their minds hung in suspense which to choose, or as if the reality of the advantages of the latter was questionable, will, probably, at some future period wish they had more nearly copied the example of Moses, that ancient and eminent servant of God; who, though placed in a situation so promising to a mind ardent in the pursuit of worldly grandeur and riches, and at a period of life, when the charms of such objects are most likely to allure and fascinate; yet, in those circumstances, nobly refused, disdainfully rejected those flattering allurements, and boldly resolved to take his lot with God's people, though poor, persecuted, despised, and exposed to every species of contempt and cruelty. "He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." The "treasures of Egypt" could not draw him; nor the sinful pleasures of a voluptuous court allure him.—His choice was as judicious, as his conduct was decided. He even preferred *the reproach of Christ*, to the honours and emoluments of this world. His reasons were weighty and satisfactory; "the pleasures of sin are but for a season." And such is the evanescence of all worldly possessions! Sin may be rolled under the tongue as a sweet morsel; but its effects are deleterious, bitter, and fatal; and what will those do in the end

who prefer it? Moses "had respect to the recompence of reward." He "set the Lord before him," and "endured as seeing him who is invisible," and as seen by him. His choice and conduct recommend themselves to our hearts; in our cool and serious moments we are compelled to approve of them. If there be any thing we prefer to the approbation of God, the pleasing of him, and the present hope and future possession of the heavenly inheritance, the "great recompence of reward," we must, to our conscience stand self condemned; and sooner or later must bitterly, if not unavailingly lament our choice. Moses, by determining as he did, deprived himself of what a great majority of the world prefer, and brought on himself a multiplicity of cares, and much painful solicitude of mind, in conducting so ungrateful, untractable, and mutinous a people, for the space of forty years; but he was greatly honoured by God, had the most free intercourse and familiarity, and the most delightful communion with him; with the singular honour of conversing with him "face to face," as a man converseth with his friend: and to crown all, an assured and confident hope of a translation to the church above. Let the same principles actuate us, the same motives animate us, the same enjoyments allure us, the same prospect cheer us, and the same choice determine us. Though we attain not his extraordinary endowments and honours, we shall assuredly secure the most solid advantages while pursuing our pilgrimage; having "peace with God," a senso of his love and favour, a good title and a well grounded hope; and, having finished our course with joy, obtain an entrance into that happy world, and be for ever united with that perfect and glorious society, whose fellowship we have ardently desired, and wisely preferred.

Riches, if properly estimated, and properly used, have unquestionably their advantages; and these consist chiefly in increasing our influence, and enlarging our means of doing good. They also free us from that necessary care, and those frequent occasions of perplexity and embarrassment usually attendant on poverty; and place within our reach several enjoyments mental and corporeal, from which the indigent are in a great measure excluded. But are not riches, like every other blessing *a talent*, for the use of which we should hold ourselves accountable? Do they not increase our respon-

sibility, our care, and our danger? Is not the state of the rich held up to our view in the scriptures, as attended with the utmost danger to their everlasting welfare? And do not our own observations and reflections corroborate the truth of that statement? And yet, dreadful infatuation! which no warning seems sufficient to check! how few are alarmed or instructed! they are still sought for with as much avidity, as if the possession of them, instead of being hazardous to our souls, increased the security of their final salvation. By whom do they appear to be held with a strict and conscientious regard to their proper use? How rare are such instances! But how generally do they nourish pride, covetousness, unfeeling selfishness and cruelty; or are lavished in frivolous amusements, in ostentatious grandeur, in riotous living, or some other method of useless extravagance, or ruinous excess!

Our Lord's knowledge of human nature cannot be called in question; and he has said, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven;" yet how few apprehend any danger! Covetousness is called idolatry; we read of the "covetous whom the Lord abhorreth;" and are exhorted to "take heed and beware of covetousness," a double caution: the rich are to be charged "not to be high minded, nor to trust in uncertain riches." But who thinks himself covetous? who acknowledges and laments such a crime? who is not offended if accused of it? How difficult to bring home such a crime to the conscience, although so very common; and so obvious to every one except the guilty person! The mind, sagacious in other matters, seems blind to this; and the conscience, tender to other vices, here seems stupid and callous. Let it be remembered, that he who discerneth the heart will be able to detect it, and he who has promised to reward every one according to his works, will most assuredly convict those who are guilty of it, and punish them for it. How awful to be abhorred of the Lord! Pause, reader, and consider. Should this be thy case, where wilt thou look for comfort or safety? O when will the endowments of the mind, the virtues of the heart, and the graces of the spirit, those "fruits of righteousness" be generally and decidedly preferred? These are of sterling value; these constitute a treasure of which death cannot deprive us; they are, in the sight of God, of great price. How pleasant to

see a christian, with whom God has entrusted a greater portion of this world's wealth, a pattern of humility, meekness, spirituality, zeal and benevolence ; like this great Master, going about and seeking opportunities to do good ; in whom are seen no airs of importance, no ebullitions of pride, no distant reserve ; whose humility and meekness are maintained by serious reflections on his increased responsibility, by a just appreciation of the value of wealth, and by anticipations of the approaching period when he must give an account of his stewardship. Whose spirituality, zeal and benevolence are excited and quickened by a correct opinion of the comparative value of present and future enjoyments, by just views of the nature of religion, by frequent recollections of the warnings and admonitions given him in scripture, and by an ardent desire to be approved faithful when he appears before his judge. He finds it " more blessed to give than to receive." His mind enjoys a luxury in doing good, in visiting the fatherless and widows, in searching out proper objects of relief. His expanded heart is alert at the sighs of distress and the calls of misery ; and he readily affords a helping hand to those plans of amelioration and usefulness that promise to diminish the misery, and increase the temporal or eternal welfare of his species ; and especially to any scheme, by which the kingdom of Christ, the spread of the everlasting Gospel, and the salvation of his fellow-men can be effected. The great consideration that gives an impetus to his efforts is redeeming love. " Freely he has received," and therefore he " freely gives." His heart beats high with gratitude to that God who " so loved the world as to give his only begotten son," and to that Saviour " who gave himself for him," " who was slain, and hath redeemed him to God by his blood." He contrasts his present with his past situation, and admires the change, and the steps by which it has been accomplished. He considers that he is not his own, but is bought with a price, and he feels his obligation to glorify God with his body, soul and substance. Solicitous to " live unto God," and " yield himself to him as one alive from the dead," he is careful to " live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved him, and gave himself for him." Judging correctly of the worth of his soul, the greatness of its danger, the importance of its salvation, and the desirableness of the heavenly inheritance ; he fixes his

eye on the "cross of Christ," and derives from that enlivening view a constant supply of that animation, comfort, and hope, which makes him "dead to the world, and the world dead to him." He deems no sacrifices too great to make, no duties too difficult to perform, that he may glorify his Lord, adorn his christian character, and serve his generation. He regards every thing he possesses on earth as a sacred deposit, of which he is utterly unworthy, to be used for the advantage of his fellow-creatures and the advancement of the divine glory: and remembers, for the proper use of it he must render an account. He considers no possessions an advantage, but as they increase his capacity for usefulness, and are appropriated to their intended purpose. And far from coveting an increase of riches, much less desiring them for their own sakes, he labours to "be contented with such things as he has;" wisely considering that every addition to his temporal possessions, is attended with an increase of care, responsibility, and danger, having so much more to improve. *Spiritual attainments* are what he seeks most, well knowing, that there is in them an intrinsic value and excellence, which time cannot diminish, nor death destroy. How peculiarly desirable is an increase of such characters! Awake to emulation and zeal, my opulent brethren: consider the good you might do, and the glory you might secure, and the pungent regret you will one day feel, if a talent be put into your hand, and you fail to improve it. Abundance of this world's goods, possessed with such views, attended with such dispositions, and devoted to such noble purposes, is a real blessing to the possessor, and through him an advantage to the society to which he belongs. Such characters, indeed, are a blessing to their species, and an honour to human nature; as well as an exemplification of the benevolent spirit of the gospel.

There is not a more agreeable spectacle to a true christian, than to behold the church of Christ in a flourishing condition; "brethren living together in unity;" all striving according to their abilities and influence to promote peace, order, and godliness in the church; and the spread of the gospel among their ignorant and perishing neighbours. All feeling a lively interest in the Redeemer's kingdom and glory; living in friendship as one family, every one contributing his portion of ability to promote the common good; reckoning his private

secular concerns, and those of his family, as a very subordinate object, intent most on the superlatively important objects above-mentioned: connecting with them the promotion of genuine piety in his own soul; the "finishing his course with joy," and obtaining the rest which remains for the people of God. Who will deny that these are objects of transcendent importance? that every private temporal concern ought to give place to them? and that he who devotes to them his principal attention and care, is displaying superior wisdom, and is living to the most valuable purposes? Who would not prefer the situation of such a person, when life draws to a close, and eternity presents itself to his view? Who, even now, in his serious moments, can inwardly disapprove of such a course, or fail to applaud it? All *must* approve, but alas! few are disposed to imitate. O why do we not listen more attentively to the voice of conscience, to the dictates of truth, and to the imperious calls of duty! Although devoted to self-interest, by mistaking the means, we are frustrating our purpose, and defeating our own designs. Is not a price put into our hands that we may secure incalculable, even everlasting advantages? Let us not lose the precious opportunity, which is never to return. When life is expiring, death and eternity approaching; the solemn audit drawing near, when our condition will be irrevocably determined, and we all shall be rewarded according to our works; why are we not more earnest, more active, more heavenly? When shall we learn the divine art of viewing objects in the light of eternity, of appreciating them according to their real value; and of proportioning our regards to their importance? The time of probation will soon close: the period of labour will soon finish; and by indulging a sluggish and carnal disposition, we may have to lament at last, that our time is fled, and our work unfinished or totally neglected; we are going to give up our accounts, and are utterly unprepared for the impartial scrutiny. It surely becomes every one to be truly in earnest; to have "his loins girt, and his lights burning;" to "give all diligence to make his calling and election sure;" that he may be found both *ready and willing*; may obey the call to die with alacrity, and cheerfully quit the present life with a hopefull of immortality. Thou Father of spirits, and Giver of all grace! let it please thee to afford thy servants thy quickening energy, to

awake every power of their souls to the utmost diligence in securing their own salvation, glorifying thy great and holy name; and arousing their dying fellow-creatures to a due concern for their eternal welfare! Under the influence of thy all-powerful spirit, and copiously supplied with thy special grace; may their efforts be successful in "saving themselves and them that hear them!"

That we may not be deceived in a matter of transcendent importance, where deception would be most fatal; we should frequently, impartially, and with the greatest possible care, accompanied with the most fervent prayer, compare ourselves with that description the scriptures gives us of the true followers of Jesus. What is the description given of these in the bible? They are "born of God," they are "partakers of the divine nature;" they "love not the world, neither the things that are in the world;" they "are not conformed to the world;" they "overcome the world," by their *faith*; "the world is crucified unto them, and they unto the world," by the cross of Christ; or by frequent believing views of a crucified Saviour; they are "spiritually minded;" "the word of Christ dwells in them richly;" "they do all in the name of the Lord Jesus;" "the mind is in them which was also in Christ Jesus;" "Christ is their life;" "he dwells in their hearts by faith;" they desire to be "filled with all joy and peace in believing," and "abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost;" "the love of Christ constrains them" to "live not to themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again;" and "the life which they now live in the flesh, they live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved them, and gave himself for them;" "they are led by the spirit," and "walk in the spirit," and desire to "be filled with the spirit;" they "set their affections on things above;" "their conversation is in heaven, from whence also they look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus;" their aim is to "finish their course with joy," and to be "faithful unto death;" and "they count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ;" Jesus "Christ is precious to them," and from love to him, they "forsake all for him," "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world;" and hope to be "found complete in him." &c. &c. Let the sacred scripture be our standard;

and, if in any thing we discover our deficiency, as doubtless we shall, in some degree; let us diligently "follow after, if that we may apprehend that for which we were apprehended of Christ." God, in his superlative goodness will discover those deficiencies to us, if he sees us sincere and ardent in our endeavours to know and do his will. "Then shall ye know, if ye follow on to know;" for "the secret of the Lord is with the righteous;" and "if any man will do his will," i. e. be seriously intent on doing it, and fully determined to do it, when discovered to him, "he shall know of the doctrine, that it is of God." Let this encourage us.

The following advice is judicious and important, and I earnestly request every one of my readers to pay a strict and practical regard to it. "Be sure to live on the great fundamentals of religion, and let not your attention to these be diverted by an intemperate zeal about lesser things. Place not your religion in disputable points, and ineffectual opinions, but in those weightier matters of the law and gospel which are of undoubted importance; and in which holy men, among all the different denominations of christians, are better agreed than is commonly apprehended. Choose God for your portion and felicity, and live daily upon Christ Jesus as the only mediator, by whom you can either have access to God, or acceptance with him. Indulge no sin—plead for no infirmity—but make it the daily business of your lives, "to mortify the deeds of the body,"

"Rest not in a low degree of holiness, but love, and long, and strive, for the highest. And for these purposes, pray without ceasing for those promised influences of divine grace which can alone heal your diseased natures, and carry you forward from one degree of holiness to another, till, being ripened for glory, an entrance shall, in due time, be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

(To be concluded in our next.)

BIBLICAL ANECDOTES.

Since the establishment of Bible Societies, various instances of the grossest ignorance have been discovered, such indeed as could scarcely be imagined to exist in what is called a christian

country, but which sufficiently demonstrate the utility and importance of those benevolent institutions. An auxiliary Society was formed sometime since in Southwark, and some ladies were constituted a committee, for the purpose of visiting the poorer females in the parish of Bermondsey, and to furnish them with Bibles. In performing their visits, two of these ladies called on a poor woman, and enquired whether she wished to have a Bible. The woman answered, That she did not know what religion the Bible was of; but if it was of her religion, she should not object to have one. Another woman, unable to comprehend the meaning of the term, said, "A bible, what is that?" And until the visitors had explained to her their object, she seemed not to know whether a Bible was a book, or whether it was not something to eat, to drink, or to wear!

From such facts it is easy to conclude, that the greatest exertions are still demanded in favour of the perishing heathen in our own country, as well as of those in foreign lands.

PHILOLOGOS!

PREPARING FOOD on the SABBATH.

Necessary as food is to our subsistence, it is not to be procured in any way that would violate the sabbath; for man liveth not by bread only, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God. When the Lord led his people through the wilderness, he fed them with manna from heaven; but to mark the peculiar sanctity of the sabbath, he gave them no manna on that day, that no labour might be performed in gathering and dressing it. A double quantity was rained down on the preceding day, and it was miraculously preserved fit for use on the sabbath. The law made on this occasion also says, "To-morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake, to day; and seethe (or boil) that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over, lay up for you to be kept until the morning." Deut. xvi. 22—26.

Baking, boiling or cooking on the sabbath was therefore strictly forbidden by the Mosaic law. How far this is binding upon christians, to whom no such law is given, is another question. "Dubitantes," enquire in a former number, p. 21, "Is it right for the members of christian churches to send their dinners to the bakelouse, to be cooked on the Lord's day?"

If preparing food for the body were merely a secular concern, the matter would be easily decided; but as it is not so, the answer to this will depend on a previous question,—Is it a work of mercy or necessity? Would the party so indulged, be injured by a cold dinner on the sabbath; or are there no preparatory means by which a warm dinner may be provided, without imposing the necessity of personal attendance?

If such an indulgence be not necessary, or could be provided by unexceptionable means, it may then be proper to enquire, Is it expedient to engage ourselves, or to employ others in any kind of labour on the sabbath day which is unnecessary, or may be easily avoided? Is this the best way of evincing our own regard for the sanctity of the sabbath, of inspiring others with reverence for that holy day, of fixing in their minds a deep sense of the importance of public worship, and of promoting their spiritual interests? If not, it is reason sufficient for a conscientious and tender mind, why every thing of this sort should be carefully avoided.

It is always a sign of a doubtful state, when persons are anxious to know how far they may go, and what they may do, without directly violating the letter of a commandment. A mind properly imbued with religious principle will be gravitating towards the centre, instead of diverging to the extremity of what is merely right and lawful. Whatsoever has the appearance of evil, whatsoever may be the occasion of evil, will be scrupulously avoided, if religion has its proper influence on the heart, whether it be expressly contravened by any written law or not.

Under a typical and preparatory dispensation, the minutest prescriptions were required; such a state of things was suited to the infancy of the church. But now that these ceremonies are laid aside, the christian is not to look for literal prescriptions; his conduct, in innumerable instances, in all the minuter and less distinct parts of it, which, like the softened tints in a landscape, give embellishment to the scenery of character, is not so much to be governed by positive law, as by the great principle on which all law is founded,—the principle of equity, fitness and propriety. He is not to ask, May I cook a dinner, may I take a walk, may I enter into general conversation on the sabbath day? is there any written law to forbid it? would it be positively sinful? No: all this is the language of a

slave, who is willing to do no more in religion than he can help; not that of a generous and free-born son. Rather let the enquiry be, How shall I glorify my Father who is in heaven? how shall I make his sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, and honourable? and how render my influence and example beneficial? Isa. lvi. 2. lviii. 13.

The question proposed by "Dubitantes," like many similar ones of minor importance, must be settled by an appeal to the grand charter of christiau rights and privileges, Phil. iv. 8. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." To a renewed and tender conscience, the decision of such cases will be easy; and where it is otherwise, the clearest precepts of the written law would not be sufficient.

EPAPHRODITUS.

QUERY.

To the EDITOR of the G. B. R.

SIR,

Some circumstances, in which I am unhappily placed, have led me to wish a solution of the following question. Can it be proved from scripture, that a professor of religion, who is an apprentice, ought *not* to acquiesce in the regulations of his master; and, at his command, transact business, such as corresponding, posting of books, &c. nearly the half of each successive Lord's day?

As this is a real case, I hope through the channel of your valuable Repository, to receive some information which may guide my future conduct, and enable me to adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour in all things.

I remain, your's respectfully,

M. R.

THE AGED MINISTERS' FUND.

To the EDITOR of the G. B. R.

DEAR SIR,

In conformity to the directions of my worthy brethren who have the honour of conducting the affairs of the above institu-

tion, I take the liberty of transmitting you an account of the money received, and of the distributions made, within the last three years : requesting you will do us the favour of giving it a place in your next number of the G. B. R. We also wish to embrace the present opportunity, of again earnestly recommending this excellent Institution to the attention of the Connection, as one which we cannot but consider important, useful, and necessary. We consider it *important* because we think it capable of being rendered greatly subservient to the promotion of the best interests of our fellow creatures. That it is *useful* and *necessary* is sufficiently evident from the importunity, and the very grateful acknowledgments, of our poor aged, but venerable ministers ; and also those of our poor and destitute churches, who have experienced the benefits arising from its salutary aid and assistance. We should be exceedingly happy to see our christian friends begin, duly to appreciate its value and importance, and manifest a disposition, by furnishing the means, to render it still more useful.

The Committee regularly meet in the vestry belonging to the G. B. chapel, Loughborough, on the last Wednesday in April and October. The latest report of this Fund may be seen by referring to G. B. R. Vol. VI. page 84. From this report it appears, that at a meeting of the Committee, April 27, preceding, the sum of £25. was given to aged and poor ministers, and £2. 10s. to destitute churches. At the six subsequent meetings, up to April 30th, 1817, with interest of cash in hand, the sum of £96. 4s. 9½d. has been received by the Treasurer ; and the sums paid, are,

To Aged Ministers	50	0	0
To Destitute Churches	89	0	0
	<hr/>		
Total distribution in three years ...	£139	0	0

The distributions exceeding the receipts by £42. 15s. 2½d. will I presume be considered sufficient to justify this application. If we look through the Connection, we see many of our ministers who are already far advanced in the decline of life, and must ere long be denominated *aged* ; and the probability is, that some of them, will not only be aged, but *poor aged ministers*, so that we have no reason to expect our assistance will be less needed than it has been ; our wish is, that we may

stand ready to lend them our friendly aid, when their circumstances and situations require it. Much might be said in favour of a charity so laudable as that which I am endeavouring to recommend, but I conclude by taking the liberty of directing the attention of my brethren to the prayer of their aged ministers, expressed in the petition of the venerable psalmist, Psalm lxxi. 9. "Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth." Let us beware, my beloved friends, lest, seeing our brother have need, we shut up our bowels of compassion against him. Then; indeed, we should have great reason to be alarmed for our safety. For, saith the oracles of sacred truth, "how dwelleth the love of God in such a soul?" I John iii. 17.

Signed, in behalf of the Committee,

Loughborough,
June 29th, 1817,

WM. NEWHAM,
Secretary.

N. B. Subscriptions and Donations from churches, and individuals, however small, will be thankfully received by the Treasurer, Mr. Jarvis Miller, Loughborough; and all communications addressed to the Secretary, *W. Newham, Leicester Rond, Loughborough*, will, I hope, be faithfully and affectionately attended to.

FORWARDNESS REPROVED.

To the EDITOR of the G. B. R.

DEAR SIR,

Reading, lately, in a monthly miscellany, a letter, dated, New York, Dec. 24th, 1816, concerning the forwardness of a certain young man, at a recent church meeting, I was struck with its importance. And, knowing the state of several of our own churches, I have ventured to transcribe it, and send it to you, hoping that, by giving it a wider publicity, it may be still more extensively useful.

I am, yours, &c.

Ashby de la Zouch.

J. G.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,

"I was greatly surprized and grieved at your behaviour at the late church meeting. The young and truly intelligent

Elihu was of opinion, that days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom. Hence when in company with those who were his superiors, not in strength of intellect, nor in real piety, but in years only, he discovered his good sense, and that modesty which is one of the loveliest ornaments of a young man, by waiting till Job, and the other senior friends, had done speaking, before he would open his mouth; he waited *merely*, it is said, because they were older than he. Mark, my young friend, his language; and in future, let it be your endeavour to imitate so good an example: "I am young," said the amiable youth, "and ye are old, wherefore I was afraid, and durst not show you my opinion; I waited for *your* words, I gave ear to *your* reasons, whilst you searched out what to say." What a contrast to this ancient pattern of modesty and meekness, did your behaviour, the other morning, exhibit! Elihu was young, and, therefore, afraid; you were young, and, therefore, very bold: Elihu was young and diffident; you were young and remarkably confident: Elihu patiently waited till his elder brethren had done speaking; you were so impatient and impetuous, that your older brethren had scarcely opportunity to open their mouths: Elihu was heard with respectful attention; but you with grief, and, I fear, with disgust. Be more on your guard in time to come, my brother, and do not give me occasion to write to you again in this way. I have no doubt of your piety, and I give you credit for as much understanding as usually falls to the share of a young man: you possess, too, a generous and feeling heart. These things have obtained you my esteem and that of others; but I wish to see you rise in moral and religious excellence. In order to this, put on humility as a garment, and let your youthful passions be brought more under the government of sound reason. Study much the character, and be concerned to imitate more the example of the Saviour you love. He says, "Learn of *me*, I am *meek* and *lowly* in heart, and you shall find rest unto your soul:" but by indulging a temper the very reverse of meekness, you disturb the peace of the church, disquiet your own breast, and bring guilt on your conscience. Let the apostolic precept be neither forgotten nor disregarded in your future conduct: "Ye younger, submit yourselves to the elder." By constantly attending to those things which become your profession, your station, and your years, you

will be likely to escape much trouble, to enjoy much peace, and to secure to yourself the love and esteem of all who know you and love Jesus Christ; and especially of him who desires to be considered, your sincere and faithful friend.

L. T."

CONFESSION OF FAITH.

At the particular request of the Ministers who assisted at the Ordination of MR. RICHARD INGHAM, at DUFFIELD, June 19, 1817, we insert the CONFESSION OF FAITH, made by him on that occasion: prefixing his answer to a previous question; as it furnishes us with his sentiments respecting the Holy Scriptures, which could not with propriety, be repeated, among the other articles of his Creed.

QUESTION. By what rule do you intend to conduct yourself in discharging the great office now devolving upon you?

ANSWER. The rule, Sir, by which I mean to regulate my conduct in discharging the duties of the pastoral office, is the Bible, particularly that part of it called the New Testament. This I consider the last, the most important, and the most perfect revelation of God to man, containing every thing necessary to be believed and practised; serving as a key to the Old Testament writings; furnishing an answer to every useful inquiry; profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness; able to build up the saints, and give them an inheritance among all them that are sanctified through faith which is in Christ Jesus. From this I would derive my instructions; by this I would form my opinions; on this I would rest the authority of my recommendations, and to this I would refer my hearers for the solution of every difficulty, and the clearing of every doubt. As an accountable creature, I claim the privilege of reading and explaining the scriptures for myself; nor can I think, for a moment, that God has confined the key of knowledge to any sect, cloister, conclave, or synod; or impowered any man or body of men to dictate to others what they shall believe, or what they shall practise. Being wise above what is written, has, I conceive, done incalculable injury to the interests of religion, obscured the beautiful simplicity of the gospel, clogged it with a multitude of human additions, and in some cases made void the word of God.

I wish to call no man master upon earth. At the same time, I would allow to others the same liberty that I claim for myself.

THE CONFESSION OF FAITH.

1. I believe that there is one GOD. The works of creation convince me of it; and they also shew me that he must be infinite in wisdom, in power, and in goodness. But it is from the infallible records of inspiration that I learn a true account of his nature, character and perfections. These teach me that God is a spirit; that he is eternal, immutable and incomprehensible: omniscient, omnipresent and almighty; infinitely holy, just and good; that he is the Creator, Preserver and Governor of the world: that his happiness is independent of all created beings, and incapable of being affected by any occurrences or events. I believe, further, that the incommunicable properties of the Godhead, are shared in common by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, that each of these is distinctly and properly divine, and yet that they constitute but one God. "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one." The modus of their union I pretend not to explain, neither am I an advocate for unscriptural words and phrases; but I think myself bound to believe this upon the testimony of him who hath revealed it, because I consider it plainly taught in scripture.

2. I believe that God made man upright, free from every pollution, perfectly holy, able to stand, and yet liable to fall;—that in consequence of transgressing the divine command, in eating the forbidden fruit, he did fall from his original innocence, holiness, and happiness; that he forfeited the favor of his Maker; became depraved in his dispositions and affections; incorrect in his views; averse to God and prone to sin; subject to mortality, and liable to everlasting misery, without the pardoning and restoring mercy of God:—that in consequence of Adam's sin all mankind, as springing from a corrupt stock, are become ignorant and depraved, impure and unholy, sinful and mortal; that the heart of every unconverted person is enmity against God; and that without the quickening and sanctifying influences of the spirit of God, none that are come to years of knowledge and discretion, can enter into the kingdom

of heaven. At the same time, I believe that all who perish eternally, perish for their own actual sins, which they have committed against light and knowledge, and the conviction of their own consciences.

3. I believe that as all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, so God might justly have left all to perish in their sins; but out of pure compassion he sent his only begotten Son into the world to save them from eternal ruin; that the Lord Jesus cheerfully undertook the task, laid aside the glories of heaven, condescended to become a man, united the human with the divine nature, and after yielding a perfect obedience to the law of God, cheerfully and voluntarily offered up himself as an atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, that so justice might be satisfied, the law magnified, the authority of God maintained, the holiness of his nature displayed, sin condemned and punished, the curse removed, and a way of salvation opened, which would be honourable to God, and effectual to every sinner who should adopt it; that, in consequence of the death of the Lord Jesus, provision is made for the recovery and salvation of every son and daughter of Adam; that the salvation which the gospel proclaims, includes in it a deliverance from guilt, condemnation, and misery, a freedom from the love and power and reigning influence of sin, and in due time a complete deliverance from all the effects of man's revolt from the ever blessed God.

4. I believe that the way in which sinners become interested in the blessings of the gospel, is solely through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; that genuine, saving faith is always preceded by a conviction of our guilt, depravity, and danger, and of our utter inability to save ourselves; that it is accompanied by a firm persuasion that Christ is able and willing to save; and consists in the actual dependence of the heart upon him for salvation, to be enjoyed in his own way, by grace, through faith, in the way of holiness; and that when a sinner thus believes in Christ, he is justified and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God; that then, and not till then, the Spirit takes possession of his heart, thoroughly turns the current of his affections, and enables him to bring forth fruit unto God. I believe further that genuine faith will produce good works; that these works are not the cause but the effect of our acceptance with God; that they are to be

performed from a principle of love ; and are acceptable only through Jesus Christ, Thus, while the gospel proposes salvation by grace, through faith, it establishes the moral law, ensures a regard to it as the directory of our lives, excludes all boasting on the part of man, and secures the glory to God alone.

5. I believe that the ground of a sinner's justification in the sight of God is the atoning blood of the Lord Jesus Christ; that the sinner's plea and only source of hope to the end of life will be, "Jesus Christ died for my sins according to the scriptures;" that righteousness is imputed or charged to the account of every believer; that this righteousness is not the active righteousness of Christ, but an acquittal from guilt and danger, a being considered righteous in the sight of God, and treated as though we had never sinned. The active righteousness of Christ I conceive to have been necessary on his part as a man and a Saviour; and to qualify him to become a perfect and spotless sacrifice of atonement, that so he might die, not for his own sins, but for the sins of the people; but the ground of a sinner's acceptance with God I believe to be solely the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

6. I believe that the Holy Spirit dwells in believers; that he is the author of their regeneration; is the seal and witness of their adoption and sonship, and a pledge of eternal life; that he helps their infirmities; assists in prayer; enables them to mortify sin; carries on the work of sanctification in their hearts; and that he will finally raise the dead bodies of the saints, and new-model them for the kingdom of glory. I believe that it was under his superintendence the scriptures were penned; that he works by the word and by his secret influences upon the heart; that his inward influences are always in exact consistency with the written word; that they do not destroy the freedom of man as a rational and accountable creature; that they are common to all; and that the only reason why all who are favoured with the gospel revelation are not converted, is, because they either do not read and hear the word, or because they resist the Holy Ghost. I think it of importance also to add, that it is by regarding the written word, that we obtain and enjoy the influences of the spirit.

7. I believe that a gospel church is a voluntary society, of which the head is the Lord Jesus, and the laws the New Tes-

tament;—that the primitive church, (as should be the case now,) was composed of such, and such only, as professed faith in Christ, and, upon such a profession, had been baptized in his name;—that particular churches are strictly independent, and have no authority one over another;—that the principal officers in a Christian Church are Bishops or Pastors, who are sometimes styled Elders and Overseers, whose business it is to look after the spiritual concerns of the body, to preach the word, administer the ordinances, and watch over the souls of those over whom they preside; and Deacons, whose duty is to manage the secular affairs of the church; to look after the poor, to receive the contributions and donations of the members, and to see that the Minister does not want.

8. In looking into the New Testament, I discover two positive institutions, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, which owe their authority to the will and express appointment of the great Legislator of the Church, and seem admirably adapted to answer the ends for which they were originally instituted. Baptism I understand to be an immersion of the body in water; that it is a duty incumbent upon all believers; and that none but believers are proper subjects of it. This institution I recognise as a striking representation of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, as a testimony of what we have inwardly experienced, as a very significant method of publicly espousing Christ's cause, and a declaration of our belief in the resurrection of the dead. By this Christians solemnly engage to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper, I believe to be an instructive, humbling, and reviving ordinance; that it is to be celebrated by believers to the end of time. In this they commemorate the dying love of Christ, have his death brought fresh to their remembrance, testify their acceptance of gospel salvation, manifest their communion with Christ and each other, and solemnly vow to continue firm to his covenant to the end of their lives.

9. I believe that the happiness or misery of the soul commences immediately after death; that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust; that there will be a general judgment; that Jesus Christ will be the judge; that the process of that day will be the most solemn, impartial, and decisive; that there is a place of unspeakable

felicity and glory called heaven, intended as the final and eternal abode of the people of God; and also a dreadful place of torment called hell, prepared originally for the devil and his angels, but into which the wicked must be turned, with all the nations that forget God, and in which they must remain for ever and ever. Then will the Son, in his mediatorial capacity, deliver up the kingdom to the Father, and God shall be all in all.

These, Sir, appear to me to be some of the leading truths of the Gospel Revelation, and, as such, I intend to make them the chief subjects of my ministrations. At the same time, I wish to be open to conviction, and yield to the force of scriptural evidence; and while I claim the privilege of thinking for myself, and publicly maintaining what I believe to be right, I wish to allow the same liberty to others, and to say, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

MEDITATIONS on the LORD'S PRAYER.

No. VIII.

Matt. vi. 13. " *And lead us not into temptation.*"

Sin is no sooner pardoned, than we are instantly in danger of contracting fresh guilt; and therefore we need to be kept from temptation as much as we need to be forgiven. Hence it is that our blessed Lord teaches us to pray for these in connection; well knowing that a season of spiritual enjoyment is quickly followed with trials and dangers. He himself had no sooner received the approving testimony of the Father, than he was driven into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil; and when Paul had been caught up into the third heaven, a messenger of Satan was sent to buffet him. It is true, when the enemy tried our Lord, he did not overcome him: "the prince of this world came, and found nothing in him." But Christ knew it would not be so with us; he therefore kindly forewarns us of the danger, and teaches us to pray against it.

Any thing that tends to prove and try us, or to make manifest what is in our hearts, is a temptation, from whatever quarter it may proceed. But the term is more frequently ap-

plied to those things which are the occasion of evil, or which tend more immediately to excite the corrupt principles of our nature; and, in this sense no doubt it is to be understood in the petition which we are here directed to present. "Lead us not into temptation;" suffer us not to be exposed to those things which may draw away our hearts from God, neither lead us forth with the workers of iniquity.

The temptations of the enemy are various, but skilfully adapted to the circumstances in which we are placed, and to the prevailing evils of the heart. Some of them are of a horrible kind, others alluring, alike addressed to our hopes and our fears. Job, in the day of his adversity, was tempted to the most awful presumption, to curse God and die. Peter was tempted through fear to deny his Lord; while all the disciples, from the same principle, forsook him and fled. When called to suffer for Christ's sake, to bear reproach, the loss of property, of liberty or of life; the hope of deliverance, the love of life, and the prospects of advantage become very powerful temptations to disguise or to renounce our attachment to the Saviour; and, in such circumstances, we should be in the utmost danger of being numbered with the fearful and unbelieving. Other temptations more immediately address themselves to the vanity or to the pride of human nature, or are adapted to our age, condition or circumstances; to the peculiar temperament of the constitution, turn of mind, and the minuter variations of human life. But whatever be their nature or degree, they are alike the object of aversion and of dread; and in every situation we need to pray, as we are here directed.

By means equally various, and often unexpected, are we led into temptation. Sometimes by men like ourselves, and even by the professors of religion, we are ensnared and brought into dangerous circumstances. The old prophet of Samaria tempted the prophet of the Lord, and seduced him into the path of disobedience. The Pharisees tempted Christ with subtle questions, hoping to betray him into error or mistake. But the grand agent in this business is Satan himself, who employs a variety of means and subordinate agents to accomplish his malignant designs. He is the god of this world, the ruler of its darkness, holding at his command the errors

and the evils by which men are drowned in destruction and perdition.

If by the agency of providence, God himself may be said to 'lead us into temptation,' this can be true only in a restricted or qualified sense; "for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." It is totally incompatible with the purity of the divine nature, as well as with the rectitude of his government, that he should be supposed to influence the mind to evil in any degree, or present motives for the commission of sin. But, as all the infinite variety of circumstances attendant upon human life are under his direction and controul, we may be brought unexpectedly into such a situation as shall expose us to the greatest moral danger, and nothing but the most extraordinary interposition would be sufficient to preserve our purity and our peace. There is in us, at all times, a propensity to evil; and as this propensity receives different degrees of excitement, according as circumstances more or less favourable occur, it becomes us to plead with God that his providence may prevent our being led into temptation. The christian who is comparatively safe in one situation, might be utterly ruined in another; his comfort and his usefulness might be all destroyed by a change of circumstances, over which he has no controul, nor so much as the wisdom to foresee.

Much as there is of moral evil in the world, it is little more than the ebullition of human depravity; the fountains of the great deep have not been fully broken up, or the earth would be deluged with misery and crimes to an extent hitherto unknown. The restraints which Providence imposes on our corruption are not less effectual in the prevention of crime, in the preservation of character, in the discipline necessary to meet on and prepare us for the kingdom of heaven, than are those sacred influences of the Spirit by which our nature is renewed and sanctified; and being blended with these concurrent operations, they form an essential part of that mysterious economy by which the great work of human redemption is finally accomplished. What we should be, if left to ourselves, without this wise and holy superintendence, he only knows, who sees the end from the beginning. Lord, "lead us not into temptation."

This petition likewise supposes great danger on the part of those who are directed to make it their daily prayer. Generally speaking, temptation is not that kind of evil which comes suddenly and violently upon us, and which gives sufficient indication of its presence. It is not like the wind and the earthquake which made the prophet tremble; if it were, we should take the alarm, and the danger would soon cease. It may rather be compared to the small still voice, which was scarcely heard; it gives no notice of its approach, but steals upon us unobserved. It generally happens, that those who are most under the power of temptation are the last to suspect it; and hence the imminent danger to which we are exposed.

It was in this way that temptation succeeded with man in innocency. First it was suggested that the forbidden fruit was highly desirable, then that it was not absolutely prohibited, and then that the consequence of disobedience would not be so dreadful as was apprehended. It was thus with the faithful but too self-confident Peter. He thought that he might venture to go and see the end of things, at least he might follow afar off, and be in safety; then that he might venture into the palace of the high priest, and eventually sit down among the servants, unobserved. The first impression, the germ of temptation, contains in it so small a portion of moral evil as in some cases to be scarcely discernible, and affords but little occasion for alarm; yet, when fully developed, it is found to be prolific source of innumerable evils.

The christian, in his departure from God, would be alarmed at the thought of wholly declining the duties of religion, and living in sin. This is more than he could contemplate, and it is not of the nature of temptation to present so frightful an aspect. The first thing to be done is to cool the ardour of his affections, to damp his desires after heavenly objects, and to throw difficulties and discouragements in the path of duty. He is tempted to believe that God does not hear his prayers, and will not regard him; then it becomes easy to be less constant and less fervent in that holy exercise, and to suffer an abatement in his hopes of success; this leads to a partial neglect, and that to other omissions, till the heart, being thus insensibly prepared, is ready to fall in with the commission of sin. Meanwhile, the victim of temptation is not aware of his danger; his feet are in the snare, but he perceiveth it not.

There is always something in the very nature of temptation that is flattering to our feelings and our interest, something which makes it to appear reasonable, otherwise it could have no power over us. From constitutional causes and from habit, there is a proneness to certain kinds of enjoyment, which at the same time, are known to be sinful, or to have an evil tendency; yet when the hour of temptation arrives, the evil is greatly diminished, if it do not totally vanish; and the enemy who appeared horrible at a distance, approaches us with an angel's face. Those who are lovers of money, and who "will be rich," are sure to fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts. When the opportunity of gratifying their wishes is presented, the troublesome enquiry of right and fitness is readily dispensed with, and it is found much more easy and convenient to conclude that Providence has made so agreeable an arrangement. Achan could see no evil in taking the golden wedge, and hiding it in the midst of his tent, seeing that an unforeseen event had so conveniently laid it in his way; nor David, in taking away the life of the injured Uriah, when it was so well known that the sword destroyeth one as well as another, and that the accident might be imputed to the chance of war. Where interest or inclination is to be gratified, the pleas will be numerous and powerful; and the soul is easily deceived into the belief that these pleas will be availing.

The adaptedness of temptation to the prevailing corruptions of the heart, is a source of great danger, and one of the principal means by which we are overcome. The human heart is like a town besieged, and where a majority of its inhabitants are on the side of the enemy; the resistance is enfeebled by a division of its strength, and its capture is easily accomplished. Innumerable evils, for the present dormant in the soul, would rise up and put on strength, if suitable occasions did but furnish the necessary excitement. The seeds of sin which are thickly sown within us, like the invisible animalcule, would soon spring forth into life and vigour, if visited with the genial rays of temptation, or the unclouded sun of worldly prosperity. All the senses are so many avenues to the heart, by which sin is continually seeking to enter; so many snares spread around the citadel, by which it may be stormed and taken. Nothing but incessant watchfulness and prayer can

preserve us amidst so many dangers: oh "lead us not into temptation."

We cannot read the history of the church of God, as recorded in the scriptures or as written by uninspired authors, without trembling for our own safety. In every record, in every page, we see the power of temptation, and what desolations it hath made in the earth. It has slain its thousands, and tens of thousands. Both the world and the church have resembled a field of battle, covered with the bodies of the slain; or a tempestuous ocean, where many a mighty and fearful shipwreck warns the mariner of his danger. What multitudes of wicked men have been hurried away to perdition, by the force of temptation; and how many good men and strong men have been cast down by it. As if to encrease our alarm, the scriptures have recorded the falls of many of the most eminent saints; some of them towards the close of a long and useful life, when danger was less to be apprehended; and others after the most singular manifestations of the love and favour of God. And who, after reading the account of Noah, and Abraham, and Lot, and David, and Peter, would not put up the petition, "Lead us not into temptation!"

Multitudes who have fallen under its power, have sunk to rise no more; they are gone to perdition, and are lost for ever. Nor can we be sure that this will not be our case; the beginning of sin is like the commencement of a conflagration, which may burn to the lowest hell, and kindle those flames which shall never be quenched. No one who enters upon an evil path knows whither it will conduct him; every one who walks in it goes farther than he intended, unless prevented by a miracle of mercy; and we are safe no where but near the cross, and at the footstool of our blessed Redeemer.

PAULINUS.

*The HISTORY and CHARACTER of the
PATRIARCH JOSEPH.*

No. II.

Leaving the disconsolate Jacob to bewail the imaginary death of his beloved Joseph, let us follow the steps of that interesting youth. The Ishmaelites, to whom his brethren

had sold him, pursued their journey to Egypt, and took with them their newly purchased slave. On their arrival in that country, they sold Joseph to Potiphar the captain of the king's guard. He took the young man into his house, and employed him in his domestic concerns. At first, probably, he was placed in a low station and considered merely as a menial servant. But that docility, diligence, prudence and integrity, which distinguished every part of his future life, was conspicuous even in these humble circumstances, and soon attracted the notice of his observant master. Appreciating the excellency of his character, he advanced him gradually to posts of greater honour and trust; till, finding him qualified for the station, he made him, at last, "overseer of his house;" and trusted the entire management of his domestic concerns to him. Joseph's mind had been well stored with religious and moral principles under the tuition of his affectionate and pious father: and that rectitude of disposition, which had prevented him from conniving at the wickedness of his brethren, influenced his conduct in the service of Potiphar. The blessing of divine providence graciously succeeded the efforts of this grateful youth; "and his master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand." The generous Egyptian, doubtless, afforded his favourite every opportunity of improving in the arts and sciences in which Egypt, at that early period, excelled all the neighbouring kingdoms. What Josephus the Jewish historian asserts is indeed highly probable, that Potiphar gave him a generous education and trained him up to letters. The years then which Joseph spent under this worthy master, formed an excellent preparatory course to qualify him for the important duties to which he was afterwards called: and, with these opportunities, it is not surprising that he grew up an accomplished as well as a worthy young man.

Joseph had enjoyed this comfortable situation probably ten years, when all his happiness appeared to be suddenly destroyed, and his character ruined. His master's wife indulged a criminal passion towards this amiable youth, and impudently solicited him to comply with her lewd desires. This was, indeed, an hour of sore temptation; but the virtuous young man nobly resisted. He expostulated with the deluded woman on the enormity of the crime, enumerated all his master's

favours to him with emotions of gratitude, and concluded with the memorable interrogatory, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Finding the grateful piety of Joseph, proof against her repeated attacks, the disappointed mistress determined on revenge. She accused him to her husband of attempting to force her to commit that crime to which she had in vain solicited him: and produced apparent proof of her malicious assertion. The master, enraged at the supposed ingratitude of a servant so highly distinguished, and trusting too simplistically to the report of his wife, immediately ordered Joseph to be cast into the state prison, and to be confined with great rigour. "His feet was hurt with fetters, and he was laid in irons." Psalm cv. 17.

We have no intimation that Joseph made any attempt to justify himself or criminate his mistress. He left his cause in the hand of that God who had already appeared so remarkably as his protector, and submitted to the cruel sentence without repining. And those good qualities which had procured him the confidence of the captain of the guard, obtained him here the favour of the jailor. Joseph was soon released from all unnecessary restraint and indignity; and, though he was still retained as a prisoner, all the other prisoners were put under his care, and the affairs of the prison entrusted to his superintendence.

Here we leave him for a time, and endeavour to derive some instruction from this part of his history.

Let young persons especially observe the conduct of Joseph. Though torn by his cruel brethren from the bosom of his indulgent father and sold for a slave to strangers; yet it is evident, that he did not indulge in useless sorrow or gloomy discontent, and thereby render himself disagreeable and unprofitable to his employer. On the contrary, he evidently set himself cheerfully and diligently to the discharge of those duties which were required by his altered circumstances. This procured him the regard of Potiphar and led to his advancement in his service. A similar conduct, when he was again involved in unmerited disgrace, procured him the friendship and confidence of the keeper of the prison. Let us also, when affairs take an adverse turn, and we are called to submit to injury and sustain affliction, instead of resenting the change, and, "like a wild bull in a net," struggling against Providence, yield calmly and cheerfully to circumstances which we cannot

controul, and endeavour to prove our resignation and obedience to the supreme governor of the universe, by a ready and conscientious attention to those duties to which our present state calls us. This will secure us the approbation of our own consciences and of all wise men; and may lead to a change in our affairs of which there is now little prospect.

But while we admire the docility, prudence and integrity with which this young patriarch conducted himself in his varying situations, and observe the success that attended his efforts; let us not overlook the first cause of all the mercies which he enjoyed. It was the Lord who gave him the ability and disposition to act thus properly; and it was his blessing that crowned his conduct with success. This the inspired historian presses on our attention with peculiar earnestness, "The Lord was with Joseph and he was a prosperous man." "The Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand." "The Lord was with Joseph and shewed him mercy; and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison." "The Lord was with him, and that which he did the Lord made it to prosper." And we ought to recollect, that the success of all our efforts depends on the blessing of God. For, though in the usual course of Providence "he becometh poor who depleth with a slack hand; but the hand of the diligent maketh rich." Yet it still remains a certain and important truth, that "the blessing of the Lord maketh rich and addeth no sorrow with it." Prov. x. 4,—12. While therefore we adopt all proper methods to gain the esteem of those with whom we are connected, and to secure a prosperous issue to all our laudable pursuits, let us often reflect, that "unless the Lord build the house they labour in vain that build it;" and constantly pray to him "to establish the work of our hands upon us." Let it be our chief care that, like Joseph, "the Lord may be with us" in all we undertake; and then we may be assured we shall, like him, be "prosperous men." Not that all our designs shall assuredly issue just as we should wish; but that "all things will work together for our real good."

What an advantage it is to be connected with the favourites of heaven! "The Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field." We seldom appreciate justly the benefits which a whole family may derive from one

pious inmate. Ten righteous inhabitants would have preserved the guilty Sodom from destruction. And we know not how often the stroke of divine wrath, which was ready to fall on our thoughtless families, has been averted; nor how many of our social comforts have been procured, by the intercession of a prayerful domestic. This consideration ought to make us very circumspect in forming connections, especially such as are important and lasting. How cheering the thought, that I am united in the closest bonds with one who "shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that bringeth forth his fruit in his season: whose leaf shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." "The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just." May these important reflections influence the conduct of all who believe the authority of the scriptures; but may they, in a peculiar manner, operate on those young professors who have to form an union which nothing but death can dissolve.

Lastly. What a noble example does this pious young man afford of a successful struggle against powerful temptation! On what sublime grounds does he refuse acquiescence! He detested the idea of ingratitude to his worthy master; but what armed him with double resolution, and enabled him completely to triumph, was his filial fear of offending his Maker. "How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" And if, when we are tempted to commit sin, we considered it, not merely as it respects our fellow-creatures and our own interests; but habituated ourselves to view it as an offence against our Creator, and as done in his sight who sees all our actions and will, at the last great day, judge every man according to his work, it would have a powerful effect in enabling us to conquer our own depraved natures, and resist the solicitations of our wicked companions. That solemn reflection, "Thou, God, seest me!" would inspire us with holy fear of offending him, and excite us to "watch and pray that we enter not into temptation."

GENERAL BAPTIST OCCURRENCES.

ANNUAL ASSOCIATION.

The ANNUAL ASSOCIATION of the Representatives of the churches composing the New Connection of General Baptists,

was held, June 24th, 25th, 26th, and 27th, 1817, at *Castle Donington*, in *Leicestershire*. Mr. R. Smith was chosen Chairman; and Mr. W. Felkin, Moderator. The number of representatives from the churches amounted to ninety-five; and some delicate and important cases were considered, with a considerable degree of harmony and friendship.

The reports from the churches this year are rather of a gloomy cast. Many are depressed by the excessive hardness of the times: others have been torn in pieces by a spirit of faction and insubordination; and too many have suffered material injury from disorderly walkers. The clear increase of members, in the whole Connection, during the last year, has been only two hundred and nine; and the number baptized, five hundred and twelve: both which are much fewer than took place in the year previous. On the contrary, the numbers who have been dismissed or excluded this year are considerably larger than in the preceding.—These remarks are by no means intended to produce despondency; but to excite both churches and individuals to a holy jealousy over themselves and each other, “lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble them, and thereby many be defiled;” and to animate their exertions to promote that cause which they esteem most conformable to the will of Christ.—The number of churches in the New Connection now amount to seventy, composed of six thousand eight hundred and eighty-three members.—In many congregations the interest is in a prosperous state and the additions have been numerous.

On Wednesday morning, June 25th, Mr. Jones, of Louth, opened public worship by prayer, and Mr. Jarrom, of Wisbeach, preached from *Luke ii. 10*. “Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.” In the afternoon, Mr. Everard, of Spalding, prayed, and Mr. Pickering, of Stayley Bridge, preached, from *Isa. liii. 10*. “The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.” On Thursday evening, Mr. Hollinrake, of Birchcliff, engaged in prayer, and Mr. Everard, preached, from *1 Peter ii. 4, 5*. “To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious,” &c. The congregations at all these public services were very numerous and highly respectable.

CONFERENCES.

The LINCOLNSHIRE CONFERENCE was held at *March*, June 4th, 1817. Mr Everard opened the public worship in the morning with prayer, and Mr Binns delivered a discourse, from Psalm cxlv. 9. In the evening, Mr. Rogers, prayed, and Mr. Jarrom, preached, from Isa. liii. 11. At this meeting, on an application from the friends at Norwich, Messrs. Jarrom, Rogers and Everard were requested to go to that city, and assist in opening their new meeting house. Supplies were likewise arranged for St. Ives, Chatteris, and Gedney Hill.

LIFE OF THE LATE MR. DAN TAYLOR.

Our readers will learn, from the minutes of the last Annual Association, that the Editor of the G. B. R. has been requested to write the *life of the late Mr. Dan Taylor*. The Editor certainly agrees with that numerous and respectable Meeting in thinking such a work "very desirable;" and laments that his avocations will, for some time, prevent him from turning his attention to this subject. If, however, the work should not be undertaken by some person more at leisure and better qualified to do it justice, and it please God to spare him in life and favour him with health, he intends to make the attempt, as soon as circumstances will permit: and is desirous of employing the interval in collecting proper materials. He therefore respectfully, but, earnestly solicits those friends who may have preserved any of the Letters or other Manuscripts of the deceased, or are in possession of any Anecdotes illustrative of his character or labours, that they would kindly communicate them to him, with as little delay as possible: and assures them that every assistance, in this or any other method, will be gratefully acknowledged.

RELIGIOUS ANNIVERSARIES.

It having been suggested by several judicious friends, that a brief account of the various public meetings, which have lately been held in London, for the promoting of religious objects, would be very gratifying to those readers of the G. B. R. who have not the opportunity of perusing other

publications, we have ventured to insert the following list; and trust those who have already read fuller accounts will accept this as our apology.

The anniversary of the *Methodist Missionary Society* was held, April 29th and 30th, 1817. Various sermons were preached at the places belonging to that denomination in London and its environs; and above five hundred and fifty pounds collected. From the Report it appears, that upwards of one hundred missionaries are employed, by this society, in different parts of the world; and that its expenditure is nearly fourteen thousand pounds annually.

May 5th, the seventeenth anniversary of the *Church Missionary Society* was held, at the Freemason's Hall, Lord Gambier in the Chair; attended by the Bishop of Gloucester, and upwards of one hundred clergymen, and twelve hundred others. The Report was the most encouraging that this society has yet made. At Sierra Leone, in Africa, twenty re-captured Negroes have been baptized in one day. The income of the society, during the past year, has increased more than three thousand pounds; and this year amounts to nineteen thousand pounds: yet the Treasurer is two thousand pounds in advance. The proceedings of the day were marked by a truly christian spirit, an humble ascription of all the glory to God, and sincere attachment to all their fellow labourers of every denomination.

May 7th, the thirteenth anniversary of the *British and Foreign Bible Society* was held, at Freemason's Hall, Lord Teignmouth in the Chair; supported by the Bishops of Salisbury, Norwich, Gloucester, and Cloyne. The object of this noble institution is increasingly felt and promoted, in every quarter of the globe; and new fields are continually opening for the dispensation of its bounties. Large impressions of the New Testment have been circulated at its expence among the Roman Catholics on the Continent, as well as to Protestants in catholic countries. The sum of eighty-four thousand pounds has been received this year, and eighty-nine thousand expended. During the last year, more than ninety thousand Bibles, and upwards of one hundred thousand Testaments have been distributed: making the whole number, issued by the society, to exceed one million seven hundred and fifty thousand copies.

May 5th, the *Prayer Book and Homily Society* held their annual meeting, at the Albion Tavern, Lord Gambier in the chair. It appears, that, within the last year, two thousand pounds have been received and a larger sum expended. An anonymous friend has forwarded a donation of six hundred pounds.

May 10th, the anniversary of the *London Society for promoting christianity among the Jews* was held, at Freemason's Hall, Sir Thomas Daring, M. P. chairman. Notwithstanding many difficulties and much distressing disappointment, this society obtains patronage; the Bishops of St. David's and of Gloucester having lately become Vice-Patrons. A chapel has been erected for the Jews: schools have been founded in which seventy Jewish children are taught: the New Testament has been translated into Hebrew and part of it is already circulated among the Jews: a monthly publication is also distributed amongst them, under the title of "The Jewish Expositor:" and a society is formed for visiting and relieving distressed Jews. During the past year, three Jews in this country have embraced christianity; as have also a learned Jew in Poland, and a wealthy one at Malta; who was converted by reading one of the Society's Hebrew Tracts, and has since exerted himself for the conversion of his brethren.

May 12th, the tenth anniversary of the *London Female Penitentiary* was held, Mr. Wilberforce, M. P. chairman. The number of objects has the last year, been increased from sixty to one hundred. About two hundred unhappy females have applied for admission during that time; of which only seventy-one could be received. Twenty-four have been reconciled to their friends; and twenty-one put out to services, who in general have conducted themselves very well. Two have been removed by death, and have left pleasing hopes of their safety. This institution is indebted to the Treasurer thirteen hundred pounds.

May 13th, the twentieth anniversary of the *London Itinerant Society* was held at the New London Tavern, S. Robinson, Esq. in the chair. This institution though evidently straitened for want of patronage, has been very usefully employed in spreading the gospel, by means of village preaching, adult and sunday schools, &c. in the environs of London, where there are many villagers remarkably dark and ignorant

of divine things. At one of these villages, a worthy lady has presented the society with ground for a chapel; and several friends have agreed to pay half the expence of erecting one.

May 13th, the anniversary of the *British and Foreign School Society* was held, at Freemason's Hall, the Duke of Bedford in the chair. The report stated, that ten thousand pounds which were required to clear off some old debts, had with an additional sum been procured within the last year, towards which one gentleman had contributed one thousand pounds. The system of this society is widely spreading, in every part of the world. In the Borough School, twelve thousand children had been educated—in Houndsditch, a Jewish school had been opened for the instruction of four hundred boys—the most satisfactory accounts had been received from Scotland and Ireland where the catholic clergy, in many instances, countenanced the system—in India, the missionaries co-operated in carrying on the same object—in France, the king and the government gave it the most liberal support—in Russia, it received every encouragement—in Rome, no objection was made to its introduction—in the new kingdom of Hayti, (St. Domingo,) it had obtained a footing—and had been successful in Spain, America, Africa, and many other places.

May 13th, the third anniversary of the *Irish Evangelical Society* was held, at the New London Tavern. The report stated, that the society had extended its operation to about twenty counties in Ireland, including many large cities, towns and villages—that preachers have been established at Limeric, Portarlinton, Tralee, Wexford, and Carrickfergus—that new and promising itineracies had been commenced—that new places of worship had been purchased or erected—that about ten ministers are now constantly employed in spreading the truths of the gospel—that schools have been established at most of the stations—that many both catholics and protestants have made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ—that a house and premises have been purchased for the establishment of an academy at Dublin—and that Mr. Loader has now eight students under his care, under the sanction of this institution.

May 13th, the annual meeting of the *Naval and Military Bible Society* was held, Lord Gambier in the chair. The demands for the scriptures from this institution had been greatly

increased. The receipts of the last year had exceeded one thousand pounds; of which three hundred and sixty had been received from our soldiers. The number of bibles distributed was four thousand, and of testaments six thousand.

May 14th, the annual meeting of the *Sunday School Union* was held, at the City of London Tavern, J. Butterworth, Esq. M. P. chairman. The Report, of which we shall give an abstract in another place, was highly gratifying. The meeting was numerously attended; and may, upon the whole, be considered as the most interesting meeting of this society.

May 15th, the eighteenth anniversary of the *Religious Tract Society* was held, at the City of London Tavern, and was very respectably attended. The efforts of this society for the diffusion of divine truth continue with unabated zeal, both at home and abroad. Religious Tract Societies, aided by its funds or influenced by its example, are in full operation in Russia, Finland, Prussia, Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and among the Waldenses of Piedmont. An opening for the circulation of their Tracts has presented itself in Italy, which was promptly occupied. Great attention has been paid to the supplying of the Chinese with Tracts in their own language. The Tracts issued during the past year exceed three millions and a half: a large proportion of which have been circulated by poor persons, without any other means of support; who have been furnished at prices so reduced as to occasion a loss to the society of upwards of four hundred pounds, which added to its gratuitous distribution amounts to nearly seven hundred pounds.

May 16th, the annual meeting of the *Hibernian Society* was held, at the City of London Tavern, S. Mills, Esq. in the chair. This society has now, in thirteen Irish counties, three hundred and forty seven schools, containing nearly twenty-eight thousand children. The number of scholars has increased the last year almost nine thousand; but the income has been so far deficient, as to cause a debt to the Treasurer of sixteen hundred pounds. The report stated many instances in which the instruction of the children had been of saving use to their parents: and though the popish priesthood had, in general, violently opposed the schools, because the scriptures were read in them; yet, some instances had occurred in which they had been cordially welcomed, even among Catholics.

The twenty-third general annual meeting of the (*London*) *Missionary Society* was held, May 14th, 15th, and 16th, 1817. On the 14th, in the morning, Dr. Chalmers, of Glasgow, preached at Surrey Chapel, from 1 Cor. xiv. 22,—25. And that spacious building being filled even to excess, numbers that could not gain admittance attended at Mr. Upton's Meeting-house, in the vicinity, where Mr. Fletcher preached, from Luke ii. 22. In the evening of the same day, Mr. Jones, of Syrior, in Wales, preached at the Tabernacle, to a crowded audience, from Isa. lii. 15. As numbers could not gain admittance, Mr. Maslin, of Hertford, preached in the yard of the Tabernacle, from Isa. xlv. 23. Next morning, the annual meeting was held, at Spa Fields Chapel, which was numerously attended, W. A. Hankey, Esq. in the chair. A long report was read, of which our limits forbid us to attempt an abstract at present. The receipts of the last year amounted to nearly twenty-two thousand pounds. In the evening, Mr. W. Harris, of Cambridge, preached at Tottenham Court Chapel, from Acts iv. 20. On the 16th, in the morning, Mr. H. Campbell, of Nailsworth, Gloucestershire, preached at Blackfriar's Church, from Acts xvi. 9. In the evening, the Lord's supper was administered to the "Friends of the Institution who are regular communicants with some christian church, without regarding the denomination under which they rank." On this occasion, three very spacious places of worship, Sion Chapel, Orange-street Chapel, and Islington Chapel, were crowded with communicants. Mr. Bogue presided at the first; Mr. G. Burder, at the second; and Mr. W. Roby, at the third. Collections for the benefit of the society were made, at all these places; the whole amount of which was £1348. 11s. 10d.

Towards the close of June, several numerous annual meetings of societies connected with the *Particular Baptists* were held in London; but as we hope to be favoured with the Reports, we shall at present only enumerate the leading facts, and resume the subject in our next.

Tuesday evening, June 24th, Dr. Ryland preached at Carter-lane, from John xi. 35. On the following morning, the Friends of the *Baptist Itinerant Society* met at the City of London Tavern, James Pritt, Esq. Treasurer, in the chair.

The several resolutions were carried unanimously, and the business conducted with great harmony.

On the next morning, the Friends of the *Baptist Missionary Society* met at Spa Fields Chapel; when Mr. Kinghorn delivered a discourse from Psalm xcvi. 3. In the evening, another meeting was held, at Sion Chapel; when Mr. Winterbotham, of Horsley, preached from Mal. i. ii. On the following morning, the general meeting was held at Dr. Rippon's, Carter-Lane, and was numerously attended. The accounts were highly gratifying.

The anniversary of the *Stepney Academical Institution* for the benefit of the young ministers of the particular baptist persuasion was held, at noon the same day, at Salter's Hall, when Mr. Hinton preached, from Gal. ii. 15,—16. Forty-five pounds were collected for the institution on this occasion. In the evening, at the same place, a very interesting report was read, by Mr. Dyer, of Reading.

The third anniversary of the *Baptist Irish Society* was held, at the City of London Tavern, June 17th, J. Butterworth, Esq. M. P. in the chair. On this occasion, upwards of five hundred took breakfast at six o'clock, and above a thousand attended the business at seven. The report was read by the Secretary, and various motions passed with great cordiality. Various excellent speeches were made, and though the meeting lasted nearly five hours, the attention of the company was engaged even to the conclusion. During the week, upwards of three hundred pounds were collected for the Irish Mission.

REVIEW OF NEW PUBLICATIONS.

The CONSOLATIONS of GOSPEL TRUTH, exhibited in various interesting anecdotes respecting the dying hours of different persons who gloried in the Cross of Christ: to which are added, some affecting narratives describing the horrors of unpardoned sin, when death and eternity approach. By JOHN PIKE, Minister of the Gospel, Derby. 12mo. pp. 192. Price boards 3s. 6d. or bound 4s. Wilkins Derby, Baynes, &c. London.

The contents of this little volume will be easily comprehended from its long title. Its object is to evince the infinite

importance of being prepared for death, by detailing some interesting accounts of the happy and tranquil and even triumphant manner, in which various humble and sincere believers in Christ have met the king of terrors; contrasted with several most affecting narratives of the dreadful circumstances which have attended the dying hours of impenitent sinners. Some of the last are indeed almost too full of horror to be read; but even these may be useful to minds hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Though many of these anecdotes have been long known to such as are acquainted with religious literature; yet these will possess the charm of novelty to numbers into whose hands this publication may fall. There are, however, not a few very affecting narratives both of the pleasing and dreadful kind which have not been so generally read. The facts are well narrated: and the remarks, illustrations, and applications are often very appropriate and likely to be useful. On the whole, we heartily recommend this volume to our readers of every class; but more especially to the young, and those who are engaged in the instruction of the young.—We transcribe the following brief articles, as a fair specimen both of the matter and manner of this compilation.

A NEGRO MARTYR. The friends of Negro slavery, or in other words the abettors of rapine cruelty and murder, long endeavoured to propagate an opinion, that the Negroes were a race of men destitute of natural talent as not to be qualified for a situation superior to that of a slave. A variety of facts have proved the falsehood of this injurious aspersion; the design of which was to blind the nations that these bloodsuckers might be allowed to revel on their prey. The Negro wants but civilization and Gospel light to make it manifest that mental powers “Dwell in black and white the same;” and the God of all mercy has bestowed on some of these “poor desolate outcasts of man,” that knowledge and those riches which their proud oppressors never knew. Among those thus favoured may be numbered the subject of the following narrative.

“About sixteen years ago, a healthy and most valuable African Slave, in one of our West Indian plantations, was savingly converted to christianity by being made a new creature in Christ Jesus. His wicked and brutal master (falsely called a christian) did all he could to make him renounce his Saviour; and to effect this base purpose, often flogged him most unmer-

cifully. This cruelty, however, did not move the poor African youth from his adherence to Christ. The master persevered in his inhuman conduct, till at length, on one day, memorable for the perpetration of the infernal deed, he was determined to make the poor slave renounce Christ *or flog him to death!* With horrible cruelty he lashed him till his flesh was torn, and it hung about him in tatters. With inhuman hardness, the master, while he was thus flogging his excellent slave, tauntingly enquired, "What now does your Jesus do for you?" The boy replied, "*He helps me to bear dese strokes, Massa, with patience?*" And when this heroic martyr, in the act of expiring, was sneeringly asked by his wretched tormentor, "And now what has your Jesus done for you?" He immediately answered with a faltering voice, "*Even dis Massa, dat me can PRAY for you, and FORGIVE you!*"

"A DYING INFIDEL. A certain individual who resided not far from Dudley, in Worcestershire, was for some years a steady and respectable professor of christianity. During this time, he was a good father, a good neighbour, and a loyal subject. A wicked man, however, put into his hands Paine's *Age of Reason*, and Volney's *Ruins of Empires*. He read these pernicious books, renounced christianity, and became a *bad father, a bad neighbour, a disloyal subject, and a ferocious infidel!* At length sickness seized him, and death stared him in the face. Before the period of his dissolution, some christian friends, who had formerly united with him in the sweet duties of devotion, resolved, if possible, to obtain access to him. With much difficulty they accomplished their object. They found him in a most deplorable state. Horror was depicted on his countenance, and he seemed determined not to be comforted. They spoke to him, in a suitable manner, respecting the Lord Jesus Christ and salvation. But he replied with fury—"It is too late;—I have trampled on his blood!" They offered to pray with him;—but he swore they should not. However they kneeled down, and presented their supplications to God in his behalf. And while, in this humble posture, they were pleading the merits of Jesus, the poor miserable infidel actually *cursed God and died!*"

A CATECHISM of SCRIPTURAL INSTRUCTIONS for YOUNG PERSONS: designed to promote an acquaintance with the Doctrines of the Gospel; and to impress on the heart the

importance of Religion. By J. PIKE. Price stitched, 3d. Wilkins, Derby, Mann, London.

Though we have read some parts of this little manual with pleasure; yet we fear that it will be thought both redundant and defective. It amplifies and repeats, indeed, on the great object which it professes to have in view; and furnishes the learner with sufficient proof that he is a sinner and exposed to endless misery. But it appears to us doubtful whether this important truth might not be more effectually brought home to the conscience, if many of the interrogatories, which are here with their answers intended, we suppose, to be learnt by rote, were put to the pupil in familiar but serious conversation on the meaning and application of some general proposition. In this case, the child would be driven to think and apply them to his own case, in order to furnish pertinent replies: but words committed to memory seldom are either felt or understood. Some of the answers too, speak the language of an awakened sinner, rather than a careless child: and to teach young persons to express sensations which they do not feel, may lead them to deceive both themselves and others. There appears also a deficiency. In even a "small compendium of religious instruction," the *duties* of christianity ought to have some place; and the learner should be instructed what is required by the law of God as well as what is forbidden. This however appears to have been almost wholly omitted; while sins of various classes are particularly enumerated. It might not, perhaps, be necessary in such a manual to introduce much respecting church-order and discipline; or insist largely on controverted subjects. But definitions, intended for the information of the youthful mind should be clear, precise and void of ambiguity. We therefore were a little surprised to find the author of "One Baptism" teaching his pupil, that "Baptism is the ordinance by which persons are introduced into the visible church, by being *washed* with water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." This is almost too liberal for a General Baptist.

We are requested to announce, that *Mr. Freeston's "Directions and Encouragements for Travellers to Zion,"* mentioned G. B. R. Vol. VII. page 279, are now completed; and may be had of the Booksellers. We hope, in our next, to be able to take proper notice of this publication.

ORDINATION.*

On Thursday, the 19th of June, *Mr. Richard Ingham*, was ordained to the pastoral office over the General Baptist Church, at Duffield, near Derby. Mr. Pike opened the meeting by reading and prayer; Mr. James Taylor, of Heptonstall Slack, delivered the Introductory Discourse; Mr. Preston, of Melbourn, proposed the questions to the church and the minister; Mr. Robert Smith prayed for the minister with the laying on of hands; delivered the charge; from 2 Tim. ii. 15, and concluded that part of the service with prayer. After an hour's intermission, the latter part of the service commenced. Mr. Preston prayed, Mr. James Taylor addressed the people, from 2 Cor. vii. 16, and concluded the afternoon service with prayer. Mr. Barrow gave out suitable hymns at proper intervals, through the whole service. Mr. Preston delivered a discourse, in the evening, from Psalm li. 18. The services of the day were highly interesting and impressive, and we hope will be attended with lasting good.

*AN ACCOUNT OF THE PRESENT STATE OF
SUNDAY SCHOOLS.*

*Abstracted from the last Report of the Sunday School
Union: read May the 14th, 1817.*

The New York Sunday School Society has, in the last year, formed twenty-eight schools, containing three thousand scholars: and numerous institutions of the same nature have been formed, in almost every part of the United States of America.

In France, two Sunday schools have been formed at Bourdeaux; in which two hundred children, nearly all of the poorest class of society, are now receiving instruction. There is every reason to hope, that the plan will spread rapidly into other places.

At Cape Henry, in the newly erected Negro kingdom of Hayti, a Sunday school was commenced, in Nov. 1816; and had the approbation of his black Majesty.

* The Editor trusts that the improper arrangement of this article will be excused: it was accidentally overlooked among the *G. B. Occurrences*.

Six sunday schools have already been commenced under the sanction of government, in the British settlement in New South Wales, (better known perhaps as *Botany Bay*) among the children of the convicts who have been transported thither, and much good it is hoped will be the result.

A few years ago, there was scarcely a sunday school in Ireland; but, by the present report, it appears that four hundred and thirty-nine are now in full operation; containing upwards of fifty thousand children: and that the increase last year was eighty-nine schools; containing nearly thirteen thousand children. Many thousands of bibles and twenty thousand new testaments have been distributed among these scholars, and have been by them taken home during the week; and it is pleasing to reflect how many persons may have received instruction from these copies of the sacred volume.

In *Scotland*, the means of education which are enjoyed by the lower classes of society, render the plan of sunday schools less necessary; yet there are at present upwards of twenty thousand children receiving instruction from them.

But it is in *England*, that the full effects of this excellent plan is exhibited. In London and its immediate vicinity, there existed at the date of this Report, two hundred and thirty-two sunday schools, conducted by three thousand six hundred and ninety-four teachers; in which thirty-nine thousand three hundred and six children, and six hundred and twenty-seven adults, were receiving weekly instruction of the most important nature, connected with their present respectability and comfort, and their everlasting felicity. And in the whole of England, the number of sunday schools is nearly twelve hundred; of teachers, upwards of sixteen thousand; and of scholars, one hundred and forty-eight thousand five hundred; of which two thousand three hundred and ninety-six are adults.

The LOSS of Mr. FELIX CAREY's FAMILY.

Some time ago, we mentioned the affecting event, by which Mr. Felix Carey, the Son of Dr. Carey of Serampore, had lost his whole Family; but could not state the particulars, as no details had then come to hand. His own account of the distressing scene was published in the "Periodical Accounts," No. 31, from which we have transcribed it for the satisfaction of our readers.

“ August 20, 1814. Accompanied by my wife and two children, we left Rangoon, in the Viceroy’s pleasure boat, to join the brig, which had sailed for the great river about a month before. The gold boat joined us at Kree-meeng-ding. Reached Tet-thet about eight in the evening. 21st Arrived at Panling, or Thuret-tubon. 22nd and 23rd. Waited for the baggage boat. 24th. Reached Cha-mu-louk by night. 25th. Reached Ran-ken-chanra. Here the Rangoon River joins the Iravuttee, or the main river to Ava. 26. Left the gold boat behind, to take care of the baggage boat. Reached Dhuuobhoo, and joined the vessel. Paid the viceroy a visit in the evening: he behaved extremely kind, and offered me every assistance. Waited three days for the boats. 30th. Got under sail about eleven o’clock in the morning, with a fair wind. Had not been under weigh above an hour, when it began to look very black from the S. W. Took in all sail, except the fore: at this moment we were stemming a very rapid current. A very severe squall came on suddenly: before we had time to bear away before the wind, a strong eddy took the vessel upon her lee bow, and slung her round in an instant, broadside to the wind and current. We did not lie long in this condition; for no sooner did the vessel feel the current on one side, and the wind on the other, than she upset: her cabin windows being open, she filled immediately. When I saw our condition, I rushed in to the cabin door, to save, if possible, my wife and children, with the other females. No sooner had I entered, than the impetus of the water from without closed the door upon me. I expected nothing less than a watery grave; the water gushing in from all sides, and I at a loss to know which way to extricate myself. During this short period, (for the fatal scene was closed in the course of five minutes) I could hear the screams of my wife and children, who were separated from me by a canvas screen; but could find no opening till the water made one. I sprung forward, and handed my wife, children, two little girls, and the nurse, out of the cabin window, upon the vessel’s broadside: by the time I got out the vessel was full. Amidst this confusion, I had still some hope the vessel would float; but no sooner had I got out of the stern cabin window, than I perceived her to go down bodily. Now all my hopes failed; my wife clinging to me on one side, my dear child on the other, a rapid current underneath, with the screams of the rest of the

crew in every direction. Had the jolly boat been by us at this instant, not a soul had been lost, but she was not. The vessel began to sink under us, and we were all out of our depth, exposed to a rapid current and a heavy sea. My wife clung to me; but as I sunk she left her hold and I saw her no more. I once more rose to the top, and I believe I saw my eldest boy floating at a distance, but could not get to him: the heads of some of the crew I saw in various directions, but no appearance of the vessel. In this state of perturbation, I gave up myself for lost, every wave rolling over my head. Somehow or other I made shift to tear off my shirt, and disentangle myself from my pantaloons; thus, through the kind mercy of God, I was enabled to float to shore, but with the utmost difficulty. When I reached land, I found myself so exhausted, that I could not stand: happily one of the lascars, who floated ashore at the same place, pulled me up into the grass jungles, where I sat up to my breast in water, till boats came to our relief. I was then brought back to Dhunoobhoo, but hardly in my senses. As soon as I was somewhat recovered, and the few that were saved collected, I made every enquiry, but could hear nothing of my wife or children, or any thing of the other women; except that one of my servants with the officer, picked up the body of my little girl, and buried it in the jungles opposite to the town of Dhunoobhoo. On further enquiry, I found that my wife, two children, two girls, the nurse, the cook, the gunner, and two lascars, had lost their lives. When the Governor of Dhunoobhoo heard of the disaster, he sent boats in every direction, in quest of the bodies and wreck, but not a vestige was to be seen or heard of. He behaved extremely kind to me, and sent one hundred tickalls, with a few other articles, to defray my expenses to Ava. 31st. Sent all the lascars, who were saved from the wreck, back to Rangoon, in the jolly boat. The Governor dispatched a boat to the Viceroy of Rangoon, with the sad intelligence. In a state of mind hardly to be described, I resolved to proceed to Ava, in the gold boat, and reached Gynoung-ben-tha by night.

N. B. I have lost all that I was worth in this vain world—let it go; but the loss of my dear wife and dear little infants goes near my heart. What can I say? It is the Lord's doing, &c. None can say unto him, Why doest thou thus? Only this

one thing I crave, that the remainder of my days may be devoted, with a single eye to his glory, in the establishment of his cause among the Heathen. Mrs. Carey, formerly Miss N. Blackwall, was born at Bassein, Sept. 11, 1789; married to me, March 22, 1811. My son W. Carey, was born February, 1812. Eliza Frances Carey was born July 10, 1814."

PARAPHRASE

On Hab. iii. 17,—18.

Though the fig tree shall not blow ;
 Nor the vine and olive grow ;
 Bounteous nature cease to yield
 Every product of the field ;
 Fall the flocks, by hunger slain,
 None of all the herd remain ;
 Yet, amid a scene so sad,
 In the Lord will I be glad,
 He can save, how e'er distrest :
 Be his name for ever blest.

CHATHAM.

A. C. T.

RETROSPECTION and ANTICIPATION.

LINES occasioned by the *Decease of Mr. JOHN COUPLAND,*
late Minister of the G. B. Church, at Headcorn in Kent.

" *I am distressed for thee, my brother—very pleasant hast thou been unto me.*" 2 Sam. i. 26.

Drops the tear of strong affection
 For departed friends endear'd :
 Virtuous was their course of action ;
 Be their memory rever'd.

Oh ! how pleasing the persuasion,
 We shall soon again unite ;
 Partners of a heav'nly mansion,
 Perfect made with saints in light.

Such a glorious expectation,
Tends our sorrow to abate:
While bright hope, with exultation,
Points us to that future state.

Praise we for this consolation,
Which the Gospel doth afford:
Promise of complete salvation,
Life eternal with the Lord.

CHATHAM.

A. C. T.

THE MINISTER'S "FAREWELL"

Acts xv. 29.

(See G. B. R. last Number, page 46.)

FAREWELL, ye fav'rite few ;
I must bid you all adieu ;
But the Lord is with you still—
Fare ye well, my friends, fare well.

You who long have heard the word ;
Trifled with a gracious Lord ;
And continue to rebel—
How will you, at last, fare well ?

Feeble souls, with fear opprest,
Jesus bears you on his breast ;
He will all your foes dispel ;
Fear ye not, but fare ye well.

Fare ye well, ye little flock,
Whom the world revile and mock ;
Keep the way to endless bliss,
Then you cannot fare amiss.

You who taste the Saviour's love,
Feel his drawings from above ;
Still endeavour to excel—
You shall finally fare well.

Fare ye well, my Lord's elect ;
 Trials you must all expect,
 From the world, the flesh, and hell ;
 But the faithful——shall fare well.

When a few more storms are o'er,
 We shall meet to part no more :
 Meet, with Jesus Christ to dwell,
 In a world—where all fare well !

RESIGNATION.

I wish to be wholly resign'd,
 Whatever, my God, is thy will :
 Thou hast been most gracious and kind ;
 And why should I doubt thee so still ?
 Thy will, it is right should be done ;
 For thou art unerringly wise :
 The Lord of all under the sun ;
 The sov'reign and king of the skies.

Afflictions from dust don't proceed ;
 Nor dost thou with pleasure chastise.
 As parents correct when there's need ;
 Tho' often with wat'ry eyes :
 So God, in pure love to his own,
 To save them from evil to come,
 Oft humbles them under his frown,
 In order to bring them safe home.

But let not the fav'rite child
 From henceforth conclude him unkind ;
 But humble, submissive, and mild,
 Learn more of his fatherly mind.
 The person afflicted is blest
 When chastisements make him more wise
 In Jesus' bosom carest
 And growing more meet for the skies.

THE
GENERAL BAPTIST REPOSITORY.

No. XLV.—Vol. VIII.—Nov. 1st. 1817.

*SELECT PASSAGES of SCRIPTURE illustrated by
the POLICY and MANNERS of the ANCIENT
ISRAELITES.*

GIRD UP THE LOINS. The outward garment of the ancient Israelites was a long loose robe, which, when they were unemployed, hung flowing down to the feet; but, when they were preparing for travel or labour, was closely tied round the waist with a girdle, which not only prevented it from being troublesome, but gave strength and firmness to the body. This was called *girding up the loins*, and became a proverbial mode of expression for making the necessary preparation for exertion of any kind. Thus, when Elisha sent his servant to lay his staff upon the Shunamite's son, and dispatches one of his disciples to anoint Jehu to be king over Israel, he directs them both to gird up their loins previous to setting out. 2 Kings iv. 29. ix. 1. When the Lord condescended to expostulate with Job, he said: "Gird up now thy loins, like a man." That is, prepare thyself for an important and arduous task: for "I will demand of thee, and answer thou me." Job. xxxviii. 3. xl. 7. This gives a proper idea of the meaning of the apostle, when he exhorts christians to "gird up the loins of their minds." 1 Pet. i. 13. He admonishes them to lay aside such cares and pursuits as would encumber them in the christian course, and to cultivate such intellectual habits as would animate and assist their exertions in pressing forwards towards heaven. See also Luke xii. 35. And, as girding up the loins rendered a person more capable of defending himself; so "to loose the loins" signifies to render a man helpless, and deprive him of the power of resistance. Thus the Almighty promises Cyrus, when he sent him to conquer Babylon, "I will loose the loins of kings." Isa. xlv. 1.: a prediction which was indeed literally fulfilled, when "the joints of Belshazzar's loins were loosed,"

and his knees smote one against another," Dan. v. 6.; but received its more complete accomplishment in the easy and numerous victories over powerful monarchs, which were obtained by the arms of Cyrus.

GATES OF THE CITY. At the gates of the ancient eastern cities there was a spacious area, adapted to receive a number of people, and fitted up with seats for the accommodation of persons of rank and authority. Here the courts of justice were held, and all public business transacted. Here also the markets were kept and bargains made. Their cities indeed were not so large and populous as ours, but contained only as many labourers as could cultivate the lands immediately adjacent; for all the Israelites were husbandmen. When the tribe of Judah took possession of its lot, it contained one hundred and fifteen cities. Josh. xv. 21, &c. The inhabitants went out, in the morning, to the labours of the field, and returned in the evening; so that the gate of the city was the place where all the people passed, and whatever was transacted there, was witnessed by all ranks of the inhabitants. Thus it was in the gates of Hebron, that Abraham purchased the field of Machpelah, Gen. xxiii. 10—18. At the gate of their city, Hamor and his son proposed, to their people, an alliance with Jacob, Gen. xxxiv. 20. It was at the gate of Bethlehem, that Boaz declared his intention of marrying Ruth, and the person who had a prior right, relinquished it in his favour. Ruth iv. 1—12. It was to the gate of the city, that the afflicted parents were to bring the stubborn son to be judged by the elders of the people, Deut. xxi. 19. At the gate, to the elders, was the neglected widow to make her complaint, Deut. xxv. 7. In the gate of Samaria, the plunder of the Syrian camp was sold to the famished inhabitants, 2 Kings vii. 17. The gates of the city, therefore, were places of great importance, and of public concourse: and by keeping this in mind, we shall be able to perceive a beauty and force in several passages of scripture, which otherwise are rather obscure.

When the Psalmist says that a good man "shall not be ashamed, but shall speak with his enemies in the gate," Psa. cxxvii. 5, it is meant, that when he pleads his cause before the rulers, he shall prevail. When Job says, "If I have lift up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the

gate." Job xxxi. 21.; he intends to declare, that he never took unjust advantages against the fatherless, when their cause came before him in the courts of justice. In strict conformity with the advice of the wise man, Prov. xxii. 22. "Rob not the poor because he is poor; neither oppress the afflicted in the gate:" a piece of equity not always observed; for Amos complains, that, in his days, "they afflicted the just, they took a bribe, and they turned aside the poor in the gate from his right." Well might such magistrates as these, "hate him that rebuked in the gate; and abhor him that spoke rightly." How necessary then the prophet's admonition. "Hate the evil and love the good; and establish judgment in the gate." Amos v. 10, 12, 15.: that is, let your judicial proceedings be directed by justice to all parties. It would be easy to multiply instances in which the scriptures, alluding to the courts of justice and public deliberations being held in the gates of the city, use the word *gate* to signify judgment, the public council of the city, or even the city or the state itself; but the reader may consult, Lam. v. 14. Psa. lxxix. 12. Prov. xxiv. 7. Isa. xxix. 21. Zech. viii. 16. Prov. xxi. 23, 31, &c. We shall only mention that encouraging promise of our blessed Lord, Matt. xiv. 18: when he assures Peter, "that the gates of hell shall not prevail against his church:" or, in other words, that the councils, stratagems, and strength of the powers of darkness, shall all be unable to destroy it.

ANCIENT MOURNING. When the ancients wished to express their sorrow for some affliction that had befallen them, they tore their clothes, beat their breasts, put their hands on their heads, shaved off their hair, sprinkled dust and ashes on their heads, covered their faces, uncovered their feet, put on a strait and uneasy garment of sackcloth next to their skin, lay down in the dust, and refused to take food. These certainly were more natural expressions of grief than the modern forms of mourning; and we can hardly forbear to sympathise with the friends of Job, when we are told, that, as soon as they beheld the afflicted state of that good man, they "lifted up their voice and wept, and rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads towards heaven, and sat down with him on the ground seven days and seven nights; and none spake a word unto him." Job ii. 12, 13. See also Gen. xxxvii. 34

These primitive indications of grief will contribute to the illustration of several texts in the sacred volume. When Isaiah denounces the woes that would befall the wicked daughters of Jerusalem, he bids them, "strip and make bare, and gird sackcloth on their loins;" that is, assume the habits of those who mourn for some great calamity. Isa. xxxii. 11. When zealous Ezra was informed that the Jews had united themselves with the idolatrous nations around them, in the agony of his grief, "he rent his garments, plucked off his hair, and sat down as one astonished." Ezra ix. 3. When the prophet describes the state of the Jews as forsaken of God, for their disobedience, he exclaims, "Cut off thy hair, O Jerusalem, and cast it away;" and express, by this usual indication of grief, a just sense of thy wretched condition. Jer. vii. 29. The recollection of these ancient modes of expressing their grief in the most distressing circumstances, gives a beauty to the pathetic description of the mourning prophet, "The elders of the daughter of Zion sit on the ground and keep silence: they have cast up dust upon their heads, they have girded themselves with sackcloth: the virgins of Jerusalem hang down their heads to the ground," Lam. ii. 10. It also gives spirit to the self-abasing confession of the humbled Job; "I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." Job. xlii. 6. It may be added, that those tokens of grief, although so natural and expressive, were sometimes used when the heart was unaffected. Hence the prophet exhorts, "Rend your hearts and not your garments": assume not the outward marks of sorrow, but let your minds be really affected with a sense of your wickedness, and "turn to the Lord."

PHYLACTERIES. Amongst other instances of the ostentation of religion, made by the Pharisees, our Saviour charges them with "making broad their Phylacteries." Matt. xxiii. 5. These phylacteries were small slips of parchment or vellum, on which certain portions of the law were written, which they fastened on their forehead or left wrist: that they might literally obey the command, "Thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes." Deut. vi. 8. The uses which the religious sops ascribed to these decorations were, to put them continually in mind of the precepts of the law, to procure them reverence and

respect in the sight of the heathen, and to act as charms to drive away evil spirits. The ingenious Dr. Clarke thus describes one of these phylacteries, of which he had obtained possession: "It is a piece of fine vellum, about eighteen inches long, and an inch and a quarter broad, divided into four unequal parts. In the first division, is written, in a very fair character, and with many little flourishes, after the mode of the German Jews, the first ten verses of Exod. xiii.: in the second, from the eleventh to the sixteenth verse inclusive, of the same chapter: in the third, from the fourth verse to the ninth inclusive, of Deut. vi.; and in the fourth, from the fourth to the ninth verse inclusive of Deut. xi." These passages appear to have been chosen in vindication of the use of phylacteries. They became an important part of the dress of a pharisee, some of whom wore them very broad, that they might contain more; or, that the characters being larger, they might be more visible, and thus procure them greater esteem among the people.

BORDERS OF GARMENTS. Moses had commanded the children of Israel to put fringes on the borders of their garments, that when they looked upon these distinct threads, they might remember, not only the law in general, but also the more minute parts of the precepts and ceremonies contained in it. Num. xv. 37—40. The pharisees used, from the same mean motives, to wear these fringes of an unusual length: and this is what our Lord charges them with, in the same passage, when he says, "they enlarge the borders of their garments." As they were destitute of inward religion, but wished to obtain the reputation of it, they rendered every outward mark of it very conspicuous: they "did all their works to be seen of men;" and "verily they had their reward."

A SERIOUS ADDRESS

To Professors of Religion in general, and to Members of Churches in particular.

(Concluded from page 57 of the last Number.)

Happy would it be, if both *ministers and people* deeply felt for the low state of vital religion amongst us; and would heartily co-operate in their endeavours to effect a revival. It

is a common cause;—a pre-eminently important cause;—a cause which we once professed to have much at heart, whatever our present conduct may indicate to the contrary, and for which we cannot do or sacrifice too much; in which we engaged deliberately, and voluntarily; and solemnly, and publicly, at our baptism, pledged our lives to promote it. Surely then, its manifest declension ought seriously to affect all; awaken the tenderest feelings, and arouse to the most vigorous and united exertions. Has not the Lord Jesus Christ highly honoured us in calling us to engage in it, and in committing to our care so sacred a charge? and shall we be unfaithful to him, and betray it? What an example we present to the rising generation! Shall we leave religion in a worse state among us than we found it? Shall we be less assiduous and zealous than our predecessors? To whom is the blessed Redeemer to look to abet his cause, and to exemplify and promote the spread of his truth in the world, but to his professed friends, whom he has greatly loved, and for whom he has done much? Do we think it no honour to be called to so sacred an employ? And will no advantage attend our being faithful? Has not our blessed Lord told us, that *for his sake*, we must forsake *all that we have*, or *we cannot be his disciples*? Are we following him with that love and zeal, and serving him with that diligence, resolution, and perseverance, as to evince that he possesses our hearts, and that we “count all things loss and dung for the excellency of the knowledge” of him, and the being approved of him? Let us arouse ourselves, dear brethren;—the time is short; “our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.”—Let every individual seriously and earnestly endeavour to do what he can towards effecting a speedy revival. Every one may contribute something; there is no one so insignificant as not to afford some effectual aid, by prayer, counsel, or holy example. Let us importune the God of heaven to afford us a copious supply of his Holy Spirit, to work in and with us; to “strengthen us mightily; to “work in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight.” The apostle believed such aid necessary, and therefore prayed for it; and shall we neglect it? There must be something lamentably amiss, either with the head or heart, not to desire and ask divine assistance. Shall God also encourage our asking, and we refuse? Christ our Lord and Head is present with us, and sees how every one of

his professed members and friends acts his part; he sees him that is carnal and remiss, and he sees him, who "looks not on his own things, but on the things of others." Do we not desire his approbation!—Are we not shortly to meet him?—How do you wish, O christian, to meet him? In peace and with exultation? O then, "be not slothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises." "Give all diligence to make thy calling and election sure;" for by so doing thou shalt *never* fall, but have an "abundant entrance administered unto thee, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Canst thou be insensible of the value of such a favor? Canst thou think of any thing that is fit to be compared with it? Let those objects and duties then, which thou wilt one day view as infinitely important, and unutterably desirable, command thy immediate regard, and resolutely and perseveringly act as thou wilt then wish thou hadst done.

Let *ministers* study to perform their part with zeal and fidelity. Much depends on them. They are, pre-eminently the "light of the world," and the "salt of the earth." Their conduct will be noticed, and their example pleaded, if any occasion be given, for any religious or moral dereliction; and as a justifiable excuse for lukewarmness and worldly-mindedness, I am well aware that their difficulties and discouragements are many; and that they have not that time to devote to private devotion, to pastoral visits, and to pulpit preparation, which they ought to have, and which such arduous labours, and such a mighty charge demand. Hence, both they, their churches and neighbourhood, sustain an important loss. It would be well if our churches did acutely feel the loss they and the public sustain, as to the power of religion, by suffering their ministers' time to be so much occupied as it almost universally is, by secular concerns. Should not ministers "give themselves wholly" to the duties of their office? Would the whole of their time be *too much* for their various engagements? Do they not want time for *private devotion* and *reading*, that their own hearts may be preserved alive and alert in duty, and that they may advance in zeal and heavenly-mindedness:—that they may maintain a spiritual frame;—and, that whether they preach or visit, they may speak from the "abundance of the heart?" they have also *family devotion* to keep up: *pas-*

toral visits to make; and many *extra-occasions*, when their attendance is desired and necessary; and, in addition to these, four, five or six sermons weekly, for which to prepare; and which, if properly digested, require considerable attention and time. But, dear brethren and fathers, if the churches will not perform their duty, do yours with all the diligence, zeal, and faithfulness you can. It would be extravagantly unreasonable to expect the same services from you, as if your whole time were devoted to your important office. Your master is not unreasonable; look up to him for assistance; "your reward is with him, and your work before him." "Though Israel be not gathered, yet will he be glorified." He has graciously promised, and he cannot fail; to "reward every one according to his work." While pursuing the path he has pointed out for you, and prosecuting the business he has assigned you, with an attentive and persevering care, relying on his grace and aiming at his glory, you are to him "a sweet savour, in those that are saved, and in those that perish;" and will be sure of your reward.

Very much depends on your keeping your minds in a lively and spiritual frame. In order to which, much serious fervent prayer in private, much free and holy converse with God, is indispensibly necessary. The sacred scriptures and books of a devotional and practical nature should also be daily read by such as possess much leisure. Much also depends on a proper management of the thoughts, in giving them a right direction, and keeping them steadily fixed on profitable subjects, when not necessarily and properly engaged on other matters. I well know how prone our thoughts are to wander, how difficult it is sometimes to fix them, and that much precious time may be lost in trifling vagaries, and waking dreams. Here resolution, watchfulness, and fervent prayer, will be found peculiarly necessary.

If the mind be kept in a lively, spiritual, and devotional frame, the conversation and preaching will receive a tincture from it, and be greatly enlivened by it. The latter will come more perceptibly from the heart, be more affectionate, animated, and impressive; and, by engaging the attention, and exciting the feelings, render public discourses abundantly more useful. And the former will be more spiritual and edifying. Every subject, whose direct tendency is not to comfort and edify,

instruct or warn, will be thought too trifling to dwell upon, and time will be deemed too valuable to be sacrificed to it; especially as such interviews are only occasional, and ought to be carefully appropriated to religious improvement. It is deplorable, when a minister visits his friends, to see him forward to converse on any subject, rather than on religion. There is too much reason to complain of a prevailing backwardness in professors to introduce religious conversation, or even to join in it; ministers need not contribute to make them more carnal, but rather be watchful to give a serious turn to the conversation as speedily as possible, and labour to make it spiritual and edifying. It is with a very ill grace that they complain in the pulpit, if they encourage worldly conversation in their social visits. Such occasional interviews, thus improved, will afford satisfying reflections on a review, and will conduce to the increasing spirituality, love and zeal of the minister, as well as of the friends he visits. His friends also should afford him an opportunity of conversing spiritually and profitably to them, by shewing him that they expect it from him, expressing a desire for it, carefully excluding other topics, and contriving that as many of the family be present as can conveniently be done. Where the heads of families are so worldly and forgetful of their character and profession, and neglectful of their spiritual progress, as to afford their minister no opportunity, nor discover any relish for edifying conversation, he should let them know, that if they have no ear to lend to the important subjects of religion and eternity, he has neither time nor inclination to speak on any other, and cut his visit short. If they will not let him improve the time to their advantage, he can improve it to his own; and that it is too sacred and precious to be squandered away to no profit. Let the example of those mentioned by the prophet Malachi, be remembered and imitated, whose conduct obtained so marked an approbation of the great Jehovah.—“Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard, &c.” Surely neither ministers nor christians need ever be at a loss for a profitable subject of conversation, so many as the scriptures afford: and it is probable they seldom would feel a backwardness to introduce them, did their thoughts dwell as much upon them in private as they ought, and as their importance demands. How interesting are such as the following:—God,

his perfections, providence, and grace :—the Lord Jesus Christ, his incarnation, condescension, love, sufferings, and death, exaltation, and intercession; the blessings he has procured, the privileges he bestows, and the eternal felicity he will raise his followers unto ;—death, judgment, heaven, eternity, and heavenly glory ;—christian experience, duties, promises, &c.—the glories of the blessed society above, its perfection, and duration ;—the state and progress of religion in the world ;—what can be done to advance it in each other, and in the neighbourhood, &c. &c. These and others connected with them, or branching from them, need never leave christians at a loss for topics of interesting and edifying conversation.

In the article of *preaching* ; if ministers earnestly desire to be useful, they will dwell much on those subjects which are confessedly of the first importance ; as well as be very serious and earnest in their manuer ; and close and faithful in their addresses to the conscience. The peculiar doctrines of the gospel, as they are justly denominated, should be much insisted on ; as without these, there can be little prospect of converting the sinner, or preserving the christian alive. The christian delights to hear of his Saviour, and what he has done for him daily ; believing views of him, his grace, and his faithfulness, are the life of his soul ; and if his attention were not frequently called to them, his love would decay, his graces would languish, his life and comfort decrease, and his whole soul be covered with darkness. The important advice of the apostle to Titus, chap. iii. 4—8. should never be forgotten : “ This is a faithful saying, and *these things* I will that thou *affirm constantly,*” viz. *the great love and mercy of God, in and through the Lord Jesus Christ the Saviour, the regenerating the soul by the Holy Spirit, the justification of the ungodly by grace through faith, his title to eternal life, &c.* For what purposes are these to be insisted on ? Not merely that the dead in trespasses and sins may be regenerated ; but “ *that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works.*” There is no other method of maintaining and increasing spiritual life in the christian, than that by which it was first begotten ; namely, *an acceptance of Christ, as the only Saviour, and firm reliance upon him.* By frequently reviewing and considering his sufferings and love, and letting the heart go out to him, approving and resting on him, as our

ransom and peace, for life, salvation, and grace, to help in all matters of duty, the soul of the christian is preserved alive; he goes "from strength to strength;" draws out of "Christ's fulness, grace for grace;" and is excited with renewed vigour to the work of christian obedience, and feels himself strengthened in it. This was the life of faith, which the Apostle lived, Gal. ii. 20.; and conformable to this our Lord says, "Except ye eat of the flesh of the son of man, and drink of his blood, *ye have no life in you.*" John vi. 53. Were this simple method perseveringly practised by christians, they would be preserved from declensions, their love would be constantly rising, they would rejoice, in a measure, far beyond what many ever attain; and which, it is to be lamented, is now rarely seen, though so common in the apostolic age; and there would not be so many grievous instances of professors "losing their first love." The christian's life is not maintained by the increase and variety of his knowledge, although that is desirable and advantageous, or the performance of duty; *it comes immediately from Christ, and is received through believing.* A judicious writer observes, "If christians kept in acts of faith, by out-goings of heart to him, in the way of the promise for all that is wanted, there would not only be sweet flowings of love and evangelical obedience issuing thence, but also they would be 'filled with all joy and peace in believing.' I have often thought if christians did give more attendance to such direct acts of faith, and spent less time in questioning their condition, or giving way to doubting about them, they would find their interest in the covenant cleared up, and consolation also coming in." These considerations sufficiently evince the importance of ministers dwelling on the peculiar doctrines of the gospel; and it will generally, if not invariably, be found a fact, that the labours of those are most successful who make this their practice. Besides, how reasonable, that Christ, the glorious subject of the christian revelation, should be held up to the view of perishing sinners, and the greatness of his love, and the richness of his grace; the importance of his sufferings, and the invaluable blessings of his covenant, be recommended to their regard. "How shall they hear without a preacher?" But they may as well have no preacher, as not to have the Saviour held up to their notice, the great end of preaching. The awful condition of the sinner, and the ab-

solute necessity of an union with Christ, with the certainty of immediate forgiveness, reconciliation and life, to such as sincerely believe in him. Life must exist in the soul, before right actions or christian obedience can be expected. The tree must be made good, before the fruit can be good, the heart must be renewed, before the life can be properly reformed; and the fruits of righteousness will infallibly accompany a true faith. Christians should be taught that a loving, suffering, atoning, interceding Saviour, in all his offices and fulness, is the bread on which they should feed and feast, daily and hourly: that their comfort and progress in holiness depend on it; and that they should never be satiated with such dainties. Unless their spiritual taste be greatly vitiated, this will not be the case, but they will endeavour to preserve a relish for such entertainment, and the more freely and often they feed on this "heavenly manna," the more their taste for it will be confirmed.

"None," says a sensible writer, "can be said rightly to divide the word of truth, who do not keep constantly in their eye, what ought to be the great end of preaching. This, in one word, is *to lead to Jesus*. Are the careless addressed? Nothing is gained till this object be attained. Are the saints to be edified? It is by a fresh view of the glory of the Saviour, and the excellence of his salvation, that this end is secured." "I have heard of a minister of the gospel, who adopted it as a rule, never to preach a sermon, in which, upon the supposition that one was hearing him who never had heard the gospel before, he should not be able to give some account of the way of a sinner's acceptance with God. Let none suppose that this would produce a tedious sameness. To christians, a view of the same precious truth, by which they are saved, ought to be, at least, always acceptable; and with regard to those who know it not, it is the first thing they need to be taught. It is pleasing to see attention excited; where it is so, it ought to be cherished; but we ought ever to keep in mind, that nothing truly valuable, or on which we can depend, is attained with regard to any man, *till he be brought to the foot of the cross.*"

"A discourse on any occasion," says another writer, "that contains no clear exposition of the way of salvation, by faith in a crucified Redeemer, no accurate description of the christ-

tian character; no pointed address to the consciences of the hearers; is an omission highly censurable. Every congregation, it may be supposed, includes some individuals, who are strangers to vital religion; and the preacher's object should always be, that even these may be warned of their danger, and left without excuse."

"Let not any suppose that such a strain of preaching will be unfavourable to morality; it will, when conducted judiciously, have a contrary effect. "When ministers establish and illustrate the doctrine of "Christ Jesus the Lord," with the other doctrines connected with that fundamental truth, and press these home on the hearts and consciences of their hearers, *they do not neglect the interests of morality.* For when the truths, revealed in the word of God are understood and believed, *they must dispose us to holiness;* and good dispositions, and obedient lives, are to be considered as *the effect rather of the belief of the truth,* than of any direct exhortations to virtue, however powerful in themselves these may be. For what is duty, but an empty name, without some motive to its performance? What is a motive, but some fact of importance to us? And what is a doctrine, but a statement of such a fact? But of what avail were the fact, or the statement, unless understood and believed? When a minister, therefore, establishes and explains the doctrines of the divine word, and especially its fundamental truths, such as those which relate to Christ the Saviour, and the Lord, he is so far from neglecting to enforce the practice of duty, that *he is employing the only means, by which it can be effectually secured: he is implanting those principles, from which, and from which alone, true holiness can proceed."*

The sentiments contained in the preceding extracts appear to me perfectly correct, and very important to the advancement of christian morality, and ministerial success: and therefore are highly deserving the most attentive regard of those ministers, whose hearts are in their word, and who would rejoice in nothing more, except their own salvation, than in beholding the pleasure of the Lord prospering in their hands. May that God, who alone can give the increase, direct their hearts more and more into the love of himself, and Christ the Lord; fill them with compassion for their perishing fellow creatures; give them just views of their arduous office and

work; and inspire them with zeal and diligence in the discharge of their various duties; and crown their faithful exertions with the most abundant success!

O that every one, ministers and their officers, with the people at large, were careful to fill their places with credit to themselves, and honour to their profession! Were unanimity, love, and zeal maintained, how amiable would religion appear, what success would attend the gospel, and how rapidly would religion advance! Have we the honour of a *name and place* in the church of Christ? Are we endowed with the privileges of *forgiveness, reconciliation, and adoption*? Can we call God *father*, and enjoy *hourly communion with him*; and contemplate *heaven as our everlasting inheritance*, and *eternal life as our future reward*? And shall we be inactive or unfaithful? Are these blessings of small value in our estimation? Does not the possession of them call for the most fervent gratitude and praise? To whom is Christ to look for instruments to promote his cause in the world, if not to his disciples, whom he honours with the name of *friends*?—O what a favour it is to be brought “out of darkness into marvellous light,” to have our names registered in the Lamb’s book of life: to be children and heirs! Have we forgotten our former thralldom and danger;—the awful apprehensions we once entertained of eternal perdition; the longing desire we had for deliverance; and the gratitude and joy we felt, when brought to a saving knowledge of the glorious Redeemer; And is Christ become less precious, the gospel less sweet, salvation less important, and heaven less desirable? Our divine Master expects and deserves from each of us love and fidelity; let us not disappoint him. We have solemnly pledged our best and persevering efforts; let us be faithful to our engagements. Let every one exert those talents he has given him, seeking his direction, and relying on his aid. He walks among the churches:—his eye is on every individual servant, and he is to be our judge. Can we expect him to say to us, “Well done, good and faithful servant,” if we have been slothful, negligent, and unfaithful? Remember, it will be of vast importance then to have his approbation; and inexpressibly awful to be disowned by him. Have you no fear of this; and do not such fears arouse you to more earnestness, watchfulness, and diligence? Can you always forget or overlook the strong language of scripture, addressed

to christians, and designed to awaken them to due concern, and the most spirited and persevering exertions?

Let the *Officers* in all our churches unite heartily with their ministers, and other lively, spiritual christians, and powerfully second their endeavours. Ministers greatly need their powerful co-operation; and without it their hearts will be ready to sink, and their courage fail, when the state of religion wears a discouraging aspect. Such should magnify their office; and as their appointment supposes superior talents, influence or piety, these should all be exerted on behalf of vital, practical religion, and the peace, order, and prosperity of the churches. Labour, dear brethren, to be as conspicuous for zeal, spirituality, devotion, brotherly love, holy watchfulness, and diligence, in a word, eminent personal piety, as for your station in the church of Christ. Attend diligently to the duties of your office, and consider the honour, satisfaction, and future reward that will attend fidelity. As it will undoubtedly be thought an honour to be distinguished by Christ, in the "day when he shall make up his jewels;" why should we scruple any exertions by which we may now distinguish ourselves by ardent piety, great diligence, unwearied perseverance, and eminent usefulness? Let not your secular concerns cause you to neglect the duties of your station in the church; be willing to make sacrifices for the spiritual advantages of your brethren; for it is impossible you can be ultimately a loser, by faithfully serving the Lord Christ. The honour of attending any office under Christ, when properly sustained, is far greater than any you will ever attain of a civil nature; and the satisfaction, arising from a faithful discharge of the duties of it, will infinitely outweigh all worldly prosperity. How extremely secularized must that person's heart be, and low and grovelling his ideas, who, called by his brethren to an office in the church of the living God, can be alert and vigilant in every worldly concern, and negligent in that: can shew unwearied patience and perseverance, in attending to the business of a parish, or a trade, or any other secular matter, yet be neglectful of that which he holds under Christ, and to whom he stands accountable for his conduct in it! Diligence in the former may secure to us more notice and applause from the world; but not from Christ. How necessary it is that our minds be purified—our ideas spiritualized, that we set the Lord before us; and look

at the things that are unseen and eternal. It is to be feared that to many a professor it will be said, "Verily thou hast had thy reward."—"thou soughtest the praise of men, and thou hadst it: thou hadst no regard to my glory, and thou hast now nothing to expect from me."—Awful disappointment! Let then as many as have the truth and glory of the blessed Redeemer at heart, (O that this were but the case with every professor!) associate together, unite more closely, consider what means can be used to effect a revival, pray fervently in private, and have social meetings for prayer, for the above purpose. This will greatly strengthen the hands of pious ministers, bind your hearts more closely to each other, and secure to you the divine blessing. Such an example will be calculated to have an awakening effect upon those professors, whose lukewarmness and carnality is the subject of concern and grief. Is it not also an incumbent duty, when the state of religion is very low in any society, to set apart a day for the purposes of humiliation and prayer, that the Head of the church may pour down his spirit more copiously on his people, succeed the labours of his ministers, and effect a revival of his glorious cause? But, alas! those members of a church whose conduct renders such an expedient necessary, are always the most backward to adopt and most ready to reject any proposition that is made for such a purpose: they are dead weights, hanging like a mill stone on the cause of Christ, and retarding every scheme that may be suggested for general utility.

Let every one, rich or poor, young or old, in the fear of God, and depending on his aid, seriously endeavour to do the best he can: acting constantly as under the eye of his Master, and anticipating the approaching day of account. Let him carefully watch over the state of his own soul, and live constantly by faith, that he may increase in the spiritual and divine life; fully resolving to attend punctually to *his* duty, whoever may neglect theirs; and fervently praying for his fellow christians, and the kingdom of Christ at large. Such a person will not lose his reward, for "the Lord knoweth them that are his:" he hath "set apart the godly for himself," and he will most assuredly reward those of his professed servants who are following him closely, and serving him faithfully. While many, equally favoured as to outward means, who have "slighted his

grace, undervalued their privileges, neglected his services, and brought reproach on his cause, will be finally and eternally rejected. "Then shall ye return, and discern between the *righteous* and the *wicked*, between him that served God, and him that served him not." "Well done, good and faithful servant!" will be pronounced on the diligent, while the slothful and unfaithful will "awake to shame and everlasting contempt."

To live under a deep and constant sense of eternal things, is the christian's true interest, and should be his great concern. Of what unutterable importance will they soon be to us; and how little and trivial will every earthly object and concern appear! With what ineffable severity will that professor condemn himself, who has suffered them to allure and ensnare his heart, to the neglect of his salvation, and the utter ruin of his immortal soul! O brethren, take care!—receive the word of exhortation;—be constantly on your guard. Forget not the case of the *five foolish virgins*, nor our Lord's words, "Many shall say unto me, Lord, Lord, &c." to whom he will say, "I know you not, depart from me, &c.;" and also, many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able," therefore we are to strive, even to agonize, to enter in. Such expressions as the inspired writers frequently use, denote something, and should not be overlooked. Are we not required to *labour*, to *run*, to *wrestle*, to *watch*, to *press*, to *give all diligence*, and to *lay aside every weight*? "O then let your loins be girt, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto servants that wait for their Lord." View things in the light of eternity, and judge of their importance as you will in a dying hour. Preserve a tenderness of conscience; live constantly by faith; be steadily "looking to Jesus, as the author and finisher of your faith," recollecting "that you are bought with a price," and therefore "are not your own." Remember his love, his all-sufficiency, and his faithfulness; and "commit the keeping of your souls unto him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator." And "may the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds, through Jesus Christ." J. F.

POPISH SUPERSTITION AND IDOLATRY.

An intelligent Traveller relates the following affecting anecdote, as a circumstance that fell within his knowledge.

Statues and pictures of saints, which have been long in particular families, are generally kept with great care and attention. The proprietors of them have the same attachment to them as the ancient heathens had to their household gods. They are considered as tutelary and domestic divinities, from whom the family expect protection. When a series of unfortunate events happens in a family, it sometimes creates a suspicion that the family statues have lost their influence. A Frenchman, in a creditable line of life, had a small figure of our Saviour on the cross, of very curious workmanship; and offered it for sale to an English gentleman of my acquaintance. After expatiating on the excellency of the workmanship, he told him that he had long kept this crucifix with the most pious care; that he had it always in his private devotions; and that in return he had expected some degree of protection and favour. Instead of this, he had of late been remarkably unfortunate; all the tickets which he had in the lottery had proved blanks; and having a great share in the cargo of a ship coming from the West Indies, he had recommended it, in the most fervent manner, in his prayers to the crucifix; and, that he might give no offence by any appearance of want of faith, he had not insured the goods; notwithstanding all which, the vessel had been shipwrecked, and the cargo totally lost, though the sailors, in whose preservation he had no concern, had been all saved. "In short, sir," cried he, with an accent of indignation mingled with regret, and raising his shoulders above his ears, "In short, sir, it has disappointed me, and I will now sell my Christ."

HAPPY EFFECTS OF READING THE SCRIPTURES.

At a late Meeting of the Bible Association at Brighton, a stranger requested permission to address the company. This being readily granted, he proceeded thus: "The child of a drunken sailor asked him for bread. Irritated by his request, the dissolute father spurned him from him with his foot, and the child fell over the beach into the sea. No assistance

could be given from the shore, and the boy disappeared; but by providentially clinging to a raft, towards which the waves carried him, he floated till picked up by a vessel then under weigh. The child could only tell them that his name was Jack; but the humanity of the crew led them to take care of him. Poor Jack, as he grew up, was promoted to wait on the officers, received instruction easily, and endeavoured, by steady and obliging conduct, to gain the good will of his associates. He served in several actions; and, in the last, was promoted to take care of the sick and wounded. He observed a seaman with a bible under his head, and shewed him so much attention, that the man, when dying, requested Jack to accept this bible, which had been the means of reclaiming him from the ways of sin. Jack accepted the legacy; and, from some circumstances, recognized his father in the penitent sailor." Here the speaker paused; but observing that his story had excited much interest in the hearers, he added, with a modest bow, "Ladies and gentlemen, *I am Poor Jack.*"

A collector for the Ratcliff and Shadwell Bible Association, passing through one of those wretched streets which disgrace that part of the metropolis, observed a young woman sitting on the threshold of a door, and ventured to ask her to subscribe for a bible. She replied, with horrid imprecations, "I know enough of the bible to make me miserable. I want some gin, and have no money." After some further expostulation on the part of the collector, she promised, probably with a view to rid herself of his importunity, that, if he would call again, she might give him a trifle. In a few weeks afterwards, he called at the house; but she was gone. He heard nothing more of this unhappy female for nearly two years; when, going to a religious solemnity in the neighbourhood, he was unexpectedly accosted by her, in these pleasing terms: "Oh, sir! I am happy that I have read a New Testament, which you and your partner left at a house in our street. I have thereby been led to see the sinfulness of my former conduct; and am thankful that the Lord has enabled me to forsake it, I hope, for ever." On being asked how she now obtained a livelihood, she said: "I have been reconciled to my mother, who keeps a little shop; and I assist her in the business." After encouraging her to persevere in the paths of virtue, the collector followed her into the meeting house; where her serious and

devout conduct confirmed his hopes of the sincerity of her reformation; and he had afterwards the pleasure to notice her as a regular and attentive worshipper in the same religious assembly. This is one pleasing instance of the happy effects of the exertions now making to spread the scriptures. Doubtless others equally interesting are daily occurring, though many of them may never be known till that great day when "every secret thing shall be brought into judgment."

One of the subscribers to the Reading Bible Association, having paid the usual sum to the collectors, observed as they were departing, "This is not all; I have something more to add, connected with a little tale which you will rejoice to hear. A few weeks ago, a young man came to my shop, when the Bible Societies were mentioned. On this his indignation was kindled; and he expressed, in unbecoming terms, the rancorous sentiments of his heart. Seeing him totally under the influence of passion, we made no reply; and he soon left us. I mentioned the circumstance to my little girl, then on her death bed, who, though young in years, was old in christian experience; and asked her what should be done. "Oh, father," she replied, "subscribe for a bible for him." This we did; and I presented it to the young man; at the same time informing him, who had induced us to procure it for him. Forcibly struck with the dying child's anxiety to supply him with a bible, he received it with gratitude; took it home and read it seriously. Deeply impressed with the nature of its contents, he wished to share with others the pleasure which he enjoyed. He read it to his fellow servants, who soon imbibed his feelings; became eager to possess the precious book for themselves, and subscribed liberally for that purpose. The good impressions on the heart of this young man were permanent. He earnestly endeavoured to improve in the knowledge of divine things; and his actions proved the sincerity of his professions. He now considers the offer of a bible to a friend as the highest token of sincere regard; and, with this view, lately paid nine shillings, with warm acknowledgements of the privilege he esteemed it, to obtain so great a treasure for so trifling a sum.

September 1815, the Ocean, Captain Johnston, sailed from England with a number of convicts for Botany Bay. The chaplain to the colony went out as passenger in the same ship,

and to his care the British and Foreign Bible Society entrusted a quantity of bibles, &c. for the use of the convicts. The following letter, which these unhappy men addressed to their benefactors, on their arrival at their destination, will, we are persuaded, be interesting to every real christian; and furnish a pleasing instance of the happy effects of an acquaintance with the word of God on the most abandoned characters.

“ Port Jackson, New South Wales, Jan. 30, 1816.

“ We, the convicts of this ship, desire to return our warmest thanks to the Noblemen and Gentlemen of the British and Foreign Bible Society, for receiving from the hands of the Reverend J. Youl, twenty-five bibles, and one hundred and twenty testaments. Though we must confess, that of all men living, we are the most unworthy of these great favours; yet there are some, we hope, among us, who have been plunged into this gulph of misery and wretchedness for want of duly considering the importance of the Holy Scriptures, who now rejoice in their excellence. We cannot recompence you in any other way, than letting you know that these bibles and testaments have caused many oaths to be turned into prayers, and a number of the worst songs into hymns of praise. The Rev. J. Youl’s interest with the captain has proved of great utility in a school being established among the convicts; and a number of the scholars can now read, though imperfectly, in the bible, to which before they were utter strangers. The chaplain attends the school himself daily, and ten of the most intelligent assist in various departments. Therefore, every day, weather permitting, there are thirty-six or more reading the scriptures which your valuable society furnished us with; besides nearly thirty more learning to attain the same desirable end. Though the school has met with considerable opposition from a number of thoughtless convicts, yet perseverance in it has surmounted every obstacle, and paved the way to a reconciliation between both parties: and learning has gone on with some advantage!

Signed by thirty-five convicts.

MEDITATIONS on the LORD'S PRAYER.

No. IX.

Mat. vi. 13. *But deliver us from evil.*

THE only way in which we can be effectually secured from the power of temptation is to be kept at a distance from it, for if we enter into it in the smallest degree, we are in danger of being carried away, contrary to our expectations. Our previous aversion, strengthened and accompanied by sincere repentance, interposes but a feeble barrier against the floods of evil with which we are surrounded and assailed. Much as Abraham was concerned to glorify God by the energy of his faith, it sometimes failed him in the hour of trial. Much as David loved holiness, and was the man after God's own heart, yet, when led into temptation, he was easily overcome; and much as Peter hated cowardice, he fell a victim to it, in the palace of the high priest. No reliance can be placed on the best fortified dispositions, or on any inherent strength which we possess; a more powerful arm than our own must 'deliver us from evil,' or we shall not escape.

The restraints which providence imposes on the corruptions of wicked men are the means of preventing innumerable evils, which otherwise would produce a larger portion of misery than has hitherto been suffered to exist. By cutting off the occasions of sin, by disappointing the hopes of the wicked, and confounding their policy, providence has concealed from our view some of the most odious deformities, and thrown a veil over the blackest depravity of the human heart. That there has been only one Cain, or one Judas, has been owing to that goodness and mercy by which the recurrence of innumerable temptations has been prevented, rather than to any other cause; and, with the portion of evil inherent in the human character, no man knows what he himself might have been if left to himself, or if the temper had been suffered to exercise an uncontrolled dominion.

Even good men are delivered from evil in the same way, and much of their innocence results from the same arrangement. But besides the real, though frequently invisible, agency of providence, there is an influence which God exercises over the hearts of men, delivering them from evil, by motives addressed

to their hopes, their interests, and their fears. The injury which Abimelech contemplated in reference to Abraham and that of Esau towards Jacob, were prevented by the special interposition of providence, but accompanied with motives which changed the purpose of the offence. By this combined operation we are delivered from evil in various instances of which we are scarcely aware, and prayer is answered when we discern it not.

Sin is so great an evil, that it is desirable to be delivered from it by any means whatever, which the wisdom of God may ordain; yet there is but one way in which this can be accomplished, so as to afford hope or evidence of final salvation, and that is by having its power mortified and subdued within us. All the other means may be employed with effect, but it is this alone that gives proof of our sanctification: and though they may accompany salvation, and contribute in promoting it, they are not the things in which salvation itself consists. To be restrained from sin is one thing, to have it mortified is another; the former may be the effect of an event over which we have no controul, or of a motive in which the love of God had no share; the latter, which supposes the principles of sin to be weakened and destroyed, alone bespeaks the influence of true religion. The public highway is as dry in a winter's frost, as it is in the heat of a summer's sun, though from a different and even opposite cause; and the negative purity produced by un-sanctified motives may resemble that positive excellence which the grace of God alone is able to effect, though the difference is as real in one case as in the other.

The principal means by which we may hope to be delivered from evil, is the regular and faithful discharge of holy duties. Negligence on this head is sure to expose us to temptation, and to rob us of our armour of defence. If David had been on his knees, instead of walking on the house top, his dishonour would have been prevented. Stagnant waters soon grow muddy; and it is only by a holy activity in religious duties that our purity can be preserved. In praying to be delivered from evil, we in effect pray for a spirit of watchfulness and godly fear; that we may have an habitual sense of the worth and importance of heavenly things; that we may be more spiritually minded, more on our guard against temptation; and that amidst our utmost efforts to cultivate the religion of the

heart, our dependance may be placed, not on those efforts, but on Him alone who is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. PAULINUS.

The DUTY of ABSTAINING from secular EMPLOYMENT on the SABBATH.

In answer to the Query of the APPRENTICE, in the last Number of the G. B. R.

DEAR SIR,

In order to answer the query in G. B. R. vol. viii. p. 60, in the affirmative, two things should be proved. First, that christians are under obligation to observe a weekly sabbath. And, secondly, that the *manner* of fulfilling that obligation is violated by the practices stated in the query.

I. The first of these positions will be established if we observe,—that a weekly sabbath was instituted for man in a state of *innocency*,—that its obligation was *universal*,—and, that it has not been abrogated, but is confirmed by the New Testament.

A weekly sabbath was instituted by God, to be observed by man while innocent. Gen. ii. 1, 2, 3 Hence, it could not be one of those shadows of which Christ is the substance, and which therefore received their consummation and ceased when he appeared on earth.

And, as this law was not of Jewish origin; so neither was its obligation confined to those of the Jewish nation: but having been enjoined on the first parents of the human race, it became obligatory on all their offspring, and was properly an *universal law*.

In confirmation of this sentiment we need only observe its operation on the affairs of the Jewish nation prior to the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. I refer to Exod. xvi. I am not ignorant of what many have gathered from the history of the early sacrifices, and the transactions in the ark; nor of what may be urged out of heathen antiquity on this point; but I believe that the decision of the question may be safely rested on this basis. It will be incumbent on all who slight the obligation, to find some passage of divine authority which abrogates this institution of a *weekly sabbath*.

And how impossible this is, must be well known to the attentive reader of the sacred page. The law and the prophets of the Jewish people, with one voice, enforce the observance. And the New Testament shews that our adorable Saviour was so far from rescinding, that he gave the utmost sanction to the law of the *weekly* sabbath. He observed it himself, devoting the hours of that holy day to religious exercises. He declared that heaven and earth should pass away before its force should fail. He warned the presumptuous, that no advantages of wisdom, no professions of zeal, no powers of working miracles, nor any other consideration, should save him who should break that law and teach men to break it, from being called least in the kingdom of heaven. Matt. v. 17—21. He taught his disciples to have respect to that law. Mat. xxiv. 20. The Acts of the Apostles, as recorded by themselves and St. Luke, shew that they observed the sabbath as long as they continued on earth; and since their decease, no man has been authorized by heaven, to alter any of the laws of religion.

If the law of the sabbath was given to man while innocent—if it operated on the affairs of the only people of whom we have any authentic record of so early date, before the giving of the law on Sinai—if that law required its observance—if Christ observed, sanctioned and recommended it—if christians observed it till the death of the apostles—and, if no man since that time has received authority from heaven to annul it:—then the law of the sabbath is still in force—is universal—and it is therefore the duty of christians to observe it.

II. But if Christians be obliged to observe a weekly sabbath, in what *manner* must they observe it? and is that manner of observance violated by posting of books, writing letters on business, &c. on that day?

Let us consider the *reason* assigned for the institution of a weekly sabbath, and the intimations and facts by which it is illustrated in the sacred history.

1. The *reason* assigned by the Holy Ghost for the institution is, God's *resting* on the seventh day from all the work of creating a world. Gen. ii. 1—3. "God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, *because* that on it God ceased from all his work." Since *rest* is given as the cause of the institution, it is reasonable to expect that *rest* will be the object of the

law. If God blessed a seventh day and sanctified it for man, *because* that on a seventh day himself ceased from all his works which had reference to the bodily comfort of man, it is natural to expect that in sanctifying that day, he would set it apart to sacred repose, as distinguished from the days of culture and tillage.

2. This inference is confirmed by all the passages of scripture which illustrate the subject. We find Jehovah multiplying miracles to prevent the necessity of seeking or preparing food on the sabbath, prior to the giving of that definite written law upon the subject, recorded in Exod. xx. See ch. xvi. 22—30.

When Jehovah first condescended to give written laws to men, one of those laws related to a weekly sabbath; and it expressly provided, that it should be a rest from all those unnecessary labours which have reference only to the present life. Exod. xx. 8—11. If we look into the New Testament, we shall find our Lord and his apostles devoting it to religious exercises. See Luke xiii. 10. Acts xiii. 42.—xvi. 13.—xviii. 4. &c. Nor do we ever, in more than one instance, find them making any sort of provision for their own bodies on that day; and then no further than to supply the present necessity of the moment. All their other sabbath exercises were, either teaching and learning the will of God, or performing offices of charity to the sick and the necessitous. They devoted the sabbath not to secular purposes, but to the exercises of religion; to the worship of God, and the instruction of the human race. And, though the account of their proceedings, furnished to us by the Holy Spirit, be very brief, and seldom descending to minute particulars; yet, its general language fully warrants the conclusion, that they devoted, not a part only, but the whole of the holy sabbath to religious purposes. On the day of Pentecost in particular, we find them all assembled in one place *so early*, that the Holy Ghost was shed on them altogether—the rumour of it spread over the city—multitudes from all parts collected together—had heard them speak all their different tongues—reasoned together on the phenomenon—and given occasion to Peter to begin a public defence, while it was yet but nine o'clock in the morning. I take this to be a specimen of the diligence with which they husbanded the precious hours of that day, which God in his wisdom and

mercy made for man, and sanctified from the common drudgeries of earth.

Is it probable that Jehovah would have given a double portion of food on the sixth day, and miraculously preserved from corrupting that which was dressed on that day, to prevent the necessity of labour on the sabbath, had not the nature of the institution required a rest from the care of providing for corporeal wants? Would the Lord of the sabbath have introduced so many provisions on that particular subject into the laws of the Israelites, sanctioned with penalties so extreme, but in order to secure the observance of such a rest?

If rest from worldly cares was the object of the institution— if the illustrations of the subject in sacred history go to shew that the law required the exercises of the day to be religious, exclusively of all unnecessary worldly cares and labours— and, if the New Testament, so far as it does descend to particulars, shews that the sabbath was wholly devoted to the purposes of religion and charity, by our Lord and his apostles: then, I think, the duty of M. R. is clearly apparent from scripture: viz. absolutely to refuse compliance with those arrangements or commands of his master, which require that he should devote a part of the christian sabbath to mercantile concerns.

I would however advise M. R. to try what can be done by gentle suasion. I presume that he is an artied apprentice, and that he considers it his duty cheerfully to fulfil all his master's lawful and reasonable commands. He is also a disciple of the meek and lowly Jesus, and as such, he doubtless endeavours to acquit himself in every branch of civil duty to the best of his ability: blending all his conversation with that sweetness of temper, and that readiness to oblige, which the christian religion as clearly requires, as it happily enforces. He does not repine when called upon to exert himself to the utmost, at any proper time, and in any just manner, for his master's benefit. A course of conduct thus worthy the professor of the religion of Jesus, must have prepared any reasonable master to listen to the suggestions, and to yield something to the wishes, especially to the comfort, of such an apprentice.

Let him then state his scruples, in a modest, humble manner, and request, that, as a matter of favour, he may be excused from attending to business on the sabbath. Let him, at the

same time, offer to devote the Saturday evening to the dispatch of that business to which he cannot with a good conscience attend on the Lord's day. I can hardly conceive that such a request, preferred in such a manner, and at a happy moment, could be once refused. But should not the desired effect be produced at the first time, let a week be allowed for reflection, and then let the request be repeated with the same modesty and humility as before : and should the reasonable expectation of success be ultimately disappointed, it will then be time to remonstrate. Then, without losing his gentleness of manners, let him put on firmness of mind ; and, if driven to extremities, let him give a decided, absolute refusal ; couched in language calculated at once to shew his respect for his master, and his determination to abide by the dictates of his holy religion.

PHI.

*The TEACHING of WRITING, on the LORD'S DAY,
in SUNDAY SCHOOLS, condemned.*

A friendly Correspondent has kindly communicated the following sensible observations, from the pen of the Rev. R. HALL, M. A. on a subject to which we have frequently wished to call the attention of our Readers ; and we are persuaded that they will thank us for the insertion of them.

IN considering this question the obligation of a religious observance of the Lord's day must be assumed, as it is a principle not disputed among the parties whom this discussion concerns.

I know not how a religious observance of the Lord's day can be defined, but by saying, it is an exemption of it from every employment not strictly religious, works of the last necessity and mercy excepted. Now Writing, it is undeniable, is not a religious employment, nor can learning to write be so denominated. It seems therefore to be excluded by the definition we have laid down. It is altogether a *secular* employment, which may occasionally be rendered subservient to the purposes of piety, as may every other attainment ; but it partakes not of the nature of religion.

Once break down the barrier between a sacred and civil

employment of time, and the sanctity of the sabbath is violated, nor is it possible to know where to stop. A principle is broken in upon which is plain and determinable, nor will it be possible to assign any consistent reason for resisting a second or third encroachment, which will not equally prohibit the first. If the qualifying persons for civil departments be allowed, other branches of knowledge, arithmetic for example, must be introduced, for there are abundance of situations where the art of computation would not be less useful than that of writing. Thus sunday schools would become schools of general instruction; and the sanctification of the sabbath be completely lost sight of.

When young persons have been sanctioned by their superiors, in devoting a part of the sabbath to exercises of a purely secular nature, what shall restrain the more studious part of them, at a subsequent period, from pursuing grammar, geography, or arithmetic, on the Lord's day, which are as much connected with religion as the acquisition which is pleaded for; and when we remember the tenacity of early impressions, and the tendency of depraved nature to a progressive deviation from rectitude, these and much greater evils may be expected to ensue. The relaxation of the rule contended for in the present instance, will instantly destroy in youthful minds the reverence for the sabbath; and thus one of the elements of impiety will be imbibed in a seminary established for religious instruction. The rules of duty are never inculcated successfully on children, but in an absolute form; the limitations and occasional exceptions to which they are liable, are best left to be learned by subsequent experience and enquiry. Children are utterly incapable of comprehending nice and subtle distinctions; and a very refined one indeed is necessary to ascertain the difference in a moral view, betwixt teaching the art of writing and other branches of knowledge.

I am aware of but one objection to which this reasoning is liable. It may be said, that learning to read is no more a part of religion than learning to write. But here lies an important difference. Though reading is not, in itself considered, a part of religion, it is a necessary instrument of religion. The word of God is not accessible without it. It is unquestionably the will of the Supreme Being, that the sacred oracles should be perused, or they need not to have been imparted;

but they cannot be perused by such as are ignorant of the art of reading; and the ordination of the end is always supposed to include the appointment of what is absolutely necessary to that end. Writing *may be* rendered subservient to the promotion of piety; but it possesses this property only in common with every other acquisition. Reading is essential to any considerable acquaintance with the oracles of God. It is the key, the one, that unlocks the treasures of inspiration.

All pious persons would be shocked at reading an advertisement from a writing master, informing the public that his seminary would be open on the Lord's day. But surely the circumstance of his receiving a pecuniary recompence for his labour, creates no difference in the two cases. He does that for reward, which the persons I am opposing do gratuitously. But what it is wrong to do under the stimulus of a recompence, cannot become right in consequence of its being done voluntarily and spontaneously. If the action in question be right, it carries its own vindication with it, on both suppositions: if it be wrong, the criminality of it is always supposed to be palliated, rather than aggravated by the strength of the motive. It is sufficient to decide the question with those who suppose the fourth commandment to be still in force, to recollect, that the Almighty has said, "Thou shalt remember the sabbath day to keep it holy." R. H.

We venture to add, that the necessity for the practice, against which these judicious arguments militate, may, in most cases, be easily obviated, by devoting two hours on one of the week-day evenings to instruction in writing and arithmetic: and, if admission to this evening school be made the reward of diligence, punctuality, and improvement in the Sunday school, a powerful incentive to attention, exertion, and good behaviour will be gained. EDITOR.

On the MOST ELIGIBLE MISSIONARY STATION.

To the EDITOR of the G. B. R.

DEAR SIR,

The attempts which the General Baptists are making to establish a foreign mission, must be a matter of thankfulness to all who wish well to the denomination. Should they suc-

ceed; they will become more known, and be more respected in the religious world; and participate more than otherwise they can, in the joy connected with extending the kingdom of God, and promoting the salvation of the heathen. And, in proportion as success attends their efforts, it is probable that a tone of feeling, a zeal in religion, and a spirit of devotion, to which as a body they have been in a great measure strangers, will be excited in the connection.

I was disappointed in not seeing the report of the committee's proceedings the last year, published in the association minutes; as I have been led to understand a report, on the whole, interesting and encouraging, was read in the meeting held by the friends of the mission, at Castle Donnington, before the commencement of the association. It is thought by several with whom I have conversed, that publishing it would be acceptable to many who wish well to the institution, and promote its advantage.

It appears to be a prevailing opinion among the friends of the intended mission, that before any thing considerable can be done in exciting a missionary feeling in the churches, and raising subscriptions, the persons intended to be employed as missionaries should be selected, and the station designed to be occupied, chosen. And it cannot be doubted, one should suppose, that were these determined on, with more advantage than can be in present circumstances, both from churches and individuals, subscriptions might be solicited. It is therefore desirable, that as soon as may be, a missionary station be agreed on, and persons suitable for occupying it, sought for. On the latter point, at present, it is not my design to trouble you. I only say, it is the opinion of some in the connection, that were a station chosen, and pecuniary means provided, there are persons to be found, by no means destitute of suitable talents, who would be willing to engage as missionaries. On the former point; i. e. a suitable station, I beg to offer a few remarks, or rather to propose a few queries.

Whatever part of the world the society may choose as the scene of its operations, ought it not to be one where the missionaries would be under the protection of the British government? By this means, according to human appearance, they would be more secure, and intercourse would be more easy. Unless missionaries are under the protection of some

christian state their lives are in constant danger ; and there are few, if any christian states, so desirable in this respect, as the British. The whole history of the propagation of christianity shews that but little has ever been done in extending it, when the ruling powers have been decidedly hostile.

Does any part of the East Indies offer a promising station for a General Baptist mission? No doubt there is in many parts of the East, sufficient room, notwithstanding the many labourers engaged ; and the inhabitants there are probably as ripe for the gospel, as in any part of the heathen world. At the same time, it is deserving of attention, whether, all things considered, some spot may not be selected, more eligible than any which presents itself in India. Many stations there are already occupied, many of them by men of considerable eminence as missionaries : so that any persons whom the General Baptists might send, would, in the vicinity of them, appear to disadvantage. Besides, the distance to India is very considerable ; and though the intercourse is not difficult, yet the expence attending a mission there would be great.

Does not some part of the British settlements in North America appear, in the present state of the G. B. connection and the world, as eligible a station as any that can be selected? The inhabitants there, both in Canada and Newfoundland, as well as the Indians in the back settlements, are in a great measure destitute of religious means. " The case of Canada is very affecting. Protestants are constantly attaching themselves to the Roman Catholics, not from choice, but because they have no access to a Protestant ministry : while still greater numbers live entirely without the form of religion. Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland, are in similar circumstances. In Newfoundland in particular, there are not less than twenty thousand persons without religious instruction ; and the old people among the settlers who remember this " land of bibles and ordinances," often weep that the year now rolls over them without sabbaths, without public worship, and the ministry of the word. It is much to be hoped, that greater efforts will be generally made in this country to raise up altars of God, where there are so many christians without temples, without sacrifices, and without a priesthood ; where so many thousands of protestants are placed in the alternative of living entirely without religion, or yielding

to the proselyting zeal of the Romish priests; and where so many others are sinking into heathenism."* Again, this country is under the protection of the English; missionaries here would be in a manner as safe as at home. It is comparatively near; the intercourse is direct and constant; and a mission here would not be attended with perhaps half the expence that would be attached to one in the East. There the missionaries would not be required to learn any foreign language in order to their preaching the gospel, the English being in most of the settlements in chief use; unless for the sake of the French settlers, in some parts of Canada, it was thought requisite that any of them should learn French. From these parts too the intercourse with the United States is easy; and opportunity would be afforded of learning the state of the General Baptists there, and forming an acquaintance with them.

What objection can be made against this part of the world as a suitable station for a General Baptist mission? Perhaps it may be said, a mission here would not be a mission to the heathen. And what of this? Is not the soul of an inhabitant of Canada or Newfoundland of as much value as that of a Hindoo or Chinese? And is there not as great a probability of a missionary being instrumental in saving the former as the latter? Is there not a much greater probability? And ought we not, other things being equal, to give the preference to such places as offer the best prospect of success? Will it be said, that a mission to these parts will not meet with the support which one to the heathen would? Why not? Attempts to extend the kingdom of Christ, and to save souls, are always commendable; and whether they have respect to the eastern or western hemisphere, to the inhabitants of Indostan, or North America, by real christians they will be respected and encouraged. Besides, a mission to these parts may in one view be considered as a mission to the heathen; since, to say nothing of the many thousands of European descendants who are in a state little superior to the heathen, attempts might be made, as opportunities were afforded, to christianize the Indians in the back settlements, many of whom have frequent intercourse with the Europeans.

But if it were not intended to be satisfied with sending a

* Christian Observer, vol. 15. page 57.

few ministers to North America, might it not be proper to begin there? The General Baptists are inexperienced in such undertakings. Both men and money would be more easily obtained for a mission there, than one in the East; and if it succeeded, as there is reason to believe, through divine assistance, it would, this connection in a few years would with more advantage attempt something more. They would be more experienced; be better acquainted with their strength; and probably, having been labouring in this field awhile, their missionaries might be better prepared for occupying what some may consider a more important station.

It has been said, that Madagascar has been thought of as an eligible place; and in respect to its situation, extent, population, and moral and spiritual state of its inhabitants, it must be acknowledged one of the most important stations that could be selected for a christian mission. But to its being chosen by the General Baptists as the scene of their missionary exertions, several weighty objections are opposed. A mission there would be very expensive; there is little or no direct intercourse with the island; nothing could be done till some one language used there was acquired; and perhaps the missionaries would not be sufficiently under the protection of the English, or any christian government.

The design, Mr. Editor, of this communication, is to excite in the connection an inquiry as to the most eligible station for their missionary exertions; and to induce such of your correspondents as are friendly to the proposed undertaking, and have had their attention directed to these subjects, to lay before the friends of the mission the result of their inquiries.

Your's, &c. Z. R.

**REASONS for not USING the LORD'S PRAYER,
as a STATED FORM of WORSHIP.**

IN the 43rd number of the Repository, p. 21. a correspondent asks the question, "Why do not our ministers in general conclude their public supplications with the Lord's Prayer?" And having, at the same time, intimated his persuasion, that a "plain and conclusive answer would be peculiarly acceptable to many readers," the following reasons

are submitted in reply; but whether they should be deemed "conclusive," is not for the writer to determine.

It is well known, that one class of protestant dissenters use the Lord's Prayer stately in their public services, probably from a predilection for the forms of the established church; whilst a few others, of different denominations, are found to introduce it only occasionally, to express their conviction, that its adoption is discretionary, and not obligatory. The baptists, however, of both denominations, generally decline the use of this form altogether, from a persuasion that it is not essential to New Testament worship, and that its frequent repetition is a direct perversion of its original design. In support of this latter practice, it may be alledged—

1. There is no proof that what is termed the Lord's Prayer, was ever intended to be used as a constant and stated part of public worship. Neither in the Acts of the Apostles, nor in the Epistles do we meet with any hint that such a practice prevailed in the primitive church, or that it was obligatory on christians, in any succeeding age. But this is a circumstance which could not easily be accounted for, on the supposition that the prayer was to be literally recited, as a standing formulary in the church.

2. As there is no proof that this prayer was used as a standing form, so there is presumptive evidence that it never was intended for such a purpose. The two evangelists by whom it is recited are careful only to preserve the spirit and the substance of it, without any regard to literality, as may be seen by comparing Matt. vi. 9:—13, with Luke xi. 2—14. Had it been intended strictly as a form, that form would doubtless have been preserved. Instead of this, the last of these evangelists, who was also the latest in point of time, contents himself with quoting only the substance of the prayer; varying at the same time his phraseology, and omitting a part which had been recorded by his predecessor.

3. Excellent as the prayer itself is, it appears to have been intentionally adapted to the intermediate state of christianity, rather than to its more perfect state, and therefore could not be intended as the standard of christian worship. It preserves a total silence on the subject of Christ's mediation, and of prayer being offered in his name, which the consideration of time and circumstances would easily suggest; but which omission could

not easily be justified, under the clearer light of the gospel dispensation. John xvi 23—27.

4. To reduce this prayer to a standing form, would be a perversion of the original design; tending to countenance and establish that "vain repetition," which it was intended to prevent. The pharisees loved to make a display of their piety, and performed their devotions in the streets, that they might be seen of men: but our Lord instructs his disciples to pray in secret, and to avoid ostentation in their religious services. He also compares the liturgic repetitions in the synagogues to the vain and senseless ceremonies of heathen worship; and cautions his disciples to beware of such empty parade and unmeaning formality. Matt. vi. 5—8.

Our Lord then teaches his disciples in what "manner" they ought to pray, and gives them a brief outline for that purpose, not to be verbally repeated, but to serve as a general directory. This outline implies; 1. That our language in prayer should be simple, pathetic, and concise, free from oratorical affectation and wearisome repetitions. Long prayers in public, except on some extraordinary occasions, are a great burden, if not a great sin. 2. That we are not to approach God in a servile manner, but with filial affection, considering him as our Father. 3. That our prayers should be deeply reverential and devout, free from all unhallowed familiarity, and mingled with an awful sense of his holy name. 4. That our first and principal concern should be for the manifestation of his glory, the spread of his gospel, and the coming of his kingdom. 5. That we depend on him for temporal as well as spiritual blessings; but that we are to seek the former in subordination to the latter. 6. That in imploring the forgiveness of our sins, we must exercise a forgiving spirit towards others, or it will be in vain to hope for mercy. 7. That we seek deliverance from temptation as well as from the curse; for that pardon without purity will not avail. 8. That these things are not to be sought occasionally, but constantly, "day by day." 9. That what we desire for ourselves, we should also desire for others, and that brotherly affection and a spirit of genuine benevolence must breathe in all our devotions. 10. That, in all the blessings we ask at the hands of our heavenly Father, we are to aim at his glory, and depend on his all-sufficiency; for his "is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."

EPENETUS.

QUERY.

To the EDITOR of the G. B. R.

DEAR SIR,

In reading the blessed word of truth, I frequently meet with passages which, though they are evidently full of important meaning, yet appear to my weak understanding dark and difficult. Lately I was much struck with Noah's dying blessing on his son Japheth; "God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant." Gen. ix. 27. If some of your able correspondents would favour your unlettered readers with a few remarks, explanatory of the meaning and illustrative of the accomplishment of this prophetic benediction, it would doubtless be acceptable to many, and greatly oblige,

Your's, respectfully,

B. J.

Sept. 1817.

The STATE of RELIGION in the NEW CONNECTION.

To the EDITOR of the G. B. R.

DEAR SIR,

The hints, dropped in the last number of the G. B. R. page 79, respecting the discouraging state of religion in the churches composing the New Connection, made a deep impression on my mind; and induced me to examine the Minutes of the last Association with more attention. The result has been a painful conviction, that the cause of the Redeemer amongst us is, at present, on the decline. The lamentable divisions and disgraceful contentions which distract many of our churches, the slackness of attendance at meetings for prayer and discipline, the lukewarmness and worldly-mindedness so much complained of in many of the reports, are awful symptoms, and ought to excite alarm in every friendly breast. What measures can be adopted to counteract these threatening disorders? is an inquiry which will naturally suggest itself to every one who sincerely desires the prosperity of the Connection, and the success of the gospel. Now, though in the particular cases of each decaying society, it must be left to the discretion of that society, to adopt the most likely methods to promote a revival; yet, as no branch of the union can suffer without affecting the rest, ought not the whole Con-

nection to join in some public measure to avert the evils of which there are such just complaints? Would it not be likely to produce some good effect, if the *whole Connection* would heartily unite in supporting a monthly or quarterly *prayer-meeting* for the express purpose of pleading with the Almighty for the prosperity of real, vital, and experimental religion in our own churches? If every church would agree to engage in this solemn service, *at the same hour*, might it not be hoped that the "God who heareth prayer" would graciously answer the united petitions of so many of his children? Would not a conscientious attention to such an exercise have an happy tendency to make each individual member of our congregations more careful in the cultivation of personal holiness and piety? more interested in the welfare of his own society? more active, zealous, and persevering in his endeavours to prosecute every plan that had for its object the promotion of the interests of religion in his own circle? Would not the same means excite him to be more anxious for the prosperity of the whole Connection? and to second with increased ardour every scheme for the public good? Might we not even hope that the sacred flame, kindled at these seasons of devotion, would extend still farther; and animate the breast with holy ardour to do the utmost that circumstances would permit, to spread the knowledge of his Saviour and the light of the gospel through all the earth?

Now, Sir, why cannot such a plan be adopted? What hinders our churches from cordially uniting in a plan so likely to produce the happiest effects? We have stated prayer meetings for particular objects, amongst other denominations; and even various denominations can unite in supporting stated prayer-meetings for general purposes. And are our churches formed of such discordant materials that they *cannot* co-operate in seeking a throne of grace on their own account? Or, are our members so unconcerned for the cause in which they are engaged, that they *will not* devote an hour a month, or two hours a quarter, to seek its prosperity? Surely not: the supposition would be as disgraceful as unjust. Let some of your pious and able correspondents propose a plan, in your next Repository, for realizing this proposal, and urge it with proper motives, and I am persuaded, that our Conferences and Association would patronize and recommend it. Should it be

adopted and successfully pursued, to have ventured the suggestion, will afford heart-felt satisfaction to

Your's, respectfully,

IGNOTUS.

On COLLECTING for MEETING-HOUSES.

To the EDITOR of the G. B. R.

DEAR SIR,

I was not a little surprized at seeing, in the minutes of the last association, an address "to the churches" on the subject of collecting for meeting-houses. As I did not recollect that any document of this nature received the sanction of that assembly, I could not guess by what authority it had been inserted. Leaving that point, however, to be discussed by the parties concerned, permit me, through the medium of the G. B. R. to propose a few queries to the "Individual," whoever he is, who proposed the resolutions contained in that address; and request him to favour us with plain and direct solutions of them, in your next number. This will do much towards preparing the representatives, at the next association, either "to adopt them," or to seek for "something better."

How are the churches previously to determine the "number of cases for meeting-houses which shall certainly be collected for by every church in the connection?" from the merits of the cases with which they are unacquainted? or from their own inclination or ability to collect? Must there be as many collections in each church as there are cases? or is it proposed that all the cases be collected for at one time? Are "those churches which refuse to collect," to be branded as *malefactors*, and *posted* as such annually in the Minutes? Who is to be judge when a "church has assisted accordingly to the time it has been in the connection;" and therefore graciously *permit* it to be assisted? If a rich society choose to lay out two thousand pounds, the interest of which it can easily bear, must all the principal be collected, before another poor church "be admitted" to hope for help in raising one hundred, which circumstances render necessary to the good of the cause? If powers like these be lodged in the association, would not the independence of the churches be in greater danger, than from the rules adopted at Boston? And would not a plan of this

nature counteract the object proposed; and prevent the erection of meeting-houses and the paying for them?

INQUISITIVE.

GENERAL BAPTIST OCCURRENCES.
OBITUARY.

Towards the close of the last year, died, at Halifax, in his seventy-seventh year, Mr. JOSEPH HUTCHINSON, "an old disciple." Though his parents were careless about religion, yet, by going to work at his trade at Bradford, he was early brought to enquire the way of salvation, by the ministry of the pious Mr. Crabtree. After visiting several other places as a journeyman pipe-maker, he returned to Halifax and worked with his father. He soon joined himself to the late Mr. T. Knight; about the time when that gentleman left the Methodists. He was then a decided Calvinist, and continued such till about 1770; when he became acquainted with Mr. D. Taylor. A discussion respecting their different sentiments naturally ensued; and after a stout resistance and long deliberation, Mr. Hutchinson laid down his arms; and yielding the victory to his zealous opponent, declared himself a general Baptist.

On this change of sentiments, he joined Mr. Taylor's church and entered heartily into that minister's plans for the spread of the gospel. He opened his house at Halifax, and Mr. D. Taylor frequently preached in it; thus being the means of first introducing that cause into his native town. He afterwards formed an intimate friendship with Mr. John Taylor, and was instrumental in founding the General Baptist church at Queenshead, of which he continued an useful and honourable member till the division in 1782; when he attached himself to the society at Halifax. Here also his talents and energies were employed in promoting the removal of Mr. D. Taylor to Halifax; and afterwards in procuring and supporting Mr. W. Burgess. When that minister left Yorkshire, Mr. H. removed his communion to the church at Queenshead, in which he remained till he was called to the church above. And, notwithstanding the place of worship was four miles from his habitation, yet he cheerfully and regularly walked that distance, even in the most inclement weather, to attend the means of grace; and con-

tinued this practice till he had passed his seventieth year, when the infirmities of age obliged him to be less punctual.

He naturally enjoyed a good state of health, which he preserved to old age. But some months before his death, he had a paralytic stroke, which deeply affected his constitution. For a short time, he seemed to recover from the effects of this attack; but he soon relapsed into a state of corporeal and mental weakness, which was very distressing to his friends. Yet, when he took little notice of any thing else, he could frequently speak of his blessed Saviour, and of the grace and mercy of his God. The precious promises of the gospel dwelt much on his mind in his most helpless state; and he was enabled to remember them when he had forgotten all other subjects. In these interesting circumstances, he often repeated the Psalmist's declaration, "The Lord God is a sun and shield, the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." *Psa.* lxxxiv. 11: as also *Isai.* xli. 10. *2 Cor.* xii. 9. and *Matt.* xxv. 21—23. For three weeks previous to his death, he lay almost motionless and took no food; at the close of which he was quietly dismissed from the pains and imperfections of mortality.

CONFERENCES.

The **MIDLAND CONFERENCE** was held at *Melbourn*, Sep. 30, 1817, when Mr. R. Smith preached, in the morning; and Mr. T. Stevenson, in the evening. At this meeting it being understood that some friends, in the church at Barton, proposed to publish a life of the late Mr. S. Deacon, the design was approved and promised to be countenanced. The Warwickshire friends were advised to continue their exertions for establishing the G. B. interest at Tamworth, and the churches requested to second their endeavours. Supplies were arranged for Quorndon during the ensuing quarter. The widows' fund was recommended to the support of the churches. A committee was appointed to prepare a plan for the support of aged ministers, against the next conference; which will be held at Quorndon on the last Wednesday in December: Messrs. J. Pike and R. Ingham to preach.

The **LONDON CONFERENCE** was held, at *Great Suffolk Street, Southwark*, Wednesday, October 8, 1817. On the

N.3.

preceding evening, Mr. E. Sexton preached from I John iii. 21—23; and on the evening of conference, Mr. Purcell, from Matt. xiii. 47, 48. At this conference, the states of the various churches which compose it, were reported, and, upon the whole, were of an encouraging tenor. In consequence of a suggestion from Mr. Hobbs, it was recommended to Mr. J. Mann to publish, in a small tract, the advice of our late esteemed brother Dan Taylor, to churches labouring under pecuniary difficulties. The utility of experience meetings was proposed as a subject for discussion, if time permit, at the next conference. Messrs. Farrent, Bicknell, and A. Taylor were appointed a committee to arrange and correct some rules for the regulation of this conference; and to report at the next meeting, which is appointed to be held at Chesham, Bucks, on the Wednesday in Easter week; Messrs. Bicknell and Farrent to preach; or, in case of failure, Messrs. Rofe and Purcell.

The following extract from a letter addressed to the conference by Mr. Hobbs, will explain the recommendation just mentioned.

“ I take the liberty to observe respecting the means to be adopted by the churches for the removal of difficulties in pecuniary affairs, that I know of no better means to be adopted than those recommended by our late venerable father and friend, the Rev. Dan Taylor, published in the G. B. Repository, No. 42, page 262. I am fully persuaded, that, if the advice there given be reduced to practice and conscientiously persevered in, every difficulty will be gradually removed, and every necessary supply will be easily obtained. I therefore most heartily recommend, that a sufficient number of copies of the above advice be printed, in order that they may circulate among the churches. I am convinced, this would prove a religious tract of inestimable value to every member of a christian church. Should this proposal meet your approbation, I shall wish to have fifty copies.”

Berkhamstead, Oct. 3, 1817.

JOS. HOBBS.

It is proposed to publish the above in a twopenny tract, with a liberal allowance to individuals or churches who purchase a number for distribution. Those who wish to encourage this design may send their orders to Mr. J. Mann, Commercial Road, London; or to the *Editor* of the G. B. R.

The WARWICKSHIRE CONFERENCE was held, Jan. 7, 1817,

at *Austrey*, and was well attended. Mr. Cottrell preached in the morning, from Hos. iv. 9; and Mr. Cheatle, in the evening, from Acts iv. 32. From the reports made to this meeting, it appeared that the state of religion, in the several churches, was upon the whole encouraging. The church at *Wolvey*, requesting an union with this conference, was admitted: and the object of the G. B. missionary society was warmly recommended to the support of the churches.

April 10, 1817, the same conference was held at *Wolvey*; when Mr. Cheatle preached, in the morning, from Mark v. 19; and Mr. Barnes, in the evening, from Gal. iv. 18. The friends at *Wolvey* having lost their place of meeting at *Attleborough*, a large village where there is an encouraging prospect of success, were advised to look out for another, and not to abandon the station. It was also strongly recommended to the churches to make annual collections for the support of the Academy.

The next meeting of this conference was at *Longford*, Sept. 9, 1817: when Mr. Cheatle preached, in the morning, from 1 Pet. iv. 18; and Mr. Green, of *Barton*, in the evening, from Luke xxiv. 26. A case was considered, at this meeting, respecting the introduction of preaching at *Tamworth*, which was heartily approved: and it was resolved to lay the case before the midland conference, and request their co-operation. The state of religion in the churches appeared to be improving. The next conference to be at *Anstrey*, on the second Tuesday in January, 1818.

The STATE of RELIGION in FRANCE.

We have lately received an interesting letter from a pious and intelligent friend in France; from which the following extracts will, we hope, be acceptable to our readers.

“O! that there were here more relish for religion! that those who profess to be protestants were more enlightened and guided by the spirit of truth! We would see some sensible marks of it. There would surely be zeal, activity, and concern for the cause of the gospel; efforts exerted for using all the means in their power to establish Bible Societies, &c. But no; my good friend, it is not so here. It is difficult to know the real state of religion; and without a local knowledge of that, nothing can, or rather must, be undertaken. Prejudice is so strong against the English nation, and any

thing that may come from them, how good and useful it may evidently appear, that I fear every attempt made by them, or in their name, would rather prove hurtful to the cause than useful. Our English friends are, in my opinion, on account of their christian knowledge and experience, their pecuniary means, and their liberality so well known at this time, throughout the whole world, more fit for an attempt of this kind than any; but prejudice and pride here say; "We do not want any thing, any help from them: let them mind their own business. We can do without them." However, whatever I have just said, I think it very probable, that when any successful attempt is made, the English societies will be, if not the principal, at least one of the chief instruments in the hand of the Lord to carry on the work. Different countries, customs, and opinions, indeed require different means to be used; and much caution, wisdom, and prudence to be exercised; yet, however great and numerous the obstacles may be, let us not be discouraged, but rather let us daily watch the openings of divine grace. Let us commit all things into the hands of Him whose ways are not our ways; to whom all things are possible, and by whose unerring wisdom all things are directed, according to his own will. And may his boundless love keep us continually united in heart and spirit, and daily waiting at a throne of grace for wisdom to plan and prudence to act, and for divine direction as to the best means for promoting christian knowledge in this wretched country, or wherever he is pleased to call us."

"I visited twice last year a protestant church near ———; but what have I seen among them? Nothing edifying for an experimental christian, nor encouraging and comforting for a heavy laden sinner, seeking salvation at the foot of the cross. Nor have I heard any thing from them, but what convinces me that they are indeed in a deplorable state, totally destitute of the knowledge of the vital power of religion, of a gracious change of heart through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and of his reigning love and power in the heart. Some of them, like their neighbours, do not scruple to keep their shops open, and buy and sell on the Lord's day. This I have witnessed at the house of one of the most respectable amongst them, a regular attendant on their worship; who, on my reminding him of the Lord's command, 'Keep holy the sabbath-day,' replied, 'I must live and do as others do, or else I shall lose

all my customers.' They have desired me to go and dwell amongst them; but I cannot persuade myself to comply. For of what use could I be to them, or they to me? I received, some time ago, a very friendly episile from the pastor of the reformed church at Montpellier, which discovers a very humble mind, great love to the Lord and his people, and great concern for the advancement of the gospel. I expect another letter from him, which will probably give me some information respecting the state of religion in that part of France. As to the neighbourhood in which I reside, the people are without any relish or respect for religion. I have had frequent opportunities of conversing with many persons, but to no purpose. Almost all of them acknowledge the doctrines which they profess to be false, and contrary to those contained in the holy scriptures; yet they must and will go with the multitude and do like others. However, my good friend, let us hope for the best, that the Lord will have mercy on some of my benighted countrymen; and that some part of the heavenly seed will fall into good ground, which he will graciously prepare to receive it.

ACADEMY ACCOUNT,

Midsummer, 1817.

To the EDITOR of the G. B. R.

DEAR SIR,

You will see by the Minutes of the last Association, that this account was too late for insertion in them. If you could insert it in your next Repository, it would be a satisfaction to many as well as to

Your's affectionately,

Nottingham, Aug. 6, 1817.

JAMES SMITH, *Treasurer.*

RECEIVED.

	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.
Balance in hand.....				88	6	3½
Melbourn, Collection.....	4	7	6			
Mr. Preston.....	0	10	6			
				4	18	0
Loughborough, Collection, 1816.....	7	1	8½			
Mr. Stevenson, for 1816.....	1	0	0			
Ditto, for 1817.....	1	0	0			
Mr. White, for 1816.....	1	0	0			
Carried over.....	£93	4	3½			

		£.	s.	d.
Brought over		93	4	3 $\frac{1}{4}$
Ditto, for 1817.....	1 0 0			
Mr. Millar.....	1 0 0			
	<hr/>	12	1	8 $\frac{1}{4}$
<i>Leicester</i> , Archdeacon-lane.....	2 0 0			
Mr. Wood, for 1816.....	1 1 0			
Ditto, for 1817.....	1 1 0			
	<hr/>	4	2	0
<i>Nottingham</i> , Collection 1816.....	5 3 7 $\frac{1}{2}$			
Mr. Richardson omitted.....	1 1 0			
Mr. Astle, for 1816.....	0 6 0			
Collection for 1817.....	4 9 9			
Mr. Bennett.....	0 10 0			
Mr. Robert Seals.....	1 1 0			
Mr. Richardson	1 1 0			
Miss Heard.....	0 10 6			
Mr. Radford.....	1 1 0			
Mr. James Smith.....	1 1 0			
Mr. Elliott.	0 10 6			
Mr. Robert Smith.....	0 10 6			
Mr. Chamberlain	0 10 6			
Mr. John Seals.....	0 10 6			
Mr. Torr	1 1 0			
Mr. Astle.....	0 6 0			
Mr. Hurst.....	1 0 0			
Mr. Goodwin	0 10 6			
Mr. Ashwell.....	1 1 0			
Mr. Bailey	0 8 0			
	<hr/>	22	13	10 $\frac{1}{4}$
<i>Louth</i> , Collection for 1816.....	4 11 6			
Ditto, for 1817.....	6 0 0			
Mr. Cameron.....	5 0 0			
Mr. Jones.....	0 10 6			
	<hr/>	16		0
<i>Derby</i> , a few Friends.....	1 9 5			
Mr. Pike.....	0 10 6			
Mr. Wilkins.....	0 10 6			
	<hr/>	2	10	5
Carried over.....		£150	14	3

	£.	s.	d.
Brought forward	150	14	3
<i>Thurlaston</i> , Collection.....	1	6	6
<i>Queen's Head</i> , Collection.....	1	11	0
<i>Halifax</i> , Collection.....	0	6	6
<i>Hinkley</i> , Collection	4	0	0
Mr. Millgain	1	1	0
	<hr/>	5	1 0
<i>Birmingham</i> , Mr Cheatle.....	0	10	6
Mr. Cotterill.....	0	10	6
	<hr/>	1	1 0
<i>Wimeswold</i> , Mr. Stevenson.....	1	0	0
<i>Hoton</i> , Mr. Bennett	0	10	6
<i>Longwhatton</i> , Collection	1	9	1 $\frac{1}{4}$
Mr. John Hoggs	0	10	6
	<hr/>	1	19 7 $\frac{1}{4}$
Mr. Goadby.....	0	10	6
<i>Bungay</i> , Mr. Page Mitchell.....	1	0	0
Mr. John Heard for 1816.....	5	5	0
Ditto, for 1817.....	5	5	0
Mrs. D. Stratton	1	0	0
Mrs. Hephurn.....	1	1	0
Mr. J. Garratt.....	2	0	0
	<hr/>	4	1 0
<i>Duffield</i> Collection.....	3	5	6
Mr. Ingham.....	0	10	6
	<hr/>	3	16 0
<i>Boston</i> Collection.....	11	1	0
Mr. Adam Taylor.....	0	10	6
Mr. Plunkett.....	1	0	0
	<hr/>	1	10 6
<i>Leicester</i> , Friar-lanc Collection.....	4	14	0
<i>Austrey</i> , Collection.....	2	12	0
Mr. Barnes	1	1	0
	<hr/>	3	13 6
<i>Birchcliff</i> , Collection.....	0	14	0
Mr. Hollisrake.....	0	10	6
	<hr/>	1	4 6
Carried over.....	£205	11	4 $\frac{1}{2}$

	£.	s.	d.
Brought forward	205	11	4½
<i>Staley Bridge</i> , Collection	1	0	0
Mr. Braud	0	10	6
<i>Dunick ff</i> , Mr. T.	1	0	0
	<u>1</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>6</u>
<i>Woodhouse Eaves</i> Collection.....	1	7	6
Mr. Feikin	0	10	6
Mr. Jarrom.....	0	10	6
	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
<i>Spalding</i> Collection	3	0	0
<i>Wisbeach</i> Collection.....	6	3	6
Mr. Jarrom	0	10	6
	<u>6</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>0</u>
<i>Fleet</i> Collection.....	4	0	0
<i>Tydd St. Giles</i> Collection.....	2	3	6
<i>Sutterton</i> Collection	2	0	0
<i>Gosberton</i> Collection.....	1	18	10
<i>March</i> Collection.....	2	14	6
Mr. Thomas Ewen	1	1	0
	<u>3</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>6</u>
<i>St. Ives</i> , Mr. Birley	1	1	0
<i>Coningsby</i> Collection	5	1	0
<i>Bourn</i> Collection	2	4	0
Mr. Wherry.....	0	10	6
	<u>2</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>6</u>
Interest	37	10	0
	<u>£280</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>8½</u>

PAID.

Tutor, for Board and Tuition	128	4	5
Committee Expenses	6	9	5
Mr. Green, at Academy	5	0	0
Loss with silver	0	5	6
Postage and Collecting.....	0	19	2
	<u>140</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>7</u>
Balance in hand.....	139	9	1½
	<u>£280</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>8½</u>

THE
GENERAL BAPTIST REPOSITORY.

No. XLVI.—Vol. VIII.—Feb. 1st, 1818.

*SCRIPTURE ILLUSTRATED by the JEWISH
DISTINCTIONS OF TIME.*

THE Jews reckoned their *days* to begin at sunset and to continue till the following sunset. Hence Moses, in the history of the creation, always places the evening before the morning. "The evening and the morning were the first day." &c. Gen. i. 5, 8, 13, 19, 23, and 31. The psalmist also observes the same order, when he says: "Evening and morning and at noon, will I pray and cry aloud." Psa. lv. 17. In conformity with this mode of reckoning the days, their sabbaths and festivals commenced at sunset. "From even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbaths." Lev. xxiii. 32. "In the fourteenth day of the first month at even, is the Lord's passover." Lev. xxiii. 5.

But besides this day of twenty-four hours, the Jews, like the moderns, used the same term to denote the time from sunrise to sunset, in opposition to the time from sunset to sunrise which was called Night. "God called the light, Day; and the darkness he called, Night." Gen. i. 5. David also contrasts them in a similar manner: "Day unto day uttereth speech; and night unto night sheweth knowledge." Psa. xix. 2. And our Saviour observes, "I must work while it is day; the night cometh in which no man can work." John ix. 4. The sacred historian likewise uses the term in this confined sense, in that remarkable expression, "As it began to dawn towards the first day of the week." Matt. xxviii. 1.

The Jews divided their days into twelve equal parts, which were called *hours*, and reckoned from the rising of the sun to its setting: "Are there not twelve hours in the day?" said our Saviour, John xi. 9. In Judea, the longest day was about fourteen hours, and the shortest, ten. It is obvious therefore

that one of their hours would at Midsummer contain seventy minutes; and at Midwinter only fifty. And, as the sun rose at Midsummer at five o'clock in the morning, and at Midwinter not till seven, and all the hours were reckoned from that point, they must vary according to the season. Thus the third hour of the longest Jewish day would answer to half past eight with us; and the third hour of their shortest day would be half past nine. At the equinoxes, the mean between these two extremes, their hours would correspond with ours, and their third hour would be nine in the morning. Their sixth hour was always the same as our twelve at noon. Their ninth hour would, at the respective seasons, correspond with half past two, three, and half past three in the afternoon. These hints will enable the unlettered reader to form clearer ideas of various texts of scripture. In the parables, the householder is represented as hiring labourers into his vineyard, in the morning, at the commencement of the day, and others at the third, the sixth, the ninth, and the eleventh hours: that is, at nine o'clock in the forenoon, at twelve at noon, at three and at five in the afternoon. Matt. xxi. 1, 3, 5, 6. The darkness at the crucifixion of our blessed Saviour continued from the sixth to the ninth hour; or from twelve o'clock to three in the afternoon, when he cried, "It is finished," and gave up the ghost. Matt. xxvii. 45. John xix. 30. It was about the tenth hour, or four o'clock in the evening, when the two disciples of John accepted the invitation of Jesus to visit his habitation, "and abode with him that day." John i. 39. At the sixth hour, or at twelve at noon, the conversation took place between our Lord and the woman of Samaria. John iv. 6. When the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit, and spake with unknown tongues, on the day of Pentecost, it was only the third hour, or nine in the morning; which rendered it highly improbable that, at so early an hour, they should be filled with new wine, as their mocking opponents weakly pretended. The lame man was cured by Peter and John at the ninth hour, or three in the afternoon, which, being the time of the evening sacrifice, was called "the hour of prayer." Acts iii. 1.

The *night* too was sometimes divided into twelve hours, and reckoned from sun set to sun rise. The third hour of the night therefore, when Paul and his guard set out for Cesarea,

was three hours after sun set, or about nine in the evening. Acts xxiii. 23. But the most usual division of the night was into four equal parts, of three hours each, called *watches*: the first of which commenced at sunset; the second, about nine in the evening; the third, at midnight; and the fourth, about three in the morning. In allusion to these divisions of the night, our Lord says: "If the good man had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to have been broken up." Matt. xxiv. 43. And to illustrate the eternity of God, the royal poet observes, Psa. xc. 4. that "a thousand years in his sight are but as a watch in the night:" which, being frequently spent in sleep, passes unnoticed, and therefore appears of no duration. These parts of the night were most usually denominated the first, second, third, and fourth watches; but they were sometimes styled the evening, midnight, cock crowing, and morning. Thus, it was in the fourth watch, or between three and six in the morning, that Jesus walked on the sea to his tempest-tost disciples. Matt. xiv. 25. Thus also the diligent servants are represented as waiting ready to receive their master, whether he come in the second or third watch: that is, from nine in the evening to three in the morning; which is the most still time of the night, when slothful servants would be apt to give way to drowsiness. Luke xii. 38. It was in the morning watch, between three o'clock and six, that the Lord looked through the cloud and troubled the Egyptians who pursued the Israelites through the Red Sea. Exod. xiv. 24. At the same hour of the morning, Saul made an unexpected attack on the troops of Nahash, and delivered Jabesh-gilead. And our blessed Saviour, in order to inculcate the necessity of unremitted vigilance, enumerates all these watches in one exhortation. "Watch ye therefore; for ye know not when the master of the house cometh; at even, or at midnight, or at the cock crowing, or in the morning." Mark xiii. 35. The second watch was sometimes called the middle watch because it ended at midnight. In the beginning of this watch, or soon after nine o'clock, Gideon and his valiant little troop fell upon the camp of the Midianites. Judges vii. 19.

It is probable, that before the flood, the *months* were governed by the sun; and that the year consisted of twelve months of thirty days each. For Moses informs us that,

“after the end of one hundred and fifty days the waters abated:” and it appears, by comparing Gen. vii. 2. with viii. 4. that this interval extended from the seventeenth day of the second month, to the seventeenth day of the seventh month, or exactly five months. After the flood, however, the Jews regulated their months by the moon. They began when the moon first appeared after the change; and lasted till she had gone through her course, and appeared again as a new moon. In order to ascertain the time of her first appearance, a watchman was placed, on an eminence, to look out for her; and as soon as he discovered her, notice was publicly given of the event, by the sound of a trumpet. This was the signal for the people to lay aside their secular employments, and spend some time together in religious festivity, during which the prophets expounded the law and exhorted to obedience. To this custom, frequent allusions are made in the scriptures. “Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day.” Psa. xxxi. 3. “Behold,” says David to Jonathán, “to-morrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat,” at the usual solemn festival. 1 Sam. xx. 5. The Shunammite expostulates with his wife, when she proposed to go to the prophet, without acquainting him with the object of her visit; “Why wilt thou go to him to-day? It is neither new moon nor sabbath,” and therefore he does not hold public assemblies to-day. 2 Kings, iv. 23. And the avaricious worldlings exclaim, “When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn?” Amos, viii. 5. When will this season of public worship conclude, that we may resume the gainful pursuits of trade?

The Jews however did not depend, except for the celebration of the monthly festival, on the uncertain and varying event of the moon's first appearance. They commenced their month on the day on which the change actually happened, and continued it to the day of the succeeding change. This interval is very nearly twenty-nine days and a half; and their months therefore consisted alternately of twenty-nine and thirty days. Twelve of these months composed their common year. This period fell short of the true solar year, by eleven days: and to supply this defect, they added, to every second or third year as occasion required, a thirteenth month. By these means, with some minor corrections, they kept their calendar

tolerably exact. Like most other ancient nations, the Jews originally commenced their year from the autumnal equinox, and they continue still to use that style in all civil affairs. But when the Lord had delivered them with a high hand out of the bondage of Egypt, he commanded that, in commemoration of that great event, their sacred year should begin at the vernal equinox. Exod. xii. 2. This date they followed in all their religious transactions: and hence the months were numbered, from the new moon in March. Before the Babylonish captivity, these months were usually styled by their order. Thus the month extending from the new moon in March, to the new moon in April, was called the first month: that commencing at the new moon in April, and extending to the new moon in May, the second month; and so forwards to the end of the year. After the return of the Jews from Babylon, they gave particular names to their months: calling the first month Nisan, or Abib; the second, Ijar, or Zif; the third, Sivan; the fourth, Thamus; the fifth, Ab; the sixth, Elul; the seventh, Tisri, or Ethanim; the eighth, Marchesvan, or Bul; the ninth, Chisleu; the tenth, Tebeth; the eleventh, Shebat; the twelfth, Adar; and the thirteenth when it occurred, Veadar, or the second Adar.

Thus when the passover was ordered to be eaten on the fourteenth day of the first month, we understand, the fourteenth day after the new moon in March: and, as our blessed Saviour was crucified at the passover, this was also the time of that most interesting transaction: The feast of tabernacles began on the fourteenth day of the seventh month, or fourteen days after the new moon in September. On the twentieth day of the ninth month, Ezra assembled the Jews in the open air, and expostulated with them on their sins against the law of God; when, partly affected by his discourse, and partly by the inclemency of the weather, the people trembled. Ezra, x. 9. This was natural, as it was then the beginning of December. It was also in the same ninth month, that king Jehoiakim sat in a winter house, with a fire on the hearth, burning before him. Jer. xxvi. 22—23. These few specimens are sufficient to direct the attentive reader in the proper application of the modern calendar to the Jewish months.

Besides these distinctions of time, which depended on the revolutions of nature, the Jews had some others of a more

arbitrary kind. These chiefly depended on the period of *seven days*, or a *week*, established at the beginning of time, by the Maker of all things, in commemoration of the completion of his great work of creation. Hence arose that early and almost universal adoption of this weekly period, and hence probably that particular regard for the number seven which the ancients manifested on almost every occasion. Noah chose the clean beasts by sevens. Gen. vii. 2. Jacob served twice seven years. Gen. xxix. Job's friends sat speechless seven days and seven nights. Job ii. 13. God commanded them to offer seven bullocks and seven rams. Job. xlii. 8. Balaam erected seven altars, and offered seven bullocks and seven rams. Num. xxiii. 1, &c. Numerous other instances will occur to a person acquainted with the Old Testament; and the seven golden candlesticks, the seven stars, the lamb with seven horns and seven eyes, the seven angels, the seven thunders, the dragon with seven heads and seven crowns, the seven last plagues, and the seven vials of the Revelations, are familiar to every mind. The seventh day or the sabbath, by which the weekly period was closed, and the due observance of it occupy no inconsiderable part of the ceremonial precepts. The subject has however been so often treated, that it is not necessary here to enlarge.

Every seventh year was celebrated as a sabbath of a year's continuance, and was therefore denominated the *sabbatical year*. In it, the land remained uncultivated, all debts were remitted, all prisoners for debt were liberated, and all law suits ceased. The commencement of this year was solemnly announced throughout all the land, that every one might claim its privileges. Lev. xxv. 1—7. Deut. xv. 1. It seems to be from this "year of release," that the prophet borrows the beautiful description of the office of the Saviour. "The Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek: he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound: to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." Isa. lxi. 1—2.

After seven weeks of years, marked by seven sabbatical years, or forty-nine years, the fiftieth year was observed with extraordinary solemnities and privileges, under the well known appellation of the *Jubilee*. It commenced on the tenth

day of the seventh month, on the day of solemn atonement, Lev. xxiii. 27, and was proclaimed through all the nation, by the sound of trumpets. This "joyful sound," not only cancelled all debts, hushed all litigations, and released all prisoners, but liberated all slaves, and sent them home to their families, and recovered all estates that had been sold, and restored them to their original owners. Lev. xxv. 8, &c. To this happy year, there are many allusions in the scriptures; and it is frequently introduced to represent the glory and peace of the kingdom of the Messiah. "In that day, shall the great trumpet be blown, and they shall come who are ready to perish." Isa. xxvi. 13. "The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs," &c. Isa. xxxv. 10. li. 14. "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound," &c. Psa. lxxxix. 15.

The Jews, when they wished to point out the natural day of twenty-four hours, used not unfrequently the phrase "a day and a night." Thus the rains fell "forty days and forty nights." Gen. vii. 12. Job's friends sat silent seven days and seven nights." Job ii. 13. They likewise reckoned a part of a day, a month, or a year, as the whole. When a king began to reign in the latter part of a year, it was accounted as an entire year; and, at the close of the succeeding year, he was said to have reigned two years. Various instances might be produced from the historical parts of scripture in confirmation of this remark, but one may suffice. Elah, the son of Baasha, began his reign over Israel, in the twenty-sixth year of Asa, King of Judah. In the twenty-seventh year of Asa, Zimri assassinated his master Elah at a banquet. It is plain then that Elah enjoyed the kingdom for only one year and a part, probably a small part, of another; and yet he is said to have reigned "two years over Israel." 1 Kings xvi. 8—14. This observation explains some less important difficulties in the Jewish history, and furnishes an easy mode of reconciling our Lord's prediction, Matt. xii. 40, that "he should be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth," with the actual circumstances of his burial and resurrection. Our blessed Saviour was buried sometime before sunset on the Friday evening, and rose again early on the Sunday morning; so that he was one whole day, on the Saturday, and part of the preceding and following days in the grave. Now if, ac-

ording to the idiom of the country, each of these parts of the two days be accounted as a whole day, the prophecy was literally fulfilled. The terms, "after three days and three nights," strong and precise as they appear to a modern ear, meant no more, in the mouth of a Jew, than "on the third day," reckoning the day on which they were spoken as the first. Thus Rehoboam directed his remonstrating subjects to come again to him "after three days," which they perfectly understood, and came "on the third day." 2 Chron. x. 5—12. And the lithe, which was to be brought "at the end of three years," was brought "in the third year." Compare Deut. xiv. and xxvi. 12. Had the evangelists been composing a fiction, they would doubtless have made the accomplishment correspond exactly with the prophecy; but, when relating a real fact of which they were eye witnesses, they lay aside all management, and express themselves in the usual phraseology of their countrymen. These apparent inconsistencies evince their veracity.

On the INCREASE of HAPPINESS and KNOWLEDGE in HEAVEN.

Though the circumstances in which mankind are placed on earth are infinitely diversified, there is no state exempt from anxiety and disappointment. These are the frequent companions, not only of the indigent and wretched, but also of the gay and affluent. In the progress of life, we frequently fix our attention on an object at a distance; but, after earnestly pursuing it for some time, we are mortified to find it unattainable: or, if we approach so near the fancied good, as to make a final effort for its attainment, in numerous instances, where we expected a pleasing substance, we grasp an empty shadow. No sooner do we turn, with dissatisfaction, from this object, than the eye is fixed on another; and, though this proves as vain and specious as the former, we are instantly in pursuit of a third. Must we then be the constant prey of disappointment? for ever sit down in despair of obtaining true felicity? No. Behold a more excellent way: "Set your affections on things above, not on things below." Earthly objects are ever attended with disappointments; but, in the pursuit of heavenly things, the greatest ardour may be exerted, and no fear enter-

tained that it will not be amply rewarded. "In the presence of God is fulness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for evermore." However high our conceptions of heavenly happiness, there is reason to think they are far below the glorious reality; for, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what God hath prepared for them that love him."

The exalted happiness of the righteous, in another world, may be argued from a variety of considerations. The testimony of inspiration leaves no doubt, that they will be admitted into the presence of their Redeemer, and enjoy inconceivable glory and felicity. But, great as this glory and happiness may be, at any particular period, it is highly probable, they will be still increasing; and that, to eternity, they will be in a state of progressive improvement. As this animating consideration is not very generally discussed and enforced, it may be both pleasing and profitable to enter a little into it.

It does not admit of a question, that *all* the inhabitants of heaven are perfectly happy, according to their various capacities for enjoyment. But, if the capacities of the soul there expand, and it be capable of a gradual increase of knowledge, will it not receive a proportionate increase of bliss? From the refined pleasure, imparted by discovery, is it not probable, that the beatified soul will for ever be making new discoveries in the boundless regions of divine conduct, and the glorious perfections of the blessed God? What could be a greater gratification to the contemplative mind, than to have its faculties cleared of that film which sin has cast over them, and be introduced into an unbounded region of discovery, where new beauties incessantly rise, which, by the delight they impart, tend only to invigorate to renewed investigation?

But perhaps it will be replied: "Heaven is not for philosophers only." True: but it is exclusively for the servants of God. And where is the christian to whom any earthly enjoyment can yield a delight, equal to that which is imparted by the discovery of new beauties in the Saviour, or by a more extensive comprehension of the riches of his grace? If such a one could be pointed out, would not the Saviour say, "He is not worthy of me."?

But, that the beatified spirits increase in knowledge, and consequently in happiness and glory, is not mere speculation,

the *inspired volume* intimates to us the advancement of angels in knowledge, and their profound meditation on the divine conduct for this purpose.

When our Lord tabernacled in the flesh, the angels in heaven knew not the day of the final judgment, Matt. xxiv. 36. But what they know not now, they will ultimately know. Infinite knowledge is an attribute peculiar to Deity. The knowledge of the most exalted created intelligence is in progress towards perfection.

Christianity is so stupendous a display of divine grace, as to attract and fix the attentive contemplation of angels. 1 Pet. i. 12. They stoop from their seats of majesty and bliss, and solicitously pry into the heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths of redeeming love. If investigation, in order to discovery, is thus employed by angels, it is a reasonable inference that it will be for ever employed by the spirits of just men made perfect.

Let it not be imagined, that the subjects of investigation will be exhausted; or that, through the constant application of celestial minds, they will fail to yield matter of admiration. For though a finite mind, imprisoned in a clay tenement, cannot suggest the subjects, on which the attention of disembodied spirits will be employed, yet we may most certainly conclude, that a finite mind, however glorified, can never comprehend infinitude. As easily may we conceive of an end to eternity, as of an infinite God ever being unable to do exceeding abundantly, above all that his creatures can even think. On the contemplation of his attributes therefore, the angelic orders may be constantly employed, and be constantly receiving new accessions to their stock of knowledge and delight. A late pious writer very justly observes, "The divine *power*, and the divine will, to exert divine beneficence, can have no real, no imaginable limits. These, after a profusion of blessings, distributed to unnumbered worlds, continued through unnumbered ages, must still have more to bestow; *for ever* have more to bestow; infinitely more to bestow, than it is possible for creation itself to receive."

But, though there will be a diversity in the state of the inhabitants of heaven, "as one star differs from another star in glory," there will be no want or deficiency in any. All will enjoy a fulness of divine delight. Envy, malevolence, or

selfishness will have no place; but everlasting friendship and mutual complacency prevail. No one will eclipse, but each will shed light on his brother; a sweet interchange of rays, all derived from one great source, will for ever subsist.

"There is not, in my opinion," says a great writer, "a more pleasing and triumphant consideration in religion, than this, of the perpetual progress which the soul makes towards the perfection of its nature, without ever arriving at a period in it. To look upon the soul as going on from strength to strength, to consider that she is to shine for ever, with new accessions of glory, and brighten to all eternity; that she will still be adding virtue to virtue, and knowledge to knowledge; carries in it something wonderfully agreeable to that ambition which is natural to the mind of man. Nay, it must be a prospect, pleasing to God himself, to see his creation for ever beautifying in his eyes, and drawing nearer to him, by greater degrees of resemblance."

"Methinks this single consideration of the progress of a finite spirit to perfection, will be sufficient to extinguish all envy in inferior natures, and all contempt in superior. That cherubim, which now appears as a god to a human soul, knows very well, that the period will come about in eternity, the human soul will be as perfect as he himself now is: Nay, when she shall look down upon that degree of perfection, as much as she now falls short of it. It is true, the higher nature still advances, and by that means preserves his distance and superiority in the scale of being; but he knows that how high soever the station is, of which he stands possessed at present, the inferior nature will at length mount up to it, and shine forth in the same degree of glory."

"With what astonishment and veneration may we look into our souls, where there are such hidden stores of virtue and knowledge, such unexhausted sources of perfection? We know not yet what we shall be, nor will it ever enter into the heart of man, to conceive the glory that will be always in reserve for him. The soul, considered with its Creator, is like one of those mathematical lines, that may draw nearer to another to all eternity, without a possibility of touching it: And can there be a thought so transporting, as to consider ourselves in these perpetual approaches to him, who is not only the standard of perfection, but of happiness?"

IOTA.

MEDITATIONS on the LORD'S PRAYER.

No. X.

Matt. vi. 13. *For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.*

God has not only commanded us to pray, but also that we should plead with him as a man pleads with his friend; that we should fill our mouth with arguments, and order our cause before him. Not under an idea, indeed, that he is unwilling to hear and to bless us, but that our own hearts may be suitably affected, and that we may be so impressed with the value and importance of what we ask, that it may be fit and seasonable for him to answer. Our best arguments however, and our greatest encouragement are derived from a just conception of the divine nature; it is this only that can render our religious duties a reasonable service, or inspire us with the hope of success. Hence it is, that our Lord, in this inimitable prayer, places before us the attributes of God, as the foundation of every reasonable hope in our approaches to the mercy-seat.

To our Father who is in heaven pertains "the kingdom;" the kingdom which ruleth over all. His authority being infinite and universal, he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think; and uniting with this dominion the character of paternity, we are made to possess the full assurance of hope. To him belongs "the power" of accomplishing his own designs, of fulfilling the prayers of his people, and of bringing every thing into subjection to himself; and seeing that all things were created by him and for him, to him belongs "the glory for ever."

Encouraged by such an assemblage of perfections, we approach the throne of our Father who is in heaven, and see reason to hope that the prayer of faith shall be fully answered. Do we pray that his name may be "hallowed" and sanctified by us, and by all on earth? He is able to accomplish this desire; his empire is universal, and the hearts of all men are in his hands. Do we long for the spread of the gospel, for the salvation of all the ends of the earth, and say, "thy kingdom come?" He is able to remove every obstacle, he can raise up ministers and missionaries, can open a way in his

providence; and if he give the word, great shall be the company of them that preach it, and marvellous the success. When we pray that his word and worship may be universally regarded, and that "his will may be done on earth as it is in heaven," we only pray for what he is fully able to accomplish, and which shall be for the advancement of his glory.

In all our petitions and requests, offered by faith, encouragement may be taken from the goodness of God, his love, his justice, his ability, and his grace; and though there is nothing in us that can become the foundation of a plea, yet from the perfections of his nature, and the promises of his word, innumerable pleas may be derived, and which in all ages have found a place in the prayers of the saints. What God has done for his people in former times, affords ground of encouragement to us, and the immutability of his nature is our best security. Earthly kingdoms may decay, and every hope founded on them may perish; but his dominion knows no end. The ability of our best benefactors is necessarily limited, both as to efficiency and duration; but it is not so with our heavenly Father. His is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, "for ever;" there is therefore no end to his riches, or to his ability to bless us.

"Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven; and in the earth, is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thy hand is power and might, and in thy hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name." AMEN.

PAULINUS.

ON COLLECTING FOR MEETING HOUSES.

To the EDITOR of the G. B. R.

SIR,

Your correspondent Inquisitive is "surprized at seeing in the Minutes of the last Association, an address to the churches on the subject of collecting for meeting-houses." I know not

why it should excite surprize, that any member of the association should address the churches upon any important subject, with or without "the sanction of that assembly." But I conceive, I *had* the sanction of that assembly. I dropped a few observations on the same subject when collections for meeting-houses were under the consideration of the association; and, in order to give my observations more effect, I was requested to put them into a form which might come before the association as a motion. I did as I was desired, and waited until near the close of the meeting, when almost all the representatives were gone, and then no time was left even to *make* the motion, and therefore none to discuss the subject.

The resolutions, I think, are tolerably explicit, if it be thought proper to adopt them; but I have no peculiar partiality to them in their present form: They may be modified as circumstances require. The facts stated as the foundation of those resolutions, I believe, few will attempt to deny: and their importance will be acknowledged by many churches which have waited in vain for assistance, and by those individuals who have travelled thousands of miles *out* of the connection, because *in* it, they could not obtain what they had every reason to expect.

As to the terror which your correspondent feels, on account of being "branded as malefactors, and posted as such annually in the minutes," I am not much concerned about that. Indeed none but "*malefactors*" are likely to be "branded as such," and those who are such, deserve to be "branded and posted." None but malefactors will be much *alarmed*, and it is no matter how soon they begin to be terrified. I repeat, "it is a notorious fact, that while some of our churches collect for, or subscribe to, six or seven cases in a year, there are some that scarcely admit one, and it is pretty clear, that others never collect at all. Let Inquisitive deny this if he can. The writer of this knows by considerable experience and observation, the truth of this statement: and he laments, not for *himself*, but for others, and those who deeply suffer on account of these irregularities. These difficulties, however, might be easily got over, by attending to some order in the management of cases, and every church adopting this motto: The connection 'expects every man to do his duty.' I ask, of what advantage is a connection of mere opinions, if there be not an union

of brotherly love, manifested by a hearty co-operation for each other's benefit, and the effectual promotion of the cause of Christ? If the association be authorized to expel churches for heterodoxy in sentiment; has it not authority also to expel those heretics who will not "come to the help of the Lord?"

As to the resolutions themselves, let the churches, if they be so disposed, consider them, amend them, cast them intirely away, and make new ones, and let Inquisitive do all he can to help in the work, instead of quibbling about a few expressions in the lines addressed to the churches. If the churches choose to take up the subject, and send their report to the next association, perhaps, I may, if spared in life, be prepared to assist in arranging a plan for general benefit. If the subject be deemed of little consequence to the churches, it is now much less to myself, who must shortly descend into the grave, where all our labours, and resolutions, and associations, will be at an end. May the Divine Being, direct, and assist us all to promote his glory, and the prosperity of the Redeemer's cause! is the prayer of

RESPONSOR.

L—r. Dec. 10th, 1817.

On a PROPER STATION for a GENERAL BAPTIST MISSION.

To the EDITOR of the G. B. R.

DEAR SIR,

Your last number contained a letter from Z. R. on the important subject of a suitable station for missionary exertions. The design of the writer of that communication appears such as deserves attention and respect. To the subject of it I have paid some attention; and I trust I shall not appear deficient in respect, if I trouble you with a few lines, in which I may manifest views widely different from his.

It appears to me, that, in all discussions on the subject of his letter, we should keep in view that our object is, not to proselyte to our own body those who are already connected with other christian denominations; nor even to preach the gospel to those merely nominal christians, with which doubtless Canada, as well as Britain, abounds. If this were our object, we need not go abroad; but should find a sufficient

field in every large town in Britain. And so, let me add, might those esteemed men who have become the admiration of the religious world; Carey and Ward, Martyn, Butcher and Marshman, Coke, Morrison, Vanderkemp, and a hundred more, might have found ample room for labour at home. And probably as to the number of individuals actually converted under their ministry, they might have done as much, or more, at home, than they have ever done abroad. But how contracted would be our view, if we were therefore to imagine, that the sum of good, resulting from their labours would, in the former case, have been equal to what it will be in the latter! Missionaries labour not so much for the present as for future generations. They lay the first stones of that spiritual edifice, the top stone of which shall not be raised till the scenes of time conclude. They sow the seed which shall spring up and bear a hundred fold, ages after the hand that sowed it is mouldered back to dust. Has it not been so in Britain? Were we to attempt to estimate the success of the first Missionaries to our native land, we must not merely consider the good effect during their fleeting lives, but ought to take into the account the thousands of christian churches that now exist in Britain, and the thousands that will exist in generations yet unborn. Influenced by these considerations, it appears to me that our object should be the *heathen*; our business to plant the rose of Sharon where *it has not been planted by others*; to make the *first* attack on some part of satan's empire; and to convey the *first* beams of divine light to some region of spiritual darkness. For these objects, British America is unsuitable. Valuable as are the souls of men, the Indian Tribes are so small, that they cannot justly claim attention, to the neglect of mighty nations. And where would a missionary be more reluctant to go than to American Indians? With respect to the other part of the population of British America, (I use this extensive term for the sake of including the Canadas, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland,) the following statement may perhaps convince your esteemed correspondent that, much as religious instruction may be needed there, it is not needed to the degree he supposes; and also to convince him, that the account quoted from the Christian Observer is considerably exaggerated. The Methodists, according to the Minutes of their last Conference, employ, in British America, thirty-eight

preachers, of which eleven are stationed in Newfoundland only. The Society for propagating the gospel in foreign parts has nearly eighty clergymen and schoolmasters engaged in the same countries; and the London Missionary Society has sent thither five Missionaries. A Bible Society exists at Quebec. Nova Scotia has also its Bible Society, established at Halifax; and *fourteen* branch Bible Societies, connected with the Parent Institution. When we consider these circumstances, together with the comparatively small population of British America, what is there that should call us thither, while the voice of misery from the millions of the east, says, "Come over, and help us?"

Africa is another part of the world which, on account of its comparative vicinity to us, might seem to call for attention; but those who know what Africa has proved to the Church Missionary Society would not, I should think, with a society weak as ours, venture to make any attempts there. It may be justly termed the grave of their Missionaries.

I shall not, Sir, venture decisively to point to a particular spot, which I conceive might be done with most propriety, whenever funds may be raised sufficient to send out those friends to the heathen, who, I understand on good authority, are ready to devote themselves to the missionary work: but I would observe, that to me no station appears suitable for our object nearer than the vast Island of Madagascar. This, though an African Island, is not, as far as I have learnt, a baneful climate to European constitutions. Here the field is wide. And, though not under British government, a favourable opening seems formed for the introduction of the gospel.

If this were thought unsuitable, it appears to me that a station should be chosen on the Indian continent, or on some one of the large Islands in the Indian Archipelago. Many of these are yet entirely neglected; and have been supposed to contain a population nearly or quite as numerous as Hindostan itself. Allow me to add, that so far is Hindostan from abounding with Missionary labourers, that from Bombay to Udaggery, a distance of about *seven hundred* miles, in a straight line, not one Protestant Missionary Station exists. I ground this remark on two modern maps, marking out the various Missionary Stations, which now lie before me. Perhaps, when all the various considerations, connected with a Missionary Station, are

taken into account, some place about the centre of this district may be found the most eligible that can be fixed on. Here we might pursue our *real* object; here we might pursue it under British protection; and one very considerable advantage respecting Missions to Hindostan is, that though, at first, more expensive than some others, they are much less so afterwards. We should not here approach the vicinity of those who are now such distinguished labourers in the Missionary Field. I do not wish us to send Missionaries near them. I would have us labour far from them, and till a *new* field; yet I would not fear approaching them, lest we should be thrown into the shade by doing so; for, be it remembered, though now men of great eminence, they too were once men of little note, hardly known beyond their own parish. But, Sir, the glory of God, and not the notice of men must be our object, if we wish to prosper.

Those friends who expected the Report read at Donnington in the Association Minutes, could scarcely consider what is admissible there. It has been published, and sent to different places.

Permit me, dear Sir, to conclude by observing, that Missionary Stations may be found in abundance, that we have men willing to go, and who are judged suited for the work, and all we want to enable us to make a beginning is MONEY; and, if all the churches had but the zeal of a few, six months hence we should have MONEY.

Yours, &c. P.

An ORIGINAL LETTER,

From the late Mr. A. AUSTIN to Mr. T. R.

London, January 16, 1794.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I take this, though late, opportunity of acknowledging the favour of your kind and affectionate letter, received while I was at Bristol. I can assure you, it is not want of respect, that has occasioned me so long to delay answering yours; for the particular esteem and affection I had entertained for you, caused me to feel very sensible regret at the information which yours contained, respecting your leaving London.

From my first intimacy with you, I have been solicitous, had it been the will of our heavenly Father, you might continue with us. But, as I have long since disordered from my judgment all ideas of chance, and am firmly persuaded that an unerring providence rules over all, and in an especial manner regulates and determines all the concerns of the children of God; so I must conclude, that however we might have desired it to be otherwise than it is, yet, for some good reasons, it must be best. I hope your present situation is comfortable, as to temporals; and that, enjoying spiritual advantages more frequently than in time past, your soul is in a state of comparative prosperity. However we may be circumstanced externally, the point of the greatest importance is, that we are growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and we shall have reason to be thankful that we have been exercised with the most painful dispensations of Providence, if they are but over-ruled to the establishment of our souls in the divine life.

Should it please the Lord, at a future opportunity, to direct your way again to London, and should I be spared till that period, it will give me much pleasure to see you, if I should not, before that, be favoured to meet you in the country.

I had, upon the whole, a very agreeable, and I hope to myself and others, not an unprofitable time at Bristol. My indisposition was indeed considerable, during the first fortnight, and through the violence of my cold, I found much difficulty in preaching, especially on account of the large congregations which attended. Sometimes two thousand, and often upwards of one thousand persons composed the auditory. But the peculiar care, kindness, and unwearied attention shewn to me, was an abundant recompence for all my difficulties and fatigues. I trust also that my ministry was not only acceptable; but, I hope, was made a blessing to many. Two Lord's days, I was at Kingswood, about four miles from Bristol: where a congregation of about seven or eight hundred persons attend; chiefly such as are employed in getting coals with their families. I cannot easily describe the pleasing sensations I felt in beholding their simple decent appearance, and the great seriousness and diligence with which they evidently attended the word preached. I do not know a place where the effects of gospel truth, and the operations of divine grace seem more remark-

able : as the inhabitants, in times past, I am informed, were a terror to all around them. When preaching to them, which I did with uncommon pleasure, I could scarcely help thinking myself to be among some of my old friends in Derbyshire, Leicestershire, &c.

I desire to be thankful for the advantages which you profess to have received under my instructions : and sincerely pray that you may still be more and more deeply acquainted with divine truth in all its important branches. Let me, my dear friend, advise you daily to read your bible ; and always with a praying heart. More and more am I convinced of the need of the Divine Spirit, to enable us rightly to understand, and profitably to receive, the precious truths of the word of God. All conceptions about the operations of the Spirit, tending to draw the mind from the word, are erroneous : but not less so is the conception, that we need no assistance, in order to discern the importance, and cordially to receive what is set before us in the book of God. Consider what I say : and the Lord give thee an understanding heart ! is an injunction that ought never to be forgotten by us.

-I shall be glad to hear from you when convenient ; and sincerely wishing you an increase in every good, I remain,

Very affectionately yours, in the best bonds,

A. AUSTIN.

The PRAYING SOLDIER,

AN ANECDOTE.

During the late unhappy commotions in Ireland, a private soldier in the army of Lord Cornwallis, was daily observed to be absent from his quarters and from his company of fellow soldiers. He began to be suspected of withdrawing himself for the purpose of holding intercourse with the rebels ; and on this suspicion, probably increased by the malice of his wicked comrades, he was tried by a court-martial and condemned to die. The marquis, hearing of this, wished to examine the minutes of the trial ; and not being satisfied, sent for the man to converse with him. Upon being interrogated, the prisoner solemnly disavowed every treasonable practice or intention ; declared his sincere attachment to his sovereign, and his readi-

ness to live and die in his service. He affirmed that the real cause of his frequent absence was, that he might obtain a place of retirement for the purpose of private prayer; for which, his Lordship knew, he had no opportunity among his profane comrades, who had become his enemies merely on account of his profession of religion. He said that he had made this defence on his trial; but the officers thought it so improbable, that they paid no attention to it. The marquis, in order to satisfy himself as to the truth of his defence, observed that, if so, he must have acquired some considerable aptness in this exercise. The poor man replied, that as to ability he had nothing to boast of. The marquis then insisted on his kneeling down; and praying aloud before him, which he did: and poured forth his soul before God with such copiousness, fluency, and ardour, that the marquis took him by the hand, and said, he was satisfied that no man could pray in that manner, who did not live in the habit of intercourse with his God. He not only revoked his sentence, but received him into his peculiar favour: placing him among his personal attendants, and in the way to promotion. Thus, like Daniel, he found that the God whom he served was able, not only to deliver him from the danger, into which a conscientious adherence to duty had drawn him, but also to make that duty itself, the means of his deliverance and promotion.

ON MODERATION IN DRESS.

To the EDITOR of the G. B. R.

DEAR SIR,

In lately reading some of the sermons of the pious and amiable Dr. Watts, I have been much pleased, and I hope profited; as I think every serious reader of them must be, by the good sense, sound divinity, fervent piety, and affectionate spirit of that celebrated writer. The following extract on *Moderation and decency in our Apparel*, I should be happy to see printed in your Repository; as the perusal of it may not be without its use to some of your readers, who may not have his sermons in their possession. Moderation in apparel is a subject of importance to us as men and as christians, that we may not incur unnecessary expence, involve ourselves in dif-

facilities, and act inconsistently with our profession. The inspired writers did not think it a circumstance unworthy of their attention, but have frequently given directions respecting it; and christians of all ranks should conscientiously regard their instructions. The extract is from the second volume of his Sermons. Sermon xxiii.

“Moderation and decency in our apparel, such as becomes the profession of persons whose chief ornament is religion and godliness, the Apostles, both St. Peter and St. Paul, each in his turn, insist upon, as a necessary qualification of women who profess christianity, and as an ornament to the doctrine of the gospel of Christ. 1 Peter, iii. 3, 4, 5. *Let your conversation be with fear, whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and wearing of gold.* 1 Tim. ii. 9—10. The Apostle Paul bids Timothy, the young Evangelist, teach the same doctrine and practice. *In like manner I will, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel with shamefacedness and sobriety, as becometh women professing godliness.* Not that all christians must utterly abandon those rich and more costly methods of ornament, *gold or pearls*, of which the Apostle there makes mention; for every one of us should wear such raiment as suits our character and our age, our company and business in the world. But let not these be our chief ornaments, still remembering that we are christians; and let our apparel, as well as our conversation, shew that we despise trifles, and thus maintain the dignity of our high and holy calling.”

“Here, saith a learned commentator, (Dr. Whitby.) “It is worthy to be noted by the women, that this precept ought not to be slighted by them, as of little moment, seeing it is so carefully inculcated by the two chief Apostles, of the Jews and Gentiles, St. Peter and St. Paul; and the contrary is represented as a practice contrary to godliness.”

“Nor while you are dressing, should you forget that you are sinners, and therefore should put on shamefacedness; for all our ornaments and cloathing are but a memorial of our first sin and shame. And when we take a pride in our garments, it looks as if we had forgotten the original of them, *the loss of our innocency.*”

“Nor is this sort of advice to be confined to the female world: for, as the same author expresses it, “If it be so unbecoming

christian woman to be thus concerned in adorning and trinketing up her body; it must be much more unbecoming a *christian man*, and that which makes him truly to deserve the name of a *fop*."

" 'Tis a token of a light and vain mind to be too fond of gaudy habits, a mind not much affected with sin or with salvation. Surely christians are born for greater things, and their aim should point at higher excellencies than these are. Let their chief ornament be the grace of the spirit, and the virtues of the heart and life. A well adorned body, and a neglected mind, very ill becomes a professor of the gospel."

" Christians should look like strangers and pilgrims here, and not think themselves undressed, unless they are conformed to all the niceties and vain fashions of the world. Sometimes (it may be) we are too much afraid we shall not look like the *children of this world*, whereas the Apostle advises us rather to look like *strangers*. We are travelling homeward through a foreign country, having the ornaments of holiness on us, which is the raiment of heaven. I confess we are not required to affect singularity, nor to seek a foolish and useless distinction from the customs of our country, where they are proper, innocent, and becoming; for the kingdom of God does not consist in any affected peculiarities of dress or behaviour; but let us remember too, that it is below the glory of our character, and the dignity of our calling, to have our thoughts uneasy, if every pin and point that belongs to our apparel be not placed in the most fashionable manner; to fret and rage, if every fold of a garment be not adjusted in perfect conformity to the mode."

" Then we may be said to fall short of that *venerable decency* in our apparel which christianity should teach us, when we are *among the first* in any new devised and gaudy fashions; when we are some of the foremost in the gaieties of the age; when we *run to the extremes* of every new mode, and assist to vie with the vainest of our sex; when the business of *dress* is made one of the most frequent, important, and solemn inquiries of life; and when it employs some of our most serious thoughts, and our warmest passions: when we indulge a greater expence in finery than our circumstances will allow, or our stations require: when we waste more time in adorning ourselves, than the duties we owe to God and man will reasonably

permit; and especially if we intrench upon the hours which should be devoted to sacred purposes. I should add also, that then we certainly break in upon christian sobriety, when we indulge such sort of cloathing as *in its own nature becomes a temptation to immodesty*, and brings fuel to the impure fire of the eyes, or of the heart."

"I would not be thought to treat too largely upon this subject, or handle it too severely; but let us remember, that our biggest danger in this age is excess, and luxury, and vanity of mind. We are pretty secure now a-days from too great a carelessness in this respect."

R. C.

PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD.

A Meditation on the Close of the Year.

The flight of years ought to remind me of the end of time. Every day brings me nearer to the awful moment when "time with me shall be no more." And when so large a portion of my allotted span as a year has revolved, I ought seriously to reflect on the important advance which I have made towards the grave. The close of the year should fix my meditations on the close of life: a momentous period even if there were no futurity. To bid a final adieu to all my connections, my engagements, my pursuits on earth; to sink into non-entity, and to cease to be, to an affectionate and aspiring mind, would be a solemn thought. It would cling to existence, and start back with horror from annihilation. But when I consider that eternity succeeds to time, and that when my days on earth are fulfilled, I must stand before the judgment seat of God, to give an account of all the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or evil; and then receive an irrevocable sentence to an endless state of the highest bliss or the deepest woe, surely I ought carefully to number every movement I make towards this awful moment, and consider each closing year as a loud admonition "to prepare to meet my God."

And must I meet my God? Most alarming truth! Meet that God who created me, who has preserved me ever since I began to exist, who has continued to crown my life with his tender mercies, and who therefore has a right to expect my gratitude, love, and obedience. But what return have I made

for all his goodness? Have not I daily provoked him to anger, by transgressing that holy, just, and wise law which he has condescended to reveal to his creatures? Have I not trampled on the most sacred obligations, opposed his lawful authority, and basely rebelled against his righteous government? Have I not slighted the overtures of his mercy, and neglected the great salvation which he has graciously offered to me in his gospel? And yet this is the God whom I am hastening on the wings of time to meet: and I am now brought another year nearer to the solemn interview. May I not expect to find him a consuming fire.

And is there no method of avoiding this dreadful meeting? Had I incurred the displeasure of an earthly sovereign, I might perhaps flee into some remote region out of the reach of his authority; or hide myself in some obscure retreat, and elude his notice. But here all hope of escape is cut off. The God whom I have offended ruleth over all. It is impossible to pass the bounds of his dominions, or to conceal myself from his observation. "If I ascend up into heaven, he is there: if I make my bed in hell, behold he is there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall his hand lead me, and his right hand shall hold me. If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea the darkness hideth not from him; but the light shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to him." Nothing can oppose his power, or counteract his will. When he summons me to his bar, I must appear. Willing or unwilling, prepared or unprepared, I must "meet my God."

Since then this interview is inevitable, it becomes a question of the greatest moment, How shall I be prepared to meet my God? Is there any way by which I may hope to meet him with comfort? Can the rebel be pardoned? May the sinner hope for mercy? Is there any possibility, that this offended, insulted God can become my friend; and that I may stand accepted in his sight? Yes, my soul, that God, against whom thou hast so grievously transgressed, in his astonishing mercy, has devised a plan by which he can be just, and the justifier of him that believeth. "He hath sent his only begotten Son into the world, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And he has

graciously revealed this "good news of great joy" to man in his holy word. Haste then, my soul, fly to the hope set before us in the gospel. Lay hold by faith on the atonement which the Saviour has made for thy sins. Look to thy God for the promised aid of the Holy Spirit to transform thee into the image of his Son, and to enable thee to devote thyself and all thy powers to his service. Seek to him for strength to resist every temptation, and for grace to persevere to the end. Then, when thou shalt be called to meet thy God, thou wilt find him a father and a friend; and be welcomed into his presence with "Come, thou blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for thee from the foundation of the world."

Transcendent happiness! unspeakable grace! O, my soul, give no sleep to thy eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids, till thou hast obtained scriptural evidence that thou art thus prepared to meet thy God. Then, if it should please him to call thee into his immediate presence before the close of another year, the consequences will be to thee most happy and glorious. Or, if he should see fit to continue thee in this state of trial, for many future years, yet, his grace shall enable thee to make a progress in the divine life, and that delay will only prepare thee for more exalted happiness and glory, when thou shalt be called to "meet thy God." S. O.

THE BLESSING OF JAPHETH.

To the EDITOR of the G. B. R.

DEAR SIR,

If the following hints, in reply to the Query of B. J. inserted page 133 of your last number, be thought worthy of a place in the G. B. R. they are at your service.

In the passage referred to by your correspondent, Gen. ix. 27, Noah foretold with what blessings God would distinguish the posterity of Japheth; for whom Japheth himself is put, as was usual in the prophetic language. See Gen. xxv. 23.

This prophecy contained a threefold blessing: God shall enlarge Japheth—Japheth shall dwell in the tents of Shem—and Canaan shall be Japheth's servant. And the plain meaning of the prediction appears to be, that the descendants of

Japheth should be numerous, and spread over a great part of the earth;—that they should, in process of time, obtain possession of some of the countries which had been previously occupied by the descendants of Shem—and that the posterity of Canaan should be held in a state servitude by them.

This appears to have been the import of the patriarchal benediction; and that this was literally and fully accomplished has been frequently shewn by commentators and divines. Your limits, however, will only admit of a very general view of the interesting subject

Japheth had seven sons, whose descendants soon settled a considerable part of Asia, and almost all Europe. The Germans, French, Danes, Britons, Romans, the innumerable tribes of the Scythians, which overspread a great part of the vast empire of Russia, the Medes, the Ionians, the Thracians, and many other populous nations, trace their descent from one or the other of the sons of Japheth. And there is some reason to believe that the inhabitants of the new world were derived from the same stock. Let any one, with these hints in his recollection, run his eye over a map of the world, as it was known to the ancients, and he will see, that “in the division of the nations after the flood,” (Gen. x. 32,) God did indeed enlarge Japheth; and give to his posterity an inheritance much more extensive than the possessions of the descendants of either of his brethren.

Yet large as these territories were, the children of Japheth soon began to extend them, by the conquest of the countries possessed by the descendants of Shem. About six hundred years before Christ, the Medes under Cyaxares subjected the Assyrian empire; and, not a century after, Babylon was conquered by Cyrus and Darius the Mede; and thus the posterity of Madai, Japheth's third son, dwelt in the tents of Asshur, the second son of Shem. Gen. x. 2 and 22. In less than two centuries after this conquest, the Macedonians, a branch of the descendants of Madai, with Alexander at their head, overran the greatest part of Asia, and subdued most of the remaining nations which had been founded by the sons of Shem. And lastly, the Romans, who were the posterity of Japheth, extended their dominion over the greatest part of the then known world; and particularly led the king of Persia in triumph to Rome: and thus entered into the tents of Elam, Shem's first son.

The Turks too are supposed by some to be descended from Magog, Japheth's second son; and it is certain that they are at this day dwelling in the tents of Shem; being masters of almost all the countries originally occupied by the posterity of Shem. It has also been conjectured that some of the descendants of Shem made the first settlements in countries now called the East Indies. If so, the Britons, the children of Japheth, are daily taking possession of these tents of Shem.

The third part of this remarkable prediction has been no less punctually fulfilled. When the Israelites took possession of the promised land, and reduced the remnant of the inhabitants to hewers of wood and drawers of water, Canaan then became the servant of Shem. When the Greeks and Romans subdued Syria and Palestine, the original territories of the Canaanites, and followed them with irresistible force to their colonies of Tyre and Carthage, then Canaan commenced a servitude to the descendants of Japheth, which he has never been able to shake off. For many centuries past, the Turks have held all the countries which the Canaanites at first possessed under the most galling bondage. And, if we turn our eyes to the degraded Negroes of Africa, who are the posterity of Ham, and probably of Canaan, we see the awful execution of Noah's threatening, uttered four thousand years ago, in the cruel and ignominious oppression, which that wretched race have for ages borne from the sons of Japheth.

Ought not this hasty glance at the precise manner in which this ancient prophecy has been accomplished, and is accomplishing before our eyes, to inspire us with greater reverence for the sacred volume and its important contents? As certainly as the blessing of Japheth, and the curse on Canaan were punctually fulfilled, so surely will every promise to the righteous, and threatening to the wicked contained in the scriptures receive, in due time, their full accomplishment. "God is not a man that he should lie; neither the son of man that he should repent. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" F. J.

P. S. I am well aware, that several learned men have supposed that the second part of Noah's prediction should be understood of God's dwelling in the tents of Shem; but I have preferred the common interpretation as more natural and consistent, and sanctioned by many of the best expositors.

STATE OF RELIGION IN FRANCE.

Further Extracts from the Letter, mentioned in page 139, of the last Number of the G. B. R.

“In a village about a mile distant, there is a poor family which I have visited every Lord’s day afternoon, for five or six weeks. It consists of an aged man almost blind, his son and wife, and four children, poor labouring people. The old man, on account of his infirmity, is obliged to go about to beg his bread, and used to come to our door once a week. I felt much for his affliction; and the more on account of the great respect with which he mentioned the name of the Lord, when receiving alms; always saying, “Thanks be to the good God: he hath helped to this day I always trusted in him, and he never left me without bread. I am afflicted, but he disposes every body to assist me. I am persuaded that they that trust in him and love him shall never lack.” I longed for an opportunity to converse with this man; and, at last, I met him on the road, one Lord’s day morning, and we sat down together under a tree, where we conversed for half an hour. He acknowledges the doctrines of the church of Rome, in which he had been brought up to be most of them contrary to the gospel, and said that he had never placed any reliance on them, though he sometimes goes to church. I asked him if he had ever read the Bible. “We have,” he replied, “the holy scriptures at home; and my son, who like me, seldom goes to church, uses to read some of them to us, on the Lord’s day. I trust in God, that Jesus Christ shall save my soul; he and none other.” He often repeated these words; but I soon perceived that the old man was in great darkness, ignorant of his miserable state by nature, and destitute of the knowledge of salvation by grace through faith in Christ. I proposed to pay a visit to his house, at which he expressed much pleasure. I went, on the next Lord’s day, and found them all collected in their garden. The conversation soon turned on religion, which they knew to be my principal object. They brought forwards their holy scriptures, as the old man called them, which proved to be only a short abridgement of the historical parts of the Old Testament, and the fragments of a New Testament, the greatest part of which was lost. I found the

young man like his father, as to his views of the doctrines in which he had been educated, and the state of his soul; and, after an hour's conversation, I took my leave of them, leaving them some religious books, and promising to call again." On his next visit, the writer read some parts of the scripture and commented on it, and closed the interview with prayer. He continued his visits for several successive Lord's days; but frequently had the mortification to find some branch of the family from home, attending to their temporal concerns. He took great pains to enlighten and convince these poor people, read them some sermons, lent them Doddridge's "Rise and Progress," and furnished them with a complete bible. Though they could not, at once, break through their customary habits; yet they expressed much pleasure in his conversation; and he concludes his account thus. "Let us not be discouraged; but join with me, my friend, in my prayers to the God of all mercies, and grace in their behalf, and in behalf of all that surround me."

*The HISTORY and CHARACTER of the
PATRIARCH JOSEPH.*

No. III.

In the early ages of the world, before the will of God had been fully revealed in the scriptures, it was not unusual for the Almighty to give intimations of his designs, on important occasions, by dreams and visions. Of this we have already seen an instance in young Joseph; and, as we proceed, we shall have to notice others. But let not the youthful mind be misled by these circumstances, or expect similar interpositions of Providence in the common affairs of life and religion. The word of God is the rule of our duty: and a careful perusal of it, with a sincere desire to understand it, and earnest prayer for divine illumination, is our plain and constant duty; and to trust for direction or support to dreams, visions, or impulses, is dangerous and vain.

We left Joseph confined in prison, where his amiable temper and conduct had gained him the confidence of his keeper and the superintendance of the prisoners. In process of time, two of the household officers of Pharaoh, the butler and baker, in-

curred their master's displeasure, and were committed to custody under the care of Joseph. One morning, when Joseph, as usual, went round to inspect the prison, he observed a particular gloom on the countenances of these two officers, and kindly enquired the reason. They informed him, that each of them had dreamed a singular dream, which they supposed to be a presage of some future event; but, having none to interpret it, they were involved in perplexity. Joseph piously replied, "Do not interpretations belong to God?" and requested to hear their dreams. The butler instantly complied; and Joseph confidently assured him, that, in three days, he should be restored to his former station. This favourable explanation encouraged the baker to relate the visions of his sleep, but they received a very different interpretation. He was assured, that, within three days, he should be executed as a criminal. Both these predictions were exactly fulfilled.

When Joseph foretold the restoration of Pharaoh's butler to his former influence, he made a pathetic appeal to his humanity, by informing him, that he had been stolen from his native country, and was then in confinement on an unjust charge. "Think on me," said the injured youth, "when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me; and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house." So earnest and reasonable a request, from one who had shewn so much interest in his welfare, it might have been expected, would have been gratefully recollected. But such is the depravity of human nature, that this courtier suffered two whole years to elapse, after he was restored to the favour of his royal master, and had daily access to his presence, without remembering the innocent captive, or making any effort to obtain his release. At length, circumstances occurred which made it his own interest to recollect the friendly harbinger of his good fortune. Pharaoh himself had two remarkable dreams which deeply impressed his mind, and gave him great uneasiness. In vain he consulted the professed wise men of his realm: they were unable to give him any satisfactory explanation. The butler, seeing the perplexity of his sovereign, and probably desirous of ingratiating himself by contributing to his tranquility, detailed the interpretation which Joseph had given of his own and the baker's dreams, and the exact manner in which his predictions had

been fulfilled. The king in consequence gave orders for the young man's attendance, and messengers were immediately sent to the prison to call him.

The necessary change of dress being hastily made, Joseph was introduced to Pharaoh, who gave him an account of the dreams which had so much troubled him. With equal modesty and firmness, the patriarch informed the monarch, that both his dreams portended the same event: that seven years of extraordinary plenty would bless the land of Egypt, which would be followed by seven years of extreme famine. He concluded his interpretation, by suggesting to the king the proper use to be made of this timely warning; and advising him to lay up, in proper storehouses, one fifth part of the produce of the fruitful years, as a provision for the ensuing scarcity; and, that this necessary measure might be carried into a full effect, to appoint a proper officer, with sufficient authority, to enforce its execution. This prudent advice was instantly approved by the king and his counsellors; and Pharaoh, charmed with the wisdom of Joseph, and convinced that he was peculiarly enlightened by the spirit of God, selected him as the most fit person to superintend his own plan, and immediately invested him with the necessary powers. He appointed him ruler of Egypt, and chief minister of state; arrayed him in robes of office, caused him to ride in the royal chariot, and ordered him to be proclaimed throughout the land as the next in power and dignity to himself. In order to strengthen his interest, his master procured his marriage with a lady of birth and influence; and, as a title of honourable distinction, gave him a new name. Thus, at thirty years of age, the darling son of Jacob found himself raised to almost absolute power, over the land into which, at seventeen, he had been sold for a slave.

Let us pause here; and endeavour to derive some instruction from that interesting part of the life of this celebrated patriarch, which has now past under our review.

How unstable is human greatness! and how sudden the vicissitudes of human life! How uncertain the favour of man! and how necessary to have a friend and protector whose loving kindness changeth not! The two principal officers in the household of the king of Egypt are, one day, high in the favour of their royal master, and perhaps pleasing themselves with a prospect of lasting prosperity; but, on the next day,

Pharaoh is wroth against them; they are cast into prison, and receive their allowance of food from the hands of a fellow prisoner. Anxiously inquisitive respecting their future safety, they spend their days in conjectures and their nights in dreams. And, in three days, the chief of Pharaoh's bakers is hanged on a tree, and his body left there a prey to the birds of the air. "Cursed is he that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm."

How admirable the manner in which Joseph treats the faults of others, even though committed against himself. Though most cruelly driven from his father and his home, and sold to strangers for a slave, by the envy of his unnatural brethren; though unjustly accused, thrown into prison, and his feet hurt with fetters, through the revenge of his abandoned mistress, yet he does not aggravate the crimes, nor even mention the names of those who had thus deeply injured him, in order to interest the butler in his favour. He simply and nobly states the wrongs which he has suffered, and leaves his enemies unnoticed. "Indeed," says he, "I was stolen out of the land of the Hebrews; and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon." What an exquisite specimen of forbearance! Let us endeavour to imitate it.

How great is the reward of a humane and obliging conduct! Had Joseph, with a careless haughtiness, passed by the dejected prisoners who were placed under his care, without noticing their sad looks, or kindly inquiring the cause, and endeavouring to remove it, he would have lost the opportunity of displaying that wisdom, which afterwards led to his elevation. And those who, from proper motives, sympathize with their fellow creatures in distress, and exert themselves to relieve them, will assuredly have their reward. The measure which they mete to others will be returned into their own bosoms: "good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over."

In all our distresses, let us wait patiently and resignedly for the interposition of divine providence, and neither murmur nor fret at its delay. Joseph languished in prison two full years after he had attempted to interest the butler in his favour. Doubtless he felt dejected, thought the time long, probably sometimes despaired of ever being recollected. But we

have reason to believe that he continued in the same diligent obliging and faithful discharge of the duties of his station, which had distinguished his previous conduct, and gained him the confidence of his keeper. And, when we have taken all proper means to remove any calamity, we ought to leave the event to the allwise Governor of the universe; and, in humble dependance on his goodness, apply ourselves diligently to the duties required by our present circumstances. If we truly love God, we may rest secure, that, at the best season, and by the most proper means, he will make all things work together for our good. Nor should we suffer the ingratitude or neglect of those whom we have obliged to discourage us. Joseph might justly blame the forgetfulness of the butler; but even this very circumstance was over-ruled for his good. Had the butler remembered Joseph soon after he was restored to his master's favour, it is probable that, though the prisoner might have been released, yet he would not have attained that dignity to which he was ultimately raised. But when the monarch himself wanted assistance, and the forgetful officer was thus reminded of his faults, all circumstances conspired to open the way to the preferment of the long-neglected captive. How safely then may we leave all our own concerns with Him, whose wisdom and power can cause even the failings and errors of man to promote the welfare of his servants.

But while we thus commit our ways unto the Lord, and look to him to direct our paths, we ought to use all proper means to remove any evil which presses upon us. Joseph, though he had been favoured with remarkable intimations of the great things which God would do for him, did not neglect to avail himself of the opportunity which his interpretation of the butler's dream offered, to endeavour, by the interest of that officer, to obtain his release from an unjust confinement. To neglect the diligent use of the proper means of promoting our own interest, under a pretence of depending on Providence, and waiting for its appearance in our favour, is presumption, not faith—indolence, not resignation.

Let us also learn from the example of this pious patriarch, not to be vain of any natural or acquired abilities which we may possess in a degree superior to others. Let us humbly remember that they are only gifts, and gratefully ascribe the glory to God, the great Giver. Though Joseph was highly

distinguished by his superior skill in the interpretation of dreams, yet he carefully avoided any self congratulations on his own sagacity; and, with equal modesty and piety, constantly, referred all to the Lord. "Do not interpretations belong to *God*," he observed to Pharaoh's dejected officers. And when the monarch himself addressed him in those complimentary terms, "I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it;" he immediately disclaimed the praise, and replied, "*God* shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace." He perfectly understood the application of the apostolic query: "Who maketh thee to differ from another? or, what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?"

QUERY.

To the EDITOR of the G. B. R.

DEAR SIR,

If some of your correspondents would favour us, through the medium of the G. B. R, with a few illustrative and applicatory remarks on our Saviour's address to Peter, Luke xxii. 31, 32, it would much oblige, yours, &c.

W. T.

GENERAL BAPTIST OCCURRENCES.

OBITUARY.

September the 7th, 1817, died Mrs. GRACE PARKINSON, widow of the late Mr. Joseph Parkinson, sen. of Sawley, in the sixty-fifth year of her age. From her youth she was in the habit of reading the scriptures; and, on hearing the various reports respecting the founders of the New Connection, she felt a strong persuasion that they were the real people of God, described in his word. She determined, therefore, to hear them the first opportunity; which soon occurred; and the word preached reached her heart. On a profession of faith in Christ, she was baptized and admitted into the church, of which she continued, to her death, a steady and honourable

member. She was greatly attached to the scriptures; they were the subject of her daily meditation. Her delight was in the law of the Lord; and her soul was as a well-watered garden. The fruits of piety and devotion adorned her whole deportment; and the graces of a truly christian spirit marked her daily conduct. She was a stranger, in a great measure, to those doubts and fears which too often harass the minds of weaker christians. She walked in the light of her Saviour's countenance, and in his salvation-rejoiced all the day. When questioned respecting the state of her soul, her usual reply was to this effect: "I am happy in the Lord. I have no distressing fears. I know in whom I have believed. The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith on the Son of God, who loved *me* and gave himself for *me*. My peace and joy come through *believing*:" &c. She was given to hospitality; and her heart and house were ever open to receive the friends of Jesus of every name, but especially the General Baptists. They were the people of her choice: and there was no office of love which she was not ready to perform for their comfort.

In her last illness she was remarkably patient and resigned to the divine will: and though, towards the close of life, her mental faculties were much impaired by a paralytic stroke; yet she retained her confidence in her Saviour to the last, and died "rejoicing in hope." Her remains were interred in the G. B. meeting-house at Sawley, near the remains of her worthy husband; and a discourse was delivered on the occasion, from Psa. lxxii. 26. May her surviving relatives, especially her dear children, who are all attached to the same cause, be eminently partakers of the same grace, and at last inherit the same glory!

CONFERENCES.

The MIDLAND CONFERENCE was held, Dec. 31st, 1817, at *Quorndon*; when Mr. Pike preached in the morning, and Mr. Orton in the evening. A case was presented from *Quorndon*, soliciting ministerial assistance, which was recommended to the churches. The formation of a society for the relief of aged ministers, to which ministers as beneficiaries, and others as honorary members, might be subscribers, was strongly urged by this conference; and a meeting for the formation of such

society was appointed to be held at Loughborough, at eleven o'clock on Shrove Tuesday next. A case from Hugglescote proposed the propriety of attending to business on the morning of Conference, and to public worship later in the day; but, after some deliberation, it was resolved to continue the present arrangement. It was also resolved, that this Conference should continue to move, from church to church, according to the plan inserted in the G. B. R. for November 1813. The next Conference to be at Barton, on Easter Tuesday: Mr. R. Smith to preach.

The LINCOLNSHIRE CONFERENCE was held, at *Spalding*, October 9, 1817: when Mr. Rogers preached, in the morning, from Isa. lxiv. 6: and Mr. Jarrom, in the evening, from Psal. ii. 12, 13. Some ministerial assistance was promised to Chatteris, St. Ives, and Gidney Hill. A letter from Mr. Pike was read, advising the society to fix on missionaries and a station, in the first place; and then to make an exertion with a more particular design to excite public feeling and obtain pecuniary aid. The Conference approved of this advice: and recommended to those churches which do not hold a monthly prayer meeting in behalf of missions, immediately to establish one. The next Conference to be held at Fleet, the day after the Anniversary of the Christian Fund; and, it was agreed, if time should permit, after the conclusion of the business to discuss the question: "What are the genuine evidences of a state of grace?"

ORDINATION.

May 27, 1817, Mr. John Sexton was ordained to the pastoral office over the G. B. church at Ford, in the county of Bucks. Mr. J. Ewon of Tring began the service by prayer and reading the scriptures. Mr. Hobbs of Berkhamstead delivered an introductory discourse, and proposed the questions to the church and the minister. Mr. E. Sexton of Chesham offered the ordination prayer, and delivered a charge to his brother, from I Tim. iv. 16. "Take heed to thyself and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt save thyself and them that hear thee." Mr. Bissill of Sutterton addressed the people, from Deut. i. 38. "Encourage him; for he shall cause Israel to inherit the land." Mr. Wil-

liams of Wasden-hill, prayed before sermon; and Mr. Tyler of Hadnam concluded the services of the day. Mr. J. Ewen preached, in the evening, from Luke xii. 35, 36, 37.

OPENING A NEW MEETING HOUSE.

On Lord's day, November 9, 1817, the General Baptist Meeting-house, at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire, was re-opened, after having been entirely taken down and rebuilt with considerable enlargements. Its dimensions now are thirty feet by twenty-four. The appearance is plain and neat; and the accommodations very much superior to any the G. Baptists have hitherto possessed in that neighbourhood. We hope that the Connection will cheerfully assist the friends at Ashby in liquidating the debt which they have incurred by this effort to promote the common cause. On this occasion, Mr. R. Smith, preached, in the morning, from Hag. ii. 9: Mr. J. Preston, in the afternoon, from Dan ii. 44: and Mr. R. Smith, again in the evening, from Col. i. 22. The discourses were appropriate and useful; and the services solemn and impressive. The place was crowded, especially in the afternoon and evening: and the collections amounted to £26. 3s. 10d. May the great Head of the church smile upon this attempt to support and advance his cause: and may the little one become a thousand, and the small one a strong city.

AUXILIARY MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

December 31, 1817, Mr. Jarrom of Wisbeach, invited the young people of his congregation to spend the afternoon with him. This was thought a proper opportunity to consider the propriety of establishing an Auxiliary in aid of the General Baptist Missionary Society. The proposal being unanimously approved; a resolution was immediately passed, declaring the expediency and desirableness of such an institution; and a provisional committee and secretary appointed to digest a plan for its formation. The subject was brought forward, at a public prayer meeting, January 13, 1818; when the following resolutions, recommended by the provisional committee, were cordially adopted.—1. That this society shall be denominated "The Wisbeach G. B. Auxiliary Missionary Society." 2.

That its object shall be to aid General Baptist missions. 3. That its business shall be transacted by a treasurer, secretary and committee; five of whom shall be competent to act. 4. That every subscriber, whether weekly, monthly, quarterly, or annual, shall be esteemed a member of this society. 5. That the committee shall consist of subscribers to the amount of half-a-guinea annually; and contributors of sixpence weekly. 6. That the committee shall meet on the first Thursday in every month, an hour previous to the missionary prayer meeting; when the collectors shall pay the subscriptions to the secretaries; who shall transfer the amount over to the treasurer, every three months; to be by him remitted to the treasurer of the G. B. Missionary Society, at the discretion of the committee. 7. That an annual meeting of the subscribers be held, when the accounts, as audited, shall be presented; the proceedings of the previous year reported; a treasurer and secretaries appointed; and a sermon preached in aid of the society.—Mr. Butterfield was elected treasurer, and Messrs. Waller and Lilly, secretaries; Messrs. Jarrom, Jones, Peggs, and Lilly briefly addressed the meeting in recommendation of the design; and a liberal subscription commenced; more than sixty weekly and annual contributors being obtained before the close of that meeting, which we are happy to learn have since greatly increased. As this is the first institution of this nature, in those parts, we have been more particular in reporting its formation; hoping that others will soon be established in imitation of it. The young persons at Wisbeach have done honour to themselves and their profession, by the zeal and alacrity which they have displayed in this noble cause; and, we trust, we shall have soon to record numerous instances, in which the youth of other churches shall be stimulated to similar exertions, to assist in sending the knowledge of a crucified Redeemer to those who are now perishing for lack of knowledge.

ANNUAL ASSOCIATION.

The *friends and representatives* who may attend the ensuing *Annual Association* of the New Connection of General Baptists, at Church Lane, Whitechapel, are respectfully desired to put up at *Mr. Stott's, the Three Nuns Inn, Aldgate*, where arrangements will be made for their accommodation.

MONTHLY PRAYER MEETING.

In the last number of the G. B. R. page 133, a correspondent suggested the propriety of the whole Connection uniting in the support of a periodical meeting, in each church, for the express purpose of pleading in prayer with the Almighty for the prosperity of real, vital, experimental religion in our own churches. We are happy to learn that some of the churches have adopted the suggestion: as we are persuaded, that whoever reflects how many of our churches are destitute of pastors, how many are languishing and declining both in numbers and in graces, and how many are distracted with the most deplorable contentions, will see abundant cause for deep humiliation and fervent prayer. We should be happy, therefore, to receive information of the general adoption of these exercises; and rejoice to make this Miscellany useful in promoting unity of plan and zeal in the conducting of them. Nor can we doubt of the happiest results; for the great Head of the church has never said to the seed of Jacob, "Seek ye me in vain."

 REVIEW OF NEW PUBLICATIONS.

DIRECTIONS and ENCOURAGEMENTS for TRAVELLERS to ZION; being an Earnest and Affectionate ADDRESS to professing Christians in general, on several subjects. By JOSEPH FRERSTON. Boards, 8vo, pp. 328. Price 5s. 6d.

THE volume before us consists of a number of Miscellaneous Essays, on Practical and Experimental subjects, interspersed with devotional reflections. There is but little investigation of divine truth in any of the Essays, and what there is, is intended to be subservient to higher purposes, than that merely of making the reader profoundly acquainted with theological difficulties, or of conducting him to any consistent theory of religion. It would, however, have been of some advantage to the work, had the appeal been made to the understanding in a greater variety of instances, instead of the feelings of the reader. Proof, rather than assertion, is the medium of conviction; and where this is wanting, conviction can rarely be obtained. The pious author seems indeed to take it too much for granted, that his reader is as fully convinced of the reality

of divine things as he is himself; hence he often deals in tender persuasives and affectionate advice, when he might have arrested the conscience, and summoned it before the awful tribunal of truth. This want of energy is, however, in a great measure, compensated by a flow of evangelical sentiment and feeling pervading every part of the performance; by a spirit of the most exalted piety, which seeks with unwearied solicitude the best interests of man and the glory of God. No serious person, we think, can fail to be benefited by the perusal; there is a fragrance which the heart will relish, even where the inquisitive mind is not fully gratified; and, if there be no bursts of intellectual splendour, there is a softened radiance which gilds the "traveller's" path, and guides him to the throne of God.

The writer has himself informed us in his Preface, that "he is daily expecting to be called to his eternal home, and it has been in the nearest views of eternity, that he has penned the following address. He has but little expectation of either pleasing or profiting any besides plain and serious minds. Such can overlook the defects of composition; and if the matter does but suit them, they do not much regard the manner. Had he but good reason to hope the present address will be acceptable and beneficial to such, and contribute to help them forward on the road to heaven, it would yield him the most solid satisfaction. He knows that all success is from God; and as this address has been written in his fear, with a view to his glory, and a constant looking to him for divine aid, he now most devoutly commits it to his blessing." p. v.

Chapters iii. iv. v. vi. are remarkably well written, and abound with useful and important sentiments. The following judicious observations, on experimental difficulties and discouragements, cannot fail being acceptable to the serious reader: "The christian," says Mr. F. "is sometimes greatly perplexed and distressed by the prevalence of doubts and fears, relative to his interest in Christ, which darken his prospect, fill his soul with dejection and despondency, and cause him to move on heavily. These fears may however be entirely groundless, proceeding merely from the absence of sensible comfort, or from a hypochondriacal temperament, which is not unfrequently the case. Persons of this description are very prone to write bitter things against themselves, and during

these paroxysms, can see nothing in themselves of a religious nature. It would be well if such would learn to discriminate the different sources of mental uneasiness, know their temperament, and ascertain the true cause of their trouble. They should consider whether their doubts and fears arise from the upbraidings of conscience, or some criminal compliance, or some neglect of duty; whether conscience brings home some specific charge against them; or, whether they arise from something of so general a nature, that they know not on what to fix them, or to what to attribute them. Let the humble and devout christian, in these circumstances, look up fervently to God, and rely upon him; thankfully remembering that he is 'the same, and changeth not.' Let him renew the dedication of himself to Christ as his Saviour and Advocate, and remember, that his atoning blood, applied by faith, 'cleaseth from all sin;' and patiently wait, relying on the Lord, and persevering in patient endurance and active obedience, until the dark clouds disperse, and his prospect brightens. Let him remember that 'sorrow may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning;' that they who 'sow in tears, shall reap in joy;' and let him say, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.'" pp. 29, 30.

The following judicious and spirited observations, deserve the attention of every christian who wishes to live near to God; but claim, in an especial manner, the most serious consideration of young professors who are setting out in life:—'Some have subjected themselves to spiritual declension, by their injudicious choice of situation. Their principal, if not only object has been a good business; without taking into their calculation in what degree they shall enjoy their religious privileges: as if it were of no consequence, whether the proposed situation was favourable or unfavourable to their most important interests. This is setting earth before heaven; and their temporal before their eternal advantage. It is a strange undervaluing of religious privileges, and making very light of everlasting concerns, namely, the life, the health and growing comfort of the soul. They are willing to risk all these, if they can but procure temporal success. But is it right, or likely to secure the divine blessing, to treat these important matters with a subordinate care? Is it not in direct opposition to the injunction of our Lord, and to the example of the wisest and

best of men?—By these means many have made work for long and deep repentance. O how unworthy the christian is such conduct! Can any thing less than disappointment, darkness, and a declension in vital religion be expected? If we do not regard God's honour, can we expect him to promote our comfort? His declaration is;—'They that honour me, I will honour; but they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed.' I appeal to the reader's own observation, whether he ever knew one to make a progress in religion, or even to avoid declension, who acted so injudiciously."

"Before a christian fixes on a situation, if it appears promising as to worldly affairs, he should enquire, What place or places of worship are there? Is there a society of Christians with whom I can enjoy communion in all the privileges of God's family?—Are there any lively christians whom I can make my companions, and from whose acquaintance I may expect to be assisted and encouraged in the ways of Zion? Or, is there an opportunity of introducing the Gospel into the place? For, if the former be wanting, I know not what would excuse his choice of such a situation, but the fixed intention of introducing the Gospel ministry into it, for the benefit of the inhabitants, as well as his own.—A christian should ever bear in mind, that he is not to live to himself; see Rom. xiv. 7, 8, 9.—His own spiritual and eternal welfare must be his primary concern; but next to this, according to his ability and opportunity, he must seek the salvation of others."

We should willingly transcribe farther from this important part of the work, did our limits admit; but we leave it to the attentive perusal of every young christian, who is desirous of "seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

We cannot however forbear to present our readers with one short extract more, on a branch of duty too often misunderstood and neglected by church members. "Meetings for discipline, usually called church-meetings, demand also the christian's attention. These are commonly neglected by many members of churches, as if they had nothing to do with church matters, or felt no concern whether the cause of Christ prospered or not, or how the church went on. Who are to conduct the affairs of Christ's church, if his professed friends neglect them? Has he not entrusted its concerns to them? and ought it not to be regarded as a sacred, important,

and honourable trust? A love of the brethren, a desire for the church's welfare, and a regard to the authority of Christ, ought to influence every one in these matters. The subjects that demand the attention of churches are very important; such as the reception of new members, the expulsion of obstinate delinquents, the conduct of offenders, and the best method of reclaiming them, the preservation of the peace, order, and reputation of the body, and various other necessary and important things, require the serious regard, and mutual consultation and co-operation of all. It is true that sometimes unpleasant things are brought forward at such meetings; but then, they are such as must be attended to, and we must sacrifice our own feelings for the general good. Our aim must be to do good, as well as obtain good. O Christian! carefully attend to every duty. Your all-wise and gracious Master has enjoined you nothing but what is proper and necessary. Meet your brethren on the occasions above-mentioned, and unite your counsels and influence with theirs, and give no one any cause to suspect you of coolness to Christ, and of indifference to the church's welfare, and quote your example as an excuse for their own neglect. Recollect, when you first united yourself to the church, you solemnly engaged to devote your life and powers to the service and glory of Christ, and to co-operate with his people for the advancement of his kingdom.—Be diligent and faithful."

From these extracts the reader will perceive the affectionate and pious manner in which the amiable writer has treated the important subjects included in this volume. We have already (G. B. R. Vol. VII. page 279), given a list of these subjects; and have only to observe, that five chapters are added to the number originally proposed, the titles of which are: 14. The true christian a spiritual person. 15. On progressive holiness. 16. Meditation on the death of a beloved child. 17. On religious declension. 18. On the doubts and fears of christians.

We close this article, which has run to an unexpected length, by cordially recommending the work which is the subject of it: persuaded that no one can read it, with serious attention, without feeling his mind more deeply impressed with the importance of religion, his affections weaned from temporal concerns and drawn towards heaven, and his soul animated to run the heavenly race with more circumspection, patience, and vigour.

THE DESIRE OF THE NATION TAKEN AWAY WITH A STROKE: a Sermon, occasioned by the Death of her Royal Highness the Princess CHARLOTTE OF WALES; preached at the Baptist Meeting-house, Ely Place, Wisbeach, Nov. 19, 1817, the day of her interment, by J. JARROM. White, Wisbeach; Button and Mann, London, pp. 26. 8vo. Price One Shilling.

The interesting event which a few months ago involved the whole nation in tears, gave rise to a great number of funeral sermons, from almost every denomination of professors in the country. We are pleased, that one minister of the New Connection has been induced to comply with the request of his auditors, and to print a discourse on this melancholy occasion; and thus to ward off the charge of disaffection or inability, which might probably have been made against us, had no public testimony been given of our participation in the general sorrow.

Mr. Jarrom's discourse is founded on Ezek. xxiv. 26. "Son of Man, behold, I take away from thee, the desire of thine eyes with a stroke:" from which he observes—"that the lamented Princess, now no more, might be considered as the desire of the British Nation—that she is taken away with a stroke—and that this is to be viewed, and ought to be improved, as a providential dispensation." Each of these observations are illustrated, in a manly and sensible manner. The language, though plain and unadorned, and not always correct, is nervous; and the discourse, as a composition, may venture a comparison with many similar productions, on the same subject, from more noted divines. From so short a performance, it would be improper to make long extracts; but we insert the following, as containing interesting information, not perhaps known to every reader of the G. B. R. "It is a remarkable circumstance," says the Author, "that the Royal Family of England have possessed the Throne, for considerably more than a thousand years. Our present venerable Monarch is descended, in the female line, from Cerdic, the founder of the kingdom of West Saxony. He landed in England, in the Year 495; and having founded a kingdom, left it to his descendants; who, in succeeding generations, reduced all the other kingdoms of the Heptarchy under their own power, and became sole Monarchs of England. There

have indeed been periods in which several kings, not of this race, have in succession sat on the throne; but, in the course of time, the crown has always reverted to the same family again. It has not indeed always descended to the next in succession: it has been sometimes removed to collateral branches; but still it has been continued in the same family. A race of kings so long continued must be dear to the hearts of Englishmen: and the circumstance, that the same Royal Family has been preserved more than thirteen hundred years, and generally possessed the throne, and that one of its descendants now fills it, ought to be contemplated as an evidence of a divine Providence superintending the affairs of the nation." (Page 9. 10.)

We copy another short passage, as evidence of the loyalty of the preacher: though we cannot suppress our fears, that his respect for "the powers that be" has led him to adopt expressions more strong and unguarded than many of our readers may think a strict attention to facts will justify. "Since the accession of the house of Hanover, notwithstanding the wars we have had to lament and the debt entailed on us, the nation has prospered beyond any former example. Perhaps, since England was formed into a kingdom, there never was a period in which, for so long a time, internal peace and tranquility were enjoyed, as the nation has experienced since the revolution. During this period too, arts and sciences have prospered in proportion; and the civil and religious liberties of the people have been preserved and enlarged. The Brunswick family have always been firm supporters of the christian religion, and the staunch friends of protestantism. Their reign has been signalized by a strict adherence to the principles of the constitution, and attempts at arbitrary power have not been witnessed." Pages 10 and 11.

A COLLECTION OF HYMNS, *adapted to public worship; designed principally as a Supplement to the larger Hymn book, used in the General Baptist Churches; by J. JARROM. White, Wisbeach.* Price, in sheep, 1s. 6d. in calf, 2s.

This is a neat little volume, containing 257 hymns, ranged in the order of the subjects, and selected from Watts, Doddridge, Wesley, and a great many other authors. The selection appears to be made with considerable judgment and care; and the book to be well suited to the purpose designed.

NOTICE OF NEW PUBLICATIONS.

Mr. Pike of Derby is preparing a New Collection of Hymns ; and Mr. J. Freeston has in the Press, a Work under the title of *Advice to Young Ministers*, which will be published in March next. We shall take the earliest opportunity of introducing these compositions to the readers of the G. B. R.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE BIBLE :

Exemplified in the happy effects produced by reading the Scriptures amongst the Convicts sentenced to hard labour on board the Hulks.

At the Anniversary Meeting of the Isle of Sheppey Auxiliary Bible Society, held at Sheerness, on Tuesday, the 4th of November, the effects of scriptural instruction were strikingly exemplified in the statements given by the chaplains of the two convict ships at that port, of the conduct of the large bodies of convicts respectively under their charge. The Rev. Mr. Edwards, of the Bellerophon, having mentioned the attention of the prisoners in that ship to the reading and learning by rote, large portions of holy writ, asserted it as his opinion, that in any like number of labouring men not less swearing and profane language was to be found ; and that on the preceding Saturday, a remarkable instance of honesty and integrity had occurred : a convict, when at work on shore, had found *twelve shillings*, with which he immediately went to the officer, requesting him to adopt means to find the owner ; this he accordingly did, and it proved to be a labouring youth, whose whole week's wages did not amount to that sum !

The Rev. Mr. Price, of the Retribution, also gave a very gratifying account of the beneficial effects that have resulted from the measures adopted by government (we believe upon his recommendation) for dividing the convicts into classes, and of their attention to religious instruction.—A considerable number had, unknown to him, commenced a prayer-meeting among themselves : and one of them had that day requested him to present to the Bible Society the following lines, which were highly gratifying to the numerous and respectable body

of persons assembled on the occasion of its anniversary, and will, we doubt not, prove equally so to our readers:—

To the British and Foreign Bible Society, by a Convict on board the Retribution Hulk, Sheerness.

When without form the world was wrapp'd in sleep,
Chaotic darkness moved upon the deep,
God spake the Word from his eternal throne—
'Let there be light'—and light that instant shone.

So man by nature, bound in chains of sin,
Feels not his state, though dark and dead within,
Until the gospel breaks the gloom of night,
And in his heart creates celestial light.

Long has the world in mournful ign'rance stood,
And raging tyrants dyed their hands in blood:
But mark the change,—where Satan reign'd before,
And idol temples flow'd with human gore.
God's blessed Word reveals the glorious plan,
And brings salvation down to sinful man;
Untutor'd Indians feel the sparkling ray,
And midnight darkness kindles into day.

When torn from friends—imprison'd on the deep,
The wretched CONVICT bends his head to weep;
When burning tears in plenteous streams are shed,
And black Despair sits brooding round his bed,
Where can he turn—to *whom* for comfort go—
But to that WORD, which comfort can bestow?
Though we are *outcasts*, fast in mis'ry bound,
We gladly hear the gospel's joyful sound;
Not only hear, but feel its pow'ful sway,
And humbly bend our sinful knees to pray.
The word of God has pierc'd our darkness through,
And said, though fainting, 'Ye shall still pursue.'
Kind *Benefactors!* much to you we owe
For that dear *book* from whence our blessings flow.
Still spread the word, success shall crown the deed,
And JESUS' foes shall at his footstool bleed;
His kingdom spread with joy from shore to shore,
And 'he that stole, shall learn to steal no more.'

THE
GENERAL BAPTIST REPOSITORY.

No. XLVII.—Vol. VIII.—May 1st, 1818.

*MEMOIR of the LIFE and CHARACTER of
THOMAS PAINE, the INFIDEL.*

WE have taken frequent occasion to exemplify the excellence of christianity, by exhibiting details of the useful, honorable, and happy lives, and the peaceful deaths of its professors. In order to produce a similar effect, we have sometimes introduced accounts of the mischievous, disgraceful, and miserable conduct, and the wretched ends of its enemies. With this view, we now present our readers with a few particulars respecting the religious and moral character of that notorious infidel, Thomas Paine: omitting his political exploits, as less suited to the nature of this miscellany.

Thomas Paine, the son of a Quaker of good character, was born at Thetford, in Norfolk, Jan. 1737; and received a common education at the Free School of that place. When he left school, he worked, for some time, at his father's trade of stay-making; but, at sixteen years of age, he wandered to London, and thence to Dover. Already dissatisfied with habits of regularity and industry, he entered on board a ship of war, and was prevented from sailing in her, only by the intervention of his affectionate parent. Yet, notwithstanding paternal entreaties and exertions, he soon afterwards engaged again with the captain of a privateer, and went to sea.

When about twenty-two, he was settled, as a master stay-maker, at Sandwich, where he married his first wife, who died in a few months: and her death was hastened, as it was reported, by the ill-treatment of her husband. He then returned to Thetford; and, by the interest of his father's friends, obtained a place in the excise, which he held four years; when he was dismissed for misconduct. In the following year, he was restored to the excise, and in 1768 was stationed at

Lewes. Here he lodged with a tobacconist, who dying soon afterwards, Paine ingratiated himself with the widow, and carried on the business in his own name. In 1771, he married the daughter of his friend, the widow, with whom he lived in a state of constant discord for three years. His extravagance had then dissipated the property of the family which had unhappily united themselves with him, and the few remaining effects were sold for the benefit of his creditors. About the same time, being suspected of improper practices, he was again dismissed from the excise, and all efforts for his restoration were fruitless. His wife and he also agreed on articles of separation, and never had any future correspondence.

Thus thrown destitute on the world, he went to London; and, for a short time, supported himself as a garret-writer. By some means, he attracted the notice of Dr. Franklin, and from him obtained a recommendation to his American friends. In 1774, he emigrated to Philadelphia, and engaged with a bookseller as editor of a periodical work. America was then commencing the struggle which issued in her independence; and Paine's strength of mind and boldness of style contributed not a little to excite and support the ardour of the inhabitants. He was admitted to a place of some trust in the service of Congress; but obliged to resign it in consequence of having betrayed some official secrets. He however continued his political writings; and, at the close of the contest, received a gratuity of three thousand dollars, and an estate of three hundred acres of highly cultivated land in New York.

Peace being restored, Paine returned to England with the avowed design of promoting a revolution in this country. The steps he took to accomplish this purpose, the confusion and danger that ensued, and the methods by which his design was prevented are well known, and foreign to our object. He had not been two years here before he was thrown into prison for a debt of seven hundred pounds; and, being released by the intervention of friends, visited France, which was then commencing her career of revolution. He returned to England in 1791, and pursued his political schemes with increased boldness. A prosecution was instituted against him by government; but before its termination, he was declared a citizen of France by the National Convention, and elected a member of that assembly. He immediately proceeded to Paris, took

his seat as a legislator, and was soon afterwards declared an outlaw in England. In 1793, amidst the unexpected changes of that turbulent period, Paine was seized by the rulers of the French, suffered an imprisonment of eleven months, and narrowly escaped the guillotine. Previous to his apprehension, he had contracted habits of intemperance; and the quantity of brandy which he drank brought on a fever in prison, which nearly proved fatal. He was, at length, released; and remained in France till 1802; associating with the lowest company, indulging to great excess in liquor, and become so filthy in his dress and manners, and so notorious a sot, that all men of character in Paris avoided any intercourse with him.

Paine's political publications having obtained a wide circulation, procured him great celebrity, and as he thought, operated powerfully in producing important effects, his wish to make a noise and create confusion, induced him to attempt a revolution in religion. Though totally unacquainted with the subject, and destitute of a bible, he boldly declared himself the enemy of christianity, and published, at Paris, in 1794, the first part of his "Age of Reason." This pamphlet had nothing original in it, except boldness of assertion, daring impiety, and scurrility of language. These however were too well adapted to the taste of the multitude, and procured it many readers. Elated with success, he continued the attack, in 1796, in a second part of "the Age of Reason." He had now furnished himself, to use his own language, with a "bible and testament, and found them worse books than he had conceived." In this publication, impiety and scurrility were carried to a greater height than in the former part; and the ignorance and depravity of the author exhibited in more glaring colours. As however he had now the scriptures before him, some of his strictures assumed a greater appearance of plausibility. Unchecked by any sense of decency, unacquainted with the many pertinent and sufficient defences of revelation which had been published ages before he wrote, and expressing himself with great strength of language, he represented every apparent difference as an irreconcilable inconsistency, and magnified every real difficulty into an insurmountable objection. His remarks were therefore likely to have a deplorable effect on weak and uninformed minds, and excited considerable attention among the friends of religion. Many able replies

were published, well calculated to act as antidotes to the poison contained in his pamphlets; but, as they probably never met the eyes of those who were most in danger from the infection of the Age of Reason, and as the number and respectability of its opponents gave it an undeserved importance and contributed to its popularity, it is doubtful, whether it might not have been more prudent to have suffered this rancorous attack to have passed unnoticed into oblivion. Yet, the able and satisfactory replies, which this controversy occasioned, fully demonstrated the solidity and certainty of that evidence on which christianity depends; and doubtless have tended to remove the doubts and fix the faith of many honest enquirers.

When Paine left France, he returned to America, accompanied by an unhappy female, whom he had persuaded to desert her husband, and carry off with her, three sons; the youngest of which was named Thomas, and strongly resembled Paine in features and disposition. But these partners of his guilt were treated by him with rigour and neglect; and were frequently indebted to the sympathy of strangers for necessary supplies. And when their benefactors applied to him for remuneration of their expences, he resisted their claims, and even maintained actions at law to evade them. Indeed his usual practise was to contract debts, and if possible avoid the payment of them: his servant being obliged to sue him for her wages. Parsimony in every thing but brandy appeared in his whole conduct; though, according to his own account, his income then exceeded four hundred pounds a year. Unwilling to incur the expences of house-keeping, he lodged at private houses or low taverns, where he could indulge his sottish habits with the least restraint. But his constant intoxication, filthiness, and ill temper, had now increased to a degree that rendered him a nuisance in every family, and he was forced frequently to change his lodgings. From one public house, he was literally turned out into the street; and at last became so disgusting to all who knew him, that he replied, in a tone of wretchedness, when desired to leave one family: "Where shall I go? Nobody will take me in."

In the beginning of 1808, he took up his residence at a small tavern where a puppet show was daily exhibited. Here he was left to himself: was drunk every day, was neither washed, shaved, nor shirtd for weeks, and seemed to enjoy

his filth. While here, as might be expected from such a course of life, he had alarming attacks of apoplexy. At length, his friends, pitying his forlorn condition, forced him away from the tavern, and prevailed on a carman to board him. This man, knowing Paine's character, would only venture to take him for a week, on probation. In three days, he desired the friends of his guest to provide him another lodging: for he was such a morose, drunken, and dirty old man, that he could do nothing with him. An increased allowance however tempted him to permit him to continue. The same expedient was necessary, on several future occasions, so that the expence of his boarding and attendance advanced, at this place, from seven to twenty dollars a week; and his friends were glad to comply with any demand rather than remove him: well knowing the difficulty of prevailing on any other person to take the charge of so troublesome a guest. While at the carman's, he was regularly drunk twice a day: before dinner, when he went to sleep for several hours, and after supper. His peevishness was aggravated; his language rude and insulting, and his conduct unprincipled. He would have the best meat cooked for him; eat a little of it, and throw the remainder into the fire: in order, as he declared, that he might have the worth of the money that was paid for his board. He usually performed all the functions of nature in bed: and when censured for it by his landlady, replied, "I pay you money enough, and you shall labour for it."

Age and intemperance had now broken his naturally strong constitution, and he was reduced almost to a state of helplessness. Symptoms of approaching dissolution became apparent both to his friends and himself. He grew pensive and melancholy, and was especially anxious to secure a decent burying place for his remains. He applied to the quakers for permission to be interred in their ground, but did not succeed; and the refusal affected him deeply. As his death was evidently approaching, the female whom he had brought from France, to whom and her children he had bequeathed his property, hired a small house for him, and engaged a nurse to attend him: for neither gratitude nor affection could induce her to undertake the office herself. Indeed he always abused her, in the grossest terms, whenever she entered the room. For the first week, he drank large quantities of milk punch, which had, for some

time, been his chief sustenance, but afterwards took very little nourishment. He suffered at times great bodily pain; and, during its continuance, would roar out, in a tone which alarmed the whole house, "O Lord, help me! O God, help me! O Christ, help me! O Christ, help me!" repeating the same exclamations, without varying, for a considerable time. Once he observed to his physician, I think I can say what they make Jesus Christ say, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" He durst not be left alone by night or day. He not only required that some one should be with him, but must see that it was so; and therefore never suffered his curtains to be closed. If, on any occasion, he found himself alone, he would scream and halloo in an agony of terror, till somebody came to him. While he lay in this state, two ministers waited on him; and one of them said, "Mr. Paine, we visit you as friends and neighbours. You have now a full view of death; you cannot live long; and whosoever does not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ will assuredly be damned." "Let me," replied Paine, "have no more of your popish stuff. Get away with you—Good morning—Good morning." They however, called again, and met with a similar reception. When they were retired, he forbade their admittance in future: "for," said he, "they trouble me." His physician, desirous of ascertaining whether any change had taken place in his views of religion, chose the solemn hour of midnight, when watching with his patient, to make the inquiry. Paine suffering great torture, was, in his usual manner, crying out, "Lord help me! Christ help me! &c." when the doctor, after a serious preface, thus addressed him: "Mr. Paine, you must be sensible that we are acquainted with your religious opinions, as they are given to the world. What must we think of your present conduct? Why do you call on Jesus Christ to help you? Do you believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ? Come now, answer me honestly. I want an answer as from the lips of a dying man; for I verily believe that you will not live twenty-four hours." The doctor paused some time, at every question, but Paine only ceased from his exclamations, and made no answer. Again his physician observed: "Mr. Paine, you have not answered my question. Will you answer them? Do you believe? or do you wish to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?" After a pause of some minutes, Paine re-

plied, "I have no wish to believe on that subject." And never would speak again, though he lived two days afterwards.

It is probable, that, in the near prospect of death, his fears were alarmed, and his infidelity shaken; but his excessive pride of opinion, his inordinate vanity and self-love prevented him from expressing his doubts more explicitly, and rendered him cautious and reserved. This reserve was increased by some of his disciples, who endeavoured to support him to the last in his deistical principles, and animate him to "die like a man; lest the hypocrites should take advantage of his weakness." But the stings of an awakened conscience sometimes threw him off his guard, and induced him to speak with less ambiguity. A young woman, who was in the habit of carrying him refreshments from the table of a neighbouring gentleman, was one day asked by Paine, whether she had read the "Age of Reason." On her replying in the affirmative, he insisted on knowing her opinion of it. After some hesitation, she acknowledged that she thought it a very dangerous book, and for that reason had burnt it. To this he answered, "I wish all who have read it, had been as wise as you. If ever the devil had an agent on earth I have been one."—The unhappy woman who had accompanied him to America lamented her delusion, observing: "For this man, I have given up my family and friends, my property and my religion; judge then of my distress, when he tells me, that the principles he has taught me will not bear me out." She seemed very desirous of his dissolution, and much pleased when it happened.

His weakness increasing, in the intervals of pain, he appeared quite exhausted, and lay without speaking a word, except asking, "Is any body in the room? Who's there?" During these seasons of tranquility, his nurse, a pious woman, frequently read the bible to him for hours, and told him, that if he would throw himself on the mercy of Christ, he would find relief. He appeared to listen attentively to her reading and observations, but made no reply. He never desired her to read, nor ever wished her to lay the book aside. At length, he expired, June 8th, 1809, and was buried, according to the direction of his last will, on his own farm.

Such was the affecting end of Thomas Paine. Who can read these particulars without recollecting the instructive de-

claration of the prophet? "The wicked are like a troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

MEMOIR of the late Mr. WILLIAM CURTIS, Pastor of the GENERAL BAPTIST CHURCH at MORCOT:

"Mark the perfect man and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace." DAVID.

Mr. William Curtis, was born, Dec. 13th, 1746, at Haringworth, in Northamptonshire. He was descended from pious ancestors. His great grandfather, Stephen Curtis, was a General Baptist minister, under the tyrannical reigns of the Stuarts, and suffered great persecution for the sake of a good conscience: and his grandfather, father and mother, were all respectable members of General Baptist churches. It was therefore to be expected that he would be instructed to know the scriptures from his youth. His mind was early impressed with the awfulness of sin, and the great importance of real religion. As he advanced in years, he perceived the excellence of genuine piety, and was anxious to possess that happiness which, he believed, all true christians enjoyed. This rendered him eager to seize every opportunity of improving his knowledge of divine things; and induced him diligently to read the bible and other religious books. These he usually took with him when he went to his daily employment; that he might seize every vacant moment to peruse them. His father was a shepherd, and brought up his son to the same occupation: who soon became very much attached to it, and pursued it till within a few years of his death.

In 1774, he was baptized, and received into the G. B. church at Morcot. His activity and usefulness soon attracted the notice of his friends, and tended much to the benefit of the small society with which he stood united. He was ordained to the office of deacon, Oct. 10th, 1784, by Joseph Adams, of Napton; and his steadiness, gravity, and excellent conduct, in the discharge of the important duties of that situation, procured for him a good degree and great boldness in the faith.

Soon after this, the church observing his consistent walk and prudent conduct, and believing that he possessed useful

abilities, earnestly solicited him to assist their venerable pastor, Mr. W. Stanger, whose age and infirmities almost incapacitated him for the sacred work. But, though the pastor himself cordially joined in this request, Mr. Curtis declined it, under a deep sense of the importance of the ministerial work, and his own unfitness for it. In 1790, it pleased the great head of the church to remove Mr. Stanger to his reward; and the destitute people renewed their entreaties to Mr. Curtis to favor them with his labours in the word and doctrine. He complied so far as to preach frequently; but, for several years, resolutely opposed all their attempts to induce him to accept the office of pastor. Observing however, with deep concern, the disadvantages which the cause sustained in being deprived of the regular administration of the ordinances, he, at length, complied; and was ordained, June 26th, 1791: when Mr. Burgess, of Fleet, introduced the service, and preached to the people, from 1 Thess. v 13. 14; Mr. Mabbett offered the ordination prayer; and Mr. Adams, of Napton, asked the questions, and gave the charge to the minister, from Acts, xx. 28.

Being now regularly invested with the sacred office, he endeavoured diligently to discharge its duties. Deeply impressed with a sense of the greatness and importance of these duties, he was often led to exclaim, "Who is sufficient for them?" and earnestly to intreat an interest in the prayers of his friends, that utterance might be given him. His assiduous labours were crowned with success. Many attended his ministry and found the word of God powerful to the salvation of their souls. The cause prospered in his hands, and the friends of the Redeemer rejoiced. Besides his regular labours at Morsot, Mr. Curtis opened his own dwelling house, at Haringworth, and maintained religious worship there, twice a week; which was rendered very useful to the neighbourhood, and is still continued.

While this good man was thus exerting himself in the cause of religion, it pleased God to call him to sustain several domestic trials. Soon after his ordination, he lost two of his beloved children in quick succession; and, in 1812, was bereaved of his wife, with whom he had lived, for many years, in the greatest harmony and affection. But, under these afflictive dispensations, he was enabled to do honor to the religion

he professed. Though his affectionate heart felt the stroke severely, yet he meekly resigned himself to the divine appointment; and said, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." Not being called with respect to them, to sorrow as those who have no hope, and being himself fixt on the rock of ages, he anticipated, with humble confidence, the hour when he should again meet his dear relatives around the throne of God and the Lamb.

In 1815, his health declined rapidly, and the infirmities of age rendered him incapable of attending regularly to the duties of his station. He observed with real sorrow the usual effects, in the decline of the cause. Persuaded that his usefulness as a minister was near a close, he wished to resign his office, and urged his friends to look out for a successor. For some time, they were unable to obtain one, and he was obliged to serve them as often as his weakness would permit. At last a regular preacher was settled with them, and he resigned the whole labour to him. He engaged to administer the Lord's supper, till a pastor was ordained; but his great Master, whose thoughts are not as our thoughts, saw that his work was done; and he never was able to go to the public worship afterwards. He preached his last sermon at Morcot, with much difficulty, about eight weeks before he died: and was, during that period, confined to his room; and the greatest part of it, to his bed.

In his last illness, he often suffered much bodily pain, and had great difficulty in breathing; yet he was never heard to murmur, but was generally in a comfortable state of mind. When able to speak, it was pleasing and edifying to hear his discourse. He would often say: "I am a poor sinner, but my hope is in Christ. What could I now do, without my dear Saviour? I find him to be more and more precious to my soul." Once, and but once, the enemy of souls was permitted to try his faith; and he complained of hardness of heart, darkness of mind, and the loss of consolation. But sorrow endured only for a night, and joy came in the morning. His doubts were removed, his peace restored, and he was never afterwards thus exercised. His usual answer, when asked how he felt in the prospect of eternity, was "Very comfortable; bless the Lord." As he drew nearer the hour of dissolution, speaking became painfully difficult. A relative sitting at his bedside,

and observing him to labour hard for breath, said, "It is hard work." He eagerly looked up, and replied, "Patience and perseverance,"—when his strength failed him, and he could articulate no more. A few days before his departure, a friend reminding him of the love of Christ to true believers, and the firm foundation on which their hopes are built, he replied, "Ah! I shall not know the depths of misery from which I am saved, and the greatness and fulness of a Saviour's love, till I see him face to face in glory." The last day of life, he was wholly unable to speak, but appeared perfectly sensible and comfortable to the last. He sweetly fell asleep in Jesus, on the evening of September, 10th, 1817, having nearly completed his seventy first year; leaving one child and an affectionate widow to lament their loss. May his God be their God; and may all that were dear to him on earth, be happy with him in heaven.—His remains were interred on the Saturday following, and on the Lord's day, his funeral sermon was preached, at Moreot, to a large and affected congregation, from 2 Cor. xiii. 11. "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." This passage was chosen by the aged pastor himself, as his dying charge to his beloved people. In the evening of the same day, at the request of several friends, another discourse was delivered at Burndon, where preaching has lately been established, from Num. xxiii. 10. Nor were these marks of esteem confined to his own denomination: the curate of Haringworth paid a tribute of respect to the memory of his dissenting brother, by a discourse on the occasion of his death, from 2 Cor. v. 1.

Mr. Curtis laboured in all his conduct, to adorn the doctrine of God his Saviour. As a father and husband, he was uniformly kind, indulgent, and affectionate; endeavouring to walk before his house with a perfect heart. In his dealings with mankind, he was honest, prudent, and friendly: constantly keeping a strict guard over his conversation, lest his words or actions should cause the ways of truth to be censured. His uprightness was softened by a candour and sweetness of disposition which attracted the love and esteem of all that knew him. As far as Providence had enabled him, he was ready to communicate to the necessitous; and whatever he did, he did heartily as to the Lord. As a friend, he was exemplary for

fidelity and affection; ready to sympathize with those who were in trouble. He esteemed it a part of friendship to be faithful to give a word of advice or even of reproof when necessary; but this delicate duty he performed with the greatest privacy, caution and affection. His friendship therefore was sought by many; and when once gained was solid and lasting.

As a christian, he was a disciple of him who was meek and lowly in heart. With the most abasing views of himself he would often say, "I have nothing to be proud of, but much to humble me in the dust before God." He laboured after fervour in devotion, and a humble walk with God, as the great source of life and spirituality in religion: and in these respects he excelled. Under trials and afflictions, of which he was called to endure many, he was patient and resigned; considering that it was through much tribulation that he must enter into the kingdom. When persecuted or reproached, he endeavoured to imitate him, "who when he was reviled, reviled not again—when he suffered, threatened not—but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously." Yet, though thus conscientiously labouring to glorify his Saviour, he acknowledged his imperfections, was deeply humbled before God on their account, and rested, for pardon and acceptance, wholly on the atonement of Christ.

Though not possessed of shining talents as a preacher, yet his discourses were generally calculated to be useful. Faithful in warning the wicked and admonishing professors, he watched for souls as one that must give an account. The great aim of all his exertions was to promote love and unity among his brethren, to build them up in a practical regard to the great fundamental truths of the gospel, and to promote genuine and fervent piety in their souls. To these important ends his ministry was blest in a great degree; though, owing to his infirmities, the cause drooped in the latter years of his life. He was very desirous of seeing it revive; but was prevented by being so soon called to his reward. Were he now permitted to re-visit the scenes of his former labours, he would rejoice to see the seed which he had sown springing up, and giving a pleasing prospect of a glorious harvest.

Who can read this plain account of the useful life and happy death of this respectable though obscure christian, and compare it with the disgusting character in the preceding article,

and not join in Balaam's wish, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." P. B.

ON SATANIC INFLUENCE.

To the EDITOR of the G. B. R.

SIR,

If the following remarks on the passage mentioned by your correspondent W. T. page 179, of the last number of the G. B. R. meet your approbation, they are at your service.

Our Saviour's address to Peter, Luke xxii. 31, 32, reads thus, "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

In order to *illustrate* this important text, let it be carefully observed, 1st. That it foretels a trial of severe afflictions that was about to fall on the disciples of our blessed Lord in general. Probably the high priest's hall was in the Redeemer's thoughts when he spoke; and as the trial *Peter* would undergo was to be the first in this series of persecutions, he addressed himself to Peter in particular. "Simon, Simon." But, as the language plainly indicates, the trial of the *other* disciples was also contemplated: for it is not said, "Satan has desired to have thee;" but, "to have you;" a form, never, so far as I can recollect, adopted by the Saviour, when solemnly speaking to, and concerning a single individual. And it is with this view that Peter is directed to turn his experience to general profit. "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

2nd. That it points out the principal agent by whom these afflictions should be promoted. For though the evils were brought on by the wickedness of men, yet our Lord well knew that these men would be instigated to persecute him in his followers, by the devil; who would thus attempt to stop the progress of a religion so fatal to his influence in the world. "Satan has desired to have you." The hands which will persecute you are the hands of men; but the subtilty and rage will be those of the devil.

3rd. A means is suggested by which this malignant and powerful enemy may be effectually resisted. *Faith* in the glorious truths of the gospel. Our Lord was perfectly aware of the impossibility of resisting the dreadful temptations with which the disciples would soon be assailed, by earthly motives. He knew that only the hope set before a persevering believer in the gospel, could enable any to endure the cross. That a man would choose to suffer affliction with the people of God no longer than while he should have respect to the recompence of reward. That the dreadful afflictions of persecution could only be counted light and short, while he that suffered them endured as seeing him who is invisible, and looked at the things which are eternal, of which *faith* is the only evidence on earth. "I have prayed for thee, Simon, that thy *faith* fail not."

For a further *illustration* of this passage, we may have recourse to the hall of the Jewish high priest, to the first persecution at Jerusalem, and to the history of the Acts of the Apostles in general. Satan, full of rage against the first propagators of christianity, stirred up the civil and ecclesiastical authorities at Jerusalem, to forbid all preaching in the name of Jesus, and to persecute to the last extremity all who should dare to violate that mandate. It was this persecution which "sifted the disciples as wheat, and scattered them as chaff." They were scattered abroad through all the regions of Judæa and Samaria. But, blessed be God, "they went every where *preaching the gospel.*"

As a display of the spirit which actuated these primitive persecutors, we may select the case of Stephen. "The synagogue of the Libertines" was a synagogue of Satan; who stirred up those wicked men, first to dispute with the holy deacon, and, when argument failed, to suborn false witnesses against him. The *council*, like that of Pandæmonium, was a council of demons. Who else could be capable of acting as they acted, under such circumstances as those in which they were placed. "They saw the face of Stephen as if it had been the face of an angel;" and, it is plain, they heard his voice as it had been the voice of an angel. And they, like demons, that they might no longer hear the irresistible tongue, gnashed on him with their teeth, stopped their ears, and ran upon him; pushed him out of the city, and stoned him to death, without

having passed any sentence upon him, or even pretended to find him guilty : being prevented from going through with his trial, by the energy of his defence, and the glory of his appearance ; because he looked, and spake like an angel !

He must surely be of very peculiar mental constitution, who could see a grave national council thus transported, thus carried away from all the *forms* of justice, from every dictate of reason, and all appearance of decent sobriety : thus adopting the wildest furies of an illiterate barbarian mob ; and not discover in all this a diabolical agency, and an illustration of that declaration, " Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat."

Again, what power less than that of the god of this world, could so blind the mind of Peter, as to induce him to enter the hall of that high priest, who was then *openly* plotting the death of him for whose sake alone he came thither : and to mix with those very servants, from one of whom he had just cut an ear, in resisting the legal authorities, and attempting to defend him whom they were then trying as a malefactor ? Who brought Peter hither, in the *gloomy season of darkness*, when the cowardly passion of fear operates with double violence ? Who conducted him hither *alone*, where the eyes of his fellow disciples were not upon him, and none was near to counsel or support him ? Who stimulated first one, and then another, and even, after repeated absolute denials, a third, to rise up and affirm, " This fellow is one of them ?" And who taught even " maid servants" to forget the natural modesty of their sex and situation, and to become voluntary public accusers of one so much a stranger to them, in the midst of so large an assemblage of persons ? Who ? The devil. This is the only answer that will agree with either reason or scripture. This agrees perfectly with both.

Peter's *faith failed* ; at least, partially. He forgot the caution given him a few hours before, and ceased to regulate his conduct by the maxims of divine wisdom. He looked on the disgrace of an arrest, and the danger of falling under the judgment of the high priests : but he looked not on the *throne* which had been promised him ; nor remembered that saying, " Whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall save it." *His faith failed* ; and he fell. There remained no other shield

with which he might quench the fiery darts of the wicked one. He gave up his only defence, and was vanquished.

On the other hand, let us observe the great apostle of the gentiles, after his conversion, enduring almost unparalleled sufferings, without being in any instance driven from the path of truth and duty. We see his hands bound with a chain, his feet made fast in the stocks, his back wounded with scourges; which way soever he directs his steps, bonds and imprisonments await him, and death seems to lie in ambush in his every path! But none of these things can move him; because, it was "for the *hope of Israel* he was bound with a chain: and he thought it not only not incredible, but certain, that God could and would raise the dead. He knew that to be absent from the body was to be present with the Lord; and, when he was ready to be *offered up*," his will kept pace with his sufferings, because he looked for a crown of righteousness, which the Lord would give him in *the day of his departure*. Thus by *faith* he quenched all the fiery darts of the *wicked one*, and became greater than any mere military conqueror, through him who loved him, and strengthened him.

Having thus far *illustrated* our text, let us now *apply* the remarks which have been made to our religious improvement.

And *first*. Let every one be tremblingly alive to his danger from real, diabolical agency in the world. How great is the *malice* of the tempter! His most earnest wish, his heart's desire is, that he may have us. How indefatigable is his diligence! He searches every place, he examines with minutest scrutiny every object in which he may possibly find an auxiliary. As a judge examines a charge, and the evidences in support of that charge, that he may discover the truth, so diligent is the arch-enemy of our souls, in seeking out means whereby he may destroy us and our religion together.

How tremendous is his power! If once he gains permission, he will sift us as wheat. He will toss us in worldly trouble, as grain is tossed with the shovel, to separate it from the chaff. He will agitate our passions, as corn is agitated when shaken in a sieve. What eminent instances have we of this, in the sufferings of holy Job, in Peter, in Ananias and Sapphira, and in Judas Iscariot.

Let no one imagine that he is too young to be in danger, What the poet says of death, may fitly be applied to this ty-

rant, "He delights to smite, what smitten most proclaims the pride of power." He knows no greater joy than that derived from the destruction of innocence, and from seeing the thorn of guilt rankling in the conscience of the youthful victim. Let none suppose that his attainments in the divine religion of Jesus, have elevated him above the reach of Satan's fiery darts. He *prevailed* against the most favored mortal under the law; and he had the impudent audacity to *attack* the Son of God. Let no one fancy that he has found a station on earth which is without the range of this active adversary. "He goeth about" every where, "seeking whom he may devour." He attacked Joseph in the royal palace; Paul in the sacred temple of the living God; Peter in the house of a chief minister of religion; and Jesus in the dreary desart, and in the rural garden. No age, nor place, nor time, nor sex, nor earthly distinction, nor religious privilege, can render us secure from the attacks of this wily and malignant foe. We have no hope but in the mediation of Christ, the devotion of our souls to his service, and the stability of our faith in his promises and declarations. Therefore: let us place ourselves in the best posture of defence. Let us take the shield of *faith*. Let us be frequently meditating on the awful truths of divine revelation. The shortness of life—the strictness of judgment—the terrors of hell—and the glories of heaven, form the noblest as well as the most profitable subjects of meditation. And, in proportion as we become more impressed with the scenes of eternity, the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them, will have less influence upon us.

And while we have our armour about us, we should be careful never to be taken by surprise. Peter seems, in compliance with the direction, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren," to have written that exhortation, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." Let us be *watchful*, and pay a strict attention to the state of our souls—the nature of our constitution and situation—and to the character of our companions. Had Peter *thus* watched, he had avoided the hall of the high priest, and the snare of the devil. Let us be *sober*. "Mortify your members which are upon the earth," is a most important direction for him that would arrive at heaven. Let our passions be cool, our habits regu-

lar, and our appetites under the control of religious principles. In particular, let us ever remember that "strong drink is raging;" and that "redness of eyes" is not the greatest evil to be dreaded by him "who continues long at the wine." Had Ahasuerus attended properly to this, he had not exposed himself to contempt, and to the loss of a queen, who had sufficient modesty to shun the gaze of the drunkard, and a sufficient sense of honor to know what was due to herself. Had Herod duly observed this rule, he would not have sworn incautious oaths—murdered the ambassador of heaven—and planted in his conscience those terrors, which at the report of a miracle, made him anticipate vengeance, and exclaim, "John, whom I beheaded, is risen from the dead."

And, when we have done all, let us not trust in ourselves; but in the all-prevalent intercession of Jesus Christ. We should do ill to trust to this without exerting all our powers. He prayed for Peter; yet Peter fell. But we should do worse still, if we should trust to ourselves instead of trusting in him. In this case, we should fall to rise no more. We should unite faith with diligence; and because with all our circumspection, we know nothing of all that is before us, let us pray, lest we enter into temptation. "Deliver us from the evil one," is a cry that half vanquishes the enemy. And "Satan trembles, when he sees—the weakest saint upon his knees."

Finally. Let no one be discouraged, or cast down by reason of temptation. "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, as though some strange thing happened to you." No, this is not strange. It is the common road to the paradise of God. Neither the number, nor the strength, nor even the nature of our temptations, can prove us to be reprobates. It is only the reception we give to them that can prove any thing. If we resist manfully, we shall know in due season that "blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life." The holiest man on earth may be tempted to commit the greatest of crimes. The adorable Saviour himself was tempted to infidelity, to presumption, and to the vilest idolatry, even that of worshipping the devil. If these things have been done to the Lord, let not the servants be troubled, because they drink of the same cup. It is our comfort that, Satan can never try us without leave from our heavenly Father. He can never go be-

yond the liberty granted him by God. Our gracious God will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able to bear. Our gracious Redeemer interests himself for us. And, though we may be sifted as wheat; yet, like wheat, we shall finally be gathered into the garner of God. There "the wicked will cease their troubling, and the weary will be at rest." Thither may God, in infinite mercy, bring the reader; to Him be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

PHI.

NORWICH CHURCH COVENANT.

To the EDITOR of the G. B. R.

DEAR BROTHER,

As the G. B. church in Norwich stands a candidate for admission into the New Connection, it was thought, by several of our friends, that the insertion of the inclosed would be interesting to your readers, and enable them to form their opinion as to the propriety of receiving that society into the union. The sentiments of the covenant are those of the present church, except a very few individuals, who, it is hoped, are returning to those truths from which they have for some time been diverted. That the ancient faith, piety, zeal, and success of our worthy ancestors may be fully manifest in our Connection, and that the Lord God of our fathers may increase us a thousand fold, is the earnest prayer of

Yours, in the bonds of the gospel,

Norwich, April 7th, 1818.

J. P.

A CONFESSION of FAITH and CHURCH COVENANT of the ancient GENERAL BAPTIST CHURCH, PRIORY YARD, NORWICH, dated August 22nd, 1717.

"We, whose names are underwritten, do, in the fear of the Lord, first give ourselves unto him, hereby signifying our sincere desire to devote our bodies and souls to his service, who hath plentifully provided for us, and so dearly loved us in his son Jesus Christ; and do resolve, in his strength to labour to bring our affections into a holy conformity to his holy word, both in matters of faith and practice, as we may find the one revealed and the other commanded by our glorious Mediator and Law-giver, the Lord Jesus Christ."

“ We, by mutual consent, do agree to that ancient constitution upon which our brethren, the baptized believers, from time to time, have fixed; being founded upon the scriptures of truth, and summed up in Heb. vi. 1, 2.”

“ We, by mutual consent, do declare, that there is one and but one living and true God, who is best known and discovered to the sons of men, by the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. That there is one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father in truth and love, who is both God and man; and one Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and Son, to enlighten our minds into the mysteries of Christ, as revealed in the word of the Lord.”

“ We do resolve together, through grace, not to receive any thing as a rule of faith and practice, under any pretence whatsoever, without divine authority from God's word.”

“ We also give our consent and assent to the substance of faith and practice, contained in the Brief Declaration of Faith, set forth by several messengers, elders, and brethren of the churches of baptized believers, which was reprinted, in the year of our Lord 1691, at the request of those who hold the doctrines of universal redemption: yet not receiving it from them who were but fallible men, but believing it to be founded on the unerring word of the Lord, and so assenting to the truths therein contained.”

“ And hoping that we are all members of that body of which Christ is the head, united to him by that one Spirit, we further desire, through the aid of that Spirit, to make an increase of the body unto the edifying of ourselves in love; purposing in our hearts, each one of us in his respective place, to learn and do his duties and office of love each to one another's souls, in order to the building ourselves up in our most holy faith; continuing in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and breaking of bread, and in prayer, one with another in public, and for each other in private, according to our several places and abilities; freely giving up ourselves to each other to be ruled and governed by one another, according as we are directed thereto by the word of our Lord; resolving to encourage virtue and piety, and to beat down vice and iniquity, without knowing of faces or respect of persons, that partiality may not spring up in our borders: in order that all spiritual privileges and immunities, belonging both to officers and members, may

have free course amongst us, that there be no complaints in our society and community; but that the exercise of good government may prove destructive of all iniquity and impurity, and a protection to godliness and piety; and that there may be free traffic and commerce of spiritual immunities within the walls of our Sion, to the intent that things might thrive and flourish with us. This shall be the prayer of us.

Signed by thirty brethren and thirty-nine sisters.

The EVIL CONSEQUENCES of ADMITTING CANDIDATES TOO HASTILY INTO CHURCH FELLOWSHIP.

Mr. T. Davye was the pastor of the General Baptist Church at Leicester, in the former part of the last century, and published a piece on baptism, in 1719. The following extracts from the appendix to this work relate to a very important branch of the order of a church of Christ: and we hope that the insertion of them in this miscellany may prove beneficial to the ministers and churches of the New Connection.

“There’s no man, as far as I am able to know my own heart, that more rejoices at the conversion of a sinner than myself, or is more glad to see a soul come over to Jesus Christ. I would not break the bruised reed, or quench the smoking flax: I would not, for a world, throw water upon a spark of grace, or do any thing that might in the least discourage a soul’s coming over to Christ, or embracing his truth. Nor do I expect, that, as in nature, so in grace, infants should be grown men: after the new birth we are to *grow* in grace, knowledge, faith, love, &c. unto some perfection in Christ our head. All I am pleading for and desiring, is, that we may labour to lay new creatures into God’s church. If we can but discern what we call real grace and conversion, true repentance and faith, though weak, in those who offer themselves for church membership, they are not to be refused. But I have always thought it is a difficult thing for a minister to discern this: a sudden offer to baptism, or a hearing in our assembly for a short time before, will not ordinarily discover this great new creature change. Therefore I should judge a fit time, consideration, warning, examination, and instruction, and the visi-

ble appearance of a holy and good conversation, necessary for so great a work.

But some, owning the doctrine of baptism, desire admittance into the church, while they are short of the main work of grace in their souls, and also too deficient as to their knowledge and understanding of the other fundamental points of the Christian religion, necessary to be known and well understood. My chief business at present is with these. And here I would,

I. Offer a caution to the person desiring baptism.

II. To the ministers of Christ, receiving members into the church. And then,

III. Shew, in some instances, the ill consequences and tendency of receiving into the church persons not duly qualified; or, which is the same thing, in whom we cannot discern a real and sound conversion.

I. As to the persons who offer themselves to baptism; it is a great and dangerous fault, that they do not thoroughly examine their spiritual state and condition, and that they remain ignorant of the nature and work of conversion and regeneration. They have, it may be, changed their opinion, and left the congregation with which they walked, to go to another, and take that for a change of nature: in short, they take on them a form of godliness, and submit to baptism, and partake of the Lord's table, and all is done; when, alas! all this while sin reigns, the nature is unsanctified, and they are in their old Adamic state of unregeneracy.

II. I am ready to think that some ministers are here to blame, who should know and discern better, or stay till they have some well-grounded hope or proof of their real conversion. If the candidates for baptism are yet in their old state, dark, ignorant, not yet anointed with spiritual *eye-salve*, as some of those, Rev. iii. 17, 18, no wonder they cannot see themselves and their state. They are not made spiritual, and therefore have not their spiritual *senses exercised*, Heb. v. 14. They see not, taste not, feel not, move not, so as to act aright in spiritual things: but God's ministering servants should know better, see better, understand better, taste and experience better. Therefore we are most to blame who do not take greater care of such souls, and teach, inform, and enlighten them better, and with patience wait a due time for an assured proof, at least a well-grounded hope of their real conversion.

and change. We are most to be blamed, if we do not wait and see the fruits of their faith and repentance in a good life: if we do not satisfy ourselves what they have felt under the spirit's convictions of sin, and whether their souls have been pierced by the word, Heb. iv. 12, comforted under it, burdened with the sense of sin, and crying out to Christ for that ease and rest which he alone can give, Matt. xi. 29. Acts xvi. 30, what tastes they have had of the love of God, what manifestations of his grace, what desires after Christ, what communion with him; in a word, whether they have had, in some little measure, such tastes and experiences as are recorded in the following scriptures, Rom. v. 5, 1 Pet. ii. 3, Psal. lxxvi. 16, and cxlii. 1, and lxxiii. 1. These, and such like things, we should endeavour after, and labour to see in them.

III. I shall now consider and lay open the ill tendency and dangerous consequences of admitting members too hastily into God's church; by which means there is, in many professors, nothing to be found but the shadow and form of godliness, without the substance and thing itself: a body or carcass without the soul, spirit, and life thereof.

1. Here is a fatal error indulged. The souls of such as are received into the church before they have experienced a real renovation, are in the utmost danger of remaining in a natural state. They sit down and take their rest in this new form which they have put on, and in the work which they have now done; their souls are under the spiritual delusion of Satan, their old enemy. Thus they plod and go on to their dying day, in the new way which they have entered; they *turn like the door upon the hinges*, and make no manner of progress towards heaven. When dangers arise, when the sun of *persecution* burns, or *the winds blow*, they are *offended*, and will walk no more with Christ's people. In a word, not being stably rooted and founded in and upon Jesus Christ, they do this and that to-day, and repent of it to-morrow; they *have only a name to live, yet are spiritually dead*, Rev. iii. 1. Their souls are split upon this dangerous mistake of their spiritual state; their building is on the *sand*, instead of the *rock*; they are a little convicted under a sermon, awakened and stirred up by an afflicting Providence, such as the death of a friend, sickness, or loss; this puts them upon duty, and thereupon immediately they come into the church of God; and when this is done, all their

heat and zeal is quickly over, and they are Christians just as they were before. Yet it must be acknowledged, that when God brings home souls to himself, he makes use of many such afflicting providences in conjunction with his spirit to do the work. All that I would propose, is only to wait and see the fruit of these things, in a happy change and conversion, and in the leading of a new and spiritual life; for want of which issue, their souls are, I say, under delusion, and in danger to miscarry for ever.

2. By this, ministers are preposterous in their work, and often forced to begin at the wrong end. We should speak to church-members, not as to persons unconverted; but as to new creatures in Christ Jesus, Eph. ii. 10, which, God knows, we can but seldom do. Some good and learned expositors of scripture conclude that the temple was a typical emblem of this our gospel-work, when *Solomon* built that glorious house, 1 Kin. vii. 7. *The house, when it was in building, was built of stone, made ready before it was brought thither; so that there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was building.* The timber and stone was all hewed, squared, and made ready; and there was nothing to do but to put it together, without any noise of axe or hammer: whereby we are instructed that Christ's spiritual house is to be made up of materials squared, hewed, fitted, and made ready to be laid in without any noise. But alas! we in our work among members of our churches, are often like the smiths, beating upon the anvil; labouring to forge, frame and beat out the new creature-work upon them; shewing its nature and necessity, when the work should be done before: and we should be speaking counsel or comfort, building up or polishing the new creature in them; for which there is no room, where we cannot discern Christ really formed. But the mention of this leads to another consequence.

3. Here is a church made up mostly of formal Christians, and ignorant professors only; an inconsistent, incoherent thing, a contradiction in nature, viz. a spiritual living house, made up of dead lifeless materials; a superstructure pretended to be built upon Jesus Christ as the foundation, and yet no spiritual cement, nothing that truly knits or binds the several parts of it either to Christ or to each other. And so this seemingly glorious fabric miserably falls into ruin and desolation; seem-

ing graces wither, love cools and languishes, faith decays, hope dies, and profession itself vanishes and disappears. If trial or persecution comes, formal Christians return from whence they came; all their fine appearance dwindles into nothing. All church members ought to be, according to the apostle's expression, 1 Pet. ii. 5, *as lively stones built upon a spiritual house*. Dead and lifeless stones can never make up a spiritual building.

4. Another ill consequence of admitting such as do not afford a hopeful appearance of true grace, is, that hereby many in our churches are but a little degree, (or nothing truly) better than the world. The civil, or morally honest man, equals, if not excels, the formal professor; is more true, just and faithful than he. Nay, a sober heathen, a *Socrates*, a *Plato*, a *Seneca*, is as conscientious, temperate, patient, righteous, as he. There must be a great defect in the morals of a professor of Christianity, where there is not a right ground-work of grace. And such men's religion consists most in talk, but not in experience. Hence our conversation in the world is ordinarily so much like the world; we do little or nothing *more than others*, Mat. v. 20, 47. Our example is not so bright and shining as it ought, and as it would be, if what we call grace was really in us. The best and most holy among the people of God, it is true, come infinitely short of what they should do: and our manifold slips and falls (with inward shame and deep humility we may acknowledge it) makes us very unlike ourselves as Christians. But, were our churches generally made up of persons truly gracious and renewed, they would in their conversation be more exemplary; they would be patterns of patience, humility, honesty, sobriety, heavenly-mindedness, and self-denial; whereas we are too much like the world, little differing but in profession; as earthly-minded, gratifying the flesh, light, vain, and unsavoury as others: for *the fig-tree cannot bear olive-berries, or the vine figs*; see Jam. iii. 10, 11, 12. We ought therefore to take abundance of care that those we admit, be of sober, righteous and godly conversation, which is the evidence of a gracious change.

5. Here is matter of complaint to the real converted Christians, who are true members of Christ and his church; they cannot with such hold and enjoy communion. As there is communion with every member of Christ, and Christ himself;

so also among christians themselves, 1 Cor. x. 16. There is a comfortable and joyful communion in prayers, conversation, experiences, telling one another what God had done for their souls, as Psal. lxxvi. 16. *If we walk in the light, we have fellowship one with another*, 1 John i. 7. But here, alas! we cannot meet with one among many of us, that we can pray with, or who can pray with us. Are we at home in the family? They cannot do it. Are they upon occasion in God's house, where this duty should be performed by a variety of persons, upon humiliation days, or the like? Why, they cannot be brought to do it. Do they walk or sit together with us in company? There's no savory or heavenly converse; all dead, lifeless, spiritless earth. In a word, without great care in the admission of members, we go the ready way to be a body made up of such, among whom there cannot be this spiritual fellowship. And where any thing of this nature comes to pass, it is a just cause of complaint to a truly sanctified member of the church of Christ.

6. And lastly, here is matter of mournful complaint to the labouring ministers of Jesus Christ: and this burden they do in a great measure bring upon themselves by want of due care and circumspection. Persons in the churches grow not; they are heartless, lifeless, and spiritless: they seldom come to ordinances; and when they do come, they are dead, and do all duties as if they did them not. We look on them, and see that they pray, eat, hear, as if they did it not. Why, how should it be otherwise? How should a dead plant grow, a dead tree bear fruit, a dead man spiritually eat, move, or breathe? In a word, the main thing is wanting; a spiritual life, nature, and principle, whereby they should perform these vital and spiritual operations. We sit down and mourn within ourselves to see that it is really so: and the true reason is, they are not right in the first beginning.

But here I meet with an objection very plausible, viz. that we cannot justly refuse a person when he comes and says he believes, and desires baptism, if we have nothing really evil to charge against him: that the apostles readily received all upon such profession: and moreover, that such persons may, if denied, be thereupon angry and disgusted, and come no more at our assemblies.

There is no doubt that the apostles did receive persons into

the churches immediately upon their profession. But then, as has been already intimated, true and real conversions were commonly more instantly and miraculously wrought, than now. Besides, they had greater measures of the spirit, to discern and know men and things, changes and conversions, than we can pretend to; as is clear from Acts v. 2, and other places. We live in a nation where the greatest number profess the christian religion, and look upon themselves as christians: and very many, as we have already seen, when they find reason to change their opinions, are ready to conclude that then for certain their nature is changed, and they are really converted and renewed. Wherefore, I judge it very expedient, according to John's example, Mat. iii. 7, 8, 9, to wait for fruits of faith and repentance, lest we deceive ourselves and others. And if we give credit to ecclesiastical history, for the first three centuries after Christ, we shall find they trained up their catechumens, or candidates of baptism for some considerable time before they baptised them. They exhorted, taught, and instructed them, they grounded and settled them well in the principles of the christian religion; and then baptised them: according to the commission, *teach or make disciples, and then baptize*; and afterwards further *teach them*, and build them up in their most holy faith, and in the practical duties of religion, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

As to persons being disgusted or angry at being put off for a time, I never thought it of any weight; for such a spirit argues little or no grace or change of nature. Humble grace will wait at your church doors with tears, and fervent instant desires of partaking with you of the same fellowship. See that instance, which, in my judgment, is not altogether foreign to our present case, Mat. xv. 24, 27. But if such persons chafe and are angry, and so go from you, it is to me a very concluding argument that they are not as yet very fit members of the community of Christ's church. To prevent which danger, I rather humbly advise the overseers of Christ's flock, tenderly to regard such, often to converse with them, to tell them meekly the reasons of delay, the weight of the work, the danger of not being meet subjects, to cherish their appearing graces, to desire them to be open and free in communicating their doubts, to endeavour to resolve them, to be ready cheerfully to help them in every difficulty, informing their judgments in every necessary truth.

This I take to be the best, the most likely and rational way of making a good beginning, and consequently of causing Christians to grow. A foundation well laid is most likely to make a stable and firm building.

But after all that I have said, it cannot be expected to gather churches wholly and entirely made up of such subjects as I am now speaking of, and earnestly wishing for; since we cannot always, even after the greatest care, fully know and discern who are truly converted, and who are not. There will be *tares and chaff among the pure wheat*, Mat. xiii. 24, 29, and ver. 37, 38. Yet I think we should do all we can towards the gathering of such churches as I am speaking of; and every minister of Jesus Christ should labour after it. We should every one in our respective places endeavour what we can to promote it. Herein we shall bring honour to God, good to the souls of our brethren, and comfort to ourselves, *and all the flock of God, over which the Holy Ghost hath made us overseers*. I humbly commit these things to the consideration and censure of all judicious christians, and especially of my fellow-labourers in the gospel: and I pray God Almighty to give us all more understanding in all spiritual things.—Amen.

GENERAL BAPTIST MISSION.

To the EDITOR of the G. B. R.

SIR,

Your correspondent P. is entitled to thanks for his observations in your last number, on a suitable station for the G. B. mission. He thinks that Madagascar, or some spot on the continent of India, between Bombay and Udagerry, ought to be selected. Perhaps, on some accounts, the former of these places might be preferable. Many warm friends of the mission are of opinion, that the sooner a station is determined upon, and the persons who are to occupy it chosen, the better. Several churches have already shewn a readiness to make contributions; and were there a prospect of the designs of the society in sending out missionaries being soon carried into effect, there is every reason to believe that the churches in general would be prompt in affording assistance.

Perhaps if your worthy correspondent would lay before your readers, in an early number of the G. B. R. the result of his

inquiries with respect to the healthfulness of the climate of Madagascar—the state of society there—the nature of the government—how far civilization prevails—the religious views and practices of the inhabitants—the protection which might be afforded to missionaries—the means of intercourse with the island, &c. &c. it might tend to facilitate the object of the mission.

A FRIEND TO THE G. B. CONNECTION.

THE LADIES' LIBRARY FOR THE ACADEMY.

To the EDITOR of the G. B. R.

SIR,

By publishing the following Note in your next number, you will oblige the grateful recipients, and may incite others to come forwards in a similar manner, to assist in accomplishing the desirable object of providing an appropriate library for the use of those who are preparing for the important duties of the christian ministry.

The tutor of the G. B. Academy returns his sincere thanks, and those of the students under his care, to an anonymous friend, who, under the signature of *Amicus Academiae*, has lately presented to that institution, a copy of "Doddridge's Family Expositor." He also begs leave to acknowledge, that since the publication of the Secretary's letter, addressed to the female friends of the Academy in behalf of the library, he has received, as presents to it—from *Mrs. Kingsford*, of Portsea, "Brown's Evangelical History"—from *Mrs. Mitchell*, Bungay, "Campbell on the Four Gospels"—from *Mrs. F——x*, of B——n, one pound—from *Mrs. S. Ratcliff*, of Fleet, one guinea—from *Mrs. J. Mann*, of London, "Grantham's Christianismus Primitivus"—from an *unknown friend*, without either note or signature, "Stackhouse's History of the Bible," and "Parkhurst's Greek Lexicon"—and from *Mrs Rogers*, of Fleet, "Cracknell's Latin Dictionary."

SCRIPTURE ILLUSTRATED by the MANNER of CONTRACTING and CELEBRATING EASTERN MARRIAGES.

It was usual, in the east, for persons who had agreed to marry, to enter into a previous contract, by which they became

engaged to each other as husband and wife, though the nuptials might be deferred for several years. This was called *betrothing* or *espousing*. It was considered equally binding on the parties as marriage itself; and invested them with the same titles and privileges of consanguinity. The divine and benevolent legislator of the Israelites ordained, that persons in this situation should be exempted from military service. "What man is there that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man take her," Deut. xx. 7. So sacred and inviolable was this engagement considered among the Hebrews, that, in order to give his people the strongest assurance of his favor and protection, the Lord says—"I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness and tender mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness; and thou shalt know the Lord," Hosea, ii. 19, 20.

The ceremony of betrothing was performed under a canopy, or tent, erected for the occasion: the parties being dressed in proper ornaments, and the whole company, but especially the bridegroom, esteeming it a season of joy and gladness. To this the psalmist alludes, when he says—"In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun; which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race," Psal. xix. 4, 5.

In the interval between the betrothing and the marriage, the damsel usually remained under the care of her parents; and it was expected that they should use every precaution to preserve her faithful to the engagements into which she had entered. In allusion to this, Paul tells the Corinthians—"I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you a chaste virgin to Christ," 2 Cor. xi. 2. That is: having been the instrument of persuading you to enter into covenant with Christ, by preaching the gospel among you; like as a father, who having betrothed his daughter, watches over her conduct with the utmost care, and adopts every proper method to preserve her from being seduced from the duties of her engagement, in order that, on the day of her marriage, he may deliver her innocent and unpolluted into the hands of her husband: so I anxiously watch over you, and use every endeavour lest you should be corrupted

from the "simplicity that is in Christ," that you may at last "be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless."

The mother of our blessed Saviour had been betrothed to Joseph before the message was delivered by the angel, Luke i. 27; yet the marriage was not solemnized till after the birth of the Redeemer: for, at the time of his birth, she is styled, by the sacred historian, "the *espoused* wife" of Joseph, Luke ii. 5.

The solemnization of marriages among the people of the east, especially when the parties were persons of rank and opulence, was attended with great pomp and splendor. Great preparations were made; large stores of provisions procured, and the house fitted up for the reception of a numerous company of guests. A great number of friends and relatives were invited, and accommodations prepared for them, suitable to their degrees of rank or intimacy. The bridegroom enjoyed the company of a select number of intimates in a separate apartment, called the "bride-chamber." Sampson appears to have thirty of these select companions, Judg. xiv. 11. They were the constant attendants on the bridegroom during the marriage feast; and were denominated "the friends of the bridegroom," John iii. 29; or, "the children of the bride-chamber," Mat. ix. 15, Mar. ii. 19, Luke v. 34. In the first of these passages, the baptist declares, that, so far from grieving at the increasing popularity and success of Jesus, he contemplated his success with as much pleasure as the friend of the bridegroom feels in beholding his companion in possession of the partner of his choice, and the object of his tenderest affections. In the latter texts, our Saviour informs the Jews, that it would be as inconsistent with the nature of things for his disciples to fast and mourn while they had the pleasure and advantage of his society, as it would for the select friends of a bridegroom to indulge in sorrow and lamentation during the nuptial festivities.

But besides these distinguished guests, many others were invited. It was esteemed an insult for those who had been invited not to attend; and it was considered a mark of friendship and favor if any of their acquaintance came uninvited. No one was refused admittance as long as there was room to accommodate him; and a great number of guests was considered as a proof of the esteem in which the parties were held. So numerous indeed were the guests when persons of eminence were concerned, that our Saviour, whose parables were always consistent with the manners of his cotemporaries, represents a

king as preparing for the marriage of his son, by "killing his oxen and his fatlings, and making all things ready," Matt. xxii. 4. The promiscuous crowd of common guests were entertained in a large hall fitted up for the purpose, where a person was chosen to preside during the festival, which usually lasted seven days, as the bridegroom's deputy, whom the evangelist calls "the governor of the feast," John ii. 8, &c. To this plentiful provision for the nuptial entertainments, and the unrestricted admission of guests to partake of the feast, the great teacher of Israel frequently compares the richness, fullness, and freeness of the gracious provision made for the salvation of sinners by the gospel: and his parables will receive considerable illustration from the recollection of this brief description. Mat. xxii. 2, 14. Even the joys prepared for the blessed in heaven are illustrated by these seasons of festivity; and called, by the inspired penman, "the marriage supper of the lamb." Rev. xix. 9.

It appears that it was not uncommon among the nations of antiquity, for the person who gave the entertainment, especially if he was a prince or nobleman, to provide suitable dresses or "wedding garments," as they are rendered by our translators; and to appoint a special officer to furnish each guest with a proper habit, before he took his place at the feast. We read of some princes whose wardrobes were so well stored; that they could, without previous notice, accommodate five hundred persons with suitable apparel. The garments used at marriages were sometimes costly vests splendidly embroidered, but more frequently "robes of fine linen clean and white." Rev. xix. 9. To appear, therefore, at a nuptial entertainment, when these dresses were provided, without being arrayed in one of them, would be considered as a slight on the liberal entertainer, and an overvaluing of a person's own garments. Our blessed Saviour has built on these circumstances an instructive parable, in which he inculcates the folly of depending for receptance with God on our own righteousness, which the oracles of divine truth denominate "filthy rags," and rejecting those robes of righteousness which "have been washed and made clean in the blood of the Lamb." Read the whole interesting allegory, Matt. xxii. 2, 14.

Infidels have sometimes dared to assert, that at the "marriage in Cana of Galilee," the Lord Jesus exerted his miraculous power to promote the purposes of intemperance. John ii.

1—11, But a candid perusal of the history, and a knowledge the customs which have been described, will afford a very different view of the subject. It is probable, from the interest which the mother of our Lord took in the supply of the guests, and the tone of authority which she used to the waiters, as well as from the invitation of Jesus and his disciples, that this was the marriage of some near relative. The attendance of Jesus and his disciples would not only add to the number of the guests by their own presence, but would probably draw to the entertainment many who had not been invited. Besides, it is reasonable to suppose that the pair, whose marriage was honoured with the presence of Jesus, were persons of good character and well esteemed among their acquaintance; and many might, though uninvited, take the opportunity to shew their respect by attending. These causes conspired to increase the number to be entertained much beyond the expectation of the parties; and the wine, which was thought sufficient for the whole seven days of the feast, was all spent long before their termination. In order then to repay the hospitality which he and his followers had received, to manifest his glory, and confirm the faith of his adherents, the blessed Saviour, by his almighty power, changed a large quantity of water into excellent wine; and thus, not only furnished an abundant supply for the temperate enjoyment of the feast, but made a liberal provision for the future use of the family.

This feast of seven days, at the solemnization of a marriage, was considered as peculiarly dedicated to the honour of the bride, and therefore called "her week." Thus when Laban had imposed Leah on Jacob instead of Rachel, and the disappointed bridegroom expostulated with him, he replied—"Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this also." That is—"Disgrace not Leah, by refusing to continue the marriage feast for the usual seven days; and at the close we give thee Rachel also for a wife," Gen. xxix. 27. These seven days were usually spent at the house of the parents of one of the young couple. Sampson's marriage feast was celebrated at the house of his wife's father, Judg. xiv. and our Lord represents a king as making a marriage supper for his son, Matt. xxii. 2. At the close of the entertainment, the bride was conducted homo to the house of the bridegroom with great pomp and ceremony. This procession took place in the middle of the night; and

was attended with music and illuminated by torches. A number of the most beautiful virgins around the place to which the procession was going, went to meet it, with lanterns, to conduct it to the house of the bridegroom, which was highly illuminated on the occasion; where a grand banquet closed the nuptial entertainment. From this concluding scene, our Lord formed the beautiful parable of the ten virgins, who took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom. The oil of five of these was exhausted just as the bridegroom approached; and, as attending without lights would have been deemed an insult, they were obliged to go in search of a fresh supply. Meanwhile the procession moved on, and those who were ready to join it went into the illuminated mansion of the bridegroom, and sat down with him to the banquet. But those improvident damsels, who had been thus unseasonably employed in procuring oil, coming afterwards, found the doors closed, and were refused admittance. Thus our benevolent and condescending Redeemer warns us of the danger of contenting ourselves with a careless and negligent profession of religion, while we remain destitute of that faith and real piety which ought to give lustre and vigour to our profession, and which alone can procure us acceptance at the great day of decision; and of the awful disappointment such will feel when the door of mercy is finally closed, the day of grace past, and nothing remains to them but the blackness of darkness for ever. May every reader feel the importance of attending to the friendly admonition with which the Saviour of sinners closes this interesting relation—"Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour when the son of man cometh." Matt. xxv. 1—13.

THE SUPERSTITIONS OF MALABAR.

To the EDITOR of the G. B. R.

DEAR SIR,

One of your correspondents lately pointed out the Malabar, or western coast of India, as an important station for missionary exertions. Perhaps the following particulars respecting the superstitions of the inhabitants of that country, which I have gleaned from the travels of F. Buchanan, Esq. may interest the feelings of the friends of missions.

One of the deities of the district of Tulava is Restali Mahustumra. The idol is an image in the form of a woman. Men who suppose that they have incurred her displeasure, make a vow to suspend themselves by hooks passed through the skin of the back, and thus to be swung round before her temple. Women who suppose themselves afflicted by her with any great infirmity, vow to walk barefooted on hot coals before the temple. Mr. Buchanan's informants declared that this was frequently performed. On such occasions the woman fasts a day: red hot coals are then spread before the temple, and with bare feet she slowly walks over them three times.

In the northern parts of Tulava, are two casts, called Bacadaru and Batadaru: they practice polygamy. In every house there is a stone called *buta*. Two or three times a-year the family worship this stone, by oiling it and covering it with flowers; and also sacrifice fowls to it.

Not far from Beitura is a small island on which is a stone pillar, called Jetiga, which represents a *buta*, or male devil. Many people go to the island to pray, to offer cocoa nuts, and to sacrifice to Jetiga. He is supposed to destroy the boats of those who neglect him.

The Tiars, or Shanars, are a numerous tribe in Malabar: some among them can read and write. They seem entirely ignorant of a future state. A curious kind of polygamy is practised among the poorer class: several brothers will marry *one* woman. Their deities are a male named Mundien, and a female called Bagawutty. On holidays, these are represented by two rude stones, picked up for the occasion, and placed under a shed, but afterwards thrown away or neglected. At the time of worship, a fowl is offered as a sacrifice. A hair kills it before the idol, anoints the stone that represents Mundien with oil, adorns it with flowers, and presents to it fruit.

The Vaytuvans, another tribe, seem to have no knowledge of a future state. Their deity, Nedamaly Bhagawati, is represented by a stone placed in a hut, formed of cocoa nut leaves. In March a festival to this idol lasts three days. A lamp burns in the rude temple, and before the stone goddess a fowl is sacrificed. The most venerable of the cast then takes some boiled rice, carries it thrice round the temple, offers it to the idol, and afterwards divides it among the people, who eat it with reverence as holy.

Another cast are the Cataluni. They worship Maly, a devam, or the god of the hill. The idol is a stone placed on a heap of pebbles. The place of worship is on a hill, to which they go yearly and offer prayers, cocoa nuts, spirituous liquors, &c. They have some idea of a future life. They burn the bodies of those they esteem good men, and make offerings to their spirits. They bury bad men, with a design of confuing their spirits; for they suppose that if these escape they will occasion great trouble.

The Epuenas worship a goddess named Bhadrakali. The idol is a log of wood placed in a hut called a temple. Four times a year they assemble to sacrifice and make offerings to this log. They appear quite ignorant of a future life.

Mr. Editor, let the writer add—While such is the state of the heathen world, how cruel and wicked is apathy in the cause of missions? How awful is their sin who hoard up or bury that talent, that gold or silver, which should be given to extend the kingdom of Jesus Christ!

Mr. Stephen Marshall, late a member of a G. B. church, at his death left, out of a small property, ten pounds, to our infant missionary society.

I remain, dear Sir,
Yours, &c. G.

QUERY.

To the EDITOR of the G. B. R.

SIR,

It has sometimes occurred to me that kneeling in time of public prayer, where it can be done with propriety, is a more devotional position of the body, and more scriptural too, than standing. If any of your correspondents, through the medium of the G. B. R. will say why standing is preferred, and so generally practiced rather than kneeling, perhaps it will oblige, and be useful to others, as well as,

Yours respectfully,
AN INQUIRER.

GENERAL BAPTIST OCCURRENCES.

OBITUARY.

January 2, 1818, died, at Stayley Bridge, after an illness of five days, *Nancy Hilton*, in the sixteenth year of her age.

She was admitted into the Sunday school, in that place, in the spring of 1815, and continued a dutiful and regular scholar until a short time before her decease. She was naturally of a mild and obliging disposition; obedient to her parents, affectionate to her brother and sisters, and very peaceable and gentle towards all. Constant in her attendance on the means of grace, for some considerable time before her dissolution, she seemed dead to all worldly pleasures, and her affections were set on the things which are above. She was frequently comforted by hearing the word preached: and once, after hearing a discourse on the ruler of the synagogue's daughter, was so elevated, that she said to one of her sisters—"Oh! sister, how I could like to die, and go to glory." Many times she expressed a strong desire to depart, and to be with Christ. When conversing with her companions, she would speak to them of the glories of heaven, and the happiness of its blessed inhabitants. As she was one day going with one of her sisters to the river, coming to a small green eminence, she sat down, and repeated those beautiful lines of Dr. Watts:—

There on a green and flow'ry mount,
Our weary souls shall sit;
And with transporting joys recount,
The labours of our feet.

There is reason to believe that she was punctual in private prayer, and for some time lived very habitually under the influence of religion, and in the enjoyment of its comforts. During her illness she seemed perfectly resigned to the will of God; not a murmur was ever heard to escape her lips. Seeing her brother and sisters weeping around her, she said—"The will of the Lord be doue; do not weep for me, for I am prepared for my change to come." A few hours before her departure her soul was drawn out in fervent prayer to God, to the admiration of all who heard her, after which she was silent, till her happy spirit took its flight.

May her early and speedy removal to the eternal world, deeply impress upon the minds of all her former companions, the importance of "remembering their Creator in the days of their youth," and may they be induced by this example of the frailty of youth, and the uncertainty of life, to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

Her funeral sermon was preached by Mr. Pickering, Jan. 18, to a crowded audience, from 2 Chron. xxxiv. 3—"For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father."

CONFERENCES.

The MIDLAND CONFERENCE was held at *Barton*, March 24, 1818, when Mr. Felkin prayed, and Mr. R. Smith preached from Matthew, vi. 10. The friends at *Caldwell* solicited advice from this meeting respecting the cause at *Burton*, and were directed to apply to twelve churches in their neighbourhood, and request each to supply them with ministerial aid once in twelve months, free of expence. It was left to them to specify the particular days on which this supply would be most acceptable. The rules also of the society, lately formed at *Loughborough*, for the purpose of aiding ministers incapacitated either through age or infirmities for the work of the ministry, were read to this meeting. In the evening Mr. Goadby prayed, and Mr. Ingham preached from Psalm cxxxvii. 5, 6.

The next conference is intended to be held at *Beeston*, on the Tuesday in Whitsun-week. Messrs. W. Felkin and T. Stevenson are expected to preach. The friends are desired to put up at the New Inn, Mr. Surplice's.

The LINCOLNSHIRE CONFERENCE was held at *Fleet*, Jan. 22, 1818, and well attended. Mr. Everard preached from Psalm cxxx. 3, 4. At this meeting, it was agreed to hold the conferences in rotation at *Morcott* and *Chatteris*, and that the first meeting, at *Morcott*, be in the next autumn. In consequence of a case from *Peterborough*, Mr. Ewen engaged to exchange with Mr. Wright, and collect for the support of preaching at *Dogsthorpe*. Messrs. Jarrom and Binns were requested to visit *Chatteris*, and use their endeavours to compose some unhappy differences that exist in that society. Supplies were arranged for *St. Ives*, *Chatteris*, and *Gedney Hill*. The church at *Fleet* was advised to build a meeting house at *Long Sutton*. And it was agreed to proceed with the business of the Ministers' Widows' Fund, at the next conference.

This conference was held again at *Peterborough*, April 16, 1818. On the evening preceding, two deacons were ordained; when Mr. Everard opened the service, and Mr. Binns offered

the ordination prayer, and delivered a charge to the deacons, from 1 Tim. iii. 13. On the day of conference, Mr. Jarrom prayed, and Mr. Rogers preached, from 1 Cor. i. 18. At this meeting, it was resolved, that the sums subscribed for the Widow's Fund, should be collected and put out to interest; and that Messrs. Rogers and Butlers be requested to draw up a state of the funds, and an address to the churches, to print with the rules, and submit it to the next conference. Ministerial supplies were arranged for Chatteris, St. Ives, and Yarmouth. The next conference to be at Boston, on Thursday, June 12. As there was some doubt respecting the *time* of the ensuing association, the Editor of the G. B. R. was requested to specify it in the next number of that work.

The LONDON CONFERENCE was held at *Chesham*, March 25, 1818. Mr. Purcell, of Wrotham, preached in the evening, from Exod. xxxiii. 48. The state of the churches in connection with this conference is very encouraging, Mr. E. Sexton having visited the church of Smarden and Staplehurst, in Kent, by the request of the last conference, reports that he found much life and seriousness among them, the hearts of the ministers appear to be in their work, and both ministers and people seem earnest to carry forward the cause of Christ with zeal and prudence. In order to promote the interest of our Redeemer, it was recommended, that a close attention be paid to the scriptural rule of discipline and order in our churches; that prayer meetings be regularly attended, and that conversation with our friends, upon spiritual and experimental subjects, be conscientiously maintained. Brother Sexton was requested to write a letter on the importance of *punctuality* in fulfilling our religious engagements; to be read at the next conference, which is to be held at Smarden, on Wednesday, Oct. 8, 1818: preachers, Mr. Farrent, and the minister who may be at Church-lane at that time; in case of failure, Mr. Bicknell and Mr. Purcell.

The YORKSHIRE CONFERENCE was held at *Burnley*, March 24, 1818, when Mr. James Taylor preached, from Mat. xiii. 54. This meeting arranged a supply for Lidgate—agreed that Mr. Wallis should collect for Loughborough—advised the friends at Lidgate, who are likely soon to be deprived of their present place of preaching, and several of whose neighbours seem to be liberally disposed towards their cause, to en-

deavour to erect a new meeting house, and to commence immediately, if the encouragement they received made it prudent—and made a collection to assist the church at Shore, to obtain supplies during Mr. Spencer's indisposition.

THE CHRISTIAN FUND.

The annual meeting of the friends of this institution was held at Fleet, Jan. 21, 1818. Mr. W. Taylor, of Boston, preached, in the morning, from James i. 26, and Mr. Binns, of Bourn, in the evening, from Rom. x. 16. The disbursements from this fund, during the last year, have exceeded the receipts by upwards of twenty pounds. The friends at Tydd St. Giles lately withdrew from this institution, with the view of forming one of the same nature among themselves; and this year those at Wisbeach and Spalding have followed their example. After the evening sermon, Mr. Rogers pleaded the cause of the poor; and upwards of seven pounds were collected for their relief. Ninety-nine friends of benevolence dined together on this occasion.

ORDINATION.

On Friday, March 20, J. JONES was ordained to the pastoral office, over the General Baptist church at Louth, Lincolnshire. Mr. Cameron introduced the solemn services of the day, by reading and prayer. Mr. Rogers, of Fleet, then delivered an introductory discourse, and received the minister's profession of faith and answers to a series of questions. Mr. Jarrom, of Wisbeach, offered up the ordination prayer, and addressed the minister, from 1 Pet. v. 2—4. This part of the service being concluded, the congregation was dismissed. In the evening, it was re-assembled, when Mr. Bissill, of Sutterton, delivered an address to the church, from 1 Thess. v. 12—13.

May the great head of the church smile on this union, and render it subservient to the prosperity of his cause, and the glory of God!

ANNUAL ASSOCIATION.

We are requested to remind the Ministers and Representatives who may attend the ensuing Association at Church-lane,

Whitechapel, that it will commence, according to the Minutes of last year, on Tuesday, June 30; and that the friends are requested to put up at the *Three Nuns Inn*, Aldgate.

SOCIETY for the RELIEF of AGED and INFIRM MINISTERS.

At a meeting of ministers and others, held in the vestry of the General Baptist chapel, *Loughborough*, Feb. 3, 1818, it was agreed by the ministers present, with the concurrence of the other brethren, to form themselves into a society, the object of which shall be—*The relief of those ministers of the New Connection of General Baptists, who may have been regularly employed, as stated ministers in some church, when, through age or infirmity, they shall be permanently incapacitated, either wholly or partially, for such service.*

Rules of the society.—1. The society shall be open to all General Baptist ministers of the above description.

2. Every beneficiary member shall subscribe one pound sterling per annum to the funds of the society; or ten pounds at one time, which shall constitute him a member for life.

3. Any person who shall have been a stated minister of some church, as above specified, before the 4th day of July, 1818, may be admitted a beneficiary member of this society, by commencing his subscription so that he shall have paid two pounds on or before the 10th day of July, 1818, but not afterwards; and any person who shall become a stated minister of a General Baptist church after the 4th day of July, 1818, may be admitted, upon commencing his subscription so that he shall have paid two pounds within two years after his becoming such minister, but not afterwards; except it appear that any minister was unacquainted with the existence of this society in time to enter, as above limited; in that case he may be admitted on immediate application, by paying a sum equal to one pound per annum from the 4th day of July, 1818, or from the day of his becoming a regular and stated minister as above.

4. That subscriptions shall commence from the 30th of June, 1818: and all annual subscriptions shall be accounted due on the 30th of June, and any member whose subscription shall be in arrear on the 30th of July, shall be advised thereof by a letter from the secretary; and if the subscription of any benefi-

ciary member shall remain unpaid on the 31st of December next following, he shall be no longer a member of this society.

5. No person shall continue a beneficiary member of this society any longer than he shall continue to exercise the pastoral or ministerial office, unless prevented from exercising such office by age or infirmities, according to the rules of the society.

6. Any beneficiary member appearing to be permanently incapable of steadily exercising the pastoral or ministerial office, either in whole or in part, by reason of age or infirmity, shall be entitled to benefits according to the rules of the society.

7. When a stated minister of the above description shall be permanently incapacitated for the whole labours of his station, so as to render it necessary for the church to provide ministerial assistance regularly, he shall, though still able to do something in his great work, be entitled to relief from this society, according to the necessity of the case, as it shall appear to the annual meeting; but while he exercises the ministry, he shall never receive above one half of what would fall to the share of one totally laid aside.

8. A treasurer, secretary, and committee, shall be annually chosen from the members of the society.

9. All persons, though not ministers, who shall subscribe one pound annually to the funds of the society, shall be members of it, and eligible to be elected on the committee, and to vote at the annual meetings; and any person making a donation of ten pounds at one time shall be a member for life, and eligible to vote as above. Any less sum, either as a donation or annual subscription, will be gratefully received.

10. A general meeting of the society shall be held annually at Loughborough, (unless some other place be fixed upon at the previous annual meeting) on the first Wednesday in August; and all proceedings for the current year, relative to this society, shall then be revised and finally settled. A sermon shall be preached at such meeting if the managing committee shall judge it proper.

11. The committee shall meet two months before the annual meeting, with power of adjournment, to inquire into any claims that may be made, and to arrange the business for the annual meeting.

12. The secretary shall give fourteen days notice to each

member of the committee of the time and place of the committee meeting, to be held two months before the annual meeting, and shall at any time, at the request of any three of the committee, call a general committee meeting, giving the same notice: Any five of the committee, assembled according to notice, shall be competent to act.

13. Application shall be made annually, two months before the annual meetings, on behalf of every member entitled to benefits from the society, by letter addressed to the secretary, who shall communicate such claim to the committee, at or before their next meeting.

14. The committee shall prepare a report respecting the validity of every application to the secretary, by, or in behalf of any member of this society, stated to be entitled to the benefits thereof; which report shall be laid before the next annual meeting, and such measures then be adopted as accord with the rules of this society.

15. As often as the treasurer shall be in possession of the sum of twenty pounds or upwards, he shall take the earliest favorable opportunity of investing the same in some of the public funds, in the names of trustees appointed by the society, unless the state of the funds should lead the committee to think such investiture improper; and, in that case, he shall dispose of the money according to the direction of the said committee.

16. When the annual income of this society, arising from annual subscriptions, collections, and interest of funded or other property, after payment of all current expences, shall amount to *thirty pounds*, one half thereof shall be disposable to claimants, according to the rules; when such interest shall amount to *sixty pounds*, two thirds; when to *one hundred pounds*, three fourths; and when to *two hundred pounds*, the whole shall be so disposable; provided always, that in no case shall any member receive more than fifty pounds per annum from the funds of this society.

17. The disposable funds of this society shall be divided among the several claimants entitled to benefits according to the rules thereof, in equal proportions, excepting the difference which shall arise from the application of rule 7.

18. Claimants entitled to benefits shall receive their share of the disposable funds at the annual meeting next after their application.

19. No payments shall be made by the treasurer but by order at the general meeting, signed by two of the committee, and countersigned by the secretary.

20. Any addition to these rules, or alterations thereof, may be proposed at an annual meeting, and if carried by a majority of two thirds of the members then present, it shall be entered in the report of such meeting, and sent to every member: At the next annual meeting, (absentees being allowed to send their votes in writing) if a majority of two thirds shall approve of such addition or alteration, it shall then be adopted, and be of equal force with these rules; but not otherwise.

It was also resolved unanimously,

1st. That no distribution to beneficiary members, shall be made from the funds of this society, till the annual meeting in the year one thousand eight hundred and twenty-two.

2nd. That Mr. Jarvis Miller, of Loughborough, be treasurer, and the Rev. W. Felkin, Kegworth, secretary, for the present year.

3rd. That 500 copies of these rules be printed—that a copy be sent to every minister in the connection, and the rest circulated among the churches—and that the Editor of the General Baptist Repository be requested to insert them in the next number of that work.

MISSIONARY INFORMATION.

Interesting intelligence relative to the success of Missionary exertions in a Heathen Country.

The former of the following accounts is extracted from a work lately published, entitled "Sketches of India;" which is attributed to a writer of great authority.

During the greater part of the large fair held at Hurdwar, which lasted nearly three weeks, a Baptist Missionary (Mr. Chamberlain) in the service of her Highness the Begum Sumras, attended, and from an Hindoostanee translation of the Scriptures read daily a considerable portion. His knowledge of the language was that of an accomplished native; his delivery impressive; and his whole manner partook much of mildness and benignity. In fine, he was such as all, who undertake the arduous and painful duties of a Missionary, should be. No abuse, no language which could in any way injure the sacred service he was employed in, escaped his lips.

Having finished his allotted portion, on every part of which he commented and explained, he recited a short prayer, and concluded the evening by bestowing his blessing on all assembled.

At first, as may be expected, his auditors were few; a pretty convincing proof, when sixty thousand were collected, that it was not through mere curiosity that they subsequently increased. For the first four or five days, he was not surrounded by more than as many Hindoos: in ten days (for I regularly attended) his congregation had increased to as many thousands. From this time to the conclusion of the fair, they varied; but never, on a rude guess, I should fancy, below eight thousand. They sat around, and listened with an attention which would have reflected credit on a christian audience.

On the Missionary retiring, they every evening cheered him home. "May the Padre (or Priest) live for ever!"

Such was the reception of a Missionary at Hurdwar, the Loretto of the Hindoos, at a time when sixty thousand people were computed to have been assembled; and whither Brahmins, from far and near, had considered it their duty to repair. What was not the least singular, many of these Brahmins formed part of his congregation. They paid the greatest deference to all that fell from him; and when in doubt, requested an explanation. Their attendance was regular; and many whose countenances were marked, were the first in assembling.

Thus, instead of exciting a tumult, as was at first apprehended, by attempting conversion at one of the chief sources of idolatry, Mr. Chamberlain, by his prudence and moderation, commanded attention; and I have little doubt, ere the conclusion of the fair, effected his purpose, by converting to christianity men of some character and reputation.

A sequel to this narrative, is given by a gentleman writing to his friend, respecting the visit of Anund Mosseeh, a converted Hindoo, to Delhi, and his discovering an extraordinary body of native christians. The gentleman writes as follows:—

Mureet, May 6th, 1817.

The other day, Anund Messeeh asked my permission to leave his little school at Meerut, to go over for a few days to Delhi, which was the more readily granted, as he still

entertains hopes of bringing his wife over to the acceptance of the gospel, as well as his brother and two sisters. During his stay there, a report was in circulation, that a number of strangers from several villages to the west of Delhi had assembled together, nobody knew why, in a tope near the imperial city; and were busily employed in friendly conversation, and in reading some books in their possession, which had induced them to renounce their caste, to bind themselves to love, to associate with one another, and intermarry only among their own sect, and to lead a strict and holy life.

This account filled Anund with great anxiety to ascertain who and what they were; and he instantly set off for the tope, which had been pointed out as the place of rendezvous. He found about five hundred people (men, women, and children,) seated under the shade of the trees, and employed, as had been related to him, in reading and conversation. He went up to an elderly looking man, and accosted him, when the following conversation took place.

“ Pray, who are all these people? and whence come they?”
 “ We are poor and lowly, and we read and love this book.”—
 “ What is that book? ” “ The book of God!”—“ Let me look at it, if you please.” Anund, on opening the book, perceived it to be the gospel of our Lord, translated into the Hindoostanee tongue, many copies of which seemed to be in the possession of the party: some were *printed*, others *written* by themselves from printed ones. Anund pointed to the name of Jesus, and asked, “ Who is that?” “ *That is God!* He gave us this book.”—“ Where did you obtain it? ” “ An Angel from heaven gave it us, at Hurdwar fair.”—“ An Angel?” “ Yes, to us he was God’s Angel: but he was a man, a learned pundit.” (Doubtless these translated gospels must have been the books distributed, five or six years ago, at Hurdwar, by the Missionary.) The written copies we write ourselves, having no other means of obtaining more of this blessed word.”—“ These books,” said Anund, “ teach the religion of the European Sahibs. It is *their* book; and they printed it in our language for our use.” “ Ah! no,” replied the stranger, “ that cannot be, for they eat flesh.”—“ Jesus Christ,” said Anund, “ teaches, that it does not signify what a man eats or drinks. *Eating* is nothing before God. Not that which entereth into a man’s mouth defileth him; but that which cometh out of the

mouth, this defileth a man ;" for vile things come forth from the heart. " Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, thefts ; and these are the things that defile." " That is true ; but how can it be the European book, when we believe that it is God's gift to us ? He sent it to us at Hurdwar." " God gave it long ago to the Sahibs, and they sent it to us."

I find from Anund, that these Testaments were circulated at Hurdwar, I believe, by Mr. Chamberlain ; and, falling into the hands of several people, resident in different but neighbouring villages, they were soon found to be very interesting records, and well worth the attention of the people. A public reader appears to have been selected by themselves, in each of the different villages, for the express purpose of reading this miraculous book ; and their evenings have been habitually spent, now for many months, in the blessed employment ; crowds gathering to hear *God's Book*. The ignorance and simplicity of many are very striking, never having heard of a printed book before ; and its very appearance was to them miraculous. A great stir was excited by the gradual increasing information hereby obtained, and all united to acknowledge the superiority of the doctrines of this *holy book* to every thing which they had hitherto heard or known. An indifference to the distinctions of caste soon manifested itself ; and the interference and tyrannical authority of the Brahmins became more offensive and contemptible. At last, it was determined to separate themselves from the rest of their Hindoo brethren ; and to establish a party of their own choosing, four or five, who could read the best, to be the public teachers from this newly-acquired *book*.

The numbers *daily* and *rapidly* increased, especially among the *poor* ; which, at last, suggested the idea of convoking a public meeting of all their congenial associates, to ascertain how many accepted this new doctrine. The large grove of trees near Delhi, seemed a convenient spot ; and this interesting groupe had now all met for this very purpose, when Anund's visit took place.

We are desired to announce, that the Family of the late D. TAYLOR, will speedily publish a New Edition of his Catechism, price six-pence, in stiff covers. Orders will be thankfully received by the Editor of the G. B. R.

POETRY.

THE POCKET-BOOK.—INSCRIBED TO E. B.

When angry Winter's keener blast,
 And bleak December's winds are past;
 When Spring and Summer breathe around,
 And deck with flow'rs and fruits the ground;
 Be thine to steal from worldly strife,
 And note th' occurrences of life;
 To linger near some murm'ring brook,
 And ponder on thy Pocket-book.

Nor let the emblem be mistook,—
 Thy heart is but a Pocket-book!
 And every thought that's written there,
 And every wish and every prayer,
 Is read distinctly by that eye
 Which pierces through eternity.

Yes, I am tutor'd to believe,
 And will the pleasing thought receive,
 That, when thy God the dead shall raise,
 And read the diary of thy days,—
 'Tho' many a fault be rang'd around,
 And many a blotted page be found,—
 Some memoranda will appear,
 Bestain'd with a repentant tear;
 Yes! I will pleasingly presage,
 That, scrawl'd in every checquer'd page,
 There shall be found, however rude,
 The signature of gratitude;
 And, haply, in the margin spied
 The record that thy Saviour died.

Then lift to heav'n the raptur'd eye
 With confidence and certainty;
 And, if thy poet's humble prayer
 And ardent vow find favor there,
 Thy great Creator's helping hand
 Shall guide thee through a weary land;
 His providence and watchful eye
 Lure thee from earthful vanity,
 And, rich in mercy, overlook
 The errors of thy Pocket-book.

THE
GENERAL BAPTIST REPOSITORY.

No. XLVIII.—Vol. VIII.—August 1st, 1818.

**PROPOSALS for the CONDUCTING of the NEW
CONNECTION of GENERAL BAPTISTS.**

AT the Nottingham Association, in 1815, Mr. James Taylor, of Heptonstall Slack, proposed a case respecting the propriety of forming some "Rules for the Connection and Association; especially for the admission and exclusion of churches and individuals". This led to some discussion; but as the meeting was then drawing to a conclusion, the case was referred to the following Association; to which Mr. Taylor was requested to bring his thoughts, on this interesting subject, in writing. Accordingly, he read the following paper to the Association, at Boston, in 1816; when, after much deliberation, the last two rules were adopted, and the rest deferred for future consideration. A deep impression was made on the assembly by the communication; and several, who were not present, have expressed a desire to peruse it. We have, therefore, obtained the writer's permission to publish it in the G. B. R. Though we may not approve of every part of the scheme, we are persuaded the paper contains many valuable hints, which the pleasing increase in the extent of the Connection renders highly important, and well worthy the serious attention of every well-wisher to the prosperity of the General Baptist Cause.

EDITOR.

**PLAN PROPOSED to the GENERAL BAPTIST
CHURCHES and ASSOCIATION for the REGU-
LATION of the CONNECTION.**

ARTICLE I. Let the Union, formed in the year 1770, be perpetual; and let it continue to bear its present denomination, i. e. "The New Connection of General Baptists."

Note.—1. I have thrown these articles into an authoritative form; not because they claim any authority, but for

the sake of readiness, clearness, and precision. They are at your service to reject or accept; possess no power but their own propriety; and you must judge whether they have this attribute.

2. The duty and advantages of a connection of Christian Churches are so obvious, and, I hope, allowed by all of you, that there is no need to enlarge on them here. I may suggest, that to unite together in the way proposed in this first article—is *rational* and common in other cases—has the authority of apostolic example—and is sanctioned by all ages in the history of christian churches.

ARTICLE II. Let this Union consist of such churches only, as voluntarily embrace and maintain the sentiments expressed in the profession of faith, drawn up and signed in 1770; and that purpose, by divine help, cordially to unite in every measure, adopted by the Connection for the furtherance of the gospel.

Notes.—1. In every Union some similarity is understood; much more in a religious connection. 2 Cor. vi. 15.

2. God has wisely suffered the christian church to be divided into various denominations, that by their opposition, a spirit of enquiry and exertion may be maintained amongst all his followers.

3. Should not therefore churches of differing sentiments unite in different communities?—Those errors which have most injured the General Baptists are Arianism and Socinianism. To escape these the New Connection was formed: why should it not take more care still to avoid them? Would it not be more agreeable and honourable for Arians to separate from us, rather than in an underhand manner sap our foundations?

I do not enter into any dispute. If you can suppose those—both these opposing sentiments right or allowable, yet, for the sake of peace, union of exertion, and success, they must be separated.

ARTICLE III. Let this Connection be carried on and managed, by an Annual Association of the Ministers and such Representatives as the churches think proper to depute.

Notes.—1. It is obvious that forty or fifty churches, hundreds of miles distant from one another, cannot meet together but by a deputation from each church.

2. It is reasonable that each church should judge whom to employ as its delegates.

3. From the situation of ministers, as peculiarly engaged in the work of the Connection, and as called forth to manage the churches' affairs, they are natural representatives, without deputation.

4. But this term, "*Ministers*," I should restrict to such only as are ordained by imposition of hands, and approved by the Association.

5. With respect to the internal regulations of the association, I have several observations to make; but, except they be called for, perhaps it will be best, at present, to suppress them. I have also an extract from the Constitution of the American Baptists' Association, which may be read if desired.

6. One remark I beg leave to suggest with respect to the method of deciding the votes of the Association. In general the majority of the persons present will be sufficiently accurate; but, in some places and cases, would it not be more just for the voters to be regulated by the numbers they represent? For instance. Suppose fifty members be allowed one representative, a church of a hundred members may send two representatives; of four hundred members, eight, &c. But, as our churches are seldom exact fifties, we may say that all churches under seventy-five members, shall have one representative; from seventy-five to one hundred and twenty-five members, two; from one hundred and twenty-five to one hundred and seventy-five, three, &c. It would be injurious for one man to have two votes. If therefore a church of four hundred members send only four representatives, they should have only four voices; and, though a minister may vote on his own foundation, yet if he be a representative of some church, he should still have but one vote. Proxies, or absent persons voting, prevents the advantages of discussion, as they cannot hear the arguments on any subject in debate. If the churches know that they forfeit their privileges by not embracing them, it will make them more anxious to send representatives. The above proportion is greater than generally would be acted upon; and so small as to embrace all churches.

7. I must solicit your patience whilst I suggest another idea here; that is, a committee of enquiry and arrangement would greatly facilitate the business of the Association. If

the chairman of the Association, the secretary, the treasurer and secretary of the Academy, the treasurer of the Itinerant Fund, &c. were to sit daily, as a committee, at proper intervals, to inquire what churches have omitted to collect for the new chapel at Slack, for the Academy, or for the Itinerant Fund, and to obtain lists of all collections, that they may be inserted in the minutes,—to inquire what success the advice of last Association has had, what chapels are in danger of being lost for want of trustees, what churches fail to return representatives or states to the Association,—to arrange the cases that come before the Association,—to examine into the importance and necessity of some applications—to report on all these as occasion may require. I think the increase of the number of our churches, and the increase of the business of the Association will make some method for expedition necessary. A committee of this kind will do more than appears probable at first sight. It must be provided with a writer, a comfortable room, &c.

ARTICLE IV. Let the objects of this Association be the care and support of the churches, let it attend to the states and cases of the churches, provide ministerial and pecuniary relief where necessary, give suitable advice, and neglect nothing which concerns the welfare of the Connection.

Notes.—1. The care of the Connection is so obviously the business of the Association, that it is unnecessary to remark upon it.

2. But this has not been attended to, I am afraid, in the best and most decisive way. As the Association pretends only to give advice, it is easier to determine on this, than on some definitive measure. But advice, though ever so salutary, sometimes does not answer the immediate necessity of our friends. The support and spread of the cause of Christ, are the primary objects of the Connection and Association. Mutual and reciprocal aid of all the churches arises out of this, and essentially conduces to it. The cause of Christ is principally carried on by a faithful ministry. Where therefore a church is destitute of this in any degree, in the same degree its prosperity and success suffer. The low state of religion, now or formerly, at Burnley, Ashford, Cauldwell, Kirton, Maltby,

Louth, &c. &c. may be traced to this source. In the places where the G. B. interest is recently begun or revived, as at Mansfield and Nantwich, who must take care of them or provide them with supplies if the Association neglect them? The Association must consider it a paramount duty to provide ministerial aid for all destitute churches; and to see that ministers are sufficiently indemnified for their labours. I have no doubt but plenty of preachers will be found, and means for their subsistence, if the resources of the Connection be properly applied. Perhaps this will be plain to you also, if you attend to the sequel of these notes.

3. In cases of pecuniary relief considerable irregularity has been observed and felt by some churches. An object of christian fellowship is mutual support, by an equality of exertion, according to the strength or numbers of churches. "One," says Paul, Cor. viii. 13. 14. "is not to be eased, and another burdened." I hope you will think of this who have had to do with the collections for Louth and Mansfield Chapels, till, in our notes on Article IX, we resume this subject.

ARTICLE V. Let every church be perfectly independent of other churches, and no more governed by the Association than itself shall think proper to allow. But, as the important objects of the Connection cannot be effectually undertaken and carried on without mutual union and mutual exertion, the Association shall have power to call forth and employ the strength and energies of the whole body, according to the united wisdom of its members.

Notes.—1. If the propriety of the preceding article be allowed, it will shew the necessity of this. If the Association be to provide preachers and money, they should have some power, some resources, for their work. The subject of this Article is extremely delicate; and I expect you will hear me with more candour than I shall display ability in the discussion.

2. None will expect that we intend civil power, armed with coercion and compulsion. This is incompatible with the merciful state of the dissenting churches. None can justly therefore reproach us with assuming popish tyranny, with compelling persons to believe the doctrine of the Trinity, or otherwise incur all the curses of the Athanasian Creed. All we contend

for is mutual agreement to carry on one glorious cause. If persons make any engagement with others, it is universally allowed that they are bound by those engagements. If a person enter any of our churches, whatever be said on the occasion, he is virtually bound to regard the rules of such church. So of every other society. No society can exist without reciprocal obligations, and unless those obligations be fulfilled.

3. If it were possible to consult the churches individually, on the propriety of establishing preaching at Manchester or Mansfield, it would be very slow, and no conclusion could be drawn without an Association to compare the opinions of the churches. It is evidently more *likely, rational, and ready* to determine upon this at an Association; I have no doubt all our churches would allow the propriety of this. If they depute their officers and representatives to make such arrangements, is it not absurd to withhold the needful supplies? Is it not reasonable for the Association to say, "Brethren, we want a certain sum of money for these purposes; and you must therefore raise it for us?" and will not the churches be bound by honour to assist?

4. Yet I should be very sorry for either church or association to possess unlimited power. All the churches have power of sending representatives: they may therefore propose and carry any motion through the Association. And I always suspect a man to be possessed of tyrannical principles who is averse to popular discussion. Nothing can be more free, more popular, than the Association. I need not quote the histories of Greece and Rome, which abound with evidence of this. All of you should know, that an opposition to parliaments was the characteristic sin of the Stuarts; the most systematic tyrants, though not the worst men, that ever disgraced the British throne.

5. But if all the churches were individually consulted on the constitution proposed in these pages, and especially on this article, and agreed on a maximum of pecuniary supply. beyond which the Association should not exceed, it might perhaps ease some minds.

6. None can deny that the Association possesses the most information, and can best judge about the propriety of laying out such monies as may be raised.

7. There are other objects of the Association. Some may be mentioned hereafter : and others are so natural as to be seen without mention.

ARTICLE VI. Let the Association especially attend to the maintenance of an effective gospel ministry, by the encouragement and support of such persons as appear fitted for this work. For this end, let the present academy be perpetuated ; and managed by a committee, subject to the controul of the Association.

Notes.—1. I have no doubt of the importance and advantages of Academies ; yet palpable as these are, there is considerable difficulty in arranging a plan for the management of any ; and more especially of that which belongs to our Connection. As this business has fallen into abler hands ; and as, in Yorkshire, we have never been favoured with their arrangements of the Academy, I need not, and I cannot, remark on the Academy with propriety.

2. I may be permitted to observe, that there is in our connection, a great deficiency in the encouragement afforded to young men fitted for the ministry. I have sometimes feared that some ministers are averse to the encouragement of young preachers lest they should supersede them in the affections of the people, or in popularity. How unlike Moses and Paul ? Many young men are probably discouraged by the embarrassment and sometimes poverty that appears before them when they turn their eyes to the ministry. The want of experience-meetings and prayer-meetings in many of our churches, prevents the exercise of the abilities of young men ; and, on this account probably, some bright parts may lie long hid in obscurity.

3. But, as there is certainly a want of preachers in the connection, it behoves the Association to take some method to remedy this. In the mean time, we should not neglect any that may lie idle.

ARTICLE VII. Let such young men as have finished their academical studies, be examined by the Association ; and, if approved, solemnly set apart as ministers of the gospel, by imposition of hands, in some of the public services of the asso-

ciation. Let them then be sent forth to preach in such places as the Association shall think proper; and be sufficiently provided with the necessaries of this life; till divine Providence shall lead them to settle as pastors of some of our churches.

Notes.—1. Probably the adoption of this rule might remedy the paucity of preachers complained of in the last article.

2. I would not have the examination and ordination restricted to students from the academy; but open to all young men who may be thought qualified with gifts and grace for the ministry.

3. This ordination, as it shows the approbation of the Ministers and Association, is that which, according to Article III. entitles them to a vote in the Association, even though they be not immediate representatives of churches.

4. This is the apostolic time for ordination, which, if I understand the New Testament accounts of this solemn transaction, was not peculiar to the pastoral office, but common to all sent forth to preach the gospel.

5. These public ordinations at the Association would obviate some inconveniences, and afford the whole connection an opportunity to become acquainted with the young men engaged in the ministry from time to time.

6. The employment of young men in destitute churches, or in itineracies from place to place, will give some life and action to the Connection, raise curiosity, and support the churches generally. It will give a better opportunity to judge of the settlement of our young brethren; and give them an opportunity of getting a better acquaintance with the Connection than otherwise they might obtain throughout their whole lives.

7. No doubt but this, like every thing else, is liable to abuse, and attended with difficulties. One difficulty will be an increased expence.

But 1. After the Association has been at the expence of establishing preaching any where, is it not improvident that the expence of that should be lost for want of a preacher?— If a preacher be raised up, and especially if he have been maintained at the academy, is it not wicked to let him be lost for want of support?

2. If a church be peculiarly assisted by the young preachers, let them make peculiar exertions; and in many cases, they will be able to indemnify the Association.

3. Where this is not the case, I hope the provisions of the next Articles will be found sufficient.

ARTICLE VIII. Let the fund, called the *Itinerant Fund*, be perpetually and universally supported; and applied to the maintenance of the young men mentioned in the foregoing article, and to every exertion for the spread of the gospel, which the Association may approve.

Notes.—1. I know not whether the apostles had an Itinerant Fund or not; but preachers were sometimes supported in the same way, as it is intended to do. This appears from 3 John 6, and other places. A similar fund, called an "Association Fund," appears in the constitution of the American Baptists; in 1689, the Baptists in England seem to have had a similar object in view.

2. The Itinerant Fund, though established for so short a time, has been very useful, at Fornsett, Nantwich, Stayley-Bridge, Lidgate, and of some advantage in other places.

3. Probably several things might be said usefully on this fund. I must now say only this; Take care to support it and properly apply it. There is danger of its being alienated to improper objects; its only object is the spread of the gospel. There is great necessity for this: keep it in view.

ARTICLE IX. Let all the Churches in the Connection engage to assist in these three objects, the Academy, the Itinerant Fund, and the Erection of such Meeting-houses as the Association shall recommend, by making an Annual collection for each, *at least* in such proportion to the number of their members, as the Association shall unanimously appoint.

Notes.—1. I am afraid of giving some offence by my remarks on this article; but I can truly say it is my wish to avoid it. If what be said is just and true, pray you give it a kind reception.

2. The object now before us is equality; a word in the mouths of many; a thing impossible to be attained in many connections; and perhaps in most cases, taken strictly, morally

improper. But the apostle pleads for it; and if properly proportioned nothing can be more just. The object is plainly stated. Every church ought to assist in proportion to its numbers in the specified objects.

3. Is it reasonable for some churches to receive the advantages of the Academy or Itinerant Fund, whilst they never contribute towards their support? It is a shocking fact, that a part of our churches bear almost the whole burden of the Connection. What will you say, if I state a comparison of the exertions of the church and congregation at Nottingham with several of its sister churches? Upon a fair calculation of what has recently been done in Nottingham, for the last twelve years, more than fifty collections must have been made, and many hundreds of pounds raised for the support of the G. B. interest, as well as others; whilst our friends at Nottingham have had only a partial collection through the Connection, for their valuable chapel. But, in this period, some churches have collected twice, if not *thrice* over, throughout the Connection; and notwithstanding have made few collections, some none, for either Academy or Fund; and some have never attended to any church case, that I can discover. If my statement be wrong, it is easy here to expose it; but if it be right, something is materially wrong.

4. If we mention equality according to numbers, some of our churches suppose they must be burdened. Small and poor churches will say, "They are rich at Nottingham, and can afford to collect better than we." However able or well-disposed a numerous church may be, the proportion suggested will be heaviest on them. Compare Burnley and Nottingham; and say, every member is desired to raise sixpence. Will not twelve shillings be easier for Burnley than ten pounds for Nottingham. But every church will be nearly equally affected by a similar proportion; for where there are many members, there are always many poor.

5. If every church assisted the Itinerant Fund and Academy, to the extent only of threepence from each member, in *one year*, it would produce a large sum; about £160 per annum: and, in most cases, our churches, if they would collect at all, would raise double this sum.—If therefore threepence was considered as the *minimum*, with the voluntary exertion of some in behalf of the Academy, and of others for the Itinerant Fund,

there could not be less than a hundred pounds a year for each. I am so much within compass in these calculations, that you may add to what I say; and, in a few years, reckon two hundred pounds.

6. With respect to collecting for chapels, nothing can be more irregular: and yet nothing could be more easy, than for every church to make an annual collection for such cases. By this, I apprehend, more would be collected than is now, on an average; for some seldom help. But instead of being an injury, it would be well worth a collection to have a good preacher come from a distance. Whatever reflections may be cast on begging, it has the authority of the New Testament; and has been very useful in our Connection. I do not doubt but you will see it necessary to regulate it. Several abuses have crept into begging; but one annual collection for such cases as the Association recommends, will do a great deal towards rectifying them; and if the churches chuse to assist in twenty others, let them be praised, not blamed.

ARTICLE X. Let such Books as are usually adopted by our churches, such as Hymn Books, Minutes, periodical Publications, Tracts for Sunday Schools or for distribution, &c. &c. be printed by order of the Association, and for the benefit of its funds.

Notes.—1. The Methodists have no doubt raised twenty thousand pounds by the publication of books. The Evangelical Magazine has afforded seven thousand pounds for poor widows, —the Baptist Magazine, though a recent publication and of small circulation, has raised a considerable sum. I have no doubt that the adoption of this rule, and the observance of it by all our churches, would immediately raise one hundred pounds, annually, towards the support of the Association funds.

2. I have not room for many remarks more. If an honest and judicious person were engaged in this, as an agent for the Association in London, it would afford a great facility to our churches in gaining books, as well as benefit the Connection.

ARTICLE XI. Let such churches as desire to be united to this Connection, present a petition to that effect, to the Association, with a statement of their religious sentiments and practices. Let this Petition be inserted in the printed minutes,

and the case lie over for a year, to allow time for the churches and ministers to gain information of the state and character of the Petitioners. And, at the next Association, let the case be resumed; and the petitioning church be either unanimously accepted, deferred for further enquiries, or rejected.

ARTICLE XII. Let every church that shall swerve from the confession of 1770, or that shall act unbecoming the character of a christian church; that shall suffer preachers amongst them, of different sentiments, or of scandalous lives, be called to send Representatives to the Association, that the fact may be examined in the presence of their Representatives. If they disobey this call, let their conduct be investigated nevertheless; and, if found guilty, let the offending church be freely admonished. If the charge be proved, and no reform can be effected, let the Association then proceed to remove such a stumbling block out of the Connection by expulsion.

Notes.—1. Not to name the inconvenience of sending to *all our churches* for leave to admit a church into the Connection, it has been peculiar to ourselves, and it is less possible of examination than that proposed here. Hitherto the Association has no power to accept or reject, whatever heresies the churches may approve or disapprove.

2. If it be confided to the Association to admit it into the Connection, it naturally follows they have the power of expulsion; a power as necessary in the Association as in any of our churches.

N. B. A few Rules are better than many: these twelve might easily have been made twenty or thirty; but, if they embrace the general objects, particulars had better be left to the wisdom of the Association. JAMES TAYLOR.

*AN ORIGINAL LETTER from the late MR. BOYCE
to one of the CHURCHES under his care.*

Coninsby, 12th. March, 1772.

*My dear friends and well beloved of the church at K—,
in the faith and fellowship of our Lord Jesus Christ, grace,
with truth and peace, be multiplied among you.*

Having a real and unfeigned desire for your souls' welfare and eternal happiness, I do with great respect, and hearty good will, and in all love and sincerity, take the christian liberty to write a few lines to you, about some of the great things which concern your salvation: And I hope you will receive them in the same spirit I send them.

Know then, my dear brethren, that I have had, and still have many uneasy thoughts and reflections in my own mind, concerning the state of those churches with which I stand connected, as their messenger and servant in the gospel. And you, among the rest, have had no little share of that care, fear, and concern which I have borne in my mind, for a long time. I have long gone on hoping the best I could; but I have very little knowledge of the ground of my hope for them. Just thus stands the case betwixt me and the church at K——, as well as others.—I have weighed and considered these things, long and often, in my own mind, and do assure you they are very near my heart. I am very greatly troubled, and know not what to do.

I fear that with many of us all is not right and safe, and well; the *pure religion* of Jesus Christ is not laid to heart, loved, and lived up to, as it calls for, and deserves to be.—It is true, I know indeed, we are baptized into a profession of the faith of the gospel, but the grand question is, do we all *live* the life of the gospel? I fear not. I fear there are many who are strangers to the true gospel life, if not to the true gospel faith. I fear there is too much of the love of the world, and the things of the world, seated in the hearts of many professors; and that there is a great deal of lukewarmness, formality and carnal security among us; that there are those who have only a name to live, and are dead to the things of God. Dead to the life of God!—I fear there are too many, somewhere or other, who are very much unacquainted with a real and saving change;—who want a heart feeling sense of a divine power renewing their natures, and making of them *new* creatures. But, I beg now, my dear brethren, you will give me leave to ask you some serious and important questions; and let every one of you whom it may concern lay them seriously to your hearts. Permit me, therefore, with the most brotherly kindness and respect to you all, to ask you as follows; and do you put the questions home to your consciences.

Pray, my dear brethren, do you all experimentally know what it is to be *born again*? Have you really experienced the efficacious working of the divine Spirit in regenerating your souls? Are you indeed *new creatures*? Are "Old things passed away and all things become new?" 2 Cor. v. 17. If not, how sad must be your state! Do you not know that it was to this end, viz. the renewal of your souls, that the kindness and love of God towards us appeared? And that it is not for the sake of, or by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, that he saves us, by the working of regeneration and renewing of the holy Ghost? Titus iii. 4. 5. Again, how do your minds stand affected towards the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you indeed know and believe in him?—Do you evidently shew your faith by your works? In and through what works does your faith shine forth? But do you love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity? If so, grace be with you and remain in you. But if not so, the most dreadful anathema, or curse, is thundered out against you. 1 Cor. xvi. 22. Dear brethren, think on this.

Do you really know, believe and lay to heart the great things which Jesus Christ has done for you? Do you set a just value upon his all-atoning sacrifice—his all-cleansing blood? Do you live the life of Christ? A life of self-denial? A life of love? A life of real holiness and heavenly mindedness? Do you know what it is to be crucified with Christ? To be crucified to the world, and to have the world crucified to you? Are you acquainted with these things? Have they been an entertainment to you, when meditating seriously in your hearts upon them? What proof do you give to the world, of your knowledge of faith in and love to them? How do you distinguish yourselves from the carnal and worldly minded? Is your conversation only such as becomes the gospel of Christ? Phil. i. 27.

Again. Do you rightly know your state by nature as fallen creatures, the descendants of *Adam* the first? Do you rightly know your state as actual sinners in your own persons? And is it from this knowledge of yourselves that you see and know the necessity of Christ to redeem and save you? That you see and know the necessity of regeneration? Of justification? or, which amounts to the same, of forgiveness of sins, and of being accepted in the beloved and holy Son of

God? The necessity of sanctification and real holiness? Do you think upon and seriously lay to heart the sins you have committed, and the duties you have neglected, since you were professors of the gospel? Do you thankfully acknowledge that all your temporal and spiritual blessings are the free gift of God, arising purely and alone from his own free grace? And do you live to the glory and praise of this grace, by which you must be justified and saved? Do you know yourselves saints in Christ Jesus? adopted sons and daughters of God? children of light, and heirs of the heavenly inheritance?

Lastly. Do you, my brethren, ever look into and examine yourselves respecting these soul-concerning matters? If not, how can you ever have any certain, or in the least degree comfortable knowledge of yourselves, your state and condition?

I have written these things, with a real desire to promote your greatest good and highest happiness; I beg, therefore, you will watch unto prayer, "bear one another's burdens," "weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those who do rejoice," "let your moderation be known unto all men." Avoid glorying and haughty boasting, either of faith or works. But do you glory in the Lord, and make your boast of him. This will nobly distinguish you from the formal, hypocritical and luke-warm professor, as well as from the ignorant and profane. Let therefore your lamps burn, and your lights shine, and be ye yourselves like those who are waiting for the return of their Lord; that when he cometh he may find you watching:—ready and prepared to enter with him into his kingdom. Luke xii. 35, 36. This is and shall be the ceaseless prayer of him, who is willing to labour among you in the work of the Lord;—willing to do all the good he can for you, so long as he may be pleased to employ him as a poor unworthy instrument, who shortly must give an account of his stewardship. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." II Cor. v. 10.

God forbid any one soul should perish through my neglect, so that his blood will be required at my hands. I am therefore very desirous to give you and others a friendly and faithful warning, that I may be free from the blood of all men. I will therefore now conclude, having in the most respectful and affectionate manner, laid before you a few things only

though of great weight and importance to all and every one of us. I will take my leave, at present, with an humble and hearty prayer, for you all, to the God of all grace; that he may be pleased to bless you always with every good thing, for your soul's present peace and future happiness, through and for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I remain, your sincere friend, in gospel bonds,
GILBERT BOYCE.

The RISE and PROGRESS of ADULT SCHOOLS.

"Who hath despised the Day of small Things?"

Zechariah.

The following animating instance of the success, attending the well-meant endeavours of an humble individual, to promote the cause of benevolence and religion, ought to be generally known; that persons, in similar circumstances, may not sit down inactive, under the discouraging persuasion, that they are able to do nothing.

William Smith, occupied the office of door-keeper to a Methodist meeting-house in Bristol, at a salary of eighteen shillings a week. Though in this humble rank in life, and possessed of no learning, except the ability to read his Bible, yet he has been the means of rendering essential service to society. In 1804, he founded the first of the Methodist Sunday Schools in Bristol, which are now affording education to more than two thousand children. When the friends of christianity began to exert themselves to distribute the scriptures among the poor, he cheerfully stepped forward and afforded great assistance. February 13, 1812, the Bristol Auxiliary Bible Society, held their second Anniversary, when, among other communications, a letter was read from Keynsham, which, after giving a list of persons who were destitute of the scriptures, observed—"We have been necessarily obliged to omit a great number of poor inhabitants who cannot read, and are therefore not likely to be benefited by the possession of the Bible." This affecting remark made a deep impression on the mind of W. Smith, who was present. He pitied the deplorable situation of those, who, through their inability to read the sacred records, were deprived of that great privilege.

His mind dwelt on their misfortunes, and he felt a strong wish to be able to assist them. Having occasion, in the course of a few days, to wait on a merchant in the city, to beg a Bible for a poor man, he took the liberty to mention his wishes, and asked the gentleman, whether he thought it might not be possible to teach these indigent adults to read. This worthy merchant entered cordially into his views; assured him that success was not only possible, but probable;—encouraged him to make the attempt; and promised that the Auxiliary Bible Society should aid his efforts, by donations of the scripture for the use of his pupils.

With these encouragements, W. Smith determined to make the attempt; and after allowing three shillings out of his small salary as door-keeper, to a person to officiate for him, he selected two friends of his own rank, and the next day commenced his operations. They went to a district of the city, a large proportion of which is inhabited by the poorest classes. This district they traversed to solicit subscriptions towards the purchase of a Bible. Many of those to whom this application was made, replied, "I should be glad to have a Bible; but it will be of no use to me, as I cannot read." This afforded Smith an opportunity of asking them whether they would be willing to learn, if a school was opened. Almost all embraced the proposal with evident pleasure: the first man on the list of learners being William Wood, aged sixty-three; and the first woman, Jane Burrace, aged forty. Two rooms, free of expence, were obtained the same evening; and William Smith engaged two persons, who had been formerly employed in superintending charity schools, to act as teachers, in his proposed establishment. Another difficulty still remained. He had procured rooms and teachers; but had no books with which to commence his instructions. After some deliberation, he applied for the loan of a few, to Capt. J. Richards, who cheerfully furnished them, and spoke encouragingly of his undertaking. No time was lost: Notice was immediately given to the poor of the parish; which had been canvassed, that it was proposed to open the schools on the eighth of the same month; only nineteen days after W. Smith had first mentioned the subject. This was accordingly done: and on the first day, eleven men and ten women were admitted. The numbers increased every week, till, in a short time, the rooms

were filled. The progress made by the learners was encouraging; and the improvement in their behaviour and morals highly pleasing.

This was the commencement of *Adult Schools* in England. Something similar had indeed existed, for a short time, in Wales; but of this, the humble but praise-worthy W. Smith was totally ignorant. To him, therefore, belongs the praise of being both the projector and founder of these useful institutions; at least, in his native country. But we must not stop here.

The success which attended the first attempt was highly gratifying to Mr. Smith and his associates: and the numbers who daily applied for admission, soon made it necessary to look out for more spacious accommodations for their reception, and for more aids in their instruction. The attempt began to attract notice; and, soon afterwards, a few friends of religion and humanity met William Smith, and formed themselves into a society, under the title of "*An Institution for instructing Adult Persons to read the Holy Scriptures.*" A subscription was entered into for carrying forwards the design; and fourteen pounds subscribed by thirty persons. A few rules for the regulation of their proceedings were agreed upon; and these, accompanied with an appropriate address, were printed, and circulated with a view to inform their fellow citizens, and induce them to aid in their desirable object. For preparing and publishing this address, Mr. Smith was indebted to the assistance of a minister of the Methodists; who kindly stepping forwards to the assistance of these poor men, in their laudable attempts, rendered them the most important services. At the date of this publication, they state, that above eighty adult persons were learning to read, under the direction of six conductors and thirty teachers.

Mr. Smith did not undertake either the office of conductor or teacher; but employed almost every hour, which he could snatch from his humble occupation, to solicit the most suitable persons, to whom he could take the freedom of introducing himself, to engage in those stations, for which he thought himself unqualified. He also was actively employed in procuring suitable rooms, in eligible situations, for schools; and in inviting the ignorant poor to attend them. So unwearied were his exertions and those of his few associates, that in little

more than thirteen months, nine schools were opened for men, and nine more for women; into which three hundred men and three hundred and one women had been admitted. Of this number two hundred and twenty-two men, and two hundred and thirty-one women were receiving instruction, on April 19, 1813, when the first annual Report was published.

In the following year, the cause made a rapid progress. Persons of ability, influence, and property, joined the humble founders, and united their efforts to carry forwards their benevolent designs. Their exertions were crowned with signal success. At the commencement of 1814, the schools were increased to twenty-one for men, and twenty-three for women. Into these schools, upwards of fifteen hundred adults had been received; nearly thirteen hundred of whom were then engaged, with the most pleasing success, in learning to read the oracles of truth, and in receiving those instructions in religion and morality, which promised to be of the utmost advantage to them both in this world and to all eternity. Besides these seminaries, there were four other adult schools had risen in the town, independent of the society, which, at the above date, contained two hundred and seventy scholars.

This was effected in Bristol alone; but before the close of 1813, the plan had spread to other places, and similar institutions were formed at Plymouth, London, Uxbridge, Salisbury, Sheffield, Norwich, Yarmouth, Ipswich, Bury, and Bungay, as well as in several parts of North Wales, and at Swansea, and some places in South Wales.

The cause has since then spread with great rapidity. Magistrates, gentlemen of all ranks, and ministers of all denominations, have united their efforts, and joined in supporting and extending the benefit of that system, first introduced by William Smith, the pew-opener of a dissenting meeting-house. The instruction of adults has become a national object; and tens of thousands of those unhappy members of society, who had arrived at years of maturity, ignorant of the invaluable art of reading, have been enabled to peruse for themselves the Book of God, which is able to make them wise unto salvation. Thousands are, at present, in a course of instruction; and generations yet unborn will have to bless the memory of the humble but honourable individual who first established Adult Schools.

Dr. Pole's History of Adult Schools.

On DEJECTION of SPIRITS.

In a Letter to a Friend.

W—, Cambridgeshire, 10th June, 1817.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I received your letter, and will, by divine assistance, offer a few remarks relative to your case. And first, I would wish you to understand that the causes of dejection are either moral or physical. The physical cause of dejection, in general, is nervous debility; and may commonly be distinguished from moral, by a lowness of spirits without any apparent cause, so that the individual is low, and yet cannot account for his dejection. Should this be your case, an apothecary will be more servicable than a divine. Perhaps exercise is one of the best means to abate nervous symptoms, as we seldom find those who use much exercise complain of this malady.

2. Though moral dejection generally exhibits the source whence it proceeds, yet it sometimes admits a great deal of ramification, and amalgamates with latent causes, so as to require no small share of examination to discover the true source. However, in general, it may be traced to the neglect of some known duty, the commission of known sin, or to inaccurate conceptions of the truth and dispensations of God. If either of the two former, *you know the remedy*: the latter is not so easily solved. It sometimes happens, that we expect too much. Constant sunshine is not promised; the reverse is more than once intimated in the sacred pages. Under the greatest gloom the path of duty is plain: Isa. l. 10.

You intimate that you have had comfortable, and I trust, scriptural evidences of an interest in the friend of sinners, and communion with him; but lament the want of sensible enjoyment. Do not forget we live by faith; neither by sight nor sense. Guard against thinking your case singular. Remember: "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." Prov. xxvii. 19. Past experience, in cases of this kind, should afford present encouragement. Have you tasted that he is gracious? Then see Jer. xlii. 1. Zeph. iii. 17: Jer. xxxi. 3. Mal. 3. 6. Num. xxiii. 19. Ps. xci. throughout. You know the heart of man is treacherous. Satan, in connection with it, labours to distress, where he is not permitted to destroy. Let it be your employment to look much to

Jesus. Our God wills that we should have "strong consolation." Heb. vi. 18. To him let us repair, and there let us rest. The suitableness of Christ to every case, and his ability to do above all we can ask or think, together with his willingness and readiness to supply all our need, are inexhaustible treasures. Oh! may the Holy Spirit enable us to live in the faith of these things; then we shall live like christians, in point of comfort, and in respect of holiness. Let us never forget that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever." Our frames may vary, and our comforts, one after another may fail us; but let us not forget, He is a being that rests in his love. Cast your burden on him, and leave it there. Has he not engaged never to leave nor forsake us? Take David's advice, "Wait on the Lord and keep his way: delight thyself also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." Psa. xxxvii. 4. He has engaged to comfort those that mourn in Zion. Live much on his promises, and meditate on that "covenant which is ordered in all things and sure." May you be enabled to take hold of it, and find it "all your salvation."

My dear Friend,

I remain, your soul's affectionate well-wisher,

W. E.

The PRAISE of PATIENCE.

(An Extract.)

Patience is the guardian of faith, the preserver of peace, the cherisher of love, the teacher of humility: patience governs the flesh, strengthens the spirit, sweetens the temper, stifles anger, extinguishes envy, subdues pride, bridles the tongue, restrains the hands, tramples on temptations, endures persecutions, consummates martyrdom. Patience produces unity in the church, loyalty in the state, harmony in families and societies; she comforts the poor, moderates the rich; she makes us humble in prosperity, cheerful in adversity, unmoved by calumny and reproach; she teaches us to forgive those who have injured us, and to be first in asking forgiveness of those whom we have injured. She delights the faithful, and invites the unbelieving; she adorns the woman and approves the man; is loved in a child, praised in a young man, and admired in an

old man. She is beautiful in either sex, and in every age. Behold her appearance and attire! the countenance is calm and serene as the face of heaven, unspotted by the shadow of a cloud; and no wrinkle of grief or anger is seen in her forehead; her eyes are the eyes of doves for meekness, and on her eyebrows sit cheerfulness and joy; her mouth is lovely in silence, her complexion and colour that of innocence and security; while, like the virgin daughter of Sion, she shakes her head at the adversary, and laughs him to scorn. She is clothed in the robes of the martyrs, and in her hand she holds a sceptre in the form of a cross. She rules not in the whirlwind and stormy tempest of passion; but her throne is the humble and contrite heart, and her kingdom is the kingdom of peace.

*The HISTORY and CHARACTER of the
Patriarch JOSEPH.*

No. IV.

We left Joseph at that interesting period of his eventful life, when divine Providence had suddenly raised him from a prison, to be the chief minister of state to the monarch of Egypt: and we shall now take a slight review of his conduct in that public station.

Undazzled and uncorrupted with this unexpected exaltation, his first attention was directed, not to the honours, the profits, or the pleasures, but to the duties of his high office. He knew that the future comfort, if not the existence of a numerous people depended, under God, on a proper discharge of those duties; and immediately applied himself to them. He made a progress through all the land, in order to gain an acquaintance with the local circumstances of the various parts, that he might be able, more effectually, to carry his benevolent design into execution. In this journey, he doubtless provided storehouses, appointed officers, and made the necessary preparations for securing the surplus of the plentiful harvests which he knew were at hand. As his design was public and the circumstances that had led to this measure well known, the proprietors of the land were, most probably, exhorted by him to take similar measures of precaution for their own accommodation. Possibly too many slighted the admonitions of a stranger, and, as they would be ready to style him, a visionary, who had imposed on

the credulity of the king. Nor would these doubters probably observe any thing extraordinary in the accomplishment of the first part of his predictions—the uncommon fertility of the succeeding years; when, to use the simple but expressive language of Moses, “the earth brought forth by handfuls.” Joseph however was diligent in preparing for the approaching famine; and being furnished with the necessary funds by his royal master, bought up the superabundance of the seven plenteous years, and secured it in proper granaries: “the food of the field which was round about every city being laid up in each city.” It is easy to conceive, that the inhabitants, despising his denunciation of future scarcity, and flattering themselves that to-morrow would be as to-day, were eager to dispose of their superfluous stock, by selling to the agents of the governor, and thus increasing their own wealth, as they might imagine, by taking advantage of this weakness. The quantity purchased by Joseph must have been immense; as it sufficed for the support of all the inhabitants of Egypt and their cattle for seven years, as well as supply for the pressing necessities of neighbouring nations; and left a sufficient quantity for seed at the close of the calamity.

But a sad reverse now took place. The Sovereign of the Universe, who can with infinite ease turn a fruitful land into barrenness, saw fit to afflict Egypt, and the adjacent countries, with a grievous famine, which “waxed sore in all the land.” The stores of individuals were soon exhausted, and the famished people petitioned their monarch for food from the public granaries. Pharaoh, whose confidence in the prudence of Joseph must have been strengthened by this exact accomplishment of his predictions; referred the whole business to his minister. “Go unto Joseph,” said he, “whatsoever he saith unto you, do.”

Joseph was now called to discharge a duty that required great wisdom and resolution; he had to adjust the claims of the king, whose money had purchased the food that was preserved in the store houses, and of a people who must perish without relief. He appears to have conducted this delicate business with equal integrity and humanity. At first, the Egyptians were able to purchase corn of the agents of Joseph; but the famine continuing, all the money in the land was soon collected into Joseph’s treasures. This he remitted

with great fidelity, to his master; for " he brought the money into Pharaoh's house." The money being thus spent, the people applied to the governor; and he proposed to supply them with the necessary provisions in exchange for their cattle and flocks. It is probable, that both parties might consider this as a desirable arrangement. The Egyptians, conscious that they had nothing on which to support their cattle, and uncertain how long the calamity would continue, would feel a satisfaction in parting with them; and Joseph, aware of the resources which he possessed, and knowing when to expect a termination of the scarcity, received them with pleasure, and determined to preserve them for more auspicious times. The sale of their flocks and their herds, their horses and their asses, obtained this afflicted people subsistence for only one year; and at the close of it, their distress still increasing, they went to Joseph, with a voluntary proposal, to surrender their lands to Pharaoh, and engage themselves as his servants, in order to obtain food, " that they might live and not die." This desperate offer of a starving people, Joseph thought proper to accept. Probably, he saw that, by thus acquiring a complete authority over them, he should be able, with more economy, to supply their wants. For this purpose, he removed the inhabitants of the country into the cities, that they might be nearer his magazines, and be fed with less trouble and expence.*

* Most commentators have supposed, that after Joseph had obtained full authority over the Egyptians, he transplanted them from one part of the kingdom to another; with a design, they suppose, of weakening their attachment to their native settlements, and making them forget their former possessions. This conduct has been blamed by infidels as despotic, and tending to sanction slavery and oppression. But the only text on which this supposition is founded, Gen. xlvii. 21, may, with equal propriety, be understood that in every part of the land, he removed the country people into the adjacent cities for the conveniency of supplying their wants: just as " the food of the field which was round about every city, was laid up in the same." Gen. xli. 48. The transplanting of the inhabitants is wholly omitted in the account which Josephus, the Jewish historian, gives of these transactions; but he tells us,

At length, this dreadful scourge, which had for seven long years, afflicted mankind, was removed, and the earth once more yielded her increase. But the return of plenty afforded little satisfaction to the wretched inhabitants of Egypt, who found themselves in a state of bondage, and deprived of every kind of property. The humane disposition of Joseph made him hasten to remove their anxiety. No sooner did he perceive that the famine was ended, than he convened the Egyptians; and, after reminding them of the situation in which they had placed themselves and their property, he restored them their cattle, furnished them with seed, and returned the alienated estates to their original owners, to be held by them as tenants of the crown, on condition of paying one fifth of the annual produce, as a rent to the king. This adjustment was so very favourable to the people, that they accepted it with gratitude. "Thou hast saved our lives;" they exclaimed to Joseph: "Let us find grace in the sight of my Lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants." And we learn from profane history, that the memory of Joseph was, for a long course of ages, held in the highest veneration by the Egyptians, as the saviour and friend of the people. Nor had the monarch any cause to be dissatisfied; an ample and permanent revenue being secured to the crown, with the full consent of the people. These wise regulations of Joseph were, from that time, established by law; and became the settled constitution of Egypt.

From this hasty glance at the public conduct of Joseph, it is easy to derive several instructive hints.

How entirely dependent are we on the divine Providence for all our enjoyments, and even for the necessaries of life! It is probable that the distressing famine in Egypt was caused by the Nile not overflowing its banks in the usual manner, and at the proper season. And the Power which restrained that

that after the famine, Joseph put the Egyptians into possession of the lands which they had forfeited; and this seems implied in the words of Moses, *xlvii. 23, 24.* If this was the case, it is plain that the removing of the inhabitants from one part of the kingdom to another would have been, not merely useless, but have occasioned much unnecessary toil and expence. This cavil, therefore, against the oracles of truth, being founded on a mistake, falls of itself.

river from fertilizing the dominions of Pharaoh, can, with equal ease, prevent our clouds from dropping down fatness, and afflict Britain with a scarcity as dreadful as that which caused Egypt to faint. If we more frequently reflected, that all the wealth, the ingenuity and the power of man cannot cause a single ear of corn to grow, unless the Lord of all send suitable weather, it would have a happy tendency to check our self-confidence, and fill us with gratitude to the Giver of all good, for the mercies which we are constantly enjoying from his bounty.

In the usual course of his providence, God varies our days with alternate seasons of affliction and comfort, of joy and sorrow. He is a wise man who, in times of prosperity, does not forget that adversity will succeed, and endeavours to prepare for it. Had all the inhabitants of Egypt been as prudent as Joseph, and laid up the surplus of their own farms, as a fund for a time of scarcity, they would not have been reduced to that state of deep degradation and distress, in which they were afterwards involved. "The prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on and are punished." Happy is the man who, amidst the blandishments of prosperity, pursues such a line of conduct, as may secure him the esteem of the wise and good, should a change take place, and he be plunged in adversity. Nor are these vicissitudes confined to the worldly circumstances of good men; something similar frequently occurs in the affairs of religion. At one time, a Christian enjoys the means of grace in rich abundance. A faithful and a respectable ministry, frequent participation in the privileges of the house of God, many opportunities for mutual instruction and edification in the things that tend to the prosperity of his soul. These are seasons of plenty; but in a short time a painful reverse is felt. The valued minister is removed from his station, the preaching of the word and the administration of the ordinances are interrupted, or become less edifying.—Possibly the circumstances of the individual may be so changed, that his opportunities for enjoying the means of grace, either public or private, are lessened, if not wholly taken away. Now, if he have not laid up a store of spiritual food, of experience, knowledge and grace, during the former abundance, he becomes, like the Egyptians, faint by reason of the famine; but if, through divine grace, he has been enabled

to improve the former golden hours, he can, like Joseph, draw from the treasures of his mind, support for himself and his companions in affliction.

Let us learn from Joseph, in whatever situation we are placed, conscientiously and diligently to attend to the duties of that station. The same fidelity, assiduity and punctuality, which obtained him the favour of Potiphar, and procured him respect in a prison, appear conspicuous in his conduct as governor of Egypt. He saw every thing with his own eyes, regulated all the subordinate officers, rendered a regular and just account of his trust to his master, and in all his conduct displays an honourable anxiety to discharge effectually every duty which he undertakes. Let us imitate so laudable an example; and whatever offices we accept, whether in the church or in the world, let us look to the Lord for grace and ability to perform effectually the requisite duties of such offices. If we really believe ourselves incapable of doing justice to the engagements into which we enter, it is dishonest to our friends and society to enter into them. If we have abilities and neglect the duties of our station, we are not only unjust to those who employ us; but ungrateful to God, in not using his gifts to his glory. It is not the station which a person fills, but the manner in which he acts in it, that, in the judgment of wise men, ascertains his character. The basest men are sometimes raised to the most important trusts; but their negligent or treacherous behaviour soon discloses their meanness. And in that great day when each of us shall have to give an account of his stewardship, the inquiry will not be, How many talents didst thou possess? or in what station hast thou acted? but How much hast thou improved the talents put into thy hands? and in what manner hast thou conducted thyself in the station in which thou wast placed? May every reader of this sketch be, by divine assistance, enabled to render such an account, at that important audit, as to hear the Judge of all the earth say to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

GENERAL BAPTIST OCCURRENCES.**OBITUARY.**

BETTY HODGSON was the daughter of Mr. William Parker, of Wadsworth. Her father and mother were both professors of the Christian religion, and in connection with the Methodists. Her father was occasionally employed in preaching the gospel, and his house was often frequented by eminent ministers of the gospel, of different denominations. He maintained strict christian discipline in his family: she and her sisters were taken by him, when very young, five miles, on a sabbath day morning, to hear the Rev. William Grimshaw, of Howarth. There subsisted a particular intimacy between her father and this eminent clergyman; and the frequent visits of the Rev. William Grimshaw at her father's house enlivened the devotions of the family, and led her, at an early period, to think on divine things. Through the regard which her parents paid to the cause of Christ, their own personal salvation, and the salvation of their children, she was brought into early habits of virtue.

She was very remarkable for obedience to her parents. Even after she was grown she was very tender and yielding to parental authority. I have heard her say sometimes, when the disobedient conduct of children has been stated to her, that she never told her parents, that she would not do what they commanded, in all her life. On one occasion, when a sister of her's was about to suffer for irregular conduct, she felt so tenderly concerned for her, that she fell down on her knees before her parents, and entreated them to forgive her. After she was married, her attention to her parents was uncommon. She suffered much in her bodily health, by assisting them in their infirmities.

She was equally remarkable for her industry; she was brought up to labour very hard from an early period, it became habitual and voluntary. When a young woman, she preferred being at home discharging domestic duties, to visiting the houses of the rich with her parents and friends.

She espoused the religion of Jesus in a professional way, about thirty-five years before her decease. She considered herself very unworthy of the privileges of God's people. She often exclaimed, in the private meeting, "Behold, I am vile."

From this she was led to place all her confidence in the merits of our great Redeemer, who is the only foundation of the sinner's hope of acceptance with God. She obtained a peaceful sense of divine approbation, but never made any pretensions to those extacies of sacred joy, which some have experienced.

Her attendance on public worship on the Lord's day, was as constant as domestic circumstances would admit. It appears that this was imbibed by her from early habit; she was trained to it from a child. Hence, "train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." She felt much pleasure in bringing her children with her to the house of God. She entertained a very low idea of those who were professors of the christian religion, of any denomination, and neglected the ordinances which Jesus Christ has instituted in his Church; and particularly, in remaining at home on the Lord's day unnecessarily, or spending the sacred hours in visiting their neighbours' houses, where God was not feared, instead of being in the congregations of God's people, or taking particular care of their families. The apostle James saith, "Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works."

She had to assist, in a very important way, in bringing up a large family. Her labour in this was unremitting, and in few instances, equalled. She rose early and took rest late, till, I believe, she injured her constitution with it. She was never content unless when very industrious. Her anxiety for her children's welfare was uncommon. She used every exertion to get them well educated. She frequently admonished them to keep good company. If they were at any time absent, when she expected them at home, or were exposed to danger, her fears concerning them prevented her rest. She often cautioned them against vice, and recommended seriousness of mind, and an active regard to the interests of their souls.

The former part of her life was very healthy, but when arrived to about fifty years of age, she began to decline. The palsy first seized her right hand, after that it affected all of the right side, and in a short time the whole of the body. Soon after this, she had an attack of inflammation. When this subsided her mortal frame was quite exhausted of strength, and was unable to perform its functions. She could not, after this declension, even feed herself. She has remained in this

state about eight years.—Being naturally industrious, this affliction was, in its commencement, very trying to her. She wept sometimes very tenderly, yet said little by way of complaint. Now virtue began to grow more speedily; it was visible, especially to those who lived with her, that the great work of sanctification was more rapid in its advances than when she was healthy. Being frequently told, that it was a merciful Providence which confined her to her bed and her chair, she would always readily assent. Resignation to her afflicted circumstances was exemplified in her to a degree, which is seldom, if ever witnessed. It was uncommon to hear one murmuring accent fall from her lips. Instead of repining, she often spoke with flowing tears of the goodness of God to her. In the review of his merciful dispensations to her and her family, she often uttered the most grateful sentiments. And it was very affecting to hear her, at these times, in her weak state, attempt to sing some of the Doxologies of the Rev. J. Wesley, and some of the animating lines of Mr. Wm. Darncey; to attempt to cite the hymns and portions of scripture, which were frequently uttered by her, would extend the limits of this little memoir too far.

Her gratitude to those who waited on her, was lively and frequently expressed. She often said to her children, "You have a deal of trouble with me—I shall weary you all;" though she never heard any of them complain: they frequently told her, that it was a pleasure to them to assist her; for no children were ever laid under greater obligations to a mother. A servant, who lived with her upwards of six years, was much endeared to her afflicted mistress for her kind services.

As the worship of God was carried on both in a private and public manner in the family, she frequently acknowledged, with weeping eyes, the benefit she had derived from it. Some of these means were appointed for her accommodation. This she knew, and could scarcely relate her experience without expressing her gratitude in tears. Her body, some time before its dissolution, became very feeble; and it was evident that a little more pain than common would be more than she could bear. The evening before her removal, she appeared more pale and feeble. She often said that she expected to die unexpectedly. This so happened. Her soul was removed

from the feeble tabernacle about three o'clock in the morning, Jan. 22, 1816, aged sixty-nine years. Her death became desirable to her long before her removal. She had no doubt of her future happiness. A gentleman and lady called on her the day before her removal, and suggested to her, that her affliction was a long and trying one. To this she replied, "My rest will be the sweeter."

Some quit this world in doubt of their title to glory; but she possessed the earnest of the place, and wept for joy in the prospect of it. May we be followers of them, who through faith and patience are now inheriting the promises. J. H.

May 22, 1818, Mr. WILLIAM EVERETT of Burbage, near Hinckley, finished his earthly course at the advanced age of eighty-three. He was one of the excellent of the earth, and long waited and often longed for his dismissal from this probationary state. He was, it is supposed, one of the oldest members that were living at the time, in the midland churches. He had been a member *nine and fifty or sixty* years, and most of that time, a member of Hinckley church; and what is greatly to his honour, an upright, peaceable, and consistent member.—He was born in the neighbourhood of Barton, his mother being one of the earliest General Baptists in these parts. She was one of the first *seven* who united together for religious purposes. The ministers he was first accustomed to hear were Messrs. Deacon, Whyatt, Pickering, and Grimley. He served his apprenticeship at Hinckley, and like other youths, was thoughtless and careless respecting everlasting concerns. He had, however, his occasional convictions; and, during his apprenticeship, his conscience would sometimes reproach him for his neglect. Walking along Hinckley streets one day, the thought forcibly struck him—"You know these are good men, and you will not go to hear them." He put the suggestion by, with saying to himself, "I am too young." A year or two after, the thought returned, and seemed to say, "You are older now, and yet you delay to attend; and you will be brought to give account of your neglect." But he thought he was in good health, and he would shortly be out of his apprenticeship, and then he could go whenever he chose. When his apprenticeship had expired, he was unwilling to leave his acquaintance, and to go to Barton to reside with his mother. But she being very desirous of it, made use of a

little stratagem to effect her purpose. She took a larger house, and informed him, that if he did not come and reside with her, she could not pay her rent ; so he went, and began regularly to attend the preaching in that place and neighbourhood. In the course of two or three years, he was brought to the knowledge of the truth, was baptized, and united in christian fellowship. During his long pilgrimage, the writer has never heard of a blot on his character, nor of his ever causing the church any trouble. He never gave pain to the mind, or distress to the feelings of his minister ; nor did any thing to weaken his hands, or discourage his heart in his work. He was not distinguished for his activity, but this was constitutional. He was constant in his attendance on public opportunities ; and his purse was ever open to contribute, according to his ability, to maintain and promote the cause of his Redeemer. He was ready to every good work. Though upright and consistent, he was truly humble. He never spoke in his own praise, but appeared to preserve an habitual sense of his unworthiness and unprofitableness. He steadily adhered to first truths, and first principles ; was grounded and settled in the great and distinguished truths of the gospel ; and Christ and him crucified, was his constant delight and theme. On his atoning death, and the abundant mercy of God in him, he grounded his hope, and to the last found Christ precious to his soul. He possessed a firm and solid hope, and much sweet peace. He had long waited and ripened for a better world, and better company, and longed to be dismissed from the body. His decline was gradual, and his last illness short. " He knew in whom he had trusted, and was persuaded that Christ was able to keep that which he had committed to him." Thus lived and died *William Everett*, who has left an example, which both old and young will do well to imitate. Would to God every member lived as peaceably, walked as uprightly, and died as serenely as he did. No minister will appear at the general audit, to accuse him of having weakened his hands in his arduous work ; no christian or other person, to charge him with having, by his spirit or conduct, thrown stumbling-blocks in his way,—turned his feet out of the right path,—or given him any discouragement to press forward in the line of duty. The writer feels a pleasure in this opportunity of testifying his worth. Indeed, during *nineteen years*

acquaintance, he never occasioned him a moment's uneasiness, by any irregular or unfriendly behaviour; but always manifested that friendship and attachment which every member of a church should cultivate towards his pastor. He now "rests from his labour," and his works have accompanied him. May the number of such characters greatly increase! May we "die the death of the righteous, and may our last end be like his."

N. B. Both his mother and wife died happy in the Lord — He buried a daughter and son after they were grown up. One daughter only survives him.

J. F.

May 25, 1811, MARY FOULDS, departed this life in the seventy-second year of her age. She was the oldest member of the G. B. Church at Birchcliff. She engaged in religion soon after Mr. Dan Taylor went to labour in that part of the country. Her experience was written May 31st, 1763, which was approved by the church. She has been a wise, steady, and respectable member about fifty-five years. When in health, she used to retire into secret for meditation and prayer. Her conduct throughout has adorned the doctrine of her profession. Nov. 17, 1810, she lost her husband, who had been a member of the same church more than forty years, and noted for his piety and good sense. Since then, she has experienced much affliction, with resignation and patience. Nothing delighted her so much as to talk about Christ. Though her pain was great, she would have talked about religious subjects as far back as fifty years. Her memory was wonderful. When her brethren, in Christ, paid her their weekly visits, she seemed to forget all, to unite with them in fervent devotion. Notwithstanding she had a very mean opinion of herself, and ascribed all to the grace of God.

It was often her desire that her mind might be composed at death, that she might leave this world triumphing in Christ. The Lord was pleased to grant her desire. A very little before she breathed her last, a christian brother asked her, how she felt her mind? she said: "Christ is precious, he is precious." Amongst her favourite hymns were those of Dr. Watts, Hymn 6. 1 Book. Hymn 75 and Hymn 100, 2d Book, which were sung when her minister preached her funeral discourse, from Psal. xvii 15, to a very large and serious congregation. May the Lord grant that her children may walk in her steps, that they may meet their pious parents in heaven.

CONFERENCES.

The MIDLAND CONFERENCE was held at *Beeston*, May 12th, 1818. At this meeting it was agreed, that the Association for 1819, should be held at Derby. A case from Friar-Lane, Leicester, was again submitted to the brethren, and referred to the ensuing Association. The friends at Duffield asked the advice of this conference on the propriety of building a Meeting-house at Belper, and received the following answer: "We encourage the friends at Duffield to build; but advise them not to contract too large a debt." The friends at Ilkiston and Smalley, were advised to take the same steps for obtaining ministerial supplies as they had taken the last year. The church at Castle Donington were directed to apply to several neighbouring congregations for ministerial assistance, during Mr. Brand's indisposition. The friends at Beeston were also advised to procure supplies from neighbouring churches, once a fortnight, and to apply to assistant ministers in the different churches, to fill up the vacancies.

The LINCOLNSHIRE CONFERENCE met at *Boston*, on Thursday, June 11, 1818. At this meeting, Mr. Rogers read the Rules for the "Ministers' Widows' Fund," with the Address, which he and Mr. Butters had been requested, by the last conference, to compose: when a little alteration having been made in the Rules, it was agreed, that the whole should be printed and circulated through this district. The conference determined to recommend, that the expences incurred by the brethren, who have supplied Yarmouth and Chatteris, be paid by the "Itinerant Fund;" and also that the Association take the state of Yarmouth into its consideration. Some arrangements were made for the accommodation of Chatteris and Tydd St. Giles; the former with the ordinance of baptism, and the latter with the Lord's supper, on the next Lord's day but one. In the evening, Mr. Rogers preached, from Isa. xlv. 3. The next conference to be at Morcot, on the last Thursday in September next.

The YORKSHIRE CONFERENCE was held at *Queenshead*, May 26th, 1817, Mr. Pickering preached from Psalm lxxvii. 1. Arranged supplies for Lidgate and Apperley-Bridge. 2. Messrs. Pickering and Hodgson were directed to present a case to the Association, requesting that an Itinerant be esta-

blished and maintained in the neighbourhood of Manchester. 3. In answer to an adjourned case, it was judged perfectly irregular to baptize such persons as will not join a baptist church, when they have an opportunity. 4. Desired Mr. Pickering to supply Nantwich before next meeting.—Attended to three cases of a more private nature.

Staley Bridge, Aug. 18th. Mr. James Taylor preached from Matt. ix. 37, 38.—1. Arranged a supply for Lidgate and Apperley Bridge. 2. Desired Mr. Dean to supply Nantwich before next meeting. 3. Desired Mr. Pickering to make inquiries concerning Butterton in Derbyshire, and communicate them to the Leicestershire conference. 4. Desired our churches to make speedy collections for the Itinerant Fund, to meet the pressing demands of some of our supplies. Attended to five other cases.

Lidgate, Nov. 5. Mr. James Taylor preached from Isa. xii. 6. 1. Arranged a supply for Lidgate and Apperley Bridge. 2. Received and paid monies on account of the Itinerant Fund which will appear in the Minutes of the Association. 3. In answer to an enquiry concerning members of our churches who may become insane, it was advised not to exclude them, but suspend them from the Lord's supper. Attended to eight other cases.

Heptonstall-Slack, Dec. 25. Mr. Richard Ingham of Duffield, preached from Isa. lxiii. 1—5. Appointed a supply for Lidgate and Apperley Bridge. Ten other cases were attended to, some of them important and delicate.

Burnley, Mar. 24th, 1818. See the last Number of G. B. R. page 231.

Shore, May 11th. Mr. W. Pickering preached from Isa. xlv. 22. 1. As Mr. Dean found it inconvenient to labour at Burnley, he was advised to supply Lidgate till next Christmas. 2. Mr. John Midgley was desired to supply Burnley once a fortnight till next meeting; and supplies were arranged for the intermediate Sabbaths. 3. Referred a letter concerning Doncaster to the Association.

N. B. Most of the above accounts were received several months ago; but the letter being accidentally mislaid, the omission was overlooked till pointed out by the scribe of the Yorkshire conference, who has kindly supplied new docu-

ments. The Editor hopes his Yorkshire friends will accept this as an apology for the delay.

MEETING HOUSE RE-OPENED.

On Lord's day, September 28, 1817, was re-opened for public worship, the G. B. Meeting-house, at *Ticknall*, Derbyshire. On this occasion, Mr. Thomas Stevenson, from Loughborough, preached in the morning, from I Cor. i. 21; and, in the evening, from II Cor. v. 14, 15. And Mr. Wm. Felkin, from Kegworth, in the afternoon, from Rom. ii. 16. The services of the day were all well attended; especially in the afternoon, the place being not only very much crowded, but it was supposed that there were not less than two hundred who could not be accommodated, to whom Mr. Joseph Barrow delivered a short lecture, in a croft adjoining, from Rom. v. 20, 21. The seasons of worship were very interesting and highly approved, and we hope will be long remembered by those who were present. May the great Head of the church fill this house with his glory. The collections amounted to more than thirty-one pounds.

SETTLEMENT OF A MINISTER.

On Tuesday, June 30, the settlement of Mr. J. Farrent, over the ancient G. B. church in Great Suffolk Street, Southwark, was solemnly recognized at that place. Mr. John Ewen, of Tring, introduced the service by reading the scriptures and prayer. Mr. Jarrom of Wisbeach, proposed the usual questions to the church and the minister; and received Mr. Farrent's Confession of Faith. Mr. E. Sexton of Chessham, delivered an affectionate charge to the pastor, from I Thess. ii. 4—8. Mr. R. Smith of Nottingham, addressed the people, from I Thess. v. 12, 13. May this union be blest, by the great Head of the church, to the revival of his cause in that part of his vineyard, where it has, for a long season, been in a drooping state. Mr. Farrent was formerly pastor of the G. B. Church at Isleham, Cambridgeshire; and has laboured at Great Suffolk Street for more than a year.

ANNUAL ASSOCIATION.

June the 30th and July 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, 1818, the Annual Association of the Ministers and Representatives of the churches composing the New Connection of General Baptists, was held at London. Mr. J. Jarrom was chosen chairman, Mr. W. Pickering, deputy chairman, and Messrs. J. Bissil and A. Taylor, moderators. On the evening of Tuesday the 30th, Mr. E. Sexton opened public worship with prayer, and Mr. T. Rogers, preached, from Matt. xxviii. 20. On Wednesday evening, Mr. Kingsford, of Portsea, prayed, and Mr. R. Smith preached, from 1 Tim. i. 11: and on Thursday evening, Mr. Kingsford of Battersea prayed, and Mr. J. Bissill preached, from Ezra. x. 4. At this meeting, the churches at Chatteris and Sinden were added to the Connection, from the old General Baptists; and the brethren at Wirksworth, Shottle, and Cowhouse-lane, formerly a part of Duffield church, as also the friends at Torporley, which had been united with the society at Nantwich, were, at their own request, entered on the list as distinct churches. The churches at Ford, Seven Oaks, Wendover, and Great Yarmouth, applied for admission into the Connection; and were ordered to be considered at the next Association. From the returns to this meeting, it appears that the cause of religion has advanced during the past year: the number baptized being five hundred and forty-five, and the clear increase three hundred and thirty-seven. The whole number of members amount to seven thousand one hundred and seventy; and the churches to seventy-four. Though in some places dissection, and in others indifference, have hindered the progress of the cause, yet upon the whole, the reports are much more encouraging than they were at the last association. May the great Head of the Church continue and increase this prosperity by healing the breaches that disgrace some of these societies, and infusing a spirit of love, zeal, and genuine piety into all who are connected with them.

 THE GENERAL BAPTIST HISTORY.

The History of the English General Baptists, lately published, in numbers, by the Editor of the G. B. R. being now finished, those who have imperfect sets are requested to complete them with as little delay as possible. The few remaining copies of this work may be procured, by application to

the Author or the Booksellers, in two volumes, boards, price One Guinea.

REVIEW of NEW PUBLICATIONS.

SERIOUS ADDRESS to a YOUNG MINISTER of the GOSPEL, on Important Subjects, connected with the Christian Ministry. By JOSEPH FREESTON. 12mo. pp. 172. Price 3s. 6d. boards.

The amiable and pious author of this publication is so well known to most of the readers of the G. B. R. that it is less necessary to enlarge. The subject is important: and is treated with great seriousness, and an evident wish to be useful. It is divided into sections, the contents of which are:—the dignity and importance of the ministerial office and character—the knowledge necessary for a christian minister—the value of time—the importance of truth, and of preserving the mind unbiassed—the nature and importance of spiritual knowledge—a minister's duty to his people—the inutility of a mere moral strain of preaching—the importance of inculcating a love of devotion and spiritual-mindedness—the importance of application in sermons—pastoral visits—the difficulties and encouragements of the ministry—a letter on the proper method of prosecuting ministerial studies—extracts on preaching.

These subjects are highly interesting: and the pious writer has taken such views of them, as we presume no minister can attentively peruse without feeling his heart affected and his soul roused to greater exertion and care in his sacred work. It would be easy to quote numerous passages in elucidation of this remark, but our limits confine us to a few. The sections on "the necessity of personal holiness in a minister," and on "the inutility of a mere moral strain of preaching," are peculiarly important. "It is certainly possible," says the experienced monitor, "that amidst continual solicitude to fill up our places and discharge our duties as ministers with propriety: and in the ardent pursuit of that variety of knowledge which our profession requires, personal religion may be overlooked, and a great declension, as to religious experience, superinduced. Therefore, while you are indulging a laudable concern for the honour of your office and character, and for the faithful discharge of ministerial duties, take particular care of your own heart; watch over all its movements; attend to its various

frames; and be frequent in self examination. This is your first duty, and must be your first concern. If this be neglected, though much useful knowledge may be acquired, the soul will be brought into a cold and barren frame; religion will then afford you but little satisfaction, and the duties of the ministry will be regarded as a mere drudgery, or performed from a mere sense of duty, and not from an internal delight in them, and a lively zeal for the honour of Christ and the good of souls. Whatever you do then, labour assiduously to keep your heart alive." (pp. 10, 11.)

In his statement of the knowledge necessary for a christian minister, we fear the worthy author has not been sufficiently guarded. When we hear a knowledge of History, Chronology, Geography, Astronomy, Anatomy, and Chemistry declared to be necessary to enable a person to understand the Bible; and to qualify him to "explain and apply the deep things of God," and consider the circumstances in which the greatest part of our young preachers are placed, we fear the consequences. The pious and modest youth, who has had no opportunities of previous instruction, feeling his ignorance of these sciences and the improbability of ever acquiring even a "tolerable" knowledge of them, will conclude that he can never be designed for the sacred work, and relinquish the task in despair. On the other hand, the forward and self-confident may be encouraged to devote that time and attention to these scientific pursuits, which ought to have been spent in reading the Bible, and plain practical experimental writers, on the great points that constitute the essence of vital christianity. This may enable him to adorn his harangues with figures drawn from the abstruse parts of science, but can never qualify him effectually to describe the lost condition of sinners, the way of salvation, and the work of grace on the heart: subjects of infinitely more importance to a minister of the gospel than the revolutions of the stars or the combinations of chemistry. We would not however, be misunderstood. Literary and philosophical acquisitions, when leisure and abilities permit a minister to obtain them, open the mind, elevate the imagination, and may greatly assist in elucidating the subjects of religion. But we know how dangerous such pursuits are to young and inquisitive minds, just beginning to thirst after mental nourishment. It has cost many of the most useful and acceptable ministers of the gospel much severe and resolute self-denial, to check their

inclinations to such studies, and confine their undivided attention to subjects more directly connected with their great business as preachers and pastors. A sacrifice, which can be justly appreciated only by him, who, with a mind eagerly thirsting for knowledge and the cup of information at his lips, has been compelled, by the stern dictates of conscience, to turn away, and leave the delicious draught untasted. Yet this sacrifice, painful as it is, must, we apprehend, be made by most of those in our Churches who undertake the work of the ministry, if they wish to be wise to win souls. But while we make these remarks, to prevent the injury which, we conceive, might arise from a few unguarded expressions, we cordially acquit the author of any design to give an improper importance to human science; and refer, with pleasure, to some passages in the same work, which, if regarded, will prevent this effect. "A clear and comprehensive knowledge of the *Holy Scriptures* is peculiarly necessary and important to a minister, whose business it is to explain and enforce them. Study them closely, my friend, and daily. Endeavour to study them with an unbiassed mind; fervently praying for the illumination of the Holy Spirit to guide and assist you." (p. 19.) "Whatever subject of science may engage your attention, be careful you do not forget your character as a *christian minister*, the highly honourable office you fill, and the important duties which it involves. Labour diligently to make all your attainments subservient to the promotion of religion, in your own soul and in the souls of your fellow creatures. *Theology*, you know, is the grand science which is to be the subject of your principal attention; and the *Bible* is the grand repository of true wisdom. The other sciences are but handmaids to it. Whatever, therefore, you study beside, make the *Bible* your principal subject of attention." (pp. 121, 122.) "There are several within the limits of my knowledge, who have been *eminently useful* as ministers, who knew nothing of Hebrew or Greek. What a useful body of men have the methodist preachers been; and yet it is known that many of them are unacquainted with the learned languages. Have there not also been some such in our own denomination, who have been excelled by few in real usefulness?" (pp. 18, 19.)

END OF THE EIGHTH VOLUME.