

Wesleyana.

For the Wesleyan.

Here Wesleyana, or Thoughts on Methodism.

No. VIII.

Five men, since the death of Wesley, have particularly distinguished themselves among the Methodists by their learning or writings. There are many men in the Wesleyan Ministry now living, eminent for knowledge and literary labours: but the five spoken of are numbered with the dead—they are ADAM CLARKE, JOSEPH BENSON, RICHARD WATSON, WILBUR FISK, and the younger RICHARD TREFFRY.

Of these, for comprehensive acquirements, ADAM CLARKE ranks first. Born in the North of Ireland of respectable parentage, he obtained in boyhood the rudiments of a liberal education. Early devoted to trade, he was prevented from obtaining the advantage of a thorough scholastic training. While yet a youth, he was pressed by Wesley into the work of preaching the Gospel; and thenceforth through weariness and toil and in the stirring scenes of an active life of itinerant labour, he separated himself, and intermeddled with all wisdom until he had won for himself a world-wide reputation for patient research and multifarious learning. Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Sanscrit, Arabic, Persian, Syriac, French, Spanish, Italian and German, were all familiar to him; and they all poured forth their precious treasures at his feet. His knowledge of Sacred Philology and of the great works in Theology was vast and profound. His Commentary on the Sacred Writings will long remain a monument of astonishing acquirements consecrated to the highest of all services. The writer believes that of all Commentaries extant in the English language on the Divine Revelation, Adam Clarke's brings to the elucidation of the sacred text the greatest amount of various learning. In the esteem and reverence of American divines especially he is yearly taking a higher place. Clarke was a very lovable man, with a character of transparent truthfulness and simplicity, and a heart of tender benevolence. Had his youth and early manhood been spent in the pursuit of learning only, within the space of unlimited supplies of books, he would have been, in respect to knowledge, the Man of his Age; and as it was, take him for all in all, he had perhaps no superior among his contemporaries.

JOSEPH BENSON was a well-educated man who attained to high eminence as a successful preacher of the Gospel, and as the author of a judicious Commentary on the Old and New Testament. He was a man of deep piety and singular devotedness to his Master's work; and his memory is blessed. By his ministerial and literary labours he has laid the Methodist Church under many obligations to enshrine his name in her most grateful recollections.

RICHARD WATSON—*clarum et venerabile nomen*—redolent of genius, of lofty thought and dignified eloquence. Richard Watson is the Bossuet of Methodism. In youth his education was limited; and several of his years were spent in manual labour. Providentially conducted to the sacred office, his earliest efforts gave promise of future excellence; and the ripe fruitfulness of his mature age more than redeemed the rich promise of his youth. In Watson's mental constitution strength and beauty were harmoniously blended. He rose with ease to the higher regions of thought; and he marshalled the evidences of truth with a mastery native only to the skilful and profound logician. He was endowed with the rare gift of being able to throw around the severe abstractions of truth the hues and drapery of a tasteful imagination. He attained to respectable scholarship: but it is for power of intellect, wide range of thought, and beauty and brilliancy of imagination, and not for mere knowledge of facts that Richard Watson is the greatest mind of Methodism. A few of his sermons, carefully prepared by himself for the press, are probably equal in style and thought to any pulpit performance of modern times. His Institutes are at least upon a level with any work of the same class in systematic Theology. Had a more impassioned temperament given fire and vivacity to his great powers he would have rivalled Hall and Chalmers as a pulpit orator. But there was a serenity of depth in him that forbade all passion. A fragment of a work upon which death found him engaged in the plenitude of mature strength, gives proof that if life had been permitted for the realization of his noble conceptions his fame would have been still greater than it is.

WILBUR FISK is an honoured name in American Methodism. He graduated at one of the most respectable of the American Universities.—He is the author of several works of merit; and was a highly popular and successful preacher.—He is chiefly known, however, as the great patron of learning in the denomination of which he was so valued a member. He extended and deepened the desire for mental training and for the diffusion of education, that, since his death, hath wrought astonishing results among the Methodists of the United States. The influence of his life and labours for the diffusion of sanctified learning, and the propagation of the Gospel, will long

be held in cherished remembrance, and for generations to come be productive of inconceivable good. He was President of the Wesleyan University of Middletown, Connecticut, and in that high office rendered invaluable services.

RICHARD TREFFRY, Junr., son of a useful Minister and writer of the same name, was cut off in early manhood. Learned and of considerable genius, at least of high talent, he wrote, during a long and depressing illness which terminated in death, several works which have obtained a deserved wide circulation. There was something Watsonian in his mould of intellect.—His productions are written in a chaste and agreeable style; and evince original thought, acuteness of reasoning and diligent research. Had a long and healthy life been accorded to this gifted man he would doubtless have performed great things for Christ and his Church. He who giveth every good and perfect gift saw fit to shorten the struggle of life and recall to Heaven the servant who might have been more distinguished on earth. ERASMUS.

THE WESLEYAN.

Halifax, Saturday Morning, April 12, 1851.

THE PARAMOUNT CLAIMS OF DIVINE TRUTH.

Truth is of that nature that it cannot sympathize or fraternize with error. Its claims on supremacy are stern and inflexible. Were it otherwise it would prove itself to be unworthy of its celestial origin and ultimate destiny. It comes with all the majesty of divine authority and demands universal homage. Its challenges on unreserved admission to the understandings and hearts of men are sustained by awful sanctions—refusal subjects to fearful penalties. Unnumbered blessings attend on cordial acceptance—a hearty welcome ensures the smiles and friendship of its unswerving patron—the God of truth. He consults his own happiness and security, who, at all hazards, buys the truth and sells it not. He is an enemy to himself, the greatest opponent of his own interests, who fails to make the purchase, and cowardly shrinks from enduring the imposed sacrifice. Error puts on a deceptive garb, and allures only to destroy. Of all errors, those in religious matters, are the most fatal, the most to be dreaded. Yet man is naturally prone to error and averse from truth. Submission to the grace of God is necessary to correct the fatal tendency of nature and give a new and right bias to the mind. The only means of reclamation are, in many instances, scornfully rejected, and vain and unsubdued men ruinously lean to their own understandings and take refuge in the exposed citadel of their own self-sufficiency. Truth received would make them free—but rejecting this potent emancipator, they remain in bondage to their own perverse wills, and sin. The religion of the heart they spurn—a religion appealing to sense and passion they readily embrace. They are in danger of becoming not unwilling dupes of cunning and deceitful men, who are pledged to support and extend an ecclesiastical system, whose foundation is error, and whose superstructure is reared by human device. The true friend of his race will endeavour by all legitimate means to recover such from the snare into which they have fallen; and we know of no more effectual way to accomplish this God-like object than to call them to that pure fountain of Truth, the Oracles of God, inspired by His Spirit and confirmed by the sacrificial blood of Christ. In the radiance of this emanation from Heaven, error appears in all its native hideousness and deformity—whilst Truth makes her appearance in robes of celestial light, her face smiling with heavenly beauty, her eye fixed on the throne of the Eternal, her heart pulsating with love to man, and her hand stretched out to invite the return of the erring, and guide them to the paths of peace, purity, and safety.

THE BLESSINGS OF THE REFORMATION.

We cannot too frequently recur to the blessings of the Reformation as manifested in England, whilst Romanists are so active in their vain endeavours to disparage that blessed work of God. This age is called to witness the Papal hosts congregated to pray for England's conversion to the Roman faith—an event, which, if realized, would exercise the most disastrous influence on every momentous interest of the empire. The God of Truth has, we believe, no such calamity in reversion for our nation, as the superseding of evangelical Protestantism by the obstructive dogmas of Popery. Whilst Protestants are faithful to God, in their adherence to

his cause, God will preserve them from the open and secret machinations of the emissaries of that Church which inculcates the *Christian* duty of *anathematizing* from the altar, at set times, and amid professedly devotional exercises, all denominations of Christian people who are without her pale. On the blessings of the Reformation, the Rev. I. J. BLUNT concludes his "Sketch of the Reformation in England" with the following just and appropriate remarks:—

"To the Reformation we owe it, that a knowledge of religion has kept pace in the country with other knowledge; and that, in the general advance of science, and the general appetite for enquiry, this paramount principle of all has been placed in a position to require nothing but a fair field and no favour, in order to assert its just pretensions. We are here embarrassed by no dogmas of corrupt and unenlightened times, still riveted upon our reluctant acceptance by an idea of papal or synodical infallibility; but stand with the Bible in our hands, prepared to abide by the doctrines we can discover in it, because furnished with evidences of its truth (thanks to the Reformation for this also!) which appeal to the understanding, and to the understanding only; so that no man competently acquainted with them need shrink from the encounter of the infidel; or feel, for a moment, that his faith is put to shame by his philosophy. Infidelity there may be in the country, for there will ever be men who will not trouble themselves to examine the grounds of their religion, and men who will not dare to do it; but *how far more intense would it have been, and more dangerous*, had the spirit of the times been, in other respects, what it is, and the REFORMATION yet to come, religion yet to be exonerated of weights which sunk it heretofore in this country, and still sink it in countries around us; enquiry to be resisted in an age of curiosity; opinions to be bolstered up (for they may not be retracted) in an age of incredulity; and pageants to be addressed to the senses, instead of arguments to the reason, in an age which, at least, calls itself profound! As it is, we have nothing to conceal; nothing to evade; nothing to impose: the reasonableness, as well as righteousness, of our reformed faith recommends it; and whatever may be the shocks it may have to sustain from scoffs, and doubts, and clamour, and licentiousness, and seditious tongues, and an abused press, it will itself, we doubt not, prevail against them all, and save, too (as we trust), the nation which has cherished it, from the terrible evils, both moral, social, and political, that come of a heart of unbelief."

"A GROSS AND LIBELLOUS CALUMNY."

In urging on the Legislature, whilst framing the clauses of the Marriage Bill, the necessity of carefully guarding against exempting Roman Catholic Priests from the requirement of procuring a License from the Government, or of publishing Banns, before celebrating marriage—a requirement demanded under penalty of Ministers of all Protestant denominations—we, in a recent number, assigned as a cogent reason, that the Popish Bishop had in some instances granted a "Dispensation," by which his Priests were ecclesiastically authorized to perform the ceremony without such License or publication, and thereby the law was defeated and the money which should have gone into the public treasury was diverted from its legal course, or put into the pocket of the Bishop. This declaration a writer in the last Recorder, styling himself "CLERICUS," whom from his signature we suppose to be one of the Romish Priests of this City, takes upon himself to pronounce "*a gross and libellous calumny*." In sustentation of his impeachment he asserts—

"1. That no money has ever been paid at St. Mary's for a Dispensation in Banns of Marriage."

"2. That the 'Romish Bishop' has been always most rigid in exacting the publication of Banns."

"3. That instances of Dispensation have been extremely rare, and that they are not granted unless in those very peculiar circumstances in which the reputation of individuals, the honour of families, or some other grave and weighty reason, render such Dispensation imperative upon the conscience of the Ecclesiastical Superior, both by the Gospel law of charity, and the wise Canons of the Catholic Church."

These "grave and weighty reasons," we submit, do not invalidate, but fully support our allegation. In every case where banns are not published, the law requires a License to be procured for which a certain sum of money is to be paid to the proper officer. But in those instances in which "Dispensations" have been procured, banns have not been published, nor have Licenses been obtained. It is therefore clear as day that, if the money has not gone into the pocket of the Bishop, which we put only as one part of the alternative, *the revenue has been defrauded*, which was the other part of the alternative stated.—We did not say that *both* the revenue was robbed and the Bishop pocketed the money; but we said, and say still, that every "Dispensation" granted to perform the ceremony of marriage

without publication of Banns, does in reality defraud the revenue of a certain sum of money, which every person married by a Protestant Minister without publication of Banns is required to pay; and if the Bishop charge for such "Dispensation" the money which should have gone into the treasury, is put into his own pocket.—The parties who procure such favours know whether they pay for them or not.

Any person, with one eye half open, can perceive that the second and third of the "grave and weighty reasons" of Clericus involve a palpable contradiction.

"The 'Romish Bishop' has been always most rigid in exacting Banns—"

And yet

"Instances of Dispensation have been extremely rare."

That is, in English, the Romish Bishop has been and has not been "*always most rigid in exacting the Publication of Banns*!" If the Romish Bishop has "*always*" been so exacting, and if this rigid exactness be the undeviating rule by which he truly designed to govern himself for the future, pray, what was the ground of objection urged by the Hon. President of the Council to that clause of the Marriage Bill which required either a License or the Publication of Banns? Eyen from the *confession of Clericus*, it appears, that "Dispensations," superseding the publication of Banns, have been granted by the Romish Bishop, which is precisely what we alleged: and yet, this Clericus has very gravely and very consistently declared our statement to be "*a gross and libellous calumny*!"

Nor are the material facts which we stated relative to the "Protestant young Lady"—whose reputation, by the way, we hesitate not to say, *Clericus*, by his *italic* insinuation, has wantonly assailed—denied by this volunteer defender of an act for the performance of which a Protestant Minister would be justly stigmatised forever by those who appreciate the sanctities of social life and admit the claims of parental guardianship.—It appears from *Clericus* that the "baptism," a point immaterial to our former argument, "took place in open Church, in daylight, several days previous to her marriage." Was that Church St. Mary's? Was it not the secluded Church in the distant Cemetery? When the young lady took a walk there, was she previously aware that the object of getting her to that out of the way Church was her "baptism" and initiation into the Roman communion? Whilst the object was carefully concealed from her, was not the plot arranged with the connivance of the Romish Priest? Were not two old women the principal, if not all, the witnesses of her baptism? Let *Clericus* answer these questions as *truth* will compel him to do, and then we shall the better judge of the "honourable" conduct of certain parties in this affair.

But at what hour of night did the marriage take place? Had "banns" been previously published on three successive Sundays or holidays as the law required? On these material points *Clericus* is silent! And is he aware that a protestant Clergyman was applied to in this case to marry without License or publication of banns and very properly refused? And was it not only because the Romish Bishop or some of his Priests dared to set the law of the land at defiance, that such an act was performed in this City, as on the part of the officiating Priest, outraged every principle of common decorum and propriety? And if legal sanction had been given for the exercise of this high handed *dispensing* power, where is the protestant family that might not have its peace and happiness ruthlessly invaded without a moment's warning by clandestine alliances?

The case of the "real Protestant Lady" to which *Clericus* so pathetically alludes, requires us merely to state, that had not the Romish Priests of this City held out an inducement which no Protestant Minister could conscientiously offer, it is more than probable that *Clericus* would not have had the opportunity of giving such a "shameful version" of it. He lauds the "Romish Clergy at St. Mary's" for their disinterested and Christian advice which "saved her from great peril." But how came she in that "peril,"—who held out the inducement—who promised to perform the ceremony without either license or publication of banns,—and was it not after such inducement had been given, that—finding the sole condition, on which the "sacrament" of marriage would be administered, was her renunciation of Protestantism and her bap-

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