

viour to his revilers, *because I tell you the truth.* That Bishop Ravenscroft had his faults, must be freely admitted by his greatest admirers. An unfortunate harshness of manner would sometimes repel the timid from approaching him; and an apparent impatience under contradiction, would deter free conversation in those who knew him perfectly. But these were blemishes of the outward man only, and reached not the "spirit of the mind." Of these weaknesses, however he was not unconscious; and oftentimes has he lamented over them before his friends, and prayed against them in secret. But a day or two before his death the writer of this was conversing with him on the solemn subject of the future, when he said: "My hopes on that score are without an intervening cloud. I know in whom I have believed, and I fear not to trust myself in his hands. But, bear me witness, I look for salvation only as a pardoned sinner. I have much to be forgiven of God, and I have many pardons also to ask of my fellow-men, for my harshness of manner towards them. But," said he, lifting up his eyes to heaven, and striking upon his breast, "there was no harshness here."

I cannot conclude these brief notices of my beloved diocesan, without adverting to what I conceive was one of his most distinguishing and lovely characteristics—I mean his devotion in private. On more than one occasion I have been unavoidably placed as an ear witness of his moments of retired devotion—a devotion to which I am sure that he thought there were no witnesses but himself and his God. And it was at such times that I wished a censorious world stood in my place. I distinctly remember the first time that I was so situated. Such were the strong wrestlings and deep groanings of that man of God in prayer, that my first impulse was to fly to his assistance, fearing lest some sudden and violent pain had seized upon him; but a moments reflection convinced me that it was not *bodily* anguish that wrung these complainings from him, but an agony of spirit, which seemed driven for relief to these plaintive moanings. Oh, how hard would he seem to wrestle with his God! Every groan that burst from his labouring soul seemed to say, *I will not let thee go unless thou bless me.* Nor was his a short-lived or transitory devotion. Three times a day like the prophet of old, did he kneel upon his knees; and unless pressed by other duties, he continued in prayer for the space of half an hour. His usual custom was to go from the reading of God's word to the seeking of his face in prayer. Indeed I never have known a more diligent reader of the Bible. It was ever open on his desk; and in the composition of his sermons, he seldom sought assistance beyond its pages. Enter his study when you would, there was the Bible on one side of him, and his Concordance on the other. And this reminds me of the wide-spread, but mistaken opinion of thousands as to his views on the subject of commentaries on the Bible. So far was Bishop Ravenscroft from desiring to disseminate with the Scriptures the interpretations of any man, or set of men, that I can truly say I never have known any one to hold commentaries in such light esteem. More than once have I heard the young and inexperienced Christian ask him: "What commentator shall I consult in reading my Bible?" And his reply has invariably been, "No one. Read it on your knees, and the Spirit of truth will make all necessary things plain unto you." Nay, I have heard him go further, and say, that "seldom if ever, had he been helped out of a difficulty by consulting even the most esteemed commentators." He delighted to drink out of the pure fountain of God's word; and his sermons and private discourses showed plainly that he was neither unlearned nor unskilful in handling its sacred truths. In his views of the Christian system, he seemed to stand on an eminence, with the whole Gospel spread out before him, in all its length and breadth. As a practical expounder of Scripture, I have never known his equal. He left to others the applause of critical acumen and deep research, and sought rather to bring every passage of God's word to bear upon the conscience of the sinner. And in the practical applications of Scripture he was peculiarly solemn and interesting. When in health, I have known him, after preaching twice or thrice in the day, lecture at family prayers for thirty or forty minutes, upon perhaps the first chapter that met his eye upon opening the Bible. And on these occasions, it has often been thought by his friends, that in point of force of manner, and rich-

ness of thought, he even exceeded his more deliberate pulpit exercises."—*Episcopal Watchman.*

FOR THE GOSPEL MESSENGER.
AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY.
Tract No. 214.

The strictures of Nayland on this tract in some of the late numbers of the Gospel Messenger led the writer of this article to examine for himself that part of the tract to which reference had been made. The first view excited a suspicion that there had been a want of fidelity, if not of moral honesty in preparing the twenty-sixth page of that tract. The writer of it, by placing "Simpson's Plea" at the end of his extracts would leave his readers to conclude that he had been using the language of a clergyman of the church of England; for it is not known that there is any work designated by that title except "a plea for the deity of Jesus Christ, by the Rev. David Simpson, A. M. late of St. John's College, Cambridge; Minister of Christ's Church, Macclesfield, &c." A comparison of the historical notices which this author gives of the fathers, with the notices exhibited in Tract No. 214 as the language of this author, will show how far the suspicion of disingenuousness and dishonesty is supported by facts.

Simpson's Plea, according to the London edition of 1812.

"Ignatius was a disciple of John, was appointed Bishop of Antioch by Paul, was approved of by Peter, and had the honor of dying a martyr in the year of our Lord 107." Page 467.

"Polycarp was a disciple of John, and by him made Bishop of Smyrna, A. D. 82. He was burnt alive in 100th year of his age, and in the year of our Lord 166." p. 478.

"Justin Martyr is one of the most eminent christians and scholars in this period. He was born A. D. 103, and beheaded at Rome A. D. 167." p. 488.

"Theophilus being a studious inquisitive man—became convinced of the truth of Christianity, and was made Bishop of Antioch about the year of our Lord 168." p. 493.

"Irenæus, the Disciple of Polycarp, was made Bishop of Lyons in France, A. D. 178, and beheaded by Severus, A. D. 202." p. 495.

"I have given the testimony of this learned Bishop and martyr pretty much at large." p. 502.

"About the close of the second century, or the beginning of the third, flourish'd Clemens Alexandrinus, the friend of Irenæus, scholar of Pante-næus, and tutor of the famous Origen." p. 502.

Here are notices of six of the fathers,—four of them were Bishops of extensive churches and have received their appropriate titles from all writers ancient and modern who have any claims to fidelity as authors. All history declares what Simpson does, that Ignatius was appointed Bishop of Antioch. But Tract No. 214 makes this writer of the Episcopal Church say that Ignatius was pastor of the Church at Antioch. Simpson says that Polycarp was made Bishop of Smyrna A. D. 82.—The writer of Tract No. 214 omits this fact and chooses to make this churchman say he was born A. D. 82.

The whole christian world as well as Simpson has said that Theophilus was made Bishop of Antioch. The author of Tract No. 214 has not simply made the discovery himself, but he would make us believe that a writer of our own church says that Theophilus was ordained pastor of the church at Antioch. Simpson

Simpson's Plea, according to Tract No. 214.

"Ignatius was a disciple of John, and Pastor of the Church of Antioch, and honored with martyrdom in the year of our Lord 107." p. 26.

"The venerable Polycarp, a Disciple of John born A. D. 82, and called to a martyr's crown at the advanced age of 100, finished &c." p. 26.

"Justin Martyr, born A. D. 103, and beheaded at Rome 167, has the following sentence,"—p. 26.

"Theophilus was ordained Pastor of the Church at Antioch about the middle of the second century." p. 26.

"Irenæus suffered martyrdom under Severus A. D. 202, was a Disciple of Polycarp, a Disciple of John and says &c." p. 26.

"Clemens Alexandrinus the friend of Irenæus, says &c. This later flourish'd about the close of second century." p. 26..