

sense; but even systematically reject, the most fundamental articles of Christianity. "Indeed," says Empaytez, "such is now their incredulity in relation to the Divinity of Christ, that it would be more easy to find in their sermons the names of Socrates, and Plato, than the appellation of the Redeemer."

"RATIONALISM" in Germany.

The following are specimens of the "rational" interpretation of the Scriptures, given to theological students of the University of Halle, Germany, by Dr. Wegscheider, and Dr. Gesenius—which we copy from the New-York Observer.

1. *The young man at Nain.*—"This narrative has for its basis the simple fact, that Jesus at his entrance into Nain, met a funeral procession, accidentally remarked signs of life in the man supposed to be dead, and by an impressive call restored him perfectly to his consciousness. The Jews are accustomed to bury their dead too soon!"

2. *The feeding of the 5,000.*—"Probably the following facts served for the foundation of this story.—Of the many men with whom Jesus found himself in the desert the greater part had a plenty of provisions with them, but the rest were destitute. Jesus, with his usual benevolence, began to divide his provisions among those who were in want.—This example, supported by his persuasions, and by the proverbial hospitality of the East, was followed by others, who were furnished with provisions, and so all were satisfied, and there was even much left by those who partook. The essential fact is, Jesus relieved in a wise, humane manner, the wants of a large multitude, and this is to be exhibited so as to have a religious, practical bearing."

3. *Walking with Peter on the water.*—Of this story, he says, "An actual walking of Jesus with Peter on the water would be mere juggling, and without meaning. Probably Jesus was out upon the lake, and Peter swam to him, from which the credulous historian has made this fable!"

4. *Transfiguration.*—The transfiguration of Jesus is explained by a thunder storm and a drunken sleep of the disciples, who were full of the Jewish notions of a Messiah; for, "considered as a miracle it is an unmeaning juggle."

5. *The Resurrection.*—The resurrection of Jesus, Dr. Wegscheider, thus explains: "Jesus only appeared to be dead; it is unphilosophical to explain the appearance otherwise than as a natural event, although the evangelists with their defective physiological knowledge and their love of the marvellous held him to be actually dead."

To the objection that by the supposition of a mere appearance of death an essential part of the Christian doctrine, and with it the festival of the holy supper and of Easter would be taken away, he answers:

1. "Jesus' death on the cross can be considered as an actual death, for if the seeds of life remaining in his body had not, under the guidance of God, been preserved by favorable circumstances, and quickened, his entire death would have been un-

avoidable. 2. The chief design of the death of Jesus—his offering up his life for the confirmation of his doctrine, and the moral courage with which he devoted himself to death, remains unchanged, even though we suppose that his death was not entire. *Jesus himself could not anticipate that his crucifixion would not be fatal to him, and did not anticipate it, and even after his resurrection he must have regarded the death-like unconscious state in which he had found himself as actual death!* 3. In the New Testament the state of unconsciousness is generally called death, and is, undeniably, the commencement of actual death, and is only prevented by God's special interposition from terminating in actual death. We may properly consider that state to be death from which God's guidance alone can restore life. Thus every institution prescribed by Christianity, in so far as it is founded on the moral greatness and dignity of Jesus, retains its full force."

We beg our readers to bear in mind that there are hundreds of young men on whom, during their residence at Halle, these doctrines are impressed, and by most of whom they are retained and cherished. The immediate effect must be a loathing of the Holy Scriptures and of the miserable employment of picking out a few kernels of wheat from a bushel of chaff, and which, when found, are not worth the search, since they can be so much more readily found in Wegscheider's lectures, which, while they sift out the kernels, make the residuum of the Bible superfluous.

These young men accept an office which requires them to teach from the pulpit, at the altar, and at the sick-bed, what they regard as superstition and fiction; an office of which they must be ashamed, when they are called upon to discharge its duties in the presence of those, who know their real sentiments, and who cannot but despise them for concealing those sentiments under mental reservations and accommodations. Is it to be wondered at, that they, after the light which is in them is turned into darkness, resolve to spend in worldly pleasure the few years which are at their command, before they take upon them this painful yoke; and that afterwards, with their hardened hearts, they labor all in their power to subvert divine truth, and to waste the Church of God; or some who prefer to give up a comfortable living rather than commit such sacrilege, abandon the study of theology, and choose some worldly calling? We beg that they who are accustomed to despise "rationalism," as a system whose emptiness and worthlessness have been long since exposed, and to regard it as belonging more to the past age than the present, would duly weigh the above facts. Let them consider the extent and permanency of the evil, and remember that this has been the character of the instruction at Halle, for the last ten years."

IN FRANCE, among its protestant members, the case is almost equally deplorable: there, too, they are for the most part, like those of Germany, and Switzerland socinians, and unbelievers; hence, they have adopted the socinian catechism of Vernes. Maron, the arch-priest of protestant France, in his re-

commendation of it to the public, says, "it has this great merit, that it is suitable to all communities; because, it includes none of these articles which divide them." Consequently it is obvious, that among these men, THE ESTABLISHED PRINCIPLES OF FAITH ARE NOTHING.

A Winter Evening Dialogue between John Hardman and John Cardwell, or THOUGHTS ON THE RULE OF FAITH, IN A SERIES OF LETTERS, &c. &c. &c.

1. The Catholic Faith not changeable; but fixed. 2. Reformed Faith not fixed; but changeable.

GENTLEMEN, Kirkham, 26th January, 1817

1. **THOUGH** these general observations of Mr. Cardwell, on the nature, the character, and tendency of your "Letters to the Clergy of the Catholic Church," had not stricken my mind before, I could not, in the secret of my own breast, help admitting the justice and propriety of his remarks. I felt rather mortified that my friend had discovered the anarchical principles and spirit of presbyterian levelling of your pamphlet, which though obvious when pointed out, had hitherto been invisible to me. Neither was I much gratified with his remarks on the protesting principle, as a criterion of truth. I was sensible that the terms protesting or protestantism do not occur in the Scriptures, our only Rule of Faith; and I now saw evidently that though both you and I are Protestants, your religion differs from mine, as much as mine does from Popery. But smothering the chagrin and disappointment which I felt at the turn which our conversation had taken, and apprehensive lest Mr. Cardwell should divert me from my intended attack on the corruptions of his church, and put me on the defence of my own, I here begged leave to interrupt him. Well, said I, whoever the authors of this pamphlet may be, whether wavering Papists, or Protestants in disguise, is a matter of little consequence: but one thing you must admit; that they have fully exposed the pretended authority of your church to teach whatever doctrines she pleases as matters of faith; and have demonstrably proved that this leading principle of Popery, which caused and justified the Reformation, is repugnant to Scripture, and blasphemous to the Almighty.

Hold, said Mr. Cardwell, I am happy to agree with you that such a principle is equally absurd and impious; but that principle is not ours. Our church claims no such power; she pretends to no such authority; she never pretended to exercise it. It is an assertion which would not be tolerated in any Catholic writer. On the contrary, it would certainly be condemned as heretical. Our faith is no secret; it is not hidden under a bushel. We clearly profess and openly avow our religious principles in the face of the universe. A child may learn them in a few days.—a cultivated understanding in a few hours. Now, Mr. Hardman, let me request your attention. The faith of the Catholic Church is not arbitrary, but fixed; not changeable and reformable at the pleasure of man; but originally delivered to the Church, in unchangeable