

DIVINITY.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE BOOK OF GENESIS.

Thus terminates the Book of GENESIS, the most ancient record in the world; including the History of two grand subjects, CREATION, and PROVIDENCE; of each of which it gives a summary, but astonishingly minute, and detailed account. From this Book, almost all the ancient philosophers, astronomers, chronologists, and historians have taken their respective data: and all the modern improvements and accurate discoveries in different arts and sciences, have only served to confirm the facts detailed by Moses, and to show, that all the ancient writers on these subjects, have approached to, or receded from TRUTH and the phenomena of nature, in the exact proportion as they have followed the Mosaic history.

In this Book the CREATIVE POWER and ENERGY of God are first introduced to the Reader's notice; and the mind is overwhelmed with those grand creative acts by which the universe was brought into being. When this account is completed, and the introduction of SIN, and its awful consequences in the destruction of the earth by a flood, noticed, then, the Almighty Creator is next introduced as the RESTORER and PRESERVER of the World; and thus the history of Providence commences—a history, in which the mind of man is alternately delighted and confounded, with the infinitely varied plans of wisdom and mercy, in preserving the human species, counteracting the evil propensities of men and devils, by means of gracious influences conveyed through religious institutions, planting and watering the seeds of truth and righteousness, which himself had sowed in the hearts of men; and leading forward and maturing the grand purposes of his grace and goodness, in the final salvation of the human race.

After giving a minutely detailed account, and yet in a very short compass, of the peopling the earth, ascertaining and settling the bounds of the different nations of mankind, the Sacred writer proceeds with the history of one family only; but he chuses that one, through which, as from an ever during fountain, the streams of justice, grace, goodness, wisdom, and truth emanate. Here we see a pure well of living water, springing up unto eternal life, restrained it is true, in its particular influence to one people, till in the fulness of time, the fountain should be opened in the house of David, for sin and uncleanness in general, and the earth filled with the knowledge and salvation of God: thus by means of one family, as extensive a view of the œconomy of providence and grace is afforded, as it is possible for the human mind to comprehend.

In this epitome, how wonderful do the workings of Providence appear! An astonishing concatenated train of stupendous and minute events is laid before us; and every transaction is so distinctly marked, as every where to exhibit the finger, the hand, or the arm of God! But did God lavish his providential cares and attention on this one family, exclusive of the rest of his intelligent offspring? No: For the same superintendance, providential direction and influence, would be equally seen in all the concerns of human life, in the preservation of individuals, the rise and fall of kingdoms and states, and in all the mighty revolutions, natural, moral, and political, in the universe, were God, as in the preceding instances, to give us the detailed history; but what was done in the family of Abraham, was done in behalf of the whole human race. This specimen is intended to show us, that God does work, and that against him, and the operations of his hand, no might, no counsel, no cunning of men or devils can prevail—that he who walks uprightly, walks securely; and that all things work together for good to them who love God. That none is so ignorant, low, or lost, that God cannot instruct, raise up and save. In a word, he shews himself by this history, to be the invariable friend of mankind,—that he embraces every opportunity to do them good,—and, speaking after the manner of men,—that he rejoices in the frequent recurrence of such opportunities: that every man considering the subject, may be led to exclaim in behalf of all his fellows, BEHOLD HOW HE LOVETH THEM!—It.

From the Christian Observer.

AN EVANGELICAL MINISTER.

It is deeply to be lamented that the Church of Christ should ever be divided by mere party names,

or that its true members should on any occasion be more ready to show their controversial badge, "I am of Paul, and I am of Apollos," than the common uniform of their holy profession—"and I of Christ." The terms "orthodox" and "evangelical" seem at present to marshal the two leading divisions of opinion in our church. But are not the terms convertible? Can a man be an orthodox churchman without being evangelical; or an evangelical churchman without being orthodox? To bring the point to the test of experiment, I subjoin the following character of "an evangelical minister," which was sent to a lady who had desired a definition of that term; and I would humbly request to know what it contains that is contrary to orthodoxy. Why any truly orthodox churchman should shrink from the unmorbid approach which the expression "evangelical" is often intended to convey. Change the word evangelical for orthodox, in its proper sense, and the description would be appropriate.

VIOL.

The expression an evangelical minister, when justly applied to a Clergyman of the Church of England, means, or should mean, one who, believing the doctrines contained in the sacred Scriptures, as expounded in the Liturgy and the Thirty-nine Articles—to the belief and maintenance of which he has pledged himself at his ordination,—preaches in conformity with them; enforcing the doctrines of the fall of man, and the corruption of human nature; the incapacity of mankind, in their natural state, to discern spiritual things, or to do works acceptable to God; and the necessity of a holy change of heart, as the principle of a moral change in conduct. He maintains that salvation is wholly of God's grace, through faith in Christ Jesus; and not of man's works or deservings. He shews the necessity of an atoning sacrifice to put away sin, and exhibits the office of the Holy Spirit in the renewal of the soul and the reformation of the character. He holds the necessity of good works, not as the precursors of faith, or the procuring cause of salvation, but as the necessary result and evidence of faith implanted and salvation bestowed. An evangelical minister is himself the subject and the example of the truths he preaches. Religion is with him a matter, not of hearsay, but of personal experience. Being moved by the Holy Spirit, to take upon him the sacred office, he depends on that Divine Agent for the success of his commission, and the reception of the doctrines which he delivers. He is described in Scripture as "a fellow-labourer together with God," and his business is "to gather into the fold of Christ the wandering sheep of his flock out of this naughty world." He knows, that since the Fall, "the whole world lieth in wickedness," in the sleep and death of sin, under the bondage of satan, and yet unconscious of their state; and that "the carnal mind is enmity to God, and opposed to all his gracious dispensations;" and, therefore, he willingly submits to be misunderstood and reproached, like his Divine Master, in his efforts to bring men to the knowledge of the truth, and to turn them from the power of satan unto God. He preaches the duties of the Christian as distinctly and minutely as his privileges; not shrinking from the constant declaration, that they who have believed should be zealous to maintain good works, and that Christ died expressly to purify to himself a people zealous of them. I will only add, that he practises what he preaches; that "he renounces the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh; that he believes all the articles of the Christian faith; and that he strives to keep God's holy will and commandments, and to walk in the same all the days of his life."

ADDRESS TO A MINISTER ON LEAVING HIS FLOCK.

Dear! Beloved in the Lord.—The weeping Church bids you a long and sad adieu; and prays that the Angel of the everlasting covenant may go up before you and be a light to your path, as to Israel of old, 'till you arrive at Mount Zion, the City of the living God!—And wheresoever you may stop on your journey, may the Angels of God, [especially those that preside over Churches] be ascending and descending on that place; till all shall be compelled to cry out, 'how dreadful is this place!—

this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!' And when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, remember your poor afflicted Church, that is cast down, but not forsaken—wrestle mightily with the Lord in prayer for us; for Z. O.'s sake hold not thy peace, and for Jerusalem's sake be not at rest till the salvation thereof go forth as a Lamp that burneth. We, again, bid you a tender farewell! we may not meet again till the heavens be no more! On that glorious morn, may you be enabled to say,—'here am I Lord, and the people, that thou hast given me,' and may your appearance be bright and glorious! for "they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever."—May many Jewels be given you for a crown of rejoicing in that day, when the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Finally, beloved in the Lord, farewell! We will remember Thee in the great congregation.—We will remember Thee at the evening and morning sacrifice!—And, we will be remembered by thee, and our prayers will ascend up to heaven jointly, and be offered upon the golden altar, [with the prayers of all saints,] which is before the throne of God. And as we look at the House of God, we will remember thy work of patience and labour of love—we will not complain—our grief shall be silent as the dews of night, because your tender heart will be too much affected.

We pray that you may go forth in the strength of the mighty God of Jacob, that you may be clothed with salvation,—that "holiness to the Lord," may be placed upon your forehead, that you may take unto you the whole amour of God, that you may be a Boanerges to the wicked, but a "son of consolation" to the trembling seeking soul. And may you be the means of doing much good in the name of the child Jesus—and that God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, may sanctify you wholly throughout soul, body, and spirit,—is the prayer of your affectionate Church.

LITERATURE.

ON THE DIFFUSE STYLE.

A diffuse writer unfolds his thought fully. He places it in a variety of lights, and gives the reader every possible assistance for understanding it completely. He is not very careful to express it at first in its full strength, because he is to repeat the impression; and what he wants in strength, he proposes to supply by copiousness. Writers of this character generally love magnificence and amplification. Their periods naturally run out into some length, and having room for ornament of every kind, they admit it freely.

Each of these manners has its peculiar advantages; and each becomes faulty when carried to the extreme. The extreme of conciseness becomes abrupt and obscure: it is apt also to lead into a style too pointed, and bordering on the epigrammatic. The extreme of diffuseness becomes weak and languid, and tires the reader. However, to one or other of these two manners a writer may lean, according as his genius prompts him: and under the general character of a concise, or of a more open and Diffuse Style, may possess much beauty in his composition.

For illustrations of these general characters, I can only refer to the writers who are examples of them. It is not so much from detached passages, such as I went formerly to quote for instances, as from the current of an author's Style, that we are to collect the idea of a formed manner of writing. The two most remarkable examples that I know, of conciseness carried as far as propriety will allow, perhaps in some cases farther, are Tacitus the Historian, and the President Montesquieu in "L'Esprit de Loix." Aristotle too holds an eminent rank among didactic writers for his brevity. Perhaps no writer in the world was ever so frugal of his words as Aristotle; but this frugality of expression frequently darkens his meaning. Of a beautiful and magnificent diffuseness, Cicero is, beyond doubt, the most illustrious instance that can be given. Addison also, and Sir William Temple, come in some degree under this class.—Blair.

ON HARSHNESS OF STYLE.

As every good quality in Style has an extreme, when pursued to which it becomes faulty, this holds