

he would never have given us the ordinances. Thus one error produces another: the error of Calvin's decrees, produces Socinianism, Universalism, and fanaticism;—and we may add, has a bearing on anabaptism. "Doctor Franklin," says a writer in the Episcopal Watchman of February 19, 1831, "was doubtless a statesman and a philosopher: but what did he know of the Christian revelation? Disgusted in childhood with the tenets of a crude, ultra-Calvinism, which he was accustomed to hear from the pulpit, he threw the whole subject from his mind without examination, and seems never to have returned to it afterwards." The Doctor had a mind strongly tinged with feelings of justice and benevolence, and seeing such an impious caricature of the religion of justice and mercy instead of a faithful picture, he verily rationally concluded that a good Being could not be its author. In the same way numbers have revolted from the decrees of John Calvin, and taken a desperate plunge into the opposite extreme of Universalism: and we ourselves have heard them quarrel against the peculiarities of Calvin with spiteful fury, as if they were the whole of orthodoxy, and the Gospel was not otherwise known, except with themselves.

4. On the other hand, by directing men for the evidence of regeneration, adoption into God's family, and membership of Christ's body and covenant union with him, to the ascertainable fact of their baptism in the official transactions of God's authorized servants in their mother the Church; and for the evidence of their growth in grace to the measure of the discharge of the duties of their holy calling and election into God's service, we cut off all occasions for those dangerous irregularities and innovations; and by sober and discreet instruction in the value and use of the Church and her ordinances, arm their minds equally against the folly of their own presumption and self-conceit; or cold neglect in the service of their Maker; or the arts of deception and religious quackery, of which the world scarce ever saw more than at present; or the gloomy fears of those who feel a strong necessity for being truly pious, but fancy they cannot be so till they have passed through the fiery ordeal of some mysterious and agonizing experiences.—The plain and easy path of duty is too often deserted because it is too tame, and cannot furnish a constant round of high excitement; and many times because it requires too much subordination for spiritual pride to submit to.—The writer of this knows several instances of "born again" subjects, who once were full of revival zeal, but who, after their frenzy had cooled, became ashamed of their extravagance, and took a desperate leap into the dreary wilderness of dimly hearted Universalism.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN SENTINEL.

RELIGION.

"We will be glad, and rejoice in his salvation."

So firmly are we persuaded of the truth and consistency of the Psalmist's assertion, that "the ways of religion are the ways of pleasantness,"—so abundantly, so triumphantly has it been exemplified in the experience of the true people of God in all ages of the Christian world, that we can in no wise allow ourselves to believe that gloom and austerity are synonymous terms with religion.

There is a sullen ostentatious sense of religion which affects only the countenance; but, O, how distinguishable from that genuine, sincere sense of it by which the heart is made better! Not, however, that the profession of Christianity is altogether devoid of gloom. There is a time (and where is the Christian who has not experienced it?) when a deep sense of sin is heavy on the awakened sinner's mind; when his "iniquities appear to have separated between him and his God," and the appointed sources of spiritual consolation seem closed against the soul. But this is of short duration. The Gospel, as a dispensation of mercy, provides for the returning penitent. In due time, it speaks peace to his troubled conscience: it exalts him "to sit in heavenly places in Christ;" it strips the sack-cloth from his loins: it girds him with gladness; and enables him henceforth, like the great father of the faithful, to appear as the follower and friend of God.

Very different from this is that religious gloom, that austerity of manner, which is sometimes seen to characterize every state of

mind, and to attach every course of action. It varies not with the varying sense of religious feeling, but is an equally prominent feature, both when "the heart knoweth its own bitterness, and" in those more grateful moments, when "the stranger may not intermeddle with its joy." There is a becoming seriousness naturally induced by the reflection, "Thou God seest me," which, certainly, highly befits the Christian: "there is a gravity suitable to the disciples of Christ, who have engaged to walk in their Redeemer's steps." But then we are not required by that God "who knows our frame, and remembers that we are but dust," to banish mirth, provided it be within the bounds which religion prescribes, and not excited by subjects which religion condemns. Nothing can be more contrary to what we consider the proper and natural effects of religion, rightly understood, than gloominess and apparent depression of spirits: nothing, as a predominant feeling, could be farther removed from the disposition and conduct of the great Author of our holy religion than melancholy. Such a feeling would ill-accord with the idea which he himself gives us of his religion: He declares his "Yoke to be easy and his burden light;" and assures us that the consequences of our taking his yoke upon us will be that we shall have—not gloominess of mind—not sadness of heart—but "rest;" or, as the Apostle particularizes, "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

This accords not only with our view of religion, but with those descriptions of it also which we find incidentally dispersed through the Sacred Volume. In describing the approaching advent of the Saviour's kingdom, the holy prophet exhausts every emblem of the purest joy, and every type of the most perfect peace. It is represented to us by the Angels (Luke ii. 10.) as "glad tidings to all people"—as good news, because it made known to man the great Evangelical truth that God was at length reconciled to his people. Is it possible then, let me ask, that the subjects of such a dispensation can be constitutionally a melancholy people? that gloom and sadness can naturally prevail where there is such distinguished cause for the deepest gratitude and the most unbounded joy? A melancholy Christian is but half a Christian; because his views are confined to one side of the picture. He beholds the difficulties of the wilderness, and the length of the way; but he regards not the "pillar of the cloud," the "Manna," the "living stream," and the "verdant fields" which are beyond the flood: he feels the trials, the afflictions, and the temptations of life, but surely he neglects too much the all-mighty assistance God vouchsafes to his people, and the crown that is ultimately to reward their toil.—How beautiful the sentiment, how enviable the spirit of the holy Psalmist! "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God."—"Let Israel rejoice in Him that made him; let the kingdom of Sion be joyful in their king." ♥

G. S.

THE RECHABITES.

In the year 1821 Bishop Heber preached a sermon from the following text, Jeremiah xxxv. 18—19.—"Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according to all that he hath commanded you, therefore thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel: Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever."

Upon this text the Bishop makes the following observations:

That this promise, thus solemnly and explicitly made, has received its exact fulfilment, we have very reasonable grounds to believe, not only from the respect due to the inspired authority of Jeremiah, but from every thing which is known concerning the manners and policy of those tribes which yet wander over the open country of Syria. In our present limited knowledge of those regions, we are unable indeed to fix with precision on any one particular clan as the descendants of the Kenites. But many clans there are, and always have been, who, from policy and preference at least as much as necessity, retain in those wild regions the habits described by the prophet. The use of tents would be no distinguishing mark among the wandering hordes of the desert; and the impostor Mahomet, in forbidding the use of fermented liquors, did no more than comply with a prejudice already universal not only