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#### FOR THE CHRISTIAN EXAMINER.

REVIEW OF A WORK ENTITLED, "ESSAYS ON THE FORMATION AND PUBLICATION OF OPINIONS, AND ON OTHER SUBJECTS. SECOND EDITION LONDON 1826." BY THE REV. D. WILKIE, L. L. D. QUEBEC.

The style in which these Essays are written, is the very best that can be conceived for the discussion of philosophical subjects. It is cool, dispassionate, and perspicuous in the highest degree. There is every where the utmost firmness, arising from conviction, in the statement of opinions; while every the slightest approach is avoided to that warmth of expression which would engage any of the passions on the side which is so clearly supported. It would scarcely be possible, out of the whole mass of modern authors, to select a more just example of pure philosophical writing, uninfluenced by passions and feelings.

It is scarcely necessary to add, that this is the spirit in which truth ought always to be sought, as it is clearly that in which it ought always to be expressed, when propounded to the understanding. The Author of the observations here submitted would reckon it unpardonable, in exercising in some degree the office of a critic on these essays, to deviate from the impartial, candid, and altogether

praiseworthy example which they exhibit. Without at all arrogating to himself the same excellence of style, he lays full claim to the same spirit of candor and dispassionate coolness in the investigation of the subject.

Of the ten Essays of which the work consists, the two first, while they are the longest, are also by far the most important. They are entitled, "ON THE FORMATION AND PUBLICATION OF OPINIONS," a designation which sufficiently indicates the objects of which they treat.

In the first section of this Essay, some just observations are made on the meanings of the terms, belief, doubt, disbelief, assent and opinion. Among other things, it is observed with great justice, that the word, *belief*, is, in common language, taken often for the system of truths believed, as well as for the state of the mind when it assents to the truth of a proposition. The latter is the proper use of the word. The word *opinion* is understood to mean a proposition, assented to, after doubt, deliberation, and argument.

After some other pertinent remarks on the use of the terms to be employed in this discussion, the author proceeds, in section second, to announce his leading proposition, that *belief* is in all