

THE
CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE.

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FOR THE YEAR 1824.

— By manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.—2 Cor. iv. 2.

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FEBRUARY, 1824.

Religious Communications.

LECTURES ON THE SHORTER CATECHISM OF THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY OF DIVINES—ADDRESSED TO YOUTH.

LECTURE V.

We now proceed to discuss the third answer of our catechism. It is stated thus—"The scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man."

You ought to be distinctly apprized, my young friends, that our shorter catechism was intended to contain only a compendious and connected system of revealed truth—That is, it was not intended either to go into long explanations, or to take in all the subordinate parts of the system, but only those things which are of leading importance. Neither was it intended to consider any point of what has been called *natural religion*, in any other view than as it is found stated in the Bible. Hence, after having explained what is the chief end or design of man, and recognised the holy scriptures as the only rule of direction in religious duty, the answer before us makes a *distribution*, or lays down *the method*, of the following treatise. The distribution or method is very short and summary, and yet very expressive and complete. It is—I. What we are to believe. II. What we are to do.—Or, as it would be technically termed, the *credenda* and *agenda* of the revealed system.

VOL. II.—Ch. Adv.

As the answer before us was intended to specify the plan or method of the following part of the catechism, and as this has just been stated, it would seem that we had nothing more to do, but to proceed immediately to the next question. But in reality, as the authors of the catechism intended it to be as compendious as possible, so they appear to have designed that their very *arrangement* should have a significant import; and on considering it, I find that some points of much importance, especially to young persons, must be introduced here, or not find so suitable a place in any other part of our course. I shall proceed, then, to notice these points; and shall show, as I proceed, how they arise out of this answer.

My first remark shall be on the word *principally*.—"The scriptures principally teach" certain truths, or doctrines. It is here intimated that the sacred writings teach some things beside what we are to believe in regard to God, and what we are to consider as our duty to him. The Bible contains a good deal of biography, and history, and many genealogies; and all that it contains is unmixed verity, and none of it is without its use. But the word we consider intimates, and the fact is unquestionably so, that some parts of the scripture are much more important than others. The most *important*, that is, the *principal* parts, are those which teach us *faith* and *duty*. If

LATIN HYMN OF FRANCIS XAVIER.

This justly celebrated hymn has often been republished; but as we think it may well have a place in every religious miscellany, we insert it in ours—with the best translation we have been able to select, out of several which we have seen. But no translation we have ever seen, comes near to the simplicity and tenderness of the original.

O Deus! ego amo te,
 Nec amo te ut salves me,
 Aut quia non amantes te
 Æterno punis igne.
 Tu, tu, mi Jesu! totum me
 Amplexus es in cruce;
 Tulisti clavos, lanceam,
 Multamque ignominiam,
 Innumeros dolores,
 Sudores, et angores,
 Ac mortem; et hæc propter me,
 Et pro me peccatore.
 Cur igitur non amem te,
 O Jesu amantissime!

Non ut in cælo salves me,
 Aut ne æternum damnes me,
 Aut præmii ullius spe;
 Sed sicut tu amasti me,
 Sic amo, et amabo te;
 Solum quia rex meus es,
 Et solum quia Deus es.

TRANSLATION.

My God, my Saviour, thee I love,
 Not for the hope of joys above,
 Not for the fears of pains below—
 What love from fear or hope can flow?

Thou on the cross didst me embrace,
 While bloody sweats bedewed thy face:
 For me, O God, thou deign'st to bear
 The shameful cross, the nails, the spear.

Thy precious blood for me did flow,
 For me thou drank'st the cup of wo,
 Died'st on the ignominious tree—
 For me, poor sinner, all for me.

And can I then ungrateful prove,
 And not return thee love for love?
 Let heaven or hell my portion be,
 Still, Jesus, still I must love thee.

 Reviews.

NATURE OF THE ATONEMENT. *A Discourse delivered Aug. 17, 1823, in the Chapel of the Theological Seminary, Andover. By James Murdock, D.D., Brown Professor of Sac. Rhet. and Eccles. Hist. in the Seminary. Published by the Students of the Institution. Andover, Flagg & Gould, Printers. 8vo. pp. 48.*

This is a sermon of one of the professors of the oldest of our theological institutions, and certainly one of the most respectable and important, whether we take into view its ample endowments, the learning of its professors, or the number of its pupils. Every thing proceeding from such a quarter, comes with peculiar force, and possesses an interest which does not belong to common productions. The character of the audience to which this discourse was delivered seems also to increase the interest; for we

learn, by the advertisement prefixed, that it consisted chiefly of theological students; and it appears that it was published at their request, and was "designed to aid them in forming their opinions on the important subject discussed." The subject likewise which the preacher undertakes to treat, *the nature of the atonement*, is one than which, none in the whole range of theology is more interesting. In addition to all, we are in a degree directly concerned in the religious sentiments taught and imbibed in the Andover institution. Its pupils are freely invited to preach, and often become settled pastors, in the Presbyterian churches. For these reasons we not only think it a matter of propriety to give to our readers a careful review of this sermon, but we feel ourselves bound in duty to examine it closely; and if we find it erroneous, to bear a very explicit testimony against its errors.

The text of this discourse is taken from Rom. iii. 25, 26.

“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”

No production of Dr. Murdock's pen has before fallen under our notice. But although he has hitherto been less known to the publick, than his learned and respectable colleagues; yet, we are of opinion, that as far as learning and talents are concerned, this discourse will detract nothing from the literary reputation of that important seminary. The style is bold, free, and forcible; and if here and there some carelessness is observable, it creates no disgust in our minds. We are even pleased to see a preacher so absorbed with the magnitude of his subject, as to forget the nice collocation of words, and studied embellishments of diction; and although manifest imperfections of this kind are usually corrected when pulpit compositions are committed to the press, yet if an author, whose matter is excellent, chooses to let them remain, he shall do it without offence to us. We think, that the candid and judicious reader will not refuse to Dr. Murdock some talent for profound and discriminating investigation; and his disposition to trace every opinion as far as possible, to its first principles, and to bring every doctrine, however venerable for antiquity, to the test of rigid inquiry, is laudable. We feel constrained, however, to qualify this commendation by remarking, that Dr. M. is too dogmatical for our taste: by which we mean, that he often asserts peremptorily, where he ought to prove conclusively. Professors, who are accustomed to dictate *ex cathedra*, are, perhaps, in danger of contracting this habit;

but we cannot say that we have before observed it, in those who have recently favoured the world with their writings.

Perhaps we shall appear fastidious when we object to the display of literature, and especially of German literature, in this discourse. We cannot but be of opinion that there is more parade of authors in the margin than the occasion required. What need was there to send us to Germany for authorities to establish such a sentiment as this—“An offended God will make his own terms, and who can tell what they will be until he reveals them?” We are at a loss to conjecture what new light these learned men can cast on this plain proposition; which we think might very safely have been left to the good sense of Dr. M.'s hearers. But the truth is that we would not have noticed this circumstance, if it had not appeared to us to manifest a disposition, which we exceedingly regret to observe is becoming prevalent—a disposition to defer too much to German criticks, and German theologians. That the most distinguished writers and professors in that country, are not at present safe guides in matters of faith, seems to be admitted by the most liberal among us; yet it appears to be taken for granted, that we may make the lexicons, scholia, and commentaries of these men our standard books, without any danger. But if deists and Socinians are permitted to compose our lexicons of the original tongues, and our critical commentaries on the text of sacred scripture, they need not be concerned about our creeds and symbols of doctrine—undermine the foundation and the superstructure must fall. The fact really is, that some of the German commentators, whose works are in highest repute in this country, are as openly deists as Hume or Gibbon. They are not afraid to say, that the early history of the Jews,

recorded in the Bible, is fabulous; that the Mosaic account of the creation is repugnant to true philosophy; and that inspiration never existed. Is it really come to that pass, that we must be dependent on such men to inform us what is the true meaning of scripture? Is there no danger that they may insidiously obscure or pervert the word of God? And after all, what do these boasted works contain which cannot be found in other authors? It is a fact that the *Scholia* of *Rosenmüller* the younger, are principally made up of scraps from other books, and often in the very words of the authors, with no other acknowledgment than the general mention made of their names at the beginning of the work. And yet, according to the rising fashion, if the authority of a commentator is needed, we are referred to this infidel. We do not speak at random, when we call him an infidel; the charge can be made out completely from his own works, so highly prized by many in our country. And, in our opinion, there is no vehicle of the poison of error and infidelity so effectual as a critical exposition of the Bible. Here the unwary student, while he feels as if he were drawing from the fountain of life, is in reality imbibing the streams of death. The deleterious potion indeed is not prepared in large draughts, but drop by drop is instilled into the unsuspecting mind.

We desire to ask, what sort of a system of theology that would be, which should be formed in exact conformity with one of these commentaries? Would it contain one fundamental article of revealed religion? We think not. Yet these are the authors who are honoured by a constant reference to their writings, while our old standard commentators are treated as unworthy of regard. And what is most to be deplored, young tyros in theology are somehow led into

the opinion, that these books must be possessed, cost what they may, and let the price come from whence it may. We admit that it is altogether proper, that such works should be in the hands of professors, and such as are called upon to refute their errors; and we make no objection to students reading such works, where they enjoy the best aid to enable them to detect the infidelity which insidiously lurks in them. But this will not suffice. By some means German theology is in vogue, and there is a pride in referring to a long list of German authors; the natural inference would be, that Germany was the land of sound theology; but how far this is from being the fact, we have already hinted. We wish to indulge in no undue severity, nor to deny to any set of men the praise which they have merited. We are ready to acknowledge that in biblical criticism the Germans have laboured much, and as far as relates to the mere letter of the sacred text, not unsuccessfully; but let us beware, cautiously beware, of the leaven of infidelity with which many of their books abound.

In the beginning of the 7th page of the discourse before us, Dr. M. contracts the fundamentals of Christianity within very narrow limits. "For the attainment of salvation," says he, "it may be sufficient that we know and believe firmly the simple fact, that there is forgiveness with God, for the penitent believer, on account of something which Christ has done or suffered." This is certainly liberal enough; for we cannot recollect that we ever saw or heard of any person bearing the Christian name, who would refuse his assent to this proposition. But perhaps there is more implied than appears—perhaps the preacher would so explain his words as to include some correct view of the character of Christ; otherwise we must think, that he has gone much too far in his libe-

rality. We shall be able to judge of this in the sequel.

In the same page the learned professor of Ecclesiastical History has given a brief sketch of the history of the atonement from the earliest ages to the present time, which, as a curiosity in this department of literature, we shall present to the reader, entire.

“On few points in theology, has the Christian church made greater progress in knowledge. From the days of the earliest fathers to Martin Luther, there was a gradual though not very rapid advance. The reformers cast much light on the subject. From that time, the adversaries of the doctrines of grace have, with eagle eyes, detected errors and mistakes in the writings of the reformers and their successors. Within the last fifty years, the subject has undergone a more full discussion than ever; and the advance in knowledge has, I conceive, been answerable to the efforts made. One fact is noticeable, and demands our gratitude to the Author of all light: the believers in gratuitous justification, both in Europe and America, seem to be gradually coming to nearly the same conclusions.”

It would seem from this sketch, that the darkest age of the church was that which immediately succeeded the apostles; at least as it relates to a knowledge of the atonement.—That knowledge was steadily, though not rapidly, advancing through all the dark ages of Gothic barbarity and Popish superstition; that the adversaries of the doctrines of grace have detected errors and mistakes in the writings of the reformers and their successors; and finally that the subject of the atonement has been more fully discussed, and had more light cast upon it, within the last fifty years than ever before. Now all this was new to us; for we had been accustomed to think, that in the earliest ages, the fundamental truths of the gospel were best understood, as being received immediately from the apostles, or from men instructed by the apostles: that soon the church began to degenerate, and continued declining until the gospel was al-

most entirely obscured in the dark ages: And we were startled at hearing of the success of the adversaries of the doctrines of grace in detecting the errors of the reformers, for we had thought that these champions of truth had been triumphant in all controversies on this subject. But no part of this statement of facts surprised us more, than the account of the advancement of knowledge within the last fifty years. It was as if some strange thing had come to our ears. We asked ourselves, where this great light had appeared? What important works had been written on the atonement, in Europe or America, within that period? We knew, indeed, that in the Unitarian controversy some men had written ably in defence of a vicarious atonement, but we were not aware that they had disclosed any new views of this doctrine. It was also within our knowledge, that some pamphlets and small books in this country, had been written on this subject; but we were not prepared to hear, that in these, there was a more thorough and clear discussion of the nature of the atonement than was ever before made. We were pleased to find here a reference to a note in the Appendix, and that the reader may have a fair opportunity of judging how far ecclesiastical history will support her professor in his assertions, we will insert a part of it.

“The death of Christ, they often considered in the light of a *sacrifice for sin*; and often too, in that of a *ransom* paid for the redemption of captives. They considered all men as having resigned themselves up willing slaves of the god of this world; who therefore had over them the rights of a conqueror over captives. To rescue them from this captivity, Christ paid his own life a ransom. Thus *Justin, Irenæus, Clemens Alex. Tertullian, Origen, Basil, &c.*, who maintained that the ransom was paid to the devil. Indeed this was the general opinion in the earlier ages. But *Gregory Naz. Augustine, Athanasius, and Ambrose*, held that the ransom was paid to God;—a sentiment which was generally held among the schoolmen.”

That the opinion here ascribed to the primitive church and earlier fathers, is correct, ought to have been shown by undoubted authorities; or at least the passages in the Fathers, on which the opinion is founded, ought to have been so referred to, that we might have the opportunity of judging for ourselves. As the matter stands, we have it not in our power to determine by any evidence furnished by Dr. M., how much or how little truth there may be in this serious allegation against the earlier fathers, and the whole primitive church. But we believe the true state of the case to be, that some unguarded expressions, seeming to have the import "that the ransom of Christ was paid to the devil," may be culled from the writings of some of the earlier fathers; but that it was the general opinion in the earlier ages, or that it was held by all the venerable men whose names are mentioned in the note, we utterly disbelieve.

And here let it be remembered, that the real opinion of a writer must not be determined from some one or two detached expressions which he may have inadvertently used, but from an impartial analysis of all that he has written on the subject. We are much mistaken, if Dr. M. would not find it the most difficult task he ever attempted, to sustain the allegation which he has made, so dishonourable to many of the Fathers, and to the earlier ages of the church. At any rate, as he has produced no evidence whatever of his assertion (except a reference to another list of learned authors), we shall indulge ourselves in incredulity on this point, until the proof shall appear.

But although Dr. M. allows that "the reformers cast much light on this subject," yet it appears from this note, that they adopted the opinions of *Anselm*, who lived in the eleventh century; and that their chief merit consisted in extending the efficacy of the atone-

ment to all sins, and not merely to sins committed before baptism. But the theory of *Anselm* adopted by the reformers, we are next told, is incumbered with difficulties; and *Grotius* is mentioned as one, who has exhibited a new scheme, which it is said is now generally embraced by Protestants, and has nearly supplanted the scheme of *Anselm*.

The only remark which we shall make on this statement is, that we have good reason to believe, that the reformers borrowed their ideas of the atonement directly from the word of God; and that when they availed themselves of human helps, they did not go to the schoolmen, and to the dark ages, but to such men as *Augustine*, and others of the Fathers.

As this new theory is doubtless the one which our author attempts to explain and defend in this sermon, we shall have opportunity of judging of its consistency before we are done.

The preacher commences his exposition of the text, by a critical examination of the principal words and phrases of which it consists. This is proceeding in a scholar-like manner; for there is no sure method of ascertaining the meaning of any book, or any sentence in a book, but by learning the true import of the words, phrases, and figures which the author employs. Nor does the sacred volume form any exception from this rule; for if God condescends to speak to us in the language of men, he expects us to understand him according to the true meaning of the words used; otherwise a revelation would be useless, or rather no revelation to us. But while we approve Dr. M.'s method of arriving at the sense of the text, we cannot say that we think his interpretation altogether satisfactory. He takes not the least notice of a clause of the 25th verse, which by some learned commentators is thought to have a very

important bearing on the meaning of the whole context: we refer to these words, *for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.* It may be, that Dr. M. did not think it necessary to his main design to explain this clause; but certainly it behoved him to give its general meaning; and that his own interpretation might stand, it was necessary to prove, that the sense put on these words by Cocceius, Macknight, and others, is not correct. But our chief objection is to his method of disposing of the phrase τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ, which he explains to mean, "the perfect holiness and uprightness of God's character as a moral governor," or "the rectitude of his views and proceedings as moral governor of the universe." The method which he pursues to support this interpretation is, by endeavouring to set aside other interpretations; but according to this method of exegesis, it was incumbent on him to show the incorrectness of all other interpretations which have been given by learned men. But this he has not attempted; he has only considered two, and therefore if it be granted that he has succeeded in setting these aside, it does not follow that his own must stand.

That interpretation of the text which Dr. M. takes most pains to overthrow, is the one which makes δικαιοσύνη to mean *goodness, benignity, or compassion*; and we are of opinion that the reasons offered to show that it is incorrect, are sufficient; for the word is never used in this sense by the writers of the New Testament. But this notwithstanding, we think, that the phrase, thus interpreted, makes a more consistent sense, than that adopted by the preacher; and if a long list of German authorities can establish any thing, they might readily be produced in favour of this interpretation. *Schleusner* gives this meaning to the phrase in most

places where it occurs in this epistle; and this is but one of a thousand instances to show, that this admired lexicographer is an unsafe guide in the interpretation of the New Testament.

The other interpretation which Dr. M. endeavours to set aside, is that which understands this phrase to mean, that justifying righteousness which God has revealed and will accept; but let the preacher here speak for himself.

"Some suppose the righteousness of God to denote here, not one of the divine attributes, but that righteousness which God accepts and makes the ground of a sinner's justification; or what had just before been denominated 'the righteousness of God without the law,' and 'the righteousness of God which is by faith in Jesus Christ.'" But this would be supposing the righteousness of God to be nothing different from the propitiation itself; between which two things, the text makes the same distinction as between *the means employed, and the effect produced.* The propitiation was intended for an exhibition, or, it was an exhibition, of the righteousness of God. That which is employed solely as the means of exhibiting something else which we wish to display, cannot be the very thing displayed. To bear the meaning contended for, the text should read: Whom God hath set forth as a propitiation, that is, *hath caused to become his righteousness.*"

Our first remark on this passage is, that the objection here made appears to us very feeble. The difficulty started is certainly not very tangible, so that we find it scarcely possible to get hold of it. But so far as we can give it body and shape, it amounts to this, that according to this view of the text, *propitiation* and *righteousness* are the same thing, but the text represents the first to be the *means* and the last the *effect*. But when the *effect* produced is the manifestation of some truth, and the *means* some important fact or transaction, the two things are not properly distinct.

* See *Waltby*, in loc. and *Discourse on Imputation*, in his *Com. on N. T.* vol. II. p. 228.

For example, the execution of the penalty of the law on an offender is the means of exhibiting the justice of government; and how futile would be the objection, that this was justice itself, and therefore could not be the means of exhibiting justice? But secondly we remark, that *propitiation* and *justifying righteousness* are not precisely the same, in the view of those who give this interpretation: the latter includes more than the former, and therefore the objection is not well founded; and we see no absurdity or inconsistency in saying, that Christ was set forth to be a propitiation in order that such a justifying righteousness might be declared, or exhibited, as God would accept. But although we believe that the interpretation here attempted to be set aside is substantially correct, yet we are of opinion, that it does not give the precise and full import of the phrase τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ. This is the most important phrase in Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and the right understanding of it will be a sort of key to the whole epistle; and a mistake in regard to it tends to spread confusion through all his reasoning. Now we lay it down as a sound rule of interpretation, *that when an author in a discourse, consisting of a chain of close reasoning, selects some words or phrases to express his most important ideas, these words or phrases should be understood in one uniform sense, unless there be some clear indication, that the writer has in some instances employed them in a different sense.*

Let this rule be applied to the case before us, and whatever other effect it may have, it will completely overthrow that interpretation which has been adopted by Dr. Murdock. The phrase ἡ δικαιοσύνη τοῦ Θεοῦ first occurs in chap. i. verse 17, where the apostle, having declared that he was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, proceeds to

explain what that gospel contained. "For therein," says he, "*the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, the just shall live by faith.*" Is it not most evident that by *the righteousness of God*, he means, the method of obtaining life by faith in Christ? Certainly, he cannot mean, that the *rectitude* or *justice* of God was revealed to faith: this would be no gospel; and his proof from the Old Testament would have no meaning.

Here let it be distinctly noticed, that when Paul would announce in a summary manner the substance of the gospel, he selects this very phrase to express it. But before he could with propriety proceed in explaining this method of salvation, he must prove that all men were sinners and under condemnation, and consequently needed this gospel method of justification. Therefore he turns aside to establish this truth, both in relation to the Gentiles and Jews, and having completed his demonstration, and drawn the inevitable conclusion, *that by the deeds of the law no flesh should be justified*, he returns to the consideration of the gospel, and uses the identical phrase which he had employed in the commencement: *But now the righteousness of God, without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.* Can there exist a doubt that these words have the same sense here as in the 17th verse of the first chapter?—If there could, the apostle has provided against it, in the following verse. *Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all that believe.* Thus far all is plain, and Dr. M. seems to admit, that in the passages just quoted, there is reference to a justifying righteousness. The apostle goes on to say, by way of further explanation—*For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God: being justified freely by his grace through the redemption*

that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

Here let it be remembered, that we have ascertained the general meaning of the phrase in question, as hitherto employed—that the same phrase is used both in the 25th and 26th verses—for *ἡ δικαιοσύνη αὐτοῦ*, is precisely the same as *ἡ δικαιοσύνη τοῦ Θεοῦ*, except that the pronoun is used for the noun. And it should be carefully observed, that the subject is so far from being changed, that the connexion is of the closest possible kind, so that the sentence is not completed until after the words of the text are introduced—and then we would appeal to any one, whether in the same breath, in the same sentence, in explaining the same subject, the same phrase distinctly mentioned, and emphatically reiterated, can be supposed, without the greatest necessity, to have an entirely different meaning? and a meaning too not authorized by the usage of the Apostle Paul in this epistle, or in any of his writings? If so, then we shall despair of ever being certain of his meaning, when he uses the plainest language.

But what necessity is there in this case, for supposing any change in the use of this phrase? The scope of the apostle is to explain that way of life, or method of justification, which is revealed in the gospel. He had called it over and over again, the *righteousness of God*. In the 24th verse, he expresses his meaning most clearly: *Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*. Then follow the words of the text, *whom God hath set forth, &c.* It is as though he

had said, this justification is by grace through the redemption of Christ; but this redemption is effected by setting forth Christ as a propitiation, which becomes effectual through faith in his blood; and thus a foundation is laid for declaring, or exhibiting the method of justification which God hath appointed, by which past sins are forgiven. And the exhibition of this method of justification is necessary to show that God is just in the justification of a believing sinner; for if this method of justification did not include a propitiation for sin, then it would not be just to justify the sinner, even if he did believe. This, we are persuaded, is the true import of the apostle's reasoning, and it will be confirmed by considering the other passages where this phrase occurs.

We do not think it necessary to inquire into the different senses, in which the word *δικαιοσύνη* is used in this epistle, when found in connexion with other words: our opinion is that *ἡ δικαιοσύνη τοῦ Θεοῦ* is a phrase of definite and uniform import, and that through the whole epistle, the apostle never loses sight of the sense in which he used it when he commenced. And this will appear more evidently, if we attend to the only other passage (except one, which shall be presently noticed), where it is used. In the beginning of the tenth chapter, Paul expresses his ardent desire and prayer to God for his unbelieving countrymen, that they might be saved. He allows that they had a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. Then in the third verse, he points out the great error into which they had fallen, in regard to the way of salvation. "*For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*" Here we have precisely the same form of expression as was repeatedly used before; and we sup-

pose that scarcely a man could be found, who would not agree that the apostle by *God's righteousness*, means the gospel method of justification, in opposition to that which was by the law. But if a doubt could remain on any mind, it must be removed by the explanation which he subjoins. "*For,*" says he, "*Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise,*" &c. Here the *righteousness of God* is first set in opposition to that righteousness which the unbelieving Jews went about to establish, and which is denominated *their own righteousness*; next, this righteousness of God is described to be that which is constituted by Christ becoming the end of the law; and finally, it is contrasted with the righteousness described by Moses, the substance of which was, *the man that doeth these things shall live by them*, and is called *the righteousness which is of faith*.

We have omitted to notice one passage, in which this phrase is found, chap. iii. v. 5, where it is used incidentally, in stating the objection of certain cavillers to the doctrine preached by Paul. And although we admit, that at first view, it seems to refer to the attribute of God's justice, yet we are persuaded that an impartial examination of the context will result in the opinion, that even here, the apostle has not departed in the least from that sense which he at first gave the words. In regard to this point, however, we can do no more than refer to the judicious commentary of Dr. Whitby on the place: and let him also be consulted on the other passages in which this phrase occurs. Why Dr. M. has referred us to the opinion of this commentator on *his* text, we cannot

conjecture; for if his object had been to select one the most *adverse* to his own interpretation, he could not have succeeded better.

We have not paid so much attention to the exposition of the text, because we think that Dr. M.'s theory of the atonement can derive much advantage from his own interpretation, as will be shown presently; but because we considered it important to give, what we believe to be, the true import of this interesting part of scripture.

(To be continued.)

THE MORAL DIGNITY OF THE MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE. *A Sermon delivered before the Boston Baptist Foreign Mission Society, on the evening of Oct. 26, and before the Salem Bible Translation Society, on the evening of Nov. 4, 1823. By F. Wayland, jun. Pastor of the First Baptist Church in Boston. Published by request. Boston, James Loring, 1824. pp. 39.*

So many missionary sermons have been preached and published within the last thirty years, that any thing novel in such addresses, cannot often be expected. The subject, however, is exceedingly copious, as well as highly interesting, and of such a subject genius will seldom fail to find some new and striking method of illustration. A method of this description has, we think, been happily hit upon by the author of this discourse, whose talents are certainly of no ordinary kind. The text of the sermon is Matt. xii. 38: "The field is the world." In an introduction of nine pages, he treats on the emotions which are produced by what critics have denominated the *SUBLIME*. He speaks of the sublime in natural objects, in the energies of intellect, in the greatness of moral purpose and enterprise—in patriotism and in philanthropy—in the characters and con-

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Religious Communications.

LECTURES ON THE SHORTER CATECHISM OF THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY OF DIVINES—ADDRESSED TO YOUTH.

LECTURE VI.

The fourth answer of our catechism is thus expressed—"God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth."

We have seen that our catechism was intended to be merely a summary of revealed truth, and no farther to notice subjects of natural religion than as they are referred to in scripture. Had not their plan been thus limited, the authors of the catechism would no doubt have made the subject of the answer before us the first in the system; since the being and perfections of God must manifestly lie at the foundation of all religion. But as a revelation from God necessarily implies his existence, so that existence is taken for granted, not only in this catechism but in the scriptures themselves. There is no elaborate argument in the Bible to prove the being of a God, although we there find a reference incidentally to the very best evidence by which his existence is evinced; and it is from revelation alone that we obtain a correct and just knowledge of the divine perfections. It is an undeniable fact, that although the belief of a great first cause has been nearly universal in the world, through all ages, yet without revelation men have never had consistent and adequate conceptions of the divine character. A few of the heathen philosophers

did, indeed, form and express some noble and just notions of the Supreme Being; yet in other particulars they were, in regard to the Deity, grossly ignorant or erroneous: and whatever was their knowledge, it was pretty much confined to themselves and to a few disciples—"The *world* by wisdom knew not God."

But notwithstanding the catechism is silent on this subject, I have thought it right to give you a short and summary view of the evidence or proof of the being of God, as it is stated in the systems of natural religion. In doing this some of the divine attributes will of course be mentioned; but we shall not dwell upon them till we come to consider them as made known by revelation, as well as by reason.

The proof of the being of God rests ultimately on this principle, that *there can be no effect without a cause*. That every effect must have an adequate cause, must be taken as an axiom; that is, a principle so obvious that it does not admit of proof. Without axioms, or self-evident principles, we can never reason conclusively at all; because all sound reasoning must begin or terminate in what is self-evident. Mr. Hume, who seemed to delight in trying to make the human understanding confound or subvert itself, has endeavoured to weaken our belief in the connexion between cause and effect;*

* The late Dr. THOMAS BROWN, of Edinburgh, in his "Inquiry into the Relation of Cause and Effect," maintains with Mr. Hume, that what we denominate *causes*

with almost every thing that characterizes fervent piety, and distinguishes Christian liberality. He was not however distinguished as a writer; and we did not know that he had ever attempted poetry, till we cast our eyes on the following lines in the *Evangelical Magazine* for December last, which are there said to have been "written by that great Christian philanthropist, John Thornton, Esq. of Clapham, upon his receiving a mourning ring from a cousin of his own name, lately deceased.

"Welcome, thou presage of my certain doom!

I too must sink into the darksome tomb;

Yes, little prophet, thus my name shall stand,

A mournful record on some friendly hand:
My name?—'tis here,—the characters agree,

And every faithful letter speaks to me!
Bids me prepare to meet my nature's foe,
Serene to feel the monster's fatal blow;
Without a sigh to quit the toils of time,
Secure of glory in a happier clime:

Then mount the skies—forsake my old abode,

And gain the plaudit of a smiling God;
Receive, Lord Jesus, body, soul and spirit;

Behold my plea—thy sufferings and thy merit."

The writer of these lines died in the Lord 1790, aged 71.

Æbietos.

NATURE OF THE ATONEMENT. *A Discourse delivered Aug. 17, 1823, by James Murdock, D. D.*

(Continued from p. 84.)

Dr. Murdock, having finished his exposition of the text, proposes these two questions for discussion: 1. Why was an atonement necessary? 2. And how did the mediation of Christ answer the purpose? But before he enters on the discussion of these points, he undertakes to answer, as a preliminary, the following question: "What are the reasons which either induce or require God, to inflict any punishment whatever on transgressors?" For this he assigns three reasons; first, the intrinsic evil of sin; secondly, the good order and happiness of his kingdom; and thirdly, the personal benefit of the individuals who transgress. All these, however, might be included in one. The only reason for which God punishes sin is its evil. If it were not evil in its own nature, it never could interfere with the good order and happiness of his kingdom. This

is only one way in which the intrinsic evil of sin is manifested. This reason is not, therefore, properly distinct from the first; and as to the third, it is still the evil which is in sin, that requires that it should be punished even in the children of God. But we should not have found any fault with these reasons, if we had not perceived that on these distinctions the author builds his whole system of the nature of the atonement. With the first of these reasons, according to him, the atonement has nothing to do: "nothing that a Mediator could do would remove it." But an extract from the sermon will best convey the professor's meaning.

"Of the three grounds of punishment just enumerated, the first is, in the nature of things, removeable in no other way than by a change of character, either in God or in the sinning creature. Nothing that a Mediator could do would remove it. The holy and unchangeable God can never cease to abhor sin. He must forever feel differently, and be inclined to conduct differently, towards the righteous and the wicked. Nothing can ever bring the infinite mind, which is purity

itself, into harmony with the polluted souls of sinning creatures. They must become holy; this, and this only, can remove the first ground of punishment.—And this certainly will remove it; because when creatures cease to be sinners, they must cease to be odious in the sight of God. Their new and holy characters render them now lovely in his view; and he can therefore feel no repugnance, so far as their present characters are concerned, to embracing them as his dear children.—Such a change in the sinner's character, will likewise remove the third ground of punishment, which was the reformation of the sinner himself. Because this object is already obtained, by the change supposed.

“Only the second ground of punishment then remains to be removed; and to remove this, and this only, is the proper business of an atonement.”

Here we have the true foundation of Dr. M.'s theory. Though sin might be punished in the transgressor, on account of its intrinsic evil or ill desert, yet the sufferings of a Mediator have no respect to this; they can have no effect upon it.—This is only to be removed by making the sinner holy, which, we are told, is all that is necessary. As these radical principles are all important in this subject, we might have expected something in the way of proof; but the preacher has contented himself with a string of assertions, to which it would be easy to oppose as many negations. But our object now is to exhibit to the reader, a just view of Dr. M.'s theory; our remarks upon it shall be made in due time. We shall therefore extract a number of passages from the discourse, that it may be clearly seen that we do no injustice to the learned professor, in the representations which we make of his system.

“Thus far we have been examining and attempting to ascertain, precisely, the nature of the difficulty which it was the business of the atonement to remove. The difficulty, it appears, consisted wholly in the second ground of punishment; that is, in the necessity of distributive justice to the well being of the universe.

“To remove this difficulty, and to enable God righteously to pardon the re-

penting sinner, the atonement must give the same support to law, or must display as impressively the perfect holiness and justice of God, as the execution of the law on transgressors would. It must be something different from the execution of the law itself; because it is to be a substitute for it, something which will render it safe and proper to suspend the regular course of distributive justice.—If such an expedient can be found, then an adequate atonement is possible; otherwise it is not.*

“Now such an expedient, the text represents the sacrifice of Christ to be. It is “a declaration of the righteousness of God; so that he might be just,”—might secure the objects of distributive justice, as it becomes a righteous moral governor to do;—“and yet might justify,” or acquit and exempt from punishment, him that believeth in Jesus. It was in the nature of it, an exhibition or proof—*επιδείξις*—of the righteousness of God. It did not consist in an execution of the law on any being whatever; for it was a substitute for an execution of it.—It did not annihilate the guilt of the transgressors, or cause them to be either really or apparently innocent; for this was impossible: it rather proclaimed the atrocity of their guilt.—It did not fulfil the law, or satisfy its demands on transgressors; for then their acquittal would have been an act of justice, not of grace; and the atonement would have been but another mode of executing the law itself, not a substitute for it. Its immediate influence was not on the characters and relations of men as transgressors, nor on the claims of the law upon them. Its direct operation was on the feelings and the apprehensions of the beings at large, who are under the moral government of God.”

“The only difficulty is to understand how this exhibition was a display of the righteousness of God. To solve it, some have resorted to the supposition that the Son of God became our *sponsor*, and satisfied the demands of the law on us, by suffering in our stead. But to this hypothe-

* See *F. G. Süskind*, über die Möglichkeit der Straffen-Aufhebung oder der Sünden-Vergebung, in *Flatt's Mag.* für christ. Dogm. St. I. S. 1—68, and *C. G. Bretschneider's Handbuch der Dogm.* §. 158. Band II. S. 248—278. Also *Dr. J. Edwards*, Three Serms. in Select. on Atonement, pp. 330—337. *Dr. Marcy's* discourse, *ibid.* pp. 206—208. *Dr. Small-ey's* Sermon, *ibid.* pp. 112—114. *Dr. Griffin*, on the Extent of the Atonement, pp. 22—27. *Mr. Burge*, Essay on the script. doctr. of Atonement, pp. 39—66.

sis there are strong objections. To suppose that Christ was really and truly *our sponsor*, and that he suffered in this character; would involve such a transfer of legal obligations and liabilities and merits, as is inadmissible: and to suppose any thing short of this, will not explain the difficulty. For if, while we call him a sponsor, we deny that he was legally holden or responsible for us, and liable in equity to suffer in our stead; we assign no intelligible reason, why his sufferings should avail any thing for our benefit, or display at all the righteousness of God.— Besides, this hypothesis,—like all the others, which suppose the Son of God to have first entered into a close, legal connexion with sinful men, and afterwards to have redeemed them,—would make the atonement to be a legal satisfaction for sin; and then the acquittal of the sinner would be no pardon at all, but would follow in the regular course of law.—We must, therefore, resort to some other solution. And what is more simple, and at the same time satisfactory, than that which is suggested by the text? The atonement was an *exhibition or display*. That is, it was a *symbolical transaction*. It was a transaction, in which God and his Son were the actors; and they acted in perfect harmony, though performing different parts in the august drama. The Son in particular, passed voluntarily through various scenes of humiliation and sorrow and suffering; while the Father looked on with all that tenderness and deep concern, which he—and none but he—could feel. The object of both, in this affecting tragedy, was to make an impression on the minds of rational beings every where, and to the end of time. And the impression to be made, was, that God is a holy and righteous God; that while inclined to mercy, he cannot forget the demands of justice, and the danger to his kingdom from the pardon of the guilty; that he must shew his feelings on this subject; and shew them so clearly and fully, that all his rational creatures shall feel that he honours his law while suspending its operation, as much as he would by the execution of it.

“But how, it may be asked, are these things expressed or represented by this transaction. The answer is,—symbolically. The Son of God came down to our world, to do and to suffer what he did; not merely for the sake of doing those acts and enduring those sorrows, but for the sake of the impression to be made on the minds of all beholders, by his labouring and suffering in this manner. In this sense, it was a symbolical transaction. And the import or meaning of it, as of every other symbol, is to be learned ei-

ther from the circumstances and occasion of it, or from the explanation that accompanies it. Hence all that either reason or revelation teaches, respecting the object of Christ's visit to our world, may properly be applied to the explanation of this significant transaction.—Does any object, that viewed in this light, it is an obscure and unnatural symbol? I might ask the objector to shew the natural fitness of other symbols both human and divine, to express the import which is ascribed to them. Words, for instance, are symbols of human thoughts and emotions. But what is there in the nature of articulate sounds, to make them significant of the thoughts and emotions of the soul? or to make each word significant of one particular thought, rather than another? The only answer here, is that men have agreed to use certain sounds as symbols of certain thoughts; and thence it is, they have acquired a meaning.”

“According to the view we have taken of the nature and design of the atonement, the justification of believers is not a justification founded on the principles of law and distributive justice. It is an *absolute pardon*, an act of *mere grace*; and of grace on the part of God the Father, as well as on that of God the Son. For the operation of Christ's sacrifice, it appears, was not on the regular course of distributive justice in regard to individual transgressors. Its influence was on the public feeling respecting the character of God. And it only enabled God, with honour to himself and safety to his kingdom, to gratify the desires of his heart by the pardon of repenting sinners. Justification, therefore, is a real departure from the regular course of justice; and such a departure from it, as leaves the claims of the law on the persons justified, forever unsatisfied. This is a legitimate inference from the principles which have been advanced. And it is confirmed by the following considerations.”

“If the atonement causes transgressors to be justified on the principles of law and distributive justice, either it must change the principles of the law itself, or it must divest the transgressor of guilt and ill desert, or it must legally and fully satisfy the demands of the violated law upon him.—But the first is impossible. The law of God is founded on the eternal and immutable principles of distributive justice. It renders to every man according to his deserts. Till the distinction between right and wrong shall cease to exist, or the Omniscient cease to discern it and regard it; the principles of the divine law must remain unaltered. The atonement then did not change the law.—Neither did it divest

the transgressor of his guilt and ill desert. It could neither recall the deeds he had committed, nor change their moral character, nor separate from him the guilt of them. It therefore could not make the transgressor to become really innocent. Nor did it 'cover over' his sins, or conceal them and cause them to be overlooked and forgotten. For, the pardoned sinner not only remains, in fact, the same guilty creature he was before; but he is viewed and treated by his Maker, as personally guilty; and he must feel himself to be so, and ingeniously confess and mourn over his transgressions, in order to obtain forgiveness; and if received to mercy, he must forever adore and praise the abounding grace of God in his salvation. The atonement then, did not divest the transgressor of his guilt or ill desert.

"Neither did it satisfy the demands of the violated law upon him. For, what were the demands of the violated law? Not, that some transferable good should be surrendered and paid over to God or to the law, as being forfeited by the transgressor. The law did not ordain, that, in case we sinned, certain privileges or valuable possessions held by us, should be forfeited into the hands of another or to the public, who might sue for them and recover them. Had this been the case, the Mediator might, perhaps, have been able to pay the forfeiture, or something equivalent to it; and thus have virtually satisfied the law. But the law ordained no such thing. When transgressed, it requires no payment, no transfer of any thing whatever, to another. What then does it demand? That the sinner *himself* suffer the punishment, which it denounces. The violated law holds *him* personally guilty, and it requires that due punishment fall on *his* head, and on his only. For the law of God, as already observed, is founded on the principles of distributive justice, which renders to every one according to his deserts. It therefore, carefully discriminates between the innocent and the guilty; and it never suffers the distinction to be overlooked or forgotten. When once a creature becomes a transgressor of its commands or prohibitions, it never is satisfied, and never can be, with any thing short of the full execution of the threatened penalty on the transgressor himself."

"And thus also the bloody sacrifice of the Mediator, was not what the law of God demanded, or could accept, as a legal satisfaction for our sins. All that it could do, was, to display the feelings of God in regard to his law; and to secure, by the impression it made, the public objects which would be gained by an exe-

cution of the law. It did not cancel any of the claims of the law on us. And hence, after the atonement was made, God was under no legal obligations to exempt any man from punishment. If he had never pardoned a single transgressor, neither the law nor distributive justice would have been contravened. And if he pardons at all, it is mere grace. Or to state it otherwise, the atonement was not of such a nature as to require God to pardon us, but it enables him to do it with credit to himself and safety to his kingdom.

"The atonement was not a legal or a forensic transaction. It was altogether extrajudicial, or out of the ordinary course of legal procedure. It was an expedient for avoiding a legal procedure in regard to believers. It was in its nature, simply a display or exhibition, intended to impress on all creatures a deep sense of 'the righteousness of God' as a moral governor."

The attentive peruser of these extracts will be at no loss to understand the theory which is proposed and defended in this sermon; but in order that it may be clearly exhibited to the most cursory reader, we will present an outline of the scheme, still employing, as far as practicable, the language of the preacher.

The radical principle, and we think the *κέντρον ψευδός*, of the whole system is, that the atonement has no respect to the evil nature of sin, considered in itself—This is a proper ground of the punishment of the transgressor, but cannot be removed by any thing that a Mediator can do. The atonement can only effect the removal of that ground of punishment which arises from the tendency of sin to disturb the good order and happiness of the universe. It is not the execution of the law on any being, but must be something different from this, as it is a substitute for it. The atonement therefore does not fulfil or satisfy the demands of the law against transgressors; its immediate influence was not on the characters and relations of men as transgressors, nor did it alter the claims of the law upon them. In this transaction

Christ did not become our *Sponsor* to satisfy the demands of the law in our stead: this would be to make the atonement a legal satisfaction. But the atonement was an *exhibition* or *display* of the righteousness of God. It was a *symbolical* transaction, the object of which was to make an impression on the minds of rational beings—a method of showing clearly and fully, that God honours his law while suspending its operation, as much as he would by the execution of it. It is therefore merely a symbolical transaction, the meaning of which must be learned from the circumstances or explanation accompanying it. In this respect it resembles words, which are symbols of thought; or sacramental signs, which signify spiritual blessings. This symbol, however, has a natural fitness to express its object; but its object was not so much to enlighten the understanding, as to impress the feelings of creatures—not to exhibit the intellectual conceptions of the Divine mind, but the determinate purposes and holy feelings of God.

This being the nature of the atonement, it follows, that the justification of believers is not founded on the principles of law and distributive justice. Justification is a real departure from the regular course of justice; and such a departure from it as leaves the claims of the law on the persons justified, forever unsatisfied; therefore, the pardoned sinner not only remains in fact the same guilty creature he was before, but he is viewed and treated by his Maker as personally guilty; the atonement did not divest the transgressor of his guilt—

Here we have Dr. M.'s theory of the atonement; and, certainly, no one can complain that he is not sufficiently explicit. Whatever may be thought of his opinions, he is honest and open in disclosing them to our view. From an utter abhorrence of all misrepresentation of the opinions of others, we have

been induced to form this summary, almost entirely from the author's own language: for we are certain that many intelligent Christians, in this part of the country, will scarcely believe that any one, who is not professedly a Socinian, would make such declarations as are contained in this discourse. But our plan is not to attempt to render opinions odious by referring them to some heretical system. If we cannot show them to be erroneous by a fair appeal to reason and scripture, we shall not make the effort to beat them down with other weapons. Whatever opinion cannot stand the test of thorough discussion, however long it may have been cherished, and however important it may be esteemed, let it be abandoned. Evidence is always arrayed on the side of truth, though her voice is not always heard; we are, therefore, not afraid of the free discussion of any doctrines, for if they are untrue they ought to be discarded, and if they are sound, they will be more firmly established by a full and fair investigation.

We shall now proceed to make some remarks on Professor Murdock's theory, and if they should run out to a length which may be inconvenient to some readers, we hope for indulgence, when it is considered that the subject is of infinite importance.

1. Our first remark is, that this theory is wholly unsupported by the testimony of God, in his word. We know, indeed, that Dr. M. has taken some pains to show that the text, which he has placed at the beginning of his sermon, favours his ideas of the nature of the atonement; but supposing his interpretation to be correct, it still goes but a very little way towards making out this theory: It merely 'declares that the atonement is an exhibition of the righteousness of God: this is one end which it accomplishes; but it does not follow, that it is the *only* end. Besides, it may exhibit the

righteousness of God by being the execution of the penalty of the law upon the sinner's surety: indeed, this is the only way in which it can have this effect, according to our ideas. Most commentators, that we have consulted, take this view of the text. But is it not very remarkable, that Dr. M. has not resorted to the Bible at all for evidence of the truth of his opinions? When he leaves the discussion of his text, he seems to take leave of the scriptures. Now, to us, this looks very suspicious. Do we know any thing—can we know any thing of the atonement, but from the sacred scriptures? And are they not very full on this subject? Do they not present the subject under a variety of aspects? Why then did not Dr. M. found his system upon plain and repeated declarations of the word of God? A theory in revealed theology, not founded on explicit declarations of the inspired volume, is no better than a hypothesis in philosophy, supported by no experiment. If God has declared the nature and end of the atonement in his word, we should receive his testimony submissively and cordially; if he has not condescended to declare what it is, we shall never be able to find it out by our subtle speculations and distinctions. Is it not then an unaccountable thing, that Dr. M. has not even compared his theory with the numerous declarations of sacred scripture on this subject? We shall for ever protest against this method of constructing theological systems without the aid of the Bible. It is the very bane of sound theology. Until men (and above all men, professors in theological seminaries,) shall consent to come to the word of God, and receive its doctrines simply as they are revealed, and not strive to be wise above what is written, we shall make no real progress in divine knowledge. We shall be overrun with refined theories, which will supplant each other as rapidly, and

with as little advantage to the world, as the fanciful systems of natural philosophy, before that science was reduced within its proper limits and placed on its true foundation. In our times, every man, who has ingenuity enough to spin out a fine theory, immediately falls in love with it, and dreams that great improvements are making in the sublime science of theology. But certainly, if theologians would study their Bible more, and theorize less, the prospect of advancement would be much more flattering.

But Dr. M.'s theory is not merely naked of scriptural support; it appears to us in direct hostility with scripture. Some of his strong assertions have a good deal the appearance of setting scripture authority at defiance. We know that was not his intention, but men in his station ought to regard even appearances. The holy scriptures teach that "*Christ hath redeemed us from the law, being made a curse for us—that he bare our sins in his own body on the tree—that he gave himself the just for the unjust—was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities—when we were without strength, died for us—that he was made sin for us—is our propitiation—gave his life a ransom for all—an offering and a sacrifice to God,* and some hundred other passages, of like import. But Dr. M., without even troubling himself to explain any of these texts, goes boldly forward, and declares that the idea of Christ being a *sponsor* is incorrect—that he never satisfied the law, nor suffered the execution of its penalty, nor removed the believer's guilt—that the atonement is a *symbol*, an *exhibition*, a *display*, a means of expressing the feelings of God, merely intended, not to inform the intellect, but make an impression on the feelings of rational creatures. How incomprehensible must be the language of scripture, if it means what Dr. M.

teaches respecting the atonement! But by what methods does he establish these opinions, which appear to be so strange to the sacred oracles? By the help of a few distinctions, and a goodly number of bold assertions. We have, after all our search, found no other support for these new doctrines.

We have not been able to find that the learned Professor has resorted to the Bible for a single auxiliary text, in support of his theory. He boldly asserts that so it is, and so it must be; but why it must be so, he has not condescended to inform us. If all the things which he has asserted without proof are self evident to him, his powers of intuition reach far beyond ours. But we did suppose, that it was incumbent on him to show that his views do not militate with the plain declarations of scripture. This, however, he has not attempted; and unless he has some method of accomplishing it, of which we have no conception, we believe it was prudent in him to keep the declarations of scripture as much out of view as possible. He might, indeed, have said that the texts of scripture, which seem to teach the doctrine of vicarious satisfaction, are all figurative; but the Socinian can use, and has long ago used, this subterfuge, with as much plausibility as Dr. M. possibly could do. For our own parts, we have established it as a principle, to pay no regard to any theological theories, which are not fairly founded on a just interpretation of the word of God; and therefore this want of scriptural support would have led us to reject Dr. Murdock's views at once, if the system had contained no other marks of reprobation upon its face.

2. Our second remark on this theory of the nature of the atonement is, that it is wholly incompatible with the justice of God. It is true, indeed, that it makes the only end of the atonement to be a display of

this attribute; "an exhibition of the righteousness of God." But Dr. M. has not informed us how it can produce this effect. He has, indeed, told us that it is a symbolical transaction, and is calculated to make a very deep impression on rational creatures; but he has nowhere explained the way in which the sufferings of Christ can, according to his scheme, have the effect of displaying the rectitude of God as moral governor of the universe. When he speaks of the atonement as a symbol, he seems to insinuate that there is nothing in the nature of the transaction itself which has any connexion with the end; but that like other symbols, it derives its signification from divine institution; just as words derive their meaning from agreement and use; or as religious ceremonies, which are symbols, derive their import from the appointment of God. We have only to remark on this view of the subject, that in order to know what meaning God has annexed to this transaction, we must have recourse to the scriptures; there is no other possible method of learning what the will of God is in such cases; but as we have seen, no attempt has been made by the learned professor to show that his views are supported by the general tenor of the word of God. He has not even attempted to prove that his theory can be reconciled with the plain declarations of scripture. But our remark is not founded on a mere defect of evidence in support of the theory; we maintain, that according to the view of the atonement taken by Dr. M. nothing can be conceived more manifestly inconsistent with justice. The fact to be accounted for is, that Christ the Son of God, by the determinate counsel of God, endured sufferings unspeakably great. According to the theory under consideration, no sin was charged to his account. He suffered not in the place of any body. The law

was not executed upon him. The transaction then was simply this: The most glorious and innocent person in the universe, who was capable of suffering, was punished in the most grievous manner, having no sins to answer for, either his own, or those of others. Is there any need of argument or illustration on a point so plain? Is there any thing conceivable more incompatible with righteousness than the punishment of an innocent person? And it will not change the nature of the transaction to say, that Christ consented to endure this exceeding weight of misery. For any one to consent to be dealt with unjustly cannot make it just: if a man consent that another should kill him, or deprive him of his liberty, the consent cannot make it right. How then could it be just in God to afflict with pains so inconceivably great, his own Son? If he were considered in the light of a *sponsor*, or *substitute*, then indeed the case would be changed. We shall not now discuss the question, whether a substitute for sinners is admissible; but supposing that Christ did become a substitute, then he could be punished consistently with justice; but if we consider him as an innocent person, subjected to the penalty of no law, and having no demands of justice to satisfy, then there can scarcely be expressed a more self-evident proposition, than that his death and sufferings are irreconcilable with justice. Dr. M. admits, that the regular course of distributive justice is suspended. "*Justification* is a real departure from the regular course of justice;" but this departure from justice does not relate to the sufferings of Christ, but to the remission of the penalty of the law, incurred by transgressors. There is therefore a twofold injustice necessary to be supposed, according to this theory: the one in the sufferings of the innocent; the other in the remission of punish-

ment to the guilty. How God can be just while he departs from the regular course of justice, is what Dr. M. has yet to explain; and how that departure can be an exhibition of his righteousness or justice, is a problem still more difficult to be solved. The Ruler of the universe, in the atonement, departs from the regular course of justice, in the punishment of the innocent, and in the release of the guilty; and yet this transaction is to exhibit his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus!

We have no doubt that the learned professor has thought much on this subject; and yet it is manifest to us, that he would have done well to extend his views still farther than he has done. His scheme needs much addition to render it in any degree consistent.

3. Our third remark is, that according to this theory the death of Christ has in it nothing of the nature of atonement. An atonement is a satisfaction made to an offended person in behalf of the offender. It is a means of appeasing the anger of the person injured. An atonement for the sins of men must contain in it a *satisfaction* to God on account of their sins. It is an expiation, or propitiation for sin. But according to this scheme, it is a mere symbolical transaction, intended to make the impression that God is righteous. But this is no atonement. Suppose God had fixed upon something else as the *symbol* of this truth—suppose he had annexed to the vivid lightning, this meaning, would there be any propriety in calling this an atonement? Take away all idea of the death of Christ being a satisfaction to law and justice in behalf of sinners, and you destroy the very nature of atonement. The name may be retained, but the thing is gone as completely, as in any system of Socinianism whatever. And *vicarious sufferings* are excluded from this

system by the express and repeated declarations of the author; therefore all inquiries and disputes respecting the persons for whom the atonement was made, are pronounced to be improper, and to arise from not understanding the nature of the atonement. That the author does reject the idea of vicarious satisfaction from the atonement, is manifest from the whole tenor of the discourse, but it is explicitly stated in his third inference, when he says—"These controversies (about the extent of the atonement) arise from the supposition, that the atonement draws after it by necessary consequence, the salvation, or at least the pardon, of all that believe. And they have given no little trouble to those who hold the doctrine of *vicarious satisfaction*." Now we contend that this destroys the very nature of atonement, and that the word ought not to be retained. Suppose that we were informed, that a number of soldiers had disobeyed orders, and incurred thereby a heavy penalty, but that an atonement had been offered and accepted, is it possible to separate from it the idea of the persons for whom it was made? If an atonement has been made, in whatever it consists, the inquiry will ever be proper; for whom was it made? For every thing which partakes in any degree of the nature of atonement, must have relation to offences, and these suppose persons who are chargeable with them. And an atonement which has no relation to offences committed, is an absurdity; if the word be applied to things of this kind, it is an abuse of language. All that is said in this third inference, in the conclusion of the sermon, furnishes conclusive evidence, that according to the theory of the author, the true nature of atonement is completely destroyed.

4. Moreover, it will appear by an impartial consideration of the

principles laid down in this discourse, that an effectual atonement is impossible, because the principal ground of punishing transgressors cannot be removed by any atonement. The author admits that sin deserves to be punished on account of its intrinsic evil; but he asserts, as we have seen, that nothing that a Mediator can do, will have any effect to remove this reason of punishment. Then it must remain in full force, or must be removed in some other way. What that way is, the preacher has undertaken to inform us, p. 16, 17. "They (sinning creatures) must become holy; this, and this only, can remove the first ground of punishment—and this certainly will remove it." Now, however strange this doctrine may appear to some persons, we ought not to be surprised at the earnestness and confidence with which it is asserted; for if this position cannot be maintained, the whole theory is perfectly nugatory. There is no doubt that the principle here assumed, whether true or false, is a corner stone in this fabric. Let us see then what has been brought to support it. The whole is included in the latter clause of a sentence already quoted. "When creatures cease to be sinners, they cease to be odious in the sight of God." The author seems, however, to have felt some misgiving about this matter; for, in the next sentence, the idea is repeated with some addition: "Their new and holy characters," says he, "render them now lovely in his view; and he can therefore feel no repugnance, so far as their present characters are concerned, to embracing them as his dear children." What does he mean by "present characters?" If no more than that a holy God must be pleased with the present holy exercises of a holy soul, it is true, but nothing at all to the purpose. Does God, in viewing the characters of his creatures, extend his attention to nothing but the pre-

sent exercises? Do not all the actions ever performed go into the estimate? Let us suppose two creatures of similar faculties and advantages, one of whom departs from the way of rectitude, and lives for many years in the commission of the most enormous crimes, while the other retains his innocence and never offends; but at the end of this period, the first returns (no matter how) to his original state of purity; must God, from the holiness of his nature, view them with the same approbation? Does the ceasing to perform evil acts immediately obliterate them, so that they can have no effect on the Divine mind? It is wonderful that the sagacious author did not feel the force of his own sound reasoning in the next paragraph. "He has committed deeds which cannot be recalled. He is a transgressor of the law, and must forever stand guilty. What is done can never be undone. All he can do will be to repent of the past, and cease to do evil for the future." Now, these are incontrovertible truths; and Dr. M. will do us a great favour, if he will show why they do not apply as perfectly to the first ground of punishment laid down by him, as to the second. When men form an estimate of the characters of one another, do they not comprehend in their view the whole conduct of every person, as far as they can ascertain it? If it were not so, a man who had reformed need not be ashamed of having perpetrated the most abominable crimes. God views things as they are, and in their just connexions. All the actions of a man belong to him, and go to form his character; those performed long ago are as much his own, and as truly appertain to his character, as those which he is performing at the present moment. It cannot be, therefore, that God can look upon one who is stained with the guilt of enormous sins, in the same light as

if he had never offended, because he has now become holy. He must for ever contemplate the man as one who has been guilty of heinous offences, and as He acts agreeably to his own views of truth, He must deal with such an one according to his character. We speak now in relation to the theory of Dr. M., for we believe that by a Mediator, the greatest sinner can be so reconciled to God, that he can be received as if he had never offended; but this can never be the case upon the plan here proposed. A mere change of character can never remove this ground of punishment. Indeed, to suppose that it could, is to suppose that guilt contracted by a series of evil acts, can be obliterated by the performance of holy acts, afterwards. This is the identical error of those, who think that repentance will certainly wash away all former sins. But if the intrinsic evil of sin be a just ground of punishment, as Dr. M. fully admits; and if a creature by transgression has incurred this punishment, then his performing his duty afterwards can have no effect on his former guilt. His good conduct for the present will secure him from incurring more guilt, but the old charges stand in full force against him. If then this ground of punishment cannot be removed by making the creature holy, and if, as Dr. M. asserts, "nothing that a Mediator can do will remove it," what is the condition of every sinner? Is not salvation impossible? For, when by the atonement, the second ground of punishment is removed, the first standing in full force, all the sufferings and work of the Mediator must be utterly ineffectual. Dr. M. should have examined this ground more thoroughly, before he ventured to trust his whole structure upon it. He has certainly brought himself into a dilemma: either reformation must have the efficacy of cancelling contracted guilt, or the salvation of

any sinner is impossible; for here is a punishment incurred which no atonement can remove.

We have not a doubt that this single thing is sufficient to demolish Dr. M.'s whole theory. The foundation is unsound—his main principle is perfectly untenable; and when this is removed, the superstructure must fall—unless we can be reconciled to a scheme which would plunge every sinner into utter despair.

(To be concluded in our next.)

IOHANNIS MARCKII CHRISTIANÆ THEOLOGICÆ MEDULLA DIDACTICO-ELENTICA, EX MAJORI OPERE, SECUNDUM EJUS CAPITA, ET PARAGRAPHOS, EXPRESSA. IN USUS PRIMOS ACADEMICÆ JUVENUTIS. *Editio prima Americana, accurate emendata, et post expressos scripturæ textus. Indice duplici, Gulielmo ab Irhoven auctore, tum rerum, tum S. scripturæ, quæ objectionum materiam vulgo faciunt, explicatorum aucta. Philadelphicæ: typis et impensis J. Anderson, 13 N. Seventh-street, 1824. 12mo. pp. 334.*

No republication of an old book in our country could, we think, have given us more pleasure than that which is here announced. We are pleased, not only because MARCK'S *Medulla* is a theological work of prime excellence, copies of which could not easily be obtained, but because we hope this republication furnishes a presumption that the taste and demand for such works are increasing among us.

We certainly do need, and that egregiously, in the English language, a good system of didactic theology, in which a short, clear and satisfactory notice should be taken of the many points of controversy. Wanting this, the book before us is perhaps the best sub-

stitute that can be found. Indeed, we think it better than any thing that could, in the same compass, be expressed in our language—Latin being far more favourable than English, to the forming of a summary at once perspicuous and complete. We therefore earnestly recommend this valuable manual to every theological student, and to every young clergyman in the United States, who may read our miscellany. In this work, justly styled *Medulla*, he may see, in the narrow compass of 334 duodecimo pages, a fair exhibition of all the important points of theology, the principal passages of scripture, by which the doctrines laid down by the author are, in his opinion, supported, and the chief objections of Papiasts, Prelatists, Arminians, Socinians and Infidels, stated and answered. The author, it is well known, was a stanch Calvinist, of the old school. But we should suppose that such a work would have attractions, not only for those who think with the writer, but for those who differ from him *toto cælo*: for if it be natural, that the former should be desirous to see the best arguments by which their faith may be defended, the latter, we should think, must be curious to observe in what manner an able adversary notices and replies to their objections.

We have compared this American edition, cursorily, with four European editions, and pretty carefully with the copy from which the reprint has been made. The American edition, so far as relates to paper and typography, is decidedly superior to any of the others. Its editor also, has corrected a multitude of minor errors in the language. The few which remain, are mostly to be found in the first 80 pages, and in the quotation of texts from the Greek New Testament, with which the work abounds. But there is not an error, we think, of such a nature as to occasion any difficulty to the reader, even with-

THE
CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE.

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Religious Communications.

LECTURES ON THE SHORTER CATECHISM OF THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY OF DIVINES—ADDRESSED TO YOUTH.

LECTURE VI.

(Concluded from page 102.)

The answer before us begins with stating that "God is a spirit." There have been some who have denied that we can form any distinct and rational idea of a spirit; and some young persons, I know, have been sadly perplexed and bewildered, from not understanding how to conduct their thoughts and inquiries in regard to this subject. I will therefore endeavour very briefly to explain it; making use of the general reasoning of Mr. Locke, without adopting his method or using his language.

You will observe and remember then, that we form our idea of *spirit*, in the very same manner in which we form our idea of *matter*. We know nothing of either, but by their properties or attributes; and by these we know as much of spirit as we do of matter. To illustrate this I take a stone; and my senses inform me that it is *hard*, and *extended*, and *coloured*. But hardness, extension, and colour, are not matter, but merely, as the terms import, the properties or attributes of matter. Neither can you show me, nor tell me, what the *matter* of the stone is, separately from its properties or attributes—further than that there must be something, a *substratum*, philosophers call it, to which all these belong. Of matter

then it is plain you know nothing besides its attributes, except that it exists. Now you may perceive at once, that you know exactly as much as this of spirit—and we admit that you can know no more. You are every whit as certain that you *think*, *choose*, and *refuse*, as you are that the stone is hard, extended, and coloured. Thinking, choosing, and refusing are not, indeed, spirit itself, but the acts or attributes of spirit. We grant too, that we cannot tell what spirit is, separately from these acts or attributes—further than that there must be something, an *immaterial substance*, it is often called, to which all these belong. But of this immaterial substance we affirm that we are not *more* ignorant, than of the material substance called matter. Our ignorance, and our knowledge of both, are exactly similar and equal. We can define neither matter nor spirit, except by their several attributes; and by these we can define and conceive of both equally well. If any body will tell me what matter is, exclusively of its being hard, extended and coloured, I will tell him what spirit is, exclusively of its thinking, choosing and refusing. If he cannot do the former, he ought not to require me to do the latter; and if he believes in the existence of matter, when it is known only by its attributes, he ought to believe in spirit which is known precisely in the same way. Yes, my young friends, we have as much knowledge of mind as we have of

Reviews.

NATURE OF THE ATONEMENT. *A Discourse delivered Aug. 17, 1823, by James Murdock, D. D.*

(Concluded from page 129.)

5. We remark again, that the idea of pardon and justification, entertained by Dr. M. is inconsistent and impossible. According to his views, "the atonement does not cause a sinner to be justified on the principles of law and distributive justice;" "nor did it cover his sins," "nor cause them to be overlooked and forgotten." But "the pardoned sinner not only remains, in fact, the same guilty creature he was before, but he is viewed by his Maker as personally guilty." On what principles then does justification take place? To this he answers, "we pronounce the justification of believers to be an act of the sovereign mercy of God, a departure from the regular course of justice; and such a departure as leaves the claims of the law forever unsatisfied." This, we must think, is a kind of justification never heard of before. The law which binds the creature, and which is immutable, remains forever unsatisfied, and the person is justified! The pardoned sinner remains as guilty as before his pardon! This justification then is, confessedly, in violation of the demands of the law—It is a departure, from justice. Was such a doctrine ever promulged till now? If the demands of the law remain unsatisfied, then the transgressor remains in a state of condemnation, for the demand of the law against the sinner is, that he should die. But he is justified by an act of sovereign mercy. How is this? condemned and justified at the same moment? Yes, forever condemned and yet forever justified! Pardoned, yet not divested of guilt!—A more manifest contra-

diction cannot be expressed in words. It shocks common sense, and sets all argument at defiance.

But the truth is, that, according to the author's scheme, there is no such thing as justification, in any proper sense. The theory is, that law and justice are totally disregarded in the salvation of the sinner. The word *justification*, like the word *atonement*, is retained, while the thing properly signified by it has no existence. Here then we see that the attributes of justice and mercy are so far from harmonizing in the plan of salvation, that the former is utterly disregarded, to make way for the latter. The thing is not denied; it is as explicitly declared as words can express it. There is indeed an appearance of caution in some of the expressions, as, "a departure from the regular course of justice," as if there might be some other course. But to crown all, this theory makes the great end of the atonement to be, "an exhibition of the rectitude of God!"

We are constrained, from this view of Dr. M.'s theory of the nature of the atonement, to declare, that it is more dishonourable to the Divine attributes, and more inconsistent with itself, than any system which we have ever before contemplated.

6. The great end of the atonement, according to this theory is, to make such a display of God's holiness and determination to punish sin, that a lasting impression may be left on the minds of rational creatures, that sin shall not pass with impunity under the government of God. But we assert, that according to the view given by this theory, the death of Christ can have no such effect; for the fact is, that in every instance in which it is pardoned, it is unpunished, and how

can this teach other creatures that their sins shall certainly receive their due wages? As far as conduct can establish a principle, the very contrary of this is made certain. It is true Christ has suffered a painful and ignominious death; but this cannot teach that the sinner will hereafter be punished. Christ was not a sinner, and no sins were imputed to him: he suffered, according to Dr. M., in all respects as an innocent person. All that can properly be inferred from this is, that if creatures transgress the law of God, they will not be punished, but the Governor of the universe will pour out his wrath upon some other party. It is calculated to make the innocent tremble, but there is nothing in the transaction to terrify the guilty. Let us, for illustration, suppose, that some king, after a number of his subjects had been guilty of the highest crimes, should, instead of executing the law upon them, inflict a terrible punishment on his own son, to make the impression on his subjects that he was *just*, and would certainly hereafter execute the laws upon offenders. Would not all the world cry out against the measure, not only as most unjust, but most preposterous? The impression made would indeed be deep and awful, but it would be an impression of horror in relation to his administration. But such is the theory of the atonement inculcated by a learned professor in one of our orthodox seminaries, on more than a hundred pupils, and now printed for their instruction! We have read somewhere of a Brahmin, who, supposing that he had suffered a great injury from a person from whom he could obtain no satisfaction, brought his own son, and murdered him in the presence of the man who had offended him. This is the only analogous case which we have noticed in the proceedings of men.

7. Our last remark is, that this scheme robs the cross of its chief

attractions, and greatly obscures the glory of the divine attributes displayed in the death of Christ. According to the theory under consideration, there is here no manifestation of God's hatred of sin, on account of its intrinsic evil; no exhibition of his justice in inflicting the deserved punishment on sin in the person of a surety; no regard manifested to truth, or to the sacred and immutable nature of the law, by executing the penalty incurred. And as to the wisdom of appointing such a costly sacrifice, merely to make a symbolical representation, we cannot see it. The expense appears to us far too great for the end to be accomplished. We were pleased, indeed, to find that Dr. M. holds firmly the doctrine of our Saviour's divinity, but we confess that we could not see the justness of that inference, in which it is represented as deducible from the doctrine of the sermon. We cannot understand why a divine person must become incarnate and suffer death, merely as a symbol, to make the impression of a certain truth on the feelings of rational creatures. We will concede to Dr. M. that the impression made, will be deeper from the sufferings of such a person, than from those of a creature, but that does by no means prove that it was absolutely necessary. The preacher, indeed, tells us what is very true, that the simple preaching of the cross has had a mighty efficacy in converting men from sin unto God; but this simple preaching to which he refers, has always been very different from those views of the cross which he has given. It was a plain declaration of what the scriptures teach, where every text that relates to the subject, conveys the idea of vicarious sufferings; of a sacrifice offered up for us; of the love of God in "not sparing his own Son, but delivering him up for us all." The Gospel represents Christ as made under the law; as becoming

the end of the law for righteousness; as being made sin for us; as enduring the curse of the law, &c. The simple preaching of the cross displays the divine attributes; exhibits them in harmony, in the plan of salvation; represents the law as honoured and the rights of God as Governor of the Universe vindicated; and shows, (not after Dr. M.'s manner) how God can be just, and the justifier of him who believes in Jesus. But all these things are excluded from the scheme under consideration; and a strange doctrine introduced of a departure from justice; a justification in total disregard of the claims of the law and distributive justice; of pardon bestowed on the sinner, whilst he remains as guilty as ever; of a symbol to make some undefined impression on the feelings; of the punishment of a glorious person on whom no sin was charged, to demonstrate that God was righteous, and that he would certainly punish the transgressors of his law, &c. If this theory does not rob the cross of its attractions, and obscure the glory which encircles it, we will confess that we are blind.

For ourselves, we are not sorry to see Dr. M. come out with his *whole* system, for we are persuaded there are thousands who are charmed with vague notions of a general and indefinite atonement, which has no respect to the sins of individuals, who will shrink with horror from the system when fairly extended to its legitimate consequences, and traced to its primary principles. And after all our immense improvements in this part of theology, we shall find ourselves under the necessity of rejecting it altogether, or sitting down in company with *Luther* and *Calvin*, and even of taking good old *Anselm* by the hand.

We do not mean to insinuate that all who believe in a general atonement, have departed from just and scriptural views of the nature

of this important doctrine; for we have the pleasure of knowing some estimable persons, who, with these views, maintain the doctrine of substitution and vicarious satisfaction as firmly as we do. With such we wish to enter into no controversy. When true views of this cardinal doctrine are entertained, we think the dispute about the *extent* of the atonement is one of very little consequence; and indeed, in our opinion, is more a dispute about words than things.

But the new views, which are every day becoming more common, of the *nature* of the atonement, must give alarm to every friend of scriptural orthodoxy. These theories are characterized by a boldness of speculation, and a disregard of the plain declarations of scripture, which threaten consequences of the worst kind. We do not attribute bad motives to all those who are so fond of innovating; we believe, in general, that they mean well, and that they really think that they have made great discoveries in theology. And it seems to them disgraceful, that whilst every other branch of science is making rapid advances, theology should be destined to be stationary. Why should we be confined to the stature of our fathers on this subject, more than on any other? We would answer, that the cases are different. We have no clear revelation from God on other sciences; we are left to our own reason and experience; but in theology, we have our system as complete as it can be, in the holy scriptures. But we do not wish to hold out the idea that no new light can be obtained in this sublimest of all sciences; we only assert, that this will never be effected by bold speculations, however ingenious—These, as we said before, are in theology, what *hypotheses* are in philosophy. But by patient, assiduous and devout study of the Bible, we may learn much more than we now know; especially if we

should be favoured with measures of the Holy Spirit, larger than have been known since the apostles' days. *To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to these, it is because there is no light in them. The entrance of thy word giveth light.—The testimonies of the Lord are sure, making wise the simple!*

We now take our leave of Dr. Murdock, with an earnest recommendation to him to reconsider his principles. His penetrating mind cannot remain blind to their consequences, when he has more maturely reflected on the subject. It is clear that he cannot stand on the ground which he has chosen; he must either retrace his steps or go forward; and if he shall choose the latter, it is not difficult to predict the point to which his system will carry him. We cannot be suspected of entertaining any unfriendly feelings towards the learned professor; he is personally unknown to us; nor have we been incited to examine his discourse from the itch of idle disputation. But we feel a deep solicitude for the interests of evangelical truth, and we will not conceal, that the issuing of such sentiments from so high a source, has excited in our minds no small alarm. We know, indeed, that Dr. Murdock is not the teacher of theology in the important seminary in which he is a professor; and we will not—we cannot believe (unless constrained by irresistible evidence,) that his learned and respectable colleagues coincide with him in opinion, on this subject. The danger to that institution, nevertheless, is not small. Young and ardent minds are easily captivated by novelties in theology, especially when they are plausibly dressed up, and promise to divest an important subject of the difficulties which apparently surround it. And in the present case, it is manifest, that the delivery of this sermon produced a deep impression on the minds of the

students, who not only requested its publication, but were at the expense of the edition. May a gracious God preserve that, and other similar fountains, from which so many streams issue, from being poisoned with error!

FOR THE CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE.

No. III.

A REVIEW OF THREE PAMPHLETS, ENTITLED, "AN ABSTRACT OF UNITARIAN BELIEF," "REV. JOHN EMORY'S REPLY," AND "REMARKS ON THE REPLY."

In our last, we adduced the example of Stephen, as a warrant for worshipping Christ. We dwell on it the more, because the text in which it is exhibited, does not admit of that wresting and torturing of words, so often practised by the opposers of the divinity of Jesus. In the Unitarian New Testament,* it is thus translated—"So they stoned Stephen, invoking and saying 'Lord Jesus receive my spirit,' and he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, 'Lord lay not this sin to their charge.'" Such is the state of the text as received by Unitarians themselves. Now let us see what it proves. The Protomartyr prays the Lord Jesus, to "receive his spirit." In Ecc. xii. 7, it is said, the "dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return to God who gave it." Now Stephen must have been mistaken, or Jesus is verily God, in such a sense as to receive, and also to give, the spirits of men.

Again; his prayer to the Lord Jesus, is "lay not this sin to their charge." Here Christ is addressed as having power to forgive sins. But we are told that Christ's power on earth to forgive sins, is but delegated power. Our answer is, that

* Called by Unitarians "The improved version!"