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No. IV.

ART. I.—*A Discussion of the question, Is the Roman Catholic Religion, in any or in all its Principles or Doctrines, inimical to Civil or Religious Liberty? And of the question, Is the Presbyterian Religion, in any or in all its Principles or Doctrines, inimical to Civil or Religious Liberty?* By the Reverend John Hughes of the Roman Catholic Church, and the Reverend John Breckinridge of the Presbyterian Church. Philadelphia: Carey, Lea & Blanchard. 1836.
(Concluded.)

WE have been reluctantly compelled, for want of room, to extend our review of this subject to a third number. But we hope that the intrinsic importance, and (to American citizens) the peculiar interest of the question discussed, will plead our apology.

Now it cannot (to repeat a remark already made)—it cannot be said that the language which describes the church as a commonwealth, and her ministers as governors and magistrates—her members as subjects—heretics as rebels and enemies, is *figurative*; because the figure cannot be carried out. The punishment of heresy required by the laws of the church is in fact capital; and Luther was condemned by Leo

ART. VI.—*Lectures on the Atheistic Controversy; delivered at Sion Chapel, Bradford, Yorkshire. By the Rev. B. Godwin, D.D. With an Appendix to the American edition.* Second American edition from the London. Published at Boston, by Hilliard, Gray & Co. 1836.

Archibald Alexander

WE are pleased to find that the demand for these lectures has been such as already to justify a second edition. Many persons seem to think that all arguments on this subject are useless, because there are, as they suppose, few, if any, atheists in the world; and if there are any, they are too blind and perverse to be at all influenced by any reasoning, however conclusive it may be. As to the non-existence or paucity of atheists, we can only say, that we wish it were the fact; but the truth is far different. Men entertaining atheistical opinions are numerous, bold in avowing their sentiments, and zealous in propagating them. And as to the objection that atheists are too much blinded by prejudice and bad passions to be benefited by argument, it is probably too true, in regard to such as are confirmed in their atheistic belief: but there are many who have only commenced this dreadful career, and who are not destitute of misgivings, as to the truth of the system of infidelity. To such, a clear and forcible argument may be of infinite service, in reclaiming them from the danger of sinking into the most horrible gulf in the universe. But the chief reason for entering into the atheistic controversy is, for the sake of those who are not yet caught in this snare of the Devil, but who may be placed in such circumstances as to be exposed to the danger of being infected with this deadly poison.

The account which Dr. Godwin gives of the occasion of these lectures, is so interesting, and shows so clearly the extent and increase of atheistical opinions in the manufacturing districts of England, that we think it will be useful to lay it before our readers, from his preface, with very little abridgment.

“Something more than twelve years ago, Providence directed the author’s steps to one of the most populous manufacturing districts of the kingdom; he soon observed, that the character of the population, in general, was marked by no small degree of activity, energy, and enterprise, extending to every subject which engaged their attention: that they seldom remained indifferent spectators, or silent observers of

what was passing around them, but on all questions of trade, politics, or religion, they generally took a decided part, and, whether right or wrong, pursued their object with determination and spirit. While, therefore, he beheld with satisfaction the vigorous efforts which were made to support most of the benevolent institutions which distinguish the present day, he saw, with deep regret, vice assuming a great degree of boldness, and perceived, that a daring spirit of infidelity had, to a considerable extent, not only rejected the truths of revelation, but even denied or questioned the being of a God. He found, that besides regular meetings for discussing the favourite topics of scepticism, many works of infidelity were in circulation, and that the opportunities afforded for the inculcation of its tenets, by the frequent intercourse to which manufacturing employments give rise, were by no means lost. He frequently wished, that some one qualified for the undertaking would step forward in the cause of truth, and endeavour, by a reference to nature, and an appeal to reason, to stop the progress of errors so pernicious. To one or two friends of scientific attainments, a plan of this kind was suggested, but in vain; while the pressure of the author's engagements, and the sense of the importance of such an undertaking, deterred him from making the attempt, though it still continued to occupy his thoughts.

“Towards the close of 1833, the following placard was posted on the walls of the town and neighbourhood:

“ ‘On Sunday last, in the Primitive Methodist Chapel, Mr. Matfin, according to previous announcement, repeated a declamation on INFIDELITY, which he had before delivered in the surrounding villages. Its character was therefore known, and, prior to its repetition, last Sunday evening, he received a letter, of which the following is a copy:

“ ‘ ‘SIR,—As you have taken advantage of the protection of the pulpit to misrepresent and abuse a certain portion of your fellow-creatures, whose only peculiarity is a devotedness to truth, a refusal to profess opinions, which appear to them erroneous and absurd, though the reward of their honesty be the persecutions of interested hypocrisy on the one hand, and of prejudice, bigotry, and superstition, on the other;—as you have described such as enemies to human happiness, and fit only to be hunted from society, common justice requires, that while you thus endeavour to commit them to the antipathies of your hearers, you should allow them to be heard in their own defence. You are, therefore,

requested either to permit a reply at the termination of your sermon, or otherwise offer the use of your chapel for that purpose, some evening of the ensuing week. You have described infidels as the most vicious and detestable beings in nature; but if you refuse them the common justice here demanded, your conduct will belie your words, and will prove you to be much more vicious and detestable.

“ ‘Bradford, November 15th, 1833.’

“ ‘At the conclusion of the sermon, and while the collection was progressing, Mr. M. stated, that he had received a very ridiculous letter from the infidels, but he must tell them that ‘if any one attempted to read any thing, or speak, or kick up a dust,’ they would subject themselves to a penalty of forty-one pounds, and that officers were in attendance to mark them out, in order that the law might be enforced.

“ ‘Here is a pretty specimen of the liberality of parsons! They will *only* assert the truth of Christianity where their dogmas cannot be gainsayed! If, however, they be sincere in their declaration, that such a doom, as they assert, awaits those who differ from them in opinion and belief, is it not then their duty to hear, and answer the reasons assigned for such difference? They must know, that belief is not dependent on the will—it is the result of perception, and that, therefore, declamation against, and vituperation of infidelity, are quite useless. Persuasion or threatenings can be of no avail to alter opinions and belief honestly entertained;—all such changes must be the result of conviction from reflection, reasoning and argument. They should establish the truth of their creed, by exhibiting the force of its evidence, and the futility of all objections. Let any one, competent to this task, undertake it, and he may obtain the co-operation of the sceptic for the eliciting of the truth.

“ ‘Bradford, November 22d, 1833.’

“ ‘On reading the above, the author at once felt that such an appeal should be met; and as he found that no one else was likely to take up the subject, he determined on attempting to ‘establish the truth’ of what is generally believed, ‘by exhibiting the force of its evidence, and the futility of all objections.’ As soon as his intentions were known, those who had espoused the sentiments alluded to, professed themselves highly pleased, and offered to render any assistance to such an investigation. A public meeting for discussion was suggested; but that, on several accounts, was declined, as less eligible than a course of lectures. It was also requested, that

permission might be given to those who held sceptical opinions, to reply, in the chapel, to the arguments which might be advanced; but this was not admissible. The author, however, went as far as he could with propriety; he promised them a syllabus of the lectures, and offered, when they should fix on a time and place for replying, to announce the appointment from the pulpit, and with his friends to hear what should be advanced by them; and, farther, that if they should prove any statement of importance to be incorrect, or any material argument unsound, he would willingly acknowledge it. The difficulty of obtaining a suitable place was finally alleged as a reason for abandoning this plan, and the author was urged to commit his lectures to the press, that they might thus receive an answer. So urgent, indeed, was the request, that a deputation from the body, offered to print the lectures at their own expense, if they should be furnished with the manuscript. As to publishing, no decided reply could then be given; but they were promised, at all events, copious notes.

“In February and March the lectures were delivered in Sion Chapel, where the author officiates as pastor. The interest felt in the town and neighbourhood was far greater than the lecturer had anticipated. The place was crowded to excess; the congregation increasing as the course proceeded, and though the pressure and heat were great, a silent and unremitting attention was given to the whole of the lectures, which occupied, on an average, each, about two hours and a quarter in delivery. Those who had embraced the tenets of infidelity, were general and regular in their attendance, and their behaviour was marked with propriety. Indeed, it is but just to say, in all the communications the author has had with the leaders of the sceptical party, he has been treated with the utmost respect and courtesy. In his intercourse with them he has often expressed his deep concern for their welfare, and his sense of the pernicious nature of their principles, which they have uniformly received with kindness. It is also but just to add, that though the greater part of those who are professedly sceptical, deny, it appears, the existence of a supreme and intelligent Creator, distinct from nature, they are not, as far as the author can learn, disgraced by licentious habits; many of them he believes to be men of upright conduct, against whom nothing can be alleged but their principles. That such men should embrace a system so contrary to the general sense of mankind, so opposed to the cou-

clusions of most of the wisest and best of men; a system so extravagant in its opinions, so barren of all that is good, so unfavourable in its aspect on virtue, is a cause of surprise and regret. May 'the Father of lights' mercifully convince them of their error—may they 'know the truth,' and may the truth 'make them free.'

"In addition to the frequent and urgent requests of the followers of infidelity, and the great difficulty found in furnishing, according to promise, such notes as would answer the purpose, a unanimous and affectionate request came from the author's own beloved charge, that the lectures might be published,—he could hesitate no longer.

"In consequence of these circumstances, they now appear before the public."

We have been requested, by the American editor, to express our opinion of the merits of this work, and our judgment whether it is not well adapted for theological students. Believing that an answer published in our periodical would be more acceptable than a private letter, we are free to say, that, in our judgment, these lectures are written with no common ability, and with no inconsiderable erudition. The whole argument is, at the same time, ingenious, logical, and presented in a form as condensed as is consistent with perspicuity. We therefore view these lectures as a very valuable addition to our literature on the atheistic controversy; and if they should be widely circulated and carefully perused, the benefit to our increasing population would be incalculable. In answer to the inquiry, whether they are not well adapted for theological students, we would say, that they are calculated to be useful to all men, of whatever age or condition, who have sufficient mental culture to follow the writer in his very conclusive reasonings. But if it be intended to inquire, whether these lectures would be suitable as a TEXT BOOK for theological students, instead of Paley's *Natural Theology*, our answer would be, that this volume should, by no means, be made to supersede Paley, but may be read and studied with great advantage by all those who have made themselves well acquainted with that inimitable work. We mean to express it as our opinion, that Dr. Godwin's Lectures are not so well adapted for an elementary work, on this subject, as Dr. Paley's. The statements and facts are not sufficiently expanded to be entirely level to the capacities of beginners; but the condensed form in which they are proposed in this work, is admirably adapted to rivet the

conviction and enlarge the knowledge acquired by the study of Paley. And having so good an opportunity, we would also recommend the careful perusal of Lord Brougham's Natural Theology. It should be studied in connexion with Paley's work, already so extensively in use.

We conclude our notice of these Lectures by recommending them to the careful perusal of our readers; and by expressing the hope that they will be extensively circulated in our country.

Twelve Lectures on the Connexion between Science and Revealed Religion; delivered in Rome, by Nicholas Wiseman, D.D. Principal of the English College, and Professor of the University of Rome. First American from the first London edition. Andover: published by Gould and Newman, 8vo. 404 pages.

THE following subjects are treated in these Lectures: 1. The Study of Languages. 2. Same subject. 3. The Natural History of the Human Race. 4. The same subject. 5. On the Natural Sciences. 6. The same subject. 7. Early History. 8. The same subject. 9. Archaeology. 10. Sacred Literature. 11. Oriental Literature and Profane Studies. 12. Conclusion.

These lectures are learned and ingenious, though they cannot be said to be very profound. They contain scarcely any thing by which it could be known that the author belonged to the Romish communion; and although we do not subscribe to all the opinions expressed in them, we are of opinion, that they may be read, not only with pleasure, but profit, by the biblical student.

Christian Consistency, or the Connexion between Experimental and Practical Religion; designed for Young Christians. By the Rev. E. Mannering, of Holy Will Mount Chapel. London: R. Baynes, Paternoster Row. 1836. pp. 253.

THE contents of this excellent little volume are,
 1. General Observations on Experimental Religion.
 2. The Nature of the Christian Walk.
 3. The Importance of the Christian's Walk.