

THE
BIBLICAL REPERTORY.

OCTOBER, 1833.

No. IV.

ART. I.—*Quakerism not Christianity: or Reasons for renouncing the doctrine of Friends. In three parts. By Samuel Hanson Cox, D. D., Pastor of the Laight Street Presbyterian Church; and for twenty years a member of the Society of Friends.* Pp. 686.

WE have rarely sat down to our work as critics with so deep a sense of our incompetency to the task in hand, as we bring with us to the examination of the book whose title we have here given. We have two reasons for this, one of which grows out of the character of the book, the other out of the nature of the subject. As to the book, our readers will readily enough understand what we mean, who are acquainted with the splendid eccentricities of its author, and the peculiarities of his intellectual progeny. And as for the subject, after the best investigation we have been able to give to it, we are free to acknowledge that there are some important points in respect to which we are still in doubt: indeed, there is so much of mysticism belonging to the system of the Quakers, and so much of what seems to us contradiction in those authors who are recognised as standards of the sect, that it appears to us well nigh a hopeless matter to arrive at any thing

ART. VI.—*The British Reformers. Writings of the Rev. Thomas Becon, Chaplain to Archbishop Cranmer, and Prebendary of Canterbury.*

THERE is no one thing which indicates in a more pleasing manner the revival of a truly evangelical spirit in Great Britain, than the re-publication of many writings by the most spiritual and searching of the old English divines. In the world there cannot be found so rich a treasure of experimental, casuistical, and practical theology, as in the older writings of that highly favoured island. The providence of God, which permitted so many pious and learned pastors to be ejected from their charges, in the time of Charles II., is explained and vindicated, when we consider, that the result of this impious and impolitic proceeding, was the publication of hundreds of volumes, which have never been surpassed, in any country, for soundness of doctrine, and for the genuine spirit of deep and fervent piety. These books not only enlightened and edified multitudes of contemporary readers, but have continued to bless the church until the present day; and give promise, at this time, of being more eminently useful hereafter, than they have ever been before; because the prejudices which existed in many minds against the writers, on account of their non-conformity to the established religion, have now passed away; so that the evangelical part of the Church of England do now profit by the compositions of these eminently godly men.

But the writings of the British Reformers have fallen much more into oblivion, than those of their successors, both within and without the national church. So entirely were many of the works of these holy men lost sight of, that the very names of some who edified the church by their writings, and sealed their doctrines by their blood, were almost forgotten. It was therefore a wise and benevolent purpose, to search out their *works*; and to lay them before the Christian public, in a commodious and attractive form. This has been done by the RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY of London; and if that be true which has been reported to us, *that the whole expense of stereotyping these volumes was borne by one man*, it reflects an honour upon this unknown individual, above all praise. Having, through the kindness of a friend, enjoyed the privilege of looking over these volumes, our attention was particularly arrested by the works of BECON, a name which, although we must have often seen it in

reading the history of the Reformation in England, had entirely escaped from our memory; so that we were surprised when we found it in the same class with Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley, Jewel, Tindal, Coverdale. After a cursory perusal of the writings of this forgotten reformer, we are constrained to acknowledge, that for soundness in the faith, vivacity, learning, and eloquence he holds a first place among his distinguished compeers. There are perhaps, no where to be found in the language, finer specimens of "English pure and undefiled," such as it was of old before the admixture of foreign corruptions. And if the editor has taken no liberties with the language of the author, we have cause to be astonished at the purity and propriety of his style. Indeed, after all our refinement and improvements, we cannot but express the wish, that we could go back again to the genuine Saxon dialect of Becon; for the sake of these we would willingly give up the riches which have been imported into our language from abroad. But we are not so much concerned to lay before our readers specimens of this writer's diction, as of his sentiments, and correct modes of thinking and reasoning. Before we introduce any extracts from the productions of this distinguished and eloquent writer, we think it expedient to give from the memoir prefixed to the volume, a brief account of his life.

"Thomas Becon was born in Suffolk, about A. D. 1510, and was educated at Cambridge, where he was graduated 1530. It seems that Latimer's preaching was the means of opening his eyes; on which he became a zealous defender and propagator of the doctrines of the Reformation; and wrote several small treatises which attracted considerable notice, and exposed him to the persecution of the Romish clergy. But Becon, though doubtless sincere in his profession of the doctrines of the Gospel, was not yet prepared to suffer the loss of life on account of his faith. When apprehended by Bonner, 1544, he publicly recanted his opinions at St. Paul's Cross, and committed to the flames the treatises which he had published; some of them were under the name of Theodore Basil, and are included in the proclamation of 1546 against heretical books. Finding there was no safety for him in London or its vicinity, Becon travelled into Staffordshire and Derbyshire, where he remained in seclusion, until the accession of Edward VI. During this interval, he was not idle, but applied himself diligently to the education of children in useful learning; and, especially in Christian doctrine. But the best account of Becon, at this time, can be derived from a tract written by himself, entitled, "The Jewel of Joy," from which we will take copious extracts:

"What gentleness I found at the hands of some men in these parts, ye know right well. Therefore, when neither by speaking, nor writing, I could do good, I thought it best, not rashly to throw myself into the ravening paws of those greedy wolves, but for a certain space, to absent myself from their tyranny, according to the doctrine of the Gospel. Leaving mine own native country, I travelled into such strange places as were unknown to me, and I to them. And yet, I thank the Lord my God, who never leaveth his servants succourless, I, although an unprofitable servant, in that exile and banishment wanted no good thing. I have learned in that my journey, to cast my care upon the Lord my God, who abundantly feedeth so many as trust in Him, and depend on His liberality and goodness. For one house I found twenty, and for one friend a hundred. I could wish nothing for the provisions of

this life, but I had it plenteously, God so caring for me his unprofitable and wretched servant.

“After I had taken leave of my most sweet mother and my other friends, I travelled into Derbyshire, and from thence into the Peak, whither I appointed my books and my clothes to be brought. Mine intent was, by exercising the office of a schoohnaster, to engraft Christ and the knowledge of him in the breasts of those scholars whom God should appoint unto me to be taught. I found them of very good wits and apt understandings. Coming to a little village called Alsop in the dale, I chanced upon a certain gentleman called Alsop, lord of that village, a man not only ancient in years, but also ripe in the knowledge of Christ’s doctrine. After we had saluted each other, and taken a sufficient repast, he showed me certain books which he called jewels and principal treasures. To repeat them all by name I am not able, but of this I am surc, that there was the *NEW TESTAMENT*, after the translation of the godly, learned man, Miles Coverdale, which seemed to be as well worn by the diligent reading thereof, as was ever any Mass book among the papists. I remember he had many other godly books, as “The obedience of a Christian man,” —“The Parable of the wicked Mammon”—“The Revelation of Antichrist”—“The sum of Holy Scripture”—“The book of John Frith against Purgatory,” all the books under the name of Theodore Basil, with divers other learned men’s works. In these godly treatises, this ancient gentleman, among the mountain tracks, occupied himself both diligently and virtuously. But all the religion of the people consisted in hearing matins and masses, in superstitious worshipping of saints, in hiring soul-carriers to sing trentals,* in pattering upon beads, and in such other popish pedlary. Yet the people wher I have travclled, for the most part are reasonable and quiet enough, yea and very comformable to God’s truth. If any be stubbornly obstinate, it is for want of knowledge, and because they have been seduced by blind guides.

“While I was in the Peak, I learned that Robert Wysdom was in Staffordshire. He was the same to me as Aristarchus was to Paul. Desiring greatly to see him, I bade my friends in the Peak farewell, and made haste towards him. When I came to him, I not only rejoiced to see him in health, but also gave God thanks that he was so well placed and provided for. I found him in the house of a certain faithful brother, called John Old, a man old in name but young in years, and yet ancient in true godliness and Christian life. He was to us as Jason was to Paul and Silas. He received us joyfully into his house, and liberally, for the Lord’s sake, ministered all good things to our necessities. And as he began so he continued, a right hearty friend, and dearly loving brother, so long as we remained in that country. Even as blessed Paul wished to Onesiphorus, so wish I to him; the Lord grant that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day.

“After we had passed certain days in the house of that most loving brother, refreshing ourselves with the comfort of the Holy Scriptures, after so many grievous tempests, troubles, storms, and painful labours, our dear brother Wysdom was called away by letters, which was to us no small grief and pain.† Notwithstanding we submitted to the good pleasure of God, with this hope and comfort, that his return to his old familiars should be greatly to the advancement of God’s glory, and to the quiet of his Christian studies, whereof might spring hereafter no small advantage to the Christian commonwealth. And so we wishing one another the assistance of God’s Spirit, repentance of our former life, strength of faith, and perseverance in all godliness to our last end, departed, yea, and that not without tears. He was ever virtuously occupied, and suffered no hour to pass without good fruit. He is a man in whom the fear of God reigneth unfeignedly. After his departure,

* Trentals were prayers to the number of thirty.

† Robert Wysdom, or Wisdom, was minister of St. Catharine’s, in Sothbury, and a faithful and laborious preacher of the truth. Like Becon, he was compelled to recant, 1544. But he soon repented of this act, and continued to propagate the doctrines of the Gospel as long as he lived. He wrote an exposition of the ten commandments, for which he was imprisoned in the Lollard’s tower. During the persecuting reign of queen Mary, he escaped to the continent; but on the accession of Elizabeth, he returned to England and was made archdeacon of Ely.

according to my talent, I brought up youth in the knowledge of good literature, and instilled into their breasts the elements and principles of Christ's doctrine, teaching them to know the Lord their God, to believe in him, to fear and love him, and studiously to walk in his holy ways from their cradles even to the yielding up of their last breath. I doubt not but Christ was so deeply graven in their hearts at that time that he is not worn out, neither as I trust shall be so long as they live. The people here were not so superstitious as those of the Peak, but savoured more of pure religion, through the influence of books which had been dispersed among them.

"After I had spent a year and somewhat more in that country, in the virtuous education and bringing up of youth, I departed into Warwickshire, where, in like manner, as before, I enjoyed the liberality of my sincere and dear friend John Old, who, impelled by urgent causes, had removed into that country. There likewise I taught several gentlemen's sons, who, I trust, if they live, will be ornaments to the public weal of England, both for the preferment of true religion, and for the maintenance of justice.

"I travelled in Derbyshire, in the Peak, in Staffordshire, and in Leicestershire; yet Warwickshire was to me the most dear and pleasant. In Leicestershire—I pass over the other—I had acquaintance with one learned man, a countryman of ours, called John Aylmer, a master of arts in the University of Cambridge, a young man singularly well learned both in the Latin and Greek, teacher to the children of my lord marquis Dorset; but Warwickshire administered to me the acquaintance of every learned man."

It affords us much satisfaction to insert at large the following account of the preaching and character of the martyr Latimer, from a contemporary, and one who was intimately acquainted with him from his youth. As a faithful, simple hearted, fearless, and popular preacher, Latimer probably stood foremost among the British reformers. In his boldness of reproof even of kings, and in the plainness of dress and unaffected simplicity of manners, he seems to have greatly resembled Elijah the prophet, and John the Baptist. It being the custom on New Year's day for the courtiers to make some present to the king as a token of respect, Latimer presented to his sovereign, Henry VIII., an English New Testament, folded at the text, "Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."

"First comes to my remembrance, master Latimer, a man worthy to be loved and revered by all true hearted Christian men, not only for the pureness of his life, which before the world hath always been innocent and blameless, but for the sincerity and goodness of his evangelical doctrines, which, since the beginning of his preaching, has in all points been so conformable to the teaching of Christ and his apostles, that the very adversaries of God's truth, with their menacing words and cruel imprisonments, could not withdraw him from it. But whatsoever he had once preached, he valiantly defended the same before the world, without fear of any mortal creature, although of ever so great power or high authority; wishing and minding rather to suffer, not only loss of worldly possessions but also of life, than the glory of God or the truth of Christ's Gospel should in any point be obscured or defaced through him. His life was not dear unto him so that he might fulfil his course with joy, and the office that he received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of God's favour. His noble fame and virtuous renown is well known, not only in the realm of England, but also in foreign countries, among both learned and unlearned. I knew him twenty years ago in the University of Cambridge; to whom, next to God, I am bound to give most hearty thanks, for the knowledge if I have any of God and his most holy word. I was sometime a poor scholar of Cambridge, very desirous

to have the knowledge of good letters; and in the time of my being there this godly man preached many learned and Christian discourses, both in Latin and English, at all of which, for the most part, I was present; and although at the time I was but a child of sixteen years old, yet I noted his doctrine as well as I could, partly reposing it in my memory, partly committing it to writing, as letters are the most faithful treasures to the memory. I was present, when with manifest authorities of God's word and invincible arguments, he proved in his sermons that the Holy Scriptures ought to be read in the English tongue, by all Christian people, whether they were priests, or laymen as they are called; which divers drowsy dunces, with false flattering friars, could not abide, but openly in their unsavoury humours resisted his godly purpose; even as Alexander the coppersmith and Elymas the sorcerer, resisted Paul. Notwithstanding this, he, yea rather God in him, whose cause he handled, got the victory, and it came to pass according to his teaching. Neither was I absent when he inveighed against empty words, good intents, blind zeal, superstitious devotion, such as the setting up of candles, running on pilgrimages, and such other idle inventions of men, whereby the glory of God was obscured, and the works of mercy less regarded. I remember also how he was wont to rebuke the beneficed men with the authority of God's arm, for neglecting and not teaching their flock, and for being absent from their cures: they themselves being idle, and masting themselves like hogs of Epicurus's flock: taking no thought how their poor parishioners pine away, starve, perish, die for hunger. Neither have I forgotten, how he at that time condemned foolish, ungodly, and impossible vows to be fulfilled, wishing rather that liberty of marriage should be granted to them which have so vowed, than so to continue through life in all kind of abominable uncleanness. O how vehement was he in rebuking sin! especially idolatry, false and idle swearing, covetousness, and licentious living! Again, how sweet and pleasant were his words in exhorting unto virtue! He spake nothing but it left, as it were, certain stings in the hearts of his hearers which moved them to consent to his doctrines. None, except they were stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart, went away from his sermons who were not led to a faithful repentance of their former lives, affected with high detestation of sin, and moved unto all godliness and virtue. I knew certain men who, by persuasion of their friends, went unto his sermons, swelling, blown full, and puffed up like unto Esop's frogs with envy and malice against the preacher; but when they returned, the sermon being done, and were asked how they liked him and his doctrine, answered with the priests and pharisees' servants, 'Never man spake like this man.'

"I will not further report his freedom of speech against buying and selling benefices, against the promoting into livings them which are unleavened and ignorant in the law of God, against popish pardons, against the reposing our hope in our own works or in other men's merits, against false religion, &c. Neither do I here relate how beneficial he was, according to his ability, to poor scholars and other needy people; so conformable was his life to his doctrine; so watered he with good deeds whatsoever he had planted with godly words. He so laboured earnestly both in word and deed to win and allure others to the love of Christ's doctrine and his holy religion, that it became a proverbial saying, even to this day, 'when master Stafford read, and master Latimer preached, then was Cambridge blessed.'"

And as Becon goes on to give the character of the other holy man here mentioned, of whom very little is elsewhere published, it will no doubt be gratifying to our readers to have his portrait also from the pen of one so well qualified in all respects to exhibit his true character.

"George Stafford was a man whom the unthankful world was unworthy any longer to have.* I pass over the gifts of nature, and such godly qualities as ruin

* George Stafford or Stavert, was fellow of Penbroke Hall, in Cambridge, a reader of divinity, who lectured on the Scriptures. He gave every attention to the duties of his ministry. About 1528 there was one of great fame for his skill as a conjuror, at Cambridge. This man fell sick of the plague. From compassion

unto them that pursue them, the favour and commendation of men, wherewith he was plenteously endued. This I say, that he was a man of very perfect life; and if I may so speak of an angelic conversation, approvedly learned in the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin tongue; and such a one as had, through his painful labours, obtained singular knowledge in the mysteries of God's most blessed word. By his industry, labour, pains, and diligence, he seemed of a dead man to make blessed Paul live again; and putting away all unseemliness, set him forth in his native colours, so that now he is both to be seen, read, and heard with great pleasure, by them that labour in the study of his most godly epistles. And as he beautified the letters of blessed Paul with his godly expositions, he learnedly set forth in his lectures, the native sense and true understanding of the four evangelists; restoring unto us in a lively manner, the apostles mind and the mind of those holy writers, which, for so many years before, had lain unknown and obscured, through the darkness and mists of Pharisees and Papists. He was a faithful and a prudent servant, giving meat to the Lord's household in due time. He cast away profane and old wives' fables, and as the good servant of Jesus Christ exercised himself unto godliness. He was an example to the faithful, in word, in conversation, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. He gave his mind to reading, to exhorting, to doctrine. He studied to show himself unto God a laudable workman that needeth not to be ashamed, dividing the word of truth justly. He was gentle unto every man, and with meekness informed them that resisted the truth, if God at any time would give them repentance for to know the truth, and to turn them again from the snare of the devil. He fought a good fight, he finished his course, he kept the faith; therefore there is laid up for him a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give him in that day: and not to him only, but to all them that love His coming."

"While I was training up youth, and fashioning their minds unto true godliness, behold unexpected letters were sent to me from my most dear mother; in which she required me to return to my native country, and to be a staff of her old age, as my father-in-law was departed from this vale of misery. Considering my duty, and the honour which I owe her by the manifest commandment of God, I immediately after, not without the friendly consent of my well-willers, departed from Warwickshire, and with all haste repaired home."

Although the preceding extract is long, it will, we trust, be found entertaining to our readers, as furnishing a picture of the religious and moral state of England before the blessed end of the Reformation. It will only be regretted that our author has not left us a fuller and more detailed account of himself and coadjutors in the work of the Reformation.

Upon the accession of Edward VI., Bacon was one of the six preachers, stationed at Canterbury by Cranmer: he was at the same time chaplain to the protector Somerset, and sometimes visited in his family at Sheen.

After the lamented death of Edward VI., when Mary came to the throne, he, together with Bradford and Veron, was committed to the tower; where he remained prisoner seven months. How he obtained his release, it is difficult to say; for almost all his fellow labourers were detained in confinement until popery was

to his soul, Stafford ventured his own life by visiting him, and reasoned with him upon his wicked life and practices till he was brought to repentance, and destroyed his books; but while he was thus instrumental in saving this man's soul, it was at the expense of his own life.

completely established, and then committed to the flames. Becon, although liberated from prison, was aware that his life would not be secure in England, he, therefore, after remaining in concealment for some time, escaped to the continent, where he continued till the death of queen Mary. His writings were included by name in the proclamation of Philip and Mary against heretical books of the Reformers; and no doubt many copies were destroyed. While on the continent, he was not idle, but employed his pen in vindication of the doctrines of the Reformation. Among other things, he wrote an address to his persecuted brethren in England, directing them to their only refuge and deliverer; which was often read in the private meetings of the Protestants, and afforded edification and comfort to many.

Upon the death of Mary, Becon returned again to England, and laboured zealously and successfully to promote the truth. Like many of the exiles, and most excellent characters of that day, he was in favour of greater latitude as to uniformity than was allowed, and was one of that large minority in the convocation, who petitioned for a greater liberty with respect to some rites and ceremonies. Indeed, it appears from Strype's Annals, that the rigid doctrine of uniformity was carried by the majority of a single vote; for in support of the petition there were fifty-eight votes, and against it fifty-nine. And when the clergy of London were required at Lambeth to subscribe the ecclesiastical regulations recently adopted, Becon at first refused, but afterwards conformed. After this, Canterbury seems to have been the usual place of his residence, until the time of his death, which occurred 1567.

Becon was undoubtedly one of the most laborious and useful writers among the British reformers. His publications exceed forty in number; and some of them are of considerable length. The earliest was printed in 1541, and the latest in 1566. They embrace a much wider range of subjects, than the works of any other writer of that day. Several of them relate to the popish controversy, in which he appears to have been thoroughly versed. Their contents are strictly scriptural, and frequently contain, for several pages together, passages appropriate to the subject in hand, and felicitously connected: and while all the reformers were mighty in the Scriptures, Becon, perhaps, in this respect, excelled them all.

Most of his writings were at first published as separate tracts, and were much read and widely circulated. The printer, Day, 1549, obtained a license to reprint all the writings of Becon, which furnishes sufficient evidence that they were in demand. A. D. 1564, a uniform and corrected edition of his works was

printed under his own superintendence, and dedicated to the archbishops and bishops of the realm. They form three volumes, folio, and are now among the scarcest writings of the reformers of England. Few of them have been reprinted since that time; and thus the numerous and excellent writings of this pious and learned divine have been suffered to fall into unmerited oblivion. It may be satisfactory to the reader to see a list of Becon's works. The following is furnished by the editor of the volume now under consideration:

1. News from Heaven. 2. The Christmas Banquet. 3. A Potation for Lent. 4. The Pathway to Prayer. 5. A Pleasant Nosegay. 6. The Policy of War. 7. David's Harp newly Stringed. 8. A New Year's Gift. 9. An Invective against Swearing. 10. The Governance of Virtue. 11. A New Catechism. 12. Preface to the Book of Christian Matrimony. 13. The Jewel of Joy. 14. The Principles of the Christian Religion. 15. A Treatise of Fasting. 16. The Castle of Comfort. 17. The Solace of the Soul. 18. The Fortress of the Faithful. 19. The Christian Knight. 20. Homily against Whoredom. 21. The Flames of Godly Prayers. 22. The Pomander of Prayer. 23. The Sick Man's Salve. 24. Dialogue between the Angel and the Shepherds. 25. A Comfortable Epistle to the Afflicted People of God. 26. A Supplication to God for restoring his Holy Word. 27. The Displaying of the Popish Mass. 28. Common Places of Holy Scripture. 29. Comparison between the Lord's Supper and the Pope's Mass. 30. Proofs from the Fathers against the Popish Errors relative to the Sacraments. 31. The Monstrous Merchandise of the Romish Bishops. 32. The Pilgrims of Rome. 33. Diversity between God's Word and Man's Invention. 34. The Acts of Christ and Anti-christ. 35. Christ's Chronicle. 36. The Summary of the New Testament. 37. The Demands of the Holy Scripture. 38. The Glorious Triumph of God's Blessed Word. 39. The Praise of Death. 40. Postills, or Sermons upon the Gospels for the Sundays and Holy Days, throughout the year.

There are, besides, a few other pieces ascribed to Becon, and some translations; and he is known to have assisted in the edition of the Scriptures, called "The Bishop's Bible."

Of the above named works, those included in the volume now under review, are 1. News out of Heaven. 2. A New Year's Gift. 3. An Invective against Swearing. 4. The Castle of Comfort. 5. The Fortress of the Faithful. 6. The Christian Knight. 7. The Flower of Godly Prayers. 8. The Sick Man's Salve. 9. The Demands of Holy Scripture. 10. Diversity between God's Word and Man's Invention. 11. Select Sermons.

By a comparison of these lists it will be seen, that the volume now given to the public, contains only a small part of the writings of this eminent man: and indeed, in regard to several of those here printed, the original is very considerably curtailed; and in one instance (*The Sick Man's Salve*) we have only the last part of a book of considerable extent, and once of great popularity. It is to be hoped, that hereafter some person who has access to his original works, will publish other treatises of *Becon*. It might have been expected, that the style of a man writing in the time of *Henry VIII.* and *Edward VI.*, would now be nearly obsolete; but this is so far from being the case, except in regard to a single word here and there, that we scarcely know where to direct our readers to a specimen of the English language, so pleasing and forcible, as in the writings of *Becon*. It is true that there is an exuberance in his language which is not perfectly conformable to the canons of criticism now in vogue; but whether our English style is really improved since the days of the British reformers, deserves a passing doubt. As our object in this review is not to enter into any discussion respecting the doctrines or opinions contained in this volume, but inerey to bring an almost forgotten writer to the notice of our readers, we will now, as best calculated to answer our purpose, give a copious extract from the first of the treatises of our author, from which some judgment may be formed of his style and manner, and also of his theological opinions.

In this tract *Gabriel* is introduced, as on the day of *Christ's* Nativity speaking to fallen man in the way of instruction, exhortation, and encouragement.

“God, in the beginning, as the Holy Scriptures testify, made man according to his own similitude, likeness, and image. That is to say, He endued him with immortality, wit, reason, sapience, justice, free-will, mercy, goodness, holiness, truth, and all perfections, and gave him empire and rule over all living creatures; placing him in a joyful paradise, a garden full of pleasure, that he should work it and keep it; giving him also authority, power, and liberty to eat of every tree in the garden, save only of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. If man did eat of that ever so soon, God told him before, that he should die the death—that is, fall from the glorious state, wherein he then was, and become mortal, sinful, wretched, miserable, servile, thrall, captive, and a very bond slave to Satan—hated of God, void of all goodness, bent to all mischief, the son of perdition, a fire brand of hell, a vessel of ire and wrath. All these things did God tell before unto Adam, that he might be prudent, wise, circumspect, and the better arm himself with courageous valour to fight against the crafty and subtle assaults of his enemy.

“Not long after, Satan, whom God had thrown out of heaven for his proud disobedience, and disobedient pride, envying man that blessed and glorious state wherein he did remain; desiring also his perdition like his own, full craftily and like a wily serpent, attempted the woman as the more frail vessel, and ready to be subdued and overcome; so that at the last she gave way to the crafty persuasions of that wily serpent, the father of lying, and wickedly transgressed God's most holy commandment.

“For Satan told him plainly that there was no danger in eating of that fruit which was forbidden, neither should they die the death though they so did; yea, rather their eyes should be opened, and they should be as gods, knowing good and evil. The woman being inflamed with these honey-like and sweet enticements; seeing also, that the tree was good to eat of, fair to the eye, and pleasant to behold, took the fruit of it, did eat, and afterwards gave it to her husband, who did eat in like manner; so that straightway both their eyes were opened, and they saw that they were naked; that is, they perceived right well that they were now become miserable, wretched, sinful, reduced to extreme calamity, and utterly fallen from the favour of God, for the transgression of his most blessed precept, which made them to be very much ashamed and to hide themselves, from the fear of God. O miserable! pitiful change! O chance more perilous than can be expressed! Now is a man become of immortal, mortal; of righteous, wicked; of wise, foolish; of holy, profane; of virtuous ill-disposed; of free, bond; of merciful, cruel; of godly, devilish; of faithful, unfaithful; of spiritual, carnal; of true, false; of a vessel of mercy, the vessel of wrath; of the son of God, the son of the devil; of the heir of glory, the heir of damnation. ‘And what is more to be lamented, not Adam alone is fallen into this damnable state, but also all his posterity; so that as many as come of this old Adam, are damned, cursed, and thrown down from the favour of God. Thus our transgression of God’s commandment hath made you all subject to the yoke and tyranny of Satan, and bound to everlasting damnation. Adam is your father, and ye are his children: look therefore in what case he is, in the very same are you. Adam is carnal, therefore are you carnal; Adam is wicked, therefore are ye wicked; Adam is the son of wrath, therefore are ye the sons of wrath; Adam is a liar and nothing but vanity, therefore are ye liars and nothing but vanity; Adam is captive and bound prisoner to Satan, sin, death and hell, therefore are ye captives, and bound prisoners to Satan, sin, death and hell. How can it be otherwise? That which is born of the flesh is flesh. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of briars? Even as it is impossible for a sour crab tree to bring forth savoury and sweet apples, so is it impossible for a sinful man, drowned and buried all in sin, to beget any other than sinful, ungodly, and wicked children. Yea, merely by the sin of one man, Adam, was evil brought forth upon all men unto damnation. By the disobedience of him were all made sinners, and by nature the sons of wrath. For this one man’s fault did sin enter into the world, and through sin, death; and so death came upon all men, inasmuch as *all* have sinned. Ye were therefore begotten in sin, conceived in sin, and brought forth in sin. None of you all is pure, but every one is polluted with ungodliness. Your minds and thoughts are also prone to evil at all times. Ye are not able to think a good thought of yourselves. What will ye do now? To flee profiteth nothing, to abide also bringeth damnation; thus you see that ye cannot escape by any means. To mitigate and assuage the divine ire and God’s wrath ye are not able. Your sin hath made God angry with you. What have you now, I pray you, wherewith ye may please him.’ Yourselves, as ye have heard heretofore, are the children of wrath, begotten in sin, carnal, wicked, and ungodly; your heart is corrupt, unclean, stinking, flowing with iniquity, arrogant, puffed up, proud, hating God, loving itself, full of hypocrisy, and all evil. Your fruits are like unto yourselves, that is detestable in the sight of God. ‘Thus you see that you have no way to pacify God’s wrath, who he have stirred up against yourselves through your wickedness. What, therefore remaineth, but only that you look for all cruel and grievous things? Hell’s mouth is open and ready to swallow you up. The fire of hell which never shall be quenched awaiteth you. Everlasting torments, intolerable punishments, perpetual turmoilings abide you. You are appointed to that place where weeping and gnashing of teeth are; where the fire is inextinguishable; where the worm of those that be there never dies. What will ye do now, what shift will you find? Will you fulfil the law which God gave to Moses, and so pacify his wrath? But this ye are not able to do; for of yourselves ye are nothing but flesh, and utterly without God. Moreover, the law is spiritual; that is, it requires not only politic and civil works, but also pure affections, and clean motives of the Spirit, and must be fulfilled, not with external works only, but also with a frank and free heart, doing the works of the law, not of constraint and for fear of punishment, but of love. Now is the law

and you of contrary nature. When then shall ye agree? The law, I confess, is holy, and the precept is holy and righteous and good; but ye are unholy and wicked and evil. How will ye then accomplish the law, that ye may pacify God's wrath, and deserve remission of your sins, through your own merits and deserts? Can he that is dead erect and lift up himself? Can he resume and take again his armour? Can he recover new strength? Can flesh teach flesh no more to sin? Can the eagle command herself no more to fly? Can the dolphin cease to swim? Can the man of India change his skin, and the cat of the mountain her spots? Neither can ye of yourselves cease to be what ye are, nor yet work good who have been so long exercised in evil. The law killeth, it giveth not life. The law worketh death, displeasure, and damnation: it purchaseth not grace, remission of sins, favour, mercy, peace and tranquillity of conscience; for cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law that he may do them."

In this strain of pungent and convincing remark, the writer goes on for several pages, cutting off the guilty sinner from every false refuge; driving him to utter despair, as it relates to his own merits and exertions, and shutting him up to the way of salvation by faith in Christ, as the only possible way of escape. This gospel plan, this good news to the perishing, he then proceeds to open, with as much clearness and force as he before had exhibited man's undone and helpless condition, under the law.

"God perceiving in what miserable case Adam and all his posterity were set, through the breaking of his most holy and blessed commandment; and that death, by the envy of Satan, had come over all the world; willing, of his own free mercy, without any of your merits and deserts, to show himself of no less power to save man, than the devil was to condemn him; said to Satan at that time, when Adam had offended, I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed, and that self-same seed shall tread down thy head. O most sweet and comfortable promise! O most heavenly word of grace! Here is the beginning of your joy and gladness! In Adam were ye all lost, but in this seed of a woman are ye all saved! But who is this seed? Not Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, nor David. Who then? Verily the Son of God, even Jesus Christ, who, without the seed of man, by the wonderful operation of the Holy Ghost, did take flesh of the pure Virgin Mary, and is this day born unto the world. He is the seed of the woman that shall tread down the head of the serpent; that is to say, destroy his power, deliver you out of captivity, and reconcile you to God the Father, purchase remission of your sins, obtain the Holy Ghost for you, and make you fellow heirs with him of eternal glory."

Here the eloquent author heaps text upon text, both from the Old and New Testament, in which the character and work of the mediator is set forth, and then proceeds as follows:

"Moreover, divers grave, weighty, and serious causes are there, why it was convenient that this your Saviour should be born: First, that inasmuch as ye are all grievous sinners, and have broken all the commandments of God, he should fulfil the law for you, delivering you from the curse of the law, whereunto ye are bound, or else by no means could you be saved. And this shall this child, who is now born, do for you, delivering you from the curse of the law whereunto ye are bound: for Christ is the perfect fulfilling of the law unto justification, to every one that believeth. Christ shall redeem you from the curse of the law, while he is made accursed for your sake; for it is written, 'cursed is every one that hangeth upon a tree.' O what joyful tidings are these for you to hear, that Christ shall deliver you from the curse of the law, and restore you unto life, who were before dead!"

Our author next shows how Christ came to be a prophet as well as a priest, and represents the miserable state of blindness into which man had fallen, which he, by his word and spirit, comes as a glorious light into the world to remove. But he returns again to the contemplation of the expiatory sacrifice of Christ.

“This is that Son of man, who is come to save that which was lost, and not to destroy the souls of men, but to save them. And all this shall come to pass by the oblation and offering of his own most precious blood and blessed body. And this one sacrifice or oblation of his most blessed body, shall be able to save so many as believe on him, even to the uttermost. The virtue of it never ceases, but endures in perfect strength forever and ever. Christ’s blood shall not cry for vengeance as the blood of Abel did, but for mercy, grace, and favour.”

In the same lively evangelical strain does the author descant on the whole mediatorial offices and work of Christ; exhibiting him in his kingly power and glory, as well as in his deep humiliation unto death; and in conclusion he gives a summary of the doctrine which he had before delivered, and ends his discourse, or rather represents the angel Gabriel as exhorting men in the following animated language:

“Receive this your Saviour with embracing arms. Run unto him, if not with the feet of your body, yet with the feet of the mind. Acknowledge him to be your only and all sufficient Saviour; and that there is none other name given unto men, under heaven, whence they must be saved, but only this name of Jesus Christ. Confess him to be the true Son of the living God, who hath now taken flesh of the most pure and clean Virgin Mary, for your sake. Confess him alone to be your peace, life, health, defence, goodness, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Your pastor, bishop, shepherd, and head. In all your troubles resort unto him as unto a strong bulwark, that he may ease you of your miserable burdens. Pour out your hearts before the Lord; know him to be your Mediator and Advocate. Ask all things in his name. Doubt nothing of his great goodness and exceeding mercy towards you; for behold he hath written you on his hands, that you may be ever in his sight. Can a woman forget the child of her womb, and the son whom she has borne? And though she doth forget him, yet God will not forget you. He will undoubtedly ease you of your burdens be they ever so great. If ye thirst, he will give you of the well of the water of life freely. If ye hunger, He is that bread of life which came down from heaven, of which, if a man eat, he shall live for ever. If ye be sick, he is a physician, ready to cure and heal all your diseases. If ye be bond, and in servitude, he will make you free and set you at liberty. If ye be dead in sin, he is the resurrection and the life. If ye walk in darkness, he is the light of the world. If ye be poor, he is rich unto all that call upon him. If ye be profane, wicked, and foolish, he is righteous, holy, and wise. If ye be oppressed with sin, death, and hell, he hath subdued them all. If ye fear the wrath of God the Father, he is your mediator, advocate, and atonement-maker. If ye have condemned yourselves through sin, he is a Saviour, and will save his people from their sins. What would ye have more? Ye want nothing but he will supply it for you abundantly, and to the uttermost. Fear not, therefore, to come to your new king Jesus Christ; for the very cause of his coming is not to destroy, but to save the souls of men. Forsake all idolatry and vain superstition. Believe in him alone; put your affiance and trust in none other but him only. And let not this your faith be dead, but quick, lively, and mighty in operation. Let it be such a faith as worketh by love. First, let your faith bring forth an earnest love toward God; and out of this love to-

ward God, let such a love proceed towards your neighbour, that out of that love there may spring plenty of good works. Be like unto a good tree which bringeth forth her fruit in due time. Be no barren and unfruitful fig tree, lest the malediction and curse of God fall on you. While you have time, work good unto all men; for God hath not delivered you from the power of your enemies, and of all such as hate you, that you should continue evil, or return to your own wickedness; but that ye, set at liberty, and void of all fear, should serve him in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of your life. 'Ye are now Christ's altogether, therefore must ye look what he will have you to do. For if he be punished, who disdained to fulfil the commandment of a terrestrial and earthly power, in what case are ye, if ye do either cast away or despise the commandment of a heavenly Governor. Certainly ye ought so to institute and order your life, that it should serve Christ your captain, in such manner that Satan should have nothing to do with you, nor ye with him. For he that doeth sin is the servant of sin; therefore, ought ye to cast away all sin from you, and give your minds to purity and holiness of life, and ever study to maintain mutual love. For not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of God which is in heaven. He that pertaineth to Christ is a new creature; and they that belong unto him have occupied the flesh with the lusts thereof; therefore, if ye be the soldiers of Christ, declare it in outward works, for it is a point of notable unshamefacedness to boast yourselves that ye pertain to Christ's army and yet do nothing at all that he commandeth. He that saith he dwelleth in him, ought to walk as he hath walked. If ye say that ye have fellowship with Christ, and yet walk in darkness, ye lie and do not the truth; but if ye walk in the light, as he is the light, then have ye fellowship together, and the blood of this, your Saviour Jesus Christ, God's own Son, maketh you clear from all sin. Now forsake all wickedness and embrace all godliness. Reject all idolatry, and practice the true worshipping of God. Cast away the works of the flesh, and put on the fruits of the spirit. Mortify old Adam, and become new men. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

It was our purpose to give several extracts from the other treatises contained in this volume, but the length of what we have given from the first, must serve as a specimen of the author's style and spirit.

The next tract in this volume, entitled, "A New-Years Gift," is in the form of a dialogue, or conversation, between Philemon, the giver of the New-Year's Gift, Theophilus, Eusebius, and Christopher, his friends. The object of the work is to show, that, as salvation cometh by Christ only, so Christ is no Saviour but to them that repent, believe, and lead a virtuous life, "and are plenteous in doing good works." It was dedicated "to the right worshipful Master Thomas Royden, Esquire, and Justice of the Peace," and from this dedication we learn, that it was composed by the author, immediately after "a grievous and troublesome sickness." The Gift, which Philemon had prepared for his friends on New-Year's day, was no other than a precious text of Scripture, which he undertook to expound for their edification and comfort. The text was a part of the lesson for Christmas day, and according to the English version then in use, was this: "*The gift of God that bringeth salvation unto all men, hath appeared, and teacheth us that we should deny un-*

godliness and worldly lusts, and that we should live soberly, religiously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, to redeem us from all unrighteousness, and to cleanse us to be a peculiar people unto himself, and even such as should be earnest followers of good works."

There is not only much sound doctrine in this tract, but it is expressed in a very attractive and elegant manner. The perusal of the whole will be accompanied with pleasure and profit to the lover of divine truth.

"The Invective against swearing," is one of the most powerful and cutting reproofs of that profane vice, which we have ever seen. It would now answer an excellent purpose, to have it abridged and widely circulated, in our country, where this hateful vice abounds; especially, we should like to see that part of it re-published, which relates to perjury. This, it is to be feared, is a crying sin, an account of which the land should mourn, and yet we seldom hear it reproved, even from the pulpit. No associations are formed to check its dangerous progress; and among the variety of religious tracts in circulation, we have seen nothing intended to rebuke this vice, so detrimental to the state, as well as the church.

The fourth tract in this volume, is entitled, "The Castle of Comfort." It is directed against the Romanists, and would answer well, as it is short, to be circulated among the blinded followers of popish doctrine at this time. The object of the piece, as stated by the author himself, is, 1. To prove from manifest Scripture, that God only forgiveth sin. 2. That the priest is but a minister appointed of God to declare the remission of sins to the truly penitent—to declare—and not to forgive. 3. An answer to the objections of the adversaries. 4. The use of the Keys.

The "Fortress of the Faithful," is also in the form of dialogue, as it had a special reference to the civil disturbances, and prevailing miseries of multitudes of people when it was written, the editor of this volume has left out a great deal of the original; and also has admitted copious citations of Scripture examples, which were exceedingly proper, when the Bible had been so long a sealed book, that its contents were very little known by the people at large, but now when the Scriptures are in every one's hand, it is not necessary to transcribe so much of what they contain in the tracts put into circulation.

"The Christian Knight" is an ingenious and spirited dialogue, between Satan and a Christian soldier. The whole object of

Satan seems to be to disarm the Christian of his shield of faith, and to drive him to distrust of God's mercy, and to desperation, by exaggerating the greatness of his sins. The resistance of the Knight, a Christian soldier, is firm and scriptural. He not only protects his vitals by a judicious use of the broad shield of faith, but he discomfits his persevering foe, by a dexterous use of the sword of the spirit. The tract is admirably adapted to the case of such as are keenly buffeted by Satan; and to such also, who are continually in danger of giving up all hope, on account of the greatness of their sins. This discourse furnishes strong evidence of the fertility of Becon's genius, and of his experimental acquaintance with the depths of Satan. It is extremely probable that Bunyan was well acquainted with this tract, and that he was not a little indebted to it, in composing some parts of his "Pilgrim," and "Holy War."

Prefixed to this discourse, there is a letter addressed to "The Right Honourable Francis Russell, Knight, and afterwards, Duke of Bedford, which is an interesting composition, and gives us a favourable idea of the piety of the distinguished nobleman to whom it was addressed. Indeed, Lord Russell not only professed the Protestant religion, but had the honour of suffering for the sake of the truth. In the time of Queen Mary, he was imprisoned for a considerable time. Cranmer, Bradford, and others, took a deep interest in him, and wrote letters to him for his confirmation and comfort. The whole of this address to Lord Russell, we would willingly transcribe, but a regard to the narrowness of our limits, makes it necessary that we should forbear further quotations.

Becon seems to have exercised himself much in composing prayers; and from the specimen here given, which, we are informed, is a small part of the whole number, we are led to entertain a very favourable opinion of his talent for devotional writing; and since excellence in this species of composition falls to the lot of very few persons; as requiring sound judgment, good taste, and uncommon spirituality, these examples are calculated to give us a very high idea of the character of the author.

But we now come to a treatise, which in the original is of considerable extent, and was in the author's time, and afterwards, held in higher estimation than any of his writings beside. This is, "The Sick Man's Salve." As has been already stated, this volume contains only the closing part of this discourse; and if the preceding parts are as excellent as that which is here given, it is to be regretted, that any portion of it was omitted. It will still, however, be practicable for any one who possesses Becon's

works in full, to have the whole of this treatise printed in a volume, by itself.

“The Demands of Holy Scripture,” is a “New Catechism,” composed by the author. The next article, entitled, “God’s Word and Man’s Invention,” exhibits strongly but justly, the contrast between the system of Popery and Protestantism; the antithesis, though it necessarily becomes somewhat tiresome, is kept up with admirable skill. This ought likewise to be circulated as a separate tract, wherever Popery has gained a footing. The contrast between “God’s Word and Man’s Invention,” is exemplified in more than forty distinct particulars. The remainder of this interesting volume consists of select summaries, called “A New Postill.” The subjects are “The Sufferings of Christ.”—“The Resurrection of Christ.”—“The Office of the Holy Ghost.”—“On the Holy Family.” And it is pleasing to remark the striking coincidence between what was considered evangelical preaching three hundred years ago, and at the present time. The freedom, copiousness, and warmth of the reformation sermons approaches very near to the style of animated extempore preaching, which we sometimes have the privilege of hearing from men of deep experimental piety, and fervent zeal; who seem to care little for their language, if they can only make the right impression on the hearts of their hearers. The excellence of preaching will usually bear proportion to the fervour of piety felt, and to the preacher’s intimate acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures.

Although we have placed “The British Reformers” at the head of this article, we have confined our attention, thus far, exclusively to one of this number. But we have in our possession eleven other volumes, executed in the same beautiful style of typography, as the one on which we have bestowed so much attention. And if our time and limits would permit, it would be a pleasing task to conduct our readers through these rich pastures of Gospel truth. There is to us something indescribably charming in the spirit of these ancient worthies who jeopardied their lives, and not a few of them shed their blood, in testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus. Who that loves the Gospel and the cross of Christ could grow weary of conversing with the spirits of such men as Wickliff, Bilney, Latimer, Cranmer, Hooper, Ridley, Knox, Philpot, Tindal, Frith, Barnes, Rogers, Saunders, Fox, Bale, and Coverdale. But in these volumes we have select portions of the genuine compositions of all these eminent theologians and martyrs for the truth; and several others, who are less known. Their works, we confess, have furnished us with a feast which it has not been our privilege

often to partake of. One spirit runs through them all. The same leading doctrines are recognised by them all; though occasionally, we find a shade of difference between them, on points of minor importance. Just such differences as exist now among those who truly love the Lord Jesus, and have been taught by his Spirit, and ever will exist while human knowledge is imperfect; and while men exercise their privilege of thinking and judging for themselves. The circumstance of some men knowing more than others, is itself sufficient to account for a diversity of opinion between them and others. Does not the experience of every successful student attest, that in proportion as he makes progress in knowledge, he is always led to change, in some degree, his former opinions? If one man sees a truth in many more of its relations than another does, when these two persons compare ideas, they will not be found to agree perfectly; nay, they may seem in some cases, to be widely apart, when the only real difference is, that the one sees further, or takes more comprehensive views, than the other. While we contend earnestly for the faith, then, let us learn to exercise charity and forbearance towards each other. Let us not too rigidly insist upon having every man to pronounce our shibboleth without the omission of a single letter. Where we find brethren possessing sincere love to Christ, and endued with genuine meekness and humility, we should be reluctant to make them offenders, or denounce them as heretics, for some minor difference from our standard of opinion.

But that on account of which we would recommend these writers to the careful perusal of our readers, is not so much the precision with which they express their theological opinions, for in regard to this they were often loose; as the ardent zeal for God's glory, the fervent love of the Lord Jesus, and the deep feeling of eternal realities, by which they are characterized. These holy men so commonly appear before us in the panoply of stern polemics—for they were obliged to resist the hideous forms of error by which they were surrounded—that we have failed to do them justice as men of deep experimental piety, and of a uniformly devout spirit. They were, indeed, men of whom the world was not worthy. They fought a good fight, and came off conquerors and more than conquerors. Some of them were left, like Peter, in the hour of temptation, and like him they fell; but Christ prayed for them, and when recovered, they were more useful than before. The case of Cranmer is known to all. Thus the Lord teaches us that the standing of man is in himself;—that human strength is weakness, and human courage cowardice, in the day of trial. Man can glory in

nothing else but his weakness, that the power of Christ may rest upon him; and when most sensible of his own weakness, then is he strong; and the true ground of all just confidence, that we shall not utterly fall from our steadfastness, is the promise of a faithful God, "My grace is sufficient for thee. I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

ART. VII.—*Philip Melancthon's opinions respecting Sin.*
Translated from his Common Places.

REFLECTING men have always wondered, that as there is in most things in the universe so beautiful an order, there should exist so great confusion, so many crimes and calamities, together with diseases and death, in the human race. The philosophers, in attempting to account for these phenomena, have ascribed them partly to matter, partly to the will of man, and partly to fate, which they say is the necessary connexion of the first cause with all second causes, whether physical or voluntary. The Manicheans, adopting a corrupt philosophy, professed certain insane opinions, equally dishonourable to God and injurious to morality; maintaining, that there were two eternal and independent principles, the one good and the other evil, and also the doctrine of necessity; by which opinions, the church in ancient times was very much agitated. It is the part of a pious mind to think and speak with reverence concerning God; and to embrace and hold fast those sentiments which are true, and friendly to piety and good morals, and which have been approved by the deliberate judgment of the judicious and pious in the church; and not to indulge vain curiosity, or a fondness for useless speculations, nor to enter into infinite labyrinths of disputation.

We ought, however, in the commencement, to lay it down as a certain principle, from which nothing should induce us to depart, that God is not the author of sin, that he does not will sin, nor approve of sin, nor impel the wills of others to choose sin: but that he is truly and awfully opposed to sin, which he has declared, not only by his word, in which eternal misery is threatened, but also by the unceasing manifestations of his wrath against it, in the dispensations of his Providence. And the Son of God, by becoming a victim for sin to appease the anger of his Father, has demonstrated in the most striking manner, by his death, that not God, but the devil is the author of sin. Let it then be received