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ART. I.—*A Compendium of Christian Antiquities: being a brief view of the Orders, Rites, Laws, and Customs of the Ancient Church in the Early Ages.* By the Rev. C. S. Henry, A. M. Philadelphia, Joseph Whetham. pp. 332. Svo. 1837.

A PETTY ambition to be recognised as authors is, we fear, a growing vice among Americans. One of the lowest forms in which the passion shows itself, is that of abridgment. Not that abridgment, in itself, is evil; but because the abridger, in the cases now referred to, cannot deny himself the happiness of being thought a *bona fide* author, by that class of readers who confine themselves to title-pages. On the elegant title of the volume now before us there is no intimation that the book is not the offspring of the Rev. C. S. Henry. A very little turning of the leaves, however, suffices to show that it is all from Bingham, and on looking at the preface, we are gravely told, that “it makes no pretension to originality of investigation.” This is not strictly true; for the *pretensions* of a book are to be looked for in the title-page; and besides, there is some pretension in the affected statement that “the work of Bingham has been relied upon, as to facts and authorities—as well as followed

in its general method," instead of plainly telling the whole truth. There is also pretension in the fact, that even this insufficient acknowledgment could not be given, without an attempt to take it back again, by talking, in the usual style of second-hand authors, about "an independent reference" and "an independent exercise of judgment," which, as the author (of the preface) well observes, it requires "an attentive comparison" to find. To reviewers, especially, this sort of affectation is offensive and perplexing. How are we to deal with such a questionable shape? Is the preface or the title-page to give name to the volume? Are we to believe the confessions of the one, or the "pretensions" of the other? This is no captious question: it is one which affects both the merit of the volume and the credit of its author. A good compendium of Christian Antiquities may not be the same thing with a good abridgment of the *Origines Ecclesiasticæ*. Tried by the former test, the book, to say the least, is not a scholar-like performance. Were the sources of church history sealed up when Bingham died? Have the last hundred years brought nothing new to light? And if our author or abridger answers, Nothing, does he answer advisedly, or speak at random, knowing neither what he says nor whereof he affirms? Even if Bingham were correct in every point, one who writes upon the subject now, should *know* that he is thus correct, by diligent comparison with later writers. There is something almost laughable in the idea of a new book on Christian Archaeology, consisting of an old book frittered down, and interspersed with an occasional "independent reference," and an occasional "independent exercise of judgment," without an allusion—unless couched in some very occasional and independent passages which we have not discovered—to the vast accumulations of the German archaeologists, nor even to those works in which the fruits of their immense research have been digested. A Compendium of Christian Antiquities without a reference even to Neander or Augusti! This is the more remarkable, because the German writers are familiar with the standard English works in this department, and Augusti, in particular, has constant reference to Bingham, in his own rich and masterly performance.\* With all allowance for the author's "intelligent attachment to the constitution, discipline and

\* *Denkwürdigkeiten aus der Christlichen Archæologie.* Von Dr. J. C. W. Augusti. 12 vols. Leipzig, 1817—1831.

worship of that Church, which the writer believes to be, &c. &c." "and of which it is his happiness to avow himself a devoted member," might he not, without offence, have wished to know what those who have succeeded Bingham have to say? When the subject of research is written testimony, as it is in this case, there is much to be expected from the critical acumen and correctness of the Germans, and very little to be feared from their neology on points of doctrine. Familiar contact with them, in relation to such matters, would scarcely stain the *tabula rasa* of a bishop. We are sure, that if old Joseph Bingham were alive, he would be thankful for assistance which his copyists despise.

But this may be thought disingenuous criticism of a book which "makes no pretension to originality." It is certainly provoking to be met with such a plea, but it can hardly be resisted. Once more then we protest against all stratagems, by which a man can figure in the title-page as author, and when charged with his delinquencies, in that capacity, take refuge in the self-abasing language of his preface, which, after all, however, may be so well guarded and so studiously ambiguous, that when the storm is over, the poor innocent abridger may appear once more as author, and talk of his "independent exercise of judgment." After this solemn protest, we admit the offered plea, and allow Mr. Henry to be nothing more than an abbreviator, saving and excepting all occasional independent acts of mind, which "an attentive comparison" may show him to have exercised. If we have spoken harshly, it must be ascribed to the equivocal position which the author had assumed. Having fixed him now upon one horn of his dilemma, we proceed, with great good humour, to impart to our readers some idea of his volume.

No one who reflects on the nature of the work, will expect us to canvass all its chapters and sections in detail. All that can be expected is that we present such views of some of its leading articles, as will enable our readers to form an opinion of its general character. Two questions obviously arise, and demand solution—Is the present volume a fair abridgment of Bingham's work, in all its parts warranted by his minuter statements? And may the whole be relied on as affording correct information on the various matters of which it treats? We are constrained to say, that neither of these questions can, without much qualification, be answered in the affirmative.

In the first place, we are of the opinion that the compiler

of this manual has failed, in a number of instances, of representing with entire justice the statements of the voluminous writer of whose work he undertook to give a compendium. Bingham was a man of real learning. He was aware of the definite import and bearing of what he stated as facts. We find him, therefore, for the most part, very precise, not only in setting down what he alleged to be facts, but also giving, with laborious minuteness, his authorities; and thus enabling his readers fairly to judge how far his allegations were sustained by his witnesses. In some instances, indeed, the attentive and impartial reader sees clearly that his original authorities are far from sustaining his alleged facts. But then the reader is left to judge for himself; the whole testimony is before him, and no one is deceived. We could mention a number of instances in which Bingham appears to us egregiously to fail of maintaining his assumed position by the testimony which he adduces. Yet, even in this case, considering his management of his work, no harm is done. The whole case is stated; and the reader is left to form his own opinion.

But when such an author is abridged, by a literary workman less learned, less discriminating and accurate both as a thinker and writer, and withal a little sanguine and rash, and, into the bargain, not a little given up to sectarian prejudices and feelings, we can no longer expect the cautious statements, the ample explanations, the guarded reserves, which enable the reader of the original work to know where he stands, and to judge how far each plea is fairly established. Nay more, by a single stroke of the pen, by the selection of one injudicious word, an impression may be made not only very different from that which the original writer intended, but, perhaps, without design, directly opposite to it. Hence it is, that to make a faithful abridgment of a work of either profound thought, or of carefully digested learning, requires, it has been sometimes said, the same sort and amount of talent which were employed in the construction of the original work. Without undertaking to carry the principle so far, in all cases, we have no doubt that there is much more truth in it than is commonly supposed. And we are much mistaken if the careful readers of the volume before us will not find frequent occasion to observe that the present abridgment has fallen into hands in every respect less competent than the learned and laborious compiler of the *Origines Ecclesiasticae*.

A few examples will serve at once to illustrate and confirm our meaning. In book fourth, chapter first, section 145, Mr. Henry tells us that in administering the ordinance of baptism, in the primitive church, "there were three sorts of sponsors; (1) For children, who could not answer for themselves; (2) For adults, who by sickness, or infirmity, or other incapacity, could not answer for themselves; (3) For all adult persons in general." When we are told that this was the case in the primitive church, every intelligent reader will, of course, suppose that the first or apostolic church had these several classes of sponsors. But what will be the surprise of such a reader when he is told that, during the first five hundred years after Christ, there is no satisfactory evidence that, in ordinary cases, any other than one sort of sponsors were known, viz. parents offering their children in baptism? Within the first five hundred years after Christ there is no sufficient evidence that children were ever presented for baptism by any other persons than their parents, provided those parents were living, and were professing Christians. When some persons in the time of Augustine, who flourished toward the close of the fourth, and during the first thirty years of the fifth century, contended that it was not lawful, in any case, for any excepting their natural parents to offer children in baptism; that learned and pious father opposed them, and gave it as his opinion, that in extraordinary cases, as, for example, when the parents were dead; when they were not professing Christians; when they cruelly forsook and exposed their offspring; and when masters had young slaves committed to their charge; in these cases (and Augustine mentions no others) he maintains that any professing Christians, who should be willing to take such children under their care, and become responsible for their religious education, might with propriety offer them in baptism. This, it will be instantly perceived, is perfectly consistent with the principles and practice of the Presbyterian Church in relation to this subject. We may add, that the very names most commonly applied to sponsors by the Greek and Latin writers, show the origin of the custom. Such names are *πατέρες*, *μητέρες*, *compatres*, *commatres*, *propatres*, *promatres*, *patrini*, *matrinae*; to which we might add the English *god-father*, *god-mother*, and the German *gevatter* and *gevatterin*. These names, as Augusti well remarks, all bear the impress of the olden time, when the parents themselves, or in default of parents, the nearest rela-

tives or guardians, received the child from the baptismal font; the parental titles being modified to show, that something more than the natural relation was intended.\*

It is true, in the work of Bingham, of which this is an abridgment, that writer seems to have taken unwearied pains to collect every scrap of testimony within his reach, in favour of the early origin of sponsors. But he utterly fails of producing even plausible evidence in support of his general position; and, at length, candidly acknowledges that, in the early ages, parents were, in all ordinary cases, the presenters and sureties of their own children; and that there were no others, excepting in extraordinary cases, such as those alluded to by Augustine. It is granted, indeed, that some writers have quoted Dionysius, Tertullian, and Cyril of Alexandria, as affording countenance to the use of sponsors in early times; and even the truly learned and cautious Bingham seems desirous of pressing them into his service for this purpose. Not one of these writers, however, has written a sentence which establishes the use of any other sponsors than parents, when they were in life, and of a proper character to offer their children for the sacramental seal in question. Even Dionysius, whose language has, at first view, some appearance of favouring other sponsors, yet, when carefully examined, will be found to speak only of sponsors who undertook to train up in the Christian religion some of the children of pagans, who were delivered for this purpose into the hands of these pious sureties, by their unbelieving parents. And, after all, the writings of this same Dionysius are given up by the learned Wall, and by the still more learned archbishop Usher, as "a gross and impudent forgery." As a sample of the way in which the advocates of sponsors try to prove their point, it may be mentioned that the learned Boehmer, in his *Jus Ecclesiasticum*, (vol. 3. p. 849,) draws large conclusions from the words of Justin Martyr (Apol. i. 61.) *ἐπειδὴ ἀγωναὶ ὑφ' ἡμῶν ἐνδα ἕδαρ ἐστί.* This speaks volumes in relation to the quantity and quality of testimony which can be adduced from ancient writers. The conclusion of Augusti, on the subject, is, that there is no decisive evidence whatever, though he admits "a not improbable historical induction" in favour of the use of sponsors, at an early period, *as witnesses of baptism.*

It was not until the council of Mentz, in the ninth century,

\* Augusti, vol. vii. p. 327.

that the Church of Rome *forbade* the appearance of parents as sponsors for their own children, and required that this service should be surrendered into other hands. And as to sponsors at the baptism of adult persons, there is no credible testimony for it until the fifth century; and, even then, they were employed only when adults about to be baptized were, through disease or otherwise, unable to speak for themselves, or to make the usual profession; in which cases, it seems to have been customary for some relative or friend to answer for them, and to bear testimony to their good character. From these peculiar cases, however, as superstition gained ground, the transition was easy to the use of sponsors in *all cases* of adult baptism.

The views which we have taken of this subject would be very apt to be taken by every unprejudiced and cautious reader of Bingham's original work. But when his extended and minute statement, diffused over five folio pages, is contracted into a single octavo page, and we are given to understand, that all the various classes of sponsors of which mention is made, were in use in the primitive church, that is, from the origin of the Christian church,—we have surely some reason to complain of an exhibition as much adapted to impose upon unwary readers as if it were expressly intended to accomplish that very purpose.

Again, in book fifth, chapter first, in which the subject of Liturgies is treated, there is much which, when unaccompanied with Bingham's minute and circuitous mode of exhibiting the subject, is adapted to deceive and lead astray. The following passage occurs "Concerning the use of Forms of Prayer in the apostolic age."

"Nothing can be clearly decided on this point beyond the consent of all the ancient writers, that the Lord's Prayer was in general use as a part of the public service from the earliest days of the church;—that the form of baptism was uniformly the same;—that there was a settled form in every church for the profession of faith;—and probably also the scripture forms of psalms and hymns, and the forms of benediction. Inasmuch, however, as there was a settled order of divine service in the Jewish Church, to which undoubtedly the Saviour himself conformed; and as he himself gave a specimen of a form of prayer which was held in reverence and used by the earliest Christians; it cannot in any way be fairly argued that forms of public worship are at variance with the genius of Christianity; or that the apostles and

primitive Christians would be unlikely to use them. The probability is in favour of the opposite opinion."

If the reader will con over Bingham's three folio pages, of which this short paragraph is an abridgment, he will see how feeble and utterly insufficient is the testimony on which he relies for sustaining his positions. But when the whole is summed up in a single paragraph, without the citation of one witness, without exhibiting any part of the basis on which any of his assertions rest, it is evident that the reader is entirely at the mercy of the abridger, and has no means of judging how far reliance may be placed upon his statements. He makes, in substance, the same statements as those of Bingham; but Bingham enables his readers to see how gratuitous and unsupported many of his representations are, by exhibiting in detail the amount of his proof. Not so with the author of this abridgment. He makes direct and strong representations, in a few lines; and being supposed to have his own veracity, backed by the learning and fidelity of the writer whom he professes to abridge, pledged for the support of what he alleges—his representation will, no doubt, be considered by many as entitled to full credence.

Now, when Bingham, and other writers who tread in his steps, assert and endeavour to prove that liturgies were in use in the apostolic age, and in the ages immediately succeeding, they endeavour to make good their assertion by such testimony as the following:—that the primitive Christians had evidently psalms and hymns, which had been reduced to writing, which were well known among them, and which they united in singing; that they had for the most part, a form of words, which was commonly employed in administering baptism, and the sacramental supper; and that, in blessing and dismissing the people, they commonly adopted the usual apostolical benediction, or some other well known form of a similar kind. These writers have not a single fact or testimony to show in support of their assertion but something of this sort. Now it is plain that all this may be freely granted without in the least degree helping their argument. The Presbyterian Church is represented, and found fault with, as being without a liturgy; and yet it has, and always has had, the prepared and prescribed parts of public worship to which reference has just been made. Nay, we know of no church, of regular organization, that has not psalms and hymns, and a customary form of benediction, and an ordinary substantial formulary for administering the sacraments. But

is it not trifling with the credulity of cursory readers to represent this as implying a prescribed form for conducting ordinary prayers in public worship?

Much use, indeed, in this controversy, has been made of that form of prayer which our Saviour taught his disciples, at their particular request, commonly called the Lord's Prayer. But we are persuaded that a candid attention to every circumstance connected with the delivery of that prayer, will convince any one that it furnishes no proof whatever of either the obligation or propriety of confining ourselves to prescribed liturgies. We believe that it was never designed by our Lord to be adopted as a permanent and precise form of prayer; but only as a general directory, intended to set forth the topics, or general matter of prayer; and our reasons for thinking so are the following. This prayer, taken alone, is not, strictly speaking, adapted to the New Testament dispensation. When it was delivered, the Old Testament economy was still in force, and the setting up of the New prayed for as future. It contains no direction for asking in the name of Christ, which was soon after solemnly enjoined, as always to be observed. It is not delivered in precisely the same words by any two of the Evangelists; and, of course, we cannot suppose the use of the *ipsissima verba* indispensably necessary. We hear no more of its use by the inspired apostles, or the primitive Christians, during the apostolic age. Though we have some of the prayers uttered during that period, this is not among them, nor do we find it adverted to in the most distant manner; and it was not, for several centuries after that age, that it was considered as proper to be introduced into the service at every season of public worship. For these reasons we are persuaded that the Lord's Prayer was never intended to be used as a strict form; and, consequently, that it affords no solid argument in favour of prescribed liturgies. And in this opinion we are fortified by many high authorities, ancient and modern. Augustine expresses the decisive opinion that Christ, in delivering this prayer to his disciples, gave it as a *model* rather than a *form*. He says expressly, that it was not intended to teach what words were to be used in prayer, but what things were to be prayed for; and understands it to be meant chiefly as a *directory* for secret and mental prayer, where words are not necessary.\* With this

\* *De Magistro, cap. I.*

opinion of Augustine Grotius concurs, as appears in his commentary on Matthew vi. 9. Augusti, after stating, as we have done already, that there is not a vestige of the use of the Lord's Prayer, in public worship, to be found in the New Testament, seems to come to the conclusion, that our Lord, in giving it, intended merely to point out to his disciples certain petitions in the Jewish breviary, which they might employ. This hypothesis, whether true or false, will serve to show the opinion of a learned German antiquary, as to the liturgical use of the Lord's Prayer.\*

We would ask the most zealous friend of liturgies, whether there is any evidence that a written form of prayer was used, in a single instance, in *any* of the cases of social or public worship recorded in the apostolic history? Had Paul a written form when he kneeled down and prayed with the elders of Ephesus, on taking leave of them, to "see their faces no more?" Did Paul and Silas make use of a *book* when, at midnight, they "prayed and sang praises to God" in the prison at Philippi? Had Paul a prescribed form, when, at Tyre, "he kneeled down on the shore and prayed," with a large body of disciples, with their wives and children, who had kindly visited him, and ministered to his wants, when he touched at that city in the course of a long voyage? Can we suppose that the body of pious people who composed the "prayer meeting" at the house of Mary the mother of John, to pray for the liberation of the apostle Peter, made use of a form in pleading for the welfare and usefulness of that eminent minister of Christ? Is it possible to suppose that the church at Ephesus was furnished with a liturgy, when Paul, in writing to Timothy, while there, thought it necessary to give him such pointed and specific directions concerning some of the topics proper to be introduced in public prayer? It is believed no one can be so credulous as to admit such a supposition. Psalms and hymns, and a form of confession on entering the church, and a formula of benediction at the close of their public service, they evidently had, as all churches now have; but nothing more.' Had any thing more been possessed and used by the primitive church, it is wholly incredible that we should find no record of it. Had the inspired apostles prepared, or directed to be prepared for the church a form of public devotion, can any man believe that the primitive Christians would not have

\* Aug. Denkw. iv. 132.

preserved it with reverence and affection, and that some very unequivocal, if not distinct account of it would have been found in the inspired history, or at least in some of the early Christian writers? That no trace of any such thing can be found, is not only evidence enough that no such form ever existed; but also that the Head of the Church did not deem it proper to provide any such form; and, of course, to say the least, did not attach so much importance to such forms as was afterwards done, when piety declined, and the devices of men flowed into the church.

With respect to the first three or four centuries after Christ, it is very common to assert, without hesitation, that liturgies were in constant use during that period. Of this, however, not even plausible evidence has ever been produced. We are very sure the affirmative can never be proved. But we are willing to undertake, what logicians have commonly considered as a hard, if not an impracticable task, viz. to prove a negative.

If prescribed forms of prayer had been in use among the early Christians, prayers would, of course, have been then *read*, as they now are, by all who use liturgies. But any expression indicative of any such fact, has never met our eye, or been to our knowledge reported, in the records of the first four or five centuries. The phrases *ἀναγιγνώσκειν εὐχάς*, or *preces legere*, or *de scripto recitare*, &c. &c., which were so common centuries afterwards, never, so far as we know, then occur. We meet with frequent mention of reading other things; reading psalms; reading portions of scripture; reading narratives of the suffering of martyrs; reading epistles from churches, or eminent individuals; but never of reading prayers. We may, therefore, confidently infer, that the thing indicated by those phrases was neither known nor practised in those times.

But further; the writers who have undertaken to give us accounts of the worship of the early Christians, make use of various forms of expression which are utterly irreconcilable with the practice of *reading prayers*. Justin Martyr tells us, in his second Apology, that as soon as the sermon was ended, the congregation all rose up, and offered their prayers to God. Standing in public prayer was the usual posture at that time, and the invariable posture on the Lord's day, on which it was accounted a sin to kneel;—kneeling being chiefly, if not entirely confined to days of fasting and humiliation. On this account it was customary for the preacher to

close his sermon with an exhortation to his hearers to stand up and pray for the divine blessing. The conclusions of Origen's sermons furnish many examples of this, of which the following is a specimen:—"Wherefore, standing up, let us beg help from God, that we may be blessed in Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen!" And again, "Wherefore, rising up, let us pray to God, that we may be made worthy of Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and dominion, for ever and ever, Amen!" And again, "Standing up, let us offer sacrifices to the Father, through Christ, who is the propitiation for our sins, to whom be glory and dominion, for ever and ever, Amen!" *Homil. 19. in Jerem.; Homil. 2. in Cantic.; Homil. 1. in Iesaiam.* And in describing the prayers thus offered up, the following account is given by some of the earliest and most respectable writers. Justin Martyr tells us, that the president, or presiding minister in the worship of the congregation, prayed (*ὅση δύναμις*) "with his utmost ability." *Apol. 2.* Origen speaks of public prayer in the same manner. "We worship," says he, "one God, and his one Son, who is his word and image, with supplications and honours, according to our ability." *Contra Celsum. Lib. viii. p. 386.* And again, "The Grecian Christians in Greek, the Romans in Latin, and every one in his own proper language, prays to God, and praises him as he is able." *Ibid. p. 402.* The same writer, speaking of the different parts of prayer to which it was proper to attend, mentions first *doxology*, or adoration, and says, he that prays must bless God (*κατὰ δύναμιν*) "according to his power or ability." *De Oratione, sect. 22.* And in the same work, in a preceding section (the 10th) he says, "But when we pray, let us not *battologise* (i. e. use vain repetitions) but theologise. But we *battologise* when we do not strictly observe ourselves, or the words of prayer which we express; when we utter those things which are filthy either to do, speak or think; which are vile, worthy of reproof, and opposed to the purity of the Lord." Tertullian, speaking on the same subject, says, "We Christians pray for all the Emperors, &c. looking up to heaven, with our hands stretched out, because guiltless; with our heads uncovered, because we are not ashamed; *denique, sine monitore, quia de pectore*; i. e. lastly, without a prompter, because from the heart." *Apol. cap. 30.* We learn also from Origen, that those who conducted the public devotions, were accustomed to pray with closed eyes, which was wholly irreconcilable

with reading a liturgy. "Closing," says he, "the eyes of the senses, but lifting up those of the mind." *Contra Celsum*. Lib. vii. p. 362.

Other incidental statements, by various early writers, go to establish the same thing. Socrates Scholasticus, the ecclesiastical historian, who lived in the beginning of the fifth century, speaking of public prayer, expresses himself in the following unequivocal and strong language. "Generally in any place whatever, and among all worshippers, there cannot be two found agreeing to use the same prayers." *Hist.* lib. v. cap. 21. Surely this could not have been alleged, if there had been public prescribed forms in use. In nearly similar language, Sozomen, the contemporary of Socrates, and who wrote the ecclesiastical history of the same period, after asserting and describing the general uniformity of the public worship of Christians at that time, remarks, that notwithstanding, "it cannot be found that the same prayers, psalms, or even the same lessons were used by all at the same time." *Hist.* lib. vii. cap. 19. Augustine, in like manner, who was contemporary with Sozomen, speaking on the same subject, says, "there is freedom to use different words, provided the same things are mentioned in prayer." *Epist.* 121. And to show that the prayers usually offered up in his day were left to the discretion of each officiating minister, he speaks of some "who were guilty of barbarisms and solecisms in their prayers," and cautions those to whom he wrote against being offended at such expressions, inasmuch as God does not so much regard the language employed, as the state of the heart." *De Catechiz. Rudib.* cap. 9.

The general fact, that it was left to every bishop or pastor in the first ages of the church, to conduct the public devotions of his congregation as he pleased, appears evident from a great variety and abundance of testimony. A single citation from Augustine will be sufficient to establish the fact. That father, having occasion to show that numbers of his brethren in the ministry, had many things in their public prayers, and especially in the administration of the Lord's Supper, which were crude, weak, and contrary to soundness in the faith, assigns this reason for the fact. "Many light upon prayers," says he, "which are composed by ignorant babblers, and through the simplicity of their ignorance, having no proper discernment, they make use of them, supposing them to be good." *De Baptismo contra Donat.* lib. vi. cap. 25. How could these things possibly have happened, if the church at

that time had been in the use of public prescribed liturgies? And the remedy which Augustine and his contemporaries suggest for this evil, is quite as decisive in its bearing on this subject as the evil itself. The remedy was, for the weaker and more illiterate pastors to consult their more wise and learned neighbouring pastors, who might discern and point out any improprieties in their prayers. This whole matter will be better understood if we advert, for a moment, to the well-established fact, that as early as the age of Augustine, many men had crept into the sacred office, and some had even been made bishops, who were unable to write their own names, and, probably, even to read the writing of others. No wonder that such ecclesiastics were unable to conduct the public devotions of their respective congregations in a decent manner; and therefore resorted to their more capable neighbours to patch up prayers for them, and probably to read over these prayers repeatedly in their hearing, that they might be impressed upon their memories, and thus the way be prepared for reciting them, not from written papers, (which many of these ministers were unable to read) but from memory, in the public assembly. With respect to the use of liturgies in the primitive church, the reader may be pleased to see the judgment of the learned German writer whom we have already quoted. "That such an assertion should have found defenders at an earlier period, when historical criticism was so little practised, is not to be wondered at; but that modern Catholic writers should have ventured to repeat it, is certainly remarkable. The best doctors of that church—such as Bona, Bellarmin, Baronius, Le Nourry, Natalis Alexander, Tillemont, Du Pin, Muratori, Renaudot, Assemani, &c.—have proved the opinion to be utterly untenable; and yet such is the force of prejudice, and such the zeal for favourite hypotheses, that they will not yield even to the clearest demonstrations of an impartial criticism."\*

And even when liturgies were brought into general and established use, there was no uniformity, even among the churches of the same state or kingdom. The church at large neither provided nor prescribed forms of prayer. Nor did even any large section of the visible church catholic make any such provision. Every bishop, in his own diocese, adopted what prayers he pleased, and even indulged to any extent his taste for variety. This undoubted fact is itself

\* Augusti, Denkw. iv. 206.

decisive proof that liturgies were not of apostolic origin. For, as we before observed, if any thing of this kind had been known as transmitted from inspired or even primitive men, it would, doubtless, have been received and preserved with peculiar veneration. But nothing of the kind appears. Instead of this, as the practice of using forms of prayer gradually crept in, as piety declined, so the circumstances attending their introduction and prevalence were precisely such as might have been expected. They were adopted, not by the church, but by each pastor who felt the need of them, or was inclined to make use of them; and, by and by, when prelacy came in, each bishop within his own diocese took such order in reference to this subject as his character and inclination might dictate. This led, of course, to almost endless diversity. Accordingly it is a notorious fact, that when the Reformation commenced in England, the established Romish Church in that country had no single uniform liturgy for the whole kingdom. There seems to have been a different one for the diocese of every bishop. And, accordingly, when, in the second year of king Edward's reign, the principal ecclesiastical dignitaries of the kingdom were directed to digest and report one uniform plan for the public service of the church, they collated and compared the five Romish missals of the several dioceses of Sarum, York, Hereford, Bangor, and Lincoln, and out of these Popish forms constructed their Book of Common Prayer. It was afterwards, in consequence of the friendly remarks of Calvin and Knox, considerably modified, and some of its more gross Popish features thrown out. This is expressly attested by Heylin, in his *History of Presbyterianism*: by Dr. Nichols, in the Preface to his *Commentary on the Book of Common Prayer*; and by Fox, in his *Acts and Monuments*.\*

The result, then, is, that, notwithstanding all that is alleged to the contrary, liturgies were unknown in the primitive church; that as piety and learning declined, the clergy began to need external aids for conducting the public devotions of their congregations; that this whole matter, however, continued, for several centuries, to be managed by each pas-

\* In a disputation with Latimer, after the accession of queen Mary, the prolocutor, Dr. Weston, thus complained of Knox's influence—"A *runnagate Scot* did take away the adoration or worshipping of Christ in the Sacrament, by whose procurement that heresy was put into the last communion book; so much prevailed that one man's authority at that time." *M'Crie's Life of Knox*, ii. 83.

tor for himself; that in the exercise of this individual discretion, frequent blunders occurred, through the gross ignorance of the clergy; and that liturgies did not obtain general prevalence until the church had sunk into a state of darkness and corruption, which all Protestants allow to have been deplorable.

The *Libellus Officialis*, mentioned in the 25th canon of the Council of Toledo, A. D. 633, seems to have been rather a brief directory for the worship of God, than a formal or complete liturgy; and some which claim to be far older want the characteristics of a prescribed liturgy, and seem to be rather mere collections made by private individuals. The *libellus officialis* was a document given to every presbyter, within a certain district, at his ordination, to instruct him how to administer the sacraments, lest through ignorance of his duty in reference to those divine institutions, he should offend Christ. "Quando presbyteri in parochiis ordinantur, libellum officialem a suo sacerdote accipiunt, ut ad ecclesias sibi deputatas instructi accedant, ne per ignorantiam etiam in ipsis divinis sacramentis Christum offendant."

With respect to the alleged liturgies of St. Mark, St. James, and that of Alexander, all enlightened Protestants, as we believe, agree that they are forgeries; and with regard to the liturgies attributed to Chrysostom, Basil, &c., bishop White, an English prelate, who lived in the early part of the 17th century, delivers the following opinion. "The liturgies," says he, "fathered upon St. Basil and St. Chrysostom, have a known mother (to wit, the late Roman church); but there is (besides many other just exceptions) so great dissimilitude between the supposed fathers of the children, that they rather argue the dishonest dealings of their mother, than serve as lawful witnesses of that which the adversary intended to prove by them."\* We have only to add, as an instructive fact, that the occidental and oriental churches have, and, so far as we know, always have had, liturgies wholly independent and unlike; that each claims the honour of a genuine tradition from the apostolic age; that the ancient liturgies of each have been denounced, by some of its own members, as mere forgeries; and that the best authenticated bear internal marks of being mere collections, not authoritative formularies.†

\* Tracts against Fisher, the Jesuit, p. 377.

† Aug. Denkw. iv. pp. 256—350.

In making these extended remarks on the subject of liturgies, we are desirous of not being misunderstood. We by no means think the use of prescribed forms of prayer unlawful. There are multitudes of very excellent people, who think them convenient, attractive and edifying. With these we find no fault. Thousands, we question not, through the medium of precomposed forms, have been built up in faith and holiness unto salvation. We have not the smallest desire either to disturb the devotions, or to ridicule the preferences of such of our fellow Christians. If any serious persons find the use of forms better adapted to promote their spiritual benefit, than joining in extemporaneous prayer, they would be neither wise, nor faithful to their own souls, were they to neglect the use of them. But when any of this class contend that the church is prohibited by her Master from praying otherwise than by forms; that it is criminal to attempt to join in any other; and that all possible excellence is concentrated in their own forms: especially when they venture to assume, with confidence, the historical argument, as clearly in their favour; when they confidently assert that prescribed forms of prayer were used in the apostolic church; that their use in the church has been uniformly established thence downwards; and that it is now the duty of all worshipping assemblies to confine themselves to such forms; we may surely be pardoned for, at least, putting in our demurrer. We are very certain that no one of these positions can be sustained. We have no disposition to assail the innocent preferences or practices of our fellow Christians; but we cannot regard it as any part of Christian fidelity, to hear others ridicule and revile that which is equally sustained by the simplicity of apostolical practice, and the undoubted example of the earliest and purest ages of the church, without putting in a plea in its favour.

We have only one more passage belonging to the class under review, on which we shall offer a passing remark. It is that which occurs in chapter iv. section 197, and is in these words.

“The communion was received sometimes standing, sometimes kneeling, but *never sitting*; at least the two former are the *only postures ever mentioned*.”

Now, although Mr. Henry does not directly assert, that the kneeling posture in receiving the communion, was adopted, either in the apostolic age, or in the first few centuries succeeding it; yet the reader is left to suppose that this

meaning was intended to be conveyed. This is the most natural construction; and probably nineteen readers out of twenty will take for granted that such was the fact, and, of course, pronounce the posture of sitting at the communion table to be unsupported by either scripture or uninspired history. It is true, had the abridger given us the simple statement of Bingham, with his authorities appended, this illusion would be instantly dispelled. It would be seen at a glance that that learned and laborious antiquary had not a shred of testimony to produce that kneeling at the communion was ever practised for more than a thousand years after Christ. He acknowledges that this posture was never employed at the communion when administered on the Lord's day, since all kneeling on that day was expressly interdicted for a number of centuries after Christ. He infers, however, without the slightest authority to sustain him, that, as kneeling was allowed and even prescribed, at seasons of fasting and humiliation, therefore, kneeling at the communion was practised on such days. But this is mere inferential conjecture. He cannot find a single sentence in all antiquity to support him. It is truly amusing to see how he deludes himself, as well as his readers, with circuitous suppositions instead of direct and solid proof.

It is granted, on all hands, that the posture in which the Lord's Supper was first administered by the Saviour himself was that in which it was customary to receive ordinary meals. It is not known that any one denies or doubts this. The Evangelists are too explicit in their statement of the fact, to admit of doubt. But if the Saviour himself chose this posture, as most agreeable to his will, and to the nature of the feast, may we not, on the whole, conclude that it is wisest and best to assume that posture at the table of the Lord which we assume in the reception of our ordinary food? Is not the Lord's supper a feast of love and joy? In what nation is it thought suitable to kneel at feasts? Where do men eat and drink upon their knees? The first passover, we know, was eaten standing. But after the people of God were settled in their own land, it was always eaten in the posture of ordinary feasts; but never kneeling.

The truth is, that kneeling at the communion was never known or thought of until Transubstantiation arose in the twelfth or thirteenth century. When men began to believe that the sacramental elements were really transmuted into the body and blood of the Redeemer, there was some colour

of apology for kneeling and adoring them. But when this error was abandoned, that which had grown out of it ought to have been abandoned also. And, accordingly it is well known that a large body of the most pious and learned divines of the church of England, at the period of the Reformation, were earnestly desirous of laying aside this posture, as one that savoured of the Popish error alluded to; but they were overruled by the queen and the court clergy, who chose to retain it; and it has accordingly ever since made a part of the ritual of that church. When the committee of bishops and other divines appointed to revise the liturgy of king Edward brought in their report, it was left indifferent in that report whether the eucharist should be received kneeling or standing. The queen, however, drew her pen over the clause which gave this option, and made the kneeling posture obligatory, greatly to the grief of some of the very best men at that day in the church. Archbishop Grindal and bishop Horn wrote to Zurich, that they by no means approved of, but merely suffered kneeling at the eucharist, signing with the cross in baptism, with some other ceremonies, hoping that they would be able speedily to obtain their abrogation.\*

We have dwelt so long on our first position, viz. that the volume before us is not, in all cases, a fair and adequate exhibition of Bingham's work—that we have left ourselves but little room for enlarging on the second point which we proposed to illustrate and exemplify, viz. that the original work here abridged cannot, in all cases, be relied upon as a safe and impartial guide on the subjects of which it treats.

And in this predicament, we think, is a large portion of what he tells us concerning the establishment of prelacy in the early church. We are persuaded not only that he presses into his service testimony which by no means bears him out in his conclusions; but that a number of his statements go to establish the very opposite to that which he maintains. Thus he appears to consider the fact, that several of the early writers distinguished between bishops, presbyters (or elders) and deacons, as deciding that the bishops of whom they speak were prelates; without once adverting to the undoubted fact, that if Presbyterians were about to speak of the fixed officers in their churches, they would use precisely the same language. He quotes the representations of Ignatius and others, without appearing to know that Presbyterians, if they em-

\* Burnet, ii. 310, 314.

ployed the Greek language as Ignatius did, would be obliged to use the very same terms, unless they would resort to a most inconvenient circumlocution. In every Presbyterian church duly organized and officered, there is a bishop, a bench of presbyters or elders, and a body of deacons. But the great question is, what are the respective functions of these officers? A Presbyterian bishop is the pastor of a single church. An Episcopal bishop is the superintendent of a large number of churches. Now will any one who has the least acquaintance with antiquity, venture to affirm that the early writers declare in favour of the latter rather than the former? Mr. Bingham does so, and Mr. Henry follows in his track: yet manifestly in the face of the most authentic testimony for the first three hundred years. It is perfectly clear, from the concurrent voice of the early writers, that in every worshipping assembly a bishop was expected to be present and preside; that in his parish there was to be but one communion table; that he was the only stated preacher in his congregation; that he was the only person officially authorized to baptize, to administer the Lord's supper, and to direct the deacons as to the poor persons of his charge, who were to be relieved by the church's funds. Does this statement correspond best with the character and duties of a parochial bishop, or of a diocesan bishop? Surely no one who reflects a moment can hesitate as to the proper answer to this question. The truth is, none but a Presbyterian or parochial bishop could possibly have discharged the duties represented, by these early writers, as always connected with the office. Were there no other facts on record, these would be abundantly sufficient to discredit the claims of prelacy.

Again; all that Mr. Bingham tells us at large, and Mr. Henry in a more abridged form, of the *Chorepiscopi*, or country bishops, instead of fortifying the Episcopal claim, evidently tends to weaken and subvert it. It will be recollected that the ground which Presbyterians assume is this—that, in the apostolic church, and for two or three centuries afterwards, the title of *bishop* designated the pastor of a single church; that this simple parochial minister was invested with every grade of ecclesiastical authority, from the ordination of his fellows, to the lowest official function; that this bishop, or pastor, was associated in office with a bench of presbyters or elders, who, with him at their head, conducted the government and discipline of each church, and also, with a body of deacons, who conducted the distribution

of the church's charity, and generally its pecuniary concerns; that this state of things continued through the greater part of three hundred years, after which it was gradually altered; that, by little and little, the bishops, when piety declined, became filled with a spirit of ambition and encroachment; that the bishops of the larger cities and towns, who had most wealth and influence, began this encroachment, claiming the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of all the churches in their immediate vicinity. We believe that the poorer country parishes retained the primitive form of government much longer than those of the great cities, and were nearly, if not quite a century longer in receiving the new form of Episcopacy. The ministers of these country churches were called *Chorepiscopi*, or country bishops. They continued to exercise the full powers of parochial bishops, on the primitive plan, a considerable time after the pastors within and near the great cities had become subject to diocesans. Until, as prelacy gradually became more widely extended, and more firmly established, it was resolved that when these country bishops died, no more successors to them should be appointed, but the whole power thrown into the hands of the city bishops. This plan was consummated A. D. 347, by the council of Sardis, which passed a decree to suppress the *Chorepiscopi* entirely. The reason given by the council for this decree is remarkable: *Ne vilescat nomen episcopi*, "lest the title of bishop should become too cheap." From that time the country bishops, though not universally discontinued, began to disappear, and not long afterwards generally ceased to exist.

Now Mr. Bingham tells us much about these country bishops, and Mr. Henry also mentions them particularly: but, most unfortunately for the cause of prelacy, all the leading facts which they state respecting this class of officers, fall in exactly with the Presbyterian theory, and can scarcely be made to accord with the principle of prelacy. Once, it is acknowledged, they were allowed to ordain, and to perform other offices now confined by Episcopalians to prelates; but these powers were gradually diminished, and finally withdrawn. These circumstances, in our judgment, plainly prove that diocesan Episcopacy was an innovation. If it had been the apostolical model, and especially if it had been deemed the important, fundamental matter that prelatists suppose it to be, then those churches which were most remote from worldly influence, and felt the greatest love for primitive

simplicity, would, no doubt, have been found adhering to prelacy with peculiar zeal. Instead of this, the more we examine the records of antiquity, the more clearly we perceive that prelatical encroachments slowly and with difficulty found their way among plain country congregations; but were readily adopted in great cities, and among the more wealthy clergy. This circumstance affords no small evidence that ministerial parity was both the doctrine and practice of the primitive church, and that Episcopacy, in the modern sense of the word, was gradually introduced by the progress of human ambition.

Further still; the accounts which Mr. Bingham and Mr. Henry give of the difference between bishops and presbyters in the early ages, fully satisfy us that Episcopacy, in the prelatical sense of that term, is an innovation. They tell us, and they tell us truly, that, during the first three hundred years, presbyters, or the *second order of clergy*, as they call them, were not invested with the power, as an ordinary and essential function of their office, of preaching, baptizing, and administering the eucharist; that these were all appropriated to the bishop's office, and were not performed by presbyters, unless in the bishop's absence, or in virtue of his special permission. These facts are stated at much length by Bingham in the second book of his *Antiquities*, and in the third and nineteenth chapters of that book; but much less distinctly and particularly by Mr. Henry.

Now the construction which we put upon these statements appears to us inevitable, viz. that the mass of the presbyters or elders, during the times here spoken of, were a very different class of officers from those commonly styled "priests" in the papacy afterwards, and in more modern prelatical churches. The circumstance that preaching, baptizing, and administering the eucharist were among the prerogatives of the ancient bishop; that they made no part of the ordinary functions of presbyters; nay, that, in ordinary cases, they were not allowed to perform them, but in virtue of a special permission from the bishop in each case, which is evidently the import of the whole account, unless we make nonsense of it; plainly shows that in those days both the bishops and presbyters were by no means the same sort of functionaries with those who, in Episcopal churches, bear the same name now. It is vain to say, that presbyters in the Protestant Episcopal Church at the present day, cannot preach, or perform any of the ecclesiastical acts above referred to, without

the bishop's permission. This is an idle evasion. The fact is, as every one knows, that their original ordination as presbyters, or "priests," as they are called, conveys the full power to preach, administer sacraments, and perform every duty of the ordinary parochial ministration, statedly, and without any further let or impediment. Who would not think it ridiculous to say now, of presbyters in that church, after their ordination, that they could preach and baptize only by permission of the bishop? The power of doing so makes an essential part of their office, in all cases in which it would be orderly for a Presbyterian minister to perform those acts. The description then, in those early writers, is that of Presbyterian churches, whose parochial bishops or pastors had the sole charge of preaching, and administering sealing ordinances; whose elders were chiefly employed in ruling, and who never performed, any part of the pastors' or bishops' duties, but by their special permission, or particular request. It is not probable, indeed, that all the presbyters in those days were of the class of mere rulers; but that even those of them who had the same ordination with pastors, yet for the sake of order, acted only as the assistants of the pastors, and neither preached nor administered sealing ordinances, excepting, as we have just stated, at the request of those who were invested with pastoral charges, and under whose direction they habitually acted. Similar cases have often occurred in Presbyterian churches, especially among foreign Presbyterians. It is not an uncommon thing there to see a minister ordained and installed as an assistant to an aged pastor, with the right of "succession to the pastoral charge," when the old pastor shall die or resign: in the meanwhile every leading public function to be under the direction of the pastor. So in some Episcopal churches, a curate, though of the same ecclesiastical order with his rector, is subject to his control and direction in all official acts.

With respect to the representation given in this volume of the rite of Confirmation, we think it adapted in no small degree to mislead. In the apostolic church there was no such rite, as that which, under this name, has been long established among papists as a sacrament, and adopted in some Protestant churches as a solemnity in their view, if not commanded, yet both expressive and edifying. Toward the close of the *second* century, and the beginning of the *third*, among several superstitious additions to the rite of baptism which had crept into the church—such as *exorcising* the infant, to

drive away the evil spirit; putting a mixture of milk and honey into his mouth; anointing him with spittle and with oil, in the form of a cross; it became customary to lay on hands, for the purpose of imparting the gifts of the Holy Spirit. This laying on of hands, however, was always done immediately after the application of water, and always by the same minister who performed the baptism. Of course, every one who was authorized to baptize, was also considered as authorized to lay hands upon the baptized individual. As this was a mere human invention, so it took the course which human inventions are apt to take. It was modified as the pride and the selfishness of ecclesiastics prompted. When prelacy arose, it became customary to reserve this solemn imposition of hands to prelates, as a part of their official prerogative. As soon as convenient after baptism, the infant was presented to the bishop, to receive from him the imposition of hands, for conveying the gift of the Holy Spirit. In process of time, another modification of the rite was introduced. As bishop's dioceses became larger, and the difficulty of bringing every infant to him immediately on its baptism increased, the imposition of his hands was postponed for a number of years, according to circumstances, and sometimes till adult age. Then, when the bishop visited the several churches within his diocese, the young person or adult was presented to him with great formality, to receive his peculiar benediction. Among many proofs that this was not the original nature or form of the rite, besides much direct testimony to that amount, is the notorious fact, that throughout the whole Greek church, for a number of centuries, and at the present time, the laying on of hands is administered, for the most part, in close connection with baptism, and is dispensed by any priest who is empowered to baptize, as was done throughout Christendom in the third and fourth centuries, before the Greek church was separated from the Latin. In like manner, in the Lutheran and other German churches, where a sort of confirmation is retained, although some of them have ecclesiastical *superintendents*, or *seniors*, the act of confirming is not reserved to them, but is performed by each pastor for the children of his parochial charge. Those who wish for further information on this subject will find it in the learned treatise of the celebrated John Daille, *De Cultibus Religiosis Latinorum*. pp. 94—283.

We shall trouble our readers with only one remark more;

and that will be with respect to what is said in pages 267 and 268, in regard to the festival of *Christmas*, or the Nativity. Here again, as in former instances, we think some of the statements adapted to deceive the unwary reader.

From the language employed on this subject, the cursory reader will, undoubtedly, take for granted that the festival styled Christmas was sacredly observed from the time of the apostles. Now the fact is, there is every reason to believe that it was unknown in the church during the first three hundred years. When Origen, about the middle of the third century, professed to give a list of the fasts and festivals which were observed in his day, he made no mention of Christmas. From this fact, Sir Peter King, the Lord Chancellor of England, in his "Inquiry into the Constitution and Worship of the Primitive Church," &c. infers that no such festival was then observed; and adds, "It seems improbable that they should celebrate Christ's nativity, when they disagreed about the month and the day when Christ was born." Every month of the year has been assigned by different portions and writers of the Christian church as the time of our Lord's nativity; and the final location of this, as well as other holy days in the ecclesiastical calendar, was adjusted, as Sir Isaac Newton assures us, rather upon astronomical and mathematical principles, than on any solid calculations of history. He speaks on the subject in the following manner: "The times of the birth and passion of Christ, with such like niceties, being not material to religion, were little regarded by Christians of the first age. They who began to celebrate them, placed them in the cardinal periods of the year; as the annunciation of the Virgin Mary on the 25th of March, which, when Julius Caesar corrected the calendar, was the vernal equinox; the feast of John the Baptist on the 24th of June, which was the summer solstice; the feast of St. Michael on the 29th of September, which was the autumnal equinox; and the birth of Christ on the winter solstice, December 25th; with the feasts of St. Stephen, St. John, and the Innocents as near to it as they could place them. And because the solstice in time removed from the 25th of December to the 24th, the 23d, the 22d, and so on backwards; hence some in the following centuries placed the birth of Christ on December 23d, and at length on December 20th; and, for the same reason, they seem to have set the feast of St. Thomas on December 21st, and that of St. Matthew on September 21st. So also at the entrance of the sun into all the signs in

the Julian calendar, they placed the days of other saints; as the conversion of Paul on January 25th, when the sun entered Aquarius; St. Matthias on February 25th, when he entered Pisces; St. Mark on April 25th, when he entered Taurus; Corpus Christi on May 26th, when he entered Gemini; St. James on July 25th, when he entered Cancer; St. Bartholomew on August 24th, when he entered Virgo; Simon and Jude on October 28th, when he entered Scorpio; and if there were any other remarkable days in the Julian calendar, they placed the saints upon them; as St. Barnabas on June 11th, where Ovid seems to place the feast of Vesta, and Fortuna, and the goddess Matuta; and St. Philip and James on the first of May, a day dedicated both to the Bona Dea, or Magna Mater, and to the goddess Flora, and still celebrated with her rites. All which shows that these days were fixed in the first Christian calendars by mathematicians at pleasure, *without any ground in tradition*; and that the Christians afterwards took up with what they found in the calendars.”\*

And when this festival *was* introduced, there is good evidence, that it was adopted as a substitute for, and to call off the attention of the people from, a Pagan festival, which had been long celebrated about the same time in December; when the Pagan temples were always lighted up with candles, and hung round with a profusion of evergreen boughs. And for the purpose of reconciling the populace to the Christian festival which took the place of the heathen anniversary, the candles and the green boughs were introduced into the Christian churches; and the latter remain in Protestant churches, as a memorial of the conformity, to the present day.

But we hasten to close an article already unduly protracted. Our readers will be able to form a judgment of the general character of the volume before us from what has been said. Its mechanical execution is sightly and in good taste. It is printed neatly and, we believe, correctly, Greek always excepted, with respect to which the author or his printer has ventured on “an independent exercise of judgment” with a little too much frequency. As the abridger avows, in his preface, that the plan was undertaken with the purpose of promoting the interests of the Protestant Episcopal church; so, in this view, it is remarkably adapted *ad captandum*. We do not know that Mr. Henry ought to be seriously inculpated for this.

\* Sir Isaac Newton on Daniel and the Apocalypse, ch. 11.

He followed Bingham with confidence. His plan precluded the possibility of so displaying, in detail, the authorities of his original, as to enable his readers to judge of their deficiency. And he had, undoubtedly, a right both to his plan and to his convictions of truth and duty. To follow him from page to page, and give warning against all the vulnerable points in his statements, would be to write a volume larger than that which we review. We can, therefore, only put our readers on their guard against inadequate and partial representations; and express our regret that the whole work of Bingham, and the rich and impartial pages of Augusti, cannot be spread out before every candid inquirer.

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ART. II.—*Embassy to the Eastern Courts of Cochin China, Siam, and Muscat: in the U. S. Sloop-of-War Peacock, David Geisinger, Commander, during the Years 1832-3-4.* By Edmund Roberts. New York: Harper and Brothers. 1837. 8vo. pp. 432.

Books of voyages and travels are no longer sought for the mere purpose of amusement. Science and Commerce are busy in exploring every nook and corner of the earth, in quest of their respective prizes, and Christian benevolence should be equally active in promoting inquiry into every avenue for the truth of the gospel. The day is coming, we doubt not, when the marine of Christian powers will be subsidiary to the cause of the Redeemer, and when it will not be considered more reasonable to fit out a vessel for the East India trade, than to send a cargo of bibles to Siam or Japan. But until that better day shall dawn, when Christian fleets, bringing the sons of Zion from far, their silver and their gold with them, shall be descried upon the ocean, flying as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows, we must be content to follow in the path opened by the laborious and daring children of this world, who, in their own way, are wiser than the children of light. Geography is becoming more and more a Christian science. It is the reconnoissance of the great field of evangelical warfare. Every new discovery gives a hint to the missionary and the church. Already our missionaries are contributing more to the exact knowledge of remote regions than all the merchants, seamen, and savans of the