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Biography.

SKETCH OF THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF JOHN CALVIN,

Taken from the *Religious Monitor*, with the addition of several extracts of a communication received from a learned and ingenious Correspondent.

Continued from page 345.

"THE time at length arrived," says Beza, "when the Lord was to shew favour to the church at Geneva." The syndics who had given authority and effect, as well as secretly instigated, to the decree of banishment, were removed from the government either by death or by exile. The people, also, who had never wholly forgotten their injured pastors, afraid of continuing exposed to the infamy to which their unchristian conduct subjected them among their Protestant brethren, and, perhaps, expecting to derive even political advantages from the presence and counsels of Calvin, began to feel their loss, and earnestly solicited his return. This illustrious exile had resolved to live and die at Strasburg; and, therefore, at first refused the invitation of the Senate and people; not from any diminution of his affection to them, but from aver-

sion to political controversies and tumultuous assemblies, and from a persuasion of his being eminently useful to the church at Strasburg. Their solicitations, however, becoming daily more unanimous and urgent, Calvin feared to resist what might be a call from God; and having stipulated for the recal of his colleague Viret, returned to Geneva on the 13th September, 1541, and was cordially received by every order of the citizens. Restored to his importunate people, and remembering the fatal effects of their former irregularities, he immediately established a form of discipline, and an ecclesiastical consistory, with power to censure the disorderly, the vicious, and the profane, and to punish them if incorrigible or contumacious, even to the length of excommunication and imprisonment. The people professed to submit to this new arrangement,

will you sit down, and write a prayer to agree with the sentiments you have this day been preaching; will you commit it to memory, go into your closet, and repeat it to God? The young man promised to do it. Accordingly, when he went home, he wrote the prayer, committed it to memory, went into his closet, and attempted to repeat it, but found, through the power of conscience, that he could not.

A few years afterwards he came again to Mr. W. Mr. W. soon recollected him and received him very cordially. The young gentleman offered to preach for him; Mr. W. at last reluctantly consented. Accordingly the young gentleman went

into the pulpit, and to the great astonishment of Mr. W. delivered a sound, sensible, *calvinistic* sermon. When the service was over, Mr. W. asked him why he had altered his sentiments; the young gentleman asked *him*, if he did not recollect a favour he had, a few years ago, requested of him; and being answered in the affirmative, he related the circumstances, and added, that, being greatly agitated as well as surprised, he had carefully examined his sentiments, and had reasoned thus with himself: Can it be proper for me to *preach* to a congregation what I cannot offer up in *prayer* to God?

Review of New Publications.

A Sermon, preached July 22, 1807, at the funeral of the Rev. Alexander Macwhorter, D. D. senior pastor of the Presbyterian church in Newark, New Jersey. By Edward D. Griffin, A. M. surviving pastor of said church. 8vo. pp. 52. New York. S. Gould. 1807.

If an able and faithful gospel minister be one of the most important characters in our world, then the death of such an one is a very solemn event, in the estimation of every thinking man, and a judicious history of his life is a valuable record. Such was Dr. Macwhorter, whose decease gave occasion to this discourse. *He was indeed a burning and a shining light.* He filled a large space in the Presbyterian church, for many years. And beyond the limits of that church, he was known, and revered, and his death lamented.

Being no strangers to the character of this apostolic man, and knowing also the high reputation of his surviving colleague and eulogist, we took up this discourse with no common expectations: And we are happy in being able to say that these expectations have been fully answered.

The text on which it is founded is Psa. cxii. 6. *The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.* After an appropriate introduction, in which brevity and feeling are remarkably united, Mr. Griffin proceeds to shew that the righteous "shall be long

remembered with affection and reverence on earth;" and that they "shall be had in everlasting remembrance before God, and the inhabitants of heaven." These positions are illustrated in a neat, perspicuous and striking manner. If there be a fault in this part of the discourse, it is, that neither of these principal heads is sufficiently expanded. Such a preacher had no reason to be afraid of fatiguing his hearers, by a more full discussion of subjects, so rich and interesting.

After devoting a little more than three pages to the general doctrine of the text, Mr. G. proceeds to "sketch the outlines of the history and character" of the venerable deceased. The execution of this portion of the discourse is unusually happy. It is particular, without being tedious; and every where sober and discriminating, without being vapid. It would be happy for the literary and ecclesiastical historian, if every distinguished man had found an equally faithful, able, and interesting biographer. We forbear to lay any part of this sketch before our readers, at present, because it is our intention in a future number to present an abridgment of the whole. We cannot omit, however, to transcribe a single paragraph, as an example of that tender, poetic simplicity, which we believe often distinguishes the compositions of this gentleman.

"My reverend father lived to a good old age. As I have heard him say, *he lived to see two worlds die*. He trod the path of life with those who have long since gone to rest. Your fathers knew him; and he helped to fit those for heaven whose aged dust now sleeps in that hallowed

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ground. He baptised most of you, and will shortly meet those faces at the bar of God, which he covered with the sacramental water. When I have heard him talk of the events of other times, and the well known characters with whom he acted on the public stage, before I had existence, and saw him alone amidst a younger race, I have often contemplated him as a venerable oak, which once stood in the midst of the forest:—the ruthless axe of time has laid his companions low; and now he stands alone on the open plain, and every withered leaf trembles in the blast. That trunk which seventy winters had in vain assailed, must fall at last, like the companions of his youth. He *has fallen*, and is gathered to his fathers! He no longer stands alone in the open plain; he is surrounded once more by the companions of his youth, and stands, we trust, transplanted and renewed among the trees in the paradise of God."

The addresses, to the surviving relatives of the deceased, and to the afflicted congregation over which he had so long presided, close this discourse. These, also, and especially the latter, are excellent. We present the following passage as a specimen:

"Yes, while his body lies insensible before you; his soul still lives in a conscious state. He loved you much; and in the abodes of bliss will, I doubt not, often think of you. Perhaps he may sometimes pass this way, to mark how you improve the instructions which he left among you, and whether you are coming after him to glory. I have a strong persuasion that his former family and flock will not be wholly excluded from his present cares. Perhaps he will sometimes visit our *assemblies*, to hear those truths repeated which he so often preached, and to observe their effects on you. Perhaps he may *now* be present! Sainted Spirit! hast thou come to witness our griefs? Do I see thee hovering over our assembly? O! if thou wouldst

speak to us now, thy doctrines would no longer be unheeded!—Alas! he speaks no more! His ministry among us is then forever closed, and sealed up to the judgment of the great day. Nothing can be added to it, or taken from it. He has done what he had to do, and has returned to Him that sent him.—But his ministry has not done with us. Think not, that, except tears and tender remembrance, you have nothing more to do with your deceased pastor. As the Lord liveth, you shall meet him again. When the dissolving heavens shall open, and disclose the Son of Man, coming in clouds to judge the world, your father, we trust, will be in his glorious train. And when the convulsions of that day shall burst the dormitories of a thousand generations, his sleeping body will rise! Then, he who baptised you, he who catechised you, he who warned and wept over you, shall stand with you in judgment. Then, all the scenes which have passed between you and him shall be examined, and an account taken how you improved his ministry in general, and each sermon in particular. Every hour that you sat under the sound of his voice, shall be found to have been big with life or death. The effects of improving or resisting his ministry, shall be felt through every hour and moment of eternity!—Oh! did you consider this while your minister lived? Did you consider this while his agitated soul was pleading over you? Did you consider this while you were bearing his clay-cold body to the house of God? Did you consider, that you were attending one who must be a witness, either for or against you, in the day that shall decide the destinies of all men, and whose ministry must either help you to heaven, or sink you deeper in hell? I see some of you tremble. But the half has not been told you. If a review of his ministry be so overwhelming at present, what will it be in the day of judgment! *If in the land of peace, wherein you trust, it has wearied you, then how will you do in the swelling of Jordan?*

On the whole we consider this sermon as doing equal honour

to the departed saint, and to the living preacher. Vigour of mind, taste, and piety appear in every page. We sincerely rejoice that the important station so long held by Dr. Macwhorter, is so ably and honourably filled.

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An Essay on the Life of GEORGE WASHINGTON, Commander in Chief of the American Army, through the Revolutionary War; and the first President of the United States. By AARON BANCROFT, A. A. S. Pastor of a Congregational church in Worcester. Worcester, Thomas & Sturtevant, 8vo. pp. 552. 1807.

THIS publication “originated in the author’s wish to place within reach of the great body of his countrymen, an authentic biography of General WASHINGTON.” When we consider of what importance it is, that the example of this illustrious man be presented to the view of American citizens of every class, in the present and in every future age, and at the same time, how extensive is the plan, and how costly are the volumes, of the *Life of Washington* by Judge Marshall, we must allow this desire, and the *Essay* to which it has given rise, to be highly commendable. The plan of the work is, “to notice no individual or event, further than was necessary to display the principal character.” The author professes to offer but little original matter. “The few facts, which have not before been published, were received immediately from confidential friends of General