

THE
PRINCETON REVIEW.

JULY, 1856.

No. III.

- ART. I.—1. *Synopsis Evangelica. Ex quatuor Evangeliiis ordine chronologico concinnavit, prætexto brevi commentario illustravit, ad antiquos testes appposito apparatu critico recensuit Constantinus Tischendorf.* Lipsiæ, 1851. 8vo.
2. *Synopsis Evangeliorum Matthæi, Marci, Lucæ, cum locis qui supersunt parallelis litterarum et traditionum evangelicarum Irenæo antiquiorum. Ad Griesbachii Ordinem concinnavit, prolegomena, selectam Scripturæ varietatem, notas, indices adjecit Rudolphus Anger, Phil. et Theol. Doctor, utriusque in Acad. Lips. Professor, etc.* Lipsiæ, 1852. 8vo.
3. *A new Greek Harmony of the Four Gospels, comprising a Synopsis and a Diatessaron, together with an Introductory Treatise, and numerous tables, indexes, and diagrams, supplying the necessary proofs and explanations.* By William Stroud, M. D. London, 1853. 4to.
4. *A New Harmony and Exposition of the Gospels, consisting of a parallel and combined arrangement on a new plan, &c.* By James Strong, A. M. New York, 1852. 8vo.
5. *A Harmony of the Gospels in the Greek of the Received Text, on the plan of the author's English Harmony, with the most important various readings, &c.* By James Strong, A. M. 1854. 12mo.
6. *The Four Witnesses: being a Harmony of the Gospels on a new principle.* By Dr. Isaac Da Costa, of Amsterdam. Translated by David Dundas Scott, Esq. New York, 1855. 8vo.

THERE is something strange in the unwearied constancy with which the Church, in every age, has wrought at the great

ing practice, and especially this vast multiplication of words, without the addition of a single new idea, we appeal not to Scripture or sectarian distinctions, but to taste and common sense. Many a reader, we have no doubt, though accustomed and attached to such formalities in other cases, will consider their use here a work of supererogation, and perhaps be ready to say:

“Is it a custom?—Ay, marry, is it.
 But to my mind, though I am native here
 And to the manner born, it is a custom
 More honoured in the breach than the observance.”

ART. II.—*A Memoir of the Rev. Sydney Smith, by his Daughter, Lady Holland. With a Selection from his Letters. Edited by Mrs. Austin. In two volumes. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1855.*

It is not without design that we have delayed to notice this Memoir. Other reviews have considered its subject as a critic, a reformer, a politician, and a wit. We design to consider him as a *minister of religion*; for in this relation he was truly a remarkable man. In thus viewing him, we shall examine his religious writings, as well as observe him in his biography and letters.

Sydney Smith was born at Woodford, in Essex, 1771; received his early education at Winchester, and then went to New College, Oxford; where nothing special is recorded of him, except that he obtained first a scholarship, and then a professorship yielding about a hundred pounds a year. After this, he deliberately resolved to enter the church. When Dr. Johnson, in his time of need, was offered a good living, if he should enter into orders, he declined it, saying: “I have not the requisites; and I cannot, in my conscience, *shear* the sheep which I am unable to *feed*.” But Sydney Smith had no difficulty in answering the Bishop, that he was “inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon him this office and ministration, to serve God for the promoting of his glory, and the

edifying of his people;" and to believe, according to the Liturgical service, that it is an office that requires us "never to cease from our labour, care, and diligence, till we have done all that lieth in us, according to our bounden duty, towards all such as are committed to our care, in order to bring them to a ripeness and perfection of stature in Christ Jesus."

His first scene of ministration was the parish of Netherhaven, near Amesbury, a village consisting of a few scattered farms and cottages. It is often no disadvantage for a young clergyman to be called to labour at first in a small and obscure parish, where the mind and heart can be well disciplined. Even if no field of extensive usefulness be at once offered, he can remain quiet, trimming his secret lamp, which may one day shed its light far and wide. Some of the most eminent ministers in the church of God have been thus trained. Bishop Wilson, the excellent and devout Bishop of Sodor and Man, after his ordination, was appointed to a small curacy, where he lived in great retirement; where his annual stipend was but thirty pounds; but where he was eminently fitted for the conspicuous station in the church which he ultimately occupied. It was so with Hooker, who was at first settled in a poor and thinly populated parish, containing less than two hundred inhabitants. And Doddridge used often to remark, how grateful he was that he was thus early called to such a situation, and how it prepared him for extensive usefulness in a higher sphere.

Did Sydney Smith feel and act thus? Did he, according to his ordination vow, regard his office as one of high responsibility? He found his parishioners ignorant, unrefined, and miserable. Did he, feeling the value of their souls, strive to enlighten, and refine, and make them happy? Did he instruct the illiterate, reprove the wicked, exhort the negligent, alarm the presumptuous, strengthen the weak, visit the sick, comfort the afflicted, and reclaim the wandering? If he had acted thus, "the wilderness," in a moral sense, "would have been glad, and the desert would have rejoiced, and blossomed as the rose." But instead of this, he complained of want of society, of books, of food, of everything; and, at the end of two years, resigned his living. After this, he departed with the eldest son of the squire to whom he was tutor, and engaged to go with him to

the University of Weimar, in Saxony; but in consequence of the disturbances in Germany, occasioned by the war, he went to Edinburgh. He arrived at that city in 1797, with his pupil, Beach, and remained there about five or six years; associated with politicians and men of science, attended the medical lectures at the University, and, as a Dissenter, preached occasionally for Bishop Sanford, in the Episcopal chapel. He was not, however, much known as a clergyman, but distinguished as uniting with Jeffrey and others in the establishment of the *Edinburgh Review*, and appreciated for his talents—especially for his wit and satire.

We are not of those who believe that satire in itself is wrong, or inconsistent with love to God or man. If not wantonly indulged; if restrained within due bounds, it may be not only harmless, but useful. We have in Scripture striking examples of it—in Elijah's address to the prophets of Baal, (1 Kings xviii. 27;) in the exposure of idolatry in Isaiah, (Is. xlv. 9, &c.;) in the irony of Paul to the Corinthians, (1 Cor. iv. 8; 2 Cor. xi. 19.) Its good effects have often been seen. Evils and follies once prevalent have ceased to exist, because they have become so ridiculous as to excite shame. By this means, Cervantes did real service to his country; Erasmus furthered the Reformation; and even the profane Lucian, "though his heart did not mean so," advanced the cause of Christianity by the happy application of his wit to the follies of Paganism.

But against whom and what did Sydney Smith exercise his wit and sarcasm? Evidently, though not professedly, against that religion of which he was the minister, and which, on the day of his ordination, he had vowed to advance; evidently against the true friends and advocates of divine truth.

At this time a change, which had begun, was advancing in the Church of England, in favour of evangelical religion. A life-giving spirit was everywhere springing up. Instead of the secularity which characterized the clergy, and made them satisfied, if they only regularly received their tithes, and a drowsy indifference among the people, if they only were christened, confirmed, and received the sacrament, many of the former were beginning to learn the true nature of the ministerial office, and to feel that its grand design was to save souls; and many

of the latter were enlightened to see that true religion was more than a decent attention to external rites and ceremonies; that it consisted in supremely loving God, delighting in his precepts, living a life of faith upon his Son, giving up all for Christ, labouring after conformity to his image, and striving for the advancement of his cause. Imbibing this spirit, the friends of religion, individually, and by means of concentrated action of various societies and associations, everywhere spread abroad evangelical truth, and endeavoured to give vitality to a dead church, and purity to a corrupt world. Against an ardent and persevering zeal, in propagating such principles, violent opposition was to be expected. Under the banner of this opposition, Sydney Smith ranged himself; and by one peculiarity, not doctrinal discussion, but bitter sarcasm, he stood in the very front rank.

The first production on this subject which he issued, was an article in the *Edinburgh Review*, on "*Methodism*;" by which was meant evangelical religion; or, to use his own definition—"We use the term to designate the Calvinistic and Arminian Methodists and the *evangelical* of the Church of England—these three classes of fanatics—not troubling ourselves to point out the finer shades and nice discriminations of lunacy, but treating them all as in one general conspiracy against common sense, and rational, orthodox Christianity."

In the discussion of this subject, the author is careful to tell us that he is no infidel: "It has been our good fortune to be acquainted with many truly religious persons, both in the Presbyterian and Episcopalian churches; and from their manly, rational, and serious characters, our conceptions of true practical piety have been formed." The religion which he professes, and of which he is the minister, is Christianity shorn of its beams, and deprived of all those peculiar qualities which the hand of God has stamped upon it; a religion which lets conscience sleep, while the heart is unchanged, and by which a man is lulled into a state of complete self-complacency; a Christianity, if it deserve the name, which has in it nothing worthy of its Author; nothing great or noble, nothing spiritual or holy, nothing raised above the world; nothing, in short, which puts to shame the claims of a Pagan philosophy. Possessing

such a religion, not of divine, but of human workmanship, why should he flee to infidelity, and deny the authenticity of the Scriptures? Why should he not love, and defend, and worship it?

He shows the sentiments of the evangelical party by quoting largely from their organs, or monthly magazines; endeavours to prove that their "religion is not the religion which is established by law, and encouraged by national provision;" and promises to present their "opinions and habits as objects of curiosity and importance." What are these opinions? They are the simple and fundamental doctrines of the special providence of God, the corruption of man, the necessity of faith in the Redeemer, the importance of holiness, the inefficacy of preaching and the sacraments, without the influences of the Holy Spirit. These doctrines, expressed sometimes in narratives, sometimes by notices, and sometimes by essays, are held up to ridicule, and regarded as the very cant of fanaticism. Take the following, which expresses his views of religion, sneers at divine grace, and conveys a personal sarcasm: "We had hitherto supposed that the disciples of the established churches in England and Scotland had been Christians; and that after baptism, duly performed by the appointed ministers, and participation in the customary worship of these two churches, Christianity was the religion of which they were to be considered members. We see, however, in these publications, men of twenty and thirty years of age first called to the knowledge of Christ, under a sermon by the Rev. Mr. Venn; or first admitted into the church, under a sermon by the Rev. Mr. Romaine. The apparent admission turns out to have been a mere mockery, and the pseudo-christian to have had no religion at all, till the business was really and effectually done under these sermons by Mr. Venn and Mr. Romaine." That which gives joy to angels seems to him the source of sacrilegious mockery. For instance, a letter from a pious chaplain of a man-of-war, found in the *Evangelical Magazine*: "Off Cadiz, Nov. 25, 1806. My dear friend,—I have only time to tell you that the work of God seems to prosper. Many are under convictions; and some, I trust, are converted. I preach every night, and am obliged to have a private meeting afterwards, with those

who wish to speak about their souls. Capt. — raises no objection. I have nearly a hundred hearers every night at six o'clock. Pray for us." And another letter from the sailing-master of his majesty's ship *Tonnant*: "It is with satisfaction that I can now inform you, that God has deigned, in a yet greater degree, to own the weak efforts of his servant, to turn many from Satan to himself. Many are called here, as is plain to be seen, by their pensive looks and deep sighs. Our thirteen are now increased to upwards of thirty." Nothing seems to provoke the defender of "rational and orthodox religion" more than the following facts: "We must remember that the Evangelicals have found a powerful party in the House of Commons, who, by the neutrality which they affect, and partly adhere to, are courted both by ministers and the opposition; that they have gained complete possession of the India-house; and, under the pretence, or perhaps with the serious intention of educating young people for India, (as much as they dare, without provoking attention,) in their own particular tenets."

The gross misrepresentations which he gives of the whole evangelical party are too numerous to be repeated. He says, "they lay very little stress upon practical righteousness; they say a great deal about faith, and very little about works; what are commonly called the mysterious parts of religion are brought into the foreground, much more than the doctrines which lead to practice." They are always gloomy and unhappy: "Ennui, wretchedness, groans, and sighs, are the offerings which these unhappy men make to a Deity who has covered the earth with gay colours, and scented it with rich perfumes. They hate pleasure and amusements. No theatre, no cards, no dancing, no punchinello, no dancing-dogs, no blind fiddlers. All the amusements of the rich and of the poor must disappear, wherever these gloomy people get a footing." It is a religion which leads to insanity: "There is not a mad-house in England, where a considerable part of the patients have not been driven to insanity by the extravagance of these people. We cannot enter such places, without seeing a number of honest artisans, covered with blankets, and calling themselves angels and apostles, who, if they had remained contented with the instruction of men of learning and education, would have been

sound masters of their own trade, sober Christians, and useful members of society.”

We have observed a remarkable coincidence between the language of Chief Justice Jeffreys, at the trial of Baxter, and that of the reviewer in this article. The judge cried out, “These fellows have appropriated God to themselves: ‘*Lord, we are thy people, thy peculiar people, thy dear people!*’” “And then,” the historian adds, “he snorted, and squeaked through his nose, and clenched his hands, and lifted up his eyes, mimicking their manner, and running on furiously, as he said they used to preach and pray.” Sydney Smith says, “They consider themselves as constituting a chosen and separate people, living in a land of atheists and voluptuaries. The expressions by which they designate their own sects, are, the *dear people*, the *elect*, the *people of God*. The rest of mankind are carnal people, and the people of this world. The children of Israel were not more separated, through the favour of God, from the Egyptians, than they are, in their own estimation, from the rest of mankind.”

Throughout the whole article, everything valuable in the Christian religion is made the subject of sport, with an asperity worthy of Voltaire. Evangelical truth had before this been opposed, and at that time was impugned with violence and misrepresentation; but it had never been held up to such contempt, (particularly by a professed Christian,) and by invective so bitter. Compared with it, Lavington’s “Comparison between Popery and Methodism” is lenient; and Swift’s Treatise on the “Operations of the Spirit” is but little worse.

Who were the men thus held up to scorn, and exposed to the most unsparing sarcasm? They were some of the best ministers of the Church of England, who adhered to its Articles and constitution: such men as Romaine, the Milners, Venn, Cecil, Newton, Scott, Porteus, Goode, Cadogan, Simeon, and a host of others like them; and laymen, like Wilberforce, Teignmouth, Cowper, Thornton, Mrs. More, and numerous others of a kindred spirit. These he stigmatizes; and some of them personally, as Methodists, enthusiasts, fanatics, and schismatics, because they make a distinction between nominal and real religion; because they speak of Christian experience as applicable to the exercises

of the pious mind; because they are ready to inquire into attainments in humility, faith, hope, and love, as the fruit and graces of the Holy Spirit. Let any unprejudiced man read the Scripture, however slightly, and compare with it this article, and he must be convinced that the author was not a secret and concealed, but an open and avowed, enemy of the religion of the Bible.

The next article that appeared on religion, from the same pen, and in the same Review, was on the subject of "*Missions in India.*"

For many years this subject had excited public attention. Long before this period, societies had been formed for the propagation of the Gospel in that interesting land. The "Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge" had employed men from other countries, particularly from Denmark and Germany, to labour in that field; and the names of Ziegenbalg, and Grundler, and afterwards of Swartz and Gerické, are familiar to all who are in any degree acquainted with the peninsula of India. The work, however, was much retarded by the want of more labourers. At length several Dissenting bodies co-operated in the great undertaking, and in a little time outstripped the elder society. The "London Missionary Society," composed of various Christian denominations, was instituted, and sent its missionaries to India, as well as to other parts of the world; and the evangelical portion of the National Church, rejoicing in their zeal, and vigour, and self-devotion, longed to imitate them, and to unite in heart, if not in form, in illuminating the dark corners of the earth. Above all, the Baptist missions had displayed a zeal worthy of such a cause; they bore an honourable testimony for the faith of Jesus, and not without success; they saw several poor and ignorant idolaters "turned from dead works to serve the living God," and the light of revelation rising upon many who were groping in the "region and shadow of death." The father of this mission, at Serampore, was the venerable Dr. Carey. He, and those who were associated with him—Ward, Marshman, and others—encountered many difficulties; but these difficulties tended only to animate their vigilance, and awaken their zeal.

The time when Sydney Smith wrote on this subject, was an interesting period. The British acquisition of power in India had been so rapid and extensive, that nearly sixty millions of inhabitants had submitted to its control. It was a period when Christians felt that this immense population had a claim on their justice and benevolence; that they owed them instruction and protection; that they were bound to dispel the gross delusions of their religion, and to correct the flagrant enormities of their conduct, by imparting, in a greater degree than they had done, the truth of Christianity. It was a period when the subject of the renewal of the charter of the East India Company was shortly to come before Parliament; and when there was a general anxiety that in the new charter a clause should be introduced, authorizing a wide dissemination of Christian principles, and the removal of many long-existing obstacles. It was a period when Corrie, and Thomason, and Henry Martyn were in the field; when the venerable Buchanan was exciting attention by his "Christian Researches in Asia," his "Star in the East," and his "Apology for promoting Christianity in India."

But while the friends of the Redeemer were cherishing this missionary zeal; while they felt that "necessity was laid upon them" to send the Gospel to that great Indian empire which Providence had put into their hands; while the diffusion of the Scriptures and their translation into so many of the languages of the East were preparing the way for the living voice of the preacher; while so many degraded Pagans were ready to "cast their idols to the moles and the bats," so many dark understandings waiting to be enlightened, so many aching hearts longing to be comforted, there sprung up a most violent and pertinacious opposition. For a long time a strong and deep-rooted prejudice had prevailed against missions, which was at length succeeded by a still, but virulent hostility. At last came an explosion of temper which had long been secretly at work; and the Rev. Sydney Smith, for himself and others, felt that it should no longer be in a state of compression and confinement. He had the ambition to lead the van in this anti-missionary crusade, and make a fierce assault against all that is doing for the object in Church and state. Though he pro-

fesses not to be an infidel, yet he unites with those who regard the effort of introducing Christianity into India as visionary and romantic; who stigmatize the "Researches" of Buchanan as an imposition on the public, and a libel on India; and who esteem the mode proposed as calculated to remove the event to a great distance. To this mode he objects, "because," as he says, "the evangelical party have got possession of the Eastern empire. Under the auspices of the college at Fort William, the Scriptures are in a course of translation into the languages of almost the whole continent of Oriental India; and we perceive that in aid of this object, the Bible Society has voted a very magnificent subscription. The three principal chaplains of our Indian settlements are (as might be expected) of principles exactly corresponding with the enthusiasm of their employers at home; and their zeal upon the subject of religion has shone and burnt with the most exemplary fury." This work being under the direction of the evangelical portion of the Church cannot of course be properly conducted. The author says: "This is the great evil; if the management were in the hands of men who were as discreet and wise in their devotion as they are in matters of temporal welfare, the desire of putting an end to missions might be premature and indecorous. But the misfortune is, the men who wield the instrument, ought not, in common sense and propriety, to be trusted with it for a single instant. Upon this subject they are quite insane and ungovernable; they would deliberately, piously and conscientiously expose our whole Eastern empire to destruction for the sake of converting half a dozen Brahmans, who, after stuffing themselves with rum and rice, and borrowing money from the natives, would run away, and cover the Gospel and its professors with every species of impious ridicule and abuse."

It would seem that in the estimation of the reviewer, the Hindoos do not need conversion. He says—"They are a civilized and moral people; and after all that has been said of their vices, we believe that a Hindoo is more mild and sober than most Europeans, and as honest and chaste." He sums up his sentiments on this whole subject in the following manner:—"We see not the slightest prospect of success; we see much danger in making the attempt; and we doubt if the conversion

of the Hindoos would ever be more than nominal. If it is a duty of general benevolence to convert the heathen, it is less a duty to convert them than any other people, because they are a people highly civilized, and because you must infallibly subject them to infamy, and present degradation. The instruments employed for these purposes, are calculated to bring ridicule and disgrace upon the gospel; and in the discretion of those at home, whom we consider as their patrons, we have not the smallest reliance; but on the contrary, we are convinced they would behold the loss of our Indian empire, not with the humility of men convinced of erroneous views and projects, but with the pride, the exultation, and the alacrity of martyrs.”

While the author thus argues with those of his own church, and severely denounces them, he treats with perfect levity and buffoonery the whole Baptist mission at Serampore. A most furious and unmeasured attack he makes upon the excellent Dr. Carey—a man so faithful in sustaining the mission in Bengal, so distinguished as an Oriental scholar; so eminent for the many versions of the Scriptures which he had made; so beloved for his humble, benevolent, and self-denied piety. To bring this venerable man into contempt, he quotes from his journal, when he first went to India, in 1793, such parts as he judged the most intolerable religious cant. And what are they? Such things as no true Christian can condemn, but such as Sydney Smith was incapable of appreciating; most repugnant to his taste and revolting to his principles.—“1793: *June* 16—Lord’s day—A little recovered from my sickness—met for prayer and exhortation in my cabin—had a dispute with a French deist.” “—30: Lord’s day—A pleasant and profitable day; our congregation composed of ten persons.” “*July* 7.—Another pleasant and profitable Sabbath—our congregation increased one—had much sweet enjoyment with God.” “*Jan.* 25.—Lord’s day.—Found much pleasure in reading Edwards’s sermon on the ‘justice of God in the perdition of sinners.’” “*April* 6.—Had some sweetness to-day; especially in reading Edwards’s sermons.” “*June* 8.—This evening reached Bowles, where we lay to for the Sabbath—felt thankful that God had preserved us.” “—16.—To-day I

preached twice at Malda, where Mr. Thomas met me—had much enjoyment, and though our congregation did not exceed sixteen, yet the pleasure I felt in having my tongue once more at liberty, I can hardly describe—was enabled to be faithful, and felt great affection for immortal souls.” “1796. *Feb.* 6.—I am now in my study; and it is a sweet place, because of the presence of God with the vilest of men. The work to which God has set his hands will infallibly prosper.” These ravings of fanaticism proved Dr. Carey wholly unfit to be a missionary in India! With the same personal rancour he assails Ward, one of the most able of the Eastern missionaries, who did so much by his writings in enlightening the public mind on the absurdities and horrors of Paganism; who was so commended for his elaborate “View of the history, literature, and religion of the Hindoos.” Nor do the venerable Danish and German missionaries escape his gross ribaldry; men who had spent their lives, not in the pursuit of gain, or in commercial enterprises, but in removing the ignorance, profligacy, and misery of the heathen; in making them happy in this world and in the world to come. The ridicule poured out upon all these men is like treating with scorn the first heralds of the cross, and their immediate successors, the confessors and martyrs. Shall they be revered and preserved in grateful remembrance, because they encountered the fiercest opposition in spreading the gospel among the nations; and shall those who imitate them, and have a congenial spirit, be held up to derision? Yet Sydney Smith was capable of this.

The whole article can excite no other emotions but those of indignation and disgust. Robert Hall is not too severe in speaking of it—“It is impossible to read the strictures of the *Edinburgh Review* on Missions, in an article which appeared under that title, without surprise that such sentiments could find admission in a work which possesses such just claims to literary mind. The anonymous writer of the article alluded to, with the levity of a buffoon, joined to a heart of iron and a face of brass, has more than insinuated that the Christianity attempted to be promoted in India, by the missionaries at Serampore, would, were it adopted, prove a serious injury to the natives, and that they are much happier and more virtuous

under their present institutions. The system of religion, be it remembered, which these men have attempted to introduce, and which this *Christian* reviewer loads with abuse, is precisely the same in its doctrinal articles with that of the Church of England, to which he has subscribed, *ex animo* no doubt, his unfeigned assent and consent. It may be hoped, that at a time when the Church of England is evincing a spirit of moderation and forbearance, and can boast of so many prelates and dignitaries distinguished for their piety and learning, no clergyman for the future will be allowed to degrade himself in a similar manner, without the most indignant rebuke. It may possibly gratify certain spirits to see the Dissenters and 'Methodists' vilified and abused; but they will do well to remember that the indulgence of a profane and scoffing humour must be ultimately injurious, not only to Christianity, but to any Christian community whatever; and that to stab religion through the sides of fanaticism is a stale artifice of infidels, by which the simplest can no longer be deceived."

Among those who entered the lists of controversy on this subject, and who replied to this article in stern and lofty rebuke, was the Rev. John Styles, an eminent non-conformist, a man of talent and usefulness, the author of several works that had received attention; of an admirable "Life of Brainerd," of an "Essay on Animal Creation;" of "Pulpit Studies and Aids to preaching;" and of an excellent work on the stage, which ranks with the treatises of Collier, Law, and Witherspoon, and which Foster commends and quotes in the *Eclectic Review*. A notice of him by Sydney Smith occupied another article in the *Edinburgh Review*. It was written to ridicule rather than to convince, and contains no argument, but only a bitter sarcasm against a good man and his associates. He repeats what he had uttered in his former articles respecting missions and the evangelical party; and says that the Methodists (using the term in the same extensive sense as before) are "vermin" that should not complain of the means employed to destroy them. "It is scarcely possible to reduce their drunken declamations to a point, to grasp the wriggling lubricity of these cunning animals, and to fix them in one position. They must, however, all be caught, killed, and cracked, in the manner and by the

instruments which are found most efficacious for their destruction; and the more they cry out, the greater plainly is the skill used against them." And again: "Undoubtedly the distinction of mankind into godly and ungodly—if by godly is really meant those who apply religion to the extinction of bad passions—would be highly desirable. But when by that word is only intended a sect more desirous of possessing the appellation than of deserving it—when under that term are comprehended thousands of canting hypocrites and raving enthusiasts—men despicable from their ignorance, and formidable from their madness—the distinction may hereafter prove to be truly terrific; and a dynasty of fools may again sweep away both Church and State in one hideous ruin. There may be, at present, some very respectable men at the head of these maniacs, who would insanify them with some degree of prudence, and keep them only half mad, if they could. But this wont do; Bedlam will break loose, and overpower the keepers. If the choice rested with us, we should say—Give us back our wolves again—our Danish invaders—curse us with any evil, but the evil of a canting, deluded, and Methodistical populace. Wherever it extends its baneful influence, the character of the English is constantly changed by it. Boldness and rough honesty are broken down into meanness, prevarication and fraud."

On the subject of the introduction of Christianity into India, he repeats what he had before affirmed, but only with more violence. The following is a specimen. "It is not Christianity which is introduced there, but the debased mummery and nonsense of Methodists, which have little more to do with the Christian religion than it has to do with the religion of China. We send men of the highest character for the administration of justice and the regulation of trade; why then are common sense and decency to be forgotten in religion alone, and so foolish a set of men allowed to engage themselves in this occupation, that the natives almost instinctively duck and pelt them? Our charge is, that they want sense, conduct, and sound religion, and that if they are not watched, the throat of every European in India will be cut. But these pious gentlemen care nothing about the loss of the country. The plan it seems is this:—we are to educate India in Christianity, as a parent does his child,

and when it is perfect in its catechism, then to pack up, quit it entirely, and leave it to its own management. This is the evangelical project for separating a colony from the parent country. They see nothing of the bloodshed, and massacres, and devastations, nor of the speeches in Parliament, squandered millions, fruitless expeditions, jobs and pensions with which the loss of our Indian possessions would necessarily be accompanied; nor will they see that these consequences could arise from the *attempt*, and not from the completion of their scheme of conversion. We should be swept from the peninsula by Pagan zealots; and should lose, among other things, all chance of ever really converting them." We can conceive of nothing more groundless, calumnious, and false, than the whole of this article.

Not only against the Evangelical Magazine does he vent his spleen, but also against all the other organs of evangelic truth. He says, "the Eclectic Review is understood to be carried on upon Methodistical principles." Of the Christian Observer—a work established by the evangelical members of the Church of England, of which Zachary Macaulay was the first editor, whose pages were enriched by the contributions of Lord Teignmouth, Wilberforce, Thornton, Stephen, Babington, Heber, and others of like talents, education and piety—he thus speaks: "We cannot conclude without the most pointed reprobation of the low mischief of the Christian Observer; a publication which appears to have no other method of discussing a subject fairly open to discussion, than that of accusing their antagonists of infidelity. No art can be more unmanly, or, if its consequences are foreseen, more wicked. If this publication had been the work of a single individual, we might have passed it over in silent disgust, but as it is the organ of a great political religious party in this country, we think it right to notice the very unworthy manner in which they are attempting to extend their influence. For ourselves, if there were a fair prospect of carrying the gospel into regions where it was before unknown—if such a prospect did not expose the best possessions of the country to extreme danger; and if it was in the hands of men who were discreet as well as devout, we should esteem it a scheme of true piety, benevolence and

wisdom; but the baseness and malignity of fanaticism shall never prevent us from attacking its arrogance, its ignorance, and its activity."

The next article on the subject of evangelical religion from the same pen, was a review of Mrs. More's "Cœlebs in Search of a Wife."

This work, from the pen of so popular a writer, was received at once with universal interest; it was regarded by the friends of religion as calculated to be useful; to remove from many minds prejudices against real piety; to present an inviting exhibition of Christian life and doctrine to persons of imagination and taste, of a certain rank and culture, who would not be disposed to seek them in more serious works. But this very circumstance, that an evangelical spirit is diffused through it, and is calculated to impress like an interesting picture, leads the reviewer to oppose it, and to display his usual bitterness. Mr. and Mrs. Stanley, Lucilla, and the rest are "the children of the tabernacle," "uniformly paltry and narrow; always trembling at the idea of being entertained, and thinking no Christian safe who is not dull."

In this manner, he speaks of the object of the work, and the manner in which it is executed:—"The exaltation of what the authoress deems to be the religious, and the depreciation of what she considers to be the worldly character, and the influence of both upon matrimonial happiness, form the subject of this novel—rather of this *dramatic sermon*. The machinery upon which the subject of the discourse is suspended is of the slightest and most artificial texture, bearing every mark of haste, and possessing not the slightest claim to merit. Events there are none, and scarcely a character of any interest. The book is intended to convey religious advice; and no more labour appears to have been bestowed upon the story than was merely sufficient to throw it out of the dry didactic form."

More than once he misrepresents the meaning of the authoress, to introduce a low jest, which degenerates into mere farce, and much of which is too indecent to be quoted. Among other "methodistical" sentiments, the reviewer is particularly severe against Mrs. More for speaking of the dangerous tendency of dramatic entertainments. He says:—"The finest

exhibitions of talent and the most successful moral lessons at the theatre are interdicted. There is something in the word *playhouse* which seems to be so closely connected in the minds of these people with sin and Satan, that it stands in their vocabulary for every species of abomination." But he not only tolerates the theatre as an innocent amusement, but *recommends* it as one of the best means of continuing virtuous, and reforming the vicious. He adds:—"Where is every feeling more roused in favour of virtue than at a good play? Where is goodness so feelingly, so enthusiastically learned? What so solemn, as to see the excellent passions of the human heart called forth by a great actor, animated by a great poet? What wretched infatuation to interdict such amusements as these! What a blessing that mankind can be allured from sensual gratifications, and find relaxation and pleasure in such pursuits!"

If we were not acquainted with the sentiments and language of Sydney Smith, we should think it incredible that a professed advocate of religion and morals, a minister of the Christian religion, should in this manner undertake the defence of the stage; virtually, to regard it as one of our best institutions, and to esteem it a powerful means for the promotion of virtue; virtually to desire its continuance; and so declare that its cessation would be a great moral evil. By Christians of all ages, and of every denomination, it has been acknowledged that the theatre is calculated to corrupt the morals, to instil dangerous and corrupt maxims, to root out of the heart every religious principle, by its immodest allusions, coarse profaneness, and shameless blasphemies. Yet here a minister of religion asks, "Where is goodness so feelingly, so enthusiastically learned?" Why this ardent attachment to the theatre? A reason may be found. Because he would there be freed from the sight of those religious fanatics and madmen, who it is certain, would not be present; because he would enjoy perfect immunity from Puritanism, cant, and rank Methodism; because, if he did find them there, he would discover them on the stage exposed to ridicule and contempt—a subject with which he was intimately familiar; in the exhibition of which he would be an admirable critic.

These were the last articles on this subject which Sydney Smith published in the *Edinburgh Review*. We acknowledge that the satire is keen, and the sarcasm bitter, but against what are they levelled? Not against the follies and vices of mankind; not against what deserves our contempt and abhorrence, but against virtue, and truth, and religion: against some of the best men that England has produced, whose personal character they misrepresent, and whose individual reputation they endeavour to destroy. Such criticisms are little to be distinguished from scandal and defamation, and what aggravates the offence is, that the author never, in any degree, regretted it. When, in 1840, thirty years afterwards, he consented to publish his contributions in volumes, these articles he would not omit; he said, "I see very little in my *Review* to alter or repent of; what I thought evil then, I think evil now."

These thirty years were pregnant with changes in the religious and moral condition of society which must have presented to him many points of inquiry. He had seen India in a different aspect from what it was when he assailed its missions;—schools, colleges, ministers of different denominations everywhere multiplied. He had seen prejudices giving way, and all Christendom united in this hallowed enterprise. He had ceased to hear apologies for heathenism, the sickly whinings once uttered over the injuries of a meek and innocent idolatry; the false alarms of danger incurred by the entrance of Christians into the East, and base and unfounded charges on the missionaries as the authors of revolt. He had seen silenced the tongue of calumny against the Baptist mission, and justice done to Carey, and Ward, and Marshman. He had seen those whom he had stigmatized as evangelical, and branded by the odious name of fanatics, passing away. He had read, or might have read, the memoirs of Buchanan, Henry Martyn, of Thomas Scott, of Wilberforce, of Hannah More, and others like them. He had seen the evangelical spirit spreading in the army, in the navy, in the House of Parliament, in the ministry, from the Archbishop of Canterbury, to the humblest curate; and yet no sensation of regret is felt for his conduct; he "wrote no line which he wished now to blot:" he could say "*I see very little in my Review to alter or repent of.*" This

raises to its utmost height the enormity of his conduct, and compels us to say with Robert Hall (in the passage already quoted) "such a writer has the levity of a buffoon, a heart of iron, and a face of brass."

At the time these Reviews appeared, Sydney Smith was residing in London. He preached for a time at the Foundling Hospital, and was morning preacher at Fitzroy chapel. Little, however, is said in his Memoirs of the effect of his preaching. It would be almost folly to suppose that its design was to make men religious, to lead them to exercise "repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ:" this would be the height of Methodism—to preach about faith, and atonement, and grace, would be most intolerable cant. About this time he published two volumes of sermons. We find in them a marked absence of discussion on all the essential features of the gospel, so that they have little or no claim to be denominated *Christian*, supposing Christianity to be, to proclaim salvation to perishing sinners, through faith in Christ, and by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit. 'Tis true he exhorts his hearers not to be openly immoral and vicious, and yet as earnestly exhorts them not to be Puritans, or Methodists, or Meetingers; to avoid the cant of Deism as they would that of Evangelicalism. To show his utter ignorance of Scripture, it would be amusing, if treating on any other subject, to see his continued misquotations. The apostle's language, "pray without ceasing," is quoted as "praying in every season;" the touching prayer of our Saviour, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," as "Lord, forgive them;" the declaration of John the Baptist, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," is that of an apostle; the caution of Solomon, "be not righteous over much," as that of St. Paul; and the words of Simon, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace," as the words of the Psalmist!

However dull and frigid he may be on other topics, in his sermons, yet when Methodism is his theme, he always kindles, and has abundant fire and warmth. Never do we see the love of Christ inspiring the heart of Paul with more energy than does this subject the soul of Sydney Smith. If the apostle introduces his loved topic at all seasons, so, this defender of

“rational religion,” embraces every opportunity of bringing into notice his favourite theme. Besides having a whole sermon on the subject, he seeks for every occasion to inveigh against it as the great prevailing evil of the age. So concerned is he for his country, that in his “Sermon on the Duties of the Queen,” he cautions her against it:—“It will be a sad vexation to all loyal hearts and to all rationally pious minds, if our sovereign should fall into the common error of mistaking fanaticism for religion, and in this way, flinging an air of discredit upon real devotion. It is, I am afraid, unquestionably the fault of the age; her youth and her sex do not make it more improbable, and the warmest efforts of that description of persons will not be wanting to gain over a convert so illustrious and so important. Should this take place, the consequences will be serious and distressing; the land will be inundated with hypocrisy; absurdity will be heaped upon absurdity; there will be a race of folly and extravagance for royal favour, and he who is farthest removed from reason, will make the nearest approach to distinction.”

In his posthumous sermons, in which there is much larceny from others, particularly from Barrow, he uses great caution in avoiding an expression that savours of such cant; and to effect his object, changes words and phrases; substitutes for the “practice of piety,” our “holy religion,” and for the words “righteous,” “holy,” “godly,” puts in their place, “the moral fitness of things,” “the virtues and sanctions of Christianity.”

But it was not so much as a preacher or writer of sermons that Sydney Smith was so distinguished, when he went from Edinburgh to London, and made the latter city his residence. It was rather as a friend and jovial companion of politicians and men of literature, who admired his wit and sought his society; who were pleased with his constitutional and excessive gayety of spirits; and yet not displeased with his views of religion. Among these men, his reputation spread widely; he was elected a member of one of their clubs, and was generally present at their convivial meetings. In these circles, he was pre-eminent; in the Memoir, much is said of the powers of his humour and sarcasm; very much told of that infectious wit which was perfectly irresistible; which forced peals of laughter

from every guest, and "set the table in a roar." We are informed how, on one of these festive occasions, he personated before a young Scotchman, *Sir Sydney Smith* (for as such he had been introduced to him,) how he assumed the military character, performed the part of Acre to perfection, fought all his battles over again, and showed how he charged the Turks, to the complete and permanent deception of the Highland ensign. We are told how he denied that he was the author of "the letters of Peter Plymley," and how he reported that Dugald Stewart was the author, or generally supposed to be so. On these occasions the "evangelicals" would be a fine subject of satire, and no doubt, were often held up to ridicule, to the amusement of his companions. And judging from some of his letters, we should think, in order to embellish his speech, and give a high relish to a story, that he would, Swift-like, occasionally utter a profane expression.

He was, in time, elevated to the Johnson Club, so called, because it was instituted by Dr. Johnson and his friends. Here too, he speedily arose to the first rank, and was distinguished for his mirth; and at times so excessively jovial that if he who had originally formed the company, and whose name it bears, had come to the light of day, he would have again said, with strong emotion—"This merriment of parsons is most disgusting." But to all such things Sydney Smith was perfectly indifferent; he would eat and drink, talk and jest, go into such company and visit such places as he pleased, without any of the restraints of his clerical profession. He held in this respect all the independence of Swift. Of the latter person his biographer says—"He could not forbear indulging the peculiarity of his humour, when an opportunity occurred, whatever might be the impropriety of the time and place. Upon his coming to Laracor, he gave public notice that he would read prayers on Wednesday and Friday, which had not been the custom, and accordingly the bell was rung, and he ascended the desk. But, having sat some time, with no other auditor than his clerk Roger, he began, 'Dearly beloved Roger, the Scripture moveth you and me in sundry places;' and so proceeded to the end of the service. Of the same kind was his race with Dr. Raymond, vicar of Trim, soon after he

was made dean of St. Patrick's. Swift had dined one Sunday with Raymond, and when the bells had done ringing for evening prayers, he said, 'Raymond, I bet you a crown that I will begin prayers before you this afternoon.' The wager was accepted, and immediately they both ran as fast as they could, to the church. Raymond, the nimbler of the two, arrived first at the door, and when he entered the church, walked decently towards the reading-desk. Swift never slackened his pace, but running up the aisle, left Raymond behind him; and stepping into the desk, and without putting on the surplice, or opening the book, began the service in an audible voice." Sydney Smith, in like manner, for the sake of a good jest, would sacrifice everything, lay aside his clerical character, and renounce all personal dignity. The Memoir is full of instances—one is sufficient. When, on one occasion, an extraordinary good story was told him, he wished to monopolize it, and offered to the narrator five shillings for the exclusive right of it for a week. The bargain was struck, and the money paid down; and for a week, he laughed most heartily himself, and made others laugh, almost to exhaustion. From the same love of merriment, he chose as his text for his farewell sermon at Berkley Fitzroy chapel, "thou shalt not commit adultery;" seeming to adopt the suggestion of another facetious prebendary, Sterne, who advises a clergyman, when at a loss for a text that suited a sermon, to select the 9th verse of the second chapter of Acts: "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia."

We shall not follow the subject of the Memoir into his political career, nor speak of his political writings, nor consider his political speeches. The time at length arrived, when the party which he had long advocated came into power; then he looked for his reward for having fought the good fight, and anticipated an increase of happiness, according to his frequent declaration—"I am happier for every new guinea which I gain." For his services, he was rewarded with the living of Foston-le-Clary, afterwards exchanged for Combe Florey, near Taunton—then appointed to the Prebendal stall of Bristol; and at length, through the influence of Lord Grey, made resi-

duary Canon of St. Paul's Cathedral. He was not, however, satisfied with these preferments, and aimed at a bishopric. His biographer thus speaks of it:—"I know that he felt deeply, to the hour of his death, that those by whose side he had fought for fifty years so bravely and honestly in their adversity, and with the most unblemished reputation as a clergyman, should in their prosperity, never have offered a bishopric, that which they were bestowing on many, only known at that time, according to public report, for their mediocrity, or unpopularity."

Swift (for we are compelled, in spite of ourselves, to turn continually from the Canon of St. Paul's to the Dean of St. Patrick's,) in like manner, sought and expected an Episcopate in England—"but," says his biographer, "archbishop Sharpe having represented him to her Majesty as a man whose Christianity was very questionable, and being supported in this by a very great lady, it was given to another." Such, it seems, was the reason why the honour was not bestowed on the other expectant. His warmest political friends thought it would be carrying the jest too far, to make Sydney Smith a bishop. He defends himself against the charges, by the following letter to Lord Russell: "I defy — to quote one single passage of my writing, contrary to the doctrines of the Church. I defy him to mention a single action of my life which he can call immoral. The only thing he could charge me with, would be high spirits and much innocent nonsense. I am distinguished as a preacher, and sedulous as a parochial clergyman. His real charge against me is, that I am a high-spirited, honest, uncompromising man, whom he and all the bench of bishops could not turn upon vital questions; this is the reason why, as far as depends upon others, I am not a bishop."

Resigning himself to his fate, and professing to "have lost all wish to become a bishop," he confined himself to St. Paul's, where he was required to "do duty" for three months in the year; and where he preached some excellent sermons, the most of which, it appears, were not of his own composition. For one that was much admired, he was indebted to our country, as he tells us in a letter to Lady Grey:—"I think Channing an admirable writer. Yet admirable as his sermon on

war is, I have the vanity to think my own equally good; and you will be the more inclined to agree with me in this comparison, when I tell you that I preached in St. Paul's the identical sermon which Lord Grey so much admired. I thought I could not write anything half so good; so I preached Channing."

It is wonderful that he should have condescended to own that any good could proceed from us, and to acknowledge his obligations. For, as a country, we have been honoured by incurring the severest vituperation of one who loaded with calumny some of the best men and women that ever lived. It was Sydney Smith that said, "Literature the Americans have none—no native literature, we mean; it is all imported. They had a Franklin, indeed; and may afford to live for half a century on his fame. There is, or was, a Mr. Dwight, who wrote some poems, and his baptismal name was Timothy. There is also a small account of Virginia by Jefferson, and an Epic by Joel Barlow; and some pieces of pleasantry by Mr. Irving. But why should the Americans write books, when a six weeks' passage brings them in their own tongue, our sense, science and genius, in bales and hogsheads. They have made no approaches to the heroic, either in their morality or their character. Since the period of their separation from us, a far greater proportion of their statesmen, artists, and political writers have been foreigners, than ever occurred before in the history of any civilized and educated people. During the years of their independence, they have done absolutely nothing for the sciences, for the arts, for literature, or even for the statesman-like studies of politics, or political economy. In the four quarters of the globe, who reads an American book?" At a later period, he says: "There appears not at this moment in America one man of any considerable talents." Afterwards he adds, "Mrs. Trollope's picture of American manners is excellent—why should they not be ridiculed?" This is but a small specimen of his obloquy and abuse.

His petition to the American Congress respecting the repudiation of some of the States, and the letters that followed, are well known. He had invested money in the Pennsylvania State funds; and because the interest was not regularly paid,

he embraced the opportunity of publishing his disappointment and spite; of declaring—"I meddle in these matters, because I hate fraud, pity the misery it has occasioned, and mourn over the hatred it has excited against free institutions." Such opprobrious epithets as he was accustomed to use to others, he pours out most copiously against the inhabitants of Pennsylvania; he abuses them for their dishonesty, calls them "men who prefer any load of infamy, however great, to any pressure of taxation, however light," and tells them that their "government is unstable, in the very foundations of social life."

From the "Letters and Correspondence," we see in him no little excitement on the subject. Writing to his friends, he says:—"I hope you were pleased with my attack upon the Americans—they really deserved it—it is a monstrous and increasing *villany*. Fancy a meeting in Philadelphia, convened by public advertisement, where they came to resolutions that the debt was too great for the people to pay; that the people could not pay it, and ought not to pay it. It is a fortunate thing for the world that the separate American States are making such progress in dishonesty, and are absolutely refusing to pay their debts. They would soon have been too formidable if they had added the moral of good faith to their physical strength. I verily believe they are cracking; for a nation cannot exist in such a state of morals. There is nothing in the crimes of kings worse than this *villany* of democracy." After all this, there was no occasion for him to say—"I envy Lord Byron for his skill in satirical nomenclature."

In following Sydney Smith through the evening of his days, we hoped that we should at last see some of that seriousness and sobriety which become the man of years, the professed Christian, and the minister of religion. But he had such a dread of gravity, and such a horror of solemnity, that he would not yield, but fought against them most vigorously, even when life was closing and the grave opening. At the age of seventy-two he writes to a friend—"I am learning to sing some of Moore's songs, which I think I shall do to great perfection"—no doubt some of those convivial songs which would lead him to drive away melancholy. It was probably suggested by a visit which the poet had made to him a few

weeks before; for he says—"We have had little Tommy Moore here, who seemed to be very much pleased with his visit; he talked and sung in his peculiar fashion, like any nightingale of the 'Flower Valley,' to the delight of us all." After the death of Sydney Smith, this poet was applied to, to write the memoir of his friend, but his serious and sudden illness prevented. It was truly unfortunate that the design was not executed. It would have been peculiarly fitting for two such intimate friends to be thus associated; for the minister of religion, to whom Byron dedicated some stanzas in his "Don Juan," to have his life written by Thomas Moore.

But little is said of his death, nothing of his feelings, in view of the past, or hope of the future. It was to be expected that these things would be hurried over. One last saying, however, is striking, uttered when he must have known that there was no hope of recovery—"I feel so weak, both in body and mind, that I verily believe that if the knife were put into my hand, I should not have strength or energy enough to stick it into a Dissenter." There is "a ruling passion strong in death;" there are exceptions to the remark of Young,

"Men may *live* fools; but fools they cannot *die*."

Though Sydney Smith was through life an enemy of evangelical religion, and a very unsuitable man for the clerical profession, there is much to admire in the manly perseverance with which he laboured in an obscure parish, for the improvement of the people according to his own standard of religion. He was a disappointed man, more to be pitied than either admired or imitated.