

THE
MONTHLY REPOSITORY
OF
THEOLOGY
AND
GENERAL LITERATURE.

POPULUMQUE FALSIS
DEDOCET UTI
VOCIBUS. *Hor.*

"To do something to instruct, but more to undeceive, the timid and admiring student;—to excite him to place more confidence in his own strength, and less in the infallibility of great names;—to help him to emancipate his judgment from the shackles of authority;—to teach him to distinguish between showy language and sound sense;—to warn him not to pay himself with words;—to shew him that what may tickle the ear or dazzle the imagination, will not always inform the judgment;—to dispose him rather to fast on ignorance than to feed himself with error."

Fragment on Government.

JANUARY TO DECEMBER, INCLUSIVE,
1824.

VOLUME XIX.

HACKNEY:

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without actual prostration, I could possibly have expressed myself in more conciliatory and deferential language than I have adopted in my late communications with you. I congratulated myself upon the signature of peace, upon the terms of the *statu quo*, with a separate article relating to commercial objects, providing for the free exchange of all except a few prohibited articles. But how vain are human wishes, and human hopes and expectations! The parchment was engrossed, the seals were brought forth, mine was actually affixed, yours was apparently in your hand, when lo and behold, to my utter astonishment, appears upon the table a *contre-projet*, opening up the whole question at issue. I am called upon to give up all my points, and, like a poor fellow applying to the Bishop of Peterborough for orders, I must reply in five lines to each article of the *projet*. My dear Sir, do you not know that a child may in five words put a question which a philosopher could not answer in as many days or weeks? Papa, who made God?—Nobody, my dear.—Who made the Devil?—God, my dear.—Papa, why does not God kill the Devil?—Ah! that's a puzzler.—You ask, "Had you been present when Jesus Christ said that such persons (meaning such as sinned against the Holy Ghost) should not be forgiven in the world to come—that they should, and be blessed to all eternity?" The only answer which I can, just at present, return to such a question is, that as, without a personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus, I nevertheless love and respect his character too much to gainsay his words, sure I am, that if I had enjoyed the distinguished honour of seeing his mighty works and hearing his wise discourses, this feeling of love and respect would have been so greatly increased, that it is very improbable that I should have ventured to contradict him, although it is possible that, like his disciples, I might have requested him in private to explain his meaning. In the absence of the great Teacher, I must do, as all humble inquirers after the truth have done, diligently and patiently and candidly weigh and compare one saying with another, knowing that "no lie is of the truth;" that is to say, that the Scripture in general, and, by way of

eminence, the gospel of Christ, cannot contain contradictions. This, however, is a work of time; and I must, therefore, since you have put the question thus directly, crave your indulgence for a short space, in order that I may frame my answer. If I am forced to resort to my artillery, blame me not. Of one thing be assured, that your person shall sustain no injury, whatever may become of your fortifications.

Yours affectionately,

[To be continued.]

Mr. Adam's Letter to the Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society, on his renouncing Trinitarianism, with his Remarks on Mr. Ivimey's Letters in the Morning Chronicle.

(See Mon. Repos. Vol. XVII. pp. 682—690.)

Calcutta,

Sept. 7, 1821.

SIR,

PERMIT me to request the insertion in the Monthly Repository of the following letter, addressed to the Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society, to which I shall also crave leave to subjoin some additional remarks.

"DEAR BRETHREN,

"A considerable change having taken place in my religious sentiments, I deem it a duty which I owe to you and to myself, after my mind has arrived at a full conviction on the subject, to give you the earliest information respecting it. The change to which I refer respects the doctrine of the *Trinity*, on which, at the time of my departure from England, I conscientiously held the sentiments which I professed. Since my arrival in this country, however, the discussions in which I have been engaged, in the discharge of my duties as a Missionary, with the natives, both idolatrous and monotheistical, have convinced me that the doctrine referred to can be defended against those who reject Christianity, only by the same arguments which support all idolatry; and a renewed and diligent examination of the Sacred Scriptures has terminated in a no less firm persuasion, that it is equally indefensible against those who draw their objections and arguments from that source. I therefore

consider that I can no longer be justified in teaching it to the heathen, or in professing it amongst my countrymen as an essential part of Christianity.

“Such a declaration may, perhaps, in your judgment, be necessarily, as it is in fact too commonly, accompanied with a rejection of other doctrines, which I, notwithstanding, consider highly important, if not absolutely essential to the scheme of Christian truth. In order, therefore, to prevent all misunderstanding, (which I am particularly anxious to guard against,) I beg to assure you that the supreme, undivided, independent Deity of Jesus Christ, and the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit, are the only doctrines belonging to my former system of belief, which I feel compelled to reject; and that although my first doubts respecting them were suggested by conversing with intelligent Hindoos on the principles of *natural reason*, (the only ground which it is possible to assume with such opponents,) yet it is not on that ground alone that I have finally rejected them. On the contrary, both in rejecting these and in retaining such as are commonly considered either inseparably connected with or dependent upon them, I most unequivocally admit the entire subordination of reason to revelation. Proceeding upon this principle, I believe Jesus Christ to be the only begotten Son of God, that eternal life which was with the Father, by whom also God made the worlds. I believe in his miraculous conception, in his two-fold nature, as the Son of God and as the Son of man, in the sinless purity of his life, in his meritorious sufferings and death, in his resurrection from the dead, in his ascension to heaven, in his exaltation to the right hand of God, and in his prevalent intercession with the Father. I implicitly receive the doctrines and laws which he taught as a prophet; I trust in the atoning sacrifice which he offered as a priest; I submit to the government which he exercises as a king; I anticipate with joy and gratitude the sentence which he will pronounce as my final judge; and I believe that both on account of the original dignity of his nature, the high offices which he has sustained,

and the stupendous work which he has accomplished, he will be an object of eternal veneration and praise to saints and angels in heaven. In short, I consider that as there is only one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in us all, so there is only one Lord, one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; and on the supposition that the latter both in his original and in his assumed nature, is a being derived from, dependent on, and inferior to, the former, whose son and servant he is declared to be, I perceive in the whole scheme of redemption a fitness and intelligibleness, a glory and beauty, which render the doctrines of the gospel doubly dear to my heart.

“With respect to the doctrine of the Spirit, although I am unable to discover any satisfactory evidence in the Scriptures for its distinct personality, yet I believe in the necessity of divine influence to renew the mind, by removing the natural bias to evil, and implanting in its stead a ruling desire for pure and spiritual enjoyments. I also believe, that salvation is to be ascribed to the free and sovereign favour of God through the faith which is in Christ Jesus, a faith which, as it is produced by divine influence, so it works by love, purifies the heart, overcomes the world, and brings forth in the life and conduct those fair fruits of the spirit by which the peculiar genius of Christianity is discovered, and its doctrines recommended to the acceptance of unbelievers.

“Having thus fully explained my views on these points, I trust that the candour which you know so well to exemplify, joined with the particularity of my statements, will effectually prevent all misconception on the subject. It will give me much pleasure to receive and consider any remarks with which you may favour me, the more especially as proceeding from those whose characters I esteem and whose piety I wish to imitate, although I feel compelled to differ from them in some of their doctrinal sentiments. In the mean time, as I no longer profess doctrines which are commonly considered fundamental and indispensable, and as on this ground you may, probably, object to

apply to my support any part of the public money entrusted to you, I shall from the date of this letter, until I hear from you to the contrary, discontinue drawing from your funds the sum which I have regularly received since my arrival in India.

"If, in the public accounts of the Society, you should find occasion to refer to the subject of this letter, I must beg as an act of kindness, what you, I am persuaded, will be disposed to grant from a principle of justice, that you will publish the whole of it. The official mention of my change of sentiments on such a subject in any other language than my own, or the publication of a *part only* of my statements, I would sincerely deprecate as likely to create misapprehensions and prejudices, which may be prevented by an opposite course.

"With fervent prayers for your prosperity as a Society, and for your happiness as individuals, and earnestly intreating a continuance of that friendly and affectionate regard which I have ever experienced from you,

"I am, dear Brethren,

"Yours very affectionately,

"W. ADAM.

When I was writing the above letter, I knew that no language I could employ to express the necessary meaning, would be altogether acceptable to those to whom it was addressed; but, after the guarded and conciliating manner which I adopted, I did not expect those broad charges of a proud and indocile spirit which have been brought against me both in private and in official communications. I am willing to leave the letter to make its own impression upon every honest and candid mind—an experiment which those with whom these charges originated do not appear to have been desirous of attempting, notwithstanding the permission they received to publish it. Upon the immediate subject of this letter, I wish only to add, that it does not *now* correctly express my religious sentiments. The simple humanity of Christ's person and the unpurchased mercy of God, are doctrines which, since writing it, have fully recommended themselves to my understanding and my heart, by an accumula-

tion of evidence which it is my chief wonder how I could so long resist. I shall probably have occasion to refer again to the above letter in the animadversions which I now proceed to make upon the letters addressed by Mr. Ivimey to the Editor of the Morning Chronicle, respecting Rammohun Roy and myself, and since inserted in the Number for November 1822, of your Repository. To Mr. Aspland, I beg to make my sincere acknowledgments for the spirited manner in which he replied to Mr. L.; but there are some points on which he did not possess that information which I shall endeavour to supply. Whether Rammohun Roy is or is not a Christian, I shall leave to himself to declare, as he informs me that, if his other engagements permit, he intends to address you upon this subject.

1. The writer in the Morning Chronicle states that I was "awakened by the arguments of" Rammohun Roy. In this he is perfectly correct. It was he that first shook my belief in the doctrine of the Trinity. It was he that first made me doubt its truth. This I thankfully acknowledge; and if he had never rendered me any other benefit, if he were to be my enemy the remaining part of his life, I should still have abundant reason for gratitude to him during the remaining part of mine. Mr. L. says, with a sneer, that it is not for him to deny that I became a Unitarian through Rammohun Roy, and seems to consider it derogatory to a Christian Missionary, and much more, of course, to the minister of Eagle Street, to learn any thing from such a person. To say that Rammohun Roy is not perfect either in knowledge or in virtue, is saying only what is true of all mankind; but saying this, I do not hesitate to add, that there are few who might not derive some accession to their information from the stores of his erudition, and some additional incentives to goodness from his shining example. Mr. L. is now well advanced in years, and would seem highly to estimate his own attainments; but profound and extensive as they no doubt are, let him be assured that he has *yet* to learn the value and loveliness of truth—a value which is not diminished in the esti-

mation of an honest inquirer, a loveliness which is not hid from an ardent one by the language in which it is conveyed or by the colour of him by whom it is communicated.

Let me not, however, be misunderstood as to the amount of the debt which I owe to Rammohun Roy on this account. Nothing that the writer in the Morning Chronicle has stated, nothing that I have admitted, can justify Mr. I. in describing me "as the disciple of Rammohun Roy." I acknowledge no "mere man" as my master in religion, but I glory in my discipleship to that heavenly Teacher whom Mr. I. charitably supposes it is now my business to "insult." Rammohun Roy did, indeed, first shake my belief in the Trinity, but after I began to doubt its truth, I said little to any one. I read and thought much in private, as in the view of my Omniscient Judge; and it was only when, by a diligent and conscientious perusal of the Christian Scriptures, I became convinced that the Trinity was not a doctrine of revelation, and was opposed to those doctrines which all admit revelation does teach, that I communicated my change of sentiments to him and others without fear and without reserve. Since then, whilst I have enjoyed his cordial sympathy and received his zealous aid in my endeavours to diffuse a knowledge of Unitarian Christianity, I have been, in succession, pitied, communicated, hated, and calumniated by Christian Missionaries; although, one would think, that those who had themselves experienced doubts on the same subject, would have learned forbearance towards others in similar circumstances. I say this advisedly, for I had the best means of knowing that at least two other Missionaries were vacillating at the same time with myself, between Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy. These gentlemen have, in a manner, I am willing to hope, perfectly satisfactory to themselves, got rid of all their qualms and scruples. The only circumstances which, to an impartial observer, might seem to cast a doubt upon this are, the spiritual pride of which they appear lately to have acquired a large accession, and the ignorant vituperation which they bestow upon those who differ from them,

and to whose opinions they had themselves begun to approximate.

Mr. I. says, "It is possible he may have learned the sentiments from those who call themselves Unitarians in this country," i. e. England. Mr. I. is so recondite that I have to search for his meaning. Does he wish to say that I may have learned the sentiments referred to from the works of those who, in England, call themselves Unitarians? Or, does he intend to assert that I, when in England, may have learned these sentiments from the persons who call themselves Unitarians? If the former, I have only to tell him that he is mistaken, and that in the course of the investigations upon which I entered, in addition to the Scriptures, I referred exclusively to the works of Trinitarian divines. If the latter, then it follows that I was a Unitarian at the time I left England. I dare him to the proof of this. I dare him to shew, by evidence, that I ever acted hypocritically in any matter, much less that I continued a hypocrite in religion during three or four years of my life. Let Mr. I. either pay some more attention to the usages of language, or have some more regard for the characters of those whom, if he will not admit them to be fellow-Christians, he, at least, cannot deny to be fellow-creatures, and who, although they may happen in his estimation to be heretics, are not quite so indifferent to their good name as to permit it to be sacrificed either to a blunder in language or to an assertion without proof.

2. The Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society, it appears, "thought it right to dismiss" me "as a Missionary." They did so, but it was by a resolution, dated February 14, 1822, communicated to me in a letter from Mr. Dyer, one of the Secretaries, in reply to the one addressed to them, which I have transcribed above, and sent for publication, and which is dated Sept. 7, 1821. In that letter I had virtually dismissed myself, by relinquishing the salary which I had drawn since my arrival in India, and which, as it amounted only to 50 S. R. per month, could be received even by them in no other light than as a link, and the only one, too, except that of principle, intended to keep up

the connexion between them and myself. In that letter I stated, that I should discontinue drawing the above sum from their funds, *until I should hear from them to the contrary*; thus intimating my willingness to act as their Missionary, if they had no objection to my publicly professing and teaching what I sincerely believed. This, I am well aware, was a degree of Christian moderation, which it was too much to expect them to exercise; but by not accepting this overture, they have brought on themselves all the obloquy of dismissing a Missionary who had offended them only by following the dictates of his conscience; while I enjoy the pleasing satisfaction of having been honest in my avowal of the truth—honest in relinquishing their salary, which, if I had waited for their dismissal, I might have retained a twelvemonth longer, and honest to the engagements which I had made by offering still to labour as their Missionary, if they would accept of such services as I could conscientiously give.

3. From Mr. Ivimey's practice, it would appear not to be inconsistent with serving the cause of reputed Orthodoxy to impose on the acquaintance of an adversary with the particular facts of a case. In vindicating himself for applying to me the term Socinian, he describes a Socinian as one who "avows his determined opposition to the doctrine of the proper divinity of the Son of God, and denies that his death was an atonement for sin," and who "declares that Jesus Christ was a mere man, and that he had no existence before he was born of the Virgin, &c." Now, Mr. Ivimey, if he is as "well acquainted with *all* the transactions of the Baptist Missionary Society," as he professes to be, must have known of the letter given above, in which, while I deny the Supreme Deity of Christ, I at the same time avow my belief in his two-fold nature as the Son of God and as the Son of man, in his pre-existence, and in his atoning sacrifice; and yet Mr. I. describes me as rejecting those doctrines which I had affirmed that I believed in the only authentic document which could have reached him on the subject. Was this *just* to me? Was this *fair* to his opponent? Was this

consistent with that sacred regard which is due to *truth*?

4. It appears from Mr. I.'s account that I have "awfully disappointed the expectations of the Society by which" I was "sent to India." If the members of that Society expected that my sentiments and feelings, my convictions of truth and duty, should always remain in every respect the same, then they expected not only what was highly undesirable, even had I continued a Trinitarian, but what was in fact impossible, enjoying, as I did, the advantages of increasing years, and necessarily exposed, as I was, to new impressions and associations. If the members of that Society expected that, to please them, I would resist the force of truth, and silence the voice of conscience, and thus become a hypocrite and dissembler; then they expected what certainly contained no impossibility, but what was no less certainly opposed to far higher claims than any which they could have upon me; they expected what I never promised to do, and what, if I had been so culpable as to promise, I should have been still more so in performing. But if, which I am willing to suppose, they expected that I should profess and teach only what I sincerely believed to be the truth of God, and that I should be faithful, diligent and persevering, according to the knowledge and strength and means which I possessed, in preaching the glorious gospel of the blessed God, then am I bold to affirm that their expectations have NOT been so "awfully disappointed," as Mr. I. thought fit to represent. The propagation of that gospel, in all its genuine purity and native excellence, amongst the inhabitants of this country, is and will be the object of my unceasing endeavours. But Mr. I. charges me with "insulting" Jesus Christ. I have of late, oftener than once, been called upon to rebut such a charge: but I can truly affirm, that its frequent repetition, instead of weakening, only strengthens the deep feeling of horror which it first excited. Believing, as I do, "that Jesus Christ was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners;" that he was "a man approved of God, by signs and wonders which God did by him;" and that under God "he was the author and finisher of that

faith," the regenerating influences of which will be experienced by all the future ages and nations of the world, it would be a mere waste of words if I were to attempt to vindicate myself from the charge of "insulting" him. Even Mr. I. must consider such an attempt unnecessary, for he evidently employs it only as an *argumentum ad invidiam*, without reflecting on the serious nature of the charge which he brings. Viewed, then, as an argument, it shews the strong prejudices of the person who can employ such reasoning; and if we regard the design, it discovers the bad passions of the man who can stoop to such abuse.

5. I come now to a charge which only Mr. I. could have the effrontery to subscribe with his name. I hope that no other Baptist minister is to be found between Caithness and Cornwall who has sufficient contempt for the favourable opinions of good men, sufficient despite for the restraints of decency and religion to do it. If any others are to be found, I can only mourn over the evil signs of the Baptist denomination, "lament their errors and aberrations" from the paths of practical piety, genuine humility and honest dealing, and use my best endeavours to expose them, as I now do to expose Mr. I. To do this effectually, I transcribe the climax in which he collects all the high crimes and misdemeanours of which I have been guilty. "Is it not a rational cause for lamentation," he asks, and while the word *rational* was distilling from his pen, bigotry was distending his heart—"Is it not a rational cause for lamentation, when men who were once members of our churches; who were educated for the ministry at our expense; who were introduced to the public as ministers through our influence; who owe every thing they are, as public men, to our friendship; should have imitated the worst part of the worst man's conduct? 'He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.'" Let us first examine the charge, in order that we may understand it, and then its proofs. I am, in Mr. I.'s opinion, one of those who "have imitated the worst part of the worst man's conduct." Who then was "the worst man"? By comparing the passage from the Psalms given above, with the context in which it is quoted by our Lord himself,

(John xiii. 18,) it will appear that Mr. I., by these terms, means to describe Judas Iscariot. What was "the worst part of" Judas's conduct? It was undoubtedly the betrayal of his Lord and Master into the hands of his enemies. *In this sense*, I am accused of "having imitated the worst part of the worst man's conduct." Such is the charge. Now for the proofs.

Before proceeding, however, to a separate consideration of the particulars which Mr. I. enumerates, let it be admitted that they contain nothing but what is true, in the most unqualified sense. Let it be admitted that I *was* once a member "of our churches;" that I *was* educated for the ministry "at our expense;" that I *was* introduced to the public as a minister, "through our influence;" that I *do* owe every thing I am, as a public man, "to our friendship." What then? Why, notwithstanding these obligations, I have presumed to exercise the right of private judgment,—impelled by the force of accumulated evidence, I have altered my opinion on a subject which involves, in Mr. I.'s view, no less important alternatives than eternal happiness and eternal misery; and because I *will* not relinquish this right, because I *cannot* resist this evidence, and because I *neither will nor can* commit my conscience, in so weighty a matter, to Mr. I.'s keeping, *therefore* it is that I am accused of having "imitated the worst part of the worst man's conduct." And yet this is the man who prides himself on his "acquaintance with the right of private judgment, and the advantages of unfettered discussion." With such an illustration of Mr. I.'s professions, I may be justified in considering, that "private judgment and unfettered discussion" are not greater strangers to the apostolic head of the Romish Church, who is "infallible," than they are to the elect Pastor of Eagle-Street Meeting, who is "never in the wrong."

But Mr. I.'s premises are not correct to the extent which his words express. It appears I owe every thing I am, as a public man, "to our friendship." In truth, I find it nearly as difficult to recollect the period when I enjoyed Mr. I.'s "friendship," as the Hindoo does to remember the deeds of his pre-existent state. I did, indeed, once see him in London, and was in his company perhaps altogether two

or three hours, during which he condescended to exchange with me at least a hundred words. I happened to meet with him afterwards at Edinburgh, where about an equal degree of intimacy prevailed. Beyond this, his "friendship" for me and mine for him never went.

Again, I was introduced to the public as a minister "through *our* influence."—Now, I certainly feel very highly obliged to Mr. I. for this exertion of his influence; but I have of late received so many uncourtly rubs from that part of "the public," to which he did me the honour of introducing me, that I must confess my obligations to him, on this account, are not so weighty as I sincerely wish they had been.

Further, I was educated for the ministry "at *our* expense." Here a simple statement of facts is required. Before I was connected with the Baptist Missionary Society, I had studied several years at the Grammar School of my native town, and had passed one session at the University of St. Andrew's. After I was connected with that Society, at their expense I studied about fourteen months at Bristol, six months at Glasgow, and three months at Edinburgh. Here my education ended, in so far as it was carried on at their expense; and for the aid which was thus afforded me, I shall ever feel grateful to those members of the Baptist Missionary Society who would disdain on this, or on any other ground, to lord it over my conscience; but to those, if such there be, who, like Mr. I., can employ such an argument for such a purpose, I am not ashamed to say that I find it extremely difficult to keep alive any feeling of gratitude. It may not be altogether improper to remind Mr. I. that there are or have been certain Missionaries who, from Independents or Congregationalists, have become Baptists. Did Mr. I. ever tell the public at whose expense Mr. Judson, Mr. Rice, Mr. Bruckner and Mr. Harle, received their education? Did he ever bring against them the charge of imitating "the worst part of the worst man's conduct"?

Finally, I was once a member "of *our* churches," and, because I have ceased to be so, therefore Mr. I. reasons, I have imitated "the worst part of the worst man's conduct." Was

ever such an indictment supported by such evidence? Admitting, however, which Mr. I.'s argument clearly requires, that Baptist Churches are secret associations for some concealed purpose, which, having once entered, it is unlawful ever to leave, and that I have betrayed "*our* churches" by ceasing any longer to be a member of them, then, according to Mr. I., this betrayal of "*our* churches" is worthy to be described as an imitation of the betrayal of Jesus Christ by Judas; from which it follows, that as I unfortunately bear a strong resemblance to Judas, so *we* and "*our* churches" deserve to be placed in comparison with the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. Did ever Unitarian so "insult" Jesus Christ as to place himself on a level with that divine Teacher? Apologizing for the length to which my remarks have extended, I am, &c.

W. ADAM.

Calcutta, Sept. 9, 1823.

Islington,

March 4, 1824.

SIR,

THE *Eclectic* or *Calvinistic Review* for January 1824, notices the volume of Sermons by Mr. Toller, recently published, together with the prefixed Memoir, by the Rev. Robert Hall. The obnoxious paragraph of the biographer, lamenting the awfully prevalent spirit of *free inquiry* at Daventry Academy, where Mr. Toller was educated, on which I animadverted in your last miscellany, (pp. 83—88,) is extolled to the skies. This is what was to be expected, in perfect unison with the character of that periodical publication, the avowed organ of a party. But with this ebullition of zeal against *free inquiry*, the Reviewers are not contented. They proceed to do what the good sense of Mr. Hall withheld him from doing—attacking Dr. Doddridge for suffering *free inquiry* to be indulged by his students for the ministry! They, indeed, denominate him "the devout and holy Doddridge;" but *devout* and *holy* as he was, he, it seems, set first of all the pernicious example, which Messrs. Ashworth and Robins imitated, so as to endanger the salvation both of their pupils for the ministry, and also of the flocks afterwards committed to their care in different parts of the country. This attack upon