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ART. I.—*A Discussion of the question, Is the Roman Catholic Religion, in any or in all its Principles or Doctrines, inimical to Civil or Religious Liberty? And of the question, Is the Presbyterian Religion, in any or in all its Principles or Doctrines, inimical to Civil or Religious Liberty?* By the Reverend John Hughes of the Roman Catholic Church, and the Reverend John Breckinridge of the Presbyterian Church. Philadelphia: Carey, Lea & Blanchard. 1836.
(Concluded.)

WE have been reluctantly compelled, for want of room, to extend our review of this subject to a third number. But we hope that the intrinsic importance, and (to American citizens) the peculiar interest of the question discussed, will plead our apology.

Now it cannot (to repeat a remark already made)—it cannot be said that the language which describes the church as a commonwealth, and her ministers as governors and magistrates—her members as subjects—heretics as rebels and enemies, is *figurative*; because the figure cannot be carried out. The punishment of heresy required by the laws of the church is in fact capital; and Luther was condemned by Leo

this time, scarcely a more important subject treated in the volume: and while we should be reluctant to see this subject handled by many who are good writers on other subjects, we believe that Dr. Sprague has so carefully studied the subject of true and spurious revivals; and has been in circumstances so favourable to just observation on the true spirit of Fanaticism as it has appeared in our country, not only in religion, but on the subject of temperance, abolition, retrenchment, &c., that he is well qualified to write judiciously and instructively on this subject. We do hope, therefore, that he will not only take in good part our free but friendly remarks, but will so far yield to our suggestions, as to write this lecture over again, for the next edition of his work, with such improvements as we are sure he is capable of making. And here we would conclude our remarks by cordially recommending this volume to all classes of readers, as one which will richly repay them for the expense of buying and the time of perusing it. It has occurred to us, that it would be very suitable to be introduced as a class-book into our academies and female schools of the higher order, in connexion with the Evidences of Christianity. It would tend greatly to enlarge the minds of young ladies by making them familiar with subjects of the highest interest.

ART. IV.—*The Doctrine of Predestination truly and fairly stated; confirmed from clear Scripture Evidence; and Defended against all Material Arguments and Objections advanced against it: to which is annexed a short and faithful Narrative of a remarkable Revival of Religion in the Congregation of New Londonderry, and other parts of Pennsylvania, as the same was sent in a Letter to the Rev. Mr. Prince of Boston. By Samuel Blair, late Minister of the Gospel at Fagg's Manor, Chester County, Pennsylvania. Baltimore: 1836. Matchett, Printer.*

Amibard Alexander

IT is a matter of lively interest with us to recover from oblivion all the writings of those pious and laborious men who laid the foundation of the Presbyterian church in these United States. We have it also at heart to record all well-authenticated accounts of the characters, manners, and lives

of these fathers of our church; for, unless this is speedily done, many facts, which may now be authenticated, will sink into irremediable oblivion. We feel sincerely thankful, therefore, to those persons in Baltimore, who have given us a reprint of the essay of the Rev. Samuel Blair on Predestination; and also of his letter to the Rev. Mr. Prince of Boston. Mr. Samuel Blair was undoubtedly one of the ablest theologians, and most solemn and successful preachers of the day in which he lived; and no better evidence of the strength of his mind, and the soundness of his opinions, need be sought for, than is contained in this essay on a subject which is often misrepresented by its enemies, and not well understood by its friends. A century has now elapsed since Mr. Blair was conspicuous in the church in those regions; and many of the people who now occupy the ground on which he laboured in the ministry, are scarcely acquainted with any thing further that related to this distinguished man than his name. We think, therefore, that our readers will be gratified with such hints respecting him as we have been able to glean.

The Rev. Samuel Blair was, we have reason to think, born in the north of Ireland, whence his parents emigrated to Pennsylvania when he was a boy. The first certain information which we can obtain of him, was while he was a pupil in the school at Neshamony, under the tuition of the Rev. Mr. William Tennent, the father of Gilbert, William, John, and Charles Tennent. From the literary character and solid attainments of the Tennents and Blairs, who finished their education at this school, the teacher must have been eminent in his profession. And the man who was privileged to train four such men as Gilbert and William Tennent, Samuel and John Blair, must ever be considered as an eminent benefactor of the Presbyterian church. The building in which these distinguished men drank in the salutary streams of classical and theological literature, was no better than a log cabin; which, however, on account of the eminence of the men who proceeded from it, was denominated *THE LOG COLLEGE*, long before any chartered college existed in the middle states. This fabric has for some time been in ruins; but the spot where it stood can be pointed out by the aged inhabitants of the vicinity. When the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church formed the determination to establish a Theological Seminary, many of the friends of the enterprise, felt a strong desire that it should be founded on this sacred spot, where such men as the Tennents and Blairs

had been educated. To encourage such a location, the Rev. Nathanael Irwin, then pastor of the Presbyterian church in Neshamony, left a bequest of one thousand dollars to the seminary, provided the General Assembly should conclude to place the seminary on this site.

When Mr. Samuel Blair had finished his classical, and also his preparatory theological studies, he was licensed to preach the gospel, by the presbytery of Newcastle; soon after which, he received a call from the Presbyterian congregation in Shrewsbury, New Jersey. Until lately, we did not know that this excellent and able minister, had ever been the pastor of a church in our vicinity. And we believe, that, though there is still a Presbyterian church in Shrewsbury, there is not a person in that place or in that whole region who has the least idea that the Rev. SAMUEL BLAIR was once the pastor of a Presbyterian church in that village. Who knows but that God has a regard for the place, for the sake of his devoted servant, who preached and prayed there. At any rate, the knowledge of the fact has created a deeper interest for the place, in our minds, and we believe, will have that effect on the present pastor and his little flock who now worship there. This brings to our recollection, the case of a pious woman who died in that village, not many years since. For eight years she was bed-ridden, and during a part of that time there was no pastor; and the little flock had so dwindled, that the hearts of the few that remained were utterly disheartened: but this good woman never ceased to pray for this almost desolate church, and to encourage all around her to trust in the Lord, and to hope that he would still return and visit the desolations of Zion. And God permitted her to live to see a decent and commodious house of worship erected, a pastor settled, and a goodly number gathered into the fold. Though she was never able to visit this house of prayer, and meet with the precious little flock who worshipped there; yet they were accustomed, as a church, to meet with her, in her own house, not only for preaching, prayer, and praise, but for *breaking of bread* in commemoration of the sufferings of our Lord. The writer of this article, on one occasion, was present, when a devoted servant of God, now at rest, preached in her room, and another minister dispensed the sacred symbols of the Lord's body, to this heavenly minded woman, and to the church in her house: and he seldom ever was witness to a scene of deeper, tenderer interest. Now, had this precious woman

ever known that the pious and evangelical Samuel Blair had once prayed and preached, in the place for which she sent up to heaven so many fervent prayers, it would have mightily confirmed and encouraged her believing heart. It was repeatedly said by one who knew her, and the situation of the church in Shrewsbury, that he doubted not, that this little church was preserved from utter extinction by the prayers of this one woman, who for eight years never left her bed, but as she was lifted by others. Her pastor was desirous that there should be some memorial of this patient and devoted servant of God, and he prepared a tract containing a particular account of her afflictions and her faith; but whether he ever got it published, we are not able to say. The reader will indulge us in this digression, we are sure, as it relates to a church, of which Mr. Blair was once the pastor. And as we have entered into some particulars, respecting this church, which was certainly one of the oldest in this part of New Jersey, we will trespass a little further on the patience of the reader, by remarking, that about the close of the last century, the Presbyterian church in Shrewsbury was burnt to the ground; and one disaster followed another, in such quick succession, that about 1812, almost every vestige of a Presbyterian congregation had disappeared. In the village, it is doubted whether a single Presbyterian family remained. The most considerable members of the church had died or emigrated; and it was almost forgotten, in the place, that there ever had existed a Presbyterian church in Shrewsbury. There were, however, a few respectable families in the vicinity, who claimed to be Presbyterians; but they had no bond of union, no place of worship, and never met together as a religious society. After the lapse of a few years, some pious ladies in Princeton, formed themselves into a missionary society to supply destitute places in the state, with the gospel; and having obtained an enterprising missionary, he was directed to visit this place, and to endeavour to resuscitate the church here. This he accomplished with a laudable zeal; and searched out what Presbyterian families remained in the country around, and had them collected and organized, with the view of erecting a new church.

It appears, that some of the most respectable citizens of Monmouth county had once been members of this congregation; as a sample of which one was found remaining, old Mr. Tiebout, a judge of the Court of Common Pleas. This old gentleman, now about three score and ten, alike distinguished

for piety and good sense, took the young missionary by the hand most cordially, and promised him all the co-operation which his standing in society and property could afford. For a long time he had despaired of seeing the desolations of this little Zion restored. He seemed to himself to be left alone, in the midst of other people, with whom he could not comfortably associate in worship. But now his spirits revived, and his zeal received a new impulse. A plan of rebuilding their church was formed; and while the missionary visited all the families in the vicinity, supposed to be friendly to such an institution, the judge repaired to the city of New York, where he had many friends and acquaintances, and so represented the situation of affairs in Shrewsbury, that he secured some aid to the cause, which was now dearer to his heart than any earthly interest. The result of these exertions was, the erection of a small commodious church, in which the gospel has been preached, and the worship of God conducted, with but short interruptions, for more than a dozen years. The pious judge Tiebout, in the evening of his days, had the delightful privilege of meeting with a small church of single-hearted and devoted Christians; and of having an evangelical preacher to lodge in his house, and to dispense the word of life, every Sabbath day. And when about to leave the world, having no offspring of his own, he bequeathed his house and farm for the support of a minister, for ten years; calculating, that by the time these years had elapsed, the church, if at all prospered, would be able to stand on its own foundation. And this expectation has not been entirely disappointed, for the church still exists and grows, and enjoys the labours of a diligent and faithful pastor.

Here we would take occasion to observe, that we have seen few places in all this country, the situation of which pleases us so well, as Shrewsbury. It is a few miles from the sea shore, and within a few hours sail of New York city. The village is on a beautiful and fertile plain, which lies between two small rivers, called the North and South rivers. At Black-point, where these streams flow together, in full view of the Atlantic ocean on one hand, and the brow of the highlands on the other, is one of the most delightful spots we ever visited. The late William Bingham, Esq. of Philadelphia, whose taste for elegance was unsurpassed in this country, was so struck with the beauty of this situation, that, on an elevation of the highlands, he erected an elegant mansion which commands a complete view of the road by which

all ships that enter the port of New York from the Atlantic must pass in full view. And there is not an hour of the day when vessels of every description may not be seen. The point at the junction of the two small rivers was fixed upon, not many years since, as the site of a polytechnic college, and an ample charter was obtained from the New Jersey legislature, by which the managers were authorized to confer literary degrees, the same as any other college. Buildings were commenced, and one or more of the projectors of the plan took up their residence there; but soon the whole scheme fell through. The reasons of the failure are not particularly known to us, but may readily be conjectured. It seems to us, however, that this spot must sooner or later become the site of some flourishing institution.

But to return to Mr. Blair. It appears from a paper of advice to his people, which he dictated on his death bed, that he had been seventeen years in the ministry, eleven of which he had spent in Fagg's Manor, and the other six he must have been the minister of Shrewsbury; his settlement in that place occurred, therefore, in the year 1734, when he was only twenty-two years of age. To what presbytery this congregation then belonged does not appear; it must have been either to the presbytery of Philadelphia or of New York, for four years afterwards the presbytery of New Brunswick was formed by the synod of certain churches and ministers taken from each of these presbyteries. Mr. Samuel Blair was therefore one of the ministers who constituted our presbytery of New Brunswick, at its first erection, in the year 1738. But it was not long after this event, before he received an urgent call to settle in the congregation of New Londonderry, in Fagg's Manor, Chester County, Pennsylvania. Not wishing to take so important a step without the best advice, he laid the whole matter before his presbytery, who advised him to accept the call, as they were of opinion that it would introduce him into a more enlarged field of usefulness, as that part of the country was then rapidly filling up, by emigrations from the north of Ireland, with a Presbyterian population. Mr. Blair, in his letter to the Rev. Mr. Prince of Boston, annexed to the 'Essay on Predestination,' says, "Having been regularly liberated from my former charge in East Jersey above an hundred miles north-eastward from hence, the reverend presbytery of New Brunswick, of which I had the comfort of being a member, judged it to be my duty, for sundry reasons, to remove

from them." The congregation to which he now came had been recently organized, and consisted, as did nearly all Presbyterian congregations in Pennsylvania, at that time, of emigrants from Ireland; and probably many of them from Londonderry, as they gave the name of New Londonderry to their congregation, or to a village within its bounds. The congregation has generally been spoken of under the name Fagg's Manor; but this letter of Mr. Blair to Mr. Prince is dated New Londonderry, Aug. 6, 1744. This congregation had existed about fourteen or fifteen years before he came to them, but they had never enjoyed the labours of a regular pastor until he was installed over them. This event occurred in the month of April, 1740, although he removed and settled among them in Nov. 1739.

Mr. Blair had not been long labouring in this field before he was permitted to see his ministry crowned with extraordinary success. A glorious revival took place among his people, the influence of which extended far and wide. But as he drew up, at the request of Mr. Prince of Boston, a particular account of this work of grace, for publication, it will be gratifying to many, now after the lapse of nearly a century, to read a narrative of God's wonderful mercy to his church in the days of our fathers.

"I cannot, indeed, give near so full and particular a relation of the revival of religion here as I might have done, had I had such a thing in view at the time when God was most eminently carrying on his work among us: I entirely neglected then to note down any particulars in writing, for which I have been often very sorry since; so that this account must be very imperfect to what it might otherwise have been.

"That it may the more clearly appear that the Lord has indeed carried on a work of true real religion among us of late years, I conceive it will be useful to give a brief general view of the state of religion in these parts before this remarkable season. I doubt not then, but there were still some sincerely religious people up and down; and there were, I believe, a considerable number in the several congregations pretty exact, according to their education, in the observance of the external forms of religion, not only as to attendance upon public ordinances on the Sabbaths, but also as to the practice of family worship, and perhaps secret prayer too; but, with these things the most part seemed, to all appearance, to rest contented; and to satisfy their consciences just

with a dead formality in religion. If they performed these duties pretty punctually in their seasons, and as they thought, with a good meaning, out of conscience, and not just to obtain a name for religion among men, then they were ready to conclude that they were truly and sincerely religious. A very lamentable ignorance of the main essentials of true practical religion, and the doctrines nearly relating thereunto, very generally prevailed. The nature and necessity of the *new birth* was but little known or thought of, the necessity of a conviction of sin and misery, by the Holy Spirit's opening and applying the law to the conscience, in order to a saving closure with Christ, was hardly known at all to the most. It was thought, that if there was any need of a heart-distressing sight of the soul's danger, and fear of divine wrath, it was only needful for the grosser sort of sinners; and for any others to be deeply exercised this way, (as there might sometimes be some rare instances observable) this was generally looked upon to be a great evil and temptation that had befallen those persons. The common names for such soul-concern were, *melancholy*, *trouble of mind* or *despair*. These terms were in common, so far as I have been acquainted, indifferently used as synonymous; and *trouble of mind* was looked upon as a great evil, which all persons that made any sober profession and practice of religion, ought carefully to avoid. There was scarcely any suspicion at all, in general, of any danger of depending upon self-righteousness, and not upon the righteousness of *Christ* alone for salvation. *Papists* and *Quakers* would be readily acknowledged guilty of this crime, but hardly any professed *Presbyterian*. The necessity of being first in *Christ* by a vital union, and in a justified state, before our religious services can be well pleasing and acceptable to God, was very little understood or thought of; but the common notion seemed to be, that if people were aiming to be in the way of duty as well as they could, as they imagined, there was no reason to be much afraid.

“ According to these principles, and this ignorance of some of the most soul-concerning truths of the gospel, people were very generally through the land careless at heart, and stupidly indifferent about the great concerns of eternity. There was very little appearance of any hearty engagedness in religion: and, indeed the wise, for the most part, were in a great degree asleep with the foolish. 'Twas sad to see with what a careless behaviour the public ordinances were attended,

and how people were given to unsuitable worldly discourse on the Lord's holy day. In public companies, especially at weddings, a vain and frothy lightness was apparent in the deportment of many professors; and in some places very extravagant follies, as horse running, fiddling and dancing, pretty much obtained on those occasions."

"There were some hopefully pious people here at my first coming, which was a great encouragement and comfort to me. I had some view and sense of the deplorable condition of the land in general; and accordingly the scope of my preaching through that first winter after I came here, was mainly calculated for persons in a natural unregenerate estate. I endeavoured, as the Lord enabled me, to open up and prove from his word, the truths which I judged most necessary for such as were in that state, to know and believe, in order to their conviction and conversion. I endeavoured to deal searchingly and solemnly with them; and, through the concurring blessing of God, I had knowledge of four or five brought under deep convictions that winter. In the beginning of March I took a journey into *East Jersey*, and was abroad for two or three Sabbaths. A neighbouring minister, who seemed to be earnest for the awakening and conversion of secure sinners, and whom I had obtained to preach a Sabbath to my people in my absence, preached to them, I think, on the first Sabbath after I left home. His subject was the dangerous and awful case of such as continue unregenerate and unfruitful under the means of grace. The text was, Luke xiii. 7. *Then said he to the dresser of his vineyard, behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none, cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?* Under that sermon there was a visible appearance of much soul-concern among the hearers, so that some burst out with an audible noise into bitter crying; (a thing not known in those parts before.) After I had come home, there came a young man to my house under deep trouble about the state of his soul, whom I had looked upon as a pretty light, merry sort of a youth: he told me, that he was not any thing concerned about himself in the time of hearing the abovementioned sermon, nor afterwards, till the next day that he went to his labour, which was grubbing, in order to clear some new ground: the first grub he set about was a pretty large one, with a high top, and when he had cut the roots, as it fell down, those words came instantly to his remembrance, and as a spear to his heart, *Cut it down, why*

cumbereth it the ground? So, thought he, must I be cut down by the justice of God, for the burning of hell, unless I get into another state than I am now in. He thus came into very great and abiding distress, which, to all appearance has had a happy issue: his conversation being to this day as becomes the gospel of Christ.

“The news of this very public appearance of deep soul-concern among my people, met me an hundred miles from home: I was very joyful to hear of it, in hopes that God was about to carry on an extensive work of converting grace among them; and the first sermon I preached after my return to them was from Matthew vi. 33. *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.* After opening up and explaining the parts of the text, when in the improvement, I came to press the injunction in the text, upon the unconverted and ungodly, and offered this as one reason, among others, why they should now henceforth first of all *seek the kingdom and righteousness of God*, viz. that they had neglected too, too long to do so already. This consideration seemed to come and cut like a sword upon several in the congregation, so that while I was speaking upon it, they could no longer contain, but burst out in the most bitter mourning. I desired them, as much as possible, to restrain themselves from making a noise that would hinder themselves or others from hearing what was spoken: and often afterwards I had occasion to repeat the same counsel. I still advised people to endeavour to moderate and bound their passions, but not so as to resist or stifle their convictions. The number of the awakened increased very fast, frequently under sermons there were some newly convicted, and brought into deep distress of soul about their perishing estate. Our Sabbath assemblies soon became vastly large: many people from almost all parts around inclining very much to come where there was such appearance of the divine power and presence. I think there was scarcely a sermon or lecture preached here through that whole summer, but there was manifest evidences of impressions on the hearers; and many times the impressions were very great and general: several would be overcome and fainting; others deeply sobbing, hardly able to contain, others crying in a most dolorous manner, many others more silently weeping; and a solemn concern appearing in the countenance of many others. And sometimes the soul exercises of some, though comparatively but very few, would so far affect their bodies, as to occasion some strange,

unusual bodily motions. I had opportunities of speaking particularly with a great many of those who afforded such outward tokens of inward soul-concern in the time of public worship and hearing of the word; indeed many came to me of themselves in their distress for private instruction and counsel; and I found, so far as I can remember, that, with by far the greater part, their apparent concern in public was not just a transient qualm of conscience, or merely a floating commotion of the affections; but a rational fixed conviction of their dangerous perishing estate. They could generally offer, as a convictive evidence of their being in an unconverted miserable estate, that they were utter strangers to those dispositions, exercises and experiences of soul in religion, which they heard laid down from God's word as the inseparable characters of the truly regenerate people of God; even such as before had something of the form of religion; and I think the greater number were of this sort, and several had been pretty exact and punctual in the performance of outward duties. They saw that they had been contenting themselves with the form, without the life and power of godliness; and that they had been taking peace to their consciences from, and depending upon, their own righteousness, and not the righteousness of *Jesus Christ*. In a word, they saw that true practical religion was quite another thing than they had conceived it to be, or had any true experience of. There were likewise many up and down the land brought under deep distressing convictions that summer, who had lived very loose lives, regardless of the very externals of religion. In this congregation I believe there were very few that were not stirred up to some solemn thoughtfulness and concern more than usual about their souls. The general carriage and behaviour of people was soon very visibly altered. Those awakened were much given to reading in the holy scriptures and other good books. Excellent books that had lain by much neglected, were then much perused, and lent from one to another; and it was a peculiar satisfaction to people to find how exactly the doctrines they heard daily preached, harmonize with the doctrines maintained and taught by great and godly men in other parts and former times. The subjects of discourse almost always, when any of them were together, were the matters of religion and great concerns of their souls. All unsuitable, worldly, vain discourse on the Lord's day seemed to be laid aside among them: indeed, for any thing that appeared, there seemed to be an almost uni-

versal reformation in this respect in our public assemblies on the Lord's day. There was an earnest desire in people after opportunities for public worship and hearing the word. I appointed in the spring to preach every Friday through the summer when I was at home, and those meetings were well attended, and at several of them the power of the Lord was remarkably with us. The main scope of my preaching through that summer, was, laying open the deplorable state of man by nature since the fall, our ruined, exposed ease by the breach of the first covenant, and the awful condition of such as were not in *Christ*, giving the marks and characters of such as were in that condition: and moreover, laying open the way of recovery in the new covenant, through a Mediator, with the nature and necessity of faith in *Christ*, the Mediator, &c. I laboured much on the last mentioned heads, that people might have right apprehensions of the gospel method of life and salvation. I treated much on the way of a sinner's closing with *Christ* by faith, and obtaining a right peace to an awakened wounded conscience; showing, that persons were not to take peace to themselves on account of their repentings, sorrows, prayers, and reformations, nor to make these things the ground of their adventuring themselves upon *Christ* and his righteousness, and of their expectations of life by him: and, that neither were they to obtain or seek peace in extraordinary ways, by visions, dreams, or immediate inspirations; but by an understanding view and believing persuasion of the way of life, as revealed in the gospel, through the suretyship, obedience, and sufferings of *Jesus Christ*, with a view of the suitableness and sufficiency of that mediatory righteousness of *Christ* for the justification and life of law-condemned sinners; and thereupon freely accepting him for their Saviour, heartily consenting to, and being well pleased with, that way of salvation; and venturing their all upon his mediation, from the warrant and encouragement afforded of God thereunto in his word, by his free offer, authoritative command, and sure promise to those that so believe. I endeavoured to show the fruits and evidences of a true faith, &c.

“ In some time many of the convinced and distressed afforded very hopeful, satisfying evidence that the Lord had brought them to a true closure with *Jesus Christ*, and that their distresses and fears had been in a great measure removed in a right gospel-way by believing in the Son of God; several of them had very remarkable and sweet deliverances

this way. It was very agreeable to hear their accounts, how that, when they were in the deepest perplexity and darkness, distress and difficulty, seeking God as poor condemned hell-deserving sinners, the scene of the recovering grace, through a Redeemer, has been opened to their understandings, with a surprising beauty and glory, so that they were enabled to believe in Christ with joy unspeakable and full of glory. It appeared that most generally the Holy Spirit improved, for this purpose, and made use of some one particular passage or another of the Holy Scripture that came to their remembrance in their distress, some gospel-offer or promise, or some declaration of God directly referring to the recovery and salvation of undone sinners, by the new covenant: but with some it was otherwise, they had not any one particular place of scripture more than another in their view at the time. Those who met with such remarkable relief, as their account of it was rational and scriptural, so they appeared to have had at the time the attendants and fruits of a true faith, particularly humility, love, and an affectionate regard to the will and honour of God. Much of their exercise was in self-abasing and self-loathing, and admiring the astonishing condescension and grace of God towards such vile and despicable creatures, that had been so full of enmity and disaffection to him: then they freely and sweetly, with all their hearts, chose the ways of his commandments; their inflamed desire was to live to him forever, according to his will, and to the glory of his name. There were others that had not had such remarkable relief and comfort, who yet I could not but think were savingly renewed, and brought truly to accept of, and rest upon, Jesus Christ, though not with such a degree of liveliness and liberty, strength and joy; and some of these continued, for a considerable time after, for the most part, under a very distressing suspicion and jealousy of their case. I was all along very cautious of expressing to people my judgment of the goodness of their states, excepting where I had pretty clear evidences from them, of their being savingly changed, and yet they continued in deep distress, casting off all their evidences: sometimes in such cases I have thought it needful to use greater freedom that way than ordinary; but otherwise I judged that it could be of little use, and might readily be hurtful.

“Beside these above spoke of, whose experience of a work of grace was in a good degree clear and satisfying, there were some others (though but very few in this congre-

gation that I know of) who, having very little knowledge or capacity, had a very obscure and improper way of representing their case. In relating how they had been exercised, they would chiefly speak of such things as were only the effects of their souls' exercise upon their bodies from time to time, and some things that were just imaginary, which obliged me to be at much pains in my enquiries before I could get any just ideas of their case. I would ask them, what were the thoughts, the views, and apprehensions of their minds, and exercise of their affections at such times when they felt, perhaps, a quivering overcome them, as they had been saying, or a faintness, thought they saw their hearts full of some nauseous filthiness, or when they felt a heavy weight and load at their hearts, or felt the weight again taken off, and a pleasant warmth rising from their hearts, as they would probably express themselves, which might be the occasion or causes of these things they spoke of? and then, when with some difficulty I could get them to understand me, some of them would give a pretty rational account of solemn spiritual exercises. And upon a thorough, careful examination this way, I could not but conceive good hopes of some such persons.

“But there were, moreover, several others, who seemed to think concerning themselves that they were under some good work, of whom yet I could have no reasonable ground to think that they were under any hopeful work of the Spirit of God. As near as I could judge of their case from all my acquaintance and conversation with them, it was much to this purpose: they believed there was a good work going on, that people were convinced, and brought into a converted state, and they desired to be converted too; they saw others weeping and fainting, and heard people mourning and lamenting, and they thought if they could be like those it would be very hopeful with them: hence they endeavoured just to get themselves affected by sermons, and if they could come to weeping, or get their passions so raised as to incline them to vent themselves by cries, now they hoped they were got under convictions, and were in a very hopeful way; and afterwards they would speak of their being in trouble, and aim at complaining of themselves, but seemed as if they knew not well how to do it, nor what to say against themselves, and then they would be looking and expecting to get some texts of scripture applied to them for their comfort; and when any

scripture text, which they thought was suitable for that purpose, came to their minds, they were in hopes it was brought to them by the Spirit of God, that they might take comfort from it. And thus, much in such a way as this, some appeared to be pleasing themselves just with an imaginary conversion of their own making. I endeavoured to correct and guard against all such mistakes, so far as I discovered them in the course of my ministry; and to open up the nature of a true conviction by the Spirit of God, and of a saving conversion.”

“This blessed shower of divine influence spread very much through this province that summer, and was likewise considerable in some other places bordering upon it. The accounts of some ministers being sometimes distinguished by their searching, awakening doctrine, and solemn, pathetic manner of address, and the news of the effects of their preaching upon their hearers, seemed in some measure to awaken people through the country, to consider their careless and formal way of going on in religion, and very much excited their desires to hear those ministers. There were several vacant congregations without any settled pastors, which earnestly begged for their visits, and several ministers who did not appear heartily to put to their shoulders to help in carrying on the same work, yet then yielded to the pressing importunities of their people in inviting these brethren to preach in their pulpits, so that they were very much called abroad and employed in incessant labours, and the Lord wrought with them mightily, very great assemblies would ordinarily meet to hear them upon any day of the week, and oftentimes a surprising power accompanying their preaching, was visible among the multitudes of their hearers. It was a very comfortable, enlivening time to God’s people, and great numbers of secure, careless professors, and many loose, irreligious persons, through the land, were deeply convinced of their miserable, perishing estate, and there is abundant reason to believe, and be satisfied, that many of them were in the issue, savingly converted to God. I myself had occasion to converse with a great many up and down who have given a most agreeable account of very precious and clear experiences of the grace of God, several even in *Baltimore*, a county in the province of *Maryland*, who were brought up almost in a state of heathenism, almost without any knowledge of the true doctrines of Christianity, afford very satisfying evidence of

being brought to a saving acquaintance with God in Christ Jesus.

“Thus, sir, I have endeavoured to give a brief account of the revival of religion among us in these parts, in which I have endeavoured all along to be conscientiously exact in relating things according to the naked truth, knowing that I must not speak wickedly even for God, nor talk deceitfully for HIM: and, upon the whole, I must say it is beyond all dispute with me, and I think it is beyond all reasonable contradiction, that God has carried on a great and glorious work of his special grace among us.”

Besides what we have extracted, the letter contains an account of the religious experience of several individuals, which it would gratify us to lay before our readers; but our limited space forbids us this pleasure; and the whole letter being now republished, all who wish for further information may readily have access to it. As Mr. Blair seems to have been conscientiously desirous of publishing a truly correct narrative of this extraordinary revival, he took the precaution to get the elders of the church to read the account, and to add their attestation. Accordingly Mr. Blair's letter is accompanied by a certificate, signed by six elders, corroborating the narrative of their minister.

The pious reader will be struck with the similarity between this revival and many of those which have been experienced in our own time. The effects of the divine Spirit's operations on the human heart, however many circumstantial differences there may be, are in every age and country substantially the same. And this striking similarity in the exercises of the pious, furnishes a strong evidence of the reality of experimental religion.

Mr. Blair was truly a burning and a shining light; but, like many others of this description, while he enlightened others, he consumed himself. Though his life was protracted a few years beyond that of Brainerd or Davies, yet he did not reach his fortieth year. Of his last sickness we have not been able to collect any particulars, except that from his dying bed he dictated an advice to his beloved people, to which we have already referred, but the discourse, though it was printed, is not within our reach. His remains were deposited in the burying ground at Fagg's Manor, where his tomb may still be seen, on which is the following inscription.

“ Here lyeth the body of
 REV. SAMUEL BLAIR,
 Who departed this life,
 The 5th day of July, 1751,
 Aged 39 years and 21 days.

“ In yonder sacred house I spent my breath,
 Now silent, mouldering, here I lie in death;
 These silent lips shall wake, and yet declare
 A dread Amen to truths they published there.”

His fame was great throughout the Presbyterian church, and has been handed down with lustre to the present time. The Rev. Dr. Finley, a contemporary and friend, who preached his funeral sermon, and who was well qualified to judge of his ministerial character, has left us the following testimony. “ He was diligent in the exercise of his office to the utmost of his bodily strength; *not sparing himself*; and God remarkably succeeded his faithful ministrations to the conversion of many souls.” And as a member of the church judicatories, the same reverend person bears the following honourable testimony. “ We waited for his sage remarks, and heard attentively his prudent reasonings. After *his* words, how seldom had any occasion to speak again. His speech dropped upon us, and we waited for him as for the rain.”

It is reported of him that there was a solemnity in his person and appearance which struck an awe into the mind of the beholder; and this was most conspicuous and impressive when he was in the pulpit. We remember, many years ago, to have conversed with an aged man, who was brought up in Pennsylvania, and had been awakened under Mr. Blair’s ministry. He informed us that, when a wild young man, he had been induced, by the fame of Mr. Blair, to ride far, one morning, to hear him preach; but passing the house where the minister had lodged, he saw him walking in the yard with his arms folded; and, said he, “ The very sight of him threw me into a tremor from which I did not recover until I saw him in the pulpit, and heard him, with awful emphasis, give out the text ‘ Except a man be born again,’ &c. From that moment I fell under the deep conviction that I was a lost and ruined sinner, and this impression never left me entirely, until I hope I was born again.” This man had maintained a character of eminent piety for about half a century when he gave us this account.

We are unable to compare such men as Gilbert Tennent and Samuel Blair. They were both preachers of extraordinary power; and were chief instruments in carrying on the work of the Lord.

The estimation in which Mr. Blair was held as a preacher by a good judge, may be learned from the following anecdote, received from the lips of Dr. Rodgers, by a person now living. When the Rev. Samuel Davies returned from Europe, his friends wished to know his opinion of the celebrated preachers he had heard in England and Scotland. After dealing out liberal commendation to such as he admired most, he concluded by saying, that he had heard no one who, in his judgment, was superior to his former teacher, the Rev. Samuel Blair.

Mr. Blair had one brother younger than himself, who was educated also at Neshaminy, and who also entered the ministry. His name was John, and he was first settled in Cumberland county, probably at Carlisle or its vicinity, about the year 1742. But this being then a frontier, he and his people were driven back into the older settlements, by the hostile incursion of the Indians, who were then very troublesome to the new settlements. At the time of the premature death of his brother Samuel, he was without a charge, and very soon received a call to become his successor, as the pastor of the church in Fagg's Manor, which he accepted.

And here may be the proper place to mention, that Mr. Samuel Blair, being a good classical scholar as well as an able theologian and powerful preacher, soon after his settlement at New Londonderry, instituted an academy there, after the model of the one at Neshaminy, the benefits of which he had experienced as well as witnessed. The object of this institution was the preparation of young men of talents and piety for the gospel ministry. So deeply were the fathers of the Presbyterian church in these United States impressed with the necessity of learning, for this sacred office, that several of the ablest and most learned of them devoted much of their time to this work, and by this means accomplished much more than they would have done by spending their whole time in preaching.* That this was true in regard to Mr.

* Besides the Log College at Neshaminy, in Bucks county, Pennsylvania, which may be considered the mother institution, and the academy established at Fagg's Manor by the Rev. Samuel Blair, there was a famous school at West Nottingham, under the tuition of the Rev. Samuel Finley, who succeeded Mr. Davies as president of New Jersey college. In this school the following distin-

Blair's academy, will be evident from a mere recital of the names of some who obtained their classical learning at this school. Among these were Samuel Davies, so well known to the American, and also to the British churches; John Rodgers, so long a conspicuous preacher in New York; Hugh Henry, a highly esteemed Presbyterian minister on the eastern shore of Maryland; Alexander Cumming; and James Finley. To have been instrumental in training such men as these is honour enough for any one man, and this honour properly belongs to Samuel Blair, whose memory should be preserved fresh in the Presbyterian church to the latest periods.

John Blair, who was not inferior to his brother in learning and abilities, though he probably was so in pulpit eloquence, succeeded him not only in the pastoral office, but also as principal of the academy. In this important station he continued for nine years. But, in the mean time, New Jersey college having been erected for the express purpose of raising

guished persons were pupils at the same time: Governor Martin of North Carolina, Ebenezzer Hazard, Esq. of Philadelphia, Dr. Benjamin Rush, and his brother Jacob Rush, Esq. a distinguished and pious judge, the Rev. William Tennent of Abington, and the Rev. James Waddel, D.D. of Virginia. Another excellent academical and theological institution was erected at Pequea, under the care of the Rev. Robert Smith, who married Mr. Blair's sister. From this school also, many eminent men proceeded, whose names we are unable to give. But the sons of the reverend principal are sufficient to give celebrity to the school in which they received their elementary education, for they were all uncommonly excellent classical scholars. Two of them are too well known as presidents of colleges, and as eloquent preachers, to require any further notice here; a third was a highly respectable clergyman, formerly pastor of a Presbyterian church in Wilmington, Delaware, and afterwards of a Dutch Reformed church in this vicinity. But one of the most accomplished classical teachers who ever gave instruction in this country, was the Rev. Dr. Allison, a native of Ireland, but a graduate of the university of Glasgow. He is supposed to have arrived in this country in the year 1735, but his name does not appear on the records of the synod until 1737. He first set up his school at New London, in Maryland, but it was not long before it was transferred to Newark, Delaware; where it long flourished under the care of Dr. M'Dowell, Dr. Allison having been removed to the city of Philadelphia, to be the rector of an academy there, and afterwards appointed vice-provost of the college, now the university of Pennsylvania. It is admitted that Dr. Allison's scholars were the most accomplished in classical literature of any educated in this country: but at that time, in all the schools above mentioned, this species of learning was much more thoroughly cultivated than it is at present. And while we are mentioning Presbyterian schools of that period, we cannot forget the school commenced at Elizabethtown, then transferred to Newark, and erected into a college, and finally fixed at Princeton, under the name of the college of New Jersey, on which the smiles of Providence continue to rest. For much accurate information on this whole subject, see the Rev. Dr. Green's *Christian Advocate*, vol. xi., and also his *History of the College of New Jersey*.

up men for the ministry, and having, by a wonderful Providence, been deprived of several of its distinguished presidents, by their sudden removal by death, Mr. John Blair, in the vacancy produced by the decease of the Rev. Dr. Finley, was elected professor of Divinity; upon which, he removed from Fagg's Manor, and transferred his residence to Princeton; and as the college remained for sometime without a head, Mr. Blair, at the request of the Trustees, acted as president until the arrival of the Rev. Dr. Witherspoon from Scotland. After which he resigned his office in college, and accepted an invitation to settle as pastor at Wallkill, Orange county, New York, where he remained until his death, which event occurred Dec. 8, 1771, at which time he was no more than fifty-one or fifty-two years of age. Mr. John Blair left behind him a Treatise on Regeneration, which is ably written and orthodox. He published also a discourse respecting the terms of admission to the sacraments, in which he endeavours to prove that there is no more propriety in excluding those who wish to attend on them, than to exclude them from other parts of God's worship. This piece the late Dr. J. P. Wilson, of Philadelphia, republished in a small selection of "Sacramental Treatises."

Mr. Samuel Blair had two sisters married to eminent Presbyterian clergymen; the one to the Rev. Dr. Robert Smith of Pequea, as before mentioned; the other to the Rev. Mr. Carmichael of Brandywine; and one sister who remained unmarried. He left behind him one son, the late Rev. Dr. Samuel Blair of Germantown, who died there, at an advanced age, twelve or fifteen years since. Dr. Blair, in his youth, was considered the most accomplished and promising young man in the Presbyterian church, as an evidence of which it may be mentioned, that at the age of twenty-five he was elected president of New Jersey college. This office he wisely declined, but accepted an invitation to settle in the Old South Church, Boston; but in going thither by water, he suffered shipwreck, and was for a time much exposed. By this disaster his health and spirits received a shock from which he never entirely recovered. To increase the misfortune, he lost his whole stock of written sermons, which, to a young man in such a conspicuous situation, must have been no small inconvenience. He returned from Boston after a short residence, and took up his abode in Germantown, Pennsylvania, where he spent the remainder of his life in literary retirement. His health was feeble and his voice

weak; so that during many years that he continued to live, he never had any pastoral charge, and preached but seldom. He was a modest, friendly man, and had a delicate taste in composition and eloquence. When congress met in Philadelphia, he was for a while chaplain to that body.

Mr. Samuel Blair of Fagg's Manor also left several daughters; at least two, one of whom was married to the Rev. David Rice, and became the mother of a numerous offspring; many of whom are still well known in Virginia and Kentucky.

But to return from this long digression to the article under consideration, we would remark, that there existed a difference of opinion in the Presbyterian church, respecting the true character of the revival which commenced about the year 1740, and which extended through almost every colony where Presbyterians resided; and also with great power through New England. There was also a wide difference of feeling in regard to the ministry of Mr. Whitefield, who laboured most incessantly and successfully in this country. The leaders and friends of the revival were the Tennents, Blairs, Smith, Rowland, &c., who belonged principally to the presbyteries of New Brunswick and Newcastle; while the majority of the other presbyteries considered Mr. Whitefield to be a rash enthusiastic man, who, by his impassioned eloquence, drove the people to distraction; and the revival, as it was called, they believed to be a grand delusion, by which poor ignorant souls were persuaded that they were suddenly converted, and adopted into the favour of God. The controversy soon became so hot that the contending parties could no longer live in the same communion. The Presbyterian church was rent into two parts, the one of which received the denomination of *Old Side*, and the other that of *New Side*. Mr. Samuel Blair, as being a chief instrument in promoting the revival in Pennsylvania, took a very active part in defending it, and in repelling the attacks made on the Rev. Mr. Whitefield, whom he and his associates believed to be an eminent servant of God, and the most successful as well as the most eloquent preacher of the day. But happily few things were published on this controversy, and most of what was written has sunk into oblivion, from which it would not be for edification to rescue it if it were practicable. The spirit of the parties, we know, was exceedingly exasperated against each other; but there were then no religious papers to serve as channels for the wide circulation of the bitterness of controversy. By degrees the heat of this contention subsided,

and the leading men on both sides endeavoured to promote, not only peace, but union, which, after a while, they accomplished. This schism lasted about seventeen years, during which time each party had formed a synod. The *New Side* had become strong by a coalition with the Presbyterians of New York; and by the accession to their party of the Presbyterian ministry in East Jersey, who did not join the *New Side* until four years after the schism had taken place. The two synods met in Philadelphia, in the year 1758, and united into one body under the name of THE SYNOD OF NEW YORK AND PHILADELPHIA, and adopted the Westminster Confession of Faith, as the standard of doctrine, to be received by all ministers, candidates, and elders in the church, without qualification. It should be remarked, that the unhappy schism of which we have spoken, had no reference whatever to doctrine. The *NEW SIDE* were as rigid in their adherence to the doctrines of the Confession and Catechisms, as the *Old Side*; the only other point of difference, besides that of the revival, related to the qualifications of candidates for the ministry. The *Old Side* insisted more on the necessity of *learning*; the *New Side*, of *piety*; and in order to secure this point, they examined all candidates on their experimental acquaintance with religion; to which their opponents objected, for various reasons. But when the union was formed this principle was conceded, and became a standing rule in all the presbyteries; and the same regulations relative to learning in candidates were adopted, which are now in force. Mr. Blair did not live to see this union consummated. No doubt he would have rejoiced in it, for he was a man of a meek and respectful disposition, and of a catholic spirit.

The congregation of Fagg's Manor, after the departure of the Rev. John Blair to Princeton began to decline. It was difficult to find a successor to such men, and the people were unwilling to call any minister, unless he came near to the standard to which they had been accustomed. The consequence was that the congregation remained long vacant, and of course did not flourish; and when they obtained a pastor at last, he turned out to be in all respects dissimilar to their former pastors. In his hands every thing went down, until he saw fit to relinquish his charge and remove to the west. Another long vacancy now occurred, and it did appear, as though this once famous church would become extinct. Still some of the old members, of deep and lively piety, remained; but the rising generation possessed another spirit, and many

emigrated to Western Virginia and to the western part of Pennsylvania. In 1795, we conversed with an aged man above 80, who had been an elder in the church of Fagg's Manor, in the time of Samuel Blair, of whom he could not speak without tears; but he seemed to think that the world was entirely changed, for said he, "I hear no man preach now as did Samuel Blair." But God remembered and visited these long desolations. Under the faithful and diligent labours of their late pastor, the Rev. Mr. White, who settled among them when a young man, and continued in active service, about thirty years, this church was again built up, and has for many years held a respectable standing in the presbytery of Newcastle.

We have occupied so much of our allotted space, in giving a sketch of the life of Mr. Blair and collateral events, that we have little room left for any remarks on the "Essay on Predestination;" but as we wish our readers to peruse the whole discourse, there will be no use in making any selections. It will be sufficient to observe, that it is characterized by vigour, clearness, and sound orthodoxy. The person who reads it with attention and impartiality, will need no other evidence that the author was a man of powerful mind, and an uncompromising Calvinist. We were also agreeably disappointed, in finding that there is very little objectionable in the style; and we see not why it may not now be circulated with as much advantage, as a century ago, when it was first published. There are some other things in print from the pen of Mr. Blair, which we should be pleased to see again. Every relic of such a man is precious, and should be preserved.

J. N. Alexander

ART. V.—*Critical Remarks on an alleged interpolation
in Isaiah 7: 8.*

SOME of our readers must have heard Mr. Wolff's graphic account of the orthodox Professor in Germany, who, after stating various neological interpretations of a certain passage, ventured to suggest, with all humility, whether it might not *possibly* be understood, as having reference to Jesus Christ. The same sort of feeling, in a less degree, exists among ourselves, produced by an exaggerated estimate