BIBLICAL REPERTORY.

OCTOBER 1837.

No. IV.

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 Presbyteriun 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.

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

condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy."

ART. III.—Lectures illustrating the Contrast between true Christianity and various other Systems; by William B. Sprague, D.D., Minister of the Second Presbyterian Congregation in Albany, New-York: Daniel Appleton & Co. 1837. pp. 386.

Dr. Sprague holds the pen of a ready writer. It seems to give him little trouble to throw off a volume of several hundreds of pages. And as he is a ready, so he is a useful writer: his opinions seldom furnish occasion for just censure; and his style is so free from blemish that there is little left for the critic but to applaud. The only fault which we remember to have heard charged against his style is that it is so smooth as often to be deficient in vigour. But whatever may be the fact in regard to former publications, we are of opinion that the lectures now before us furnish no evidence of the fault in question: they are evidently written, not only in a style of uncommon perspicuity, but with point and force. It was our design before this time to give a review of this publication, which seems not yet to have attracted as much attention as the importance of the subjects treated, and the excellence of the composition demand; but by the press of other matters our space has been so pre-occupied, that we could not find room for many things which we wished to lay before the public.

These lectures furnish much correct and valuable information respecting the false systems of which they treat; and will, we think, be hereafter considered by the judicious part of the Christian public, as a production of Dr. Sprague's pen, which has as good claims to become a standard work in our Theological literature, as any other with which he has favoured the world. The lectures are eight in number. The following are their titles, in the order in which they are arranged:

1. Christianity contrasted with Atheism.
2. Christianity contrasted with Paganism.
3. Christianity contrasted with Deism.
4. Christianity contrasted with Mohamedism.
5. Protestant

Christianity contrasted with Romanism. 6. Evangelical Christianity contrasted with Unitarianism. 7. Practical Christianity contrasted with Antinomianism. 8. Experimental Christianity contrasted with Formalism.

We are persuaded that a bare inspection of the above table of contents, will induce a desire in many persons, to get possession of a volume in which so many interesting subjects are discussed, and that by a writer who stands so high in the public estimation. And the more we consider the plan of treating these subjects, by exhibiting them in contrast with pure Christianity, the better are we pleased with the design. This method adds peculiar force and vivacity to the whole discussion; and the selection of topics is so complete that we feel no wish to propose any change: the only idea which occurs in relation to a plan so felicitous in its conception, is, that it might perhaps, be enlarged with advantage; not so much by increasing the matter under the several heads, as by adding some other topics.

In the first of these lectures, in which Christianity is contrasted with Atheism, the ingenious author makes the following points, on which he brings these two systems into comparison, by considering their influence respectively: 1. Upon the Intellect. 2. Upon the Conscience. 3. Upon the Heart.

4. Upon the Life.

As a favourable specimen of the racy and pointed style of the author, in this volume, we will extract the third point of contrast, between these two systems, namely, their influence respectively on the heart.

"Let me now, thirdly, direct your attention to the opposite influences which the two systems exert upon the HEART. I shall consider them in their tendency to mould its affec-

tions, and satisfy its desires.

"That we may rightly estimate their influence in moulding the affections, it is necessary that we bear in mind that the moral character of an individual, by which I mean the real state of his heart, is determined in no small degree, by his intellectual views; and that, as truth and error are directly opposite in their nature, so they exert a directly opposite influence upon the heart. I know that systems of gross error have sometimes been professed where there has been the decency of a moral life; nevertheless, this does not prove that even external morality is the fruit of error, or that error is not naturally and essentially hostile to morality: it only proves that there may be countervailing influences arising from constitutional temperament, or education, or some other cause, strong enough to prevent the full and legitimate operation of error; or, as the case may be, that the error which is professed sits so loosely upon the mind, and is held with so little intelligence and reflection, that it exercises but a partial dominion over the heart. And, on the other hand, who needs be told that truth, even truth of the noblest kind, is often professedly received, where none of its legitimate fruits ever appear; either because it is held as a mere speculation, or because its influence is neutralized by the power of corruption? But notwithstanding these accidental, counteracting influences, both in respect to truth and error, it still remains true that each has its appropriate influence; that truth is the seed of virtue, that error is the germ of corruption and crime."

The lecturer then proceeds to illustrate this particular by showing, 1. That Atheism contracts the affections, while Christianity expands them. 2. That Atheism brutalizes the affections; Christianity refines them. 3. Atheism debases the affections; Christianity exalts them.

The following extract is at the same time so ingenious and so just, that we cannot deny ourselves the pleasure of laying it before our readers, on the comparison of the two systems,

as it relates to satisfying the desires of the mind:

"And here, if it would not lead me into too wide a range, I might call your attention distinctly to each of the several desires which make part of our original constitution, and show you how Atheism satisfies none of them-how Christianity satisfies them all. I might show you how Atheism mocks the desire of existence, by opening before the mind the hideous gulf of annihilation; how Christianity meets it, by establishing not only the immortality of the soul, but the resurrection of the body. I might show you how Atheism mocks the desire of action, by supplying no adequate motive to action, and limiting the exercise of our faculties to the brief period of the present life; how Christianity meets it, by at once giving our faculties a right direction, and opening a noble field for their exercise. I might show you how Atheism mocks the desire of knowledge, by miserably contracting the field of thought, and breathing over every subject an air of skepticism; how Christianity meets it, not only by leading the intellect, as with the hand of an angel, from one part of God's visible works to another, but by throwing open the gates of other worlds, that the beams of immor-

tal truth may pour down in all their brightness upon the mental eye. I might show you how Atheism mocks the desire of the approbation and esteem of other beings, by originating a character which every virtuous being must hate, and which every intelligent being must condemn; how Christianity meets it, by forming in man a spirit of benevolence, and disposing him to do good to all as he has opportunity. I might show you how Atheism mocks the desire of society, by inspiring a distrustful and unsocial spirit, and making man the enemy of man; how Christianity meets it, by inculcating a spirit of universal good will, and associating men together for purposes of mutual enjoyment and improvement. But instead of entering so broad a field, I shall consider the several desires of the soul as concentrated in the general desire of happiness; and shall dismiss this branch of the subject with two or three remarks illustrative of the contrast between the two systems in their bearing upon this leading and comprehensive desire."

The contrast on the last mentioned of the particulars is strongly exhibited, by showing, 1. That Atheism produces doubt: Christianity certainty. 2. That Atheism supplies no object adequate to fill the capacities of the soul; while such an object is supplied by Christianity. 3. That if Christianity be true, Atheism hazards every thing: if Atheism be true,

Christianity hazards nothing.

We do not agree with those who think that it is useless to publish lectures on Atheism. There is perhaps, at this time, no more appalling danger which threatens the church and the country, than a species of infidelity, which deserves to be denominated Atheism; because it denies all moral obligation and aims at excluding all divine worship, and indeed, every vestige of religion, from the world. To propagate this system, societies are formed, lectures are delivered, tracts circulated, and books, replete with the poison of Atheism, published and read by many. While these efforts are made in several of our populous cities in the face of day, and with alarming effect on the minds of unguarded youth, the friends of Christianity have as yet done little to counteract the evil. They are so much occupied in maintaining their respective peculiarities, that this most dangerous enemy is permitted to steal a march upon them. Why is not provision made for the delivery of public lectures in all our largest cities, on the fundamental principles of religion? A lecturer so popular as Dr. Sprague, might do immense good

by half a dozen lectures on the being and attributes of God. What if infidels should refuse to attend; yet multitudes of young men who are exposed to the contagion of atheistical opinions might be essentially benefitted, by being fortified against the insidious poison. We do not know how the benevolent could accomplish more good, than by instituting a course of lectures in Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore, to be delivered every winter. In London, there are many such lectures, and from this source we have been furnished with some of our ablest treatises, on the evidences

of natural and revealed religion.

The second lecture of Dr. Sprague, on Paganism, is good, and will have a salutary effect, by showing the wretched and degraded state of the heathen, and thus stirring up Christians to labour for their conversion, and by teaching us what we all would be this day, were it not for the benign influence of Christianity. And of course, what will be the condition of our posterity if we should suffer the precious deposit of revealed truth to be wrested from us: for although atheism and irreligion would be the proximate effect; yet soon the constitution of man would demand some kind of religion, and there would be a return to some form of idolatry and will-worship: that is, to Paganism.

The third lecture, "Christianity contrasted with Deism," is, in our judgment, one of the ablest in the book: but we have room to give only an outline of the author's plan. The two systems are contrasted in respect to 1. The extent of their discoveries. 2. The certainty of their evidence. 3. The energy of their operations.

4. The character of their results.

This comprehensive plan is beautifully carried out and illustrated. We would willingly present the whole lecture to our readers; but this would not consist with the plan of our work; and is unnecessary, because Dr. Sprague's volume, on fine paper and in handsome type, may be purchased at a reasonable rate, in any of our theological bookstores. The object of our review is to recommend this popular and valuable work to the perusal of all who read our pages.

The fourth lecture, "Christianity contrasted with Mohamedism," is also an able performance. The plan is to contrast the two systems, in respect to 1. The grounds of their authority. 2. The means of their propagation. 3. The characters of their founders. 4. Their influence on the world.

Under the first of these particulars, the lecturer asserts, p. 120, "This is a species of evidence (miracles) which Mo-

hamedism has never seriously pretended to claim." Now this is true, as it relates to Mohamed himself, and the Koran; but if the author will consult the controversial tracts, published by Professor Lee, on this subject, he will find, that the Mohamedans ascribe almost innumerable miracles to the founder of their religion, which they pretend are as well authenticated as those recorded in the Old and New Testaments. In this lecture, under the head of the means of the propagation of the two systems, the first particular is, "that Mohamedism was introduced at a period when every thing was favourable to its extension: Christianity at a period when the state of the world opposed the greatest obstacles to its success." It may be truly said, that at no time of the world is the introduction of a new religion easy; the obstacles from the existing religious establishments, and from the strong prejudices of all people, in favour of what they have been taught from infancy, must oppose a great obstacle in the way of any one who undertakes to bring men off from their old religion to one entirely different. These obstacles were in the way of Mohamedism as much as of Christianity. Neither had the countenance and favour of the ruling powers; even his own fellow citizens and kindred, were, for the most part, bitterly opposed to his pretensions. Judging, a priori, from existing circumstances, hardly any thing could be conceived more improbable than his success, in propagating a new religion over so large a portion of the globe. Neither is it manifest that the time when Christianity was propagated was peculiarly unfavourable. One government embraced all civilized nations; universal peace prevailed; the Greek and Latin languages were spoken almost every where in the Roman empire; and learning was widely diffused, which rendered it practicable by written discourses to disseminate opinions far and wide. It was, indeed, an enlightened age; which would have been unfavourable to the propagation of an imposture; but the supposition of its being an imposture does not seem to us properly introduced into this comparison. Here are two religions, both of which obtained a most extraordinary circulation. These are events to be accounted for. In regard to Christianity we say, that nothing but divine interposition could have given success to the enterprise. And it is incumbent on us to account for the wide spread of Mohamedism, from natural causes. lecturer lays much stress on the time; we think, entirely too much. We think that the rapid progress of Mohamed-

ism is to be attributed to two causes: first, the success which attended his arms; without which his religion would in all probability have died with him. And secondly, the ardour of enthusiasm, with which he continued to inspire his followers. Never were men more actuated by strong devotional feelings than the early soldiers of Mohamed and the caliphs who succeeded him. Their religion rendered them invinci-Their generals commenced the battle with prayer at the head of their troops. Paradise was confidently expected as the immediate reward of those who should fall in the conflict. In this elevated enthusiasm, we think is found the true secret of the successes of the Mohamedans in their military expeditions. It is true, the Greek and Persian empires were in a distracted and enfeebled state, which rendered it less difficult for devoted and ardent spirits, under the strong impulse of religious zeal, to achieve a conquest over them. We do not deny that there was something in the state of religious sects in Arabia, and of the condition of the civil governments in other countries, which were favourable to Mohamed's enterprise; but we cannot see a sufficient ground for the prominence given to this matter in this contrast; especially when there are so many other strong points, on which the author has insisted.

The contrast between Protestantism and Romanism, in the fifth lecture, is, we think, well conducted. The points of comparison are—1. Their agreement with Scripture. 2. Their conformableness to reason. 3. Their claim to antiquity. 4. Their adaptation to human nature. 5. Their ef-

fects on human society.

The sixth lecture, in which evangelical Christianity is contrasted with Unitarianism is, perhaps, the longest in the volume; but it is not too long. It is, in our opinion, eminently suited to subserve the cause of truth, and save souls from perdition. The reasonings on this subject are commonly so abstruse, or involve so much of learned criticism, that common readers are not much instructed. But the view here taken, while it is just, is popular and convincing. We would therefore particularly request the attention of the reader to this lecture; and if he has been vacillating between orthodoxy and Unitarianism, and still is possessed of some impartiality of judgment, and some love of the truth, we are of opinion, that his faith in the old doctrines of the church will receive sensible confirmation, by the careful perusal of this lecture.

The two systems are contrasted in the following respects:

1. Their accordance with the obvious interpretation of the Bible.

2. The homage which they pay to the authority of Scripture.

3. The nature and importance of their peculiar doctrines.

4. Their adaptation to pacify a guilty conscience.

5. Their tendency to produce and cherish the Christian virtues.

We quote the following passage to show how far Unitarians do actually go in the disbelief of some of the plainest and most important doctrines of the New Testament. It is generally known that they are agreed in rejecting with scorn the Trinity and the Incarnation of the Son of God; the atonement, and regeneration by a divine, internal influence; and the total and inherent corruption of human nature; but it is not so well understood by many, that they explain away the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, and of a day of final and universal judgment. And some who are aware that such men as Belsham in England, had run to this astonishing length, may yet suppose that Unitarians, in our own country, are more sober-minded, and less erroneous. Let such as entertain these sentiments, ponder the citations from the writings of the leaders of the sect, in the following extract:

"It may perhaps occur to some that I have allowed to Unitarianism too little that is peculiar to Christianity, inasmuch as I have not considered as part of the system the doctrines of a resurrection and final judgment in the sense in which they are generally held by evangelical Christians. I vindicate myself from any unfairness here, by reading to you one or two brief extracts from Unitarian publications of high authority. One of the most distinguished champions of Unitarianism in this country holds the following language:-The resurrection which Paul preached had no concern with the flesh and blood that compose the body while we live. And it will probably be found that our Lord himself, although in speaking either to the Pharisees, who held to the resurrection of the body,—a doctrine which was taught by Zoroaster to the Chaldeans, and had been brought from Chaldea by the Jews, on their return from their captivity,—or to the Sadducees who denied that doctrine, he sometimes appears to accommodate his language to the previously existing opinions of the age, -never yet taught the resurrection of

the body as a doctrine of his own; but that, on the contrary, when speaking as he often spoke, of the resurrection of the dead, he meant the survivorship of the spirit.' Again, in the Christian Examiner it is thus written:- 'I do not believe there ever will be any general judgment. The assembled universe, so often spoken of, as gathered at once before the throne of God, to be reciprocally spectators of each others' trial and judgment, is, I believe, a mere coinage of the human brain. Certainly the Scriptures assert no such thing.' 'The last day therefore spoken of in the Scriptures, we conceive to be the last day of each individual's mortal life.' And thus in the Unitarian Advocate:—'We are told that Christ will judge the world.' 'We are not to presume, however, that he will do it in person; but only that the world will be judged by the principles which he has set forth in the gospel.' I do not say that all Unitarians would concur in these views; but I take for granted the mass of them do, from finding them thus explicitly stated in some of their standard publications; and in view of these statements I leave you to define, as well as you can, the boundary between Unitarianism and Deism."

The more we meditate on the subject, the more are we convinced, that Unitarianism is as really subversive of Christianity as Deism. There is indeed more of truth in the system, but much more of inconsistency. And if there be any such thing as fundamental truth in Christianity they reject it; and, therefore, as it relates to salvation, their prospects are not a whit better than those of a sober deist. While they seem to acknowledge and honour Christ, they do in fact deny him and degrade him. How can they suppose that they honour the Son, even as they honour the Father? We cannot be censured as bigoted for refusing to rank Unitarians among Christians. They are no more Christians than Mohamedans are Christians. They do not, in fact, think so honorably of Christ as do the Mohamedans. Unitarianism is the true religion, then Mohamed was a great reformer. If this religion be true then the propagation of Christianity produced the most odious and incurable system of idolatry which ever existed in the world. Indeed, upon this hypothesis, Christ utterly failed of establishing the religion which he and his apostles taught; for it has been made to appear with an evidence, to which we can scarcely wish for addition, that Unitarianism was not the belief of the primitive church, in the age immediately succeeding that of

the apostles. In short, if Unitarianism be Christianity, there is nothing in it of so much value, that any reasonable man should think it necessary to make much sacrifice for its support and propagation. Christ is not necessary to salvation, nor to the most exalted piety; for good men, such as Abraham, Samuel, Isaiah, Daniel, &c. were saved, and obtained while living, the favour of God, without any dependence on Jesus Christ. As they have rejected the doctrine of the resurrection and judgment to come, we wonder they do not adopt the whole creed of the Sadducees, and not only reject angels and spirits, but a future state. Surely they can as readily find out how this doctrine was borrowed from the Pagans, as that of the resurrection of the body; for while the heathen never dreamed of a resurrection of the body, they generally held, in some form, the immortality of the soul. As to Zoroaster's teaching the resurrection of the body, we believe it to be a mere Unitarian figment.

We cannot refrain from again recommending to our readers, the careful perusal of this lecture; and would suggest the duty of turning the attention of others to it, who may need the salutary correction which it is adapted to produce

on the attentive and rational mind.

The seventh lecture presents a contrast between Practical Christianity and Antinomianism; and contains much useful matter; but on the whole we are less satisfied with it, than with either of the preceding. We do not mean to insinuate, that there are any erroneous views on the subject treated; but there is a vagueness in the exhibition of Antinomianism, which renders it difficult for us to perceive precisely the object of the writer's opposition. The doctrine of eternal justification is commonly reckoned as Antinomian, and doubtless it seems to look that way and is erroneous; yet the defenders of this opinion have never pleaded for exemption from the moral law as a rule of life. Dr. Gill has written much in favour of this opinion, and yet he was considered by all who knew him to be an eminently holy man. Crisp was called an Antinomian, and certainly used a phraseology respecting our sins being borne by Christ, which is very objectionable; and yet there is reason to think, that he was a man of eminent faith. So the author of "The Marrow of Modern Divinity," has sometimes spoken of the abrogation of the moral law to believers, in a way which has given much offence, and occasioned no little trouble in the church: but he never meant to deny that believers are bound to con-

form their lives to the moral law; but only, that the law has no dominion over those who are united to Christ, as a covenant of works; while he strenuously maintains the necessity of personal holiness. There is at present within the established church of England, a set of men who are by their enemies called Antinomians; and yet perhaps they are among the holiest men in England. These are the followers of the late Dr. Hawker, who seems to have been a man of devoted and elevated piety. These men do, in words, reject the law, as having nothing to do with the true believer; but they hold that his very nature leads him to holy living; and that this is effectually provided for in the covenant of grace. nearly as we have been able to learn, these men hold the doctrines of grace in the clearest and fullest manner, attributing every thing to the righteousness and grace of Christ; but to avoid a legal spirit, they run into some extremes, and give unnecessary offence to others, by unwarrantable expressions. The real opinions of these persons may be seen in a periodical published for several years back, entitled "The Spiritual Magazine," in the works of Dr. Hawker in ten volumes, and in Mr. Caine's treatise on the Covenants.

Arminians are wont to reproach the doctrine of imputed righteousness as a rank Antinomian doctrine; but it would be easy to show that their system contains much more of the leaven of Antinomianism than the Calvinistic; for they believe, that the moral law under which man was created has been set aside by the gospel or new covenant, and a milder law, better suited to our lapsed and fallen nature, has been substituted. And it can be shown, that every other system than that which teaches justification by the righteousness of Christ must be tinctured with Antinomianism. We cannot but express the wish that in a second edition of these lectures, this one may be left out, or what would be better, freed from ambiguous statements, and rendered more definite and palpable in the mode of treating this error. Still, as we said, we do not charge the writer with teaching any thing positively erroneous; but only with not making more evident the errors which he meant to oppose; so that precious truth might not be suspected as Antinomianism.

The last lecture in this volume contains a contrast between Experimental Christianity and Formalism, Sentimentalism, and Fanaticism. In general, we are of opinion that Dr. Sprague is very happy in his method, and in the selection of terms to express his ideas, in these contrasts: but in this case

he has failed exceedingly in this respect. From the manner in which things entirely different in their nature are here grouped together, the impression has been left on our minds that the author had become somewhat weary of his work, and was in haste to bring it to a conclusion. We asked ourselves what conceivable relation is there between Formalism, Sentimentalism, and Fanaticism. Indeed, we are at a loss to know precisely what the author means by the two first terms; for he has not with his usual discrimination given us accurate definitions of them. Formalism, as we understand the term, embraces no peculiar system of opinions, but is merely a practical error, in which many, who profess the true religion, rest in the mere performance of external rites or forms. This, indeed, will bear to be contrasted with experimental Christianity, the essence of which is in the affections of the heart; but certainly ought not to be placed under the same category with sentimentalism, which, if we take up correctly the idea of the writer, is merely a matter of refined feeling. These two things instead of forming one side of the contrast, are susceptible of a complete contrast with one another: the one consisting altogether in external performances, the other in sentiment. But as neither of these necessarily includes any system of erroneous opinions, we think they were unsuitable to be employed as standing in contrast with true religion. And as they are in opposition to one another, so there is little affinity between either of them and fanaticism, with which they are so intimately associated in this contrast. Indeed, we cannot but think that the term sentimentalism is not judiciously introduced in this place. It is an undefinable something which may accompany true experimental Christianity, as well as that which is spurious; therefore it cannot properly stand in contrast with experimental religion. It is then our decided opinion that both these terms, formalism and sentimentalism, should be dropped, and the contrast be between experimental Christianity and Fanaticism, not only because the terms as used are incongruous, but because, in all the other cases in this volume, some system of truth is contrasted with an erroneous one; whereas, in this instance, there is no particular error brought into view when these terms are used. And we would respectfully suggest to the author another reason for confining the contrast instituted in this lecture, to experimental Christianity and Fanaticism. This last subject is here treated by far too cursorily and superficially. There is, at

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.

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