

THE
PRINCETON REVIEW.

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No. IV.

- ART. I.—1. *The Directory for the Worship of God in the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, as amended and ratified by the General Assembly in May, 1821.*
2. *The Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, according to the use of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America.*

IF any feel amazement at the variety of forms in which the religious sentiment of Christians seeks expression in mental and bodily exercises, while, in all the cases, the God who is worshipped, the end of the worship, and the spirit which guides the worshipper are the same, they have but to consider this obvious and significant fact: That the spirit of God in the mind of man expresses itself in the various languages, and the various forms of thought and of actions familiar to the persons who are the subjects of his operation. The different forms of Christian worship are different languages employed to express one and the same sentiment of religion.

The people of different nations, under their various forms of social organization, differing from each other in their climates, their education, and their occupations, and having little assimilating intercourse with one another, have their various forms of expressing respect and disrespect, love and hatred; while the

ART. VI.—1. *The Catholic News Letter, St. Louis.*

2. *The True Catholic, Louisville.*

THAT such a man as the late John Breckinridge, D. D., should be charged with having turned Papist, and such men as his surviving brothers, with having refused his dying request to see a Romish priest, and with having denied him Christian burial, is, to those having the least knowledge of the parties, so violent an absurdity, as to shock all belief. It is difficult for those who see the inherent folly and falsehood of the charge, to believe that the authors of the calumny could themselves credit it, or that any man whose opinion was worth regarding would give it the weight of a feather. Our first impression, therefore, was, that an accusation so preposterous hardly merited a contradiction. We admit, however, that it is not safe to judge by ourselves, those whose whole circumstances and state of mind are entirely different from our own. Although our conviction, therefore, of the falsehood of the charge, is no stronger now since it has been refuted and retracted, than it was before, we think the relatives of Dr. Breckinridge have judged correctly in condescending to prove to strangers, what friends knew without such proof. It is not for the purpose of satisfying any of our readers that we advert to this subject, but we are desirous of placing on such record as our pages afford, the fact that the charge above mentioned having been advanced, and an abortive attempt having been made to sustain it, has been formally retracted by its authors. We give, therefore, the original accusation as made in the *Catholic News Letter*; the denial and refutation of it by the Rev. Dr. William Breckinridge, and the recantation of the charge by its authors.

Statement of the News Letter, June 27th.

“The Rev. Mr. B. was celebrated, a few years since, for the active part he took against the Catholic Church in Baltimore, and other eastern cities. He had several memorable controversies with Catholic priests on the subject of our religion, and conducted a newspaper, which was, if possible, still more malignant in its character, than the *Herald of Religious Liberty*. Having spent some years in this unholy warfare he came to die. He had two brothers, clergymen, like himself, of the Presbyterian

Church. Seeing his end approaching, he called them to his bedside, and in the solemn tones of a dying man, struck to the heart with a sense of his sins, warned them never to raise their voice against that Church, in traducing which he had so zealously employed his own. He then asked to see a Catholic priest, that he might make amends for the outrages he had committed against the Church of God, and that he might die in peace. But his entreaties were refused, and his brothers—brothers as well by blood, as by the fellowship of a common ministry—suffered him to die, bewailing his sins, and praying in vain for the means of a reconciliation with the Church whose holiness and truth he had habitually outraged.”

The Reply of Dr. W. Breckinridge in the True Catholic.

“On the supposition that the late John Breckinridge and his brothers are the persons alluded to, we pronounce it an unqualified, malignant and shameless calumny—such a falsehood as we might expect to be uttered by the children of the father of lies. We dare say, however, that it will be believed by papists, for it is not as hard to be believed as that a bit of bread is God. If these priests believed it, it is a little strange they kept it a secret so long. For ourselves, we have never heard the most distant intimation of it, until we opened the *Catholic Advocate* of last Saturday. We have no idea that other men believe there is the least foundation for the story, and therefore we deem it sufficient to give it this absolute and indignant contradiction.

“We demand of the editors of the *CATHOLIC NEWS LETTER*, who speak with so great confidence on the subject, that they give us the names on whose authority they have uttered this audacious slander of the living—this most atrocious outrage on the dead.”

The atrocity of the original charge was greatly aggravated by the attempt to justify it on preposterous evidence, and by the addition of a still more offensive accusation against the surviving brothers of the deceased :

“When we wrote the article of the 27th June, we were well aware that the circumstances to which we then thought proper to confine ourselves, were dependent upon testimony which it would not be in our power to make public, for the reason that it would involve the breach of private confidence ; nor should

we have even alluded to those circumstances, but for the fact, that, should our statement ever be questioned, we felt assured that there were other matters, of a less private nature, to which we might resort for the substantiation of our narrative. We confess that the death bed scene we have alluded to, is beyond our power to *prove*, because its authenticity is under the seal of confidence—that is, so far as relates to the name of the person by whose testimony it has been described. But this much we are at liberty to state, that a lady, still alive, as we believe, who attended Dr. B. in his last illness, related the facts as we have stated them. She was either a relative of Dr. B., or otherwise a person in whose good offices he placed great confidence, and the surviving brothers will no doubt apprehend who she may be. But be this as it may, it is not the strongest evidence of what we asserted, but only corroborative of the leading fact. That on which we chiefly rely is a matter of public notoriety, and when mentioned, there will be little need to wish for the name of the death-bed witness, since there will be no room in any mind for a doubt upon that head.

“What we mean is this: that the Rev. John Breckinridge, notorious, if not distinguished, as a minister of the Presbyterian Church—a man who had been greatly flattered and applauded, for his zeal in opposing the ancient and only true Christian faith—having at last paid the debt for which all nature are in arrear, instead of being buried with the honours that are usually bestowed on the remains of eminent men, was, by his brothers, privately interred, if we mistake not, at Lexington, Ky. Such a fact did not fail to excite the astonishment of the people of that place; and when the reason was asked for so unusual an act, his Reverend brothers, with a callousness no where to be found but in the stern and unnatural creed to which they belong, gave out that he had lost his faith, and was unworthy of a Christian burial.”

“In reply to the complicated falsehoods,” of the above account, says Dr. W. Breckinridge, “I oppose the following statement, and for its correctness, I appeal to those who were in the region where the events took place:

“In the month of May, 1841, my brother, then in a very low state of health, reached the old family residence, some miles from Lexington—the abode of our father in his lifetime, then and

still of our aged mother—where he lingered till the 4th of August, when he expired in the faith and hope of the gospel, giving glory to God. His remains were interred the next day, as is the custom of the country, in the presence of a large number of persons—the kindred, friends, and neighbours of the family; his personal friends and brethren in the ministry; persons not only from the immediate neighborhood, but also from Lexington, and as is distinctly remembered, from Frankfort, twenty-five miles distant. In short, there was just such an assembly as is usual in this country under similar circumstances. The funeral services were conducted by the pastor of the church to which the family belong, the Rev. John Simrall. The body was borne to the grave, if I mistake not, by ministers of the gospel, followed by the brothers who are now charged with denying it Christian burial, and by many sympathizing friends. It was deposited in the old family burying ground, where the members and some friends of the family, have been buried for nearly fifty years, along with the remains of our father, John Breckinridge, and our elder brother, Joseph Cabell Breckinridge, men known and honored in their times, and with precisely the same demonstrations of respect and sorrow, both private and public, with which their dust had been deposited in that spot.

The other members of the family having devolved upon myself the duty of giving directions for the monument, I caused to be inscribed upon it the following. You may not admire the taste which dictated it, but you must admit that it utterly falsifies your story :

JOHN BRECKINRIDGE,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.

Born July 4, 1797.

Died August 4, 1841.

“And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.”

This statement was so complete a refutation of the charge in question, that the authors of the calumny, out of regard to public sentiment, if from no higher motive, were constrained to retract the accusation.

The editors of the News Letter say in reference to the above statement, “We cordially acknowledge it bears upon its face an

air of truth which induces us to believe it. It is due, however, to the gentleman who wrote the former articles of the *News Letter*—and who is at present absent from the city—to say that nothing but a firm belief in the truth of the statements made by him could have prompted him to make them public. We know him to be a gentleman of high and honorable principles, utterly incapable of asserting anything touching the actions or the characters of others without the strongest convictions of its truth. We are confident that no one will more heartily approve of this act of justice to Dr. Breckinridge, than he, and we can safely say for ourselves and him, that whilst we regret the appearance of the misstatement in the columns of the *News Letter*, we rejoice that Dr. B. has been enabled to satisfy us of its incorrectness, and afforded us the opportunity of correcting it.” See *Catholic Advocate*, Louisville, September 5, 1846.

Thus ends this discreditable affair. The memory of a man dear to the whole Presbyterian church, has been vindicated in such a manner as to force an acknowledgment from the unwilling lips of those who have evinced a disposition to say and to believe anything, however preposterous, which they thought could gain credit with the most ignorant and prejudiced of his enemies.— Since even they have recanted, it is hoped no one can hereafter be found of sufficient hardihood to renew the charge.

ART. VII.—*Lectures on Mental Philosophy, and Theology.* By James Richards, D. D., late Professor of Christian Theology in the Theological Seminary at Auburn, New York. With a sketch of his Life, by Samuel H. Gridley, Pastor of the Presbyterian congregation, Waterloo, New York. New York: William M. Dodd. 1846. Svo. pp. 501.

JAMES RICHARDS was born in New Canaan, Connecticut, October 29, 1767. His father was a farmer, a man of good sense, and esteemed for his social and Christian virtues. His mother, Ruth Hanforth, was a woman of vigorous intellect, of consistent piety, and of uncompromising faithfulness in all matters of social duty,