

ART. XVII. *LESLIE'S Short and Easy Method with the Deists; wherein the Certainty of the Christian Religion is established by some infallible Marks, (in a Letter to a Friend). To which are subjoined four additional Marks from the same Author's subsequent Tracts, entitled "The Truth of Christianity demonstrated." Compressed by FRANCIS WRANGHAM, M. A. pp. 37.*

THE tracts which are here presented to the public, in an abridged form, have been so long known, and their character so justly appreciated, that we consider it needless to enter upon an analysis of their contents. Mr. Wrangham is entitled to the thanks of every friend of revelation, for having compressed these

valuable works into so small a compass; and furnished those who have not either leisure or inclination to study larger treatises, with arguments in defence of the Christian faith "so short and clear, that the meanest capacity may understand them, and so forcible that no man has yet been found able to resist them."

ART. XVIII. *A Plea for Religion, and the Sacred Writings; addressed to the Disciples of Thomas Paine, and wavering Christians of every Persuasion; with an Appendix, containing the Author's Determination to have relinquished his Charge in the Established Church, and the Reasons on which that Determination was founded. By the Reverend DAVID SIMPSON, M. A. 8vo, pp. 351.*

THIS appears, from the advertisement prefixed to it, to be an enlarged edition of a work of so miscellaneous a nature, as to be scarcely capable of being reduced to an orderly arrangement. It is the production of a singular, but evidently honest mind; a book of religious anecdote, discovering some reading, but more observation and knowledge of the world. We shall endeavour to give our readers, in a few words, some idea of its contents. The first object which the author seems to have had in view, is to shew the different effects of infidelity, and faith in the gospel, upon the last moments of life. For this purpose twelve examples are given of *dying unbelievers*; the same number of *persons recovered from their infidelity*; several instances of *dying Christians who had lived in the spirit of the world*; and several of *persons living and dying either with confidence, or the full assurance of faith*. The author next inquires into the causes which induce men to reject the gospel; he allows the existence of many deplorable corruptions in the Christian church, but properly shews that they furnish no argument against Christianity itself. He then enters upon a defence of the sacred writings, and of revealed religion, but with little attention to arrangement and method. He makes great use of the prophecies; from which he concludes that every thing antichristian will be shortly overwhelmed in destruction; he therefore urges the necessity of a speedy and complete reformation of the abuses which exist in our established church, and holds up

the horrors of the French revolution as an incitement to avoid delay. In order that our readers may have some idea of the manner in which this well meaning work is conducted, we shall select the following as a proper specimen, and as containing some serious truths, which all who are interested in the welfare of religion ought seriously to consider,

"I have spoken above of the patronage of church livings. Some of my readers may be in a great degree strangers to the state of it. I have taken some pains to inform myself upon the subject, and I find that it stands nearly in the following proportions, I speak generally, but yet accurately enough for the purposes of common information. It is well known then, that the church livings of England and Wales make together, speaking in round numbers, about 10,000. Of these near 1000 are in the gift of the king. It is customary, however, for the lord chancellor to present to all the livings under the value of twenty pounds, in the king's book, and for the ministers of state to present to all the rest. Those under twenty pounds are about 780, and those above near 180. Upwards of 1600 pieces of church preferment, of different sizes and descriptions, are in the gift of the 26 bishops: more than 600 in the presentation of the two universities: about 1000 in the gift of the several cathedrals, and other clerical institutions: about 5700 livings are in the nomination of the nobility and gentry of the land, men, women, and children: and 50 or 60 there may be of a description different from any of the above, and nearer to the propriety of things. These are all so many heads of the church, in a very strong sense of the words, the king or queen of the country being a kind of arch-bishop."

“As we have been speaking on the subject of the *patronage of livings*, it may be worth while still further to observe, that the bishop of — enjoys very considerable privileges of this nature, which have, on a late occasion, been shamefully abused. Not less than 130 presentations belong to him! A certain *episcopal* gentleman of that diocese, knowing the extensive emoluments he was likely to be possessed of in this way, brought his son up to the church; and, when he came of proper age, bestowed first one living upon him, and then another, as they became vacant, to a very considerable amount, which this son enjoys at this day. He is now one of our *dignified clergymen*, and in possession of a very unreasonable number of valuable preferments, to most of which he pays extremely little personal attention. He takes care, however, to secure the fleece, the devil may take the flock.” John x. 1—18.

“Another *son* of AARON, in a neighbouring district which might be named, possesses preferments in the church, by the procurement of his *episcopal* father, to the amount of 2000 pounds a year. He has for a long season been extremely attentive to his tithes; but hardly ever man paid less attention to the salvation of the souls of his people, and the sacred duties of his office. Seldom, indeed, does he appear among the former, less frequently still does he attend the proper duties of the latter. Fifty or sixty pounds a year he reluctantly pays to a journeyman *parson* to supply his own lack of service; but like master like man, they are a miserable couple together; the one is penurious, the other dissolute. What must the condition of the flock be, under the care of two such wretched shepherds?

“I will mention a third curious instance of *clerical* sagacity. A certain *rectory*, not fifty miles from this place, is said to be of the value of near 2000 pounds a year. A kind young lady, whose friends have sufficient interest with the patron, falls in love with a wicked, swearing, dashing officer in the army, and marries him. That a comfortable maintenance may be secured for the happy pair, it is agreed, that the gentleman shall change the colour of his clothes, apply himself to the attainment of a smattering of Latin and Greek, and admit himself a member of one of our famous universities. There he actually now is, qualifying himself to take possession of the *bouncing benefice*. The incumbent being dead, a pliable *parson* is put in for a time as a *locum tenens*. And when the *quondam* officer has attained his proper credentials, this worthy *Levite* must resign all his *fat pigs* in favour of this son of *Mars*. The white-washed officer will then come forward, and declare in the face of God and man, with a lie in his mouth, that he trusts he is moved by the HOLY GHOST to preach the gospel.

“If these were solitary instances of improper proceedings in church matters, it would not be worth while to notice them in this manner, but, alas! they are only specimens of what is by no means uncommon, where valuable livings are concerned. Oh! were the business of private patronage and presentation thoroughly investigated, and laid before the public, the picture would be highly disgusting to every serious mind, and call for reformation with a tone not easy to be resisted.”

In the second appendix the author assigns the reasons which have induced him to form a determination to relinquish his situation in the church.

“After what has been said in the foregoing papers, I do not see how I can, either in honour or conscience, continue to officiate any longer as a minister of the gospel in the establishment of my native country. It appears to me, in my coolest and most considerate moments, to be, with all its excellencies, a main branch of the *anti-christian* system. It is a strange mixture, as has been already observed, of what is secular and what is spiritual: and I strongly suspect the day is at no very great distance when the whole fabric shall tumble into ruins, and the pure and immortal religion of the SON of GOD rise more bright, lovely, and glorious from its subversion. The several warnings of the sacred oracles seem to be of vast importance, and necessary to be observed. “Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul; be not cut off in her iniquity, for this is the day of the Lord’s vengeance; he will render unto her a recompence.” Jer. li. 6. “We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed; forsake her, and let us go every one unto his own country.” Ibid. li. 9. “When ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel, the prophet, stand in the holy place, then let them which be in Judea flee to the mountains.” Matt. xxiv. 15, 16. These are only remotely applicable to the business in hand. The following is more directly so: “I heard a voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” Rev. xviii. 4.

“In obedience to these injunctions, and under a strong disapprobation of the several anti-christian circumstances of our own established church, THE GENERAL DOCTRINES OF WHICH I VERY MUCH APPROVE AND ADMIRE, I now, therefore, withdraw, and renounce a situation which, in some respects, has been extremely eligible. I cast myself again upon the bosom of a gracious Providence, which has provided for me all my life long. Hitherto, I must say, the Lord hath helped me. I have never wanted any manner of thing that

has been necessary to my comfort, and though I neither know what to do, nor whither to go, yet

“The world is all before me, where to choose

“My place of rest, and Providence my guide.”

“This extraordinary step the sacred dictates of conscience compel me to take. I am truly sorry for it. To me few trials were ever equal. I have loved the people among whom I have so long lived and laboured; and I have every reason to be satisfied with their conduct towards me. Neither hath the Great Head of the church left us without seals to our ministry. The appearance of fruit, at times, has been large; and there are some, no doubt, among the people of our charge, who will be our joy and crown in the great day of our Redeemer's coming. My friends must consider me as called away by an imperious providence; and, I trust, they will be provided with a successor more than equal, in every respect, to their late affectionate pastor. I think it necessary to say, in this place, that the doctrines I have preached unto them for six and twenty years, I still consider as the truths of God. I have lived in them myself, and found comfort from them. I have faithfully made them known to others, as thousands can bear me witness; we have seen them effectual to the pulling down the strong holds of sin and Satan, in a variety of cases: and I hope to

die in the same faith, and to find them the power of God unto the salvation of my own soul in eternal glory by Christ Jesus. I mean to preach the same doctrines, the Lord being my helper, during the whole remainder of my life, wheresoever my lot may be cast. I am not weary of the work of the sacred ministry. I have, indeed, often been weary in it, but never of it. I pray God my spiritual vigour, life and power; and love, and usefulness, may abound more and more to the end of my christian warfare.

“Awake, my dormant zeal! for ever flame,

“With gen'rous ardours for immortal souls;

“And may my head, and tongue, and heart, and all,

“Spend and be spent in service so divine.”

Concerning the validity of these reasons, it is not our province to judge; to different minds they will inevitably carry different degrees of conviction. That man, however, must ever be the object of our applause, who, in the important concerns of religion, has the courage to follow the dictates of his own conscience; and who suffers no considerations of worldly interest, of personal ease or fame, to induce him to resist the call of duty, and openly to profess what his heart condemns.

DOGMATICAL AND CONTROVERSIAL THEOLOGY.

ART. XIX. *Eight Discourses on the Connection between the Old and New Testament, considered as two Parts of the same divine Revelation; and demonstrative of the great Doctrine of Atonement, accompanied with a preliminary Discourse, respectfully addressed to the younger Clergy: containing some Remarks on the late Professor CAMPBELL'S Ecclesiastical History. By the Rev. CHARLES DAUBENY, LL. B. Fellow of Winchester College, Minister of Christ's Church, Bath, and Author of "A Guide to the Church."* 8vo. pp. 481.

THE preliminary discourse occupies nearly a third part of the whole volume, and may be considered as embracing two objects; the one, a refutation of those who maintain the existence of *natural religion*, and of those who deny that the revelation of a future life made any part of the dispensation by Moses; the other, a defence of the episcopalian form of church government, against the attacks which are made upon it in the lectures of the late Professor Campbell.

“By attending to the writings and discourses of many, otherwise well-informed, divines, we shall find two points, generally speaking, taken for granted; and argued

upon accordingly. The first is, that natural religion constitutes the basis of revelation; the second, that the Jewish dispensation had relation only to *temporal* objects. It is more to be wondered at that positions, demonstrably false in themselves, should originally receive the sanction of the first literary abilities; than that, on the ground of such sanction, they should continue to pass current in the world. But a very moderate exercise of the intellectual powers will be sufficient to convince us, that no authority, however respectable, can establish positions which have neither reason nor revelation to support them.

“In fact, from the commencement of revelation in Paradise, one revelation has succeeded to another, and one degree of spi-