

T H E

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ART. I. *Philosophical and Literary Essays.* By Dr. Gregory, of Edinburgh. 2 Vols. 8vo. pp., in both, 1035. 12s. Boards. Cadell. 1792.

VARIOUS attempts have been made to apply mathematical demonstration to metaphysical subjects. Writers have undertaken to demonstrate mathematically the existence of God. The operation of moral principles has been estimated mathematically; and entire systems of pneumatology and theology have been drawn up in a mathematical form:—yet that strict demonstration, which is found in pure mathematics, has never been attained, and, it may be confidently asserted, never will be attained, in any other science. The objects of contemplation in the science of quantity may be conceived with perfect distinctness, and are capable of being represented by the most familiar examples. The terms by which these objects are expressed have a certain and invariable signification, and are liable to no ambiguity. The axioms of this science either necessarily follow from the definitions of its terms, or must be universally admitted as soon as they are understood: whereas, in other sciences, objects are indistinctly perceived, terms are inaccurately defined and variously understood, and first principles are often defective either in certainty or universality.

Not discouraged by the ill success of former adventurers, nor by the manifest difficulty of the undertaking, the author of the work which we are now to examine, ventures to decide a difficult metaphysical question by mathematical reasoning. The long-disputed point concerning the philosophical liberty of the human mind, Dr. Gregory takes out of the hands both of the vulgar and of the metaphysician, who seem to distrust one another, and puts it into the hands of the mathematician, whom both parties respect, and can have no reason to distrust.

SINGLE SERMONS.

Art. 77. *On Establishments in Religion and Religious Liberty.* Preached before the University of Cambridge, July 1, 1792, being Commencement-Sunday. By Robert Thorp, D. D. Archdeacon of Northumberland, and Rector of Gateshead. 4to. 1s. Cadell. Within the compass of a few pages, Dr. Thorp undertakes to explain the nature and extent of religious liberty, to prove the necessity of establishments, and to shew the justice and expediency of the test-laws for their security. He argues with great moderation, and we believe he means to argue with fairness: but we must be ingenuous enough to confess, that he appears to us not to reason with that logical precision and discrimination, which are necessary to convince the philosophical reader. He does not distinguish between *the establishment of religion, and a religious establishment.* It may be deemed wise in a state to promote the inculcation of religious principles, because they are the firmest basis of social virtue: yet it does not hence follow that this is a necessary system of religious doctrine. All Dr. Thorp's arguments, therefore, brought to prove the beneficial influence of religion on society, taken from a general view of its nature, do not evince the necessity of distinguishing any *one* particular system of it, unless it can be demonstrated that this one is more conducive to virtue than any of the rest.

After laying it down as an axiom, that 'it is the first public concern of every well-regulated government to establish religion,' and observing that 'most Christian nations have agreed upon the expediency of making a permanent provision for those, who, secluded from all secular employments, are engaged in performing the offices of religion,' he proceeds, indeed, to remark, that 'if it be impossible or inexpedient to extend this provision to the various sects into which a society may be divided, it follows, that a preference must be given by law to some particular sect:'—but we submit it to Dr. Thorp's consideration, whether, by this *if*, he has not taken for granted the most essential matter of debate.

We have neither time nor inclination to launch out into this discussion; let it suffice to remark on this occasion, that since, according to Dr. Thorp's own words, 'Religion (generally considered,) supplies the defects of human policy, by implanting a real principle of virtue in the heart, by correcting the inward frame of the mind, and by influencing the moral conduct from the corrections of conscience, and a sense of the divine authority,' the established religious system should contain nothing more than is requisite toward securing these important ends.

On the subject of test-laws, while Dr. T. confesses that restraints, without reason, or any good end in view, would be violations of natural liberty, he contends that 'religious persuasions inconsistent with the safety of the state, or incompatible with the duties necessary for its preservation, that religious opinions, *not immediately dangerous in themselves, if necessarily connected or usually accompanied with political opinions, hostile to the established form of government,* are sufficient reasons for an exclusion from civil offices.'

Though we would say nothing in favour of doctrines evidently dangerous to the state, we cannot avoid protesting against that con-

fruitive treason, by which some religious doctrines are condemned as usually accompanied with dangerous political sentiments. It is easy, in this way, to impute to any religious opinion, a dangerous political tendency: but, in the court of liberal criticism, this cannot pass for fair and just argument.

Notwithstanding we object to some of the reasoning in this discourse, our admiration and praise were not withheld from Dr. Thorp's exhortation. It is, throughout, the language of a well-informed and truly benevolent Christian.

‘ But the promotion of virtue and piety, the influence of the doctrines and motives of the gospel over the lives and actions of men, are the most certain and infallible marks of the rectitude and utility of a religious institution. However men may differ about the means, as far as these ends are attained, so far the institution undoubtedly coincides with the intention of the author of our religion. Let it be our constant endeavour to preserve this distinction, by exciting men to the practice of justice, fidelity, temperance, charity, and every good work, *following after the things which make for peace*, and engaging all parties, by moderation and forbearance, by *love unfeigned*, by the word of truth, to unite in that universal establishment of Christianity, which we are promised it shall in due time attain, when *the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ*; when *the fullness of the Gentiles shall come in*; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.’

Art. 78. Preached on Whitsunday, A. D. 1791, by Joseph Holden Pott, M. A. Prebendary of Lincoln, and Archdeacon of St. Alban's. 12mo. 6d. Rivingtons. 1792.

An ingenious discourse, containing several good remarks accommodated to the forms and times appointed in our established church, and more conformable to the Calvinistic part of its articles than is often observed. It is designed as a supplement to two others on fasts and festivals; for an account of which, see Review, New Series, vol. ii. p. 365.

Art. 79. Preached at the Anniversary Meeting of the Sons of the Clergy, in the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, May 12, 1791. By Joseph Holden Pott, M. A. &c. 4to. 1s. Rivingtons.

The same account may be given of this sermon as of other publications by Mr. Pott. There is, perhaps, somewhat more in it of *priesthood* and *altar* than a liberal mind, fraught with just apprehensions of Christianity, can altogether approve: but, on the whole, the discourse is a good one, and well adapted to the occasion.

Art. 80. Preached at the Opening of the New Ebury Chapel near Sloane-square, Chelsea. By the Rev. Richard Sandilands, LL. B. Chaplain to the Right Hon. the Viscountess Dowager of Hereford. 8vo. 1s. Cadell. 1792.

Perhaps the view in which religious edifices are represented in this discourse, may have too much tendency to encourage a superstitious reverence for places of worship, as such. ‘ The house of God! with what awful reverence should every individual approach an edifice dignified with so sacred an appellation!’ Such language, left un-

guarded,