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THE
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APRIL, 1832.

ART. I.—*The Life of Wiclif*. By Charles Webb Le Bas, Professor in the East India College, Herts, and late Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. London. Rivingtons. 1832.

ABOUT two years since we called the attention of our readers to a Life of our great native Proto-reformer written by Mr. Vaughan, and we need not here repeat the opinions which we then offered respecting either Wiclif or his Biographers. The volume on the same theme, now before us, is the first of a Series of Original Works, intended "to form a digested System of Religious and Ecclesiastical Knowledge;" and in pursuance of such a design the days of Wiclif naturally present the most fitting point from which the English Protestant may commence. In consenting to enter upon a field so often and so recently trodden, Mr. Le Bas has probably made no small self-sacrifice; but there are few among our contemporaries by whom such a sacrifice can be more easily afforded;—*nihil tangit quod non ornat*—and even if it should so happen that the materials which he employs do not possess in themselves the full gloss and bloom of absolute novelty, they are nevertheless sure of being disposed, under his masterly hand, in such a manner, as to unite strength with beauty, and to exhibit complete freshness in design, arrangement, and combination.

That a publication, addressed to such objects as the new *Theological Library* professes to compass, has been undertaken, we most heartily rejoice; and by the names of its very eminent joint conductors, of the highly respectable publishers, and of many of those enlisted under their command, ample guarantee seems afforded for the merit of its execution. We are much deceived if its future pages will not be characterised, like the present sample, by general soundness of principles, sober piety, and ripe learning: and we trust that a Family of snug small octavos, adapted to the prevalent humour of the day for such minor forms, may be

expected in legitimate course of gestation, which will prove not unworthy of ranking with that brood of now dormant giants, which sprang from the press in the bye-gone Age of folios, as supreme rulers in Metaphysics and Divinity. Lovers as we are of antiquity, and constitutionally suspicious of innovation, we are far from lamenting the great outward change in Literature which has rendered it conveniently portable. The "Physic of the Soul," which, not much more than half a century ago, found no other vehicles than a profuse flood of decoction or a solid sphere of bolus, is now delicately conveyed in the dust-shot of attenuated pills, or the *guttulæ* of a concentrated tincture. Neither is it to be said that sound Learning hazards any diminution because we are relieved from the Sisyphean toil of rolling incessantly up a steep height of letter press in order to roll down again; any more than that our health is likely to suffer because we are spared the once necessary accompaniments of its purchase—bitter tastes and wry faces. Never indeed was more truth condensed in the narrow compass of an adage than may be found in that trite proverb which denounces, although with a somewhat different primary bearing, "Great Books to be great evils." Man is essentially a comfortable animal; and he will read with far more cheerfulness, and probably therefore with far more edification, a volume which he can hold "twixt his finger and his thumb," like "a pouncet-box," rather than one which seems from its dimensions to require the mechanical agency of a crane, to lift it to its resting place upon a standing desk huge as a painter's easel. Nobody unless upon compulsion ever has recourse to folios; and but for necessity they would remain, like Theseus, eternally seated upon the ground-shelves allotted for their repose.

Parvissima corpora quantò

Et lævissima sunt, ita mobilitate feruntur.

At contrà quo quæque magis cum pondere magno,

Asperaque inveniuntur, eo stabilita magis sunt.

With this conviction that the *πρόσῳ* and the *πίον* are altogether distinct qualities, in so far as the produce of type is concerned, we approach Mr. Le Bas' miniature volume with quite as much respect as if its dimensions were colossal; and we trust before we part from our readers, to exhibit to them distinct proofs that its spirit is not to be measured by its body. Our appeal will be principally made to the two Introductory Chapters, both as being the most original, and as those in which the author has evidently put forth his chief might. They contain, 1st, a General View of the gradual corruption of Christianity to the middle of the XIVth century, and 2dly, a View of Christianity in England to the same epoch.

After a fair statement of the difficulties which must often encumber the student of Ecclesiastical History, in his early inquiries, from the question, *why* Christianity, the choicest gift of Heaven, has been allowed to be perverted? Mr. Le Bas proceeds to answer it by showing the chief causes which have occasioned its corruption. In the primitive Ages of the Church, both the esoteric mysteries and the exoteric rites of Paganism, the doctrine and discipline of the Heathens, if we may so far abuse those words by applying them to a Creed which in truth possessed neither the one nor the other, were unfavourable to the simplicity of the Gospel. The Philosophers were well called by Tertullian, as will be remembered, "the Patriarchs of Heresies." Even when the striking evidence of Christianity had worked conviction on those who were thought Wise, it did not succeed in humbling the restlessness of their curiosity; nor were they content that God should be yet *more* wise than themselves. Whenever Revelation refused to exceed its own promises, and failed to reveal those things which pass Man's understanding, the Philosopher, without abandoning his new acquired belief, resorted to his former subtleties; and endeavoured to supply his wants by an unnatural commixture of the two systems. And to this source, (the fruitful and never failing source of every perversion,) the overweening pride of Human Reason, may be traced the earliest deviations from the Truth as it is in Christ.

Thus far, in regard to doctrine, although we have not expressed ourselves in Mr. Le Bas' own words, we entirely coincide with and have endeavoured briefly to represent his meaning. In attributing the profuse magnificence which, ere many centuries had passed, overburdened the simplicity of Christian worship, to the Ritual of Mythology, we think he bears, like many other writers, a little too hardly upon Paganism. Somewhat, no doubt, and certainly no small portion, must be attributed to that source; and no one can read Middleton's well known *Letter from Rome*, or Mr. Blunt's later and perhaps not so well known *Vestiges of ancient Manners in modern Italy*, without admitting that numerous coincidences, not otherwise to be accounted for, exist between the ancient rabble of Godlings and the modern mob of Saints; between idols, lustral water, and fumigations, whether displayed before the shrines of Jupiter Tonans or of St. Peter. It would be easy indeed to show plentiful instances in which such an agreement may be established; in which

Pan to Moses lends his borrowed horn;

but the subject has been often and sufficiently discussed; all we contend for is, that, in contemplating the striking analogies between the worship of Imperial and of Papal Rome, *too much* has

been thought to be borrowed by the latter from the former. Human nature requires no prompter in its tendency to cumulate pomp upon the outward service of the Deity. Man acts from instinct, not from imitation, when he sheathes Altars with gold and Temples with marble. If he be dark, barbarous, and ignorant, it is to avert the wrath of an all-devouring tyrant; if cultivated, civilized, and more enlightened, it is to conciliate the affection of a Universal Father. In either case, he bestows upon that Being whom he most dreads or loves, the possession which he esteems most costly and most precious; and be it a bribe extorted by terror, or a voluntary tribute proffered by gratitude, it is alike the best which his means suffer him to provide. If he be poor, he brings, like righteous Abel, the *firstlings of his flock and the fat thereof*; if he be rich, he dedicates the House of the Lord, which he hath builded, like that wise King who had *largeness of heart even as the sand that is on the sea shore, with two and twenty thousand oxen and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep.*

Nor can this feeling, when restrained within due bounds, when the essence of Religious worship is not forgotten in its accidents, be esteemed otherwise than praiseworthy. The reasons which induced the Almighty to prefer the sacrifice of Abel to that of Cain have furnished abundant food for controversy: and whatever they might be, it certainly does not appear from Holy Writ that in outward and apparent value that which was rejected was by any means inferior to that which was accepted. To the elder brother, as a tiller of the ground, the fruits of the earth were of as much price as were his lambs to the younger, a keeper of sheep. Hence then no argument can be derived in favour of our position. But passing over the precise directions given to Moses for the construction of the Tabernacle; its ark and mercy-seat, its vessels, its curtains, its hangings, and its vail, the garments, ephods, mitres and breast-plates of its ministers; it would seem that the distinguished approbation with which God accepted the prayer of Solomon, on the occasion referred to above, when He *hallowed His house, and put up His name therein for ever, so that His eyes and His heart shall be there perpetually*, may be received as proofs that a becoming majesty of external service is acceptable to Heaven.

Be the source what it may which introduced the *licentiousness* of pomp into the Christian worship—and we argue no further than that Paganism was not its *only* source—no one can deny that it soon became a most crying abuse; and that the inward cleanliness of the cup and the platter was little regarded, so as it blazed with burnished gold without; that the foulness, and noisome corruption, and dead men's bones which polluted the body of the sepulchre, were not held to be causes of offence, while its

porch glistened with polished whiteness. Well and rightly does Mr. Le Bas express himself, that "it was a fervid zeal for the glory of God's name which originally sought to render the Christian worship honourable in the sight of the Heathen," that nothing but "the vulgarest spirit of fanaticism" has ever questioned the necessity of all sober and decent solemnity. Doubtless, *wherever* two or three are gathered together, God may be fittingly worshipped in spirit and in truth; and he will accept the sacrifice of the heart, be it offered from the cavern or the mountain, from the deep vault or the upper chamber. But it is a poor and parsimonious Sectarianism, a mistaken and ascetic niggardliness, which would strip his Temples naked, and curtail or abolish ceremonies which are convenient. Far, very far, however, beyond convenience, and sober and decent solemnity, and forms necessary for honour, had the Church advanced before the fall of the Roman Empire. Take a single, and that a trifling, instance only. "The clergy," states Mr. Le Bas, "in the splendour of their apparel may be said to have well nigh beggared the 'pomp of Aaron's wardrobe, and the Flamen's vestry.' Their official raiment blazed with gold and purple, and *needle-work of divers colours*. Almost every object in the creation was pourtrayed upon these garments. The more devout among them, indeed, carried Scriptural Histories emblazoned on their backs; but even so their appearance has been compared to that of painted walls." At a period somewhat later than that of which Mr. Le Bas is here speaking, we have read of a King of France, (if we remember rightly, one of the Carolingians, and among the very weakest of that weak race) whose great merit with the Monks, by whom his Court was thronged and his canonization subsequently procured, was that he wore a mantle embroidered, as is said, with the entire Apocalypse. Accepting this statement with all requisite qualifications, (and not a few appear to be demanded,) it strikingly illustrates the contemporary degeneracy of pure Religion, and proves to how great extent idle and fantastic shadows had been substituted for genuine Christian graces. When the flood of barbarism overwhelmed Rome, corruption had so far disfigured the Church, that, as Mr. Le Bas has remarked, it is not improbable a great convulsion was necessary for her preservation; and he then acutely shows how seasonably the convulsion which *did* occur was fitted to the exigency, so that it might purify without destroying. Had it riven the frame of Society before Christianity had struck its roots deep as the centre, the gates of Hell might have prevailed against our Religion. But God, who is faithful, remembered his promise, and the Church continued to abide. The passage which follows this reasoning has a fair claim to rank highly among those which Longinus would have applauded; but powerfully as it touches the heart, warmly

as it kindles the imagination, substantially as it feeds the understanding, we miss the link which connects it with the preceding argument.

“ It was well that Christianity, in those days, had long pervaded and possessed nearly the whole mass of civilized society. Had these tremendous convulsions occurred before its strength had been consolidated, they must, as it would appear to all human judgment, have swept it from the face of the earth. As it was, nothing short of a general extermination could destroy it. It survived the havoc of those dreadful visitations: but strange and wonderful were the appearances with which it emerged out of the chaos. *From the very midst of the ruins, a portentous form was seen to arise, such as the world had never looked upon; an apparition habited in the robes of priesthood, and surrounded by attributes of majesty; holding in one hand the rod of worldly power, and in the other the flaming sword, which turned every way, to guard the citadel of spiritual dominion. For ages together did this stupendous phantom continue to spread out before the astonished gaze of mankind, till its feet seemed to rest upon the earth, while its head was towering among the stars.*

“ And where, it may be asked, was the power that called up this mysterious shape of sovereignty? In truth, the mighty enchanters which summoned it into the realms of light, were no other than the corrupt passions, and the clamorous necessities of man. The passions of man called aloud for indulgence, his calamities for succour and protection; and both these purposes could be answered by nothing but an empire, which should combine the spiritual with the secular dominion, and bring the powers of the world into league with the allurements and the terrors of superstition. The Papacy is not to be contemplated as a mighty scheme of imposture and despotism, constructed conformably to a fixed and regular design, and gradually completed according to a system, conveyed from one generation of deceivers to another. The passions and the wants of a licentious and semi-barbarous world invited the master-builders to raise up the fabric of spiritual supremacy; while the confusion and anarchy of the West, deprived of the protection of the Imperial presence, demanded the establishment of the temporal dominion. And thus it was, that the chambers of seduction, and the battlements of strength and pride, rose up together, and formed, between them, a structure more strange, more fantastic, and, at the same time, more vast and menacing, than could ever have been projected, in the wildest mood of ambition, by the invention or the sagacity of man.”—pp. 17—19.

We do not here perceive that “ the convulsion ” in any way “ purified; ” indeed, by the rise of the Papacy, *the last state became worse than the first.*

The sentences marked above in italics have most forcibly arrested our attention; they contain choice and golden words, which impress themselves upon the memory involuntarily, and sink into it without effort; no man can read without remembering them, and having them frequently return to his lips; and whether

we consider the beauty of the diction, the harmony of the cadence, or the justness of the metaphor, they excite equal admiration and envy. Few, if any, writers can hope often to approach the high elevation attained in so palmary a passage as this; and it strikes us that Mr. Le Bas' chief fault of style, if we may venture to say that he has any fault, arises from a little too ambitious emulation *αἰὲν ἀριστεύειν καὶ ὑπερβολὴν ἔμμενας*—not of others—for that would not be a difficult task—but of himself. He writes as if every succeeding paragraph were jealous of its predecessor and piqued into a contest for superiority with it. It would be most unjust to say that he is ever meretricious, but we think in these introductory chapters he is too invariably glittering and gorgeous. We seek short intervals of repose, and find none. The eye is wearied, dazzled, and perplexed by excess of light, which increases to so overpowering an intensity, that in the end it almost becomes darkness. It is not that his metaphors, fiery and high mettled steeds as they are, gain mastery over their charioteer; he keeps them skilfully in hand, and they are always in the right track, and in reality under guidance. But then, on they go—ever at the top of their speed—dashing, splashing, snorting, foaming, panting, prancing, curvetting, and galloping—without bait or check, through rough places and smooth, over hill and valley, constantly accelerating as they proceed, till the terrified passenger, whom they are whirling on, fancies that he is run away with, feels himself dizzy, bewildered, vertiginous, and perhaps a little sick; and would fain jump out at all hazards, if it were in his power. The plethora of imagery, which oppresses the Introduction, is the more remarkable, from the comparative emaciation of the subsequent narrative.

But to return from this digression upon faults, into which the notice of an excellence has perversely betrayed us—Mr. Le Bas with great candour admits the many benefits which, amid all its iniquity, the Papal power conferred upon mankind:—the protection which it often afforded to the otherwise unbefriended; the shield with which it covered the helpless; the sword which it raised against the oppressor; the fostering hand with which it singly trimmed the lamp of Learning amid the utter darkness brooding every where around; and above all its inestimable preservation of the true Catholic doctrine; deep buried indeed under superincumbent error, but so located that, in due season, the hand of the skilful miner might bring the precious ore to day, and purge away the dross which had collected round it. All these great blessings speak with trumpet tongues that it was Wisdom more mighty than that of Man, which permitted this Gigantic Evil to exist, and drew good from it in the end.

Thus equitable in apportioning praise, Mr. Le Bas cannot be taxed with undue severity, when in turn he exhibits the reverse of the picture; and he does so with considerable power.

“On the other hand, Europe never can forget the remorseless and sanguinary abuse of her almost superhuman powers. In the annals of Christendom, it is indelibly written, that of all the empires which the world has ever seen or trembled at, the Papacy was the most merciless in the exercise of its predominance, whenever it was left by events to the uncontrolled manifestation of its spirit. Its maxims of government had an uniformity and an inflexibility, like that which distinguished the career and the domination both of its republican and imperial predecessor. The very life and soul of its policy, was to spare the submissive, and trample down the rebellious. If this relentless principle was ever suspended, it never, for a moment, was forgotten or abandoned. It yielded to the pressure and obstruction of circumstances, just as the inundation yields to the impediments and the resistance, offered by the face of the country which it is laying waste. It wound round the base of the mountain and the promontory, which its strength was unable to undermine or to overthrow; and it held on its stealthy course to the provinces beyond, till the whole land was overwhelmed, and the summits of the hills disappeared beneath the flood. In this very faculty of yielding, lay the secret of its resistless and unconquerable might. And all history bears witness to the desolation which marked the course of its victorious fury. The thirteenth century is disastrously memorable for the murderous crusade against the Albigenses. In the fifteenth, the annals of the Hussites, the Lollards, and the Moriscoes, were written in characters of flame and blood. The horrid tragedy is still continued through the two following centuries, in the martyrology of the Reformers and the Huguenots. To name the Inquisition, is to summon up before the memory such prodigies of infernal atrocity, as oppress and distract the heart, and almost cause it to despair of human nature. In the eighteenth century, indeed, the demon of persecution shrunk and cowered, like a guilty thing, before the advancing light of civilization and intelligence. But to this hour, though the fiend is bound in chains, it is ready, at any moment, to emerge from the pit, should it be able to burst its fetters. Infallibility is the name, which it still wears written upon its vesture and on its thigh. In this, it still hopes to conquer. In virtue of this it is, that the spirit of Loyola hath once more descended upon earth, to breathe the breath of life into the remains, which, *in the eyes of the unwise*, seemed to be consigned for ever to the dust. This is the voice which, in the hearing of the present generation, has denounced all religious toleration by the name of impiety, and has prohibited the circulation of the Scriptures, as it would prohibit blasphemy.”— pp. 24—26.

In passing on to a notice of those small and obscure Christian communities, which, safe amid their mountain fastnesses, maintained the primitive Faith uncorrupted, or very early rejected its growing abuses, Mr. Le Bas has very judiciously avoided the perplexed and controversial matters with which their story has

too often been encumbered. Perhaps, in the outset, he somewhat too absolutely speaks of the people of the Valley of Piedmont, as "known by the name of Vaudois or the Waldenses." That the two have often been thus confounded is not to be denied, but that they are plainly distinct, is, we think, a point now beyond all doubt. The Vaudois and the *Vallenses* of course are the same. But it is no more than just to their well-established superior antiquity that they should be distinguished from the later *Waldenses*, the followers of Waldo of Lyons.* A little onward, indeed, Mr. Le Bas expressly states his conviction to this effect. There is, he says, "but little difficulty in the surmise that the Valleys of Piedmont may, from primitive, perhaps from Apostolic times, have witnessed a more undefiled profession and practice of the Gospel than can easily be found among the more degenerate communions of Christian Europe." In the probability of this surmise we most reluctantly acquiesce; but without having recourse to *conjecture*, it seems to us that the freedom of the Vaudois from many errors taught by Rome may be affirmed with *certainty* three Centuries earlier than the date which Mr. Le Bas has assigned to it. In his account of their tenets he ascends no higher than *La Nobla Leyçon*, which he is not disinclined to admit as a production of the XIIth century. We are not sure whether, by omitting any notice of Claude Bishop of Turin, in the IXth century, he intends to discredit the connexion of the Vaudois with that Prelate's Diocese; and consequently with the marked opposition to Romish Doctrines by which Claude, in his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, condemns Prayers for the dead, human merits, and the infallibility of the Church, and maintains Justification by Faith. But that the Vaudois must have been under the spiritual guidance of Claude, is plain by a reference to the Ecclesiastical distribution of Italy. The Province of the Cottian Alps embraced considerable part of Piedmont; and of the ten Dioceses in that Province, Turin was the most Eastern, and therefore the one in which the Valleys would be included.

The claims of the Vaudois to a continuous Apostolic succession, and to the retention of Episcopacy, even so late as the XVth Century, are, we think, far more doubtful than those which they assert to total or very early freedom from the corrupt doctrines of the Papacy; and Mr. Le Bas fully agrees in this opinion. It may fairly be asked how Episcopal consecration was to be obtained by them, after they had rejected the authority of the Sees under which they had hitherto been distributed, those of

* We cannot admit Maclaine's contradiction to weigh against the evidence adduced by Leger, Usher, Allix, and Mosheim, exclusive of many recent authorities.

Turin and Pinerol? and it seems that they were not less cut off from the Imposition of hands, at that season, be it what it may, than they were afterwards, when, fleeing from persecution and hunted down among their mountains, they were for awhile forced to abandon all visible Church communion. Mr. Gilly,* indeed, has said that it is evident that there were Bishops in the Waldensian Church in 1544; for that the following Article occurs in their Confession of Faith presented to Francis I. in that year. "*Nous tenons cecy pour resolu parmi nous, que les Evêques et les Pasteurs doivent être irréprehensibles dans leur doctrine et leurs mœurs.*" But in this statement there is more than one error. First, the inhabitants of Merindol and Cabrieres, by whom that Confession was drawn up, cannot strictly be called the Waldensian Church, if by "Waldensian" be meant, "of the Vaudois." The above named villages were not within the confines of the Valleys; and although doubtless they agreed in many, perhaps in most points of Faith with their neighbours, and might be deemed offshoots from their trunk, they plainly were not that antique trunk itself. Again, this Confession was presented to Francis in 1542, not 1544; a trifling difference, which would scarcely deserve notice, were it not that, as will presently be seen, our main objection rests upon the alteration of a single word. We have not means of ascertaining in what Language the original Confession was framed; but we feel very considerable doubt whether French was employed, because French was not at that time the general medium of Diplomacy, whether Civil or Religious. We are still more sure that the Provençals would have been unable to write so pure French as that which is above quoted; and we are borne out by the Patois of other existing documents proceeding from them. It is therefore much to be doubted whether the Article cited by Mr. Gilly is transcribed from the original Confession.

If it be not so, and if that Confession was framed not in French, but in Latin, (the Language in more ordinary official use,) the argument altogether falls to the ground. For in the Latin Confession printed by Gerdesius,† from the *Acta et Monumenta Martyrum* of Johannes Crispinus, (pp. 104—110) no mention whatever of *Episcopi* is to be found. On the contrary, the description noticed resembles a smooth, plain, level, close-shaven Presbyterianism, "*Confitemur ministros (les Evêques!) et Ecclesiæ Pastores, exempli gregi et fidelibus esse oportere.*" Every thing here depends upon the *utrum antiquius* of the Latin or the French version; and we repeat that we have not the power of

* *Mountains of Piemont*, p. 75, (1824); cited by Mr. Le Bas, p. 32.

† *Historia Reformationis*, Vol. IV., *Monumenta*, Num. XV. p. 87.

determining their rival claims. We do not profess to do more than show that, without additional evidence, Mr. Gilly's citation is by no means conclusive respecting the fact in support of which it has been adduced.

Of the exemplary purity of the lives of the Vaudois happily no doubt can ever be raised. Mr. Le Bas cites Rayner (Reyner?) in illustration of their high moral character at the time of which his volume treats. In later days, the round oath sworn by Louis XII. may be accepted as similar testimony. That Prince being asked by the reigning Pope to exterminate them, manifested a reluctance, not a little unusual either in a Most Christian or a Most Catholic King, to light the fires of persecution without previous inquiry: and avowed that if it were even Turk or Devil against whom he was commanded to make war, he would first hear what they had to say in their own behalf. The result of his investigation proved so advantageous to the parties accused, that Louis called all the Saints to witness that the Vaudois were far better Christians than either himself or any other of his subjects. But never perhaps was stronger evidence adduced in favour of those connected with the pious and simple mountaineers, than may be found in the Report laid before Francis I. at the time in which he was preparing for the accursed Massacre of Merindol. The heart sickens when we call to mind the atrocities which were afterwards perpetrated in the very teeth of that most affecting document.

The butcheries in Provence, to which we here allude, although perpetrated on a smaller scale, were akin to those committed three centuries before in Languedoc; even as the Albigenses had many features in common with the Vaudois. The charge of Manichæism brought against the former, as it had been yet earlier against the Paulicians, is strenuously rebutted by Archbishop Usher. Even if it could have been proved, the accusation was not a little ambiguous; for among the infinite variety of Sects which from time to time have been taxed with participation in the errors of the original Manichæans, who shall venture to pronounce what Heresy may or may not in some way be connected with their name? That the Albigenses were not altogether orthodox, is the most probable conclusion obtained from a comparison of the different accounts remaining of them. Such is the opinion of Mr. Le Bas, and we shall cite his statement, because we are gratified to observe in it a similar amiable and charitable temper to that which animated a very high authority in our Church, when treating the same subject 200 years before him.

“What the ‘men of the valleys’ were in Piemont, the Albigenses

may, possibly have been in Languedoc, and the south of France; although it must be confessed that the name of these latter religionists has not been handed down to us with the same unsullied honours as that of their Alpine brethren. It has been confidently affirmed, that the creed of these people was tainted with the monstrous errors of the Manichæan heresy: and the charge has been supported by a large body of contemporary evidence, and more particularly by the recorded acts of the inquisition of Thoulouse. That the extravagant principles of this strange theory were partially dispersed among the multitude of sects which at this time were beginning to disturb the slumbers of Romish orthodoxy, appears almost beyond dispute. But it seems likewise irresistibly clear, that, amidst the variety of error which is said to have chequered the motley surface of their belief, one peculiarity was common to them all; for, without exception, they protested against the exorbitant wealth and intolerable despotism of the Papal hierarchy. It will easily be perceived how grievously the mixture of Gnostic or Manichæan error, in the multifarious creeds of these people, would disqualify them for an effectual conflict against the abuses they presumed to denounce. Their doctrinal perversions would enable the defenders of the Catholic faith to proclaim, with sufficient plausibility, that the gainsayers of the Papal supremacy were likewise open adversaries to the primitive truth; that the traitors to the Pontiff were also little better than rebels against God; that they who set up their own private judgment against the authority of St. Peter's chair, scrupled not to affirm a divided empire between the power of evil and the Father of all goodness. To what precise extent these notions could justly be ascribed to the Albigenses, or the Cathari, or other reputed heretics of the twelfth or thirteenth centuries, it would at this day be extremely difficult to decide; but it can scarcely be doubted that they retained a sufficient amount of erroneous doctrine, to furnish their enemies with very formidable arms against them. In another, and much more creditable respect, however, they undoubtedly bore a very near resemblance to their Asiatic predecessors. The greater part of the original Manichæans are represented to us, with all their extravagancies, as a class of harmless mystics, or austere enthusiasts; and such, undoubtedly, were a very large portion among their European successors, in subsequent ages, by whatever multitude of names they may have been consigned to public execration by their persecutors."—pp. 34, 35.

In a like spirit was this persecuted race estimated by one who justly merited the title of "pious and profoundly learned," bestowed on him by his contemporaries. Joseph Mede, after touching upon the charges brought by St. Bernard against certain *vulpeculæ*, who were devouring the Lord's vineyard, writes as follows, in a tone, of which the above passage has agreeably reminded us. "*Quin et omnis ævi experientia testatur, etiam nostri, quàm parùm fidei in hujusmodi criminationibus adversario tribuendum sit. Hoc tamen eò à me dictum putari nolim, quasi Segreges istos omni prorsus erroris labe expertes crederem. Nihil opus est. Quippe in eo non vertitur res quam*

adstructam velim. Ulro igitur dare non verebor præ ἀμερπία τῆς ἀνοδοκῆς (ut est hominum ingenium) cū istos, tum postea Waldenses et Albigenes (quidni et nostros?) in nonnullis tam quæ ad dogmata, quàm quæ ad mores spectent, (quæ tamen essentiali Fidei Christianæ non ledant,) ab errore excusari non posse, nec debere. Hoc tamen non prohibere assero quò minus fuerint Cœtus ille Jesu Christi electus, vocatus, et fidelis. In hoc enim Religionis examine illud nos (ut opinor) sentire decet, veros & legitimos Dei cultores non ex omnimodò erroris, etiam non fundamentalis, immunitate censendos esse, quinimo ex puritate cultús et immunitate ab Idololatrid. Qui sic comparati, Deo Patri per Jesum Christum Filium Mediatorem, sincerè placere studeant, ei gratos esse & acceptos. Quis enim mihi præstabit, septem illa millia qui tempore Eliæ Baali genua non flexerant, quosque Deus sibi superfuisse testatur, ab omni errore graviore fuisse immunes? aut Ecclesiam Judæicam aliquot ante Christum seculis, quâ parte sincerissima fuit, pluribus de Religione erroribus non laborasse.—(Revelatio Antichristi, Works, p. 722.)

How much of polemical virulence and nugacity would have been spared to the suffering world, if Divines had always thought and written in the spirit of either of the above extracts!

One hundred thousand Paulicians are said to have been put to death during the Persecution raised by Theodora in the IXth century. The incredible number of one million Albigenes has been stated as the estimate of the sufferers who fell during the Crusade against them in the XIIth. And yet it may be rationally believed that the victims on both occasions were exposed to all the hideous varieties of torture and massacre which the madness of Bigotry inflicted, far less because they maintained any notion of an Evil Being equipollent with God, (into which they might be driven by their insane speculations on Free Will,) than because they refused Worship to Saints and genuflexion to Images. The question regarding the particulars of the belief of the Paulicians is among the most obscure in Ecclesiastical History; but when we call to mind the detestable moral abominations which fouled the Byzantine Court, and the simultaneous fury of its zeal for *Idololatrea*, we may more readily suppose that the vengeance of the Empress was directed against Heretics who abstained from worshipping wood and stone, than against doctrinal offences, (respecting which she was comparatively careless,) affirming the existence of two Deities, and denying the authenticity of the Old Testament. The Roman Catholic Writers indeed have delighted to exhibit, more especially, the heterodoxy of the Paulicians in regard to Images; and Bossuet, if pressed hard, might perhaps have found it not very easy to overthrow the assertions of one of those Heretics, as they are called, which he cites from Petrus Siculus, with no small expression of horror. A Woman tainted with Manichæan principles, says that writer, perverted an igno-

rant person named Sergius, by telling him that the Catholics honoured Saints and Images as if they were Gods; and that they prohibited the reading of the Scriptures, lest, from their perusal, that error and many others should be discovered. If such were really one of the Paulician arguments, (and since its narrator resided some time among those to whom he assigns it he is not likely to be mistaken,) it would be very difficult to deny that they partook of the Spirit of the XVIth Century; and we think somewhat more is owing to them than the scanty praise of having been those who first deposited in the Church the leaven of "spiritual resistance." Resistance, simply as such, may be far other than a merit; to become meritorious, it must be Resistance for the Truth's sake; and to such a merit, so far as the instance afforded by Petrus Siculus leads us, were the Paulicians certainly entitled. We advance, therefore, a few steps beyond Mr. Le Bas, and we think the Paulicians, *if the view of them which we have taken above be correct*, stand almost in the same relation to Wiclif, as Wiclif himself does to the Saxon Reformers. We need not add that we consider such an allowance as this, to employ Mr. Le Bas' own words, "very different from confessing ourselves debtors to them for our own emancipation, or investing them with the chief honours due to Apostles of Religious Purity."

Mr. Le Bas next turns, in his Second Chapter, to the state of Christianity in England at the epoch of Wiclif's appearance. To the festive spirit of Gregory the Great, seconded by the zeal of the Monk Augustin, it is well known that we owe the firm establishment of the Gospel on our Shores, and the consequent sure mitigation of Barbarism, which accompanied it. How dark that Barbarism must have been, how ferocious the internal warfare which had raged for 150 years, is sufficiently attested by the extinction both of the Christian Religion and of the British Language throughout the Saxon territory, at the time at which the *Founder of our Church*, as he may be justly named, first landed in Kent. On this foundation we must add a few words. True it is that many of the Romanists strenuously contend that St. Peter converted Britain, even as he was also first Bishop of their own See; but the evidence which they advance is too slight to demand attention. Simeon Metaphrastes is, we believe, the first writer who hazarded this assertion, with little more than an *ipse dixit*; and that veritable historiographer is pronounced by one grave authority to be a Greek, and therefore to be a liar; and by another, and that other a Cardinal, to have blundered on this point, as he has often done on many besides. A passage in Gildas also has been wrested to a similar purpose by one whose name alone is sufficient to condemn him, the Jesuit Persons; but it requires that most dis-

honest Doctor's peculiar obliquity of vision to discover in Gildas any vestige of such a meaning. There is rather less improbability in the traditional accounts which consign Britain to the Apostolic tutelage of St. Paul. The *insulæ quæ in mare jacent*, named by Theodoret as among the spots which the great Teacher of the Gentiles visited after his labours in Italy and Spain, may be applied without violence to our own Islands; but surely the expression is too general to enable any one to affirm positively that it *does* mean Britain. The mission of Joseph of Arimathæa and the foundation of Glastonbury, when divested of the pseudo-miracles grafted upon it, might be more readily believed; and we should not be reluctant to assent to that tradition avouched by Bale, which states, that he who gave a Sepulchre to our Saviour, humbly rests beneath the walls of the first Christian House of Prayer raised within the circuit of our own "Glassy Isle," (*Inis Witrin*). Whatever credit may be attached to the claim of any particular converter, the conversion itself of Britain immediately after the Apostolic times is not to be questioned. It is distinctly attested both by Tertullian and by Origen as having occurred before the close of the II^d Century. Yet, notwithstanding the progress which Christianity may have made before the fatal invitation given by Vortigern to the Saxons, nothing can be plainer than that the cruelties of the Idolatrous Tribe, which that weak Prince summoned to his assistance, prevailed more against the Faith in Britain than had even the Persecution of Diocletian. The inaccessible fastnesses of Wales and the rough places of Cornwall afforded refuge to the few who had not been compelled to bend the knee to Odin and his Scandinavian assessors. But so feeble, so remote, and so unknown was this pious remnant, that the work of Augustin and his Followers is manifestly to be esteemed a beginning, not a renovation; and the people which he found "fierce, barbarous, and *unbelieving*," as Bede has called them, required not the watering of the seed already sown, in order that it might ripen to harvest, but the very first insertion of it in the furrow. It is thus that we are justified in calling Augustin the *Founder* of our Church; and it is well to bear in mind, that, by surrendering that position, we not only deprive ourselves of a strong outwork, but, moreover, we abandon to the enemy an advantageous ground, upon which he will be certain to establish a formidable battery. It is not a simple question for the inconsequential discussion of the Antiquary, but it is one upon which, if we relinquish our grasp, Rome will fasten with greediness. Never must it be forgotten that Gregory himself disclaimed all pretension to the title of Universal Bishop, and denounced any one who asserted such a pretension to be no other than the forerunner of Antichrist,

Ego fidenter dico, says that meek, pious, and unobtrusive administrator of the Romish See, while curbing the strongly contrasted arrogance of the contemporary Patriarch of Constantinople, *Ego fidenter dico quisquis se universalem Sacerdotem vocat, vel vocari desiderat, in elatione sua Antichristum præcurrit*. Never can any English Protestant be surprised that Persons, Saunders, and their legitimate successors in right line, would rejoice with exceeding joy if they could invalidate the claim of Augustin to be the layer of the first stone of our Temple, when they read in his Epitaph that he came to establish our spiritual welfare à *Beato Gregorio ROMANÆ URBIS PONTIFICE directus*.

How rapidly the fruits of Augustin's preaching attained maturity is seen by a native having been thought worthy to fill the Archbishopal throne, in very little more than forty-three years after the death of its first occupier. Frithona or Adeodatus, as he is called, the sixth Archbishop of Canterbury, was an Anglo-Saxon, and he is described to have been a man of learning and of virtue. Of similar character as well as Country was his elect successor, Wigard, whose death before consecration made way for the most eminent man of his times, the Cilician Theodore, the fellow-citizen of St. Paul. To that Prelate we are indebted for the first introduction of Greek Literature into our Native Soil; and would that we could recover some of the precious manuscripts which he bestowed upon his favourite child, the School which he founded at Cricklade (*Gracolada*); or that Homer upon which the Bibliomaniacs of the VIIth Century linger with delight, enamoured of the fairness of its characters and the accuracy of its text! To that illustrious name, and to the two Institutions, which must awaken a pure glow of devout exultation in the heart of every British Christian by whom they are pronounced, Iona and Lindisfarn, Mr. Le Bas offers a passing tribute as he advances onwards to Alfred.

“On the name of Alfred history has lavished all her resources of praise. Like the fabled Hercules of old, in him have centered the collective honours of institutions and achievements, the glory of which a more perfect knowledge of the times might, possibly, enable us to distribute with greater equity and credibility. But, after every reservation, enough would, doubtless, be left, to stamp him as a miracle of wisdom, energy, and patriotism; a benefactor such as Providence, in its mercy, sometimes raises up to rescue nations from despair. The Danes had torn his kingdom to fragments. He left it, at his death, in a state of integrity. In the eye of an historian of the Church, his name is eternally memorable, for the faithfulness with which he discharged the first of all those paternal duties, for which the *powers that be are ordained of God*. He laboured, both in his own person, and by munificence of

encouragement and patronage, to restore and to protect the fallen religion of his country. Religion seems, in truth, to have been the pillar of flame which incessantly directed and cheered him, throughout *the greatness of his way*. He commanded personally in fifty-four pitched battles—he was the creator of the navy of Britain—he was the protector of her commerce—he was, himself, the life and soul of her public justice—he has been thought by some to merit the title of Founder of her constitution—he was the good genius of her literature and arts—and, lastly, he most eminently deserves the name of Nursing Father of her Church. A third portion of his time was given up to the toils of study, and the exercises of piety. He translated works of devotion—he commenced a version of the Psalms—and his whole life appears to have been an example of the power of Christianity to take captive the highest faculties and noblest affections of man. And the whole of these wonders is rendered more overpowering by the circumstance, that they were achieved under the almost incessant pressure of severe bodily anguish. His life was one perpetual disease, and was terminated at the age of fifty-two—after having crowded within its limits such prodigies of useful exertion, as would seem to have demanded the days of an ancient patriarch, and the iron vigour of a Charlemagne.”—pp. 52, 53.

Saint Dunstan, notwithstanding Dr. Lingard's whitewash in the well-known Schedule A. at the end of his First (quarto) Volume, has received ample justice from numerous hands; and his portion of “everlasting fame” may be considered as assigned to him strictly in that monosyllable of the Satirist, which it might be unseemly to prefix here to his other words. We may leave him, therefore, after noticing Mr. Le Bas' sound and pithy judgment, that he “has done more than perhaps any other individual that can be mentioned, to inflict upon mankind the curse of a suspicion that Priestcraft and Religion are one;” and we turn to the contemplation of a widely different character, Robert Grostete, Bishop of Lincoln.

“Considerable interest,” says Dr. Lingard, “has been attached to the history of this Prelate by the *partiality of modern writers*.” It might be thought that one whom the general voice of his contemporaries pronounced to be the most virtuous, active, and learned Ecclesiastic of his time;—one whom Matthew Paris, an ultra-Papist, denounces as “*Domini Papæ et Regis redargutor manifestus, Prælatorum correptor, Monachorum corrector, Romanorum malleus et contemptor*; and nevertheless, with singular honesty, admits, in the very same paragraph, to have been, “*Presbyterorum director, Clericorum instructor, Scholarium sustentator, populi prædicator, incontinentium persecutor, Scripturarum sedulus perscrutator diversarum; in mensâ spirituali devotus, lacrimosus et cõntritus; in officio Pontificali sedulus, venerabilis et*

indefatigabilis;*—one for whose canonization, within a few years after his death, the University of Oxford presented an especial petition to the Holy See;—it might have been reasonably supposed that such a person little needed the “*partiality of modern writers*” to make him a subject of interest. The *partiality* which Dr. Lingard has shown, not a little, however, increases that interest.

Let us hear some of Dr. Lingard’s remarks on Grostete’s history. Innocent IV., in 1253, addressed a mandate to this Bishop to collate an Italian Boy, a nephew of his Holiness, to the first vacant stall in the Cathedral of Lincoln, under penalty of excommunication if he refused. This scandalous abuse was to be effected by that which the language of the Vatican termed *Provisio* or *gratia expectativa*; namely, the *providing* a person with a benefice during the lifetime of an incumbent actually seized of that Benefice; an exorbitant exercise of authority which first led to the statute of *Præmunire*. Grostete, in an ever-memorable Letter (he had on a former occasion written that which Knyghton calls *satis-tonantem Epistolam*.) peremptorily refused obedience, or rather professed that he was compelled “most filially and obediently” to disobey. How that letter was in truth received by Innocent, and what were its real consequences, we will presently show, but first we must present Dr. Lingard’s version. “So far was it (Grostete’s Letter) from exciting passion or resentment in the breast of the Pontiff, that *as soon as* he received it from his agent he wrote a letter in exculpation of his conduct, and proposed that remedy for the abuse of Provisions which has been already described in these pages.” What sort of description of that remedy is given we cannot say, for the reference (p. 19) in Dr. Lingard’s quarto edition is incorrect, and we have not the octavo at hand—but it matters nothing to our present purpose. A note on the above-cited passage continues: “The contemporary Annalist of Burton assures us that Innocent’s Letter was occasioned by the reply of Grostete to his agent, (Burt. 326. 330,) a sufficient refutation of the ridiculous tales which are told by Paris.” A second note informs us that “the story that he (Grostete) died under a sentence of suspension or excommunication, rests on very questionable authority. It probably arose from the comminatory denunciations of the Provision which he had rejected.”—(vol. ii. pp. 384, 385.)

* We have omitted one sentence which contains the *beau ideal* of a Bishop “given to hospitality,” “*in mensâ refectonis corporalis, dapsilis, copiosus et civilis, hilaris et affabilis.*”

The Annalist of Burton, in the first page referred to by Dr. Lingard, gives Bishop Grostete's Letter to the Pope's Delegate, (which may be found in Matthew Paris also, and elsewhere,) but without a date. Grostete, according to the same authority, died on the 13th of October, 1253. The apologetical Rescript of Innocent to the English Clergy, not to Grostete, although the Pope could not yet have received the intelligence of his death, bears date the 3d of November in the same year; and the Annalist of Burton, *without saying one syllable as to the manner in which Grostete's Letter was received by the Pope*, writes as follows: *Eodem tempore* (the common form with which, or *eodem anno*, almost every sentence of this dry and jejune writer commences, and which, therefore, by no means justifies Dr. Lingard's translation, "as soon as,"—some interval may or may not have elapsed) *acceptis prædictis Litteris Domini Episcopi Lincolnie, et eisdem lectis et intellectis, Summus Pontifex Archiepiscopis, Episcopis et quibusdam Abbatibus Regnis Angliæ * * * paria Litterarum vel amplius bullata, sub hæc formâ transmisit*, and this is the "sufficient refutation of the ridiculous tales which are told by Paris!" which tales, with an entire conviction that they are true, we shall venture to repeat at the hazard of being called ridiculous. *"Hæc cum ad Domini Papæ audientiam pervenissent, non se capiens præ ira et indignatione, torvo aspectu et superbo animo ait. 'Quis est iste senex delirus, surdus et absurdus, qui facta audax, imò temerarius judicat? Per Petrum et Paulum, nisi moverat nos innata ingenuitas, ipsam in tantam confusioem præcipitarem, ut toti mundo fabula foret, stupor, exemplum et prodigium! Nonne Rex Anglorum noster est Vassallus? et, ut plus dicam, mancipium, qui potest eum nutu nostro incarcerare, et ignominia mancipare? Et cum hæc inter fratres Cardinales recitarentur, vix compecentes impetum Papæ, dixerunt ei: 'Non expediret, Domine, ut aliquid durum contra ipsum Episcopum statueremus, ut enim vera futcamur, vera sunt quæ dicit. Non possumus eum condemnare. Catholicus est, imò et sanctissimus, nobis religiosior, nobis et sanctior, excellentior, et excellentis vitæ, ita ut non credatur inter omnes Prælatos majorem, imò nec parem habere. Novit hoc Gallicana et Anglicana cleri universitas, nostra non prævalet contradicere. Hujusmodi epistolæ veritas, quæ jam fortè multis innotuit, multa contra nos poterit commovere. Magnus enim habetur Philosophus, Latinis et Græcis literis ad plenum eruditus, zelator justitiæ, lector in Theologiâ scholis, prædicator in populo, castitatis amator, persecutor simonialium.' Hæc dixerunt Dominus Ægidius Hispanus Cardinalis, et alii, quos propriatangebat conscientia. Consilium dederunt Domino Papæ, ut omnia hæc conventibus oculis sub dissimulatione transire permitteret, ne super hoc tumultus excitaretur. Maxime propter hoc, quia scitur, quod quandoq; discussio est ventura."—(p. 872.)*

Now, we ask, is this minute and particular account to be rebutted by the negative evidence, the mere silence of the Annalist

of Burton? Is it not probable that, in his first fury, Innocent issued the Bull of excommunication under which Knyghton tells us—*quâ de causâ ad curiam vocatur et excommunicatur* (2436)—Grosetete was lying when he died? Who, indeed, can compare the mild, gentle, and subdued tone of Innocent's Rescript with the "comminatory denunciation" of the rejected Provision, without feeling convinced that the original wrath of the Pope must indeed have been great; and that it could have subsided only in consequence of the discreet and prudential remonstrances of his Cardinals? Is it likely that the same man who had threatened the highest Ecclesiastical penalties against Grosetete if he disobeyed his Provision, should, a few months afterwards, express himself as follows concerning Provisions in general, unless the Cardinals had dissented from him and refused him support? "*Cordi semper habuimus, quod in Provisionibus faciendis haberemus illius providentiâ modum, per quem Ecclesiis et Monasteriis seu aliis piis locis honor et commodum proveniret.* Great, indeed, would have been the honor and convenience resulting to the Church of Liucoln if she had accepted the Pope's nephew, a Boy-Prebendary, as a companion for her own legendary Sir Hugh! Again, the meek and conscientious Pontiff assures us that *improbitas nimia petitorum*—(O, the pertinacity of this just-breeched solicitor for a Canonry!)—*sæpe nobis dolorem intulit, et cordi nostro suspiria cumulavit, maxime cum post multa diffugia et excogitata resistentiâ studium, Provisiones quasdam PRORSUS INVITI fêcimus QUAS POTUISSE VITARE PRO MAGNO ET SOLEMNI GAUDIO DUCEREMUS* (*Ann. Burt.* 328). So far is the Pope's "Letter of exculpation" from disproving that resentment against Grosetete existed in his breast, that we defy any one to read it attentively without conviction that his abandonment of the Provision was wrung from him by hard necessity; and never is the resentment of an angry man more deadly than when he feels compelled to restrain its expression.

Of Grosetete's final opinion of Popery in return, we shall offer Mr. Le Bas' account. It contains the substance of a much longer passage in Matthew Paris. The anecdote with which it concludes is an additional evidence, if any such were needed, of the spirit with which Innocent continued to regard his opponent.

"At the end of the same year he was seized with the disorder which terminated all his conflicts and perturbations: and, next to the prospects of a better world, his chief consolation was to pour out his sorrows into the hearts of his confidential chaplains. His last conversations show that his spiritual vision was enlightened to perceive that the whole scheme of the Papal government was *enmity with God*. His eyes were then, at least, widely open to the frightful mischief of the Mendicant

institution ; and he bitterly deplored that the devotees of poverty should be converted into the *publicans* and extortioners of the Pope, and that the vilest secular passions should lurk beneath the garb of humility and indigence. But the burthen of his lamentations was the positively *Anti-Christian* character of the Romish hierarchy ; for, by what other name, he asked, but that of *Anti-Christ*, are we to designate a power that labours to destroy the souls which Christ came to save and to redeem ?— At last the spirit of prophecy seemed to burst upon him, and he exclaimed, that nothing but the edge of the sword could deliver the Church from this Egyptian bondage. In the midst of his lamentations his voice failed him ; and soon after he expired. His best encomium is the exultation of Innocent, who, on hearing of his death, exclaimed, ' I rejoice, and let every true son of the Church rejoice with me, that my great enemy is removed.' "—pp. 68, 69.

Dr. Lingard is not the only writer who has misrepresented Grostete. One of the many strange contradictions in the survey taken of that Prelate's character by Milner in his *History of the Church of Christ* is noticed by Mr. Le Bas as follows:—

" I profess myself unable, distinctly, to comprehend the views of this writer respecting the faith of Grostete. He tells us that, ' like many of the best divines of those days, this Bishop knew not the just nature of the Christian article of justification by Jesus Christ the righteous :' and yet, within a few lines, he adds, that ' dependence on God, as a reconciled Father in Christ Jesus, was his grand practical principle.' "—p. 69.

Numerous other confused statements of a similar kind might be adduced from almost every page of the Chapter (Cent. XIII. Ch. VII.) which Milner has dedicated to this great man, chiefly, as it would appear, with the intention of disparaging him in the eyes of a party. Grostete, we are told, " seems to have been always very serious in Religion according to the degree of light which he had," but " his views were very indistinct ;" " so long a course of consistent steadiness, integrity, and so much fear of God, attended with so small a degree of Spiritual light as in the case of this Bishop, is not a common phænomenon in the Church of God." " The holy soul of Robert Grostete was favoured with so much discernment as just to *understand and receive the essentials of godliness* AND NO MORE." What " more" we may ask does our Creator or his blessed Son require of us, than the " understanding and reception of the essentials of Godliness," so as to produce " serious Religion," " consistent steadiness," " integrity, and fear of God ?" Yet farther ; " however defective he was in doctrine, he was exceedingly strict in his views of morality, and like all Reformers of the *merely active class*, who labour to promote exterior good conduct, with low and inadequate ideas of Christian principle, he excited great offence and disgust, and pro-

duced very little solid benefit to mankind." "It was in the case of *practical evils*, not of doctrinal errors, that the Bishop of Lincoln showed the strength of his discernment; in regard to these he never failed to act with sincerity and vigour." Again, we find him described as possessing "unspotted integrity;" "uprightness and magnanimity;" "pious and upright perseverance;" that he knew "no other recreation than what naturally arose from the variety of his Religious employments;" that he was "renowned for Christian boldness and honesty, and ever animated by a true zeal for the honour of God, and by the deepest sense of the worth of souls;" "that the salvation of souls was perpetually in his thoughts and in his mouth," and that he "must have been possessed of the Spirit of Christ and have been superior to the Spirit of the World." Nevertheless, in the very teeth of these numerous declarations, and in the very same breath in which they are announced, it is added, that "most Bishops and Pastors who have been possessed of this advantage, (solid and perspicuous views of Evangelical truth,) though inferior to Grostete in magnanimity, industry and activity, have yet, if *truly pious*, far exceeded him in promoting the good of the Church." And once more, that, "upright, intrepid, disinterested, and constantly influenced by the fear of God, he yet failed to bring about the good which he had conceived in his heart, because he had too much reliance on moral and prudential plans for that reformation of mankind, which is sought in vain from every thing, except from the knowledge and application of the Gospel." But let us inquire from what less pure and living source than "the knowledge and application of the Gospel," were the multitude of Christian graces derived, with which the pen of the Historian has so lavishly and so truly invested Grostete? What enabled "the Spirit of Christ" to pre-dominate in him over "the Spirit of the World," but "acquaintance with the mystery of Godliness?" Whence had he "sincere zeal for the honour of God, and the deepest sense for the worth of souls," unless he were "truly pious?" How, in one word, could "the salvation of souls be perpetually on his thoughts and on his lips" if he had been devoid of "solid and perspicuous views of Evangelical Truth?" That, singly, he did not effect the mighty change, which, perhaps, indeed, his eyes were not sufficiently strengthened to contemplate, even in dim perspective, and which it required the farther ripening of nearly three centuries, the acute perception of unnumbered additional abuses accumulated during their lapse, and the united efforts of a numerous band of holy Confessors finally to consummate, can little be a matter of surprise. But never till Martin Luther confronted the Powers of this world at Augsburgh, and overthrew them with the sword

of Faith, did there exist heart, spirit and understanding more pregnant with the as yet unfashioned members of embryo *Protestantism* than those of Robert Grossete!

Of Milner's incongruities, after the above exposure, it is unnecessary to say more; yet we cannot forbear exhibiting as their climax two paragraphs which occur within a dozen pages of each other. First he says, "It was his (Grossete's) usual infelicity to labour in the fire for every vanity, *because he had no distinct perception of the fundamental truth of Christianity.*"—(vol. iv. p. 46.) This simple and monocephalic proposition creeps on but a few paces before it is metamorphosed into the veriest amphibæna, the most double-visaged Janus, which ever looked fore and aft at the self-same moment;" "the eminence of his practical Godliness demonstrates that *he must have been in possession of the fundamentals of Divine Truth*—the evidence of the Bishop's *knowledge of fundamental truths* is not only to be collected by fair inferences, but is also *direct and positive!*"—(vol. iv. pp. 57-8.)

Quidni? unus olim; nunc verò partus est geminus!

The meek, amiable and accomplished Bradwardine is naturally a far higher favorite with Milner than Grossete; for the terror of Pelagianism, under which the former laboured, inclined him somewhat too much to the opposite errors of Augustin. Few of the followers of that School, however, can lay claim to the finely tempered and mitigated spirit in which Bradwardine preached the disputed doctrine. Mr. Le Bas has well explained his course.

"A predestinarian, in theory, he undoubtedly was. But what was the practical efficacy of this ingredient in his divinity? We may read the answer to this question in the following words:—'Why do we fear to preach the doctrine of predestination of saints, and of the genuine grace of God? Is there any cause to dread, lest man should be induced to despair of his condition, when his hope is demonstrated to be founded on God alone? Is there not much stronger reason for him to despair, if, in pride and unbelief, he founds his hope of salvation on himself?' Whatever may be the merits of the predestinarian doctrine, as tried by the principles of sound philosophy, or by the language of Scripture, one thing, at least, is certain,—that the Church might regard it with comparative tranquillity, if its fruits had always been as mildly flavoured, as those which it produced in the *good and honest heart* of this holy man! Uncharitable austerity, and spiritual arrogance, are the plants which are apt to thrive in the soil of what is now called Calvinism. But this was a growth which could not live in the soul of such a being as Bradwardine.

"As an adversary of Pelagius, he denounced the freedom of the human will; but it is obvious, after all, that his warfare, in reality, is

not against the perfect free agency, but against the self-sufficiency, of man. It was much the fashion of that age to question the necessity of a *preventive* grace. The spiritual influences of God, it was imagined, were to be earned by works positively meritorious, or by tempers and dispositions, which might duly render the man an object of Divine favour; so that our nature might, either be invested, as it were, with a strict legal title to the benefit; or, if not, at least, with a sort of equitable claim to it, which the bountiful goodness of the Deity would by no means resist. *Condignity* was the term invented by the schools to indicate the higher of these two moral conditions; the lower was denoted by the word *congruity*. In the one case, the man is actually *worthy* of the grace of God; in the other, he is *fittly prepared* for its reception. These fancies were, both of them, repudiated and condemned by Bradwardine; as they are, at this day, by our own Church. According to our theology, the fittest *preparation* for the influences of the Spirit of holiness, is a contrite acknowledgement of our own *unworthiness*. 'The meritorious dignity of doing well, we utterly renounce;' for it invests man with the right to bargain with his Maker. The notion of *congruity* we, as decidedly, reject; for, as Bradwardine observes, it represents the Holy One as disposing of his favours for a cheap and vile consideration. And the practical result is, that, on the one hand, we are to labour for the grace of God as urgently as if our own deeds could purchase or procure it: and, on the other, to acknowledge that our enjoyment of the gift, yea, and our power to labour for it, are solely to be ascribed to his gratuitous mercy."—pp. 77, 78.

Fitzralph, Archbishop of Armagh, a thorn in the side of the Mendicants, is the last precursor of Wiclif whom Mr. Le Bas notices. Few and scanty indeed were the lights which burned among us in those times of ignorance and darkness that might be felt. But it is plain that we were not altogether as men without hope. Milner may condemn the mere "activity" and "practical vigour" of Grostete; Mr. Le Bas more wisely regrets that there were not many like him to be found, who bore their principles into the busy scenes of life. "The misfortune was, that the Truth for the most part *retired* to the strong holds of Religious and contemplative *retirement*; and its action there was scarcely powerful enough to keep up the moral circulation through the social mass." From *Hérèsy*, we were singularly free; but this is justly styled "a dubious pre-eminence." In 1166, a small band of German fauatics, rejecting Baptism and the Eucharist, and notwithstanding their claim to superior purity, (for they named themselves *Cathari*), teaching that marriage was incompatible with salvation, landed in England. Their leader was named Gerard, their number did not exceed thirty, and they made no more than one convert, a female, who speedily abjured. Like most other weak men, these silly people were also obstinate; but they met with judges who, compared with the general spirit of the times, must

be considered merciful. Henry II. had forbidden burning in his continental dominions; while his neighbours applied no other remedy to diseased Faith. The Synod of Bishops, therefore, before which the Cathari were summoned, condemned them *only* to whipping, branding and banishment; and there is some doubt whether, after the infliction of the first two portions of their sentence, before the third could be executed, they did not perish miserably in the fields from want of food; in consequence of a proclamation forbidding all true Christians to hold any intercourse with them. These apparently harmless sectaries, and some Albigenes, of whom we know nothing more than the bare fact that they were burned by John, appear to have been the only innovators who, before the XIVth Century, ruffled the monotonous stagnation of English orthodoxy. The temporal usurpation of Rome frequently excited deep murmurs; but few if any hearts had been yet awakened by a suspicion of her gross doctrinal corruption.

We have dwelled so long upon Mr. Le Bas' Introduction that our notice of the body of his Work must necessarily be brief; and we shall content ourselves with little more than pointing out a few novelties which it has been in his power to collect. Of the extraordinary value attached to Wiclif's labours before the Reformation, the following note may be accepted as a specimen. It is written at the end of one of the MSS. of the *Pore Catif*, a Treatise recently committed to the Press, for the first time, by the Religious Tract Society; and the original copy may be found among the Harleian collection in the British Museum (2335).

“ ‘This book was made of the goods of John Gamalin, for a common profit, that the person that has this book committed to him of the person that had power to commit it, have the use thereof for the time of his life, praying for the soul of the same John: and that he that hath this aforesaid use of the commission, when he occupieth it not, leave he it, for a time, to some other person. Also, that the person to whom it was committed for the term of life, under the aforesaid conditions, deliver it to another for the term of his life. And so be it delivered and committed from person to person, man or woman, so long as the book endureth.’ ”—p. 149.

Respecting the unruly scene which disgraced the appearance of Wiclif, when cited to St. Paul's before the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, Milner has gone out of his way, not only to show that it “ added no real honour to the cause of Wiclif,” a position which no one will dispute, but he has moreover pressed into Court, the most ambiguous of all witnesses, Silence, in order, if possible, to throw some portion of that dishonour upon Wiclif himself. For this ungracious and

inequitable attempt at detraction he has met with a just reprimand from Mr. Le Bas.

“ Mr. Milner, in his Church History, vol. iv. p. 115, says, ‘ It would have given real pleasure to the lover of Christian reformation, if he could have discovered any proof that Wiclif protested against the disorderly and insolent behaviour of his patrons:’ and, ‘ that the deportment of the archbishop and bishop seems to have been more unexceptionable than that of Wiclif and his friends.’ Now does not this language seem to intimate that the writer must have been on the watch for an opportunity of disparaging the Reformer? As for the conduct of Wiclif’s patrons, we have no objection to deliver it over to the displeasure of Dr. Milner. Little more, perhaps, can be said for it (if correctly reported) than, that it was very nearly what might be reasonably anticipated from the haughty and semi-barbarous aristocrats of that age. The declaration of Bishop Courtney, that he would gladly have excluded the Earl Marshal from the Church, might be expected, in those times, to chafe the temper of a Percy, and highly to exasperate a Prince of the blood. But as for Wiclif himself, charity would, surely, presume that, if he did not interfere, it was because the tumult and violence of the scene were such as to make all interference hopeless and nugatory. Nay, any attempt to interfere, on his part, might only have aggravated the irritation of his high-born friends. Nothing can well be more unfair than to raise up unfavourable surmises on the strength of a negative circumstance like this.”—p. 163, 164.

Of Dr. Lingard’s shuffling arrangement of the three papers presented by Wiclif to the Papal Commissioners, on his subsequent citation to Lambeth, we have already spoken sufficiently in our Review of Mr. Vaughan’s Life;* and Mr. Le Bas has adopted the opinion of his predecessor. Furthermore, he proceeds to correct one of the most unworthy passages which has issued from Milner’s pen. That Historian has broadly affirmed, that the explanations offered by Wiclif are considered by his “ very best friends” to be so “ unnatural, forced, artful, and unmanly,” that they are “ ashamed to defend this part of his conduct.” Mr. Le Bas’s answer is too long for extraction, too argumentative for abridgment; but it distinctly proves that Milner’s extreme statement can be supported only by those three most convenient Rhetorical props of controversy, Omission, Assertion, and Misrepresentation. He concludes with an honest and candid admission that Wiclif in this transaction is not altogether invulnerable. From how much unavailing trouble and inconclusive apology would Biographers be relieved, if they would thus judiciously remember, that they are writing the lives not of angels but of men, and therefore that *some* errors must be granted, *some* frailties and failings must be confessed!

* Brit. Crit., April, 1829, p. 400.

"After all, however, it would ill become any candid biographer of Wiclif, to claim unqualified commendation for the document which, on this occasion, he exhibited to his judges. It would be vain to deny that there is, in some parts of it, an air of obliquity, of confusion, of scholastic intricacy, which very greatly weakens its dignity and effect. Whether this is to be partially ascribed to the peril of his situation; or whether it may more justly be considered as one unhappy symptom of the influence of the scholastic discipline upon his understanding, none can pronounce, but He who searcheth the heart of man."—p. 188.

In a similar spirit is Wiclif defended from other imputations cast by Milner, who endeavours to represent him as too deeply involved in secular concerns, to deserve the praise of being "a leading character of real godliness." The charge must be given in Joseph Milner's own words; those last cited belong to his brother and editor. "Whoever carefully examines the original records will soon be convinced that the merits of this Reformer have been considerably exaggerated. . . . One point of instruction may in some measure compensate the pain which every lover of truth must feel at the discovery of his inconsistencies. It is this, let serious Divines cease to immerse themselves in political concerns. Politics was the rock on which this great and good man split; and in this case it clearly appeared that the work of God is not to be carried on by 'the arm of flesh.'" . . . "I know no person of ecclesiastical eminence whose life and character have cost me more thought and care than Wicklif's. And after all, *there is not much that deserves the peculiar attention of godly persons.* I have consulted the best authorities, and in scrutinizing their contents have been mortified to find that I could not conscientiously join with the popular cry in ranking this man among the highest worthies of the Church. A political spirit, as we have seen, deeply infected his conduct." Now, cover the name Wiclif, and one or two epithets, and ask a stranger to these passages whom it is they describe? He will answer at once, if we mistake not, a Hildebrand, an Innocent, or a Julius—a Mazarine or a Richelieu—nay, perhaps he will even reply, an ex-bishop of Autun! But what says Mr. Le Bas in opposition?

"It requires no inconsiderable exercise of patience to observe the spirit which seems to have presided over the representations given of him by some, whom we might naturally expect to find among his friends. By these he is pictured to us rather under the aspect of an unquiet political agitator than of a devout and spiritual servant of Christ.* The foundation for this charge it is beyond my capacity to discover. It is true that his great reputation fixed the eyes of the government upon him as the fittest person to vindicate his country from the ignominy and

* "Milner's Church History."

the oppression of the Papal tribute—that the same cause dispatched him, among other illustrious men, as the representative of her ecclesiastical interests in the embassy to Bruges—and, lastly, that the Parliament of England resorted to the sanction of his judgment, when they resolved, that the very marrow of the realm should no longer be drained out, to pamper the greediness and ambition of a foreign court. Services like these would seem to demand of Englishmen no other sentiments than those of gratitude and reverence: and that eye must, indeed, be keen to ‘pry into abuses,’ which can discover in the performance of such services any grievous departure from the sacredness of the spiritual function. An English ecclesiastic, of distinguished sagacity and erudition, was employed to defend the Church and State of England against the rapacity of aliens; and this, too, in an age, when the talents and accomplishments of Churchmen were constantly in requisition, for all the most arduous responsibilities of secular office. This is the whole truth and substance of the case. If, indeed, it could be shown that the days and nights of Wiclif had been wholly, or chiefly, consumed in occupations and engagements of this description,—and that his powers were thus diverted from the peculiar channel in which the main current of a Churchman’s exertions ought, indisputably, to flow,—there might be some pretence for this invidious exhibition of his character. But the fact is not so. The occurrences in question were nothing more than short episodes in his life. We have only to look into his writings, or even into a catalogue of his writings, to see how small a portion of his time on earth was absorbed by matters in which politics had the slightest concern. And the more rigorously those writings are scrutinized, the more clearly will it appear, that no confessor was ever animated by a more disinterested, unworldly, and devotional spirit, than the man who enjoyed the friendship of John of Gaunt, and the confidence of the British Parliament.

“The imperfect justice hitherto rendered to the memory of Wiclif, as a man of deep religious affections, may, in part, be the natural effect of that peculiar interest which attaches to his character as the antagonist of a corrupt hierarchy. We have been accustomed to regard him, chiefly, as the scourge of imposture, the ponderous hammer, that smote upon the brazen idolatry of his age; and our thoughts have thus been too much withdrawn from the work, which was constantly going forward within the recesses of his own spirit. A more just and patient consideration of his writings will show us, that the demolition of error, and of fraud, was not more constantly present to his mind, than the building up of holy principles and affections. These two objects are, for the most part, closely interwoven with each other: and this it is, together with his use of the vernacular tongue, which gave his writings their wide and powerful influence. There had, doubtless, (as we have already observed,) been produced, before his time, and within the very bosom of the Romish Church, considerable stores of solid and devotional theology; but, then, they were either enshrined in such ‘cunning work’ of scholastic subtlety and abstraction,—or they were so guiltless of all reference to existing circumstances, and abuses,—that, to the people, they were,

generally, no better than the merest nullities; and they were, consequently, regarded with supreme indifference and composure by the Romish Church. The reveries of Plato were scarcely more innocuous to the worldly system of the Papacy, than pure effusions of the most exalted piety; such, for instance, as the works of Bradwardine, or, at a later period, the treatise of Thomas à Kempis. But the toils of Wiclif had a twofold object. He laboured not only to shake in pieces the outward fabric of the house of Rimmon, but, also, to expose and to correct the personal vices and corruptions which had, for ages, sought a shelter in its sanctuary. The former of these is an undertaking, which rouses the indignant sympathies of mankind. The latter is a work which summons all who contemplate it, to a painful examination of their own hearts and consciences. And hence it is, that the cause which exposed him to persecution in his own day, is that which has principally made him the object of admiration in the times which followed. The Reformer of Christian morals has been forgotten in the Reformer of Papal abuse; and thus his memory has been left open to the suggestion, that he is to be honoured as the antagonist of Popery, not as the advocate of Christ,—fitted to join with politicians and with princes, in their resistance to encroachment, rather than to band with saints and confessors in bearing testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus.”—pp. 298—302.

And here we must reluctantly break away. The last few chapters of Mr. Le Bas's Work must be read entire. The 9th considers Wiclif's opinions; and a summary of a summary would be little profitable or intelligible. The 10th and 11th relate to his followers; and the 12th is a *Catalogue Raisonné* of his Works, reprinted from Mr. Vaughan, with the permission of his liberal publishers. No one can have followed our remarks without perceiving that Mr. Le Bas has produced a Work of very considerable value. Some marks of haste it may perhaps bear about it, and a severe eye may detect a few ambitious sentences, which would probably have subsided under the gentle filing of diligent revision. But it is a volume for which the Protestant Christian owes a large debt of gratitude to its author. The student will find in it rich stores of Ecclesiastical knowledge; the accomplished Divine will lay it up in his Theological armoury among the weapons of defence with which he may usefully gird himself in the day of battle; and to the general scholar, the man of letters and of taste it will win its easy way by frequent bursts of glowing eloquence. We could not pardon ourselves if we concluded otherwise than by extracting two detached passages, which, placed together, exhibit a sum of that small portion of Wiclif's personal character which is known to us, and of the far more visible results of his labours; the first in language of unequalled beauty; the second with a nice discrimination of truth.

“ Thus prematurely was terminated the career of this extraordinary

man. His days were not extended to the length usually allotted to our species. Ten more years of vigorous exertion might reasonably have been expected from the virtuous and temperate habits of an exemplary life. But the earthly tenement was, probably, worn out by the intense and fervid energy of the spirit within: and if his mortal existence be measured by the amount of his labours and achievements, he must appear to us as full of days as he was of honours. It now remains that we endeavour to form a righteous estimate of him, as he presents himself to our conceptions through the haze and mist of ages. Unfortunately, he is known to us almost entirely by his writings. Over all those minute and personal peculiarities which give to any individual his distinct expression and physiognomy, time has drawn an impenetrable veil. To us he appears, for the most part, as a sort of unembodied agency. To delineate his *character*, in the fullest and most interesting sense of that word, would be to write romance, and not biography. During a portion of his life, indeed, he is more or less mixed up with public interests and transactions: but of these matters our notices are but poor and scanty; and, if they were more copious, they would, probably, do little towards supplying us with those nameless particulars to which biography owes its most powerful charm. With regard to the details of his daily life,—the habitual complexion of his temper—the turn of his conversation—the manner of his deportment among his companions—his inclinations or antipathies—his friendships or his alienations—we must be content to remain in hopeless ignorance.” . . . “ We must be satisfied to think of him as of a voice crying in the wilderness, and lifting up, through a long course of years, a loud, incessant, heart-stirring testimony, against abuses, which for ages had wearied the long-suffering of heaven. Respecting his gigantic successor, Martin Luther, we are in possession of all that can enable us to form the most distinct conception of the man. We see him in connection with the wise, and the mighty, and ‘ the excellent of the earth.’ We behold him in his intercourse with sages and divines, with princes and with potentates. We can trace him, too, through all those bitter agonies of spirit through which he struggled on, and on, till at last he seized upon the truth which made him free for ever. But, to us, Wiclif appears almost as a solitary being. He stands before us in a sort of grand and mysterious loneliness. To group him, if we so may speak, with other living men, would require a very strong effort of the imagination. And hence it is that we meditate on his story with emotions of solemn admiration, but without any turbulent agitation of our sympathies.”—pp. 294, 5.

“ Admirable as he was, he seems to have been somewhat better fitted for the business of demolition than of building up. As the fearless assailant of abuse, nothing could well be more noble than his attitude and bearing. But, had he succeeded in shaking the established system to pieces, one can scarcely think, without some awful misgivings, of the fabric which, under his hand, might have risen out of the ruins. If the reformation of our Church had been conducted by Wiclif, his work, in all probability, would nearly have anticipated the labours of Calvin; and the Protestantism of England might have pretty closely resembled the

Protestantism of Geneva. Episcopal government might then have been discarded—ecclesiastical endowments and foundations might have been, for the most part, sacrificed—the clergy consigned to a degrading dependence on their flocks—the worship of God, if not wholly stripped of its ritual solemnity, yet deprived of the aids of instrumental harmony—and, lastly, the fatalism which lurked in the scholastic writings of the Reformer, might then, possibly, have raised up its head, and boldly demanded a place in the Confession of the National Church! Had Wiclif flourished in the sixteenth century, it can hardly be imagined that he would have been found under the banners of Cranmer and of Ridley. Their caution, their patience, their moderation, would scarcely have been intelligible to him; and rather than conform to it, he might, perhaps, have been ready, if needful, *to perish, in the gainsaying* of such men as Knox or Cartwright. At all events, it must plainly be confessed, that there is a marvellous resemblance between the Reformer, with his poor itinerant priests, and at least the better part of the Puritans, who troubled our Israel in the days of Elizabeth and her successors. The likeness is sufficiently striking, almost to mark him out as their prototype and progenitor: and therefore it is, that every faithful son of the Church of England must rejoice, with trembling, that the work of her final deliverance was not consigned to him. It must be regarded as providential, that he was raised up precisely at the time when his peculiar qualities could be most serviceable. A mighty engine was required, whose momentum might shake and loosen the cyclopean masonry of the Papal fabric, and thus prepare for the labours of wiser and sedater men. For this service Wiclif was incomparably adapted; and the faithfulness and courage with which he performed it must demand the warmest gratitude of Protestants to the latest generations.”—pp. 365, 6.

It is with no small satisfaction that we learn from the conclusion of Mr. Le Bas's Preface the intention of the University of Oxford to publish Wiclif's version of the Old Testament, under the superintendence of the Rev. J. Forshall and F. Madden, Esq. both Librarians of the British Museum. The undertaking is equally honourable to the learned editors and to the distinguished Body under whose auspices they are employed.
