

MISSIONARY MAGAZINE;

OR

EVANGELICAL INTELLIGENCER.

THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S

MISSIONARY MAGAZINE;

OR

EVANGELICAL INTELLIGENCER:

FOR 1805.

WILLIAM P. FARRAND, EDITOR.

VOL. I.

PHILADELPHIA:

PRINTED FOR, AND PUBLISHED BY, WILLIAM P. FARRAND AND CO.
N^o 170, MARKET STREET.

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1806.

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ON CERTAIN OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE BIBLE.

In accounting for the origin of evil, in attempting to explain the doctrine of original sin, of divine providence, of the freedom of moral action,—in discussing these and some other topics contained, or treated of, in the bible, difficulties of no small magnitude occur. But it ought to be carefully considered and kept in mind, that, properly speaking, *these are not bible difficulties*. If the bible were wholly set aside, these same difficulties would, in all their force, meet the mind. It is a fact that evil is in the world: It is a fact that we inherit evils from our parents: It is a fact, admitted by all except Atheists, that God governs the world: It is a fact on which all social intercourse among mankind depends, that man is a free or moral agent, accountable for all his voluntary actions—These are stubborn undeniable facts, without the bible. It is not from the bible that we first learn them—They are not something which the bible first of all reveals, or brings to our knowledge and which we should not otherwise be required to believe. Had the bible never existed we must both have *known and believed them*.—What, then, is the just statement in regard to this subject? Simply this—*The account* which the bible gives of these facts, *and the principles which it teaches* in regard to them, the friends of the bible are concerned to vindicate—Nothing more is incumbent on them. *As the facts* are not to be denied, it remains with those who contradict or ridicule what the bible teaches, to teach something better, something more reasonable, more credible, and easier to be received. Let them be put to do this,—They are in reason bound to do it—The facts are to be disposed of by them, as well as by the friends of the revelation. They find fault with the way in which revelation disposes of the facts—Let them then point out a better. Let them take the wide field of conjecture and employ in the service all the powers of imagination. When they have done their best, let their account of these things be compared with that which the bible gives of them. All experience hitherto has demonstrated that whatever real difficulties there may be in what the sacred scriptures teach relative to the abstruse points, they are infinitely less than those which offer when the wit or wisdom of man becomes the teacher—What the bible teaches is credible—What men has ever yet taught, contrary to it, is absolutely incredible, absurd and ridiculous. Consider the doctrines of the Magi and the Gnos-

tics about the origin of evil: recollect the *fate* of the ancient Stoicks, and the predestination of the modern Turks, and you have a fair specimen of what men do in solving these difficulties, when they depart from the scripture. It is among these men, not guided by scripture, that you find sentiments on the points in question, so monstrous as to shock all reason and common sense. Among christians, at least in practice, you do not find them. On the whole, the friends of revelation should always consider what are properly the difficulties of the sacred scriptures, and what are not, and when the enemies of the bible object against the statements it gives, relative to certain doctrines *of natural religion*, let them be required to give better and more consistent statements of their own. And it will deeply concern those who are thinking of entering the school of infidelity, to consider seriously whether, if they reject the scriptures altogether, they will get rid of any of their *speculative difficulties*. They may be assured that they will retain them all, and add unspeakably to the number, whenever they give up their bibles. Whatever is useful in practice, the word of God plainly teaches.—It does not profess to explain things which perhaps our faculties in this world do not permit us fully to comprehend.

ON SANCTIFICATION.

Real christians have often very inadequate conceptions of the gospel plan of sanctification, and suffer much from this cause. They know that the people of God will ever desire a deliverance from sin, and will gradually be obtaining a victory over it. But finding that their own corruptions are very strong and active, they are frequently sunk into great dejection, and are ready to conclude that their state is graceless; and in consequence of this they have no heart to come to Christ to accept the benefits which he has procured for his people, and which he offers and promises to them. Now, though we ought to be very cautious that we do not build up ourselves or others on unfounded hopes and unwarranted comforts, yet let the following remarks on this subject be well considered.

1. It is not certain that no progress is made in sanctification, or that corruption is unusually prevalent, because it is most sensibly perceived. Sin has a blinding influence on the soul, and it often actually prevails the most when it is the least discovered and felt. David for some time after the com-