

dant of the learned and ingenious author of the ‘*Histoire des Huns*,’ the translator of the ‘*Choo-king*,’ and the writer of many valuable articles in the ‘*Mémoires de l’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres*.’

We shall add but one word on the folio Atlas of plates which accompanies these volumes. It is, in fact, a most wretched specimen of the state of the fine arts in the capital of *la Grande Nation*: indeed, the whole performance is so miserable, as even to disgrace a Chinese artist; to whose drawings, in fact, if we are not greatly deceived, the engraver has been indebted. Yet many of these tame and trumpery prints bear the names of no less than three persons: thus we have ‘*De Guignes fecit*,’ ‘*Duval sculpsit*,’ ‘*Deseve direxit*.’ In this respect the national character has suffered no change—a Frenchman must still call to his assistance the whole ocean, when a pail of water would be more than sufficient for his purpose.

ART. III. *The Alexandrian School; or a Narrative of the First Christian Professors in Alexandria; with Observations on the Influence they still maintain over the Established Church.* By Edw. Jerningham. 8vo. pp. 58. London. Hatchard. 1809.

SOME tenderness, perhaps, is due to the author of this pamphlet, on account of the peculiar circumstances under which he writes. While he wishes to reform our established religion, he represents himself as having hazarded the displeasure of certain near connections by the preference which he has given to it. p. 57. Yet, though we are desirous of treating him with all the delicacy which his situation fairly requires, there is a higher duty to be performed. *Amicus Plato, &c.*—that is, we wish very well to Mr. Jerningham, and applaud the disposition which appeals from human systems to the Divine will, and makes the scriptures the foundation of faith. But our chief concern must be for the character of that establishment, which, as yet, he misunderstands, and which, with singular oddity, he at once supports, and labours to discredit.

It was indeed with no small surprise that we first perused the title-page of this essay. It was not very probable, that a subject of so much importance as the reformation of the Establishment should be satisfactorily discussed in so meagre a work; nor did it clearly appear, that, if the Church were sick, she was likely to find in Mr. J. a person particularly qualified to be her clinical attendant. p. 30. But whatever might be his fitness for such a work, we

knew that his alarms were founded on a false assumption. He has indeed lately escaped from a church in which less equivocal relics of Platonism may be discovered; and we suspect that he views us through the antient mist which yet clouds his eyes, and that the fear which he shows on our account still hangs upon him from the cave of Trophonius. As it is, we utterly deny his charge, and defy him to prove the influence which he affirms to be still maintained over the Established Church by the doctrines of the Alexandrian School. This defiance may indeed be given with the greater security, because, in the progress of his argument, Mr. J. has effectually abandoned his fundamental position, and saved us some small trouble by refuting himself.

Mr. J. seems to suppose, that, if his readers are to be convinced of the heathenism which is incorporated with the doctrines of the church, they should be previously acquainted with the character of the place from which it was derived. Accordingly, one half of his pamphlet is employed in giving some account of Alexandria, of its architect, of the museum of the Ptolemies, the catechetical school of the Christians, and some of the more eminent professors who admitted a mixture of Platonism into their interpretation of the Scriptures. We are sorry to say, that, if the reader is not already far better informed on the subject, he will gain but little insight from Mr. J., who snatches his broken and unsatisfactory notices from encyclopædiæ and other sources of easy access, starts from one name to another, confounds distant ages and writers, and gives an account of many things and of nothing. Thus, for awhile, are we dragged along through shreds and scraps about Aumonius Secas, (we know not where Mr. J. got his mode of writing the name,) Gregory Thaumaturgus, Origen, and we know not how many others. At length, however, we are relieved: for, lo! at the end of this muster-roll, is introduced a writer from another place, on the peculiarity of whose opinions depends the main subject of the book. From this moment, the reader has nothing further to dread from the Alexandrian school; for the attention of Mr. J. is now wholly engrossed by St. Austin of Hippo!

That this celebrated father indulged too fond a taste for Platonism, in the earlier part of his life, is known to all. But Mr. J., who undertakes to give the world information about St. Austin, ought to have been aware that he lived to retract his error, and that no writer of Christian antiquity laboured with more diligence or success to establish the superior claims of the scriptures. He ought to have observed, too, in favour of others whose names he has mentioned, that their Platonic fancies were lamented by the more orthodox, as indiscretions which occasionally disfigured the cause of evangelical truth; and that some of the early treatises in
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which they occur, were philosophical exercises intended for private use in an age unusually contentious,—preparations for dispute with Grecian infidels through the employment of Grecian learning, and an accommodation of it (not always safe indeed) to the purposes of the gospel. The question, however, lies beyond this. The peculiar doctrine which Mr. J. imputes to St. Austin, and which, it seems, the Church of England has received from him, is predestination. It is useless to ask whether this doctrine was taught by the school of Alexandria, the supposed *fons et origo mali*: the reader well knows that it was not. What is strange, however, is, that Mr. J. knows this too: for having so long detained us with his Platonic philosophy, he now most unexpectedly admits, that the opinion which remains to be discussed was a *novelty*, and to be ascribed to St. Austin alone!

‘ It would be difficult to ascertain, in the present day, by what steps St. Austin ascended the throne of mental dominion, and by what means he subjugated so great a part of Christendom; for ’ (an odd inference, by the way,) ‘ he invented an almost new scheme of religious belief, which is *only to be found in his writings*. What Cicero says of Plato, is applicable to St. Austin: “*Novam quandam fixit in libris civitatem.*”’ p. 28.

We are thus transported from Alexandria to Hippo, and the discussion which was to have proved the Platonism of our church, ends in the discovery of an opposite doctrine.

As Mr. J. enters upon this part of his work, he seems to be conscious of something unusually dignified and important.

‘ I am now advancing to the second object of this essay, in which I am to consider how far the doctrines of the Alexandrian school *and the opinions of St. Austin** have contributed to stain the purity of Protestant belief.’ p. 30.

His conduct of this part of his argument, however, is worse than that of the former. There, as the reader has seen, we have only to smile at the absurdity of a literary parade wholly irrelevant to the subject; but here we have to lament an attempt—feeble indeed—on the church and the cause of inspiration together.

Mr. J. travels Homerically. We have traced him from Alexandria to Hippo. His next stage is to Geneva; finally, he alights in England.

Τρις μὲν οὐξάτ' ἰών, τὸ δὲ τετραζῆλον ἔικετο τεκμῶρ.

‘ Our venerable reformers had no sooner separated the purer part of the stream from the surrounding pollution, and consigned it to a reser-

* A dexterous reunion after so decided a separation.

voir, than predestination, like the wild boar in Virgil, rushed into the receptacle.' p. 30.

He attributes this mischief to the return of our divines 'from Geneva, at the death of Queen Mary, where they had imbibed the severer doctrines of Calvin;' and he complains, in language rather unsuitable to a convert, that the articles of a church, which, notwithstanding, he prefers to all others, are calculated to diffuse 'gloomy and desponding ideas, which suit better the ritual of *nightly sorcerers*, than the benevolent system of the Son of God!'—p. 51. Good words, Mr. J.—But we shall restrain our feelings, and proceed.

In tracing the descent of the obnoxious doctrine here imputed to the church, which he has adopted after the exercise of his 'most deliberate judgment,' it was the business of Mr. J. to prove, that the 17th article contains the doctrine of Calvin, and that the doctrine of Calvin is that of St. Austin. He has done neither. We must therefore take the liberty of reminding him, that there are points of essential difference between these writers; and that, in his later and more mature works, Austin maintained opinions which can by no means be reconciled with the system of Calvin. We must hint to him too, that if he will faithfully compare the third book of Calvin's Institutes with the article in question, he can hardly fail to observe the important difference of their respective doctrines. Till this be done, we will not argue the question with him. Let him therefore set about another pamphlet of 50 or 60 pages. Thirty of them may be employed in giving an introductory account of any thing he pleases, the School of Athens, or the British Institute; and in the short remainder, let him discuss those great and momentous subjects which wisdom, and learning, and piety have not yet exhausted in the numerous volumes which have been dedicated to the profound enquiry.

There is, however, a certain part of Mr. J.'s objection which must, at all events, be noticed, on account of the discredit which it attempts to throw on an important doctrine of scripture. His primary quarrel, then, is neither with Calvin, nor Austin, but with St. Paul; and it appears that the foundation of the doctrine contained in the 17th article—a doctrine 'better suited to the ritual of *nightly sorcerers* than to the benevolent system of the Son of God,' is laid in the Epistle to the Romans! Determined, therefore, as Mr. J. is on the correction of the article, and stating, as he does, that the predestination of the happiness of those, whose 'love God foreknew,' was first asserted in the Epistle, ch. viii. v. 29, he wishes us to believe that the sacred writer has thus expressed himself without the authority of the Divine Spirit!—

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‘ An opinion of such tremendous importance is brought forward incidentally, without any preparatory introduction, or any *acknowledgement of divine inspiration.*’ p. 22.

Is Mr. J. a stranger to the usual manner of the writer against whom he hazards this insinuation? Is it customary with St. Paul to introduce his doctrines with regular warnings to his reader concerning the inspiration by which he is guided in each particular? Are we not convinced of his sacred authority by other means? Is it not made to appear from the sanctity or sublimity of the subject, or from a peculiar mode of expression evidently suggested by the habitual guidance of the Spirit? Nay, is it not rather the manner of the Apostle to convey the fact of his general inspiration by a negation of the accustomed authority on some subordinate point? ‘ I speak this by permission, and not of commandment.’ ‘ I have no commandment of the Lord; yet I give my judgment.’ 1 Cor. vii. We intreat the better attention of Mr. J., and of others, who, like him, are in haste to censure what they do not stop to understand. We wish them to consider the consequences of their unadvised conduct. Mischief enough is done to religion by the open enemies of goodness; and it is hard that she should suffer from the awkwardness of those who profess to wish her well. As to ourselves, we shall fearlessly oppose ourselves to both parties. The cause of revelation is paramount to all other considerations; and if Mr. J. is not satisfied with this apology, we cannot help it. We must not stand by, and tamely see the attempts of infidelity seconded by the scarcely less pernicious effusions of opinionated weakness, and well-meaning absurdity.

Such, then, is the result of the second part of Mr. J.’s argument. It has already appeared that his School of Alexandria has nothing to do with his question; and now we see, too, that the origin of the mischief which we have to lament in the 17th Article, is to be attributed to St. Paul. The doctrine of the Apostle may have been exaggerated by Austin; and the exaggerations of Austin may have gathered additional gloom and terror from the hard and stoical mind of Calvin. But this is no concern of the Church of England. She stands on the doctrine of the Apostle, which, in spite of Mr. J.’s insinuations, will be found to have been inspired. Accordingly, she makes no assertion of the ‘ reprobation’ which haunts the mind of Mr. J., and without which Calvin would have loathed his own system. Lest this should not suffice, the article points out the danger of indulging unfounded notions concerning predestination; and, lest any of the terms which it has employed should be supposed to lie open to an arbitrary and personal interpretation, it closes the subject with a caution, which is intended to cover and control

control the whole ;—‘ that, in point of belief, we are to receive the divine promises as they are *generally declared* in the scriptures ; and that, in point of obedience, we are to follow that will of God which is *expressly enjoined* to us in his word.’

It is now time to dismiss Mr. J. He objects, indeed, to a few other things: but he talks about them all with the same sort of logic. He complains, that our liturgy represents infants as born under the wrath of God (though here, again, his real quarrel is with St. Paul, who gives the name of ‘ children of wrath’ to those who are in a state of nature); and we find him asserting, with apparent seriousness, that a doctrine which a fond mother cannot admit concerning her offspring must be wrong :—‘ the feelings are true, and the *theory* is false.’ p. 47. He contends, indeed, for the sanctity of unassisted nature, and the ‘ immaculate purity’ of the heathen sages ; and is even disposed to quarrel with those who do not see the concurrence of idolatry with Christianity. p. 44. He is willing to believe what somebody has told him, that there was nothing reprehensible in the Pagan custom of sacrificing prisoners of war, and that it proceeded from the laudable wish of cultivating the ‘ fortitude of the soul !’ In short, every idolatrous action becomes, in his interpretation, a proof of human virtue ; and he is strongly inclined to infer the innocence of nature, from a procession in which ‘ the chariot of Jupiter was drawn by white horses !’ He has, indeed, much more of this kind of logic. He states the Jews to have believed in evil spirits. St. Cyprian had the same notion. Hence he infers that the early Christians borrowed it from—Plato ! p. 7. Again, he informs us, that, in Tertullian’s time, the Platonists had admitted into their system the proud fortitude of the Stoics. But Tertullian would not avoid martyrdom by flying from the scene of persecution : it follows, therefore, that fortitude does ‘ not harmonise with the meekness of the gospel.’ p. 8.—*Di boni !* we do not recollect such syllogisms as these among the ‘ *certò ac necessariò concludentes*’ which Rhedycina once taught us ; and will therefore leave them and their author together.

Mr. J. has aimed a few blows at the Establishment ; but he wishes to persuade us that they are proofs of his love for it: his censures are ‘ *vulnera amantis.*’ p. 53. This incidental confession seems to disclose the whole secret of the composition before us. ‘ To be in love and to be wise,’ Mr. J. knows, is granted only to the gods. We advise him to be more moderate. As his ardour cools, his logic will probably improve ; and as he regains the sober exercise of his judgment, he will be more ready to allow the sounder state of the church, and to retract the rash imputations against her which had escaped him in the paroxysm of his passion.