PULPIT ORATORY.

DR. CHALMERS[1] AND MR. IRVING.[2]

The Scotch at present seem to bear the bell, and to have "got the start of the majestic world."[3] They boast of the greatest novelists, the greatest preachers, the greatest philanthropists, and the greatest blackguards in the world. Sir Walter Scott[4] stands at the head of these for Scotch humour, Dr. Chalmers for Scotch logic, Mr. Owen[5] for Scotch Utopianism, and Mr. Blackwood[6] for Scotch impudence. Unrivalled four! Nay, here is Mr. Irving, who threatens to make a fifth, and *stultify* all our London orators, from "kingly Kensington"[7] to Blackwall! Who has not heard of him? Who does not go to hear him? You can scarcely move along for the coronet-coaches that besiege the entrance to the Caledonian chapel in Hatton-garden; and when, after a prodigious squeeze, you get in so as to have standing-room, you see in the same undistinguished crowd Brougham and Mackintosh,[8] Mr. Peel and Lord Liverpool,[9] Lord Landsdown and Mr. Coleridge.[10] Mr. Canning and Mr. Hone[11] are pew fellows, Mr. Waithman[12] frowns stern applause, and Mr. Alderman Wood[13] does the honours of the Meeting! The lamb lies down with the lion, and the Millennium seems to be anticipated in the Caledonian chapel, under the new Scotch preacher. Lords, ladies, sceptics, fanatics, join in approbation,—some admire the doctrine, others the sound, some the picturesque appearance of the

orator, others the grace of action, some the ingenuity of the argument, others the beauty of the style or the bursts of passion, some even go so far as to patronize a certain *brackish* infusion of the Scottish dialect, and a slight defect of vision. Lady Bluemount[14] declares it to be only inferior to the EXCURSION[15] in imagination, and Mr. Botherby[16] cries—"Good, good!" The "Talking Potato"* and Mr. Theodore Flash[17] have not yet been.

Mr. Irving appears to us the most accomplished barbarian, and the least offensive and most dashing clerical holder-forth we remember to have seen. He puts us in

*Some years ago, a periodical paper was published in London, under the title of the PIC-NIC.[18] It was got up under the auspices of a Mr. Fulke Greville,[19] and several writers of that day contributed to it, among whom were Mr. Horace Smith,[20] Mr. Dubois,[21] Mr. Prince Hoare,[22] Mr. Cumberland,[23] and others. On some dispute arising between the proprietor and the gentlemen-contributors on the subject of an advance in the remuneration for articles, Mr. Fulke Greville grew heroic, and said, "I have got a young fellow just come from Ireland, who will undertake to do the whole, verse and prose, politics and scandal, for two guineas a week, and if you will come and sup with me to-morrow night, you shall see him, and judge whether I am not right in closing with him." Accordingly, they met the next evening, and the WRITER OF ALL WORK was introduced. He began to make a display of his native ignorance and impudence on all subjects immediately, and no one else had occasion to say any thing. When he was gone, Mr. Cumberland exclaimed, "A talking potato, by God!" The talking potato was Mr. Croker,[24] of the Admiralty. Our adventurer shortly, however, returned to his own country, and passing accidentally through a town where they were in want of a ministerial candidate at an Election, the gentleman of modest assurance offered himself, and succeeded. "They wanted a Jack-pudding," said the father of the hopeful youth, "and so they chose my son." The case of the Duke of York and Mrs. Clarke[25] soon after came on, and Mr. Croker, who is a dabbler in dirt, and an adept in love-letters, rose from the affair Secretary to the Admiralty, and the very "rose and expectancy of the fair State."[26]

mind of the first man, Adam, if Adam had but been a Scotchman, and had had coal black hair. He seems to stand up in the integrity of his composition, to begin a new race of practicing believers, to give new impulse to the Christian religion, to regenerate the fallen and degenerate race of man. You would say he had been turned out of the hands of Nature and the Schools a perfect piece of workmanship. See him in the street, he has the air, the free-swing, the *bolt upright* figure of an Indian savage, or a northern borderer dressed in canonicals: set him in the pulpit, and he is armed with all the topics, a master of fence, the pupil of Dr. Chalmers! In action he has been compared to Kean;[27] in the union of external and intellectual advantages, we might start a parallel for him in the admirable Chrichton.[28] He stands before Haydon's picture of Lazarus,[29] and says, "Look at me!" He crosses Piccadilly, and clears Bond-street of its beaux! Rob Roy, Macbriar is come again.[30] We saw him stretched on a bench at the Black Bull[31] in Edinburgh,—we met him again at a thirteen-penny ordinary in London, in the same attitude, and said, without knowing his calling, or his ghostly parts, "That is the man for a fair saint." We swear it by

> "His foot mercurial; his martial thigh;
> The brawns of Hercules, but his jovial face!"[32]

Aye, there we stop like Imogen[33]—there is a want of expression in it. "The iron has not entered his soul."[34] He has not dared to feel but in trammels and in dread. He has read Werter[35] but to criticise him; Rousseau,[36] but to steel himself against him; Shakespear,[37] but to quote him; Milton,[38] but to round his periods. Pleasure, fancy, humanity, are syrens that he repels and keeps at arms-length; and hence his features are hardened, and have a barbaric crust upon them. They are

not steeped in the expression of Titian or Raphael;[39] but they would do for Spagnoletti[40] to paint, and his dark profile and matted locks have something of the grave commanding appearance of Leonardo da Vinci's massive portraits.[41]

Dr. Chalmers is not so good-looking a man as Mr. Irving; he wants the same vigour and spirit. His face is dead and clammy, cold, pale, bloodless, passionless, and there is a glazed look of insincerity about the eyes, uninformed, uninspired from within. His voice is broken, harsh, and creaking, while Mr. Irving's is flowing and silvery: his Scotch accent and pronunciation are a terrible infliction on the *uncultivated* ear. His "Wh*e*ch observation I *oo*rge upon you my fr*i*nds and br*ee*thren" desolates and lays waste all the humanities. He grinds out his sentences between his teeth, and catches at truth with his fists, as a monkey catches an apple or a stick thrown at him with his paws. He seems by his action and his utterance to say to difficulties, "Come, let me clutch thee,"[42] and having got them in his grasp, tears and rends them in pieces as a dog tears an old rag to tatters or mumbles a stone that is flung in his way. Dr. Chalmers engages attention and secures sympathy solely by the intensity of his own purpose: there is neither eloquence nor wisdom, neither imagination nor feeling, neither the pomp of sound nor grace nor solemnity of manner about him, but he is in earnest, and eager in pursuit of his argument, and arrests the eye and ear of his congregation by this alone. He dashes headforemost into the briars and thorns of controversy, and drags you along with him whether you will or no, and your only chance is to push on and get out of them as well as you can, though dreadfully scratched and almost blinded. He involves you in a labyrinth, and you are anxious to escape from it: you have to pass through many a dark, subterranean cavern with him in his theological ferry-boat, and

are glad enough to get out on the other side, with the help of Scotch logic for oars, and Scotch rhetoric for sails! You hear no *home* truths, nothing that touches the heart, or swells or expands the soul; there is no tide of eloquence lifting you to Heaven, or wafting you from Indus to the Pole.—No, you are detained in a canal, with a great number of *locks* in it.—You make way by virtue of standing still, your will is irritated, and impelled forward by stoppages—you are puzzled into sympathy, pulled into admiration, tired into patience! The preacher starts a difficulty, of which you had no notion before, and you stare to see how he will answer it. He first makes you uneasy, sceptical, sensible of your helplessness and dependence upon his superior sagacity and recondite learning, and proportionably thankful for the relief he affords you in the unpleasant dilemma to which you have been reduced. It is like proposing a riddle, and then, after playing with the curiosity and impatience of the company for some time, giving the solution, which nobody else has the wit to find out. We never saw fuller attendances or more profound attention than at the Tron Church[43] in Glasgow—it was like a sea of eyes, a swarm of heads, gaping for mysteries, and staring for elucidations—it was not the sublime or beautiful; the secret was that which has been here explained, a desire to get rid of the difficult, the disagreeable, the dry, and the discordant matter that had been conjured up in the imagination. Dr. Chalmers, then, succeeds by the force of sophistry and casuistry, in our humble judgment. Riddles (of which we spoke just now) are generally traditional: those that Dr. Chalmers unfolds from the pulpit, are of his own invention, or at least promulgation. He started an objection to the Christian religion (founded on its supposed inconsistency with the Newtonian philosophy) which objection had never been noticed in books, on pur-

pose that he might answer it. "Well," said a Scotchman, "and if the answer was a good one, was he not right?" "No, assuredly," we should answer, "for there is no faith so firm as that which has never been called in question." The answer could only satisfy those who had been unsettled by the question; and there would be many who would not be convinced by the Doctor's reasoning, however he might plume himself on his success. We suspect that this is looking after a reputation for literary ingenuity and philosophical depth, rather than the peace of consciences or the salvation of souls; which, in a Christian minister, is unbecoming, and savours of the Mammon of unrighteousness. We ourselves were staggered by the blow (either then or long before) and still gasp for a reply, notwithstanding Dr. Chalmers's nostrum. Let the reader briefly judge:—The Doctor tells us, it may be said, that the Christian Dispensation supposes that the counsels of God turn upon this world as its center; that there is a heaven above and an earth beneath; and that man is the lord of the universe, the only creature made in the divine likeness, and over whom Providence watches, and to whom revelations are given, and an inheritance everlasting. This agrees with the cosmogony of Moses,[44] which makes the earth the center of all things, and the sun, moon, and stars, little shining spots like silver sixpences, moving round it. But it does not so well agree with Newton's *Principia*[45] (we state Dr. Chalmers's objection) which supposes the globe we inhabit to be but a point in the immensity of the universe; that ours is but one, and that the most insignificant (perhaps) among innumerable worlds, filled, probably, with created intelligences, rational and fallen souls, that share the eye of God with us, and who require to know that their Redeemer liveth. We alone (it would appear) cannot pretend to monopolize heaven or hell: there are other contin-

gent candidates besides us. Jacob's dream was poetical and natural, while the earth was supposed to be a flat surface and the blue sky hung over it, to which angels might ascend by a ladder, and the face of God be seen at the top, as his lofty and unchangeable abode; but this beautiful episode hardly accords with the Antipodes. Sir Isaac turned the world upon its back, and divided heaven from itself, and removed it far from every one of us. As we thought the universe turned round the earth as its pivot, so religion turned round man as its center, as the sole, important, moral and accountable agent in existence. But there are other worlds revolving in infinite space, to which this is a speck. Are they all desert, worthless? Were they made for us? Have they no especial dispensations of life and light? Have we alone a God, a Saviour, revealed to us? Is religion triumphant only here, or is it itinerant through each? It can hardly seem that we alone have occupied the thoughts or been the sole objects of the plans of infinite wisdom from eternity—that our life, resurrection, and judgment to come, are the whole history of a wide-seeing Providence, or the loftiest events in the grand drama of the universe, which was got up as a theatre only for us to perform our petty parts in, and then to be cast, most of us, into hell fire? Dr. Chalmers's Astronomical Discourses indeed may be said to dwarf his mighty subject, and make mankind a very Lilliputian race of beings, which this Gulliver[46] in vain dandles in the hard, broad, brawny hand of school divinity, and tries to lift into their bigotted self-sufficiency and exclusive importance again. How does he answer his own objection, and turn the tables on himself—how reverse this pitiful, diminished perspective, and aggrandise us in our own estimation once more as undoubted heirs of heaven or of hell—the sole favoured or reprobated sons of God? Why, his answer is this—that the

microscope has done as much to lift man in the scale of being, and to enlarge the bounds of this atom the earth, as the telescope has done to circumscribe and lessen it; that there are infinite gradations BELOW man, worlds within worlds, as there are degrees of being above, and stars and suns blazing round each other; that, for what we know, a speck, a lucid drop circulating in a flea's back, may be another habitable globe like this!—And has that, too, a revelation of its own, an avenging God, and a Christ crucified? Does every particle in a flea's back contain a Mosaic dispensation, a Popish and a Protestant religion? Has it its Tron church and its Caledonian chapel, and Dr. Chalmers's Discourses and Mr.Irving's orations in little? This does not seem to obviate the difficulty, but to increase it a million-fold. It is his objection and his answer to it, not ours: if blasphemy, it is his; and, if orthodoxy, he is entitled to all the credit of it. But his whole scheme shows how impossible it is to reconcile the faith delivered to the saints with the subtleties and intricacies of metaphysics. It displays more pride of intellect than simplicity of heart, is an insult equally on the understandings or prejudices of men, and could only have been hit upon by that personification and abstraction of cross-purposes, a Scotch metaphysical divine. In his general preaching, Dr. Chalmers is a great casuist, and a very indifferent moralist. He states the *pros* and *cons* of every question with extreme pertinacity, and often "spins the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument."[47] He assigns possible reasons, not practical motives, for conduct; and vindicates the ways of God, and his own interpretation of the Scriptures, to the head, not to the heart. The old school-divines set this practice afoot; for being accustomed to hear the secrets of confession, and to salve the tender consciences of the great and powerful, they had to bandy all sorts of questions about;

and if they could find out "a loop or peg to hang a doubt on,"[48] were well rewarded for their trouble; they were constantly reduced to their shifts, and forced to go on the forlorn hope of morality by the ticklish cases referred to them for arbitration: and when they had exhausted the resources of humanity and natural sentiment, endeavoured to find new topics within the range of abstract reason and possibility. Dr. Chalmers's reasoning is as unlike as possible to a chapter in the Gospels: but he may do very well to comment on the Apocalypse or an Epistle of St. Paul's. We do not approve of this method of carving out excuses or defences of doctrinal points from the dry parchment of the understanding or the cobwebs of the brain. Whatever sets or leaves the dogmas of religion at variance with the dictates of the heart, hardens the last, and lends no advantage to the first.

Mr. Irving is a more amiable moralist, and a more practical reasoner. He throws a glancing, pleasing light over the gloomy ground of Calvinism.[49] There is something humane in his appeals, striking in his apostrophes, graceful in his action, soothing in the tones of his voice. He is not affected and theatrical; neither is he deeply impassioned or overpowering from the simple majesty of his subject. He is above common-place both in fancy and argument; yet he can hardly rank as a poet or philosopher. He is a modernised covenanter, a sceptical fanatic. We do not feel exactly on sure ground with him—we scarcely know whether he preaches Christ crucified, or himself. His pulpit style has a resemblance to the *florid gothic*. We are a little *mystified* when a man with one hand brings us all the nice distinctions and air-drawn speculations of modern unbelievers, and arms the other with "fire hot from Hell,"[50] —when St. Paul and Jeremy Bentham,[51] the Evangelists and the Sorrows of Werter,[52] Seneca,[53] Shakespear, the author of

Caleb Williams and the Political Justice,[54] are mingled together in the same passage, and quoted in the same breath, however eloquent that breath may be. We see Mr. Irving smile with decent scorn at this remark, and launch one more thunderbolt at the critics. He is quite welcome, and we should be proud of his notice. In the discourses he has lately delivered, and which have drawn crowds to admire them, he has laboured to describe the Sensual Man, the Intellectual Man, the Moral Man, and the Spiritual Man; and has sacrificed the three first at the shrine of the last. He gave certainly a terrific picture of the death-bed of the Sensual Man—a scene where few shine—but it is a good subject for oratory, and he made the most of it. He described the Poet well, walking by the mountain side, in the eye of nature—yet oppressed, panting rather than satisfied, with beauty and sublimity. Neither Fame nor Genius, it is most true, are all-sufficient to the mind of man! He made a fair hit at the Philosophers; first, at the Political Economist, who draws a circle round man, gives him so many feet of earth to stand upon, and there leaves him to starve in all his nobler parts and faculties: next, at the Great Jurisconsult, who carves out a mosaic work of motives for him, cold, hard, and dry, and expects him to move mechanically in right lines, squares, and parallelograms, drills him into perfection, and screws him into utility. He then fell foul of the Moralist and Sentimentalist, weighed him in the balance and found him wanting—deficient in clearness of sight to discern good, in strength of hand and purpose to seize upon it when discerned. But Religion comes at last to the aid of the Spiritual Man, couches the blind sight, and braces the paralytic limb; the Lord of Hosts is in the field, and the battle is won, his countenance pours light into our souls,

and his hand stretched out imparts strength to us, by which we tower to our native skies! In treating of this subject, Mr. Irving introduced several powerful images and reflections, to show how feeble moral and intellectual motives are to contend with the allurements of sense and the example of the world. Reason alone, he said, was no more able to stem the tide of prejudice and fashion, than the swimmer with his single arm (here he used an appropriate and spirited gesture, which reminded us of the description of the heroic action of the swimmer in Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia)[55] is able to oppose the raging torrent, as the voice of conscience was only heard in the tumultuous scenes of life like the faint cry of the sea-bird in the wide world of waters. He drew an animated but mortifying sketch of the progress of the Patriot and Politician, weaned by degrees from his attachment to young Liberty to hug old Corruption; and showed (strikingly enough) that this change from youthful ardour to a hoary, heartless old age of selfishness and ridicule (there were several Members of the Honourable House present) was not owing to increased wisdom or strength of sight, but to faltering resolution and weakness of hand, that could no longer hold out against the bribes, the snares, and gilded chains prepared for it. The romantic Tyro was right and free, the callous Courtier was a slave and self-conceited. All this was true; it was honest, downright, and well put. There was no cant in it, as far as regards the unequal odds and the hard battle that reason has to fight with pleasure, or ambition, or interest, or other antagonist motives. But does the objection apply to morality solely, or has not religion its share in it? Man is not what he ought to be—Granted; but is he not different from this ideal standard, in spite of religion as well as of morality? Is not the religious man often a slave to power,

the victim of pleasure, the thrall of avarice, hard of heart, a sensual hypocrite, cunning, mercenary, miserable? If it be said that the really religious man is none of these, neither is the truly moral man. Real morality, as well as vital christianity, implies right conduct and consistent principle. But the question simply at issue is, whether the profession or the belief of sound moral opinions implies these; and it certainly does it no more than the profession or belief of orthodox religious opinions does. The conviction of the good or ill consequences of our actions in this life does not absolutely conform the will or the desires to good; neither does the apprehension of future rewards or punishments produce this effect completely or necessarily. The candidate for Heaven is a back-slider; the dread of eternal torments makes but a temporary impression on the mind. This is not a reason, in our judgement, for neglecting or giving up in despair the motives of religion or morality, but for strengthening and cultivating both. With Mr. Irving, it is a triumphant and unanswerable ground for discarding and denouncing morality, and for exalting religion, as the sovereign cure for all wounds, as the *thaumaturgos*, or wonder-worker, in the reform of mankind! We are at a loss to understand how this exclusive and somewhat intolerant view of the subject is reconcileable with sound reason or with history. Religion is no new experiment now first making on mankind; we live in the nineteenth century of the Christian æra; it is not as if we lived in the age of apostles, when we might (from novelty and inexperience of the intended dispensations of Providence) expect the earth to wear a new face, and darkness suddenly to flee away before the light of the gospel: nor do we apprehend that Mr. Irving is one of those who believe with Mr. Croly,[56] that the millennium actually commenced with the battle of

Waterloo; that event seems as far off, to all outward appearance, as it was two thousand years ago. What does this make against the doctrines of christianity? Nothing; if, as far as they are implanted and take root, they bear fruit accordingly, notwithstanding the repugnance and thanklessness of the soil. Why then is Mr. Irving so hard upon the labours of philosophers, moralists, and men of letters, because they do not do all their work at once? Bishop Butler[57] indeed wrote a most able and learned quarto volume, to prove that the slow growth and imperfect influence of christianity was a proof of its divine origin, and that in this respect we had a right to look for a direct *analogy* between the operations of the worlds of grace and nature, both proceeding as they did from the same Almighty hands! Our deservedly popular preacher has, however, an answer to what we have here stated: he says, "the time MUST and WILL shortly come!" We never contradict prophecies; we only speak to facts. In addressing himself to this point, Mr. Irving made a spirited digression to the Missionary Societies, and the impending propagation of the Gospel at home and abroad—all obstacles to it would speedily be surmounted:—"The Negro slave was not so enchained but that the Gospel would set him free; the Hottentot was not so benighted but that its light would penetrate to him; the South Sea Islander was not so indolent and voluptuous but that he would rouse himself as its call; neither the cunning of the Italian, nor the superstition of the Spaniard, not the tameness of the German, nor the levity of the French, nor the buoyancy of the Irish, nor the indomitable pride of the English, nor the *fiery manhood* of the Scotch, would be long able to withstand its all-pervading influence!" We confess, when our Caledonian pastor launched his canoe from the South Sea Isles and landed on European *terra firma*,

taking measure of the vices of each nation that were opposed to the spirit of christianity, we did *prick up* our ears to know what fault he would, in due course of argument, find with his native country—it would go against the grain, no doubt, but still he had undertaken it, and he must speak out—When lo! for some sneaking vice or sordid pettifogging disposition, we have our own "best virtue"[58] palmed upon us as the only failing of the most magnanimous natives of the North—*fiery manhood*, quotha! The cold sweat of rankling malice, hypocrisy, and servility, would be nearer the mark—Eh! Sir Walter?[59] Nay, good Mr. Blackwood,[60] we meant no offence to you! "Fiery manhood" is the Anti-Christian vice or virtue of the Scotch that meets true religion on the borders, and beats her back with suffocating breath! Is Christianity still then to be planted like oak timber in Scotland? What will Dr. Chalmers and the other labourers in the vineyard say to this?—"We pause for a reply!"[61] The best and most impressive part of Mr. Irving's discourse (Sunday, the 22nd June) was that, in which he gave a very beautiful account of what Christianity had done, or rather might do, in aid of morality and the regeneration of the spirit of man. It had made "corruption blossom," "annihilated time in the prospect of eternity," and "changed all nature, from a veil hiding the face of God, into a mirror reflecting his power and beneficence." We do not, however, see why in the fervour of his enthusiasm he should affirm "that Jesus Christ had destroyed melody," nor why, by any allowed licence of speech, he should talk of "the mouth of God being muzzled by man." We might not perhaps have noticed this last expression, considering it as a slip of the tongue; but Mr. Irving preaches from written notes, and his style is, on the whole, polished and ambitious. We can conceive of a deeper strain of argument, of a more

powerful and overwhelming flood of eloquence; but altogether we deem him an able and attractive expounder of Holy Writ; and farther, we believe him to be an honest man. We suspect there is a radical "taint in him," and that Mr. Canning[62] will be advised to withdraw himself from the congregation. His strokes aimed at iniquity in high places are bold, unsparing, and repeated. We would however suggest to him the propriety of containing his indignation at the advancement of the secular priesthood by "the powers that be;" it is a thing of course, and his impatience of their elevation may be invidiously construed into a jealousy of the spoil. When we compare Mr. Irving with some other preachers that we have heard, and particularly with that crawling sycophant Daniel Wilson[63] (who tendered his gratuitous submission to Nero the other day in the excess of his loyalty to George IV[64].) we are sorry that we have not been able to make our tribute of approbation unqualified as it is cordial, and to stifle *their* venal breath with the applauses bestowed upon *him*. "Oh! for an *eulogy* to kill"[65] all such with!

[The following has also lost *its way to us. We take it in as a foundling, but without adopting all its sentiments.]*

MR. IRVING, THE QUACK-PREACHER.

We have always set our faces against cant, quackery, and imposture, in every shape; but we think, of all places, the pulpit should be sacred from these. It ought to be the chosen retreat of simplicity, gravity, and decorum. What then must be the feelings of every well-wisher to religion and good order, who witnesses the disgraceful scenes that

are weekly acting at the Caledonian Chapel—the place itself resembling a booth at a fair, and the pulpit made into a stage for a tall, raw-boned, hard-featured, impudent Scotch quack to play off his ambiguous person and obscene antics upon? It is difficult to analyze Mr. Irving's figure. His hair is black and matted like a mane, his beard blue and *singed*; and he verges in his general appearance to the *simious* tribe, but of the largest species. To hear this person, so qualified, bandy Scotch dialectics, and "sweet religion make a rhapsody of words,"[66] the great, the learned, and the fair, leering dowagers, and faded (or fading) blue stockings, throng twice every Lord's Day—for what?—to admire indecency, blasphemy, and sedition, twanged through the nose, and to be told that he (Mr. Irving) has come up from the banks of the Esk[67] with huge, hasty strides to *introduce God Almighty in London*, and to prop the falling throne of Heaven with his raised right arm! This is too much, though Mr. Irving is six feet three inches high, and a Scotchman. One would think that the Christian and Protestant religion was of too old a standing to be put into leading-strings now, and that the fashionable and the fair will hardly consent to be baptised by this new St. John[68] in the kennels of Saffron-hill[69] and the mud of Fleet-ditch.[70] Yet, when one looks at the half-saint, half-savage, it *does* seem as if society was to begin again; and all our pre-established notions were confounded by the cross-fire of his double vision. A portentous cast in the right eye is one of the engines with which the orator supports his quackery—it is not a mote, but a beam—which he levels like a battering-ram at my Lord Liverpool[71] (*proh pudor!*) accompanied with a taunt on his Majesty's Minister and Government—which glances off from the gentle skull of Hone the parodist to Canning's polished forehead,[72] and falls plump on the

shaven crown of Mr. B—— M——, who sits on the steps of the pulpit, with a forlorn attitude and expression, like one of Cibber's[73] celebrated figures. What did Mr. Irving mean, last Sunday, by issuing a Proclamation in the name of the King of Heaven, appointing himself Crier of the Court, beginning with a TO WIT, TO WIT, and ending with damnation to all those who do not go to hear him? He ought to have been hissed like a bad player who leaves his part to foist in fustian of his own. It would not have been borne but in the Scotch accent; and the outrage was carried off by the oddity of the thing. What did he mean by saying, the Sunday before last, that the God of natural religion was like the Great Desert—dry, disagreeable, comfortless, deadly—where no one wished to dwell? No one, we will be bold to say, would venture upon this gross insult to the God of Nature (whom we apprehend to be also the God of Christians) without that strong obliquity of mental vision that can keep natural religion in one eye and revealed religion in the other, look grave on the parent and fulsome on the daughter. Why does Mr. Irving cut and carve and make minced-meat of the attributes of the Almighty, to shock the pious and make the ignorant stare? Why did he, on last Lord's day assert, by an impudent figure, that the God of Mercy was like Alsatia,[74] where the scum of mankind took refuge? Does not this brawny bravo of the Caledonian Kirk[75] want an asylum for himself? Would it not be thought indecent and profane in us to retort such a metaphor, and ask this insane reviler whether, on his theory, the God of Justice is not the God of Newgate,[76] and he himself a volunteer Jack Ketch?[77] We say the indecency, the profaneness would not be in us, but in the original allusion. Mr. Irving will find before long that he cannot play with religion as with cups and balls; that he cannot insult the feelings, the prejudices,

and common sense of mankind with impunity; and that, instead of taking implicit faith and established opinions in pieces, he had better let them remain in their original integrity. With respect to that last figure of his about Alsatia, we beg to say, that the founder of the Christian religion has left a parable behind him about the Prodigal Son,[78] but perhaps this authority may not weigh with the *modern* Saviour of the polite world! In a word, this favourite of the frail votaries of religious theatricals should beware, with his tricks, his finery, and his goodly proportions, of the fate of Apuleius's Golden Ass.[79] Still he might do in America.

EDITORIAL NOTES

[1] Thomas Chalmers (1780-1847), Scottish Presbyterian minister, theologian, and social reformer. He became a prominent leader in the Church of Scotland, advocating for evangelical reforms and social welfare.

[2] Edward Irving (1792-1834), Scottish clergyman and theologian, known for his charismatic leadership and influence on the early Pentecostal movement and for founding the Catholic Apostolic Church. Hazlitt attended one of his sermons at the Caledonian Chapel in Hatton Garden in 1823 and wrote and account in which he listed the names of the notable figures present on the occasion.

[3] See William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar* I.ii.137.

[4] Sir Walter Scott, Scottish novelist and poet.

[5] Robert Owen (1771-1858), textile manufacturer, social reformer, and founder of utopian socialism.

[6] William Blackwood (1776-1834), Scottish publisher and founder of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in 1817. The magazine gathered a host of writers and gained notoriety for launching personal attacks on public figures, leading to several lawsuits against it.

[7] Reference to Jonathan Swift's ballad "Duke Upon Duke", line 56.

[8] Sir James Mackintosh (1765-1832) and Henry Peter Brougham (1778-1868), Whig politicians and rectors of the University of Glasgow.

[9] Sir Robert Peel (1788-1850) and Robert Banks Jenkinson, 2nd Earl of Liverpool (1770-1828), British Tory statesmen. Between 1822 and 1827, Peel was Home Secretary in Liverpool's government.

[10] Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), English poet and literary critic. In his letters, he claims to have attended one of the gatherings and defines Irving "the super-Ciceronian, ultra-Demosthenic pulpiteer of the Scotch Chapel in Cross Street, Hatton Garden" (7 July 1823) and "the greatest *orator* I even heard" (23 July 1823).

[11] William Hone (1780-1842), English writer and publisher, famous for his satirical works and defiance of government censorship. Hone is known for his trial in 1817, where he successfully defended himself against charges of blasphemy. During one of his trials, Hone relied on the legal principle of precedent, showing the jury that parodies of the Scriptures – when supportive of the government – were not prosecuted. He extensively quoted from other people's Scripture parodies, which had not faced legal action. He cited, among others, the British Tory statesman George Canning (1770-1827), who had written such parodies without facing prosecution, and concluded that his own parodies should not be treated as exceptions to the general rule.

[12] Robert Waithman (1764-1833), British politician and radical reformer, known for his advocacy of parliamentary reform and workers' rights.

[13] Sir Matthew Wood (1768-1843), British Whig politician who served as Lord Mayor of London and Member of Parliament. Wood supported the expansion of suffrage and was involved in promoting the rights of the working class.

[14] Misprint for *Beaumont*. Margaret Beaumont (c. 1766-1829), British socialite, philanthropist, and supporter of the arts.

[15] Possible reference to the poem *The Excursion* (1814) by William Wordsworth, who was Margaret Beaumont's close friend.

[16] Nickname possibly referred to the English poet, playwright, and translator William Sotheby (1757-1833). He gained recognition for his attempts at writing dramatic works and his translations of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The nickname may be explained by Sotheby's persistent attempts as a dramatic author.

[17] Possible reference to Theodore Hook (1788-1841), English writer, playwright, and practical joker, known for his sharp wit and satirical works. In his Sunday newspaper *John Bull,* Hook denounced Irving as a humbug (20 July 1823) as testified by Coleridge; in one of his letters, Coleridge wrote Irving had been "so blackguarded in the 'John Bull' of last Sunday" (23 July 1823).

[18] The *Pic-Nic* (1803) was a short-lived literary periodical established by Lt. Col. Henry Francis Greville, and edited by the British author William Combe (1742-1823).

[19] Henry Francis Greville (1760-1816), British impresario. He is also known for his role in the early stages of *The Cabinet* and for his involvement in the cultural and political circles of his time.

[20] Horace Smith (1779-1849), English poet and novelist. Together with his brother, he wrote parodies of poets of their time including William Wordsworth, S.T. Coleridge, and Lord Byron, and collected them in *Rejected Addresses* (1812).

[21] Edward Dubois (1774-1850), English man of letters. He contributed regularly to the *Morning Chronicle* and was an art critic for *The Observer*. With Theodore Hook, he became editor of the *Monthly Mirror*.

[22] Prince Hoare (1755-1834), English painter and playwright. Among his works was the popular farce *No Song, No Supper* (1790).

[23] Richard Cumberland (1732-1811), English dramatist and editor of the short-lived periodical *The London Review* (1809).

[24] John Wilson Croker (1780-1857), Anglo-Irish statesman and writer for the *Quarterly Review*. Croker served as Tory MP and became an influential political figure in early nineteenth-century Britain; he is remembered for his critical role in the development of the Admiralty as well as his contentious literary criticism.

[25] In 1803, Mary Anne Clarke (1776-1852) and Prince Frederick, Duke of York (1763-1827) became entangled in an illicit affair which turned into a political scandal when the press spread the news that she had employed her influence over the duke to obtain army commissions in exchange for financial gain.

[26] See William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* III.i.166.

[27] Edmund Kean (1787-1833), actor celebrated for his intense and passionate performances of Shakespearean roles. Breaking away from the more formal traditions of the time, he revolutionized acting thanks to his emotional depth and dramatic style.

[28] Misspelling for *Crichton*. James Crichton (1560-c. 1585), known as The Admirable Crichton, was a Scottish rhetorician. His remarkable talents and mastery of several fields of knowledge – including languages, philosophy, and swordsmanship – earned him widespread admiration across Europe during the Renaissance, especially in Italy.

[29] Reference to the painting *The Raising of Lazarus* (1821-23) by historical painter Benjamin Robert Haydon (1786-1846)

[30] Reference to Walter Scott's Waverly novels *Old Mortality* (1816) and *Rob Roy* (1817). Robert Roy Macgregor (1671-1734) was a Scottish outlaw who became a Jacobite folk hero. In Scott's novel, Ephraim Macbriar is a covenanting preacher supposedly based on Hugh Mackail (c. 1640-66), Scottish martyr of the covenant.

[31] Public house and hotel.

[32] See William Shakespeare, *Cymbeline* IV.ii.383-84.

[33] Imogen, daughter of King Cymbeline in Shakespeare's play *Cymbeline*. In his *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* (1817), Hazlitt writes that "of all Shakespear's women she is perhaps the most tender and the most artless".

[34] Biblical reference: see *Psalms* 105.18.

[35] Reference to epistolary novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774) by German author Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), a seminal work of the *Sturm und Drang* movement exploring the intense emotional turmoil of the eponymous young artist.

[36] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, French philosopher and writer.

[37] William Shakespeare (1564-1616), English playwright, poet, and actor.

[38] John Milton, English poet.

[39] Tiziano Vecellio, known in English as Titian (1488/90-1576) and Raffaello Sanzio, known in English as Raphael (1483-1520) were Italian Renaissance painters. Titian's art is characterized by its emotional depth and vibrant colour, while Raphael's is distinguished by its classical balance and serene beauty.

[40] Jusepe de Ribera, known as Spagnoletto (1591-1652), Spanish painter. Ribera is renowned for his masterful use of tenebrism, a technique emphasizing stark contrasts between light and dark to heighten emotional impact.

[41] Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), Italian scientist, inventor and artist of the Renaissance. His portraits – such as *Lady with an Ermine* (1489), *La Belle Ferronnière* (1490-99), and *Mona Lisa* (1503) – exemplify his mastery of light and shadow, particularly using the *sfumato* technique, which brought unprecedented life-like quality and emotional depth to his subjects.

[42] See William Shakespeare, *Macbeth* II.i.45.

[43] The Tron Church is an evangelical Presbyterian church in Glasgow known for its rich tradition of expositional preaching.

[44] Moses is a central figure in the Abrahamic religions, known as the leader who liberated the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. Mosaic cosmogony, as presented in the Book of Genesis, emphasizes the orderliness and intentionality of God's creation.

[45] Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727), English mathematician, physicist, and astronomer, widely regarded as one of the most influential scientists in history. His *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (1687) laid the foundations of modern physics and astronomy.

[46] Reference to Jonathan Swift's satirical novel *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), in which Lemuel Gulliver travels to lands such as Lilliput, where the inhabitants are tiny, and Brobdingnag, in which they are giants.

[47] See William Shakespeare, *Love's Labour's Lost* V.i.17-18.

[48] See William Shakespeare, *Othello* III.iii.418-19.

[49] Calvinism is a branch of Protestant theology based on the teachings of John Calvin (1509-64), emphasizing the sovereignty of God, the authority of Scripture, and the doctrine of predestination.

[50] See William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar* III.i.297.

[51] Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), English philosopher and social reformer, best known as the founder of utilitarianism. He advocated for legal and social reforms, including the abolition of slavery and animal rights.

[52] Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774).

[53] Lucius Annaeus Seneca the Younger, known as Seneca (4 BCE-65 CE), Roman Stoic philosopher, statesman, and playwright, also known for his writings on ethics.

[54] Reference to the English writer and philosopher William Godwin (1756-1836). His treatise titled *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793) is an influential critique of political institutions and the first work to outline the principles of anarchism; his popular Gothic novel *Things as They Are; or, The Adventures of Caleb Williams* (1794) explores the consequences of unchecked authority.

[55] Reference to the prose pastoral romance *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* (1580) by the poet and courtier Sir Philip Sidney (1554-86).

[56] George Croly (1780-1860), Irish writer and Anglican priest. He was a regular contributor to the *Literary Gazette* and *Blackwood's Magazine*.

[57] Joseph Butler (1692-1752), English Anglican bishop and philosopher. Hazlitt's allusion is to Butler's treatise *The Analogy of Religion* (1736), which defends the reasonableness of Christianity by comparing religious doctrines to the natural world.

[58] See William Shakespeare, *All's Well That Ends Well* IV.iii.272.

[59] Sir Walter Scott, Scottish novelist and poet.

[60] William Blackwood, Scottish publisher.

[61] See William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar* III.ii.36.

[62] George Canning, British Tory statesman.

[63] Daniel Wilson (1778-1858), English Bishop of Calcutta. At that time, Wilson was minister at St. John's Chapel, Bedford Row, Bloomsbury.

[64] George IV (1762-1830), who reigned from 1820 to 1830.

[65] See "Oh, for a curse to kill with" in Thomas Otway, *Venice Preserv'd* II.ii.

[66] See William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* III.iv.56-57.

[67] The River Esk flows through Midlothian and East Lothian in Scotland.

[68] John the Baptist.

[69] Saffron Hill is a street and former ward located in Holborn, London, and the location of some of London's most infamous slums.

[70] The River Fleet is the largest underground river in London. As London expanded, the river was gradually reduced to an open-air sewer and the area around it became known for its poor housing and prisons. See Alexander Pope, *The Dunciad* II.271-274.

[71] Robert Banks Jenkinson, British Tory statesman.

[72] George Canning, British Tory statesman.

[73] Colley Cibber (1671-1757), English actor-manager and playwright. He served as the poet laureate of England and was a prominent figure in Drury Lane Theatre. He also became involved in literary controversies and is generally remembered as the main target in Alexander Pope's satirical poem *The Dunciad* (1728-43).

[74] Historical region located in northeastern France, bordered by Germany and Switzerland.

[75] Scottish for *church*.

[76] Newgate was a notorious prison in London, originally built in the twelfth century and active until its closure in 1902. It housed many infamous criminals and became synonymous with crime and punishment in London.

[77] John Ketch, known as Jack Ketch (d. 1686), English executioner under King Charles II. In time, the expression *Jack Ketch* became a proverbial term for death, Satan, and executioners generally owing to Ketch's botched executions.

[78] Biblical reference: see *Luke* 15.11-32.

[79] Reference to *Metamorphoses* by Roman writer Apuleius (c. 125-c. 180), also referred to as *The Golden Ass*. It tells the story of Lucius who is transformed into a donkey as a result of his insatiable *curiositas* and desire to practice magic.