SPENCER, JoHN, a very learned theologian, was bom at Boctonunder-Blean, in Kent, in the year 1630. From , the grammar school of Canterbury he was removed to Cor pus Christi College at Cambridge, where he was entered on the 25th of March 1645. Having taken the degree of A.B. in 1648, and of A.M. in 1652, he was chosen a fellow in 1655. In 1660 he preached a sermon before the university, and during the same year it was published under the title of “ The righteous Ruler.” He afterwards published a learned and curious work, entitled, “ A Discourse concerning Prodigies.” To the second edition, corrected and enlarged, he added “ A Discourse concerning vulgar Prophecies.” Lond. 1665, 8vo. During the same year, he proceeded D.D. In 1667, he was presented by his college to the rectory of Landbeach, and on the 3d of August elected master of the college. About a month after his election, he was preferred by the king to the archdeaconry of Sud bury, in 1672 to a prebend of Ely, and in 1677 to the deanery of that church. In 1669 he had published a La tin dissertation concerning Urim and Thummim. But his most elaborate work is *De Legibus Hebræorum Rituali­bus, et earum Rationibus, libri tres.* Cantab. 1685, 2 tomfol. An edition, with the author’s additions and improve ments, was published at Cambridge in 1727 ; and several editions, one by Pfaff, were printed on the continent. “ It is,” as Mr. Orme has remarked, “ a very learned, but a very dangerous work; the great object of which is to show, that the Hebrew ritual was almost entirely borrowed from the Egyptians, and accommodated to the taste and prejudices which the Jews had acquired among that people. The same hypothesis had been stated by Maimonides, a philosophizing Jew, in his More Nevochim, and was greedily laid hold of by Sir John Marsham, in his Canon Chronicus Ægyptiacus. A masterly refutation of the work of Spencer was furnished by Witsius, in his Ægyptiaca; and Shuck ford, in his Connections, supplies also many arguments on the same side. Warburton partly espoused the system of Spencer, and replied to Witsius, for which he is very properly censured by Dr. Magee, in his work on the Atone ment. Socinians and infidels have made very liberal use of the work and arguments of Spencer.”@@\*

Dr. Spencer died on the 27th of May 1695, in the sixty third year of his age. He was a great benefactor to his college, to which he bequeathed an estate that had cost him L.3600. He married Hannah, the daughter of Isaac Pullen of Hertford, and had a son and a daughter, who both died before their father.

Spencer Cape, a pointed rocky cape, the east point of entrance into Spencer’s Gulf on the south shore of New Holland. Long. 136. 56. E. Lat. 35. 18. S.

Spencer's Gulf, a large gulf on the south coast of New Holland, which extends 185 miles into the interior of the country, in a northeast direction. The entrance between Cape Catastrophe on the west, and Cape Spencer on the east, is forty-eight miles wide. Captain Flinders traced it to within eight miles of its termination.

SPENSER, Edmund, one of the greatest of English poets, was born in East Smithfield, about the year 1533. There is no record in which the admirers of his genius may trace the incidents of his early years; but there is reason to suppose that they were clouded by poverty and depen dence. On the 20th of May 1519, he entered Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, in the humble character of a sizer; a circumstance which is alone sufficient to rescue those luckless scholars from abject despondency, and to render them respectable in the eyes of their more fortunate companions. Some poems, in a collection of fugitive pieces entitled “ The Theatre for Worldlings,” which appeared during this

year, are ascribed to Spenser, upon internal evidence. On the 10th of January 1752—3 he took the degree of A.B., and on the 26th of June 1576 that of A.M. From a letter of his friend Gabriel Harvey, himself a poet of some reputation in his time, it appears that, in consequence of having made enemies, who had both the will and power to injure him, he quitted Cambridge in despair of academical preferment. He had luckily some friends in the north of England, among whom he now found a temporary asy lum. Whether he was received as an honoured guest, or compelled to turn his learning to account in the way of tuition, is unknown ; but the latter supposition is the more probable of the two.

During his retirement in the north, Spenser wrote “ The Shepherd’s Calendar.” Nothing is more common than for poets to deprecate the barbarity of a phantom, and to be reduced to despair, because some angelic nonenity turns a deaf ear to their entreaties ; but it is said that Rosalind was a real mistress, at whose feet Spenser sighed in vain. The successful rival of the needy sonnetteer was, in all likelihood, some substantial yeoman. At this period of his history, Harvey advised him to try his fortune in London ; and it is probable that he abandoned without reluctance, the scene of his unrequited passion. Upon his arrival in the metro polis, he was fortunate enough to obtain an introduction to Sir Philip Sidney, who invited him to become his guest at Penshurst, the seat of the family in Kent. As a token of gratitude for this hospitality the “ Shepherd’s Calendar,” published in 1579, was “ entituled to the noble and vertuous gentleman, most worthy of all titles, Maister Philip Sidney.”

Till long after the time of Spenser, the poet depended upon the casual gratuities of distinguished persons, who sometimes exerted their influence in procuring for a favourite bard some less precarious means of subsistence. Re commended, as it is conjectured, by the Earl of Leicester, the poet went to Ireland with Arthur Lord Grey of Wil ton, who was appointed deputy of that kingdom in 1580. Spenser was the secretary of the viceroy, and discharged the duties of his office with greater promptitude and exactness than poets usually display in the ordinary business of life. His “ View of the State of Ireland,” a treatise written in the form of a dialogue, displays no inconsiderable portion of political sagacity. By the interest of Lord Grey, Leicester, and Sidney, Spenser obtained, in 1586, a grant of three thousand and twenty-eight acres of the forfeited estates of the Earl of Desmond. This piece of good fortune was embittered by the death of his patron, the gallant Sidney, who fell in the same year at the battle of Zutphen. The pastoral elegy of Astrophel, sacred to the memory of the departed hero, although not published until 1591, was probably written when the grief of the poet was at the height. It was provided by the royal patent, that those who profited by the forfeiture should reside upon the lands that were allotted to them. According to this arrangement, Spenser proceeded to a place named Kilcolman, in the county of Cork. This exile, to what was then little better than a region of barbarians, was cheered by a visit from the renowned Sir Walter Raleigh. At the suggestion, it may be presumed, of his distinguished guest, whom per­haps he accompanied to England, the poet soon exchanged his Hibernian solitude for the splendours of a court. In 1590 were published the first three books of the Fairy Queen; and the poet was afterwards presented by Raleigh to Queen Elizabeth, who conferred upon him a pension of fifty pounds a-year, then no despicable sum. The grant of this pension was discovered in the chapel of the Rolls by Mr. Malone, who has thus been enabled to clear the repu­

@@@1 Orme's Bibliotheca Biblica, p. 417. Edinb. 1824, 8vo.