

First Ripe Fruits:

BEING A

COLLECTION OF TRACTS;

To which are added,

TWO SERMONS.

BY THE
REV. JOHN M. MASON, A.M.
NEW YORK.

WITH A SHORT MEMOIR
OF THE
AUTHOR.



As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it, &c.—Isaiah lxx. 5.

Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.
John vi. 12.

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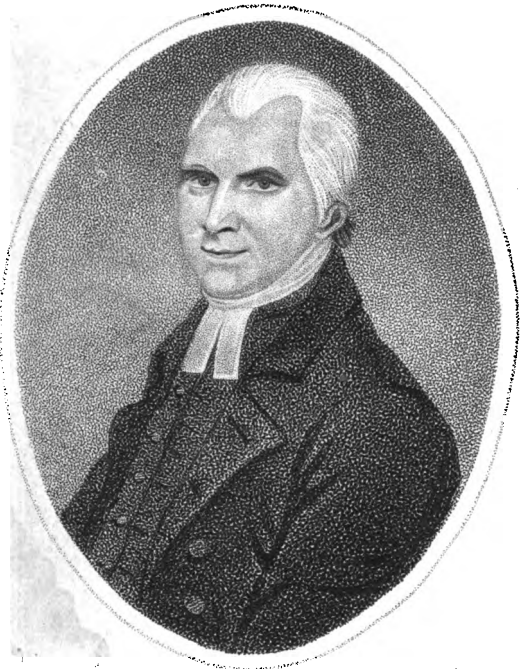
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The Rev^d
JOHN M. MASON .
New York?

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MEMOIR

OF THE

REV. JOHN M. MASON.

THE subject of this memoir is son of the late Rev. John Mason, a native of Mid-Galder, in the county of Linlithgow, North Britain; who was early dedicated to the ministry, among the Body of seceders from the church of Scotland, known by the name of Anti-burghers. After completing his education at the University, he went to Abernethy, and studied Theology under that eminent divine, the Rev. Mr. Moncrieff, of Culfargie, then their stated Professor; and there he also officiated, for some time, as Tutor of Philosophy, along with that excellent man. Application having been made by some members of that communion, resident in the city of New York, to the proper Church Court in Scotland, for a minister to be settled among them, Mr. Mason was selected by his brethren (not altogether with his own approbation) as the

most proper person to undertake such a charge. Among the most urgent for his acceptance was the late Rev. Mr. Adam Gibb, of Edinburgh, a divine not more eminent for his talents as a preacher, than for other qualifications necessary in the leader of a party, one of the most numerous and respectable which the church of Scotland has *forced* from her communion. Mr. M. more than twenty years ago took a very active part in completing a union between three religious denominations in America, all of Scots origin, Burghers, Antiburghers, and Cameronians. He was, indeed, from his predilection for peace, a prime mover of the scheme; and, after various meetings between the Ministers and Representatives of the several parties, they were united in one body, under the name of "the Associate Reformed Synod;" which seems rather awkwardly to preserve distinctions which they professedly and really buried.

Upon arriving in the city of New York, Mr. M. found the interests of religion in a declining state, and therefore he entered upon his ministry resolving to endeavour its revival. Accordingly, besides the stated labours of the Sabbath, he instituted three diets for catechising, namely, one for the unmarried men, another for the single

women, both of which were held in his own house; and a third for the public examination of the children in the meeting; all of which were made eminently useful; so that; from few which composed the church at its beginning, their numbers soon encreased; and many of other communions joined as members, while Mr. M. did not prove their right to Christian fellowship chiefly by their knowledge of the peculiarities of the Secefsion, but by their *love to Christ*. This was his touchstone, and should alone be that of every Christian minister. In this manner he made full proof of his ministry, while many were daily added to the church. In consequence of the great increase of members and occasional hearers, the meeting was found too small to contain them; accordingly it was pulled down, and the present one, of which his son is minister, erected in its place.

Mr. M. married the daughter of a respectable Dutch merchant, and one of the aldermen of New York; by whom he had other children, besides the subject of the present memoir. The Rev. John M. Mason, after completing his studies at one of the colleges of the United States, and obtaining a greater share of literature than falls to the lot of many who, from want of the means, or a capa-

city to receive what is provided for them, are without this excellent helpmate in the most important of all employments, was sent to the University of Edinburgh; where he attended the lectures of those professors more immediately connected with the study of theology, by all of whom he was respected as a scholar and a Christian. Among these, the Rev. Dr. Andrew Hunter, Professor of Divinity, shewed him singular marks of attention. In Scotland it is required of every student of divinity to attend the Theological Lectures at the public hall of the University four years, and during that time to deliver the following discourses, viz. *a Lecture, a Homily, an Exegesis, an Exercise and addition, and a Popular Sermon*; and to accustom the students to public speaking and critical investigation, one or more of them are called upon to canvas the merits of each discourse. Mr. Mason was frequently appointed to this task; nor did he on any occasion disappoint their hopes, although many had reason to fear the issue. A believer from experience in the doctrines of salvation, he felt indignant at any attempts to lessen their importance; so that not only the openly erroneous had reason to dread his reproof, but even those who *professed* to believe the truth, and had so dressed up error

in her garb, that they flattered themselves it might escape detection. However, the covering was too thin for his keen eye not to penetrate: he would instantly strip off the borrowed finery, and discover the nakedness of error to an astonished assembly; while the object of his censure blushed with conscious shame. He knew so well all the bearings one doctrine of grace has with another, the nicety with which every stone in the spiritual building is laid, that with the line and plummet of his mind's eye, the least deformity was soon perceived, and as readily adjusted. Blest with a retentive memory, added to the clearest judgment, he was well calculated for criticism; and *they* were ever convinced of the justice of his remarks, who did not approve the sentiments which called them forth. In these exercises he was ably supported by his fellow students and intimate companions, the *Rev. Mr. Ewing, of Glasgow, Mr. Innes late minister of Stirling, (now of Dundee,) Mr. Dick, author of the Essay on the Inspiration of the Scriptures,* and others.

While here, he was likewise a member of a Philo-Theological Society, composed of the students, which meets once a week. Every second meeting is devoted to the hearing of essays on different subjects in natural and re-

vealed religion. At the other, a systematic discourse is delivered on any subject the party chooses. After which follows a debate on some moral or religious subject. Two are appointed on each side; and after arguing the matter at length, any other member is at liberty to deliver his sentiments. *Messrs. Mason, Ewing, and Innes*, were distinguished speakers in this laudable institution; and to it, in a great measure, we may attribute that easy and manly eloquence for which all of them are conspicuous.

But neither these important exercises, nor his studies, prevented him from attending to matters of inferior concern. Ready to every good work, his mind, like his Master's, was not above noticing the wants, and consulting the interests of little children; and we have seen him, at a Sabbath School, direct the devotions of many, who are now bearing fruit in the vineyard of the church.

While at Edinburgh, the unwelcome tidings arrived of the death of his beloved parent; and the church, knowing his superior talents, saw in him the most fit successor to his venerable father. They therefore resolved to wait the time when he should return to the

bosom of his country and the church, fully fraught with the blessings of the gospel of peace. He lost no time to hasten his departure for America, where he arrived, and, with the unanimous voice of the people, was ordained pastor of the church over which his father had long and successfully laboured. Here he has continued to exercise his ministry with much acceptance, not only to his own people, but the majority of the well-inclined citizens of New York. Every Sabbath presents a scene highly interesting to the Christian: a loving people hanging on the lips of wisdom, eager to catch the heavenly doctrine as it drops. Under the guidance of such a shepherd, there is not to be found a wanderer; his stock of divinity is not exhausted with a few sermons, the production of many a laboured hour, and upon topics so common to the ear, that dullness itself in the repetition becomes proficient. No, he is ever able, out of the treasure of his heart, to bring forth things *new* as well as old. Of this, every one who has heard the sublimely animated discourses delivered from the pulpits of this metropolis, is well assured. His church consists of near seven hundred members, with all of whom he is on terms of more than common intimacy. The relation which subsists between a minister and his people, when

properly understood and acted up to, is superior to every human tie; and they who, from sinister motives, cut the heart-wrought knot, may find an excuse plausible enough to men, but, except in some cases, they will search in vain for one with which they can face the High Priest of their profession, Christ Jesus.

It is the duty of every Christian, however mean his situation in life, to promote the welfare of his fellow-mortals; but there are indispensable obligations to this, laid upon the ministers of the gospel; and we may, without any breach of charity, suspect the Christianity of that man whose narrow soul is limited by the walls of the church or meeting with which he is connected. Mr. M. lives in habits of friendship with ministers and christians of various denominations; but, like a faithful servant of Jesus, he refused to give the least countenance to Dr. P. on the arrival of that gentleman in New York. The spirit which characterizes Mr. M. is that of His Divine Master, the advancement of whose kingdom has been ever dear to his heart; and on all occasions he has stood forth in any design to promote its interests.

As a member and office bearer of the New York Missionary Society, he is steady, zealous,

and active; not daunted from prosecuting the end, though the means employed may not have all the success to be wished. But his Character is not more high as an eloquent and able divine, than as a public-spirited citizen and patriot, in the best sense of the word. Mr. M. may be said to inherit such a spirit, for his father, with many good men from this country, espoused the cause of Congress during the struggle with America for her independence; and we have heard it said, he followed the army in the capacity of chaplain, and was much respected by general Washington. The son is likewise a warm friend of his country in its civil and religious liberties; but a determined enemy to the policy, which connects their existence with that of French principles, and affects to treat those whom they term of the *old school*, as weak minds, possessed of good hearts but bad heads. During the contest for the last election of a President, he espoused the British party in opposing Mr. Jefferson; not from any other motive, than conviction that it was his duty to prevent the *Patron of Infidelity* from filling that chair, which a *Washington* and an *Adams*, names equally dear to the patriot and Christian, had consecrated by the many testimonies they gave to the excellence of our Holy religion. He well knew that *Deism* in

the chief magistrate must be productive of evil to the state; for if the fountain-head be corrupt, the streams will necessarily become contaminated. The truth of this we see in the late accounts from that country, wherein it is said that a hundred Deists in New York, have entered into a resolution to maintain and propagate their principles at the expence of their all! Poor men! where is their hope when the Lord taketh away their soul? However, it is consoling to think, that in this very city, where the *Hydra of impiety* has arisen, there is a *Spiritual Hercules*, one whose club is equal to their united onset. *Magna est veritas et prevalebit.*

Mr. Mason expostulated with his fellow-citizens against the election of Mr. Jefferson; and though his exertions did not succeed, the address contained in this volume, created a spirit of enquiry into the nature and consequences of principles, as connected with the office of a Chief Magistrate, which gave Mr. Jefferson the mortification to see, that many thousands of the same sentiments in matters of state, were his warmest opposers, when the motives which actuated his conduct were found not to be built upon the true foundation, the *word of God*, but a *crooked policy*, dictated by a spirit opposite to Christianity.

The object of Mr. Mason's visit to Britain, is already known to the public. The increasing population of America, and the number of vacant churches with which he is connected, called for a supply of able preachers; at the same time that a Theological Library for the use of ministers and students, was much wanted. That he succeeded in obtaining a supply so liberal for both, is highly honourable to our age and country, while thousands will long remember with delight the discourses which he delivered in this city, and which we are happy to learn are intended soon to be published.

To those who have heard Mr. M. it is needless to attempt a description of his talents and manner: to those who have *not* heard him, any description must be inadequate. This eminent preacher is characterized by a certain originality of thought and style. Bold and animated, he transfuses great vigour and spirit into his productions. His sentiments and language, even without the adventitious aids of his manly appearance, his deep-toned voice, his earnest look and gesture, enlighten and impress. We hope that the present Volume will edify many; and that "The First Fruits," here collected, will be generally relished as *ripe and rich*.

LETTERS

ON

FREQUENT COMMUNION.

PREFACE.

THE subject of the following letters, and the views which they contain, have, for some time past, made a deep impression on the mind of the writer. They are the result, not of hasty opinion, but of solemn conviction, preceded by deliberate inquiry. All the authorities to which the author had access, have been carefully consulted; nor has any fact been advanced for which he had not ample proof; and often much more ample than the marginal references indicate. Whether his reflections on these facts are just, and his general argument conclusive, must be left to the judgment and conscience of the reader. Satisfied for himself, that he is pleading the cause of truth, and grieved at the supineness even of serious professors, he has spoken with freedom and decision. To insult the prejudices of good men, and of religious communities, is indeed neither decent nor wise; but it would be more than unwise, and worse than indecent, to sacrifice the honour of our Lord Jesus to the scruples

of false tenderneſs. Truth never commands higher reſpect, nor, on the whole, gives leſs offence, than when ſhe addreſſes the world in a firm tone, and with an undaunted air. When a departure from evangelical duty is become general, and people love to have it ſo; when the wiſe virgins ſleep as well as the fooliſh, we are not to whisper in the heavy ear, but to “cry aloud, to ſpare not; to lift up the voice like a trumpet; to ſhew God’s people their tranſgreſſion, and the houſe of Jacob their ſins*.” With this injunction before him, the author has not been ambitious of flattering language: and he feels no neceſſity of apologizing for a ſtyle of expreſſion correſponding, in ſome meaſure, with his views and feelings.

If, however, there be in any part of theſe letters, ought which violates the law of love, although at preſent unconſcious of it, he here utterly diſavows its ſpirit, and intreats his Chriſtian brethren to place it to the account not of deſign, but of frailty. Nothing can be farther from his intention, than to offend againſt the generation of the righteous.

It may be ſuppoſed that the answers to ſeveral objections are needleſſly minute, and that they might have been ſafely committed to the

* *Iſa.* lviii. 1.

good sense of the reader. The author would have thought so too, had he not found by experience, the strength of their influence upon minds both serious and sensible.

Some who feel themselves interested in these letters may be gratified to learn, that the sentiments of the author are confined neither to himself nor to his country. They were expressed, in substance, many years ago by men whose praise is in the churches*. In one of the numbers of the Missionary Magazine, lately commenced at Edinburgh, is a review of a series of Dialogues recently published in Scotland, on the same subject, and with the same design: and from private information and correspondence, he is assured that the sacrament of the supper has actually been celebrated, of late, without the usual fast-days, not only in several churches of the Seccession, but in many other churches connected with the Establishment in Scotland.

* The late Rev. THOMAS RANDALL, Stirling; Dr. JOHN ERSKINE, and Rev. T. S. JONES, Edinburgh.

LETTERS, &c.



LETTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,

WE should greatly undervalue our spiritual mercies, were we insensible that “the lines have fallen unto us in pleasant places; yea, that we have a goodly heritage.” The unadulterated faith once delivered to the saints; that religious polity which Christ hath instituted for his church; and a worship, on the whole, scriptural; are benefits which God bestowed on our fathers, and which, by his grace, they have transmitted unto us. To insure our peaceful enjoyment of them they underwent no ordinary trials. It is the fruit of their labours, their tears, and their blood, which merit, from their posterity, an everlasting remembrance.

But, brethren, we should prove ourselves unworthy of such an ancestry, if, under the pretext of prizing *their* attainments, we become indifferent about our *own*; if we lose their spirit,

while we boast of their names: much more, if, falling short of their excellence, we do not endeavour to regain and surpass it. Magnanimous men! they not only cherished their light, but applied it to expose delusion, and to explore the paths of forgotten truth. Far from being satisfied with previous reformation, they inquired if any corruption had been retained; any error unnoticed; any duty overlooked: and exerted themselves to supply the defect, both by condemning what was wrong, and by performing what was right. No favourite prepossessions; no inveterate habits, either appalled their courage or paralyzed their efforts. According to their knowledge, they cheerfully sacrificed whatever is contrary to the simple and spiritual ordinations of their Lord. Accompanied herein with his blessing, they were eminently successful, and have left us an example which it is our glory to imitate. And we are to imitate it, by comparing, with the scriptural pattern, that branch of the Church to which we belong, that we may discover whether there yet remains ought which needs correction. No opinion can be more dishonourable or dangerous than this, that reformation being already atchieved, we have nothing to do but to tread quietly on in the track of precedent. Godliness is not the nursling of tradition. If we have no better rea-

son for our sentiments and practice, than that they were the sentiments and practice of our fathers before us, our religion is not a rational, but a mechanical service. Christianity allows no implicit faith, except in the Divine testimony. It is not enough that a point of doctrine or worship has the sanction of venerable names, and ancient custom: these may command respect, but can neither obligate conscience, nor relieve us from the trouble of examining for ourselves; because there is no believing by proxy. Like the Bereans, in whom the gospel excited a spirit of noble enquiry, we are to "search the scriptures," for the warrant both of our religious profession and our religious observances. We are charged to "prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good*." The charge embraces not merely such things as we have not hitherto adopted, but whatever we already possess. "Try all," saith the Holy Ghost; "hold fast that which abides the trial, and let go the rest!" As we shall answer, then, to our Master in Heaven, we are bound to review our religious order and usages: and if we shall find them, in any particular, at variance with his appointments, thankfully to own our mistake, and faithfully to amend it. No plea

* 1 Thess. v. 21.

can justify our refusal; for whatever purity we may really enjoy, none of us have the vanity to claim an exemption from error, nor to suppose that the furnace of the sanctuary can detect no dross in our gold. A church may, in her leading characters, be sound and evangelical; and yet, in some parts of her conduct, go exceedingly astray.

The duty now recommended appears to be peculiarly seasonable and urgent.

1. We profess to be JEHOVAH's witnesses; to maintain his truths against corruption; and for this end to keep up a distinct communion. If we expect our testimony to make a desirable impression upon others, we should ascertain whether we ought not to begin with reformation at home. It will be superlative happiness, indeed, if we be able, after the conscientious discharge of this duty, to lift up our heads and say we are clean. Let us not be too confident that such would be the issue; for, •

2. A number of ourselves more than suspect, that in one of the most interesting parts of public worship, we have deviated far from propriety. They see in our commemorations of the REDEEMER'S DEATH, neither that *frequency* nor *simplicity* which were the delight and the ornament of primitive churches. In their estimation, the supper of the Lord is

treated with a neglect which we would tremble to shew towards any other of his institutions. Instead of pressing to it through every difficulty, and with holy joy, we approach it, in general, as seldom as can at all consist with the decency of Christian profession. Once in twelve months, or once in six, is commonly deemed a sufficient remembrance of him "who loved us and gave himself for us."

They see, moreover, our sacramental feasts loaded with incumbrances for which they cannot discover any scriptural warrant; and that to these incumbrances is owing, in a great measure, the evil of which they complain.

These things they deplore: they are deeply convinced that the authority of the Lord Jesus; the purity of his ordinances; the very design of the holy supper; and the good of languishing Zion, require a speedy and an effectual remedy.

On this momentous topic, do the following letters, brethren, address you. They are intended to urge the great duty of frequent communicating—to sift the objections by which it is opposed—and to place, in the light of truth, some of those observances which obtain among us. However unworthy of their subject, they claim attention for their subject's sake. In the boldness of the gospel, they not only solicit, but

demand an impartial hearing. You owe it to yourselves, to the truth, to GOD. You owe it likewise to your brethren, who, against the torrent of prejudice, have adventured to put more marked honour upon the blessed Jesus, by more frequent, and, as they conceive, more evangelical commemorations of his love, than have been usual. And if it shall appear that they are right; that we have been criminally remiss in celebrating that death which is the spring of every living hope; that all apologies for our neglect are lighter than vanity; and that any of our customs want the approbation of the HOLY GHOST, and really stand in the way of our obedience; the question will be decided with all who love Jesus Christ more than fashion, and they will unite in a reform as general as it will be glorious.

LETTER II.

Frequent Communion an indispensable Duty.

CHRISTIAN BRETHERN,

OUR obligation to keep the sacramental feast, is the dying command of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. *I have received of the Lord*, saith the Apostle Paul, *that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it and said, "Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me."* After the same manner also, he took the cup when he had supped, saying, *"This cup is the New Testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's death till he come*."*

This institute, being drawn up with some latitude, does not ascertain precisely, *how* often the supper is to be celebrated. Something is, no doubt, committed to Christian prudence. The situation of a church or of her members, may

* 1 Cor. xi. 23—26.

occasionally render communicating inexpedient or even impracticable. By not restricting it to certain periods, which it would then be clearly sinful to omit, Christ has preserved his people from the embarrassments which incidental hindrances would otherwise have created.

But in providing for lawful impediment, he has given no sanction to carelessness. It would be a strange inference from the words of the apostle, and a profligate abuse of gospel liberty, to conclude, that as the Lord hath prescribed no *stated times* of communicating, we may innocently abstain as often and as long as we please. Some, indeed, appear to act upon this notion. Whether they communicate twice in a year, or once; or only every other year, is to them indifferent. But whoever justifies this irregularity from the indefinite terms of the institution, ought to reflect, that the same apology will justify a professor who should communicate but once in his whole life. With such carnal sophists, however, I have nothing to do. The real disciple who loves his master, will not permit himself to shuffle. He will candidly confess, that the very phraseology of the text implies *frequency*. The words *as often*, occurring twice in two lines, can signify nothing less, if it signify any thing at all. Whence it follows, that frequent communicating is positively enjoined;

and, consequently, that infrequent communion is a violation of the commandment which the Saviour delivered with his departing breath.

It may be asked, how are we to mark, in this case, the limit between duty and sin? Where does the one terminate, and the other commence? I answer, that the indefiniteness of the command will obviate the difficulty on the one hand; and fervent love to Christ, on the other. There is little wisdom, and less tenderness, in anxiety to tread as near to forbidden ground as we possibly can, without crossing the boundary. This is perilous casuistry, as many of the godly have found to their cost. In an hour of worldly prudence, they have made experiments, with great safety, as they thought; but which issued in agony of conscience, and a broken heart. On the subject before us, as well as on every other that is liable to doubts, spiritual caution will teach us to remove from danger. But wherever the line be drawn, it is pretty evident that our ordinary practice lies far on the wrong side. Considering the *place* which the supper holds in the Christian life, and the *ease* with which it may be celebrated; it is a satire on language to call yearly or half-yearly communions *frequent*. Every believer's heart will tell him so. And here, while meditating on the command *often* to shew forth the Lord's death, he is intreat-

to ponder a few considerations which ought to awaken sensibility, and to influence conduct.

Although it cannot be disputed, that the very words of institution require frequent communion, yet their emphasis is mostly overlooked. An accurate inspection will convince us that they are more happily adapted to the nature and ends of the ordinance, than any other mode of expression; and contain an argument which should thrill our very souls. They hold out the memorial of Emanuel's death, as a *test* not merely of obedience, but of love; and the *frequency* of our acts of obedience as the *measure* of our love. *This do in remembrance of ME: For AS OFTEN as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, YE DO SHEW FORTH THE LORD'S DEATH. As if he had said, " In this bread and wine, O my people, I leave you my memorial. Here is the symbol of my broken body, and here of my streaming blood. In my deepest sorrows you were not forgotten by me; and I require you to keep this feast as a proof that I am not forgotten by you. Realize, O my people, that it is YOUR LORD'S DEATH which ye shew forth every time you eat this bread and drink this wine. As ye love me, I charge you; as I have loved you, I charge you, THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME."*

Say, then, O thou whom JESUS hath deliver-

ed from the wrath to come, doth he not here fix a standard of thy gratitude to his grace? If thou art in this manner to testify thy remembrance of him, wilt thou not do it oftener, the more thou rememberest him? If this is the mean by which thou art to shew forth his death, will not thy use of it be regulated by thy sense of thine obligations to his death? And does not the tenor of this command teach thee, that the *frequency* of thy sacramental commemorations of him will be proportioned to the *ardour* of thy love? Alas, brethren, if *this* is a criterion of love to our Lord, the pretensions of most of us are low indeed.

That the foregoing view of the Redeemer's precept is not erroneous, will be evident from a delineation of the principal features of his supper.

1. The sacrament of the supper is *an important part of our practical testimony to the cross.*

This holy ordinance contributes as much, if not more than any other, to keep alive in the earth the memory of that sacrifice which, through the eternal SPIRIT, our High Priest offered up unto God. In a powerful appeal to the senses, it arrests attention, and strikes with awe, while the scenes of Gethsemane and Calvary pass along in symbolical review. In this holy ordinance, we proclaim to the surround-

ing spectators, that we are not ashamed to confess the despised JESUS before a crooked and perverse generation. We proclaim to the carnal world, that we have renounced their master, their idols, their hope; and have "avouched the Lord to be our God." We cry with the apostle, "God forbid that we should glory, save in the cross of our LORD JESUS CHRIST." This, indeed, is the only ordinance in which *as* believers, we make a public, social, and separate confession of his name. In other services of the sanctuary, we are mingled with the crowd: our profession, though public and social, is not *separate*, and does not distinguish us from others. In the worship of a godly family at home, it is, indeed, social and separate, but not *public*. In holy baptism, it is separate and public, but not *social*, or at most very imperfectly so. It is only in the supper of the Lord, that these three characters of the church's practical confession completely unite. One humble commemoration of his death is a better testimony to his grace, and sinks a deeper conviction into the breasts of the profane, than years of empty profession or angry controversy.

2. The supper is *an affecting representation of the communion which believers have with CHRIST JESUS.*

They appear at the sacramental table, as members of a family of whom CHRIST is the head; the federal head by *legal*, and the spiritual head by *vital* union. This double relation establishes between them and their Lord, a *common interest*, which is recognized and sealed in the holy supper. On the one hand, they, in worthily receiving the symbols of his body and blood, receive him by faith as a crucified Saviour; vow adherence to his cause, and claim the right of communicants in the benefits of his covenant. On the other hand, he accepts the vow, and admits the claim; divinely sanctioning their title to all the blessings which he hath to confer. The peace of God, which passeth understanding; access to him as a reconciled father; grace to help in every time of need; in a word, life, light, strength, consolation, victory: his presence, his spirit, his fulness, his kingdom, his glory—all these he owns to be their portion; all these he promises to give them. So that the sacramental seal of their being “planted together in the likeness of death,” bespeaks, at the same time, the preparation and earnest of their being “planted also in the likeness of his resurrection.”

3. The supper exhibits the *union and communion of believers with each other, in CHRIST.*

They are citizens of the New Jerusalem, en-

joying equal privileges under a common charter—children of the same family sitting down to a feast provided by paternal love. They do “all eat the same spiritual meat; and do all drink the same spiritual drink.” If there is ought in religion to make them feel that “they being many are one body;” that they are the purchase of the same blood, and monuments of the same grace; that they are combating in a common warfare; are partakers of a common salvation, and heirs of a common inheritance: that they have one faith; one calling; one hope;—it is the communion of the body and blood of the Lord. Thrice blessed ordinance! which clothes spiritual principle with visible form; and repeats to the senses, what the scripture hath solemnly addressed to the heart, that in the nations of the saved “there is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female; for they are *all* one in Christ Jesus*.”

4. The death of Christ commemorated in the supper, *is the point in which the leading doctrines of redemption concentrate their rays, and where they shine with united lustre.*

Draw nigh, O Christian, and by faith contemplate in the cross of Jesus, the *infinite evil*.

* Gal. iii. 28.

of sin. Nothing less than a sacrifice of infinite value, can procure its pardon. To expiate its guilt, God manifested in the flesh, becomes a curse; to wash away its stain, his precious blood is poured out. See in the agonies of him who is JEHOVAH'S fellow; see in the sword of vengeance that cleaves his heart, the accursed sinfulness of the sin which thou hast committed; and which, without his interposition, would have sunk thee for ever into the lowest hell!

Draw nigh, and contemplate the rigours of JEHOVAH'S justice in the *punishment* of sin.

He hath sworn in his holiness, and by many infallible signs he hath demonstrated, that it shall not escape. The waters of his flood have swept from the earth a whole generation of rebels. Fire from heaven consumed the sinners of Sodom. Sword, and famine, and pestilence, have repeatedly avenged his quarrel. Nay, "the damnation of hell" is prepared for apostate angels, and the impenitent among men. But neither the flood of waters, nor the flood of fire; nor famine, nor pestilence, nor sword; nor that everlasting destruction from his presence; no, not even hell, with all its terrors; not any of these; not all of them combined, ascertain so dreadfully JEHOVAH'S determination to punish sin, as his "not sparing his own Son." Oh how should we have supported the

weight of that wrath which bowed down to the earth, and laid low in death, the WORD incarnate!

Draw nigh, and contemplate *the riches of the Father's grace in our salvation.*

Apostates from his favour, and rebels against his government, we were objects of his just and sore displeasure. Without the least impeachment of his righteousness, he might have sworn in his wrath, that we should never enter into his rest. But in the multitude of his mercies he provides for us, even for *us*, a ransom that delivers from going down into the pit. *God so loved—how mighty the emphasis! so loved the world that he GAVE, not an angel, nor a host of angels,—but his ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*.*

Draw nigh, and contemplate *the love of Christ—a love without parallel, and beyond comprehension. Though he was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men †.* Source of eternal wonder! Lo “the Creator of the ends of the earth” descends into a tabernacle.

* John iii. 16.

† Phil. ii. 6. 7.

of flesh, and sojourns among men! And whence, blessed Lord, whence this condescension? It was for "the good of his chosen." He assumed their nature, that he might occupy their place; might take their guilt; might become a curse for them, that they might be made the righteousness of God in him*. Yes, dear Christian, he put his soul in thy soul's stead; he drank *for thee*, the cup of trembling: it was thy guilt which nailed him to the ignominious tree; thy guilt which rolled the billows of wrath in upon his sinless soul. It was in bearing thine iniquity that hell's blackest midnight thickened upon his spirit, and wrung from him that agonizing cry, MY GOD, MY GOD, *why hast THOU forsaken me*†! Hath he passed through the fires of the pit to *save thee*? and doth he "stake all the glories of his crown to *keep thee*?" and wilt thou, canst thou, darest thou be backward in promoting the frequent commemoration of his love? O Saviour, if we forget thee, let our right hand forget her cunning!

Draw nigh once more, and contemplate *the harmony of the divine attributes in the recovery of sinners.*

In this astonishing death, *mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have*

* 2 Cor. v. 21.

† Psal. xxii. 1.

*kissed each other**. While the blood of expiation flows, and fire from above consumes the sacrifice, a cloud of incense, rising up from the altar, announces, at the throne of God, an offering of a sweet-smelling savour. Now *God can be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus*†. Into this plan of grace and truth the angels desire to look. They see, with admiration, the prince of this world cast out; his prey torn from his hands; his kingdom of darkness rent to its foundation.—They see God's threatening fulfilled; his government exalted; transgression punished; and yet his name glorified in the salvation of the transgressor. JUSTICE, appeased, puts up her sword; while MERCY lifts the wretch from the abyss of his pollutions and his crimes. *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! Yea, it BECAME him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings*‡.

These are considerations which render the death of Christ infinitely interesting to a believer, on which he cannot meditate too often, nor too intensely. The very life of his soul lies in experiencing their power. The more his faith

* Ps. lxxxv. 10.

† Rom. iii. 26.

‡ Heb. ii. 10.

is exercised upon them, the more will he imbibe of their virtue, and be conformed to his crucified head. In proportion, then, as it is his duty to be under the influence of those evangelical principles which a sanctified view of the death of Christ begets and cherishes, it is also his duty to be engaged in the frequent commemorations of his death. And hence I add, that,

As the death of the Lord Jesus is thus inseparably connected with the great *doctrines* of godliness: so, in the

5. Place, it hath a *mighty efficacy in quickening the graces, and mortifying the corruptions, of believers.*

Those who are best acquainted with themselves know that nothing but communion with Christ in his death can conquer their depravity. Their old man is *crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth they should not serve sin**. Let them declare, *when* it is that sin, in every shape, is most detestable in their eyes: *when* their desires for perfect deliverance from it are most ardent; *when* the emotions of lust expire within them. Is it not *when* they obtain a commanding view of their LORD JESUS, *as bearing their sins in his own body on the tree†?* Yes, *one* believing.

* Rom. vi. 6.

† 1 Pet. ii. 24.

glimpse of CHRIST CRUCIFIED, does infinitely more in “ subduing their iniquities,” than all their resolutions, their watchfulness, their struggles, without it. Let them declare also, *when* the adversary gets the advantage over them: *when* the “ law in their members, warring against the law of their mind, brings them” most easily “ into captivity to the law of sin and death;” is it not, when their views of his cross are beclouded, and “ faith in his blood” enfeebled?

On the other hand; *when* is every holy grace most lively and flourishing? If “ the peace of God rule in their hearts,” and his love be “ shed abroad therein by the Holy Ghost”—if they be “ clothed with humility”—if “ patience have her perfect work”—if hope tower, and faith triumph, and love to the brethren glow—if, trampling on this miserable world, they “ set their affections on things above;” and “ press towards the mark for the prize of their high calling of God in Christ Jesus;” it is because they are “ crucified with CHRIST:” it is in *bearing about in the body the DYING of the Lord Jesus, that the LIFE also of Jesus is made manifest in their mortal flesh* *. If such, then, is the connection between the cross of Christ, and the

*. 2 Cor. iv. 10.

life of faith; if such its influence on a believer's peace, and holiness, and comfort, and preparation for "an abundant entrance into the kingdom" of his Father; how important the duty of retaining the spiritual impressions of it! how strong the necessity of frequent, and *very* frequent recurrence to that ordinance which is destined to recal it afresh to our memories, and which, by sensible tokens, so evidently sets forth Christ crucified!

6. In the holy supper believers are often admitted to *near intercourse with the GOD of the spirits of all flesh.*

Communion is one of the most prominent features of the ordinance. *The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ*?* It is here seen that the fellowship of believers is *with the Father and with his Son JESUS CHRIST†.* And *here* the Lord not only attests its *reality*, but is often pleased to give them a sweet and powerful *sense* of it. Covered with celestial food, food such as angels never tasted, how often has the sacramental table been, to the children of promise, a scene of delight ineffable! The kind invitation, *Eat, O friends; drink, ye*

* 1 Cor. x. 16.

† 1 J.

*drink abundantly, O beloved**; hath thrilled their very souls. They can well remember how bountifully their God hath dealt with them, while they were endeavouring to honour him by shewing forth the death of his Son. They came hungry, and he hath set them down to a *feast of fat things*, and hath *satisfied them with the goodness of his house, even of his holy place*†. They came disconsolate, and he hath *given them beauty for ashes; the oil of joy for mourning; the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness*‡. They came with feeble and with fainting steps, and he hath *strengthened them with might by his SPIRIT in the inner man*§. They came bowed down under the weight of the body of death; and groaning beneath the oppressions of unbelief, and he hath “ removed the burden from their shoulders.” The spirit of bondage hath fled before the spirit of adoption: *Abba Father!* was their gracious aspiration. In the liberty of the gospel, they have cried out, *O LORD, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant; thou hast loosed my bonds*§! In a word, he hath disappointed all their apprehensions: he hath dried up their tears; hath stilled the inward tumult; hath dissipated their darkness; hath poured his consolations into their hearts; hath

* Cant. v. 1. † Is. xxv. 6. Ps. lxx. 4. ‡ Is. lxi. 3.

§ Eph. iii. 16. § Ps. cxvi. 16.

enabled them to “ enter with boldness into the holiest by the blood of JESUS;” caused them to “ see his power and his glory; sealed them up, by the Holy Ghost, unto the day of redemption,” and sent them away encompassed with these “ songs of salvation.” *Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee: thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s*.*

This, indeed, hath not been the happiness of every believer; nor is it always the happiness of any believer. But it certainly hath been, and yet is often enjoyed at the table of the Lord: perhaps more often, proportionably, than in any other exercise. And this, not because it is, in itself, more holy than the rest; or because access to God therein is, in itself, more near; but he will put a special honour upon it, and upon them who love it; because it is that ordinance

* Ps. lxxiii. 3, 4. ciii. 1—5.

which in a special manner, puts honour upon his Son JESUS.

And now, Christian, interrogate thine own heart. Say, as in the sight of thy beloved, is it not thy duty, and thy privilege, *often* to keep the feast in remembrance of him? Wilt thou refuse to display, before the world, a bold, and generous testimony for his name? Is it to thee unprofitable, or unpleasant, to recognize, at short intervals, thy union and communion with him, and in him, with all the household of faith? Art thou in danger of entertaining, from the frequent commemoration of his death, too deep an abhorrence for sin? Of realizing, too sensibly, its eternal opposition to JEHOVAH'S purity? Of esteeming, too highly, his pardoning grace? Of being unduly affected with the love of Jesus? Of admiring, to excess, that holy plan by which God is infinitely magnified; and thou hast escaped the wrath to come? Canst thou not find frequent employment for a *sanctifying* Saviour? Hast thou no lust to subdue? no grace to quicken? no mercy to ask? Hast thou won the crown; all thine adversaries slain, and all thy conflicts over? Art thou indifferent about meeting with thy God? Are his consolations small with thee? or the light of his countenance a thing of nought?—But why rend thy bosom with questions like these? No believer can think

thus. And can he apologize to his own conscience? can he apologize to his Lord, for infrequent, very infrequent attendance upon that ordinance in which his self, and all the benefits of his covenant are represented, sealed, and applied? Did he intend, suppose ye, that this memorial of his death should be thrust into a corner of the year? Or could they who heard the tender and piercing words, *This do in remembrance of ME*, have believed that any who love his name would treat it with such indignity? No; never, never! Were Paul to rise from his rest, and to visit our churches, one of the first things he would miss, is the communion table. What would be our confusion, should he address us in inquiries like these; “How often do you remember your Redeemer in the sacramental feast? every sabbath? every other sabbath? every third sabbath? every month?” Alas, no. This was never heard nor thought of among us—“How often, then?” Oh, I feel the rising blush—but the shameful truth must come out: “Generally, not more than twice in the year.” What astonishment would seize the Apostle—He would hardly own us for his disciples! Is this, Christian brethren, our kindness to our friend? this our reverence for his injunction, our return for his love? We are verily guilty concerning our brother. It becomes us to rouse from our

lethargy: to throw ourselves abashed at his feet: to implore his forgiveness: to evince our sincerity by correcting our fault; and no longer disobey him, and forsake our own mercies.

LETTER III.

Objections answered—Innovation.

CHRISTIAN BRETHERN,

THE duty of frequent communion is so undeniable; and the argument by which it is enforced appeals with such power to every gracious principle, that there seems no room for objection. But objections are made; and by those too, who, we must hope, desire to walk in all the commandments of the Lord blameless. Experience teaches us, that prejudice, even in upright minds, is sufficient to obscure the most luminous truths, and to magnify the most trifling difficulty into an impassable mountain. I shall, therefore, attempt to obviate those objections which appear, from their popularity, to be thought most important.

I. It is said that the measure proposed *would innovate upon the established order of the church.*

To this I reply, that if it be, *indeed*, an innovation; and if, as hath been proved, it is nevertheless our *duty*; then it is high time the innovation were made, and the habits of *old* transgression removed. Let not the terror of

an ill-sounding epithet defeat a needful and scriptural alteration. The cry of innovation is no proof that a measure is not both lawful and wise. It was raised by the Prelatists against our venerable ancestors; by the apostates of Rome, against the illustrious reformers; by the Scribes and Pharisees, against Christ himself. But happily the fact is otherwise. Frequent communion is *not* an innovation. The odium of this charge lies upon our present practice. Many consider as a part of the good way, whatever is older than themselves. But when we speak of innovation in the church of Christ, we are not to enquire merely what was done by our fathers, or grandfathers, or their sires: but what was the order of the church *from the beginning?* How did Christ ordain? How did his Apostles conduct? In what state did *they* leave the church? Now it is notorious, that during the three first centuries of the Christian æra, communions were held, with the frequency of which, among us, we have neither example nor resemblance. It is also notorious, that the original frequency of communions declined as carnality and corruption gained ground:— And it is no less notorious, that it has been urged as a weighty duty by the best of men, and the best of churches, in the best of times.

A brief illustration of these points, may not be unacceptable to the reader—

As to the *first*; it is demonstrable, that among the primitive Christians, the celebration of the supper was a part of the *ordinary sanctification of the Lord's day*.

To begin with the Apostles. We learn from Acts xx. 7. that *on the first day of the week—the disciples came together to break bread*. Hence it is evident, not only that Christians assembled on the Lord's day for public worship, but that they did not part without commemorating his death. What else can be meant by *breaking of bread*? It is a phrase, borrowed from Christ himself, to signify the communion of the supper. And most assuredly his people did not assemble on his day for any common or carnal purposes. Nay, it is intimated that sacramental communion was a *principal*, if not *the principal* object of their meeting. Prayer, praise, and preaching of the word were, doubtless, their stated exercises; but of such moment was the supper considered, that in recording their employment on the sabbath, the sacred historian mentions nothing else—they came together *to break bread*. The argument must be decisive with all who allege this place to prove that the Apostolic churches

sanctified the first, instead of the seventh day of the week. For the historian does not more positively say that they *came together*, than that they came together *to break bread*. Indeed the strength of the argument drawn from this passage, to prove the change of the sabbath, lies in the supposition that this "breaking of bread" signifies the sacrament of the supper; because it is the only expression from which we gather that the meeting of the disciples was both a *stated* one, and for *religious* ends. It is plain that they were not called together to hear the Apostle preach; but that he preached to them on the first day of the week, because they then came together, of course, *to break bread*: for he arrived at Troas the Monday preceding; and instead of assembling them, as he might easily have done, he appears to have *waited six days*, that he might meet them on the *seventh*, which was the Lord's day. And designing to depart on the morrow, or Monday, he was so pressed for time that he protracted his sermon till midnight. All which difficulty he would have avoided by summoning the church in the foregoing week; but he chose rather to undergo it, than not give his apostolical sanction to the sanctification of the Lord's day, or lose the pleasure of joining with the brethren in

commemorating his death. You must therefore admit, either that this celebrated passage* contains no proof that the primitive Christians *habitually* sanctified the Lord's day; or that *weekly communions* were their constant practice.

To the same purpose is the testimony of Paul, 1 Cor. xi. 20. He had reproved the Corinthians for their scandalous dissensions in the place, and at the time, of public worship. *You come together, says he, not for the better but for the worse. For when ye come together IN THE CHURCH, I hear that there be divisions (schisms) among you. Ver. 17, 18. That these "schisms" occurred in their indecent manner of communicating, is undeniable. For with reference to them the Apostle proceeds, v. 20. When ye come together therefore, into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. "By your shameful behaviour, the ordinance is so prostituted that it resembles nothing less than the supper of the Lord." The Apostle tells us, that their irregularities happened, when they came together in the church, and that the scene of them was the table of the Lord. Whence it*

* Its true meaning, and the strong argument which it affords for the change of the sabbath, are ably stated in that learned work, entitled, *Sabbatum Redivivum*, part ii. p. 517—520.

follows, that the celebration of the supper was a regular concomitant of their stated meetings for public worship; and these, we know, were held at least *every Lord's day*. The conclusion results necessarily from the tenor of the Apostle's argument, " which evidently supposes, that whenever they assembled together, they came to eat the Lord's supper; for otherwise their coming together so as not to eat the Lord's supper, would be no proof that their coming together was for the worse*."

Weekly communions did not die with the Apostles and their contemporaries. There is a cloud of witnesses to testify that they were kept up, by succeeding Christians, with great care and tenderness, for above two centuries. It is not necessary to swell these pages with quotations. The fact is indisputable†. It was even common to communicate *three and four times* a week, and in some places *every day*. Communion every Lord's day, however, was universal; and was preserved in the Greek church till the *seventh*

* ERSKINE'S *Theological Dissertations*, p. 262.

† PLIN. *Epist.* lib. 10. ep. 97. p. 724. ed. VEENHUSII. JUST. MARTYR. *Apol.* 2da. opp. p. 98. D. Paris. 1636. TERTULL. *de orat.* p. 135, 136, ed. RIGALTII.—Whoever wishes to see these, and numerous other testimonies to the same effect, cited at large, may consult ERSKINE'S *Dissertation on frequent communicating*; and especially BINGHAM'S *Origines Eccle-*

century; and such as neglected *three weeks* together were excommunicated*.”

In this manner did the spirit of ancient piety cherish the memory of a Saviour's love. There was no need of reproof, remonstrance or intreaty. No trifling excuses for neglect were ever heard from the lips of a Christian; for *such* a neglect had not yet degraded the Christian's name. He carried in his own bosom sufficient inducements to obey, without reluctance, the precept of his Lord. It was his choice, his consolation, his joy. These were days of life and glory; but days of dishonour and death were shortly to succeed; nor was there a more ominous symptom of their approach, than the decline of frequent communicating. For as the power of religion appears in a solicitude to magnify the Lord Jesus continually; so the decay of it is first detected by the encroachments of indifference. It was in the *fourth* century, that the church began very discernibly to forsake her first love. The ardour of primitive zeal gave way to a cold formality, and the supper of the Lord, sooner, perhaps, than any other institution, fell a prey to its malignant influence.

siasticæ, Book xv. Chap. 11. where a multitude of authorities are collected and elucidated.

* ERSKINE'S *Dissertations*, p. 271.

“ About the year 324; it was decreed at a council held at Illiberis, in Spain, that no offerings should be received from such as did not receive the Lord’s supper*: which shews that some who called themselves Christians, were beginning to neglect the dying command of their professed Lord.

“ About the year 341, a council at Antioch decreed, that all who came to church, and heard the scriptures read, but afterwards joined not in prayer and receiving the sacrament, should be cast out of the church, till such time as they gave public proof of their repentance†.

“ Towards *the close of the fourth century*, men grew more and more cold and indifferent about the Lord’s supper; so that the eloquent Chrysostom complains, ‘ In vain we stand at the altar; none care to receive ‡.’

“ At length, communicating weekly, or even monthly, begins to appear burthensome. The greater part received the sacrament only three times a year; and some not so often. This occasioned the council of Agde, or Agatha, in Languedoc, met in the year 506, to decree, that none should be esteemed good Chris-

* Concil. Illiberit. can. 28. † Concil. Antioch. cau. 2.

‡ Chrysost. Hom. III. in Ephes.

“ tians who did not communicate, at least, at
 “ the *three* great festivals, Christmas, Easter,
 “ and Whitsunday*: and, accordingly, from
 “ that time forward, those of the church of
 “ Rome esteemed themselves, in so far, good
 “ enough Christians, if they communicated
 “ thrice a year; and that it was presumption
 “ to receive oftener†.” And, mark it well,
 reader; their sense of the necessity of frequent
 communions decreased, in proportion as they
 became addicted to *will-worship*; and the su-
 perstition of *uncommanded holidays*.

From such an outset matters proceeded, very naturally, from bad to worse, till the unblushing degeneracy had nearly discarded sacramental communion altogether. The council of Lateran under POPE INNOCENT III. in 1215; that very council which established the accursed tenet of auricular confession; and the more accursed tenet of transubstantiation, decided a *yearly* communion, at *Easter*, to be sufficient ‡. The de-

* Concil. Agath. can. 18.

† ERSKINE'S *Dissertations*, p. 267, 268, 271.

‡ BINGHAM'S *Origines Eccles.* Book XV. ch. ix. 6. MOSHEIM, vol. iii. p. 250. FLEURY, *Histoire Ecclesiastique*, Tom. xi. p. 279, 280, 4to. This eminent popish historian, compelled to own that yearly communions were the effect of “ the remissness and lukewarmness of Christians,” seems himself a little scandalised at the decree of INNOCENT'S council. The only apology which his ingenuity could suggest, is as severe a censure as a protestant would desire. They did nothing more “ than confirm

cision was not more unscriptural, than it was crafty and impious. For by removing this sacrament from ordinary view, and connecting it with the pomp of *Easter*, it augmented the artificial devotion of an ignorant and deluded age, and signally promoted the idolatry of the *host*.

Here, then, we have traced infrequent communion to its source—the *example, traditions, and enactments* of Apostate Rome. So firmly was this conviction rivetted in CALVIN'S breast, that he scrupled not to term annual communions, *a contrivance of the Devil**. The authority of Rome is surely not so venerable, nor her bequests so precious, that we need be over-nice in departing from her precedents. Certain it is that the best of men and the purest of

to the practice already tolerated by the church. “ Dans l'usage introduit par le relachement & la tiédeur des Chrestiens, la plupart ne communioient plus qu'une fois l'an, a Paques—Ainsi le concile de Latran ne fit—que se conformer a l' usage deja tolere par l'eglise.” *Ib.* p. 281. i. e. The council only sanctioned “ remissness and lukewarmness,” out of respect to an *old custom*. Ah Popery!

* The very words of Calvin are, “ And truly, this custom, which enjoins communicating once every year, is a most evident contrivance of the devil; by whose instrumentality soever it may have been introduced.” “ Et sane hæc consuetudo quæ semel quotannis communicare jubet, certissimum est diaboli inventum: cujuscunque tandem ministerio invecata fuerit.” CALVIN, *instit.* lib. iv. cap. 17, 46.

churches, have been so far from considering frequent communion as a rash and hurtful innovation, that they have both desired and urged it as a most blessed reformation. A few testimonies to this purpose, may be gratifying to the reader.

The excellent CALVIN complains that in his day, professors, conceiving they had fully discharged their duty by a single communion, resigned themselves, for the rest of the year, to supineness and sloth. "It ought to have been," says he, "far otherwise. *Every week*, at least, the table of the Lord should have been spread for Christian assemblies; and the promises declared, by which, in partaking of it, we might be spiritually fed*."

Intirely with CALVIN agrees his contemporary, that able defender of the reformation, MARTIN CHEMNITZ. He closes a series of judicious remarks with the following strong expression: "They are neither true nor faithful ministers of Christ, who, *by any means whatever*, either lead away or deter the people from

* Factum est ut fere omnes, quum semel communicaverunt, quasi in reliquum anni tempus pulchre defuncti, in utramque, aurem securi dormiant. Longe aliter factum oportuit: singulis ad minimum hebdomadibus proponenda erat Christianorum cœtui mensa Domini; declarandæ promissiones quæ nos in ea spiritualiter pascere. *Instit. lib. vi. cap. 27. sec. 46.*

the *frequent* use of sacramental communion.” And what he understood by *frequency*, is clear from the very next words, in which he feelingly extols the “ most lovely examples of genuine antiquity*.”

The admirable WITSIUS, after a short detail of the original frequency of communicating, and of its decline with the “ increase of numbers and the decrease of zeal,” exclaims, “ Alas! how far are we at this day from the sanctity and zeal of the ancients † ? ” It is true, he was not without apprehension, that, in a general corruption of manners, a too great frequency might depreciate the ordinance. There was little reason, as we shall shortly see, for the good man’s fear; and less for his precaution. Modern Christianity is in no danger of running into an extreme, by emulating, on this subject, the ardour of an apostle.

CALDERWOOD, in his elaborate controversy with the Prelatists, lays the blame of infrequent communion on the want of zeal and love

* Nec veri vel fideles Christi ministri sunt, qui, *quacunque* ratione populum a crebriori usu communionis Eucharisticæ abducunt vel absterrent. Et *pulcherrima* sunt *veræ* antiquitatis exempla de crebro Eucharistiæ usu. CHEMNIC. exam. Concil. Trident. par. ii. p. 101.

† Heu! quantum a priscorum sanctitate ac zelo hodie absumus! *De æconomia fœderum*, lib. iv. cap. 17, 33. p. 913. 4to,

which throws us so far behind the primitive church; but insists that this should be no obstacle to its restoration*.

Had I intended, or did the limits of this discussion permit, it would be easy to adduce, on the same side of the question, a long list of illustrious names, not more graceful to my page than savoury to the church of Christ. The general sentiment of those who have thought most profoundly as well as piously on the subject, accords perfectly with the preceding. Nor is it the sentiment of individuals merely; it hath been expressed in the most solemn manner by the purest churches of the reformation.

The constitution of the BELGIC or DUTCH church of 1581, appointed the supper to be celebrated *every other month*†.

The discipline of the REFORMED CHURCHES OF FRANCE, after noticing that it had not been usual with them to celebrate the holy supper oftener than *four times* a year, recommends a *greater frequency*; the due respect being preserved, that believers, treading in the footsteps of the primitive church, may be exercised, *and*

* *Et quamvis hæc tempora, zelo et charitate defervescente, non tam frequentes ferant Cœnæ celebrationes quam in Primitiva ecclesia, tamen sæpius celebranda, &c. Altare Damascenum, cap. x. p. 536.*

† VOETII *disputat. tom. iv. p. 761.*

may increase in faith, by the frequent use of the sacraments.*

The church of SCOTLAND, at her first reformation, insisted upon *four* communions in the year†; and there is every probability that she would have gone farther, but from an opinion, that the people, just emerging from the darkness and bondage of popery, were unable to bear it. This conjecture is founded upon what actually took place at the modelling of that plan of doctrine, worship, &c. by the WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY, which united in one most evangelical communion, the churches of England, Scotland, and Ireland. The directory for public worship prescribes the frequent celebra-

* Bien qu'on n'ait pas accoutume de celebrer dans nos Eglises la sainte Cene, plus souvent que *quatre fois l'an*; toutefois il seroit *bien a desirer*, qu'elle se celebrast *plus souvent*, le respect qui y est requis etant garde; parceque il est tres utile que le peuple fidele soit exerce, & qu'il *croisse en la foi*, par l'usage *frequent des sacramens*, comme aussi l'exemple de l'eglise primitive nous y convie. *Discipline des Eglises Reformees*, chap. xii. 14. On this canon, Mr. L'ARROQUE observes, that at the Synod of Orleans, in 1562, a minister of Picardy, who used to celebrate the supper *every month*, was advised to follow the custom of the other churches, merely for the sake of uniformity. It seems, however, that they had thought better of the matter, as the canon in its present form was drawn up by the Synod of Paris in 1565. L'ARROQUE *Defence de la Discipline des Eglises Reformees de France*, p. 290. 4to.

† 1st Book of Discipline, art. XIII.

tion of the Lord's supper: Nay, it supposes that it should be so frequent, as to supersede the necessity even of a *previous intimation*. "Where this sacrament cannot with convenience be *frequently* administered, it is requisite that public warning be given the sabbath day before the administration thereof." *How* often should it be administered to render this warning needless? Let this question be pondered by those who think semi-annual communions sufficient. Yet that very directory have we adopted, and affect to admire. Alas, what a flagrant contradiction between our profession and practice!

As an instructive comment on this part of the directory, it may be added, that several of the ministers who assisted in its compilation, and a great part of those who were ejected in the time of Charles II. for non-conformity, are *certainly known* to have celebrated the holy supper every month in their own congregations*. Before this, in the days of LAUD's corruption and tyranny, those eminent men of God, Mr. ROBERT BLAIR and Mr. CUNNINGHAM of Holywood, made such mutual arrangements as afforded their people opportunities of communicating *eight* times in the year†.

The foregoing facts will convince every ho-

* ERSKINE'S *Dissertations*, p. 274.

† *Ibid*, p. 279.

nest inquirer, that frequent communion is not an innovation. It will be hard indeed, if the combined suffrages of Apostles and Reformers, of the best of men and the purest of churches, cannot wipe off the imputation. But it attaches, with an indelible stain, to our existing custom, which can boast of no such authority. This, which we are so afraid of altering, is a real innovation on Christian order, and an unhappy desertion of Christian principle. If innovation is, *in truth*, our abhorrence, let us endeavour to get out of its labyrinth; and, retracing our wandering steps, let us return to the *old way* in which the first confessors of the cross have walked before us, and where we may expect to find much rest unto our souls.

LETTER IV.

The Subject continued—Irreverence—Want of Preparation.

CHRISTIAN BROTHERS,

ATTEMPTS to restore frequent communion have been charged, not only with innovation, but with *disrespect* to the ordinance of the supper: for it is objected,

II. That “by rendering the duty *too common*, it would deaden affection; destroy solemnity; banish reverence; and thus be injurious to the religion which it is designed to aid.”

That such an objection should be made by a formalist, who goes to the communion-table once or twice a year to save appearances, or to quiet conscience, is nothing strange. But that it should ever be proposed by a living Christian, is truly astonishing.

On what is it, on what *can* it be founded? Is it countenanced by the word of God, by the nature of the exercise, or by the experience of believers? Did Jesus, when he said, *This do in remembrance of me*, caution us not to do it too frequently lest we should lose our veneration? Did he bid us to shew our reverence to his in-

stitution, by trampling on his command? or our gratitude for his love, by slighting his memorial? The same objection was made by some at the reformation, and was treated with the utmost indignation. *A wonderful reverence, truly, for the sacrament, cries BUCER, by which it is contemned, and the saving communion therein offered with the Son of God, rejected*!* But let us appeal to *fact*. Do *other* duties grow contemptible by their frequency? Is the *sabbath* vile because of its weekly return? Are the divine scriptures; is family religion; are secret and ejaculatory prayer, insipid to those who are most conversant with them? *Pray without ceasing*, saith the HOLY GHOST. “Pray but *seldom*,” replies the objection we are combating: “You will be too bold and familiar with holy things if you often meddle with them. Frequent prayer will end in profaning the presence of God, because it will diminish your sense of his majesty.” How does this language sound in pious ears? The heart of a believer revolts: his blood runs cold: The testimony in his own breast refutes, as he goes along, these impious suggestions. And can any man con-

* *Mira sane sacramenti reverentia, qua contemnitur, & salifica in eo oblata filii Dei communicatio repudiatur! apud CALDERWOOD in Altar. Damase. p. 536.*

ceive why frequent prayer, meditation, &c. should promote the spiritual life, and frequent communicating hinder it? Will increased faith produce unbelief; or renewed love, indifference? Will melting views of divine grace harden the heart? or a commanding sense of the divine glory generate pride? Will "fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ," abate heavenly mindedness? or the sealing of the Spirit of promise nurture carnal confidence? Oh—tell it not in Gath! Let not the rumour reach an uncircumcised ear; that believers in Jesus, who profess to love him supremely; proclaim his excellence to others; and declare that the more they know and enjoy of him, the more they desire to know and enjoy—that even believers in Jesus, when invited to frequent an ordinance which he hath left as a seal of their covenant-mercies; a mean of intercourse with himself; a pledge of his eternal kingdom, should not only *refuse*, but *justify* their refusal, by pleading that it would—*diminish their reverence!!*

No, Christian reader; carelessness and carnality keep pace with neglect. The new man is deprived of his food: while the old man, "corrupt according to the deceitful lusts," gains strength; and thus aversion from duty is doubled with remissness. This is a lesson of universal

experience. Never were there more devout, and humble, and reverential communions, than in the days of primitive purity. No where, at this hour, do they more deeply interest pious affection; or exert a benigner influence, than where they most resemble, both in frequency and simplicity, the apostolic pattern.

III. It is objected, that "very frequent communicating is unfriendly to suitable preparation, as we could not always afford the time necessary to be spent in it."

Far, infinitely far, be it from me to encourage levity or sloth in a service so spiritual. Wo to him whose profane approach makes "him guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." But in many there is reason to fear, the objection arises from no such scruple. It cannot but be a favourite with those, who "having the form of godliness without the power," find it useful in palliating their inattention to a duty which they secretly hate, and from which they would gladly be exempted. Miserable men! They need preparation indeed: but such as they will never acquire by the farce of "hanging down their heads like a bulrush;" and assuming, once in six months, or once in twelve, the austerity of a monk, and the precision of a pharisee; while, during the rest of the year,

they sacrifice at the shrine of mammon or of lust.

In what, however, does preparation for the table of the Lord consist? In a multitude of outward performances? In devoting a great part of the preceding week to various exercises of public worship? Alas! all this may be done, and the heart remain as unprepared as ever. The religionist who, besides giving tithes of all that he possessed, *fasted twice in the week*, was not thereby fitted for communion with his Maker. One hour, one minute of genuine humiliation before God—one tear of gracious contrition for sin—one groan unutterable of the Spirit of Adoption, is of more value in his sight, than the most splendid round of formalities. If we trample on manifest duty, under the notion that by performing it *seldomer*, we shall perform it *better*; he will not accept an host of uncommanded offerings as an equivalent for the disobedience. He hath said, *I hate robbery for burnt offering**. “Burnt-offering you must bring; but you shall not plunder your neighbour’s fold to replenish my altar.” Preparation for the holy supper is indispensable. But we may not withhold from our Redeemer the sacramental tribute, on pretence that when we *do*

* Is. lxi. 8.

pay it, we will make up the deficiency by our superior qualification. It is the most perverse of all perversions to *displace* a duty by *preparing* for it.

But why must so much time be consumed in extraordinary preparation for the Lord's supper, as to hinder its frequent celebration? It is said, that "we therein make a *nearer* approach to God than in other duties, and therefore need more cautious and thorough preparation."

This mode of arguing is common: but is it just? Is it scriptural? Let us examine it. Briefly, it amounts to this, that the Lord requires more holiness from us in sacramental, than in other services; *i. e.* allow us to be *less holy* in the latter, than in the former. I might excuse myself from saying another word about it: a simple statement is a refutation. But to sift it a little more—Is God more holy on sacramental than on other occasions? Is an irreverent mind, or a polluted heart, less offensive to him on these, than on those? Does communicating possess either more inherent, or more accidental sanctity, than any other act of spiritual worship? Let the living God plead his own cause. He hath said, *I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me**. Again; *Having boldness*, saith his apostle, *to enter into the holiest by the blood of*

* Lev. x.

*Jesus—let us DRAW NIGH**. It will not be disputed that these embrace *every act* of worship. God has therefore, imprinted the *same* character upon them *all*; and as *he* has not discriminated between them on account of their greater or less degree of sacredness, let us beware how *we* do it. He is as jealous of his honour in prayer, in praise, &c. as in communicating. Were we rightly affected, as deep solemnity would rest on our spirits, in asking a blessing at our meals, as in breaking the sacramental bread. And it betrays either much ignorance or much carnality, if a communion-season fill us with awe, while the other offices of piety find us, and leave us cold or unconcerned.

I am so far from questioning a believer's sweet and joyous communion with his God in the sacramental feast, that this is one of my principal arguments for its frequent celebration. But that it is, *in itself*, a *nearer* approach to him than others; or that *equal* nearness is not attainable in others, can never be admitted. Such an opinion is neither founded in the scripture, nor supported by fact. What is communion with God, in the usual acceptation of that phrase? Is it not the reciprocation of love between him and his people? *His* love "shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost;" and *their* love flow-

* Heb. x. 19. 22

ing out to him in return? What is *nearness* to God? Is it not a realizing view, by faith, of his most glorious perfections, accompanied with a sense of his favour as *our* reconciled God in Christ? And will any pretend that believers may not, at times, enjoy these privileges as largely in the retirements of the closet, or in other parts of public worship, as in communicating? Nay, is it not evident, that, if you except the social acts of eating and drinking the symbolical bread and wine, the exercises of a communion-table are, or ought to be the very same with those which should mark other duties of devotion? Godly sorrow for sin—triumph in the merits and grace of the Lord Jesus—self-dedication to him—appropriation of his covenant mercies, &c. form the essence of worthy communicating; and they equally form the essence of every other part of acceptable worship. The tenet here opposed, is, therefore, utterly groundless. And it is pernicious also. For it exalts one divine institution at the expence of the rest. And in its operation it may engender idolatrous notions of the supper, but will never promote a sound and evangelical piety.

A habitual frame for any duty to which we may be called, would be our unspeakable happiness. But on our present plan, one communion is forgotten, and its impressions worn out,



before the next arrives. A due frequency would bring on a new one, while the savour of the last is yet fresh and cheering. It would foster the spirit of communion-sabbaths, and keep our Lord's death in a manner always before our eyes. And whether this would not be a more effectual preparative for the sacramental supper, than a crowd of week-day services, let Christians judge.

The last two objections lead to consequences as forbidding as they are natural. If frequency of communion breeds irreverence, then reverence is befriended by infrequent communion. If the former deprives us of leisure for preparation, then the latter must be highly favourable to it. The conclusion on the whole, is, *the seldomer we communicate, the better*; and we would be far more reverentially impressed, and might be far better prepared, if, instead of twice in one year, the Lord's death were celebrated only once in two years, or once in ten. We should then have abundance of time for every pre-requisite. We might have tenfold the present employment, and tenfold the pomp: If a week were too little, we could afford a month; and the supper of the Lord would be immensely honoured. Hither the plea which I have been considering, conducts us at last. But, O thou that lovest a crucifi

Saviour, avoid its snare. This smiling vizard
conceals a fiend. Beneath this garb of piety
lurks a dagger for thy life; and ere thou art
aware, it will stab thee to the heart, and
put thy Redeemer to open shame.

LETTER V.

Of the Customary Appendages to the Lord's Supper; particularly public Fasts and Thanksgivings.

CHRISTIAN BRETHERN,

A FEAR is entertained, that a frequency of communion, much greater than ordinary, would involve the abolition of the previous fast-day, and the subsequent day of thanksgiving; and this forms, with many conscientious people, a
IV. and very formidable objection.

The consequence is not dissembled. These observances cannot consist with a proper regard to the command of the Lord Jesus. And if we mean to obey it "in simplicity and godly sincerity," they *must* be laid aside.

The writer of these letters is very sensible that he here enters on the most delicate and difficult part of his undertaking; that, on this subject, the prejudices even of the truly pious, are both strong and irritable; and that, if a well-meant attempt to promote a *scriptural* commemoration of the love of Jesus Christ, should fail, this is the rock on which it will perish. B

being fully assured that the general attachment to these observances results less from conviction than from habit; and that a fair representation, candidly weighed, will remove every scruple, he deems it his duty to discuss them with openness and freedom. Let no upright man be alarmed for the issue. Truth cannot lose by inquiry. Error only shrinks back from the light, lest her "deeds should be reprov'd."

Bear with me then, Christian brethren, while, in reviewing our sacramental fast and thanksgiving days, I endeavour to shew,

First, That they have no warrant in the book of God.

Secondly, That they are contrary to the judgment of almost the whole Christian church.

Thirdly, That they are attended with great and serious evils.

To prevent mistake, the reader is admonished that a day of fasting before, and of thanksgiving after the communion, are not condemned as *in themselves unlawful*, or in every connection improper. The object of animadversion is that *system* which either inculcates their *necessity*, or perpetuates their observance. With this explanation, then, I say,

FIRST, *That they have no warrant in the book of God.*

That the scripture is a *perfect* revelation,

containing every thing necessary for the instruction and edification of the church; that nothing which it does not expressly appoint, or fairly imply, can be admitted into her doctrine, discipline, or worship; and that all opinions and practices; fathers, canons, and councils, are to be tried at its bar; are fundamental principles of protestantism. Whatever cannot abide the furnace of "the law and the testimony," though recommended by numbers, tradition, antiquity, or ought else, must be rejected as "reprobate silver." This maxim was the two edged sword which hewed down the legions of Antichrist before the victorious reformers. It is stated, with equal strength and precision, in our confession of faith*, and is received as an axiom in religious controversy, by all whom the subject in hand more immediately interests.

In applying this maxim to the case of the fast and thanksgiving days attached to the Lord's supper, it will readily occur, that this part of Christian worship, if any, requires, in all its circumstances, to be distinctly marked. Is it, therefore, credible, that God should couple it with a day of fasting and thanksgiving, and not even mention this in his word? And yet the scripture is silent. When Jesus Christ in-

* Ch. i. 10.

stituted the supper, he simply said, *Take, eat; this is my body—This cup is the New Testament in my blood: Drink ye all of it.* When Paul interposed, with his apostolical authority, to correct the abuses which had crept into the church at Corinth, he detailed the nature, ends, and manner of communicating. He even speaks, most pointedly, of preparation for it. *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup**. But not a syllable of fast-days. Now, can any judicious Christian imagine, that neither Christ himself, in the institution of the supper, nor his Apostle, in restoring its decayed purity, should hint at observances which both knew to be connected with it? Could such an omission have been suffered, when the Lord foresaw that, for a series of ages, his church would, in this very particular, go universally and uniformly astray?

It is not indeed, as far as I know, maintained by any, that he has *explicitly* enjoined these days; but many plead that they are nevertheless, *deducible* from scriptural declarations and appointments.

They find, that on the great day of expiation a *solemn fast* was kept in Israel: and hence infer, that as a public fast preceded the offer-

* 1 Cor. xi. 28.

ing up of the symbolical sacrifice for sin, so it ought to precede the commemoration of the *real* sacrifice, which is already offered. "Is not sin as evil and as bitter now as it was then, and humiliation for it as pressing a duty? Should not the memorial of Emanuel's suffering, excite as much compunction as the prospect of it?" No doubt. Believers will never disagree in this. It is perfectly just: and yet the argument drawn from it utterly inconclusive. In tracing the *analogy* of the two cases, it overlooks an essential difference, *viz.* the divine precept in the one which is wanting in the other: and in labouring to bring the Jewish *example* to bear, it presents no point of attack where it is not mortally vulnerable.

1. The Jewish fast was peculiar to the old dispensation, and so cannot establish a precedent for the new.

2. It ceased with the law of Moses; and it is certainly singular reasoning, that an ordinance which God himself hath *abolished*, infers his will, that a similar one should be *perpetuated*.

3. Our fast-days are *preparative* to the supper: but the Jewish fast bore no such relation to the sacrifice on the day of atonement. It was not a preparative, but an accompanying exercise.

4. The supper has not succeeded to the sacrifice of the day of expiation; but to the feast of the pasover: It is from this institution, therefore, if from any in the Old Testament, that we are to derive the manner of celebrating it. But the pasover was not preceded by a day of fasting, though it was followed by an holy convocation, and a week of unleavened bread. Here, then, is a much stronger reason from analogy, *against* our sacramental fast, than the day of expiation can furnish *for* it. And whoever finds the Monday thanksgiving in the "holy convocation" after the pasover, must also find something to "correspond with the seven days of unleavened bread."

5. As the good faith of argument requires us to admit the legitimate consequences of our principles, let us see whither the plea, that the fast on the day of expiation warrants a fast before the supper, will lead us.

On the same ground you must maintain that the supper should be celebrated but *once a year*; and this would be equally repugnant to its own nature, and the example of the Apostles, who certainly understood the will of Christ as well as we can pretend to do.

But now, if one Jewish institution furnish a precedent for imitation, it is hard to tell why another may not; the *daily sacrifice* for in-

stance; seeing it as really typified the atonement of Christ, as the sacrifices of annual expiation did. Thus we should be reduced to a curious dilemma; the argument from one ordinance, limiting us to a *yearly* communion, while the argument, just as good, from another, would oblige us to communicate *twice a day*.

This sample of inconsistency and contradiction, is enough to shew how cautiously inferences are to be drawn from institutions under the law, to duties under the gospel. Error here has been one of the most fruitful sources of corruption; and an inlet to all the rabble of the antichristian hierarchy.

There have not been wanting some to allege the four fasts mentioned by Zechariah, which the Jews kept on account of their calamities, as countenancing our sacramental fasts. But the notion is so extravagant, that it would be worse than trifling to spend a moment in refuting it.

Should these refuges fail, there is one left; viz. that religious fasting, before special duties, has ever been deemed by the church of God both suitable and necessary; and that it becomes us to act upon this principle when we are about to join in the communion of "the body and blood of the Lord." Here a large

column of texts is displayed, some containing the doctrine, and some, examples of fasting. But after they are collected with so much pains, and propounded with so much zeal, what do they prove? Nothing more than that fasting, on particular occasions, is a moral duty. This is mere "beating the air." Nobody denies it.

The question is not, whether fasting is a divine ordinance; but whether it is a divine ordinance *preparative to the holy supper?* Now it is obvious, that the application of a principle to particular circumstances, cannot be grounded upon texts which speak of it only in general, without any reference to those circumstances. Such is the nature of the passages alluded to. If in this question they prove any thing, they equally prove the necessity of fasting before baptism; before the sabbath; before family worship; or craving a blessing to our meat; as before the sacrament of the supper; because they have no more coupled it with the latter, than with the former. "These things," you will say, "are absurd." Absurd enough I own. And one would think that the argument which begets them cannot be much better.

In order, therefore, to work up your quotations into proofs, you must resort to those scriptural examples, in which the principle of fasting is reduced to practice. But the success

here will be little better. It would be no difficult task to shew that none of the instances which the scripture has recorded of social or solitary fasting, lend the least aid to the service into which they are pressed. Who can bear such reasoning as this? David fasted when the prophet Nathan charged upon him the guilt of adultery and murder—Ezra and his company, at their return from captivity—Nehemiah with the Jews, at the restitution of JEHOVAH'S worship, and the solemn recognition of his covenant—the Apostles, at the ordination of ministers—therefore we must have a fast day before the sacrament of the supper!! An Apostle cautions against “wresting the scriptures:” And they are always wrested when they are brought to prove what they *will not* prove. High indignity is offered to them and to their author, when men are determined to force out of them, at all events, a testimony according to their wishes; and rather than fail, will adjudge them to the tortures of licentious criticism. Be it remembered; they are sworn witnesses for the King Eternal: let their deposition be heard; but if it do not accord with our prejudices, let us beware how we presume to order them to the rack.

It will still, however, be insisted, that scriptural precept, together with the example of the

saints, establish this position, *That on the approach of special duty, and in the expectation of special blessings, we are to humble ourselves before God in religious fasting; and that the supper being an occasion on which we perform the one, and look for the other, a preparatory fast is highly necessary.* The plea accosts us here in its most imposing form. But notwithstanding, there are weighty reasons for refusing our assent.

1. The cases are not parallel. All the scriptural instances of public fasting are founded in circumstances *out of the ordinary course of providence*; and therefore leave precedents for such circumstances *only*. But the sacrament of the supper, is an *ordinary* part of divine worship: or if it be, in any respect, otherwise, our own negligence, and not God's word, has made it so.

2. If the scriptural doctrine and examples of fasting oblige us to that exercise, as preparative to the Lord's table, it is beyond measure astonishing, that this was never thought of till the other day: that it should not be heard of among Christians for near seventeen hundred years; nor then, except in a corner of the church; nor even in that corner, till men were driven to invent a defence of a custom which they had observed, without asking whether it

was right or wrong. Nay, that a principle of practical religion which involves a serious question of duty and sin, should be overlooked by the very Apostles under the plenary inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and by Christ Jesus himself! If the reader can credit all this, it is time to lay aside this pamphlet. It is in vain to contend with prejudice impenetrable to every thing but Omnipotence.

3. The force of the plea we are examining, lies in assuming, that the Lord's supper is one of those special occasions to which the above principles strictly applies. But this is taking for granted the very thing in dispute. That the Lord's supper is such an occasion, is peremptorily denied; and the proof of the affirmative lies upon the affirmers. However, not to take the advantage of so material an error, it may be remarked, that *special* occasions of duty, being such as are out of the line of God's *ordinary providence*, the special duties adapted to them must be such as depart from the line of his *ordinary worship*. As we cannot determine beforehand the period of their arrival, so we cannot beforehand determine the season of the duties attached to them. With regard to societies, they may not occur perhaps once in two or three years, and the larger the society, and the more complex the social relations, the

longer, in all probability, will be their intervals; yet they *may* occur half a dozen times in one year. It is plain, then, that none of the ordinary institutions of the gospel can furnish any such special occasions, and so cannot obligate to any such special duties. Now the Lord's supper is one of the most important of these ordinary* institutions: It equally belongs to times of prosperity and of adversity, of joy and of sorrow.

Farther, as it is not in itself an extraordinary duty, so the blessings which we are to seek in performing it, do not come under the description of special blessings; *i. e.* blessings *appropriated* to special occasions, as already defined. If, in controverting this sentiment, any use the term "special" more vaguely, he will only destroy his own argument, since its very existence depends on the supper being in a restricted sense, a special occasion of duty. I would, therefore, beg the Christian to point out a single blessing to be supplicated or expected at the holy communion, which he does not, or at least ought not, to supplicate and expect in *every* approach to God through the faith of Jesus. Till this be done, all that has been, and all that can be said about the spe-

* Confess. of Faith, ch. xxi. 5.

cialty of the blessings connected with the sacrament of the supper, is mere illusion. It is not, no, it is not, a just regard for that precious ordinance, which, both in opinion and practice, hath put the prodigious difference between it and others; but *these* are not duly improved; *these* are under-valued; and men seek to compensate their fault by idolizing the other.

On the whole, it appears, that our sacramental fast and thanksgiving days, are destitute of Christ's authority*. The utmost that can be alleged for them; amounting, with the most liberal indulgence, to no more than a *presumption* from analogy; a presumption opposed by a thousand contrary presumptions—a presumption which violates every law of analogical inference; which cuts, instead of untying, the knot of difficulty—attempts to brow-beat facts; and flies in the face of apostolical precedent.

* Even the soberer *papists* confess, "that it does not appear, by his own practice, or any commands which he gave to his disciples, that he instituted *any* particular fasts; or enjoined any to be kept *out of pure devotion.*" CALMET'S *Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. I. p. 556. ART. FASTING.

LETTER VI.

The Subject continued.

TO CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,

MY second proposition relative to days of public fasting and thanksgiving at the celebration of the Lord's supper, is, that *they are contrary to the judgment of almost the whole Christian church.*

By the Christian church, I understand the body of visible believers, from the resurrection of Christ until now.

The only way of ascertaining their judgment on this point, is to enquire into their practice, compared with their known and established principles. It would be idle to demand any other kind of proof: For no man in his senses will look for express and formal condemnation of what was never heard nor thought of. The argument, therefore, is this; that *if days of public fasting and thanksgiving at the sacrament of the supper, as now in use among us, were unknown in the church for a long series of ages; then, for a long series of ages, it was not her judgment that they should be observed.* And this, if duly considered, will demonstrate

that they never were appointed by Christ, and have no claim on our regard. For although the existence of a custom in the church is no proof that it was instituted by Christ, yet the *non-existence* of it in the times of primitive purity, is proof decisive that he did *not* institute it. Men have added to his worship, many uncommanded and superstitious rites; but it cannot be pretended, that the church has lost any part of her testimony; because she has not lost the Bible. A custom, then, affecting; in any manner, the vitals of duty and of worship, and of which no traces are to be discovered in the apostolic church, nor in any part of the church at all, for a great number of centuries, is both unscriptural and anti-scriptural, and ought to be laid aside.

As to the apostolic church, *viz.* that which was founded by the ministry of the apostles, and is described in their writings, every man by reading his Bible may decide for himself. Here all is plain and simple: not the most distant hint of our numerous observances.

When we descend to the succeeding ages, we see the inventions of men obtruded upon every department of the church's worship: her beauty disfigured by meretricious embellishment; and her appointments buried under a load of carnal rubbish. Fasts, feasts, and a

monstrous assemblage of trinkets and trumpery, debauched men's minds from the "simplicity that is in Christ," turned his house into a puppet-show, and marked the swift approach of the man of sin. All these things were adopted, and justified, not on the authority of the written word; but on the pretext of decency, devotion, and especially of *tradition*. Then indeed, there were fastings in abundance: forty days at once in Lent: four times more at stated seasons, and afterwards twice a week.

At these times, it is true, the custom was to communicate *fasting*. But still a fast day as preparative to it, was not known. When the communion happened on the Lord's day, (and amidst all the corruption it was yet common every Lord's day) it was celebrated early in the morning, and the fast was merely an abstinence from meat, till it was over, when they fell to feasting. This is evident, not only because the feasts called *agapæ*, or love-feasts, usually accompanied the communion; but because solemn decrees of council had pronounced fasting on the Lord's day, excepting Easter, an high offence. It was also frequent to communicate on fast days through the week. But fasting in both these cases, arose from a very different cause, than a conviction of its necessity as a preparative for the communion. It originated

in rack and pitiable superstition. On the Wednesday and Friday, both the one and the other were intended to honour the supposed sanctity of the days. And the reason of communicating fasting on the Lord's day was a notion that no meaner food ought to enter the communicant's mouth before the consecrated bread and wine. The great Augustine, speaking of this practice, says, " thus it hath pleased the Holy Ghost." But with all deference to this worthy father, we would rather have his proofs than his opinions; and must be excused, if, in appeals to unerring truth, we allow the Bible to speak for itself. It is true indeed that some of the ancients, as well as of the moderns, have quoted, in support of Augustine's assertion, 1 Cor. xi. 34. *The rest will I set in order when I come.* From which, say they, " we are given to understand, that the Apostle then appointed this custom of receiving fasting*." How they came at the inference is not quite so clear. To tell people that *if they were hungry they should eat at home*, is rather an odd way of enjoining a fast; and hardly to be discovered without the penetration of the sage who spied a whole book of common prayer in the text, *Let all things be done to edifying.*

* BINGHAM, vol. i. p. 808. Fol.

I am under no temptation to conceal what some may suppose inconsistent with the foregoing representation, that among the causes assigned for the observance of Lent, this was one, that persons who communicated but *once a year*, might, by great fastings and austerities, be purified from their sins, and qualified for the communion on *Easter Sunday*. Mark—once a year—on Easter Sunday. For that day was an high day, and was signalized, as well as the week preceding, with prodigious parade. I grievously mistake, if any to whom these pages are addressed, will chuse to refer to this as a precedent; and if they should, it will only prove a serpent that will turn and bite them. For,

1. It was not preparation for the Lord's table, so much as preparation for it *at Easter*, that occasioned the previous fasting. The homage was paid to the *day*, not to the *ordinance*.

2. The reason, as far as it went, embraced two fast-days, *viz.* Friday and Saturday, and even extended to all the silly penances of Lent.

3. It was alleged only by a *few* who communicated but once a year, which, with the multitude of their rites, they thought a full equivalent for the want of frequent communions. But this was the subject of severe and pointed cri-

mination, by those who retained something of the spirit of Peter and of Paul. And is it not strange that the very principle which, 1400 years ago, was lamented, by the best men in the church, as a sinful defection, should *now* be considered as a substantial part of a *reformation-testimony*?

4. The men least remarkable for their piety, were the most distinguished for these temporary rigours. None so filled with reverence for the sacrament as they: none so fearful of unhal- lowed approaches. But the truth is, they cast the spirituality of their profes- sion behind their backs for the rest of the year, and Lent was the time of settling their accounts current with the church.

Thus far our researches for solid examples of our sacramental fasts and thanksgivings, have been fruitless. No one, surely, will hunt for them in the ages that follow. Degeneracy succeeded degeneracy: the genius of Christi- anity was forgotten by the multitude: Church services swelled into an enormous bulk; but the living spirit was fled, and the mass of pu- trescence which remained behind, served only to nurture and bring to his full size, “the son of perdition.”

Passing by, therefore, the long and dreary reign of darkness and idolatry, we resume our

enquiries at the æra of the reformation. But we shall be as much puzzled to find precedents here, as in the days of the Apostles. The pretensions of the Pope, and the corruptions of popery, were manfully rejected: the worship of God freed from profane incumbrances: the stupid blasphemy of *deified bread*, and all its mountebank superstition, exploded: every punctilio of the sacramental doctrine and rites severely discussed: but of a day of preparatory fasting and subsequent thanksgiving no body dreamed. They were unknown to the good Waldenses; to Luther, to Calvin, to Melancton, to Bucer, to Beza, and all the rest of the worthies who espoused the quarrel of the Lord against the mighty. There is not a vestige of them in those illustrious compounds of evangelical doctrine which were framed when the lamp of reformation began to shine the brightest; and the churches were eminently favoured with the spirit of judgment, and the spirit of burning. The HELVETIC*, GALLICAN†, ENGLISH‡, SCOTTISH§, BELGIC¶, STRASBOURGH¶¶, AUGSBOURG**, SAXON††, BOHEMIC‡‡, Confessions, all treat of the supper, and, almost all of fasting; they were drawn up with

* 1566. † 1559. ‡ 1562. § 1568. ¶ 1561.

¶ 1530. ** 1530 †† 1551. ‡‡ 1532.

the exprefs design of separating the precious from the vile; they ſpeak particularly of ſelf-examination, in order to worthy communicating; they explain the nature, and point out the *ſeaſons* of religious faſting; but not a liſp of it as a needful preparative to the table of the Lord. Nay, the Belgic confeſſion aſerts roundly, “ all the abuſes and accuſed inventions which men have added to the ſacraments, and mingled with them, we juſtly reject as a real profanation; and affirm, that all the godly are to be contented with that order, and thoſe rites *alone*, which Chriſt and his Apoſtles have left us*.” So that, in the view of theſe bold witneſſes for truth, every thing added, as a neceſſary appendage to the manner which Chriſt and his Apoſtles have delivered to us of celebrating the ſacraments, is an *abuſe*, a *profanation*, an *accuſed invention*. What would theſe honeſt diſciples ſay, could they lift up their heads, and ſee whole bodies of Chriſtians profeſſing to walk in the track of the written word, and to preſerve

* Itaque nos hic quidem merito omnes hominum iudificationes, et damnanda commenta, (quæ illi ſacramentis addiderunt & admiscuerunt) tanquam veram profanationem rejicimus. Affirmamusque omnes pios unico illo ordine & ritu, quem Chriſtus & apoſtoli nobis tradiderunt contentos eſſe—debere. *Confess. Belgic.* cap. 35. apud *Syntagma Confessionum*, part I. p. 183. *Genevæ*, 1621. 4to.

the best spirit of the reformation, stickling for observances, and those too, as obligatory on conscience, which have no more authority from Christ or his Apostles, than the feast of Purim, or the fast of Lent?

But what is still more in point, because it comes nearer home, and may, therefore, have greater weight, is, that our numerous services about the holy supper are diametrically opposed to the current of public sentiment in the church of Scotland; and to her solemn, repeated enactments, from the commencement of the reformation, down to the establishment of the Westminster confession of faith.

This may startle some serious people who have not thoroughly examined the matter; but the fact is incontestible. For,

1. The confession of the English church at GENEVA, speaking of the sacraments, (Art. IV.) says, "Neither must we, in the administration of these sacraments, follow man's fancy; but as Christ *himself* hath ordained, so must they be ministered*." This confession was received and approved by the church of Scotland.

2. The confession of faith of the protestants in Scotland, drawn up in 1560, declares,

* Collection of confessions, 8vo, p. 14.

(Art. XXII.) “ That the sacraments be rightly ministrated, we judge two things are requisite: the one, that they be ministrated by lawful ministers—the other, that they be ministrated in such elements, and in such sort (form or manner) as God hath appointed: else we affirm that they cease to be the right sacraments of Christ Jesus*.”

3. The first book of discipline, composed in 1560, by several reformers, of whom JOHN KNOX was one, presented to the great council on the 20th of May that same year; signed by all the first reformers, Jan. 17, 1561 †, speaks only of the “ *preaching of the word*,” to “ precede the ministration of the sacraments.” And enjoins, that “ in the due administration of the sacraments, *all things* should be done according to the word: nothing being added nor yet diminished. The sacrament should be ministered *after the order of the kirk of Geneva*. All ceremonies and rites invented by men should be abolished; and the simple word followed in all points.” (Art. II.) ‡.

Nor were these views entertained only in that remote and difficult period. They have again and again been formally avowed by the church

* Col. of conf. p. 36. † ERSKINE, p. 276.

‡ Col. of conf. p. 43.

of Scotland when she was in the zenith of her spiritual prosperity and glory. For,

4. The national covenant, as approved by the General Assembly in 1638, and 1639, and subscribed by persons of all ranks in 1739, adopts the confession of 1560, and declares all who “ refuse the administration of the holy sacraments as they were then ministered, (1560) to be no members of the true and holy kirk of Christ Jesus, within the realm of SCOTLAND*.”

5. An act of the Assembly passed 1638, after referring to several public instruments, finds that “ whatever gesture or *rite* cannot stand with the administration of the sacraments as they were administered in 1567, and were ministered ever since the reformation till the year 1618, must be condemned as a rite *added* to the true ministration of the sacraments, without the word of God—and as a rite or tradition brought in without, or against the word of God, or doctrine of this reformed kirk†.”

It is very true, that these acts are levelled immediately against corruptions which had taken place in the manner of distributing and receiving the sacramental elements; but it is evident that they lay down an universal rule condemning the imposition of rites and ob-

* Col. of conf. p. 99.

† Col. of conf. p. 206.

servances in divine worship, which have no foundation in the word of God; and thus conclude, with great energy, against those corruptions as particular instances contravening the general principle.

From these facts, it appears that the church of Scotland, from the dawn of the reformation till 1638, indulged but one sentiment as to the administration of the sacraments, *viz.* that it is not to be encumbered with any rites or traditions contrary to, or *beside*, the written word. And what was in her eyes the scriptural mode of administering them, is sufficiently ascertained by her prescribing conformity in this matter with the church of Geneva. *But in that church, a day of fasting before, and of thanksgiving after the sacrament of the supper, were never heard of.* And hence, it is clear, that the prohibitions of the acts quoted above, extend, in their spirit, to these no less than to other uncommanded observances.

But we have not yet done. The General Assembly, in 1645, directing the method of procedure in dispensing the Lord's supper, positively *precluded* these days: enacting that there be *one sermon* of preparation, delivered in the ordinary place of public worship, upon the day immediately preceding. That before the serving of the tables, there be *only one sermon*

delivered to those who are to communicate, and that in the same kirk there be one sermon of thanksgiving after the communion is ended*.” This last sermon could not have been intended for a week-day; because the Assembly evidently passed their act to accommodate their manner of celebrating the supper to the directory which they had just before adopted, and which knows nothing of such a service †.

If we now repair to the Westminster confession of faith, and directory for public worship, we shall meet with evidence enough to destroy every surviving doubt.

The directory, on the head of the supper, and the preparatory service, not only does not enjoin a fast-day, but does not even insist on a week-day sermon. Its words are, “ Where this sacrament cannot with convenience be frequently administered, it is requisite that public warning be given the sabbath day before the administration thereof: and that *either then, or on some day of that week, something concerning that ordinance, and the due preparation thereunto, and participation thereof, be taught.*” Nothing is here required, but that *something*

* ERSKINE, p. 281.

† The directory was adopted in their 10th session, and the above act passed in the 14th.

concerning the ordinance and preparation for it be taught: and it is left discretionary whether this shall be spoken on the sabbath preceding, or at any other time in the course of that week*.

It is, indeed, pretended that the directory does, by implication at least, suppose the necessity of the previous fast-day; because it declares public solemn fasting to be a duty which God requireth when special blessings are to be sought and obtained; and because it considers the administration of the sacraments as a *special* occasion, which affords matter of special petitions and thanksgivings; whence it is inferred, that the directory contemplates the holy supper as one of those occasions on which God requireth public solemn fasting.

Had not this argument been used often, and not without an air of triumph; time would have been worse than mispent in giving it an answer; but as the case stands it must be seriously examined and put to silence and to shame.

This will be effectually done by quoting *fairly* the passages to which it alludes, and adding one or two observations.

* In strict compliance with the directory, the preparatory discourse is delivered to the congregation at New-York, on the Friday evening preceding the communion.

Concerning fasting, the directory says, “ When some great and notable judgments are either inflicted upon a people, or apparently imminent; or by some extraordinary provocations notoriously deserved; as also when some special blessing is to be sought and obtained; public solemn fasting (which is to continue the whole day) is a duty that God expecteth from that nation or people.”

Under the head of *prayer after sermon*, it says, “ Whereas, at the administration of the sacraments, the holding public fasts and days of thanksgiving, and other special occasions which may afford matter of special petitions and thanksgivings, it is requisite to express somewhat in our public prayers—every minister is herein to apply himself in his prayer, before or after sermon, to those occasions.”

Whoever finds in either of these passages, or in both of them, an injunction of our sacramental fast, certainly finds in the kernel what never was in the shell. Can any man persuade himself, that the Westminster divines would have taken such a crooked method of inculcating it, and not utter a syllable about it, either in the directory, confession, or catechisms, when expressly treating of the supper, and of the due preparation?

But, beside this general reflection, which one would think sufficient, I say,

1st. That the words "special blessing," "special occasion," "special petitions," on which the whole stress of the argument is laid, prove nothing at all: because the term "special" is indefinite. Its precise meaning must be ascertained from its relation to the subject of discourse. When applied to the Lord's supper, it merely distinguishes this from other duties: when applied to the occasions of fasting or thanksgivings, it distinguishes them from the ordinary occurrences of providence. Accordingly, the supper, with regard to its peculiar character, is called a "special occasion," but when compared with the occasions of public fasting and thanksgiving, is reckoned a part of *ordinary* worship*. The paragraph last cited from the directory no more determines the supper to be an occasion of public fasting, than a public fast to be an occasion of communicating; but mentions both as occasions of special prayer; that is, of prayer *adapted* to the nature of these exercises. And in what sense the word "special" is used in its connection with public fasting, the appendix to the directory has made plain enough. "It is lawful and

* Conf. ch. xxi.

necessary, upon *special emergent occasions*, to separate a day or days for public fasting or thanksgiving, as the several *eminent* and *extraordinary* dispensations of God's providence shall administer cause and opportunity to his people." No one, surely, will call the administration of the supper, an "eminent and extraordinary dispensation" of providence.

2d. In one of the places cited from the directory, there happens to be a small letter which completely ruins the cause the citation was intended to support. It does not say, "in the administration of the sacrament," but "sacraments," including baptism, and making this to be an occasion no less special than the supper. So that if the argument, shape it as you please, prove any thing, it proves that the directory prescribes a public fast as often as a child is baptised. Unless this be admitted, the foundation is swept away, and the fabric reared upon it tumbles to the ground. So much for the DIRECTORY.

The CONFESSION OF FAITH, which treats, in ch. xxix. of the Lord's supper; and the LARGER CATECHISM, which points out, with great care, the various exercises that should precede and follow it, (Quest. 171, 175) do neither of them contain an iota of the doctrine

of a previous fast, or a subsequent day of thanksgiving.

But the matter is decisively settled by the twenty-first chapter of the confession, which treats of *religious worship*. In section V. "the due administration and worthy receiving of the sacraments," are classed with reading the scriptures, preaching and hearing the word, and singing of psalms; and are declared to be, equally with them, "parts of the *ordinary* religious worship of God;" whereas "solemn fasts and thanksgivings" are classed with religious "oaths and vows," are declared to belong to "special occasions," and are thus entirely separated from any immediate connection with the Lord's supper. There is no getting over this. You must either pronounce the Lord's supper an extraordinary duty, or public fasting and thanksgiving ordinary ones; and in both cases, you overthrow the doctrine of the confession. It is needless to say more; the contradiction is direct and full; nor has the most ingenious sophistry one subterfuge left.

It is, therefore, a stubborn fact, however illy it may be received, that the Lord's supper, dispensed without fast-day, thanksgiving-day or week-day sermon, would comply not only with the spirit, but with the letter of that very

directory, which we ourselves have solemnly approved, as being substantially founded in the word of God; and that our present sacramental fast and thanksgiving days are in open hostility with the decision of that system, which we hold up to the world as exhibiting our genuine faith. And yet the least attempt to lay any of them aside, that is, to act up to our *own avowed principles*; to conform to *that order which we profess to believe according to the divine will*, is reproached as innovation and defection!!

But if these days are so destitute of every just authority, how were they introduced? Like all other unwarranted rites—by stealth. They originate, perhaps, in accident; they are continued without design; the popularity of a name recommends them to respect; one imitates another: and thus, or ever we are aware, they glide into the worship of God, and usurp the dignity of his institutions. This is the ordinary progress of corruption. The readiness with which men leave divine appointments for their own fancies, is proportioned to their reluctance in leaving their own fancies for divine appointments.

But in whatever manner the sacramental fasts and thanksgivings came into use, they are clearly of *modern date*. We have already

seen that no traces of them can be found in the apostolical churches, or in those of the reformation. Their existence in Scotland, is certainly later than 1645, as is manifest from the directory for worship, and from the act of the General Assembly quoted above*. It even appears that there was no fast-day as low down as the year 1657, ten years after the adoption of the confession, and twelve after that of the directory. It is not denied that week-day sermons had sometimes been preached after the communion. That glorious one of the renowned JOHN LIVINGSTON, from which near five hundred persons reckoned their conversion to God, or their establishment in his ways, was delivered on a Monday after the sacrament, in 1630. But these were entirely *occasional*; and the event at the kirk of *Shots* was "the more remarkable, that one, after much reluctance, *by a special and unexpected providence*, was called to preach that sermon on the Monday, which *then was not usually practised* †."

It is also true, that in 1657, although the fast-day had not yet come into fashion, ser-

* P. 67.

† FLEMING'S *fulfilling of the Scripture*, vol. I. p. 400. 12mo.

vices accompanying the communion were enormously multiplied: But this was with many, and very justly, a source of serious discontent. As the account is little known, and may be useful, the chief of it is here given from Dr. Erskine's Dissertation, as he took it from the author of "*Dan in Beersheba**." "The General Assembly, in the year 1645, did establish an order for preventing confusion in the celebration of the sacrament, with which *the whole church* were satisfied. Yet, since our divisions, our dissenting brethren† have taken up a new and irregular way of dispensing the holy supper, whereby they have turned it either into a theatrical pomp, or into the *Popish* error of *opus operatum*. They have a great many ministers assisting them; six or seven; nay, sometimes double that number, whose congregations are generally left destitute of preaching that day. Every day of their meeting, *viz.* Saturday, the Lord's day, and Monday, (*N. B. They had then no fast-days*) many of these ministers do preach successively one after another; so that three or four, or sometimes more,

* This writer's authorities are two books published in London, 1657, and entitled, *Uldericus Verulicus, sive de Statu Ecclesiæ Scoticanæ*, and *A True Representation of the Rise, Progress, and State of the Divisions in the Church of Scotland*.

† It refers to the dispute between the *resolutioners* and *protestors*.

do preach at their *preparation*, and as many on the Monday following. And on the Sabbath, sometimes three or four preach before they go to the action, besides those who preach to the multitude of the people who cannot be contained in the church. Never before were there so many sermons in any church in so short a time. These practices, as they are a clear violation of the order unanimously established in the church, and do occasion great animosity and alienation of simple people against those ministers who will not imitate those irregular courses; so uninterested observers perceive a clear design in all this, so set up themselves as the only zealous and pious people worthy to be trusted and followed in our public differences: which if it be not an injury to that sacred ordinance, and an improving that which should be a bond of unity and communion, to be a wedge to drive and fix a rent, let the judicious and sober judge*.” How far some of these reflections are applicable to our own circumstances, is left to the reader. But as to the narrative, it may not be unworthy of remark, *first*, that the *whole church* was satisfied with the order established by the Assembly in 1645: that is, *without either fast or thanksgiving days*.

Secondly, that the multitude of week-day services shortly after introduced, were opposed both as *new and irregular*. *Thirdly*, that they were considered as turning the celebration of the holy communion into a kind of *theatrical pomp*—and *fourthly*, that their effects were most baneful. There are few so hardy as not to condemn these abuses: and yet they are not more indefensible than some usages which are now viewed as sacred. Nor is there a doubt that had they continued to our day, it would have been quite as difficult to get rid of them.

On the whole, from the obscurity which covers the rise of the sacramental fasts, and the disorder which at first reigned in the other extraordinary services, it seems evident that they crept into the church *by degrees*; that *custom*, regardless of the reason of things, and equally tenacious of the wrong as of the right, transmitted them to posterity; and that undistinguishing habit, and the belief of the cradle, have numbered them with the ordinances of **JESUS CHRIST***.

* When the Scottish confession of 1560, was publicly discussed and approved, three Popish noblemen, the Earl of Athol and Lords Somerville and Bothwick, dissented upon this ground, *we will beleve as our fore fatheris belevit*. *KNOX'S Historie*, p.253. fol. There is too much of this Popish leaven fermenting in every corner of the reformation.

LETTER VII.

The Evils occasioned by Sacramental Fasts and Thanksgivings.

CHRISTIAN BRETHERN,

MY last proposition concerning our sacramental fasts and thanksgivings, is, that *they are attended with great and serious evils.*

1. *They establish a term of religious communion, which has no scriptural sanction.*

Christ Jesus hath specified in his word, the principles, duties, and conduct of those to whom the privileges of his house belong; his decisions then, are the only rule of appreciating character, and ascertaining the conditions of Christian fellowship: and it is high presumption in any man or society of men, to extend or abridge them. Now, as he hath not enjoined, either directly or by implication, a day of fasting before, or of thanksgiving after the commemoration of his death, no churches under heaven have a right to require them. Yet they *are* required; for they are judged *necessary*, and to omit them is deemed *censurable*. This is to erect them, at once, into laws of conscience and

laws of Christ; for nothing is necessary in his church, but what he has commanded; nor any thing censurable, but what he has forbidden. They are, therefore, to all intents and purposes, made terms of communion: and will deprive of the privileges of his house, those who cannot feel themselves bound in conscience to observe them. And what is this? It is nothing less than to impeach the wisdom, and usurp the authority, of the Lord our lawgiver. If he will resent the unfaithfulness of those who throw down the hedge of his vineyard, and lay it open to the beasts of the field; he will equally resent the arrogance of those, who, by additions of their own, so narrow the door as to exclude his sheep.

2. As the evangelical institution of the supper does not contain our customary appendages, *the insisting upon them is reprehensible as an unwarranted addition to that part of divine worship.*

The ordinance, as Christ left it, is simplicity itself: but we have made it a very different thing from what the gospel describes it. We have encumbered it with a pompous ceremonial, which the Lord “ never commanded, neither came it into his mind.”

It may, perhaps, be said that this is a rash and unreasonable charge; that both fasting and

thanksgiving are duties which God hath prescribed; and therefore, that we do not *add* to his worship.

This is a mere evasion; and a miserable one. God, indeed, requires the observance of days of fasting and thanksgiving; but does he require it whenever the supper is to be dispensed? We are no more authorised to join what he has not joined, than to coin new modes of worship. The *connection* between the supper and the fast and thanksgiving days, is a *human device*, and the *compound* is as real an addition to God's appointments, as ever human presumption ventured upon. Let me not, however, be misunderstood. I have already conceded, that duties which have no necessary connection, *may* occasionally coincide in point of *time*. But if the coincidence result not from God's providence, but from man's pleasure; if it then be held up as a *rule* of conduct; if it set aside any part of scriptural obedience; if it be employed as an engine of superstition, it becomes, in the strictest sense of the word, a *corruption*; and a corruption of which it is impossible to calculate the effects. "If man's wisdom be allowed to add, or alter so much as one loop or pin, it will never be easy or at rest—without the whole tabernacle be *new-modelled* according to the *pattern* in his own head. And one cannot tell what

may be the consequence of, nor how much the Lord may be displeased with, a very small variation from the pattern shewed in the mount. Nor will good meanings and designs be sustained as any whit of an apology for such officious services: It is but a cold reception they get, namely, *Who hath required these things at your hands?* As the zeal of God's house consumed our Lord himself, and the typical David, both of them; so ought the same spirit to be in all his ministers especially. They ought to do what in them lies, by reformation, and a spiritual impartial exercise of discipline, to purge the house of God. For to them hath the Son, which is *over his own house*, committed, in *trust*, the ordinances and order of it, with a solemn charge *to keep them pure and entire*, without any the least addition, subtraction, mixture*, or exchange of one thing for another†." The same

* Mark this; *Mixture*. Is not our blending fast and thanksgiving days with the celebration of the supper, a *mixture* which God never mingled?

† The **TRUST**; a sermon by Mr. WILSON, of Perth, as quoted in a note to p. 35 of the Rev. WILLIAM MARSHALL'S sermon on *The propriety of singing the Psalms of David in the New Testament worship*.

It would not be amiss, if those who at one time contend for keeping all the parts of divine worship as God hath ordained them, without addition or subtraction, without mixture or exchange; and at another time, as the occasion serves, can re-

principle which justifies one deviation from the simplicity of evangelical worship, will justify a thousand; and it is of small moment in what *form* the deviation presents itself. An arbitrary connection between duties, is as exceptionable and dangerous as any other; because, independently on its mischief as a precedent, there is no defining its extent. Whenever men assume this power, they set an engine to work, which, without increasing or diminishing the *number* of God's institutions, may deface every part of his worship, and render it as ridiculous and contemptible as infidels or devils could wish it.

3. The multiplicity of our week-day services *is incompatible with such a frequency of communion as is our indispensable duty.*

If just regard were shewn, in this particular to the dying precept of our dear Lord Jesus, and all the extra-days of worship kept up, no congregations either would or should submit to the burden. The tribute of time which would be withdrawn from their ordinary occupations, would be much too great for any who "eat their bread in the sweat of their brow." This alone might convince that these days cannot be

proach their fellow-servants for laying aside observances which their master never commanded, would refresh their memories by reviewing, now and then, their own professions and quotations.

agreeable to the divine will, for they would render the New Testament worship more oppressive than the Jewish ritual. Yet they may not be touched. And the consequence is exactly what might be expected, the memorial of the love of Jesus is a rare occurrence. These very days have invariably defeated every exertion to bring back the usages of the church to apostolical simplicity. Had it not been for them, communions would have been much more frequent, both in the church of Scotland and in the denominations which have sprung from it. The best of men have lamented, and entreated, and struggled, but all in vain. These observances repressed the spirit of generous and scriptural reform. Prejudice took the alarm; steeled her heart against conviction; stopped her ears to expostulation; drowned the voice of reason and scripture in the cry of innovation and defection! The genius of the gospel may be violated; the commands of Christ may be trodden under foot; the monument of his great sacrifice pushed out of sight—but these fast and thanksgiving days, which he never appointed; to which the church, founded by his apostles, was an entire stranger; these must not lose an atom of their importance, or their pomp. And can men have the hardihood to call over this adulterine zeal the

name of Jesus, and palm it on the world for *faithfulness* to his cross?

4. Through the accumulation of week-day services, the dispensation of the supper, seldom as it happens, *is almost impracticable to any minister without the aid of some of his brethren.*

From their extreme distance, that aid cannot ordinarily be had, but at the price of great personal difficulty, and of leaving their congregations destitute. And is it credible, that Jesus Christ hath imposed on his ministers a labour which usual health and strength are unable to sustain? Is there a text, a line, a word, in the whole Bible, to shew that one part of his family should be deprived of their food, because another part are celebrating their feast? Let none plead necessity; and the duty of consulting each other's comfort. Convenience, I know, must yield to necessity. But we must first be sure that the necessity is *real*. In the present case, it is obviously one of our own seeking; and the evil is only aggravated by sanctifying it with the name of a providential call. We would shew our wisdom by leaving God's providence in his own hand.

5. Our sacramental fasts and thanksgivings not only destroy, as hath been proved, the sound distinction between ordinary and extraordinary duties, but *tend to banish altogether both the*

principle and practice of scriptural fasting and thanksgiving.

As to the *principle*. By wedding these exercises with the sacrament of the supper, you tie down to certain periods, what the Bible has tied down to *no* periods. You attempt to fix the “times which the father hath put in his own power.” You regulate the seasons of fasting and thanksgiving, not, as your directory has wisely done, by providential dispensations, but by human agreements. You lift yourselves up into the throne of God, and determine for him, instead of allowing him to determine for you, when those duties are proper. Now this is directly subversive of their very principle and use. In the common acts of his government, and the stated ordinances of his worship, JEHOVAH hath established a permanent testimony for his supremacy and our dependence. But to quicken our sense of his continual agency, of his sovereign rule, and of our accountability to him, he is pleased occasionally, to make bare his holy arm, and, by special interpositions, to proclaim a present God. This revives our languid sensibility, awakens our slumbering cares, and leads directly either to solemn humiliation, or exceeding joy before him. To join these exercises statedly, with any stated part of worship, is to disregard the very thing which *makes* them du-

ties at all; to cherish in the rising generation, an ignorance, and to breed in the risen one, an oblivion of their primary end, is to wrest from the ETERNAL, a means which he employs to teach the rebellious that he "sitteth King for ever," and of which he hath reserved the application to himself. In vain do you pretend to explain the nature and occasions of fasting. Mankind will never profit from doctrine which is a visible and perpetual contradiction to practice.

If the principle of extraordinary duties be overlooked, the scriptural performance of them cannot be preserved. Between them and their occasions God hath created a beautiful correspondence, to which man cannot furnish a substitute. If *you* call us to such duties and *divine providence* does not, we cannot enter into their spirit, because the occasion of them does not exist. And as you cannot command the latter, you cannot infuse the former. You can hardly expect any thing else than dull formality. And the Lord knoweth that this is too sadly the character of many of our sacramental fasts. Instead of deep meltings of heart, they are little better than dry and senseless ceremony. Not to mention, that, being fasts in name more than in truth,

they are not seldom a mockery of the Holy One of Israel *.

But this is not all. Our custom at the communion may operate as a prohibition to fasting and thanksgiving on their proper occasions. The providence of God may call to them, but the supper is in prospect, and they must be deferred till then. On the other hand, the supper may be scarcely over, before a necessity for them occurs, and then, they cannot be attended to, because we have just been engaged in them. This is no fiction: it has actually happened, and that not once or twice. And it deserves any other name than reverence to God's institutions; for it is saying, upon the matter, "We will have our own way; we will fast when he does *not* require us; and we will *not* fast when he *does*." Can we lift our eyes to heaven and look for a blessing, while we are guilty of such preposterous and headstrong disobedience?

* The excellent CHARNOCK observes, that, in his days, "the commonness of fasts had driven true humiliation almost out of doors." WORKS, vol. ii. p. 756.

If it be asked, why commonness should be more unfriendly to fasting than to communicating? the reason is, that the one is *in its place*, and the other *out of it*. CHARNOCK'S contemporaries did as we do at our communions—appoint public fasts without a providential call. Thus circumstanced, their effect is a serious comment upon the doctrine of the two preceding pages—they turned "*true humiliation almost out of doors*."—Let us think and take warning.

6. Our numerous services about the holy supper, *create a pernicious distinction between the sacraments.*

Being seals of the same covenant; representing the same blessings; and ordained by the same authority; one would suppose that they are to be approached with equal reverence and equal preparation. Yet we must have a public fast before, and a public thanksgiving after the one; while nobody dreams of either in connection with the other. Who taught us to make this difference? It is not in the word of God. From Genesis to the Revelation, not a passage can be alleged for public fastings and thanksgivings at the administration of the supper, which is not equally friendly to them at the administration of baptism. It does not arise from the nature of these ordinances; the approach to God in both, is equally near, and equally solemn*.

Christian reader, do we not lament the ignorant and sinful conduct of many professors

* If any should argue that these exercises are proper in one case, and not in the other, because the members of the congregation at large, are in the one engaged, and in the other, only a very few at most, they are requested to solve the problem, *How many communicants are requisite to a public fast?* If this be a duty at all, the number of communicants is of no importance. It is as necessary in a communion of two, as of ten thousand.

towards the sacraments? They refuse to glorify Jesus by commemorating his death, but are offended if they be not allowed to present their children in baptism. They startle at the thought of the one, but rush without concern to the other. Whence proceeds the profanation? From various causes, no doubt. But it merits consideration, whether we have not materially contributed to it by our unscriptural appendages to the holy supper. These, by throwing around it an air of superior sacredness and awe, have depreciated baptism in the eyes of men, and have led them to view it as less serious in itself, and less dangerous to be sported with. They suppose much to be requisite for the former, and little, if any thing, for the latter. Hence they demand the one with great confidence; and when questioned about their neglect of the other, tell you they are unprepared.

While this distinction emboldens the careless, it disheartens the feeble-minded. Not a few who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, are afraid to touch the symbols of his body and blood. They would go to his table; but when they think of attempting it, their courage fails: the spirit of bondage bows them down; and instead of feeling like children drawing nigh to a most compassionate father,

they feel like criminals dragged to the tribunal of a judge. Why this unhappiness? Beyond dispute, in part from the trappings which have been hung round the table of love, and from the unwarranted manner in which even good men have permitted themselves to speak of it. Between both, it has been made an object of dread. Its tender persuasions; its rich consolations, have been too little regarded: and even to believers it has been arrayed in terrors, and fenced with thunder. Nay, Christian reader, we have exalted one sacrament at the expence of the other; we have thrown a stumbling block before a carnal world; and have countenanced a ruinous departure from equal, and vigorous discipline.

7. Let not the assercion be deemed too hardy, that our manner of celebrating the supper is *unfriendly to pure and evangelical devotion.*

Ordinances are desirable, not on their own account, but as means by which communion with Christ Jesus is promoted, and his covenant-mercies enjoyed. Believers know that they grow in grace, in proportion as they live by faith upon their divine Redeemer: and that nothing is more fatal to their peace, nor casts them down more rapidly from holy attainments, than a legal dependance on duties.

Now the question is certainly worth asking, and worth answering, whether the pomp of our communions does not bear strong marks of legality, and has not a strong tendency to engender and nurture it in the minds of men? Else, why this pomp at all? Why not the same simplicity here as in other ordinances? The grace of Jesus is quite as sufficient for this as for those. But the language of our supernumerary days of worship is, that however sufficient it may be, it is not so free as on other occasions. Nor is the opinion of their legal tendency mere surmise. Would to God it were! Every one who is not grossly ignorant of himself will own the proneness of corruption to rest in frames, duties, any thing but the grace that is in Christ Jesus; and especially, to idolize whatever has "a shew of will-worship and humility." That this hath been the fruit of our additions to the scriptural mode of celebrating the Lord's supper, daily facts make but too apparent. What means this religious parade, when that blessed exercise draws near? Whence this unusual sternness? These sudden austerities? Whence that mortified air which vanishes like a phantom, and never returns but with a returning communion? Why do so many plead for infrequent communion, on the pretext that they cannot otherwise be suitably

prepared? Why do so many abstain from communicating, even at the periods which themselves approve, if they happen to be prevented from keeping the fast-day? The plain interpretation of it is, "Had I kept the fast, I had been well qualified: but now I am altogether unfit." But why not communicate without it? "The service is peculiarly holy: great preparation is very necessary, and very difficult." And what is the obvious inference? *We must work the harder.* Ah, is there no legality in all this? Yes, verily. And so powerful is it in many, that not all their love to Jesus Christ; not all their zeal for his name; not all the allurements of his grace; not all the majesty of his authority, will preserve them from the deliberate violation of his command, lest they should transgress—the tradition of the elders!

8. Our sacramental fasts and thanksgivings involve us perpetually in self-contradiction.

We speak, with great confidence, of lifting up a banner for truth; of not believing every spirit, but trying the spirits whether they are of God. We reject, in a mass, the corruptions of Popery, and of her ape, Prelacy. We renounce the religious observance of Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, Ascension, &c. and the festivals in honour of a troop of saints and saint-

elses, as superstitious and inconsistent with gospel-worship, how graceful soever to the anti-christian calendar. The reason of their being laid aside by the Westminster Assembly, and of their being disowned by ourselves, is their want of divine authority. " Festival-days, vulgarly called *holy-days*, HAVING NO WARRANT IN THE WORD OF GOD, are not to be continued." The reason is sound and irresistible: but the mortification is, that with this profession in our mouths, we gravely declare by our practice, and especially by justifying it, that sacramental fast and thanksgiving days, *which have no warrant in the word of God*, ARE to be continued.

Talk no more, then, to a Papist or an Episcopalian, of his uncommanded holy-days. He will reply that you have no objection to holy-days, provided they be of your own appointing. Question him not about the fast on Good Friday, before Easter Sunday. He will question you in his turn, about your Thursday or Friday fast before, what he would call, sacrament-sunday. Ask not for *his* warrant from the bible. He will retort, by asking for *yours*. He will produce quite as many, and quite as good proofs for *Lent*, as you can for your fast-days; and infinitely more examples. On the ground of *decency*, he will keep up with you:

on the ground of *devotion*, outstrip you: and on the ground of *antiquity*, leave you out of sight. Here then, you are reduced to a dilemma. You must either allow his days, or give up your own. They stand and fall together. It is superlative inconsistency to inveigh against the one, and defend the other*. In vain do you quirk and shuffle: the absurdity is glaring. You are fastened down, nor can you disentangle yourself by all the arts of controversial chicanery. If, therefore, we venture to attack corruptions of divine worship among others, a skilful adversary will combat us with our own weapons, and turn the edge of our testimony against our own bowels. We shall be incessantly rebuffed by the stinging, but merited taunt: "Physician! heal thyself. Hypocrite! first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye†." In such hu-

* "The comparison," you will say, "does not hold. The evil of those holy-days lies in attaching notions of sanctity to set times, other than God has appointed in his word." True. And you insist on our keeping holy, days of fasting and thanksgiving, other than those which he calls for in his providence. The difference is merely circumstantial; the principle, in both cases, the same. You have only to vary its application a little, and you may create as many holy-days as you think fit.

† Mat. vii. 5.

miliating circumstances, it is a poor subterfuge to exclaim against the defections and incorrigibleness of the times; and to console ourselves as being reproached for Christ. This is not witnessng for truth; but putting a cheat upon ourselves. The religion of Christ is not answerable for our folly; nor hath his reproach any affinity with reproach for inconsistency. The alternative, Christian brethren, is decisive: we must either act up to our profession, or sit down self-condemned, and silently bear our shame.

If we would have a good conscience, and an unblushing face; if we would present an invulnerable front to every foe, let us dare to acknowledge and to rectify what is amiss in ourselves. Let us not shrink from the scriptural test. If any thing which custom has taught us to value as fine gold, should prove to be dross—to the dross with it! Let us have the Christian magnanimity to say, **PERISH THE TRADITIONS OF MEN! THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD BE HONOURED!** Then may we expect his blessing; and we shall no longer injure his truth, nor expose our profession to ridicule*.

* Should it be demanded, how a week-day service of any kind preparatory to the supper is more defensible than public fasts and thanksgivings, or more consistent with the foregoing

reasonings? I answer, Preaching the word, unlike those exercises, is an *ordinary* part of God's worship; and, if it do not displace any other duty, can never be *unreasonable*. But should any assert a previous week-day sermon to be essential, either to the right administration of the supper, or the right preparation for it—should it be considered as obligatory, *by divine authority*, on the conscience—should it jostle other duties out of their places—should it be a pillar of will-worship—should it lead to erroneous notions of the sacraments, breeding a *false* reverence for the one, and sinful slight of the other.—Could it be proved to have all or any of these effects, the author would be the first to condemn and reject it.

LETTER VIII.

Some popular Pleas for Sacramental Fasts and Thanksgivings, briefly considered.

CHRISTIAN BRETHERN,

AFTER all that has been said, will any still advocate our sacramental fasts and thanksgivings, by pleading that “they are of long standing in the church—are a laudable custom—are well meant—have been practised by great and good men—are helpful to devotion—are either sin or duty; and if not the former, then certainly the latter!”

A word or two to each of these pretences. As to their *antiquity*, I remark,

1. It is not true: we have already proved them to be quite modern; an innovation of yesterday.

2. Antiquity is a wretched standard of truth: the abominations of popery are more ancient than they by several centuries.

That they are a *laudable custom*, is begging the question, for it is the very thing in dispute. Beside, custom is not to be the rule of worship. Many bad customs have crept into the church of God: and if their being *once* customs, is a reason for their being *always* customs, the reformers acted very foolishly, in throwing so

many of them away. If it be not a scriptural custom, the longer it has stood the worse; the more mischief it has done; and the greater need for its immediate abolition. The injury done by custom to purity, is the subject of old and heavy complaint. "Our Lord Christ called himself truth, not custom," saith Tertullian*.

Their being *well-meant*, is no better apology than the former. Good intentions do not sanctify a fault. The worst of things have sometimes been done with the best design. Zeal for God, not according to knowledge, has been a greater pest to his church, than all the openly wicked schemes of Satan and his agents.

But *great and good men have practised them*—And the argument will be conclusive, whenever it is proved that great and good men never do wrong. Till then, we must look more at God's word, than at their example. Great and good men have observed "days, and months, and times, and years;" and have used rites and ceremonies, the very mention of which, as parts or appendages of worship, would excite among us just and universal indignation. Their errors were not so much their own, as the errors of their day and place.

* Dominus noster Christus veritatem se, non consuetudinem cognominavit. *De virginibus velandis*. Opp. p. 172. ed. Rigaltii. The whole passage is highly worth attention. See also CYPRIAN, ep. 73. p. 202, ep. 74. p. 215. ed. Felb.

They followed the fashion, because it was the fashion, without serious examination, or perhaps any examination at all. This is undoubtedly the fact with respect to our sacramental fasts and thanksgivings; not one in a hundred of those who keep them, having ever inquired into their reason and obligation. And this is the best apology for those worthies whose conduct is now held up as a model for ours.

But the principle of this argument is utterly intolerable. It puts an everlasting stop to reformation. Had our ancestors acted upon it we would have been still within the precincts of that synagogue of Satan, the church of Rome. They were more enlightened. Could they hear us allege their example in vindication of an unscriptural usage, they would be the first to resent the impiety. Not wishing us to be followers of them, farther than they were of Christ, they would disown us as a spurious brood, and not the genuine sons of the Reformation. We have made miserable proficiency, if we have not yet learned that maxim of Christian independence, not to call any man our master upon earth.

Will it be pretended that the days in question are *helpful to devotion*? This very pretext is urged in behalf of Christmas, and Good Friday, and Whitsunday, and Lent. This very pretext has been an inlet to a multitude

of those abuses, which, in the most profligate times, inundated the church of God. Nothing so ridiculous, so monstrous, so profane, as to be denied its sanction. Pictures, pennances, saint-worship, crosses, images, and all the rest of the ungodly trumpery, find a sanctuary here. Devotion, forsooth, cannot be maintained by means which the Lord hath appointed; but when to these, men have added a host of their own inventions, they become wonderfully devout! What rashness! what presumption! As if the great God were less concerned about his own worship than we! As if he did not thoroughly know our frame, and what is necessary to cherish devout affection! As if he had left his institutions imperfect, and we must mend them!

But, says an objector, the observance of these days is *either sin or duty*; and if not the former, then certainly the latter.

As this argument appears to be a favourite with some; and one which, by involving their opponent in a perplexing dilemma, issues, they imagine, in their own certain and decisive triumph; it demands a more particular animadversion.

1. then, The proposition, that an act must be either sin or duty, is false and absurd. It is no doubt, sinful to omit what is our duty to do;

and duty to omit, what is sinful to do. This, however, is nothing to the purpose; for it is only saying that duty is duty, and sin is sin. But it is not true what the proposition asserts, that if a thing be not sin it is necessarily duty. By this mode of arguing, you must own every thing to be duty which you cannot prove to be sin. For example; you will not maintain, that it would have been sin in the apostle Paul, to have taken wages from the church of Corinth; for he peremptorily affirms his right to it from the ordinance of God*. Then it must have been his duty: and in declining pecuniary support, he was chargeable with a breach of duty.

This same mode of arguing will convict, not only the apostle of sin, but the Bible of error. Let us instance, in the vows spoken of, Deut. xxiii. 21, 23. These vows, saith the argument, were either sin or duty; not sin, most assuredly; therefore duty: and *not to vow* would have been *sinful*, because an omission of duty. But saith the Lord, “if thou forbear to vow, it shall be *no sin* in thee.” On the other hand, we might equally argue, *Not to vow* was either sin or duty. Sin it could not be, for God said so; therefore duty; so that vowing, being the opposite of duty, would have been sinful; whereas the Lord

* 1 Cor. ix. 14.

declared it lawful, and sin not to pay it. This argument has now done its work. It has proved the apostle a fool; the word of God a contradiction; and the same act to be, at the same time, and under the same circumstances, both sin and duty, and yet neither one nor the other.

2. Were the argument, in itself, a good one, it would do no service, but much harm, to the cause which it is brought to aid. The sacramental fasts and thanksgivings, you allege, are either duty or sin. That they are duty, will not be granted. Then, says the terrible dilemma, they are *sin*. And what then? Why, my practice, and the practice of my forefathers, in this particular, has all along been sinful. Ay there's the rub. That the practice of *others* who differ from you is sinful, you can readily admit, and perhaps warmly contend. But that such a charge should be laid at your *own door*, you cannot endure: and at the very idea of extending it to your fathers, your displeasure kindles, and you exclaim, " Shall those Godly men, the Bostons, the Moncrieffs, the Erskines, and the multitude of the faithful both in the church of Scotland, and in the Secefsion, who have uniformly kept the fast and thanksgiving days, be accused of conniving at a corruption of the Lord's worship? Away with such an unworthy reflection!"

But recollect, my friend. The position, that these days must be either sin or duty, is not *mine*; it is *your own*. As you never can prove them to be duty, the consequence of your principle is, that both yourself and others have sinned in observing them. It is only your own argument recoiling with the weight of a mill-stone upon yourself.

But taking it for granted that they cannot be sinful, as your pious ancestors observed them; and contending that they must be duty, you pronounce the omission of them to be sin; for that is not a *duty* which may be innocently neglected. Now this renders the matter unspeakably worse.

For, in order to remove an imputation from your forefathers, you throw it upon all the holy men of God who have lived in every age of the Christian church, till a little more than a century ago; and in every part of the globe, excepting the spots of Great Britain and Ireland. For they never observed the sacramental fasts and thanksgivings on which you insist. If you are resolved, then, to adhere to the principle of their being either sin or duty, you have your choice whether you will own the sin to have been in your fathers skirts, or will charge it on the whole church beside, with the apostles of Christ Jesus at their head.

This argument, therefore, embarrasses none but those who use it; and as for the others, they ought never to be heard out of the mouth of a protestant; far less of any who have embraced the Westminster confession and catechisms. With what eyes do men read these admirable composures? or with what conscience avow them as containing their own faith? Could a stranger believe that the identical pretexts on which they vindicate their sacramental fasts and thanksgivings, are enumerated in a part of this very system, which they profess to receive as founded on the word of God; and are there marked with the most unqualified reprobation? Yet such is the fact! among the sins forbidden in the second commandment, as explained in the larger catechism, are “ all superstitious devices, corrupting the worship of God, *adding to it*, or taking from it, whether invented and taken up of ourselves, or received by tradition from others, though under the title of *antiquity, custom, devotion, good intent*, OR ANY OTHER PRETENCE WHATSOEVER*.”

Let us never forget, Christian brethren, that our notions of propriety, or the examples of men, though they seem to be pillars, have nothing to do in modelling JEHOVAN'S worship.

* Quest. 109.

A jealous God, he will curse innovations, and overwhelm their apologists with the terror of that challenge, " Who hath REQUIRED this at your hands* ."

Considering, therefore, that our sacramental fasts and thanksgivings have no divine warrant—that they are strangers in the church—that they are inconsistent with our profession—that they establish an unscriptural term of communion—that they tend to destroy the principle of public fasting and thanksgiving—to create a pernicious distinction between the sacraments—to cherish legal tempers in devotional exercises—and that they stand in the way of that great duty, the duty of frequently shewing forth the death of our Redeemer—does it not become you, Christian brethren, to make a solemn pause; and to search whether, in this matter, there *be not with YOU, even with YOU, sins* [against the Lord your God†?

* Is. i. 12.

† 2 Chron. xxviii. 10.

LETTER IX.

Benefits of Scriptural Communion.

CHRISTIAN BRETHERN,

THOSE who confound the idea of change with that of innovation; or whose convictions are overpowered by their fears, view the proposal for frequent communion as pregnant with alarming consequences. Their apprehensions, however sincere, are certainly ill-founded. On the contrary, we have reason to anticipate, from this very measure, the most desirable and salutary effects.

1. *We shall enjoy the consolation of having performed a duty much and long neglected.*

In the hour of retirement and reflection, an exercised believer can hardly persuade himself, in the face of all the considerations which have been set before him, that one or two communions in the year, correspond with the will of Christ; with the end of his memorial; or with his own profession. His heart, in spite of apologies, will smite him; it will tell him, that a Saviour's death merits not such forgetfulness; nor will all the week-day pageantry silence its murmurs. Unable to shew a clear warrant for

his appendages to the supper, and conscious that they supplant an obedience, otherwise easy, to his Lord's command, his confidence will waver, and a shade pass over his cheerfulness

By communicating after the primitive model, in reviving its frequency, and lopping off the redundancies of human fancy, this source of disquietude will be dried up. Our Master's memorial restored to its just respect; the reproach of disregard to his dying precept wiped away; the excellence of his *simple* institutions *practically* asserted; our "keeping of the feast" more pure, because more scriptural—will be sublime attainments. They will repay, a thousand fold, the sacrifice of adverse prejudice and habit. Singleness of heart in conforming to the obvious intentions of our Lord Jesus, will infuse into our obedience a vigour, and into our privileges a delight which are vainly expected from conformity to the devices of men; and which can be appreciated by those alone who have smarted from the sting of a misgiving conscience.

2. *A harmony, at present impossible, will be established in our system of public worship.*

God is the God of order; and his word, which is the rule of Christian order, hath referred every duty to its proper place: ordinary duties to ordinary occasions; and duties extraor-

dinary to occasions extraordinary. But our sacramental fast and thanksgiving days have reversed this order, by wedding extraordinary duties with ordinary occasions. Now, if our arrangement be right, that of the Bible must be wrong. But as no Christian can impeach the latter, it must be admitted, not only that the former is faulty, but that disolving the unnatural union between ordinary occasions and extraordinary duties, and reserving public fasting and thanksgiving for the seasons to which the scripture hath assigned them, viz. *providential emergencies*, will be a needful, and a great reform. This will indeed curtail, by more than two thirds, the existing week-day observances, and reduce the supper of the Lord to a very simple thing. Exactly what it should be! Christ left it a very simple thing. By making it otherwise, men have only spoiled it: and be it remembered, that simplicity is the glory of all evangelical worship. It may have few charms for carnal professors; it may appear to them ignoble and sordid; but in proportion as it characterises a church, is “the beauty of the Lord our God upon” her. And who will not count that beauty our honour and our blessedness?

3. *Our judicial profession will be rescued from charges which it is now difficult, if not impossible, to repel.*

While we maintain that the feast of the supper is *frequently* to be celebrated, and keep it only *twice a year*—that communicating is an ordinary, and fasting an extraordinary duty; and yet blend them in our practice—that holidays having no warrant in the word of God, are not to be observed: and insist upon the religious observance of days which have no such warrant; it requires uncommon assurance, or betrays contemptible weakness, to vaunt our own steadfastness, and bewail the departure of others from their avowed principles. This may render us objects of derision or of pity, but not of respect. We must lie under the suspicion, if not the reproach, of hypocrisy; because our pretensions are unsupported by our conduct. But if, in the hope of teaching others, we set out with teaching ourselves; if we *exemplify* our doctrines by the severe application of them to our own church; rectifying *her* mistakes, and banishing *her* corruptions; it will be manifest to the world, that we contend not for the pre-eminence of party, but for the claims of truth. Such honesty will throw a lustre round our character; and imprint a majesty upon our testimony, for which the usual clamour and acrimony would be too much honoured in being called a miserable substitute. Passion would be soothed, and

prejudice allured. Men would listen with candour to the expostulations of conscience. We should have the praise of consistency, if not of success. And though we might fail to convince an opponent, we should at least command his esteem.

4. *Frequent and simple communions will probably purge the church of unworthy members.*

There is not a greater nuisance to Christianity, than men who usurp its name without its influence; who give to Christ the vapour of the lips, and to mammon the solid homage of the heart. They are a perpetual mildew on the blossoms, a death-frost about the roots of social piety. In any denomination, one such professor is one too many: though intire freedom from them never has been, and never may be, the happiness of any earthly connection. In the little family of the master himself, a devil occupied the seat of an apostle. Highly favoured the church which has the fewest of them, and in which their numbers are diminishing! Perhaps there could not be devised a more effectual expedient of getting rid of them, than employing them in spiritual work. With abundance of formality, they may attend to the notorious *externals* of religion: and as a bribe to conscience, and a set-off to character, they may have no objection to the communion, *if it*

be not too often. Once or twice a year will do. But strip this precious ordinance of the additions which nurture legality, or flatter pride: let it be as plain as the Bible made it, and as frequent as a believer needs it: let there be nothing to render it impressive, but its subject; or alluring, but its spirituality; and mark the consequence. The former zealot will cool. Novelty, decency, example may secure his compliance for a while; but it will be strange if his impatience do not at last get the ascendancy. Without affection to Jesus Christ, he will grow tired of his supper. Without a principle of spiritual life, he will count spiritual worship intolerable: the more spiritual, the more intolerable: and the holy communion most intolerable of all. His soul will loathe the heavenly manna, and by degrees he will drop off. It is not asserted that this would be the course of every formalist. Of some it more than probably would. And every one who should thus become a self-detector, would be a clear deduction from the mass of enmity, in a particular church, to the interest of truth and holiness.

5. A blessed fruit of frequent communions would be the promotion of brotherly love.

In nothing is the religion of Jesus more dishonoured, than in the want of that kind affection which ought to subsist between the

heirs of a common salvation. No trait of moral character is in itself more amiable or excellent; none more ornamental to the gospel of Christ; none more powerfully recommended by his example; more peremptorily enjoined by his authority; more solemnly insisted upon in his word, as a test of profession, than the grace of love. And the time *has been*, when it formed the chief distinction of a disciple. In those days of primitive glory which we commend so much, and imitate so little, the mortified, yet admiring Pagan, could not forbear to exclaim, "Behold how these Christians love one another!" Alas! the sad reverse! Professors, of every name, should they agree in nothing else, agree in forgetting the lesson of love. To judge from facts, one would suppose that we are commanded not to "put away*," but to cherish "all bitterness and wrath, and anger and clamour, and evil speaking, with all malice." For it is too evident, that amidst the lust of pre-eminence, and the strife of party, the meekness of the gospel is banished, its charities stifled, and the most sacred appellations bestowed on wranglings which nurture malignant corruption, and scatter infernal pestilence. The infidel stands by, a spectator of these

* Eph. iv. 31.

guilty scenes, and scoffingly remarks, that Christians “ have just religion enough to make them hate one another heartily.” This departure from the spirit of the gospel, among those who retain its *doctrines*, is a common and a GRAND APOSTACY. The Holy One of Israel cannot suffer it to pass with impunity; and it is doubtless a principal cause of the controversy which he is now pleading with us, by restraining his gracious influence, and permitting the adversary to triumph.

In searching for the reasons of this difference, so little to our credit, between ourselves and the first believers, their attention, compared with our inattention, to the table of the Lord, is too remarkable to be overlooked. At this holy ordinance they were incessantly together. Between our communions is an interval of several months. When they rose from the sacramental bread, it was their joy, that in a few days they should mingle their friendship and renew their vows, in the same spiritual covenant. With us, after one feast is over, it is so long before another come, that we almost forget we are brethren. The monument of a Saviour's death, with us a rarity, being continually before their eyes, kept their faith steady; awakened the most tender emotions; and preached to their hearts the duty of



mutual love. Could it be otherwise? If reiterated meditation fix the evanescent impression; if the object of warm attachment stir the soul; if society, in an exercise purified by grace, and elevated by devotion, beget reciprocal endearment: then must frequent communion have an auspicious influence on Christian charity. Love is inscribed on every object, every action, every circumstance connected with it. No admittance here for diabolical tempers. A son of malice may thrust himself outwardly among the children, but he is no child; nor does he partake of the children's food. The bread of earth he may eat, and the wine of earth he may drink; but he has no communion in the body and blood of the crucified Jesus. He is therefore out of the question. It relates to none but living disciples. Now, is it possible that believers should indulge a sentiment of pride, when they are at once reminded that they were lifted from a dunghill, and receive the pledge of a celestial crown? A sentiment of revenge, when they realize that God is in Christ reconciling them to himself? A sentiment of *enmity*, when he is saying to them, I am pacified towards thee *for all that thou hast done*; and thy sins and thine iniquities will I remember no more. When they feel themselves infinite debtors to the love of Jesus, can

they disobey his commandment, inforted by this argument from his own gracious lips, *As I have loved you, so do ye also love one another?* Let Christians declare, from their own experience, whether they have not often felt, on sacramental occasions, a more than usual interest and complacency in each other; whether suspicion and coldness, contention and revilings among brethren, ever appear to them more indecent and detestable; whether they are ever more ashamed of themselves and of others for the want of mutual love, than when they have risen with spiritual-mindedness from the table spread for the houshold of faith? Indeed, if it is a mean of exciting our love to the Lord Jesus, it must be a mean, and a powerful one too, of exciting love to one another; for in proportion as we love him, we love his image, and are governed by his Spirit. And it is no less clear that this is one of the ends of its institution. For being the memorial of our Redeemer's love to us, it sets before us the amiable pattern of our love to each other. It is almost impossible to contemplate it in the former light, and not in the latter: and altogether so, to contemn it in the latter, without profaning it in the former.

The result is, that spiritual communions having a natural and necessary effect in che-

rishing Christian love, their frequency must have a proportionable effect in augmenting it. An appeal to facts will justify the inference. The whole weight of primitive example is in its favour. And at this hour, no churches in point of harmony and love, exhibit so fair a copy of that example, as those in which communions are most frequent and most simple.

Would you, then, dear brethren, contribute to banish the animosities which are but too prevalent in the family of faith, and to revive the love of former days, repair *often* to your sacramental table: there learn that “in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature*.” There pray, with the apostle, and, with him, embody in your actions the spirit of the prayer, “AS MANY as walk according to THIS RULE, peace be on them, and mercy, even upon the Israel of God †.”

6. *It is by no means improbable, that the restoration of scriptural communions may usher in a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.*

It has just been shewn, that no mean will more effectually conduce to the revival of love: and with the grace of love, every other grace

* Gal. vi. 15.

† Ibid, vi. 16.

flourishes. In that sweet confidence and endearment which are inseparable from it, believers strengthen each other's faith, and are helpers of each other's joy; nor is there in the whole circle of social graces and duties, any which the Lord more delighteth to honour.

Beside; the nearer a church approaches, in her worship, to the institutions of the Lord Jesus, the more solid ground has she to implore and to expect his countenance. Christians, the strength of whose judgment was exceeded only by the fervour of their piety, have complained, that a damp hath settled on their spirits, and the liberty of God's children been remarkably denied them, on the sacramental fasts and thanksgivings. The only reason they could assign for the fact, is, that they could not say they had God's warrant for them. Laying them aside, and retaining his appointments, faith can plead both his warrant and his promise. He hath sufficiently taught us, and often "by terrible things in righteousness," that he will not sanctify the liberties which men take with his worship. If they throw it into a form different from that which he hath prescribed, they have no right to look for his blessing. And if at any time they enjoy it notwithstanding, it is an act of mere sovereignty,

condescending to their infirmities. Historical testimony may be confirmed by our own observation, that the power of godliness declines in a church, as the inventions of men prevail. And, on the contrary, that in those churches which are freest from them, the life of religion, and the presence of the Lord with his ordinances, are most conspicuous. It demands, indeed, no small degree of spiritual-mindedness, and of reliance on his wisdom and truth, to be satisfied with them exactly as he has left them. They are so plain, so noiseless, so unlike every carnal notion of importance; that when compared with their destined effects, unsanctified reason stands astonished, and cries, who can it be? Yet Israel's King hath chosen to work in a manner, and by means which shall mortify human pride, and exalt his name. It is the highest attainment of any Christian society, to "receive, observe, and keep pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as he hath appointed in his word;" humbly committing their success to himself, and steadily resisting the encroachment of human officiousness. The fear, that, discarding all uncommanded observances, and bringing back our sacramental feast to the simplicity and frequency from which it has swerved, would

destroy reverence and breed carelessness, proceeds from unbelief in his providence and promise. The protection of this blessed ordinance would then be placed where it ought to be, in the hands of its author; and our attendance on it would be distinguished by greater power and glory, because it would have more of God, and less of man. A church casting off her errors in a day of coldness, declension, and blasphemy—doing homage to truth, by sacrificing her prejudices, her habits, and her traditions—setting at defiance the scoff of the worldling, and the clamour of the formalist, in order to conform more perfectly to scriptural establishments, and honour more pointedly the love of Jesus, would be a spectacle not more singular than magnificent. It would bespeak the doing of the Lord; and would be a token, such as we have never had, that he is about to revive his work in the midst of the years; to build up our Zion, and appear to us in his glory. And in the hope thereof, when we see this, our heart shall rejoice, and our bones shall flourish as an herb.

Lastly, *The proposed reform will be a preparative for trial.*

With trials we may, at all events, lay out account. They even commonly precede a re-

vival. The messenger of the covenant, when he comes into his temple, is "like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap*." And the less stubble to be consumed, the fewer stains to be washed out, the better; as the preliminary discipline will be gentler. And while he shakes the nations, should he also, as appearances indicate, sift the churches, *they* will suffer the least in whose skirts are the fewest abominations. Uncommanded observances will then be found to be a serious evil, and the zeal which defended them will be rewarded with stripes.

If we would be ready, O brethren, to meet our God, let us give all diligence that our public order, as well as our personal hope, be built upon the naked rock; and in the day of the tempest both will stand, fabrics fair and immoveable; when the rubbish of human devices, and of human flatteries, are swept away, and made the sport of the whirlwind.

"Now, may the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you

* Mal. iii. 2.

that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen*.”

* Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

Hope for the Heathen:

A

SERMON,

PREACHED IN

THE OLD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

BEFORE THE

NEW-YORK MISSIONARY SOCIETY,

At their Annual Meeting, November 7, 1797.

HOPE FOR THE HEATHEN.

ISAIAH xxv. 6, 7.

The LORD of Hosts—will destroy, in this mountain, the face of the covering cast over all people; and the veil that is spread over all nations.

THE exercise of divine mercy towards man is coeval with his need of it. The shock of the fall was hardly felt; Remorse had only begun to prey upon the conscience, and Guilt to rally his terrors, when a hope, as consoling as it was unexpected, dawned from heaven upon our revolted race. “I will put,” said God to the tempter, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel*.” In this original promise were included all subsequent revelations concerning the redemption of sinners. The doctrine of the MESSIAH’S person, of his sacrifice, of his triumph; together with that vast system of prediction which extends from the beginning to the end of time, and all the corresponding dispensa-

* Gen. iii. 15.

tions of the new covenant, are nothing but its regular developement. But this being slow as well as regular, and all flesh corrupting his way, the Lord selected the family of Abraham to be, for ages, both the witnesses of his grace, and the depositaries of his truth. To them were committed his living oracles; to them the ordinances of his worship; to them the symbols and doctrine of the great atonement. Among them he deigned to dwell, and to raise up an illustrious line of prophets, who should direct their faith and hope to Jesus the Saviour. "To him," saith Peter, "give *all* the prophets witness, that, through *his* name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins*."

But though the children of Israel enjoyed these privileges, while other nations were "suffered to walk in their own ways," they were taught that the covenant of peculiarity should one day be abrogated, and be succeeded by a more general and more glorious economy.—"In thee, and in thy seed, shall *all* the nations of the earth be blessed †," was the catholic promise to Abraham their father. As the time of its accomplishment approached, the circle of prophetic vision grew brighter

* Acts x. 43.

† Gen. xii. 3, xxii. 18.

and larger. Later prophets were enabled to explain the enigmas of their predecessors, and to speak, with precision and clearness, both of the coming of the Messiah, and of the glory that should follow. Isaiah, in particular, appears to have been favoured with the most liberal disclosure of the divine purposes. Borne on high by the revealing Spirit, he sees far beyond the common horizon. The extremes of the earth, and the ages of futurity, are commanded into his view. He sees the "sun of righteousness" ascending the heavens, and breaking in upon the thick darkness which enwraps the globe. He sees the fiends of night stretch their foul wings, and fly from the spreading day. He sees the tabernacle of God descending to dwell among men: His eye rolls ardent over the wondrous scene; his bosom heaves with mighty emotions; and when utterance is granted, he bursts forth in the language of the text, *In this mountain will the Lord of Hosts destroy the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.*

The Lord hath not been slack concerning his promise, nor have the words of his servant fallen to the ground. The elementary dispensation of Moses is no more; its shadows have received their substance, and its types their truth, in the person and offices of the "WORD

made flesh." Millions of Gentiles, and among them, believers of this assembly, who were once " afar off, are now brought nigh by the " blood of Christ," and are " no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens of the " saints, and of the household of God*."

But though all this hath happened, according to the scriptures, much is yet required to their complete fulfilment. Many families of the earth are still unblest: These two are reserved for the trophies of Emanuel's grace, and are to be subjected to his authority, by the same means which he hath ever employed in converting sinners—the gospel of his cross. Three topics of discourse, not less appropriated to the design of our meeting, than plainly suggested by the text: For *in this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts destroy the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations.*

I. Many families of the earth are yet unblest. They are described as destitute of spiritual and saving knowledge; an idea obviously conveyed by the figures of a VAIL, and a COVERING—Darkness, thick darkness, enshrouds their minds, and conceals from them those facts and princi-

* Eph. ii. 13, 19.

ples which it most interests them to know and to improve.

Of the nations thus under a vail we reckon four classes:

1. The families which adhere to the "man of sin:"—Enticed by his lying wonders, and given up to strong delusions, they have deviated into the paths of apostacy; they are under the vail of *anti-christian error*.

2. The families of rejected Israel:—Having disowned their Mefsiah when he came; and being disqualified, by judicial blindness, for discerning the real sense of their scriptures, which testify of him; the vail upon their hearts is the vail of *obstinate unbelief*.

3. The families which embrace the doctrines of Mahommed:—Turned aside after fables, and amusing themselves with the belief of lying vanities, they are under the vail of *gross imposture*.

4. The families which are usually called Pagan:—With no other instruction than the glimmerings of natural reason, and the refracted rays of distant tradition, they are covered with the vail of *deplorable ignorance*.

All these are characterized in the text. But our attention is invited more immediately to those who are without any scriptural revelation. Though true of all, it is of them pre-eminently

true, that they are under the double veil of a benighted understanding, and an erring conscience.

God is the source of intellectual light; for he alone is perfect reason. Wisdom in natural things is his gift; much more that wisdom which is spiritual and divine. Loss of ability to discover the chief good, was at once the just reward, and the native consequence of revolt. For as all spiritual light in the creature beams from the effulgence of the Godhead, whenever sin had intercepted the communion of man with his Maker, the day which shone around him vanished; the gloom of the pit thickened on his soul; and from that accursed hour to this, unless illumined from above, he hath wandered out of the way, and his feet have "stumbled upon the dark mountains." Does the assertion need proof? Proofs innumerable are furnished by the unhappy Heathen. Of the very God who "breathed into their nostrils the breath of life;" on whose bounty they are continual pensioners; and at whose tribunal they must shortly stand, they are fatally ignorant. The "heavens may declare his glory, and the firmament shew forth his handy work*;" but the Pagans, unaccustomed to

decypher their language, and to study their lessons, do not thence derive, in fact, just and clear perceptions even of "his eternal power and Godhead;" far less of his moral character; less still can they learn that he is the only satisfying portion of rational beings; and least of all, that he is accessible to the rebellious. Those general notices of his being which have prevailed in all countries and at all times, have never sufficed to direct men aright in their inquiries after him; nor do they now prevent the most foolish, the most extravagant, the most abominable conceptions of his nature, and of his operations.

Mistake in the first principles of religion and of morals, must generate uncertainty in all the subordinate principles of both. The rule of obedience is, therefore, at best, a subject of conjecture. What is the genius, measure, and manner, of acceptable worship? What are the relative duties of society? Wherein they come short? And what shall be the fruit of transgression? few of the Heathen ask, and none can tell. Yet they are under a law of righteousness which saith, "the soul that sinneth shall die." The origin of their wants and woes they are unable to explore. To the demerit and wages of sin they are utter strangers. The consequences of death they are equally unpre-

pared to meet, or to estimate. All beyond the grave is impenetrable obscurity. Their notions of immortality are less a speculation than a dream. When called hence, they plunge into the world of spirits, unconscious of their destiny; and, till that consummation of sorrows, they grope, at a venture, after the path of life; but grope, alas! in vain; "having the understanding darkened; being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart*."

Of this intellectual darkness the inseparable companion is an *erring conscience*:

Although light in the understanding does not, of course, imply moral excellence, yet, without the former, there can be none of the latter. To this it is necessary not only that there be a law of morals, but that it be obeyed from a regard to the authority of the lawgiver. Both the lawgiver and the law must, therefore, be known, or conscience will inevitably go astray. The general sentiment of right and wrong, though sufficient, if violated, to leave men without excuse, will by no means conduct to the proper discharge of duty. The fact is notorious; and a glance at the Heathen world will

* Eph. iv. 18.

descrie a thousand monuments of it. To those who have the advantage of revelation, no truths appear more simple and luminous, than that there is but one God, and that he only is entitled to religious homage. Yet how dubious, on these points, were the most celebrated Heathen philosophers! how embarrassed their research! how conjectural their opinion! And of that spiritual devotedness which is the life of real religion, they had as little knowledge as the sons of modern unbelief. If from them we turn to the mass of their contemporaries, or to those who are now in a similar condition, we are startled and shocked to see them “ worship
 “ and serve the creature more than the Creator
 “ who is blessed for ever *.” One poor idolater bows to “ the host of heaven;” another trembles before an evil spirit—Here, he finds his divinities in birds, and beasts, and reptiles; there, he “ changes the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto
 “ corruptible man †,” and lies prostrate before a deity of stone or of wood, the work of his chizel or his axe. “ He heweth him down
 “ cedars, and taketh the cypresses and the oak—
 “ he burneth part thereof in the fire; with part
 “ thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and

* Rom, i, 25.

† Ibid, i. 23.

" is satisfied ;—yea, he warmeth himself, and
 " saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire :
 " And the residue thereof he maketh a god,
 " even his graven image: he falleth down unto
 " it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it,
 " and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god.
 " —And none considereth in his heart, neither
 " is their knowledge nor understanding to say,
 " I have ournt part of it in the fire; yea, I have
 " also baked bread upon the coals thereof;
 " I have roasted flesh, and eaten it; and shall
 " I make the residue thereof an abomina-
 " tion? shall I fall down to the stock of a
 " tree*?"

The rites of Paganism are worthy of its
 creed. Instead of a worship, reasonable, re-
 verend, and pure; it exhibits all the frightful
 varieties of whatever is absurd, or blasphemous,
 or obscene. Its effects on individual and social
 character, are precisely such as we might anti-
 cipate. Unrestrained by any just apprehensions
 of God, of his law, or his government, the
 most baleful passions domineer in the heart,
 and the most horrible excesses pollute the life.
 Moral distinctions confounded; the sense of
 relative obligation extinguished; crimes the
 most atrocious perpetrated with deliberation,

* Isaiah xliv. 14—19.

and upon principle, are, among the Heathen, the result of being “without God*.” If, in the midst of this degradation and these enormities, the thought should occur, “that they “who do such things are worthy of death,” a secret horror creeps through the blood; conscience, the scorpion of guilt, strikes his sting into the bosom; forebodings, equally dark and intolerable, the mysterious presentiment of “judgment to come,” harrow up the soul. Whither, in this extremity, shall they turn for succour? All around them is one dreary waste; the reign of silence and of desolation. No friendly voice is born to the listening ear; no tower of help rises up to the anxious eye. The Comforter, who should comfort their souls, is afar off. They have not heard, like you, of the name of Jesus. They have none to tell them of “redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of “his grace†.” And the termination of their mortal course—O brethren, how tremendous! The heavens blacken; the tempest roars; the whirlwind rushes by; down pours the torrent; and without a refuge, and without a hope,

* Ward's History of the Law of Nations, vol. i, p. 81—85, 104—106.

† Eph. i. 7.

they are swept away in the ruin of the nations that forget God.

Exposed to this melancholy fate, the Heathen claim our sympathy; and we eagerly ask, Is their doom to such woe irreversibly sealed? Are they shut out, for ever, from the divine compassions? No! To the praise of his grace, Jehovah hath thoughts of mercy, rich mercy, towards them. **HE WILL DESTROY**, saith the prophet, *the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations*—a design, the contemplation of which forms the

II. Part of discourse.

From the days of eternity, the Father hath given to the Messiah “the Heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession*.” The whole earth, therefore, being included in the covenant-grant, shall be filled with the knowledge, and subdued to the obedience, of Jehovah. On the maxims of carnal wisdom, the fact is, indeed, impossible, and the expectation wild. To extirpate prejudices implanted in infancy, nurtured by habit, confirmed by example, and consecrated by tradition—to enlighten the stupid idolater, and soften the ferocious savage—to persuade men to despise as contemptible, and loathe as

* Psal. ii. 8.

abominable, the objects of their respect and veneration—in a word, to change the opinions, the customs, the characters of nations; and unite them in a religion, simple, holy, heavenly—a religion opposed to every vicious principle, and every vicious act—a religion which proscribes all human merit, and prostrates all human pride—This is an undertaking which equally defies the policy and the power of man. And the belief that it shall, at any time, be attended with success, furnishes incessant matter of derision to the philosopher, and of sneer to the witling. Their mistake lies in supposing the God who made them to be as foolish and as feeble as themselves, or as little concerned in the salvation of sinners. But we, according to his promise, look for the interposition of his arm, by which, however mean the instruments, this prodigious revolution shall be effected with no less ease than certainty. For,

1. He directs the complicated movements of the universe. However confused and contradictory things may appear to our little minds; with him whose “understanding is infinite,” there is neither surprise, perplexity, nor chance. “Known unto the Lord are all his works from the beginning of the world*.”

* Acts xv. 18.

Not only are the laws of matter his sovereign will, and their operation his continual agency, but the whole system of intellect is under his controul. All the discordant passions, interests, designs, which dash, in eternal collision, the affairs of men; all the activities of superior intelligences, as well the enmity of fiends as the ministry of angels, are combined, in the harmony of providence, to produce the result which he hath ordained; and hither every occurrence irresistibly tends. "He doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth*." He causeth "the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of wrath he will restrain †." The unpromising situation, therefore, of the Heathen, is no obstacle to Israel's God, and should be none to Israel's faith. Be the mountains of difficulty ever so impassable, at his presence they flee away. Let the "nations rage, and the kingdoms be moved," if he "utter his voice, the earth is melted ‡."

2. The glory of the Messiah is a chief end of the dispensations of providence.

The vicissitudes of kings and kingdoms, and all the stupendous events which shine in ancient annals, were important chiefly as they

* Dan. iv. 35.

† Psal. lxxvi. 10.

‡ Psal. xlvi. 6.

served to prepare the way, and to spread the triumphs, of him who was “ a light to lighten “ the Gentiles.” For this God gave the learning of the world to Greece, and its empire to Rome. Both contributed to facilitate and extend the victories of the gospel. The same design is prosecuted in the events which, at this moment, astonish the world. If “ nation “ rise up against nation, and kingdom against “ kingdom”—if establishments, imposing from their antiquity, and formidable from their strength, be undermined by the progress of opinion, or shattered by violent explosion—if impiety and ambition, and all the infuriate passions, be permitted to take their course; and scenes of desolation and blood, such as history hath not learnt to record, nor imagination to paint, be opened to our view; it is, that God may destroy the dominion of hell by her own chosen legions, and make them subserve the introduction of that kingdom, which is “ righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the Holy “ Ghost.” Thus saith his high decree, “ I “ will overturn, overturn, overturn, until HE “ shall come whose right it is, and I will give “ it him*.”

3. In the scriptures of the prophets, this

* Ez. xxi. 27.

spiritual revolution, by which the “ kingdoms
 “ of this world shall become the kingdoms of
 “ our Lord and of his Christ*,” is frequently
 predicted, and strongly marked. “ All the ends
 “ of the world shall remember, and turn unto
 “ the Lord; all the kindreds of the nations
 “ shall worship before thee†. It shall come
 “ to pass, in the last days, that the mountain of
 “ the Lord’s house shall be established in the
 “ top of the mountains, and shall be exalted
 “ above the hills, and all nations shall flow
 “ unto it: And many people shall go and say,
 “ come ye, and let us go up to the mountain
 “ of the Lord, to the house of the God of
 “ Jacob: and he will teach us of his ways,
 “ and we will walk in his paths‡:” So that
 “ from the rising of the sun, even unto the
 “ going down of the same, his name shall be
 “ great among the Gentiles; and in every
 “ place incense shall be offered unto his name,
 “ and a pure offering§.” Is there, then, a na-
 tion that yet “ sit in darkness and the shadow
 “ of death?” for them “ light is sown,” and
 to them shall “ light spring up.” Is there a
 nation “ mad upon their idols?” Jehovah shall
 “ famish all the gods of the earth,” and teach
 their votaries that he is “ the God of salvation,”

* Rev. xi. 15. † Ps. xxii. 27. ‡ Is. ii. 23. § Mal. i. 11.

and that “there is none beside him.” Is there a nation enslaved to superstition, or abused by imposture? He shall “frustrate the tokens of the liars, shall make the diviners mad,” and convert the bondage of their followers into the liberty of his dear children. “Rejoice, therefore, ye Gentiles, with his people* . Faithful is he that hath promised, who also will do it†.”

But here occurs an important query. By what means are these predictions to be fulfilled, and these prospects to be realized? The means are prepared; they are extremely simple; they are in your hands—even *the doctrines of the gospel of peace*. And this is the

III. And last topic which I proposed to discuss—IN THIS MOUNTAIN, saith the prophet, shall the Lord destroy the veil that is spread over all nations.

Mount Zion, to which Isaiah refers, is a figure, most familiar to the scripture, of the Church of Christ. The apostle Paul, addressing believers under the New Testament, says, “Ye are come unto Mount Zion‡.” And the plain sense of the text is, that the Lord will bless the Heathen outcasts, by “causing them to pass under the bond of his covenant,” and

* Rom. xv. 10. † 1 Thess. iii. 12. Heb. x. 23.

‡ Heb. xii. 22.

to inherit the privileges of his house: and this shall be effected, by diffusing among them the glad tidings of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. "Behold," saith the sure word of prophecy, "behold thou shall call a nation " that thou knowest not, and nations that knew " not thee shall run unto thee, because of the " Lord thy God, and for the Holy one of Is- " rael, for he hath glorified thee*."

Our faith on this point will, indeed, provoke the ridicule of a tribe equally vain and licentious, who claim to be the exclusive benefactors of mankind. Rejecting, with opprobrium and insult, the gospel of Christ, they hail, as they speak, a new order of things, and the world is to be regenerated by a reason without conscience, and a philosophy without religion. "No doubt ye are the people, and " wisdom shall die with you†." But after all the ostentation and clamour of infidels, what reformation has been wrought by *their* doctrines or by *their* spirit? During forty centuries, reason and philosophy had the world almost to themselves. Where did they overthrow the reign of idolatry? From what vice did they reclaim the nations? One sect of philosophers rose on the ruin of another, to be itself the

* Isaiah lv. 5.

† Job xii. 2.

aggrandizement of a third. But the world lay still in wickedness; its diseases rankled with increasing fury, and struck deeper and deeper their poisonous roots, under the successive treatment of these "physicians of no value." Eighteen centuries more have nearly elapsed since "God manifested in the flesh, put away sin by the sacrifice of himself:" and what has been done in elevating the character, in purifying the morals, in ameliorating the condition of man, that has been done without the aids of his gospel? What countries have the priesthood of unbelief rescued from barbarism? Where have they resisted the influence, or wiped off the shame, of profligacy? Where have they promoted either happiness or virtue in public or in private? Whom have they taught to "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly? By their fruits ye shall know them."

How different is the genius, and how different has been the career of the gospel of Christ! When it was promulged to the Heathen, the philosopher pronounced it folly, and stalked disdainfully by the missionary of the cross: yet through the cross did the missionary preach forgiveness of sins, and life everlasting; and lo, the throne of darkness tottered to its fall; the Gentiles "turned from idols to serve the liv-

“ing God.” Abandoning, at once, their prejudices, their delusions, and their lusts, they fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them.” The face of the world was changed, and the worldling knew not how. No deep speculations, no subtle reasonings, no displays of science converted the nations. The process was very short and very simple. Their guilt and their depravity—their certain destruction without pardon and renovation—the grace of God in sending Christ Jesus to die for sinners—his ability to save unto the uttermost—and the freedom of his salvation to the most worthless and vile, are the truths which won the Gentiles to the obedience of Christ. It is this same gospel which, at this hour, turns men “from darkness to light,” and which is destined to “carry the banners of the cross victorious round the globe.” Those refined moral disquisitions which, under the garb of sermons, expel vital godliness from the church, will never introduce it among the Heathen. Whoever hopes to gain them to the faith must imitate the Apostle Paul. He must “preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but to them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God, and the

“wisdom of God*.” Adapted to every clime of the earth, to every stage of society, and to all descriptions of its members; unveiling their real misery, and bringing near the only remedy; discovering, at once, their wants, and the means of supplying them; and, seconded by the energy of the quickening Spirit, this precious gospel fastens on the conscience, melts the heart, thrills the very bones and marrow; and transforms the most obdurate rebel into a willing subject of Jesus Christ. When the “Lord gives testimony to the word of his “grace,” it shall have “free course, and be “glorified.” No darkness too dismal for it to dispel, no prejudices too obstinate to subdue. “Mighty, through God, to the pulling down “of strong holds,” this very gospel shall force its way through every physical, and every moral difficulty; and in his name and strength, shall its messengers cast down imaginations, and every high thought that lifteth itself up against the obedience of Christ. “Every “valley shall be exalted, and every mountain “and hill shall be made low: and the crooked “shall be made straight, and rough places “plain. And the glory of the LORD shall be “revealed, and all flesh shall see it together;

* 1 Cor. i. 23, 24.

“ for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken
“ it*.”

Come then, my brethren, let us ascend the hill of God; and, aided by the torch of the skies, let us look through the surrounding gloom, to the glories that lie beyond. See! an “ angel
“ flies through the midst of Heaven, having
“ the everlasting gospel to preach to every na-
“ tion, and kindred, and tongue, and people †.”
The standard of SHILOH is reared: his banner waves on high: the great trumpet is blown: the nations hear and gather unto him. From the east, from the west, from the north, from the south, they press into the kingdom. On the one hand, is the plundering Arab; on the other, the pitiless Savage. Here, are the frozen children of the Pole; there, the sable tribes of Afric; and yonder, the long disinherited Jew steals silently to his Mefsiah, weeping as he goes. Hark! the din of arms, and the tumult of battle cease; Discord and War retreat back to hell; and again that hymn of Angels is heard below, “ Glory to God in the highest; on earth
“ peace, good-will towards men ‡.” The redeemed of the Lord raise their responsive song,
“ Now is come salvation and strength, and the
“ kingdom of our Lord, and the power of his

* Isaiah xl. 4, 5.

† Rev. xii. 6.

‡ Luke ii. 14.

“Christ*.” Brethren, 'tis no illusion; 'tis
 “the sober certainty” of truth divine. The
 zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this—
HALLELUJAH!

AND NOW, dear brethren, shall not the
 first sentiment of our hearts be a sentiment of
 gratitude for the grace of God manifested unto
 us?

Let it never be forgotten, that we, in our
 ancestors, were among the perishing outcasts.
 Yet to us hath the word of salvation been sent.
 Without the gospel of Jesus, we should this
 day have been burning incense unto idols:
 Without the gospel of Jesus, we should have
 been strangers to that blessed hope which gives
 to life its best relish, and takes from death both
 his terrors and his sting. O Christian, Chris-
 tian, remember, that if thou hast escaped the
 wrath to come, and art made “an heir of God,
 “and a fellow heir with Jesus Christ,” it is to
 the praise of sovereign mercy. Thy father was
 an Amorite, and thy mother a Hittite; and
 thou mightest have been left, with the Amorites
 and Hittites, to die in thine iniquity. Yet thou
 livest; livest unto God; livest for glory; and shalt
 never come into condemnation, and never taste
 of the second death †. Thrice blessed gospel,

* Rev. xii. 10.

† John v. 24.

which “ hath brought life and immortality to light*!” Thrice glorious grace, which hath constrained any of us to receive “ the truth in “ the love thereof:” And thrice condescending Saviour, who hath “ washed us from our sins “ in his own blood, and hath made us kings “ and priests unto God and his father †.”

2. Since the Lord hath destroyed the veil that was spread over us, by revealing to us the great salvation, let all who have hitherto been indifferent about it, be deeply impressed with the duty of embracing it without delay, and with the sin and danger of neglecting it.

“ It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all “ acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the “ world to save the chief of sinners ‡.” On the authority of the most high God, that gospel which we preach, tenders to *you*, my brethren, to *every one* of you, a free grant of this Saviour, and, in him, of eternal life: and, suffer me to add with all solemnity, enjoins your acceptance of it at the peril of your souls. This is *his* commandment; this, therefore, is *your* duty, your immediate, your indispensable duty, to believe on the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, that you may be saved. A refusal is the most aggravated crime which you can pos-

* 2 Tim. i. 10.

† Rev. i. 5.

‡ 1 Tim. i. 15.

sibly commit. For it not only approves, with deliberation, all your deeds of rebellion against the God of your mercies, but pours contempt on the riches of his grace, and throws scornfully away the only hope that ever has been, or ever shall be, proposed to guilty men. The experiment, therefore, is not less dangerous than sinful. For if ye reject Christ Jesus, the Lord, "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin*." And when Jehovah writeth up the people, he will count that ye "trampled under foot the Son of his love, and deemed the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing; and did despite unto the spirit of grace.†" Think not that this is a matter of trifling moment. If the gospel, which you hear from day to day, be not the instrument of your conversion to God, it shall be the occasion of your more dreadful condemnation. If not "the savour of life unto life," most certainly "the savour of death unto death‡." The Heathen will rise up in the judgment against you, and will condemn you; for they never shared your means of salvation. The devils will rise up in the judgment against you, and will condemn you; for no Saviour was provided for them; and, there-

* Heb. x. 26.

† Ibid, x. 29.

‡ 2 Cor. ii. 16.

fore, whatever be their crimes, the rejection of a Mediator's blood will be none of them. Now, then, "as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God*." O that ye may know, in this your day, the "things that be long to your peace, before they be hid from your eyes!"

3. In the assurance that Jehovah will destroy, by the prevalence of his gospel, the vail spread over the nations, believers may see how little they have to fear for the existence, or for the triumph, of their religion.

Infidelity, it is true, prospers; and hath assumed a most effrontful air, and a most impetuous tone. Her threats are loud, and her expectations sanguine. But threats as loud have, more than once, been put to shame; and expectations as sanguine, more than once, been blasted. Seventeen centuries ago did the adversaries of the church predict her speedy downfall; but, unlike the prophets of Jehovah, they proved to be the seers of a lie: she hath lived to see their rage perish, their monuments moulder, their names sink into oblivion: and such shall be the issue of her present conflict. She can meet with no assault more furious and

* 2 Cor. v. 20.

formidable than those which she hath a thousand times met and a thousand times foiled. " God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early*." Therefore, " no weapon that is formed against her shall prosper; and every tongue that riseth in judgment against her, she shall condemn †." The temporary successes of the infidel should, indeed, confirm our faith, because it verifies the scriptures. Our master, Christ, hath told us, that this shall be one of the signs of his approach: " when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth ‡?" Every infidel under heaven is, then, a witness for Christianity; and carries in his forehead the proclamation that it is divine—Let him enjoy his exultation. Under a controul which he can neither elude nor resist, he is, really, though ignorantly, working his own destruction, and the aggrandizement of the Messiah. His progress shall be arrested, and his boast confounded, whenever he shall have performed the part allotted to him in the " determine counsel and foreknowledge of God." In our patience, therefore, let us possess our souls. What, though blasphemy display his columns in defiance to the armies of the living

* Ps. xlvi, 57

† Isaiah liv. 17.

‡ Luke xviii. 8.

God? What, though disorder spread from pole to pole, and mingle the nations in universal uproar? What, though the foundations be destroyed, their fabrics overturned, and earth quiver under the falling wreck? That Jesus whom we worship, sitteth king for ever: He

—“Rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm.”

With all power in heaven and in earth, *he* will bring order out of confusion, and light out of darkness. In the moment of decision he will arise, and plead his own cause. When he appears, in glory, to build up Zion, his enemies shall lick the very dust. The infidel, to his astonishment, will find, that in planting the seeds of unbelief, he was planting laurels for the cross: and the believer, to his unspeakable joy, that all the trials of the church, and all the tumults of the world, were but preparative to the reign of righteousness “in the ages of peace.”

4. The subject which has this evening occupied our attention, places, in a strong light, both the *obligation* which lies on Christians to evangelize the Heathen, and their *encouragement* to attempt it.

If we count it life eternal to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent,

our bowels must yearn over those who are acquainted with neither. But, it would be more than unkind, and worse than reproachful, were our best sympathies to evaporate in empty words, or empty wishes. We are called not merely to condolence, but to action. A number of the families yet under the veil, are our neighbours. They border on our country; they are accessible to our enterprize. Prompt and spirited measures for introducing among them the gospel of Christ, are our bounden duty.

Our *duty*—because we *have* the means of grace, and they have *not*. The unsearchable riches of Christ have been poured in upon us, while they are languishing in spiritual poverty. They must address themselves for help to *some* more favoured than themselves; and to whom, with a more imperious claim than to *us*? The very difference of our situation creates us their debtors: the vicinity of our residence doubles the debt. The word and ordinances were bestowed upon us, not only that ourselves might be saved, but that we might minister to the salvation of others. Our possession, therefore, of the glorious gospel, implies, in the very nature of the privilege, an obligation to extend it as far as possible. Freely ye have received, freely ye must give. This is the way in which

the gospel ever has been, and ever must be diffused. Though the employment would dignify angels, God hath committed it to men. They who possess the treasure must impart it to others; and these, again, to more; till passing, "in earthen vessels," from people to people, and from clime to clime, it enrich the world. An attempt to monopolize, or, which amounts to the same thing, a refusal to circulate it, is treason against the law of the kingdom. And let it not, my brethren, be our dishonour and our crime, to betray both ingratitude to our Redeemer, and cruelty to our fellow men; by declining to communicate to them the mercies which, through the instrumentality of others, he hath lavished upon us.

With the superiority of our privileges, the genius of our profession conspires to challenge our interference in behalf of the Heathen. As Christians, we profess that the glory of the Lord Jesus is the object most dear to our hearts, and most worthy of our pursuits. We profess to believe that the redemption of the soul is precious, and that, without the virtue of his blood, it ceaseth for ever. Is this a *sincere* profession? Can it at all consist with unwillingness to use every means in our power for diffusing, far and near, the sweet savour of his name? Must not a guilty blush crimson our

faces, if we presume to pray “thy kingdom come,” when we are conscious that we have *done* nothing, are *doing* nothing, *endeavour* to do nothing, for the promotion of his kingdom? Do we, in very deed, believe that there is no salvation in any other; no name given under heaven whereby sinners can be saved, but the name of Jesus Christ, and yet look coolly on, while multitudes of the Heathen are perishing within our reach; nor ever stretch out a hand for their relief? Yes, my brethren, a generous and persevering attempt to proclaim among them the glad tidings of a SAVIOUR, is a tribute to the *decency* of our Christian profession; and it is a tribute which their most afflicting necessities forbid to be deferred any longer.

If you heard of a number of human beings shut out from every sustenance, and falling, in rapid succession, the victims of famine, and knew, at the same time, that vigorous exertion might rescue the survivors, what anxiety would thrill every heart, what eagerness animate every countenance! How would the hand pour forth its spontaneous benefactions! How speedily would messengers be dispatched with the staff of life! Alas! my brethren, we speak to you of a more terrible famine; “a famine not of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing

“ of the word of the Lord*.” We plead with you not for expiring bodies; it is the spirit, the spirit that dies! To the heart of the Christian be our appeal. Suppose thy bible taken from thee; thy sabbaths blotted from thy days; the mercies of the sanctuary fled; thy father’s fellowship denied; thy hopes, “ full of immortality,” vanished; the shadows of eternal night stretching over thy soul—And, if the thought be more intolerable than ten thousand deaths, think of yonder Pagans, without God, and without hope. Ah! while the sentence is on my lips, they are passing, by hundreds, into that world unseen, with no renewing Spirit, and no atoning blood! “ Oh that mine head “ were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of “ tears†,” that I might weep unceasingly over the mighty ruin,

If any additional argument can be needed to render the proof of our duty, on this point, completely triumphant; that argument is supplied by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. When he left this world, and went unto the Father, his parting injunction to his followers was, “ Go ye and teach all nations‡.” And that the precept is binding upon the whole church to the end of time, the promise of his

* Amos viii. 11.

† Jer. ix. 1.

‡ Mat. xxviii. 19.

presence and support most clearly evinces—
 “ Lo, I am with you always, *even unto the end*
 “ *of the world.*” The command, being exprefs
 and full, leaves no room for evasion. It either
 obligates *all*, or obligates *none*. If we may be
 exempted without sin, the exemption must ex-
 tend to every Christian society under heaven;
 and then the Master’s commandment would be
 a nullity, and his promise have neither grace
 nor meaning. In this matter, therefore, my
 brethren, we are by no means guiltless. With
 a single exception*, all denominations of Chris-
 tians among us have violated their faith to their
 Lord; and are now chargeable with habitual
 disrespect to his authority. Instead of hasten-
 ing, with generous emulation, to the aid of
 the Heathen, we have gone, one to his farm,
 and another to his merchandize: we have
 clamoured for the shibboleths of party, and
 have been unanimous (ah, shameful unani-
 mity!) in declining, on carnal and frivolous ex-
 cuses, that work of faith, that labour of love.
 Now, therefore, thus saith the Lord, consider
 your ways. If we persist in neglecting these
 Heathen, while we have the means of sending
 the gospel to them, they shall die in their ini-

* The honour of this exception belongs to the MORAVIAN
 BRETHREN.

Q 3
 The author is not accurate: the Meth.
 had established missions in the West-Indies
 in 1706. Digitized by Google

quity; but their blood may be required at our hands.

Let no one object difficulties*. In a question of plain duty, a believer is not to be de-

* An objection to missions among the Indians, or other savages, which many view as unanswerable, is, "that some considerable progress in civilization is previously necessary to prepare a people for the reception of Christianity. You must first make them men, say the patrons of this opinion, before you make them Christians. You must teach them to live in fixed habitations, to associate in villages, to cultivate the soil, and then you may hope that they will hear and understand when you unfold the sublime principles of the gospel*."

Plausible and popular as this objection is, it is equally unsupported by reason, by scripture, or by fact.

If the gospel cannot succeed among the Indians, for example, the obstacle must be either in their understandings or in their manner of life.

The former opinion "supposes a wider difference between the understanding of the man of the woods and the man of the city, than what does, in fact, take place. The human mind is not, in any country, below the reach of discipline and religious instruction. The American Indian, the Pacific Islander, and the African negro, are shrewd men, whose intellectual capacity will not suffer in comparison with the uneducated classes of people on the continent of Europe †." Why should it, since it is culture, and that alone, which destroys the level of abilities naturally equal? Surely the Indian, whose necessities compel him not only to hunt and fish for his subsistence, but to be, in a great measure, his own artificer, as well as the guardian of his private and public right, must be superior,

* *Dr. Hardy's (of Edinburgh) Sermon before the Society, in Scotland, for propagating Religious Knowledge, p. 14.*

† *Ibid, p. 15.*

tered by difficulties. **THUS SAITH THE LORD,** is his warrant: and as long as there is nothing

in point of general understanding, to those vast bodies of Europeans whose intelligence the division of labour has confined to a detached article of manufacture, or to the merely servile operations of agriculture. Indeed, all the national transactions with the Indians shew them to possess great acuteness, and no small share of what learning cannot bestow—common sense. How seldom will you find, I do not say among the vulgar, but among the polished orders of society, better specimens of well-formed idea, and of genuine eloquence, than are frequent in the Indian talks?

If, on the other hand, their manner of life be considered as presenting the decisive obstacle, this opinion supposes it much more difficult to alter outward habits than inward principles. Christians will not dispute that the gospel can and does transform both the heart and the character; yet it is thought unable to overcome a propension to wandering from place to place. The plain meaning of the objection, therefore, is this, that some means *more powerful than the gospel*, must be applied to civilize the Indians, and prepare them for its reception. For if it be admitted, that the gospel can civilize as well as save, the objection falls at once to the ground. But if its power to civilize be denied, while its power to save is admitted, it becomes the objectors to shew the reason of this distinction; and also, what those more effectual means of civilization are. Be they what they may, since the gospel is excluded, they must be merely human; and then the principle of the objection turns out to be this, that the wisdom of man is better adapted to civilize the Indians, than the wisdom of God.

Further; the objection supposes that savages are to be civilized without *any* religious aid. For whatever arguments prove the utility, in this matter, of religion at all, conclude, with tenfold energy, in favour of the religion of Christ. But to neglect the religious principle, would be to neglect the most potent auxi-

too hard for Omnipotence, there is nothing to justify disobedience or demur. Unbelief looks

liary which can be employed in managing human nature ; and to act in the spirit of that wise philosophy which would erect civil society upon the basis of Atheism.

It would swell this note into a dissertation, to state the various considerations which militate against the idea of civilizing the Indians before we attempt to christianize them. But granting this, for a moment, to be necessary, who shall effect it? Philosophers? Merchants? Politicians? If we wait for them, the sun will expend his last light, and the business be unfinished. The Indians have had intercourse with the whites, in the concerns of trade and policy, nearly two hundred years, and most of them are as wild as ever. To put off evangelical missions to them, till, in the ordinary course of things, they become civilized, is, therefore, equivalent to putting them off for ever.

2. If the opinion that the gospel can succeed only among civilized people, receives little countenance from reason, it receives less from scripture.

No such restriction of its influence is contemplated in prophecy. Its universal reception is the subject of numberless predictions ; but they contain not a hint that the want of civilization shall be such a bar to its progress as is commonly imagined. On the contrary, it is expressly declared, that the most roving and untutored tribes shall rejoice in Messiah's salvation, even while they retain their unpolished characters and manners. " Sing unto the LORD a new song—Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages* that Kedar doth inhabit. Let the inhabitants of the rock sing ; let them shout from the top of the mountains†." Beyond all controversy, the general sense of the prophet, in the words of that elegant scholar, Bishop LOWTH, is, that " the most uncultivated countries, and the most rude and uncivilized people, shall confess and celebrate,

* *Or tents.*

† *Isaiah xlii. 10, 11.*

at opposition, and faints. Faith looks at the promise of God, and conquers. In the strength

“ with thanksgiving, the blessing of the knowledge of God graciously imparted to them*.” And he particularizes, as an example, those wild Arabs, who, in every point of comparison, were as inaccessible to the gospel as the American Indians.

No such restriction was thought of by the Apostle Paul. He was a debtor not more to the Greeks than to the barbarians†. He maintains, that in the body of Christ “ there is neither Greek nor Jew, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free.” A position which evidently assumes, that barbarians or Scythians might be Christians no less than Jews or Greeks, bondmen or free.

No such restriction is to be found in the commission which the Lord Jesus hath left his church. Thus it runs “ Go and teach *all nations*—Go ye into *all the world*, and preach the gospel to *every creature*,” manifestly, every human creature, for such only are objects of the gospel-salvation. Not a syllable about civilization. And, unless it can be proved, that Indians, and other savages, are neither nations nor human creatures; or, if they are, that they are in no part of the world, the prejudice we are combating must be abandoned as in direct opposition to the will and the commandment of Christ.

Such a restriction, moreover, effaces the chief character and glory of the gospel, viz. that “ it is the *power of God* to salvation.” Were it what many take it to be, a system of mere moral suasion, of cool, philosophic argument, the case would be different, and the prejudice just. Indians and Hottentots are, indeed, rather rough materials for a religion cantly stiled *rational*. But whoever knows any thing of *real* Christianity, knows that the conversion of a sinner is the exclusive work of JEHOVAH the SPIRIT. It is this principle, and this alone,

* Translation of Isaiah, Notes, p. 198, 4to.

† Rom. i. 14. Col. iii. 11.

of the promise, worm Jacob threshes the mountains, and beats them small as chaff. It is

which makes the preaching of the word to men "dead in trespasses and sins," a *reasonable* service. Now, to say that the gospel *cannot* succeed among a people not previously civilized, is to say, either that it is *not* the power of God, or that there are some things too hard for Omnipotence.

3. This opinion, dissonant from reason and scripture, is also contrary to fact.

Was the world universally civilized when Christianity was promulged? or did it prosper only in civilized countries? What were the ancient Getulæ, in Africa? the Sarmatians and Scythians, in Europe? If we can credit history, they were as remote from civilization as the American Indians. Yet, among these, and other nations equally uncultivated and savage, had the gospel, in the time of Tertullian, established its reign*. And in Britain it penetrated into those places which Roman arts and arms had never been able to reach †.

This general assertion might be amplified in an interesting detail, and might receive additional force from the sanctions of modern history. But either would protract, to an immoderate length, a note already too long. We may, however, ask, why the gospel should be unequal to the effects which it formerly produced, and of which its friends made their just and unanswerable boast? Let us fairly risk the experiment, whether the cross of Christ has lost its influence on barbarian minds. Instead of waiting till civilization fit our Indian neighbours for the gospel, let us try whether the gospel will not be the most successful means of ci-

* *Tertull. adversus Judæos, cap. vii. opp. p. 189. ed. Rigaltii.*

† *Inaccessa Romanis loca. Id. ib. A number of testimonies to the same facts are collected in that learned work of Grotius, de veritate Religionis Christianæ, opp. tom. iii. p. 46, 47. Fol. Lond. 1679.*

the way of the Holy one of Israel to order his servants on difficult duty, without shewing them immediately how they are to succeed. Reserving to himself the manner and the praise of their victory, he lays upon them a necessity of trusting his faithfulness; and they never did, and never shall trust it in vain.

But why do I speak of difficulties? The most formidable ones which must be encountered in a mission to the Heathen, have been overcome, and are daily overcome, by the firmness and intrepidity of carnal men. *They* can visit the savage tribes, can cross their rivers, climb their mountains, traverse their forests; can learn their language, conform to their manners, acquire their confidence; can patiently submit to hunger and cold, fatigue and peril:—For what? To decorate earthly science, or to collect the dust of lucre, or the vapours of fame. They pretend to no divine command;

vilizing them. The grace of the Lord Jesus will do what philosophy and the arts will never do—tame the wild heart: and there is no doubt of a corresponding alteration in the conduct. One Christian institution alone, the holy Sabbath, will go farther to civilize them in a year, than all human expedients in a century. Driven continually before an extending frontier; their manners debauched by the commerce of unprincipled whites; their numbers diminishing by war and by vice; the only alternative which seems to be offered them is, conversion or extermination.

they think of no divine support. Yet we, who talk familiarly of both, turn pale at the mention of those obstacles which they continually surmount. Whence this resoluteness on the one side, and this timidity on the other? The uncourtly truth is, that the men of the world are *in earnest*, and we are *not*. And what must they, what can they conclude from our supineness? Either that our religion is false, or that we do not believe it? How long ere this reproach be wiped away? Duty urges; misery implores; thousands of precious souls are the depending stake; and not a moment is to be lost. In the work before us, in the immortal work of evangelizing the Heathen, let us rouse each latent energy, and brave opposition like good soldiers of Jesus Christ. And certainly the encouragement is as great as the call is pressing. As far as man, with the lights of prophecy, can judge, the time is not very distant, when God shall arise, and have mercy upon Zion. What mean these dire convulsions? this crash of kingdoms? these torrents of blood? He who can here discover only the shock of human interests, or the madness of human passions, hath not penetrated beyond secondary and instrumental agencies. From the eminence of scriptural prediction, a humble believer overlooks the mole-hill of worldly po-

litics, and describes the moving power, and the necessary effect, of the machinery of Providence. To him it is evident that Jehovah "shakes the nations," and is shaking them, that "the desire of all nations may come." And hence his faith derives an establishment, and his hope an elevation, which earth is as unable to destroy as to create. Impending calamity, then, should stimulate, and not dishearten, the disciples of Jesus. The walls of Jerusalem are commonly built in troublous times. Nor hath the career of the gospel been ever more ample and brilliant, than in the days which were memorable for "distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear; and looking after those things which were coming upon the earth*." In these circumstances of disaster and dismay, the people of God are charged to look up, and lift up their heads, because their redemption draweth nigh, and the Son of Man is coming with great power and glory. If these are, in any degree, the signs of the times, then, *now* is the time for the armies of Israel to gird every man his sword on his thigh, and follow David, his king, to conquest and to glory.

* Luke xxi. 25, 26.

If from the sphere of politics we turn to that of religion, we shall behold events which ought to convert every doubt into proof, and every wish into a vow. While the spirit of discord rages in the world, the spirit of union and of love descends upon the church. Beyond the waters of the Atlantic, our brethren in the faith and patience of Jesus, rejoice in his most benignant influences. Astonishing spectacle! The spell of party is broken; the antipathies of the cradle expire; the strife of ages ceases; and a sweeter harmony of heart and of measures, among Christians of different name, is produced in an hour, than has been granted to the entreaties, the labours, the prayers, of the best of men, for centuries together!

Do you demand the cause of this gracious unanimity? It is the doing of the Lord. Its object? It is the extension of the Mediator's kingdom. Its fruits? They are, already, embassies of peace to the Heathen. Great is the company who have gone forth, with primitive zeal, to publish the word of life. The probability is that Christ crucified, that Christ whom our souls love, is, at this moment, preached to the barbarians of the southern seas; and that an evangelical mission is on its way to the interior of Africa! Ye servants of the most high God, who shew unto the Gentiles the way of salva-

tion, all hail! May the Breaker go up before you; even Jehovah on the head of you; may he cheer you with his presence, fill you with his Spirit, clothe you with his blessing! And what more auspicious omen can we, my brethren, desire? When the work is actually begun; when it has received the most unequivocal tokens of divine approbation, shall we still linger, and tempt the Lord by asking any further signs? To him who is not blind, the finger of his providence points; to him who is not deaf, the voice of his providence calls. In-
 eitement of a more imperious kind would encroach on the province of miracle.

If to these encouragements we add the promise of our master in heaven, reluctance will be cut off from her last retreat. He hath said, that he will be with his people in their attempts to teach the nations. If, on a design so truly Christian, we go in *his* name, and in *his* strength, we have a *right* to expect his aid; nor is it possible that he should abandon us, or put us to shame. He hath bound himself by the oath of his covenant, to beat down opposition before those who, obedient to his authority, constrained by his love, and confiding in his truth, enter upon arduous duty; and the glory of his crown is staked on the issue. With the Lord of Hosts on our side, whom or what shall we

fear? To him all difficulties are alike. At his command the treasures of the earthling shall flow in the service of the cross; and hundreds shall arise to solicit, as an enviable distinction, the office of a gospel-herald to the savages. Clad in the armour of the sanctuary, and conducted by the " Captain of salvation," they shall go forth " conquering and to conquer." Ere his promise fail, the mountains shall sink, the vallies rise, the rivers be driven back to their sources, and Ocean again divide his waters. Who, then, are on the Lord's side? Who prefer the salvation of men above their chiefest joy? Who burn to hide the dishonour of the past in the glory of the future, and aspire to the dignity of being fellow workers with God? Let them, with one heart and one soul, in the faith of the gospel, in the good will of brethren, in the bowels of Jesus Christ, forthwith pledge themselves to each other, to those apostolical believers beyond the sea, to the Heathen, who are perishing for lack of vision, that they will unite their efforts to fill the dark places of the land with the light of God's salvation. Should we succeed in the conversion of a single Pagan, the acquisition would infinitely repay our expenditure and our toil. For our Lord himself hath pronounced the whole world, in comparison with *one soul*, to be a thing of nought.

But O, my brethren, who shall count the number, or define the extent, or limit the duration, of those blessings which *our* exertions may be instrumental in imparting to the Heathen! Who shall stop the river of life in its course through their parched soil? Most transporting thought! that thousands of believers whom we shall never see in the flesh; and tens of thousands, who shall come into being when we are gathered unto our fathers, may trace their knowledge of the Saviour to the execution of that plan in virtue of which I address you this evening! and that its magnificent result may never be fully disclosed, till the mystery of providence be finished, the election of grace brought in, and the shout of final redemption thunder through the temple of God!

a powerful sermon.
Wm.

Living Faith:

A

S E R M O N,

PREACHED BEFORE THE SOCIETY

FOR THE RELIEF OF

THE DESTITUTE SICK,

On the Evening of Sabbath, the 1st of November, 1801,

In Bristo Street Meeting House, Edinburgh.

LIVING FAITH, &c.

ACTS xv. 9. compared with GAL. v. 6.

*Purifying their hearts by Faith,—Faith which
worketh by Love.*

THE church of Christ, *chosen out of the world* to bear his cross and to partake of his holiness, has, from the very nature of her vocation, many obstacles to surmount, and many foes to vanquish. A warfare, on the issue of which are staked her privileges, her consolations, her everlasting hope, opens an ample field for exertion, and ought to concentrate her strength and wisdom. Unhappily, however, controversies about things which do not involve her substantial interests, have, at all times, interrupted her peace and marred her beauty. Weakness, prejudice, and passion found their way into the little family of the Master himself; and, even after the descent of the Spirit of truth, invaded and violated his sanctuary. Disputes concerning the Mosaic ritual had arisen among Christians to so great a height, and were conducted with so much

ardour and so little love, that the power of godliness was in danger of being stifled in a contest about the form, and the Head of the church deemed it necessary to interpose his rebuke. "Whether ye are called Jews or Gentiles; whether ye observe or neglect some formulas of the typical law, are not questions which should kindle your animosities and exhaust your vigors. A more awful subject claims your inquiries. While you are occupied in vain jangling, the winged moments are hurrying your souls to their eternal state. Are you ready to depart? Is your title to the kingdom clear? Pause, listen, examine. *In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but a new creature; but a faith of the operation of God; but a faith which purifies the heart and works by love.*"

To us, my brethren, not less than to those early professors of the cross, is the heavenly oracle addressed. We, too, have our weaknesses, our prejudices, our passions, which often embark us in foolish and frivolous litigation. We, too, have immortal souls of which the whole world cannot repay the loss, and which are hastening to the bar of God's righteousness. Come, then, let us endeavour to collect our wandering thoughts; to shut out the illusions of external habit; to put a negative on

the importunities of sense, and try whether our religion will endure the ordeal of God's word. If our faith is genuine, it *purifies the heart, and works by love*. Precious faith, therefore, in its effects upon spiritual character; that faith which draws the line of immutable distinction between a believer and an unbeliever, and without which no man has a right to call himself a Christian, is the subject of our present consideration. And while the treasure is in an earthen vessel, may the excellency of the power be of God!

Before we attempt to analyse the operations of faith, we must obtain correct views of its nature.

Some imagine it to be a general profession of Christianity, and a decent compliance with its ceremonial. They accordingly compliment each other's religion, and are astonished and displeased if we demur at conceding that all are good Christians who have not ranged themselves under the banners of open infidelity.

Others, advancing a step farther, suppose that faith is an assent to the truth of the gospel founded on the investigation of its rational evidence. Without asking what proportion of the multitudes who profess Christianity have either

leisure, or means, or talents for such an investigation, let us test this dogma by plain fact. Among those legions of accursed spirits whom *God has delivered into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment*, and their miserable associates of the human race, who have already *perished from his presence*, there is not one who doubts the truth of revelation. Men may be sceptics in this world, but they carry no scepticism with them into the bottomless pit. They have there rational evidence which it is impossible to resist; evidence, shining in the blaze of everlasting burnings, that *every word of God is pure*. That faith, then, by which we are saved, must be altogether different from a conviction, however rational, which is yet compatible with a state of perdition. If any incline to set light by this representation, as taking the advantage of our ignorance, and retreating into obscurity which we cannot explore, let him open his eyes on the common occurrences of life. He may see, for there is not even the shadow of concealment, he may see both these good Christians of fashion, and these good Christians of argument, *without God in the world*—He may see them betraying those very tempers, and pursuing those very courses, by which the Bible describes *the workers of iniquity*—He may see them despis-

ing, reproaching, persecuting that profession and practice, which, if the Scriptures are true, must belong to such as *live godly in Christ Jesus*. Of both these classes of pretended Christians the faith is found to be spurious, and at an infinite remove from the faith of God's elect: for in neither of them does it *purify the heart, or work by love*. The Scriptures teach us better.

As faith, in general, is reliance upon testimony, and respects *solely* the veracity of the testifier; so that faith which constitutes a man a believer before God, is a simple and absolute reliance upon his testimony, exhibited in his word, on this solid and SINGLE ground, that *he is the God who cannot lie*. It was not a process of reasoning, which rivetted in Abraham's mind the persuasion that *in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed*, and procured him the appellation of *the father of the faithful*. It was an act of NAKED TRUST in the veracity of his covenant-God, not only *without*, but *above*, and *against* the consultations of *flesh and blood*. Abraham BELIEVED GOD, believed him in hope, against hope; and it *was counted to him for righteousness*. It is the same at this hour. *The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it*—must silence every objection, and cut short every debate. And they who do not *thus* receive the Scriptures, cannot give another proof

that they believe in God, as a promising God, at all.

The testimony of God which faith respects, comprising the whole revelation of his will, centers, particularly, in the free grant which he has made of his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to sinners of the human race; assuring them, that *whosoever believeth on him shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life*; that *he will be a Father unto them, and they shall be his sons and his daughters*; that *he will dwell in them, and walk in them, and be their God, blessing them*, in their precious Redeemer, *with all spiritual and heavenly blessings*. Now that faith after which we are inquiring, consists precisely in "receiving" and resting upon Christ Jesus for salvation, "as he is offered to us in the gospel," that is, in the testimony of his Father.

This faith is not the creature of human power. It is a contradiction to suppose that men can argue themselves, or be argued by others, into a reliance upon the testimony of God. Because this implies a spiritual perception of his eternal veracity: whereas the reason of man is corrupted by sin, and the natural tendency of corrupted reason is to *change the truth of God into a lie*. Nothing can rise above its own level, nor pass the limits of its being. It were more rational to expect that men should

be born of beasts, or angels of men, than that a principle of life and purity should be engendered by death in a mass of corruption: And carnal men are DEAD *in trespasses and sins*. Cast it, therefore, into the fairest mould; polish, and adorn it with your most exquisite skill, *that which is born of the flesh* will still be *flesh*; weak, corrupt, abominable: *enmity against the law of God*, and, if possible, more rank enmity against the gospel of Jesus Christ. From this source it is vain to look for *faith in his blood*. We must seek it higher.

It is of divine original. A gift which “ com-
 “ eth down from the Father of lights: By grace
 “ are ye saved, through faith, and that not of
 “ yourselves; it is the gift of God.”

It is of *grace*—For it is one of those covenant-mercies which were purchased by the Saviour’s merit, and are freely bestowed for his sake. “ It is given us, on the behalf of Christ, “ to believe on his name.”

Of *grace*—Because it is a fruit of the gracious Spirit. As Jehovah the Sanctifier, he creates and preserves it in the soul. For this reason he is called the *Spirit of faith*, which is, therefore, *of the operation of God*.

FROM this faith, there result two glorious effects. Let us consider them, in their turn, as they are stated in the text.

I. *It purifies the heart.*

Human depravity is a first principle in the oracles of God. *From within, out of the heart proceed those evil thoughts, and evil words, and evil deeds, which defile, disgrace, and destroy the man.* And he who refuses to admit the severe application of this doctrine to himself, has not yet arrived at the point from which he must set out in a course of real and consistent piety. He may, indeed, "flatter himself in his own eyes until his iniquity be found to be hateful, but who shall ascend into the hill of God? or who shall stand in his holy place?" *He, and he only, who has clean hands, and a pure heart.* Now, as it is the grace of faith by which a sinner obtains that purity which qualifies him for the fellowship and kingdom of God, we are to enquire, in what the purity of the heart consists? And what is the influence of faith in producing it?

The *heart* is a term by which the Scriptures frequently express the faculties and affections of man. As the pollutions of sin have pervaded them all, they all need the purification of grace.

At the head of the perverted tribe stands a *guilty conscience*. Stern, gloomy, suspicious, it cannot abide the presence of a righteous God; and yet lashes the offender with a whip of scorpions. To render the conscience pure, pardon

must intervene and shelter it from that curse which rouses both its resentments and its terrors. This is effected by *the blood of the covenant*, which, “ speaking better things than the blood “ of Abel, sprinkles the heart from an evil con- “ science.”

The *will* is purified, when it is delivered from its rebellion against the authority of God, and cordially submits to his good pleasure. This, too, is from above: *For his people are made willing in the day of his power.*

The *understanding* is purified, when its errors are corrected, and the mists of delusion dissipated. When its estimate of sin and holiness; of things carnal, and things spiritual; of time and of eternity, corresponds with the sentence of the divine word. This also is from above. “ The eyes of our understanding are enlight- “ ened, that we may know what is the hope of “ his calling, and what is the riches of the glory “ of his inheritance in the saints; and what is “ the exceeding greatness of his power to us- “ ward who believe.”

In fine, the *affections* are purified when they are diverted from objects trifling and base, to objects great and dignified. When they cease to be at the command of every hellish suggestion, and every vagrant lust—When they add to the crucifixion of those profligate appetites

in the gratification of which the ungodly man places his honour, his profit, and his paradise, their delight in a reconciled God as the infinite good—When they aspire to *things above, where Jesus Christ sitteth at God's right hand*; breathe after his communion; and are disciplined and chastened as becometh the affections of a breast which the Holy Ghost condescends to make his temple.—Such affections are surely from heavenly inspiration: for thus saith God, “ I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.”

While the purification of the heart, thus explained from the Scriptures, is the work of the divine Spirit, it is accomplished by the instrumentality of faith. For he *purifies the heart by faith*. Under his blessed direction, the grace of faith possesses a double influence.

1. As a principle of *moral suasion**, it pre-

* By moral suasion is here meant, not that kind of reasoning which one graceless man may address to the understanding of another; but those persuasives to holiness which the Spirit of God in his word addresses to his grace in the heart. These faith applies and improves.

sents to the mind considerations the most forcible and tender for breaking the power of sin, and promoting the reign of holiness. The presence, the majesty, the holiness of God—the sanctity of his law—his everlasting love in the Lord Jesus—the affecting expression of that love in *setting him forth to be a propitiation for sin*—The wonders of his pardoning mercy—The grace of Christ Jesus himself in becoming *sin for them, that they might be made the righteousness of God in him*—The condescension of the Holy Ghost, who deigns to dwell in them as their Sanctifier—The genius of their vocation—The connection of holy obedience with their own peace, their brethren's comfort, and their Master's glory—These, and similar motives which arise from the exercise of precious faith, operate mightily in causing believers to *walk humbly with their God. The love of Christ constraineth us, even as a rational inducement, to live henceforth not unto ourselves, but unto him that died for us and rose again.* And while a graceless man is deterred from the commission of crime, not by a regard to God's authority, or by gratitude for his loving-kindness, but by calculations of prudence, or fear of penalty, a Christian, acting like himself, repels temptation with a more generous and filial remonstrance, *How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God!*

But, brethren, I should wrong the Redeemer's truth, and enfeeble the consolations of his people, were I to confine the efficacy of faith in purifying the heart to the influence of *motive*. I have not mentioned its chief prerogative; for,

2. Faith is that invaluable grace by which we have both union and communion with our Lord Jesus Christ. In the moment of believing, I become, though naturally an accursed branch, *a tree of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah that he may be glorified*: I am no longer *a root in a dry ground*, but am *planted by the rivers of water, even the water of life, which proceedeth out of the throne of God and of the Lamb*.—I am engrafted into the true vine, and bring forth fruit in participating of its sap and fatness.—I am made a member of the body of Christ, *of his flesh and of his bones*; so that the spirit which animates his body pervades every fibre of my frame as one of its living members. His vital influence warms my heart. Because he lives, I live: Because he is holy, I am holy: Because he hath died unto sin, I reckon myself dead unto sin. This is the fruit of union.

Communion with him is, properly speaking, a *common interest* with him in his covenant-perfection, The benefits of this communion flow

into the soul in the exercise of faith. Whatever Jesus has done for his people, (and their sanctification is the best part of his work,) he conveys to them in the promise of the gospel, and that promise is enjoyed in believing. It is by faith that I live upon the *Great God my Saviour*, and make use of him as *Jehovah my strength*. By faith I am privileged to go with boldness into the holiest of all, and be it reverently spoken, to press my Father in heaven with reasons as strong why he should sanctify me, as he can address to me why I should endeavour to sanctify myself. Lord, am I not thine? the called of thy grace? redeemed by the blood of thy dear Son? Hast thou not promised? Hast thou not sworn? Hast thou not pledged thy being, that none who come to thee in his name shall be rejected? Is it not for thy praise that my heart be purified, and I made meet for walking *in the light of thy countenance among the nations of the saved*? Wilt thou leave me to conflict alone unaided, unfriended, with my furious corruptions, and my implacable foes? Wilt thou, though intreated *for thy servant David's sake*, refuse to work *in me all the good pleasure of thy goodness, and the work of faith with power*? I cannot, *will not let thee go except thou blest me*. Such faith is strong; it is omnipotent; it lays hold on the very attributes

of the Godhead, and brings prompt and effectual succour into the labouring spirit. This is the reason why it purifies the heart? I know, that to such as have never been brought under the bond of God's covenant, I am speaking unintelligible things. Blessed be his name, that, continuing carnal, ye cannot understand them. If ye could, our hope would be no better than your own. But I speak to some whose burning souls say Amen to the doctrine, and rejoice in the consolation; who, in the struggle with corruption and temptation, have *cried unto God with their voice, even unto God with their voice, and he heard their cry; and bowed his heavens and came down; gave them deliverance and victory; and shed abroad in their bosoms the serenity of his grace.*—These are precious demonstrations of his purifying their hearts by faith.

It is obvious, that the fruits of faith, which have been now enumerated, cannot be exposed to the eye of the worldling. Deposited in the *hidden man of the heart*, they are privileges and *joys with which no stranger intermeddles*. Shall we thence conclude, that the faith from which they spring is unsusceptible of external proof, and never extends its benign influence beyond the happy individual who possesses it? By no means. This would be an

error too gross for any but the theoretical religionist. The text ascribes it to a *social* effect :
For,

II. It doth not more certainly purify the heart, than it *worketh by love*.

Love is the master-principle of all good society. It is the holy bond which connects man with man, and angel with angel, and angels with men, and all with God. It is itself an emanation from his own purity. For *God is love: and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him*. Consequently, the new man, whom regenerating grace creates in elected sinners, and whose activities are maintained by faith, must be governed by love. Its first and most natural exercise is toward that God who *hath loved them with an everlasting love, and therefore with loving-kindness hath drawn them*. It is the apprehension by faith of Jehovah's love to them in Christ, anticipating them with mercy, forgiving them all trespasses, loading them with covenant-favour, which softens their obduracy, melts them into tenderness, and excites the gracious re-action of love toward their reconciled Father. *We love him*, says an apostle who had drunk deeply into the spirit of his Master, *we love him, because he first loved us*.

As an enemy to God is, by the very nature of his temper, an enemy to himself and to all

other creatures, so in one whose heart the *love of God is shed abroad by the Holy Ghost*, not only consults his own true happiness, but is led to consult the happiness of others. *Charity*, saith the apostle Paul, "suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly; seeketh not her own; is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things; believeth all things; hopeth all things; endureth all things." The Scriptures, indeed, mark love to the brethren as the great practical proof of our Christianity. Nothing can be more peremptory than the language of the beloved disciple—*If a man say, "I love God," and hateth his brother, he is a LIAR: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?* On this point, however, there will be little dispute. Men are instinctively led, to measure, by their social effects, all pretensions of love to God. The question before us, and of which the scriptural decision will be far from uniting the mass of suffrage, is, how *faith works by love?*

The apostle asserts, that the faith of a Christian, instead of being a merely speculative assent to the abstract truth of the gospel, is an active moral principle, which cannot have

its just course without embodying itself in deeds of goodness. The reasons are many and manifest—By faith in Christ Jesus, we are justified before God, our natural enmity against him is slain, and his love finds access to our hearts, By faith we embrace the *exceeding great and precious promises*, and, in embracing them, *are made partakers of the divine nature*; so that *we are filled with all the fulness of God*; and out of the abundance of the heart, not only does the mouth speak, but the man act: By faith we converse with our Lord Jesus Christ; are conformed to him; *follow him in the regeneration*; and learn to imitate that great example which he left us when he *went about doing good*. By faith we obtain the promised Spirit who sanctifies our powers both of mind and body, so that *we yield our members instruments of righteousness unto God*. By faith in Christ's blood, which redeems us from the curse of the law, we are also liberated from the vassalage of sin: *for the strength of sin is the law*; and, receiving the law as fulfilled and satisfied by his righteousness, come under its obligation in his covenant, and are enabled to keep it by his grace. Now *the fulfilling of the law, is love*; love and kindness to God and our neighbour, in all our social relations: It is, therefore, impossible that faith should not work by love.

All the directions of the book of God, for the practice of the moral virtues, consider them as the evolution of the principle of love residing in a heart which has been purified by faith. Our Lord's sermon on the mount, by the perversion of which many have seduced themselves and others into a lying confidence in their own fancied merits, was preached, not to the promiscuous multitude, but to his *disciples*, who professed *faith in his name*. And the scriptures of the apostles, especially the apostle of the Gentiles, follow the same order. They address their instructions to the *church of God*—to the *saints*—to such as have *obtained like precious faith with themselves*. Not a moral precept escapes from their pen, till they have displayed the riches of redeeming love. But when, like wise master-builders, they have laid a broad and stable foundation in the doctrines of faith, they rear, without delay, the fair fabric of practical holiness.—It is after they have conducted their pupils to the *holiest of all, through the new and living way which Jesus hath opened*, that you hear their exhorting voice, “Mortify, therefore, your members
 “which are upon the earth; fornication, un-
 “cleanness, inordinate affection, evil concu-
 “piscence, and covetousness which is idolatry.
 “—Put off also all these, anger, wrath, malice,

“ blasphemy, filthy communication out of your
 “ mouth.—Lie not one to another, seeing ye
 “ have put off the old man with his deeds, and
 “ have put on the new man which is renewed
 “ in knowledge after the image of him that
 “ created him; where there is neither Greek
 “ nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision;
 “ barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ
 “ is all and in all. Put on, therefore, as the
 “ elect of God, (for this very reason that ye
 “ *are* his elect), holy and beloved, put on
 “ bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of
 “ mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing
 “ one another, and forgiving one another if
 “ any man have a quarrel against any, even as
 “ Christ forgave you, so also do ye.” *And*
above all these things, above bowels of mercies,
above kindness, above humbleness of mind,
above meekness, above long-suffering, above
forbearance, above forgiveness, above all these
things, put on CHARITY which is the bond of
perfectness. If the apostles, then, understood
their own doctrine; or rather, if the Spirit, by
whom they spake, knows what is in man, we
are not to look for real love, i. e. for true mo-
rality, from any who are not the children of
God by faith in Christ Jesus. And, on the
contrary, this faith is the most prolific source
of good actions; because it purges the fountain

of all action, and sends forth its vigorous and healthful streams, *purifying the heart, and working by love.*

I should be unfaithful, my brethren, to truth and to you, were I to dismiss this subject without employing its aid for repelling an attack which is often made upon the Christian religion—for refuting the calumny which pretended friends have thrown upon its peculiar glory, the doctrine of faith—for correcting the error of those who, separating faith from holiness, have *a name to live and are dead*—and for stimulating believers to evince, by their example, both the truth of their profession and the power of their faith.

The enemies of the gospel have invented various excuses for their infidelity. At one time, there is a defect of historical document: at another, they cannot surrender their reason to inexplicable mystery. Now, they are stumbled at a mission sanctioned by miracle: then, the proofs of revelation are too abstracted and metaphysical: and presently they discover, that no proof whatever can verify a revelation to a third person. But when they are driven from all these subterfuges: when the Christian apologist has demonstrated that it is not the want of evidence, but of honesty; that it is not an enlightened understanding, but a corrupted heart,

which impels them to reject the religion of Jesus, they turn hardily round and impeach its *moral* influence!! They will make it responsible for all the mischiefs and crimes; for all the sorrows, and convulsions, and ruins which have scourged the world since its first propagation.

Before such a charge can be substantiated, the structure of the human mind must be altered; the nature of things reversed; the doctrine of principle and motive abandoned for ever. It is only for the forlorn hope of impiety to engage in an enterprize so mad and desperate. Say, Can a religion which commands me to *love my neighbour as myself*, generate or foster malignant and murderous passions? Can a religion which assures me, that *all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone*, encourage a spirit of dissimulation and fraud? Can a religion which requires me to *possess my vessel in sanctification and honour*, indulge me in violating the laws of sexual purity? in breaking up the sanctuary of my neighbour's peace? in throwing upon the mercy of Scandal's clarion the fair fame of female virtue? Can a religion which forbids me to be *conformed to this world*, cherish that infuriate ambition which hurls desolation over the earth, and fertilizes her fields with the blood

of men? Can a religion?—But I forbear—
*From whence come wars and fightings among
 you? Come they not hence, even from your lusts?*
 Those very lusts from which it is the province
 of faith to purify the heart? The infidel pleads
 for his unholy propensions, on the pretext that
 they are *innocent* because they are *natural* :
 And when a thousand curses to himself and
 to society follow their indulgence, he charges
 the consequence upon a religion which enjoins
 their crucifixion, and which, to give them their
 career, he trampled under foot. But stop, vain
 man! Was it the religion of Jesus Christ, which,
 on its first promulgation, *breathed out threaten-*
ings and slaughter? shut up the saints in prison?
punished them oft in every synagoge? compelled
them to blaspheme? and being exceedingly mad
against them, persecuted them even unto strange
cities? Was it the religion of Jesus Christ
 which, in its subsequent progress, illuminated
 the city of Rome with the conflagration of a
 thousand stakes, consuming, by the most excru-
 ciating of deaths, a thousand guiltless vic-
 tims*? Was it the religion of Jesus Christ
 which, at a later period, when the Tiber over-
 flowed, or the Nile did not overflow; when
 the earth quaked, or the heavens withheld

* Tacit. Annal. lib. xv. cap. 44.

their rain; when famine or pestilence smote the nations, ordered its opposers to the lions*? Was it in obedience to the religion of Jesus Christ, after the expulsion of pagan idolatry, that the *mother of harlots and abominations of the earth* became drunk with the blood of the *saints and with the blood of the martyrs*?—Was it the religion of Jesus Christ which, after being rejected with marks of an unexampled insult, suggested to the knights-errant of blasphemy, the project of regenerating the world by the power of atheistical philosophy? Was it this religion which taught them to blot out the great moral institute of society, the Sabbath of the Lord? to extinguish the best affections of the human heart, to break asunder the strongest ties of human life, and to subvert the basis of human relations, by exploding the marriage-covenant? This, which instigated them to offer up hecatombs of human sacrifices to every rising and every setting sun? to hew down, with equal indifference, the venerable matron and her hoary lord; the vigorous youth, the blooming maid, the sportive boy, and the prattling babe? and while they were thus writing the history of their philosophical experiments in the blood of the dead and the tears of the living, to

*Tertull. Apolog. cap. 40.

boast the victories of their *virtue*? But my soul sickens—Ah, no! *The wisdom which cometh from above*, that wisdom which the gospel teaches, *is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated; full of compassion and of good fruits; without partiality, and without hypocrisy.* Such was its imposing aspect in the primitive ages. ‘Give me a man,’ said a celebrated father of the church, the eloquent Lactantius, ‘give me a man passionate, slanderous, un governable: with a very few words of God I will render him as placid as a lamb. Give me a man greedy, avaricious, penurious: I will give him back to you liberal, and lavishing his gold with a munificent hand. Give me a man who shrinks from pain and death; and he shall presently contemn the stake, the gibbet, the wild beast. Give me one who is libidinous, an adulterer, a debauchee; and you shall see him sober, chaste, temperate. Give me one cruel and blood-thirsty? and that fury of his shall be converted into clemency itself. Give me one addicted to injustice, to folly, to crime; and he shall, without delay, become just, and prudent, and harmless*.’

Similar, in proportion to its reception by

* Lact. *De falsa Sapientia*, lib. iii. cap. 25.

faith, are still the effects of this blessed gospel. What has exploded those vices which, though once practised even by philosophers, cannot now be so much as named? What has softened the manners, and refined the intercourse, of men? What is it which turns any of them from sin to God, and makes them conscientious, humble, pure, though at the expence of ridicule and scorn from the licentious and the gay? What has espoused the cause of suffering humanity? Who explores the hospital, the dungeon, the darksome retreat of unknown, unpitied anguish. The infidel philosopher? Alas, he amuses himself with dreams of universal benevolence, while the wretch perishes unheeded at his feet: and scruples not to murder the species in *detail*, that he may promote its happiness in *the gross*! On his proud list of *general* benefactors, you will look in vain for the name of a HOWARD; and in their system of conduct your search will be equally fruitless for the traces of his spirit. Christianity claims, as her own, both the man and his principles. *She* formed his character, sketched his plans, and inspired his zeal. And might the modesty of goodness be overcome; might the sympathies of the heart assume visible form; might secret and silent philanthropy be called into view, ten thousand Howards would issue, at this moment,

from her temples; from the habitations of her sons; from the dreary abodes of sickness and of death. Tell me not of those foul deeds which have been perpetrated in her name. Tell me not that her annals are filled with the exploits of imposture and fanaticism: that her priests and her princes have been ambitious, profligate, and cruel: that they have bared the arm of persecution, and shed innocent blood upon the rack and the scaffold; at the stake and in the field: that they have converted whole nations into hordes of banditti, and led them, under the auspices of the cross, to pillage and massacre their brethren who boasted only the "simple virtues" of pagans and infidels. The question is not what actions her name has been abused to sanctify, but what have accorded with her principles, and are prompted by her spirit? It is no discovery of yesterday, that *Satan is transformed into an angel of light; and therefore no great thing if his ministers also be transformed into ministers of righteousness.* Ignorance and dishonesty have often borrowed a Christian guise for the more successful practice of knavery and rapine. But when they have violated all the maxims of the Christian religion; when they have contemned her remonstrances, and stifled her cries; shall they be permitted to plead her authority? Or

shall the scoffer insult her with the charge of being their accomplice and adviser? No! In so far as men do not study *whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report*, they evince not the power of faith, but the power of unbelief; in other words, not the spirit of the gospel, but a spirit directly opposed to it; *i. e.* the spirit of infidelity. If, then, you think to justify your incredulity by shewing a man, who to a profession of Christianity adds a life of crime, the indignant gospel tears the mask from his face, and exposes to your view the features of a brother. Whatever be his profession, we disown his kindred; he acts wickedly, not because he is a Christian, but because he is *not* a Christian. His crimes conspire with his hypocrisy to prove him an infidel.

Here we must part with some who have cheerfully accompanied us in the detection and reproof of avowed unbelievers. For I am to employ the doctrine of the text for refuting the calumny which pretended friends have thrown upon the peculiar glory of Christianity, the doctrine of *faith*.

Multitudes, and would to God that none of them were found among the teachers of religion, multitudes who profess warm zeal for revelation, are yet hostile to all those cardinal

truths which alone render it worthy of a struggle. Omitting the mockery of such as call Christ *Lord, Lord*, while they rob him of every perfection which qualifies him to be the Saviour of sinners, let me call your attention to those whose enmity is particularly directed against the doctrine that has been preached to you this evening. Nothing, to use their own stile, can exceed their veneration for religion in general; but if you venture to speak of the righteousness of the Son of God "imputed to us, and received by faith alone;" if you insist on the desperate wickedness of the heart, and the necessity of Almighty Power to regenerate and cleanse it; if you rejoice in the blessedness of that union with the Lord Jesus which places you beyond the reach of condemnation; so that "neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor heighth, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate you from his love," or shut you out of his kingdom, you must expect to pass, with *rational* Christians, for a weak, though perhaps well-meaning enthusiast: nay, you must expect to hear those blessed truths which are the life of your soul, stigmatized as relaxing the obligations of the moral law; as withdrawing the most cogent motives to obey its

precepts; as ministring incentives to all ungodliness. Impossible! Nothing but ignorance of the grace of God in its saving energy, could give birth or aliment to such a slander. It proceeds on the supposition that a sinner may be pardoned, and not sanctified; that he may be delivered from penalty, and yet retain an unabated affection for his lusts. Were this the fact; did faith in Christ's blood set him free from the condemning authority of God's law, and yet leave him under the tyranny of sinful habits, there is no doubt, that it would encourage him *to work all uncleanness with greediness*. But the reverse is true. The blood of Jesus Christ, applied by faith, does not more certainly abolish guilt, than it paralyzes lust. *He is made of God unto us*, in a connection which nothing can dissolve, *wisdom, and righteousness, and SANCTIFICATION*. *Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin*. The grace of faith is the leading faculty of that *new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness*. Holiness is the proper element of a believer, as sin is the proper element of an unbeliever. And, therefore, although the *notion* of grace may be abused to licentiousness, the *principle* never can; for it is that principle from which we learn to *deny un-*

godliness, and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. To insinuate, then, that the doctrine of free and plenary justification by faith in Christ Jesus, tends to licentiousness, is to give the lie direct to the testimony of the Holy Ghost and to the uniform experience of his people. Whoever cherishes such an opinion, however highly esteemed by himself or by others, is not a Christian; he is *in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.* But there is no cause of wonder. *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him.* It has been so from the beginning; and will continue so to the end. The objection which he makes, at this hour, to the doctrine of grace, is as stale as it is unfounded. It is the very objection which was combated by the apostle Paul. *What shall we say then?* exclaimed his adversaries, when he preached justification by faith through the imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus, and the absolute certainty of being saved from wrath through him in virtue of believing, *what shall we say then? shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?* Or, in modern language, Does not this doctrine of yours tempt men to throw the reign upon the neck of their passions, by removing the fear of condemnation, and espe-

cially by furnishing them with the pretext, that the more they sin, the more grace is exalted in their pardon, seeing that *where sin hath abounded, grace doth much more abound?* The apostle admits, that the depraved heart is prone to draw such a conclusion, and that it was actually drawn by his enemies: who took occasion from it to represent him as *making void the law*. But he repels it with the most indignant reprobation. *God forbid!* The inference is absurd. *How shall we that are DEAD to sin, LIVE any longer therein?* That doctrine, therefore, which wicked men never accuse of leading to licentiousness, is NOT the doctrine of God's word. That doctrine, on the contrary, against which, by misrepresenting it, they bring this accusation, is the very doctrine of the apostle. But its true and only effect, which we maintain, which the Scriptures teach, and which all believers experience and exemplify, is, that *sin shall not reign in their mortal body, that they should fulfil it in the lusts thereof*.

Of the same nature, and from the same source with the calumny which I have endeavoured to refute, is the practical error of many who, separating faith from holiness, *have a name to live and are dead*. The error must be rectified, for it is fatal. Some console themselves with their *doctrinal* accuracy, while their

hearts and conduct are estranged from moral rectitude. They hope that their faith, however inactive, shall save them at last. Others, in the opposite extreme, disregarding faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, trust in their upright intentions and actions. They know little of what Christians call *believing*, but they are good *moral* men. Their gospel is the trite and delusive aphorism,

“He can’t be wrong, whose life is in the right;”
not considering, that

He can’t be right, whose faith is in the wrong.

They talk, indeed, on both sides, with much familiarity, of “our holy religion,” as if its best influences had descended upon themselves. Holy religion it is: but what made it *yours*? One of you does not pretend to *have RECEIVED Christ Jesus the Lord*; the other, notwithstanding his profession, has no solicitude to *WALK in him*: and both are equally far from the salvation of God. Jesus Christ is *the way, the truth, and the life*; *no man cometh unto the Father but by him*: No man entertains good thoughts, or performs good works, without being a *partaker of his holiness*. Every plant which his heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. At the great day of his appearance to judge the world in righteousness,

no virtue will be approved which did not grow upon his cross, was not consecrated by his blood, and nourished by his Spirit. *Such* virtues, however they may be applauded here, are only brilliant acts of rebellion against him, and will not, for one moment, relieve the rebels from the *damnation of hell*. Nor let those whose belief does not purify the heart, nor work by love, flatter themselves that their condition is better, or that their doom shall be more tolerable. Whatever judgment shall be measured to others, *they who know their Lord's will, and do it not, shall be beaten with many stripes*. Be not deceived. The threatening bears directly upon you. You profess to know God, but in works you deny him. *Your* inconsistency reproaches his truth, and causes his enemies to blaspheme. *You* lay stumbling-blocks in the way of the unwary. *You* multiply the victims of that very infidelity against which you declaim: and, in as far as they have been seduced by your example, their blood shall be required at your hands. For yourselves, if you die without being *renewed in the spirit of your minds*, your faith will not save you. The farce of a mock profession will terminate in the tragedy of real and everlasting woe. Oh, then, *while it is called TO-DAY, harden not your hearts!* To sinners of every class and character, the forgiveness of God is preached. From his throne

in heaven the Saviour speaks this evening. "Unto you, O men, do I call, and my voice is to the sons of men! Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness: behold I bring near my righteousness." In him is grace, and peace, and life. Now, therefore, *choose life that ye may live.* And may his blessed Spirit visit you with his salvation, creating in you that faith which purifies the heart, and works by love!

Finally, Let Christians be admonished by the doctrine of my text to evince, in their behaviour, both the truth of their profession and the power of their faith.

They cannot too often nor too solemnly repeat the question of their Lord, *What do ye MORE than others?* It is not enough for them to equal, they must excel, their neighbours. They have mercies, motives, means, peculiar to themselves. They have a living principle of righteousness in their own hearts; and, in their great Redeemer, they have, as the fountain of their supply, *all the fulness of the Godhead.* It is but reasonable that much should be required of them to whom much is given. Let your whole persons, O believers, be temples of God. Set your affections on things above, where Jesus Christ sitteth at his right hand. Remember, that every one who hath the hope of seeing Jesus as he is, *purifieth himself even as he is*



pure. Walk in love as he hath loved you. Let this amiable grace shed her radiance over your character, and breathe her sweetness into your actions. Compel, by her charms, the homage of the profane. Cleave not to earth, because your treasure is in heaven. Make use of it to exercise the benevolence of the gospel, to glorify your Father who is in heaven, to diffuse comfort and joy among the suffering and disconsolate. *To do good and to communicate, forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.* This evening presents you with an opportunity of shewing that faith worketh by love. The Society, on whose account I address you, carry, in their very name, a resistless appeal to the sentiments of men and of Christians. Devoting their labours to "the relief of the **DESTITUTE SICK**," they have sought out and succoured, not here and there a solitary individual; but scores, and hundreds, and thousands of them that were *ready to perish*. Sickness, though softened by the aids of the healing art, by the sympathy of friends, and by every external accommodation, is no small trial of patience and religion. But to be both **SICK** and **DESTITUTE** is one of the bitterest draughts in the cup of human misery. Far from me be the attempt to harrow your feelings with images of fictitious woe. Recital must draw a veil over

a large portion of the truth itself. I barely mention that the mass of sorrow which you are called to alleviate, appears in as many forms as there are affinities among men.

Is there in this assembly a father, the sons of whose youth are the stay of his age, and the hope of his family? In yonder cell lies a man of grey hairs, crushed by poverty, and tortured by disease. His children are scattered abroad, or have long since descended into the tomb. The sound of "Father," never salutes his ears: He is a stranger in his own country: His only companions are want and anguish.

Is there here a wife of youth encircled with domestic joys? or is there one whose heart, though solaced with a thousand outward blessings, calls back the aching remembrance of the loved relation? Behold that daughter of grief. The fever rankles in her veins. She has no partner, dearer than her own soul, on whose bosom she may recline her throbbing head. Her name is *Widow*. Desolate, forsaken, helpless, she is stretched on the ground. The wintry blast howls through her habitation, and Famine keeps the door.

Is there a mother here, whose eyes fill in the tenderness of bliss, while health paints the cheeks of her little offspring, and they play around her in all the gaiety of infantine sim-

plicity? I plead for a mother, the toil of whose hands was the bread of her children. The bed of languishing destroys her strength and their sustenance. "The son of her womb" turns pale in her feeble arms; her heart is wrung with double anguish, while, unconscious of the source of his pain, he cries for bread, and there is none to give it.

Is there here a man of public spirit who exults in the return of plenty and of peace? Let him think of those who suffer under the stern arrest of hunger and disease. Ah! let him think, that this wretchedness belongs to the wife and family of the soldier who has fought the battles of his country. The messenger of peace arrives: the murmur of the crowd swells into ecstasy: Their shout echoes through the hills. She raises her drooping head, and hears, not that her friend and helper is at hand, but that herself is a widow and her children fatherless. The blood of her husband and of their father has flowed for the common safety—He shall never return.

Is there a Christian here, who knows how to *do good unto all, but especially to them that are of the household of faith?* Among these afflicted who are sinking under their infirmities, and *have not where to lay their heads*, are some to whom the celestials minister, and who

are fellow-heirs with Christ in glory. I state the facts: I use no arguments: I leave the result with your consciences, your hearts, and your God.

A
FUNERAL ORATION,

ON THE
DEATH

OF
GEN. WASHINGTON,

**BY APPOINTMENT OF A NUMBER OF THE CLERGY
OF NEW YORK,**

AND PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST.

FUNERAL ORATION.

FELLOW-CITIZENS,

THE offices of this day belong less to eloquence than to grief. We celebrate one of those great events which, by uniting public calamity with private affliction, create in every bosom a response to the throes of an empire. God, who doeth wonders; whose ways must be adored, but not questioned, in severing from the embraces of America her first-beloved patriot, has imposed on her the duty of blending impassioned feeling with profound and unmurmuring submission. An assembled nation, lamenting a father in their departed chief; absorbing every inferior consideration in the sentiment of their common loss; mingling their recollections and their anticipations; their wishes, their regrets, their sympathies, and their tears, is a spectacle not more tender than awful; and excites emotions too mighty for utterance. I should have no right to complain, Americans, if, instead of indulging me with your attention, you should command me to retire, and leave you to weep in the silence of

woe. I should deserve the reprimand, were I to appear before you with the pretensions of eulogy. No! Eulogy has mistaken her province and her powers, when she assumes for her theme the glory of WASHINGTON. His deeds and his virtues are his high eulogium. His deeds most familiar to your memories, his virtues most dear to your affections. To me, therefore, nothing is permitted, but to borrow from yourselves. And though a pencil more daring than mine would languish in attempting to retrace the living lines which the finger of Truth has drawn upon your hearts, you will bear with me, while, on a subject which dignifies every thing related to it, 'I tell you that which you yourselves do know.'

The name of WASHINGTON, connected with all that is most brilliant in the history of our country, and in human character, awakens sensations which agitate the fervors of youth, and warm the chill bosom of age. Transported to the times when America rose to repel her wrongs, and to claim her destinies, a scene of boundless grandeur bursts upon our view. Long had her filial duty expostulated with parental injustice. Long did she deprecate the rupture of those ties which she had been proud of preserving and displaying. But her humble intreaty spurned; aggression followed

by the rod, and the rod by scorpions, having changed remonstrance into murmur, and murmur into resistance, she transfers her grievances from the throne of earth to the throne of heaven; and precedes by an appeal to the God of battles, her appeal to the sword of war. At issue now with the mistress of the seas; unfurnished with equal means of defence; the convulsive shock approaching; and every evil omen passing before her, one step of rashness or of folly may seal her doom. In this accumulation of trouble, who shall command her confidence, and face her dangers, and conduct her cause? God, whose kingdom ruleth over all, prepares from afar the instruments best adapted to his purpose. By an influence which it would be as irrational to dispute, as it is vain to scrutinize, he stirs up the spirit of the statesman and the soldier. Minds on which he has bestowed the elements of greatness, are brought, by his providence, into contact with exigencies which rouse them into action. . . . It is in the season of effort and of peril that impotence disappears, and energy arises. The whirlwind which sweeps away the glow-worm, uncovers the fire of genius, and kindles it into a blaze that irradiates at once both the zenith and the poles. — But among the heroes who sprung from obscurity, when the

college, the counting-house, and the plough, teemed with "thunderbolts of war," none could, in all respects, meet the wants and the wishes of America. She required, in her leader, a man reared under her own eye; who combined, with distinguished talent, a character above suspicion; who had added to his physical and moral qualities the experience of difficult service; a man who should concentrate in himself the public affections and confidences; who should know how to multiply the energies of every other man under his direction, and to make disaster itself the means of success—his arm a fortress, and his name a host. Such a man it were almost presumption to expect; but such a man all-ruling Heaven had provided, and that man was WASHINGTON.

PRE-EMINENT already in worth, he is summoned by his country to the pre-eminence of toil and of danger. Unallured by the charms of opulence: unappalled by the hazard of a dubious warfare: unmoved by the prospect of being, in the event of failure, the first and most conspicuous victim, he obeys her mandate, because he loves his duty. The resolve is firm, for the probation is terrible. His theatre is a world; his charge, a family of nations; the interest staked in his hands, the prosperity of millions unborn in ages to come. His means,

under aid from on high, the resources of his own breast, with the raw recruits and irregular supplies of distracted colonies. O crisis worthy of such a hero!—Followed by her little bands, her prayers and her tears, WASHINGTON espouses the quarrel of his country. As he moves on to the conflict, every heart palpitates, and every knee trembles. The foe, alike valiant and veteran, presents no easy conquest, nor ought inviting but to those who had consecrated their blood to the public weal. The Omnipotent, who allots great enjoyment as the meed of great exertion, had ordained that America should be free; but that she should learn to value the blessing by the price of its acquisition. She shall go to a “wealthy place,” but her way is “through fire and through water.” Many a generous chief must bleed, and many a gallant youth sink, at his side, into the surprised grave; the field must be heaped with slain; the purple torrent must roll, ere the angel of peace descend with his olive. It is here, amid devastation, and horror, and death, that WASHINGTON must reap his laurels, and engrave his trophies on the shields of immortality. Shall Delaware and Princeton? Shall Monmouth and York?—But I may not particularize; far less repeat the tale which babes recite, which poets sing, and Fame has published

to a listening world. Every scene of his action was a scene of his triumph. Now, he saved the republic by more than Fabian caution; Now, he avenged her by more than Carthaginian fierceness. While, at every stroke, her forests and her hills re-echoed to her shout, "The sword of the LORD and of WASHINGTON!"—Nor was this the vain applause of partiality and enthusiasm. The blasted schemes of Britain; her broken and her captive hosts, proclaimed the terror of his arms. Skilled were her chiefs, and brave her legions; but bravery and skill rendered them a conquest more worthy of WASHINGTON. True, he suffered, in his turn, repulse and even defeat. It was both natural and needful. Unchequered with reverse, his story would have resembled rather the fictions of romance, than the truth of narrative: And had he been neither defeated nor repulsed, we had never seen all the grandeur of his soul. He arrayed himself in fresh honours by that which ruins even the great—Vicissitude. He could not only subdue an enemy, but, what is infinitely more, he could subdue misfortune. With an equanimity which gave temperance to victory, and cheerfulness to disaster, he balanced the fortunes of the state. In the face of hostile prowess: In the midst of mutiny and treason: Surrounded with astonishment,

irresolution, and despondence, WASHINGTON remained erect, unmoved, invincible. Whatever ills America might endure in maintaining her rights, she exulted that she had nothing to fear from her commander in chief. The event justified her most sanguine presages. That invisible hand which girded him at first, continued to guard and to guide him through the successive stages of the revolution. Nor did he account it a weakness to bend the knee in homage to its supremacy, and prayer for its direction. This was the armour of WASHINGTON: This the salvation of his country.

The hope of her reduction at length abandoned; her war of liberty brought, in the establishment of independence, to that honourable conclusion for which it had been undertaken; the hour arrived when he was to resign the trust which he had accepted with diffidence. To a mind less pure and elevated, the situation of America would have furnished the pretext, as well as the means, of military usurpation. Talents equal to daring enterprize; the derangement of public affairs; unbounded popularity; and the devotion of a suffering army, would have been to every other a strong, and to almost any other, an irresistible temptation. In WASHINGTON they did not produce even the pain of self-denial. They added the last proof

of his disinterestedness; and imposed on his country the last obligation to gratitude. Impenetrable by corrupting influence; deaf to honest but erring solicitation; irreconcilable with every disloyal sentiment, he urged the necessity, and set the example, of laying down in peace, arms assumed for the common defence. But to separate from the companions of his danger and his glory, was, even for WASHINGTON, a difficult task. About to leave them for ever, a thousand sensations rushed upon his heart, and all the soldier melted in the man. He who has no tenderness, has no magnanimity. WASHINGTON could vanquish, and WASHINGTON could weep. Never was affection more cordially reciprocated. The grasped hand; the silent anguish; the spontaneous tear trickling down the scarred cheek: the wistful look, as he passed, after the warrior who should never again point their way to victory—form a scene for nature's painter, and for nature's bard.

But we must not lose, in our sensibility, the remembrance of his penetration, his prudence, his regard of public honour, and of public faith. Abhorring outrage; jealous for the reputation, and dreading the excesses, of even a gallant army, flushed with conquest, prompted by incendiaries, and sheltered by a semblance

of right, his last act of authority is to dismiss them to their homes without entering the capital. Accompanied with a handful of troops, he repairs to the Council of the States, and, through them, surrenders to his country the sword which he had drawn in her defence. Singular phenomenon! WASHINGTON becomes a private citizen. He exchanges supreme command for the tranquillity of domestic life. Go, incomparable man! to adorn no less the civic virtues, than the splendid achievements of the field: Go, rich in the consciousness of thy high deserts: Go, with the admiration of the world, with the plaudits of millions, and the orisons of millions more for thy temporal and thine eternal bliss!

The glory of WASHINGTON seemed now complete. While the universal voice proclaimed that he might decline, with honour, every future burden, it was a wish and an opinion, almost as universal, that he would not jeopardize the fame which he had so nobly won. Had personal considerations swayed his mind this would have been his own decision. But, untutored in the philosophism of the age, he had not learned to separate the maxims of wisdom from the injunctions of duty. His soul was not debased by that moral cowardice which fears to risk popularity for the general

good. Having assisted in the formation of an efficient government which he had refused to dictate or enforce at the mouth of his cannon, he was ready to contribute the weight of his character to insure its effect. And his country rejoiced in an opportunity of testifying; that, much as she loved and trusted others, she still loved and trusted him most. Hailed, by her unanimous suffrage, the pilot of the state, he approaches the awful helm, and grasping it with equal firmness and ease, demonstrates that *forms of power cause no embarrassment to him.*

In so novel an experiment, as a nation framing a government for herself under no impulse but that of reason; adopting it through no force but the force of conviction; and putting it into operation without bloodshed or violence, it was all important that her first magistrate should possess her unbounded good-will. Those elements of discord which lurked in the diversity of local interest; in the collision of political theories; in the irritations of party; in the disappointed or gratified ambition of individuals; and which, notwithstanding her graceful transition, threatened the harmony of America, it was for WASHINGTON alone to controul and repress. His tried integrity, his ardent patriotism, were instead of a volume of argu-

ments for the excellence of that system which he approved and supported. Among the simple and honest, whom no artifice was omitted to ensnare, there were thousands who knew little of the philosophy of government, and less of the nice machinery of the constitution; but they knew that WASHINGTON was wise and good; they knew it was impossible that he should betray them; and by this they were rescued from the fangs of faction. Ages will not furnish so instructive a comment on that cardinal virtue of republicans, confidence in the men of their choice;—nor a more salutary antidote against the pestilential principle, that the soul of a republic is jealousy. At the commencement of her federal government, mistrust would have ruined America; in confidence, she found her safety.

The re-appearance of WASHINGTON as a statesman, excited the conjecture of the old world, and the anxiety of the new. His martial fame had fixed a criterion, however inaccurate, of his civil administration. Military genius does neither confer nor imply political ability. Whatever merit may be attached to the faculty of arranging the principles, and prosecuting the details, of an army, it must be conceded that vaster comprehensions belong to the statesman. Ignorance, vanity, the love of

paradox, and the love of mischief, affecting to sneer at the "mystery of government," have, indeed, taught, that common sense and common honesty are his only requisites. The nature of things and the experience of every people, in every age, teach a different doctrine. America had multitudes who possessed both those qualities, but she had only one WASHINGTON. To adjust, in the best compromise, a thousand interfering views, so as to effect the greatest good of the whole with the least inconvenience to the parts; to curb the dragon of faction by means which ensure the safety of public liberty; to marshal opinion and prejudice among the auxiliaries of the law; in fine, to touch the main spring of national agency, so as to preserve the equipoise of its powers, and to make the feeblest movement of the extremities accord with the impulse at the centre, is only for genius of the highest order. To excel equally in military and political science, has been the praise of a few chosen spirits, among whom, with a proud preference, we enrol the father of our country.

It was the fortune of WASHINGTON to direct transactions of which the repetition is hardly within the limits of human possibilities. When he entered on his first presidency, all the interests of the continent were vibrating through

the arch of political uncertainty. The departments of the new government were to be marked out, and filled up; foreign relations to be regulated; the physical and moral strength of the nation to be organized; and that at a time when scepticism in politics, no less than in religion and morals, was preparing, throughout Europe, to spring the mine of revolution and ruin. In discharging his first duties, that same intelligent, cautious, resolute procedure, which had rendered him the bulwark of war, now exhibited him as the guardian of peace. Appropriation of talent to employment, is one of the deep results of political sagacity. And in his selection of men for office, WASHINGTON displayed a knowledge of character and of business, a contempt of favouritism, and a devotion to the public welfare, which permitted the *General* to be rivalled only by the *President*.

Under such auspices, the fruit and the pledge of divine blessing, America rears her head, and recovers her vigours. Agriculture laughs on the land: Commerce ploughs the wave: Peace rejoices her at home; and she grows into respect abroad. Ah! too happy, to progress without interruption. The explosions of Europe bring new vexations to her, and new trials and new glories to her WASHINGTON. Vi-

gilant and faithful, he hears the tempest roar from afar, warns her of its approach, and prepares for averting its dangers. Black are the heavens, and angry the billows, and narrow and perilous the passage. But his composure, dignity, and firmness, are equal to the peril. Unseduced by fraud; unterrified by threat; unawed by clamour; he holds on his steady way, and again he saves his country. With less decision on the part of WASHINGTON, a generous but mistaken ardour would have plunged her into the whirlpool, and left her till this hour the sport of the contending elements. Americans! bow to that magnanimous policy, which protected your dearest interests at the hazard of incurring your displeasure. It was thus that WASHINGTON proved himself, not in the cant of the day, but in the procurement of substantial good, in stepping between them and perdition, the servant of the people.

The historian of this period will have to record a revolt raised by infatuation, against the law of the land. He will have to record the necessity which compelled even WASHINGTON to suppress it by the sword. But he will have to record also his gentleness and his lenity. Deeds of severity were his sad tribute to justice: deeds of humanity, the native suggestions of his heart.

Eight years of glorious administration created a claim on the indulgence of his country, which none could think of disputing, but which all lamented should be urged. The ends which rendered his services indispensable, being mostly attained, he demands his restoration to private life. Resigning to an able successor the reins which he had guided with characteristic felicity, he once more bids adieu to public honours. Let not his motives be mistaken or forgotten. It was for him to set as great examples in the relinquishment, as in the acceptance, of power. No mortified ambition; no haughty disgusts; no expectation of higher office, prompted his retreat. He knew that foreign nations considered his life as the bond, and his influence as the vital spirit of our union. He knew that his own lustre threw a shade over others, not more injurious to them than to his country. He wished to dispel the enchantment of his own name: he wished to relieve the apprehensions of America, by making her sensible of her riches in other patriots; to be a spectator of her prosperity under their management; and to convince herself, and to convince the world, that she depended less on him, than either her enemies or her friends believed.—And therefore he withdrew.

Having lavished all her honours, his coun-

try had nothing more to bestow upon him except her blessing. But he had more to bestow upon his country. His views and his advice, the condensed wisdom of all his reflection, observation and experience, he delivers to his compatriots in a manual worthy of them to study, and of him to compose. And now, when they could hope to enjoy only the satisfaction of still possessing him, the pleasure of recounting his acts, and the benefit of practising his lessons, they accompany his retirement with their aspirations, that his evening may be as serene, as his morning had been fair, and his noon resplendent.

That he should ever again endure the solitudes of office, was rather to be deprecated than desired. Because it must be a crisis singularly portentous, which could justify another invasion of his repose. From such a necessity we fondly promised ourselves exemption. Flattering, fallacious security! The sudden whirlwind springs out of a calm. The revolutions of a day proclaim that an empire was. However remote the position of America; however peaceful her character; however cautious and equitable her policy; she was not to go unmolested by the gigantic fiend of Gallic domination. That she was free and happy, was crime and provocation enough. He fastened on her

his murderous eye; he was preparing for her that deadly embrace, in which nations supine and credulous had already perished. Reduced to the alternative of swelling the catalogue of his victims, or arguing her cause with the bayonet and the ball, she bursts the ill-fated bonds which had linked her to his destinies, and assumes the tone and attitude of defiance. The gauntlet is cast. To press on is perilous: to retreat destruction. She looks wistfully round, and calls for WASHINGTON. The well-known voice, that voice which he had ever accounted a law, pierces the retreats of Vernon, and thrills his bosom. Domestic enjoyments lose their charm; repose becomes to him inglorious; every sacrifice is cheap, and every exertion easy, when his beloved country requires his aid. With all the alacrity of youth, he flies to her succour. The helmet of war presses his silver locks. His sword, which dishonour had never tarnished, nor corruption poisoned, he once more unsheaths, and prepares to receive on its point the insolence of that foe whose intrigue he had foiled by his wisdom.

It must ever be difficult to compare the merits of WASHINGTON's characters, because he always appeared greatest in that which he last sustained. Yet if there is a preference, it must be assigned to the Lieut. General of the

Armies of America. Not because the duties of that station were more arduous than those which he had often performed, but because it more fully displayed his magnanimity. While others become great by elevation, WASHINGTON becomes greater by condescension. Matchless patriot! to stoop, on public motives, to an inferior appointment, after possessing and dignifying the highest offices! Thrice favoured country, which boasts of such a citizen! We gaze with astonishment: we exult that we are Americans. We augur every thing great, and good, and happy.—But whence this sudden horror? What means that cry of agony? Oh! 'tis the shriek of America! The fairy vision is fled: WASHINGTON is——no more!——

“How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!”

Daughters of America, who erst prepared the festal bower and the laurel-wreath, plant now the cypress-grove, and water it with tears.

“How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!”

The death of WASHINGTON, Americans, has revealed the extent of our loss. It has given us the final proof that we never mistook him. Take his affecting testament, and read the secrets of his soul. Read all the power of domestic virtue. Read his strong love of letters

and of liberty. Read his fidelity to Republican principle, and his jealousy of national character. Read his devotedness to you in his military bequests to near relations. "These swords," they are the words of WASHINGTON, "these swords are accompanied with an injunction not to unsheath them for the purpose of shedding blood, except it be for self-defence, or in defence of their country and its rights; and in the latter case, to keep them unsheathed, and prefer falling with them in their hands to the relinquishment thereof."

In his acts, Americans, you have seen the man. In the complicated excellence of character, he stands alone. Let no future Plutarch attempt the iniquity of parallel. Let no soldier of fortune; let no usurping conqueror; let not Alexander or Cæsar; let not Cromwell or Bonaparte; let none among the dead or the living, appear in the same picture with WASHINGTON: or let them appear as the shade to his light.

On this subject, my countrymen, it is for others to speculate, but it is for us to feel. Yet in proportion to the severity of the stroke, ought to be our thankfulness that it was not inflicted sooner. Through a long series of years has God preserved our WASHINGTON a public blessing: and now that he has removed him for ever, shall we presume to say, *What doest*

thou? Never did the tomb preach more powerfully the dependence of all things on the will of the Most High. The greatest of mortals crumble into dust, the moment he commands, *Return, ye children of men.* WASHINGTON was but the instrument of a benignant God. He sickens, he dies, that we may learn not to *trust in men*, nor to *make flesh our arm*. But though WASHINGTON is dead; Jehovah lives. God of our fathers! be our God, and the God of our children! Thou art our refuge and our hope; the pillar of our strength; the wall of our defence, and our unfading glory!

Americans! This God who raised up WASHINGTON, and gave you liberty, exacts from you the duty of cherishing it with a zeal according to knowledge. Never sully, by apathy or by outrage, your fair inheritance. Risk not, for one moment, on visionary theories, the solid blessings of your lot. To you, particularly, O youth of America! applies the solemn charge. In all the perils of your country, remember WASHINGTON. The freedom of reason and of right, has been handed down to you on the point of the hero's sword. Guard, with veneration, the sacred deposit. The curse of ages will rest upon you, O youth of America! if ever you surrender, to foreign ambition, or domestic lawlessness, the precious liberties for which WASHINGTON fought, and your fathers bled.

I cannot part with you, fellow-citizens, without urging the long remembrance of our present assembly. This day we wipe away the reproach of republics, that they know not how to be grateful. In your treatment of living patriots, recal your love and your regret of WASHINGTON. Let not future inconsistency charge this day with hypocrisy. Happy America, if she gives an instance of universal principle in her sorrows for the man "first in war, first in peace, and first in the affections of his country!"

THE
VOICE OF WARNING
TO
CHRISTIANS,
ON
THE ELECTION
OF A
PRESIDENT
OF
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

Blow the trumpet in Zion—*Who is on the Lord's side?*

THE

VOICE OF WARNING, &c.

IF a manly attempt to avert national ruin, by exposing a favourite error, should excite no resentment, nor draw any obloquy upon its author, there would certainly be a new thing under the sun. Men can seldom bear contradiction. They bear it least when they are most demonstrably wrong; because, having surrendered their judgment to prejudice, or their conscience to design, they must take refuge in obstinacy from the attacks of reason. The bad, dreading nothing so much as the prevalence of pure principle and virtuous habit, will ever be industrious in counteracting it; and the more candid, rational and convincing the means employed in its behalf, the louder will be their clamour, and the fiercer their opposition. On the other hand, good men are often led insensibly astray, and their very honesty becomes the guarantee of their delusion. Unaware, at first, of their inconsistency, they afterwards shrink from the test of their own profession. Startled by re-

monstrance, but unprepared to recede; checked by the misgivings of their own minds, yet urged on by their previous purpose and connection, the conflict renders them irritable, and they mark as their enemy whoever tells them the truth. From the coincidence of such a bias with the views of the profligate and daring, results incalculable mischief. The sympathy of a common cause unites the persons engaged in it; the shades of exterior character gradually disappear; virtue sinks from her glory; vice emerges from her infamy; the best and the basest appear nearly on a level; while the most atrocious principles either lose their horror, or have a veil thrown over them: and the man who endeavours to arrest their course, is singled out as a victim to revenge and madness. Such, from the beginning, has been the course of the world. None of its benefactors have escaped its calumnies and persecutions: not prophets, not apostles, not the Son of God himself. To this treatment, therefore, must every one be reconciled, who labours to promote the best interests of his country. He must stake his popularity against his integrity; he must encounter a policy which will be content with nothing short of his ruin; and, if it may not spill his blood, will strive to overwhelm him with public execration. That this is the spirit which has

pursued a writer, the purity of whose views is equalled only by their importance—I mean the author of “*Serious Considerations on the Election of a President*,” I need not inform any who inspect the gazettes. To lay before the people of the United States, proofs that a candidate for the office of their first magistrate, is an unbeliever in the Scriptures; and that to confer such a distinction upon an open enemy to their religion, their Redeemer, and their hope, would be a mischief to themselves, and a sin against God, is a crime never to be forgiven by a class of men too numerous for our peace or prosperity. The infidels have risen *en masse*, and it is not through *their* moderation that he retains any portion of his respectability or his usefulness. But in *their* wrath there is nothing to deprecate; nor does he deserve the name of a Christian, who, in order to avoid it, would deviate an hair’s breadth from his duty. For them I write not. Impenetrable by serious principle, they are not objects of exhortation, but of compassion; nor shall I stoop to any solicitude about their censure or applause.

But do I represent as infidels all who befriend Mr. Jefferson’s election? God forbid that I should so “lie against the truth.” If I thought so, I should mourn in silence: my pen should slumber for ever. That a majority of

them profess, and that multitudes of them really love, the religion of Jesus, while it is my terror, is also my hope. Terror, because I believe them to be under a fatal mistake; hope, because they, if any, are within the reach of conviction. I address myself to them. The latter, especially, are my brothers, by dearer ties and higher interests than can be created or destroyed by any political connection. And if it be asked, Why mingle religion with questions of policy? Why irritate by opposition? Why risk the excitement of passions which may disserve, but cannot aid, the common Christianity? Why not maintain a prudent reserve, and permit matters of state to take their own course? I answer, Because Christians are deeply engaged already: Because the principles of the gospel are to regulate their political, as well as their other, conduct: Because their Christian character, profession and prosperity, are involved in the issue. This is no hour to temporize. I abhor that coward spirit which vaunts when gliding down the tide of opinion, but shrinks from the returning current, and calls the treason *prudence*. It is the voice of God's providence not less than of his word. "Cry aloud, spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins."

With Christians, therefore, I must expostulate; and may not refrain. However they may be displeased, or threaten, I will say, with the Athenian chief, "*Strike, but hear me.*"

FELLOW CHRISTIANS,

A crisis of no common magnitude awaits our country. The approaching election of a President is to decide a question not merely of preference to an eminent individual, or particular views of policy, but, what is infinitely more, of national regard or disregard to the religion of Jesus Christ. Had the choice been between two infidels or two professed Christians, the point of politics would be untouched by me. Nor, though opposed to Mr. Jefferson, am I to be regarded as a partizan; since the principles which I am about to develope, will be equally unacceptable to many on both sides of the question. I dread the election of Mr. Jefferson, because I believe him to be a confirmed infidel: you desire it, because, while he is politically acceptable, you either doubt this fact, or do not consider it essential. Let us, like brethren, reason this matter.

The general opinion rarely, if ever, mistakes a character which private pursuits and public functions have placed in different attitudes; yet

it is frequently formed upon circumstances which elude the grasp of argument even while they make a powerful and just impression. Notwithstanding, therefore, the belief of Mr. Jefferson's infidelity, which has for years been uniform and strong, wherever his character has been a subject of speculation—although that infidelity has been boasted by some, lamented by many, and undisputed by all, yet as it is now denied by his friends, the charge, unsupported by other proof, could hardly be pursued to conviction. Happily for truth and for us, Mr. Jefferson has *written*; he has *printed*. While I shall not decline auxiliary testimony, I appeal to what he never retracted, and will not deny, his *Notes on Virginia**.

In their war upon revelation, infidels have levelled their batteries against the miraculous *facts* of the Scripture: well knowing that if its historical truth can be overturned, there is an end of its claim to inspiration. But God has protected his word. Particularly the UNIVERSAL DELUGE, the most stupendous miracle of the Old Testament, is fortified with impregnable evidence. The globe teems with demonstrations of it. Every mountain and hill and valley lifts up its voice to confirm the narrative of Moses.

* The edition which I use is the second American edition, published at Philadelphia, by Matthew Carey, 1794.

The very researches and discoveries of infidels themselves, contrary to their intentions, their wishes and their hopes, are here compelled to range behind the banner of the Bible. To attack, therefore, the Scriptural account of the deluge, belongs only to the most desperate infidelity. Now, what will you think of Mr. Jefferson's Christianity, if he has advanced positions which strike directly at the truth of God's word concerning that wonderful event? Let him speak for himself: " It is said that shells
 " are found in the Andes, in South America,
 " fifteen thousand feet above the level of the
 " ocean. This is considered by many, both of
 " the learned and unlearned, *as a proof of*
 " *an universal deluge.* But to the *many consi-*
 " *derations opposing this opinion,* the following
 " may be added: The atmosphere and all its
 " contents, whether of water, air, or other mat-
 " ters, gravitate to the earth; that is to say,
 " they have weight. Experience tells us, that
 " the weight of all these columns together,
 " never exceeds that of a column of mercury
 " of thirty-one inches high. If the whole con-
 " tents of the atmosphere then were water, in-
 " stead of what they are, it would cover the
 " *globe but thirty-five feet deep:* but, as these
 " waters as they fell, would run into the seas,
 " the superficial measure of which is to that of

“ the dry parts of the globe, as two to one, the
 “ seas would be raised only fifty-two feet and
 “ a half above their present level, and of course
 “ would *overflow the land to that height only.*
 “ In Virginia this would be a very small pro-
 “ portion even of the champaign country, the
 “ banks of our tide-waters being frequently,
 “ if not generally, of a greater height. De-
 “ luges beyond this extent, then, as for in-
 “ stance, to the North mountain or to Ken-
 “ tucky, seem out of the laws of Nature. But
 “ within it they may have taken place to a
 “ greater or less degree, in proportion to the
 “ combination of natural causes which may be
 “ supposed to have produced them.—But
 “ such deluges as these, will not account for the
 “ shells found in the higher lands. A second
 “ opinion has been entertained, which is, that
 “ in times anterior to the records either of his-
 “ tory or tradition, the bed of the ocean, the
 “ principal residence of the shelled tribe, has,
 “ by some great convulsion of nature, been
 “ heaved to the heights at which we now find
 “ shells and other remains of marine animals.
 “ *The favourers of this opinion do well to sup-*
 “ *pose the great events on which it rests to have*
 “ *taken place beyond all the æras of history; for*
 “ *within these certainly none such can be found;*
 “ and we may venture to say further, that no

“ fact has taken place either in our own days,
 “ or in the thousands of years recorded in his-
 “ tory, which proves the existence of any na-
 “ tural agents within or without the bowels of
 “ the earth, of force sufficient to heave to the
 “ height of fifteen thousand feet, such masses
 “ as the Andes*.” After mentioning another
 opinion proposed by Voltaire, Mr. J. proceeds,
 “ There is a wonder somewhere. Is it greatest
 “ on this branch of the dilemma; on that which
 “ supposes the existence of a power of which
 “ we have no evidence in any other case; or
 “ on the first, which requires us to believe the
 “ creation of a body of water and its subse-
 “ quent annihilation?” Rejecting the whim
 of Voltaire, he concludes, that “ *the three*
 “ *hypotheses are EQUALLY unsatisfactory, and*
 “ *we must be contented to acknowledge, that*
 “ *this great phenomenon is, as yet, unsolved†.*”

On these extracts, I cannot suppress the fol-
 lowing reflections.

1. Mr. Jefferson disbelieves the existence
 of an universal deluge. “ *There are MANY*
 “ *CONSIDERATIONS,*” says he, “ *OPPOSING*
 “ *this opinion.*” The bible says expressly, “ *The*
 “ *waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth,*
 “ *and ALL THE HIGH HILLS THAT WERE UN-*

* Jefferson's Notes on Virginia, p. 39—41. † Ib. p. 42.

“ **DER THE WHOLE HEAVEN were covered***.”
 Mr. Jefferson enters into a philosophical argument to prove the fact impossible; that is, he argues in the very face of God’s word, and as far as his reasoning goes, endeavours to convict it of falsehood.

2. Mr. Jefferson’s concession of the probability of deluges within certain limits, does not rank him with those great men who have supposed the deluge to be partial, because his argument concludes directly against the scriptural narrative, even upon that supposition. He will not admit his partial deluges to rise above 52 feet and an half above the level of the ocean. Whereas the scripture, circumscribe its deluge as you will, asserts that *the waters were fifteen cubits (27 feet and an half) nearly above the mountains†*.

3. Not satisfied with his argument, Mr. Jefferson sneers at the scripture itself, and at the credulity of those who, relying upon its testimony, believe “ that the bed of the ocean, has
 “ by some great convulsion of nature, been
 “ heaved to the heights at which we now find
 “ shells and other remains of marine animals.”
 “ *They do well,*” says he, “ *to suppose the great*
 “ *events on which it rests to have taken place be-*
 “ *yond all the aras of history; FOR WITHIN*

* Gen. vii. 19.

† Ibid. v. 20.

“ THESE NONE SUCH ARE TO BE FOUND.” Indeed! And so our faith in God’s word is to dwindle, at the touch of a profane philosopher, into an “opinion,” unsupported by either “history or tradition!” *All the fountains of the great deep, saith the scripture, were BROKEN UP**. Was this no “great convulsion of nature?” Could not this “heave the bed of the ocean to the height at which we now find shells?” But the favourers of this opinion *suppose the great events on which it rests to have taken place beyond all the eras of history. And they do well*, says Mr. Jefferson: the plain meaning of which is, that their error would certainly be detected if they did not retreat into the darkness of fable. Malignant sarcasm! And who are “the favourers of this opinion?” At least all who embrace the holy scriptures. These *do* declare most unequivocally, that there was such a “great convulsion of nature,” as produced a deluge infinitely more formidable than Mr. Jefferson’s philosophy can digest. But he will not so much as allow them to be history: he degrades them even below tradition. We talk of times for our flood, he tells us, “anterior to the records either of history or tradition.” Nor will it mend the matter, to urge that he alludes only to profane

history. The fact could not be more dubious or less deserving a place in the systems of philosophy, from the attestation of infallible truth. And is this truth to be spurned as no *history*; as not even *tradition*? It is thus, Christians, that a man whom you are expected to elevate to the chief magistracy, insults yourselves and your bible*.

4. Mr. Jefferson's argument against the

* Nay, as it is only the scripture which authenticates the popular belief of an universal deluge, Mr. Jefferson's insinuation can hardly have any meaning, if it be not an oblique stroke at the bible itself. Nothing can be more silly than the pretext that he shews the insufficiency of *natural* causes to effect the deluge, with a view of supporting the credit of the *miracle*. His difficulty is not to account for the *deluge*: he denies that; but for *the shells on the top of the Andes*. If he believed in the deluge, natural or miraculous, the difficulty would cease: he would say at once, *The flood threw them there*. But as he tells us, "*this great phenomenon is, as yet, unsolved*," it is clear that he does not believe in the deluge at all; for this "solves" his "phenomenon" most effectually. And for whom does Mr. J. write? For Christians? None of them ever dreamed that the deluge was caused by any thing else than a miracle. For infidels? Why then does he not tell them that the scripture alone gives the true solution of this "great phenomenon?" The plain matter of fact is, that he writes like all other infidels, who admit nothing for which they cannot find adequate "natural agents;" and when these fail them, instead of resorting to the divine word, which would often satisfy a modest enquirer, by revealing the "arm of JEHOVAH," they shrug up their shoulders, and cry, "Ignorance is preferable to error †."

† *Notes on Virginia*, p. 42.

flood is, in substance, the very argument by which infidels have attacked the credibility of the Mosaic history. They have always objected the insufficiency of water to effect such a deluge as that describes. Mr. J. knew this. Yet he adopts and repeats it. He does not deign so much as to mention Moses: while through the sides of one of his hypotheses, he strikes at the scriptural history, he winds up with pronouncing all the three to be "*equally* unsatisfactory." Thus reducing the holy volume to a level with the dreams of Voltaire! Let me now ask *any* Christian, Would you dare to express yourself in a similar manner upon a subject which has received the decision of the living God? Would you patiently hear one of your neighbours speak so irreverently of his oracles? Could you venture to speculate on the deluge without resorting to them? Would you not shudder at the thought of using, in support of a philosophical opinion, the arguments which infidels bring against that WORD which is the source of all your consolation; much more to use them without a lisp of respect for it, or of caution against mistake? Can he believe the bible who does all this? Can an infidel do more without directly assailing it? What then must you think of Mr. Jefferson?

But it was not enough for this gentleman to

discredit the story of the deluge. He has advanced a step farther, and has indicated, too plainly, his disbelief in the common origin of mankind. The scriptures teach that all nations are the offspring of the first and single pair, Adam and Eve, whom God created and placed in paradise. This fact, interwoven with all the relations and all the doctrines of the bible, is alike essential to its historical and religious truth. Now what says the candidate for the chair of your president? After an ingenious, lengthy, and elaborate argument to *prove* that the blacks are naturally and morally inferior both to white and red men; and that "their inferiority is not the effect merely of their condition of life*," he observes, "I advance it therefore as a suspicion only, that the blacks, whether *ORIGINALLY a distinct race, or MADE DISTINCT by time and circumstances,* are inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind†." He had before asserted, that "besides those of colour, figure, and hair, there are *other physical distinctions, proving a DIFFERENCE of RACE‡.*" He does, indeed, discover some compunction in reflecting on the consequences of his philosophy. For to several reasons why his opinion "must be

* Notes on Virginia, p. 205.

† Ib. 209.

‡ Ib. 201.

“ hazarded with great diffidence,” he adds “ as
 “ a circumstance of great tenderness,” that the
 “ conclusion” to which his observations lead,
 “ would *degrade a whole race of men from the*
 “ *rank in the scale of beings which their Creator*
 “ *may PERHAPS have given them**.” Much
 pains have been taken to persuade the public
 that Mr. Jefferson by “ distinct race” and “ dif-
 ference of race,” means nothing more than that
 the negroes are only a branch of the great fa-
 mily of man, without impeaching the identity
 of their origin. This construction, though it
 may satisfy many, is unfounded, absurd, and
 contradicted by Mr. Jefferson himself. Un-
 founded : For when philosophers treat of man as
 a “ subject of natural history,” they use the
 term “ race,” to express the *stock* from which
 the particular families spring, and not, as in
 the popular sense, the families themselves,
 without regard to their original. A single ex-
 ample, embracing the opinions of two philoso-
 phers, of whom the one, M. de Buffon, main-
 tained, and the other, Lord Kames, denied the
 common origin of mankind, will prove my as-
 sertion.

“ M. Buffon, from the rule, that animals
 “ which can procreate together, and whose

* Notes on Virginia, p. 202.

“ progeny can also procreate, are of one species, concludes that all men are of *one race* or species*.” Mr. Jefferson, writing on the same subject with these authors, and arguing on the same side with one of them, undoubtedly uses the term “ race ” in the same sense. And as the other construction is unfounded, it is also absurd. For it represents him as labouring through nearly a dozen pages to prove what no man ever thought of doubting, and what a glance of the eye sufficiently ascertains, viz. that the blacks and whites are different branches of a common family. Mr. Jefferson is not such a trifler; he fills his pages with more important matter, and with deeper sense. And by expressions which cut off evasion, contradicts the meaning which his friends have invented for him. He enumerates a variety of “ distinctions which *prove a difference* of race.” These distinctions he alleges are not accidental, but “ *physical*,” i. e. founded in *nature*. True, alarmed at the boldness of his own doctrine, he retreats a little. His PROOFS evaporate into a SUSPICION; but that suspicion is at a loss to suspect, whether the inferiority of the blacks (Mark it well, reader!) is owing to their being

* Kames's Sketches, vol. i. p. 24.



“*ORIGINALLY a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances.*” Branches of the *same stock* *ORIGINALLY* distinct, is a contradiction. Mr. Jefferson therefore means, by different races, men descended from different stocks. His very “*tendernefs*” is tingured with an infidel hue. A conclusion corresponding with his speculations, affects him, because it, “*would degrade a whole race of men from the rank in the scale of beings which their Creator may perhaps have given them.*” So then the secret is out! What *RANK in the scale of beings* have we, obeying the Scripture, been accustomed to assign to the injured blacks? The very same with ourselves, viz. that of children of one common father. But if Mr. Jefferson’s notions be just, he says they will be *degraded* from that rank; i. e. will appear not to be children of the same father with us, but of another and inferior stock. But though he will not speak peremptorily, he strongly insinuates that he does not adopt, as an article of his philosophy, the descent of the blacks as well as the whites from that pair which came immediately from the hands of God. He is not sure. At best it is a *doubt* with him—“*the rank which their Creator may PERHAPS have given them!*”—Now how will all this accord with revealed truth? God,

says the Apostle Paul, "*Hath made of ONE BLOOD ALL NATIONS of men, for to dwell on ALL the face of the earth*.*" Perhaps it may be so, replies Mr. Jefferson; but there are, notwithstanding, *physical distinctions PROVING a difference of race.* I cannot repress my indignation! That a miserable, sinful worm like myself, should proudly set up his "proofs" against the truth of my God and your God, and scout his veracity with a sceptical PERHAPS! I intreat Christians to consider the sweeping extent of this infidel doctrine of "different races." If it be true, the history of the bible, which knows of but *one*, is a string of falsehoods from the book of Genesis to that of the Revelation; and the whole system of redemption, predicated on the *unity* of the human race, is a cruel fiction. I ask Christians again, whether they would dare to speak and write on this subject in the stile of Mr. Jefferson? Whether any believer in the word of the Lord Jesus, who is their hope, could entertain such doubts? Whether a writer, acute, cautious, and profound, like Mr. Jefferson, could, as he had before done in the case of the deluge, pursue a train of argument, which he knew infidels before him had used to

* Acts xvii. 26.

discredit revelation, and on which they still have great reliance—Whether, instead of vindicating the honour of the scripture, he could, in *such* circumstances, be as mute as death on this point; countenancing infidels by enforcing their sentiments; and yet be a Christian? The thing is impossible! And were any other than Mr. Jefferson to be guilty of the same disrespect to God's word, you would not hesitate one moment in pronouncing him an infidel.

It is not only with his philosophical disquisitions that Mr. Jefferson mingles opinions irreconcilable with the Scriptures. He even goes out of his way for the sake of a fling at them. "Those," says he, "who labour in the earth, are the chosen people of God, IF EVER HE HAD A CHOSEN PEOPLE, whose breasts he has made his peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue*."

How does a Christian ear relish this "profane babbling?" In the first place, Mr. Jefferson doubts if ever God had a chosen people. In the second place, if he had, he insists they are no other than those who labour in the earth. At any rate, he denies this privilege to the seed of Abraham; and equally

* Notes on Virginia, p. 240.

denies your being his people, unless you follow the scythe and the plow. Now, whether this be not the lie direct to the whole testimony of the bible from the beginning to the end, judge ye *.

After these affronts to the oracles of God,

* Some have been vain enough to suppose that they destroy this proof of Mr. J.'s infidelity, by representing his expression "the chosen people of God, if ever he had a chosen people," as synonymous with the following: "A. B. is an honest man, if ever there was an honest man," which so far from doubting the existence of honest men, that it founds, in the certainty of this fact, the assertion of A. B.'s honesty. On this wretched sophism, unworthy of good sense, and more unworthy of candour, I remark,

1. That the expressions are by no means similar. The whole world admits that there are honest men, which makes the proposition, "A. B. is an honest man, if ever there was an honest man," a strong assertion of A. B.'s honesty. But the hundredth part of the world does not admit that God had a chosen people, and therefore the proposition that "those who labour in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever he had a chosen people," is, upon this construction, no assertion at all that the cultivators of the soil are his people, because there are millions who do not believe the fact on which it must be founded: viz. that he had a chosen people.

2. That if the expressions were parallel, Mr. J. would still be left in the lurch, because the first asserts A. B. to be as much an honest man as any man that ever lived; and so Mr. J. asserts "those who labour in the earth," to be as much the "chosen people of God," as any people that ever lived. This is still the lie direct to the whole bible, and the inventors of this lucky shift, must set their wits at work to invent another.

you have no right to be surprized if Mr. Jefferson should preach the innocence of error, or even of Atheism. What do I say! He *does* preach it. "The legitimate powers of government," they are his own words, "extend to such acts only as are injurious to others. *But it does me no injury for my neighbours to say there are twenty Gods or no God.* It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg*."

Ponder well this paragraph. Ten thousand impieties and mischiefs lurk in its womb. Mr. Jefferson maintains not only the inviolability of *opinion*, but of *opinion propagated*. And that no class or character of abomination might be excluded from the sanctuary of such laws as he wishes to see established, he pleads for the impunity of *published* error in its most dangerous and execrable form. Polytheism or atheism, "twenty gods or no god," is perfectly indifferent in Mr. Jefferson's good citizen. A wretch may trumpet atheism from New-Hampshire to Georgia; may laugh at all the realities of futurity; may scoff and teach others to scoff at their accountability; it is no matter, says Mr. Jefferson, "it neither picks my pocket, nor breaks my leg." This is no-

* Notes on Virginia, p. 231.

thing less than representing civil society as founded in atheism. For there can be no religion without God. And if it does me or my neighbour no injury, to subvert the very foundation of religion by denying the being of God, then religion is **not one of the constituent principles of society, and consequently society is perfect without it; that is, is perfect in atheism.** Christians! what think you of this doctrine? Have you so learned Christ or truth? Is Atheism indeed no injury to society? Is it no injury to untie all the cords which bind you to the God of Heaven, and your deeds to his throne of judgment; which form the strength of personal virtue, give energy to the duties, and infuse sweetness into the charities, of human life? Is it indeed no injury to you, or to those around you, that your neighbour buries his conscience and all his sense of moral obligation in the gulph of atheism? Is it no injury to you, that the oath ceases to be sacred? That the eye of the Omniscient no more pervades the abode of crime? That you have no hold on your dearest friend, farther than the law is able to reach his person? Have you yet to learn that the peace and happiness of society depend upon things which the laws of men can never embrace? And whence, I pray you, are right-

ous laws to emanate, if rulers, by adopting atheism, be freed from the coercion of future retribution? Would you not rather be scourged with sword and famine and pestilence, than see your country converted into a den of atheism? Yet, says Mr. Jefferson, it is a harmless thing. "It does me no injury; it neither picks my pocket, nor breaks my leg." This is perfectly of a piece with his favourite wish to see a government administered without any religious principle among either rulers or ruled. Pardon me, Christian: this is the morality of devils, which would break in an instant every link in the chain of human friendship, and transform the globe into one equal scene of desolation and horror, where fiend would prowl with fiend for plunder and blood—yet atheism "neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg." I will not abuse you by asking, whether the author of such an opinion can be a Christian? or whether he has any regard for the Scriptures which confine all wisdom and blessedness and glory, both personal and social, to the fear and favour of God?

The reader will observe, that in his sentiments on these four points, the *deluge*; the *origin of nations*; the *chosen people of God*; and *Atheism*, Mr. Jefferson has comprized the

radical principles of infidelity in its utmost latitude. Accede to his positions on these, and he will compel you to grant the rest. There is hardly a single truth of revelation which would not fall before one or other of them. If the deluge be abandoned, you can defend neither the miracles, nor inspiration of the scripture. If men are not descendants of one common stock, the doctrine of salvation is convicted of essential error. If God never had any chosen people but the cultivators of the soil, the fabric of the New Testament falls to the ground ; for its foundation in the choice of Israel to be his peculiar people, is swept away. And if the Atheism of one man be not injurious to another, society could easily dispense not only with his word but with his worship.

Conformable with the infidelity of his book, is an expression of Mr. Jefferson contained in a paragraph which I transcribe from the pamphlet entitled, "*Serious Considerations, &c.*"

" When the late Rev. Dr. John B. Smith
 " resided in Virginia, the famous MAZZEI
 " happened one night to be his guest. Dr.
 " Smith having, as usual, assembled his fa-
 " mily for their evening devotions, the cir-
 " cumstance occasioned some discourse on re-

“ ligion, in which the Italian made no secret
 “ of his infidel principles. In the course of
 “ conversation, he remarked to Dr. Smith,
 “ ‘ Why your great philosopher and statesman,
 “ Mr. Jefferson, is rather farther gone in in-
 “ fidelity than I am ;’ and related, in con-
 “ firmation, the following anecdote : That as
 “ he was once riding with Mr. Jefferson, he
 “ expressed his surprise that the people of this
 “ country take no better care of their public
 “ buildings. ‘ What buildings?’ exclaimed
 “ Mr. Jefferson. ‘ Is not that a church?’
 “ replied he, pointing to a decayed edifice.
 “ ‘ Yes,’ answered Mr. Jefferson. ‘ I am as-
 “ tonished,’ said the other, ‘ that they per-
 “ mit it to be in so ruinous a condition.’ ‘ *It*
 “ *is good enough,*’ rejoined Mr. Jefferson, ‘ *for*
 “ *him that was born in a manger!!*’ Such
 “ a contemptuous fling at the blessed Jesus,
 “ could issue from the lips of no other than a
 “ deadly foe to his name and his cause*.”

Some of Mr. Jefferson’s friends have been
 desperate enough to challenge this anecdote as
 a calumny fabricated for electioneering pur-
 poses. But whatever they pretend, it is incon-
 testibly true, that the story was told, as here
 repeated, by Dr. Smith. I, as well as the au-

* Serious Considerations, p. 16, 17.

thor of " Serious Considerations," and several others, heard it from the lips of Dr. Smith years ago, and more than once. The calumny, if any, lies either with those who impeach the veracity of a number of respectable witnesses, or with MAZZEI himself. And there are not wanting, among the followers of Mr. Jefferson, advocates for this latter opinion. He must have been a wretch indeed, to blacken his brother philosopher, by trumping up a deliberate lie in order to excuse his own impiety in the presence of a minister of Christ! If such was MAZZEI the *philosopher*, it is our wisdom to think, and think again, before we heap our largest honours upon the head of his *bosom friend*.

Christian reader, The facts and reasonings which I have laid before you, produce in my mind an irresistible conviction, that Mr. Jefferson is a confirmed infidel; and I cannot see how they should have a less effect on your's. But when to these you add his solicitude for wresting the bible from the hands of your children—his notoriously unchristian character—his disregard to all the ordinances of divine worship—his utter and open contempt of the Lord's day, insomuch as to receive on it a public entertainment * ; every trace of doubt

* At Fredericksburgh, in Virginia, in 1798.

must vanish. What is a man who writes against the truths of God's word? who makes not even a *profession* of Christianity? who is without Sabbaths; without the sanctuary; without so much as a decent external respect for the faith and the worship of Christians? What is he, what *can he be*, but a decided, a hardened infidel?

Several feeble and fruitless attempts have been made to fritter down and dissipate this mass of evidence. In vain are we told that Mr. Jefferson's conduct is modest, moral, exemplary. I ask no odious questions. A man must be an adept in the higher orders of profligacy, if neither literary occupation, nor the influence of the surrounding gospel, can form or controul his habits. Though infidelity and licentiousness are twin sisters, they are not compelled to be always in company; that I am not a *debauchee*, will therefore be hardly admitted as proof that I am not an *infidel*. In vain are we reminded, that the "Notes on Virginia" contain familiar mention, and respectful acknowledgment, of the being and attributes of God. Though infidelity leads to Atheism, a man may be an infidel without being an Atheist. Some have even pretended, that anxiety for the honour of God, prompted them to fix the brand of imposture upon the scripture! But where has

Mr. Jefferson, when stating his *private opinions* betrayed the least regard for the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ? In vain is it proclaimed, that he maintains a Christian minister at his own expence. I shall not enquire whether that maintenance does or does not arise from the product of glebe lands attached to many southern estates. Taking the fact to be simply as related, I *will* enquire whether prudent and political men never contribute to the support of Christianity from *other* motives than a belief of its truth? Mr. Jefferson may do all this and yet be an infidel. VOLTAIRE, the vile, the blasphemous Voltaire, was building churches, and assisting at the mass, while he was writing to his *philosophical* confidants, concerning your divine Saviour, CRUSH THE WRETCH! In vain is the "ACT for establishing religious freedom," which flowed from the pen of Mr. Jefferson, and passed in the Assembly of Virginia, in 1786, paraded as the triumph of his Christian creed. I protest against the credibility of the witness! That act, I know, recognizes "the Holy Author of our religion," as "Lord both of body and mind," and possessing "Almighty power;" and by censuring "fallible and uninspired men," tacitly acknowledges both the inspiration and infallibility of the sacred writers. But Mr. Jefferson is not here declaring his *pri-*

vate opinions: for these we must look to his Notes, which were published *a year after*, and abound with ideas which contradict the authority of the scriptures. He speaks, in that act, as the organ of an *Assembly* PROFESSING CHRISTIANITY; and it would not only have been a monstrous absurdity, but more than his credit and the Assembly's too, was worth, to have been disrespectful, *in an official deed*, to that Redeemer whose name they owned, and who was precious to many of their constituents. *Such* Christianity is common with the bitterest enemies of Christ. Herbert, Hobbes, Blount, Toland, Tindall, Bolingbroke, Hume, Voltaire, Gibbon, at the very moment when they were labouring to argue or to laugh the gospel out of the world, affected great regard for our "holy religion" and its divine author. There is an edict of Frederic the II. of Prussia, on the subject of religious toleration, couched in terms of the utmost reverence for the Christian religion, and yet this same Frederic was one of the knot of conspirators, who, with Voltaire at their head, plotted the extermination of Christianity: and whenever they spoke of its "Holy Author," echoed to each other, *Crush the wretch!* This act, therefore, proves nothing but that, at the time of its passing (we hope it is so still) there was religion enough in

Virginia, to curb the proud spirit of infidelity.

CHRISTIANS! Lay these things together: compare them; examine them separately, and collectively: ponder, pause; lay your hands upon your hearts; lift up your hearts to heaven, and pronounce on Mr. Jefferson's Christianity. You cannot stifle your emotions; nor forbear uttering your indignant sentence—INFIDEL !!

This point being settled, one would think that you could have no difficulty about the rest, and would instantly and firmly conclude, "Such a man ought not, and as far as depends on me, shall not, be President of the United States!" But I calculate too confidently. I have the humiliation to hear this inference controverted even by those whose "good confession" was a pledge that they are feelingly alive to the honour of their Redeemer. No, I am not deceived: they are *Christian* lips which plead that "*Religion has nothing to do with politics*"—that *to refuse our suffrages on account of religious principles, would be an interference with the rights of conscience*—that *there is little hope of procuring a real believer, and we had better choose an infidel than a hypocrite.*

That religion has, in *fact*, nothing to do with the politics of many who profess it, is a melancholy truth. But that it has, of *right*, no concern with political transactions, is quite a new

discovery. If such opinions, however, prevail, there is no longer any mystery in the character of those whose conduct, in political matters, violates every precept, and slanders every principle of the religion of Christ. But what is politics? Is it not the science and the exercise of civil rights and civil duties? And what is religion? Is it not an obligation to the service of God, founded on his authority, and extending to all our relations personal and social? Yet *religion has nothing to do with politics!* Where did you learn this maxim? The bible is full of directions for your behaviour as *citizens*. It is plain, pointed, awful in its injunctions on rulers and ruled *as such*: yet *religion has nothing to do with politics*. You are commanded “*in ALL your ways to acknowledge him**.” IN EVERY THING, *by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, to let your requests be made known unto* “*God†.*” “*And WHATSOEVER YE DO, IN*” “*WORD OR DEED, to do ALL IN THE NAME of*” “*the Lord Jesus‡.*” Yet *religion has nothing to do with politics!* Most astonishing! And is there any part of your conduct in which you are, or wish to be, *without law to God*, and not *under the law of Christ*? Can you persuade yourselves that political men and measures are

* Prov. iii. 3.

† Phil. iv. 6.

‡ Col. iii. 17.

to undergo no review in the judgment to come? That all the passion and violence, the fraud and falsehood, and corruption which pervade the systems of party, and burst out like a flood at the public *elections*, are to be blotted from the catalogue of unchristian deeds, because they are *politics*? Or that a minister of the gospel may see his people, in their political career, bid defiance to their God in breaking through every moral restraint, and keep a guiltless silence because *religion has nothing to do with politics*? I forbear to press the argument farther; observing only, that many of our difficulties and sins may be traced to this pernicious notion. Yes, if our religion had had *more* to do with our politics; if, in the pride of our *citizenship*, we had not forgotten our *Christianity*: if we had prayed more and wrangled less about the affairs of our country, it would have been infinitely better for us at this day.

But you are afraid that to refuse a man your suffrages because he is an infidel, would *interfere with the rights of conscience*. This is a most singular scruple, and proves how wild are the opinions of men on the subject of liberty. Conscience is God's officer in the human breast, and its rights are defined by his law. The right of conscience to trample on his authority is the right of a rebel, which entitles him to nothing

but condign punishment. You are afraid of being unkind to the conscience of an *infidel*. Dismiss your fears. Is is the last grievance of which he will complain. How far do you suppose Mr. Jefferson consulted his *conscience* when he was vilifying the divine word, and preaching insurrection against God, by preaching the harmlessness of Atheism? But supposing Mr. Jefferson to be *conscientiously* impious, this would only be a stronger reason for our opposition. For the more conscientious a man is, the more persevering will he be in his views, and the more anxious for their propagation. If he be fixed, then, in dangerous error, faithfulness to God and truth requires us to resist him and his conscience too; and to keep from him the means of doing mischief. If a man thought himself bound in conscience, whenever he should be able, to banish God's sabbath, burn his churches, and hang his worshippers, would you entrust him with power out of respect to conscience? I trow not. And why you should judge differently in the case of an infidel who spurns at what is dearer to you than life, I cannot conceive. But in your solicitude for the conscience of Mr. Jefferson, have you considered, in the mean time, what becomes of your *own* conscience? Has it no rights? no voice? no influence? Are you not to keep it void of of-

fence towards God? Can you do this in elevating his open enemies to the highest dignity of your country? Beware, therefore, lest an ill-directed care for the conscience of another, bring your own under the lashes of remorse. Keep this clear, by the word of God, and there is little hazard of injuring your neighbour's. But how can you interfere with any man's conscience by refusing him a political office? You do not invade the sanctuary of his bosom: you impose on him no creed: you simply tell him you do not like him, or that you prefer another to him. Do you injure him by this? Do you not merely exercise the right of a citizen and a Christian? It belongs essentially to the freedom of election, to refuse my vote to any candidate for reasons of conscience, of state, of predilection, or for no reason at all but my own choice. The rights of conscience, on his part, are out of the question. He proposes himself for my approbation. If I approve, I give him my support. If not, I withhold it. His conscience has nothing to do with my motives; but to my *own* conscience they are serious things. If he be an infidel, I will not compel him to profess Christianity. Let him retain his infidelity, enjoy all its comforts, and meet all its consequences. But I have an unquestionable right to say, "I cannot trust a man of such

“ principles : on what grounds he has adopted
 “ them is not my concern ; nor will his personal
 “ sincerity alter their tendency. While he is
 “ an infidel, he shall never have my coun-
 “ tenance. Let him stay where he is : and
 “ let his conscience be its own reward.”

I could not blame another for such conduct to me ; for he only makes an independent use of his privilege, which does me no injury : nor am I to be blamed for such conduct to another, for I only make the same use of my privilege, which is no injury to him. Mr. Jefferson's conscience cannot, therefore, be wronged if you exclude him from the presidency because he is an infidel ; and your own, by an act of such Christian magnanimity, may escape hereafter many a bitter pang. For if you elect Mr. Jefferson, though an infidel, from a regard to what you consider the rights of conscience, you must, in order to be consistent, *carry your principle through*. If infidelity is not a valid objection to a candidate for the presidency, it cannot be so to a candidate for any other office. You must never again say, “ We will not vote for such a man because he is an infidel.” The evil brotherhood will turn upon you with your own doctrine of the “ rights of conscience.” You must then either retract, or be content to see

every office filled with infidels. How horrible, in such an event, would be the situation of your country! How deep your agony under the torments of self-reproach!

But there is no prospect, you say, of obtaining a real Christian, and we had *better choose an infidel than a hypocrite*. By no means. Supposing that a man professes Christianity, and evinces in his general deportment a regard for its doctrines, its worship, and its laws; though he be rotten at heart, he is infinitely preferable to a known infidel. His hypocrisy is before God. It may ruin his own soul; but, while it is without detection, can do no hurt to men. We have a hold of him which it is impossible to get of an infidel. His reputation, his habits, his interests, depending upon the belief of his Christianity, are sureties for his behaviour to which we vainly look for a counterbalance in an infidel; and they are next to religion itself, the strongest sureties of man to man. His very hypocrisy is an homage to the gospel. The whole weight of his example is on the side of Christianity, while that of an open infidel lies wholly against it. It is well known that the attendance of your Washington, and of President Adams upon public worship, gave the ordinances of the gospel a respectability in the eyes of many

which otherwise they would not have had : brought a train of thoughtless people within the reach of the means of salvation : and thus strengthened the opposition of Christians to the progress of infidelity. You can never forget the honourable testimony which Mr. Adams bore, in one of his proclamations, to a number of the most precious truths of Revelation ; nor how he was abused and ridiculed for it, by not a few of those very persons who now strive to persuade you that Mr. Jefferson is a Christian. In short, your President, if an open infidel, will be a centre of contagion to the whole continent : If a professed Christian, he will honour the institutions of God ; and though his hypocrisy, should he prove a hypocrite, may be a fire to consume his own vitals, it cannot become a wide-spreading conflagration.

Can you still hesitate ? Perhaps you may. I therefore bespeak your attention to a few plain and cogent reasons, why you cannot, without violating your plighted faith, and trampling on your most sacred duties, place an infidel at the head of your government.

1. The civil magistrate is *God's officer*. *He is the minister of God*, saith Paul, *to thee for good* *. Consequently his first and highest

obligation, is to cherish in his mind, and express in his conduct, his sense of obedience to the Governor of the Universe. *He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in THE FEAR OF GOD**. The Scriptures have left you this and similar declarations, to direct you in the choice of your magistratés. And you are bound, upon your allegiance to the God of the Scriptures, to look out for such men as answer the description; and if, unhappily, they are not to be had, for such as come nearest to it. The good man, he who shall “ dwell in God’s “ holy hill,” is one “ in whose eyes a vile “ *person is contemned*; but he HONOURETH “ *them that fear the Lord*†.” But can you pretend to regard this principle, when you desire to raise an infidel to the most important post in your country? Do you call this *honouring them that fear God*? Nay, it is honouring them who do *not* fear God: that is, according to the scriptural contrast, honouring a *vile person*, whom, as Christians, you ought to *contemn*. And have you the smallest expectation that one who despises the word and worship of God; who has openly taught the harmlessness of rebellion against his government and being, by teaching that Atheism is

* Ps. xv. 4.

† 2 Sam. xxiii. 3.

no injury to society, will, nevertheless, *rule in his fear*? Will it shew any reverence or love to your Father in Heaven, to put a distinguishing mark of your confidence upon his sworn foe? Or will it be an affront to his majesty?

2. The civil magistrate is, by divine appointment, *the guardian of the sabbath*. In it *thou shalt not do any work; thou, nor thy son, &c. nor THE STRANGER THAT IS WITHIN THY GATES* *. “Gates,” is a scriptural term for public authority; and that it is so to be understood in this commandment, is evident from its connection with “*stranger*.” God says that even the stranger shall not be allowed to profane his sabbath. But the stranger can be controlled only by the civil magistrate who “*sitteth in the gate* †.” It therefore belongs to his office, to enforce, by lawful means, the sanctification of the sabbath, as the fundamental institute of religion and morals, and the social expression of homage to that God under whom he acts. The least which can be expected from him, is to recommend it by personal observance. How do you suppose Mr. Jefferson will perform this part of his duty?

* Ex. xx. 10.

† Dan. ii. 49.

or how can you deposit in his hands a trust, which you cannot but think he will betray; and in betraying which, he will not only sacrifice some of your most invaluable interests, but as *your* organ and in *your* name, lift up his heel against the God of Heaven? In different states, you have made, not long since, spirited exertions to hinder the profanation of your Lord's day. For this purpose many of you endeavoured to procure religious magistrates for this City, and religious representatives in the councils of the State. You well remember how you were mocked, traduced, execrated, especially by the infidel tribe. But what is now become of your zeal and your consistency! I can read in the list of delegates to the Legislature, the names of men who have been an ornament to the gospel, and acquitted themselves like Christians in that noble struggle, and yet are expected to ballot for electors, whose votes shall be given to an infidel President. Who hath bewitched you, Christians? or, what do you mean by siding with the infidels to lift into the chair of State; a man more eminent for nothing than for his scorn of the day, the ordinances, and the worship of your Redeemer; and who did not blush to make it, in the face of the sun, a season of

frolic and revel*? Is this your kindness to your friend?

3. The *church of God has ever accounted it a great mercy to have civil rulers professing his name*. Rather than yield it, thousands of your fathers have poured out their blood. This privilege is now in your hands: and it is the chief circumstance which makes the freedom of election worth a Christian's care. Will you, dare you, abuse it by prostituting it to the aggrandizement of an enemy to your Lord and to his Christ? If you do will it not be a righteous thing with God to take the privilege from you altogether; and, in his wrath, to subject you, and your children, and your children's children, to such rulers as you have, by your own deed, preferred?

4. You are commanded to *pray for your rulers*; it is your custom to pray, that they may be men *fearing God and hating covetousness*. You intreat him to fulfil his promise, that *kings shall be to his church nursing-fathers, and queens her nursing-mothers*†. With what conscience can you lift up your hands in such a supplication, when you are exerting yourselves to procure a President, who you

* The Fredericksburgh feast, given on the Sabbath, to Mr. J. 1796.

† Is. xlii. 28.

know does *not* fear God; i. e. one exactly the *reverse* of the man whom you ask him to bestow? And when, by this act, you do all in your power to *defeat* the promise of which you affect to wish the fulfilment? Do you think that the church of Christ is to be nurtured by the dragon's milk of infidelity? Or that the contradiction between your prayers and your practice does not mock the holy God?

5. There are circumstances in the state of your country which impart to these reflections, applicable in their spirit to all Christians, a double emphasis in their application to you.

The Federal Constitution *makes no acknowledgement of that God* who gave us our national existence, and saved us from anarchy and internal war. This neglect has excited in many of its best friends, more alarm than all other difficulties. The only way to wipe off the reproach of irreligion, and to avert the descending vengeance, is to prove, by our *national acts*, that the Constitution has not, in this instance, done justice to the public sentiment. But if you appoint an infidel for your President, and *such* an infidel as Mr. Jefferson, you will sanction that neglect, you will declare, by a *solemn national act*, that there is no more religion in your collective character, than in your written constitution: you will put a *na-*

tional indignity upon the God of your mercies; and provoke him, it may be, to send over your land that deluge of judgments which his forbearance has hitherto suspended.

Add to this the consideration, that *infidelity has awfully increased*. The time was, and that within your own recollection, when the term infidelity was almost a stranger to our ears, and an open infidel an object of abhorrence. But *now* the term has become familiar, and infidels hardly disgust. Our youth, our hope and our pride, are poisoned with the accursed leaven. The vain title of "philosopher," has turned their giddy heads, and, what is worse, corrupted their untutored hearts. It is now a mark of sense, the proof of an enlarged and liberal mind, to scoff at all the truths of inspiration, and to cover with ridicule the hope of a Christian; those truths and that hope which are the richest boon of divine benignity; which calm the perturbed conscience, and heal the wounded spirit; which sweeten every comfort, and soothe every sorrow; which give strong consolation in the arrest of death, and shed the light of immortality on the gloom of the grave. All, all are become the sneer of the buffoon, and the song of the drunkard. These things, Christians, you deplore. You feel indignant, as well as discou-

raged at the inroads of infidel principle and profligate manners. You declaim against them. You caution your children against their infection. And yet, with such facts before your eyes, and such lessons in your mouths, you are on the point of undoing whatever you have done; and annihilating, at one blow, the effect of all your profession, instruction, and example. By giving your support to Mr. Jefferson, you are about to strip infidelity of its ignominy; array it in honours; and hold it up with eclat to the view of the rising generation. By this act, you will proclaim to the whole world that it is not so detestable a thing as you pretended; that you do not believe it subversive of moral obligation and social purity: that a man may revile your religion and blaspheme your Saviour; and yet command your highest confidence. This amounts to nothing less than a deliberate surrender of the cause of Jesus Christ into the hands of his enemies. By this single act—my flesh trembles, my blood chills at the thought! by this single act you will do more to destroy a regard for the gospel of Jesus, than the whole fraternity of infidels with all their arts, their industry and their intrigues. You will stamp credit upon principles, the native tendency of which is to ruin your children in this world, and damn them in the world to come. O God! “the ox knoweth his owner, and the

“ as his master’s crib: but thy people doth not
 “ know, and Israel doth not consider*.”

With these serious reflections, let me connect a fact equally serious: The *whole strength of open and active infidelity is on the side of Mr. Jefferson.* You may well start! But the observation and experience of the Continent is one long and loud attestation to the truth of my assertion. I say OPEN and ACTIVE infidelity. You can scarcely find one exception among all who preach infidel tenets among the people. Did it never occur to you, that such men would not be so zealous for Mr. Jefferson if they were not well assured of his being one of themselves—that they would cordially hate him if they supposed him to be a Christian—or that they have the most sanguine hope that his election to the Presidency will promote their cause? I know, that to serve the purpose of the moment, those very presses which teemed with abuse of your Redeemer, are now affecting to offer incense to his religion; and that Deists themselves are labouring to convince you that Mr. Jefferson is a Christian; and yet have the effrontery to talk of other men’s *hypocrisy!* Can you be the dupes of such an artifice? Do you not see in it a proof that there is no reliance to be placed on

infidel conscience? Do you need to be reminded that these infidels who now court you, are the very men who, four years ago, insulted your faith and your Lord with every expression of ridicule and contempt? That these very men circulated, with unremitting assiduity, that execrable book of Boulanger, entitled *Christianity Unveiled*; and that equally execrable abortion of Thomas Paine, *The Age of Reason*? That, in order to get them (especially the latter) into the hands of the common people, they sold them at a very low rate; gave them away where they could not sell them; and slipped them into the pockets of numbers who refused to accept them? Do you know that some of these infidels were at the trouble of translating from the French, and printing for the benefit of Americans, a work of downright undisguised Atheism, with the imposing title of *Common Sense*? That it was openly advertised, and extracts, or an extract, published to help the sale*? Do you know that some of the same brotherhood are secretly handing about, I need not say where, a book, written by Charles Pi-

* The title is a trick, designed to entrap the unwary, by palming it on them through the popularity of Paine's tracts under the same name. The title in the original, is *Le bon Sens*, GOOD SENSE. It was printed, I believe, in Philadelphia; but the Printer was ashamed or afraid to own it.

gott, an Englishman, entitled *A Political Dictionary*? Take the following sample of its impiety: (my hair stiffens while I transcribe it) “*Religion*—a superstition invented by the “ arch-bishop of hell, and propagated by his “ faithful diocesans the clergy, to keep the peo- “ ple in ignorance and darkness, that they may “ not see the work of iniquity that is going “ on,” &c*.

Such are the men with whom professors of the name of our Lord Jesus Christ are concerting the election of an *infidel* to the Presidency of the United States of America. Hear the word of the Lord: “ What fellowship hath “ righteousness with unrighteousness? And “ what communion hath light with darkness? “ And what concord hath Christ with Belial? “ And what part hath he that believeth with an “ infidel†?” Yet Christians are uniting with

* Pigott’s Political Dictionary, p. 132. This work was originally printed in England; but having been suppressed there, the whole, or, nearly the whole impression, was sent over to America, and distributed among the people. But in *what manner*, and by *what means*, there are some who can tell better than the writer of this pamphlet. It was thought, however, to be so useful, as to merit the American press.—For the copy which I possess, is one of an edition printed at New-York, for THOMAS GREENLEAF, late editor of the Argus: 1796.

† 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

infidels in exalting an infidel to the chief magistracy! If he succeed, Christians must bear the blame. Numerous as the infidels are, they are not yet able, adored be God, to seize upon our "high places." Christians must help them, or they set not their feet on the threshold of power. If, therefore, an infidel preside over our country, it will be YOUR fault, Christians; and YOUR act; and YOU shall answer it! And for aiding and abetting such a design, I charge upon your consciences the sin of striking hands in a covenant of friendship with the enemies of your master's glory. Ah, what will be your compunction, when these same infidels, victorious through *your* assistance, will "tread you down as the mire in the streets," and exult in their triumph over bigots and bigotry.

Sit down, now, and interrogate your own hearts, whether you can, with a "pure conscience," befriend Mr. Jefferson's election? Whether you can do it *in the name of the Lord Jesus?* Whether you can lift up your heads and tell him that the choice of this infidel is for his honour, and that you promote it in the faith of his approbation? Whether, in the event of success, you have a right to look for his blessing in the enjoyment of your President? Whether, having preferred the talents of man be-

fore the religion of Jesus, you ought not to fear that God will blast these talents; abandon your President to infatuated counsels; and yourselves to the plague of your own folly? Whether it would not be just to remove the restraints of his good providence, and scourge you with that very infidelity which you did not scruple to countenance? Whether you can, without some guilty misgivings, pray for the spirit of Christ upon a President whom you choose in spite of every demonstration of his hatred to Christ? Those who, to keep their consciences clean, oppose Mr. Jefferson, may pray for him, in this manner, with a full and fervent heart. But to *you*, God may administer this dread rebuke: “ You *chose* an infidel: *keep him* as ye chose him: walk in the sparks that ye have kindled.” Whether the threatnings of God are not pointed against such a magistrate and such a people? “ Be wise, O ye kings,” is his commandment; “ be instructed ye judges of the earth: serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling: KISS THE SON, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way when his anger is kindled but a little*.” What then is in store for a magistrate who is so far from “ kissing the Son,” that he hates and opposes

* Ps. ii. 10—12.

him? “ The wicked shall be turned into hell,
 “ and all the NATIONS that FORGET God*.”
 And who forget him, if not a nation which,
 though called by his name, nevertheless ca-
 reless, honours, rewards his enemies? The
 Lord hath sworn to strike *through Kings in the
 day of his wrath*†. Woe, then, to those go-
 vernments which are weilded by infidels, when
 he arises to judgment; and woe to those who
 have contributed to establish them! To what-
 ever influence they owe their determinations
 and their measures, it is not to the “ Spirit of
 “ understanding and of the fear of the Lord.”
 Do I speak these things as a man; or saith not
 the scripture the same also? “ Woe to the re-
 “ bellious children, saith the Lord, that *take*
 “ *counsel, but not of me*, and that cover with a
 “ covering, *but not of my Spirit*, that they may
 “ add sin to sin. That walk to go down into
 “ Egypt (*and have not asked at my mouth*) to
 “ strengthen themselves in the strength of Pha-
 “ raoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt.
 “ Therefore the strength of Egypt shall be
 “ your *shame*, and the *trust in the shadow of*
 “ *Egypt your CONFUSION*‡.” This is the light
 in which God considers your confidence in

* Ps. ix. 17.

† Ps. cx. 5.

‡ Is. xxx. 1—3.

his enemies. And the issue for which you ought to be prepared.

I have done; and do not flatter myself that I shall escape the censure of many professed, and of some real, Christians. The stile of this pamphlet is calculated to conciliate nothing but conscience. I desire to conciliate nothing else. "If I pleased men, I should not be the "servant of Christ." I do not expect, nor wish, to fare better than the apostle of the Gentiles, who became the enemy of not a few professors, because he *told them the truth**. But the Bible speaks of "children that will "not hear the law of the Lord—which say to "the seers, See not: and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things: speak unto "us *smooth things*: prophecy deceits†." Here is the truth, "Whether you will hear, or whether you will forbear." If you are resolved to persevere in elevating an infidel to the chair of your President, I pray God not to "choose "your delusions"—but cannot dissemble that "my flesh trembleth for fear of his judgments." It is my consolation that my feeble voice has been lifted up for his name. I have addressed you as one who believes, and I beseech you to act as those who believe, "That we

* Gal. iv. 16.

† Is. xxx. 9, 10.

“ must *all* appear before the judgment-seat of “ Christ.” Whatever be the result, you shall not plead that you were not warned. If, notwithstanding, you call to govern you an enemy to my Lord and your Lord; in the face of earth and heaven, and in the audience of your own consciences, I record my protest, and wash my hands of your guilt.

ARISE, O LORD, AND LET NOT MAN PREVAIL!



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