

DISCOURSE.

“As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.”—Acts xiii. 48.

Many things both in the natural and moral worlds which in themselves are not desirable, are nevertheless useful and essential as producing the most important results. Violent storms are in themselves not pleasant, but their effects upon the atmosphere and the ocean are essential to the preservation of life and health. War is a grievous calamity to a people, but in many instances it is infinitely preferable to the evils by which it is induced. In like manner, religious controversy is not desirable, on its own account; but it often proves a blessing, by the removal of those errors, by means of which the god of this world blinds the minds of men and destroys their souls.

Let no man be deceived with respect to controversy. The world is full of error. It is natural to man, and can be removed from the heart of man only by the truths of the Gospel. Every man who preaches the Gospel, and “contends earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints,” must be a controversialist, for there is not a doctrine of the Bible that has not been denied or perverted. I cannot preach on any subject without opposing the views, and condemning the practices of some persons. Truth cannot be injured by controversy. Error alone will suffer. Hence those who wish to retain and promulgate their errors,