

To the latter, we answer, No; and that for the following reasons:— First, because it was not the will of Christ to make the knowledge and belief of human inferences a part of his religion; but upon the belief and obedience of what is expressly recorded as his will, did confer upon the believing and obedient all the blessings of his kingdom,—viz. righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. Second, because it is not the will of Christ to make all moral and religious truth, or every thing that might be fairly deduced from scripture promises, a part of his religion; for were this the case “the world itself could not contain the books that should be written;” as John says of the many other things which Jesus did, which are not written—not recorded. Third, because inferences and opinions are the proper and immediate effects of human reasoning and judgment: and are, therefore, but of human authority; whereas divine testimony and law are the proper and immediate effects of a divine authority. Wherefore, in the belief and obedience of the former, we obey man; but in the belief and obedience of the latter, we obey God, having an immediate respect to his express authority, and that alone. Fourth, because were all deducible inferences from the holy scriptures, or even a distinct apprehension of every thing expressly contained in them, made a part of the Christian religion, where is the man that could be justly entitled to the name of Christian, and where should we find a society of such? Fifth, and lastly, for the best of all reasons, that the belief and obedience of what is expressly and explicitly revealed concerning Christ, his laws, and ordinances, will render the believing and obedient subject perfect;—thoroughly furnished for all good works. Thus are we thrown back again upon the gospel and law of Christ, as delivered by the Apostles and expressly recorded in the New Testament, that we may find rest to our souls; the belief and obedience of which constitute the Christian religion and the Christian character.

But then, “How can two walk together except they be agreed?” True, unless they be agreed to walk together. But can no two agree to walk together in religious fellowship, unless they think alike in all religious matters? And, if not, where shall we find the two that can walk together? But, perhaps, it will be said, the necessary agreement is only to be understood of things of an essential character. Well, be it so; but by what rule is this to be determined. The difficulty of agreement here, appears to be as insuperable as in the former case. Does not every sect think the things that they have agreed upon, for that purpose, to be quite essential; yet no two sects agree what these ought to be. But they always happen to be what the supreme will and authority of the sect pleases to make them, and not what their intrinsic importance would seem to indicate. For instance, the cutting of a bit of skin of a child eight days old, is quite essential to fellowship in one sect; whilst in another, the aspersion of a few drops of water, accompanied with certain words, is deemed of equal importance. In short, as every religion, true and false, consists of faith and obedience, and is confessedly founded on authority;