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“ PROVE ALL THINGS, HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD.”

A WORD TO THE DISCIPLES OF THE ANCIENT
GOSPEL,

IN BEHALF OF REFORMATION, AND FOR THE CONSIDERATION
OF OPPONENTS.

BELOVED,

“WE commend not ourselves again to you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf; that you may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart;—not in reality.”

The reformation for which we plead, is the exhibition of the ancient gospel and law of Christ, as preached and inculcated by the Apostles, and expressly recorded in the New Testament.

Objection. All professions say so.

Answer, Do they do so? If, they do, we are all agreed; but if not, that is no reason why we should not do so. And if all do what we propose and urge, whence come our divisions. If all that preach and teach spoke the same things, would not our divisions speedily terminate? And can this ever take place and be maintained till all obey the apostolic injunction, “Preach the word,”—and,—“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God speak.” Pray how can we do this, but by exhibiting the recorded word as delivered by the Apostles? Have we any authority to preach any thing else? Have we any authority to explain the gospel or law of Christ; much less to add to the propositions either of the law or the gospel, by inculcating anything as matter of faith or obedience, that is not expressly inculcated as such in the New Testament. We do not, however question the authority of translating, or of the grammatical exposition of words and phrases,—but, merely, of theological explanation, for the purpose of making these expositions, inferences, and opinions, articles of faith, and terms of communion. Thus new-modelling the christian religion by those additions and alterations, which now distinguish one sect from another.

Objection. But may not inferences and opinions, formed by just reasoning, be as true as the text? and, if so, ought they not to be received as of equal authority?