

and in conjunction with them. The pledge, as it is commonly called, is indeed nothing more or less than a good resolution ; and we are exhorted by ministers of the Gospel, and by friends, to reform our ways, and to form and fulfil resolutions of amendment. With regard to very many of our enjoined obligations and duties, and on many of the lawful and needful occasions of life, we are required to make, and do actually enter into, pointed and strict resolutions, and some of them are committed to writing. We have, indeed, the very highest authority for the lawfulness or expediency of entering into vows, or forming resolutions for good. It is even commanded, "Vow and pay unto the Lord your God." The wise and pious Psalmist, with regard to various parts of his conduct, entered into voluntary resolutions or pledges, and which we find recorded in the sacred volume. He has written, "I will not sit with the wicked." "I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me." "I have purposed that my mouth shall not transgress. "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes;" and this last, indeed, seems directly in point to the main subject under review. The 101st Psalm is just a string or list of pledges, or good resolutions, and most of them with reference to practical duties. Lastly, the vow of the Nazarite is directly in point. It was not divinely enjoined, but was entirely voluntary, and yet it was not only permitted, but met with the divine approval and sanction.

With regard to another objection made to the societies, that there are some persons within them who hold infidel or heretical opinions, it scarcely merits an answer, even though insinuated or put forth by some learned but injudicious divines. It is perfectly possible that there are a few of such characters engaged in the cause, but our opponents would find it very difficult to show that they have ever been so numerous or influential in any society as to have brought about measures subversive of the interests of sound religion and scriptural morality. Moreover, it would scarcely seem courteous or right to refuse to such persons the privilege of uniting with Christians in the promotion of a work of such general benevolence and usefulness. In the course of such united exertion, those persons might even receive some good to themselves, with regard to religion, by observing the far more exalted principles and motives, and the superior zeal and persevering activity, exhibited by orthodox Christians, in carrying forward this excellent work. Even with reference to the Gospel itself, the wise and discriminating Paul has said, "Some, indeed, preach Christ even of envy and strife, and some also of good will ; what then, notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea and will rejoice." If orthodox professors would silence the reproaches, and destroy or weaken the influence of those who are unsound in the faith, there is a ready and scriptural way of effecting those purposes. Let them unanimously and actively engage, and take the lead in this and every other movement for promoting religion, morality, and happiness, and thus, they will most effectually silence such reproaches, evince the truth of their profession, and show that they are indeed the redeemed people of the Lord, "zealous of good works." But what shall be said on this matter, concerning the *thousands* of Christian ministers, and even *millions*, in all, of other