

loaded with human doctrines, and ordinances, that mankind was again *in bondage under the elements of the world*. But when the night of ignorance was spent, and light again dawned; men asserted the free use of the spiritual powers they had received from their Maker; and thought, and judged for themselves. The mind, unfettered from prejudices, exerted freely its faculties in the search of truth; and was soon made sensible that many of the articles of the public faith could not be of Divine origin. Reason, recovering its long compressed energy, refused to bear the controul of human authority in its researches after the pure doctrine of the Gospel. The nature of things, and the indubitable word of God alone could be admitted, as the criterions, by which Divine doctrines were to be ascertained. Guided by these, reason discovered the sad degeneracy; and an enlightened zeal was solicitous to restore men to that liberty, unto which they were called by the Christian dispensation. Under the Gospel Religion, conscience was not to be burthened with the observance of rites, and ceremonies; the solicitude of the Christian was to be chiefly directed to spiritual things; and to the discharge of the duties of the moral law; *for in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature*. (Gal. 6. 15.) Under the direction of men, whose minds were enlightened by the truth; and who had just views of the designs of the Gospel, a reformation was effected; and the Christian Religion exhibited to the world in its primitive purity, and simplicity. Where the light of wisdom had enlarged the mind, it appeared evident that things in their nature indifferent, could be of no essential importance in the Religion of Christ; the kingdom of God, it was clearly seen, was righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy-Ghost; and, that *he, that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God*. (Rom. 14. 18.) Still, as men cannot unite in the profession of Religion unless they be bound together