

renovates the human heart, which elevates human character, and which prostrates in the dust all the boasted expedients of ancient and modern times. The church of the living God is therefore styled, the *pillar and ground* of the truth. The christian religion is a social religion, and is best exhibited to the full conviction of the world in this social character. An individual or two in a pagan land, may speak about the christian religion, and may exhibit its morality as far as respects mankind in general, but cannot give so satisfactory and convincing an exhibition of it, as by exhibiting a church, not on paper, but in actual existence and operation, as divinely appointed. The ambassadors of Christ, whom he specially called and divinely inspired, were commissioned to go into all nations in quest of materials, living stones to build this pillar of truth, this house of the living God, and then to unite or cement these materials to exhibit the inscription of the blessed gospel in such legible characters as to be known and read of all men. This work, the Apostles accomplished in having made of twain one new man, i. e. of Jew and Gentile, one new institution or associated body, the church; and having placed this in all nations, in the most conspicuous situations, in the most populous countries, the most commercial states, and in the most renowned cities, they were taken to heaven, and left the church, by its doctrine and example, to christianize the world. All that has been necessary ever since, was, to hold fast the Apostle's doctrine and commandments. If this had been faithfully done, we have a right to believe that the heathen would have been converted. But it has happened by the woful departure of ambitious and ignorant men, from the ancient simplicity of the new religion, that the same awful crime is justly preferred against the people called christians, that was by an Apostle, charged upon the Jews; viz.—“The christian name has been through your crimes, blasphemed among the heathen.” So that among many pagans, the term christian denotes every thing hateful and impious. Surely nothing worthy of admiration can be done by the christians of this age, in converting the world, until christians themselves are seen united, on the apostle's word, John xvii. 20–21, separating from every thing that is worldly and ungodly—turning away from such as have a form of godliness, but deny the power of it—until they form themselves into societies, independent of hireling teachers and ecclesiastical courts, modelled after the forum, the parliament, or national conventions, until they cast to the moles and to the bats, the philosophic speculations, the metaphysics, the fables, which appear in so many human creeds; until they return to the ancient model delineated in the New Testament, and until they keep the ordinances as delivered unto them by the Apostles.

Then suppose a Christian Church were to be placed on the confines of a heathen land, as some of them, in such case, inevitably would be; the darkness of paganism would serve as a shade in a picture, to exhibit the lustre of Christianity. Then the unconverted around them, would see