

THE
WITNESS OF TRUTH.

Vol. IV.

OSHAWA, AUGUST, 1849.

No. 8.

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE ?

THE BAPTISTS AND DISCIPLES—THE POSITION WE OCCUPY.

LETTER FIRST.

ELDER DAVIDSON:—MY DEAR SIR,—Your request, made at our brief interview near Columbus, desiring a synopsis of our religious views, is the occasion of my present letter and the letters which may hereafter follow. As nothing like justice could be done to the correspondence on my part without writing more than one epistle, I trust you will not seriously object to this arrangement. No advantage of a party character will accrue to me in thus presenting you with a number of letters instead of one; yet, should you opine differently, please intimate it, and my purpose will be abandoned. I am far from thinking, however, that you will fail to assent most cordially to what is now offered and contemplated.

In order to place before you the real ground we occupy as a religious body, it will be necessary for me to premise a few things by way of reference to the past history of christianity; or rather I might say, the past aberrations from, and abuses of, christianity. You will doubtless concur with me, that in pursuing this course, I claim no more than the Baptists claim when they exhibit to the religious world their views of baptism, the Lord's day, the nature and meaning of ordination, and their opposition to religious nationalities. Well, then, friend Davidson, allow me a fair field, a fair hearing, and a fair tribunal, and without doubt neither you nor I, by this written interview, will afflict each other with religious leprosy; a non-descript malady of which the party leaders of sectarian Israel are most obviously afraid.

Now if we extend our horizon to the time of Constantine the Great, the year of grace 325, looking from that period down to the year of the Christian era that we came upon the stage of action, we discover at