

inquirer. Every sect cries out, *we are the people, and the Law of the Lord is with us*; every partisan enforces the pretensions of his sect. But this, though frequently urged, is the weakest of all reasons for keeping aloof from investigation. The amount is, "The danger of going astray is great, the consequences fatal; therefore I will shut my eyes." Good sense would say, "The danger of error is great, the consequences fatal; therefore I will use all my diligence that I may not be misled:" For certainly, if "strait be the gate and narrow the way which leadeth unto life," we have the strongest inducement possible to search out and embrace the "few who find it." We are, therefore, reduced to this alternative, either that there is no truth at all, or that we are bound to seek it through every peril, to distinguish its voice amid all clamours, and to possess it at any price. If this condition seem hard, let it be remembered,

2. That it is not left to our discretion whether we shall choose or not.

The determination to choose *nothing*, is a determination *not to choose the truth*; and this draws after it the condemnation of those who "love darkness rather than light." The most high God having given us his word as the rule of our faith and duty, a neglect to seek its counsel because men wrangle about its meaning, is to make the hazard of going wrong a reason for never being anxious to go right. It would be like the excuse of a servant, who having, in common with others, received his master's orders to repair to a certain place, should resolve not to stir, because his fellow servants quarrelled about the road. Their disobedience could never justify his. Nor is there a man upon earth who would not pronounce it to be the plea of a fool, that out of his pure love of peace, he had never been at the trouble to ascertain the import of his master's instructions! The fact is, that no medium can be assigned between receiving and rejecting the truth. If rejected, we seal our own perdition—If received, we must reject whatever is hostile to it; that is, we must institute a comparison between conflicting claims; which is precisely the object of controversy.

Pursuing the argument a little further, we shall perceive in the

3d place, That in disclaiming all controversy, we set out with a principle which it is impossible to carry through.

In what department of society, or on what subject of discourse, do the thoughts of men accord? The law has long been celebrated for its fertility in litigation. Medicine is hardly inferior to the bar: agriculture keeps up a sharp debate with commerce: and the politician has always to navigate a "tempestuous sea." Not a project, a character, nor an incident, can be introduced into common conversation without calling forth different strictures, according to the views, habits, relations, and