

courage, and indulge a humble confidence that "the time of the end" is drawing nigh, when its mild excellencies shall be more fully experienced even in this world.

In the midst of much lukewarmness and relaxed religious principle, we have to deplore the return of the human heart to a preference for a religion largely diluted with ceremony, and adorned with the exquisite proportions of architecture; or, in some, a desire for novelties in doctrine, and crude speculations, founded on a notion that the plain, simple, and pure truths of the Bible must change with the advancing state of science; and that fresh discoveries are as reasonably to be expected in religion as in the paths of human knowledge; or worse than all, the spread of infidel principles, which indeed have been greatly fostered by the two alarming and prevalent errors just referred to.

The religion of ceremony has ever been opposed to that of the heart; and where the heart, which is the seat of man's disorder, remains unaffected, the power of religious profession is lifeless. I do not by this observation intend to decry all ceremony whatever; on the contrary, both natural and revealed theology teach us that a simple ceremonial is highly useful in aiding the growth of divine principles in the heart. But it is the substitution of a host of corporeal acts for the inward, renewing, heavenly principle, which is so debasing, and reduces the purest and most elevating system of religion in the world, so worthy of its Divine Founder, to a refined mingling of Paganism and Judaism with traditionary Christianity. It is amazing how any, who have the Bible, with every other aid which unpersecuting and unobstructing modern times confer on man, can embrace such grovelling views of Christ's soul-renewing doctrines. "We are the true circumcision who worship God in the spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Such a passage as this from God's holy Word—and there are thousands of a similar nature—cuts up, root and branch, this leaning of the heart on the "beggarly elements," by which strong language the Apostle describes this tendency to fall back on a mere ceremonial for salvation. It has borne sad sway in our time; and has distracted or perverted many an unstable mind, in despite of previously formed evangelical views, of all ancestral and holy recollections, and of the