

on more solid and convincing ground than abstruse speculations, we shall appeal to the New Testament. The Saviour of the world charged the scribes and pharisees of that age with having "shut up the kingdom of heaven against men," with having "neither gone in themselves, nor suffered those that were entering to go in." He charged the lawyers, or doctors of divinity, with having taken away the *key of knowledge* from the people. The apostle Paul taught the christians that it was possible for them so to walk as to give occasion to the adversaries of their cause to speak reproachfully of it and them; they might so walk as that the *name* of God, of Jesus, and his *doctrine* might be *blasphemed*. And Peter declared, that, in consequence of false teachers and disciples, "*the way of truth should be evil spoken of.*" He also teaches that christians may so conduct themselves as that those who behold their conduct may be allured to the belief of the gospel. [See Matt. xxiii. 13. Luke xi. 52. 1st Tim. v. 14. vi. 1. 1st Pet. iii. 1. 2d Pet. ii. 1. 2.] Those records show that professed disciples may, both by *omitting* to do their duty, and by *committing* faults, prevent and greatly retard the spread of the gospel, the enlargement of Messiah's kingdom. We are convinced, that the *character* of the "christian communities" is the greatest offence, or stumbling block in the way of the conversion of the world. And that therefore the only hopeful course to convert the world is to reform the professors of christianity.

But what kind of a reformation is requisite to this end? It is not the erection of a new sect, the inventing of new *shibboleths*, or the setting up of a new creed, nor the adopting of any in existence save the *New Testament*, in the *form* in which it pleased the Spirit of God to give it. It is to receive it as it stands, and to make it its own interpreter, according to the ordinary rules of interpreting all books. It is not to go back to primitive Calvinism, or primitive Methodism, or primitive Lutheranism, but to *primitive Christianity*. The history of the church for many centuries has proved, the history of every sect convinces us, that it is as impossible for any one sect to gain such an ascendancy as to embrace as converts the others, and thus unite in one grand phalanx the christians against the allied powers of darkness, as it is to create a world. Every sect, with a human creed, carries in it, as the human body, the seeds of its own mortality. Every sect has its infancy, its childhood, its manhood, and its dotage. Some die as soon as they are born, and others live to a good old age, but their old age is full of grief and trouble. And die they must. As it is appointed unto all men *once to die*, and after that the judgment, so it is ordained of God that all sects must die, and that because their *bond of union* is under the *curse*. Where are the hundreds of sects that have already existed? They only live in history as beacons to posterity.

It need not be objected that some sects have already taken the New Testament and run into the wildest extremes; for either they interpreted it according to the reveries of Swedenburg, the fanaticism of Shakerism, or the enthusiasm of New Lightism, or they apostatized from a good pro-