

ministered in it are clearly laid down in His written word—and they are evidently very strictly guarded against all interference, either on the part of avowed enemies or professed friends, by the solemnly recorded expression of His high displeasure, to be inflicted on all offenders, especially at the time of the restitution of all things. And the grand consummation aimed at in the embodying of such principles for the management of His Church is His bringing to the enjoyment of the inheritance of Heaven a number which no man can number out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation—whose eternal song of gratitude and praise to the Redeemer shall be, “Thou art worthy O Lord, to receive glory and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created!”

After the departure of Christ's inspired Apostles and Evangelists from this world, and the completion and circulation of the written word amongst the churches which had been formed—in the case of any dispute or difference of opinion on any matter, arising from whatever cause, the appeal was to be made constantly and solely to the Bible. And no error, on any essential or vital matter could arise which such an appeal to the infallible standard could not settle, if prayer, individual and united, for the Divine Spirit's illumination, and guidance, should precede, and follow the investigation—since, concerning every thing vital and essential in the constitution of the Church as one body, though consisting of many parts—its mode of acting in the world to the Divine Head, and the various members and office bearers to one another—and in its advances, with the truth, upon general society, whence an increase of its members should be drawn, there is to be found in the Bible, some authoritative intimation of the will of the Supreme Lawgiver and Judge—such intimation of His will being given, sometimes in the form of direct injunction, sometimes in the way of narrative, and sometimes by implication—in which last case, the truth intended to guide and direct the church, is wrapt up and enclosed under some apparently unimportant statement; and this designed, on the part of the Redeemer, to test and prove the sincerity and honesty of the search after His will, which His professed followers, whether office bearers in His church, or private members only, may announce it as their willingness to make for the discovery of the truth, and on which avowed honesty and sincerity, He will one day pronounce a public judgment.

Very soon, “antichrists, many antichrists, seducing spirits, false teachers, grievous wolves, deceitful workers, false apostles, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ,” made their appearance in the world, and often intruded themselves into the churches of the Redeemer. The enemy came in like a flood upon the fold of the Chief Shepherd: in whatever quarter of it there were found faithful overseers, feeders of the

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