

more especially, that he would never comply with the proposals made in Dr. Du Pin's *Commonitorium*, of which I have now given the contents; observing that, though he was a friend of peace, he was still more a friend to truth; and that, unless the Roman Catholics gave up some of their doctrines and rites, an union with them could never be effected. All this is contained in a letter written by the Archbishop to Mr. Beauvoir, on receiving Du Pin's *Commonitorium*. This letter is dated August 30. 1718, and the reader will find a copy of it subjoined to this appendix. About a month after, his Grace wrote a letter to Dr. Du Pin, dated October 1, 1718, in which he complains of the tyranny of the Pope, exhorts the Gallican doctors to throw off the papal yoke in a national council, since a general one is not to be expected; and declares, that this must be the great preliminary and fundamental principle of the projected union, which being settled, an uniformity might be brought about in other matters, or a diversity of sentiments mutually allowed, without any violation of peace or concord. The Archbishop commends, in the same letter, the candour and openness that reigns in the *Commonitorium*; entreats Dr. Du Pin to write to him always upon the same footing, freely and without disguise and reserve; and tells him, he is pleased with several things in that piece, and with nothing more than the doctor's declaring it as his opinion, that there is not a great difference between their respective sentiments: but adds, that he cannot at present give his sentiments at large concerning that piece.

SECTARIAN PRESUMPTION.

[The reader is requested to read in connection with the following, an article on another page copied from the Churchman, particularly the extract from Mr. Hall, with which it concludes.—We here see a consequence among many of denying the Scripture doctrine of baptism; namely, that it constitutes regeneration and unites us to the Church of Christ. We shall be happy to hear often from "AUDITOR."]]

Rev. Sir,

April 8, 1831.

If the following remarks be deemed suitable for "The Sentinel," their insertion will oblige me.

I have often thought that if men reflected seriously upon the awful malediction with which the Spirit of God terminates the volume of Revelation, it might make them pause, and perhaps tremble, ere for personal and party purposes, they presumed "to handle the word of God deceitfully." In our day of unhappy departure from the simplicity of the Gospel, of novelty and innovation; in which we see system succeed system with such alarming rapidity; in which we see creeds and modes of worship undergoing continual revision, as if perfection consisted in mutability; we very frequently see the Bible perverted to the very worst of purposes, and compelled, notwithstanding the immutability of its Author, to speak the ever varying language of fanaticism and folly.—In fact, so long as men claim the right of throwing off all constituted authority, of setting up their own private judgments in place of the positive ordinances of God, and of forming systems for themselves irrespective of the Church, "The pillar and ground of the truth," this must always be so. In such a case, if they go to the word of God, it is not that they may try their opinions by this touchstone of truth, but that they may wrest it from its obvious and connected meaning, and force it to give a coloring to their favourite dogmas, and something like a foundation to the creations of an unstable imagination.

* We must maintain the right of private judgment, and the necessity of being guided by it in every thing: but we must also maintain the necessity of having proper evidence on which to found it. In this case, a correct private judgment is nearly the same as correct knowledge. A private judgment formed in ignorance of truth and fact is and must be erroneous. It is in this way that ignorance and presumption, and a sovereign contempt of all the means of knowledge, wrest the Scriptures to the destruction of the ignorant and unlearned, as saith St. Peter.

But if the Word of God contain "all knowledge and all truth," if it be the foundation of every doctrine connected with our salvation, we should surely divest ourselves of every prejudice when we consult its pages, and hold ourselves manfully open to conviction; and above all, as we tender our souls, we should carefully guard against the adoption of any opinions however pompously and confidently inculcated, until we have first carefully searched the Scriptures—the whole Scriptures in connection, "whether these things be so."

Such reflections have often been suggested to the mind of the writer both in reading and in hearing, but never with more painful force than lately when he attended the funeral of a deceased neighbour. It was conducted by a teacher of the sect of Methodists who delivered a discourse upon the occasion, and in doing so he afforded a melancholy proof of what men will do in the defence of a system, and of the daring and presumptuous attempts that are sometimes made to bend and forcibly adapt the word of God to preconceived opinions.—The passage of Scripture which he read as his text was that which mentions the death of Jacob. "He gathered up his feet into the bed and yielded up the Ghost." He began by giving a rather rapid sketch of the life of the Patriarch, and held him up as a religious example to his audience.—But in doing so he brought forward the favorite notion that it is necessary to know precisely the time of conversion,—that no man can be in a state of favour with God without being able to tell the particular moment when he entered that state, and to countenance this idea, he boldly pointed out the exact time of the Patriarch's conversion, and quoted a part of his history to prove his conjecture.—For mine own part, in reading the history of Jacob, who was the object of the plans, purposes, and promises of God even before his birth, I should have been sadly puzzled to fix on the critical moment.—It was not so, however, with the speaker; and if he did not satisfy, he certainly surprised me by stating without hesitation that Jacob's conversion took place at Beth-el where he saw the vision of the ladder reaching from earth to heaven! He explicitly stated, and repeated his statement, "that he lay down in repentance and arose justified!" He said, "he marked and dated the day of this fact" so necessary to be known, and *curse*—yes CURSED, with a bitterness that made me shudder, "the man or the minister" who should presume to remove "the land-mark of spiritual regeneration which Jacob had set up as a memorial to all future generations." Now in reading the 28th chapter of Genesis on which he founded all this, the most prejudiced and system-loving mind must acknowledge that its every verse and word are as silent as the grave upon the subject of the "repentance" and "justification" of Jacob, and that not one syllable is said, or a single hint given of the one or of the other; or is there ought to excite the belief, but the very contrary, that he who was a child of promise while yet unborn, the inheritor of the "blessing of Abraham," had up to this time, lived in impenitence: a "stranger to the covenant of promise," and an enemy to his father's God.—There is every reason to believe that Jacob was a pious and regular worshipper of God from his earliest youth; and the more likely, as he had lived fifteen years with that grandfather of whom God said, "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord;" besides the almost certainty that such godly parents as Isaac and Rebecca had done their duty to their son in his childhood, and taught him the ways of the Lord: and so far is the vision at Beth-el from importing a sudden conversion from a life of sin, that it is rather a positive token of the approbation of the Almighty and a repetition of the covenant made with Abraham, having a more explicit reference to Christ in these words, "in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Among the miraculous conversions mentioned in the New Testament, it would have been easy to cite something far more to the point, and which might have satisfied a mind disposed to adopt upon the ipse dixit of a teacher; but the cherished dogma rushed upon the mind of the speaker; its reception was all important to the hearers! the life of Jacob was the subject of discourse; and without deigning to step aside, the vision at Beth-el was pressed at once into the service, and forced, *nolens volens*, to prove at once the identical moment of Jacob's conversion, and that all who are in a state of grace must know the exact moment of its commencement.