

indeed can be." How offensive then must this be in the sight of God! How contrary to the spirituality of religion! and how injurious to the interests of Christ's kingdom!

This vow having been made, the Bishop lays his hand upon the heads of those children and young persons, and (distressing to affirm) without any knowledge of their previous character—without any genuine mark of personal religion, thus addresses the heart-searching Jehovah concerning them:—*"Almighty and everlasting God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants by water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins"!!!* And lest this should not suffice, he certifies them, as he lays his hand upon their heads, "by that sign of God's favor and gracious goodness towards them." He does this, notwithstanding the 25th article of the English church says, that this observance has "*not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God;*" but *has grown of the corrupt following of the Apostles.* He does it in the absence of scriptural authority or evidence of the persons being in a state of grace.

Do not be surprised at my use of earnest language in speaking of this act; for the nature of religion, and the interests of immortal souls, fully justify me in it. What, I would ask, is the declaration, under such circumstances, and concerning many of those children and young persons, that "they are regenerated and forgiven," but *lying not to men but God?*—What is the positive certification in this solemn manner of God's favor and gracious goodness towards them, but offensive presumption in a mortal man?—and what is its influence on the subjects of this ceremony, but "daubing them with untempered mortar?" What but deceiving souls? Let the word of God decide the case.

The consequences arising from the performance of this ceremony are most dangerous. "Ignorant persons who are taught to consider a Bishop as a successor of the Apostles, an ambassador of Christ, a special minister of God, who have too good an opinion of such a man to think he would declare a falsehood, when they hear him solemnly affirm that they are fully justified, pardoned, regenerated, and interested in God's favor, of course conclude that their state is safe, even while they continue in their sins!—and as full remission of sins, and the blessings of salvation are to be obtained on such easy terms, can we be surprised when we see many flocking to accept these favors?" No pious minister of the gospel can be ignorant of the fact, that men are "prone to deceive themselves with false hopes, and to substitute good purposes, professions, and vows, in the place of real repentance and holiness of life. This is one of the chief hindrances to their becoming truly pious and devoted to God; and as the office of confirmation plainly and directly tends to nurture these false hopes, therefore, so far from its conducing to holiness of con-