

## A DISCIPLINARY ESSAY.

From the Christian Baptist.

They greatly mistake who expect to find a liturgy, or a code of laws in the New Institution, designed to govern christians either in their private or public relations and character. This may be found in the Old Institution which the God of Abraham set up amongst the children of the flesh. The nation of the Jews afford both demonstration and proof that man cannot be governed or controlled either in piety or morality by any extrinsic law, however excellent or spiritual. The former institution was an institution of *law*—the new an institution of *favor*. Christians are not now, nor were they ever, under law, but under favor. Hence argues the Apostle:—"Sin shall not lord it over you; for you are *not under law*, but *under favor*." A single monosyllable represents the active principle, or law of subordination and of practical morality which it unfolds. That monosyllable is *LOVE*. "*Love is the fulfilling of the whole law.*" The glad tidings of the divine philanthropy is the instrument or medium of the inspiration of this principle. The New Institution writes upon the hearts, and not on marble, the governing principles or laws of all religious and moral action. This truth recognized and apprehended, solves the difficulty which has puzzled so many minds, and so generally distracted religious society. Many christians have read and rummaged the apostolic writings with the spirit and expectations of a Jew in perusing the writings of Moses—Jews in heart, but christians in profession. They have sought, but sought in vain, for an express command or precedent for matters as minute as the seams in the sacerdotal robes, or the pins and pilasters of the tabernacle.

The remote or proximate causes of most errors in disciplinary proceedings may be traced either to the not perceiving that the distinguishing peculiarity of the New, or Christian Institution, is this—that it aims at governing human action without *letter*, and causes its votaries to "serve in newness of spirit," and not observing that the congregations which christianity forms are designed rather as schools of moral excellence, than as courts of inquiry possessed of judicial authority.

To look still farther into the genius of the New Institution is yet prerequisite to just conclusions on this subject. The New Institution, governing religious and moral action by a law or principle engraved upon the heart, proposes certain acts of private and public edification