

four gospels which ever yet appeared in our language. They are from the conclusion of his preface to the "*Preliminary Dissertations*," volume I, page 59. They accord with our own experience and breathe our sentiments. He says, 'The language of our Lord to his hearers was, *If any man WILL come under my guidance*. Nothing is obtruded or forced upon the unwilling. Now, as the great source of the infidelity of the Jews was a notion of the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, we may justly say that the great source of the corruptions of christians, and of their general defection foretold by the inspired writers, has been an attempt to render it in effect a temporal kingdom and to support and extend it by earthly means. 'This is that spirit of Antichrist which was so early at work as to be discoverable even in the days of the apostles.' "In the same page he says, 'If to make proselytes by the sword is tyranny in rulers; to resign our understanding to any man, and receive implicitly what we ought to be rationally convinced of, would be, on our part, the lowest servility.—Every thing therefore, here, is subjected to the test of scripture and sound criticism. I am not very confident of my own reasonings. I am sensible that, on many points, I have changed my opinion, and found reason to correct what I had judged formerly to be right. The consciousness of former mistakes proves a guard to preserve me from such a presumptuous confidence in my present judgment as would preclude my giving a patient hearing to whatever may be urged, from reason or scripture, in opposition to it. Truth has been in all my inquiries, and still is my great aim. To her I am ready to sacrifice every personal consideration; but am determined not (knowingly) to sacrifice her to any thing.' 'These are the sentiments and determination of my heart, as though they had been indited there.'

'It is very far from our design to give any just ground of offence to any, the weakest of the disciples of Christ, nor to those who make no pretensions to the christian name: yet we are assured that no man ever yet became an advocate of that faith which cost the life of its founder and the lives of so many of the friends and advocates of it, that did not give offence to some. We are also assured that in speaking plainly and according to fact, of many things of high esteem at present, we will give offence. In all such cases we esteem the reasoning of Peter unanswerable. It is better to hearken unto God, in his word, than to men, and to please him than all the world beside. There is another difficulty of which we are aware, that, as some objects are manifestly good, and the means attempted for their accomplishment manifestly evil, speaking against the means employed we may be sometimes understood as opposing the object abstractly, especially by those who do not wish to understand, but rather misrepresent. We have only one request to make our readers—and that is, an impartial and patient hearing for which we shall make them one promise, viz. that we shall neither approve nor censure any thing without the clearest and most satisfactory evidence from reason and revelation.'