

Branch will accept this explanation of a circumstance which the Committee cannot but regret—and their worthy Secretary, not less; while all unite in the conviction that no efforts to promote the cause will be relaxed on account of it. The Rev. JONATHAN TAYLOR is the *President* of the Cookshire Society.

TRUE IDEA OF THE BIBLE.

How deplorable are the numerous errors which have divided, darkened, and deformed, modern Christendom! These errors have principally originated in attaching an unwarrantable importance to some detached portion of the Bible, and in some instances, to the Bible itself. Perhaps our pious readers may be startled at the very idea of there being a possibility of thinking more of the Sacred Scriptures than we ought. To quiet their alarm, we will at once say, that few think sufficiently highly of that blessed Book, for we deem it to be a divine volume of which God is the author, and which has been communicated to men as an *instrument* of bringing sinners to a saving "knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus."

We apprehend, however, that too many professors of religion, at the present day, do not make an evangelical distinction between the *agency* and the *instrumentality* which accomplish the salvation of apostate men. To illustrate plainly, so as not to be misunderstood, what we mean by *agency* and *instrumentality*, we will suppose a man about to fell a tree with an axe: the man is the *agent*—the axe the *instrument*.

In the salvation of rebellious men, Jehovah is the *sole agent*: God the Father in the infinitude of love and wisdom, devised the scheme of our redemption—God the Son opened "a new and living way" through which mercy, consistent with justice, can be communicated to sinners—and

God the Holy Spirit must create the soul anew, destroy its natural enmity to the divine perfections, sanctify it, incline it to repent of its sins and to believe the Gospel; and therefore capacitate it for obeying the divine commands in this world, and for the enjoyment of celestial glory in that which is to come. In operating upon the soul, the Holy Ghost uses whatever *means* he, in his sovereign wisdom, thinks best. The Bible, however, written under his divine influence, is his usual *means*; but at the same time, be it remembered, that though an unregenerate man were to peruse and study the Bible for ever, its most constant perusal and critical examination would never change his heart. It was not the preaching of the Apostle Peter, on the day of Pentecost, that converted such a multitude; but it was the Holy Spirit who used the preaching of the Word, on that occasion, as an *instrument* in the moral *new-birth* of thousands.

The Bible is not God, but the word of God; and the moment we look upon it as an *agent*, and not merely as an *instrument* in our salvation, we erroneously consider it as possessing the innate attributes of Deity himself. When the Saviour exhorts the disciples to "search the Scriptures," it is not because they are God; but because they testify of Him. Again, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." In this prayer the Saviour implores his Father to sanctify his disciples through the *instrumentality* of the Sacred Scriptures.

We make these remarks because we know that there are professed Christians who deem the Bible, not as the *instrument*, but as an *agent* in human redemption; and who consider it sufficient, independent of the immediate power of the Holy Ghost, to illuminate—to regenerate—to sanctify. Was the Bible, we would