

have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation. This appears the more manifest, for the very technical language of the prior dispensations has been transferred to those by which they were succeeded. And it is from not attending to the relation of the several dispensations of religion to each other, and to the sense of the phrases which have been brought from the Synagogue into the Church, that we are now disturbed by useless if not pernicious controversies concerning original sin, regeneration, conversion, election, justification, and the perseverance of the Saints. And until the disputants shall agree to trace the great progressive scheme of revelation from its commencement to its completion, it will be impossible to put an end to these controversies.

Another error, equally pernicious, and no less prevalent, is that which gives to preaching a decisive and permanent pre-eminence over all the ordinances of the Gospel. Preaching has often been abused, is peculiarly liable to abuse, and would perhaps require more restraint than is consistent with what is called the liberal and independent spirit of the age. Preaching is much more liable to abuse than the ministration of any other ordinance of the Gospel in any regular communion. It is a means of influence and an object of vanity; and it frequently maintains the one and feeds the other when in fact it is most erroneous in itself, and most injurious to the interests of the people. How opposite soever the common opinion may now be, it is not by preaching generally or principally that men are to be instructed in the sound principles and salutary practice of the Christian Faith. The four, five, or six sermons which the common notion may lead many to hear in the course of a week, and it may be of almost every week, will not generally leave at the close of the year the certain note of one step's progress in the perfection required in the Gospel. The same subject and the same sounds are heard in the commencement, in the progress, and in the close of this preaching; and while the hearer thinks himself full, he is really as empty and ignorant as when he commenced. Yet by his vacancy at prayer and by the little attention and value which he seems to bestow on all the public ordinances, it follows that preaching is, in his estimation, the one thing needful. Between the neglect of preaching and this undue and dangerous pre-eminence, there is surely some medium; and that medium may