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THE
CHRISTIAN GLEANER.

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NO. 3.

“ PROVE ALL THINGS, HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD.”

MILLENNIUM.

WILL sects ever cease? Will a time ever come when all disciples will unite under one Lord, in one faith, in one baptism, in one hope, in one body, in one spirit, and in adoring one God and Father of all? Will divisions ever be healed? Will strife ever cease among the saints on earth? To these questions all who pray for the millennium, all who long for its appearance, answer, *Yes*. How then shall the union be accomplished? Will all be converted to any one sect? Will all become Unitarians, Trinitarians, Arians, or Socinians? Will all become Presbyterians, Baptists, or Methodists? Will all become members of any one of the hundred sects of this century? I presume no person of common intelligence will say, *Yes*. All sects know they have some opinions, or some customs, which must be dispensed with. How then shall it be introduced? I answer unequivocally in one sentence, By abandoning opinions, and founding all associations upon the belief of Gospel facts. Let every sect give up its opinions as a bond of union, and what will remain in common? The gospel facts alone. Every sect, Catholic and Protestant, admits all the historic facts recorded in the *five* historical books of the New Testament. Their various interpretations, additions, subtractions, and new modifications of opinions concerning these facts, and not the truth or falsehood of the narratives, create all the confusion, build the whole Babel, and set all the machinery of the contending interests in motion. Now, will not the slowest to apprehend see that, if by any means, they could be induced to abandon their opinions, and retain the plain incontrovertible facts, the strife would be over.

But men cannot give up their opinions, and, therefore, they never can unite, says one. We do not ask them to give up their opinions — We ask them only not to impose them upon others. Let them hold their opinions; but let them hold them as private property. The faith is public property: opinions are, and always have been, private property. Men have foolishly attempted to make the deductions of some great minds the common measure of all christians. Hence the deductions of a Luther, and a Calvin, and a Wesley, have been the rule and measure of all who coalesce under the names of the leaders. It is cruel to excommunicate a man because of the imbecility of his intellect. I have been censured long and often for laying too much

stress upon the assent of the understanding ; but those who have most acrimoniously censured me, have laid much more stress upon the assent of the mind than I have ever done. I never did at any time, exclude a man from the kingdom of God for a mere imbecility of intellect ; or, in other words, because he could not assent to my opinions. All sects are doing, or have done this. Their covenants and creeds are deductions, speculative and abstract, from the crucible of some strong skull, and those who would not or could not subscribe them as the oracles of God, have been given over to Satan. They will make a sect, another sect, if they can. But they will not be able to make a sect of those who advocate the ancient order of things ; provided those who are now contending for the gospel, will be true to their own cause.

I will now show how they cannot make a sect of us. We will acknowledge all as christians who acknowledge the gospel facts, and obey Jesus Christ. But, says one, will you receive a Unitarian ? No ; nor a Trinitarian. We will have neither Unitarians nor Trinitarians. How can this be ! Systems made Unitarians and Trinitarians. Renounce the system, and you renounce its creatures.

But the creatures of other systems now exist, and some of them will come in your way. How will you dispose of them ? I answer, We will unmake them. Again I am asked, How will you unmake them ? I answer, By laying no emphasis upon their opinions. What is a Unitarian ? One who contends that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God. Such a one has denied the faith, and therefore we reject him. But, says a Trinitarian, many Unitarians acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the Son of God in a sense of their own. Admit it. Then I ask, How do you know they have a sense of their own ? Intuitively, or by their words ? Not intuitively, but by their words. And what are these words ? Are they Bible words ? If they are, we cannot object to them—if they are not, we will not hear them ; or, what is the same thing, we will not discuss them at all. If he will ascribe to Jesus all Bible attributes, names, works, and worship, we will not fight with him about scholastic words : but if he will not ascribe to him every thing which the first christians ascribed, and worship and adore him as the first christians did, we will reject him, not because of his private opinions, but because he refuses to honor Jesus as the first converts did, and withholds from him the titles and honors which God and his apostles have bestowed upon him.

In like manner will we deal with a Trinitarian. If he will ascribe to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, all that the first believers ascribed, and nothing more, we will receive him—but we will not allow him to apply scholastic and barbarous epithets to the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit. If he will dogmatize and become a factionist, we reject him—not because of his opinions, but because of his attempting to make a faction, or to lord it over God's heritage.

And will you receive a Universalist too ? No ; not as a Universalist. If a man, professing Universalist opinions, should apply for admission, we will receive him, if he will consent to use and apply all the Bible phrases in their plain reference to the future state of men

and angels. We will not hearken to those questions which gender strife, nor discuss them at all. If a person say such is his private opinion, let him have it as his private opinion; but lay no stress upon it; and if it be a wrong private opinion, it will die a natural death much sooner than if you attempt to kill it.

In illustration of this most interesting point, I beg leave to introduce a narrative which justifies the course here recommended, and presents it, in a very eligible character, to the advocates of the ancient order of things—

In the year 1828, when the gospel, as taught by the Apostles, was proclaimed with so much power, in the Western Reserve, Ohio, by our brothers, Scott, Bentley, Rigdon, and others, some of all sects obeyed it. Among these some Methodist and two Universalist preachers were immersed for the remission of their sins. One of these Universalist preachers appeared at the Mahoning Association, held in Warren, in the month of August, 1828. He was invited to deliver an oration, at an early period of the session of the Association. He did so. Many of the brethren heard him with great pleasure: but some—remembering that he had, only a few weeks before, proclaimed Universalism, or some species of Restorationism—could not be altogether reconciled to invite him to a seat, and to treat him as a brother. Indeed, some worthy brothers were intent on having a motion made, calling upon his brother Rains, for an unequivocal declaration of his opinions upon the Restoration scheme, to which he was suspected by some as still partial. It was intended, by some members, to non-fellowship this brother, if he avowed these principles. Some opposed this measure; but finally brother Rains arose, and in a very clear and forcible manner, and with all deference, declared that, when he obeyed the gospel, he had, as he thought, virtually renounced sectarianism, and did not expect that the disciples of Christ were to judge him for his private opinions. It was true, he said, that many of his former opinions remained. These opinions he did not wish to inculcate; but if he were asked to avow his private opinions concerning his former peculiarity, he must confess that he was substantially of the same opinion still.

This greatly alarmed some of the brothers, and they were prepared either to renounce him, or to withdraw from the Association, if he were acknowledged. Some of us made a proposition that if these peculiar opinions were held as PRIVATE opinions, and not taught by this brother, he might be, and, constitutionally, ought to be retained; but if he should teach or inculcate such private opinions, or seek to make disciples to them, he would then become a factionist, and as such could not be fellowshipped.

Whether he held these views as matters of faith, or as pure matters of opinion, was then propounded to him. He avowed them to be, in his judgment, matters of opinion, and not matters of faith—and, in reply to another question, averred that he would not teach them, believing them to be matters of opinion, and not the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Although a majority of the brethren were satisfied, still a number were not reconciled to this decision. It was repeatedly urged

that it mattered not what his private opinions were on this subject, provided he regarded them only as matters of opinion, and held them as private property.

I urged this course from the conviction that, if these opinions were not agitated nor discussed, the ancient gospel would cause them to wither away. This was my philosophy then, and being much pleased with this brother, I had no doubt, from his very handsome address and acquirements, he would be a very useful laborer in the great field. I only heard of him a few times since; but the other day I received the following letter from him, which, I think, proves the wisdom of the course pursued, and goes far to recommend the principles contended for in this article.—

“*Cincinnati, April 13, 1830.*”

“**DEAR BROTHER,**—Being aware that you are often addressed through the medium of letters, and that the multiplicity of engagements which call for your attention, render brevity a necessary qualification in your correspondents, I will, in this communication, be as brief as possible.

“I wish to inform you that my ‘Restorationist’ sentiments have been slowly and imperceptibly erased from my mind, by the ministry of Paul and Peter, and some other illustrious preachers, with whose discourses and writings, I need not tell you, you seem to be intimately acquainted. After my immersion, I brought my mind, as much as I possibly could, like a blank surface, to the ministry of the new Institution—and by this means, I think, many characters of truth have been imprinted in my mind, which did not formerly exist there. I also consider myself as growing in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, every day—and as I give myself wholly to the work of an evangelist, I have, within the last twelve months, been instrumental in disseminating the truth extensively, and in removing from many minds, some heavy masses of sectarian rubbish. The facts of the New Testament will conquer the world. They have conquered me, and are now conquering thousands of others. The reformation is progressing in almost all parts of the Western Country through which I have travelled, beyond my most sanguine expectations.

“My former associates persecute me, I would say, most cruelly; I hope you will not permit them to prejudice your mind against me. I shall have many difficulties to encounter, in consequence of the evil circumstances which formerly surrounded me—or, to speak more plainly, in consequence of having once been a Universalist. I, however, hope to rise above the opposition of my quondam brethren, and during the remainder of my days, to devote my energies, not to the building up of sectarian systems, but to the teaching of *the word*.

“I should be very happy to hear of the welfare of father Campbell. I am strongly disposed to reciprocate the kindness of that beloved Brother, by declaring, that if I were *Timothy*, father Campbell should, in preference to any man, be my *Paul*. You will not call this flattery. It is a warm sentimental effusion of my heart.

“**AYLETT RAINS.**”

It is in accordance with the liberty which I sometimes take, when I think the good cause requires it, that I publish an extract from a private letter. This has been known to be my failing; I hope it leans to virtue's side!

To return—I hope I may be permitted to say that I feel a certainty amounting to assurance, that this is the only practicable course to usher in that glorious day of union, peace, and love, which all desire, and many expect, to be the discriminating character of the Millennial age.

Reason and experience unite their testimony in assuring us that, in the same proportion as individuals labour to be of one opinion, they disagree. The greater the emphasis laid upon opinions, the more rapidly they generate. The nearest approaches to a unity of opinion which I have ever witnessed, have appeared in those societies in which no effort was made to be of one opinion; in which they allowed the greatest liberty of opinion, and in which they talked more and boasted more of the glory and majesty of the great facts, the wonderful works of God's loving kindness to the children of men, than of themselves, their views and attainments.

I am greatly deceived in all my reasonings, and observation has misled me, if any society pursuing the principle we have suggested, will ever be troubled with Unitarians, Trinitarians, Universalists, Arminians, Calvinists, &c. &c. and under such a course of procedure as that recommended here, all will see that such systems and such schismatical tenets could never originate. If I were to attempt to produce the greatest uniformity of opinion, I would set about it by paying no respect to opinions, laying no emphasis upon them, admiring and contemning no opinion as such. But if I wished to produce the greatest discrepancies in opinion, I would call some damnably dangerous, others of vital importance; I would always eulogize the sound, and censure the erroneous in opinions. We all know that strife is like the bursting forth of water—it always widens the channels; and many a broil in churches, neighborhoods, and families, would have been prevented if the first indication had been sympathetically attributed to the infirmity of human nature.—*Editor Millennial Harbinger.*

SINCERITY.

“DO THYSELF NO HARM.”

“Do thyself no harm” by believing false doctrines.—The mental constitution of man is from the same hand that framed his physical structure. God has assigned laws to each, and in neither case can these be transgressed with impunity.

What revelation has declared, experience has illustrated; that truth is the aliment divinely appointed to nourish the soul. The Saviour prayed for his disciples, “Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.” Here the truth, divinely revealed, is recognized as the instrument of sanctification. But the truth, to take effect,

must at least be believed. It must be received into the understanding. It is not enough that it lies on the table, if it be not stored in the mind. No man is so insane as to hope, because food is prepared and is on his table, that therefore he shall live, eat it or not. Neither should any one be so irrational as to expect spiritual health and growth, mental expansion, heart enlargement, the soul's salvation, without embracing that truth which God hath revealed for the specific purpose. But if it be thus necessary to believe the truth, it is plain to demonstration that we must not embrace errors, which are *fundamentally subversive of this truth*.

You have flattered yourself that the *nature* of your opinions was of little importance—that *sincerity* in them was enough. But rest assured that sincerity in the belief of error is widely different from believing the truth. Did you never hear of a person's taking poison, sincerely believing it to be a wholesome medicine? And did his sincerity arrest the laws of nature? Did the poison forget its virulence and become harmless and nutritious, because of his sincerity! On the contrary, was not his sincerity the very thing which ruined him? Had he indulged any suspicions, he might have examined with care before he took the poison; or he might have prevented its effects after he had taken it, by timely preventatives. But his apprehensions were not awakened. He felt no alarm. He sincerely believed it a wholesome medicine, and his sincerity destroyed him.

Sincerely believing ice to be fire, will not convert it into fire. Sincerely believing stones to be bread, will not render them nutritious. Nor will sincerely believing error to be truth, alter at all its destructive nature. Suppose a man should take a quantity of flour, and an equal quantity of arsenic, and, comparing them together, should conclude that one was just as well calculated to preserve life as the other. He might say, "I can see no great difference between the two; I can feel no difference; I can smell no difference. I can perceive no reason why one should preserve life, and the other destroy it. I am under no obligations to believe what I cannot understand—nor do I believe it. I am sincerely of the opinion that this arsenic is just as good to preserve life as that flour." And having reasoned thus learnedly, he proves his sincerity by swallowing the poison. Yet, notwithstanding his sincerity, he is a dead man. Yea, *in consequence* of his sincerity, he is a dead man. It is just because he really and sincerely believed what he professed, that he took the poison and destroyed his life. Sincerity does not reverse or suspend the laws of nature, either in the physical or moral world. It rather gives efficiency and certainty to those laws.

Some of the pirates, executed not long since for murder on the high seas, are said to have declared on the gallows, that they believed there was no God, no heaven, no hell, no retribution, no hereafter. That they were *sincere*, it should seem there could be no doubt; for they published the declaration with their dying breath. Were they justifiable or excusable in their belief? Do you say, No? But who are you that undertake to decide what another ought, or ought not to believe? They sincerely believed there was no God, and their sin-

cerity was tested at the end of the halter; and why were they not justifiable? You will reply, doubtless, as I should, that there is light enough, even from the works of God, to teach any person that he is. Before these men could have become Atheists, they must have closed their eyes to the light of day, and their consciences to the light of heaven. They loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. Their sincere belief of error arose entirely from their sin. They wanted no God, and they would believe in none. They heartily desired that he should not be, and they sincerely believed that he was not. Their sincerity, therefore, is found, on examination, to be not their excuse, but their fault; not their misfortune, but their crime. Instead of palliating their guilt, it is itself the most portentous mark in the long catalogue of their sins.

And what is true in this case, is true in all analogous cases. Sincerity in the belief of essential error is never any excuse for such error. So far from justifying those who embrace it, it aggravates their condemnation. Take the Deist, who, professing to believe in God, rejects his word. Will his sincere rejection of Christ and the gospel save him? How strange it would be, if a sincere rejection of Christ, and a sincere acceptance of him, should lead to the same results—should entitle to the same blissful rewards!

No, reader, we must sincerely reject error, and sincerely believe and embrace the truth. And we must be careful not to mistake human error for heavenly truth—man's wishes for God's revelation.

PRAYER, OR COMMUNION WITH GOD.

This is the spirit of the spirit of true religion. Without communion with God there is nothing gained by faith or hope, by promises, or commands, by professions, confessions, or institutions. This is the *sanctum sanctorum*, the holy of holies, the inmost temple of religion. This was lost by Adam, and if we do not gain this by Messiah, we have gained nothing but a name. But *what is communion with God?* Let us ask, for illustration, *what is communion with man?* The reciprocation of common sentiment and common feeling. Language fails to define its intimacies. Two spirits in conversation with each other is its best illustration—two spirits of kindred thought and kindred interests pouring into each other the overflowing of congenial views, feelings, desires.

Speech with us is the channel of thought. In this channel betwixt man and man flows every sentiment, feeling, and desire. And it is not only the circulating medium of spirits on earth, dwelling in houses of clay; but it is the medium of converse 'twixt God and man. Arrayed in words of human language the Eternal Spirit appears to man not now only; for in Eden, blooming in primeval beauty and innocence, the voice of God, in harmonies sweeter than nature knows, fell upon that ear not yet polluted with the serpent's poisoning breath. Since then, God has spoken to man through the mediation of angels,

celestial and terrestrial; by prophets in times of old; and in later ages by his Son. The stipulated signs of human thought are the stipulated signs of all divine ideas suggested to man. God now speaks to us in his written word, and we speak to him in our prayers. Thus we have communion with God through his Holy Spirit which is imparted to us. If we listen to God when he speaks (for he speaks first as becomes him) he promises to listen to us. But if we hear not him, he hears not us. What an honor to be admitted into the audience with the Almighty Father upon such gracious terms! We hear the recorded words of God spoken by him through angels, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, his own Son; and thus having given our ears for a while to the voice of God, we lift up our voice to him. We utter our adorations, confessions, thanksgivings, petitions, and our unconditional submission to the will, authority, wisdom, and goodness, mercy and love of him "who is, and was, and evermore shall be!" Thus our spirits ascend to the heavens and commune with God. This is the delightful fellowship which the *christian indeed* has with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ; "praying *always*, with all prayer and supplication in the spirit;" in the closet, by the way, in the field, morning, noon, evening, he prays "without ceasing." "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord! In the morning will I direct my prayer to thee, and look up." "In the morning shall my prayer anticipate thee." "As for me, I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me. Evening and morning, and at noon, will I pray and cry aloud, and he shall hear my voice." "Seven times a-day do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments." "His praise shall be continually in my mouth." "By Jesus let us offer the sacrifice of praise continually." Thus speak the saints of both Testaments.

Men may talk about religion, about sound doctrine, about ordinances, about institutions, about every thing present and future; but without this communion with God, this habitual devotion of mind, these constant aspirations, ejaculations, and soarings to the throne of mercy and favor, man is unfit for heaven, and unworthy of the christian profession. A zealot he may be, orthodox in doctrine, moral in demeanor; but he wants the life and power of christianity. Meditation on what God has spoken to us, and the outpourings of our spirit to him, is to the moral man what free respiration in a pure atmosphere is to the physical man—life, health, vigor, beauty.

These musings remind me of a devotional reading of the 12th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, which was overheard from the closet of an Israelite indeed, reported by a brother who dated his conversion from it. As a specimen which illustrates the above remarks, we shall transcribe it from our pocket-book of memoranda. He read the common version, and mingled his readings with the following ejaculations:

"I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." [Yes, Lord Jesus, it is most reasonable that I give myself to thee; not my body only, but my soul; for hadst thou not made thy soul an offering for my sins and given

thyself for me. I had sacrificed myself to my lusts and sold myself for vanity. My body, Lord, is thine—a living sacrifice offered by my soul to thee. O sanctify it wholly!] “And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” [From the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of this life, which are of this world—O my Father and my God, deliver me! And let my mind, O Saviour! reflect thy moral image as thou didst reflect on me the brightness of thy Father’s glorious image.]

[Here is a hiatus of six verses.]

v. 9. “Let love be without dissimulation; abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good.” [O Lord! thy love to mankind was without dissimulation! so let my love to the saints and my good will to mankind ever be!] “Be kindly affectioned one to another, in honor preferring one another.” [May my affection for the saints be as tender and as kind as was that of thy servant Paul, who endured all things for their sakes; and always may I rejoice to see them honored, and to honor them without one envious thought. Lord, thou knowest my natural pride and forwardness; may I regard myself as nothing, that thou mayest be all.] “Not slothful in business.” [May I rise betimes and redeem time, that I may by industry in my family, provide for my household, and have something to give to him that needs; and while I do so may I be fervent in serving the Lord!] “Rejoicing in hope” [of being delivered from the bondage of corruption and the evils of this life; may I “be patient in tribulation,” and “continue instant in prayer.”] “Distributing to the necessity of saints, given to hospitality.” [O Lord, may thy poor saints share my bounty, and may I be often honored with showing hospitality to thy people. May they who know me regard my house as thine, and ever feel themselves at home under my roof. Lord bless the labor of my hands and prosper the industry of my family, that I may have it in my power to be more like thee, who went about on earth doing good!]

“Bless them which persecute you; bless, and curse not.” [Heavenly Father, forgive all my enemies, if enemies I have, and reconcile them to thyself for Jesus’ sake!] “Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.” [O Lord! may I be more full of thy divine sympathy!] “Be of the same mind one to another. Mind not high things; condescend to men of low estate.” [Deliver me, O my God! from the spirit of this world! May I choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the company of those called great and noble here. May I never be ashamed of the poorest of thy poor, but esteem them as rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom!]

“Be not wise in your own conceits.” [Lord save me from conceit! May I have a due regard to the attainments of others, and respect the gifts of wisdom and knowledge which thou hast vouchsafed them. To “no man let me recompense evil.”] “Provide things honest in the sight of all men.” May I not only be honest in fact, in eating, drinking, and wearing my own labors, (and when I give may it be my

own which I give,) but may I, by my diligence in business and constant industry, *appear* to all men to be honest, lest I should bring reproach upon thee, O Lord ! and may I be honorable in my dealings with all mankind !]

“ If it be possible, as much as lieth in you live peaceably with all men.” [May the God of peace enable me to live peaceably with all mankind. May I rather suffer wrong than be over-righteous in exacting what mere justice awards me, and by civility, courtesy, and all manner of kindness rather propitiate than irritate the evil tempers and dispositions of men.]

“ Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place to wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” [O Lord ! this is a lesson not easily learned. May I in spirit and in truth cultivate this temper; and when I am injured by my fellow-man, may I not take thy weapons into my hand, nor assume what belongs to thee, the avenger of them who suffer righteously. May the example of the martyr Stephen, and of my Saviour, be ever before me in such times of trial. And when I have an opportunity of requiting good to them who have injured me, may I do it not in appearance only, but in reality and with all my heart ! Lord Jesus, may these excellent precepts, all of which my soul approves, be written on my heart, that I may from the heart yield obedience to them all !”]

This is a pretty fair specimen of that communion with God, and with his Son Jesus Christ, enjoyed in reading his word and in calling upon his name. This is a way of reading the holy oracles which commends itself to all; and incomparably transcends all commentators in giving to the mind the true meaning of the word, and in confirming it in the faith of all its exceeding great and precious promises. Prayer without the use of means necessary to the object desired, and the use of means without prayer, must be equally unsuccessful to the attainment of christian excellence.

EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

(Continued from page 39.)

MR. CAMPBELL rises again.

But as we have advanced thus far towards the true point on which christianity is predicated, I deem it important to aid my opponent by adducing facts, additional to his twelve, in evidence of the verity of the christian religion. I require the concession of only one postulatum in order to establish the verity of the christian religion. That postulate I will couch in the following terms—The christian religion, as well as the Jewish, is predicated upon certain matters of fact—it or rather these religions being predicated upon certain matters of fact, it

follows that, if these facts be true, the whole system of the christian religion must be true.

Now I do assert that of the verity of these facts we have every species of evidence that human reason requires, that the most sceptical mind could require upon any other subject of equal antiquity, or that the nature of the case permits to be adduced in attestation of the verity of ancient historic facts. I have asserted that we have every species of evidence of the verity of these facts, and of this religion, that right reason requires. In order to prove these facts, we must lay down certain *criteria* by which we are enabled to decide with certainty upon all questions of historic facts. In the first place, then, you will observe that we have certain *criteria* by which we are enabled to discriminate between the truth and fallacy of testimony; and it is our every day practice, in ordinary concerns of life, to avail ourselves of these *criteria*. We do not believe every thing without scruple. We are often glad of the opportunity of examining oral and written testimony, and we generally find some way to elicit the truth or detect the fallacy of certain reported facts. These *criteria*, when applied to any reported fact, force us to the conclusion that it is either true or false. Were it not for this *criteria*, by which we are enabled to appreciate the value of testimony, we would, in the ordinary intercourse of society, be liable to constant deceptions, inasmuch as the conscientious speaking of the truth is not the distinguishing virtue of the present age. These *criteria* are various; but wherever there is a perfect consistency and accordance between the fact reported and the testimony adduced to prove it, conviction of the verity of that fact necessarily follows. In the first place the consistency of testimony with our present experience in matters of this sort, is a safe criterion whereby to test the verity of all matters of ordinary occurrence, *i. e.* taken in connexion with the character of the reporter, and all the other *media* through which we receive the testimony. All these are scrutinized in order to ascertain the truth in ordinary cases; but to facts encrusted with the venerable rust of antiquity—a rust which has been accumulating for four thousand years—the application of the ordinary *criteria* of more recent facts would be futile.

These *criteria*, then, are resolvable into four particulars. First, then, we allege, that, in order to judge with certainty of the truth of facts which occurred so long ago, the facts reported must have been what we call *sensible* facts; such as the eyes of the spectators and all their other senses might take cognizance of. Secondly, that these sensible alleged facts were exhibited with every imaginable *public and popular attestation*, and open to the severest scrutiny which their extraordinary character might induce. The facts we are now testing by these two *criteria*, were, I affirm, in the first place, *sensible* facts; and secondly, they were exhibited under circumstances of *extraordinary publicity*.—Thirdly, that there have been certain monumental and commemorative *institutions*, continuing from that time to the present, as a perpetual attestation of these facts—that each of these observances was instituted in *perpetuam memoriam rei*. Fourthly, that these monumental proofs existed simultaneously with the trans-

piration of the facts which they are intended to perpetuate—that they continue in existence up to the present hour :

1. The facts relied upon were sensible facts.
2. They were facts of remarkable notoriety.
3. There now exist standing monuments in perpetual commemoration of these facts.

Lastly, These commemorative attestations have continued from the very period in which the facts transpired, up to the present time. The facts on which we rely have all these four criteria. I am willing to submit them to all the tests which can be applied to any other recorded facts of antiquity. And I repeat, with a confidence that fears no refutation, that no fact accompanied with these *four* criteria, ever was proved to be false. Nay, we will demonstrate that no fact which can abide these *criteria* CAN be false.

Let us now come to the prominent facts on which the Jewish religion was first predicated. 1st. I have stated that six hundred thousand men are said to have walked through the Red sea as over dry land, in consequence of Moses' rod being extended over it ; they are said to have stood still upon the opposite shore, whilst the Egyptians their pursuers were drowned by the returning of the waters. The question is, Was this a sensible fact? We will say nothing at present concerning the ten plagues of Egypt, but will now advert to another fact intimately connected with this subject. On the night immediately preceding the departure of the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, it became necessary, before the hard heart of Pharaoh would relent so far as to let these people go, to send forth a destroying angel, by whom the first-born of the land were slain. This was, most certainly, a sensible fact, of such paramount and engrossing interest as to arouse every sense, and call forth every faculty in the thorough investigation of it. These two facts, to pass over all others, are of the character promised. They are not only sensible facts, but they are facts of a character to take hold of, and to make an indelible impression upon, every faculty and sense belonging to mankind. Well, now, so far these facts correspond with our first criterion. The next question is, Were they publicly exhibited in open day and in the face of witnesses? I only propose this question in order to fix your attention. Every man who has heard of these facts, knows that they were exhibited in the face of the most enlightened realm of antiquity—many of them in the very court of Pharaoh, which was crowded with the greatest statesmen and scholars that then existed. The people to be delivered were themselves six hundred thousand in number, each of them individually and deeply interested ; so that all the recollections connected with their state of vassalage ; all their national feelings of hostility towards their oppressors ; in short, every sort of feeling which belongs to man, was called into exercise to the very highest degree of excitement ; and all these concurring to impress their minds indelibly with the marvellous and stupendous character of the fact. Therefore there is no matter of fact on record more notorious than these. In like manner, the eating of the *manna* and drinking of the waters from the rock, are sensible facts,

and in their nature must have been most notorious. In them all there is not a single matter of fact on which the Jewish religion is predicated, that is not in its nature sensible and notorious.

We next ask, Are there any commemorative institutions now existing in attestation of these facts? Yes, for the whole Jewish nation exists at this day. Notwithstanding all the mighty empires of antiquity, which once flourished in history, and in their turns controlled the temporal destinies of the world, have sunk, one after another, into dust—have so crumbled to atoms, as to leave no trace behind them—not even a living man, who can say one drop of Grecian or Roman blood flows in his veins—one nation, one *monumental* nation of antiquity, yet remains—a nation who can trace their lineage up to its source—a monumental nation, with monumental institutions, which prove them to be the legitimate seed of Abraham, and which stamp the seal of verity upon the historic facts recorded of this people. Do not their circumcision and their passover still exist?

We have now applied three of our *criteria* in attestation of the facts relied upon. The fourth is, that the commemorative monuments instituted simultaneously with the transpiration of the facts to be preserved and perpetuated, have never been out of existence from that period up to the present hour. Moses tells them on the very night preceding their departure from the land of Egypt, to take a lamb, to be called the Paschal Lamb, and to dress and eat it in a peculiar manner. This festival was to be observed on that night, and under circumstances calculated on every return of its anniversary, to excite the recollections and the feelings of the Jewish nation. He tells them that they must, on every anniversary of this festival, eat the passover with a strict observance of all rites and circumstances; that they must eat with their loins girded, and with such other adjuncts as should remind them of the sorrows of their captivity in Egypt. Now we are able to show that there never has been an interval from that period down to the present, in which the anniversary of the feast of the *passover* has not been solemnly celebrated. This feast was instituted on that memorable night, and was continued unchanged down to the present period. But this is only an item of the monumental evidences of historic truth pervading the singular annals of this most interesting people. This signal deliverance from the house of bondage, is commemorated by institutions attended with such peculiar adjuncts as entwine themselves round the hearts of men—adjuncts, which, in the very act of commemorating, call into exercise all the feelings incident to human nature. Of this character is the institution which devotes the first-born of the land to the Lord.

The Jews were not permitted to consider their first-born as their own, but as belonging to the Lord, as given to him in memory of their redemption from the house of bondage. It is now not simply the passover which commemorates the fact of deliverance from the land of Egypt; but this separation and appropriation of the first-born of the land to the Lord perpetuates the fact. This devotion of the first-born of the Lord, is calculated in its nature to engross the whole heart of man. Men are not to be persuaded to part with their chil-

dren, or their substance, except by the most cogent reasons. These people, proverbially avaricious, not only observed the passover, but resigned all property in the first-born of the land to the Lord. In process of time, when the nation was brought into a state of municipal order, and under a national covenant, it was then so ordered that one tribe was selected to be given to the Lord in lieu of the first-born. And here we see the whole nation agreeing to support that tribe for ever. This selection was made from the tribe of Levi. To superficial observers the ingenuity displayed in the erection of this monument in perpetuation of the memory of a leading fact in Jewish history, may not appear; but it is a monumental institution, eminently calculated in its nature, to keep the recollection of the fact which it commemorates fresh and vivid in the hearts and minds of the Israelites. The whole number at that time of the first-born of the whole twelve tribes, was, twenty-two thousand two hundred and seventy-three. Moses was commanded to calculate the number of the tribe of Levi, which was twenty-two thousand. The whole tribe of Levi was taken head for head; and the two hundred and seventy-three of the first-born, over and above, were redeemed at five shekels per head. Observe the exactitude and particularity of this arrangement. First, the institution of the passover—next, the segregation of the first-born of the land as the Lord's; and after this an arrangement to appropriate the whole tribe of Levi—two hundred and seventy-three lacking in number were to be redeemed at one hundred *oboli* a-piece.

Thus the avarice, the gratitude, and every other passion of the Jewish nation, were made to co-operate in attestation and perpetuation of this leading fact. Here we may remark, that as these sensible demonstrations, and the very manner of their exhibition, exclude the possibility of imposition upon the minds and senses of the first actors and original witnesses of these facts; so the *criteria* of these monumental and commemorative facts equally preclude the possibility of imposition upon us. Let us dwell for a moment upon the influence of this commemorative institution of the passover, and the conventional segregation of an entire tribe to be supported for ever by the great body of the people—a tribe who were to have cities built for them—who were made proprietors of all the circumjacent lands, and who were exonerated by the new social compact of the nation from all personal care and anxiety concerning their own support. The tribe of Levi, and all their personal property, were segregated to the service of the Lord. This was a concession demanded of this people as a condition precedent to their enjoyment of the new national covenant. And thus has divine wisdom perpetuated a standing monument in commemoration of the miracles of Moses. To bring this matter home to every man's business and bosom, I would ask all of you if it would be possible to induce you to sanctify and segregate one child of your family, or one lamb of your fold, or to celebrate a certain annual festival in commemoration of a fact which never occurred? Does the widest range of human experience warrant the supposition that any people, under any circumstances, could be induced to do this?

We are now to try this matter by the tests of reason, and to examine whether it were possible, in the first instance, to fabricate these monumental evidences. Let us ask ourselves seriously if any nation under heaven could be induced to celebrate a solemn annual festival in commemoration of a false fact—a fact which never did occur? Could all the magi, sorcerers, and wonder-mongers of eastern antiquity, if they were now alive, compel the North-American nation to observe the first day of January in commemoration of their declaration of independence, when the whole nation knew that its anniversary was the fourth day of July? To suppose such an absurdity as this—to admit for a moment the possibility of such a national extravagance—is to suppose men to be very differently constituted now-a-days from what all former experience has ever demonstrated them to be.

If these mighty miracles of Moses had been performed in a dark corner of the earth, in the presence of only a few wandering tribes, or of a rude, unlettered nation, without records, some sceptical scruples might arise in our minds. But the most high has so contrived it as to leave no room for any cavil of this nature.

These facts transpired in an age when the human faculties were highly cultivated—Moses himself was brought up in all the learning of the Egyptians—a nation at that period pre-eminently distinguished for scientific acquirements. Who is not acquainted with the scientific reputation of ancient Egypt? Who has not heard of her proficiency in the arts, particularly in the art of embalming, of which we are ignorant! Standing monuments of the scientific attainments and luxurious refinement of this people abound at the present day. From their own annals it appears that they were quite as sceptical as the people of the present day. Here I will take occasion to remark that the facts on which the Jewish and Christian religions have been predicated, have been wisely arranged so as to transpire in the presence of nations, as bold, daring, politic, ambitious, and intelligent as ourselves. We are wont to think slightly, and to speak disparagingly of the intellectual powers of the ancients. But there were a great many highly polished and severely disciplined minds amongst them. And it was in the presence of such a people, shrewd, keen, and sceptical—in their metropolis, within the precincts of the court, in the face of kings, courtiers, sages, and statesmen, that these evidences were adduced—these miracles were wrought, and these monumental commemorative institutions were erected. Every thing was so ordered in relation to these facts, as to remove forever all rational ground of doubt or scepticism. So far, then, I have proceeded to give a general idea of the argument which I am now to submit in attestation of the facts on which the Jewish religion is predicated.

In the further prosecution of the argument, we shall illustrate other facts analogous to the preceding, embracing similar objects, and, like them, perpetuated by monumental commemorative institutions. We shall briefly analyse the institution of the Sabbath, the celebration of the Passover, and other festivals of the Jewish ritual. To support these monumental commemorative institutions a levy became necessary to a greater amount than ever was exacted by the fiscal polity of

any other nation; and such was the veneration of this people for their ritual, that this enormous taxation was submitted to without a murmur. I have been calculating the amount of property necessary to the support of the Jewish religion, and have elaborated this result: that one half of the time and money—a full moiety of the whole resources of the nation was exacted; and one chief object was to keep these miracles, with their monumental attestations, in perpetual remembrance. The cheerful relinquishment of one half of their whole personal property, goes to repudiate the idea that this people were cajoled by intrigue into submission to such an oppressive taxation. We shall further show that all the other facts on which religion is predicated, have been accompanied with the same commemorative and perpetuating attestations from the moment of their transpiration down to our present times.

THE FORCE OF TRUTH.

The following extracts appear without the knowledge of my correspondent. I should publish the whole epistle but for two reasons: the one, I have not the consent of the writer, and some things in it require that; the other, some parts of it speak in too high terms of the debate with Mr. Owen. But we find our reasons and our apology for publishing the following extracts because they delineate the actual condition of many minds under the popular influences, and because we think they are calculated to benefit some of that class. It gives me pleasure to add, that the writer has not merely changed opinions and become a speculative believer, but a practitioner of the faith confessed. He has been immersed into the Lord Jesus Christ, and now labors occasionally in the word and teaching.—*Ed. M. H.*

“ Monticello, Wayne co. Ky. Nov. 17, 1831.

“MR. CAMPBELL—You have been the agent of the Lord in converting my mind from the darkness and ignorance of scepticism, to the light and truth of the gospel of the Redeemer. In the 17th or 18th year of my age I felt some concern about eternal things, and turned my attention occasionally to the reading of the Bible. I frequently went to preaching, and have now little doubt that if a right direction had been given to my exertions and inquiries, I should long ere this have embraced christianity. The preacher so often talked of holy fire, baptism with fire, irresistible operations of the spirit, &c. &c. that I was made to think that unless I saw or felt the *physical* wonders and operations in relation to which they so loudly declaimed, I could not be a christian. I waited and prayed for these signs and wonders. I did all I could do; but, alas! I could see and hear no wonderful things, nor could I feel any sudden irresistible operation. I felt a change in my desires and the inclination of my mind was to obedience. But for want of the dreams, and sights, and visions which appeared to be a capital point in the detail of nearly every experience

I heard told to the church, and the theme of almost every exhortation, prayer, and song, I concluded I was left in darkness, and after a while took shelter under the shade of deism. But fortunately about four months ago some of the numbers of the Harbinger fell into my hands. I read them attentively, and was struck with the force of reason and philosophy exhibited in the dialogue between Austen and Timothy on the Holy Spirit. I saw there the important landmarks of distinction between the physical and moral operations of the Spirit of God. The one mode of operation is addressed to the senses, as in the miraculous conversion of St. Paul; the other is addressed to the mind through the medium of words which convey the will and mind of God to us. The arguments employed and the authority quoted and explained in this dialogue, rent asunder from my mind the mysterious illusion of physical operations, which had diverted my mind from the true cause of investigation. The only obstruction then left as a barrier to my cordially embracing christianity, was as to its divine authority, with a view to forming an opinion upon this point, upon which the entire fabrick reposes. I turned my attention to an examination of the testimony, in the course of which examination I was able to procure a copy of your debate with Robert Owen in Cincinnati. I had heard of Mr. Owen's social system, and had some years ago read some of his views in a newspaper. I regarded Mr. Owen as the great Ajax of scepticism, and concluded that if his mind were unable to bear up in argument against the arguments and evidences in favor of christianity, it would be unreasonable and unphilosophical any longer to doubt its truth. Before I had got half through the book I was thoroughly convinced of the utter futility and absurdity of the doctrine of the social system. The whole tissue of chimerical nonsense was torn into atoms. The king of scepticism dethroned, and the empire of reason and revelation established upon the foundations of philosophy, reason, and testimony, I consider the arguments advanced in this book in support of christianity, as amounting to nothing less than a positive moral demonstration of its divine authenticity. It is there irrefragably demonstrated that without a direct revelation from God, man never could have formed the idea of God, Spirit, Sacrifice, Altar, &c. &c. *ergo*, would never have had words expressive of these ideas. The utter inability of the human mind to form and create a *new* original substantive idea of either a material or spiritual thing, shows conclusively that christianity must be a revelation from God to the world. The testimony upon which rests the truth of the recorded facts, are shown to have all the criteria which ancient historical facts possibly can have. The facts are shown to have been addressed to the senses, and of the most public notoriety, and in their nature calculated to make the deepest impression on the human mind. Monumental commemorative institutions were established coetaneous with the transpiration of the facts, and have been perpetuated down to the present day as testimonials of their truth. Well might you challenge Mr. Owen to show that any fact recorded in history, possessing these criteria of their verity, ever was or could be shown to be false. Your

achievement in that debate has lit up a new torch of light in the christian world, and it will illuminate the paths of many.—

“ With high respect, yours,

F. P. S.”

FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIAN UNION.

(Continued from Page 19.)

FACT.

Fact means something done. The term *deed*, so common in the reign of James the First, is equivalent to our term *fact*.

Facts have a power which logical truths have not; and therefore, we say, that facts are stubborn things. They are *things*, not *words*. The power of any fact, is the meaning: and therefore the measure of its power is the magnitude of its import. All moral facts have a moral meaning; and those are properly called moral facts, which either exhibit, develope, or form moral character. All those facts or works of God, which are purely physical, exhibit what have been commonly called his natural or physical perfections; and all these facts and works of God, which are purely moral, exhibit his moral character. It so happens, however, that all his works, when properly understood, exhibit both his physical and moral character, when viewed in all their proper relations. Thus the deluge exhibited his power, his justice, and his truth; and, therefore, displayed both his physical and moral grandeur. The turning of water into wine, apart from its design, is purely a demonstration of physical power; but when its design is apprehended, it has a moral force equal to its physical majesty.

The work of redemption is a system of works, or-deeds, on the part of Heaven, which constitute the most splendid series of moral facts which man or angel ever saw. And they are the proof, the argument, or demonstration, of that regenerating proposition which presents God and *love* as two names for one idea.

When these facts are understood, or brought into immediate contact with the mind of man, as a moral seal or archetype, they delineate the image of God upon the human soul. *All the means of grace are, therefore, only the means of impressing this seal upon the heart; of bringing these moral facts to make their full impression on the soul of man.* Testimony and faith are but the channel through which these facts, or the hand of God, draws his image on the heart and character of man. If then the fact and the testimony are both the gift of God, we may well say that faith and eternal life are also the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

To enumerate the gospel facts, would be to narrate all that is recorded of the sayings and doings of Jesus Christ, from his birth to his coronation in the heavens. They are, however, concentrated in a few prominent ones, which group together all the love of God in the gift of his Son. He died for our sins, He was buried in the grave,

He rose from the dead for our justification, and is ascended to the skies to prepare mansions for his disciples, comprehend the whole, or are the heads to the chapters which narrate the love of God, and display his moral majesty and glory to our view.

It must strike every man of reflection, that a religion requiring much mental abstraction or exquisite refinement of thought, or that calls for the comprehension or even apprehension of refined distinctions and of nice subtleties, is not a religion suited to mankind in their present circumstances. To present such a creed as the Westminster, as adopted, either by Baptists or Paido-Baptists; such a creed as the Episcopalian, or, in fact, any sectarian creed, composed, as they all are, of propositions, deduced by logical inferences, and couched in philosophical language, to all those who are fit subjects of the salvation of Heaven—I say, to present such a creed to such for their examination or adoption, shocks all common sense.

This pernicious course is what has paganized christianity. Our sects and parties, our disputes and speculations, our orders and casts, so much resemble any thing but christianity, that when we enter a modern synagogue, or an ecclesiastical council, we rather seem to have entered a Jewish sanhedrim, a Mahometan mosque, a Pagan temple, or an Egyptian cloister, than a Christian congregation. Sometimes, indeed, our religious meetings so resemble the Areopagus, the Forum, or the Senate, that we almost suppose ourselves to have been translated to Athens or Rome. Even christian orators emulate Demosthenes and Cicero; christian doctrines are made to assume the garb of Egyptian mysteries, and christian observances put on the pomp and pageantry of pagan ceremonies. Unity of opinion, expressed in subscription to voluminous dogmas imported from Geneva, Westminster, Edinburgh, or Rome, is made the bond of union, and a difference in the tenth, or ten thousandth shade of opinion, frequently becomes the actual cause of dismemberment or expulsion. Christianity consists infinitely more in good works than in sound opinions; and while it is a joyful truth that he that believes and is baptized shall be saved, it is equally true that he that says, ‘I know him, and keeps not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

ELOIIM.

General Remarks proving the doctrine of a Plurality in Deity, to be Scriptural, and not inconsistent with human experience or analogy.

The revelation of God, is contained in the Old and New Testament; what he teaches therein we must be ready to receive upon his own authority—what he has not revealed, it is not possible for us to know, or necessary for us to enquire into. Faith has to do not with what

thinkest thou, but what readeſt thou. One particular doctrine, the reality of which God has been pleaſed to reveal, though the manner of it continue a ſecret, is that he himſelf is, one, and alſo that there is a plurality in him, and that it is limited to three, or in other words—

1ſt. That there is but one God.

2dly. That there is a plurality in God, and that it is limited to three.

3dly. That each of the divine Three, has aſcribed to him in Scripture, the names and perfections, works and worſhip proper *only* to God—or that the names and perfections, works and worſhip proper *only* to Deity, are common to Three, who are revealed as the *only* one God.

That there is only one God, is a ſcriptural truth, not queſtioned by any chriſtian—let it ſuffice to name a few texts—“ I am the Lord (Jehovah) and there is none elſe, there is no God beſide me.”—(Is. XLV. 6. 1. Cor. VIII. 4. 6. Neh. IX. 6. Rev. XV. 4. Deut. VI. 4. Ps. LXXXVI. 10. 1. Cor. XII. 6. Gal. III. 20. Jer. X. 10. 1. Tim. I. 5. James II. 19.)

Where the perfections peculiar to Deity are mentioned in ſcripture, the unity thereof is either expreſſly taught, or neceſſarily underſtood excluding in the plainest terms a plurality of Gods.—“ I am the Almighty God, walk before me, and be thou perfect”—(Gen. XVII. 1. “ He maketh all things, ſtretcheth forth the heavens alone, and ſpreadeth abroad the earth by himſelf”—(Is. XLIV. 24. Gen. XIX. 6. Job XI. 7; XXXV. 11. Dan. IV. 35. Heb. I. 3. Rev. IV. 8. Ps. CXLVII. 5. Jer. XXIII. 23.) Eternal. (Ps. CX. 2; CII. 12. 2. Pet. 3. 8.) Unchangeable.—(Mal. III. 6. James I. 7. Heb. XIII. 8.)—Hence every one who credits revelation may join with David in ſaying—“ O Lord there is none like thee, neither is there any God beſide thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears.”—(1. Ch. XVII. 29.)

But the ſame divine authority alſo teaches us, that in this one God, there is a divine plurality, and that it is limited to three. This would have appeared with clearer evidence, if the translators of the Bible into Engliſh, had given us the words Jehovah and Elohim, where they occurred without any tranſlation; or told the Engliſh reader, how he ſhould know when the words Lord and God, which they have tranſlated them by, had Jehovah and Elohim for their originals—Deut. VI. 4. then ſhould read “ Hear O Iſrael, Jehovah our Elohim is one Jehovah”—there is evidence on the face of this text for a divine plurality which is loſt by uſing the word God which is by no means a proper tranſlation for the word Elohim. That Elohim is of a plural ſignification is acknowledged by all who know the Hebrew. Indeed the ſenſe of the phraſe ſeems neceſſarily to point out a plural ſignification—for if the word Elohim in the text be of a ſingular ſignification, then the word God by which it is tranſlated will evidently point out the unity of the divine being, and ſo would introduce an inſipid repetition of the ſame thing; that the one divine Being is the one divine Being—if Elohim be ſingular, the text is a revelation that one is one—but if Elohim be a plural ſignification, it is evident that

the singular word God, does not convey a suitable idea of the sense of this expression used here by the divine spirit. Further, as the word Elohim is plural it cannot be a general name to denote the one Divine Being such as the word God is; nor can it be a proper translation for two reasons.—1st. As Elohim is plural, it must convey to the Hebrew the same idea, that the word Gods does to the English reader—which introduces a palpable contradiction into revelation that there is only one God, and yet whenever he speaks of himself he calls himself Gods.

2dly. It is not to be supposed that the Divine Being would adopt a plural word to denote himself by, to men, so prone to Polytheism as they were in those ages. Moses whose writings often guard against Polytheism, makes the first appellation he gives to God plural, Elohim bara (God's created.) Though Elohim is often joined with a singular verb, yet it is many times in construction with verbs, adjectives and participles plural (Gen. xx. 13. 36. 7. Deut. iv. 7. 2. Sam. vi. 23. Ps. LVIII. 11.

There are several other nouns besides Elohim that are to be understood of the being of God, which are expressed in the plural, and imply a divine plurality in Deity, as—"Nor have I the knowledge of the Holy" (holy ones)—Pro. xxx. 3. "where is God my maker" (makers)—Job xxxv. 10. "If I be a master" (masters)—Mal. i. 6. "Remember now thy (creators)"—Ec. xxii. 1. "Let Israel rejoice in him that made him" (in his makers)—Ps. cxlix. 2. "For thy maker (makers) is thy husband (husbands)—the Lord of Hosts is his name"—Is. liv. 5.

The plural expressions used in revelation by God, when speaking of himself further prove a divine plurality—"And God (*Elohim*) said let us make men in our image, after our likeness"—(Gen. i. 26.) "And the Lord God said (*Jehovah Elohim* said) behold the man is become like one of us"—(Gen. iii. 22.) One of us necessarily implies more than one—besides that the plural word Elohim preceding determines who the us were—and though a king may use us and we in speaking of himself, he could not with any propriety say one of us, when speaking only of himself. The following texts prove that this divine plurality is limited to three.—(Is. vi. 3. John xii. 40. Acts xxviii. 25. Rev. i. 3. John xvi. 16. Heb. ix. 14. 2. Thes. iii. 5. Math. xxviii. 19. 1. John v. 7. 2. Cor. xiii. 14.

Some reject these things thus taught in the scriptures because they cannot comprehend and describe the manner of them, and some because they imagine their admission involves a contradiction; much of the difficulty lies in our reasoning from what we know of a nature that is finite and limited, to one that is infinite and incomprehensible and beyond the reach of definition—if human nature were infinitely simple, we do not know but that one nature, and one power might act in all individuals without division. But respecting the essence and nature of the incomprehensible Jehovah, we can know nothing. We can just as little conceive how God exists at all, as we can conceive how he exists in plurality—and just as little that he exists in unity, as in plurality; in some sense perhaps, the latter is more conceivable to the mind than the former, for independently of revelation,

reason, and analogy are on our side for a plurality in unity—every thing with which we are most conversant furnishing us with illustrations of it, in themselves—so that without presuming to make them in any way illustrate the divine existence or unity, we may instance them, as shewing, that the idea of a plurality in unity, is not necessarily inconsistent, or contradictory—for example, when we say the sun is 900,000 miles in diameter, we speak only of the round orb (not of the rays which reach the earth) when we say the sun shines, we mean only the light; when we say the sun is hot, we mean the heat—and yet there are not three suns but one sun. And to a man born blind, (without any conception of sight or light) all the idea he would have of the sun, would be as respects but one of these three (in which he manifests himself,) the heat; he must rely on the testimony of others, that, the light, a body distinct, and different, was, as much the sun, as the heat was; and yet that there was but one sun. From animate nature, every living man furnishes an instance of a plurality in unity, in his soul, rational mind, and body—when we say man is immortal, do we not mean the human soul? or the man is learned, do we not mean the mind alone?—when the man is dead, do we not mean the body alone? and yet there are not three men, three human natures in the individual, but one man, one human nature, a trinity in unity forming the manhood. The mind of man (as immaterial,) furnishes perhaps a still clearer illustration of a plurality in unity. There is the judgment, the imagination, the memory—three faculties, distinct, and different, in idea, and in function, each of which we separately call the mind, and yet there are not three human minds, but one.—Were it possible for the brute creation to contend, about the essence of human nature, and to theorize how far body, soul and mind, being not mere qualities, but distinct existences, performing distinct functions, could be one nature, we might smile at their folly and arrogance; yet such an attempt, would be humility itself, compared with the bold dogmatism of man, about what can, or cannot, belong, to the incomprehensible majesty of the most high God. We must think and speak of God as he speaks of himself in scripture—remembering, that there is a very wide difference between what it reveals, and the speculations of men, on this subject—its truths imply no necessary contradiction at all—we are not called upon to believe that three is one, or one three, in the ordinary sense of these expressions, or that the Father, is the Son, or that the Holy Spirit, is either the Son, or the Father.

But we can believe from scripture that there is but one God, we can believe from the same divine source, that in the economy of redemption this great, and good being, has revealed himself to man, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, each sustaining different relations or functions in the salvation of men; though the manner of this we cannot account for. That the Father, Son, (or word manifest in flesh) and Holy Spirit are divine, is no speculation, but is demonstrable from revelation, inasmuch as all the ideas we have from revelation of the divine attributes and perfections, are ascribed to the Three; who if possessed of the one, must necessarily be possessed of the other, for there is no separating the

divine nature, and the divine attributes and perfections. From the same source, and by the same kind of scriptural evidence, do we establish the divinity of the Son, and Holy Spirit, as we do that of the Father.

Considering our finite and fallen nature and capacity, it would be wonderful could we without express revelation account how these divine three, compose the unity of the Godhead—could we do so, God would cease to be incomprehensible, as to his essence, and past finding out. But in truth, christians have continually to believe, and admit as scriptural truths, many things, equally, if not more incomprehensible, and less consistent with any analogies or ideas we can form; as, that God created all things out of nothing. Our finite reason cannot even conceive how it is possible anything can be created out of nothing; as far as we are conversant with anything, it seems a contradiction—or, how God is immense, without extension; every where, without division; eternal without succession, beginning or ending. Yet to deny these, and many other things, which we are bound to believe the existence of, from revelation, (though contrary to all our experience and conception) would be to commence sceptics, or madmen. To conclude then this part of the subject, we affirm that the scriptures reveal,—that there is but one God.—That he reveals himself in a plurality limited to three, who in the economy of redemption, are revealed to fallen man, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.—That to each of the divine three are ascribed the names, perfections, proper *only to God*,—or in other words, that the names perfections, works, and worship, proper *only to Deity*, are common to the Divine Three.—If we search the scriptures and find that these things are therein revealed—then let us mix faith with the word of truth, that it may profit us; and while rejoicing in the mystery, (now no longer a secret but revealed) God manifest in our nature.—God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself,—let us repel vain speculation as to what is not revealed, by the consideration—“Can we by searching find out God? can we find the Almighty to perfection?” “Great things doeth he which we cannot comprehend, touching the Almighty we cannot find him out—he is excellent in power”—and desire, and pray—“That the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Ghost, may be with us all.” Amen.

WAX AND CLAY.

An evil man is clay to God, wax to the Devil. God may stamp him into powder, or temper him anew; but none of his means can melt him. Contrariwise, a good man is God's wax, and Satan's clay: he relents at every look of God; but it is not stirred at any temptation. I would rather bow than break to God: but, for Satan or the world, I would rather be broken in pieces with their violence than suffer myself to be bowed unto their obedience.—*Bishop Hall.*

SUPERIORITY OF THE CHRISTIAN.

There is no man so happy as the Christian. When he looks up unto heaven, he thinks, 'That is my home; the God that made it and owns it, is my Father; the angels, more glorious in nature than myself, are my attendants; mine enemies are my vassals. Yea, those things which are terriblest of all to the wicked, are most pleasant to him. When he hears God thunder above his head, 'This is the voice of my Father.' When he remembereth the tribunal of the last judgment, he thinks, 'It is my Saviour that sits in it;' when death, he esteems it but as the angel set before paradise; which, with one blow, admits him to eternal joy. And which is most of all, nothing in the earth or hell can make him miserable. There is nothing in the world, worth envying, but the Christian.

"THE LAW WAS OUR SCHOOLMASTER TO BRING US UNTO CHRIST."

Israel in ancient days,
Not only had a view,
Of Sinai in a blaze
But learned the gospel too :
The types and figures was a glass,
In which they saw a Saviour's face,

The paschal sacrifice,
And blood-sprinkled door,
Seen with enlightened eyes,
And once applied with power
Would teach the need of other blood,
To reconcile the world to God.

The lamb, the dove set forth
His perfect innocence ;
Whose blood of matchless worth
Should be the soul's defence ;
For he who can for sin atone,
Must have no failings of his own.

The scape-goat on his head
The people's trespass bore,
And, to the desert led,
Was to be seen no more :
In him our surety seem to say,
Behold I bear your sins away.

Dipt in his fellows blood,
The living bird went free ;
The type well understood,
Express'd the sinner's plea ;
Described a guilty soul enlarg'd,
And by a Saviour's death discharged.

Jesus, I love to trace,
Throughout the sacred page,
The footsteps of thy grace,
The same in every age :
O grant that I may faithful be,
To clearer light vouchsaf'd to me.

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