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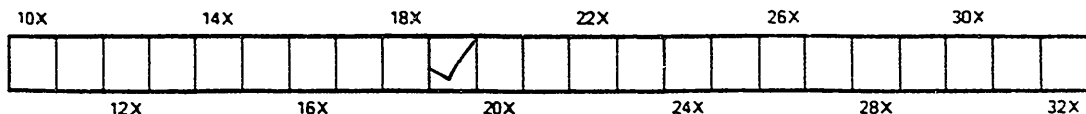
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E. K.

THE
WITNESS OF TRUTH.

Vol. I.]

PICTON, DECEMBER 1, 1845.

[No. 2.]

THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

From the Christian Baptist.

[Continued from page 14.]

Having taken a cursory view of some of the leading features of the christian religion, exhibited in prospect, and in actual existence at its first institution, we shall in the last place advert to its present appearance. But alas! "how is the fine gold become dim!" Instead of the spotless doctrine, simply and plainly exhibited in the New Testament, we have got the sublime science of theology, subdivided into scholastic, polemic, dogmatic, and practical divinity. Instead of the form of sound words, given by the spirit to be held fast, we have countless creeds, composed of terms and phrases, dogmas and speculations invented by whimsical metaphysicians, christian philosophers, rabbinical doctors, and enthusiastic preachers. * * * * *

Our zeal burns brightest in contending for orthodox tenets, and a sort of technical language rendered sacred, and of imposing influence, by long prescription. Such as the covenant of works; the covenant of grace; the active and passive obedience of Christ; legal repentance; the terms and conditions of the gospel; the gospel offer; the holy sacraments; ministerial, sacramental, and catholic communion; the meditorial kingdom of Christ; the millennium; historic faith, temporary faith, the faith of devils, the faith of assurance, and the assurance of faith; the direct act of faith, the reflex act of faith; baptismal vows; kirk sessions; fencing the tables; metallic tokens, &c. &c. Thus to speak in clerical dignity, more than half the language of Ashdod is mingled with less than half the language of Canaan; and the people are generally zealous about such confounding, misleading, and arrogant distinctions, which all result in divesting christian-

ity of its glorious simplicity, which adapts it to boys and girls, as well as to philosophers, and which distort it into a mystery fit to employ linguists, philosophers, doctors of divinity, all their leisure hours, at a handsome sum per annum in studying, and then in giving publicity to their own discoveries, or in retailing those of others.

But into how diverse and opposite extremes and absurdities have many run, in their wild, chimerical, and superstitious views of the christian religion. Inquisitive reader, turn your eyes to yonder monastery, built in that solitary desert, filled with a religious order of monks, and an abbot at their head. Why have they shut themselves out from the world in that solitary recluse? Is it for the purpose of becoming more abstemious, more devout, more devoted to the study of mystic theology? Hear them contending whether the Solitaries, the Cœrabitcs, or the Sorabaites have chosen the cause most congenial to the Gospel. See this poor, gloomy, lazy set of mortals, habited in their awful black, their innocent white, or their spiritual grey, according to their order, forsaking all the business and enjoyments of society, spending their days in penury and affliction for the sake of sublime contemplation of God and the heavenly world; and say, have they ever seen a bible! Again, see this sacred gloom, this holy melancholy, this pious indolence, becoming so popular as to affect all the seminaries of Christendom for a time! See it command the respect of the highest dignitaries of the church; and hear them call those haunts of gloom and superstition, as some of reformed orders of our own time call our Colleges, "fountains and streams that make glad the city of God" by qualifying pious divines! Yes, these monasteries became so famous for piety and solemnity, that the church looked to them for her most useful ministers. And, indeed, much of the gloomy aspect, dejected appearance, and holy sighing of modern times, and especially of the leaders of devotion sprang from these monasteries.

Next, consider for a moment, yon sobbing anchorite, with his amulet round his neck, his beads solemnly moving through his fingers, bent upon his naked knees in yon miserable cell, muttering his "Ava Maria," and invoking St. Andrew to intercede in his behalf; and say, has he a bible? O yes! it lies mouldering and moth eaten upon his shelves.

From this scene of infatuation turn your eyes to yonder dismal edifice, with iron gates and massy bars. Within its merciless apartments view the "*minister of religion*," the "ambassador of Christ," attired in his sacred robes, with holy aspect and flaming zeal for "divine honor" and that of his church, exhorting the vile heretic on pain of excruciating torments here, and eternal damnation hereafter, to abjure his heresy. As an argument to enforce his pious exhortations, observe the red hot pincers in his hand,

pointing to the boiling lead, the piles of faggots, the torturing wheel, and all the various engines of horrid vengeance. Do you ask who is he? I answer, it is the Reverend Inquisitor. On the most solemn *AUTO DE FE*, see this incorrigible heretic brought forward, arrayed in his *santo benito*, or sleeveless yellow coat, flowered to the border with the resemblance of flowers, of red serge, decorated with his own picture, surrounded with devils, as doomed to destruction for the good of his soul. Then declare of what use is reason or revelation to many called christians!

But leaving the dungeon and that quarter of the globe, visit the groups of reformed christians, and see another order of the "teachers of the christian faith," "ministers of religion," having prepared themselves by the study of Grecian and Roman languages, laws, history, fables, gods, goddesses, debaucheries, wars, and suicides; having studied triangles, squares, circles, and ellipsis, algebra, and fluxions, the mechanical powers, chemistry, natural philosophy, &c. &c., for the purpose of becoming teachers of the christian religion; and then going forth with their saddlebags full of scholastic divinity in quest of a call to some eligible living; then ask again, where is the bible?

And, stranger still, see that christian general, with his ten thousand soldiers, and his chaplain at his elbow, preaching, as he says, the gospel of good will among men; and hear him exhort his general and his christian warriors to go forth with the bible in one hand and the sword in the other, to fight the battles of God and their country; praying that the Lord would cause them to fight valiantly, and render their efforts successful in making as many widows and orphans as will afford sufficient opportunity for others to manifest the purity of their religion by taking care of them!!! If anything is wanting to finish a picture of the most glowing inconsistencies, add to this those christians who are daily extolling the blessings of civil and religious liberty, and at the same time, by a system of the most cruel oppression, separating the wife from the embrace of her husband, and the mother from her tender offspring; violating every principle, and rending every tie that endears life and reconciles man to his lot: and that, forsooth, because "*might gives right*," and a man is held guilty because his skin is a shade darker than the standard color of the times. Adverting to these signs of the times, and many others to which these necessarily led, will you not say this prophecy is now fulfilled: "There will be a time when they will not endure wholesome teaching; but having itching ears, they will according to their own lusts, heap up to themselves teachers. And from the truth, indeed, they will turn away their ears and be turned aside to fables," 2 Tim. 4: 3, 4. "This also know, that in latter days, perilous times will come. For men

will be self-lovers, money-lovers, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, without natural affection, covenant-breakers, slanderers, having a form of godliness, but denying the power of it. NOW FROM THESE TURN AWAY."—Christian reader, remember this command—and "from such turn away."

FAMILIAR CONVERSATIONS

BETWEEN FATHER OMEGA AND HIS SON ALPHA.

No. I.

[*The family of Father Omega was an example of virtue, intelligence, and christian demeanour to all the neighbouring families within the Grecian vale. Alpha, the eldest son, about sixteen, naturally of an inquiring mind, steadily advanced in knowledge, and, according to his years, a great observer of causes and results, especially as relating to the developement of human character and moral law; and his father, careful to imbue his growing mind with the principles of virtue, embraced every opportunity of maturing his impressions in the school of religion. Not only was the youth required, morning and evening, to join in the reading of the scriptures at the hour of devotion, but several verses were to be recited at the close of every day, and on Lord's Day, after the usual meetings had been attended, a number of additional verses were to be learned and repeated, and, as opportunity offered, questions and other exercises were considered both lawful and expedient.—The conversation which follows, occurred on Monday morning.*]

ALPHA.—I was last evening at a kind of meeting I never until then attended, and where a sermon was delivered such as I never before heard. The subject to which the preacher called the attention of the audience was that of "the weightier matters of the law", mentioned by the Saviour in one of his addresses to the Pharisees, recorded in the twenty-third chapter of Matthew. His remarks upon these words, and his exhortations, were to me entirely new; and such as will require, I think, from you, father, many explanations. From the judgment, mercy, and faith—and the mint, anise, and cummin of the law of Moses, Mr. Orthodox, the preacher I heard, enforced the necessity of a careful distinction between the essentials and non-essentials of the doctrines which his hearers might receive. I did not indeed understand all that the preacher said relative to these essentials and non-essentials; but if I rightly apprehended even a part of what he advanced, I certainly believe he endeavoured to show that some doctrines in the Christian religion were so great and weighty that they could not with impunity be neglected or disobeyed; and that certain other doctrines were of so much less consequence or obligation as not to call for obedience only at the option of the person who obeys. Or to express the same idea in different language: There are some divine requirements so much

better and weightier than others that they *must be obeyed*; and other of the divine requirements are so far inferior that they *may be obeyed or not* as the professor chooses. Now, father, these things appeared novel to me, and contrary to the authority of divine law: will you therefore please relieve me of my difficulties by telling me if there be any authority for them in the scriptures?

OMEGA.—It gives me pleasure, my son, that you never until now heard these words, nor any of the religious novelties connected with them; and it gives me equal pleasure to know that your attention has been called to consider them at a time when there is an opportunity of giving such explanations as may erase or prevent false impressions. But, in the first place, in order to give a proper direction to my remarks, tell me what have been your own reflections?

ALPHA.—No distinct impressions of any kind have resulted from my own reflections. So many other topics, divisions of topics, and different opinions of topics were introduced and illustrated by the speaker, all of them marvellously new to me, that I have been sufficiently occupied in pondering over and wondering at them; for, although the preacher was a textuary, and had a handsome little text selected, he touched upon every thing, ancient and modern, having relation or having no relation with the subject, that could either with propriety or impropriety be manufactured into a discourse of an hour's continuance. Indeed it required no little ingenuity to bring so many curiosities into a single discourse. If leisure permits, and memory is faithful, a week's asking will perhaps unfold a few of these doctrines and simplify them to my understanding.

OMEGA.—In the next place then, my son, let me ask you if these words essential and non-essential are to be found in the New Testament. You remember, I presume, what I have frequently said, that all the doctrines, commands, and sanctions of the religion of Christ are fully revealed, taught, and enforced in the sacred writings of the New Institution. If, then, these words or these ideas can be discovered in the writings of Paul, or Peter, or Matthew, or Luke, or John, we are not only at liberty, but it becomes obligatory to employ them irrespective of our own views of propriety or impropriety. For it is proper here to observe, that the novelty of anything is no argument against it: for all that is good, in religion as well as in science, must, of necessity, at one time have been new or novel. We will examine this matter upon its own merits.

ALPHA.—Neither the words nor their import, so far as I have discovered, are to be found in the Bible, Old Testament or New. It was the remembrance of what you had often taught me respecting the all-sufficiency of the oracles of God, and the impres-

sion that non-essentials were no where expressed in the Bible, which made the last evening's discourse so irreconcilable. Especially in the New Testament, containing the doctrines of Christianity, I have read diligently; and I believe you have questioned me upon almost every passage, and illustrated with remarks as necessity required. I therefore was the more surprised.

OMEGA.—You are correct, my son, in saying that such words or their meaning are not within the book of life. Indeed, we have positive injunction to the contrary. The Saviour, in his farewell instructions to his Apostles, after giving the commission to announce the gospel to all nations, adds, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I command you." Paul, also, in preaching to the Corinthians, appears to have been unacquainted with non-essentials. A few facts, and a few splendid deductions from them, constituted the gospel he promulged. Christ died—was buried—rose again—was seen by numerous and credible witnesses—seems to have been the 'essential' points in the 'creed' of his gospel; and inasmuch as we have no record of his "non-essentials", admitting he had any, shall we not be as faultless as Paul in leaving them wholly to theorists? But this "short metre" would not answer the system of the gentleman you heard last evening, nor any of his doctrinal brotherhood; for, take away the power they claim to make non-essentials, and they feel themselves unchristianized: *for the existence of their religious systems depends as much upon non-essentials as upon essentials.*

ALPHA.—Like one of old, I am disposed to ask "How can these things be?"

OMEGA.—My affirmation may be easily illustrated. Suppose a company of twelve Doctors of Divinity, all belonging to different parties. They assemble for the purpose of ascertaining if there be any possibility of uniting and co-operating. Before each begins for himself to explain the length and breadth of his creed, they all agree that in the New Testament there are at least one hundred precepts. Subsequently they are all engaged, one after another, in relating and minutely retailing their religious belief. Doctor All-worthy first addressing the meeting, says, 'With peculiar pleasure I have learned that we all agree in being regulated by one hundred precepts of Christ; and with freedom I also express my belief, that as they are all divine, they are all obligatory.' Doctor Orthodoxy then rises, saying,—'Brethren, I am happy we are all united in this cordial truth, that there are one hundred precepts in our religion, and I am also happy to affirm my sincere opinion, with all my orthodox brethren, that when these precepts are fairly divided, there are fifty essentials and fifty non-essentials.' Then rises Doctor Doubtful, and says with equal gravity, 'My dear brother Doctors, I believe there are fifty essentials in the religion of our Re-

deemer, and twenty-five non-essentials; but there are twenty-five precepts concerning which I am much in doubt, being almost persuaded of their essentiality, and I cannot co-operate with any of my dearly esteemed brethren until these doubtful precepts are satisfactorily determined.' It is, my son, easily perceived, without giving all the details of this council, that the members of it must agree in the number of non-essentials in order to effect either a sentimental or practical union.—Still, what I before affirmed is not yet proved. I have said that the existence of certain systems of religion depends as much upon their non-essentials as their essentials. Now the proof is given in one sentence: *THEY DO NOT OBEY ALL THE DIVINE REQUIREMENTS, and therefore if they CANNOT SHOW that some of these requirements are unimportant and unessential, THE FOUNDATION OF THEIR REFUGE IS OVERTURNED, while at the same time their righteousness is proved not to excel the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees.* And here let me tell a sectarian secret. Theological legislators found it necessary, indispensably necessary, to establish the distinction between the essential and non-essential, because it gave them a license to comply with as many of the requisitions of christianity as would answer their convenience, or be required to accomplish the devices of craft: for, had they been disposed to submit humbly to the commandments of God, a non-essential had never been named.

ALPHA.—But father, if I understood the preacher, he taught the importance of agreeing exclusively upon the essentials. He enumerated a few tenets which he considered essential, and which, he affirmed, were substantially his belief; and all who would assent or subscribe to these, and consent to unite with him, he was willing to acknowledge brethren in the Lord. No other examination, preparation, or qualification he said would be necessary.

OMEGA.—Undoubtedly, and with much apparent charity and show of liberality,—a liberality, which, when dissected and stript of all ambiguity, retains much of the astringency of Roman tyranny in its composition. For, at the close of the sermon, had you offered yourself as a candidate for membership in his communion, your assent to every item in his summary of essentials and non-essentials would have been imperiously demanded.

ALPHA.—I begin now to perceive their demand for non-essentials; and also I begin to perceive the necessity of agreeing in the non-essentials in order to agree in the essentials. A little study develops these matters clearly. But it requires intricate machinery to assimilate the religion of God with the religion of men. Father will you tell me your principal objections and reasons against the doctrines of which we have been speaking?

OMEGA.—My son, I have nothing against essentials, only as they are connected and contrasted with what is affirmed to be unimportant in the word of God. The word either has no meaning or an improper meaning. Were I in speaking of you always to call you my *white* son, would it not fairly imply that your brothers were mulattoes or negroes? And if not, there would be no meaning in calling you my *white* son. But against the doctrine of non-essentials I shall offer a few and only a few of my reasons.

In the first place, assuming this doctrine true, we are constrained to believe that the Holy Spirit, communicating the will of God to the divinely chosen twelve, was erring and imperfect, for it moved not these holy men to speak correctly and intelligibly—not correctly because they spoke too much, not intelligibly because there is not a general agreement respecting the redundancy.

2. Our Father in heaven would be either trifling with us, or leaving too much for our feeble discrimination; seeing he has given us no rule by which we are to determine infallibly when to obey and when not to obey his authority.

3. There is no intimation of non-essentials in the inspired record, neither in its history nor prophecy—neither in its narratives of the past nor its descriptions of the future.

4. The doctrine goes upon the principle that there is a super-sufficiency in that volume where it is written, "All scripture, given by inspiration of God, is profitable."

5. It invites, permits, and supports corruption. The morality and purity of religious communities may be safely and correctly estimated by the ratio of the number of their non-essentials. The fewer non-essentials, the greater purity; the greater number, the less purity.

6. Not to specify further, it promises, it gives nothing to the *man of God, who seeks to worship in spirit and in truth*. Nay, on the contrary, there is a positive loss; for he lacks a good conscience—the possession of him only who submits to all that God requires.

ALPHA.—Surprising, father, that those who advocate the doctrine of essential and non-essential never thought of any one of these reasons, which to me appear so conclusive and satisfactory. It almost seems impossible to account for it upon the principle of a defection of intellect; for it certainly requires much ingenuity and discriminating ability to reason as I heard the Rev. Mr. Orthodox. But I have been trying to study more fully the principle involved in these views as respects scriptural authority or divine law. My reflections have led me to the conclusion, that if there be anything in the scriptures less important than another, it must be because there is less authority, and,

therefore, if this be sustained, some part of what we call the book of God must be spurious; and I am certain Mr. Orthodox is not prepared for this conclusion.

OMEGA.—You have, my son, touched and partially uttered a very important idea, and if carried to its legitimate issue, erases the whole foundation of non-essentials, and overwhelms in utter ruin the citadel of refuge claimed by its professed pleaders.—As a weak law cannot come from a great law-giver, so there cannot be an unimportant command from one who is great in authority; nor are our obligations to obey in any wise lessened by the opinions we may form of the trivial nature of the consequences following disobedience. Indeed, obedience, properly speaking, has nothing to do with consequences; for it pre-supposes or implies authority; and this authority calls—nay, imperiously demands—obedience, apart from all consequences, and independently of their number, character, or magnitude. As I consider this an idea of great practical as well as theoretical value, we shall make it the subject of illustration, and impress the mind with it by the familiar language of similitude. Upon this table there are two wine-glasses, and I shall suppose that I fill each of them with two kinds of liquor, identically the same in color but very different in nature. The one I fill with wine, the other with laudanum. Your little sisters Claïressa and Clurinda are present, and I simply tell them not to touch, taste, or take these glasses. We leave the room, and your sisters remain.—After we have departed, Clurinda, the youngest and most forward, essays to disregard my authority and tastes and drinks the contents of one of the glasses—the glass of wine. No injurious effects follow. Claïressa, fondly informed of the pleasing flavor, and tenderly urged to partake, drinks the other filled with the poison of laudanum. The effects are fatal. She immediately convulses, trembles, groans, and expires. Now the question presses upon us, Did the deceased sister receive a higher command or disobey a greater law than she who lives? Who affirms it! These children received the same charge and injunction, and were alike obligated to obey; and the moral and legal obligations to obedience were similar. But there is a disobedient dead child, and a disobedient living child—both transgressing the same authority! It was not the virtue, or the comparative insignificance of the crime, that preserved her who lives, nor the comparative greatness of the sin that destroyed her who is dead; but the whole is attributed to the different effects of that which was taken. The laudanum would have been as fatal, and Claïressa would have been poisoned with it, had she taken it without infringing a command. It was not therefore the nature of the command but the nature of the laudanum that took her life; from which I argue that authority is invariably the same, coming from

the same source, and that transgression always bears the same relation to authority, although there may be various degrees of the consequences or results of transgression as it respects ourselves.

Where now is the doctrine of non-essentials? We have been preparing them a respectable burial without the hope of a resurrection. If God be the author of all the precepts and laws of the bible, and if we acknowledge that with regard to the obligation of law or the enforcement of obedience, there is no diminution of authority, however trivial, in our view of the effects of disobedience, I cannot find anything but darkness nor any place but the grave for the unequal doctrine of some things *essential* and some things *not essential* in the statute book of heaven. The pure essence of such doctrine, resulting in a convert, makes a nearer relation than a German cousin to infidelity.

CONDUCTOR.

CONFESSIONS OF FAITH—CONFESSIONS OF OPINION.

AFTER all that has been said on this subject, there is not a sect in this country, of which we have heard, that has a confession of faith, properly so called. They have books and pamphlets, which they call by this name, and by which they impose upon themselves and upon one another. If it be not too late, we would give them a true and proper name, a name which we are assured every man of good sense and of common education must approve, as well as agree to discard the common name as a misnomer, as incorrect, and as absurd. The proper name of those instruments is, doubtless, according to the English language, A Confession of Opinions, or, Confessions of Opinions. If there be any difference between faith and opinion, (and that there is, all languages and dictionaries declare,) then the name we have given them is perfectly *apropos*, and their common name perfectly incongruous.

All writers on faith, properly so called, define it to be, "the belief of testimony, either human or divine." And opinion is, "the notions, judgment, or view which the mind forms of any thing." For example, I believe the testimony which God has given of Jesus of Nazareth, or I believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the son of the living God. This is a well attested fact, in proof of which the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit have given, or agree in one testimony. Concerning this person, his mission, and character, various opinions may be formed. All things testified of him are articles or items of belief; and all views, judgments, or notions formed of the things testified, are matters of opinion.—Now all the abstract views of God and man, of things present and future, with which these confessions are replete, are matters of opinion; and as the general character of these books should fix upon them their name, they should be styled Confessions of Opinions. To speak philosophically, I believe what is testified, I know what I have observed or experienced, and I am of opinion in all things speculative. It is true, in one sense, I may be said to know what I have believed, when my faith has been proved by observation and experience. But the terms faith, knowledge, and opinion.

should never be confounded. I believe that Jesus Christ died for our sins, I know that the sun gives us light, and I am of opinion that all infants dying shall be saved.

A person's faith is always bounded by testimony; his knowledge by observation and experience; and his opinions commence where both these terminate, and may be boundless as God's creation or as human invention. Perfect freedom and liberty should be granted to all opinions. The faith of christians should be guarded and circumscribed by the revelation of God, and every man's knowledge admitted to be co-extensive with his observation and experience. In matters of this world those distinctions are realized and acted upon every day. A killed B. C believes it, D knows it, and E is of opinion that A killed B. C believes it to be true, because three credible persons have sworn that they saw him do it. D, one of the three witnesses, knows it to be true because he saw it done. And E, who neither heard the testimony nor saw the deed, but from some circumstances detailed to him, is of opinion that it is true. These distinctions are, we presume, evidently correct. A superficial reader may object that Thomas is said to have believed what he saw. But those who attend to all the circumstances will see that he believed the testimony which he had before heard, when certain evidences were presented to his eyes. In this sense the term may, by even correct speakers, be often used. But enough is said to suggest a train of reflections which must issue in the conviction that our confessions of faith are confessions of opinions, and as such ought to have nothing to do with the union, communion, and harmony of christians. "There is one faith," says the apostle; but no where in the volume is it said, There is one opinion. Every new religious establishment, founded upon one opinion, will come to ruin, as all the past have done, and as all the present are doing. But the gates of Hades shall not prevail against those who build on the one faith, which is beautifully and properly called "the Rock."

INFIDELITY, AND THE EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

No. 2.

Have all the readers of this work been favoured with a perusal of a little volume, entitled, "A dissertation on miracles, containing an examination of the principles advanced by Mr. David Hume in an essay on miracles—By Doctor George Campbell of Aberdeen, Scotland, Principal of Marischal College?" Probably not one in twenty of our readers have seen the volume to which we have alluded. It is an excellent work. Although written nearly one hundred years ago, the topics it embraces, the views it embraces, and the logic and learning it displays are still interesting, appropriate, and necessary. The occasion of this "dissertation" on the part of Doctor Campbell may be explained in a few words.

David Hume, Esquire, one of the most erudite and popular Historians of the last century, was a gentleman, who, although

he might love every other good thing, loved not the bible nor the God of the bible. He was an avowed sceptick, and failed not to exhibit his learned doubts to the best advantage. As every man, whether in the departments of science, literature, or religion, exercises an influence in society equal to his reputation, Mr. Hume, so highly celebrated as a literary gentleman, and therefore occupying a commanding position, had it in his power greatly to affect the public mind; and his infidelity equalling if not surpassing his reputation, the promptings of his zeal urge him to give the world "An essay on miracles", into which he foists certain historical facts, farcical anecdotes, and philosophical deductions, newly arranged and beautifully colored, and having over them all an extra veil of plausibility. The Doctor of Aberdeen is aroused, and in his zeal, and in a masterly style, opposes his own learning, talents, logic, reputation, and philosophy to the learning, talents, logic, reputation, and philosophy of Mr. Hume. And the author of the dissertations is not only both disposed and prepared to encounter the objections of the Essayist, but in the meantime he is also willing to allow christianity to rest upon the merits of its own evidences.

Of the Essayist and its author, the Doctor, at the commencement of his reply, says:—"The essay on miracles deserves to be considered as one of the most dangerous attacks that has been made on our religion. The danger results not solely from the merits of *THE PIECE*; it results much more from that of *THE AUTHOR*. The *piece* itself, like every other work of Mr. Hume, is ingenious; but its merit is more of the oratorical kind than of the philosophical. The merit of *the author*, I acknowledge, is great. The many useful volumes he has published, of history, as well as criticism, politics, and commerce, have justly procured him with all persons of taste and discernment, the highest reputation as a writer.—For my own part, I think it a piece of justice in me, to acknowledge the obligations I owe the author, before I enter upon the purposed examination. I have not only been much entertained and instructed by his works; but if I am possessed of any talent in abstract reasoning, I am not a little indebted to what he has written on human nature for the improvement of that talent. If, therefore, in this work, I have refuted Mr. Hume's essay, the greater share of the merit is perhaps to be ascribed to Mr. Hume himself." Since then Mr. Hume is so highly gifted, not only as a historian but as a logician, we may reasonably expect from him the choicest sample of infidel objection.—We shall give him the liberty of speaking and delivering himself in his own language. Among a number of his assertions, he affirms:—

"Experience is our only guide in reasoning upon matters of fact. Experience is in some things variable, and in some things uniform.

A variable experience gives rise only to probable evidence; a uniform experience amounts to a proof. Probability always supposes an opposition of experiments and observations, where the one side is found to overbalance the other, and to produce a degree of evidence proportioned to the superiority. If the fact attested partakes of the marvellous, if it is such as has seldom fallen under our observation, here is a contest of two opposite extremes, of which the one destroys the other, as far as its force goes, and the superior can only operate on the mind by the force which remains. In such cases we must balance the opposite experiments, and deduct the lesser number from the greater, in order to know the exact force of the superior evidence."

Two things in these few sentences are to be carefully noted. The first is, that in all matters of fact we are to be influenced or directed exclusively by experience; and second, the proper law or rule by which we are to divide different experiences, and thereby arrive at a reasonable or philosophical conclusion. The first makes useless all other testimony save that of experience, and the second classifies and disposes of this experience according to the most approved system of philosophy, Mr. Hume being in the philosophical chair. But he is bolder when he says,—

"A miracle is more properly a subject of derision than argument.—A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature; and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as entire, as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined. And if so, it is an undeniable consequence, that it cannot be surmounted by any proof whatever from testimony. A miracle, therefore, can never be rendered credible, even in the lowest degree."

Observe, Mr. Hume distinctly affirms that a miracle being contrary to the natural laws, can never be proved, established, or made credible by *any kind*—the very strongest testimony.—Again he says:—

"It is impossible for God Almighty to give a revelation, attended with such evidence, that it can be reasonably believed in after ages, or even in the same age, by any person who has not been an eye witness of the miracles by which it is supported."

After making these assertions and taking these positions, he illustrates them with great dexterity and ingenuity. We may yet give a few samples of what he has further said against the pretensions of miracles and religion; but meanwhile we are prepared to hear the Doctor. He thus speaks:—

"That the evidence of testimony is derived solely from experience, which appears to be an axiom of this writer, is at least not so incontestible a truth as he supposes; that, on the contrary, testimony has a natural and original influence on belief, prior to experience, will, I imagine, easily be evinced. For this purpose, let it be remarked, that the earliest assent, which is given to testimony by children, and which is previous to all experience, is in fact the most unlimited; that by a gradual experience of mankind, it is gradually contracted and reduced to narrower bounds. To say, therefore,

that our diffidence in testimony is the result of experience, is much more philosophical, because more consonant to truth, than to say that our faith in testimony has this foundation. Accordingly, youth, which is unexperienced, is credulous; age, on the contrary, is distrustful. Exactly the reverse would be the case, were this author's doctrine just.

"But how," says Mr. Hume, "is testimony to be refuted?" Principally in one or other of these two ways: *first*, and most directly, by contradictory testimony; that is, when an equal or greater number of witnesses, equally or more credible, attest the contrary: *secondly*, by such evidence of the incapacity or baseness of the witnesses, as is sufficient to discredit them." * * * "In his opinion, 'When the fact attested is such as has seldom fallen under our observation, there is a contest of two opposite experiences, of which the one destroys the other, as far as its force goes, and the superior can only operate on the mind by the force which remains.' There is a metaphysical, I had almost said, a magical *balance* and *arithmetic*, for the weighing and subtracting of evidence, to which he frequently recurs, and with which he seems to fancy he can perform wonders. I wish he had been a little more explicit in teaching us how these rare inventions must be used. When a writer of genius and elocution express himself in general terms, he will find it an easy matter to give a plausible appearance to things the most unintelligible in nature. Such sometimes is the author's way of writing. In the instance before us he is particularly happy in his choice of metaphors.—They are such as naturally are adapted to prepossess a reader in his favor. What candid person can think of suspecting the impartiality of an inquirer who is for *weighing* in the *scales of reason* all the arguments on either side? Who can suspect his exactness who determines every thing by *numerical computation*? Hence it is, that to a superficial view, his reasoning appears scarce inferior to demonstration; but, when narrowly canvassed, it is impracticable to find an application, of which, in consistency with good sense, it is capable.

"In confirmation of the remark just now made, let us try, how his manner of arguing on this point can be applied to a particular instance. For this purpose I make the following supposition. I have lived for some years near a ferry. It consists with my knowledge that the passage-boat has a thousand times crossed the river, and as many times returned safe. An unknown man, whom I have just now met, tells me in a serious manner that it is lost; and affirms, that he himself standing on the bank, was a spectator of the scene; that he saw the passengers carried down the stream and the boat overwhelmed. No person, who is influenced in his judgment of things, not by philosophical subtleties, but by common sense, a much surer guide, will hesitate to declare, that in such a testimony I have probable evidence of the fact asserted. But, if leaving common sense, I shall recur to metaphysics, and submit to be tortured in my way of judging by the essayist, he will remind me, that there are a contest of two opposite experiences, of which the one destroys the other, as far as it goes, and the superior can only operate upon the mind by the force which remains? Well, I would know the truth if possible; and that I may conclude fairly and philosophically, how am I to balance these opposite experiences, as he is pleased to term them? Must I set the thousand, or rather the two thousand instances of the one side, against the single instance of the other? In

that case, it is easy to see, that I have nineteen hundred and ninety-nine degrees of evidence, that my information is false. Or is it necessary, in order to make it credible, that the single instance have two thousand times as much evidence, as any of the opposite instances, supposing them equal among themselves; or supposing them unequal, as much as all the two thousand put together, that there may at least be an equilibrium: This is impossible. I had for some of those instances, the evidence of sense, which hardly any testimony can equal, much less exceed. Once more—must the evidence I have of the variety of the witness be a full equivalent to the two thousand instances which oppose the fact attested? By the supposition, I have no positive evidence for or against his veracity, he being a person I never saw before. Yet if none of these be the balancing the essay writer means, I despair of being able to discover his meaning.

“Is then so weak a proof from testimony incapable of being refuted?—I am far from thinking so; although ever so weak a proof could not be overturned by such a contrary experience. How then may it be overturned? *First*, by contradicting testimony. Going homewards I meet another person, whom I know as little as I did the former, and finding that he comes from the ferry, I ask him concerning the truth of the report. He affirms that the whole is a fiction; that he saw the boat, and all in it, come safe to land. This would do more to turn the scale than fifty thousand such contrary instances as were supposed. Yet this would not remove suspicion. Indeed, were we to consider the matter abstractly, one would think, that all suspicion would be removed, that the two opposite testimonies would destroy each other, and leave the mind entirely under the influence of its former experience, in the same state as if neither testimony had been given. But this is by no means consonant to fact. When once testimonies are introduced, former experience is generally of no account in the reckoning; it is but like the dust of the balance, which has not any sensible effect upon the scale. The mind hangs in suspense between the two contrary declarations, and considers it as one to one, or equal in probability, that the report is true, or that it is false. Afterwards a third, and a fourth, and a fifth, confirm the declaration of the second. I am then quite at ease. Is this the only way of confuting false testimony? No. I suppose, *second*, that instead of meeting any person who can inform me concerning the fact, I get from some, who are acquainted with the witness, information concerning his character. They tell me he is notorious for lying; and that his lies are commonly forged, not with a view to interest, but merely to gratify a malicious pleasure, which he takes in alarming strangers. This, though not so direct a refutation as the former, will be sufficient to discredit his report. In the former, where there is testimony contradicting testimony, the author's metaphor may be used with propriety. The things weighed are homogenous; and when contradictory evidences are presented to the mind, tending to prove positions which cannot be both true, the mind must decide on the comparative strength of the opposite evidences, before it yields to either.

“But is this in the supposition first made? By no means. The two thousand instances formerly known, and the single instance attested, as they relate to different facts, though of a contrary nature, are not contradictory. There is no inconsistency in believing both.

“There is in arithmetic a rule called REDUCTION, by which numbers of different denominations are brought to the same denomination. If this ingenious author shall invent a rule in logic, analogous to this, he will bless the world with a most important discovery. Then, indeed, he will have the honor of establishing an everlasting peace in the republic of letters: then we shall have the happiness to see controversy of every kind, theological, historical, philosophical, receive its mortal wound: for though in every question we could not even then determine with certainty on which side the truth lay, we could always determine with as much certainty as geometry or algebra can afford, on which side the probability lay, and in what degree. But till this metaphysical reduction is discovered, it will be impossible, where the evidences are of different orders, to ascertain by subtraction the superior evidence. We could not but esteem him a novice in arithmetic, who, being asked whether seven pounds or eleven-pence make the greater sum, and what is the difference, should, by attending solely to the numbers, and overlooking the value, conclude that eleven-pence were the greater, and that it exceeded the other by four. Must we not be equally so in reasoning, if we follow the same absurd method? Will we not fall into as great blunders? Of as little significancy do we find the balance.—Is the value of things which are not alike to be determined merely by weight? Shall silver be weighed against lead, or copper against iron? If in exchange for a piece of gold, I were offered some counters of baser metal, is it not obvious, that till I know the comparative value of the metals, in vain shall I attempt to find what is equivalent by the assistance either of scales or arithmetic?”

We shall allow both the Doctor and the sceptical champion to speak again; but in the mean time a sufficiency of the germs and elementary reasons of things have been presented to engage our consideration, in this department, for the session of a month.—‘Short lessons and well learned,’ is a maxim founded in the wisdom of the wise, and is acceptable both to teacher and taught.—Could the principal points contained in the Doctor’s dissertations be fairly and fully placed before the community, and as fairly and fully examined by the whole discerning public, a blessing of no ordinary character would result to society, descending to after ages.

CONDUCTOR.

SPIRITUAL PURITY.

Extremes, inconsistencies, contrarities, incongruities, are the prominent features of the religious communities of the nineteenth century. Could science furnish us with an instrument such as we have been fancying, a sort of spiritual thermometer, constructed to test the different views, feelings, ceremonies, degrees of virtue, and variety of organization of all the religious denominations of this our day and generation, how great and striking would be the diversity. Some have a religion that is all ordinances; some, that is all spirit; some, that is of a partially mixed nature, having doth ordinances and spiritual influence, but the

ordinances merely nominal or superfluous; and some, either for the sake of variety or convenience, regard neither the power of the spirit nor the operation of ordinances, but worship they know not what and cannot tell why by the faith of proxy, leaving their religious welfare and the good keeping of their souls to the care of ministers and statesmen. Still, all is taken for religion and good sound orthodoxy. A well-meaning pious minded person observes a brother professor freezing in some frigid zone while endeavouring to argue himself happy in keeping the externals of old-fashioned theology, and, reasoning upon his perilous and perditionable position, forthwith hurries into a torrid or burning clime, where the spirits of professing men, however willing and sincere, are never made perfect. That the extremes and imperfections of the professing community have principally originated in good motives and excellent intentions, I would not be understood to deny; but that they are of God, or that they are the legitimate issue of pure religion, or the exhibition and developement of that religion, I cannot believe. In the origin and manifestation of these diversities, there is a spirit; but not the holy spirit.

Happy the man and blessed that people who observe all the ordinances of the Lord's house, and who appreciate the import and experience the power of these ordinances—who unite the meaning and feel the influence of ordinances with their observance. While attempting a return to the primitive institutions of the christian church, we are not to forget the piety and purity, the spirit and power of christianity. The human organization called man, has a body and a soul: so has religion. Ordinances constitute its body; the influence, import, and power of ordinance its soul. As in this material world we have no spirits without bodies, so we cannot have that regenerating system called religion without ordinances. But let no one say that religion consists wholly in these. We desire something more than the name or the form; we desire the power—the reality—the soul. Christianity, the religion of Jesus Christ, is a living, moving, energizing something not contained wholly in the best and most perfect samples of ceremony.

Every science, as also every system, has certain peculiarities and characteristics which distinguish it from every other; and religion, the science of all sciences, and the perfection of all systems, is not an exception. And if there be any one trait or distinguishing feature which appears more prominently than another in the religion of Christ, it is the immaculate and spotless purity it both implies and enforces. Christianity is essentially a system of purity. A profession without a corresponding spiritual or holy life, may indeed be fashionable and polite in certain circles of society, or may claim the applause of the popular mul-

fitude; but still it is a mere name—a powerless external—a lifeless formality. It may pass the board with some committees of religionists on earth, but will never pass the board of heaven. It may be desirable now as a show or as a genteel recommendation, or as an ornament hung up in a parlor, but there is nothing in it enduring.

A shell without a kernel, a fountain without water, a tree without branches, leaves, or fruit, appear to my mind as valuable in the scale of congruity and utility as an acknowledgment of the christian religion without purity. He who would be Christ's must "sow to the spirit" if he would reap an immortal harvest. A new creature he must be, and he must preserve himself new by the renewing and sanctifying graces of the divine spirit, which is given most liberally to all who in faith request it.

Few are so impressed with the holy precepts and life-giving laws of the author of our redemption as fully to be determined to prosecute the heavenly journey leading directly to eternal life. How many begin who do not continue and therefore do not enjoy the life divine. Comparatively it is easy to make a profession of christianity. It is not a severe tax upon flesh and blood to appear a christian at first by external profession; but to carry the cross of Christ constantly and consistently—to practically despise the world with all its enchantments, charms, and fascinations—to live unblamably and exhibit the example of Christ—to exercise the self-denial that has no fellowship with the lusts of the eye, the lusts of the flesh, nor the pride of life—to follow Jesus the Saviour as the captain of salvation, and to esteem every affliction light which prepares us for glory, honor, and immortality; requires more patience, perseverance, moral endurance, holiness, and christian grace, than the generality of religious professors possess. Of the few therefore who enter upon the strait passage, still fewer have the endurance to press on till they reach the holy city, New Jerusalem. But it cannot be because the reward is deficient. The gospel is rich with every excellency, and its offers are both for the present and future.—Great are its immediate gifts, and its promises are large with future good. What hopes! what promises! what divine rewards! what living blessings! what enduring consolations! what unsullied joys! what heavenly glories! what exalted triumphs! are connected with the christian victory! We have no reckoning—we have never learned an arithmetic—that computes the blessings, treasures, dignities, and triumphs of the successful termination of the "good fight of faith." Perverted indeed and greatly infatuated must be the mind that prefers the honors and riches of the life that now is to that which is to come. O for a little faith, even as a grain of mustard seed, to perceive the contrast be-

tween the pearls of time and the precious things of eternity.—
What a high motive to a holy life.

I have as much confidence in Mormonism, in Mahomedanism, or in Nothingarianism, as in any outward profession without a corresponding exemplary character. No counterfeit, even in this imperfect state, can long appear respectable within the courts of christianity, and still more easily would deception be detected were professors generally possessed of that moral purity delineated in the life and behavior of Christ and the holy twelve.—“The power of godliness,” is a meridian grace that ever proves itself lovely, and eclipses the lustre of every other splendor. This power is always conspicuous and always influential: for a christian is one who has been renewed in the image of God, “in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness;” constituted a son of God by his spirit, and derives his education and receives the model of his manners from the same hallowed source, and therefore his glory and nobility cannot be obscured. The son of a nobleman, brought up at court and instructed in all the fashions and accomplishments of high birth, distinguishes himself by his manners and general deportment; and are the sons of God left without a well defined pattern of good behaviour? and is not purity one of the principal attributes?

A precept was not uttered nor an ordinance appointed by the Saviour, but was intended to affect the heart. Moral goodness or holiness is the essence of the whole scheme. What is called in vulgar style “head religion,” that is, a religion dwelling only in the mind, consisting of abstract mental views and well arranged doctrines, forming a sort of mathematical theory, is not the religion of Jesus Christ, taught, exhibited, and promulgated by his Apostles, and will never prepare any of its subjects for the eternal Canaan. Christianity is comprehensively divine. Not only is it superhuman and heavenly in its origin, and was at first demonstrated and confirmed by supernatural and divine power, but its influences and effects wherever and whenever received are invariably and essentially divine. The system is like its author—Christ. Perfect himself, pure, spotless, undefiled, separate from sin, he has taught doctrines, given precepts, and instituted ordinances equally immaculate and lovely. “If any one have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

And what is the spirit of Christ? The spirit of meekness? of compassion? of condescension? of love?—yes—and the *spirit of purity*. Let no one therefore impose upon himself and think he possesses the spirit of God’s beloved Son while the tenor of his thoughts, words, and deeds are worldly and fleshly.

All men love consistency, however widely they have themselves wandered from its honest dictates. With the Great

Teacher all concur in saying, "either call the tree evil and the fruit evil, or else call the tree good and the fruit good." So then let every one be decided and consistent. Profession and character must be blended. If any one claim membership in the great church of the adversary, he will give incontrovertible evidence of his attachment to the Captain of his Condemnation by corroborating works; and if any one be a christian by profession, let him also prove the value and consistency of his pretensions by imitating Zacharias in being a "blamless observer of all the Lord's commandments and ordinances." Or according to an Apostle, "let him show, by good behaviour, his works with meekness of wisdom." CONDUCTOR.

ALL SIN IS SELFISHNESS,

We request a careful and repeated reading of the following chapter, taken from Harris' Prize Essay on Mammon,—a work of superior merit and deserved celebrity. We recommend the propriety of perusing it three times and then committing it to memory for future regulation.

"Selfishness, as we have already intimated, is the universal form of depravity; every sin that can be named is only a modification of it. What is avarice, but selfishness grasping and hoarding? What is prodigality, but selfishness decorating and indulging itself—a man sacrificing to himself as his own god? What is sloth, but that god asleep, and refusing to attend to the loud calls of duty? And what is idolatry, but that god enshrined,—man, worshipping the reflection of his own image? Sensuality, and, indeed, all the sins of the flesh, are only selfishness setting itself above law, and gratifying itself at the expense of all restraint. And all the sins of the spirit are only the same principle impatient of contradiction, and refusing to acknowledge superiority, or bend to any will but its own. What is egotism, but selfishness *speaking*? Or crime, but selfishness, without its mask, in earnest, and *acting*? Or offensive war, but selfishness confederated, armed, and bent on aggrandizing itself by violence and blood? An offensive army is the selfishness of a nation embodied, and moving to the attainment of its object over the wrecks of human happiness and life. "From whence come wars and fighting among you? Come they not hence, *even of your lusts*?" And what are these irregular and passionate desires, but that inordinate self-love which acknowledges no law, and will be confined by no rules—that selfishness which is the heart of depravity?—and what but this has set the world at variance, and filled it with strife? The first presumed sin of the angels that kept not their first estate, as well as the first sin

of man,—what was it but selfishness insane? an irrational and mad attempt to pass the limits proper to the creature, to invade the throne, and to seize the rights, of the Deity? And were we to analyze the very last sin of which we ourselves are conscious, we should discover that selfishness, in one or other of its thousand forms, was its parent. Thus, if love was the pervading principle of the unfallen creation, it is equally certain that selfishness is the reigning law of the world, ravaged and disorganized by sin.

It must be obvious, then, that the *great want* of fallen humanity, is, a specific against selfishness, the epidemic disease of our nature. The expedient which should profess to remedy our condition, and yet leave this want unprovided for, whatever its other recommendations might be, would be leaving the seat and core of our disease untouched. And it would be easy to show that in this radical defect consist the impotence of every system of false religion, and of every heterodox modification of the true religion, to restore our disordered nature to happiness and God.— And equally easy is it to show that the gospel, evangelically interpreted, not only takes cognizance of this peculiar feature of our malady, but actually treats it as the very root of our depravity; and addresses itself directly to the task of its destruction,—that, as the first effect of sin was to produce selfishness, so the first effect of the gospel remedy is to destroy that evil, and to replace it with benevolence.”

FIVE FACTS and TWO FACTS.

It is a fact that the inhabitants of the world number ten hundred millions.

It is also a fact that of this number, six hundred and forty-seven millions, or about two-thirds of mankind, are pagans and worship idol gods.

It is another fact that of the remaining three hundred and fifty-three millions who acknowledge one God, there are one hundred and sixteen millions of Roman Catholics, seventy millions belonging to the Greek Church, one hundred and ten millions of Mahometans, and five millions of Jews.

It is therefore a fact that among ten hundred millions of people there only remains fifty-two millions of Protestants.

It is also as true as any other fact, that among these fifty-two millions of Protestants there are four out of every five who are more conformed to confessions, formulas, creeds, disciplines, sermons, and human prayer-books than to the New Testament of our Lord and Savior.

Now it is a fact, as incontestible as any already stated; that

God, in terms most unequivocal, has enjoined upon his people the duty of propagating the truth and holding up the light of heaven.

And it is another awful, undeniable, and tremendous fact that this duty is neglected: and that among the people professedly of God there is little enterprize, little zeal, little spiritual activity: that they resemble a pilot slumbering in a storm, more than people "awake to righteousness."—— Christian professor, where are you—and—what are you doing? CONDUCTOR.

CORRESPONDENCE.

The following two letters speak for themselves, and require neither criticism nor commentary. They are from the pens of men who have for years advocated the cause of apostolical truth, in opposition to the various religious fashions now current among both churchmen and dissenters.

Dear Brother Oliphant,

Some thoughts having occurred to me in connection with certain reflections respecting the publication just commenced under your superintendence, I have put them on paper and now forward them to you, that you may, if you deem it proper, give them a place in your periodical,

The name you have made choice of is a good one, and I pray that it may be becomingly sustained. Truth is the most important subject which can engage the human mind, and its being received or rejected bears a most momentous influence on the happiness or wretchedness of man; and consequently, he who assumes the character of a witness in its behalf, occupies at once an honorable, important, and responsible position, and these unmeasurably increase when Divine truth is the subject of testimony.

My thoughts were somehow, by the name you have adopted, led to a phrase—a phrase which contains much—which is frequently made use of and almost invariably in a very different acceptation from that in which it is employed by the inspired writer. I do hope that you will not imagine from my remarks made respecting the erroneous application of the scripture language referred to, that I am at all of the mind expressed in the communication of your first correspondent, or fear that your witnessing for the truth is to be a mere wrangling or disputing about doctrines or institutions without regard to their practical bearing. I entertain no such fear, but feel assured that the high moral tendency of the doctrines and ordinances of christianity will be that which you will study to place most prominently and vividly before, and press most powerfully upon, your readers.

The phrase then to which I refer, is, as already observed, one from the scriptures, viz., "The truth as it is in Jesus." This language is very fre-

quently employed when nothing more is meant than some abstract doctrines of belief, which by a reference to the portion of sacred writ whence it is taken, it will be found it has respect not to abstract doctrines, but to moral conduct—that the truth exhibited in Jesus' life and breathed throughout his doctrine or teaching was the putting away all moral deformity and the practising all that was pure and holy and lovely; thus says the apostle, (Eph. iv. 21, 23,) "If so be that ye have heard him and have been taught by him *as the truth is in Jesus*, that ye put off concerning the former conversation, (behavior,) the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Paul after having given a succinct exhibition of the teaching of Christ, proceeds to enlarge upon the subject throughout the remainder of the epistle by enumerating many of the evil passions, and practices in which the Ephesians had indulged in the times of their ignorance and disobedience, and were now called upon to abandon; and by likewise particularly specifying many of those christian virtues with which they as the children of God and brethren of Jesus should be adorned while fulfilling the duties devolving upon them in the varied spheres and relations of life in which they moved; thus communicating to them and to us what is the essence of "the truth as it is in Jesus"—what constitutes the old man and is to be *put off*, and what is contained in the new man and is to be *put on*.

Paul's exposition of "the truth as it is in Jesus" beautifully harmonizes with what, throughout the book of God, is represented as being the grand design and native tendency of the development of the divine philanthropy and which is so powerfully and engagingly expressed in the language of that apostle to his son Titus, when, in connection with that manner of behaviour which he had been instructing him as that which he should inculcate upon the disciples as becoming their profession, and as an enforcement of it, he says, (Tit. ii. 11, &c.,) "For the favor of God which bringeth salvation to all men hath appeared, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope even the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jssus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works."

That the Witness may prove a valiant, indefatigable, and successful advocate of the truth and greatly promote an elevated piety and purity among the followers of the Lord, is the prayer of

Your affectionate brother,

C.

November 18th, 1845.

Mr. Oliphant,—Respected Sir,

I have had a hasty glance at a very neat little periodical published by you in Picton C. W., under the imposing title of "*The Witness of Truth*." On page 9, under the caption, "A word to strangers", I find the following statement, which appears fully as imposing as the title of the paper. You say "Idolatry is the same sin, whether Baal, Moloch, or a golden image, be the the object of worship. Sects worship idols." Now sir, the position in which this statement, if true, places many, is indeed fearful. Idolatry, in all ages of the world, has been looked upon by *Jehovah* with indignation, and visited with his severest displeasure. The 1st commandment, Ex. 20, 3-4-5 verses, is positive, and the curses attached to a violation of this commandment, have been literally fulfilled, up to the conclusion of the Jewish age; and inasmuch as "God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath appointed heir of all things,"—full and adequate punishment for all sins will be inflicted upon all those who commit them. We cannot expect literal and immediate punishment to be inflicted now as it was under the age or dispensation of miracles. But the time, though seeming slow, is sure. Now, from the above consideration, if sects worship idols, how are they going to escape? "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation." I deem it highly important that you clear up this matter, by showing what is idolatry, what sectarian idols are, how worshipped. If a portion of mankind who are denominat'd sects, are thus sunk in idolatry, and you can be the happy instrument of showing them the error of their ways and of inducing them to "turn from their idols and seek the true and living God," you will confer a lasting favour on society.

Respectfully your's,

NO IDOLATOR.

In the first and second numbers of this work we have given a fair representation of the brevity and variety we approve in reference to articles.—One of the sins of this age is a verbose style. This must be corrected. To correspondents we say, Write concisely. Few words and many thoughts, plain speech and powerful argument, might be a good motto. We shall take for granted that all say *amen* who approve what we say in practice.—The preceding communications present a good example.

A number of queries, arriving too late for this month's *Witness*, are in waiting, and will appear in our next.