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# THE CHRISTIAN.

Vol. III. } SAINT JOHN, N. B., FEBRUARY 1847. { No. 2.

CONDUCTED BY W. W. EATON.

Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.—*Peter*. On this Rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.—*The Lord Messiah*.

## THE STUDY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE grand object of this publication is to impart scriptural knowledge. When it loses sight of this work it ceases to perform the mission of *The Christian*. The first page ever written for it contained a promise that it should always be an index to the Word of God. We feel exceedingly anxious that our readers should become diligent students of the "lively oracles." It is a shame for a professor of Christianity to say, "the Bible, and the Bible alone, is my rule of faith and practice," and at the same time to be ignorant of its general contents. It is a divine command that we "grow in grace and in knowledge." How shall we obey the latter part of the precept—indeed how shall we obey any part of it without diligently studying the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles. Some time before the conductor of this humble sheet made any profession of christianity, a disciple of the Saviour in Eastport, presented him a copy of the New Testament translated by Doctors George Campbell, Macknight, and Doddridge, with prefatory remarks, notes &c: by Alex. Campbell. He read the prefatory remarks with great interest. He has since had access to most of the popular Commentaries, Theological, and Controversial works; but he feels himself more indebted to these prefatory remarks for what knowledge he has of the Christian Scriptures than all the other human productions which have come under his notice. Honor to whom honor is due. He would gratefully acknowledge the benefits that he has derived from the labors of others: and he does it in this place to create a desire within his readers to give the same production—not only a careful reading, but a thorough examination. From month to month the remarks alluded to shall be laid before the readers of *The Christian*. Many of them will recognize the following article as an old acquaintance; but they will be pleased to see it spread before the community in so cheap a form.

The remarks on the history of the Lord are rather too extended for so small a publication; but they are too good to be divided.

If there happen to be a reader who does not feel interested in such a production, we would commend to his particular notice the concluding paragraphs, and submit the question whether in the numerous essays of the present century he can produce one of equal beauty and elegance? We ask, therefore, for the whole a careful and a thorough investigation.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS TO THE NARRATIVES OF MATTHEW,  
MARK, LUKE AND JOHN.

BY A. CAMPBELL.

THESE books were designed to be read and understood by persons of the humblest capacity, as well as by those of the most exalted genius! Readers of the most limited education, as well as those of the most liberal attainments, were equally embraced in the view of the writers. If particular attention was paid to any class of readers, it was doubtless to the poor, who have not the means of refined education. One of the most striking evidences of the divine mission of the Saviour was, that, *to the poor his glad tidings were announced.* A revelation not adapted to them, forfeits all claims to divine origin.

In laying down some general principles or rules for reading intelligibly the following narratives, regard must be had to all sorts of readers—the young as well as the old; the illiterate as well as the learned; and also some attention must be paid to the difficulties that lie in the way of a rational and profitable perusal of them.

In the first place, then, there is no opinion or notion which is more prejudicial to an intimate acquaintance with these writings, than that of the Egyptian priests, introduced into the first theological school at Alexandria, and carried throughout christendom—viz. “That the words of scripture have a mystical, spiritual, theological, or some other than a literal meaning; and that the same rules of interpretation are not to be applied to the inspired writings which are applied to human compositions,” than which no opinion is more absurd and pernicious. If this notion were correct, all efforts to understand this book must be in vain, until God sends us an interpreter who can resolve those enigmas and mystic words of theological import, and give us the plain meaning of what the Apostles and Evangelists wrote.

The reader will please consider that, when God spoke to man, he adopted the language of man. To the fathers of the Jewish nation he spoke in their mother tongue. By his Son, and his Son by the Apostles, spoke to every nation in its own language. When he spoke to any nation he uniformly adopted the words of that nation in expressing his will to it. And that he used their words in the commonly received sense, needs no other proof than this; that if he had not done so, instead of enlightening them in the knowledge of his will, he would have deceived and confounded them: than which no hypothesis is more impious. For example, were God to speak to us in *English*, and select from our vocabulary the words *death*, *punishment*, *perpetual*, and *wicked*; were he to use the last term as we use it, and annex to the others a signification different from that we affix to them—such as mean *life* by the term *death*, *happiness* by the term *punishment*, and a *limited time* by the word *perpetual*, and, without apprising us of such a change in their meaning, say, “*Perpetual death shall be the punishment of the wicked,*” what a deception would be practised upon us! His words in our acceptance, would convey a tremendous thought; but, in his reserved sense, would mean no more than, “*A limited life shall be the happiness of the wicked.*”

Once more on this topic. As nothing can be said to be revealed or

made known by words which are not perfectly intelligible, so we find the sacred writers so conscious of this, that when they used any word which was not familiar to the readers whom they addressed, they immediately add, "*Which being interpreted, signifies.*" If, then, those writers were accustomed to explain any word not familiar to their readers, does it not undeniably follow that they supposed every word or allusion not so explained, sufficiently plain already? And again, would not the same benevolence and respect to the capacity and understanding of their readers, which induced them to explain some terms of very subordinate importance, such as "corban," "talitha cumi," "Aceldama," "Golgotha," &c. &c. have caused them to explain words of infinitely more importance, such as "repentance," "faith," "hope," "love," "justify," "covenant," "baptism," "ambassador," "Son of God," "eternal life," "everlasting punishment," &c., if they had not supposed such terms sufficiently plain in the common usage, and quite intelligible to all their readers? From these plain facts and arguments we deduce the following rule or direction to all those who, under the guidance of Heaven, desire to understand these sacred books:—*You are to understand the words and sentences in these narratives (and indeed in all the apostolic writings) by the application of all those rules through which you arrive at the meaning of any other book or writing of the same antiquity.*

Next to a regard to the commonly received sense of the words in these writings, nothing contributes more to the clear and certain understanding of them, than a knowledge of *the design* of the respective writers of this volume. In one respect they all may be said to have but one design. Taking the ultimate happiness of man as the grand design of revelation, it must be granted that all the inspired writers had this object in view in all that they wrote. It is, however, capable of the clearest proof; and, indeed, it is universally admitted that every writer who has written different parts of this book, had a specific design in each separate communication. For in the prosecution of one grand design, there are often a thousand items, distinct from each other, to accomplish; each of which may be the design of one particular effort. Now it requires not a moment's reflection to see that Paul had one design in writing to Timothy, another in writing to Philemon, and another in writing to the congregation in Rome.

It is granted by all critics, that when all grammatical rules fail to settle the meaning of any ambiguous word or sentence, a knowledge of the design of the writer or speaker will do it. Even when a writer's terms are badly selected or improperly used, a knowledge of his design makes his meaning plain. Daily experience must convince us that we can more easily solve difficulties and correct mistakes in composition, by a knowledge of the design of the writer, than by any other means we possess. Indeed, the more weighty and important criticisms upon verbal inaccuracies, are predicated upon a knowledge of the design of the writer or speaker. If, then, a suitable regard be paid to the design of any speaker or writer, how ambiguous and incorrect soever his words may be, we shall seldom, if ever fail in understanding him. For example—little children, when they first begin to speak, have but few terms at command, and necessarily apply them very inaccurately, yet their nurses

and attendants find little or no difficulty in understanding them. In regarding what they design to communicate, their language becomes as definite and precise as that of the Grecian or Roman orator.

To those who inquire how we are always to find out the design of a writer, we would just observe, that his design becomes apparent either from an express avowal of it, or from attention to a variety of circumstances connected with his writing, or from both. But this will in the sequel become sufficiently plain. Indeed, many readers appear to discover the design of a writer much sooner than they do the meaning or propriety of what he says.

But to bring these general hints to bear upon our subject, we must request the attention of our readers to the design of the narratives of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. In this way we think we can most profitably introduce them to the acquaintance of the youth, who may peruse them.

Had we no means of ascertaining *the design* of these four historians, other than mere conjecture, predicated on circumstances, we would rationally conclude, that the design in committing to writing their testimony concerning Jesus of Nazareth, was the same as induced them to deliver it orally; only with this difference, that in writing they designed to perpetuate, in a more permanent form, what must be soon corrupted and forgotten, if only spoken and not written: and that the conviction of unbelievers, and the confirmation of disciples in the truth of one incomparable fact, was the grand design of their testimony, whether verbal or written. This illustrious fact is, that *Jesus the Nazarene is the Son of God, the Saviour of men*. But we are not, in this instance, dependent on conjecture. We are expressly told by one of the historians that his design in writing was, that through his *written* testimony the reader "might believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the son of God, and that believing this he might have life through his name." Another of these sacred historians says that his design in writing was, that a certain illustrious personage, a christian disciple to whom he inscribed his narrative, "might know the certainty of those things wherein he had been instructed." This narrative was directly inscribed to this personage, and through him made public property, and consequently was designed to produce the same effects in all persons in similar circumstances, and therefore was as well designed to produce faith where it was not, as to confirm it where it already existed. But, in brief, whatever was the grand design of one of these historians, was the design of them all; for they all were employed to bear testimony to the same person; and in doing this, they were equally guided by one and the same Spirit.

But whence all the differences and varieties in their narratives? This, too, the design of each goes very far to explain. But was not the design of *one* the design of *all*? True, it was the design of them all to prove one fact, *but it was not to the same identical persons*; and all men are not to be convinced by the same arguments. As this is a point of vast importance, in every way in which it can be viewed, permit me to be more particular in invoking attention to it.

As all nations have their own peculiarities, and all people their own ways of thinking, reasoning, and expressing themselves; these varieties

in their circumstances require a corresponding variety in addressing them upon all subjects; though the things spoken be substantially the same, and the design of the speaker precisely the same. Now in writing as well as speaking, the same persons vary their communications according to the times, places, and circumstances in which they speak or write. For example, though Paul proclaimed the same gospel at all times and in all places, he does not always exhibit it in the same words, nor accompanied with the same evidences, arguments, or reasons. Thus in publishing the same gospel to the Lycaonians, the Athenians, the Antiochans, the Corinthians, he is governed by all the prejudices, views, feelings, and circumstances of his auditors; and adapts the style, the facts, arguments, and evidences, to the capacities, views, and circumstances of his hearers. While he publishes the same glad tidings to them all, he varies in many respects upon all these occasions. This was absolutely necessary to his success, and is a most irrefragable proof of the sincerity and honesty of the man, and greatly adds to the credibility of his testimony. Now for the same reasons that Paul differs from himself, or varies in his way of speaking the gospel in different places, he would have observed the same varieties in writing to the same people. For he never spoke at random in publishing the glad tidings, and what he *spoke*, was as deliberate as what he *wrote*. For the same reasons, therefore, had any one of the writers of these four histories written them all to the different persons, at the different times and in the different places where they were at first published, there is every reason to believe that they would have been as different from each other as they are; and making a reasonable allowance for the peculiarities of each writer, that they would have been the same as they now are. Many reasons could be offered for this opinion, but we shall only submit one proof or argument in favour of it, which is indeed done when one single fact is stated—viz. Luke, in his Acts of the Apostles, *three* times gives an account of Paul's conversion and special call to the apostleship, and these three differ as much from each other as Matthew, Mark, and John differ in their narratives concerning Jesus of Nazareth. But there is just the same reason and necessity for, and the same propriety in, the varieties which are found in these four histories, as there was for Paul to speak the same gospel in a different way, with different arguments, facts, and evidences, in the different places in which he published it. Suppose Matthew Levi to have written a narrative for the Jews in Judea, one for the conviction of the people at Rome, one for the Jews and Greeks in Greece, and one for the Asiatics in general, at different periods within the lapse of from 20 to 30 years; would it not have been as fitting for him to have been as diverse in his statements, as Paul was in his preachings in Damascus, Lycaonia, Athens, and Rome?

It was, for example, of indispensable importance that Matthew Levi, when writing for the Jews in Judea, at the time in which he wrote, should trace the lineage of Jesus of Nazareth up to David and Abraham; but of no consequence to the people of Rome, for whom John Mark wrote, that he should do it at the time he published his testimony. This, and other differences between Matthew and Mark and the others, is precisely analogous to that between Paul in Damascus and Paul in Athens. In a

Jewish synagogues in Damascus the Jewish prophets must be circumstantially adduced; but before the Areopagus in the city of Athens, Aretus, a Grecian poet, was better evidence than Isaiah or Daniel—better adapted to the audience and to the design of the speaker.

To return to the design of these four testimonies. The *immediate design* of these writings is to convince men that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the Son of God; and the *ultimate design* of them is to put men in possession of life! Matthew's design was, in the first instance, to convince the Jews in Judea—Mark's design was, to convince the Italians or Romans—Luke's design was to convince the Grecians—and John's design was to convince the Asiatics in general of this fact; and if you please, through these finally all nations. Now as the Saviour did not exhibit all the evidence of his mission in any one town, village, or city, or to any one people, it was quite compatible with his example, and with all circumstances, that none of his ambassadors should attempt to lay all the evidences before any one people, whether they preached as Paul, in all nations; or wrote, as these writers, did, for the conviction of different nations and people.

Now to bring all these remarks to bear upon a national and profitable *art of reading* these memoirs, we shall for example, take the testimony of Matthew Levi, and show how a knowledge of his *design* illuminates every page, and contributes to clear and comprehensive views of that religion, in the accomplishment of which he was an active and honored agent. Let the reader suppose that he was possessed of all the facts and documents with which Matthew was furnished, and that he designed to address his countrymen, the Jews, in order to convince them that Jesus of Nazareth, who had, at the time of his writing, finished his earthly career, was that Messiah, the Son of God, which God had long and often promised, and they expected. That he might write with the most effect, he would take into view the circumstances of the Jews at his time of writing. He would place before them their different sects and prejudices, the popular errors and the popular truths of the time; and being fully acquainted with these, he would select out of the information with which he was furnished such facts and documents as would suit all the circumstances of the case. Being aware that the whole nation expected a prince and a deliverer to arise from among them, and from the house of King David, he would conclude, that unless he could satisfactorily prove that this Jesus was legitimately descended from Abraham through David, all further attempts to convince his countrymen would be in vain. For this purpose, then, he would apply to the Registrar's office for a copy of the roll of the lineage of the house of David, well attested; and from this trace Jesus to David, and thus prove that, in as far as pedigree was concerned, this person had the most legitimate claim upon their faith, as being unquestionably, from the most public and well-attested documents, a descendant of King David. In the next place he would remember, that not only his descent from David, but many circumstances of his nativity and infancy, had been pointed out by the Prophets of his nation; and that the people of his time expected those to be fulfilled in the Messiah. He would therefore introduce those circumstances which had been foretold—such as the character of his mother, the place of his nativity, the slaughter of the infants in Ramah, his flight into Egypt, his

being recalled, his being brought up in Nazareth, and the history of that Elijah that was to come before him. Thus he would adduce the testimonies of Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Malachi, as all concurring in him.

Having, then, introduced him under all these favorable circumstances, and fairly brought him before his readers, accompanied with every attestation which either their own expectations or the sayings of their Prophets had made necessary; his next effort would be to furnish such evidences as their expected Elijah presented in his behalf, and such unexpected attestations as his Father from heaven and the Holy Spirit had given at his first manifestation to Israel. Then he would give a specimen of his own character, deduced from what he said and what he did, that they might judge whether there was any thing in his doctrine or deeds incompatible with his pretensions. In selecting his own declarations he would prefer those of the greatest notoriety, such as his public discourses: and of his miracles he would adduce not only those of the most splendid character, but those which were performed in the presence of the largest and most respectable assemblies.

He would occasionally, as opportunity served, state the success attendant on his labours, mention the names of his principal followers, and introduce as early as possible to the notice of his readers those prominent characters, who afterwards occupied so conspicuous a place in the triumphs of his cause. He would sometimes record such incidents in their history as would unfold their true character, and serve to give them credit with the people. He would always introduce the ancient predictions that bore upon him or them, and thus present a chain of evidence addressed to all that is in man, and to the peculiar temper and feelings of his countrymen. For this purpose pains would be taken to shew how he acted in all sorts of company—amongst friends and foes; and still having regard to the prejudices and errors of the times, such occurrences as would have a tendency to correct these mistakes would be minutely detailed. Combining brevity and great comprehension with simplicity and perspicuity, tracing every prominent incident from his birth to his death, his resurrection, and ascension into heaven; he would thus produce such a phalanx of evidence as would leave without excuse every man who had read the ancient oracles, or only heard the comments of the public instructors of the people.

Such, I say, would be the general outlines of the course which reason would suggest to a person, whose design would be to convince a people, circumstanced as the Jews were, at the time Matthew published his testimony in Judea; and such, substantially, is the course that Matthew has adopted and pursued.

*Now as the design of a writer is his own guide in the selection and arrangement of his materials, arguments, and evidences; so it is the only infallible guide, when known, to the interpretation of what he has written.* A regard to the grand design of the whole, and to the particular design of each item in the narrative, will do more to explain to us the meaning of what is written, than all comments upon the meaning of words, or what is called "*the doctrines*" of scripture.

Were a person to write at a great distance from Judea, as John did,



where the people knew little or nothing of the Jewish Prophets or of the Jewish customs, he would not think of troubling them with a roll of lineage about his pedigree, nor with any quotations from ancient Prophets, except to let them know that he had been the subject of ancient prophecy, and mention a few instances to show that these prophecies had been most exactly fulfilled in him. He would introduce John the Harbinger merely as "*a man sent from God.*" If he spoke of the people, of Canaan, he would simply call them Jews. If he introduced any Hebrew names, such as *Rabbi* or *Messiah*, he would interpret them. If any of the sacred institutions of the Jews' religion, such as the Pass-over, was introduced, he would call it *a feast of the Jews*. If he referred to any of the usual customs of the Jews, he would explain them, such as *the Jewish manner of purifying*. If he spoke of places in that country, he would give a geographical description of them, such as *Bethany upon the Jordan*. If he alluded to the sectarian feelings of these people, he would describe to what extent they were carried, by informing his readers that *the Jews had no intercourse with the Samaritans*. Nay, he would adopt the style of the East, as far as compatible with a lucid statement of facts; and as *light* was a favorite topic of the Asiatics, he would under this similitude, introduce to their consideration Jesus as "*the light of the world.*" In affording them the evidences of the mission of this wonderful personage, knowing that they would argue much from the reception which Jesus met with at home in his own country, he would be particular in relating the miracles wrought in, and near to, the metropolis, and the different arguments and debates to which they gave rise; and as they would be more likely to have heard his fame from the people that visited Jerusalem at the great annual festivals and convocations, he would more minutely detail what happened on those occasions. Such would be some of his peculiarities in addressing a people so great strangers to the Jewish history.

With similar varieties both Luke and Mark are distinguished, but for the same reasons, and subordinate to the same ends; and are just as easily understood as those of Matthew and John, when all the preceding considerations are attended to.

The Christian, who sincerely desires to understand these narratives, will not only most unfeignedly present his supplications and prayers to him who gives his Holy Spirit to them that ask him; but he will exercise those faculties of understanding which God has given him, and to which he has adapted all his communications since he became a transgressor. He will apply the same rules of interpretation to those compositions, which he would apply to any other writings of the same antiquity. He will consider the terms, not otherwise explained by the writers, as conveying the same ideas which they are wont to convey in common acceptance. He will always keep the design of the writer before his mind, and for this purpose he will attend to all circumstances requisite to ascertaining his design—such as the character of the writer himself, the circumstances of the people whom he addressed, or amongst whom he published his writings, their peculiar prejudices, views, and feelings at the time of his writing to or for them; his own most explicit avowals with regard to his motives and intentions in making any communications to

them. All these things will be attended to, and the writings examined in the natural order in which they are presented; noting every allusion and incident with the greatest circumspection, whether it regard time, place, or character. But above all, the most prominent object which the writer had in view, will be the most prominent in the consideration of a rational reader of his writings. And when difficulties occur, not to be satisfactorily solved by the mere import of the words, that meaning which best accords with the design of the whole writing, or with the particular passage, will be preferred.

But, as yet, we have not called the attention of the reader to the ultimate design of these narratives. We have, indeed, noticed that their *immediate* design is to convince the reader that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the Son of God—and that this object is subordinate to another design, viz. that THE READER MIGHT, THROUGH THIS CONVICTION, ENJOY EVERLASTING LIFE.

Reader! This is the glorious end of these sacred histories. On the following pages is inscribed the most astonishing narrative ever read; the sublimest and the simplest story ever told. But this is not all. It is designed to accomplish an object superlatively grand, transcending—in degrees inexpressible—the most magnificent scheme that created intelligence ever conceived. To convert a race of polluted, miserable, and dying mortals, into pure, happy, and glorious immortals; to convert the gates of death into the gates of immortality; to make the pathway to rottenness and corruption, a high road to deathless vigour and incorruptible glory; to make the grave the vestibule, the antechamber, to “a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;” to make the dying groans of sin-worn nature a prelude to ecstasies unalloyed. Yes, this is the benevolent and glorious design of these Testimonies. Books, written with such a design, with a design to purify, elevate, and glorify the debased and degraded children of men; to prepare, furnish, and adorn them for the society of principalities and powers, for the society of their God and King, in a world of perfect bliss, most assuredly come with a divine character to man. Their claims on the attention and examination of those to whom they are presented, most certainly are paramount to all others. And the bare hypothesis, to say nothing of the moral certainty, that they came from God, with such a design, is quite enough, methinks, to woo our whole rational nature, to constrain all our moral powers, to test their high pretensions to a character so philanthropic and divine.

On such a theme, who would not wish to be eloquent! But how can we equal in style a subject which, when but faintly and in prospective viewed, exhausted the sublimest strains of heaven taught prophets, and of poets fired with God’s own inspiration—whose hallowed lips tasted not the fabled springs of Pagan muses, but the fountain of living waters, springing from eternal love! Yet even these failed to lisp its praise. Nay, the brightest seraph that burns in heavenly light, fails in his best effort, and, in profound thought, pores upon the marvellous theme. The compassion of the eternal God, the benevolence and philanthropy of the Father of the whole family in heaven and in earth towards us, the fallen children of his love, has transcended the loftiest grasp of the highest

intelligence, and has made to falter the most expressive tongue in all the ranks of heavenly powers. In all the rapturous flights of these morning stars of creation, in all the ecstatic acclamations of these elder Sons of God, the theme has not been reached; and though they have tuned their harps a thousand times, and swelled their voices in full chorus in countless efforts, yet the theme is still unequalled, and, as it were, untouched. Vain, then, would be the attempt, and fruitless every effort, to express, in corresponding terms, a subject so divine. Indeed, we have no language, we have not been taught an alphabet adapted to such a theme.

“Come, then, expressive silence, muse its praise!”

#### ANCIENT AND MODERN PROFESSORS OF CHRISTIANITY.

How strong the contrast between the first christians and modern professors! The former periled all for Christ's sake; the latter deprive themselves of no animal gratification not dishonorable in the eyes of a worldling. Not only in what popular theologians call essentials, but in the genuine prerequisites of a disciple of Christ, do the moderns fail in copying the original pattern. One of the first grand characteristics of a disciple of Jesus is love to the brotherhood: “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another.” The first followers of the Lamb did love each other; the historian says, “they were of one heart and of one soul.” No language can be much more expressive than this. It proves that the heart-moving prayer of our Saviour had in those days an actual fulfilment. It illustrates very tangibly the meaning of those ever memorable words: “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” Where is that union now? Who are seeking, striving, praying for it? Who has any reason to expect the world's conversion through any other instrumentality than a united congregation of believers whose faith is based on the testimony of apostles; believers who manifest their faith by an humble submission to all God's requirements? But what is the state of modern professors? The question is not what are the feelings that one sect has for the other but as professed followers of the lovely Jesus, what spirit and disposition do they manifest towards those whom they believe to be bound to the same heaven with themselves? That oneness for which the Saviour prayed, and which was so beautifully exemplified in the model church, gathered in Jerusalem, is wanting.

Divisions and parties among the ancient christians received the strongest reprobation from the apostles. They were then ranked with the worst of crimes, and called “works of the flesh;” and those guilty of them denounced as unfit to enter the kingdom of God. When the Corinthians began to say, “I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas,” the apostle rebuked them sharply, and charged them with being “carnal:” they were taught that to be “carnally minded was death.” But at the present time there is little else than disunion. This is so manifest that the proof will not be demanded by any, unless it should be

urged that "evangelical christians" have formed an alliance. But what is the value of a union without a communion? What advantage will result to the world from such a union?—A union based on human opinions—a theoretic without the possibility of a practical union—until the whole basis be changed! Such was not the condition of the ancient disciples: they were united on God's word; moderns are divided on their own opinions.

2. The ancients lived for eternity. Their whole deportment shewed that they were strangers and pilgrims here. Like Israel, in the going from Egypt to the promised land, they were continually making preparation to enter the land "flowing with milk and honey." But how is it with the great mass of professors at the present time? Are they not living for the present world? Are not their plans and purposes all with reference to time? Their most ardent aspirations are what shall we eat? what shall we drink? and wherewithal shall we be clothed? Does not the devotion which we see to the things of the world leave this impression on every reflecting mind? And is not this directly opposed not only to the practice of the primitive christians, but also to the express teachings of the Messiah?

3. To confess Jesus in ancient times was to throw one's self into the jaws of persecution. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer perscution," is an oracle of revelation. "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you." There is no doubt but that the same zealous conformity to the Lord and to the word of his grace would stir up the same spirit of opposition at the present time. But what are the facts with reference to modern professors. It is now unfashionable not to belong to some religious society or church. Has the offence of the cross ceased? Indeed even those called evangelical have urged upon the attention of the halting, as a motive to induce them to "profess religion," that they would become more respectable by joining the church! The motives which influenced the ancients were holy; now, worldly and selfish.

4. What would be the effect of ancient persecution on modern professors, it would be difficult to determine. Much pure gold, some splendid gems would pass through the fire; but the comparatively few, who calmly and considerately join an unpopular society whose name is cast out as evil, give strong ground to believe that a large proportion of modern professors would renounce christianity, if confiscation of property and loss of life were the sacrifices to be made in order to its enjoyment. But how was it with the ancients? The churches increased in the midst of persecution. The cause prospered when Jews and Gentiles were opposed to it. Perhaps there was no time during its history, that christianity was making a more healthy rapid progress than during the times of persecution.

5. There was then a marked difference between the church and the world. The ancients were first in every good cause. Whatsoever things were pure, holy, lovely, and of good report, were manifest in their lives and advocated by them. But ah how changed! Some of the most immoral in the community are often found in what is called

the church. It is possible to associate for weeks and months with those who make high pretensions to piety without ever discerning any difference between them and the decent sceptic. Notwithstanding the above glaring departures from the practice of those who first engaged in the cause of Immanuel, how few are willing to go heart and hand for a reform! Many are willing to discuss the merits of a theoretic revolution, but a change that affects them personally is considered an innovation; it creates difficulties in religious communities; priests and people are disturbed by it: they would rather live in fellowship with the existing state of things than manfully come out against every thing opposed to the doctrine and practice of primitive christianity.

The contrast between ancient christians and modern professors will be continued in a subsequent paper. A general and detailed view of both classes is much needed. The above is merely introductory, May the reader imitate the former, and shun the worldly conformity of the latter, that so he may have the approbation of his Lord. W. W. E.

#### THOUGHTS TO BE REMEMBERED.

It is the bubbling spring which flows gently; the little rivulet which glides through the meadows, and which runs along day and night by the farmer's house, that is useful, rather than the swollen flood of the cataract, Niagara excites our wonder; and we stand amazed at the power and greatness of God there, as he "pours it forth from the hollow of his hand." But one Niagara is enough for a continent or a world; while that same world needs thousands and tens of thousands of silver fountains and gentle flowing rivulets, that shall water every farm, and every meadow, and every garden, and that shall flow on every day and every night with their gentle and quiet beauty. So with the acts of our lives. It is not by great deeds only, like those of Howard, not by great suffering only, like those of the martyrs—that great good is to be done; it is by the daily and quiet virtues of life—the christian temper, the meek forbearance, the spirit of forgiveness in the husband and wife, the father, the mother, the brother, the sister, the friend, the neighbor, that good is to be done; and in this way all may be useful.—

*D. Barnes.*

#### THE SAVIOUR'S BIRTH.

Nor in the regal halls  
Of power and wealth, the Undeiled was born,  
But in the manger of a lowly inn;  
Not by the glare of day, the heavenly host  
Their anthems sang, but in the solitude  
Of solemn night; nor in the gorgeous fane  
Which crowned Moriah's mount, but in the fields  
Of peaceful Bethlehem. Not upon the ear  
Of God's anointed priesthood, fell that strain  
Of precious promises to the sons of men,  
But of the humble shepherds of the plain.  
Thus makes the gospel in the lowliest heart  
Its favorite shrine, while to the poor, the meek,  
The afflicted, comes its voice to soothe the soul.  
With its unutterable wealth of love. *Willis.*

## NOTES ON LUXE XVI. 8, 9.

IN ANSWER TO A QUERY RELATIVE TO THEIR IMPORT.

"The Master commended the prudence of the unjust steward; for the children of this world are more prudent in conducting their affairs than the children of light. Therefore, I say to you, with the deceitful riches procure to yourself friends, who, after your discharge, may receive you into the eternal mansions."—DR. GEORGE CAMPBELL'S TRANSLATION.

AN aged friend in Nova Scotia, some time since, requested an exposition of the Saviour's command: "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations."—LUKE XVI. 9.

Dr. Campbell's translation of this passage is the best interpretation which has come under our observation. He has given several notes which very satisfactorily sustain his version of the original. A few extracts from which we furnish:

"*Commended the prudence of the unjust steward.*—Properly his master commended neither the actor nor the action, but solely the provident care about his future interest which the action displayed; a *case* worthy the imitation of those who have in view a noble futurity, eternal life."

"*With the deceitful mammon.*—The epithet *unrighteous*, here applied to mammon or riches, does not imply acquired by injustice or any foul means; but, in this application, it denotes *false* riches, that is deceitful, not to be relied upon."

"*After your discharge.*—As this is spoken in the application of the parable, it must be understood as referring to that circumstance which must sooner or later happen to all, and which bears some analogy to the steward's dismissal from his office. This circumstance is *death*, by which we are totally discharged from our employment and probation here. The word *fail*, in the common version, is obscure and indefinite. I have preferred *discharge*, as both adapted to the expression of the Evangelist, and sufficiently explicit. It bears a manifest reference to the act whereby a trustee is divested of his trust, and is also strictly applicable to our removal out of this world."

In reference to the expression, "*they may receive you,*" Dr. Adam Clarke says, it "seems to be a mere Hebraism for *ye shall be received*; that is, God shall admit you if you make a proper use of his gifts and graces."

Dr. Barnes' note is about the same: "This is a form of expression denoting merely *that you will be received* into heaven when you die. God will receive us there, and we are to employ our property so that he will not cast us off for abusing it." W. W. E.

KIND WORDS.—None have ever been injured, and many have been made happy by kind words. They are balm to the wounded spirit. In a family their worth is inestimable. It is pleasant to hear them as they pass from one member to another in the morning, during the busy day, or around the evening circle. They are true bonds of brotherhood, bright chains that render those who bear them light hearted.—*Christian Citizen.*

## RELIGIOUS MAXIMS.

## V.

Be not disheartened because the eye of the world is constantly and earnestly fixed upon you to detect your errors, and to rejoice in your halting. But rather regard this state of things, trying as they may be, as one of the safeguards which a kind Father has placed around you, to keep alive in your own bosoms an antagonist spirit of watchfulness, and to prevent those very mistakes and transgressions which your enemies eagerly anticipate.—*Upham.*

## VI.

Do not think it strange when troubles and persecutions come upon you. Rather receive them quietly and thankfully, as coming from a Father's hand. Yea happy are ye, if, in the exercise of faith, you can look above the earthly instrumentality, above the selfishness and malice of men, to Him who has permitted them for your good. Thus persecuted they the Saviour and the prophets.—*U.*

## VII.

"Be angry and sin not." The life of our Saviour, as well as the precepts of the apostles, clearly teaches us that there may be occasions on which we may have feelings of displeasure, and even of anger, without sin. Sin does not necessarily attach to anger, considered in its nature, but in its degree. Nevertheless, anger seldom exists in fact, without becoming, in its measurement inordinate and excessive. Hence it is important to watch against it, lest we be led into transgression. Make it a rule, therefore, never to give any outward expressions to angry feelings, (a course which will operate as a powerful check upon this excessive action,) until you make them the subject of reflection and prayer. And thus you may hope to be kept.—*U.*

**VANITY IN DRESS.**—We have sometimes hesitated whether to call vanity in dress a *sin* or a *sign*. We will explain our meaning by an anecdote. Some young ladies, feeling themselves aggrieved by the severity with which their friends animadverted on their gay plumes, necklaces, flounces, artificials, &c., went to their pastor to learn his opinion. "Do you think," said they, "that there can be any impropriety in wearing these things?" "By no means," was the prompt reply. "When the hear. is full of ridiculous notions, it is perfectly proper to hang out the sign."

The pastor took a right view of the matter. These outward ornaments are the *signs* of the "ridiculous notions" within; and until these notions are crowded out by the mighty power of the gospel entering into the soul and filling it with nobler ideas of love towards God and man, we shall have but little success in our endeavours to reform the external person.

To carry out the idea of plumes—when a young lady's mind comes to be filled with the high and glorious objects of contemplation and pursuit which the gospel brings to the soul, she will naturally shed her gay plumage, as we see certain birds in the spring of the year. Her gaudy ornaments will fall off without a struggle. But if one pluck them off by main force, we shall produce a great outcry, and our work will be in vain: for they will soon grow again.—*Christian Citizen.*

A PASSING REMARK.—We shall occasionally give a short extract, maxim, &c., to fill up a spare corner. We are not well skilled in writing maxims or short articles and we read so little poetry that we know not that we shall ever find any for our pages. At present we wish to say that we cannot always subscribe to every sentiment of our short extracts. We give them because we think there is an important thought worthy of consideration. If our readers find any chaff they must blow it out—but be careful of the wheat.

In reference to our own productions and all others we would say, "prove all things and hold fast that which is good." W. W. E.

POSTAGE.—We have been greatly disappointed in the expense of postage charged on our humble sheet. One of our city papers is just twice the size of the "Christian," yet pays but half the postage. Many of our subscribers were assured that the postage would be but a half-penny per number. We were then misinformed. We will endeavour by some means, to make up the deficiency: It is now a matter of deep regret that we did not make the third volume of the size of its predecessors. The Lord willing we purpose doing better in future.

SCRAPS OF EDUCATION.—Gold is more frequently found in grains than in lumps, and it is not the less valuable on that account. So with knowledge. Fragments when united make up the intellectual storehouse. John Adams, said, in an epistle to his wife—"The education of our children is never out of my mind. Train them up to virtue. Habituate them to industry, activity and spirit. Make them consider every vice shameful and unmanly. Fire them with the ambition to be useful. Make them disdain to be destitute of any useful or ornamental knowledge." What says Horace Mann? "Every friend of education, who insists upon qualifications superior to the present, is bound to do his part towards furnishing facilities and encouragements by which they can be acquired. We cannot consistently denounce a state of things which we do nothing to improve." Martin Luther has said of education: "In every age, even among the heathen, the necessity has been felt of having good school masters in order to make any thing respectable of a nation. But surely we are not to sit still and wait till they grow up of themselves. We can neither chop them out of wood, nor hew them out of stone. God will work no miracles to furnish that which we have the means to provide. We must therefore apply our care and money to train up and make them."—*Extract.*

THE HEART AND SWORD—It is recorded of the Duke of Luxembourg, that on his death bed, he declared that he would have cherished more deeply the memory of having given a cup of cold water to one of his fellow creatures in poverty and distress, than all the victories he had achieved, with their scenes of blood, desolation and death. An admirable lesson is contained in this brief expression of opinion.—*Ibid.*

CHRISTIANS have changed their swords into instruments of peace; and they know not how to fight.—*Irenæus, A. D. 160.*



## REFORM PAPERS AND PERIODICALS.

*The Millennial Harbinger*, monthly, 60 pages. Alex. Campbell and W. K. Pendleton, editors, Bethany, Va. Two dollars in advance. The Harbinger continues to sustain its character as a most interesting publication; especially to those who have been for some time conversant with first principles.

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*The Christian Record*, is a monthly of 32 pages, at one dollar per annum. J. M. Mathes, editor. Bloomington, Indiana. But one number has yet come to hand. There is much interesting intelligence from proclaimers, of the success attending the proclamation of the Ancient Gospel.

*The Christian Review*, monthly, 24 pages. T. Fanning, editor. Franklin College, near Nashville, Tenn. We have had the pleasure of reading all the numbers of the last volume but ten and eleven. It is a fine work: style and sentiment after our own heart.

*Genius of Christianity*.—For six years this has been a semi-monthly of 16 pages. In future it is to be a monthly of 32. A. G. Comings, editor. One dollar in advance. Claremont, New Hampshire. This publication has always contained a variety of miscellaneous matter of much interest, and many fine articles on peace.

*The Witness of Truth*, monthly, 24 pages octavo. Conducted by David Oliphant. One dollar a year. Published in Picton, Canada West. This is a well printed and well conducted work. Although Brother O. is, perhaps, the youngest of the corps editorial, his productions are not a whit behind many of his seniors. His style is quite original, and very interesting. There is something about it so spicy and amusing, and yet so sober and christian like, that it is wholly indescribable. A little more attention to first principles, and the detail of christian duty and personal devotion, would place the Witness among the invaluable periodicals of the age.

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