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THE
CHRISTIAN GLEANER.

VOL. 2.

HALIFAX, APRIL, 1836.

No. 2.

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

EPISCOPAL TESTIMONY AGAINST CREEDS.

SOME men by their high standing in society, give great emphasis to all that they say or do. The following *expose* of many sentiments for which I have been called a *heretic*, coming from a man who was in his days, and died in the office, of Bishop of the whole state of Virginia, will, to the minds of many, afford much more evidence of truth than if I had said them. Truth, however, is truth, whether a child or philosopher affirms it.

I have not met in any one extract so many of the sentiments advanced in this work; nor have I seen so unexceptionable an exposition of my “peculiar views” from any pen; nor did I know, till yesterday, that any man in the United States had spoken so much good sense on these subjects, in the year 1786, as appears in the following extract.—*Ed. Millennial Harbinger.*

EXTRACT OF A SERMON

Delivered by James Madison, D. D. President of the University of William and Mary, and Professor of Moral and Natural Philosophy, before the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the state of Virginia, May 26, 1786. The text is, “God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”—John iv. 24.

The object of this sermon is to urge the necessity of christian union, and the injurious effects of creeds, &c. in originating and promoting dissensions and feuds among christians.

Permit me, then, to make some observations upon the means most likely to forward such an event, for without attention to them, we shall deprive ourselves of the inestimable privilege of worshipping God in spirit and in truth.

Fortunately for christians, those means are altogether of the negative kind. They depend upon the *rejection*, not the *adoption* of those *human systems* of belief, or rules of faith, which have often *usurped the place of christianity itself*. They only require christians to *revert to the gospel*, and to *abandon every other directory of conscience*. I will then venture earnestly to recommend to all christians to reject every system as the fallible production of human contrivance, which shall dictate articles of faith, and *adopt the gospel alone as their guide*. Am I not sufficiently warranted, my brethren, in this recommenda-

tion? I trust there is scarce any one among us who will object to a recommendation of this nature, whether we attend to the fallibility, the ignorance, the prejudice of men, or to the truth, wisdom, and perfection of the Author of our divine religion.

I will take the liberty to advance a general proposition, the evidence of which, I persuade myself, may be established by the most incontestible proofs. The proposition is, indeed, simple and plain: it is, "that those christian societies will ever be found to have formed their union upon principles the wisest and the best, which impose the fewest restraints upon the minds of their members, *making the scriptures alone*, and not human articles or confessions of belief, the *sole rule of faith and conduct.*"

It is much to be lamented that the venerable reformers, when they burst asunder the cords of popish tyranny, ever departed from the simplicity of this scripture plan; and, that instead of adhering to it, they thought theological systems the only means of preserving uniformity of opinion, or of evincing the purity of their faith. The experience of more than two centuries has proved how far they are capable of producing either effect. On the other hand, the consequences which such institutions have been productive of, have been more or less severely felt in every part of the Protestant world, from the Diet of Augsburg to the present time.

They have in former, as well as in later ages, caused a religion, designed to unite men as brethren in the sacred bonds of charity and benevolence, too often to disseminate amongst them *jealousies, animosities, and rancorous hatred.* Yet many pious and worthy christians are apt to suppose that such systems of faith are necessary for the maintenance of true religion, or, for preventing that disorder which arises from a diversity of opinions. But do such christians reflect sufficiently upon the example which our Lord himself and his Apostles have placed before us? Did they, for this or any other purpose, prescribe or recommend summaries of faith? On the contrary, did not our Saviour constantly enjoin upon his followers, to *search the scriptures themselves?* Do we not find that the Bereans were commended for their conduct in not receiving even the *doctrine of the inspired Apostles*, until they had first searched the scriptures to see whether these things were so or not? Doth not St. Paul expressly say, that "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ?" Doth he not every where recommend to christians the duty of examining the grounds of their faith, "to prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good?" And St. John, doth he not exhort us to "believe not every spirit, but to try the spirits whether they be of God?" Now, if summaries of faith had been necessary for the prosperity of our religion, can we suppose that Christ and his Apostles would have neglected, not only to leave such as must have been most proper to maintain the true faith; but that, by their precepts as well as conduct, they would rather have taught us the duty of avoiding them? No, my brethren, we may be assured that Christ and his Apostles did not esteem any other summary necessary than the gospel itself; and that whatever is essential either as to faith or

practice, is there expressed with that clearness which a revelation from Heaven required. We are directed there to search and to judge for ourselves; for religion, to be profitable to the individual and acceptable to God must be the result of free inquiry and the determination of reason. To suppose then, that the gospel would authorise a *deprivation of this right*, or that such deprivation is necessary to its support and progress, is to *cast an unworthy reflection upon the gospel itself*; it is to suppose, that a religion which utterly disclaims all dominion over the faith and consciences of men, which is the most friendly to the essential rights of mankind, and which indeed, cannot exist where they are invaded, still requires to be supported by their destruction.

Besides, the very attempt, in matters dark and disputable, to prevent diversity of opinion, is vain and fruitless. It hath existed and must ever exist among all christians, *even those of the same society*, so long as human nature continues the same. The God of nature hath for wise purposes bestowed upon different men, different degrees of reason and understanding; so, that, if they think at all, they must necessarily think differently upon those dark mysterious subjects, which, however, are often reduced into the form of articles of faith. Nor can such difference cease, until the same *precise portion of intellect be imparted to every individual of the human race*. To attempt then to prevent diversity of opinions upon such subjects, is to oppose the very laws of nature, and consequently vain and fruitless.

But, in truth, that diversity of opinion, which most churches have been so sedulous to prevent, is neither any disgrace to a christian society, nor incompatible with its peace and good government; *unless it be disgraceful to men that they are men, and unless the christian dispensation is incompatible with the nature of man*. On the contrary, such diversity may be considered as most favourable to the progress of christian knowledge, and should also be equally favourable to christian peace, by teaching us, that dark and disputable points instead of being made articles of faith, and standards of orthodoxy, should rather be considered as trials of our christian temper, and occasions to exercise mutual charity; or, that those things alone should be held as essentials; which our Lord and Master, hath fully and clearly expressed, and which, therefore, cannot require the supposed improvements and additions of men. That christian unity, so strongly recommended to us, as the bond of perfection, does not consist in uniformity of opinion upon abstruse, metaphysical subjects but upon the great fundamentals of our religion, and in the unanimity of affections, love, peace, and charity, which is enjoined on the brethren in Jesus Christ, who all walk by the same rule, and acknowledge one and the same Lord.

But still it may be thought, that theological systems, or seminaries of faith are necessary to exclude from the bosom of a church, men whose principles might endanger its very existence. But doth experience, or do just observations upon human conduct justify such a belief? He will not be retarded in the accomplishment of his designs, or in the gratification of an avaricious appetite, though 19, 20, or 30,000 articles were presented to him. Trust me articles will never

prove a barrier to the advances of a secret enemy, or exclude from any church men of vicious principles, or no principles. Whom then will they be most likely to exclude? I answer with regret—*Men of stubborn virtue, men of principle and conscience, men of that rigid tough integrity, which cannot be shaped and twisted to suit the system of the day, men who will not prefer the dictates and decisions of fallible mortals, to the infallible word of God.*

I conceive, moreover, that no Christian church hath a right to impose upon its members, *human systems of belief, as necessary terms of communion.* For what, I beseech you, do we understand by a christian church? According to the most general acceptance “every christian church is a voluntary society of men agreeing to profess the faith of Christ and stipulating to live according to the rules of the gospel.” From this definition, we find the distinctive terms of union, or the fundamental laws of such a society, is to embrace the *scriptures alone*, as the rule of worship, faith, and conduct. Consequently every act of church government, which contravenes this fundamental law, is from its very nature *void*.

How then shall it be pretended, that other terms of communion may be prescribed to the members of a christian church? But all human systems, imposed as articles of belief, must be held as introductory of other terms. It follows then that every christian church, so far as it introduces such terms, is to be considered as having *departed from its essential characteristic*, and consequently to have exceeded its right as a church. This conclusion is the more incontrovertible, as it coincides with the maxim before mentioned, I should say with that christian axiom, “That the scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation, and are the *sole ground of faith of a christian.*” What then, it may be asked, shall not a church prescribe to itself, *terms of communion*, shall it not have its particular confessions or articles of belief, *provided they be agreeable to the word of God?* How many Protestant Churches have been built on this *foundation of sand*, unable to resist the winds and the tempests which beat against them! The *condition is inadmissible.* For *who shall determine with certainty, that those terms are agreeable to the word of God?* How is it possible, that all the members of a church should be sufficiently assured of this important point? Or is *private judgment to be entirely annihilated*; if so, to what end, did the benign Author of our being *grant reason to man?* Is the conscientious Christian to forget, that it is his *duty to search the scriptures themselves*, or are those human expositions to usurp the place of the word of God? But let us in the spirit of charity admit, that every church supposes, or firmly believes its articles or rules of faith to be agreeable to the word of God. What then is the consequence? The difference between them is surely a proof, that infallibility is not the attribute of all of them. Truth, like the Eternal, is one. In which church then shall we find it? I will presume to say *in none of them.* He who would search for the truth must search for it in the *scriptures alone.*

Let us then abandon all those systems, which to say the least can only involve us in error. Our venerable forefathers erred, or why a

reformation? *Their descendants will err.* Nor shall the resurrection of true christianity be seen among men, until it shall appear in the white garment of the gospel alone.

CONFESSION FOR REMISSION OF SINS.

If Moses taught the Jews any one lesson with more clearness and emphasis than another, it was this, that "*without shedding of blood there is no remission.*" Paul affirms this to be true of the Jewish economy. The christian institution reveals one *sin offering*, and assures us that Jesus *put away sin* by the sacrifice of himself: that he did *really* what was done by the high priest *figuratively* under the law; that he did really carry away the sins of many; and by one offering perfect forever the sanctified.

Jesus is now confessed "*the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world,*" and "*his blood that which cleanses us from all sin,*" He is called *Jesus* "*because he saves his people from their sins.*" And to him who renounces him, there is no sacrifice for his sins. There is not under the whole heaven a name given by which any man can be saved from sin, but by this name and person—Jesus.

Remission of sins, therefore, in all ages, depended upon the shedding of blood. But the shedding of blood *alone*, took not away the sins of any person figuratively or really. Faith was always necessary to lead a sinner to the sacrifice: for who would frequent an altar, or approach a sacrifice in which he did not believe? Faith, then, was the principle of action; but besides faith there was always a personal application: so that neither blood alone, nor faith alone, nor both, without a personal application, ever did, typically or really, take away sin from the conscience, nor guilt from the person.

This personal application was always to be made to the person and place appointed by him who alone can forgive sins: *for no person can forgive sins but he against whom they are committed.* This he does, or can do, only in person or by a mediator. The priests and their offerings, under the law, constituted this mediation, and to those personal application was made before pardon was granted. But the Jewish or Aaronic priesthood, with all the offerings and ordinances thereunto appended, belonged exclusively, and were accessible only to the circumcised, or to those who constitutionally belonged to the kingdom of God as then established. God permitted all other nations to walk in their own ways. To the Jews pertained the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, the promises, the Fathers, and the body of Jesus. The patterns of things in the heavens were divinely portrayed under that dispensation. Now in reference to our object in this essay, let it be remarked that to those under that economy, whether Jews or proselytes, *confession of sin in prayer* was as necessary to forgiveness, as either blood, faith, altar, or priest. In confirmation of this position let the follow-

ing testimonies be examined: Levit. xvi. 21. "After reconciling (or purifying) the holy place, the tabernacle, and the alter, he shall bring the live goat. Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the goat, and *confess over him* all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat; and shall send it away (bearing these sins) by the hand of a suitable person into the wilderness." v. 34. "This shall be an everlasting statute to you to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins, once-a-year."

But the confession of the offenders, as well as that of the priest, was necessary to forgiveness. Numb. v. 6 and 7. "When a man or woman commit any sin that men commit, to do a trespass against the Lord, and that person be guilty; then they shall *confess their sin* which they have done; and (when any person has been wronged by it) then the sinner shall recompense his trespass with the principal part thereof, and a fifth part more," The Lord promises forgiveness to Israel in their backsliding and chastisements. "If," says he, "they *confess* their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against," &c. "then will I remember my covenant and the land," &c. Levit. xxvi. 40.

When the temple was completed, and the whole religion fairly developed and carried out, in his consecrating prayer Solomon supplicates forgiveness for Israel only on the ground of confession. 1 Kings viii. 31—66. "When thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee," &c. "if they shall turn again and *confess* thy name, and turn from their sin; then hear—and forgive," Again, says he, "When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain because they have sinned; if they pray, to this place and confess their sin, then forgive," &c. This is either expressed or implied through the whole of this inspired prayer. Ezra's prayer, chap. x. 1. and Nehemiah's, ix. 2. are to the point. So is Daniel's confession, ix. 15—20. "While I was speaking and praying and confessing my sin, and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God, even the man Gabriel swiftly touched me about the time of the evening oblation." Illustrious proof of the utility and necessity of confession in order to forgiveness and acceptance! To these witnesses we shall add from the Jewish scriptures but two others—David and Solomon. Psalm xxxii. 5, 6. "I said that I will confess my transgression to the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin"—(Septuagint version, "the wickedness of my heart.") "For this shall every one that is godly pray to thee in due time." And with Solomon it was a proverb, chapter xxviii. 13. "He that covers his sin shall not prosper; but whoso confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy." I am aware that some of these quotations respect confessing to men our faults against them; but it is equally true whether God or man be the offended party, as none but he against whom an offence is committed can forgive it; so to obtain forgiveness from God or man, it behoves us to remember the principle in the proverb, "He that conceals his sins shall not prosper; but he that confesses and forsakes them shall

obtain mercy." In connexion, then, with the priest, the altar, the sacrifice, and faith, *confession* was an appointed means of remission of sins under the antecedent economy.

Under the christian economy it is an indispensable requisite to forgiveness. It was so during and under the ministry of John. They were immersed by him in the Jordan *confessing* their sins; for John announced an immersion of reformation for the remission of sins.

Jesus came up from the water, *praying*—not confessing his sins for he was holy and undefiled; but while he was *praying*, the heavens parted over his head, and a voice from his father announced him. Paul was commanded by Ananias to be immersed, *calling* upon the name of the Lord. And, indeed, all who understand baptism, know that in it there is a confession of sins; for there is a death and burial under sin, and a resurrection from its influence exhibited in the action itself.

But confession is to those under the government of Jesus, to those immersed into the faith of Christ, to those in the kingdom of heaven in its present location, *the appointed means of remission of all sins committed after baptism*. To the nature of this confession let us for a moment attend. In many things, says the righteous and amiable Apostle James, we all offend. And to this agree all the Apostles. Now while the direct influence and tendency of the favor of God exhibited in Jesus, is to crucify the flesh, with all its affections and lusts; to put to death all the members of the old man, and to inspire with the love of all holiness, goodness, and truth; still it may happen, and often does happen, much to the sorrow and grief of the most exemplary christians, that they are conscious of having sinned, both against man and against God; for, indeed, when we sin against a brother or against our neighbor, we sin against God. Now in all such cases the institution, is *confession and supplication* proceeding from repentance.

The promise now is "If we confess our sins, he is *faithful and just* (according to his own promise, "their sins and iniquities I will remember no more,") to forgive us our sins," seeing "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son *cleanses* us from *all sin*." Every one, then, who has put himself under Jesus Christ, who has died, been buried, and raised with Christ—every one who has submitted to him as Prophet, Priest, and King—who is conscious of any sin or sins from any transgression or omission since committed, and who penitently confesses them, and asks God for Christ's sake to forgive them, has the remission of those sins as certainly as he had the remission of his former sins in baptism, or as certain as God's promise can render any thing.

Those sins, then, are not to be confessed again; any more than a person is to be baptised a second time for the remission of them, seeing that he has the testimony of God that they are pardoned. The christian has the same testimony, the same assurance that his sins confessed and forsaken are pardoned, as he has that his sins committed before baptism are remitted: and, indeed, the same assurance that he has that Jesus is the Messiah: for all depend upon the

same testimony, sustained by the same credentials. From all these premises it would seem—

1st. That christians must always walk by faith. Their assurance is the veracity of God. We always receive the remission of our sins *by faith*, and by a faith which terminates on the blood of Jesus, whether approached by us through baptism, or prayer.

2d. That a personal application to Jesus, through his institutions is indispensable to the assurance of remission and the enjoyment of a good conscience.

3d. That in our prayers, confessions are to be made of all our sins of which we are conscious, and remission asked in the name of the High Priest of our profession; not forgetting that there may be errors of which we are not conscious, which need the forgiveness of our heavenly Father as much as those of which we are conscious. Well did David say, “O cleanse me from faults unknown! Search me, O God, and try me; and if there be in me any wicked way, show it to me, and lead me in the way everlasting!”

4th. That a repeated confession of the same sins, and supplication for pardon of them, argues unbelief or an ignorance of the relation in which we stand under Jesus Christ.

5th. That when any one sins against a brother, he should confess his fault and ask forgiveness; for otherwise he cannot confess his fault to God and expect forgiveness from him according to the genius of the new institution.

6th. How perfect are those christians who can dispense with the confession of any faults, who need never pray to God in secret, nor more than once-a-week or once-a-day in their families! Not so perfect was Paul and the first converts!! They and he needed to pray always, with all prayer and supplication; making supplications, deprecations, and thanksgiving for all saints. Perhaps did we know, as we ought to know, we might think it fitting to go and do likewise.

BORN AGAIN.—John 3. 5.

QUERY.—If to be born of water signifies to proceed and come forth from water—and the same expression is used relative to the Spirit, how are we to understand being born of the Spirit?

ANSWER.—We are not born twice into any kingdom, whether of nature, grace, or glory. The similitude used by our Lord is a beautiful one.—There is one birth into the natural world, of which Father and Mother are the cause and the means. There is one birth into the Kingdom of God in its present state, of which the Spirit and the Water are the cause and the means. There will be one birth into the everlasting Kingdom, of which the Lord and the grave will be the means—nor is the last birth less analogous to the first than to the second—for they that are in the grave shall hear his voice and come forth. His power places them in the grave, and his power will bring them forth. James says “of his own will begat he us—how did the Father beget us?”—“with the word of truth. Now as to beget does not signify to be born, this cannot refer to being born out of the water; we are begotten by the word, and born out of water and the spirit—or in other words regenerated.

From the Cincinnati Chronicle.

MESSRS. CAMPBELL AND OWEN.

THE debate between these two individuals commenced in this city on Monday, the 13th instant, and continued for eight days successively. Seven Moderators were chosen, any three of whom were authorized to preside over the meetings. There was, each day of the debate, an audience of more than 1200 persons, many of whom were strangers, attracted to our city by the novelty and importance of the discussion. The arguments on both sides of the question have been regularly taken down by a stenographer, and will, we understand, be published.

We were not among those who anticipated any very beneficial results from this meeting, fearing that, as is too often the case in these personal interviews, the equanimity of temper would be disturbed, and the debate sink into acrimonious recrimination. Such, however, has not, we believe, been the case in the present instance—the christian forbearance of the one, and the philosophic complacency of the other, having, throughout the controversy, elicited from each, marked courtesy of deportment. The audience have listened with respectful attention, and we were not apprized of the occurrence of any incident, calculated to inspire a regret that the meeting has taken place.

It is not, on this occasion our intention to offer any particular analysis of this controversy, which is rendered the less necessary, by the prospect of an early publication of the entire argument.*

It will be recollected that Mr. Owen proposed to prove that—*all the religions of the world were founded in the ignorance of mankind—that they are opposed to the never-changing laws of our nature—that they are the only source of vice, disunion, and misery—and that they are the only bar to the formation of a society of virtue, of intelligence, and of charity in its most extended sense.*

Mr. Campbell, after making an ineffectual effort for several days to confine his opponent to the points in dispute between them, set out to establish the truth of revelation, and to apply the precepts of christianity to the present condition and future hopes of mankind. In doing this he manifested an intimate acquaintance with the subject. He is undoubtedly a man of fine talents, and equally fine attainments. With an acute, vigorous mind, quick perceptions, and rapid powers of combination, he has sorely puzzled his antagonist, and at the same time both delighted and instructed his audience by his masterly defence of the truth, divine origin, and inestimable importance of christianity. That Mr. Campbell would bring forward any new facts upon this subject was not to be expected; but he has arranged, combined, and enforced those already existing, in a manner calculated to carry, as we are informed it has in several instances, conviction to the doubting and sceptical mind.

We think that much the smaller number of his hearers were apprized of the overwhelming mass of evidence which exists in support of

*This interesting work has been since published, entitled "Debate on the Evidences of Christianity"—containing an examination of the "Social System," and of all the systems of Scepticism of ancient and modern times, &c. &c. A copy of it is in the Halifax Mechanics' Library.—*Ed.*

the authenticity of the scriptures. By this discussion a spirit of inquiry has been set afloat, and the sources from whence this testimony has been drawn, and the mode of its application, pointed out. In this it is that we anticipated a result from the controversy more beneficial than was generally expected prior to its commencement. As it regards the reputation for talents, piety, and learning of Mr. Campbell, his friends have no cause to regret his present visit to our city. The same cannot, perhaps, be said of the infidel followers of Mr. Owen.

Some of the Sceptics who heard the discussion, acknowledged that had Christianity been so presented to them by its teachers, they never would nor could have entertained that hostility to it which they had unfortunately contracted from the very exceptionable representations of it which they were wont to hear.

“ What then is unbelief?—’Tis an exploit,
A strenuous enterprize. To gain it man
Must burst through every bar of common sense,
Of common shame—magnanimously wrong !
——Who most examine, most believe ;
Parts, like half sentences, confound.
Read his whole volume, Sceptic, then reply !”——YOUNG.
“ O Lord of Hosts ! blessed is the man who trusteth in thee !”——DAVID.

EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

Extracts from the Debate.

MR. CAMPBELL, rose and said—

My christian friends and fellow-citizens !—In rising to address you on this occasion, I feel that I owe you an apology. Do you inquire, For what ? I answer, For bringing into public discussion the evidences of the christian religion. Not, indeed, as if either the religion itself, or the evidences of its truth and divine authority, had any thing to fear from an examination, however public or however severe. Why, then, do you say, apologize for bringing this subject into public debate ? Because, in so doing, we may appear to concede that it is yet an undecided question *sub judice* ; or, at least, that its opponents have some good reason for withholding their assent to its truth, and their consent to its requirements. Neither of which we are, at this time, prepared to admit.

It is true, indeed, that we christians are commanded by an authority which we deem paramount to every other, to be prepared, at all times, to give a reason of the hope which we entertain ; and not only so, but in meekness, and with firmness, to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. If, then, it be our duty, either as teachers of the christian religion, or as private disciples, to be governed by these precepts, not only we can find an excuse for ourselves, but we hope that you also will find an excuse for us in the present undertaking. *Excuse*, did I say ? Not excuse only, but more than excuse, both authority and encouragement.

Scepticism and infidelity are certainly on the increase in this and other countries. Not, indeed because of the mildness of our laws,

but because of the lives of our professors, and a very general inattention to the evidences of our religion. The sectarian spirit, the rage of rivalry in the various denominations, together with many absurd tenets and opinions propagated, afford more relevant reasons for the prevalence of scepticism than most of our professors are able to offer for their faith.

I have sometimes been ready to conclude with Bishop Newton in his illustrations of the prophecies, that the unhallowed alliance between kings and priests, of church and state, is destined to be finally destroyed by a momentary triumph of infidelity : or, to come nearer to his own language, that before the millennial order of society can be introduced, there will be a very general spread of infidelity. However this may be, for here we would not be dogmatical, we are assured that the progress of scepticism is neither owing to the weakness nor the paucity of the evidences of christianity ; but to a profession of it unauthorized by, and incompatible with, the christian scriptures. These concessions we are compelled to make from a sense of justice to our cause ; but in conceding so much, we give nothing away but what every christian would wish to see done away, viz. the abuses of the christian religion. Nor will we allow that there is even in the abuses of christianity any argument against its excellency, nor any just reason for the infidelity of any one who has access to the oracles of God.

When we agreed to meet Mr. Owen in public debate upon the questions to be discussed on this occasion, it was not with any expectation that he was to be convinced of the errors of his system on the subject of religion ; nor with any expectation that I was in the least to be shaken in my faith in the sacred writings. It is to be presumed that Mr. Owen feels himself beyond the reach of conviction ; and I most sincerely must declare that I have every assurance of the truth and authority of the christian religion. I know, indeed, that there is no circumstance in which any person can be placed more unfavourable to his conviction, than that which puts him in a public assembly upon the proof of his principles. The mind is then on the alert to find proofs for the system which has been already adopted, and is not disposed to such an investigation as might issue in conviction. Arguments and proofs are rather parried than weighed ; and triumph rather than conviction is anxiously sought for. At the same time I own I am, on all subjects, open to conviction, and even desirous to receive larger measures of light : and more than once, even when in debate, I have been convicted of the truth and force of the argument of an opponent. Nor would I say that it is impossible that even my opponent might yet preach the faith which he has all his life laboured to destroy. But the public, the wavering, doubting, and unsettled public, who are endangered to be carried off, as an apostle says, by the flood which the dragon has poured out of his mouth, are those for whose benefit this discussion has, on my part, been undertaken. They are not beyond the reach of conviction, correction, and reformation. For the present generation, and succeeding I have been made willing to undertake to show that there is no

good reason for rejecting the testimony of the apostles and prophets, but all the reason which rational beings can demand for the sincere belief and cordial reception of the christian religion.

You must not think, my friends, that christianity has come down to our times without a struggle ; nay, indeed, it took the nations at first by the irresistible force of its evidence. It was opposed by consolidated ranks of well disciplined foes. Learned, cunning, bold, and powerful was its enemies. But experience taught them it was not only foolish, but hurtful to kick against the goads.

Never was there such a moral phenomenon exhibited upon this earth as the first establishment and progress of christianity. The instruments by which it was established, the opposition with which it was met, and the success which attended its career, were all of the most extraordinary character. The era of christianity itself presents a very sublime spectacle : the whole world reposing in security under the protecting winds of the most august of all the Cæsars ; peace, universal peace, with her healthful arms encircling all the nations composing the great empire, which was itself the consummation of all the empires of the ancient world.—Polytheism, with her myriads of temples and her myriads of myriads of priests, triumphantly seated in the affections of a superstitious people, and swaying a magic sceptre from the Tyber, to the ends of the earth. Legislators, magistrates, philosophers, orators and poets, all combined to plead her cause, and to protect her from insult and injury. Rivers of sacrificial blood crimsoned all the rites of pagan worship ; and clouds of incense arose from every city, town, and hamlet, in honor of the gods of Roman superstition. Just in this singular and unrivalled crisis, when the Jews' religion, though corrupted by tradition and distracted by faction, was venerated for its antiquity, and admired for its divinity ; when Idolatry was at its zenith in the Pagan world, the Star of Bethlehem appears. The marvellous scene opens in a stable. What a fearful odds ! What a strange contrast ! Idolatry on the throne, and the founder of a new religion and a new empire lying in a manger !

Unattended in his birth, and unseconded in his outset, he begins his career. Prodigies of extraordinary sublimity announce that the desire of all nations is born. But the love of empire and the jealousy of a rival stimulate the bloody Herod to unsheath his sword. Many innocents were slaughtered, but Heaven shielded the new born king of the world. For the present we pass over his wonderful history. After thirty years of obscurity we find him surrounded with what the wise, the wealthy, and the proud, would call a contemptible group ; telling them that one of them, an uncouth and untutored fisherman too, had discovered a truth which would new modify the whole world. In the midst of them he uttered the most incredible oracle ever heard. I am about, says he, to found a new empire on the acknowledgment of a single truth, a truth too, which one of you has discovered, and all the powers and malice of worlds seen and unseen shall never prevail against it. This is our helmet, breast-plate, and shield, in this controversy. What a scene presents itself here ! A pusillanimous, wavering, ignorant, and timid, dozen of individuals, without a penny

apiece, assured that to them it pleased the Ruler of the Universe to give the empire of the world : that to each of them would be given a throne from which would be promulgated laws never to be repealed while sun and moon endure.

Such were the army of the faith. They begin their career. Under the jealous and invidious eyes of a haughty sanhedrim at home, and under the strict cognizance of a Roman emperor abroad, with a watchful procurator stationed over them. They commenced their operations. One while charged with *idolatry*; at another with *treason*. Reviled and persecuted until their chief is rewarded with a cross, and themselves with threats and imprisonment. A throne in a future world animated him, and a crown of glory after martyrdom stimulated them. On they march from conquest to conquest, till not only the multitude of the Jewish priests and people, but Cesar's household in Imperial Rome became obedient to the faith. Such was the commencement.

The land of Judea is smitten with the sword of the Spirit. Jerusalem falls, and Samaria is taken. The coasts of Asia, maritime cities, islands, and provinces, vow allegiance to a crucified King. Mighty Rome is roused, and shaken, and attributed. Sacrifices are unbought, altars moulder, and temples decay. Her pontiffs, her senate, and emperor stand aghast. Persecution, the adjunct of a weak and wicked cause, unsheaths her sword and kindles her fires. A Nero and a Caligula prepare the faggots and illuminate Rome with burning christians. But the scheme soon defeats itself : for anon 'tis found that the blood and the ashes of martyrs are the seed of the church. So the battle is fought till every town of note from the Tyber to the Thames, from the Euphrates to the Gauges, bows to the cross. On the one side superstition and the sword, the mitred head and the sceptred arm combine : on the other, almighty truth alone pushes on the combat. Under these fearful odds the truth triumphs, and shall the advocates of such a cause fear the contest now ?

Yes, my fellow citizens, not a king nor priest smiled upon our faith until it won the day. It offered no lure to the ambitious ; no reward to the avaricious. It formed no alliance with the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, nor the pride of life. It disdained such auxiliaries. It aimed not so low. It called for self-denial, humility, patience, and courage, on the part of all its advocates ; and promised spiritual joys as an earnest of eternal bliss. By the excellency of its doctrine, the purity of its morals, the rationality of its arguments, the demonstrations of the Holy Spirit, and the good example of its subjects, it triumphed on the ruins of Judaism and Idolatry. The christian volunteers found the yoke of Christ was easy and his burthen light. Peace of mind, a heaven-born equanimity, a good conscience, a pure heart, universal love, a triumphant joy, and a glorious hope of immortal bliss, were its reward in hand. An incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading inheritance in the presence of God, with the society of angels, principalities and powers, of the loftiest intelligence and most comprehensive knowledge, brighter than the sun, in the glories of light and love eternal, and its reward in future.

But now let us ask, What boon, what honor, what reward, have our opponents to offer for its renunciation? Yes, this is the question which the sequel must develope. To what would they convert us! What heaven have they to propose! What immortality to reveal! What sublime views of a creation and a creator! What authentic record of the past! What prophetic hope of the future! What account of our origin! What high ultimatum of our destiny! What terrors have they to offer to stem the torrent of corruption! What balm and consolation to the sons and daughters of anguish! To these and a thousand kindred questions they must, and they *will* answer, *None*; none at all. They promise to him that disbelieveth the Founder of the christian religion; to him that neglects and disdains the salvation of the gospel; to him who tramples under foot the blood of the New Institution, and insults the Spirit of favor; to him who traduces Moses, Daniel, and Job; to him who vilifies Jesus, Paul, Peter, James, and John; to him who devotes his soul to the lusts of the flesh; who disdains heaven; who deifies his appetites; who degrades himself to a mere animal, and eulogizes philosophy; to this man they promise eternal sleep, an everlasting death. This is the faith, the hope, and joy, for which they labor with so much zeal, and care, and pain.

Divesting man of all that renders life a blessing and death supportable, denuding him of all the dignity and honor which have ever been the admiration of the wise and good, and reducing him wholly to the earth, is by our opponents the true philosophy, the just science, the valuable knowledge. In their estimation a colony of bees co-operating in the building of store-houses and cells, and afterwards stowing them full of the necessaries of animal life, humming from flower to flower, while the sun shines; and in its absence, sucking the juices which they have collected, is the grand model of what man would be, and what he would do, were he under the benign influence of knowledge and sound philosophy.

* * * * *

But we cannot sit down without admonishing you to bear constantly in mind the inconceivable and ineffable importance attached to the investigation. It is not the ordinary affairs of this life, the fleeting and transitory concerns of to-day or to-morrow; it is not whether we shall live all freemen, or die all slaves; it is not the momentary affairs of empire, or the evanescent charms of dominion—Nay, indeed, all these are but the toys of childhood, the sportive excursions of youthful fancy, contrasted with the question, *What is man? Whence came he? Whither does he go?* Is he a mortal or an immortal being? Is he doomed to spring up like the grass, bloom like a flower, drop his seed into the earth and die forever? Is there no object of future hope? No God—no heaven—no exalted society to be known or enjoyed! Are all the great and illustrious men and women who have lived before we were born wasted and gone forever? After a few short days are fled, when the enjoyments and toils of life are over, when our relish for social enjoyment, and our desires for returning to the fountain of life are most acute, must we hang our heads and close our eyes in the desolating and appalling prospect of never opening them again, of never tasting the sweets for which a taste of discipline and trial has so

well fitted us?—These are the awful and sublime merits of the question at issue. It is not what we shall eat, nor what we shall drink, unless we should be proved to be mere animals; but it is, shall we live or die forever? It is as beautifully expressed by a christian poet—

Shall spring ever visit the mouldering urn?

Shall day ever dawn on the night of the grave;

THE WITNESSES.

Whatever part of the works of God we view, we may trace the wisdom, power and benevolence of the author. If we look around us on the fruitful earth, we behold the suitability, propriety, and good adaptation of every portion. If our thoughts are raised to the expanded heavens, there we may find an ample supply for our imagination to admire in the order and utility of those heavenly bodies which beset the sky. How great must that being be, who first *bid* them come forth, and who, by his word, still sustains them in their regular courses without disorder or distraction! But not merely is the inscrutable wisdom, stability, and love of God to be found in creation, but, if we turn our attention to the revelation and conduct of God towards man, these traits of his character are found equally apparent. The repeated Revelations which God has given to man, bespeak his tender regard towards him, and when these have been made it has been in such a manner that man could understand them, and connected with such *institutions* as would ever *prove their truth*. The first of these was that of the seventh day being set apart as a Sabbath or day of rest, in commemoration of the Lord's resting from his work. Gen. 11. 3. The second that of circumcision, (Gen. xvii 10,) by which the Jews were set apart as a distinct people from all others. The third is the passover, instituted as a memorial of the deliverance from Egypt. Ex. xii. 14. Fourthly, all the various sacrifices, &c. &c. All these institutions were so many standing memorials, or *living witnesses*, testifying to the fact, that God had given Revelation to man; and as the Patriarch and Jew had indubitable evidence to rest their faith upon, so Christianity—the Gospel of Jesus Christ—carries with it its own testimony. Passing by all human evidence given in its favor which is abundant, and also the institution of the first day of the week instead of the seventh, which stands ready to attest the truth of the christian religion, there are three other witnesses I would bring forward, whose testimony is such that it is beyond the power of man to refute it. They are mentioned in 1 John, v. 8. “And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree in one.” These three *agree in one*, at various times, and in various things: 1st. In reference to *Jesus Christ* himself. 2d. In reference to his *Gospel*, and 3d. In reference to the *believer* in that Gospel. The spirit gave testimony before-hand, by holy men who spake as they were moved, of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. 1 Peter, i, 11. When the person in whom this prophecy was to be fulfilled, is about to appear, the second witness (the baptism of John) announces him near at hand, and in a short time afterward Jesus comes and enters meekly down into the water—a voice is heard from above—

the spirit descends like a dove and rests upon him. Thus the two witnesses unite in their testimony, and confirm the fact that Jesus is the Messiah, the sent of God.—Lastly, by the shedding of the Lord's blood, we see the verification of christianity by this third witness, the Prophets being judge.

Thus he came, not by water alone, but by water and blood.—But their official character does not cease here, for wherever the gospel has been promulgated since the days of the Messiah, the voice of these witnesses has been sounding the truth of that cause for which they were first established. The spirit witnesses, for we have the express words of the spirit given unto us, penned down in a multitude of copies distributed over a large part of the known world, so that the *mind* of the spirit may be known, wherever the word of truth is gone. The water, too, has rendered its aid in this respect, for there never was a time, since it was first instituted, when the ordinance of baptism was not administered in some form or other. It ever speaks of its author and design, which are to shew man's obedience to his Lord and Saviour. The blood, or third witness, speaks in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. Ever since the day when the disciples first met together to break the loaf and partake of the cup, it has been kept as a memorial of that event, viz : to bring to remembrance the Lord's death. Still their utility extends further than this, for their testimony is given in behalf of the christian. From them he may derive strength and consolation. For as the spirit gave testimony by promise concerning Jesus Christ, that he would come; so it promises to the sinner, on condition of his repentance and reformation, that he may obtain forgiveness. Luke xxiv. 47. In view of this and similar declarations he should seek, and by searching he may learn where he can become in full possession of salvation.—Mark xvi. 16, and Acts 11. 38, inform him he must be baptized in order for it. In this course being pursued, and in this alone, the three witnesses unite to declare his sins forgiven. The words of the spirit, the water the blood (or death) of the Lord Jesus, are here unanimous in testifying that, as the sinner has thus followed the commands of the Lord, he having died to sin, now lives a new life which is hid with Christ in God—is become the adopted child of God, being reconciled by the death of his Son. It is to these memorials that the Apostle Paul so frequently refers his christian brethren, as a stimulus for their future holiness, and rejoicing in hope, of eternal life. An example—Rom vi. 2,3,4,5. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.—For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Also Gal. 3. 26, 27, and Colos. 3. 11, 12, 13, are references to the same things for a similar purpose. May these witnesses never rise in judgment to condemn us, but contrariwise, to testify to our obedience to the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

SIN AND ITS CURE.—AN EXTRACT.

After describing the consequence of Sin.—The disease, and its remedy, and the adaptation of the remedy to the disease, are thus considered.

In SIN then, there are SIX POINTS conspicuous. 1st, The love of sin. 2d, The practice. 3d, The state. 4th, The guilt. 5th, The power, and 6th, The punishment.

In the Gospel there are also SIX POINTS. 1st, Faith. 2d, Repentance. 3d, Baptism. 4th, Pardon. 5th, The Holy Spirit. 6th, The Resurrection.

Now behold, how completely the remedy is adapted to the disease ! By faith the love of Sin is destroyed ; by repentance the practice ; by baptism the state ; by pardon the guilt ; by the Holy Spirit the power ; and by the Resurrection, the punishment.

FIRST. *Faith destroys the love of sin.* But as there has been much difficulty and controversy in the religious world relative to faith, we may be asked, by what kind of faith is the love of sin destroyed ? *Ans.* By that faith, which the Bible defines and exhibits, which “comes by hearing the word of the Lord ;” (Rom. 10. 6. 17.) ; Heb. 11. 1. ; (Acts 2. 37)—which “works by love” (Gal. 5. 6.) “which purifies the heart”—(Acts 15. 9.) The sinner who hears and believes the love of God in Christ, the truth of the gospel is “begotten with the word of truth”—“begotten through the gospel”—(James 1. 18. 1 Cor. 4. 15 ; Phil. 10 ; 1 Peter 1. 23.)—He has received the love of truth that he might be saved—He “has believed with his heart unto righteousness” and “has believed with all his heart.” The faith which destroys the love of sin is not a mere speculative figment in the head, or mere educational assent of truth which does not interest the heart and affections. “The word does not profit unless mixed with faith”—Heb. 4. 12. The truth of the gospel has a constraining influence—it conquers the love of sin by revealing the grace of God, and by the blood of the everlasting covenant—gives the victory over the world, the flesh, and the Devil. 1. John 5. 4. The truths of the Gospel claim both the head and the heart of those who profess them. Christians are to grow in grace as well as in knowledge, and cannot do the one without the other. Hence we firmly believe in both HEAD and HEART religion—because head religion without the heart is *too cold*, while heart religion without the head is *too ignorant* !

The faith that works by love, brings head and heart into a state of happy harmony ; and through these takes the government of the whole man ; leads the thoughts into the captivity of the obedience of Christ. The “love” by which it works, “rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth,” and hence becomes a powerful motive in the human soul constraining to a willing obedience, and by which *the love of sin* is destroyed.

SECONDLY. *Repentance destroys the practice of sin.* We may easily suppose, that the practice of sin will cease, when its love has been destroyed. That that repentance which is pleasing to God, must flow from, or be a fruit of faith, is evident from scripture, and

the nature of things, for the scripture assures us, that without faith it is impossible to please God; nor is it possible that any can have repentance toward God, unless they antecedently believe in his existence, and know whom and what they have sinned against. But what is repentance? It is not mere sorrow for sins, for many are always sorrowing, and yet always sinning! But yet there is no true repentance without genuine sorrow on account of our sins. "Godly sorrow," says Paul 'worketh repentance' 'not to be repented of.' 2 Cor. 7. 10. Now if Godly sorrow works repentance, it cannot itself be repentance, it must precede it; it cannot be both the cause and the effect of itself! But Godly sorrow works reformation, or an amendment of life. Take an example: On the day of Pentecost, Peter filled with the spirit (which had been promised by the Saviour to be sent to the disciples, and in them thus sent to convince the world of the sin of rejecting him, (John 16. 7.) and speaking as the spirit gave him utterance, (Acts 2. 4.)—preached Christ, and convinced many of their sin in rejecting him, proving that that same Jesus whom with wicked hands they had crucified, was both Lord and Christ. "Now when they heard this," (faith comes by hearing the word of God—and it was God's truths revealed to Peter which they heard, and God's power in the miracle which they saw) 'they were pricked (or pierced) to the heart'—words expressive of the deep sorrow and trouble of soul which the conviction of the truth produced in them. They asked Peter and the rest of the Apostles what they should do to be saved. Peter commanded them "to repent, and be baptized every one of them, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and that they should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."—Acts 2. 38. But if Peter when he commanded them "to repent" meant become sorry, there were none of them that obeyed him! They all became GLAD. "They that GLADLY received the word were baptized" (2. 41.) They had already been made sorry enough; but when told to amend their lives, and be baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus, for the pardon of their sins, overwhelming joy sprang up in their hearts. Thus then is the practice of sin destroyed; not by mere external reformation, but by a real change of mind and of heart, through the belief of the truth, which eventuates in a reformation of conduct. If any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things pass away and all things become new, and we cannot be in Christ except by faith. They therefore, who have repentance towards God, bring forth fruit meet for repentance; in other words demonstrate their repentance by a change of practice.—(James 2. 18.) And thus is the practice of sin destroyed.

THIRDLY. *By baptism, the state of sin is destroyed.* When a foreigner takes the oath of allegiance to the British Government, he passes from the state of an alien into that of a citizen; when persons are married, they pass out of the single into the married state. So, when penitent believers put on the Lord Jesus Christ, they pass out of the unpardoned into the pardoned state. Observe, we do not affirm that the state of a sinner is never changed, except in baptism.—This is no part of our creed. *What may be done out of baptism, is not*

the present question. We have, however, no great liking for the principles of those persons, who are always enquiring how near they can approach the precipice of disobedience without falling over!—The question is, of what utility is baptism? Does it convey any blessing to the obedient? Or is it a mere empty, unmeaning ceremony? We say, that in it, the state of the believer is changed! and in effect so say all the popular creeds and fathers.*

*Calvin says “Baptism resembles a legal instrument properly attested, by which he assures us that all our sins are cancelled, effaced and obliterated, so that they will never appear in his sight, or come into his remembrance, or be imputed to us. For he commands all, who believe, *to be baptized for the remission of their sins.* Therefore those who have imagined that baptism is nothing more than a mark or sign by which we profess our religion before men, as soldiers wear the insignia of their sovereign as a mark of their profession, have not considered that which was the *principal thing* in baptism; which is, that we ought to receive it with this promise, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.”—*Calvin's Institute.*

John Wesley, in his comment, p. 350, says—“Baptism administered to real penitents, is both a *means*, and a *seal* of pardon. Nor did God, ordinarily, in the primitive church bestow this (pardon) on any, unless through this means.”

Episcopalians.—After reading a part of the discourse with Nicodemus, they are ordered to make the following exhortation.

“Beloved, ye hear in this gospel the express words of our Saviour Christ, that except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Whereby you may perceive the great necessity of this sacrament, where it may be had. Likewise, immediately before his ascension into heaven, (as we read in the last chapter of St. Mark's Gospel,) he gave command to his disciples, saying, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. Which also showeth unto us the great benefit we reap thereby. For which cause St. Peter the Apostle, when upon his first preaching of the gospel many were pricked at the heart, and said to him and the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? replied, and said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost: for the promise is to you and your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words exhorted he them, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. For, as the same Apostle testifieth in another place, even baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Doubt ye not, therefore, but earnestly believe that he will favourably receive *these present persons*, truly repenting, and coming unto him by faith; that he will grant *them* remission of *their* sins, and bestow upon *them* the Holy Ghost; that he will give *them*

But let it be deeply impressed upon the mind of the reader, that although we believe that the scriptures teach, that baptism effects a change of state, we do not believe that it effects this change in behalf of any, who do not possess the *faith* and *repentance* of which we have spoken, as prerequisites to its reception, and of which those who believed on the day of Pentecost are an example. A believing "*with the heart*," and repentance "*from the heart*," we must possess before we can be recognized as proper subjects of baptism! But having these, "baptism," the Apostle Peter affirms, "SAVES US!" 1. Pet. III. 21. In the preceding verse, he affirms in reference to Noah and his family, that "eight souls were *saved by water*!" Not, however, by water ALONE!! In order to obtain salvation by water, Noah and his family *believed* and *obeyed*. Thus it is in respect to baptism. *Faith* and *obedience* bring us into the enjoyment of pardon; so that Peter says, "the like *figure* or antitype whereunto, even baptism doth also now save us." Without faith and obedience, baptism is no more fitted to save, than were the waters of the flood to save Noah, without the faith and obedience by which he built himself an ark. Baptism "is not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God," it was never designed, as were many of the legal ceremonies, for a mere purification of the flesh. It reached deeper! Through faith, and the blood of Christ, it reached the conscience! because when properly received, it was an act of obedience for remission, springing *from the heart*; an internal act, terminating in an external act; and, therefore, having an internal effect. As Eve, by the internal act of believing a lie, and the external act of eating the forbidden fruit, made herself the subject of guilt, and many woes; so we by a belief of the truth and obedience are made the subjects of remission, and many gospel blessings. The person therefore "who obeys from the heart, is made free from sin, and becomes a servant of righteousness."

Those who object that it is a mere form and can save us from nothing! have a contest, not with us but with Peter.

We affirm that the new Testament plainly reveals that baptism from the time of its first institution was for the remission of sins!

"John did baptize in the wilderness, and preached the baptism of repentance *for the remission of sins*—Mark I. 4. "And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance *for the remission of sins*"—Luke III. 3. "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, *for the remission of Sins*"—Acts II. 38. "And now why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized and *wash away your sins*, calling upon the name of the Lord"—Acts XXII. 16. "Preach the Gospel to every creature, *he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved*"—Mark XVI. 15. 16.

the blessing of eternal life, and make *them partakers* of his everlasting kingdom."

These quotations, I need not add, are in accordance with the sentiments here advanced. What a pity that all these Churches do not more consistently believe and practice their own creeds!

“Baptism doth also now *save us*”—I. Peter III. 21. “According to his mercy he saved us *by the washing of regeneration* and renewing of the Holy Ghost”—Titus III. 5.

If these testimonies do not prove that baptism according to the scriptures, afforded to *the believers* an assurance of the remission of sins, then no proposition can be proved by any testimony—for the testimony in this case is positive and divine.

If then in baptism we receive the remission, we experience in baptism a change of state—we pass out of the unpardoned to the pardoned state! “Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death”—Rom. vi. 3. “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Jesus Christ, *have put on Christ*”—Gal. III. 26, 27. These persons are here represented as having passed out of the unregenerate into the regenerate or christian state. How was this change effected? By faith. For it is as if the Apostle had said to the Galatians, “Ye believed and were baptized unto him, therefore as many as have done so, have put on Christ, or are children of God by faith in Jesus Christ”—Gal. III. 26. Begotten by the word of truth and risen with Christ from the baptismal waters, or born again of water and the Spirit—such are therefore children—“for as many as received him, to them he gave the power or privilege to *become* the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name”—John I. 12.

FOURTHLY. *Pardon destroys the guilt of Sin.* We are more anxious to introduce this topic lest any, notwithstanding the scriptural proofs and explanations we have given to the contrary—should still misunderstand or misinterpret us, as teaching that mere water washes away sin! No, not water!—“the blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin,” “sprinkles us from an evil conscience.” “We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.” Without the shedding of the blood of Jesus, there could be no remission. But we believe (that if it be the will of God, that we have a personal assurance or pledge of forgiveness for Christ’s sake, in his appointed ordinance,) that the blood of Jesus has efficacy to cleanse us, when baptized into his name, from all sin. Naaman was not cleansed by mere water, but by the power and grace of God, yet still it was by his faith and *only* in the water that the efficacy of the grace of God was exhibited to cure his leprosy—he *heard* the word of the Lord by the Prophet, and *obeyed* it, “he went down and dipped in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God, and he was clean.” (II. Ki. v. 14.) You believe that the blood of Christ cleanses you, not when in the water of Baptism, but in the atmospheric air! And why not arise and *wash away your sins* in baptism, as well as when in the air?—Why not be cleansed by this blood in baptism, as “baptism” Peter declares “doth also now save us.”—Why not receive the full assurance of faith, which Paul exhorts to “by having your hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, *and your bodies* washed with pure water”—Heb. x. 22.

Is it heresy to receive remission in baptism, if God has appointed it ?

Be it remembered then, that we attach ample efficacy to the blood of Christ. His death and resurrection constitute the immovable basis upon which the whole of our religion is reared. "We are justified by his *blood*," in *obedience*. We are not saved by faith alone, repentance alone, baptism alone, blood alone, hope alone, the *word* alone, the spirit alone, nor by any other thing alone any more than Noah in being saved "by water" was saved "by water" *alone* ! As "man does not live by bread *alone*, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God," so we "purify our souls" not by any one thing alone, but "in obeying the truth : " because in obedience we are the subjects of the concentrated energy of all the gracious means appointed for our salvation.

It being a divinely attested truth, that "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," that is pardoned, the believer receives baptism as a divine PLEDGE of pardon. He does not think that baptism pardons him, any more than faith or repentance pardons him—nor does he think that baptism, any more than faith and repentance, cleanses him from sin ! He believes that the blood of Christ through faith in repentance and baptism cleanses him from sin ; that God pardons him through the blood of Jesus in obedience, and hence, the act of obedience which is specifically for remission becomes the *pledge* of his pardon. Hence, baptism being for remission is truly the "*answer of a good conscience* !" Has Jesus said that "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ?" "I have believed," says the obedient person "and been baptized, and therefore as certain as there is veracity in Jesus, am a saved person !" — Saved too through the efficacy of redeeming blood ! He is justified, pardoned, accepted ! His guilt which had lain heavy on his heart, and pierced his soul with a thousand sorrows, has departed. "He has loved me," says the happy convert, "and washed me from my sins in his own blood." Ask him if he now feels guilty ? he will answer in the negative ! Ask him by what means he knows he is justified ? he will tell you "he has the word of God in proof of it !" He believes he has been pardoned, not because he feels happy, but he feels happy because *he believes he has been pardoned* ; and *his evidence of pardon is the word of the Lord*, He trusts not in an inward impulse, in a burning flow of the animal spirits, nor in any of the suggestions of a "heart deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," as an evidence of acceptance ; but to the word of the Lord recorded in the New Testament, confirmed by innumerable miracles, and sealed with the precious blood of our beloved Redeemer. Is not this a sure foundation ? On this then the genuine believer builds for present acceptance and for eternal salvation.

FIFTHLY. *The Holy Spirit destroys the power of sin.* The apostle reminding the Corinthians of their former state of Idolatry and unbelief, contrasted with their present state, and high calling, tells them "such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, (1 Cor vi. 11)—if we would enjoy the present salvation, or pardon

after having been made partakers of it, if we would persevere in the divine life, if we would overcome, and finally receive the Crown of life, we must be strengthened with might in the inner man by the influence of the Holy Spirit—we must put on the whole armour of God, using the means of grace, and sensible of our own weakness, and that in our flesh dwells no good thing; we must continually seek and enjoy the promised aid of the Holy Spirit, and no truth is more consoling, or more certain than that as “*children of God by faith in Christ Jesus*, (Gal. 3. 26.)—believers, are exhorted and encouraged to ask “*their heavenly Father, for his Holy Spirit*”—Luke xi. 1. 13.—And that “*because they are sons God sends forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts.*” (Gal. iv. 6.)—There is not any intimation in the whole bible of the Spirit (“*whom the world cannot receive*”) being promised, or being given to an unbeliever; to create faith.—The Gentiles were made obedient to the gosp.^l by the words of the spirit and by the deeds of the spirit which they heard and saw. Rom. xv. 18, 19.—The Gospel is made known to all nations for the *obedience of faith*—Rom. xvi. 26—but all the promises and spiritual blessings connected with it are *only in Christ*; yea and amen. Sinners must be in Christ (believers) before they can even desire, much less expect them. “*The blessing of Abraham came on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that they might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith*”—(Gal. iii. 14.) “*The Spirit is given to them that obey him*”—(Acts v. 32.) The Ephesians trusted in the Lord *after that they “heard the word of truth the gospel of their salvation”* “*in whom also after that they believed, they were sealed with that holy Spirit of Promise*”—Ephes. i. 13. John vii. 39.

To serve God aright then, believers need the Spirit of God continually, that the love of God may be renewedly shed abroad in their hearts. All grace, all truth, all divine motives, and all heavenly influences, by which the power of sin may be destroyed, are by the Spirit of God. May we be sanctified by the truth, and may God give us more and more of his good Spirit, that we may be filled with his influence in our souls, and exhibit the fruits of the Spirit in our temper and lives—may we never grieve the Holy Spirit, so that he should depart from us and leave us to ourselves. May we be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last times.

SIXTHLY. *The Resurrection will destroy the punishment of Sin.* The five preceding heads, present a perfect remedy for all our sins in this life—for our present salvation. By faith the love of sin is destroyed; by repentance the practice, by baptism the state, by pardon the guilt; and by the Holy Spirit the power. The divinely appointed means for receiving our salvation, are faith, repentance, baptism, and a continuance in well doing. With these are connected blessed promises and privileges, Pardon, Holy Spirit, and Eternal life—Believers have God as their Heavenly Father to give them every needed aid and succour—to work in them here to will and to do of his good pleasure, and persevering to the end to make them more than conquerors, and at last to raise their bodies from the grave. To

change their vile bodies and fashion them like unto the glorious body of his Son. "It doth not yet appear," says an Apostle, "what we shall be"—but "when he who is our life shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Then will their cure be perfect in soul and body and spirit—no more to sin—no more to sorrow, no need of faith or hope—but only love. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat, for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."—Amen.

HOPE OF IMMORTALITY.

"According to his abundant mercy (He) hath begotten us again unto a *lively hope*, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you."—1. Peter 1. 3.

—————"Rich hope of boundless bliss !
Bliss past man's power to paint it, Time's to close !
— 'Tis hope is earth's most estimable prize ;
This is man's portion, while no more than man,
Hope, of all passions, most befriends us here ;
Passions of prouder name befriend us less.
Joy has her tears, and transport has her death,
Hope, like a cordial, innocent though strong,
Man's heart, at once, inspirits and serenes,
Nor makes him pay his wisdom for his joys ;
'Tis all our present state can safely bear,
Health to the frame ! and vigor to the mind !
A joy attemper'd ! a chastised delight !
Like the fair summer evening, mild and sweet !
'Tis man's full cup, his paradise below
— A bless'd hereafter, then, or hoped or gain'd,
Is all,—our hope of happiness !"

My principal method of defeating heresy, is by establishing the truth. One proposes to fill a bushel with tares; now if I can fill it first with wheat I shall defy his attempt. Many have puzzled themselves about the origin of evil; I observe there is evil, and that there is a way to escape it, and with this I begin and end.—*Newton*.

TERMS.

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