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THE CHRISTIAN.

No. 2. }

SAINT JOHN, N. B., JULY, 1839.

{ Vol. 1.

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*.

DISCOURSE ON POSITIVE INSTITUTIONS.

BY JOHN TAFFE.

And the Lord God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden, to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man saying, of every tree of the garden mayst thou eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of Good and of Evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.

Genesis ii., 15, 16, 17.

I have read this portion of sacred Scripture in your hearing, with a view of calling your attention to the subject of POSITIVE DIVINE INSTITUTIONS. The first proposition, therefore, to which I invite your attention is, that *positive divine institutions are tests of respect for divine authority; and that respect for divine authority is of cardinal and indispensable importance in the religion of the Bible.*

As in every other science, so in the science of all sciences, the science of religion, which teaches man how to live right, and how to secure to himself the imperishable riches of eternity, if we would have just views of it, we must begin at the beginning, and acquaint ourselves with first principles.

If we would comprehend the whole, we must understand its parts. If we would understand the religion of the Bible, we must stand out in the light of the Bible, as in the light of the sun. If we would enjoy the light that irradiates from the pages of this divine volume, we must understand this book of books; otherwise, it will be to us a dead letter, as it is to those who call it a sealed book.

Then be it observed, that the Universe, every where inscribed with evidences of the power, and wisdom, and goodness of God, may be divided into two great empires—into the empire of matter, and of mind, each governed by laws peculiar to itself.

In the material universe there is one great law, to which the movement of every orb conforms. This law is unchanged and unchangeable as the omniscient artificer of nature.

Every thing around, above and beneath us, proclaims the wisdom and the might of Jehovah, who never began to be, who ever was, who and evermore shall be, the eternal inhabitant of eternity. Who has taught him? Who has known the mind of the Lord? or, who has seen his counsellor? All his works, like right lines, move onward and forwards. There is not a discordant note in all the works of material nature.

As the harmony and grandeur of the spheres, as well as the wonder-

ful organization of every thing that lives, declares their divine original, so the harmony of the different parts of the Bible, though written at periods of time far remote from each other, by many different persons of different habits and modes of thought, and the wonderful adaptation of its provisions to the wants and necessities of man, proclaim as with a voice from heaven, that the pens of the sacred writers were guided by the finger of inspiration.

The *one great law* in the empire of matter, to which the movement of every orb conforms, is the *universal law of the attraction of gravitation*, which binds the material universe together, and as from a central and commanding eminence, subordinates to itself a thousand less phenomena.

Nature was before religion; the earth and all the hosts of heaven were created, before man was called into being. Before man was created, no light was necessary but the light of the sun; but after man was created a moral and responsible being, endowed with a conscience, moral light became necessary for the illumination of that conscience.

When old chaos and mother night felt the creative energies of the Omnipotent Word, and fair nature, all light and lovely as the morning, arose from the plastic power of the forming spirit and Creative Word, the sun and moon, and stars, every flower that bloomed, and every bird that sung, were subjected to law.

The universal law of gravitation binds together the material Universe, composed of myriads of systems like our own solar system, which is but one of an innumerable sisterhood of systems. Could we press forward with a velocity which should leave the winged arrows of light laying far behind, until we should obtain a point so immeasurably remote from our present situation, that a ray of light could not travel a millionth part of the distance in ten thousand years, we would still be in the midst of the Universe; as many stars would appear before us as we left behind us; worlds on worlds and systems on systems rising interminable. *How wonderful must be the wisdom and power of Him*, who called the Universe into existence, and who keeps in harmonious motion, all its minute as well as its vast and ponderous machinery.

Our solar system is composed of thirty bodies, besides its comets.—The sun is placed in the centre, and all the other bodies revolve round it, according to one great law, and that law is, *that all less bodies shall obey the greater*. In compliance with this law, the moon revolves round the earth, and in obedience to the same law, the earth revolves round the sun. If the earth or moon should deviate a hand's breadth from its appointed orbit, the balance of the universe would be lost, and nothing but the strong arm of Omnipotence could arrest the disorder, and prevent the material Universe from becoming the mighty heap of ruins, burying beneath its rubbish all ranks of created beings, from the tallest Archangel in the heavenly host, to the meanest reptile that crawls upon the earth.

This subordination of less bodies to greater in the universe of matter, is a symbol of moral government in the universe of mind. *Every*

man is an image of God, and every sun of every system, is a type of the divine government, possessing, as it does, by its power of attraction, a sort of omnipotence throughout the whole system, of which it is the centre and the sovereign. The innumerable suns that light up the myriads of systems that compose the Universe, are but sparks of the Eternal Existence, broken off from the mighty sun of the whole universe of systems.

If we step out of the empire of matter into the empire of mind, we shall there find one great law governing mind, analogous to that which governs matter. As in the universe of matter, there are various bodies, so in the universe of mind, there are various wills; and, as in the former the great law is, that *that all less bodies shall obey the greater*; so in the latter, the great supreme and universal law is, that *all inferior wills shall obey the greater*, rising from the most subordinate will of created intelligences, through ranks of angels and archangels, up to the great central and controlling will of that Eternal and self-existent One, who called the universe unto being! As a departure from the great law that governs matter, would introduce chaos and confusion into the empire of matter, so a departure from the great law that governs mind, introduces disorder into the empire of mind.

Many persons are startled at the idea of the destiny of the human family being suspended upon what they are pleased to call the eating of an apple; but it is because they understand not the philosophy of religion.

We have seen that not a particle of matter is lawless; all was placed under law that the harmony of the material universe might be preserved: that the harmony of the universe of mind might be preserved, it was equally necessary that man and all created intelligences, should also be subject to law. But skeptics seem to think it ungod-like, that Jehovah should call into existence the mighty fabric of nature, with its endless chain of being; that he should create man in his own image, with the rays of intelligence flashing from his soul-illuminated eye, and then that he should suspend his destiny upon the eating of an apple! Such a representation they deem dishonorable to *Him*, whose image we bear, whose name is inscribed upon the earth and written athwart the heavens. But the question recurs, why did God place Adam under law at all? It was necessary, I have said, to preserve the harmony of the moral universe; it was also necessary as a test of his loyalty, and as a tenure of his inheritance.

Imagine to yourself a man, thirty-five years of age, standing up out of the newly created earth, in full maturity of body and mind, capable of viewing all its sublime and beautiful objects, before it was cursed for man's sake; he might have stood there for an age, overwhelmed with the beautiful and magnificent objects, that would have thronged upon his senses, from around, above, and beneath him, unless he had been put into motion by some such law as God gave to Adam, which permits at the same time that it prohibits. Without some such law, which contains a license as well as a prohibition, Adam probably would not have touched a lily; for could he have supposed, contrary to all

reason, that every thing around him was his, of the use of every thing he must have been utterly ignorant. He might have felt thirst, but he could not have known that the fountain that boiled up at his feet, and murmured off in the gentle rill, would slake that thirst; he might have felt hunger, but he could not have known that the rich clusters of fruit, with which the trees of the garden were laden, would allay that hunger. But had God instructed him in the use of every thing, still, without law, he could have had no certain tenure of his inheritance. Having tasted the sweets of life, if he reasoned at all, he would wish to know how long he was to enjoy it; having tasted bliss from a thousand fountains, he would wish to have some tenure of their enjoyment; this he could not have without law.

Again: where there is no law there can be no discrimination between right and wrong, no freedom of choice between good and evil; and where there is no freedom of choice between good and evil, there can be no approbation, no bliss, no happiness, above that of a mere animal nature.

Again: where there is no law, there can be no obedience—no obedience, no approbation; no approbation, no happiness. Perfect obedience, perfect approbation; perfect approbation, perfect bliss. Partial obedience, partial approbation; partial approbation, partial and limited happiness. This is a law of mind, as immutable as the law which binds the earth to the sun; so that God, by giving Adam law, gave him freedom and happiness.

Many persons cavil at the idea of the destiny of untold millions being suspended upon the eating of an apple; but that which seems to them folly, when its philosophy is understood, appears fraught with divine wisdom. There is no *statute or ordinance in the volume of nature or revelation, that is fraught with stronger evidence of divine wisdom, than the law under which Moses represents God to have placed Adam.*

Be it observed, then, that there are two kinds of law. I do not mean civil and criminal law, (these belong to a different category,) but I mean positive law and moral law. Positive law makes a thing right by authority; moral law enjoins that which was right in the nature of things. Positive law is right, because it is commanded; moral law is commanded, because it is right. Positive law arises from the will of the lawgiver; moral law, from the nature and fitness of things, a distinction as broad and well marked as any highway in the community. That children should obey their parents, is right in the nature of things, and therefore it is commanded; that man should shed his brother's blood, is wrong in the nature of things, and therefore it is prohibited; but that Abraham should slay his son, was right, because it was commanded; it was made right by divine authority: that Adam should partake of the fruit of the forbidden tree, was wrong, because it was prohibited; it was made wrong by divine authority.

But, at the threshold of this argument, to demonstrate the superiority of positive over moral law, it is wrong in the nature of things, for one person to destroy the life of another, and it is prohibited under the most awful sanction, by the express law of Jehovah. But though it is

wrong in the very nature of things, for one person to take away the life of another; though prohibited by the express law of Jehovah, and though for a father to slay his own son, is a deed at which humanity shudders, yet in the case of Abraham, it was made right by a positive divine law!

Man cannot be governed by moral philosophy; he must feel the weight of the sceptre of authority resting upon his spirit, or he cannot be governed. Hence *that his authority might be respected from an exhibition of his power, to enforce obedience to his authority*, God appears upon Mount Sinai, clothed in awful and terrific majesty. Darkness is his pavilion; fire and smoke ascend from round about him as from a furnace; sheets of blasting supernatural flame play in terrific grandeur round the craggy summit of the mountain, which trembles and quakes to its very base, as if awe-smitten at the presence of Jehovah. The dread voice of Jehovah is heard speaking to the terrified and retreating hosts of Israel, while the sound of a mighty trumpet is heard, waxing loud and long, as if the God of battles were summoning his heavenly hosts to some dreadful conflict. The people, overwhelmed with terror and dismay, stand afar off, and beseech Moses that God speak no more to them, lest they die! But Moses tells them, fear not, for God has come down to prove you, and that his fear may be before your eyes, that you sin not.

But to return: God is about to prove Adam, to test his loyalty; shall this be done by a positive law, or by a moral law? Skeptics object to the law under which Moses represents God to have placed Adam, because they say there is nothing morally good or evil in the eating of an apple. Suppose, then, according to the views of skeptics, Adam had been placed under a moral law; suppose he had been told, of all the trees of the garden thou mayst freely eat, but thy wife thou shalt not kill; on the day that thou shalt kill her, thou shalt surely die—there might have been many moral considerations for obedience, apart from any respect for the authority of the Divine Lawgiver, and if he had obeyed, the angels of heaven could not have told whether he was influenced by love for his wife, or respect for divine authority. Had he been placed under any other moral law, he might have obeyed from a variety of moral considerations, without the least feeling of respect for the authority of the great Lawgiver of the Universe. But we will suppose he is told freely to enjoy every good which the earth affords, so long as he shall abstain from killing his wife; years roll on, till they are multiplied by hundreds and by thousands; Adam utters not an angry word to his wife—against her he lifts no hand of violence. They live in love and harmony, and their multiplied years are crowned with bliss. One of a group of angels that had been looking upon the scene for a thousand years, at length breaks silence and exultingly exclaims, Behold the loyalty of yonder inhabitant of yonder new world! God said to him, enjoy every good the earth affords, as long as thou shalt abstain from killing thy wife; a thousand years have we been looking upon the scene, and no angry word has he spoken to his wife—against her he has raised not the hand of violence! What pro-

found respect for divine authority! But another angel of a more piercing intellect replies, I see in this no evidence of loyalty, no demonstration of respect for divine authority. Adam loves his wife, and for ought I know, such is the strength of that love, if God were to command him to kill his wife, he would not do it. Just let the command issue from Jehovah's awful throne, to this loyal subject of the divine government, of whom you speak, and for ought that has yet appeared, the puny arm of this lord of the new creation, will be lifted in mad rebellion against the majesty of heaven. Conviction flashes upon the whole group, and they disperse, wondering that they ever should have been guilty of the folly of supposing that obedience to a law of this kind, was any demonstration of respect for divine authority!

But God is not guilty of the folly which the wisdom of skepticism would have him to commit. The Bible always represents him as acting worthy of himself. He is about to sift Adam, to feel about his heart, to lay it open to the inspection of an intelligent Universe, that the angels might know whether there was there any loyalty or not. He therefore singles out a case which affords a perfect test. He places Adam in the midst of the garden; trees bending with the weight of the choicest fruits, stand thick around him. While Adam is thus situated, God says to him, "Of all the trees of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Whether Adam will now obey or not, is a pure question of will. God just gives this command to him, without assigning any reason for the prohibition,* and to Adam, no reason, apart from the will of the Lawgiver, could appear, why he should not partake of the fruit of that tree as well as of any other. The only motive, therefore, for obedience, is confidence in the divine word, and respect for the divine authority. It is thus that the Divine Father trains his children and tests their loyalty. And if you, who are parents, would have dutiful and obedient children, you should sometimes say to them, do this and do that, without assigning any reason for the command; and after you have taught them to obey you from respect for your authority, and confidence in your word, you may teach them the reason and fitness of the commands which you give them. If your child will not obey you unless it understands the reason and fitness of the command which you give it, it shows itself destitute of due respect for your word and your authority, and disposed to be governed by its own conceptions of the reason and fitness of things, rather than by your will and your authority. That child that has proper respect for the authority of its parent, only wishes to know that it is the will of its parent, that it

* An objection is interposed. I know not, says one, what greater temptation could have been presented, than the very name given to the tree—that the very name was a temptation, by creating a desire to know good and evil. The term knowledge here is equivalent to experience, and means, that when Adam should eat of the fruit of this tree, he should have experience of good and evil; he had only experienced good, but if he partook of the fruit of the prohibited tree, he should experience evil also—taste the ills as well as the sweets of life. The name, therefore, was a declaration against partaking rather than a temptation to eat of it.

should do this or that, and it will do it. So man, if a loyal heart beats in his bosom, only requires to know that it is the will of the Father and Creator of his spirit, that he should perform a certain act, and with all alacrity will he do it: his voice will be, command, Lord, thy servant heareth. Shall the child of ten years of age, inquire into the fitness of the commands of its parents, and if it perceive in them no fitness, shall it disregard them? Better qualified is the child of ten years of age, to judge of the fitness of its parent's commands, than man, in the full maturity of his mental vigor, to judge of the fitness of the commands of the Omniscient Jehovah, whose commands are all founded in perfect wisdom and perfect goodness. *Man, short-sighted man, rejects the commands of Jehovah, because he understands not their fitness!! Forbid it, heaven.* That your children may respect your authority, you should never suffer your commands to be violated with impunity; that they may have confidence in your word, you should never utter a falsehood neither should you violate any promise you make them, unless circumstances render it impossible or inexpedient for you to fulfil it; in which case you should render a sufficient reason to the child for your non-compliance with your promise.

But to return: I have said that God assigned no reason for the command which he gave to Adam, leaving the whole to rest upon Adam's confidence in the divine word and respect for the divine authority. God has thus stamped positive law with superiority over moral law, by making the former a test of respect for his authority, and, in some instances, of confidence also in his word. But, though God has stamped positive law with superiority over moral law, there are no essentials and non-essentials in religion. *Baptism is a positive institution, and is, therefore, by many, regarded as non-essential; but if the Bible must still continue to be divided into a chapter of essentials and a chapter of non-essentials, God's positive laws being placed in the one, and his moral laws in the other, these chapters will have to change places!* Moral laws have been regarded as the great essentials in religion, and positive laws as non-essential; but from the views now taken, positive divine laws are by Jehovah regarded as of first and cardinal importance in religion, and should so be regarded by us, and moral laws are regarded as of secondary consideration. *God's positive laws are tests of respect for his authority, and, in many instances, of confidence in his word; and if they be obeyed from the former of these considerations, or from the former and the latter combined, obedience to them will draw after it obedience to all his moral laws.* A man may be moral, without being religious; but religious he cannot be, in the true Bible sense of the term, without being moral also. He who obeys all God's positive laws out of respect for the divine authority, or from respect for the divine authority combined with confidence in the divine word, will also obey all his moral laws, when to these religious considerations are superadded, in the latter case, the moral considerations of respect for the rights and interests of society.

The first four commandments in the decalogue, relate to religion, and it is only with the fifth commandment that the subject of morality

is introduced. Religion is placed in the first chapter, and morality in the second. I wish not my friendly hearers to disparage morality. I wish not to draw morality into the shade, but I wish to draw religion out of the shade—out of that darkness and obscurity in which it has been involved, and to exhibit it in the light of the Bible as in the light of the sun.

The essence of religion is obedience to divine authority. The root and vital principle of religion, is obedience to God for God's sake. This is the reason why a person, after he shall have believed with his heart and confessed with his mouth, that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, is required to bow to the authority of the Lord Messiah, in the positive institution of baptism. *Religion first, morality afterwards; first, obedience to the Lord, for the Lord's sake; secondly, for our own sake, and thirdly, for the sake of others.* You would always rather your child would obey you from respect to your authority. You would rather your child would love you for yourself, than merely for its own self—graduating its esteem for you by the measure of utility—its regard for you differing in degree, but not kind, from that which it has for the tree that shelters it from the summer's heat; the house that protects it from the winter's cold; the fountain that furnishes it with drink, or the tree that yields it fruit. The mother would have her child love her for herself, and if she secures not this homage of its heart, she is pained and disappointed. *All who love, desire to be loved. God, who is love, desires the love of all his rational creatures.* Hence he addresses us as children—"My son, give me thy heart." He would have us to love him for himself, and if we yield not to him this love, he will not accept any meaner homage. This is the fountain from which flow all elevated acts of devotion. If man worship God *merely* for the hope of the good he may bestow, or for fear of the punishment he may inflict, he pays not homage to the Deity, but self is the idol divinity he worships. The great impulsive principle of christianity, is, first, love to God for God's sake; secondly, for our own sake, and thirdly, for the sake of others. Pardon this digression.

If Adam obeyed the positive law under which he was placed, God promised him no enlargement of his estate or privileges, but only the enjoyment of the rich inheritance, which he had freely bestowed upon him; if he disobeyed he forfeited the whole. But since the fall of man, in condescension and in mercy to frail and erring humanity; broken and shattered by the fall, God has, in many instances, annexed to obedience to positive law, the promise of some new privilege or blessing, never before enjoyed by the individual who yields the submission. To obedience to the positive institution of sacrifice under the patriarchal and Jewish economies, he annexed the promise of the forgiveness of sins. To obedience to the positive institution of baptism, he has appended the promise of remission of sins, under the christian economy. But, here, as in most other instances, of blessings promised in connection with obedience to positive law, as there is no apparent connection between the act to be performed, and the promised blessing, the motive for obedience, as in the case of Adam, terminates in re-

spect for the divine authority, and confidence in the divine word; confidence that God will do what he promises or threatens.

To these motives in the case of moral law, is superadded regard for the rights of man. But no person, who reasons correctly upon the great subject of religion, would think of dissevering God's commands, either from his promises or threatenings; neither would he think of separating his positive laws from his moral laws, and of labelling either the one or the other non-essential. For he who says, be baptised, also says thou shalt not steal, and if a man keep the whole law, and yet fail in one point, he is guilty of the whole, because the authority is the same, and that authority is disregarded.

All God's positive as well as his moral laws, are necessary, but they are not all necessary for the same purpose. All the organs of the body are necessary to a perfect man, but they are not all necessary for the same purpose. The eye, the ear, the hands, the feet, are all necessary; but they subserve a very different purpose in the economy of the body; so all God's positive and moral laws are necessary to a perfect system of divine government, embracing all man's relations to the universe, to time and to eternity: his positive laws are necessary to test man's loyalty and secure the interests of religion; his moral laws are necessary to subserve the rights and interests of society.

Thus have I endeavored to demonstrate that *positive divine institutions are tests for divine authority, and that respect for divine authority is of cardinal and indispensable importance in the religion of the Bible.* Hence at the head of every divine economy, God has had a positive institution to test man's loyalty. 1. The prohibited tree at the head of the Adamic economy. 2. Under the remedial system at the head of the patriarchal economy, the positive institution of sacrifice. 3. The positive institution of circumcision at the head of the Jewish dispensation; and 4. In the fore-front of the christian economy, the positive institution of baptism.

[To be continued.]

From the Christian Baptist.

ESSAYS ON MAN IN HIS PRIMITIVE STATE, AND UNDER THE PATRIARCHAL, JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN DISPENSATIONS.—No. 2.

PRIMITIVE STATE.—NO. II.

In the close of our former essay we left the progenitors of the human race in the full possession and enjoyment of paradisiacal bliss. Their Creator conversed with them *viva voce*, and they heard his voice without a tremor or a fear. They saw him, and were glad—they heard him, and rejoiced. All was calm and serene within—all was cheerful and joyous without. So rapid was their progress in this school, that Adam was soon able to give suitable names to all the animals around him; and when his acquaintance with language was thus tested by his Creator, not an imperfection or defect was found: for, "whatsoever

Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof." His happiness consisted in the perfect subordination of his passions and appetites to reason, and of his reason to the character and will of his Creator. Conscious of the perfect approbation of his God, he had nothing to fear; and all his capacities for enjoyment being gratified, he had nothing to desire. In the full zenith of his enjoyment, he had not a wish uncrowned, nor a desire ungratified.

But some tenure of his enjoyment must be granted, and a test of his loyalty must be instituted. This is the reason, as it was the basis, of the promise and law promulged to him. How long he was to be possessed of this felicity was not yet defined, and on what terms he was to continue in friendly intercourse with his Creator had not yet been stated. This gave rise to the law under which he was placed. This arrangement reminded him of his origin, of his dependence, and accountability; as well as anticipated any inquiry respecting the tenure of his enjoyments, or his destiny. But the nature of the law and of the promise, or the design of the trial under which he was placed, is all that interests us in reference to our design.

However we may understand the terms or description of this arrangement, whether as literal or symbolic, one thing is obvious, and that is all and alone important to know, and that is the nature of the trial, viz. whether his spirit or his soul, his understanding or his passions, shall control his actions. In one sentence, whether his spirit shall retain the sovereignty with which God has invested it, or his passions usurp the government. Reason was already enthroned, and had full command of all his passions, affections, and propensities; and so long as it continued at the helm, perfect subordination was to be expected and enjoyed. But if, by any means, his passions should gain the ascendant, and dethrone his reason, then disorder, confusion, and an awful reverse of circumstances, must inevitably ensue. Such was the nature of the trial. The law and promise promulged to him were predicated upon his nature and addressed to his reason, and could not fail to engage all his powers. The trial was made as easy as the nature of his relations to heaven and earth could admit, and was, therefore, the best possible test of his loyalty.

The temptation, artful as it may be supposed, was evidently addressed to the soul or passions of the woman, and of the same character was that offered to the man. It addressed the understanding through the medium of the passions; and thus the sad catastrophe was accomplished. Man fell through the triumph of passion. His reason was dethroned by the usurpation of passion, and the harmony and subordination before existing within were now destroyed. From being the son of reason, he became a child of passion, and the slave of appetite. Guilt, shame, fear, and all their horrible retinue, now invaded his peace and overwhelmed him in ruin and despair. There is no regaining his former standing; the controlling power is lost. In this miserable plight he was called to judgment, and the sentence was executed. Exiled from Eden, and from the approbation of heaven, he, by an act of mercy, is respited, and becomes a pensioner under a

small annuity, until his physical energies should be worn out by the conflicts of reason and passion upon his animal life. This was the necessary result of his preternatural condition. So that by a law of nature death became necessary.

The change which now had taken place in Adam is difficult to be conceived of, as we can have but a very imperfect idea of his former moral and intellectual grandeur. But the best illustration we can conceive of, as it is the only analogical one we know any thing of, is a second fall of man, which sometimes takes place. When we have seen a person of what is now called good moral character, and high intellectual endowments, by some sudden gust of passion, or by the ravage of some nervous disease, fall into a state of insanity, we have in his former and present character a partial representation of the nature and consequences of the fall of Adam. This we conceive to be, in many respects, a good analogical picture of the first fall of man, though we do not recollect of ever having heard it so used. Persons of good moral and intellectual standing, have fallen into fits and into habitual states of insanity, in which they neither morally nor intellectually exhibit a single trace of their former character. Yet these have all the faculties and powers which they once had, but in such a state of derangement as almost to obscure every spark of intellectual ability they once exhibited; and the balance being lost in the intellectual powers, actions foolish and wicked, mad and desperate, frequently characterize such unhappy beings. A restoration of such to reason and goodness is as great a change as that of a sinner from ignorance and wickedness to the knowledge, the fear and the love of God.

Idiots and madmen have sometimes, however, their lucid intervals, in which they seem to think and act like their former selves; but these are not often of long continuance. So fallen man seems, at times, in point of moral government and intellectual displays, to equal our highest conceptions of man's primitive standing: but these are often followed up by strong and long continued exhibitions of the triumphs of passion and prostration of reason and goodness.

But we may have better means of illustrating the nature of "the fall" when we contemplate man as he now appears as a fallen being. He is from his birth subjected to the control of appetite and passion. Adam begat a son in his own likeness, immediately after "the Fall." This child was born in the likeness of fallen Adam—not in the likeness of Adam in Eden. Its misfortune is, that it is now necessarily a child of appetite and passion before it can exercise reason at all. This gives a mastery to its passions, which no education, intellectual or moral, can perfectly subdue. The grand difference betwixt Adam in Eden and any of his sons, is comprehended in this one fact, viz: His reason first controlled his actions—passion first controls theirs. The appetites and passions of children govern all their actions for a time; we may say, for years, before reason at all developes itself. And what we call reason, is rather the shattered remains of reason, warped by passion and appetite, than that which is worthy of the name. Thus every child of Adam begins its career, impelled and prompted by its

appetites and passions, for a long time unchecked by reason; and when reason at length appears, it is weak and incapable of government, and so unaccustomed to control, that it is continually baffled by the fearful odds against it; and can never, by any effort of its own, gain the ascendancy.

But this is not all. The objects presented to the new born infant are so different from those which surrounded Adam in Eden, as of themselves, were there no other cause, to effect a wonderful change in his character and destiny. For an illustration, let us suppose that a prince and a princess, educated in the most courtly and magnificent style, surrounded with all the grandeur and majesty of an eastern palace, were immediately after their marriage to commit some crime worthy of imprisonment in some dreary dungeon; and while in this wretched confinement their first child is born, and confined to the scenery around it until it has arrived at manhood; what a difference in its views, feelings, and character, compared with the views, feelings, and character of its parents at its age; and is not this difference, of whatever nature and extent it may be, chiefly owing to the difference of objects or of scenery which surrounded it in prison, contrasted with those objects of contemplation which environed its parents from their birth to the moment of their imprisonment? This but imperfectly illustrates the essential difference in the circumstances of all human beings, compared with those of our progenitors in Eden. When we maturely reflect upon these two causes of human degradation, viz. The control of appetite and passion, and the sad reverse of circumstances surrounding the progeny of Adam, we shall find that in all their ramifications they are sufficient to constitute beings of a very different character from that which adorned our common father during his abode in Paradise.

Not prosecuting this inquiry any farther at present, we shall leave our readers engrossed in these reflections till our next.

THE TRUTH OF REVELATION.

As it is impossible for men by the powers of nature to discover the existence of God, so it would be equally impossible for them, without a previous revelation, to report that he exists; for it would be as difficult, without the means of mental conception, to conceive a falsehood, as a truth. Although in depraved nature, error may flourish better than truth, still it cannot spring up without a seed; therefore the fact, that mankind believe there is a God, is a sufficient proof of his existence, because, if there was no reality in it, they could not have invented the report.

As in the dominion of nature nothing can grow without a seed, so in the empire of mind, ideas cannot spring from nothing. The seed of mental conception, is knowledge, which must be received through our external senses, or by divine influx. The means of this conception is reflection. By our outward senses we receive simple ideas, and by reflecting on them, we conceive, or form complex ones, and so

combining thoughts, we reason and draw conclusions. Mental conception is an act of the mind, but the mind cannot act without something to act on: it can no more conceive an idea of God, or of any other being, without previous information, than nature can bring forth fruit without a seed. Hence it would be as impossible for man to fabricate the Scripture doctrine of God, his attributes and laws, as it would be to grow large quantities of grain, and breed numerous flocks and herds, without any seed to grow or breed them from. The richest soil, under the best climate, and in the most favorable season, cultivated to the greatest perfection, will yield no fruit without seed. So it may be said of man, if the seeds of knowledge are not sowed in his mind, he cannot bring forth the fruits of wisdom.

As the ground that never received seed cannot produce it, so the man that never received the knowledge of God, cannot communicate it; and as we are neither born with this knowledge, nor can obtain it by the study of nature, it follows with moral certainty that the first who possessed it, must have received it by revelation from God.

When a child gives us a long and connected account of some extraordinary circumstance, tells the name of several persons that were present of whom we know it had never heard before, and repeats several of their learned expressions, which we know are entirely above its capacity, we conclude the substance of the narrative must be true, because we say, the child could not invent such a story: so I conclude the Scriptures must be true, because ignorant nature was unable to forge such a book.

If the inhabitants of a remote island, who from time immemorial had never seen nor heard of a living creature, except those that lived on their own spot of ground, should all tell me that their island had formerly been inhabited by buffaloes, that although they had never seen them, their ancestors had, and also accurately describe the animals, I should consider the tradition true, because I should suppose they were incapable of giving an accurate description of those beasts, without some information on the subject. So I think the bare tradition that there is a God is a proof of the fact, because such a tradition could not have started from nothing.

The fact that some Indians on the Columbia, who had never seen the sea, nor a ship, believed that ships had been at the mouth of that river, was considered by Lewis and Clark as a proof that those seas had been navigated with ships, because they rationally concluded that savages, who never could have heard of the sea, nor of a ship from any other quarter, could not invent the tale; but when they saw among those people, several articles of European manufacture, said to be bought from other Indians, who got them from the ships, they were confirmed in the opinion, because they knew those people could not make such articles, and they knew no other means by which they could have obtained them. So when I find that mankind believe there is a God, I take that belief as a proof of the fact, because I think they were unable to forge the doctrine; but when I find in the Scriptures, a beautiful and sublime description of his attributes and laws,

I am confirmed in the opinion, because I know these ideas and doctrines did not grow out of human nature, and I know no way they could have received them, but by revelation from God.

I invite every deist to reflect, and inquire, whether he, or any person he ever saw, obtained his first knowledge of God from the study of nature, or from human teachers? if he, nor no person he ever saw, received his first knowledge of the Deity from nature, he cannot be sure that it can be obtained in that way. Such evidence as that on which the deist rests the being of God, would not be admitted before a justice of the peace to collect a constable's fee. It is a mere opinion destitute of proof.

* * * * *

We can establish Christianity by testimony that would be received as evidence in a court of justice. The Bible proves as positively that Moses, the Prophets, Christ and the Apostles, wrought the miracles and wrote the books that are ascribed to them, as the history of England, France, or Rome, proves that the Kings, or Emperors, whose names are therein recorded, ever lived and transacted the public business that is ascribed to them. It is well known that charters of real estate are subjects of historical record, and that in law suits about land these records are always read in court as evidence. In one land suit in Louisiana, it frequently happens that part of the history of Spain, of France, and of the United States, is read as evidence, because the land has been held under all these governments. The old Testament exhibits to the Jews a clear charter for the land of Canaan, under which they held it by metes and bounds, near two thousand years; so that we have as good evidence to prove that the five books of Moses, and the book of Joshua are true, as any freeholder in an old country has to prove that he has a legal right to his land.

The miracles by which the Jews were put in possession of Canaan, proved at once the truth of their religion, and their right to the soil.—When they had their lawsuits about land, they, no doubt, frequently referred to the crossing of Jordan, the settling of two and a half of their tribes in the land of the Amorites, the demolishing of Jericho, and the big hail stones that were thrown on the Amorites at the battle of Gibeon, because out of these miracles grew the titles to their lands, and they frequently found the same registered in the same page.

Time cannot invalidate this evidence, although the Jews have lost their land, the evidence that proves they once had a right to it, is as clear now as it was when Boaz bought of Naomi and Ruth the land that had descended on them from a warrior, who walked through Jordan dry shod, shouted to the sound of Rams' horns under the walls of Jericho, and fought the Amorites when the sun stood still upon Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon.

To reject Christianity, because the evidences that establish it are mostly historical, is as absurd as it would be for a farmer to forsake his land because it descended from his ancestors, and the title had become a matter of historical record. When talking against religion the deist says, "I read of these prophecies and miracles in books that are

said to be as old as Christianity and Judaism, but as I never saw those miracles, and did not live from the times that those prophecies were delivered till they were fulfilled, they are all nothing to me but hearsay, and therefore it is not worth my while to cultivate religion, nor try to obtain any of its advantages." And with just as much reason the farmer might say, "The evidences by which the title of my land is established are historical records, as ancient as the government under which it was first owned, but as I only read these evidences in old books, and never saw the land surveyed, registered, nor purchased, it is all to me nothing but hearsay, and therefore it is not worth my while to cultivate, or try to derive any benefit from my estate."

It is utterly impossible that the Jews would, or could have received the books of Moses, and the Book of Joshua, as a genuine history of their nation if they had not been true; because the miracles which they say were wrought in Egypt, at the Red Sea, at Mount Sinai, in the wilderness, at Jordan, Jericho, &c., were so stupendous, and done in the presence of so many hundred thousand people, in open day, that they never would have been believed if they had not been true.— Yet we find the Jews have always believed them, nor have I ever heard of a Jewish historian, that contradicted them. And besides, we should recollect, that these things were not mere opinions, or doubtful conclusions, drawn from abstruse premises, but they were matters of sense; and every Jew, who had eyes and ears, was capable of contradicting them, and detecting the imposture, if it was one. It is as certain that the books of Moses and the book of Joshua are true, as it is that the Jews ever had a political existence in the land of Canaan; because in these books their civil code, and their religion are identified, and if they are not true, we have no authority to believe that those people ever had a political existence, priests, or religious ceremonies: the truth of their religion, and the reality of their national and political existence must stand or fall together, the same evidences support both.

If all miracles were excluded from the book of Exodus, it would appear ten times as unreasonable to me as it now does. That between two and three millions of slaves, consisting of men, women and children, should be allowed to leave their masters, who were perhaps the most powerful and warlike people on earth, and march off in one body with all their flocks and herds, without a drop of blood being shed; that they should be able to escape from the Egyptian army, cross the Red Sea, subsist in such a multitude (that must necessarily travel very slow,) long enough to march clear through the barren desert of Arabia, invade Canaan, and establish themselves there under such civil and religious institutions as those by which the Jews were governed, without any miraculous interposition of God, would appear to me altogether incredible.

If it is hard to believe that Pharoah and his subjects were scourged with ten plagues, it is harder to believe that they would let their slaves go for nothing. If it is difficult to believe that God parted the Red Sea to let the Jews walk through dry shod, it is more difficult to believe that such a multitude could have crossed that Sea without any

natural means, while the Egyptian monarch, with his powerful army, was pressing on their rear. If it appears improbable that they were fed with manna in the wilderness, it will appear still more improbable that they could march through that extensive barren desert without any thing to eat. To admit that the substance of the history is true, and then exclude all miracles from it, would be making it still more miraculous, because it would be affirming that a great and astonishing revolution has been effected without any adequate means.

The unbelievers in religion are like infidels in astronomy; for fear of believing one sublime truth because it appears to them miraculous, they run into the necessity of believing things that are ten times more incredible. To the man who denies the modern system of astronomy, it appears impossible that this big earth should turn round on its axes every twenty-four hours, but he thinks it nothing strange that the sun, which is vastly larger, should, at the distance of many millions of miles from the earth, travel clear round it every twenty-four hours.—So the deist cannot believe that God has enabled prophets and apostles to effect, by miracles, these great revolutions, which are, in fact, quite out of the reach of any natural means; but it appears to him altogether reasonable, that ignorant impostors, without the assistance of wealth, literature, religious prejudices, civil or military establishments, or even truth, but with all these things against them, and without any help from God, but when they knew they were rebelling against him, could effect the most stupendous revolution that ever was achieved on earth, and give to mankind a system of morals by which the civilized world has ever since endeavored to frame their civil institutions and regulate their judicial proceedings. The testimony of more than two millions of people that were present when the Almighty opened the Red Sea, and when he rained manna from heaven, is not sufficient to enable the deist to believe that God wrought these miracles: yet, at the same time, he can believe, and that without any testimony, that God made the sea, the whole globe, and all the planets in the universe out of nothing. Although the apostles and prophets are the most creditable witnesses that ever bore testimony, and have accompanied their evidence with greater signs of truth, than any others ever did; the deist cannot believe that God has by them revealed a system of morality for the government of mankind; and yet, strange as it may appear, he can believe, without any evidence at all, that the almighty has ordained all the wickedness in the world, and that every thing in this world is going on just as God designed it should. When a man rejects the Bible as the deist does, he has no better evidence than his own opinion to prove that there is a God, who made and governs the world.

We must acknowledge the miracles of Moses, Joshua, &c., or else deny that the old Testament contains the history, religion, and laws of the Jewish nation, and to deny this would be as inconsistent as to deny that the history, laws, and religion of the Romans, English, or French, are to be found in Latin, English, or French books. The man who denies that the old Testament is a genuine history of the Jewish nation, might as well deny that there ever was such a nation,

but if he should deny this, several millions of living Jews would rise up with their old Hebrew Bibles in their hands, and contradict him.

The objection that has been raised against Moses and Joshua for invading Canaan, and destroying its inhabitants, will disappear as soon as they can show their authority from God for so doing; for then the Israelites will only appear as agents, executing the judgments of God on those whom he had condemned for their wickedness, just as the sheriff executes the law on a condemned criminal. No one can deny but that God has as good a right to destroy nations, old and young, by the sword, as he has to destroy them by earthquakes, famine or pestilence.—*William Kinkade.*

MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS ON REVELATION.

SOME readers, fond of novelties, and new theories, are ready to enquire on reading an article on the truth of revelation, in a work of this kind, "do you suppose that in this land of Bibles there are any who doubt the authenticity of the Oracles of God?" That there are but few who profess to reject it, is, perhaps, true; but, that the number of those in christendom who disbelieve the word of God is small, we are not willing to admit. We draw our conclusions on this subject from the conduct of communities and individuals. By this we can soon determine whether men believe the Bible or not. Let any reader of these remarks ask himself, whether, from his heart, he believes the record "withot exception and without a doubt." That he can enjoy no permanent spiritual happiness until he places implicit confidence in the Oracles of God is to say but little, for it has been already demonstrated to a moral certainty that, without a revelation from heaven, ignorant we now should be, not only of our origin and destiny, but also of the attributes of the great author of all natures fame. If the principal facts recorded in the Holy Volume are understood and received, there is a good foundation laid on which we can build without fear. We can then approach the fountain of living waters flowing from God's eternal throne, from which we may drink with increasing satisfaction, without any fear as to the good effects resulting therefrom, either in this or the world to come. Yes! we have the gracious words which fell from the lips of him "who spake as never man spake," and the words of the Holy Apostles and Prophets of the Lord "who spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." The past, the present and the future, were alike known to the inspiring spirit; so, that thousands of years previous to the coming of the Saviour, his character and the blessings connected with his reign, were developed in language plain and obvious to us who live under the sunshine of the gospel.

Much has been said, and more has been implied, against the sufficiency of the Bible as an instructor and guide to man in his pilgrimage journey to the celestial city. May the good Lord have mercy on those who have added to, or subtracted aught from the blessed volume—this treasure that our merciful Creator has put into our hands in the overflowing of his benevolence and compassion!

How different the language of modern christians from that of a pious Jew under the Mosaic economy! Hear Israel's sweet singer: "O how I love thy law, it is my meditation day and night"—"it is sweeter than the honey, yea than the honey comb." That man who was truly blessed in those days, was he who loved the Lord more than silver or fine gold. When the inquiry was first suggested in those days, "How shall a young man cleanse his way?" the answer was, "By taking heed thereto according to thy word." Thus the Psalmist could with propriety say, "The entrance of thy words giveth light." "The law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul"—"great peace have they that love thy law and nothing shall offend them." Sentences like the above suggest many of a like import to the diligent student of the Living Oracles.

Has the word of the Lord lost its power? Are not His almighty energies present now in his word as well as in ancient times when by his word he called all things into existence? Has it grown impotent through age? Nay, verily. It was the promises of the Lord recorded in the Old Testament which cheered and sustained the old servants of the Lord; but "they died without the sight" of him who was the burden of their themes. We live in a day when those facts are realized. Has the word of truth diminished in power since Jesus died—since the gospel was preached with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven? Who is prepared for such a conclusion? Did the ancients derive so much consolation from the word of the Lord, and we, with the full sunshine of the glorious system of life and immortality pouring its rays upon us, dare to detract from the word of the Lord! Who does so? All those who place any human testimony, or instruction, on a level with the word of God; all who substitute the teachings of men for this glorious and unerring standard. May the Lord keep us from it! We hope and pray that through our whole career we shall keep these facts before us; and in all our writings and selections our supreme object may be to hold forth the excellencies of the Book in such a manner that all of our readers will be wholly emancipated from all teachers but the Holy Spirit. If they listen to others, may it be for the purpose of situating themselves so as better to hear the words of that unerring guide.

The wise man says, "Where the word of a king is there is power." Was that true then and is it not now? Could that be said of mortal kings, and cannot the language be more properly applied to the word of our *Immortal King*! Yes! *His* word is "quick and powerful"—"it liveth and abideth forever." Amen.

Reader, remember that when the word of the Lord is addressing men possessing your character, it is addressed to you as much as though the Almighty was speaking from his celestial throne to you, and is designed for you as much as though there was not another person in the universe. But a friend says to me by way of objection, "men do not realize this—hundreds receive the word of God as true, and yet remain unsanctified and unsaved." True. And why is it so? They do not understand it. Remember the language of the Saviour. Matt. xiii. 23.

“He that receiveth seed into the good ground is he that *heareth the word, and understandeth it.*” No instruction can produce beneficial results on the mind of any but such as understand it. Can man understand a book of the antiquity of the Bible without studying it sufficiently to comprehend the general meaning of the words that express the ideas. The Book is sufficiently plain to those who are in search for truth alone; who are desirous of submitting to the Lord in all things. But this is not the employment of the mass of the community. Many are reading it for a very different purpose. Some are desirous of knowing how few of the commandments and ordinances of the Lord they can attend to and yet get to heaven. Instead of seeking for a full preparation for the world of bliss and glory, they try how near they can run to the precipice of everlasting destruction without being eternally engulfed! Others read to get arguments to make out a system. A third class read to cavil and find fault, or, seek for contradictions, &c. Now no person can for a moment suppose that such readers can ever come to an understanding of this book of books. Should we take up any other production, with similar motives, we should forever remain ignorant of it. But we are again wandering. The question before us is, Who believes the word of the Lord? Unhesitatingly we answer: Those who are daily endeavoring to make it the guide of their lives. “By their fruits ye shall know them.” Reader, if your house were on fire and you believed it, would you remain beneath its burning timbers without an effort to escape? Would any person suppose you believed it on fire, and you preparing to slumber upon your downy couch? Can you believe the record that God has given of his Son and not be desirous of obeying him! ’Tis true that during the personal ministry of our Saviour even “among the chief rulers many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.” John, xii. 42. This may be the situation of many at the present day, “but they have their reward.”

We purpose, therefore, occasionally furnishing such facts and documents relative to the truth of revelation, as will place our faith in it above mere tradition; the only argument presented by many who regard their own reveries as of equal consequence with the word of the Lord. Every Christian should always be prepared to give a reason of his hope with meekness and fear; this he cannot do so as to benefit others without being instructed in the word of the Lord. Let us all then, show that we believe the word of the Lord by doing whatsoever he has commanded.

W. W. E.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

NO. II.

In our first number we promised some additional remarks on the Kingdom. We propose in this paper to notice the most common objections to the setting up of the Christian institution on the day of Pen-

cost. Some will have the Kingdom of Heaven begin where the first intimations concerning such an institution are announced. A careful examination of our last paper will satisfy any inquisitive mind, that during the personal ministry of the Lord the Jewish dispensation was in existence, and the Kingdom of Heaven was spoken of as future. This ought to settle the whole question; but this is not the case. The mass of the community read the New Testament but very little. Such are invited to lend an ear to the following:—Because the Saviour said of the Scribes and Pharisees that they “shut up the Kingdom of Heaven”—“The Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence and the violent take it by force”^{*}—“Since the days of John the Baptist the Kingdom of Heaven is preached and all men press into it”—“The Kingdom of Heaven is within you,” &c. &c., it is argued that the Kingdom of Heaven must have had a visible existence previous to the death of the Lord and consequently was set up before the day of Pentecost.

We are prepared for these objections. Let us attend to them. Were it proper for us to go out of the record for figures and arguments, we could show many reasons for such a mode of speech. Before any government is established there are those who have received the principles on which it is founded. Were there not, no new government would or could ever be established; for there must be first the materials of a nation before it can have an existence. We prefer, however, for illustration, figures drawn either from the Bible or the kingdom of nature. At this time we shall seize on an excellent similitude suggested on this subject, from him who spake and taught as never man did. He says of the Kingdom of Heaven, “There is first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.” The developments of the church during the Patriarchal dispensation were the Kingdom “in the blade;” the Jewish, the Kingdom “in the ear,” the fields being white and ready for the harvest during the latter part of the sojourn of the Saviour among men; but not until the day of Pentecost were the first fruits offered to the Lord—“the full corn in the ear.” It is quite common for farmers to call their fields when only green and no appearance of any thing but the tender blade, fields of wheat; but, properly speaking, they are not fields of wheat until the full corn is in the ear. This figure will suggest to the intelligent reader at once the proper interpretation of all those passages quoted above. Let him but remember that “many of its principles were developed by the ancient Prophets: David, Isaiah, and others wrote concerning it; John the

^{*} Matt. xi. 12. Translated in the New Version by Campbell, McNight and Dodge, “*The Kingdom of Heaven is invaded,*” &c. “The comparison is here to a country invaded and conquered.” The Scribes and Pharisees claimed for themselves the chief places in this Kingdom, and were by their conduct shutting this kingdom against men. Publicans and harlots, however, in opposition to the influence and example of those men, received the doctrine of the Messiah, and thus, as it were, invaded or took possession of that Kingdom from which the elders and doctors excluded them. Finally, the Gentiles, too, by their faith in the Messiah, and the consequent boldness, took possession of this Heavenly Kingdom. This Kingdom, since its first promulgation, admitted every man to enter it who had boldness to deny himself and take up his cross.—*Appendix p. 58, No. vii.*

Baptist proclaimed its near approach, and more fully developed its spiritual design, therefore he was superior to them. Jesus often unfolded its character and design in various similitudes; and every one who understood and received these *principles* were said to “press into the Kingdom,” or to have the Kingdom in them, and wherever these principles were promulged, “the Kingdom of Heaven” was said to “come nigh” to that people, or to “have overtaken them;” and those who opposed those principles and interposed their authority to prevent others from receiving them, are said to “shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against men;” and thus all those scriptures must of necessity be understood from the contexts in which they stand: for it was impossible that the reign of Heaven could literally commence “*till Jesus was glorified,*” “received the promise of the Holy Spirit,” was “made Lord and Christ,” and “sat down with his Father upon his throne,” for he left this earth *to receive a Kingdom.*” Luke xx. 15.”

We remember of hearing and reading another objection drawn from Mark’s testimony, first sentence. “The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.” This we understand to be simply the preface to his narrative—a caption to that which he proposed writing. Matthew has something like it, viz. “The generation of Jesus Christ,” &c. Luke and John also have prefatory remarks. But, in relation to the first objection, let it be remembered that the phrase, Gospel and Kingdom are far from being synonymous. The argument presented from the language of Mark would also prove that the Kingdom of Immanuel was established on the earth in the days of Abraham, for Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians, iii. 8, says “God—preached before the Gospel unto Abraham.” The fact is, the Gospel means *good news*; and to proclaim to Abraham that in him and in his seed all the nations should be blessed, was to announce the Gospel; and so when the heavenly light shown around the Shepherds in Bethlehem’s plains, and they heard the Angel of the Lord proclaim, “Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people,” they heard the gospel—the good news of the Saviour’s birth. And when John Mark was about to communicate to the Grecians and Romans a narrative of the Life, Miracles, Death and Resurrection of the Lord Messiah, he was going to communicate the good news in which they were all interested. Well may he call it the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

It only requires a superficial glance into the volume of inspiration, to see that during the different eras the good news concerning the Saviour was also different. Before the birth of Christ the good news was, that a Saviour was to come; after his appearance the gospel was that he had come, and that his Kingdom was at hand; but after his resurrection the good news was, “Christ has risen indeed”!

Suppose, then, that the above facts are admitted—what then? why this conclusion is inevitable, viz: Each dispensation had its laws, ordinances, &c., and that which constituted a good citizen in one dispensation would not in another. More of this in future. At present we would just remark that our principal object has been to ascertain

the commencement of the Christian dispensation with reference to the human family. If it did not commence until the day of Pentecost, (and we trust that that fact is already established,) *then no commands or ordinances, issued or practised, previous to that time, are applicable to those out of the Church of God since that time.* If, then, we are desirous of knowing what men should do in order to enjoy the blessings of Messiah's Kingdom we must look for it since the commencement of his reign. The blessings are great. Remission of all past transgressions, the Holy Spirit and a hope of Eternal Life, are amongst the first blessings promised in this glorious Kingdom. But of this again.

W. W. E.

PERSONAL EVIDENCES.

THERE are the internal and external evidences of the Christian religion; and there are the internal and external evidences of Christian character. By the *internal evidences of Christian character*, we mean the evidences which every individual Christian has that he is born of God—that he is a Christian indeed and in fact. By the *external evidences of Christian character*, we mean those fruits of the Christian faith which distinguish the “Israelite indeed” from one of the nominal Israel of God, in the judgment of all competent and impartial witnesses. But we now speak of the internal evidences of Christian character, and who is the best author on this subject? We answer, John the Apostle. Our “Christian experience,” (pardon this accommodation of a modern non-descript phrase,) is best examined in the light of this luminous author of internal evidences. Of these the following are chief:—

Personal Internal Evidences of Christian Character.

1. We know that we have passed away from death to life, because we love the brethren. He that loves not his brethren abides in death. On this evidence a question arises—*viz. How do we know that we love the brethren?* The same author settles this question. “By this we know that we love the children of God: when we love God and keep his commandments.” chap. v. 2.

2. “By this we know that we have known God, if we keep his commandments:” and “Whosoever keeps his word, truly in this man the love of God is perfected.” By this we know that we are in him.—“Now he who keeps his commandments abides in him, and he in him; and by this we know that he abides in us, even by the Spirit which he has given to us.”

These two witnesses in us are sufficient. Love to the brethren is distinguished from natural affection and common benevolence by the most unequivocal criteria. It is a love active and operative for the Lord Messiah's sake, terminating upon a person because he is Christ's. The keeping of all the commandments, or that spirit of universal obedience, exciting and stirring up a person to do all that the Lord com-

commands, *because he commands it*, is as distinct from the lashings of conscience and that servile attention to orders, from a sense of duty, as the affectionate regard of a child to its parents is distinguishable from the unwilling and partial obedience of a slave.

These two witnesses are more creditable and responsible than the longest experience ever told, which substitutes any thing else as evidence of christian character, than what is found written in their testimony by the beloved Apostle.

External Evidences of Christian Character.

1. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.—*Jesus*.
2. If you know that the Lord is righteous, you know that every one who works righteousness has been begotten by him. 1 John ii. 29.

Internal Evidences that a Person is a Child of the Devil.

1. Whosoever hates his brother, is a murderer; and, like Cain, is of the wicked one. And no one that hates his brother has eternal life abiding in him. 1 John iii. 12, 15.
2. He that works sin is of the devil. 1 John iii. 8.

External Evidences that a Person is a Child of the Devil.

In this the children of the devil are manifest: whosoever works not righteousness is not of God; neither he who loves not his brother.—1 John iii. 10.

Infallible Evidences of Self-Deception.

1. If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie. 1 John i. 6.
2. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 1 John i. 8.
3. If a man say, I know him, and keep not his commandments, he is a liar, and the truth is not in him. John ii. 4.
4. He that says that he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness even till now. John ii. 9.
5. If a man say, I love God, and hate his brother, he is a liar. iv. 20.

Such are the personal evidence laid down by the infallible pen of this distinguished Apostle of Christ. He who is inquisitive to ascertain whether his heart and life be right in the sight of the Sovereign Judge of all, or whether he be a child of God or of the devil—a hypocrite or self-deceived, needs no other treatise than the catholic epistle of John.

The question of personal interest in the salvation of God, is incomparably the most interesting of all questions. Were a person master of the sequence of men and angels—could he, in the lofty strains of David and Isaiah—could he, in the glowing and seraphic strains of heaven-taught prophets, set forth the glory and excellency of the salvation of God—could he describe, with supernatural power and beauty, all the glories which the new heavens and the new earth will unfold—the eternity of bliss, the exceeding and eternal weight of glory which awaits all the

righteous—what is it to you or me, candid reader, if we cannot feel that we have a personal interest in it—if we cannot be assured that our individual selves will be partakers of the glory to be revealed? Let us, then, give all heed to make our calling and election certain.

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PUBLIC WORSHIP.—"What is the use," said the pupil of a medical friend of ours one morning to his master, on their way to a place of worship, "what is the use of going to Church, when you only hear the same thing over again?" "What is the use," replied his master, "of breakfasting, dining and supping every day, when you only eat the same things over again?" "I do not see," said the youth, "that the cases at all resemble each other. I must eat to support my life and nourish my body, which otherwise would languish and die." "The cases are more parallel than you are aware," rejoined the master. "What food is to the body, the ordinances of religion are to the soul. As the natural life in the one will languish and decay, unless we maintain it by the bounties of God's providence, so the divine life in the other will wither and die, unless our passions be regulated by the influence of grace." "How does it happen, then," inquired the young man, "that all have not the same relish for religious exercises, while all have the same appetite for their bodily food?"

"There," answered the master, "you again mistake the matter. It is very true that if our bodies are in health we desire and relish our daily bread; but when we are sick, it is widely different; we have then not only no relish for food, but even loathe it; and not unfrequently desire that which is unnatural and injurious. So it is with the soul. When that is at peace with God, through the redemption which is in Christ, it is healthy; and not only desires, but relishes these exercises of devotion, and cannot exist without them, but while the soul continues in sin, it is in a state of disease, and having no appetite for spiritual food, it dislikes both the seasons and the exercises of devotion, considers the Lord's day a weariness, and avoids the society of his people. Nor does the resemblance stop even here, for as bodily disease, unless removed by the hand of skill, will speedily terminate our present existence; so the continuance of that spiritual disease, I mean sin, which we derive from our first parents, will issue in that spiritual and eternal death which consists in the everlasting exclusion of the soul from the presence and favor of its Creator."

Special notice to Subscribers in the British Provinces who receive this work through the Post Office.—When the Prospectus of this work was issued, I supposed that subscribers would pay the postage for it when they received it from the Post Office. Soon after I learned that the law permitted the Post Master to exact 3d. per number, I wrote to an individual in Halifax a request to ascertain if the Post Master would make some deduction in the postage. Not hearing from this person, and the work having come out, I wrote to the Post Master in Halifax, having learned that he had the whole control of the postage. Since then he has informed me through the Post Master here, that the Christian, so long as it contains no more than twenty-four pages, can be sent through the Post Offices to any part of the British Provinces, for one penny per number, but that sum must be paid when the work is mailed in St. John. All, therefore, who receive this work through the Post Office, in making payment for it will also pay me the postage—one shilling in addition to the first cost. This, then, will include the whole expense of the work.

While waiting for an answer to my first letter, still supposing that the subscriber paid the postage on the reception of the work from the P. O., I sent the first number to the Newport, Falmouth, Rawdon, Petete, Truro and Halifax subscribers. What has become of them I know not. Since I have permission to send the work through the P. O. for the above sum, it is hoped that the various officers above named will not exact more than the penny per number. Should any subscriber or agent, however, fail of receiving the work regularly, by informing me the number shall be made good.

My blunders have resulted from the expectation that there was a uniform postage on such works. A friend on Prince Edward's Island informed me previous to issuing THE CHRISTIAN, that the postage on the Christian Gleaner was one penny, (also 24 pages) per number, and I, therefore concluded it would be the same on this, and hence my mistakes. Being a young hand at the business there is room to improve and do better in future.

W. W. E.