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THE  
**CHRISTIAN GLEANER.**

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

**THE CONVERSION OF THE WORLD.**

MAN has been often considered as a creature of circumstances. Diversified by climate, by language, by religion, by morals, by habit, he presents a most varied aspect to the contemplative mind. Betwixt “*the frozen Icelander and the sun-burn'd Moor,*” the wandering Indian and the polished citizen, the untutored savage and the sage philosopher, the superstitious pagan and the intelligent christian, what a difference! To the sceptic reasoner the human race presents an insoluble enigma. The questions, *What am I? Whence came I? and Whither do I go?* are questions which philosophy in its boasted powers, deism in its bold excursions, infidelity in its daring enterprizes, attempts in vain. The Bible alone answers them with satisfaction and certainty. To the disbeliever of it, the world has neither beginning, middle, nor end. The sceptic feels himself a speck of matter, floating down the stream of time into a region of impenetrable darkness, alike ignorant of his origin and his destiny. Whether there is in him a spark of immortality, or whether he is all annihilated in the grave, are, to him, things unknown and unknowable. The reptile, encased in its kindred shell, the oyster clinging to its native rock, could as easily calculate the rapidity of the particles of light, or measure, by its powers, the orbit of a comet, as the most gigantic genius, by its own vigor, unaided by the Bible, could prove that there is a God, that there was a creation, that there is an immortal spirit in man, or that there will be an end of this mundane state of things. We know what deism, philosophy, and natural religion arrogate to themselves; but their pretensions are as vain, as their efforts to give assured hope, are impotent and unavailing. Deism steals from the Bible the being of a God, the immortality of the soul, the future state of rewards; and shutting the volume of light, impudently arrogates to itself that it has *originated* those ideas from its own ingenerate sagacity. But we are insensibly falling into a disquisition foreign to our present purpose.

The world, as respects religion, is divided into four grand divisions—the Pagan, the Mahometan, the Jewish, and the Christian. In the first of these there are some fragments of divine revelation mutilated and corrupted. The knowledge of God once communicated to Noah, was transmitted to his descendants; and although many of them were never

favored with any other revelation than that committed to him; and although that revelation was vitiated and corrupted with thousands of the wildest fancies and most absurd notions, yet it never has been completely lost. Hence the most ignorant savages have some idea of a God, and offer him some kind of worship. They endeavour to propitiate him by sacrifice, and consider themselves under some kind of moral obligation to one another. They view certain actions as pleasing, and others as displeasing to him.

The Jewish religion, though once enjoined by divine authority, as exhibited in the Old Testament, has, by the same authority, been set aside, as having answered its design. In the best form in which it could now appear on earth, it would be as dry and useless as a shell when a kernel is extracted. The good-things once in it are no longer to be found; and, as corrupted by the modern Jews, it is quite another religion than that instituted by Moses. There is no salvation in it.

The Mahometan religion recognizes three hundred and thirteen apostles, of whom six brought in new dispensations, viz. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Mahomet. The last vacated or rendered obsolete all the preceding. It consequently contains many items of divine revelation; but these are, like the fragments of revelation found in the pagan establishments, so perverted as to be *darkness* instead of *light*. The Mahometans have, like the modern christians, their different sects, their orthodox and heterodox teachers and opinions.

The "christian nations" have the Bible, but many of them have, like the Jews, rendered it of little or no effect by their traditions. Dividing the whole family of man into thirty parts, five parts are professed christians; six parts are Mahometans and Jews; and nineteen parts Pagans. This is the mournful state of the world according to the most correct statements. Add the Mahometans, Jews, and Pagans together, and they amount to twenty-five thirtieths of the whole human race. So that but one-sixth of Adam's offspring possess, and but few of these enjoy, the revelation of God.

To what is this doleful state of the world attributable, is a question that deserves the attention of every christian. If there were no *hereafter*, the *temporal* wretchedness of ignorance and superstition presents an object that must awaken the sympathies of every benevolent mind. And if there be a hereafter, and if future happiness were attainable to those immersed in pagan and Mahometan gloom, wretchedness, and crime, still the amelioration of their earthly condition, the rational and christian enjoyment of this present life, are objects of such vast importance, as to excite all that is within us, to consider whether those possessing the light of heaven are, in any sense, chargeable with the crimes and miseries of the heathen world.

If, as some affirm, every man is accountable not only for what *he has done*, but for what *he might have done*, the question would not be of difficult determination. But as we would wish to see this point established

on more solid and convincing ground than abstruse speculations, we shall appeal to the New Testament. The Saviour of the world charged the scribes and pharisees of that age with having "shut up the kingdom of heaven against men," with having "neither gone in themselves, nor suffered those that were entering to go in." He charged the lawyers, or doctors of divinity, with having taken away the *key of knowledge* from the people. The apostle Paul taught the christians that it was possible for them so to walk as to give occasion to the adversaries of their cause to speak reproachfully of it and them; they might so walk as that the *name* of God, of Jesus, and his *doctrine* might be *blasphemed*. And Peter declared, that, in consequence of false teachers and disciples, "*the way of truth should be evil spoken of.*" He also teaches that christians may so conduct themselves as that those who behold their conduct may be allured to the belief of the gospel. [See Matt. xxiii. 13. Luke xi. 52. 1st Tim. v. 14. vi. 1. 1st Pet. iii. 1. 2d Pet. ii. 1. 2.] Those records show that professed disciples may, both by *omitting* to do their duty, and by *committing* faults, prevent and greatly retard the spread of the gospel, the enlargement of Messiah's kingdom. We are convinced, that the *character* of the "christian communities" is the greatest offence, or stumbling block in the way of the conversion of the world. And that therefore the only hopeful course to convert the world is to reform the professors of christianity.

But what kind of a reformation is requisite to this end? It is not the erection of a new sect, the inventing of new *shibboleths*, or the setting up of a new creed, nor the adopting of any in existence save the *New Testament*, in the *form* in which it pleased the Spirit of God to give it. It is to receive it as it stands, and to make it its own interpreter, according to the ordinary rules of interpreting all books. It is not to go back to primitive Calvinism, or primitive Methodism, or primitive Lutheranism, but to *primitive Christianity*. The history of the church for many centuries has proved, the history of every sect convinces us, that it is as impossible for any one sect to gain such an ascendancy as to embrace as converts the others, and thus unite in one grand phalanx the christians against the allied powers of darkness, as it is to create a world. Every sect, with a human creed, carries in it, as the human body, the seeds of its own mortality. Every sect has its infancy, its childhood, its manhood, and its dotage. Some die as soon as they are born, and others live to a good old age, but their old age is full of grief and trouble. And die they must. As it is appointed unto all men *once to die*, and after that the judgment, so it is ordained of God that all sects must die, and that because their *bond of union* is under the *curse*. Where are the hundreds of sects that have already existed? They only live in history as beacons to posterity.

It need not be objected that some sects have already taken the New Testament and run into the wildest extremes; for either they interpreted it according to the reveries of Swedenburg, the fanaticism of Shakerism, or the enthusiasm of New Lightism, or they apostatized from a good pro-

fession. Recollect, we say, that the scriptures are to be their own interpreters, according to the common rules of interpreting other writings.

A Church of Christ is a society of disciples professing to believe on the Son of God, voluntarily submitting to his authority and guidance, having all of them in their baptism, expressed their faith in him and allegiance to him, and stately meeting together in one place, to walk in all his commandments and ordinances. This society with its bishop or bishops, and deacon or deacons, as the case may require, is perfectly independent of any tribunal on earth called ecclesiastical. It knows nothing of superior or inferior church judicatories, and acknowledges no laws, no canons, nor government other than that of the Monarch of the Universe and his laws. This church, having now committed unto it the oracles of God, is adequate to all the purposes of illumination and reformation which entered into the design of its founder, having the Record, or testimony of God in it; and it becomes the duty and high privilege of every member of it to be a preacher of the gospel.

I need not tell you that I do not mean to say that every man and woman that believes the gospel is to commence travelling about or to leave their homes and neighbourhoods, or employment, to act as public preachers. But the young women are to declare to their coevals and acquaintance—the elder women to theirs—the young men and elder men to theirs, the glad-tidings; and to shew them the evidence on which their faith rests. This, followed up by a virtuous and godly life, is the most powerful mean left on earth to illuminate and reform the world. In the meantime the bishop of the church, in their weekly meetings, *teaches* the religion in its sublime and glorious doctrine and bearings, and thus the members are still educating or building up in the most holy faith; and thus the church, in all its members, “speaking the truth in love, *grows up into HIM* in all things, who is the **HEAD**, even Christ; from whom the whole body, fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, *maketh increase of the body*, unto the edifying of itself in love.” When the bishop rests from his labors, the church, of which he had the *oversight*, by his labors, and by the opportunity afforded all the members of exercising their faculties of communication and inquiry in the public assembly, finds within itself others educated and qualified to be appointed to the same good work. The church of the living God is thus independent of theological schools and colleges for its existence, enlargement, comfort, and perfection; for it is itself put in possession of all the means of its growth in grace and knowledge, if these means be wisely used.

The spread of the gospel, the multiplication of the number of the faithful in the apostolic age, is, in a great measure, attributable to the great company of them that declared the faith. The whole church of Jerusalem became preachers in a very short time. We are told (Acts viii.) that there was a great persecution against the congregation [that

was at Jerusalem; and *all*, except the apostles, were scattered through the regions of Judea and Samaria—"They, however, who were dispersed, (all but the apostles,) went about proclaiming the glad tidings of the word." No wonder, then, that so many myriads of the Jews were converted. No wonder, then, that so many congregations of christians were formed throughout Judea and Samaria, when one church sent out such a swarm of publishers of the glad tidings; "and that the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord," Ch. xi. 21.

Moses we are told was *preached*, being *read* in the synagogues. Paul tells us that he was ordained a *preacher* and a *teacher* of the truth among the gentiles. We are told that, daily in the temple, and from house to house, they ceased not to *teach* and to *preach* that Jesus was the Messiah. I need not say to you, that to preach is merely to publish news; but as this will be read by many, for their sakes I say that myriads may be qualified to preach, either as Moses was preached, or *viva voce*, to publish what Paul published to the nations, that are not qualified to *teach* the christian doctrine. And no man believes any fact but he can tell the reason why, and produce the evidence on which he believes it. This is all the New Testament means, and all I mean by *preaching*. A bishop must be "apt to teach," but nothing is said about being *apt to preach*, and it is agreed that *preaching* and *teaching* are two things essentially different. To have said that a bishop must be *apt to preach*, in that age, would have been absurd—when even women as well as men could preach. Paul mentions women of note who were his fellow-laborers; and all know how Priscilla explained to the eloquent Apollos the way of God more accurately. *Euodia* and *Syntyche* are mentioned as women who labored with the apostle Paul in the publication of the gospel. Rom. xvi. 8. Phil. iv. 3. Yet in the church they were not allowed to speak even in the way of asking questions. 1 Cor. xiv. 34—35.

Besides the light which consistent disciples in their individual capacity diffuse around them, that their Heavenly Father may be glorified, and the truth promoted, the New Testament, as already hinted, points out the Church of Jesus Christ, or disciples in their associated state, as the institution of God left on earth to illuminate and reform the world. That is, to speak in the most definite and intelligible manner, a society of men and women, having in their hands the oracles of God, believing in their hearts the gospel of Jesus Christ, confessing the truth of Christ with their lips, exhibiting in their lives the morality of the gospel, and walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly in the sight of all men.—When men having spiritual or miraculous gifts, were withdrawn, this institution was left on earth, as the design of heaven, to enlighten and reform the world. An organized society of this kind, modelled after the plan taught in the New Testament, is the consummation of the manifold wisdom of God to exhibit to the world, the civilizing, the moralizing, the saving light, which

renovates the human heart, which elevates human character, and which prostrates in the dust all the boasted expedients of ancient and modern times. The church of the living God is therefore styled, the *pillar* and *ground* of the truth. The christian religion is a social religion, and is best exhibited to the full conviction of the world in this social character. An individual or two in a pagan land, may speak about the christian religion, and may exhibit its morality as far as respects mankind in general, but cannot give so satisfactory and convincing an exhibition of it, as by exhibiting a church, not on paper, but in actual existence and operation, as divinely appointed. The ambassadors of Christ, whom he specially called and divinely inspired, were commissioned to go into all nations in quest of materials, living stones to build this pillar of truth, this house of the living God, and then to unite or cement these materials to exhibit the inscription of the blessed gospel in such legible characters as to be known and read of all men. This work, the Apostles accomplished in having made of twain one new man, i. e. of Jew and Gentile, one new institution or associated body, the church; and having placed this in all nations, in the most conspicuous situations, in the most populous countries, the most commercial states, and in the most renowned cities, they were taken to heaven, and left the church, by its doctrine and example, to christianize the world. All that has been necessary ever since, was, to hold fast the Apostle's doctrine and commandments. If this had been faithfully done, we have a right to believe that the heathen would have been converted. But it has happened by the woful departure of ambitious and ignorant men, from the ancient simplicity of the new religion, that the same awful crime is justly preferred against the people called christians, that was by an Apostle, charged upon the Jews; viz.—“The christian name has been through your crimes, blasphemed among the heathen.” So that among many pagans, the term christian denotes every thing hateful and impious. Surely nothing worthy of admiration can be done by the christians of this age, in converting the world, until christians themselves are seen united, on the apostle's word, John xvii. 20–21, separating from every thing that is worldly and ungodly—turning away from such as have a form of godliness, but deny the power of it—until they form themselves into societies, independent of hireling teachers and ecclesiastical courts, modelled after the forum, the parliament, or national conventions, until they cast to the moles and to the bats, the philosophic speculations, the metaphysics, the fables, which appear in so many human creeds; until they return to the ancient model delineated in the New Testament, and until they keep the ordinances as delivered unto them by the Apostles.

Then suppose a Christian Church were to be placed on the confines of a heathen land, as some of them, in such case, inevitably would be; the darkness of paganism would serve as a shade in a picture, to exhibit the lustre of Christianity. Then the unconverted around them, would see

their humility, their heavenly-mindedness, their tenderness, their hatred of the garments spotted with the flesh, their purity, their temperance, their brotherly love, they will observe the order of their worship, and would fall down in their assemblies, as Paul affirms, and declare that God is in them of a truth;—then would be verified anew the words of the Saviour. “If ye love one another, *all men* will know that you are the disciples of the Saviour of the world. They would say one to another, and proclaim to their countrymen on every occasion —“ These Christians are peaceful, benevolent, humane, forgetful and forgiving of injuries, they hate war, oppression, theft, falsehood, detraction; they are always talking and living in the hope of a glorious resurrection from the dead, and are looking for the coming of him whom they call their Lord. In their assemblies there is order, peace, love and harmony—their chief guide is not distinguished by his dress, as our priests, nor does he, like them, live upon the sweat and sacrifices of the people. They repay the curses of wicked pagans with blessings, and their benevolence is not confined to themselves. Come see if their religion is not better than ours—better than all others. When Christian people and the Christian Church assume such a character, they will indeed be as a city set upon a hill to convert and illuminate all around them, and there will be no divisions in their devising plans for missions to convert men to their peculiar forms of religion, as every body of Christians will be united from one standard, the New Testament; and will be in truth and in deed, missionaries of the glad tidings of salvation, wherever the providence of God or duty leads them.

Christians, as you honor the Saviour, and the Father that sent him; as you love the peace and prosperity of the kingdom of the Holy One; as you love the souls of your children, your relatives, your fellow-citizens; as you deeply deplore the reign of darkness, of paganism, of horrid cruelty over such multitudes of human beings; as you desire and pray for the salvation of the world, the downfall of Antichrist, of Mahometan delusion, of Jewish infidelity, of pagan superstition;—return, return to the religion of our common Lord, as delivered unto us by his holy apostles! Model your churches after the primitive model, erected under the agency of the Holy Spirit—and then the churches of the saints will have *rest* and will be *edified*, “and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they will be *multiplied*” with accessions until all flesh shall see the salvation of our God.

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EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM A CONTEMPORARY  
AUTHOR.

I FIND the saints are yet in Babylon. Many, very many are conscious of it, and are desirous of coming out of her that they may not partake of her plagues. But they are beset with difficulties. They have lost not the copies of the law of their King, as did their types, the Jews, in the literal Babylon; but they have lost the sense, or rather have been preached out of the sense of the law, and many are even preached out of their common sense. They are sensible of this. But this is not all. There are too many Sanballats and Tobiahs, and too few Nehemiahs and Ezras. The captives, too, are so much attached to the chains that bind them, and so much wedded to the manners of the Babylonians, their captivators, that they are, in many instances, unwilling to hazard the dangers and to encounter the reproaches incident to an attempt to return to Jerusalem. I labour incessantly to convince and to persuade the people who fear God, both out of the law, prophets, psalms, and apostolic writings, that such are their character and circumstances, and to induce them to return. It happens in this case as it did when the gospel was first promulgated—some believe the things that are spoken, and some believe them not. The number of believers is, indeed, very considerable. But when they think of repairing the breaches and rebuilding the temple, some Sanballat says, “Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned?” And, to scandalize them, some Tobiah adds his scoff, saying, “Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall!” However, many of the people “have a mind to work,” and the wall will be reared. Out of Babylon they will—they must come; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. And should we never see the day, we will die in the full assurance of faith that the saints will separate themselves from the strangers, and renounce allegiance to their spoilers and captivators. Many of those friendly to a return, are attempting to persuade their communities to arise in the mass and to march in one phalanx, and flatter themselves that they may succeed. However much we do desire such an event, we cannot reasonably expect it: for such an event never happened. No community, either political or religious, ever was reformed in the mass. No people ever, at once, returned from any apostasy. Even when God’s typical people were brought back out of Babylon, of the whole nation but forty two thousand three hundred and sixty at first returned.

I have been interrogated on the subject of a model, or a precedent for the restoration of the ancient order of things. Some seem to think that the New Testament ought to furnish an example of the sort, of some directions for the accomplishment of an object so important. It does, indeed, in some sense, though not in the way which some desire. It teaches us

how Jews and Pagans were converted unto the faith, and how both people were consociated into one community. It teaches us upon what principles they became one, and for what ends and uses they maintained the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace. It exhibits to us what they did in their congregations; but it does not, because it could not, afford a model of a people returning from a long and grievous apostacy. The christian communities had not then apostatized, and consequently no example of a return could be afforded. Until Rome was built there were no great roads leading thither, nor groups of people returning thence. For this reason the New Testament could not afford a model such as we want. But it foretels this apostacy; its rise, progress, and termination: it exhibits the thing in emblems, and in sacred symbols teaches us how to come out of **THE MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT**. It imperiously commands a return to Jerusalem; and, in general principles, ordains the way. If, then, we only remember whence we are fallen, we may reform. We may return unto the Lord. But it does more than all this. It not only minutely describes the apostacy, and characterizes the *Man of Sin* and *Son of Perdition*, but it leads us, in the way of symbols, to understand where we are, and how to return. It tells us plainly that we may find, in the history of the Jews, our own history, and a remedy for all our grievances. To illustrate this point, I cannot do better than give to you the outlines of an oration delivered on this subject. It was the first time that I delivered a public speech on the writings of Nehemiah; and I must, as they say John Bunyan was wont to do, write down the discourse after it was pronounced, or give the items and outlines of an extemporaneous address:—

#### THE OUTLINES OF AN ORATION,

*Delivered on 4th and 5th chapters of Nehemiah, the 2d chapter of the second Epistle to the Thessalonians, and the 17th and 18th chapters of the Revelation.*

After reading the above portions of the sacred writings, a few general remarks were made on the character of the inspired books, and particularly on the peculiar method which God had adopted in communicating instruction to men. The utility of the adoption of types, or emblems, in communicating instruction, was next exhibited. The natural world considered as a volume of natural types; and the sacred history of the Jewish people, a volume of spiritual types. After these introductory observations, the Jewish scriptures were examined on the subject of types. From this examination it was found—

1st. That there were persons and things originally designed as types; and also that persons and things not originally designed as types, were, in the New Testament, by the inspired commentators on the Old Testament, adopted as types, and used as such for the illustration of the christian

doctrine. Of the former sort were the priests under the law, the altars, sacrifices, tabernacle, its vessels, the temple, &c. &c. Of the latter kind were Adam, the deluge, Sarai, Isaac, Hagar, Ishmael, &c. &c.

2d. By connecting the two Testaments, or the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, it was found that certain persons, in certain respects, were types or examples of Jesus Christ; that his being called the second Adam, a priest after the order of Melchisedec, a Mediator such as Moses, &c. &c. were proofs and illustrations that he was considered the antitype of many types. But this was not all. On the authority of the infallible commentator, *Paul*, it appeared that there were not only types of Christ in the Jewish scriptures, but also types of the christian people, their worship, and circumstances; and, indeed, that the history of the church was all found in type in the history of the Jews. In illustration and confirmation of this, the following particulars were noticed:—

1. That all the same *names* which are in the christian scriptures appropriated to the christian assembly or church, were first appropriated to the Jewish people in the mass. Such were the terms *called, elected, redeemed, bought, purchased, ransomed, chosen, a peculiar people, a holy nation, a kingdom of priests, my people, my beloved, my children, spouse, bride, saved,* &c. &c.

2. That all the christian ordinances and worship were typified; such as the Lord's day, by *the morrow after the sabbath*, when the first ripe sheaf was waved; christian immersion, by their being immersed once into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; their frequent eating the manna and drinking the water from the rock, an ensample or type of our participation of the emblems in the Lord's supper; their sprinkled altar, a type of our sprinkled consciences; their laver, or bath for cleansing the priests, a type of our bath of regeneration; their first tabernacle, or holy place, a type of the christian church; their common priests, a type of christians; and their high priest a type of Jesus; their thank-offerings, of our praises; and their sin-offerings, of the sacrifice of our great High Priest. Incidents in their history, were also shown to be types of incidents in our history. Such as their being called out of Egypt; their receiving of a law afterwards; their journey through the wilderness; their river Jordan; their promise of a rest in Canaan; their entrance into it; their city Jerusalem; their mount Zion; their captivity in Babylon, and their deliverance thence. Other incidents were taken notice of; such as the rebellion of some of them; their falling in the wilderness; their judgments; their reformations; the special government under which they lived; the rewards and punishments. The authority of the christian apostles was adduced in support of these facts; such as Paul's comments in the 10th of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians; his letter to the Hebrews every where.

These remarks and illustrations were merely introductory to the portions of scripture read. We then proceeded to demonstrate the fact that

the captivity of Israel was in all its prominent features a type of the present state of the christian world. This was proved,

1st. From the fact that Paul declares *twice* in his 1st. Epistle to the Corinthians that these things (which happened to them) were types to us. Chap. x. 6. "Now those things have become *types* or examples to us." And verse 11. "Now all these things happened unto them as types or examples, and are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages are come."

2d. From the fact that John, in the Revelation, transfers the very name of the people or city of captivity of the Jews to the city of our captivity, and to the state in which we are; and calls our spoilers and captivators *Babylon the Great*. There is a *spiritual* Sodom, Egypt, and Babylon. See Revelations, chapters xi. and xvii.

3d. From an analysis of the second chapter of the 2d Epistle to the Thessalonians. This led to an exposition of the more prominent features of the countenance of the *Man of Sin* and *Son of Perdition*. That he was not a political, but a politico-ecclesiastical personage, was shown from his sitting, not on a civil tribunal, but in the temple of God; and from the term MYSTERY in capitals upon his forehead. That his impious assumption of the character of God, consisted essentially, in his claiming dominion over the faith or consciences of men, and a homage from men due to God alone.

In speaking of the Woman of Sin, viz. the *Mother of Harlots*, as well as of the Man of Sin; we did not confine either him or her to the walls of Papal Rome; but very briefly it was remarked, that although "THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS" might live in the *great city*, yet her *daughters* had married and left her; in plain English, that every council ecclesiastic which assumed the right of dominion over the faith and conscience, and claimed titles of homage, such as REVEREND, &c. or any attribute of power or honor which belonged to God alone, was a legitimate descendant, daughter, or grand daughter of the woman on whose forehead was written, "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH," cautiously avoiding offence, as some of her progeny were present. I went on to demonstrate, from our own experience and observation, independent of the sacred testimonies, that we were now in Babylon. Waving all advantages which might have been derived from the time, and times, and the dividing of time; the three years and a half, the forty-two months, the 1260 days, the accordant emblems of 1260 years; their commencement and termination—waving a hundred minor evidences likewise of the fact, the attention of the audience was confined to *three* obvious proofs, viz—

1st. The confusion of religious speech now existing, analogous to the confusion of speech at Babel, and the confounding or mixing the language of Canaan with the language of Ashdod during the captivity; our

creeds, systems, sermons, and scholastic terms, mingled with some biblical terms, terminating in an almost general ignorance of the sacred writings, and an impossibility of understanding the holy oracles, were just noticed illustrative of the exact analogy between us and the Jews while in Babylon.

2d. The almost total deprivation of the consolations of the christian religion, apparent in our private capacities and in our public meetings, in our individual experience, and in our social interviews; the melancholy and gloom; the prayers and feelings of the religious, expressed in the 137th psalm; in short, all the grand characteristics of our state, as respects the enjoyments of the religion we profess in its public institutions, and in its personal and family benefits, are exactly correspondent to the state of the Jews during their captivity. An appeal was here made to the experience and the prayers of the pious, predicated on the first six verses of the 137th psalm.

3d. The intercommunity with the world, the mingling of religion and politics, the alliance of church and state, either in the European forms or by the more specious incorporations of these United States, the almost general conformity to the world in all its frivolities, in the gratification of all those appetites, passions and propensities, purely animal, so common amongst christians; the great neglect, the very general neglect of the christian education of the youth, and the consequent irreligion and evil morals of many of the children of christian parents, are similar to the intermarriages between the Babylonians and the Israelites, and the almost universal assimilation of the children of those unauthorised marriages to the children of Chaldea. Thus, from the confusion of religious speech, the absence of the christian institutions and the enjoyments dependent on their observance, and the deterioration of christian morals by an almost exact conformity to the course of this world, being the antitypes of the confusion of the Hebrew language in Chaldea, the absence of the temple and its worship, and the amalgamation of the Hebrews and Babylonians by marriage and familiarity, was argued the fact that we are yet in Babylon, agreeably to the scripture declarations and evidences before mentioned.

Having found ourselves in Babylon, having seen the almost exact agreement of the types and antitypes, we were led to inquire why the Jews were carried captive into Babylon, that we might in the analogy find a proof or evidence assigned in the New Testament why christians are in spiritual Babylon. We found that the Jews had broken God's covenant with them as a nation, by which he had engaged to be their king and protector, and that in consequence he had permitted their temple to be burned, their city to be laid waste, their land to be turned into a desert, and themselves to be slaves to Pagan sovereigns. And so with the antitype. The christians departed from the new covenant. The threatenings declared by Jesus Christ to the seven congregations in Asia have been executed. The Lord Jesus has been disregarded as king,

and his institutes forsaken. Other church covenants have been formed; other authorities have been acknowledged; other lawgivers have been obeyed, and other apostles than those sent by Jesus, have been enthroned in our hearts. Therefore are we in Babylon.

Their return is a type of ours, else the system of types is defective and fails of perfection. Cyrus made a proclamation: liberty was granted by the state in which they were enslaved. The civil powers now are relenting, and our government has given us the liberty and acknowledged our right to be governed in our consciences by the Great King. The proclamation by Cyrus was not more friendly to the return of the Jews to their own land and laws, than is the constitution and laws of these United States. The time has arrived that the return should be commenced.

But how is it to be effected? was next proposed. Both the doctrine of the types of the New Testament agree—

1st. The Jews confessed their Sins. See Nehemiah ix. 6. They said, "O Lord, many years didst thou forbear our fathers, and testifiedst against them, by thy Spirit in thy prophets (as he has to us by his Spirit in the apostles,) yet would they not give ear." "Neither have our kings, our princes, our priests, nor our fathers kept thy law, nor hearkened unto thy commandments and thy testimonies wherewith thou didst testify against them."

2d. But they did not only confess their sins. They personally reformed; they reformed their family discipline; they returned unto the Lord with all their heart.

3d. They gave the people the law in its original import.

4th. And they solemnly engaged, as a society, to walk in God's law, which was given by their lawgiver, and "to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord our God, and his judgments and his statutes." See Nehemiah x. 29. Let us go and do likewise, as respects our King, his laws, commandments and statutes.

We were then led to consider the parts of Nehemiah read, as typical of the difficulties, reproaches, and opposition which must be encountered by those who undertake to rebuild the city and the temple.

Such were the outlines of an oration, designed to shew that the ancient order of things must be restored, and that the way is marked out, not only in the apostolic writings and prophecies, but also fully exhibited in the typical people. These outlines you may consider and fill up at your leisure. But should you neglect this, remember the command of the Lord our King. "Come, out of her, my people, that ye may not be partakers of her sins, and that you may not receive of her plagues."

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## LETTER FROM A SCEPTIC, WITH THE REPLY.

Dear Sir,

You will, no doubt, be surprised at receiving a letter from one who is entirely unknown to you;—nothing but considerations of the deepest interest to myself, could have induced me to address you in this manner: I do it to obtain information from you, on the subject of *christianity*; and I anxiously hope, if time will permit you, that you will have the kindness to comply with my request. That you may understand my case rightly, I will state it as fully and clearly as I can.

Impelled by the death-bed injunctions of a beloved mother, and the necessity for living a religious life, I seriously determined on leaving my evil habits while young, and endeavouring to have religion firmly seated in my heart—fearful, that if I deferred it until a later period of life, vice might attract my affections, and I would end my life in sorrow, I therefore, strove against any improper desires, avoided bad company and bad books, read my Bible and such books as I thought beneficial; attended public worship; and sought for divine aid in private devotion. I had been irresistably led on, by the importance of religion, in my endeavours to attain it, although I had never experienced one feeling of repentance. This made me unhappy. I saw some rejoicing in religion, who had once trembled in despair; I envied their feelings: but could not enjoy them—a colness and apathy made me insensible to both the threatenings and promises of the gospel; all my endeavours to shake off this lethargy from my mind, were either unavailing, or if successful, it was but for the moment—despair, or any thing to have excited my feelings, would have been a relief from this unhappy state of mind. I at last concluded to avail myself of the advice and encouragement of the pious. I had examined the principle of several sects, and settled in a preference of the Methodist church, of which I became a member. I had continued in that nearly a year, seeking the Divine favor and anxiously desiring that my stubborn heart might be changed; but still I remained unrelieved. I was not alarmed for my safety—nor was I panting for the river of life; but yet, was most anxious that I should be. I now began to conclude there was some radical defect in the grounds of my faith, and determined to look again at the evidences by which the bible was supported as a revelation from heaven. While reflecting, one day, on the subject of the truth of revealed religion, a thought occurred to me with peculiar force: it was, Whether the Deity would have created any being and placed him in such a situation in which it was possible for him to make himself deserving of *eternal* torment. My view of the character of Deity indu-

ced me to believe he would not—and from this I was led strongly to doubt the divinity of the Bible. From further reflections on the prescience of Deity, many considerations of like nature were urged upon my mind. I thought that as the greatest degree of happiness, was the only object of creation, the design of the Almighty would have failed, if, as the scripture authorize us to believe, a majority of mankind will be forever damned: that his goodness would not have rested the decision of such an inconceivably important question, with so weak and corrupt a being as man, and who was, moreover, placed in circumstances which so strangely nourished a distaste for the duties which the Bible enjoins. I thought that as the Deity was the *first* cause of all things, he was responsible for all things, especially for *evil* as he possessed a greater power to prevent it than the *immediate cause*, and if so, he could not punish any of his creatures with *eternal* misery; that if man was accountable for his actions to the awful extent mentioned in the Bible, *free will* would be a curse instead of a blessing; that if our maker was *ALMIGHTY* he could have created *universal* happiness, and to this end I conceived every thing in nature had a direct tendency—I could reconcile the evils we felt here, as necessary to our peculiar state of existence: but could not satisfy myself of the necessity or justice of *God's* punishing a being, eternally, for the effects of a weakness in which he was born. Punishment, I thought, should be proportioned to criminality: but in inflicting eternal punishment for temporal crimes, this principle of justice is violated. Could the God of compassion have sat on his throne of untroubled felicity, whilst a being whom he had called into existence, who would have never been *liable* to pain but for *him*, was enduring the pains of hell fire! And besides these it appeared to me inconsistent with the Deity to require from us, *on pain of damnation* if we failed, implicit belief in an account of transactions which occurred several thousand years ago, (and considering the imperfect medium through which information was communicated from one age to another,) and of which it required the utmost stretch of intelligence to comprehend even the probability. I have thought that if there is a place of reward and punishment, my destiny is foreseen by the Omniscient eye, and nothing which I can do, will alter it.

If these thoughts are correct, I will be obliged to abandon the book I was learned to love, and the profession I felt bound to make; I must draw down upon my head both the pity and the censure of society, and the tears of afflicted friends. If they are erroneous, I beg you to explain them, for my satisfaction, as soon as it is convenient for you to attend to it. If convinced of the truth of the Bible, I feel desirous to take up the cross and bear the burden and heat of the day. More than myself may be benefitted by an answer to this—

and I shall ever remain

Your grateful friend,

## REPLY TO A LETTER FROM A SCEPTIC.

Dear Sir,

ALTHOUGH I saw the word "*private*" at the head of your communication, I have made it *public* in one sense. I shall, however, keep it *private* as far as respects the author until the injunction is removed. The reason why I give publicity to a private letter is, because it may be of no injury to the author, while the injunction is virtually regarded by me. I conceive the difficulties, however you may have been entrammelled with them, as not peculiarly your own, and whether I may succeed in removing them, I doubt not but the very effort may be of general use. I can easily conceive of your difficulties before you joined, and while you were in connexion with the Methodistic society. You were too *rational* to become a downright enthusiast, and not *rational* enough to begin at the right place in examining the evidences of the christian religion. You are not to imagine that I suppose all Methodists are enthusiasts, very far from it. I would be glad, however, that there were no Calvinistic enthusiasts. But I know that there are many "seeking for religion," who find a sort of religion that does not wear well; a whole suit of it will become thread bare in a few months. I have seen the elbows looking out of some new suits in less than the regular wear of seven days. I know also that there is a possibility of keeping a suit of this sort *decent* for a good while; but then it must be worn only on Sundays, and only while at meeting. It must be hung up in the wardrobe all the week and brushed on Sunday morning in time for meeting.

The method of teaching those "who seek for religion" among the Methodists, is no better than that practised by other religious sects. The New Testament is not, neither can it be developed on any such a system. The Divine attestations to the truth of christianity, the miracles and prophecies, with all the thousand of internal evidences are not opened to the minds of the hearers. Hence there is more religion in the *blood*, than in the heart or head, of those who begin in the flesh, and think to end in the spirit.

But I cannot see how your difficulties could make you a Deist. This would be a most *irrational* conclusion. I can easily see how you might become an *Universalist*; but there is no connexion between your difficulties and Deism. Do you ask me, for why? I will tell you: your difficulties never could have existed, but for the belief of the truths revealed in the Bible—Do you say *what truths*? I answer, you believe,

1st. That there is one self existent independent eternal God.

2d. That the world was *created by Him*.

3d. That you have within you an immortal spirit.

4th. That there will be an end or termination of this present state of things.

5th. That there will be a future state of rewards, if not of punishments.

You admit all these to be unquestionable truths. I ask; upon what

evidence? Not by the testimony of your five senses—for they give no revelation of this kind; all they can tell you is that all nature concurs in attesting these truths. But, remember well, they do not *originate* in your mind these truths—else all nations, all tribes and tongues would be in possession of them, which you know, if you know any thing of history, is not at all the fact. All the ideas you have by the five senses are the mere images of *sensible* objects, or objects of sense: but on subjects that are not objects of sense they give you no information.—Hence the deaf know nothing of sounds—Hence the blind know nothing of colours. The reason is, the other senses give no information of any kind but what belongs to them, consequently all the senses are limited by things material and mundane; consequently can give no information on things spiritual, such as God, human spirits, heaven, &c. These truths then, however Deists may boast, are all borrowed from the Bible. Hence there is not a *rational* Deist in the universe.

Nor can you rationally, from your statement of difficulties, become an Universalist. If one point were conceded to you, perhaps you might. But then this is a point which no man can ever concede, as a man. I can sympathize with you here, because I was once embarrassed between this Scylla and Charybdis. I shall first state your capital difficulty, and then this point. Your capital difficulty is, “Whether the Deity would have created any being, and placed him in such a situation, in which it was possible for him to make himself deserving of eternal torment.” This difficulty arose in your mind, as you state, from your views of the character of the Deity. Now the question is, whether a being perfectly righteous himself; suppose for example, a seraph of greater capacity than you, and of uncontaminated purity, might not, from *his view of the Divine character*, find a greater difficulty to reconcile than yours, upon the hypothesis that God rewarded the wicked with endless felicity: or in other words, that *he should originate a system in which it was possible for any rational creature to become corrupt, and yet this corruption be no barrier in the way of his rising to eternal glory and felicity*. You will readily perceive that this *supposed* difficulty of a seraph, and your *real* difficulty, have to encounter one and the same fact, viz. that God has created rational beings which some way or another have become corrupt. This you must admit, or identify virtue and vice, truth and falsehood, benevolence and malevolence; in one word, moral good and moral evil—We all know that, to a *criminal*, mercy is the most darling attribute in his judge: but to a sinless being, justice, inflexible justice, is the most delightful perfection. And here another question arises, whether the government of God, (for God is a *governor* as well as a *creator*,) should be conducted on such principles as to meet the difficulties of those creatures lowest in intellect, and immersed in crime; or the difficulties of those most exalted in capacity, and of unsullied purity.

But this question is out of my way; for this is not the point to which I had reference. We all know from experience, that a system of government

which is based upon *rewards* and *punishments*, is the most *beneficial to the present state of society*. Now it must be decided, before we proceed to your difficulty as a real one; whether future rewards and punishments may not be most *beneficial to the future state of society*. But if this question is to be decided without our observation and experience, it must be decided upon mere theory, and such a decision, we know from experience, is, until tested by experience, unsafe. But your difficulty rests upon what is not proved to be a fact, and which cannot by any mortal man be proved to be a fact, viz. that *punishment will not be beneficial to society in a future state*. Your difficulty then is a purely theoretic one, and not one predicated upon any known fact; consequently can be of no real importance in deciding either upon the evidences of revelation, or upon its meaning.

But still I am not come to the point which I had proposed. I will now state it. For the sake of argument then, I will admit that before any creature was made, the result, or final termination of all things, on the present plan of things, was as perfectly well known to the creator as it will be in any future period, and also that any other possible result on any other plan, was just as well known. The question then with the Creator was, if we dare suppose him either in deliberation, or in suspense on the question, which plan was best to adopt; which plan of creation shall I adopt? If any, the plan which was actually adopted, as the fact proves. But it might have been proposed as a difficulty; If the plan adopted, with perfect prescience, was the best which possibly could be adopted, then a final question might occur, whether it were better to create or not to create, admitting the result to have been clearly foreseen? The fact proves, that to the OMNISCIENT ONE it appeared most advisable to create. Now, you will observe upon the premises before us, that it is conceded that the actual state of things now existing, was the best possible state in which they could exist, *with a reference unto all final results*. It may then, in the spirit of true devotion, and genuine humility, be affirmed that God COULD NOT, *with a reference to all final results*, give birth to a more perfect system of things than the present. In other words, God could not make an *infallible fallible* creature. Now before your difficulty becomes too heavy for the strength of an ordinary mind, it must be proved, that God could have given birth to a system in which moral evil could find no place, and in which there would be *no need of a governor*, and that he did not. But no living man can show that this is the fact; consequently your difficulty is one in which imagination is solely or chiefly concerned, and not reason nor fact. It must then be conceded that God could, in reference to all results, have given birth to a better system, or to one in which moral evil could have no place, and that he did not, before you have any grounds on which to constitute a plea. Again, such a system would have forever precluded the possibility of any creature-being happy: because the knowledge of God is essential to the happiness of a rational creature; and if God had given birth to a system,

which in its very nature excluded the possibility of evil, it would have also excluded the possibility of his being a governor. a creator he might have been, but a governor he could not have been; and unless exhibited as a governor, no rational creature ever could have known him in that way essential to happiness. These principles being apprehended, it follows, that if God had not given birth to a system in which it was possible for some to be miserable hereafter, it would have been impossible to have given birth to a system in which any could have been eternally and perfectly happy.

I am decidedly of the opinion that there is not one rational objection can be adduced against any thing in the Bible. All these objections which, have a show of reason are but evidences of the weakness of the objector, and of the influence of prejudice and evil habits. It is very hard to convince a person against his will, and it requires no great ingenuity to propose such difficulties upon any subject as no wise man could answer. Yet this will not prove that the difficulties or objections are reasonable. It only shows that no man knows every thing—It may be necessary for me to state that I do not conceive that you are actuated by any other than the most sincere intentions in your communication, and that I feel a sanguine hope of being able to remove your objections; for I feel as able to prove that the Bible is from God, as that the sun is the workmanship of his hands. A sceptic might as successfully attempt to convince me that men made the sun, as that they invented the Bible.

Your obedient servant. —

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REPLY—No. II.

*Dear Sir,*

In my last I paid some attention to your first great difficulty. Such remarks were made upon it as, I conceive, prove it to be an *unreasonable* difficulty. One in which imagination, wild and uncontrolled, was wholly concerned, and in which reason has nothing to do. I now proceed to consider the next sentence in your letter. It is this,—“ My view of the character of Deity induced me to believe he would not, (have created any being, and placed him in such a situation in which it was possible for him to make himself deserving of eternal torment) and from this I was led strongly to doubt the Divinity of the Bible.” In this sentence you proceed upon a principle which is inadmissible. You represent yourself as having certain views of the character of Deity, so independent of the Bible, as that you are constrained rather to reject the Bible than your “ views of the character of Deity !” Your views of the character of Deity are not then derived from the Bible; for it would be absurd, as you will admit, for a person who derived all the light he ever enjoyed from the sun, to say, that his views of light were such as to induce him to believe that the sun could not be the fountain of it, because it was not clearer, without intermission, or omnipresent, &c. &c. Your views then of the character of Deity are so correct, that rather than abandon them you would abandon the Bible. You doubt the Divinity of the Bi-

ble, because, as you understand it, it opposes or clashes with your views of the Divine character. Very well, indeed! In my last I demonstrated in part, that you could not know that there is but one self-existent, independent, and eternal God, but from the Bible. But here you advance one step farther than even lord Herbert, who, by seeing one miracle, was enabled to disbelieve all miracles! You have got a character of Deity some where, that annihilates the Divinity of the Bible. Tell me, my friend, where did you obtain this character? From the exercise of your five senses, which some call the exercise of reason?

I shall try what sort of a character I could form of Deity from my five senses, controlled by reason, after I was told that there is but one God. I suppose myself in possession of the truth that there is *but one God*, without ever hearing a word of a single attribute he possessed; and then, I set about to form a character for him: or, which is the same thing, to endeavour by the exercise of my five senses on the things around me, guided by my reason, to attain correct views of his character. Suppose I began my enquiries on the first of April, 1800, when I was five years old. That morning I was told for the first time that there was a God who made all things. What sort of a being he was, nobody would tell me. I went to work to find him out. I was told he had made all things; but not knowing how long since, I could not tell any thing about him from the things made, because I could not tell how much they might have been changed since he made them. I stumbled at the threshold, and fell into despair just at the beginning of my enquiries. I went back to my guide and told him he must tell me one item more, before I could learn any thing about this one God. But before I thought, I had proposed a dozen of questions. Where did he live? Did he concern himself any more with the world after he made it? Has he committed it to other agents? Who are they? Is the sun one, the moon another, the winds a third, the clouds a fourth? Has he done creating yet? Does he not make more water, more wind, more earth, more animals, &c. &c. &c. Thus I had thronged upon the ear of my preceptor a score of questions. He replied, I told you there is one God who made all things, and that is enough to introduce him to your acquaintance, if you reason right; but as you are a little stupid, I will tell you that he made all things, six thousand years ago, and still governs them; but I will tell you no more until you have found out his character yourself. I made a second effort. By the end of April, I had seen the peach-trees and the apple tree, all in blossom, and the young fruit, of which I was very fond, began to exhibit itself as the blossoms fell off. But up came the north wind one night, and something called frost came behind it, and in one night all the fruit was destroyed. I looked with great fury in my eyes at this monstrous hard hearted north wind, which prostrated all my hopes. I blessed the south wind and cursed the north.—But on reflection, said I, there is but one God, who made all things and governs all. Now he must have sent the south wind for these two weeks past and cherished

all these millions of blossoms, and then he must have sent up Mr. Bo-reas with his cold blasts and swept them all to ruin. Thought I, he is a very changeable and whimsical being this, who puts himself to so much trouble to make young apples and peaches, and then, in a moment, or fit of passion, because I *lied* the other day, turn right round and destroy them every one; and how unjust he is to make all my brothers and sisters, my uncles and aunts to want apples and peaches a whole year because I *told a lie*. Enraged by my own reasonings, I ran to my cages, and nests of young birds, and found them all frozen to death. Thinks I, what a *cruel* God this is who has killed all these dear little innocent birds just because he got angry with me. I thought, the other day, he was very good, when every thing was smiling around me; but now he appears most whimsical, notionate, cruel, and unjust. I was going back to my informant with a score of new questions, but he frowned me from his presence, and said he would not tell me one word more: if you can not make out, for yourself, a character for the Deity, said he, you must wait till you grow old and can reason better. So my enquiries stopped, and I settled down in the opinion that God was either not almighty; that winds and rains were stronger than he, or that he was the most irrational, and whimsical being in the universe: sometimes kind and sometimes cruel, as he pleased.

Early impressions and first views have a great influence upon the reasoning powers in subsequent life; and these impressions of the character of Deity, drawn from the destruction of the apples and peaches, and the destruction of my young birds and chickens, remained for many years. If others could have reasoned better, or had other data to reason upon, they might have come to different conclusions, but these were the best I could command. I began to read geography at the age of thirteen, and astronomy came in my way. When I read of different climates and their effects upon the human family, I thought that God was either not the wisest being, the most powerful, nor the most impartial. I thought if he made the whole earth he might have made it alike fertile, salubrious, and comfortable, if he had been omniscient and omnipotent. If he could and did not, I thought he was very partial and unjust, arbitrary and unreasonable.

“The frozen Iceland and sunburn’d Moor,”

both told a strange story, and reflected much upon their Maker. I saw a good deal of order in the revolutions of the heavenly bodies: but I saw, or thought I saw, a good deal of disorder, of doing and undoing. Astronomers had told me that some stars had disappeared from the heavens, having been struck and consumed by blazing comets, and I began to fear that one of those comets might in a fit of anger, strike our wooden country and burn it up. That if other stars had shone for thousands of years and were consumed, I could find no reason why our planet might not be subject to a similar fate, from some freak of a mad comet. And as the Deity allowed a system of destruction to follow up a system of pro-

vidence and preservation, I could not tell but this was his darling pleasure, to be always creating and always destroying. I read something in geography of different nations having different gods; gods of the hills and of the vallies, of the mountains and of the plains, of the seas and of the rivers, of the winds and of the other elements; and thought this explained many difficulties—I was just reconciling my difficulties growing out of the destruction of my apples, and peaches, and chickens, upon the hypothesis that there was a plurality of gods; that they had been quarrelling amongst themselves; that the god of the north wind had, in a rencounter, gained a triumph over the god of the south wind, &c. But while I was thus meditating, I opened a page in the travels of Curosus, who was describing an Asiatic islander carving, a branch of the bread-tree into a little poetical God; which he was to invoke when he became hungry. This occurrence drove me into scepticism upon the doctrine of a plurality of gods: and so I resumed my early prepossessions in favor of but one God.

In the midst of my excursions in quest of the Divine character, I was struck dumb with an occurrence in my own neighbourhood. I had been just concluding that God was *perhaps* a benevolent being, when I was told of the death of an idiot who had lived twenty years in idiotism, and worn to a skeleton by epilepsy, while his brothers and sisters were all *compos mentis*, intelligent, healthy, and affluent. Thought I, this is a proof that God is partial and unreasonably cruel, for it had been a maxim with me that he that is unjust in a little, is unjust, as well as he that is unjust in much; and if God could for twenty years thus punish one of a family and bless all the rest, I could neither tell what he was in himself, or what he might or could do.

If I have reasoned wrong, it was the best I could reason on the data before me; and while I found others reasoning differently on the same data, and on different data, I was led to question whether there was any such thing as a reasonable being; and thus in attempting to find out by reason a character for God, I was likely to find no character for man, but that he was a central point of contradictions.—So Inquisitas tells his story.

Now, my friend, your views of the Divine character, independent of the divinity of the Bible, are not worth one grain of sand. And every system of scepticism founded upon the Divine attributes, and of religion at variance with the Bible facts, is a mere spider's web, woven out of its own bowels, and designed only to catch flies.

I know our colleges are schools of scepticism, and that pure deism is taught, in one department, in every college in Europe and America, wherever natural religion is taught. But so much for your view of the Divine character at present, on account of which you are compelled to reject the divinity of the Bible. In this you resemble a child, who says it would rather have the light of a glow-worm than that of the sun.

Your friend,

## REPLY—No. III.

Dear Sir,

IN again reading your letter, I have already, I perceive, got my lever under the heavier end of your difficulties. What you next say is rather a farther developement of those noticed, than a detail of new ones. I will, however, still prosecute the subject farther, and pay a due regard to those sentences which exhibit your difficulties in a new, or in a stronger light.

There is, in all the productions of sceptical writers which I have seen, a singular confounding of things revealed with their own reasonings. More than half the time their premises are in the Bible, while they are cavilling against it. You seem to have fallen into the same predicament. The sentence in your letter, next to those I have examined, is of this character. It reads thus:—"I thought, that as the greatest degree of happiness was the only object of creation, the design of the Almighty would have failed, if as the scriptures authorize us to believe, a majority of mankind will be forever damned."

Let me now ask you, How did you come to think that the greatest degree of happiness was the only object of creation? If not from the Bible—from what source? It will serve no purpose to say, "*By reasoning;*" for this is but a mere excuse for plagiarism. For a man might as rationally propose to create something out of nothing, as to propose to reason without something to reason upon. And now I ask you, for your own conviction, *Upon what* were you reasoning, when you came to the conclusion that "the greatest degree of happiness was the only object of creation?" Upon something in the Bible, I conjecture; for there is nothing out of it from which this can be legitimately inferred on principles of reason.

The grave terminates all reasonings about happiness. No person can look beyond it without the telescope of faith—without the Bible. Now no man can *rationally* conclude from all that passes from the cradle to the grave, that "the greatest degree of happiness was the only object of creation." If there be a truth in the Bible which human experience approves, it is this, "*the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain.*" I positively deny that there is any such data afforded in the material world, from which any man can legitimately conclude, that "the greatest degree of happiness was the *only* object of creation." In fact, all human experience is to the contrary of such a conclusion; for no one in this life ever tasted one drop of the *greatest degree of happiness*; and how, in the name of the whole five senses, could he conclude, either from his observation or experience, that the *greatest* degree of happiness was the *only* object of creation! From this, methinks, you may see that you are indebted to the Bible, either understood, or misunderstood, for your premises; and that there is no logical connexion between your premises and your conclusions.

But again—You *add* to the Bible with as little ceremony as you bor-

row from it, without acknowledging the debt. Pray where does "the Bible authorize you to believe that a majority of mankind will be forever damned?" This may be a fact; and it may be admitted without in the least invalidating the truth of the Bible. For no man can argue from the fact that there are *ten* times more blossoms in spring than apples in autumn, that the world is not under the government of God. But without questioning the truth of such a termination of things, I ask, Where does the Bible authorize such a belief? That in past ages, or in the present, a majority of mankind have walked in the *broad way*, and but few comparatively in the *narrow way*, may be admitted as a Bible truth; and yet it will by no means follow that a majority of mankind will be forever damned, for one or two substantial reasons: For any thing you or I know, all the human beings that have yet lived may be as a drop out of a bucket, in comparison of the whole human family. Again—Of the millions of human beings that have been born, one-third, at least, have died in infancy, concerning the eternal destiny of whom the Bible says just not one word. But that a period of many generations is yet to come, in which the knowledge of God shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, the Bible explicitly declares; and concerning what numerical proportion of the whole human family shall be saved, the Bible says not one word. Of the saved it says, "they shall be an exceeding great number, which no man can number," and this is more than it says of the *number* which shall be cast off into hell. You will see that I determine nothing about the comparative number, but only say that you have no scriptural authority for believing that a majority of the whole human family will be eternally damned. I would add that in reasoning against, or in calling in question, the divine authority of a book to which yourself, and all intelligent persons, are obviously indebted for every correct view of the invisible and future world, it behoves you not to reason from conjectures, or ill-formed views, which are predicated upon mere imagination. But as I before said, nothing can be inferred from the *numbers* saved or lost against the divinity of the book, from mere principles of reason.

The subsequent part of this period is engrossed in my *Reply*, No. 1. You add, "I thought that as the Deity was the first cause of all things, he was responsible for all things, especially for evil, as he possessed a greater power to prevent it than the *immediate cause*; and, if so, he could not punish any of his creatures with eternal misery."

When you talk of the Deity being *reponsible*, you lose sight of the essential attribute of Deity. A Supreme can neither be responsible nor accountable; for responsibility and accountability imply dependence. To whom can a Supreme be responsible? An independent dependant being is no greater contradiction than a responsible Supreme. To whom could the creator be responsible for creating so much sea, so much cold, so much darkness, so many reptiles, so many monsters in the ocean,

so many conflicting and jarring elements in this material system? If to his creatures, then he is like them; if not to them, to none.

Some talk of his preventing *moral evil* by an exertion of almighty power; of his having "greater power to prevent it than the immediate cause;" of his being stronger than Satan. But all such notions, if they have any foundation at all, are built upon the most palpable inattention to *rational* nature. And here I would affirm that it is impossible to conceive of a rational creature of an *infallible* nature. But in affirming this, I am brought to the shore of an immense ocean, where weak heads are sure to be drowned. Let us try whether we can swim a short distance in sight of land.

Let us then try an hypothesis of this sort, viz. Suppose that all those beings called angels, of which you have doubtless heard, had been created infallible creatures. What then? None of them *could* have become Satan. But what next? None of them *could* have been capable of *moral good*. For it is essential to moral good, that the agent act freely according to the last dictate, or the best dictate, of his understanding. Moisture is not more essential to vegetation, than this liberty of acting according to the views or feelings of the agent is to moral good. Please consider, that if a rational being be created *incapable* of *disobeying*, he must, *on that very account*, be incapable of *obeying*. He then acts like a mill wheel, in the motions of which there is no choice; no virtue, no vice, no moral good, no moral evil. A little reflection is all that is wanting to see that a race of beings created incapable of disobeying, (*i. e. infallible*,) are as incapable of moral good or moral evil; of virtue or vice; of rewards or punishments; of happiness or misery, as the stones of the field. There are some things impossible to Omnipotence. Hills cannot be made without vallies; shadows, without substances; nor rational beings, without free agency. "It is impossible for God to lie." It is impossible to create a being that shall be capable of obeying, and at the same time incapable of disobeying. If then, an order of beings had been created, amongst which it was impossible for any one to become Satan, it would have been as impossible for any one of them to be either morally good, virtuous or happy. So ends the first hypothesis. And who can bring it to any other issue?

Let us try another. Suppose that, when one or more of those beings called angels had disobeyed and fallen, that he had been annihilated by an exertion of almighty power. Physical power triumphs over an evil agent. What next? *Moral evil is subdued only by moral means*. Therefore the possibility of its recurrence in the same order of beings is not prevented. To prevent its recurrence in the same order of beings, a mere display of physical energy is insufficient; wisdom must be displayed as well as power; goodness and justice must be exhibited as well as omnipotence. To have crushed the first rebel by an immediate display of simple omnipotence would not have prevented the rebellion of others; it would not have been godlike, but it would have been in the

style of mortals, who, when foiled in one department of energies, seek redress in another.

To launch out into the developement of views purely metaphysical in order to correct metaphysical errors, is at best only calculated to create a distrust in those visionary problems, on which some build as firmly as if on the Rock of Ages. I never wish to establish any one point in this way; but I desire to throw a caveat in the way of those who are willing to risk eternity itself upon a visionary problem.

How "God's possessing a greater power to prevent moral evil than its immediate cause, prevents his punishing any creature for his evil actions," is to me altogether unintelligible. No father would reason thus with respect to a disobedient child. God has power to prevent A from killing B; ought he not therefore to ordain the death of A, or inflict any punishment on A for killing B? We sometimes reason on such principles against the ways of God as would condemn every human being.

But leaving this ocean of speculation (for my head aches,) let us approach the shore. Moral evil exists as sure as we exist. From all that we can reason on its origin, nothing can be concluded against the divinity of the Bible. The Bible is the only book in the world which pretends to give us a history of its origin, progress, and cure. We do know that it exists; for of this we have indubitable testimony, and there is nothing repugnant to reason in the sacred history of its origin, which is simply this: God made rational beings of different orders, that is, beings capable of obeying and disobeying his will, without which capacity we have seen they could be neither virtuous nor vicious, happy nor miserable. Those beings were necessarily created under a law. One or more of them disobeyed that rule of action. This first act of disobedience was the first moral evil in the universe. God did not immediately destroy it, as we have seen, and as the Bible testifies. It is in the nature of moral evil to multiply its exhibitions. This it has done. And God has adopted a course of government adapted to its nature, which the Bible unfolds, and at which some men cavil. This is an additional proof of its nature and existence. He has devised and revealed a remedy for those laboring under its consequences. Those who receive the remedy are cured. Those who do not, remain under its influence.

Now what other or more rational history of moral evil can be given? Nay, is there any history of it besides the Bible history in the world. What can—what does Deism present? Is there a slippery *perhaps* on the subject, in all their systems? Does not Deism make God as directly and immediately the author of moral evil as of moral good? Is not men's aptitude to it called by them *nature*. Yes, the course of human nature. And whether they represent man as springing from the ground as a mushroom, or as the fortuitous concurrence of atoms, do they not view him as just the same being now that he was when he first opened his eyes, or from a vegetable began to have the power of locomotion?

To those who are modest enough to question their own capacity to

decide on all things supernatural, invisible, in heaven, earth, and hades, with infallible certainty, I doubt not but the Bible account will appear at least *rational*; and I am now, and I hope always will be, able to prove that any other account, theory, or conjecture different therefrom, is just as futile and as childish as the schoolboy's theory of the earth, which made the globe rest on the back of a large turtle, but could find nothing for the turtle to stand upon.

You shall, God willing, hear still farther from your friend.

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REPLY—No. IV.

Dear Sir,

You say that "if our Maker was *almighty*, he could have created universal happiness." But his works prove him almighty, and experience shews that he has not created *universal* happiness. You in this instance therefore, argue against both observation and experience. But you add, "To this end, (i. e. *universal* happiness,) I conceived every thing in nature had a direct tendency." What "*direct* tendency" you can see between idiotism, decrepitude, penury, disease, and all the evils of the brute creation, towards *universal* happiness in this state, I cannot conjecture; and if you take into view a *future* state, you then admit the very truth at which your scepticism revolts. But what is no less strange, you say you are "able to reconcile the evils we feel here as necessary to our peculiar state of existence." This is like a person saying he is able to carry two hundred pounds upon his shoulders, but adds he is unable to carry  *fifty*. You talk of a *peculiar* state of existence *here*; but when you reject the divinity of the Bible, where do you learn of *any other* than this *peculiar* state of existence *here*? Another state of existence *hereafter* is a Bible truth, but not one which can be derived from any other source.

I aim at no more in these remarks than to convince you that your whole style and sentiment is at variance with your doubt. The grand principles are already laid down which shew your difficulties to be *unreasonable*, and emerging from an unchastened imagination. In the same style you affirm, "Punishment, I thought, should be proportioned to criminality: but in inflicting eternal punishment, for temporal crimes the principle of justice is violated." What that principle of justice is I know not, which teaches us that a man should be punished no longer than the precise time he sins, or that if an offence is committed in one minute the punishment should be of no longer continuance. This is precisely the force of your objection. For the idea of punishment being *longer* than the time of sinning is that which staggers you. It would, therefore, be a violation of this "principle of justice" to confine a man in a penitentiary for eighteen years for a crime which he perpetrated in half an hour. On this "principle of justice" it would be unreasonable to cut off a man's life for ever from the earth for an action which he committed in one minute. Men are in the habit of "punishing eternal;

ly" their fellow creatures for "temporal crimes." For when A kills B, he is by his peers and the laws of his country, punished with an *eternal separation* from the whole human race existing upon the earth. But on *this your "principle of justice,"* this is a gross violation of all right. But again, there is another sophism in the terms "temporal crimes." I know of none such; for as to the time in which any action, good or bad, is a-finishing, it is nothing. For instance; A kills B. Now B is in a moment cut off from all his relatives. His children lose him once for all. The effects of this murder are eternal; or, in other words, the children of B are ever deprived of their father, and B himself is forever deprived of his life by an action which was perpetrated perhaps in a minute. The consequences are eternal, and not temporal; and therefore it is out of all propriety to talk of "temporal crimes." It would require more logic than I presume, is possessed by all the colleges in your state to shew or prove on fair principles, that there is any crime temporal, in your sense of the words, or that there is any crime committed, the consequences of which are not eternal.

You make some strong cases and propose some queer questions; but they only glance at one side of the difficulty, and are all capable of being turned to any point in the compass of human ingenuity and human weakness: such as, "*Could the God of compassion have sat on his throne of untroubled felicity whilst a being whom he had called into existence, who would never have been liable to pain but for him, was enduring the pains of hell fire.*" You might have said, 'Was enduring the pains of the gravel or rheumatism, or an infant enduring the pains of the cholick, or of a burned or scalded finger, or of a fever,' &c. &c. for these cases are as much in point as yours when presented in connexion with "*the God of compassion.*"

The consummation of your difficulties is, I presume, expressed in the following sentence: "And besides these, it appeared to me inconsistent with the Deity," (I suppose your ideas of the Deity) "to require from us, *on pain of damnation* if we failed, implicit belief in an account of transactions which occurred several thousand years ago, (and considering the imperfect medium through which information was communicated from one age to another,) and of which it required the utmost stretch of intelligence to comprehend even the probability." Your difficulties in this sentence are predicted upon false views of the gospel and of its evidence. It is not a fact that implicit faith in transactions at best probable, is required *on pain of damnation*. Every thing in this sentence is convulsed and distorted. Men are not, in strict propriety even required to believe any thing *on pain of damnation*. For example suppose you had swallowed the most deadly poison, and that some benevolent physician had voluntarily called upon you and told you that there was a medicine which would save your life, but if you did not take it you must most certainly die; would it be a truth to assert, when cavilling against the medicine, that you would not taste it because he had required

you implicitly to receive it *on pain of death*. I say it would be a false representation of the whole matter, notwithstanding it is true that if you did not receive the medicine you must die. Now I cannot conceive how it could be "inconsistent" with the most benevolent being to address a dying man as the physician in question has addressed you, and to assure him that eternal destruction must be his doom if he reject his medicine. Now the fact is, all men are sick of a disorder which must prove their eternal ruin if they are not cured of it. This is just as certain as death. I will not spend time in proving it. A remedy is provided. It is an infallible one. It is presented gratuitously, and directions for its use are appended to it. To excite interest, and to persuade men to receive it they are told a solemn truth—that die they must—that perdition awaits them, if they do not receive it. Some say they are not sick, and they will live for ever without it. Others say they are sick, but have no confidence in the medicine. Others have no objection to the medicine, but dislike its administration. Others receive the medicine gratefully, and thankful for it, and are cured by it, and would persuade others to come and be cured. Amongst those who object to the medicine there is a great variety. Some will not take it because the physician tells them they cannot be healed without it. Some reject to it because they think they ought not to have been sick, and are incensed against their Maker because he did not give them a constitution insusceptible of disease. They defy Omnipotence to arms, and console themselves that if they are lost it will be their Maker's loss as well as theirs, and that it will pain him as well as them. They choose death to spite him. Others object to the medicine because every body will not be cured, and all the world saved by it. They would believe its efficacy and partake freely if all were to be cured by it; but because they are told that all will not receive it and be healed, they will not taste it. So it goes. I have seen many men act the part of a spoiled child, which cried all morning about its breakfast, and though in need of food, it spurned the bread and butter, and threw it back upon the too kind and lenient hand of an affectionate parent, because its humor was not consulted in some peculiar way.

But it is not a fact that men are required to believe implicitly on pain of damnation; nor is it a fact that the transactions to be believed occurred several thousand years ago; neither is it a fact that the medium of information is of such a character as you describe; nor is it a fact that it requires the utmost stretch of intelligence to comprehend the probability of those transactions which constitute the gospel. This is not the place, nor is the time so opportune, to enter largely into the nature of the gospel nor the evidence which supports it. But I will give you a brief statement of the gospel and a few remarks upon the evidence of its divine authenticity in my next.

Your sincere friend,

## REPLY—No. V.

IN my last I promised you a brief statement of the gospel with a reference to your difficulties. In attempting this I must, owing to circumstances, be governed by the circumscribed limit of a sheet.

Through habit it frequently happens that the most sublime and interesting truths are heard with apathy and indifference. Because familiar with the terms, *gospel salvation, eternal life, love of God to sinners, &c.* we often pronounce and hear them with as much indifference as the most common incidents of the day. But this is not all; ideas are often attached to the terms above mentioned which contribute to the insensibility with which they are so often heard and expressed, and which divest the terms of that which most of all could interest the hearts of sinners. I will, therefore, present the gospel in the form of a proclamation, that the novelty of the *form* may awaken, if possible, attention to *the thing*. It is not the definition of a name, but the exhibition of facts the most significant, at which I aim. I include in the proclamation that which makes it *glad tidings of great joy unto all people* to whom it is promulgated. It is in the name of him who has a right indisputable so to speak:—

“WHEREAS all mankind have corrupted and debased themselves, have sinned against me and come short of my glory, in consequence of which they are estranged in heart from me, irreconciled to my government and will, and filled with enmity against my moral character: And whereas there is no possibility of their restoration to my favor, nor of their true enjoyment of themselves, in consequence of their ignorance, guilt, indisposition, and subjection to their passions and appetites by any means within their reach—I DO HEREBY PROCLAIM TO ALL MANKIND INDISCRIMINATELY, That, moved by my own pity and compassion towards them as my own creatures, though fallen and degraded, I have sent my only begotten Son into the world to reveal to them my true character; to acquaint them with their true condition and circumstances; to expiate sin by the sacrifice of himself, to honor or exalt my name in all the earth, and to render it every way compatible with my righteousness, to save whomsoever I will. Be it known, therefore, to all mankind, irrespective of family, sectional, or national distinction, That it is my WILL to pardon, and accept into my favor and friendship, every one who believes or trusts in him as my Son and the only Saviour of men, and who is thereby reconciled to my character and will: and I do hereby declare, upon my own veracity, that I will raise to life again all who die in the faith of my Son, and glorify them at the consummation of this state; that I will introduce them into my own presence in heaven, and bestow upon them all the happiness of life eternal in my kingdom of glory for ever. But whosoever hears and rejects this my proclamation, is condemned, and shall share only in the resurrection of damnation. In attestation whereof, I have sent my prophets and apostles, accredited with all the powers

and gifts of my Holy Spirit, to promulgate this my proclamation, and to demonstrate the truth and certainty thereof by all the signs and pledges which rational beings can demand, and to commit the same to writing, stamped with such evidences as are requisite to gain it universal acceptance. And I do give it in charge to every saved sinner under heaven, to take all necessary pains, and to use every possible means of giving publicity to the same until I call him home; and I do most solemnly declare, that eternal vengeance awaits all them who do not obey this my proclamation, and who shall corrupt, add to, or diminish aught therefrom."

Such is the gospel in the form of a proclamation from the invisible God. Now the question is, To what in this can any man reasonably object? I confess I know not. I admit, indeed, that some objections are made to it, but they are most unreasonable. For instance, it is objected that faith or belief is made a condition or a *sine qua non* to the enjoyment of this salvation, and that this faith is an involuntary thing. This objection is perfectly unreasonable, and built upon a mistaken view of faith. It is impossible that any medicine can cure a diseased body unless it be taken. In the same way, it is impossible that the gospel can save any soul unless it be received into that soul. And whatever answer you would give to him who objects to a medicine simply because it will not cure without being taken, I would give to him who objects to the gospel, because it will not save without being believed. If the gospel could save without being believed, I am sure the benevolence which gave birth to it would not have restricted its benefits to believers. But the benevolence and philanthropy of God cannot afflict our hearts unless it be known, and cannot be known unless it be believed, because it is the subject of testimony. And although faith may be said in some sense to be involuntary, yet it so happens that unbelief, where the gospel is promulgated is perfectly a voluntary thing, and that is the reason why they who reject the testimony which God has given of his Son, have no excuse for their sin. Also, in rejecting this testimony, they prove their perversity by divesting themselves of all those principles of reasoning, which govern them in the affairs of this life, and in admitting to be true a thousand things which govern their conduct in this world, which are neither so important in themselves nor supported by a thousandth part of the evidence which supports the christian faith. In a word, in rejecting the gospel they reject their own reason, sin against their own principles, degrade their own faculties, and, what is still worse, they make God a liar, and appropriate his attributes to their own conceits.

I am constrained to break off. If what I have said in reply to yours is not satisfactory I should like to hear from you again. In the mean time I should recommend you most humbly and prayerfully to take up the blessed volume, and (if you can get a copy of the new translation I have lately published, it will facilitate your inquiries a hundred fold) give it

a regular and close investigation from beginning to end, about a dozen of times, and then tell me what you think of it.

Your Friend,

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#### A FEW FACTS.

A few facts, which on deistical principles are inexplicable—on christian principles—are easily understood.

1st. Not one of the terms peculiarly expressive of the idea of a God, such as spirit, eternity, immortality, &c. are to be found amongst any people antecedent to their being-possessed of oral or written revelation.

2d. No nation or individual, without oral or written revelation, can be found, who has a single idea of any item in the deists' creeds.

3d. All the deaf and dumb that have been made to hear or speak, or who have been taught to communicate their ideas, have uniformly and universally declared, that an idea of a God, or any thing under that name, never entered their mind. This is decisive proof, that the knowledge of God enters the human mind by the ear, or by communication, verbal or written, that faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

4th. Not one of the idolatrous nations pretend to have derived their religion from reason. These facts, which are only stated at present, when developed, contain volumes of invincible argument on this subject. As soon as bible words and bible ideas are proscribed, man is left in total darkness, both as respects his origin and destiny—two points the most sublime and interesting that can be imagined; while boasting of light, if devoid of the light of revelation, man becomes more ignorant than the ass which knows his master's crib.

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#### ESSAYS

##### *On the Work of the Holy Spirit in the Salvation of Men.*

##### No. I.

To the Spirit of God are we immediately indebted for all that is known or knowable of God, of the invisible world, and of the ultimate destinies of man. All that ancient Pagans and modern Sceptics pretend to have known of these sublime topics, was either borrowed from the oracles of the Revealer of secrets, or was mere uncertain conceits or conjectures of their own. Were it our design, we could easily prove, upon the principles of all modern Sceptics, upon their own philosophical notions, that unaided by the oracles of the Spirit, they never could have known that there is a God, that there was a creation or Creator, or that there is

within them a spark of life superior to that of a brute. To pursue this argument is, however, foreign to our present purpose. We are not now, on set purpose, addressing infidels, but those who profess to believe that the christian religion is of divine authenticity.

It being granted that the Bible was dedicated from Heaven, it follows that it is a revealed truth that there is one God and Father of all, one only begotten Son of God who is Lord of all, and one Spirit of God, who alone revealeth to men the secrets of God. Leaving out of view all the metaphysical divinity of ancient councils, or modern theological schools, on the philosophical doctrine of the Trinity, we may safely assert, upon the plainest evidence, that these THREE must occupy the attention of every reader of the holy oracles. Scarcely have we time to exhaust one breath in reading the history of the creation as written by Moses, until the *Spirit of God* is introduced to our view, as operating in this marvelous demonstration of Almighty power. And scarcely do we read a page in any one of the four Evangelists, until this Divine One appears to our view, as a mighty agent in some work connected with the redemption of man. Even the New Testament closes with a gracious discovery of his benevolence, and the last welcome of Heaven to the sons of misery and wretchedness is echoed by this self-same Spirit, who saith, ‘COME, and drink of the water of life FREELY.’”

Without presuming to roam in the regions of conjecture, or to indulge in the flights of imagination, we shall confine our enquiries, and, if possible, the attention of our readers, to that office which the Spirit of God evidently occupies in the salvation revealed in the New Testament.

That the christian religion was to be established and consummated by the ministration of the Spirit, is one of the plainest truths in revelation. It was a subject of ancient prophecy, and the facts recorded in the New Testament concerning the gifts and operations of this Spirit, are but the accomplishment of what was long foretold and anxiously expected.

The christian religion was established by the personal labours of its founder, who *appeared* to be no more than a Jewish peasant, and the labors of a few illiterate fishermen. It is the most singular fact on the page of history, sacred or profane, the best established, and most universally admitted, by friends and foes that a Jewish peasant (as his enemies called him) and a dozen individuals, without learning, without money, without family, without name, without any kind of human influence, revolutionized, in a few years, the whole world, as the Roman Empire was then called; and that, too, at a crisis the most forbidding in its aspect, the most unfavorable that ever existed. Paganism was long established and strongly guarded by the sword of the civil magistrate, and by myriads of hungry, cunning and avaricious priests. Judaism, still better confirmed as it had truth well attested on its side, and the imposing influence of the most venerable antiquity. On the one side prejudices, creeds, rubrics, temples, gods in the Gentile world innumerable and indescribable—established and confirmed by many succeeding generations.

On the other, the most inveterate antipathies, the most unrelenting malevolence, aggravated and embittered by superstition that once had much to recommend it. Before their face, poverty, shame, sufferings through life, and martyrdom at last, were presented not as matters of conjecture, but as awful certainties, to forbid their efforts, and to daunt their souls. But by the energies of the Holy Spirit, its gifts and endowments, they triumphed. Temples were vacated, altars pulled down, and idols abolished in every land, and a new religion established in Asia, Africa, and Europe. Such is the fact, the marvellous fact, recorded, recommended, and proved by a combination of evidence, the splendor of which throws into the shade all the evidence adduced in support of any other historical fact in the annals of the world.

In the contemplation of this wonderful revolution, the Holy Spirit is the most striking object presented to our view, and to it are to be ascribed all these marvellous results. And here we open the New Testament, and commence our inquiries into the character of its operations.

That faith is necessary to salvation, is a proposition the truth of which we need not now attempt to prove, as all professors of christianity admit it; and that testimony is necessary to faith, is a proposition equally true, evident, and universally admitted. He that believes, believes something; and that which he believes is testified unto him by others. A man every body who thinks, knows, cannot see without light, hear without sound, nor believe without testimony. It is as natural for a child to believe as it is to hear, when its capacity expands: and were it not for lying and deceit, it would continue to believe every thing testified to its understanding. Children become incredulous merely from experience. Being deceived by lies and deceit, they become incredulous. Having experienced that some things reported to their ears are false, they afterwards refuse to believe every thing which they hear. The more frequently they have been deceived, the more incredulous they become. Hence the examination of testimony becomes as natural, in a little time, as it is necessary. The first lie that was told on earth was believed to be a truth. Fatal experience has rendered the examination of testimony necessary. These observations are altogether gratuitous, as all we demand is cheerfully granted by all professors of christianity, viz. that faith is necessary to salvation; that testimony is necessary to faith; and that owing to the existence of falsehoods and deceits, the examination of testimony is necessary to full conviction. These positions being adopted as indisputable truths, we proceed to observe that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, testify that there was a woman named Mary, who brought forth a son supernaturally, who was called Jesus; that the child was announced by John the Baptist as the Redeemer, or Lamb of God, that was to take away the sin of the world, who had been foretold and expected for many generations; that he was distinguished above all that was born of woman, in the circumstances of his nativity, childhood, baptism, and in every personal accomplishment; that he spoke and

taught truths, and performed actions peculiar to himself; that he was maliciously put to death in Judea in the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, under the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate, by the Jewish sanhedrim; that he rose from the dead the third day, and after appearing alive for forty days on the earth, he afterwards ascended into heaven, and was placed upon the throne of the universe, and appointed Judge of the living and the dead; and that until his second coming to judge the world, he is exalted to bestow repentance and remission of sins unto all that call upon him. These things, and many others of the same character, the Evangelists and Apostles, *una voce*, declare. Now their testimony is either true or false. If false, then all christians are deceived, and all the religion in christendom and in the world is delusion; for if christianity is not true, it will be readily admitted by my readers that neither is Mahometanism, Judaism, nor Paganism. If true, then all the christian religion depends upon their testimony. Their testimony, on either hypothesis, is worthy of the most impartial and patient investigation. But such a testimony required supernatural attestations. For although there is nothing in this astonishing narrative impossible in the nature of things, nor indeed improbable on the acknowledged principles of human reason itself; yet the marvellous character of the facts testified, the frequent impositions practised, and, above all, the momentous stress laid upon them, required that they should be authenticated from heaven. In the attestation of this testimony, and in the proof of these facts, the office of the Holy Spirit first presents itself to our notice.

It was not enough that the apostles were qualified by the Spirit to deliver a correct, intelligible, and consistent testimony, but for the reasons above specified, it was necessary that this testimony be attested by such accompaniments as would render the rejector of it damnably criminal, as well as afford the fullest ground of certainty and joy to all that received their testimony. Nor are we in this inquiry so much called to consider the import of their testimony or their qualifications to deliver it, as we are to exhibit the attestations afforded by the Holy Spirit.

Miracles were wrought by the influence of the Holy Spirit in confirmation of their testimony—that is, signs or proofs of a supernatural character followed their testimony. The very circumstance of miracles being added, proved their necessity; for all declare that God doeth nothing in vain. If miracles were wrought by the Saviour and his Apostles, those miracles were necessary appendages to their testimony. For if faith, which we have agreed is necessary to salvation, and if testimony is necessary to faith, is also admitted, then, in the case before us, miracles were necessary in order to the confirmation of this testimony, or to its credibility; for this is apparent from the fact that they were exhibited, and it is the acknowledged principle that God doeth nothing in vain.

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## No. II.

## MIRACLES.

IN our last essay it was, we hope, fully proved, that with regard to the truth to be believed and the evidences of it, we owe every thing to the gracious ministrations of the Holy Spirit. The matter of faith preached is, that "Christ died for our sins, was buried, and is risen from the dead;" but even this fact is attributed to the immediate agency of this Glorious One. He, therefore, may be said to *have made the truth*, as well as by the most illustrious displays of his power in its behalf, to render it credible to men. His testimony in its behalf consists of miracles and prophecy, with the first of these only we have to do in our present essay. The term *miracle* is general, and comprehends not only those displays of power whose legitimate and single purpose was to establish the fact that *Jesus was risen from the dead*, but the gifts also which were vouchsafed to those who believed, and whose primary intent was to fill with light and wisdom the new converts to our holy religion.

It has often been asked, What necessary connexion is there between a miracle and a revelation from Heaven? If the term *miracle* is properly defined to be "the suspension of some known law of nature," the connexion will be as follows: The suspension intimates the certain presence of a power superior to the law, and this is all it proves. The miracle, I say, only proves that a power superior to the law operates in its suspension; but the moral character of the agent is to be deduced from the nature of the miracle combined with the end for which it is said to be performed.

The miracles of our Saviour are chiefly of a beneficent kind, and the declared end of them is to establish a mission the most salutary. From a consideration of the character of his miracles and the salutary end for which they were wrought, we are constrained by the rules of right reason to believe that they were effected by the Spirit of God, and not by Beelzebub, as the infidel Jews evilly suggested. The moral character of the power is to be known by its effects; and so the Saviour, as a key to guide us in this difficult step, tells us that we are in this case to judge as in the case of trees bearing fruit. If the fruit is good, the tree is good—it is bad, the tree is bad. If the miracle is of a beneficent character and its declared end good, the agent by whom it is effected is good. It was not our Saviour's finger that performed the miracles—his touching the cured was only to connect the miracle with the end for which it was wrought, viz. to show that he was the *Messenger of the Most high*, that this display of power was in behalf of his pretensions, and not of others who might be present. The work of the Holy Spirit in this respect, then, is most glorious, and becoming Heaven in the highest degree.

The Jewish religion and the Christian are the only two religions that ever were received by men, purporting to be confirmed by miracles. Neither the Mahometan religion nor any system of Pagan superstition at its first publication claimed the evidence of miracles.

The miracles wrought by the Holy Spirit in attestation of the preaching of the apostles, were *numerous, public, beneficent*; no imposture was ever detected, the adversaries of the christian faith themselves being judges; the cures were *always instantaneous, always complete, and always permanent*. To this Holy and Eternal Spirit, then, is every christian indebted for that most splendid and powerful of all evidence, which puts out of countenance all opposition, which covers with shame and confusion the subtle and presumptuous infidel.

We must reserve our remarks on *spiritual gifts* to the next essay, which, in the department of miraculous evidence, are the most triumphant and glorious of all.

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I No. III.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS,

DAVID the king' and prophet, foretold that when Messiah the Lord would ascend to his throne, he would bestow *gifts* upon men. This passage of Psalm lviii. 18. Paul, (Eph. iv. 8.) applies to our Lord. When he ascended, he saith, "he gave," and by spiritual gifts qualified, "some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers." Peter also, on the day of Pentecost, ascribed all the stupendous gifts vouchsafed on that day to the Lord Jesus. "Therefore," says he, (Acts ii. 33.) "being exalted at the right hand of God, and having received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father, HE hath poured out that which you now see and hear." These "*distributions of the Holy Spirit*," as Macknight renders Heb. ii. 4. issued in the perfect qualification of *apostles* with "*the word of wisdom*;" *prophets* with "*the word of knowledge*;" *evangelists* with "*tongues, and miracles*;" *pastors* with an immediate possession of all the requisites to feeding the flock and *teachers* with the means necessary to instructing the disciples in all the christian doctrine. It may be necessary to remark, that the *pastors, and teachers*, mentioned in this passage, are to be distinguished from the ordinary *bishops or elders* of a christian church, inasmuch as the elders or bishops are to be qualified by ordinary means, to be selected by their brethren for the possession of those ordinary attainments mentioned by Paul in his epistles; whereas those *pastors and teachers given* on the ascension of the Lord, were as *instantaneously* prepared for their offices as Paul was made an apostle: they were not only converted to the christian faith, but, in an instant, by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, qualified to teach the whole religion. That this is no conjecture, but matter of fact, will appear from Eph. iv. 8-13.

These gifts differed both in their nature and dignity, and some envied those possessed of the more splendid gifts, which gave rise to the apostle Paul's illustration of these gifts, in the 12th, 13th, and 14th chapters of his 1st epistle to the Corinthians, where he shows that although there was a great diversity of gifts, yet the *matter* of those gifts, if I may so speak, was the same; for they were all *distributions of the same Spirit*;

their *object* was the same, for they were ministries of the *same Lord*; and their *origin* or *authority* was the same, for *the same God* inworked them in all the spiritual men. And while some were eminent for the *word of wisdom*, which appears to have been the doctrine of the gospel communicated by inspiration; others for the *word of knowledge*, or an inspired knowledge of the types and prophecies in the ancient revelations; others for faith, which, as a *spiritual gift*, “led the spiritual men, without hesitation, to attempt the working of miracles;” others for the gifts of healing, &c. &c. it was to be remembered that these distributions or these manifestations of the Spirit were given to every member of the church of Corinth; or a manifestation of the Spirit was given to every spiritual man to profit withal, not for his own honor or benefit, but for the good of the brotherhood; which the apostle, in the subsequent context, compares to a human body composed of many members—no member being created for itself, or for its own benefit, but for the service of the whole. 1 Cor. xii. 7.

Again, when the Lord spake of the Holy Spirit, (which was to proceed from his Father and himself, when he should be glorified,) he assured his disciples that this Monitor would testify of him, and would not only conduct them into all truth, but when he is come, “he will convince the world concerning sin, and concerning righteousness, and concerning judgment: concerning sin, because they believe not on me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the Prince of this World is judged. He will glorify me.”\* The signs and wonders, and distributions of this Holy Spirit, the Apostle Paul declared were the confirmations by which Jesus was glorified in the world, and the testimony of the witnesses rendered credible and convincing. So, on Pentecost, the unbelieving Jews were convinced of their sin in not believing that Jesus was Lord Messiah, by the Holy Spirit confirming their words by signs following, accompanying. They were convinced of his righteousness, or of his being a righteous Messenger of Jehovah, by the proofs the Spirit gave of his having been well received in heaven by his Father, and they were convinced of judgment, because it was evident from the testimony of the apostles, confirmed by those splendid signs of the Holy Spirit, that, by his cross, Jesus had triumphed over principalities and powers, and had vanquished him that had the power of death. Thus the Saviour promised, and thus it was performed, and thus the world, infidel Jews and infidel Gentiles, were convinced of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. The Apostle Paul also declares that “foreign languages are for a sign, not to believers, but to unbelievers.” Now the signs by which the Holy Spirit glorified Jesus on the day of Pentecost, was that of foreign tongues; diverse, or separated tongues of fire, appeared on the heads of the witnesses, and they spake in foreign tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. This, then, was such a sign to the unbelieving Jews as to convince three thousand of them, of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and hence they gladly

\*Campbell's translation of John xvi. 8—14.

received the word that announced to them the remission of their sins and the promise of the Holy Spirit. Thus the word came in "demonstration of the Spirit and with power," and their faith rested not on the wisdom of human reason, but on the power of God, thus exhibited with the word.

How transcendantly kind and excellent is the work of the Holy Spirit in glorifying Christ, in advocating his cause, and in affording to men *such a gracious confirmation of that testimony, which, when believed,* puts them in possession of the most certain, cheering, and animating hope—the hope of immortality and eternal life! How diverse its gifts and operations! This persecuting Jew, in a moment, is converted not only to the christian faith, but becomes himself the subject of its powers, the temple of its residence. The converted Jew, by its influence, is filled with *the word of wisdom,* and, while his tongue pronounces divine oracles, his finger communicates health to the incurable, and life to the dead. Another, who yesterday could not read an ancient prophecy or explain a Jewish emblem, to-day, filled with *the word of knowledge,* infallibly expounds all the secrets concealed in dark oracles, in obscure allegories, and in mysterious types of the oldest times. Another, who a moment before had no confidence in the crucified Nazarene, has that peculiar faith which impels and emboldens him to bid a demon depart, or a leprosy withdraw, in assurance of seeing his command obeyed. Another, who, just now, ignorant of the past, and even of the present times, can, by the gift of prophecy, foretell infallibly what will happen next week, next year, or a century to come. Another, who, till now, knew not what manner of spirit was in himself, can, by the gift of discerning spirits, detect the inmost thoughts of a stranger who has put on the christian name. Another, who never knew a letter, an obscure and idolatrous Pagan, who never learned the grammar of his vernacular tongue, can speak foreign tongues with all the precision and fluency of an orator. And another, in the twinkling of an eye, becomes an able and accurate expositor and interpreter of languages, a letter of which he never learned. *Yes, all these gifts and many more, did one and the self-same spirit distribute to every individual, respectively as he pleased.* These glorious, inimitable, and triumphant attestations to the truth concerning Messiah, did the Spirit of God vouchsafe, as well as reveal the truth itself. And, although these gifts were not bestowed on every first convert; yet, in some instances, whole congregations, without an exception, became the temple of these gifts; and, for the encouragement of the Gentiles, who, for ages, seemed to be proscribed from the favors of Heaven, the first Gentile congregation to which the glad tidings were announced, was filled with these gifts, and they all, in a moment, spake *foreign tongues,* as the Spirit gave them utterance. Acts xi. 15.

Let it, then, be distinctly noticed, from all these premises, that these gifts had for their object, first, the *revelation* of the whole christian doctrine; and, secondly, the *confirmation* of it; and without them, no man

could either have known the truth, or believed it. To this effect does the apostle reason, 1 Cor. ii. 9—16. He shews that none of the princes, the legislators, or wise men of Judea, Greece, or Rome, ever could, by all their faculties, have discovered the *hidden wisdom*, "which God had determined before the Mosaic dispensation began, should be spoken to the honor of those apostles, gifted by the Holy Spirit." For so it was written, "Eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard, and into the heart of man (before us, apostles) those things have not entered, which God hath prepared for them who love him. But God hath revealed *them* (those unseen, unheard, and unknown things) to us (the apostles) by his Spirit" — "Which things (before unknown; unheard, and unseen,) also we (apostles) speak (to you Gentiles and Jews, that ye may know them) not in words taught by human wisdom, (in Judea, Greece, or Rome,) but in words taught by the Holy Spirit, explaining spiritual things in spiritual words." "Now, an animal man, (whether a prince, a philosopher, legislator, or a rhetorician, (in Judea, Greece, or Rome, by the means of all arts and sciences,) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, (by all his faculties and attainments,) because they are spiritually examined," (by the light which *revelation*, and not *reason*, affords.) "But the spiritual man (the man possessed of a supernatural gift) examineth, indeed, all things; yet he cannot be examined by any animal man, (because such cannot judge of the principles suggested to him by the Spirit;) for what man (who is merely animal) hath known the mind of the Lord, (his deep designs respecting Jews and Gentiles, now made known to us apostles,) who will (or can) instruct him (the spiritual man?) But we (apostles?) have the mind of Christ," and are able to instruct your spiritual men, with all their gifts, O! ye Corinthians! How has this beautiful passage, been perverted by system into a meaning the most remote from the mind of the Spirit! The translation above given is most consistent with the original, and, indeed, is the translation of Dr. Macknight, who seems to have rendered all those passages that speak of spiritual gifts, in all the epistles, much more accurately and intelligibly than any other translator. — The *natural* man, spoken of by the apostle, is quite another sort of a man than the Calvinistic or Arminian *natural* man. The apostle's natural man, or his *animal* man, was a man who judged of things by his animal senses, or reason, without any revelation of the Spirit; but the *natural* man, of modern systems, is a man who possesses the revelation of the Spirit, and is in the "state of nature," as it is called. The Apostle's natural man's eye had never seen, his ear had never heard, his heart never conceived any of those things written in the New Testament—our natural man's ear has heard, and it has entered into his mind, to conceive, in some way or other, the things which were revealed by the Holy Spirit unto the apostles. To argue from what is said of the one by the apostle, to the other, is a gross sophism, though a very com-

mon one; and by many such sophisms is the word of God wrested to the destruction of thousands.

While we are upon this subject, we conceive we cannot render a more essential service to our readers than to detect and expose a few such sophisms connected with the work of the Holy Spirit; in doing which, we will still farther illustrate the topic under investigation.

Before coming to specifications, we shall make but one preliminary observation, viz. that, in the fixed style of the New Testament, there are certain terms and phrases which have but one meaning attached to them; and when we use those phrases or terms in any other meaning than that attached to them in the sacred style, we as infallibly err, as if, in using the term *Jupiter*, I should always attach to it the idea of a *planet*, whereas the author, whose work I read, always attaches the idea of a *god* to it. In such a case, I must, in every instance, misunderstand him and pervert his meaning.

The first specimen (and we can only give a few specimens) we shall give is from 1 Cor. xii. "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." A thousand times is this sentence quoted to prove, and many a sermon is preached from it to shew, that there is some kind of a communication, afflation, or gift of the Holy Spirit given to every man to improve, or profit withal, to his own salvation. *Three* notable mistakes are obvious in such a perversion of the text:—First, the *manifestation of the Spirit* denotes, in this context, some spiritual gift, by which the Spirit is visible, or, at least, evidently manifested to be in or with the person. Secondly, the *every man* denotes the spiritual men only, or every one that possessed a spiritual gift; for of these only the apostle here speaks. Thirdly, *to profit withal* denotes that the spiritual man did not receive this gift for his own benefit especially, but for the profit of the other members of the body; as the ear or eye does not receive impressions for its own benefit merely or primarily, but for the benefit of the whole body. This is just the design of the apostle in the whole passage.

We shall find another specimen or example of this same sophism in the 2d. chapter, 4th. verse: "And my speech, and my preaching was not with persuasive words of man's wisdom, but with the demonstration of the Spirit and of power." How often do we hear modern sermonizers praying that their preaching may come with the demonstration of the Spirit and of power, meaning thereby some internal operation of the Spirit;\* whereas the apostle uses these words to remind the Corinthians that his preaching was not successful among them by means of his eloquence, but because of the demonstration of the Holy Spirit; or that

\* We are not calling in question, nor purposely disproving any of the popular theories of the operations of the Spirit, in these examples of sophisms which we now adduce. We are merely exhibiting the way in which scriptural phrases are perverted, or wrested from their fixed meaning in the New Testament. And here it may be observed, that not unfrequently the scriptures are wrested to prove what is scriptural truth.

his mission was established by the gifts of the Spirit imparted to them, and by miracles wrought in their presence. The next verse makes this evident; for the design of this was, he adds, "that your faith might not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the *power* of God," in the miracles which God empowered me to perform; for such is the fixed meaning of the term *power* in this connexion. "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with *power*." "You shall be endued with a *power* from on high." Those who were converted by seeing, and those who are converted by hearing of the miracles which God vouchsafed to the witnesses, their faith rests or stands upon *the power of God*. I know that some, to countenance the above mentioned perversion, are wont to cite the 19th verse of the 1st chapter of the Ephesians, which reads thus: "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward, who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead." Here, say, they is a plain proof "that the power that produces faith in us is equal to the power that raised Jesus from the dead." This will serve as a *third* example of this species of sophistry. Without either denying or affirming the truth of the popular sentiment, as an abstract speculation, let us see whether this was the meaning of the apostle. The apostle, from the 17th verse, is declaring his prayer to God for the Ephesians, and, in the 19th verse mentions one item of his request, viz. "that the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, they might know what is the *hope of their calling*, and that the *riches of the glory of his inheritance* prepared for the saints; and that they might know what the exceeding greatness of his power *will be* (in the resurrection and glorification of their bodies) with relation to us who believe (which will be similar in glorifying the bodies of the saints to what it was in raising and glorifying Christ's body)—according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and exalted him," &c. So that the power here spoken of is a power *to be* exhibited in raising the bodies of the saints, and not a power to be exhibited in producing faith; for the Ephesians had already believed.

Another example of the same sophism we often observe in the citation of Acts vii. 51. "O! stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! Ye do always resist the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did so do ye." Hence it is argued, that there is some kind of operations of the Holy Spirit which are called *common*, and which are equally enjoyed by all men, the saved and the damned; and on this, and another saying or two, is the whole doctrine of *common operations* predicated. But that Stephen, who was full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom, had no reference to any internal or external operations upon the unbelieving Jews, is most evident from the context. He shewed that his audience, as did their fathers, persecuted the prophets who spake by the Spirit, and in resisting his word delivered by the prophets, they resisted the Spirit of God: for to resist a person's word and to resist himself, is, in all idioms of speech, the same

thing. The unbelieving Jews, in resisting the testimony of Stephen and of the apostles, resisted the Holy Spirit; and many in our time, who resist the testimony of the apostles, dictated and confirmed by the Holy Spirit, do, in fact, resist the Holy Spirit. And, as in the days of Noah, the Spirit of God, by the preaching of Noah, strove with the antediluvians; so the Spirit of God, by the preaching of the apostles, committed to writing, does strive with all those to whom the word of this salvation is sent; and yet many still resist the cogency and power of the truth, and the arguments that confirm it. They did not all believe who saw the miracles, and such of the spiritual gifts as were visible; neither do all, who read or hear the apostolic testimony and its confirmation, believe it. It has, however, been shown that the miracles and signs were *written* for the same purpose that they were *wrought*. This, indeed, needs no other proof than the testimony of John the apostle. He says, chap. xx. 30, 31. "Many other miracles Jesus likewise performed in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are recorded that ye may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God; and that believing (*this*) you may have life through his name."

Correct views of the office of the Holy Spirit in the salvation of men, are essential to our knowledge of the christian religion, as also to our enjoyment of it. On mistaken views of it are engrafted most of the extravagant as well as the cold and lifeless systems of our times.

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#### No. IV.

#### PROPHECY.

ALL the evidences of the marvellous love of Jehovah, exhibited in the salvation of men, are like itself, superlatively grand and sublime. The evidences which command belief, are all miracles; the evidences which corroborate and strengthen that belief, sometimes called "the internal evidences of the record," are admirably moral and rational. The evidences on which the faith of the intelligent rests, are in the first instance, all miracle. But when we discourse intelligibly on this miraculous evidence, we distinguish miracles, spiritual gifts, and prophecy. We have briefly suggested a few thoughts on miracles, properly so called, and on spiritual gifts, and are now to attend to *prophecy*. We have already found prophecy amongst the spiritual gifts, as also, indeed, the power of working miracles. But we are now to consider prophecy in a higher and more exalted sense.

Many of the primitive christians were possessed of the gift of foretelling future events. Paul declared that the Holy Spirit testified to him in every city, that "bonds and afflictions awaited him." In what manner the Holy Spirit testified this in every city we are informed. Let us take a few instances which settle this point. Acts xxi. 3. Paul found some disciples, "who said to him, *through the Spirit*, that he should not go up to Jerusalem," because of those afflictions that awaited him.

Philip, the deacon, had "four daughters which did prophesy," and while Paul was there a certain prophet named Agabus, came down from Judea and when he came into the presence of Paul, he took his girdle and bound his own hands and feet, saying, "Thus saith the Holy Spirit, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles." Thus the *Holy Spirit testified to Paul by the words* of the prophets. This Agabus was a prophet of some note, as appears from Acts xi. 28. "There stood up Agabus, and signified, *by the Spirit*, that there should be a great dearth through all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar." This gift of prophecy differs from another gift of the same name. To prophesy, in the church of Corinth, imported no more than to speak, by inspiration, in a known tongue, to the edification of men; but to foretel future events, by the spirit of inspiration, is, what we are now contemplating. Nor is it our design to attend to those prophecies, which many individuals, in the age of spiritual gifts, uttered for the immediate exigencies of that period, for either the conviction or confirmation of their contemporaries; but we are now to view the *recorded* prophecies, which were designed as a standing evidence of the truth testified concerning Christ. We all see the advantages which resulted to both Jews and Gentiles from the recorded prophecies of the ancient revelations, in the times of the Saviour and his apostles. Indeed, the prophecies, *written* and *read*, were the last appeal, and the all-convincing or silencing one, against which there was no rising up. But it is not prophecy, in that enlarged sense, which includes the evidence given to the Messiah, before his appearance in Judea, by the Jewish prophets; but it is the prophecies of the New Testament, afforded by the Holy Spirit, in honor of the Messiah and his cause, since his appearance in the flesh, which I am now to consider under this head.

The greatest wisdom is apparent in this department of evidence. The Spirit, given immeasurably to Jesus, afforded him all means of confirming his mission. His wisdom in exercising the gift of prophecy was admirably adapted to the exigencies of the time. He did not, in the first exercises of this gift, utter predictions that respected events long future: no, this would have been altogether useless in the first place; and, therefore, his first predictions respected events soon to happen to himself and his apostles. If I possessed the gift of prophecy, and wished it to contribute to my honour, I would, doubtless, foretel some events which would soon happen, in order to obtain credit to predictions of greater futurity. So did the Saviour. His first predictions respected events just on the eve of being born. He foretold to Peter, that, on going to the sea, and in casting in his line, he would take a fish with a *stater* in his mouth. This was a small matter, but as difficult to foretel as an event 2000 years distant. He prophesied that he would be killed by the chief priests, and that he would rise from the dead the third day, a few months before it happened. When they were on their way to Jerusalem, he sent two

of his disciples to a village, predicting to them that they would there find an ass tied, and her colt with her, and ordered them to bring them to him; at the same time assuring them that, on telling the proprietor that the Master wanted them, he would send them. These little matters all tended to confirm the disciples in their faith concerning him. And, indeed, there was much need that their faith should be well confirmed, as it was soon to be put to a most severe trial. He, therefore, gives as a reason for his numerous predictions, the following: "This I tell you now, before it happen, that when it happeneth, ye may believe." But, to pass over the numerous predictions that respected minor matters and approaching events, we shall proceed to notice a prophecy of great utility, which respected an event about 40 years distant. This prediction was designed for public conviction, and was perfectly adapted to this end. It was of that character of events which must necessarily be notorious and eminently conspicuous. Let us attend to it. When all was tranquil in Jerusalem, the city and the temple standing guarded by the enthusiasm and patriotism of a powerful people, under a Roman procurator; when religion and business was going on in their regular course as for ages, he foretold, that, before the people then living, died, before the existing generation passed off the stage, the city and the temple should be razed, and not one stone left on another that should not be thrown down. "On the Mount of Olives his disciples accosted him privately, saying, tell us when this shall happen? What shall be the sign of thy coming, (to do this) and of the conclusion of this state?" These questions he minutely answered, He declared the preceding events—the means by which the city and temple would be destroyed—gave directions to his disciples how they might escape this impending calamity, frequently called "*the wrath to come*," or "*impending vengeance*." And, as to the precise day, he informed them that he was not authorized to communicate it, for the father had reserved this in his own bosom, and willed not men or angels to know it; but at the same time, he would so far satisfy them as to assure them that the people then living would not all die until it actually came to pass. This was as definite as a prophecy so public and comprehensive ought to be. Let the reader remember that this circumstantial prediction concerning an event to be notorious through all the earth, was committed to record, and published through Judea, Greece, and Rome; in a word, through Asia, Africa, and Europe, many years before it came to pass. And also let it be noted that the apostles, while they published it, gave exhortations in their epistles to the christians concerning it. Matthew's gospel was published in Judea thirty-two years ago before the destruction of the city and temple; Luke's memoirs of Christ were published in Greece seven years before Titus, the Roman general, razed Jerusalem and made the plough pass over it. Mark's memoirs of Christ were published in Rome five years before this era of vengeance. But besides these written records, there were all the publishers of Messiah's words and deeds going to and fro through all the

world. These are facts, which christians acquainted with the New Testament and the history of the world, believe; and which learned infidels are constrained to admit.

In the year seventy, Jerusalem and its temple were levelled to the dust, after being immersed in all the calamities the Saviour foretold. This event, then, gave a terrible blow to the Jewish adversaries of the christian cause, and stimulated the christians with fresh courage. Their patience having been tried for many years, the deliverance would be the more appreciated, and their faith would be greatly confirmed. The more extensive the hatred, opposition, and persecution of the Jews had been, the greater publicity was given to the prophecy, and the more convincing the accomplishment. Had I lived in those days, and been so happy as to have been one of those persecuted christians who had witnessed the catastrophe, I would have argued thus with all opposers of the christian faith—"That Jesus the Nazarene was the promised Messiah, the Son of God, and now the Governor of the Universe, is abundantly proved, not only from the ancient prophecies, from his resurrection from the dead, from the gifts he has bestowed on many of his disciples, from the private prophecies he gave, which have been all accomplished, from his continued presence with his apostles, from the success attendant on their labours, but *now*, from the accomplishment of one of the most *public* and particular predictions in the annals of the world. It cannot be denied that this prediction has been *read* by thousands in the writings of the apostles, has been *heard* proclaimed a thousand times by his followers, yea, that some are still living who heard *him* pronounce it; and that it is literally fulfilled, all the world is now witness. I pass over every thing of a mere private character—I fix my eyes exclusively on this astonishing circumstance. I see every thing so exactly fulfilled in it; not one of his disciples perished in the siege; they all obeyed his commands, when they saw Jerusalem invested with armies, they fled; the people that were considered an abomination, that maketh desolate, have come; the walls of Jerusalem are levelled to the ground; the temple laid in smoking ruins; the nation dispersed. The blood of the righteous prophets has been avenged; and the curse the rulers invoked upon themselves and their children, has come upon them." "This is the Lord's doing, and marvellous in our eyes." "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry. If his wrath be roused for a little, blessed are all they who put their trust in him."

Such an argument would, we think, be omnipotent with all who would hear and consider it. Besides, this prediction gave a vast weight, and a new impetus to the other prophecies delivered by the apostles in their writings. For when this one, which figured so prominently in all their writings and speeches, was so exactly fulfilled, who would hesitate in looking for the accomplishment of the others in their proper seasons.

The prophecies delivered by Paul and John, concerning the fate of christianity in the world, occupy the next place in the *written* prophecies

and immediately succeed in train to that one now noticed.—The size of this paper forbids a minute attention to them. The intelligent will readily perceive, what an essential service they render to the testimony of the apostles. I will only set down the items of Paul's prophecy concerning the great *apostacy*, which we have lived to witness. "That day (speaking of the last day) shall not come unless there come *the apostacy* first, and there be revealed that man of sin, that son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above every one who is called a god, or an object of worship; so that he, in the temple of God, as a god sitteth, openly showing himself that he is a god. Do ye not remember that when I was still with you, I told you these things? And ye know, what now restraineth him, in order to his being revealed in his own season. For the mystery of iniquity *already inwardly worketh, only till he who now restraineth*, be taken out of the way. And then shall be revealed *that lawless one*. Him the Lord will consume *by the breath* of his mouth, and will render ineffectual *by the bright shining* of his coming. Of whom the coming is after (or similar to) the *strong* working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and miracles of falsehood." (2 Thess. ii. 3—9. Macknight's Translation.) This is as minutely descriptive of *the apostacy*, called *anti-Christ*, as the Messiah's description of the destruction of Jerusalem.

John informs us that *he was in the Spirit*, in Patmos, on the Lord's day, when the Messiah vouchsafed him a prophetic view of the church's history till the end of time. In this prophecy, declared to be the fruit of the Spirit, we have a most signal evidence of the truth of the apostle's testimony. The prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem, forty years before it came to pass; the prediction of the dispersion of the Jews, which yet exists; the prediction of the rise of the apostacy, and the removal of the Pagan power of imperial Rome, hundreds of years prior to the event; and the prediction of the downfall of the anti-christian kingdom, with the means eventuating therein; (a part of which we have lived to see,) constitute a sort of *standing miracle*, in attestation of the truth of the divine authenticity of the christian religion, which we owe to that Holy Spirit, which searcheth and revealeth the deep designs and counsels of God.

These brief notices of the work of the Holy Spirit in *revealing* the saving truth, and in *confirming* it by miracles, spiritual gifts, and prophecy, merely suggest to the intelligent reader a train of reflections, which, if followed out, may lead to a further acquaintance with this most interesting subject, than could be communicated in volumes of essays of this diffuse and general character.

It must be remembered in all our inquiries into this, and every other question pertaining to the revelation of God, that it was all given since men fell into a state of sin and misery; and that, like every other work of God, it is perfectly adapted to the end for which it was given; that is, to

make wise unto salvation those that are ignorant and out of the way, and to guide those that are reclaimed by it in the paths of righteousness and life.

Hitherto we have been considering the Holy Spirit as the *Spirit of Wisdom*, and the *Spirit of power*. We have not yet introduced him as the Spirit of Holiness or of Goodness. This will be more particularly attended to by and by. For he is not only revealed as the spirit of wisdom and of power, but also as the spirit of all goodness in man. As the Spirit of Wisdom and of power, he was the author of all the miracles, spiritual gifts, and prophecy; but as the Spirit of Goodness, he is the author of that principle in christians, which inclines and enables them to cry Abba, Father.

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No. V.

NECESSITY AND USE OF THE MIRACULOUS WORKS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

BEFORE dismissing the subject of miracles, spiritual gifts, and prophecy, we may inquire into the necessity and use of this work of the Holy Spirit. That it was *necessary* to render the testimony *credible*, and that this is its *use*, will appear from the fact that it was vouchsafed, and from a brief reference to a few passages of scripture. The effect of miracles is thus declared, John ii. 23. "Many believed in his name when they saw the miracles which he did." John iii. 2. "Nicodemus came to Jesus and said, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher sent from God; for no man can do *these miracles* which thou doest, except God be with him." John vi. 14. "Those men, when they had *seen the miracle* that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet who should come into the world." Chapter vii. 31. "And many of the people believed on him, and said, When the Messiah cometh will he do more *miracles* than these which this man hath done. John viii. 30. When speaking in relation to his claims, and when *prophesying* of what was to be done to him, to those who had seen his miracles, we are told, "as he spake these words many believed in him." At another time, (John xii. 42.) when explaining and applying the ancient *prophecies* to himself, we are told that, "among the chief rulers many believed on him."

But in his own preaching he shews the use he would make of this work of the Holy Spirit; John v. 31—39. He appeals when speaking to the people that discredited his pretensions, to the evidences on which he claimed their attention and their reception of him. He classifies the evidences on which he rested his claims under four items:—1st. He appeals to the miraculous, and every way credible testimony of John the Baptist. 2d. He appeals to his own marvellous works. 3d. He appeals to the testimony the Father had given, *viva voce*, at his baptism, and the Holy Spirit by its *visible* descent. And, 4thly, he appeals to the ancient prophecies which the Jews had received as of divine authority.

The works which Jesus did he often said were works given him to do

by his Father; that his Father worked with him; and so necessary were those works to the credibility of his mission and pretensions, that he declared that "no man can come unto me except the Father which sent me draw him;" as if he said, Neither my personal attractions as a man, nor my saying that I am the Son of God, would be sufficient to lead any person to receive me as God's Messiah; and therefore no man can, consistently with reason or the common principles of human action, come unto me, except the attestations the Father has afforded, in these works which I do by his authority, draw him, or persuade him to receive me as such. So that in fact, *faith in him* or a reception of him, he declares *impossible*, but by the evidence of miracles.

Many, it is true, of those that received him, and especially before the Holy Spirit was given to his disciples, fell away; and, from the love of the praise of men, or the fear of persecution, apostatized. He, however, encouraged those that believed on him, on the evidence of miracles, (which was not perfected during his life time,) to persevere, with this assurance, that whosoever believed in him, "*out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.*" This figure the Evangelist thus explains, (John vii. 39.) This he spake of the Spirit which they that believe on him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not *yet* given because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

Beginning with the first preaching of the gospel after the Holy Spirit was given, (Acts ii.) we see that the miracles and spiritual gifts, or the miraculous evidence, was indispensable to the production of faith. The sudden tumult of apparent rushing tempests in the air drew together a great concourse of Jews. When they entered the house where the one hundred and twenty disciples of Jerusalem were assembled, they *saw and heard*. They had *heard* a sound which brought them there. They now *saw* tongues of fire distinctly separated from each other, on the heads of the apostles. They *heard* them explain the meaning of all this. For miracles will not produce faith without their meaning be apprehended—the *end* or *design* understood. They were convinced by what they *saw and heard*. What they *heard* assured them that what they *saw* was the fulfilment of the prophecy, and the crucified Jesus was now on the throne of his Father. What they *saw* convinced them that what they *heard* was true, for God would not confirm a falsehood by his signature. They had not yet heard that there was pardon; and, therefore, knew not but God was about to take vengeance on them for their iniquities—Peter had not yet opened unto them the door of faith and hope. They cried out in distress, "*What shall we do?*" Peter promised them pardon and the gift of the Spirit, on repentance and baptism. They heard him gladly, and were baptized, and then received the favor or gift of the Holy Spirit. Here we see the necessity and use of the miraculous evidence.

In the 3d chapter of the Acts we read of another splendid conversion. Thousands believe. But there was a signal *miracle* wrought in the

name of Jesus the Nazarene. Peter taking by the hand a notable cripple, commanded him to rise up and walk. He obeyed. Multitudes assembled: they *saw* and *heard*. Peter explained the meaning of the miracle, and it was understood as a witness from heaven that he spake the truth. They believed. See again the necessity and use of the miraculous evidence.

Acts ivth. we read of the terror these miracles gave the enemies of Messiah's cause. They threatened the apostles. The apostles prayed, that with all boldness they might speak the word, and that God would stretch forth his hand to heal, and that signs and wonders might be wrought by the name of Jesus. The prayer was heard. The house shook. And so we soon read, that "By the hand of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people, **BY WHICH believers were the more added to the Lord**, multitudes both of men and women." Acts v. 12.

Saul of Tarsus was not only converted, but he was made a minister at the same time. Hence, said the Saviour, I have appeared unto thee to *make thee a minister*. Those who suppose that all that happened to Saul, on his way to Damascus, happened unto him for his conversion, pay no respect to this declaration. It is, however, true, that what he *saw* and *heard* caused him to believe that Jesus whom he persecuted was the Son and Saviour. He received the Holy Spirit afterwards by a special messenger whom the Lord appointed. Ananias came to him—laid his hands upon him—he received his sight, and was filled with the Holy Spirit. Paul said that, by the *help of God*, (in signs and wonders,) he continued always testifying the truth that Jesus was the Messiah. And a better summary of his labors and success we cannot give them in these words—"Christ hath wrought by me to make the Gentiles obedient in word and deed, *through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God*; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ." Rom. xv. 19. See also, Acts viii. 5, 6. ix. 33. xiv. 3. xix. 11—17. 2. Cor. xii. 12. and Heb. ii. 3.

I need not, as if proving a point that required a specification of every item on record, be further tedious in shewing the necessity and use of this miraculous evidence. It is, however, necessary to state, that the *reading* or *hearing* of these things now *recorded*, stands precisely in the same relation to faith, as the seeing of the apostles work the miracles, or the *hearing* them declare the truth. The words they spake are as much the words of the Holy Ghost when in *written characters* as they were when existing in the form of *sound*. And we have often shewn that the miracles are *recorded* for the same reason that they were *wrought*. John xx. 31. And that the word *written* is as capable of producing faith as the word *preached*, is easily shewn from the same record—Acts xvii. 11—12. The noble-minded Bereans "received the word with all readiness of mind, and *searched the scriptures* daily whether these things

were so;" **THEREFORE**, many of them believed. The truth to be believed is supernatural, and the evidence on which it is to be believed is of the same character. So saith the apostle, "Faith, while it is the offspring of the Spirit, cometh by *hearing*, and hearing cometh by the word of God." And to the same effect saith Peter, "Love one another with a pure heart fervently, *having been regenerated* not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, *through the word of the Living God*, which remaineth forever. But the word of the Lord remaineth forever. Now this is that or word, which by the gospel is preached unto you."—*Macknight's Translation.*

Having occupied so much of this essay in exhibiting the necessity and use of the miraculous evidence, in order to rendering credible a miraculous testimony or narrative, I shall not introduce the topic primarily designed for this number, reserving it for our next.

I would only add, as a concluding observation, and I place it by itself that it may be distinctly noted, viz. That no person ever has believed the gospel to the salvation of his soul, but in the same manner and upon the same evidence, that all who now believe, or who will hereafter believe to their salvation, do believe or will believe on the same evidence and in the same manner as they who believed after the Holy Spirit was given. The difference, in the most rigid criticism, betwixt *seeing* and *hearing*, never, in my judgment, affecting the truth of my proposition. The blind men who applied to Christ for cures, believed that he was able to cure them as strongly, on the same evidence, and in the same manner as they who had the use of their eyes.

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No. VI.

**SPIRIT OF GOODNESS—FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT.**

In the preceding essays upon this subject, we have, as far as the limits of this work admitted, glanced at the outlines of those grand and benevolent displays of the Spirit of God, afforded in the revelation and confirmation of the christian religion. His multiform and splendid distributions as the *Spirit of Wisdom* and the *Spirit of Power* to the Holy apostles, and to many of the first converts to the christian faith, in the introduction of the christian age, have just been noticed.

As the *Spirit of Wisdom*, he bestowed those gifts of wisdom, of the word of knowledge, of prophecy, and of tongues, to the ambassadors of Messiah, to qualify them to reveal, in words adapted to every case, the character and achievements of *God's only Son*, and the benevolent purposes of the Father, through him towards the human race. As the *Spirit of Power*, he clothed them with all those magnificent gifts of power over the bodies of men, by which they were always able to prove their mission and demonstrate their authority as the plenipotentiaries of the Son of God. What remains is to notice, with the same brevity, what the scriptures teach us of him as the *Spirit of all Goodness*. The apostle

saith, "The fruit of the Spirit is in all *goodness*, and righteousness, and truth." This fruit, on another occasion, he particularizes thus: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, \**fidelity*, meekness, temperance."

While his distributions, as the *Spirit of Wisdom and of Power*, were confined to the apostolic age, and to only a portion of the saints that lived in that age, his influences, as the *Spirit of all Goodness*, were *felt* and *realized* by all the primitive saints, and are *now* felt by all the subjects of the *new reign*, or by all the citizens of that *new kingdom* which the God of Heaven *set up* in the reign of the Cæsars. The citizens of this kingdom, which commenced on the literal Mount Zion, and which will extend to all nations, tribes, and tongues, have ever experienced, and will, to the end of time experience, the influences of this Spirit, as the Spirit of all goodness, righteousness, and truth. The full developement of these influences, would require us to take a longer view of the Old Covenant and the New, or of the *Letter* and the *Spirit*, than our space admits.

Whatever illuminations were enjoyed by, and whatever prospective views were communicated to, the ancient saints and Jewish prophets respecting the christian age, one thing is certain, that the Old, or Sinaitic Covenant, was a *covenant of letter* and not a *covenant of spirit*. It is equally certain and obvious that the Jewish church, with all its privileges, had but the shadows of good things to come; that their condition was as different from ours as *flesh* and *spirit*; and their *rank* as unlike ours, as that of *servants* and *sons*. We are authorized in speaking thus by no less a personage than that distinguished Jew and great apostle to the Gentiles—*Paul*. He represents the Jews as being *in the flesh* while under the law, or *covenant of letter*, and the christians as being *in the spirit*, as under the gospel, or *covenant of spirit*. He speaks of the service of the Jews as a service in "the *oldness of the letter*," and of the christians, as a service "*in newness of spirit*." He speaks of the Jews while under the *covenant of letter*, as in the bondage of slaves and possessed of the spirit of servants; but when in the *covenant of spirit*, as being the sons of God and possessed of the spirit of adoption—"not having a second time received the spirit of bondage, but as having received the spirit of adoption crying, as new-born babes, *Abba, Father*." Wherefore, he argues, the believing Jews are *no longer* servants, but raised to the rank of sons.

The new covenant is, then, fitly called a *covenant of Spirit*, because it respected not the flesh, but the mind of man, and because it is consummated by the spirit of God. There are, it is true, *written words* in the book of the New Testament, as there are *written words* in the book of the law. *But there is a MORAL fitness in the words of the NEW to be the medium of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of all goodness, righteousness, and truth, as there was a MORAL fitness in the engraven words of the former, to be the medium of the inspiration of a spirit of*

\* Macknight's Translation.

*bondage, fear and dread.\** There is a natural fitness in the pen in my hand to form letters on paper, but there is no natural fitness in it to cut down trees. Again, there is a natural fitness in an axe to cut down trees but no natural fitness in it to answer the purposes of a pen. The exhibition of those attributes of the Deity, which the letter or law presented to them in the flesh, was, in like manner, *morally* fitted to produce guilt, and fear, and bondage. Just so, the exhibition of the inexpressible love, mercy, and condescension of God in the gospel, concerning his Son, is morally fitted to produce peace, love and joy in the minds of those who apprehend it.

In a word, the covenant of letter could not inspire men with the spirit of sons. It demanded what it did not impart strength to yield. It presented a perfect rule, but left the heart unable to conform to its requisitions. The more clearly a Jew understood it, the less comfort he derived from it. It filled his heart with the spirit of bondage, and issued in condemnation and death. Moreover, the law entered that the offence might abound; and it was added to the promise of the inheritance, because of transgression, till the seed should come. But the new covenant by which the Lord puts his law into their minds, causing them to know and love him. Heb. viii. 9-11, and x. 16; develops that love which is morally adapted to inspire the spirit of adoption. For he says in it, I will be *merciful* to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. Heb. viii. 12. x. 17. It thus makes sons. For the Holy Spirit says to *believers*, "Ye are all the *Children of God* (how?) *by faith* in Christ Jesus." Gal. iii. 26. John i. 12. And *because* ye are Sons, (i. e. believers. Gal. iii. 26.) God hath sent forth the Spirit of his son in your hearts, crying *Abba*, Father.

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No. VII.

RENEWAL OF THE MIND BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

EVER since the creation of the heavens and the earth, God has always employed means, fitted to the ends he designed to accomplish. Indeed, the creation of this mundane state, is a creation of means suited to certain results. The means, as well as the end, are the creatures of God. His wisdom is most strikingly conspicuous, through all his work, in adapting his means to his ends. When he designs to bless the inhabitants of this globe with abundance of food, he sends the early and the latter rain. But does he intend to scourge them with famine? then the heavens become as brass, and the earth as iron, &c. &c.

The means are always suited to the end. In the accomplishment of a moral renovation, or regeneration of the human mind, the same *fitness* in the means employed is exhibited in every respect. No new faculties are created in the human mind, nor are any of the old ones annihilated—No new passions, or affections are communicated. He that possessed

\*This will be further developed in our next essay on this subject.

a quick perception, a steady and retentive memory, a strong discriminating judgment, a vigorous and vivid imagination before he was regenerated, possesses the same without any change after he has been renewed in the spirit of his mind. Indeed, the whole temperament of the human mind remains the same as before—He that was before of a volatile, irascible, bold and resolute temperament, or the contrary, is the same when regenerate. The biography of Saul of Tarsus, and of Paul, the apostle; of Simon, son of Jonas, and of the apostle Peter; of John, the son of Zebedee, and of John, the apostle, fully and unanswerably demonstrate and confirm these remarks—Indeed, who does not admit that men perceive, remember, reason, love and hate, fear and hope, rejoice and tremble, after they have been regenerated as before. The experience of every man concurs in this fact. The renovation of the human mind, or the purification of the human heart, is not then effected by a new creation of faculties or affections, which would be the same as creating a new soul. The soul or spirit of Saul of Tarsus was the soul or spirit of Paul the Apostle. The spirit of Saul was not destroyed and a new spirit infused into Paul; for then the spirit of Saul was annihilated, and not saved. It appears, then, that the faculties of the human spirit and the affections of the human mind are affected no more by regeneration than the height of the human stature, the corpulency of the human body, or the color of the human skin are affected by it. The memoirs of every saint recorded in the Bible are appealed to as proof of this.

If, then, as is proved, no new faculties are created, no new possession nor affections bestowed in regeneration, it may be asked, what does the *renewal of the Holy Spirit* mean? The scriptures authorize us in declaring that it consists in presenting *new objects* to the faculties, volitions, and affections of men; which *new objects* apprehended, engage the faculties or powers of the human understanding, captivate the affections and passions of the human soul, and, consequently, direct or draw the whole man into new aims, pursuits, and endeavours.

A partial illustration of this may be taken from the history of Joseph, governor of Egypt, and David, king of Israel. Joseph and David, in their childhood and youth, were employed in the cares, enjoyments, and pursuits of the shepherd's life. All their faculties of understanding, all their passions and affections as boys, were engrossed in the rural objects attendant on the shepherd's life. When elevated to the throne, their powers of understanding, affections, and passions were engrossed in the affairs of state, in the concerns of human government and royalty. A great change in their views, feelings, and pursuits, was necessarily effected by an entire change of objects. Or suppose an African child were transplanted from a Virginian hut to an African palace, at the age of ten or twelve; new scenes, new objects of contemplation, a new education, new companions, and new objects of pursuit, would revolutionise its whole mind, affections, and passions. But all these instances, although it might with them be said,

“*Old things are passed away and all things become new;*” yet their mental faculties, powers of volition, and affections are the same as when boys. This is as was said, but a partial illustration; for in that renewed state of which we are speaking, heavenly objects of contemplation and pursuit are presented to all that is within man, and the change produced rises to a level with the magnitude, purity, and glory of the objects proposed. But lest we should get into metaphysical speculations, and fall into the errors we labor to correct, let it suffice to say, that before we can understand or admire the wisdom of God, in the adaptation of the means of regeneration, we must first know what the renewal of the Holy Spirit is. If regeneration, or the renovation of the human mind were the result of the mere creative energy of the Divine Spirit, then, indeed, it were vain for us to talk of any means of renovation; then, indeed, a revelation in words, spoken or written — preaching or reading, are idle and unmeaning. This matter is at once determined with the utmost certainty, not by human speculations, nor reasonings, but by a sure and infallible testimony; and on this alone would we rest our views. Paul declares that Jesus Christ told him that he would send him to the Gentiles to accomplish the following results: “To open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God; that they might receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.” Acts xxvi. 18. Or, as it is more correctly translated by Thomson, “To open their eyes that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God; that they may receive a remission of sins and an inheritance among them who are sanctified by the belief in me.” Such was the object of the Messiah in sending Paul to the Gentiles. Now who will not say, that, when all this was done, those Gentiles were regenerated or renewed in the spirit of their minds, and that the presentation of new objects to the mind was the means employed for the accomplishment of this end? Their turning from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, are made dependant on, and consequent to, the opening of their eyes; and we all know that Paul, when sent to open their eyes, always presented to their minds new objects, or *the light of the word*. And, indeed, this was all he was commissioned to do, because it was all that Jesus Christ deemed necessary to be done, and all that Paul was empowered or capacitated to do. There was, then, the same fitness in the means Jesus Christ employed to the end proposed, as appears in the whole kingdom of means and ends. Paul declares that the ministry of reconciliation was committed to him as to the other apostles, and that the *word of reconciliation* was summarily comprehended in this one sentence — “God was in Christ reconciling a world unto himself, not reckoning to them their transgressions; for he hath made him who knew no sin a sin-offering for us, that by him we may be made the righteousness of God.” The means employed to reconcile enemies must ever fail of effecting a reconciliation, unless the means are adapted to their state and character. Now herein consists the great and the apparent difference

between the majority of the popular preaching and the apostle's preaching. The former pays no attention to the suitableness of means, but the latter always did. This we shall be at some pains to illustrate. Let a popular preacher of one school preach his gospel to a congregation he desires to see converted, and somewhere in his sermon a few dogmas of his school are presented to neutralize the other parts, or to orthodoxize the whole of it. He will say, it is true, that "natural men are spiritually dead, and as unable to believe in the Messiah as they are to scale heaven by a rope of sand, or to create something out of nothing;" or he tells the people that "God has foreordained a part of the world to everlasting life, and left the rest in their imbecile and bankrupt circumstances to sink down into everlasting death; that for those Christ died, and for a great portion of the human race no sacrifice was offered; no man can believe unless he to whom it is given;" and it must remain a matter of awful uncertainty whether any of the congregation he addresses are amongst those for whom Christ died, or to whom it shall be given to believe. Another preacher, of another school, tells his unconverted hearers that "their *wills* are as free to good as evil, and that they are as able to believe in the Messiah as they are to eat and drink; that Christ died for all mankind, savage and civilized; and that it is still uncertain whether any of his congregation will be saved or not, or whether those who now believe will be saved or damned; that God did not foreordain the salvation or damnation of any man." These dogmas of the two great schools are continually heard from a vast majority of all the pulpits in the land. For, in fact, although there are perhaps ten thousand preachers in the land speaking every Sabbath day in all the synagogues, yet but *two* men speak in them all — and these two are John Calvin and James Arminius. Now it must be confessed that such preachers were not the apostles. Such means as these the Spirit of God never did employ in the conversion of Jews and Gentiles, in the age of primitive simplicity. And the reason is obvious, for there is no *moral fitness* or suitableness in those means to the end proposed. For what *fitness* is there to produce faith in telling a man that he cannot believe? or what *fitness* is there in telling a man that until he is quickened or regenerated by the Spirit of God, he cannot become a disciple of Christ in truth? Can such dogmas, however solemnly declared, or however often repeated, cause the Spirit to descend or to regenerate the man? But he must say these things in order to be, or to appear to be, orthodox!!! Again, what *fitness* is there to produce faith in telling a man that he is able to believe? Did ever a discourse upon what is called "the freedom of the human will," or men's natural powers, incline a man to choose what is good, or cause him to exert his displayed powers to believe? As rationally might one man attempt to persuade another to go to Spain or the Cape of Good Hope, by telling him his will was free to choose or to refuse, and that his natural abilities were sufficient. All such preaching is as absurd as it is unprecedented in the New Testament.

I enter not into the merits or abstract truth of the above systems. This

would be to run the same old metaphysical race again. Some of those dogmas may be metaphysically true, but they are *distilled truths*. They have come from the Calvinistic or Arminian distillery. That is, in other words, certain parts of the Bible mingled with philosophy, and, put through a Calvinistic or Arminian process of distillation, issue in the abstract notions. The men who deal in those distilled truths, and those who drink those distilled doctrines, are generally intoxicated. For even here there is a certain analogy between the revelation of God, and the corn and wheat of God. When the whole wheat or corn of God are used for food in their undistilled state, or when eaten in all their component parts, those who eat them are healthy and enjoy life; but when the component parts of those grains are separated by a chemical process, and the distilled spirit presented to human lips, men cannot live upon these spirits, but become intoxicated, and in process of time sicken and die. This analogy is complete. They who believe and obey the New Testament as God has presented it, live upon it, and enjoy life and spiritual health; but they who attempt to live upon those theories sicken and die. Those who feel themselves upon their *free will* and sufficient strength, often take care *not to will* to obey the apostle's doctrine; and those who complain that the *will* is not free, often appear "freely willing" to neglect the great salvation.

But some of the orthodox contend that it is not safe to permit a man to preach, or to speak to men on religion, who will not expressly and publicly declare that his theory is, that men cannot believe unless they are first regenerated by the Spirit of God. This is the consummation of absurdity on their own principles. For surely they do not think that the Spirit of God will suspend or change the order of its operations according to the opinion of the speaker. On their theory the Spirit of God will operate in its own way, whatever be the private theory of the speaker; and whether a man think or do not think that men can believe only as the Spirit of God works faith in them, the result on their own principles must be the same. But we have gone farther into this subject than was intended. I had intended, in this essay, merely to illustrate that there is a *moral fitness* in the word of reconciliation to become the means of the impartation of that Spirit of Goodness which we stated in our last as the peculiar characteristic of the covenant of Spirit, under which all christians live. And how much happier would the majority of christians be, if, instead of eagerly contending about the fashionable theories in religion, they would remember that every good and perfect gift cometh down from the Father of Lights—that he has promised his Holy Spirit to them that ask him, and that every necessary blessing is bestowed upon all them who, believing that God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him, ask for those favors comprized in the love of God, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

## No. VIII.

## THE GRACE OF GOD—THE SPIRIT OF GRACE.

THE gospel, or glad tidings of the benignity of God to mankind is emphatically called the *Grace of God*. *Grace* is a term of frequent occurrence in the New Testament, and always signifies the *favor* of God towards sinners. This is no where so fully exhibited as in the gift of his Son. Hence the full, free favor of God came by Jesus Christ; and this is termed *the Grace* or *the Grace of God*. The Spirit of God, by whose agency this grace is exhibited, is therefore called *the Spirit of Grace*. Those who have apostatized from the faith of the gospel, are said to have done despite or to have offered an indignity to the Spirit of Grace, because they have treated with contempt that record which he inspired, and have contemned those splendid attestations which he vouchsafed in proof of its authenticity.

A great many enthusiastic and extravagant things are said about the grace of God—by those, too, who profess to teach the christian religion. Hence we often hear grace spoken of as a sort of fluid, resembling the electric, which bursts from the clouds that pass over our fields. *Free grace* and *sovereign grace*, and *grace in the heart*, are terms long consecrated and hackneyed in sermon books, until many suppose that they are Bible terms and phrases. Hence the grace of some is free, and of others not free—is sovereign, and not sovereign—is in the heart, or not in it. There is a grace, too, which is called *special*, and a grace that is *irresistible* and *efficacious*. With some the *day of grace* is sinned away; with others it never comes, or never passes away. From all this confusion in the modern Babel, let us turn to the style of the New Testament. There we find that every bounty expressive of the favor of God towards man, is called *a grace*; that the bounty which one christian exhibits to another, is called *a grace*; that the *written* or *spoken* gospel is called *the grace of God*; and when this gospel is announced, *the grace of God*, is said to appear, or to shine forth. Those who hold or stand in the gospel, as delivered by the apostles, are said to stand in the *true grace of God*, contradistinguished from those who blended the Law and the Gospel. Those who did not correspond in temper and deportment to the gospel, “received the grace of God in vain;” and those who did so correspond are exhorted “to continue in the grace of God.” Those, then, who believe the gospel, receive the grace of God; for, in receiving the gospel, they, in other words, receive the grace of God. When the gospel is exhibited to any people, “the grace of God hath appeared,” or “shone forth” unto them. When they believe it in their hearts, or receive it sincerely, then, and not till then, they have the grace of God in their hearts. This is all the countenance the scriptures give to the popular phrase, “*the grace of God in the heart*.” When men have believed the gospel, they are under the reign of *grace*—they are under the favor of Jesus Christ, and all the benefits they enjoy are so many multiplica-

tions of his favor. So that when the apostle prayed that grace might be multiplied unto, or that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ might be with the saints, he in other words, desires that the favor or benefits of his reign might be with them. While christians keep the commandments of the Saviour, they grow in his favor, or grow in grace, which is exhibited in the increase of all those dispositions and tempers of mind which are compatible with their state, as standing in the true grace of God.

This grace of God works in the hearts of the recipients. By it the peace of God rules, and the love of God is diffused in the hearts of men. A heart ruled by the peace of God, and warmed by his love, is as conscious or as sensible of it, as of any of its own emotions. Every person knows or is conscious that he loves, or fears, or dislikes any person, or thing. When two individuals are at enmity against each other, they are conscious of it, and of the cause. When they are sincerely reconciled to each other, they are just as conscious of it, and of the means or cause of their reconciliation. And shall it be when men are reconciled to God, through his Son Jesus Christ, that they are, in this instance only, unconscious of it! Were this the case, with what propriety or truth, could the apostle say to the christians of his time, concerning the Saviour, "Whom, having not seen, ye love; on whom, not now looking, but believing, ye greatly rejoice in him with joy unspeakable and full of glory!" That a person could believe on, or trust in another, that he could love him, and rejoice in him, without being conscious of it, is altogether inadmissible. A persuasion that God is so benign, that he is so philanthropic, as to account faith for righteousness unto him that believes the record given of his Son, as necessarily produces peace with God, as the appearance of the sun dissipates darkness. "Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom, by this belief, we have obtained access to his favor in which we stand, and rejoice in a hope of the glory of God."

Indeed a transition from darkness to light, from enmity to friendship, from hatred to love, from distrust to confidence, from despondency to hope, from sorrow to joy in those of adult age, is marked with so many sensible attributes, as to render the unconsciousness of it morally impossible. Those, however, who are from infancy brought up in the education and discipline of the Lord; on whose infant minds the sun of righteousness has shone, are often not capable of contrasting their present views and feelings with their former. From the earliest recollection they have believed in Jesus, and have, in some measure, enjoyed the benefits of a hope of acceptance with God. As their capacities of understanding have expanded, as their faith and confidence have increased, their enjoyments of the grace of God have also enlarged—So that amongst those born in a land where christian revelation is so generally diffused, the contrast cannot generally be so sensible and so obvious as in the first age of christianity. For thousands of men and women who yesterday were perfect Pa-

gans, to day rejoice in the hope of eternal life. Once they were darkness, but now they are light. Their renovation was as sensible, as obvious, and as striking to themselves, as the emancipation of an adult slave, as the liberation of a captive, or as the opening of the eyes of a blind man is to himself. Not adverting to the extreme disparity in our circumstances in these instances, from those of the first converts, has given rise to a perplexity, and sometimes to a perturbation of mind, extremely prejudicial to the happiness of many disciples.

It is, perhaps, chiefly owing to the religious theories imbibed in early life from creeds, catechisms, &c. that so few comparatively enjoy the grace of God which bringeth salvation. The grace of God exhibited in the record concerning Jesus of Nazareth, affords no consolation. The hopes and joys of many, spring from a good conceit of themselves; If this good conceit vanishes, which sometimes happens, despondency and distress are the consequences. While they can, as they conceit, thank God that they are not like other men, they are very happy; but when this fancied excellency disappears, the glad tidings afford no consolation: anguish and distress have come upon them. This, with some is a good symptom too; for, say they, "if you will not doubt, we will doubt for you."

Now in the primitive church the disciples derived all their strength, confidence, peace, hope, and joy, from the grace of God appearing in Jesus Christ. In this grace they saw their sins forgiven, themselves accepted, and, on the promise and oath of him that cannot lie, they looked for eternal life. They continued in this joy while they continued keeping the commandments of the Lord, and thereby continued in his love. By this grace of God appearing in Jesus Christ, the Spirit of God comforted their hearts; through it the spirit of adoption was received, and by it, they cried Abba, Father. Their life and their joys sprang from him in whom they confided, and not from a high opinion of themselves. The foundation of their hope made them humble; the foundation of the hope of many moderns makes them proud. The fruits of the Spirit which they received were *love* to him that loved them, and to the saints for his name's sake; *joy*, springing from their acceptance with God and hope of eternal life; *peace* with God through the sacrifice of his Son; *forbearance* towards all, springing from the Divine forbearance which they were every day conscious of; *goodness* exhibited to friends and enemies, in overt acts of kindness; *faithfulness* to God and man; *meekness* in their temper; and *temperance* in restraining all their appetites springing from the example of their glorious Chief. How opposite to this what is by some, considered as the fruits of the Spirit, love to themselves, and to those who unite with them in subscribing the same creed, and in paying the same priest; *joy* springing from a high conceit of their moral worth; *peace* with God, through their having made a covenant of peace on conditions of their stipulating; *forbearance* towards the rich or hon-

orable transgressors of their laws, or those of God; *goodness* to them that love them; *faithfulness* to men, so long as their interests are consulted thereby; *meeekness* in their temper to those who flatter them that they are every way excellent; and *temperance* wherein appetite makes no farther demands. In others the fruits of the spirit of orthodoxy are various:—*doubts*, which spring from their want of certain good symptoms; *fears*, which arise from a conscience not purged from dead works; and alternate joys and sorrows arising from a good or bad opinion of themselves—*ensoriousness* towards them who cannot say *shibboleth* as articulately as themselves, and pride originating from a notion that they are exclusively the elect of God.

But to conclude, we commenced this essay with the intention of exhibiting the import of the grace of God, in the fixed style of the New Testament, regardless of the spurious dialect, or new nomenclature of modern divinity. The prominent ideas intended to be exhibited are, that the gospel of Jesus Christ is emphatically the grace of God; that this gospel received is the grace of God received; that this grace of God when received, works in the hearts of them that believe, that the Spirit of grace therein dwells in the hearts of men, and teaches them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world; that they have “received the grace of God in vain” who do not exhibit its fruits; that “christians continue in the grace of God” while they abound in these fruits; and that while men hold fast the gospel as delivered by the apostles, they “stand in the true grace of God.”

Thus we see that the whole work of the Spirit of God in the salvation of men, as the spirit of wisdom, the spirit of power, and the spirit of grace or goodness, is inseparably connected with, and altogether subservient to the gospel or glad tidings of great joy unto all people, of the love of God exhibited in the humiliation unto death of his only begotten Son. Detached from this we know nothing of it, because nothing more is revealed. And to indulge in metaphysical speculations, or to form abstract theories of our own, is not only the climax of religious folly; but has ever proved the bane of christianity.

## A RESTORATION TO THE ANCIENT OR SCRIPTURAL ORDER OF THINGS.

No. 1.

IT is obvious to the most superficial observer, who is at all acquainted with the state of Christianity and of the Church of the New Testament, that much very much is wanting to bring the Christianity and the church

of the present day up to that standard. In what this deficiency consists, and whether, or how it may be remedied, are the subjects intended to be considered in the papers under this head. Since the great apostacy foretold and depicted by the holy apostles (2 Thes. chap. ii. 2 Peter iii. 5) reached its awful climacteric, many reformations in religion have been attempted, on a more or less restricted scale. The page of history and the experience of the present generation, concur in evincing that, if any of these began in the Spirit, they have ended in the flesh. At the same time it is admitted that the reformers have themselves been benefactors and their reformations benefits to mankind. Those reformers which stand highest and most celebrated in the annals of reformation, are perhaps not always the most deserving of our thanks. We are, perhaps, more indebted to John Wickliffe, than to Martin Luther. The reformations most celebrated in the world are those which have departed the least from the system they professed to reform. Though called reformations of religion, they have always left religion where it was. It may be questioned, whether King Harry was a whit more religious, when he proclaimed himself head of the church of England, than when writing against Luther on the seven Sacraments, as a true son of the church of Rome.

Human creeds may be reformed and re-reformed, and be erroneous still, like their authors—fallible—but the inspired creed, the New Testament, needs no reformation, being like its author infallible. The clergy too may be reformed from papistical opinions, tricks, and dresses, to protestant opinions and ceremonies; protestant clergy, may be reformed from Protestant to Presbyterial Metaphysics, and forms, from these to independency, and yet the Pope be only changed, and still remain in their heart and systems. All reformations in religious opinions and speculations have been fated like the fashions in apparel. They have lived, and died, and revived, died again and so on. As apparel has been the badge of rank, so have opinions been the badge of parties, and the cause of their rise and continuance.

Human systems whether of Philosophy, or of religion, are proper subject of reformation, but Christianity cannot be reformed. Every attempt to reform Christianity is like an attempt to create a new sun. In a word we have had professions of reformations enough.

A restoration of the ancient scriptural order of things is all that is necessary to the happiness and usefulness of Christians.

No attempt to reform the doctrine, discipline and government of the church, a phrase too long in use, can promise a better result than those which have been attempted, and which have failed. The objects proposed then, in these essays, and indeed more or less in all these gleanings, is to aid in bringing christians to see the importance and necessity of the christianity and church in modern times, being brought up to the one standard, the New Testament. To bring disciples individually and collectively to walk in the faith and in the commandments of the Lord and

Saviour as presented in that inspired volume—and thus to promote christian union on scriptural grounds. In a word, to restore the ancient order of things. Celebrated as the era of reformation is—no one can doubt, but that such an era as the one proposed of restoration would as far transcend it in importance and fame as the New Testament transcends in excellency and simplicity, the dogmas and speculations of any human creed or system. And just in proportion as the ancient order of things or the religion of the New Testament is restored, when disciples understand, believe and practice the doctrines of Christ, delivered unto us by his apostles,—just so far will the blessings of religion be enjoyed as were intended by its Divine Founder,

Now in attempting to accomplish this divine object, it must be observed that it belongs to every individual, and to every congregation of individual believers to *discard* from their faith and their practice every thing that is not found written in their only authoritative standard of faith and practice, the New testament of the Lord and Saviour, and to believe and practice whatever is there enjoined. This done, and every thing is done which ought to be done.

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No. II.

CREEDS AND CONFESSIONS OF FAITH.

BUT to come to the things to be discarded, we observe that in the ancient order of things, there were no creeds or compilation of doctrines in abstract terms, nor in other terms, other than the terms adopted by the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. *Therefore* all such are to be discarded. These however different, are professedly taken from the scriptures, they are not however the Scriptures. It is enough to prove that they ought to be discarded, from the fact that none of those now in use, nor ever at any time in use, existed in the apostolic age. But as many considerations are urged why they should be used, we shall briefly advert to these, and attempt to show that they are perfectly irrational, and vain.

1. It is argued that confessions of faith are or may be much plainer and of much more easy apprehension and comprehension than the oracles of God. Men, then, are either wiser or more benevolent than God. If the truths in the Bible can be expressed more plainly by modern divines than they are by the Holy Spirit, then it follows that either God *would not* or *could not* express them in words so plainly as man. If he *could* and *would not*, express them in words as suitable as men employ, then he is less benevolent than they. Again, if he *would*, but *could not* express them in words so suitable as men employ, then he is not so wise as they. These conclusions, we think, are plain and unavoidable. We shall thank any advocate of human creeds to attempt to show any way of escaping this dilemma.

But the abstract and metaphysical dogmas of the best creeds now extant, are the most difficult of apprehension and comprehension. They

are farther from the comprehension of nine-tenths of mankind than the words employed by the Holy Spirit. We shall give a few samples from the Westminster creed, one of the best in the world:—

*Sample 1.* “The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.”

*Sample 2.* “God from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy council of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.”

*Sample 3.* “Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass, upon all supposed conditions; yet hath he not decreed any thing because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.”

*Sample 4.* “These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.”

*Sample 5.* “Although in relation to the knowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly; yet, by the same providence, he ordereth them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.”

These samples are taken out of the 2d, 3d, and 5th chapters, and may serve as a fair specimen of the whole. Now the question is, Whether are these words more plainly, definitely, and intelligibly expressive of divine truths than the terms used by the Holy Spirit in the scriptures. We do not ask the question, Whether these *things* are taught in the Bible? but merely whether *these terms* are more plain, definite, and intelligible than the terms used in the Bible? This we refer to the reader's own decision.

II. But, in the second place, it is argued that human confessions of faith are necessary to *the unity* of the church. If they are *necessary* to the unity of the church, then the church cannot be united and one without them. But the church of Christ was united and one in all Judea, in the first age, without them; therefore, they are not *necessary* to the unity of the church. But again, if they are *necessary* to the unity of the church, than the New Testament is defective; for if the New Testament was sufficient to the unity of the church, then human creeds would not be necessary. If any man, therefore, contend that human creeds are *necessary* to the unity of the church, he at the same time, and by *all the same arguments*, contends that the scriptures of the Holy Spirit are insufficient—that is, imperfect or defective. Every human creed is predicated upon the inadequacy, that is, the imperfection of the Holy Scriptures.

But the records of all religious sects, and the experience of all men of observation, concur in attesting the fact that human creeds have contri-

butcd always, since their first introduction, to divide and disunite the professors of the christian religion.

*Every attempt to found the unity of the church upon the adoption of any creed of human device, is not only incompatible with the nature and circumstances of mankind, but is an effort to frustrate or to defeat the prayer of the Lord Messiah, and to subvert his throne and government.* This sentence demands some attention. We shall illustrate and establish the truth which it asserts.

Human creeds are composed of the inferences of the human understanding speculating upon the revelation of God. Such are all those now extant. The inferences drawn by the human understanding, partake of all the defects of that understanding. Thus we often observe two men sincerely exercising their mental powers upon the same words of inspiration, drawing inferences or conclusions, not only diverse, but flatly contradictory. This is the result of a variety of circumstances. The prejudices of education, habits of thinking, modes of reasoning, different degrees of information, the influence of a variety of passions and interests, and, above all, the different degrees of strength of human intellect, all concur in producing this result. The persons themselves are very often unconscious of the operation of all these circumstances, and are therefore, honestly and sincerely zealous in believing and in maintaining the truth of their respective conclusions. These conclusions, then, are always private property, and can never be placed upon a level with the inspired word. Subscription to them, or an acknowledgement of them, can never be rationally required as a *bond of union*. The assumption of such a right or authority is the foundation of Popery. If, indeed, all christians were alike in all those circumstantial differences already mentioned, then, an accordance in all the conclusions which one or more of them might draw from the divine volume, might rationally be expected from them all. But as christians have never yet all possessed the same prejudices, degrees of information, passions, interests, modes of thinking and reasoning, and the same strength of understanding, an attempt to associate them under the banners of a human creed, composed of human inferences, and requiring unanimity in the adoption of it, is every way as irrational as to make a uniformity of features, of color, of height, and weight, a bond of union. A society of this kind never yet existed, and we may, I think, safely affirm, never will. Those societies which unite upon the 39 articles of the Church of England, and the 33 chapters of the Kirk of Scotland, do not heartily concur in those creeds. Most of them never read them, few of them examine them, and still fewer heartily concur in yielding the same credence, or in reposing the same confidence in them. No christian controverts the propriety and necessity of having a creed. The question is, whether or not Jesus Christ shall be the author of the Creed and of the constitution, and laws of his church? or shall men, who cannot know, or think, or

act righteously in any thing relative to religion; *without* the names, and doctrinal statement and facts, revealed in the gospel, change and modify the teaching of the holy spirit—substitute others in their place? And whether in such a case must they not, more or less be taking from, or adding to the inspired word, and be offending against the one law-giver, who said to Israel of old, “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you.” Deut. iv. 2. and who threatens at the close of the inspired books, “If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life.” Rev. xxii. 18. Do any then dare to establish new creeds, sects and names, opposed to Christ’s authority? Is this true? Look into the New Testament; there the church in whatever part of the world existing, is the church of Christ—founded on one truth—there disciples are *christians*, or believers, regulated by one standard, the inspired apostolic message. Look out of the New Testament, and look into *creeds and confessions*, and we have an Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Methodist, a Baptist creed, to say nothing of their subdivisions; and corresponding to these we have Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, &c. &c. with their sectarian names are united sectarian feelings, affections and antipathies, which have usurped the place of true christian feelings and affections. But it is said these are only names;—but in religion, names and words and sentences are every thing. If in order to right ideas, we alter them, by adding to, or taking away from them, or transposing them from the order and connection of the revelation; we may change the truth and the effect of it into error, and when this is done, there is no standard by which to correct it. In nature, if we give a wrong description of an object, that description can be corrected by examining the object. In religion, the objects, facts, and doctrines, are only known through the revealed description. Alter that and give other names and creeds to the church, and the error is without a remedy. The character and authority of Christ as the one lawgiver, and the character of christians, in faith, hope and love, are merged in the sectarian name given to the church and the members; and accordingly, these which we are pleased sometimes to magnify, sometimes to call mere verbal differences, have occasioned more persevering contention, more bitter controversies, more bloody wars and persecutions, to settle what is called the faith and order of the church, according to their names and creeds, than all the conquerors of the world have employed to make themselves masters of it. If one association of men have the right, another and another have; and churches formed in accordance with them, have equal claim to divine authority. The Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians and Roman Catholics, in this respect, stand upon the same footing; and so, each one claims divine authority to oppose the others’ creed, and this under the pretext of keeping out arians, and other

heretics. Each one assumes the right to be God's commentator and expositor, instead of the apostles, and all differ, and make their differences of opinion, articles of faith. As if men were saved on account of their opinions, or were the better or worse for their mere opinions. *Indeed, confessions of opinions, would be a more appropriate name than confessions of faith, for these instruments,—if faith be properly the belief of testimony, and opinion be the notion, judgment, or view which the mind forms of any thing it believes, or has a knowledge of. All things testified of God in his word are items of belief, and all our speculative views or notions formed of the things thus testified, are matters of opinion. To speak philosophically, I believe what is testified; I know what I have observed; and am of opinion in things speculative: I believe that, Jesus Christ died according to the Scriptures for our sins, I know that the sun gives us light, and am of opinion that all children dying shall be saved. A person's faith is always bounded by testimony, his knowledge by observation and experience, and his opinions commence where both these terminate, and may be boundless as God's creation, or man's invention; perfect freedom and liberty may be granted to all opinions. The faith of christians should be guarded and circumscribed by the revelation of God, and every man's knowledge admitted to be coextensive with his observation and experience. In matters of this world, these distinctions are realized and acted upon every day; but enough is said to suggest a train of reflections, that must issue in the conviction that our confessions of faith are more or less, confessions of opinions, and as such, besides other considerations, ought to have nothing to do with the union, communion and harmony of christians. "There is one faith" says the apostle—not there is one opinion, and "him that is weak in the faith, receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations."*

To attempt union among jarring sects, which are established upon such different foundations, without the abandonment of these, would be as useless, as hopeless an attempt. Believers must all build upon the one foundation, have the one divine standard, before a sameness of feeling, a unity of faith and practice, in the bonds of peace can be expected. Christian union can result from nothing short of the destruction of human creeds and confessions, as these have greatly tended to destroy Christian union.

*But it was affirmed, that every attempt to found the unity of the church upon the adoption of any creed of human contrivance;—upon any creed, other than the apostle's testimony, is not only incompatible with the nature and circumstances of mankind, but is also an effort to frustrate and defeat the prayer and plan of the Lord Messiah, and to subvert his throne and government.*

It will be confessed, without argument to prove it, that the conversion of men, or of the world, and the unity, purity, and happiness of the disciples of the Messiah, were the sublime subjects of his humiliation unto death. For this he prayed in language never heard on earth before; in

words which not only expressed the ardency of his desires, but at the same time unfolded the *plan* in which his benevolence and philanthropy were to be triumphant.

The words to which we refer express one petition of that prayer recorded by the apostle John, commonly styled his intercessory prayer. With his eyes raised to heaven, he says;—"Holy Father—now, I do not pray for these only. (for the unity and success of the apostles,) but for those also who shall believe on me through, or by means of *their word*—that THEY ALL MAY BE ONE,—THAT THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE THAT THOU HAST SENT ME." JOHN XVII. 20. Who does not see in this petition, that the words or testimony of the apostles, the unity of the disciples, and the conviction of the world are bound together by the wisdom and the love of God. The order of heaven, is here unfolded in full splendor to our view. The *words of the apostles* are laid as the basis, *the unity of the disciples* as the glorious result, and the only successful means of converting the world to the acknowledgement, that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah or the Son of the Blessed, the only Saviour of men.

Let us attend to the argument of the prayer. The *will* of Jesus was the same as the will of him who sent him. The will of heaven, that is, the will of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, is, that all who believe on the Messiah through the testimony of the apostles may be one; consequently, they do not will, that those who believe on him through the Westminster or other divines shall be one. The words of the prayer alone demonstrate this. And who does not see, and who will not confess, that the fact proves the fact now existing, that those who believe in him through the words of divines are not one? They are cut up, or divided into these various sects at this moment. While the Saviour prays that those who believe on him through the apostles may be one, he in fact, and in the plain meaning of terms, prays that they who believe on him through any other media or means may be divided, and not be one.

But the conversion of the world is also planned and ordered by the will of heaven to be dependant on the unity of the disciples, as well as this unity dependant upon the apostle's testimony. An attempt to convert Infidels, Pagans, and Mahometans, to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and *the sent* of the Father, until christians are thus united, is also an attempt to frustrate the prayer of the Messiah. There are unalterable laws in the moral world, as in the natural. There are also unalterable laws in the government of the moral and religious world, as in the government of the natural. Those laws cannot, by human interference, be set aside or frustrated—We might as reasonably expect that Indian corn will grow in the open fields in the midst of the frost and snows of winter, as that Pagan nations can be converted to Jesus Chrtst, till christians are united through the belief of the apostle's testimony. We may force corn to grow by artificial means in the depth of winter, but it is not like the corn of August. So may a few disciples be made in

Pagan lands by such means in the moral empire, as those by which corn is made to grow in winter in the natural empire; but they are not like the disciples of primitive times, before sectarian creeds came into being. It is enough to say, on this topic, that the Saviour made *the unity of the disciples* essential to the conviction of the world; and he that attempts it independent of this essential, sets himself against the wisdom and plans of heaven, and aims at overruling the authority of the Great King. On this subject we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, because the people are dull of hearing. But we shall leave this prayer for the present, having just introduced it, and noticed the argument of it, by reminding the reader that instead of human creeds promoting the *unity* of the disciples, they have always operated just the reverse; and are in diametrical opposition to the revealed wisdom and benevolence of Heaven. Should the christian community be united upon the Westminster, or Methodistic, or Baptist, or any human creed, then the plan of heaven is defeated, the apostles disgraced, the Saviour's prayer unanswered. He that advocates the *necessity* of creeds of human contrivance to *the unity of the church*, unconsciously impeaches the wisdom of God, arraigns the benevolence of the Saviour, and censures the revelation of the Spirit. He, perhaps, without reflection attempts to new modify the empire of reason, of morality and religion; to rise above, not only the apostles, but the Saviour himself, and arrogates to himself a wisdom and philanthropy that surpasses, and in fact covers with disgrace, all those attributes that rise to our view, and shine with incomparable effulgence, in the redemption of man.

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## RECEIVING MEMBERS INTO THE CHURCH.

### No. III.

BUT the constitution of the kingdom of the Saviour is the New Testament, and this alone is adapted to the existence of his kingdom in the world. To restore the ancient order of things, this must be recognized as the only constitution of this kingdom. And in receiving citizens they must be received into the kingdom, just as they were received by the apostles into it, when they were in the employment of setting it up. And here let us ask, How did they receive them? Did they propose any articles of religious opinions? Did they impose any inferential principles, or require the acknowledgment of any dogmas whatever? Not one. The acknowledgment of the king's supremacy in one proposition expressive of a fact, and not an opinion, and a promise of allegiance expressed in the act of naturalization, were every item requisite to all the privileges of citizenship. As this is a fundamental point, we shall be more particular in detail.

When any person desired admission into the kingdom, "Dost thou believe in thine heart that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the Lord of all?" Was the whole amount of the apostolic re-

quirement. If the candidate for admission replied in the affirmative—if he declared his hearty conviction of this fact—no other interrogation was proposed. They took him on his solemn declaration of this belief, whether Jew or Gentile, without a single demur. He was forthwith naturalized, by Baptism, and formally declared to be a citizen of the kingdom of Messiah. In the act of naturalization which was then performed by means of water, he abjured or renounced spiritual allegiance to any other prince, potentate, pontiff, or prophet, than Jesus the Lord. He was then treated by the citizens as a fellow-citizen of the saints, and invited to the religious festivals of the brotherhood. And whether he went to Rome, Antioch, or Ephesus, he was received and treated by all the subjects of the Great King as a brother and fellow-citizen. If he ever exhibited any instances of disloyalty, he was affectionately reprimanded; but if he was guilty of treason against the King, he was simply excluded from the kingdom. But we are now speaking of the constitutional admission of citizens into the kingdom of Jesus Christ, and not of any thing subsequent thereunto. The declaration of the belief of one fact, expressed in one plain proposition, and the one act of naturalization, constituted a free citizen of this kingdom. Such was the ancient order of things, as all must confess. Why, then, should we adopt a new plan of our own designing, which, too, is as irrational as unconstitutional? When the eunuch said, "Here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Philip said, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." He replied, "*I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*" Philip then accompanied him into the water, and immersed him. None of the modern questions were propounded—no congregation was assembled to judge of his experience. Philip, as all his contemporaries did, took him on his word. Now I think, brethren, that you cannot say I assume too much when I declare my conviction that the apostolic method was better than yours. You object, that a person's *saying* he believes what the eunuch believed, *does not afford you sufficient evidence to disciple him.* Well, we shall hear you. But let me ask, If he heartily believe what the eunuch believed, is he not worthy of baptism? "Yes," I hear you respond. Now for his *saying* he believes. What have you but his saying that he feels or felt what he described as his experience? You take his word in that case when accompanied with manifest sincerity, why not, then, take his word in this case when accompanied with manifest sincerity? Yes, but say you, any person can learn to say that he believes what the eunuch believed. Admitted. What then? Cannot any person who has heard others catechised or examined for their experience, learn too to describe what he never felt? So far the cases are perfectly equal. The same assurance is given in both cases. You take the applicant on his own testimony—so did they. We both depend upon his word, and we grant he may deceive us, and you know he has often deceived you. But we can

easily shew, that on the apostolic plan, there does not exist the same possibility of deceiving, or of confirming an applicant in self-deception, as in yours.

When your applicant appears before your assembly, say of 100 disciples, and has satisfied them all, they lift up their hands or otherwise express their approbation of his experience, and their consent to his naturalization. Now admit that his profession were sincere, that he felt all that he described, still he may not be a disciple in truth. He may, indeed, have doubts in himself whether his experience were genuine. But in your judgment he has some confidence, or he would not sincerely appear before you. He has then, in your decision, the concurrence of 100 disciples approving *his experience* as genuine. This emboldens him. He now feels himself somewhat assured that he is a true convert, for a hundred converts have approbated his experience, and stamped it as genuine as their own. He may be deceived. And you must admit it, or else contend that all such approbated ones, who speak what they have felt are genuine disciples. I argue that there is, on your plan, a possibility of deceiving or of confirming an applicant in self-deception. On the apostolic plan no such possibility exists. For admitting in this case, as in the former, that he sincerely believes what he professes, then he is a true disciple. For they who receive him on this ground, only express their approbation of *the faith* he has professed. They assure him, by their concurrence, that believing what he professes he is a disciple—This then fixes his attention upon the truth professed. In the one case the faith he has professed is only attested by the brethren as of paramount importance, which is so in fact; and in attesting which, there is no possibility of deceiving, whether his profession be feigned or sincere. In the other case his experience is attested by the brethren, as of paramount importance, which it may not be in fact; and in attesting which, there is a possibility of deceiving, whether his profession be sincere or feigned.

But says one, You may soon get many applicants in this way. Stop, my friend, I fear not so many. You will, if you interrogate the people, find many to say they believe what the eunuch believed, but you cannot persuade them to do as the eunuch did. They will confess with their mouth this truth, but they do not wish to be naturalized, or to put themselves under the constitution of the Great King. Their not *moving* in obedience, proves the truth does not *move* them. But when any person asks what the eunuch asked, he, *ipso facto*, shews that his faith has moved him; and this authorized Philip to comply with his desires, and should induce us to go and do likewise. When the ancient order of things is restored, neither more nor less will be demanded of any applicant for admission into the kingdom, than was asked by Philip. And every man who solicits admission in this way—who solemnly declares that, upon the testimony and authority of the holy apostles and prophets, he believes that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God, should forthwith be

baptized without respect to any questions or dogmas derived either from written creeds or church covenants.

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PURITY OF SPEECH.

No IV.

*There must be, and there shall be an abandonment of the new and corrupt nomenclature, and a restoration of the inspired one.* In other words there must be an abandonment of the Babylonish or corrupt phraseology of the dark ages and of modern discoveries, in the fixed style of the christian vocabulary. This is a matter of greater importance than may, at first sight, appear to all. Words and names long consecrated, and sanctified by long prescription, have a very imposing influence upon the human understanding. We think as well as speak by means of words. It is just as impossible for an adult to think as to speak without words. Let him that doubts make the experiment. Now as all correct ideas of God and things invisible are supernatural ideas, no other terms can so suitably express them as the terms adopted by the Holy Spirit, in adapting those supernatural truths to our apprehension. He that taught man to speak, would, doubtless adopt the most suitable terms in his language to reveal himself to his understanding. To disparage those terms, by adopting others in preference, is presumptuous and insolent on the part of man. Besides when men adopt terms to express supernatural truths, it is not the truths themselves, but their ideas of them they communicate. They select such terms as suit their apprehensions of revealed truth, and hence the terms they use are expressive only of their conceptions of divine things, and must just be as imperfect as their conceptions are. It is impossible for any man, unless by accident, to express accurately that which he apprehends imperfectly. From this source spring most of our doctrinal controversies—Men's opinions, expressed in their own terms, are often called Bible truths. In order then to a full restoration of the ancient order of things, there must be "a pure speech" restored. And I think the Lord once said, in order to a restoration, that he would restore to the people "a pure speech." We know that the ancient order of things, amongst the Jews, could not be restored, after captivity in Babylon, until the law of the Lord, containing the primitive institution of the Jews' religion, was read and understood by the people, and the dialect of Babylon abandoned, as far as it corrupted the primitive simplicity of that religion. Hence the scribes read them the law from morning to evening, gave them the sense, and made them understand the reading. This became necessary because of the corrupt dialect they had learned in Babylon, on account of which their revelation was unintelligible to them, until the language of Canaan was purged from the phraseology of Ashdod. It will, we apprehend, be found precisely [similar in the antitype, or in the return of the people of God from the captivity of Babylon the great, the mother of abominations.

It will be said that men cannot speak of Bible truths without adopting other terms than those found in the written word. This will be granted, and yet there will be found no excuse for the many species of unauthorized and Babylonish phraseology. It is one thing to speak of divine truths in our own language, and another to adopt a fixed style of expressing revealed truths to the exclusion of, or in preference to, that fixed by the Spirit, and sometimes, too, at variance with it. For instance, the terms Trinity, first and second person: Eternal Son, and the eternal procession of the Spirit, are now the fixed style in speaking of God, his Son Jesus Christ, and of the Spirit, in reference to their "personal character." Now this is not the style of the oracles of God. It is all human, and may be as freely criticised as one of the numbers of the Spectator. Yet because of the sanctified character of these terms having been baptized, or authorized by the orthodox and pious for centuries, it is at the risque of my reputation for orthodoxy, and at the expense of being charged with heresy, that I simply affirm that they are terms that the wisdom of this world teacheth, and not the Spirit of God. I would not be startled to hear that I have denied the faith and rejected the revealed character of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, because I have said that the fixed style in speaking of them in the popular establishments is of human origin and of the language of Ashdod, and not of the language of Canaan. This, however, only proves that the terms of human philosophy are held as sacred, or rather more sacred than the words of the Holy Spirit.

These terms originate new doctrines. Thus the term "*trinity*" gives rise to the *doctrine of the trinity*. And what fierce controversies have originated out of this doctrine! How many creeds and martyrs has it made!! Courteous and pious reader, would it not be as wise, as humble, and as modest too, for us, on such topics, to prefer the words of the Holy Spirit, and to speak of God, his Son, and Spirit, as the apostles did. Moreover, these terms do not help our conceptions of God at all. They rather impede than facilitate our understanding the divine oracles. It is not more difficult to conceive of an eternal Son, eternally begotten, and of a Spirit eternally proceeding, than to understand any thing God has ever spoken to men. And see on what a slender thread those distinctions hang! Because Jesus Christ told his disciples that he would *send* them the Spirit, which Spirit *would* or *was to proceed* from his Father, or to be *sent forth* by his Father as well as by himself; therefore the schoolmen affirm that the Spirit eternally proceeded, or was eternally coming from the Father!!! This is the whole thread on which this "*doctrine*" hangs. I only instance this, and cannot now pause on the others.

But besides this species of sophistry there is another more dangerous, because more specious. This is really as foreign and as barbarous a dialect as that we have noticed, though in Bible terms. It consists in selecting Bible terms and sentences, and in applying to them ideas totally

different from those attached to them by the Holy Spirit. Of this sort are the following: "The natural man, spiritual man; in the flesh, in the spirit; regeneration, washing of regeneration; ministration of the Spirit, demonstration of the Spirit; power of God, *faith of the operation of God*, the grace of God; the letter, the spirit; the old and new covenant; word of God; the ministry of the word; truth of the gospel; mystery, election, charity, heretic, heresy, blasphemy, church communion, baptism, faith," &c. &c. &c. The former dialect rejects the words of the Holy Spirit, and adopts others as more intelligible, less ambiguous, and better adapted to preserve a pure church. The latter dialect takes the terms and sentences of the Spirit, and makes them convey ideas diverse from those communicated by the Spirit. We shall in this, as in the former dialect, specify one instance. Take for this purpose the sentence, "*Through faith of the operation of God.*" This the populars use to designate a faith wrought in the human heart by the operation of the great power of God. But the Spirit of God intended by this phrase to shew that christians in baptism had represented to them their *resurrection* with Christ to a new life, *through a belief of the great power of God*, exhibited in raising Christ from the dead. So the wisest teachers, and so all the learned translators of the last century understood it, amongst whom are Pierce, Tompson, Macknight, and others. Macknight reads it thus: "Being buried with him in baptism, in which also ye have been raised with him through the belief of the strong working of God who raised him from the dead." Now in relation to these two dialects, there is one easy and safe course. The first is to be totally abandoned, as transubstantiation and purgatory are by Protestants, and the other is to be tried by the context or design of the writer.

The adoption and constant use of this barbarous dialect, was the cause of making divisions, and is still one existing cause of their continuance. This style furnishes much matter, and many a topic to those who delight in metaphysical subtleties, and gains them much credit for their skill in mysteries, which they exhibit in their weekly attempts to unravel the webs which themselves and their worthy predecessors have woven. Let it be remembered that, as these terms were not to be heard in the primitive church, in restoring *the ancient order of things* they must be sent home to the regions of darkness whence they arose.

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#### ANCIENT ORDER OF WORSHIP.

##### No V.

WE shall now inquire what was the ancient order of worship in the christian church. Preparatory to this it may be expedient to consider whether there be any divinely authorized worship in the assembly of saints. As this is a theme of great importance, and of much difficulty

with some, we shall bestow some attention to it. And in the first instance we shall attempt to demonstrate, from rational principles, that there is a divinely instituted worship for the assemblies of the disciples. In order to do this as convincingly as possible, and to circumscribe the arena of conjecture, we shall take but two positions, which we hope to hold as impregnable fortresses against all assault. These we shall exhibit in the form of dilemmas. The first is, *Either there is a divinely authorized order of christian worship in christian assemblies, or their is not.* This every man must admit, or cease to be a man. Now to remove all ambiguity from the terms of this dilemma, we shall explicitly state that by a *christian assembly*, we mean a congregation or assembly of disciples meeting in one place for social worship. The day agreed upon by christians for this meeting is the *first* day of every week. The authority that ordains this day we have already noticed in this work, and it is not now a subject of inquiry. It is also unnecessary to our present purpose, inasmuch as this day is agreed upon by all christians, with the exception of some Sabbatarian\*. By the phrase, "*order of christian worship*," we do not mean the position of the bodies of the worshippers, nor the hour of the day in which certain things are to be done, nor whether one action shall be always performed first, another always second, and another always third, &c. &c. though in these there is an order which is comely, apposite, or congruous with the genius of the religion, and concerning which some things are said by the apostles; and, perhaps, even in some respects, these things may be determined with certainty as respects the practice of the first congregations of disciples; but that there are certain social acts of christian worship, all of which are to be attended to in the christian assembly, and each of which is essential to the perfection of the whole, as every member of the human body is essential to the perfect man—is that which we wish to convey by the phrase, "*order of the christian worship*." These remarks may suffice in the mean time to prevent misapprehensions; but in the prosecution of our inquiries ever ambiguity will be completely removed. We shall now repeat the first position we have taken—*Either there is a divinely authorized order of christian worship in christian assemblies, or their is not.*

On the supposition that *there is not*, then the following absurdities are inevitable: There can be no *disorder* in the christian assembly; there can be no *error* in the acts of social worship; there can be no *innovation* in the department of observances; there can be no *transgression* of the laws of the King. For these reasons, viz. Where there is no order established there can be no disorder, for disorder is acting contrary to established order; where there is no standard there can be no error, for error is a departure or a wandering from a standard; where there is nothing fixed there can be no innovation, for to innovate is to introduce new things amongst those already fixed and established; and where there

is no law there can be no transgression, for a transgression is a leaping over or a violating of legal restraints. Those, then, who contend that there is no divinely authorized order of christian worship in christian assemblies, do at the same time, and must inevitably maintain, that there is *no disorder, no error, no innovation, no transgression in the worship of the christian church—no, nor ever can be.* This is reducing one side of the dilemma to what may be called a perfect absurdity.

But, to make this matter evident to children as well as men, we will carry it a little farther. One society of disciples meets on the first day morning, and they all dance till evening, under the pretext that this is the happiest way of expressing their joy, and when they have danced themselves down they go home. Now in this there is no disorder, error, innovation, or transgression, for there is no divinely authorized order of christian worship. The reader will observe that we do not suppose human laws or regulations of any consequence in this matter. Men may regulate the worship they require for themselves and for one another; and in relation to those regulations there may be disorder, error, innovation, and transgression. But as none but the Lord can prescribe or regulate the worship due unto himself and profitable to us; so, if he have done it, human regulations are as vain and useless as attempts to prevent the ebbing of the sea or the waxing and waning of the moon. But to proceed: Another society meets for worship, and they sing all day; another shouts all day; another runs as in a race all day; another lies prostrate on the ground all day; another reads all day; another hears one man speak all day; another sits silent all day; another waves palm branches all day; another cries in the forenoon and listens to the organ in the afternoon; and it is all equally right, lawful, orderly and acceptable; for there is no divinely authorized order of christian worship. We are then, on the principles of reason, constrained to abandon this side of the dilemma, and give up the hypothesis that there is no divinely authorized order of christian worship. Now as one of the only two supposable cases must be abandoned, it follows by undeniable consequence, *that there is a divinely authorized order of christian worship in christian assemblies.*

Our second position we hope to make appear equally strong and unassailable. Having now proven that there is a divinely authorized order of christian worship in christian assemblies, our second dilemma is, *Either this christian worship in christian assemblies is uniformly the same, or it is not.* To clear this position of ambiguity, it will be observed that we speak of the assembling of the disciples on the day agreed upon for the purpose of social worship, and that the same acts of religious worship are to be performed on every first day in every assembly of disciples, or they are not. If the same acts of worship, or religious ordinances, or observances, be attended to in every assembling of the saints, then their worship is uniformly the same; but if not, then it is not uniformly the same. The position we again repeat, this exposition being given, *Either*

*the christian worship in christian assemblies is uniformly the same, or it is not.*

We shall follow the same method of demonstration as in the preceding dilemma. We shall take the last of the only two supposable cases and try its merits. *It is not uniformly the same.* Then it is different. These differences are either limited or unlimited. If they are unlimited, then it is uniformly different; and what is uniformly different has no order, standard, or rule, and thus we are led to the same absurdities which followed from supposing there was no divinely authorised order of christian worship; for a worship uniformly different is a worship without order. But supposing that those differences are limited, those limitations must be defined or pointed out some where. But they are not. Now differences that are no where limited or pointed out are unlimited, and consequently may be carried *ad infinitum*, which is to say there is no order appointed, and thus we are again encompassed with the same absurdities.

To level this to every apprehension, it may be remarked that the worship of the Jews, though divinely authorized, was not uniformly the same. The worship at the feast of Tabernacles, at Pentecost, at the Passover, and in different seasons of the year, and even of the Moon, varied from what was attended to on ordinary occasions. These varieties and differences were pointed out in their standard of worship. But no such varieties are pointed out, no such differences are ordained in any part of the standard of christian worship. Yet we find amongst the professed christians as great variety existing as amongst the Jews—though with this difference, that divine authority ordained the one, and human authority the other. The worship of a class-meeting, of a camp-meeting, of a monthly concert, of an association, of a sacramental occasion, of a preparation, and of an “Ordinary Sabbath,” differs as much as the Jewish Passover, Pentecost, annual atonement, or daily sacrifice. Now there were in the Jewish state solid and substantial reasons for all these varieties, but in the christian state there is no reason for any variety. The changing types of the Jews religion have received their consummation, and now there exists at all times the same reasons for the same observances. There is no reason why a society of disciples should commemorate the death or resurrection of Jesus on one first day more than on another. All the logic and philosophy of the age, as well as the New Testament, fails in producing one reason. He that invents or discovers it has discovered a new principle. But we are only establishing or demonstrating on rational principles, that the worship of a christian assembly is uniformly the same, and the method we have chosen is that of supposing the contrary and reducing the hypothesis to an absurdity, or a series of absurdities. In brief, the sum of our remarks on this position is, that if the worship of the christian church is not uniformly the same, then it is either occasionally or uniformly different. If uniformly differ-

ent, then there is no established order, as proved in the first dilemma; and if occasionally different, there must be some reason for these varieties; but no reason exists, therefore a difference without reason is irrational and absurd. It follows then that there is a divinely authorized order of christian worship in christian assemblies, and that this worship is uniformly the same, which was to be demonstrated on principles of reason.

These positions are capable of rational demonstration on other grounds than those adopted; but this plan was preferred because it was the shortest, and, as we supposed the most convincing.

Hoping that the christian reader will bring all things to the test, and hold fast that which is good, we bid him adieu for the present.

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### BREAKING OF BREAD.

#### No. VI.

THE subject of this essay and its scriptural proof, has been anticipated in our 1st and 2d numbers to which we refer our readers—this essay will merely contain some general remarks respecting the ordinance. We have already demonstrated from rational principles, that there necessarily must be, and most certainly is, a divinely instituted worship for christian assemblies, and that this worship is uniformly the same in all meetings of the disciples on the first day of the week: That *the breaking of bread* in commemoration of the sacrifice of Christ, is a part, or an act of christian worship, is generally admitted by professors of christianity. Romanists and Protestants of almost every name agree in this. The society of Friends form the chief, if not the only exception in christendom, to this general acknowledgment. Their religion is all *spiritual*, and may be suitable to beings of some higher order than the natural descendants of Adam and Eve; but it is too contemplative, too metaphysical, too sublime, for flesh and blood. We have tongues and lips where-with men have been impiously cursed, but with which God should be blessed. We have bodies too which have become the instruments of unrighteousness, but which should be employed as instruments of righteousness. And so long as the five senses are the five avenues to the human understanding, and the medium of all divine communication to the spirit of man, so long will it be necessary to use them in the cultivation and exhibition of piety and humanity. But we have a few words for them in due time, for we esteem them highly on many accounts. But in the mean time, we speak to those who acknowledge *the breaking of bread* to be a divine institution, and a part of christian worship in christian assemblies, to be continued not only till the Lord came and destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, but to be continued until he shall come to judge the world.

That the primitive disciples did, in all their meetings on the first day of the week, attend to the breaking of bread, as an essential part of the

worship due their Lord, we are fully persuaded, and hope have made satisfactorily evident to every candid christian. Indeed this is already proved from what has been said in the fifth number under this head. For, if there be a divinely instituted worship for christians in their meetings on the first day of the week, as has been proved; if this order, or these acts of worship, are uniformly the same, as has been shewn; and if *the breaking of bread* be an act of christian worship, as is admittde by those we address—then it is fairly manifest that the disciples are *to break bread* in all their meetings for worship. *This we submit as the fact, but not the strongest argument in support of our position.* We confess, however, that we cannot see any way of eluding its logical and legitimate force, though we are aware it is not so well adapted to every understanding as those which are to follow. Our second argument will be drawn from the nature, import, and design of *the breaking of bread*. This we shall first illustrate a little.

While Romanists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians of every grade, Independents, Methodists, Baptists, &c. acknowledge *the breaking of bread* to be a divine institution, an act of religious worship in christian assemblies, they all differ in their views of the import of the institution, the manner and times in which it is to be observed, and in the appendages thereunto belonging. In one idea they all agree, that it is an extraordinary and not an ordinary act of christian worship; and, consequently, does not belong to the ordinary worship of the christian church. For this opinion they have custom and tradition to shew, but not one argument, worthy of a moment's reflection, not even one text to adduce as a confirmation of their practice. *Who ever heard a text adduced to prove a monthly, a quarterly, a semi-annual, or an annual breaking of bread.* This course in regard to this institution, I conjecture, drove the founders of the Quaker system into the practice of *never* breaking bread—just as the views of clergy make and confirm Deists.

Much darkness and superstition are found in the minds, and exhibited in the practice of the devout annual semi-annual, and quarterly observer of the breaking of bread. They generally make a Jewish passover of it. Some of them, indeed, make a Mount Sinai convocation of it. With all the bitterness of sorrow, and gloominess of superstition, they convert it into a religious penance, accompanied with a morose piety, and an awful affliction of soul and body, expressed in fastings, long prayers, and sad countenances on sundry days of humiliation, fasting, and preparation. And the only joy exhibited on the occasion, is, that it is all over: for which some of them appoint a day of thanksgiving. They rejoice that they have approached the very base of Mount Sinai unhurt by stone or dart. If there be any thing fitly called superstition in this day and country, this pre-eminently deserves the name. A volume would be by far too small to exhibit all the abuses of this sacred institution in the present age.

The intelligent christian views it quite in another light. It is to him as

sacred and solemn as prayer to God, and as joyful as the hope of immortality and eternal life. His hope before God, springing from the death of his Son, is gratefully exhibited and expressed by him in the observance of this institution. While he participates of the symbolic loaf, he shews his faith in, and his life upon, *the Bread of life*. While he tastes the emblematic cup, he remembers the new covenant confirmed by the blood of the Lord. With sacred joy and blissful hope, he hears the Saviour say, "This is my body broken—this is my blood shed for you." When he reaches forth those lively emblems of his Saviour's love to his christian brethren, the philanthropy of God fills his heart, and excites correspondent feelings to those sharing with him the salvation of the Lord. Here he knows no man after the flesh. Ties that spring from eternal love, revealed in blood and addressed to his senses in symbols adapted to the whole man, draw forth all that is within him of complacent affection and feeling, to those joint heirs with him of the grace of eternal life. While it represents to him all the salvation of the Lord, it is the strength of his faith, the joy of his hope, and the life of his love. It cherishes the peace of God, and inscribes the image of God upon his heart, and leaves not out of view the revival of his body from the dust of death, and its glorious transformation to the likeness of the Son of God.

It is an institution full of wisdom and goodness, every way adapted to the christian mind. As bread and wine to the body, so it strengthens his faith and cheers his heart with the love of God. It is a religious feast; a feast of joy and gladness; the happiest occasion, and the sweetest antepast on earth of the society and entertainment of heaven, that mortals meet with on their way to the true Canaan. If such be its nature and import, and such its design, say, ye saints, whether this act of christian worship would be a privilege, or a pain, in all your meetings for edification and worship. If it be any proof of the kindness of the Saviour to institute it at all, would it not be a greater proof to allow the saints in all their meetings to have this token of his love set before them, and they called to partake? If it were goodness and grace on his part to allow you twice a-year in your meetings the privilege, would it not be inexpressibly greater goodness and grace to allow you the feast in all your meetings. But reverse the case, and convert it into an awful and grievous penance, and then grace is exhibited in not enforcing it but seldom. On this view of it, if it be an act of favour to command it only twice a-year, it would be a greater good to command it but twice or once during life. Just, then, as we understand its nature and design, will its frequency appear a favor or a frown.

It is acknowledged to be a blissful privilege, and this acknowledgment, whether sincere or feigned, accords with fact. It was the design of the Saviour, that his disciples should not be deprived of this joyful festival when they meet in one place to worship God. It will appear (if it does not already) to the candid reader of these numbers, that the New Tes-

tament teaches that *every time* they met in honor of the resurrection of the *Prince of Life*, or, when they *assembled in one place*, it was a principle part of their entertainment, in his liberal house, to eat and drink with him. HE NEVER MADE HIS HOUSE ASSEMBLE BUT TO EAT AND DRINK WITH HIM. His generous and philanthropic heart never sent his disciples hungry away. He did not assemble them to weep, and wail, and starve with him. No—he commands them to rejoice always, and bids them eat and drink abundantly.

From the nature and design of the breaking of bread, we would argue its necessity and importance as a part of the entertainment of saints in the social worship of the Lord in their assemblies for his praise and their comfort. In the mean time, let the christian who apprehends the nature, meaning, and design of this institution, say whether it be probable that it is, or could be an extraordinary observance, and not an ordinary part of christian worship in the meeting of saints.

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THE FELLOWSHIP, OR CONTRIBUTION.

No. VII.

ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑ, translated fellowship, communion, communication, contribution, and distribution, occurs frequently in the apostolic writings. King James' translators have rendered this word by all those terms. A few specimens shall be given. It is translated by them *fellowship*, Acts, ii. 42. "They continued in *the fellowship*." 1 Cor. i. 9. "The *fellowship* of his Son, Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. vi. 14. "What *fellowship* hath light with darkness." Gal. ii. 9. "The right hand of *fellowship*." Philip. iii. 10. "The *fellowship* of his sufferings." 1 John i. 3. "*Fellowship* with the Father." 2 Cor. viii. 4. "The *fellowship* of the ministering to the saints."

They have sometimes translated it by the word *communion*, 1 Cor. x. 16. "The *communion* of his blood."—"The *communion* of his body." 2 Cor. xiii. 14. "The *communion* of the Holy Spirit."

They have also used the term *communicate* or *communication*, Heb. xiii. 16. "To *communicate*," or "Of the *communication* be not forgetful, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

Where it evidently means alms giving in other places, they have chosen the term *distribution*, 2 Cor. ix. 13. "For your liberal *distribution* unto them, and unto all."

They have also selected the term *contribution* as an appropriate translation, Rom. xv. 26. "For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain *contribution* for the poor saints at Jerusalem."

It is most evident, from the above specimens, that the term imports a joint *participation* in giving or receiving; and that a great deal depends on the selection of an English term, in any particular passage, to give a particular turn to the meaning of that passage. For instance, "*The right hand of contribution*" would be a very uncouth and unintelligible phrase.

“*The contribution of the Holy Spirit,*” would not be much better.” Again, had they used the word *contribution* when the sense required it, it would have greatly aided the English reader. For example—Acts ii. 42. “They continued steadfastly in the apostle’s doctrine, in the breaking of bread, in the *contribution*, and in prayers,” is quite as appropriate and intelligible, and there is no reason which would justify their rendering Rom. xv. 26. as they have done, that would not equally justify their having rendered Acts ii. 42. as we have done. In Rom. xv. the context obliged them to select the word *contribution*, and this is the reason why they should have chosen the same term in Acts ii. 42. The term *fellowship* is too vague in this passage, and, indeed, altogether improper: for the Jerusalem congregation had fellowship in breaking bread, and in prayers, as well as in contributing: and as the historian contradistinguishes the *koinonia* (or “fellowship,” as they have it) from prayer and *breaking bread*, it is evident he did not simply mean either communion or fellowship as a distinct part of the christian practice or of their social worship.

Thompson has chosen the word *community*. This, though better than the term *fellowship*, is too vague, and does not coincide with the context, for the community of goods which existed in this congregation is afterwards mentioned by the historian, apart from what he has told us in the 42d verse.—There can be no objection made to the term *contribution*; either as an appropriate meaning of the term *koinonia* or as being suitable in Acts ii. 42. which would require an elaborate refutation, and we shall, therefore, unhesitatingly adopt it as though king James’ translators had given it here as they have elsewhere.

As christians, in their individual and social capacity, are frequently exhorted by the apostles to contribute to the wants of the poor, to distribute to the necessities of the saints: as the congregation at Jerusalem continued steadfastly in this institution; and as other congregations elsewhere were commended for these acceptable sacrifices, it is easy to see and feel that it is incumbent on all christians as they have ability, and as circumstances require, to follow their example in this benevolent institution of him who became poor that the poor, might be made rich by him.

That every christian congregation should follow the examples of those which were set in order by the apostles, is, I trust, a proposition which few of those who love the founder of the christian institution, will question. And that the apostles did give orders to the congregations in Galatia and to the Corinthians to make a weekly contribution for the poor saints, is a matter that cannot be disputed, see 1 Cor. xvi. 1. That the christian congregations did then keep a treasury for those contributions, is, I conceive, evident from the original of 1 Cor. xvi. 1. which Macknight correctly renders in the following words:—“On the first day of every week, let each of you lay somewhat by itself according as he may have prospered, putting it into the treasury, that when I come there may be then no collections.”

Some who profess to follow the institutions of Jesus Christ, as found

in the New Testament, do not feel it incumbent on them to make a weekly contribution for the poor, and urge in their justification, among other excuses, the following: "It was only to some churches, and with a reference to some exigencies, that those injunctions were published."

That some churches, on some particular occasions, were peculiarly called upon to contribute every week for one definite object, is no doubt true, and that similar contingencies may require similar exertions now as formerly, is equally true. But still this does not say that it is only on such occasions that the charities of christians must be kept awake, and that they may slumber at all other times. Nor does it prove that it is no part of the christian religion to make constant provision for the poor. This would be to contradict the letter and spirit of almost all the New Testament. For, in truth, God never did institute a religion on earth that did not look with the kindest aspect towards the poor—which did not embrace, as its best good works, acts of humanity and compassion: In the day of judgment, the works particularized as of highest eminence, and most conspicuous virtue, are not, Ye have built meeting houses—ye have founded colleges, and endowed professorships—ye have educated poor pious youths, and made them priests—but, Ye visited the sick, ye waited on the prisoner, ye fed the hungry, ye clothed the naked christian.

But some excuse themselves by shewing their zeal for sound doctrine. "We," say they, "do not build colleges nor give fat livings to priests." No, indeed, you neither contribute to rich or poor; you do not give to things sacred, or profane; you communicate not to the things of God, nor the things of men. You keep all to yourselves. Your dear wives and children engross all your charities. Yes, indeed, you are sound in faith, and orthodox in opinion. But your good works are not registered in the book of God's remembrance, and there will be none of them read in the day of rewards.

But this is not my design. *The contribution*, the weekly contribution—the distribution to the poor saints, we contend is a part of the religion of Jesus Christ. Do not be startled at this use of the term *religion*. We have the authority of an apostle for it. James says. "Pure and undefiled religion in the presence of God, even the Father, is this—viz. to visit (and relieve) the orphans and widows in their afflictions, and to keep unspotted by the vices of the world." There is a *sacrifice* with which God is well pleased, even now, when victims bleed no more. James has told it here, and Paul reminded the Hebrew christians of it. And when any one undertakes to shew that our present circumstances forbid our attending to a weekly contribution for the poor, whether in the congregation or out of it, we shall undertake to shew that either we ourselves are proper objects of christian charity, or we are placed in circumstances which deprive us of that reward mentioned in Matthew xxv. And if there is need for private and individual acts of charity, there is more need for a systematic and social preparation for, and exhibition of, congregational

contributions. But let it be remembered, that it is always "accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not."

I shall close these remarks with an extract from one of the best fragments of antiquity yet extant, which was first published when christians were under the persecutions of Pagan Rome. It is from an apology of one of the first bishops, which being addressed to a Roman emperor, shews the order of the christian church before it was greatly corrupted. It is equally interesting as respects the weekly breaking of bread and the weekly contribution. Justin Martyr's Second Apology, page 96—"On Sunday all christians in the city or country meet together, because this is the day of our Lord's resurrection, and then we read the writings of the prophets and apostles. This being done, the president makes an oration to the assembly, to exhort them to imitate, and do the things they heard. Then we all join in prayer, and after that we celebrate the Supper. Then they that are able and willing, give what they think fit; and what is thus collected is laid up in the hands of the president, who distributes it to orphans and widows, and other christians as their wants require."

Would to Heaven that all the congregations approximated as nearly to the ancient order of things, as those did in behalf of whom Justin Martyr addressed the Roman emperor, not more than fifty years after the death of John the apostle!

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## BISHOP'S OFFICE—SPECIAL CALL TO THE MINISTRY.

### No. VIII.

#### *Extract of a Letter to the Editor of these Essays.*

"I wish to encourage the more general circulation of your works, as in the general I heartily approve of what they contain; yet I must acknowledge there are a few things to which I have some objections. Object 1st. The call to the Ministry, you, if I mistake not, reject any thing like our having a knowledge of any special call of God to the work, as this call was confined to the days of the apostles, and accompanied with miracles as the evidence. This I acknowledge, and the calling may be said to be a miraculous calling, as well as many miracles attending their work, (the case of Paul;) but since the days of the apostles, I have to believe that the real ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ are divinely and specially called to the work; not that I believe that every person who takes it upon himself to teach or preach, is called of God to the work; no, far be it, for I believe that there are but few, compared to the number now engaged in this all-important work, know any thing like a work of grace upon their souls, and as little about a call to the ministry. I believe many are nothing better than wolves in sheep's clothing, and many, too many, are preaching for filthy lucre's sake; I believe not even all those that are owned of God, have passed from nature to grace, have experienced the new birth, are all such called to preach; though I acknowledge that

every lay member is to teach and preach both by example and precept, if they act up to their duty and privilege, as lay members and not pastors. Neither do I believe that every person whose mind may lead him out to public speaking, is to be considered as qualified for an elder or a pastor; for in the church, God has placed diversities of Gifts, by the same Spirit, some pastors, some teachers, some to exhortation, &c. and we are all called upon to the exercise of these public gifts; but I believe those that are called to labor in word and doctrine and to take charge of the flock of God, to feed them, &c. have some special mind not known to others. I will tell you a little of the exercise of my mind. I entertained a hope about 29 years ago, that God, for Christ's sake had pardoned my sins; that I was justified in his sight through the all-atoning blood of the cross, &c. At this time I felt unspeakable love both to God and my fellow-creatures, and it was my heart's desire that all might see and test the sweetness of this salvation, &c. but yet I can date no call to the work of the ministry. About six months after, I had a most transporting view of this glorious plan with its sweet and unbounded fullness—the beauty of holiness, the hateful nature of sin, the happy state of the saints, the deplorable state of the wicked, &c. that immediately my mind was impressed something like this; that as God had been so good as to reveal and make known these things to me, if I did not go forth and warn poor sinners of their danger and endeavour to point them to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, that God would require their blood at my hand, &c. I trembled, I tried to make my excuses, but yet it would awfully sound in my ears and reach my very heart, Woe unto me if I preach not the gospel! For seventeen years was this the case; but at length, with much fear and much trembling, I had to venture upon the Lord. Since that, though doubts and fears often I have to labor under, I witness peace in venturing in the work. It would exceed the limits of a letter to detail minutely the exercise of my mind for seventeen years.

Adieu, my dear brother, for the present. I hope ever to be your well-wisher and fellow-laborer in the common cause of our Divine Master, and that in much love.

## ANSWER.

*Dear Brother,*

WITH regard to the objections stated in yours of the 10th September, I have a few things to remark. And with respect to the first, it ought to be considered that *preaching, teaching, and ruling* embrace the whole duties belonging to the offices ordained by the Saviour relative to the conversion of sinners and the edification of disciples. These *works* were, for a time, to be performed by the same person. And if we understood the precise idea attached to these terms by the apostles, there would be less difficulty in our minds as to the *call* and qualifications indispensable to these works. The term *call* itself is a scriptural term, and was used by the apostles in a certain and definite sense.

You have no doubt frequently observed that we contend that the scriptures never can be understood in any other way than by attaching to the terms found in the book, the very ideas which the sacred writers and speakers affixed to them. To take their terms and attach other ideas to them, is the grossest imposition upon ourselves and others. To attempt to understand their terms, or to investigate the meaning of them is not a mere controversy about *words* and *names*, as some would have it; for the whole of our salvation is found in words, and communicated to us in terms; and unless these words, and names are apprehended, we are just in the predicament of those who have no revelation. It is matter, therefore, of vast importance with me to understand the words found in these sacred writings in the very identical sense of the writers; and I am assured that when this is done all doubts upon the subject of religion will vanish, and the New Testament will be perfectly understood. There is but *one rule* to be observed in order to gaining this end, and that is, to take notice how the terms are either universally, or specially used in all the places where they occur. This requires much reading and attention, which, however, always repays the diligent.

But to return. Let the term *preaching* and the term *call* be understood aright, and there can be no controversy between us upon the subject. But you think "there is a call to the ministry." In this phrase the terms are all changed. I think there is a call to the office of a deacon, and I think there is a call to the office of a bishop; and I think, moreover, that no man can constitutionally assume, or take to himself, these offices, unless he is called according to the apostolic rule. But with regard to "*the call to the ministry*" the Bible says nothing; and although I understand the ideas attached to these words in *popular use*, I reject them from my vocabulary altogether, because they mislead those who wish to understand the christian scriptures in their own simplicity and force. The Bible knows nothing about "the ministry" of the Catholic, Episcopal, or Presbyterian church, nor any other ministry save that of Moses and Christ. There is no such office as that of a pope, cardinal, dean, chapter, archbishop, church warden, presiding elder, circuit preacher, class leader, lay presbyter, Presbyterian minister, Congregational or Baptist Divine mentioned from Genesis to Jude. Now as the Bible knows nothing of these offices, it is unreasonable to expect to find a *call* to them, mentioned in the volume. "A call" in some sects, means so many hundred dollars a-year; in others it means a deep impression upon the mind; and in others it means no more than the voice of the congregation.

I know what you term "a call" is just what I felt a hundred times when a boy. And I still feel it. I feel that it is my indispensable duty to call upon sinners to reform, and to flee from the wrath to come. I also feel that it is my indispensable duty to write and publish this paper, and to make use of all righteous means to circulate it far and wide. I could not conscientiously abandon it. But shall I say that I am specially called by the Holy Spirit to edit it?" If there be any sense which can be put upon

these words, which will justify their use in this connexion, I will add, that I am as much called by the Holy Spirit to publish it, as any man upon earth is called to preach the gospel. What think you of this? A man that can *read* well, and who finds persons who cannot *read* the testimony of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, is also called by the Holy Spirit to *read* those testimonies? and in so *reading*, he is *preaching* the gospel. I think the whole amounts to this, and the whole issues here; those who feel it their duty to preach the gospel, call this sense of duty "*a call of the Holy Spirit;*" and when they feel it their duty to visit the sick, and to feed the hungry, and clothe the naked, they consider this sense of duty, a mere dictate of conscience, or a part of religion, and do not rank it so high as a special call of the Holy Spirit; whereas in fact it is the same in every respect. And did men feel that there is as much religion, in feeding the hungry and visiting the sick, as they think there is in public speaking; I doubt not but that they would think they had as divine, and as authoritative a call, to the one as to the other. But many, from false views of things, after they have found peace and joy in the gospel, think there is no way of *servi*ng God or men, but in preaching the gospel, and they can have no rest night nor day so long as they are not serving God," *i. e.* in their view, preaching the gospel. Hence so many not only attempt to preach the gospel, but even to teach the christian religion, who have need themselves to be taught the very first principles of the doctrine of Christ. In this way they impose upon themselves, the church, and the world with a good conscience, thinking they are serving God, and that they are either emphatically or exclusively the servants of God.

Your affec. Brother.

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It is cheerfully admitted, that many good men have advocated the necessity, and expatiated on the importance of a special call of the Holy Spirit, to qualify and authorize them to preach the gospel. But shall we be deterred, from examining any principle, because good and great men have espoused it?—if so;—all examinations of principles, of what is true or false, is at an end.—We would then venture to ask for the evidences, that any one is now specially called and sent by God to preach and teach the Christian religion. The purposes to be answered by such a call; it is replied, rendered it necessary. First, the qualifications of the preacher himself;—and secondly, the regard to be paid to the instructions which as a divine messenger he communicates. Doubtless then, if the instructions are the more to be regarded, because of the teacher being thus specially called, and sent by the Holy Spirit; it is absolutely necessary that his call be well authenticated, that his divine authority to instruct be most apparent, before it is criminal to neglect or dispute his instructions. How then does he demonstrate his authority. By producing a license, or a certificate from Papists, Episcopalians, {Presbyteri-

ans, Methodists, or Baptists, that they consider him competent, and have ordained, or authorized him to preach, and teach Christianity. Does this prove that he is called of God? No assuredly, for then God specially calls and qualifies men to preach different gospels, and to teach contradictory systems of Christianity!! This will not satisfy a conscientious mind. Will then, his merely affirming that he is specially called and moved by the Holy Spirit to the work of the ministry, prove that he is so called? Assuredly not, for many who have most confidently made such a profession, have afterwards declared and exhibited that they were not so moved; besides in this case, this would be no evidence to others, and no one is called upon to believe without evidence. But again, it was said that this special call is necessary to qualify a preacher of the gospel. Let it be asked in what respect to qualify him? Doubtless to give him a correct knowledge of the Christian religion, and the faculty of communicating it.—But do those who say they are thus called, and moved possess this gift of knowledge, and this gift of utterance? On the contrary,—do they not teach opposite systems as truth; have they not, as others, for the most part to study the religion, and to study languages, in order to communicate their ideas intelligibly? Then indeed their call does not qualify them. What an abuse of language, nay rather of principle! This man is specially called to do a work, or to go a warfare at his own expense! But did he hear a voice? He answers yes, or no; if he heard a voice, how does he prove that it was the voice of God? If he says he heard no voice, why then does he say that he is called? But to bring this subject to the test of truth. To the law and to the testimony. Let us see how it applies to those who said in holy writ, that they were specially called, and sent of God to proclaim, and teach his truths.

When Moses was sent to the children of Israel “*God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said Moses, Moses, and he said here am I. “Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people.”* And Moses said, but behold they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice, for they will say the Lord hath not appeared unto thee, and the Lord said cast thy rod upon the ground, and he cast it, and it became a serpent, and the Lord said put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail, and it became a rod in his hand, &c. “*That they may believe, that the Lord God of their Father;”* “*hath appeared unto thee.*” Ex. iii. 4 and iv. 1-5.

In like manner, the Lord we are told, called twelve men of the Jews during his life time, to be eye and ear witnesses of all that he said and did. Then he afterwards called and ordained them to be apostles, or ambassadors, or ministers of the New Testament, as they are equally distinguished by any of these names or titles of office. These he called by his own voice, and qualified them to preach and teach *infallibly* the same truths, the whole scope of their commission. Their instructions being co-extensive with their commission. In their first call and commission they were sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And to des-

prise or neglect their instruction, was criminal in the highest degree. "He that despised them, despised *him that sent them*." But this could not have been the case, had they had no means of convincing their hearers that they were so called and sent. They received miraculous power, as Moses did, to confirm their testimony and mission. For this purpose, they healed the sick, they cast out demons, they raised the dead, and as they received their power, freely, without money and without price, they freely imparted their benefits. In their second commission, and in the special commission of Peter to open the door of faith to the Gentiles; and in the call of Saul of Tarsus, to become an apostle, to, and a preacher and a teacher of the truth among the Gentiles, the same circumstances attended their call. A voice was heard, the gift of wisdom, of knowledge, and of utterance, and the gift of working miracles, were communicated and exhibited.

It is evident that all who were specially called of God, to the work of the ministry, possessed every thing that has been contemplated, as necessary in the antecedent remarks. When other persons called in question Paul's call to the work of the ministry, or to become an ambassador of Christ; how did he contend for it?—By referring to the evidences,—to the wonders he had wrought, as well as the labors he had endured, (see 2 Cor. xii. 12.) "Truly," says he, "the signs of an apostle were fully wrought among you, with all patience, by signs, and wonders, and powers." Again he tells them, chap. xiii. 6, "but I trust when I make you a visit, that ye shall know that we are not *without proof* of Christ's speaking by me."

From these premises we are scripturally led to conclude, that every one moved by the Holy Spirit, or specially called of God to preach or teach Christianity, is possessed of these three requisites—

1st.—He has heard the voice of God calling him; in other words he is called.

2d.—He is qualified to speak infallibly.

3d.—He is capable of confirming his testimony by divine attestations, or by the working of miracles.

Besides, what need have we for new revelations, new messengers? Divine messages require divine messengers. But if the message of the apostles,—if the revelation of the New Testament—be complete, be perfect, we might as reasonably require a new sun in the natural world, as in the kingdom of Christ, to look for new ambassadors, new revelations of the Spirit.

On this subject much might be said; but in the mean time, we shall simply add, to prevent misapprehension—that as we have a revelation, developing all the mysteries of the love and grace of God towards sinners through Christ, a revelation clear,—full—and complete,—it is the duty of every one who acknowledges it to be such, to devote his mind to it and study it for himself that, amongst those who believe and understand the Chris-

tian religion, there are individuals *called*, in the subordinate sense of the phrase to sundry *good works*, and *offices*, of much profit to men.—Those that are rich in this world, professing the faith—are called by *the word of God, written and read of all men*, to be ready to distribute, to be willing to communicate to the wants of the brotherhood, and to the wants of others.—When a brother in distress, appears in the presence of a brother rich in this world, the brother of high degree, is *called*, by the word of God, or the circumstances of the case *call* upon him, to put his hand into his pocket and to communicate to the distressed. Just in the same sense, a brother who is well instructed into the doctrine of the Bible, who has attained to the full assurance of understanding what Paul, and Peter, and James, and John, and the other writers of the New Testament have taught concerning the way of life and salvation; may be called by the word of God and by the providence of God, by the circumstances of the case, to teach and preach Christ to the ignorant or unbelieving, either in public or in private; or to show the things that *the ambassadors* have taught and authenticated;—these things he may urge and enforce, on *their* authority, who divinely confirmed their testimony and mission; “God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit according to his own will.” But as it would not be only absurd and vain for the rich man to say he was specially called and sent of God, or moved by the Holy Spirit, to give alms, but criminal for him to neglect the duty until he was so called and moved; so it would be absurd and vain for the person duly qualified, possessing the knowledge of the New Testament, to say that he was specially called and sent of God to preach, or teach, as it would be criminal in him to neglect what is obviously presented to him in the providence of God, or by the circumstances of the case, as a duty, on the plea that he was not specially called and sent of God, to preach or teach.

For it is not only true, that no one can himself now assume to be an apostle, or ambassador of Christ, from wanting the important essentials to the office, already alluded to, as also that of having seen the Lord after his resurrection. Acts ii. 3, 22. But with as little scriptural propriety can any one assume to stand in the same relation to the apostles and to the churches, which Timothy and Titus did, because they were in fact, specially and actually employed by the apostle Paul, as his agents, or assistants in the works in which he was engaged; among the special purposes they had to do, one was, that “Titus was left at Crete, to set in order that the things which were wanting, and ordain Elders in every city, as” says Paul “I had appointed thee,” yet without presumptuously assuming their place and authority; the New Testament furnishes the zealous and intelligent christian, with sufficient example and warrant for the work of an evangelist and preacher, simply considered as such—without necessarily requiring any special commission for the purpose, or necessarily implying their possessing any *official authority* in the churches. The scriptures inform us, that the disciples among

whom was Philip the deacon, (who were *all except the apostles* scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen,) *went every where preaching the word,*" "and the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord." Acts viii. 1, 9, and 11, 19.

Besides this, there is another fact to which we would advert, viz. that when there is a voluntary association of any number of disciples of Christ, met in any one place to attend to the duties and privileges of a church, should they call any one of their *own* number, who possesses the qualifications belonging to the bishop or overseer, laid down by the Holy Spirit in the written word; and should they appoint him to office, as the Holy Spirit has taught them in the same written word—then it may be said to such a person, "Take heed to yourself and to the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseer." But this Bishop or overseer, of whom we have now spoken, is neither priest, ambassador, minister of religion, clergyman, nor a reverend divine; but simply one that has the oversight of one voluntary society, who when he leaves that society, has no office in any other in consequence of his being an officer in that. His discharge of the work of a bishop is limited by, and confined to, the particular congregation which appointed him to office. If he should travel abroad and visit another congregation, even of the same views with that of which he was or is bishop, he is then no overseer; he is then in the capacity of an unofficial disciple. To suppose the contrary is to constitute different orders of men, or to divide the church into the common classes of clergy and laity, than which nothing is more essentially opposite to the genius and spirit of christianity. We have seen some bishops, ignorant of the nature of the office, acting very much out of character, placing themselves in the bishop's office, in a church which they might occasionally visit, and assuming as a right, to act officially in an assembly over which they had no bishopric. They acted as absurdly, and as unconstitutionally, as the president of the United States would do, if, when on a visit to London, he should enter the English parliament and place himself on the throne, either *solus*, or in junction with his majesty George IV. and that, forsooth, because he is, or was president of the United States. In the mean time we conclude that one of those means used to exalt the clergy to dominion over the faith, over the consciences, and over the persons of men, by teaching the people to consider them as a distinct order of men, specially called and moved by the Holy Spirit, and sent to assume the office of ambassadors of Christ, or ministers of the christian religion, is a scheme unwarranted of God, founded on pride, and ignorance, and, as such, ought to be opposed and exposed by all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; and that the only call which any man can now urge, with either scripture or reason on his side—is *his competency to instruct*, and the need which exists for his instruction. The same call which the rich man has to relieve the poor, when he discovers them, being that which an intelligent christian has to instruct those ignorant of the truths of God.

## BISHOP'S OFFICE.

## No. IX.

A Bishop without a charge, or cure, over which he is to preside, is like a husband without a wife, a contradiction in sense. There must be sheep, before there can be a shepherd, and there must be a congregation before there can be an overseer. Accordingly, the apostolic writings teach us, that appointment to the office of Bishop, was subsequent to the gathering the disciples into churches. The apostles and evangelists fulfilled their commission—proclaimed the gospel, made disciples, baptized, and separated them, as churches, or congregations, before they suggested the necessity and importance of the Bishop's office, or the churches could discover, who among them were fitted to take the oversight of them. It appears also, the appointment to this office was made with as little delay as possible after the churches were gathered. Thus we find the apostles in their subsequent visits to the churches which they had planted, appointing and giving directions concerning the Bishop's office.—“When they had returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them, &c.—and when they had ordained them Elders in every church, &c. they commended them to the Lord.” Acts xiv. 23—and Titus was left in Crete, to set in order the things wanting—to ordain Elders in every city as the *apostle* had appointed him. Titus i. 4. From which premises it follows that as the making of disciples, is previous to teaching them—the gathering of congregations, or churches, to setting them in order, necessarily the Bishop's work is different from that of a missionary, a preacher, an evangelist, in the New Testament import of these terms.

We are in no danger of confounding the stated, with the extraordinary offices, in the apostolic churches. No directions are given respecting the choice of persons to occupy the latter: but as to the stated officers, the word of God contains minute directions to guide our choice, together with a clear account of the duties connected with them.

The stated officers in all the churches were Elders, or Bishops, and Deacons. The term Elder and Bishop were synonymous terms. Paul sent for the Elders of the church at Ephesus, and exhorted them to take heed to themselves and to the flock, over which the Holy Ghost had made them (*episcopos*) Bishops; Acts xx. 17–23. Titus was left at Crete to ordain Elders. If any, says he, be blameless, &c. for a Bishop must be blameless—Titus i. 5–7. Some sneer at the term Bishops, as if the Spirit of God had not, as we have seen, chosen it, to designate the *only* legitimate officer, in a christian congregation, who is from office, to teach and rule. The haughty titles of reverend, and right reverend, &c. is substituted for the apostolic and humble name of overseer or bishop. Some again, because of the term being appropriated in the churches of England and Rome, to a man who a gown or certain trappings wears, have considered it very profane indeed, to call any man a bishop who has not been ordained by a pope's authority. Many may be startled

at the term, because they perceive an incongruity between the modern and the New Testament office of a Bishop. They never read in the New Testament of a Bishop, of two, three, or more churches, of a Bishop having the pastoral care of a church in Rome and Corinth, and Ephesus, upon which they divided their care and labor. They might have read of a plurality of bishops in one congregation, but never of a plurality of congregations under one bishop.

Some of our brethren, who knew better, have begun in the spirit, but ended in the flesh: they assume authority, (because Titus had it) sometimes with, sometimes without the leave of a Church, to license preachers, then to convert their licensed ones into elders!!! with the exclusive right of administering ordinances, and thus have created and finished an order of its own kind.

But amongst all the qualifications which Paul mentions, which a bishop must profess—the modern special call to be an evangelist is not to be found—for although it is true that a bishop must necessarily be qualified to do the work of an evangelist or preacher; yet a disciple may be and indeed ought to be fitted, (when the duty is apparent) to proclaim the glad tidings; to preach the gospel, who may be quite unapt to teach, and in other respects incompetent for the Elder's office. The neglect of the teaching of God's word, and confounding these things together, has been and is the cause of much evil in the christian communities.

But the fact is, very generally, few of the leaders of the religious assemblies seem to be able to decide, whether they shall be called Evangelists, Preachers, Elders, Bishops, or Ambassadors; but the terms minister, or reverend, or divine, seems to embrace them all. Many affect to see but little consequence in being tenacious of the name, on this and other heads. Why not then call all the leaders Priests—Astrologers—Soothsayers, if the name be indifferent. Because, says one, these names are used to denote quite different characters. For the same reason therefore, let the names which the apostles adopted be used in their own acception, and let those things, persons and offices which the apostles said nothing about, be named or styled as the inventors please. In a word, let us give to divine institutions, divine names, and to human institutions, human names.

The Bishops of apostolic creation are sometimes called elders, because they were generally aged persons, or amongst the oldest converts (not a novice<sup>29</sup>) in the community in which they officiated. But the office is no where called, the Elder's office. There is nothing in the term Elder, which can designate the nature of any office. But the term Bishop, overseer, implies a good and arduous work.

The nature of the Bishop's Office may be learnt either from the exigencies of the congregations, or from the qualifications by which the apostles have designated Bishops, which are such as respects the work to be done by him, and such as respects the dignity of character which his pre-eminence in the christian congregation behoves him to possess. The former are those which some call gifts or talents of the intellectual

order; the latter are endowments purely moral or religious. The former, about which at present we are only speaking, are comprised under two general heads, teaching and presiding. He must be qualified to teach, and able by sound teaching both to convince and exhort those who oppose the truth. He must feed the flock with all these provisions which their exigencies require, or with which God has furnished them in the christian institution. He must preside well—He is from office the standing president of the congregation; and its being requisite that he should be one that presides well in his own household, plainly imports what is expected from him in the christian congregation. In our ordinary meetings, according to the modern prevailing order, we have hardly need of a president—the desire and need is of an orator. The bishop of a christian congregation will find much to do that never enters into the idea of a modern preacher or minister. The qualification and business of a bishop are marked in 1. Tim. v. 17. iii. 5. Heb. xiii. 17. 1. Thes. v. 12. Titus i. 5. 1. Tim. iv. 12.

The duties he has to discharge to the flock in the capacity of a teacher and president, will engross much of his time and attention. Therefore the idea of remuneration for his services, was attached to the office from its first institution. This is plain, not only from positive commands declared to the congregation, but from hints uttered with a reference to the office itself. Why should it be so much as hinted, that the bishops were not to take the oversight of the flock “for the sake of sordid gain,” if no emolument, or remuneration was attached to the office? The abuses of the principle have led many to oppose even the principle itself. The christian bishop pleads no inward call to the work, as a business he is to live by; and never sets himself to learn it, so as to induce *any* congregation, to call him. The christian bishop is called by the brethren because he has the qualifications pointed out in the word of God already. He accepts of the office for the congregation of which he is a member, and takes the oversight of them, and receives from them such remuneration as his circumstances require; and as they are bound in duty to contribute to him for labouring among them, &c. &c. he considers himself the overseer or president of the one congregation who called him to the office; and should he leave them he is of course no longer president or overseer. He is officially an officer in no other congregation than the one which called him. He does not consider he has been called of God as Aaron was, and remaineth a priest for ever. In fine, he was chosen for his outward and visible qualifications, which the apostles describe and require.

It is the duty of elders not only to labour in word and doctrine in public and in private, but also to rule in the church of God. 1. Tim. v. 17. Heb. xiii. 7, 17. by the laws of the king of Zion. They have no right to require the church to submit, unless they make it appear plain, that the authority of Christ demands submission in that particular case. And they are to be esteemed very highly in love for their work's sake.

PLURALITY OF BISHOPS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES.

No. X.

THE word of God affords ample evidence, that the New Testament churches, founded by the apostles, had a plurality of Elders, as the following passages satisfactorily attest.

Acts xi. 29. "The disciples determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea, which also they did, and sent it to the *Elders* by the hands of Barnabas and Saul."

Acts xiv. 23, "And when they had ordained them *Elders* in every church, they commended them to the Lord."

Acts xv. 4. "And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles, and *Elders*."

Acts xx. 17. "And from Miletus he sent to *Ephesus*, and called the *Elders* of the church."

Phil. i. 1. "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Christ Jesus to all the saints which are at Philippi, with the *Bishops* and Deacons."

1. Thes. v. 12. "We beseech you brethren to know *them* which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you."

1. Tim. v. 17. "Let the *Elders* that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine."

Titus i. 5. "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain *elders* in every city, as I had appointed thee."

James v. 14. "Is any sick among you? let him call for the *elders* of the church."

The above examples of apostolic practice is equivalent to precept, because, examples here necessarily implies precept. By whom, for instance, was the church at Philippi taught to have this plurality? would it make any difference did we read that the church at Philippi had at that time no bishops, and that Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit had commanded them to appoint Bishops? but must they not have had such a command, before they appointed Bishops, as the Apostle recognizes the appointment? One example of a plurality *proves* that churches *when practicable*, ought to have a plurality—for in all circumstances a plurality might have been avoided. Therefore as this practice must have originated from divine institution and wisdom, the government in churches by a plurality of Bishops, must in itself possess superior advantages. Why then, (if it be not a practical and prevailing disregard to the authority of God's word,) is it that generally speaking, modern churches never conform themselves in this as in many other instances to the divine standard? May we not justly dread that the rebuke to those of old is as applicable to us? That we are taught the fear of God by the precepts of men; and that "Full well we reject the commandments of God that we may keep our own traditions."

For the churches in the New Testament had a plurality of Bishops—

or one congregation had several bishops. Modern churches have only one; or one bishop has, as is often the case, the charge of several congregations.

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### THE DEACON'S OFFICE.

#### No. IX.

THE term *deacon*, as all know, is equivalent to the English word *servant*. But the word *servant* is a very general term, and in the state signifies every public officer, from the president down to the constable. They are all servants of the state. So the apostles, evangelists, prophets, and bishops were all servants of the Lord and of the church. But there was one set of servants in the apostolic churches who were emphatically the servants of the church in its temporal concerns. These were the deacons, or stewards, or treasurers of the church. For as the deacon's office had respect to the temporalities of the church, and as these are in general some way connected with the pecuniary matters, the office of treasurer and almoner is identified with, or is the same as that of deacon; so much so that some translators have, out of regard more to the application than to the literal import of the term *diakonos*, uniformly translated it *almoner*.

The plain and simple state of the case is this: Christian congregations, in primitive times, had need of money or earthly things, as well as we. They had rich and poor members. Their poor were such as could not, either through bodily infirmities, or through the inadequate proceeds of their labor in times of embarrassment, furnish their own tables. Those who had to spare were then called upon to supply their wants. And in many instances they not only contributed to the wants of their own poor, but to the wants of those of remote christian communities, in times of general scarcity or pecuniary difficulties. Contributions, generally called the *fellowship*, were steadily attended to in all their meetings. So Paul gave directions to all the churches in Galatia, and elsewhere, to replenish the treasury every first day, as the Lord had prospered them in their temporal avocations. A deacon or deacons, had the charge of this treasury, and were *ex-officio* treasurers; but this was not all. They were not only to take care of the contributions, but to dispense or appropriate them according to the directions of the brethren. Thus they were *stewards*. And as the poor were those in whose behalf this fund was created, and as the deacons dispensed to them, they became, *ex-officio*, *almoners* of the poor.

As they had not in those days of primitive simplicity, so many different sorts of funds and officers as we have in this age of complexity; the deacons attended to all pecuniary matters, and out of the same fund three set of tables were furnished. These were the Lord's table, the bishop's table, and the poor's table. A plurality of deacons were in most instances necessary, because of the attention required from them and the trust reposed in them. It was not so much per annum to the bishop,

nor so much per annum to the poor, nor so much per annum to the Lord's table; but according to the exigencies of each, and the ability to contribute, was the extent of the treasury; and the distributions of the stewards or deacons of the congregation. In this state of things the deacons had something to do. They were intimately acquainted with the families and wants of the brethren, and in paying a christian regard to these and the duties of their office, they obtained an honorable rank and great boldness in the faith, or fluency in the doctrine of Christ. Conversant with the sick and the poor, intimate with the rich and more affluent brethren, familiar with all, and devoted to the Lord in all their services, they became eminent for their piety and charity, and of high reputation amongst their brethren. Once every week these contributions were made, and as often were the appropriations made in times and circumstances that required them. Out of the church's treasury, then, the poor and distressed widow above three score, or the sick and afflicted disciple was relieved. The Lord's table was continually furnished with bread and wine. The bishops' also, according to their labors and their need, were supplied. And thus every thing was promptly attended to in the Lord's institution, which could afford spiritual and temporal comfort to all the subjects of his kingdom.

Amongst the Greeks, who paid so much regard to differences of sex, female deacons, or deaconesses, were appointed to visit and wait upon the sisters. Of this sort was Phebe of Cenchrea, and other persons mentioned in the New Testament, who labored in the gospel. The direction given to the Corinthians respecting the treasury, and the instructions to Timothy and Titus concerning the choice of deacons, also concerning the support of widows and bishops, all concur in furnishing the above views of this office and work.

But how has it degenerated in modern times, into a frivolous and unmeaning carrying about a plate once-a-quarter, in all the meagre pomp of a vain world!—a mere pompous etiquette, without use or meaning. Often we find the office of treasurer and deacon contradistinguished, as that of moderator and bishop in the same congregation. It is a scriptural insult to appoint a moderator where there is a bishop, and the same to appoint a treasurer where there is a deacon. The deacon is, *ex-officio*, treasurer, and the bishop, *ex-officio*, moderator or president. To appoint a president in any meeting where there is an appointed bishop, is in effect saying that the bishop is not qualified to keep order; and to appoint a treasurer where there is a deacon, is in effect saying he is not to be trusted; or not qualified for his office. The office itself suggests the propriety of those directions and qualifications, laid down for both the deacons and deaconesses in Paul's letters before mentioned. What a wise, benevolent; and independent institution, a christian congregation is! Nothing is left out of view which can contribute to the temporal and spiritual weal of the brotherhood. They meet in full assembly once every

week, to remember, praise, and adore the Lord; to share in the participation of his favors. The temporal state of the brotherhood is not overlooked in these meetings. Contributions are made for the necessities of saints. The deacons are acquainted, and, through them, the whole fraternity, with the circumstances of all. Under its wise and wholesome discipline, care is taken that every member capable of labor, work with his own hands diligently at some honest calling. The contracting of heavy and oppressive debts is proscribed. No brother is allowed to enthrall himself nor others in any sort of worldly speculations, which incurs either anxiety on his part, or inconvenience to others. The aged, feeble, and helpless are taken care of by the brethren. The indolent, slothful, and bad economist are censured, admonished, and reformed, or excluded. The Lord's table is constantly furnished. The bishops' wants and necessities always supplied, and no one deprived of any necessary good. There are persons fitted for every service; and those who attend continually on this good service, become eminent in the faith, and after refreshing others are again in turn refreshed themselves. In this view of the deacon's office, we cannot but concur with the sayings and views of the primitive fathers, who considered the deacons as the treasurers of the congregation, and as appointed to the service of tables, viz. the Lord's table, the poor's table, and the bishop's table.

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#### ON PRAYER.

##### No. XII.

WHEN the human mind is indoctrinated into certain modes of thinking and reasoning, every exercise of the mind in religion, is tinged with the distinguishing tenets which constitute the capital points of the system. So that the refined doctrinal christian thinks, speaks, and acts, in religious matters, as if the divine approbation, and the enjoyment of heaven, were made to depend upon right opinions, or correct speculations on the topics of *revelation*. Hence we find that the zeal for correct sentiments gives a peculiar turn to every act of devotion. Baptism, the Lord's supper, the Lord's day, prayer, and praise, in the apprehensions, and in the observances of such christians, are attended on, as though our acceptance depended upon the ideas or views which the mind takes of these institutions, during the period of time in which we are engaged in them. So far has this matter been carried out in practice, that it is not uncommon to find our favorite points in speculative theology to engross the whole contents of a prayer, as well as of a sermon. Men are now taught, both by theory and practice, to confess their whole faith in their addresses to God, as they were wont in other times to confess their sins. Some times we hear the terms "*we believe*," as often repeated in a prayer as there are principal articles in our creed;—and it is not uncommon for men when addressing their Creator, to declare to him not only their own views of his character and government, but to contrast their views with those of other men—"God, we thank thee that we do not

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hold this or that; and that we believe this;”—are often heard in public prayers. And it has become as common to pray the sermon over in the succeeding prayer, as it is to sing it over in a suitable hymn or psalm.

Prayer to God is one of the most interesting, solemn, and exalted exercises which falls to the lot of mortal man. It should be well understood by the christians. Prayer is naturally divided into secret and public, or into individual and social. The Saviour commanded both. He gave promises to both—to him that enters into his closet, and to him who agrees with others touching any thing for which they should unite in their prayers to God. Now with regard to secret prayers, there is less temptation to depart from the true and proper attributes of prayer, than in public prayer: for in secret we are freed from any restraints or inducements growing out of a regard for the opinions and estimation of others. Our wants or desires are merely to be expressed in simplicity, and just according to our actual views and feelings, when we address no ear but that of Him who hears in secret.

It is in perfect accordance with that wisdom and goodness every where apparent in the christian religion, that we are so repeatedly exhorted to enter into our closets, and to address our Father in secret, to whom, though he is unseen himself, nothing is secret. There is no school under the heavens in which the *art of prayer* can be so easily acquired—in which the spirit of prayer can be so fully possessed, and in which the language of prayer can be so fully and perfectly attained—as in the closet in the fields, or forests, where no human ear can hear, and where no human eye can see us. Besides, no prayers have so much influence upon ourselves as those which are offered up in secret to God. We are then, and we feel ourselves then, in company with God alone. We can tell him what we cannot tell any mortal, the nearest or dearest on earth. We can disclose all our secrets, unburthen all our griefs, confess all our faults, and pour out all our souls before him. If we are distressed, the declaration of our distresses to him, relieves them; if we are prosperous and joyous, our thanksgivings and acknowledgments to him temper our joys and moderate our rejoicings. Equanimity is not only produced, but always retained, by this heaven-devised appointment. We are prepared for every event when we have come out from the presence of God. But there is every thing in reason, in religion, and in our condition and circumstances, to entice us to the closet, and to allure us into the secret recesses to converse with our Father who is in heaven.

According to our faith in God will be our requests; and according to our confidence in his promises will be our assurance of acceptance with him. When in spirit and in truth we call upon the Lord, our words are well ordered, because they are the words of sincerity—the language of the heart. When we speak from the heart, there is a propriety in our terms, and a pathos in our expressions, which easily distinguish them from all the language of art, and the studied forms of speech. Therefore it is that

we improve so much in the style of our prayers when we are much practised in secret prayer. Barrenness in language, and a dry frigid, and stiff style in prayer, argues that the person is a great stranger to secret communion with God. Besides, no man who has been much or long in the habit of conversing with God, can either be ashamed or afraid to pray in the presence of men; for surely he that is wont to converse with the King, will never want language nor feel himself embarrassed when he speaks in the presence of the King's servants.

Some, no doubt, will urge their own experience against this last paragraph, and will feel that it is incorrect, as respects themselves. But before their experience can be regarded as of any weight against a position so plain in terms and plausible in fact, two things must be fully considered: First, whether they have been only occasionally or habitually—whether at long or short intervals—they have been accustomed to address their Heavenly Father in secret. And in the next place, whether fluency of speech belong to them in any instance, on any subject. If fluency of speech belong not to them on other subjects, we do not suppose that habitual secret prayer will give them a fluency of speech, or an appropriateness of terms, which they do not possess, and cannot acquire on other subjects.‡

Without transcending the bounds of that *love that hopes all things*, we might say that a good number of our public prayers seem to be rather prepared for the ears of men, than for the ears of God. There is so much of the studied and set phrase of ordinary and artificial composition in our addresses to the throne of the universe, that there is more apparent concern in the speaker to please the ears of his auditors, than to worship and adore the Majesty of the Universe. He seems more desirous of securing the praise of men for his attainments, than the approbation of the Deity for his sincerity and spirituality. These remarks are not offered with any desire, or with the least intention, to promote or cherish a spirit of criticism on the performances of others; but to put every one on his guard against temptations to a departure from all that is valuable in prayer—from all that is sacred in devotion—and from all that is pleasing to HIM, whose approbation is more to be desired than the smiles of all the universe besides. But I must approach still nigher the subject I have in view, and make some remarks on the matter and manner of our prayers.

Whether it has been from the *manuals* of the church of Rome, from the *common prayer book* of the church of England, or from the *directions* for prayer in the Westminster Confession, I will not now deign to enquire; but so it is, that there appears as great a defection from scriptural usage—as great a departure from right reason in this part of the sacred worship, as in any other of the wise and gracious institutions of Heaven.

These departures from scripture and reason may be classed under certain general heads, among which the following are the chief:—1. Uniformity as respects the subject matter. By uniformity in the matter of our prayers, is meant, a certain methodical and stated expression of

the same sentiments and sentences in every address to God. Some people pray in such a monotonous strain of sentences, that after you have heard them twice or thrice, you can always anticipate the next sentence. Such forms of prayer, for *forms* they really are, argue that the person is immutably the same in his wants, sins, desires, and thanksgivings. This is one extreme, towards which, on the same side, there are many approximations, which, though not so glaring, are nevertheless as exceptionable. Call upon some of this class to pray, and let the occasion be what it may, you must expect to hear the same sins confessed, the same depravity lamented, the same petitions offered, the same thanksgivings repeated. All the difference between their thanksgivings before or after meals, and their public prayers, is, that the former are shorter than the latter. That in the public assembly, or that by the social hearth, is a long prayer; and that before dinner or supper is a short prayer. This is the effect of bad example, or of habit. For what is there in reason or in the sacred writings, which could lead a person to think that when dinner or supper calls to give thanks to God for the repast provided, we should break forth into a long confession of the sins of all our lives, a declaration of all our duties, a recital of all our petitions, or even a summary of all our thanksgivings? Can we not rationally and scripturally thank or bless God for the favor before us, through Jesus Christ our Lord? Again when we are called upon to thank God in the morning, for the mercies of the night, and supplicate his protection through the day, can we not confine ourselves to what is obviously the design of the exercise? And in the evening when we are called to thank him for the favors of the day, and to implore his guardian care through the night, can we not confine ourselves to that which immediately enters into the design of our worship?

When persons pray merely for the sake of praying, it matters not what the subject matter of the prayer may be. And, really, there appears to be many prayers made *for the sake of praying*, having no other inducement to the exercise than a sense of duty. The prayers which flow from nothing else than a sense of duty, are very insipid and irksome things, and might as well be dispensed with altogether. If a person pray evening and morning, either in public or in private, for the sake of keeping matters on a good footing with conscience, his devotion is to him as irksome as the sin offerings of avaricious Jews; and as useless to others as the counting of beads by the hour, or the hebdomadal repetition of "*Pater noster*," to a person who knows nor the meaning of a single word.

We should, when we pray, have something in view, or some special consideration which at the time induces us to the exercise. According to this consideration or design should be our prayer. For example: If we bow the knee to pray in behalf of some afflicted person, our whole address to Heaven should have respect unto the case for which we pray. Again: If we are called upon to return thanks for some favor bestowed, that alone should occupy our attention and characterize our address to Heaven on that occasion. If two or three persons first agree to ask for

some particular blessing, either for one of the company, for all of the company, or for some absent person or persons, that should be the whole and exclusive burthen of the prayer. If, then, these considerations were regarded in all our prayers, there would be no danger of falling into that unmeaning monotony of expression, and insipid uniformity of matter and manner, so irrational and unscriptural. We should, moreover, possess much more of the true spirit of prayer, and be much more benefitted ourselves from our prayers, which is one happy end inseparably connected with the proper exercise of prayer.

Next to a monotonous uniformity of expression, we rank a verbose redundancy in the use of epithets and phrases, which swell the period without increasing the sentiment, or exalting the devotion of the soul. Of this sort are all those pompous high-sounding addresses to the Deity, in which the speaker seems to exhaust the whole resources of his vocabulary, and puts his inventive faculties to torture to find out words wherewith to astound the audience, and display his elocution. This defect is more impious than the former; for the person who prays seeks his own glory. If he should plead in excuse, that in so doing he edifies his audience, he reckons without his host. When a speaker employs more terms than are necessary to express the ideas he would communicate, he is, instead of edifying, confounding the understanding of his audience. He is wasting their attention, instead of inspiring their devotion. Plain and unaffected language, which does no more than give scope to the feelings of the heart, is the proper language of public prayer. This is true eloquence of devotion. When there is no effort of the understanding to be eloquent, when the heart pours forth its desires in terms appropriate, naturally flowing as a gentle stream from a living fountain, then are we cheered and refreshed in waiting upon the Lord. If a person possess but a tolerable fluency of speech, and do not strive to be eloquent, but speak in perfect accordance with his feelings; and if he feel as a christian ought when in the audience of his Creator, he cannot fail to be both pleasing and edifying to all who unite with him in worshipping his God and Father.

Rapidity of pronunciation, is the third item to which we would request the attention of the devout worshipper. When we address God at any time, or in any place, either in public or private, great deliberation becomes us well. To speak to God is no light matter. No person can exaggerate the solemnity and deliberation which becomes us on such occasions. Well did Solomon say, "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter any thing before God. For God is in heaven, and thou upon earth." But deliberation is doubly necessary in public or social prayer: for if we do not speak slowly it is impossible for others to unite with us. We ought to remember that the design of social prayer is, that others should unite with us in every petition and every thanksgiving. Hence the necessity of giving sufficient time to the company to apprehend the full force and meaning of every word and sentence. I

have heard many prayers in which it was impossible for me to keep up with the speaker, or to unite with him. And while I was reflecting on the sentence just finished, he had got to the close of the next one. The subject was then lost, and even the pronunciation of a final AMEN, was at random, inasmuch as my judgment could not be fully made up on the correctness of the whole. The whole prayer appeared like the sound of a mighty rushing wind.

To a *rapidity of pronunciation*, I would add a *speaking at random*, as another deviation from the standard of propriety. I have often heard, or thought I heard, persons commence a sentence before they knew what they were going to ask. The style or manner, and the apparent indecision of the speaker, led us to suppose that he knew not what to ask while the words were still falling from his lips. If this ever be the case with any christian, repentance and reformation become him well. If at any time we have a few petitions to make, let us cease so soon as they are offered. It is better to pause one, two, or three minutes, between every petition, than to attempt one at random. We should always have a distinct and full view of what we are going to say, before we pronounce a single word. This is necessary when, with due respect, we speak to men. How much more when we speak to *God*. Some appear insensible of the impropriety of this manner. They seem to fear nothing so much as to fail in matter. They advance in a hurry, as if they were anxious to appear fluent, and fly from one thing to another without regard to connexion, and as if without design. It would be well for the religious community—for both teachers and taught—if every public speaker knew when he was done, and would just cease to speak when he had nothing to say. Whether, from a desire to say something great, or something better, or to correct something said amiss, I presume not to say; but so it is, that many, both in their prayers and in their preachings, continue to speak a long time after they are done. Our great teacher forbade speaking at random in our prayers, and this should be regarded as an authority without any further consideration, of sufficient weight to put us on our guard against such a practice.

But when these four defects are corrected—when we are perfectly free from the charge of a monotonous uniformity of sentiment and style, a verbose redundancy of expression, a confounding rapidity of pronunciation, a thoughtless speaking at random;—still the weightier matters may be overlooked, misunderstood, and neglected; I mean the proper subject matter of prayer. I would beg leave to propose to the consideration of the devout reader, some of the prayers found in the sacred scriptures, for the purpose of coming to correct conclusion on this most important subject—They will be found as follows:—

A prayer of Abraham, Gen. xviii. 23-32—of Moses, Ex. xxxii. 11-13—of David, 2 Sam. vii. 18-20—of Solomon, 1 Kings, viii. 23-53—of Ezra, Ez. ix. 6-15—of Nehemiah, Neh. i. 5-11—of the Levites, Neh. ix. 5-33—of Daniel, Dan. ix. 4-19—of Hezekiah, 2 Kings, 15-19, and xx. 3—of

Habakuk, Hab. iii. 2—the disciples' prayer, Mat. vi. 9-13—a prayer of the publican, Luke xviii. 13—of the Lord, John xvii.—of 120 disciples, Acts i. 24-5—of the congregation in Jerusalem, Acts iv. 24-30—of Stephen, Acts vii.—Paul's prayer for the Ephesians, Eph. iii. 14—21—for the Thessalonians, 1 Thess. v. 28—for the Hebrews, Heb. xiii. 20-21 Aaronic benediction, Num. vi. 20-26—Apostolic benediction, 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

ON THE SPIRIT AND TEMPER REQUISITE FOR THE ANCIENT ORDER OF THINGS.

No. XIII.

Now we shall offer a few remarks on that spirit and temper of mind, which was exhibited while as yet the ancient order of things stood uncorrupted, and which, it may be presumed, must be possessed and exhibited in order to the restoration of that order.

One of the most infallible signs of true conversion, which I know any thing of—and one which the ancient converts generally exhibited—and one which Saul of Tarsus at the moment of his conversion so eminently displayed, is couched in these words—"LORD WHAT WILT THOU HAVE ME TO DO?" This unfeigned and vehement desire to know the will of the Lord, in order to do it, is, in my humble opinion, the surest and most general and comprehensive sign, proof, and pledge of regeneration. The spirit and temperament of the ancient christians inclined and drew them, as the laws of gravitation do all bodies to the centre of the system, to a most devout conformity to all the institutes of the Prince of Life. They loved his will supremely. Neither fire nor water, famine nor sword, good fame or bad fame prevented them in their obedience. They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and loved not their lives unto death, rather than renounce their allegiance in any one point to him who died for them. His laws and institutions were all in all to them. No scribe, no rabbi, no sanhedrim, no human tribunal, no popularity amongst their own people or foreigners, no reproach, no privation could induce them to treat his will with either coolness, indifference, or neglect. They reasoned thus: If Jesus died for us, we owe our lives to him. We are his, and not our own. His will shall be ours; his statutes shall be our choice. Our only concern shall be, "*Lord what wilt thou have us to do?*"

The very term devotion has respect to the will of another; a devoted or devout man is a man who has respect to the will of God. When a person is given up to the will of any person, or to his own will, he is devoted to that person or to himself. But as the term devout is used in religion, we may say that every man is more or less devout according to his regard to the will of God, expressed in his holy oracles. The Saviour was perfectly so, "not as I wilt, but as thou wilt" was his prayer—his "meat was to do the will of him that sent him"—and he is the standard of true devotion. Not an item of the will of God found in the volume of the old book written concerning him, that he did not do,

or submit to, not a single commandment of his heavenly Father, which he did not perfectly acquiesce in and obey. He was, then, perfectly devout, and in proportion as men are regenerated in heart they are like him. Faith purifies the heart;—a pure heart, is a heart singly fixed upon the will of God. The regenerated are therefore devout, or devoted to the will of God; and the unregenerate care nothing about it; every one that is devout will continually be seeking to know, to understand and to do the revealed will of God; therefore, a regenerate person will be a friend to the ancient order of things, in the church of the living God, because that order was according to the revealed will of God, and every Departure from it, is according to the will of man. Nothing seems more demonstrably clear than this. Every regenerated man must be devoted to the ancient order of things in the church of God, provided it be granted as a Postulatum, that the ancient order of things was consonant to the will of the Most High.

Let the spirit, then, of the ancient christians be restored, and we shall soon see their order of things clearly and fully exhibited. “If the eye be sound the whole body shall be full of light;” and if the heart be right, the practice will bear the test of examination. To have the ancient order of things restored in *due form*, without the spirit or *power* of that order, would be mere mimicry, which we would rather, and we are assured the primitive saints themselves would rather, never see. The spirit of the present order of things is too much akin to the spirit of this world. It looks with a countenance beaming too much complacency on the pride and vanity, on the tinsel and show, on the equipage and style, on the avarice and ambition, on the guile and hypocrisy of this world.

May I tell a little of my religious experience? Well, then, I once loved the praise of men, and thought that it would be a great happiness, could I so shape my course as to merit the praise of God and the approbation of men. I saw there was a kind of piety the people of fashion in the religious world admired, and I thought that a few small additions to it might make it pass current in both worlds. I set my heart to find it out. I saw but little difference in many sects as respected true piety, but a good deal as respected show and ceremony. I thought that, which was the most popular might upon the whole be the safest, as it would make sure of one point at all events, and might gain the other too. As yet I felt no attractions of the love of God; but as soon as I was enabled to calculate the import of one question, viz. “What is a man profited if he should gain the whole world and lose his life?” and soon as I understood that it was “*a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation*, that Jesus the Messiah came into the world to save sinners,” even the *ch. f* of sinners, I reasoned on different premises and came to different conclusions. If bought at so dear a rate, and purchased at such an immense price, I found all my faculties, and powers, and means, and opportunities, were claimed on principles at which no generous heart could demur. Had I a thousand

tongues as eloquent as Gabriel's, and faculties of the most exalted character, 'twas all too little to tell his praise and to exhibit his excellencies to men.

The only question then was, *How shall I do this to the most advantage?* This chain of thought just led me to the question, "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" Now, in attempting to find an answer from his oracles to this petition, I took it for granted that there was no new communication of his will to be expected, but that it must be sought after in the volume. When any act of devotion, or item of religious practice presented itself to my view, of which I could learn nothing from my Master's Last Will and Testament, I simply gave it up; and if I found any thing there, not exhibited by my fellow-christians, I went into the practice of it, if it was the practice of an individual; and if it was a social act, I attempted to invite others to unite with me in it. Thus I went on purging my views, and returning to his institutes until I became so speckled a bird that scarce one of any species would cordially consociate with me; but I gained ample remuneration in the pursuit, and got a use of my wings which I never before experienced. Thus too I was led into a secret, which as I received freely I communicate freely. It is this: There is an *ancient* and a *modern* order of things in the Lord's house. Now I am sure that if all my brethren had only the half of the religious experience I have had upon this subject, they would be doubly in the spirit of this ancient order, and their progress and happiness would be proportioned to what it now is. In the mean time, however, I cannot conclude without again remarking, that if the spirit of the ancient christians, and of their individual and social conduct was more inquired after, and more cultivated, we should find but little trouble in understanding and displaying the ancient order of things.

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#### THE TRINITARIAN SYSTEM.

*To the Editor of the Christian Baptist.*

*Dear Sir,*

In one of your fireside conversations, when interrogated on your views of "*the Trinity*," you gave an exposition of the first verse of the first chapter of John's Testimony, with which myself, and, I believe all present, were much delighted. In conversing with those present on that occasion, I found that they as well as myself, had forgotten some of the more prominent ideas. You will confer no ordinary favor on us all, and no doubt it will be pleasing to many of your readers, to give it in writing as nearly as possible to what you spoke on the subject.

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#### ANSWER.

*Dear Sir,*

You will recollect that when I was interrogated on that subject, I gave sundry reasons why I felt reluctant to speculate on the incomprehensible Jehovah. It was also stated that there was no topic in common estima-

tion so awfully sacred as that of the doctrine of "the Trinity," and if a man did not speak in a very fixed and set phrase on this subject, he endangered his whole christian reputation and his own usefulness. At the same time I remarked that I was very far from being afraid either to think upon this subject or to express my thoughts, although it was deemed so unpardonable to depart even in one monosyllable from the orthodox views. I moreover stated that I disliked any thing like speculation upon this topic in particular, because, if I differed in the least from the orthodox, I introduced something like a new theory, or something that would be treated as such, and either approved or rejected on theoretic grounds. If, however, you will neither make a new theory out of my expositions, nor contend for any speculations on the subject, nor carry the views further than where I leave off, I will gratify you and other friends with my views of the first sentence in John's Preface to his Testimony—"In the beginning was *the word*, and *the word* was with God, and *the word* was God."

1. In the first place I object to the Calvinistic doctrine of the Trinity for the same reasons they object to the Arians and Socinians. They object to these, because their views derogate in their judgment from the eternal glory of the Founder of the christian religion. They will not allow the Saviour to have been a creature, however exalted, because they conceive this character is unbecoming him, and contrary to the scriptural statements concerning him. They wish to give him more glory than they think the Arians are willing to do. Now I object to their making him and calling him an "*Eternal Son*" because I think that if he were only the Son of God from all eternity, he is entitled to very little, if any more glory, than what the Arians give him. I wish to give him more glory than the Calvinists give him. They are as far below his real glory, in my judgment, as the Arians are in their judgment.

2. But in the second place, I have an insuperable objection to the Arian and Calvinistic phraseology, on the doctrine of the *first* relation existing between the Father, and the Saviour of Men, because it confounds things human and divine, and gives new ideas to Bible terms unthought of by the inspired writers. The names *Jesus, Christ, or Messiah, Only Begotten Son, Son of God*, belong to the Founder of the Christian religion, and to none else. They express not a relation existing before the christian era, but relations which commenced at that time. To understand the *relation* betwixt the Saviour and his Father, which existed before time, and that relation which began in time, is impossible on either of these theories. There was no Jesus, no Messiah, no Christ, no Son of God, no Only Begotten, before the reign of Augustus Cesar. The relation that was before the christian era, was not that of a *son* and a *father*, terms which always imply disparity; but it was that expressed by John in the sentence under consideration. The relation was that of *God*, and the "*word of God*." This phraseology unfolds a relation quite different from that of a father and a son—a relation perfectly intimate, equal, and

glorious. This naturally leads me to the 1st sentence of John. And here I must state a few *postulata*.

1. No relation amongst human beings can perfectly exhibit the relation which the Saviour held to the God and Father of All, anterior to his birth. The reason is, that relation is not homogenous, or of the same kind with relations originating from creation. All relations we know any thing of, are *created*, such as that of father and son. Now I object as much to a *created relation* as I do to a *creature* in reference to the original relation of God and *the word of God*. This relation is an uncreated, an unoriginated relation.

2. When in the fullness of time it became necessary in the wisdom of God to exhibit a Saviour, it became expedient to give some view of the original and eternal dignity of this wonderful visitant of the human race. And as this view must be given in human language, inadequate as it was, the whole vocabulary of human speech must be examined for suitable terms.

3. Of these terms expressive of relations, the most suitable must be, and most unquestionably was, selected. And as the relation was spiritual and not carnal, such terms only were eligible which had respect to mental or spiritual relations. Of this sort there is but one in all the archives of human knowledge, and that is the one selected.

4. The Holy Spirit selected the name *Word*, and therefore we may assert that this is the best, if not the only term, in the whole vocabulary of human speech, at all adapted to express that relation which existed "*in the beginning*," or before time, between our Saviour and his God.

These *postulata* being stated, I proceed to inquire what sort of a relation does this term represent? And here every thing is plain and easy of comprehension. I shall state numerically, a few things universally admitted by the reflecting part of mankind:—

1st. A *word* is a sign or representative of a thought or an idea, and is the idea in an audible or visible form. It is the exact image of that invisible thought which is a perfect secret to all the world until it is expressed

2d. All men think or form ideas by means of words or images; so that no man can think without words or symbols of some sort.

3d. Hence it follows that the word and the idea which it represents, are co-etaneous, or of the same ages or antiquity. It is true the word may not be uttered or born for years or ages after the idea exists, but still the word is just as old as the idea.

4th. The idea and the word are nevertheless distinct from each other, though the relation between them is the nearest known on earth. An idea cannot exist without a word, nor a word without an idea.

5th. He that is acquainted with the word, is acquainted with the idea, for the idea is wholly in the word.

Now let it be most attentively observed and remembered, that these

remarks are solely intended to exhibit the *relation* which exists between a *word* and an *idea*, and that this relation is of a *mental* nature and more akin to the spiritual system than any relation created, of which we know any thing. It is a relation of the most sublime order; and no doubt the reason why the name *word*, is adopted by the apostle in this sentence was because of its superior ability to represent to us the divine relation existing between God and the Saviour, prior to his becoming the Son of God. By putting together the above remarks on the term *Word*, we have a full view of what John intended to communicate.

As a word is an exact image of an idea, so is "*The Word*," an exact image of the invisible God. As a word cannot exist without an idea, nor an idea without a word; so God never was without "*The Word*" nor "*The Word*" without God; or as a word is of equal age or co-etaneous with its idea, so "*The Word*" and God are co-eternal. And as an idea does not create its word, nor a word its idea; so God did not create "*The Word*," nor "*The word*" God.

Such a view does the language used by John suggest. And to this do all the scriptures agree. For the "*The Word* was made *flesh*," and in consequence of becoming incarnate, he is styled *the Son of God*, the Only Begotten of the Father. As from eternity God was manifest in and by *The Word*, so now God is manifest in the flesh. As God was always with "*The Word*," so when "*The Word*" becomes flesh, he is Emanuel, *God with us*. As God was never manifest but by "*The Word*," so the heavens and the earth, and all things were created by "*The Word*." And as "*The Word*" ever was the effulgence or representation of the invisible God, so he will ever be known and adored as "*The Word of God*." So much for the divine and eternal relation betwixt the Saviour and God. You will easily perceive that I carry these views no farther than to explain the nature of that *relation*, uncreated, unoriginated, which the inspired language inculcates.

These views place us on a lofty eminence, whence we look down upon the Calvinistic ideas of "eternal filiation," "eternal generation," "eternal Son," as midway betwixt us and Arianism. From this sublime and lofty eminence, we see the Socinian moving upon a hillock; the Arian, upon a hill; and the Calvinist, upon a mountain; all of which lose their disproportion to each other because of the immense height above them to which this view elevates us. The first sentence of John I paraphrase thus: From eternity was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was, I say, from eternity with God. By him all things were made, and he became flesh and dwelt among us. He became a child born, and a son of man. As such he is called Emanuel, Jesus, Messiah, Son of God, Only Begotten of the Father.

I can give the above views upon no other authority than my own reasonings. I learned them from nobody—I found them in no book. It is true, indeed, I have held the idea for 16 years that Jesus is called *the Son of God*, not because of an "eternal generation" (which I conceive

to be nonsense,) but because he was born as the angel described to Mary. "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall over shadow thee; *therefore also* that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Luke 1. 35. This is now pretty generally received by a great many christians. Nor would I dispute or contend for this as a theory or speculation with any body. I could, indeed, amplify considerably, and perhaps obviate some difficulties by following up farther the hints submitted; but such are my views of the import of the beginning of John's testimony. You will remember that I make no systems, and although there are some abstract reasonings upon terms (as indeed much of our reasonings about language are) in the preceding, it is only for the purpose of getting into the sacred import of a style, from which we have been proscribed by a speculating philosophy. I have acceded to your request with more ease than I could have done, had it not been for a few prating bodies who are always striving to undo my influence by the cry of Unitarianism or Socinianism, or some other obnoxious *ism*. From all *isms* may the Lord save us!

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#### FOUR QUESTIONS.

THE following four Questions are from a correspondent.

1. Has the gospel, as it now stands on record, influence or power in itself, without the agency of the Holy Spirit, to regenerate and make a man a new creature? And if it has or has not, please to tell us how that change is brought about.
2. Is not saving faith wrought in the heart by the influence of the Holy Spirit; and can a man have saving faith without that influence on his soul?
3. What does the apostle mean when he says, "If by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace?"
4. And when he says, "Unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God," what sort of a *calling* does he here allude to?

#### ANSWERS:

1. To answer this question with a Yea or a Nay, might comport with a system already received or rejected by the querist; but either a *yea* or a *nay* would be incompatible with the genius and spirit of the inspired volume. To separate and distinguish the Spirit from its own word, is the radix of unhallowed speculation. What the gospel, written or spoken, does in regenerating or purifying the heart, the Spirit of God does, and what the Spirit of God does, the gospel spoken or written does. Those who resist the gospel proclamation, resist the Spirit of God; and those who resist the Spirit of God, resist and reject the gospel proclamation. Suppose I were asked, "Has the sun, the earth, the water, and the air, power or influence of themselves, independent of the influence of God to make an ear corn from one grain deposited in the earth, I could not answer it by a Yea or a Nay; but I could say that God creates the

corn, and that the sun, the earth, the water and the air were media through which, alone the divine influence was exhibited. So that they stand to the corn planted, as the power of God. And if I were asked, Why does not the word written or spoken, exhibit the same power in all who read and hear it, I would say it was owing to the same cause why every grain of wheat or corn which is deposited in the earth does not produce a ripe ear. The Saviour himself justifies this analogy between things natural and moral. See his parable of the sower and his seed.

2. From the answer above given to query 1st, I am authorized to say, that *saving* faith" is wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit, and that no man can believe to the saving of his soul but by the Holy Spirit. I wave the question about two kinds of faith. Unfeigned faith, or true faith is what is meant by "*saving* faith ;" and feigned faith "*false*" faith, or "*dead*" faith, are not saving.

3. Paul means that *grace* or favor, and desert, are antipodes. Whatever is of the one cannot be of the other. Every thing in our salvation is of pure favor. A, by a mere act of favor, or a deed of gift, invests B, with a large farm, amply sufficient for all the purposes of life. He afterwards writes him a letter, informing him that if he does not practise temperance, if he does not take exercise, if he does not mingle labor and rest, and avoid every excess, he cannot live nor be happy nor enjoy the gift. Now he that argues that B obtained the estate by his *works*, is in error; and every one who says that, without the works enjoined by A. in his epistle, B. can live and be happy, is in an error; and every man who says that B. got the farm as a reward of his works, says what is not true.

4. Christ is the power of God to all *the called*. The term *called* is used in a twofold sense in the New Testament: 1st. As descriptive of all who *hear* the word of life—and 2d. As descriptive of all those who *receive* it. The former is its *general*—the latter, its *special* acceptation. The "*many called*," are all who hear—the "*few chosen*" are all who obey. The former slight the call—the latter make it certain. The former treat their calling and election as idle and unmeaning compliments—the latter make them sure, and enjoy the special benefits thereof. To the latter only, to those who accept the call, is Christ the power of God unto salvation. The obedient are 'the "*effectually*" called—and the disobedient are the *ineffectually* called.

Were it not for the extreme sensibility of some taught in human schools, either *old* or new, on these topics, we should exclude such queries from our pages, as the most fatal of all the speculations in religion which were originated in the dark ages. That man has *true* faith or *saving* faith who *obeys* the Lord Jesus Christ, and he that disobeys him has either no faith at all, or a *dead* faith. He is regenerated who believes and obeys the Lord Jesus sincerely, and he is unregenerated who does not. The truth believed purifies the heart—and no heart can be purified without it. And every question, which, when answered, does not lead

to some good practice, is as idle as the theory of captain Symes. His theory of the earth is of as much use to my corn field, as the grand things sought after in the above four queries is to the soul of the querist. The next generation will admit this; but few of the present can. Many seem to be more concerned about my regeneration than they are about their own; than they are about the many good things I am habitually calling their attention to. While I cannot but feel grateful to them for their solicitude, I should like to see them evince very clearly the purity of their hearts by a holy life; that is, by a life of obedience to the Son of God, in all the commandments and institutions of the King, whether of an individual or social character, Happy only are the *pure* in heart, for they shall see God.

NINE UNANSWERABLE REASONS WHY ALL MEN  
SHOULD TOTALLY ABSTAIN FROM THE USE  
OF ARDENT SPIRITS.

*Should Taste not, Touch not, Handle not.*

1st. ARDENT SPIRITS should be banished, because they are needless. Ardent spirits, or alcohol were unknown, until discovered by an Alchemist in the 13th century. In an unholy search after forbidden knowledge, after the Elixir of life, alcohol was discovered, which has proved to countless thousands, the bane of life; a discovery which has inflicted, the most extensive calamity, with which the world has ever been visited since the flood. All the world lived without them, and all the business of life was conducted without them for more than 5000 years. They were not used in Great Britain till within less than 300 years. They are not then needful.

2d. Because they are useless. They are useless as respects sustenance; they contain no nourishment; they impart no strength; they only enable a man to consume with destructive rapidity the strength he has. The sensation of strength they produce is deceptive, it is an unnatural excitement, which is always more or less, followed by a corresponding depression. Ardent spirits do not fortify the human body, either against heat, or cold, against hunger, wet, or fatigue, against infection, or contagious diseases; on the contrary they add to the danger in all these exposures. This has been long asserted by eminent physicians, and has been demonstrably proved by various experiments. In every diverse circumstance of life; in every occupation mental or physical, and in every department of human labor, on the land and on the ocean, amid the wind and the waves, the toils of noonday, and the pestilence that walketh in darkness, the experiment has been tried, and man has been found stronger, and happier, safer and healthier without ardent spirits, than with their use.

Dr. Abbott, speaking of the West Indies, where their use (if any where) is supposed to be necessary, says, "on three contiguous estates of more than 400 slaves, has been made with *fine success* the experiment of a *strict exclusion of ardent spirits at all seasons* of the year. The success has very far exceeded the proprietors most sanguine hopes."

*Sailors* must sometimes need spirits if great exposures can justify their use. But experiment on a large scale, and the best testimony, as indeed analogy would lead us to believe, decide, that they are useless, and hurtful. The secretary of the navy of the U. S. has expressed his conviction, —that the use which is made of ardent spirits in the Navy is one of the greatest curses, and a distinguished officer *who has seen the experiment* made by himself, and others, declares the practicability and *great utility*, of entire abstinence throughout the navy—Several crews have attempted to winter in high northern latitudes and *those furnished with spirits have nearly all perished*, while those *not furnished* with them have *nearly all survived*.—When exposed to similar situations of cold, of wet, of hunger, of fatigue, and of being partially immersed in the sea for hours, those who *have not* used spirits, have commonly outlived those who drank them.

*Soldiers* are often even more exposed than sailors to severe extremes; but Dr. Jackson a most experienced and distinguished physician in the British Army, has long ago testified that spirits are injurious to soldiers on duty, rendering them *incapable* to endure labor and hardship—says the Dr. speaking of himself, "I have worn out two armies in two wars by the aid of *temperance and hard work*, and probably could wear out another before my period of old age arrives. I eat no animal food, drink no wine or malt liquor, or *spirits of any kind*; and I neither regard wind or rain, heat or cold when business is in the way."

The Roman soldiers marched with a weight of armour upon them, which a modern soldier could hardly stand under, and they conquered the world. Yet they drank nothing stronger than vinegar and water.

Those men in Europe who are trained for boxing matches, and who pursue systematically the means which are known to produce the most perfect health and strength, *never taste ardent spirits*, and even wine is scarcely allowed.

In watching over sick beds, and in exposure to contagious disease the use of spirits unfit for the former duty, and *peculiarly* exposes a person to receive contagion.

Literary men, students, and persons following sedentary or mental avocations, are allowed on all hands still less to require the use of spirits. Indeed if men of firm muscular fibre, following athletic and active pursuit, do not require spirits, and cannot always throw off from the system, and avoid the hurtful effects of their habitual use, still less can they be useful to the former or can they so readily overcome their injurious effects. Hence in persons of this class, who deluded by wrong views or urged by an artificial and unnatural appetite, endeavour to remedy the

languor, or the real or imagined evil consequences of their pursuits, by their use, have all their symptoms aggravated, and with even a moderate use more rapidly than others who may use more, run into all the evils of intemperance. Increasing want of energy—bodily, and mental—want of healthy appetite; cold and moist extremities; nervous tremours, more or less of a peculiar bloated appearance of the countenance, a strong and sickening taint of spirits in the breath, with other appearances, soon betrays the secret, that they are seeking from a treacherous and dangerous foe for temporary relief, and that unless total abstinence is resorted to, the result will be confirmed intemperance, loss of health, loss of reputation, loss of usefulness, and ultimately loss of life. Let, these therefore, especially, touch not, taste not, handle not, if they would avoid evil and pursue good. In fine on this head more than millions of persons have found by actual experience in total abstinence from them; that they are altogether better without them. And the number is so great in all conditions and in all circumstances as to make it certain, should the experiment be fairly made that this would be the case with all.

Therefore they are useless and should be banished,—as common sense teaches that nothing should be used which is useless.

Ardent Spirits should be banished, not only because they are needless and useless, but

Sdly, Because they hurtful, because they are poisonous and wantonly destructive of health and life.

That Alcohol is a poison, is a truth confirmed by the testimony of the most enlightened and scientific men in the world—and also by its unvariable effects in greater or less degree, upon the minds and bodies of those who indulge in their use. In any quantity, says an eminent physician they are an enemy to the human constitution. To a man in health, there is no such thing as a temperate use of Spirits.

Their influence upon the physical organs is unfavorable to health and life. They produce weakness, not strength; sickness, not health; death, not life—and says the same physician, “does a healthy labouring man need alcohol,” no more than he needs arsenic or opium. The experiment has been made a thousand times, and the result is well known, that more labour can be accomplished in a month, or a year, under the influence of simple, nourishing food and unstimulating drinks than through the aid of alcohol.

Sir Astley Cooper states, that spirits and poisons are synonymous terms;—Dr. Samuel Drake of Ohio, speaks of them as a deadly poison, in moderate doses imparting an unnatural excitement, in excessive draughts suddenly extinguishing life; thus resembling in their effects, a number of deleterious substances as stramonium, hemlock, the prussic acid and opium.

And Dr. Samuel Emlin, late secretary of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Philadelphia, remarks, “We should not admit of the popular reasoning as applicable here, that the abuse of a thing is no argument

against its use. All use of ardent spirits (i. e. as a drink) is an abuse. They are mischievous under all circumstances."—Dr. Cheyne, of London, states, that they are most like opium in their nature, and most like arsenic in their deleterious effects.—And Dr. Frank declares, that their tendency, even when used moderately, is, to induce disease, premature old age, and death;—Dr. Trotter, that of all the evils of human life, no cause of disease has so wide a range, or so large a share as the use of spirituous liquors; and that more than half of all the sudden deaths are occasioned by them. Dr. Harris states, that the moderate use of spirituous liquors has destroyed many who were never drunk;—Dr. Kirk gives it as his opinion, that such men as were never considered intemperate, by daily regular drinking, have often shortened life more than twenty years; and that the respectable use of this poison kills more men than even drunkenness itself.—Dr. Wilson gives it as his opinion, that the use of spirit in large cities causes more diseases than confined air, unwholesome exhalations, and the combined influence of all other evils.

And says that celebrated physician, Dr Cheyne, Dublin, Ireland, after thirty years' extensive practice and observation, "Let ten young men begin at twenty-one years of age to use but one glass of two ounces a day, and never increase the quantity, nine out of ten of those young men will shorten life more than ten years." Medical writers throughout the world testify that ardent spirit is a *poison*, which cannot be used without injury; which causes disease; and which shortens human life.

A large proportion of deaths even of those, only, which come under the notice of medical men, are stated on their authority to be occasioned by intoxicating liquors. Of 77 persons found dead in different places, 67 according to the Coroner's inquest, were occasioned by strong drink.

Their use impairs, and in many cases destroys reason. Of 781 maniacs in different insane hospitals, 392 according to the testimony of their own friends, were rendered maniacs by strong drink; and the physicians gave it as their opinion, that this was also the case with many others. The love of strong drink and the proneness to mania, says Dr. Pearson, are, with regard to each other interchangeable causes; and why should not this be the case? Ardent spirits, says Dr. Kirk, contains a narcotic stimulant, with similar properties of opium; with this addition, that it is more immediately irritating to the tissues of the body, it is absorbed into the blood, circulates through the lungs, and is exhaled through the numerous vessels containing the circulating blood of these organs, and not only so but the vessels of the brain, are loaded with it. I dissected a man, who died of intoxication—the operation was performed a few hours after death. In the two cavities of the brain, the lateral ventricles, was found the usual quantity of limpid fluid—when we smelled it, the odor of the whiskey was distinctly visible, and when we applied the candle to a portion in a spoon, it actually burned blue—the lambent blue flame characteristic of the poison, playing on the surface of the spoon for some

seconds. Other physicians give similar testimony, and is it strange that men lose their reason with a poison in the brain?

It would be strange if they did not. And this is the cause why men who take this poison, have so much less reason than the men who do not; and why the same men have so much less reason after they have taken it than they had before. They have a poison in their brain, which tends to make them madmen. Hence the reason why the man who, before he began to use it, was a kind father, an affectionate husband, has afterwards been found murdering his wife, and upon the fire of his own hearth, burning to death his children. Nor is the effect in such cases confined to those who use it; it descends to their children and children's children; producing a predisposition to insanity and various diseases, which, if the cause is continued, will become hereditary, and be manifested in a diminution of size and stature; a decrease of bodily and mental strength and activity; a feebleness of vision and a trembling of limbs; an indecision and a fickleness of purpose; a general deterioration of character, and a premature old age; which will visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children from generation to generation. Nor does the effect stop here, but,

4thly, Ardent Spirits should be banished, because their use is a wicked waste of property. When taken moderately, besides producing disease their use creates an artificial and dangerous appetite, which increasing by gratification, continually requires increasing quantities to satisfy it. Unlike the appetites which God has given us for bread and nourishing food and drinks, appetites which may be daily gratified and yet will not increase in their demand—their cries are continually give, give. Hence the reason why, although it is not 300 years since the use of it began in Great Britain, the quantity used has continued to increase till the inhabitants of that country have used more than 40,000,000 gallons, and the inhabitants of North America, more than 60,000,000 gallons *in a year*—and yet with all this vast expenditure was there no tendency to be satisfied, even with five gallons annually, upon an average to every man, woman and child. The tendency was getting stronger—the number continually increasing—agreeably to the nature of the poison, and to the nature of the various appetites which it forms. In this wicked waste of property, which might be used for worthy purposes, the corn consumed in distillation in the British Empire, would supply four hundred thousand persons with food at the rate of ten bushels per year. The amount of money consumed in 1829, was 20 millions of pounds, which is about £4 to £5 to every family.

Were this money spent on articles of substantial comforts, how many families at present, in abject poverty, might be restored to independence and respectability—to say nothing of the tens of thousands who might have been saved from crime, and misery, and degradation, and premature death, which the streams of ardent spirits thus produced from the waste of property directly or indirectly must have produced.

It is calculated that Ireland, with all its poverty, and recent starvation actually spends upwards of six millions every year in spirits—and that Scotland with a population only of about one fourth consumes fully three millions annually.

5thly, Ardent Spirits should be banished, because of their demoralizing effects. Whatever subjects reason to the appetite, or conscience to passion, bursts at once the strong barriers of moral obligation; and this is done by the frequent use of ardent spirits. No moral restraint can reach the drunkard. Their use weakens the power of motives to do right. Next to true religion, diligence in useful business is the grand safeguard of man. Hence God in his providence and in his word, presents a great variety of motives to make men diligent; but with thousands and thousands the use of ardent spirits makes all these motives to fail; and never fail to produce idleness, pauperism—of 1969 paupers in different alm houses, 1790, according to the testimony of the overseers, were made paupers by spiritous liquors. But for this, who can doubt, but that a great portion of these paupers would have been diligent useful members of society, and have provided well for themselves and their families?

It strengthens the power of motives to do wrong. It is well ascertained in numberless cases, that temptation to crime, which men will withstand when they have not been drinking, will lead them when they have, to go and commit them. Of 647 criminals in the State Prison, at Auburn, New York, 467 were intemperate, and 346 were under the influence of ardent spirits at the times the crimes for which they were imprisoned were committed—and of 129 in the State Prison of Connecticut more than 90 were of the same class; and a similar proportion may be found in other prisons. Of 690 children imprisoned for crime in the city of New York, more than 400 were from intemperate families. Suppose one family in ten were intemperate, more than four sevenths of the youthful criminals were from those one in ten—making the children of intemperate parents, more than ten-times as liable to crime, to the prison and to the gallows as the children of temperate parents.

6thly Ardent Spirits should be banished—because no definite line of distinction can be drawn between their moderate and immoderate use—their moderate use and drunkenness are only different degrees of the same things, and no man can use them; therefore with safety, he who uses a gill a day, thinks he needs it. He who now needs a quart was once as well relieved by a gill, and he who now needs a gill and cannot do without it is in danger at some future day of needing a quart. Thus showing that their moderate use is the crime of which confirmed drunkenness is the punishment.

7thly, Ardent spirits should be banished—as the means of preserving our liberties. It can be shown that they squander property, impair health, destroy life, sever the ties of domestic attachment, dethrone reason, benumb conscience, degrade the man lower than the brutes, and transform the citizen into a felon. What nation can survive evils like

these? No national resources can supply the insatiable demands of intemperance and its kindred vices. The country must sink under them.

Liberty, without intelligence and virtue, must perish. Distilled spirits deprave the mind and the heart, and thus poison the fountains of liberty. Our rights are founded on our duties? and ardent spirits, by making us regardless of our duties, render us unworthy of our rights, and unable to support them. How can he love his country, who loves no part of it, not even his wife and his child? How can he watch the public interests, who cannot guide his own affairs? How can he be bound by oaths, who spurns moral restraints? How can he support national virtue, who is the victim of vice? How can he be a freeman, who is a slave to drink? No drunkard can be a true patriot; he may talk of public spirit but *he* falls an easy prey to private appetite.

When the laws are set at defiance by popular tumult, it is drunkard that take the lead; they have neither property nor character to lose, and the lust of liquor prompts to the spoliation of those who have; should they meet with it, they are then prepared for every outrage. Their natural enemies, *Bridewell* and the *Jail*, are sure to experience their vengeance, and with the torch of destruction, they proceed to plunder. Truly a brotherhood of such characters, scattered over a nation, may well cause it to tremble for its liberty, as well as its peace.

Sthly, Ardent spirits should be banished, upon principles of self interest and prudence, even admitting, what no one can possibly foresee, that he shall certainly escape some or all of the evils, which almost always, more or less, result from the habitual use of spirits—besides saving the heavy tax upon a man's income, which the endless repetition of these purchases create. This course will secure a man more respect, and influence in society, than he could attain, while using these substances in the greatest moderation. Even habitual drinkers will *respect* him more, although his example may exasperate them, for taking the course which their consciences cannot but approve. And surely the temperate and respectable part of society cannot but have a higher regard for him, who abandons this idol of an unnatural appetite, than for him, who reckless of consequences to himself or others, still clings to his rum at such an immense sacrifice and risk.

Such a blaze of light now illuminates every man's path on this subject, and so powerfully do a thousand motives urge to total abstinence from ardent spirits, that the intelligent and virtuous part of society are suspicious, that the man who refuses, even from principles of self interest and prudence, has a secret attachment to the poison. Hence they dare not trust important interests to his hands. Such a suspicion may seem uncharitable to those who fall under it. Still, so long as in *nine cases out of ten*, the final result shows it to have been well founded, men cannot but indulge the suspicion, and act accordingly.

Besides, to use ardent Spirits at the present day, even in small quanti-

ties, occasions more inconvenience and suffering to a respectable man in many parts of the country, and in many relationships of societies and of acquaintances in which he may be placed, than total abstinence. In order to do it, he must breast the current of public opinion, which sets so strongly in favor of rooting out the source of so many evils. Even to replenish his store of rum, or other spirits, is no easy task to a mind at all alive to the finer feelings. To do it openly and to send to the retailers for this purpose, is to expose himself to the mortification of meeting the eye, or having the reproof or alienation of some respectable friend to abstinence. To go privately, is to be haunted with the fear of discovery—still more difficult is it to find time and place to drink. To do it publicly is to be reckoned among the intemperate. To do it at all, or at home, is to excite the constant fear, lest some one visiter should perceive the alcoholic odours of the breath,—to say nothing of the tempting the rest of the family, children, domestics, to the same evil course or to shew silent reproof and regret, by refraining to participate.

9thly, Finally ardent spirits should be banished upon christian principles—even admitting contrary to the truth and fact, that they were *useful, and not pernicious* to man—christian principles require us to avoid temptation.—Now about 50,000 individuals of all classes in our country become sots every year, by moderate indulgence in these articles, men of literary and sedentary habits, being peculiarly exposed to intemperance and its ills—He, therefore, who neglects to secure himself against temptation when it is pointed out to him—forfeits the promise of divine protection, and depends solely on his own weak and treacherous heart, when he needs an angel's holiness and strength.

Christian principles, and benevolence requires that if any practice of ours, not a duty, become an occasion of sin and misery to our brother, it must be abandoned.

To illustrate this principle, it may be proper to state the Scripture doctrine on this subject, and to take wine as an example. There is no command in Scripture rendering it imperative on us to use wine. The utmost, therefore, that can be inferred from this is, that the use of wine is tolerated or permitted. We are, therefore, at liberty to use wine but we are equally at liberty to abstain from it; for in abstaining we violate no command or injunction of Scripture, The Christian is therefore left at liberty to suit his conduct to existing circumstances; and if he choose to abstain he violates no duty, and he acts in entire consistency with the Christian law of liberty. Now to proceed to illustrate the principle. No man will deny that flesh is a creature of God, and good for food, and that the eating of flesh in itself is not an evil. And yet the Apostle declares it was wrong to eat flesh when it became an occasion of sin to his brethren. The flesh had not changed its essential character by being offered in sacrifice to an idol, which the Apostle tells us is nothing in the world; but yet when the Apostle found that the eating of it became a stumbling-block to his brother, and led him into sin, in the spirit of

Christian charity he declares, "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak."

It is not merely in the *giving of offence*, but in the *causing to offend*, that the strength and authority of this great principle lie. And hence the Apostle terminates all controversy by a declaration, which can neither be weakened by argument, nor darkened by sophistry, "If meat make my brother *to offend*, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother *to offend*." And not less explicit is the declaration of our Saviour, "Woe unto the world because of offences! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." This declaration requires neither comment nor application, for human argument can add nothing to the weight of Christ's authority. But well may such a declaration cause us to tremble; for who will say, that the customs and practices of society in regard to the use of spirits, have not been the occasion of the intemperance of our people? Who will say, that our own habits and example have not cherished the evil that now wastes and destroys our country. Shall we make poor drunkards the scape-goats on which we lay the burden of our iniquities, and send them to perdition to bear the punishment of them? No, we cannot. For, if the position be true, that drunkards are formed by the practices of temperate men, that they are the producers of drunkards, temperate men are therefore the occasion of the sin of drunkenness. They cannot escape from this conclusion. They may stifle their consciences as they will. They may apologize for their continuance in their practices as they will. But the sin of intemperance lies at the door of temperate men.

And oh, what a powerful and touching appeal does the great Apostle make on this important subject. God is the supreme good, and to be like unto God is the highest perfection of our being, and ought to be the unceasing aim of our souls. He, is the Being who gave up his Son unto death, to redeem our guilty race. When we think of this, the appeal of the Apostle ought to come with a resistless energy to our hearts, "For meat destroy not thy brother, for whom Christ died." Can we be so unlike to God, as to destroy those whom he sent his Son to redeem? Shall we hinder and disturb those unseen but gracious operations which he is carrying forward for the regeneration of our world? And if Christ died to save our brethren, shall we continue to destroy them by our intemperance? No, the eternal welfare of our brethren forbids it. We should dash from our lips that insidious poison which is causing so many of our brethren to sin. We should never, never, while the world standeth, touch "the accursed thing," by which so many of our brethren are perishing.—*Should touch not, taste not, handle not.*

The great law of Christian benevolence requires us to love our neighbour as ourselves. Now we do not probably influence our neighbor's welfare and happiness so much in any other way, as by example. Hence

to continue ourselves to use even moderately, stimulants and narcotics, contributes to strengthen our neighbour in the same practice: and he falls a sacrifice to intemperance. It needed, perhaps, only our example of total abstinence, to have saved him from ruin: but that example was on the other side, and it helped to smother the cries of reason, and to repress the throes of conscience. No wonder the Bible pronounces a woe upon him, who gives his neighbour strong drink, and puts his bottle to him, and makes him drunken also. Let it be remembered, that this may be done by example, as well as in any other way.

By his example, he contributes to uphold a practice, which brings an annual expense upon his fellow countrymen, of more than 100,000,000 of dollars; and thus to reduce to extreme poverty and wretchedness, from 50,000 to 100,000 families; and not less than 150,000 individuals to pauperism: And to shut up 50,000 men annually in the debtor's prison: And to send out 90,000 murderers, robbers, incendiaries, thieves, and the like, to make havoc in society: And to render from 300 to 500 thousand citizens habitual drunkards: And annually to make a draft upon the temperate part of the community, for 30 or 50 thousand recruits, to fill up the wasting ranks of drunkeuness: And to pour out upon the land, such a flood of corruption and profligacy, as seriously to degrade, and threaten with utter ruin, her social, intellectual, political, and moral character.

Now is there any thing in all this list, which a man would wish to have his neighbour do unto him? any thing that does not directly violate the law of Christian love? But this is not all, nor the worst: for the man who abstains not entirely from these stimulants is giving the weight of his example in support of an evil, that sends prematurely into eternity from 30 to 50 thousand of his countrymen every year that is, from 500 to 1000 every week; or from 70 to 140 every day.

Ah, my friends, this part of the subject possesses a momentous interest, and takes hold upon the retributions of eternity. For what is it to go into eternity, a drunkard? *Be not-deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.* Oh, it is fearful responsibility to exert even a feeble and remote influence, in thus precipitating such a multitude of souls, "uncalled," upon the uncovenanted mercy of God! Let no one forget, that human laws inflict an equal punishment on the accessory and the principal; and that the sanctions of the Divine Law are the same. How can he, then, who has been accessory to the drunkard's ruin on earth, hope to escape the drunkard's doom in eternity!

## THE CHRISTIAN.

Q. What constitutes a christian?

A. Faith in Jesus as the Messiah the Son of God, and obedience to him.

Q. What is faith in Jesus?

A. An assurance, founded on the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, that he is the Messiah the Son of God.

Does not this assurance draw mankind to him, and cause them to repose confidence in him?

A. All who know his name and character will put his trust in him.

Q. What are the privileges of christians as respects this life?

A. They are all reconciled to God, justified, sanctified, adopted into the family of God, saved, and constituted heirs of God through Christ.

Q. Are all these blessings, honors, and hopes, secured to all in Christ?

A. Yes, by the promise and oath of God. God swore to Abraham that he would bless all the families of the earth *in his Son*.

Q. What do the scriptures mean by being reconciled to God?

A. Just what is implied in being reconciled to man. When a misunderstanding, alienation, or enmity exists in both parties, they are said to be reconciled to each other, when the causes are removed, and when they are restored to mutual confidence, love, and affection. When alienation exists only in one of the parties, he is said to be reconciled to the other, when his alienation or the causes of it are removed.

Q. Whether do the scriptures represent that God has reconciled us, or that we have reconciled him?

A. "*God has reconciled us to himself*," is the language of the book.

How did God reconcile us to himself?

A. By making his Son a *sin-offering for us*; thereby making it every way honorable and gracious in himself to forgive us our sin through the blood of his well beloved Son, whom he sent forth from his own bosom in proof of his love to the world.

Q. What is meant by being justified?

A. It is to have the remission of all our sins, and to stand as righteous persons in the sight of God.

Q. Is it not, then, equivalent in effect to being pardoned?

A. It is so used by the Apostles: "By him all that believe are justified from all things from which no one can be justified by the law of Moses.

Q. What do the scriptures mean by the word *sanctified*?

A. To be sanctified is to be separated to God as respects our relation to him, and to have a purification of heart conformed to that state. Thus christians are said to be holy as respects both their state, dispositions, and behaviour.

Q. What do the scriptures mean by being *adopted*?

A. Adoption, or receiving into the relation of a son, is the same act, whether God or man be the adopter. On as many as receive Jesus in his character as God's son, he bestows the honour of an induction into the relation of children—of sons and daughters to the Lord Almighty. And more; he communicates to them the spirit of children, so that they can with feeling, say, "Abba, Father!"

Q. In what sense are christians *saved* in this life?

A. From sin. "He shall save his people from their sins;" from the guilt, pollution, and dominion of sin in this life, and from its punishment in the next.

Q. In what consists the inheritance or heirship of christians?

A. "All things are theirs." Angels, Apostles, and Prophets; the world, life, death, and immortality; Christ himself, "*the heir of all things*;" is theirs, and they are his. Their inheritance is in the heavens—"incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading."

Q. How many salvations are spoken of as belonging to christians?

A. Three. The salvation of their persons from all the dangers of the kingdom of nature; the salvation of their souls from the guilt, pollution, and power of sin; the salvation of their bodies from the grave and from all the punishment of sin. God is the saviour of all men, especially believers, from physical dangers; he saves the souls of them that fear him from sin and Satan. And he has a salvation to be revealed at the last day, an eternal salvation of the whole person, of which all who are found faithful to death shall be partakers.

Q. What are the chief constituents of the present salvation?

A. The remission of sins and the Holy Spirit. Pardon of all past sins is necessary to peace of conscience, and is God's free and first gift through faith in his Son, and immersion into his death and resurrection. When the heart is sprinkled from an evil conscience, and the body washed with cleansing water, ours is the spirit of love, joy, peace; for the reign of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. Thus in the order of nature the reception of the Holy Spirit is necessarily subsequent to the remission of our sins.

Q. What are some of the chief promises of the Author of this salvation concerning the union which subsists between the Lord and his people?

1. A. "Come out from among them and be you separate, and I will receive you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."

2. "I will dwell in them and walk in them; I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

3. "If a man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come and make our abode with him."

4. "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in and sup with him and he with me."

5. "I will never leave you nor forsake you." "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift!" "O! the unsearchable riches of Christ!" "Christ in us the hope of glory!"

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 H Y M N.

Who has our report believed?  
 Shiloh come is not received,  
 Not received by his own:  
 Promis'd branch from root of Jesse,  
 David's offspring, sent to bless you,  
 Comes too lowly to be known.

Tell me, O you favor'd nation!  
 What is your fond expectation—  
 Some fair spreading lofty tree?  
 Let not worldly pride confound you;  
 'Mong the lowly plants around you,  
 Mark the lowest—that is he!

Like a tender plant that's growing,  
 Where no waters friendly flowing,  
 No kind rains refresh the ground;  
 Drooping, dying, you shall view him,  
 See no charms to draw you to him;  
 There no beauty will be found.

Lo! Messiah unrespected!  
 Man of griefs, despised, rejected!  
 Wounds his form disfiguring,  
 Marr'd his visage more than any;  
 For he bears the sins of many,  
 All our sorrows carrying.

No deceit his mouth had spoken,  
 Blameless—he no law had broken,  
 Yet was number'd with the worst;

For, because the Lord would grieve him,  
 You who saw it did believe him  
 For his own offences curs'd.

But while him your thoughts accused,  
 He for our offence was bruised;  
 Yes, for us the victim bled.  
 With his stripes our wounds are cured,  
 By his pains our peace restored,  
 Purchased with the blood he shed.

Love amazing, so to mind us!  
 The Great Shepherd came to find us,  
 Silly sheep all gone astray;  
 Lost, undone by our transgressions,  
 Worse than stripp'd of all possessions,  
 Debtors without hope to pay!

Death our portion, slaves in spirit,  
 He redeem'd us by his merit.  
 To a glorious liberty;  
 Dearly first his goodness bought us,  
 Truth and love then sweetly taught us,  
 Truth and love have made us free.

Glory be to God who gave us—  
 Freely gave—his Son to save us!  
 Glory to the Son who came!  
 Honor, blessing, adoration,  
 Ever, from the whole creation,  
 Be to God and to the Lamb!

FINIS.

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