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THE CHRISTIAN.

No. 11. }

SAINT JOHN, N. B., APRIL, 1840.

{ Vol. 1.

CONDUCTED BY W. W. EATON.

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

THE SPIRIT'S INFLUENCE IN THE CONVERSION OF SINNERS.

WE do not purpose writing an essay on the above caption, although an article has been promised. Other matters must first be disposed of. In the mean time, however, we shall make a few desultory remarks on the subject connected with an exposition of John vi. 44,—“No man can come to me, unless the Father which hath sent me draw him.”

This portion of scripture has been quoted innumerable times to prove the special operation of the Spirit in the conversion of sinners. If the *drawing* in the “text” means the direct influence of the spirit; then does the language also prove the *inability* of a sinner to come to the Lord Jesus without this abstract influence; for it is said that “no man can come to me,” &c. Then, why do multitudes, perhaps seven-eighths of the Baptists and Presbyterians of America quote this to prove special operations of the spirit when they proclaim man’s ability to obey the Gospel; and argue that the defect is in the disposition? If this scripture refers to the direct influence of the spirit then are they and *they only* right who quote this to prove that sinners are *unable* to come to the Lord Jesus without the special assistance of the Holy Spirit!

Now, we believe this passage in its plain, obvious acceptation—that no man *can* come to the Lord Jesus without he is *drawn*. It is only necessary to read the connection to see at once to what the “drawing” refers. This scrap preaching is the curse of the age! No person whose eye is not jaundiced with a system would think of any extraordinary drawing from reading this, if he would read only the next sentence.

One of our brethren in the “West,” a mere lad, not long since, hearing this text quoted by a clergyman, to prove our views incorrect, arose in the assembly, and modestly said, ‘be pleased, Sir, to read the next verse.’ The clergyman glanced at it, and answered, “I’ll not be interrupted in my discourse, Sir!”

Hear, then, the subsequent verse, “It is written in the Prophets, and they shall all be taught of God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.”

Here, it is at once apparent, that the drawing of the Father means

his teaching. Read also Isaiah, liv. 13—"And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children." This is the Scripture to which reference is made by the Lord. Who, now, would think of a person's being taught without words? Not since "men spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit," has one man been found who has learned any thing spiritual, but through the present revelation of God! He who has, let him show himself—let him develop his knowledge, and he shall have the pages of *The Christian* to carry it through the length and breadth of the land.

Nothing do I desire more than to see the public mind undeceived on this point. So long as men imagine that they are the subjects of new Revelations, so long will they be ignorant of the word of God, and a prey to every ignorant enthusiast in the land. And what is worse, men who boast of their scriptural knowledge are propping up this enthusiasm by their absurd modes of interpreting the word of God; by taking detached portions, and making them the foundation of a system. This is particularly the case with the passage under consideration.—The novice in the christian school, who, perhaps, does not understand the first principles of the Gospel, having heard this scripture quoted to prove abstract operations, then hearing such operations denied, with an air of confidence, asserts, "no man can come to me unless the Father which hath sent me draw him;" taking for granted that the Spirit does influence men without words, which is the very question in dispute.

It should first be proved that the Saviour had any allusion to such operations of the spirit. This cannot be done—for his illustration shows that all he intended to communicate to them was, that no man could become his follower, unless he were taught by the Father. He knew that his pretensions were such that supernatural testimony became necessary in order to implicit confidence in him. The blessed Jesus, not like many self-styled ambassadors at the present day, said on a previous occasion: "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true," or more properly translated by Dr. G. CAMPBELL—"If I testify concerning myself, my testimony is not to be regarded." John v. He proceeds then to show that the Father from Heaven bore testimony to his divine character and mission; John the Baptist; the works that he did; the scriptures of the Old Testament, and Moses, all conspired to proclaim him the true Messiah, the Son of the Living God! But our pretended successors of the Apostles will anathematize any who dispute their word, when no voice from Heaven, no scripture, no miracle, no Moses, bears testimony to their pretensions to the sacred office. And to express a doubt that they are under the directions of the divine spirit, is to be set down as an opposer of the spirit—to sin against the Holy Ghost.

Reader, pardon the digressions. The assumptions of erring mortals are so glaring, that should our pen take the course which the mind does, in its contemplations of the unwarrantable pretensions of "man, weak man, clothed with a little brief authority," it would frequently sketch to the readers of the *Christian* many articles on the effects of the "special call to the ministry."

If the usual interpretation of the passage under consideration is to be received and the words "no man" be taken literally, what will those who make such frequent use of it do with the Universalian, should he quote John xii. 32—"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me." Now, no Calvinist living can get clear of Universalism, if he persists in his exposition of John vi. 44. The Universalian might argue thus with an advocate for special influences from the above passages,—“You believe that all those that the Father draws will come to him.” You do not doubt but that the Spirit of the Father is the Spirit also of the Son—nor do you dispute the fact that Father and Son alike draw those whom they would have come to *ἐάν*. This you must admit. The Savior says to the persons he previously addressed, “If I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me.” The only escape for the believer in irresistible influences from this conclusion is the miserable subterfuge that *all* sometimes means only a *part*.

With our views of the subject both passages become plain. The drawing in both instances mean the same—the preaching of the Gospel by those men who received it of the Lord and proclaimed it with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. None did or could come to the Lord until he was preached. He was first declared to be the Son of God with power to the world on the day of Pentecost—then the way to him was made plain—then the miraculous outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the subsequent proclamation of the Gospel drew sinners to the glorified and exalted Jesus. The Apostles’ commission having been such that they were to preach the Gospel to “every creature” “beginning at Jerusalem.” The proclamation of mercy to every creature through a crucified Jesus was to draw all to him. Mark the subsequent verse, [viz. the 33d chapter xii.] “Thus he said, signifying what death he should die.” “He by the grace of God tasted death for every man.”

None of the bitten Israelites could come to the brazen serpent, or even look toward the only remedy provided, until they were drawn; and how was this effected? A herald in the camp of Israel proclaimed abroad the remedy—the bitten Israelite “beheld the serpent of brass and lived!” Let it be remembered by all that our God and Father never yet issued a command for his creatures to obey until every thing on the part of Heaven was perfected. God first does his work and then calls on man to accept of proffered blessings. He does not call on men to obey him, and then impart power to comply; but gives them such requirements as their state and circumstances demand.

He commanded Noah to build an ark; the materials, however, were all provided by the Creator. The ark was finished, and not till then was Noah and his family commanded to enter. The Land of Canaan was provided with every thing that heart could wish, before Israel was commanded to go in and possess it. Salvation was provided in the Lord Jesus before men were called on to believe and obey him. Mansions are prepared for the disciples of Jesus, and they are commanded to make their “calling and election sure,” so that when the King of

kings comes they may be prepared to enter in to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Since we have taken our seat to write on this subject, we shall endeavor to make our readers acquainted with the sentiments advocated by the conductor of *The Christian*, relative to the Spirit's influence; particularly with relation to the conversion of sinners; and also the sentiments which we oppose. We believe all that the word of God develops on this subject, in its plain, obvious interpretation, by comparing scripture with scripture. "So say all," adds the reader! Paul says, "For what man knoweth the things of man, save the Spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. The Apostle John also speaks of the "Spirit of truth" and the "spirit of error;" we also read concerning the "spirit of the world" contrasted with the spirit of God,

Here, then, we have laid down the true Baconian philosophy—the only way to reason correctly—from things known perfectly to those not known, or known only partially. *We do not know* how our spirits act on our material bodies, but we *do know* that they act on other bodies through the medium of our physical powers. We also know that there are but two kinds of power in the universe, *Physical* and *Spiritual*. Physical power is called into action when we would move material bodies. Spiritual when we would act on mind. When, therefore, we purpose making an effort to induce men to believe our word, we exert not physical by spiritual power. The question now is, in what manner do we influence our fellow men? *Answer*, By our *words* and *actions*. Our spirits *cannot* act on the minds of others only through this medium. We do not, therefore, say that the spirit of the Lord cannot act on the human mind only through the medium of words; but we do assert without fear of successful contradiction, that no man living can produce one case where man has ever believed in, loved, or feared God, without hearing, directly or indirectly, of him. None but those who have been miraculously endowed have learned any thing of God or his attributes, but through the medium of his revelation.

The mind of man is not moved but by means of the intelligence communicated to him. No person ever desired to go to heaven or feared hell until he first heard and believed there were such places. Hence the language of the Apostle, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God;" "These things are written that you might believe," &c. Thus, then, as we put forth the power of our spirits by our words, so does the spirit put forth his powerful energies to convince of sin, righteousness and judgment, by his words.

There is, however, this difference—we cannot always be present with our words; but the Holy Spirit always presides over the word of God. "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, (*hades*) behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." Ps. cxxxix. If, then, God's presence is every where manifest, surely

he is ever present with his word. Remember, we do not say in his word: but he ever presides over it. When it is read or proclaimed, God speaks. If the Lord Jesus were here in person he would do no more than speak to sinners to show them what they are and should be—we say, he *would* do no more; he did no more when in the flesh. So far from using any compulsory power, he wept over Jerusalem, and said, “How often *would* I have gathered thy children, [inhabitants] but ye *would not*.” And on another occasion it is said, that in a certain place he could do no mighty works “because of their unbelief.” Thus did the Redeemer conduct and influence men in the days of his flesh. Mark distinctly, then, reader, that as the Lord was about leaving the disciples, he promised them the Holy Spirit. When he was with them they needed not such a teacher, but when he went away they needed another comforter or advocate. Will any rational man, from these considerations, imagine that the Holy Spirit was to produce an influence over and above, or different from that exerted by the Lord Jesus Christ himself? We have already seen that he sought only to move men by his word; may we not, therefore, come to the conclusion, without hesitation, that this is also the way, and the *only way* in which the holy spirit influences the hearts of men? Now reader, is this “denying the spirit?” We hope the readers of the Christian will examine this subject closely. Hundreds pass sentence on the faith of others, particularly on this point, who never seriously read the scriptures one hour to see what they said on this subject. Reader, have you read your New Testament with sufficient care to distinguish the difference between the *ordinary* and *extraordinary* influences of the spirit? Did you ever consider the difference between receiving the *spirit* of the Lord and the *gifts* of the spirit? Before you come to conclusions on the subject, take this piece of advice—commence reading your New Testament; when you find any thing said about the spirit of the Lord, or the word of God, write it down, or mark the place for future reference; thus go through the book, and then you will be able to judge for yourselves whether the sentiments above set forth are true or not: “Prove all things, and hold fast that which is good.” The writer of this wrote down nearly every sentence in the New Testament where the word spirit is found—he then compared them before he ventured to make assertions. The above are some of his conclusions.

But now to the sentiments which we oppose: Calvinists and Arminians admit with us that the spirit influences the sinner by the word; they are not, however, satisfied to stop here; but we understand them to contend that the Holy Spirit, *directly, immediately, and abstractly*, from the word disposes the sinner to love and serve the Lord before he will, or can believe and obey it!

Lest some should think that we desire to throw our own sentiments in the most *favorable*, and our opposers' in the most *unfavorable* light possible; we shall further define the sentiments which we oppose, by endeavoring to exhibit to the reader how far we go together, and then the place of separation.

They admit with us that the author of our existence revealed himself to our original progenitors for their present and future happiness—that he spoke to Noah, Abraham, Moses, and others—that he revealed himself more particularly to Israel from Sinai—to them often by the Prophets through whom he also revealed his displeasure for their sins, and the way in which he would have them walk to please him—through them he revealed the character of the Messiah—the time, place, and circumstances of his birth, life, death and resurrection. He sent John the Baptist the Harbinger of Messias. He came in the fullness of time, made of a woman, made under the law, and thus manifested himself in flesh; he lived our example and died for our sins, the just for the unjust, thus became the last sin-offering; bringing in everlasting righteousness. He arose from the dead for our justification—ascended on high and was crowned Lord of all—sent down the Holy Spirit according to previous promise—the disciples received largely of the spirit, and at once commenced proclaiming to the world—to every creature, the words of eternal life. Through them the Holy Spirit spoke to sinners in order to the production of faith in them, that they might forsake their sins and become the recipients of God's grace. Yes, all these wonders and miracles were for the conversion of sinners! Thus far we agree with the advocates of special direct influences. But, now, take notice, we say that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, have done enough to convince the most ungodly of sin, righteousness, and judgment; that they have done all they can do consistent with their perfections and man's accountability. We cannot see what more is possible to be done. What more can he do for the conviction and conversion of sinners? He has promised to do no more, until the sinner believes, repents, and is immersed, and thus puts on the yoke of Jesus; then he becomes a temple of the Holy Spirit.

Our opponents, however, on the other hand, after admitting all that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have done for the conviction and conversion of sinners, contend that such is the deep depravity of the human heart, that all those stupendous words and works affect the sinner now, no more than the formal prayers of a lifeless clergyman do the putrid carcasses of a grave yard, until the Holy Ghost in some indescribable, undefinable way, either makes him alive at once, or infuses supernatural extraordinary power into his word; more generally into the words of some preacher; or by some secret whisper, dream, thunder or lightning to dispose the sinner to accept of salvation!!

To sum all up in few words, the father of our spirits has called to his aid all heaven and earth to make the sinner acquainted with God and himself, that he may be disposed to serve his Creator, *but has made a complete failure!* and now, in order to induce one sinner to obey the Lord Jesus and accept eternal life, he is under the necessity of stretching forth his own naked, invisible, almighty arm, and without the intervention of means, to effect that which he has failed to do with!!!

If this is not making the word of God of non-effect, and completely nullifying all that God has revealed, and all that Jesus has done and

suffered, I have yet to learn that it is possible to make the word of God of non-effect!

This is not an exaggeration; the picture is true, if it is rough. Calvinism and Arminianism lead to this. He who tells a sinner that he is unable to believe and obey Jesus Christ with the powers which he possesses, preaches indulgences to sinners, and they usually cost the community as much as indulgences did in the days of Martin Luther! Alas! how many are preaching about ability and inability, instead of preaching Christ as the way, the truth, and the life, and calling on sinners to repent and be baptised for remission of sins, that they may receive God's holy Spirit, and become heirs to eternal life.

And yet, for all this, many of those whose preaching is directly calculated to keep sinners in their sins are crying out "false doctrine," "you deny the spirit!" As though conscious of their inability to sustain their own views of conversion, they try to hide their defects by crying out "*you deny the Spirit!*"

'Tis seldom we offer challenges; but if any intelligent man will enter into an examination of the merits of this question, we will engage to prove that he who denies that the spirit influences the sinner through the word, or that advocates any other influence of the Spirit but through the word, *is the man who denies the Spirit of God!* EDITOR.

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

JEWISH AGE.—NO. III.

NEXT to the *constitution* or natural compact at Sinai was the institution of the symbolic worship. The Jewish religion is a wonderful display of Divine wisdom, goodness, and condescension to the wants and circumstances of mankind. No infidel ever understood it, no man can understand it and doubt the Divine truth of christianity. To lay down a diagram in figures, which should one thousand five hundred years afterwards, and not before, be read and understood, by millions of human beings as plain as a literal description could be, containing a whole volume in the compass of a single sheet, exhibits such an insight into futurity, as no human being ever did or ever could possess. Suppose that some person were to pretend to be divinely inspired and commissioned, and, in the mean time, would afford to the living indubitable proofs of his mission by a stupendous display of Almighty power, but desiguing to have the same credit with posterity a thousand years hence, that he has with the living, how would he most likely obtain the credit? The evidences which, when *living*, he presents, he cannot present when dead. Let him, however, leave behind him any work which when examined shall be found to contain a knowledge of future events and developements, which no human being could possess, this knowledge being as supernatural as a power which could lift the mountains, must afford equal proof to all who examine it, as the mira-

oulous display of physical energy. Could any man have written in symbols, or laid down a diagram in figures and numbers presenting a full description of America before Columbus discovered it, and a history of all the changes which have taken place since its discovery till the present year; I say, could such a work have been executed and deposited in the archives of the Spanish Government, well attested as the genuine work of a Spanish prophet, who had died at any time, say a hundred years before Christopher Columbus was born, no person could rationally doubt the inspiration of the author, nor the certainty of the yet future and unaccomplished part of it. Such a work is the symbolic worship of the Jews' religion in all its prominent characteristics and import, in reference to the institution of Jesus Christ.

On the doctrine of chances it would be more than two billions to one that any fifty incidents could all happen in any one character to live a thousand years after the incidents detailed were recorded. Now, more than one hundred distinct incidents are found in the Jews' religion and history detailed concerning the Messiah, all of which exactly met in him, and were circumstantially completed in him. This is an argument in proof of the mission of Moses and of Christ, against which the gates of scepticism cannot prevail.—Whatever proves the mission of Moses proves the mission of Christ; and whatever proves the mission of Christ proves the mission of Moses. This is a happy arrangement, which is in accordance with the whole Divine scheme of things.

If a pretended chemist should, in testing or explaining the affinities of certain elementary principles, mingle and combine such simples as have no chemical affinity, it would not prove the whole doctrine of chemistry a whimsical or imaginary science. Or should a pedagogue, when instructing infants in the powers of vowels and consonants, form unnatural combinations in syllabication, it would not prove that the powers of letters and the import of words were unintelligible and indeterminate. Neither does the foolish and whimsical interpretation of types and symbols prove that all symbols and types are arbitrary, unmeaning, unintelligible, and undefinable things. Yet in this way some reason. Because some young novices, and some old visionaries, have made types where there were none, and misapplied those that were; therefore, say they, the whole system of types and symbols is unmeaning and unintelligible.

It is well for man, that *faith* and not *reason* is the principle on which all revealed religion is founded. For although some sceptics scowl at the idea of faith, and extol the superiority of reason, as a guide, yet the truth is, that faith is incomparably a more safe guide, than reason. Not one in a thousand reasons infallibly or even correctly. Numerous as are the falsehoods believed, they do not bear the proportion of one to ten to the errors committed in reasoning. And were a man to make reason his sole guide, even in the common affairs of this life, and reject all faith in human testimony, he would be in proportion as he lived conformably to his reason, the greatest errorist in his day. Hence it was that the Grecian and Roman philosophers erred more extravagantly, and ran into wilder extremes in religion, than the tribes which im-

implicitly followed tradition, or acted upon the principles of faith. Not a husbandman in ten, who attempts to strike out a new course in agriculture, but miscarries oftener than he succeeds. And so precarious are the best reasoners upon the plough and the shuttle, that nothing is relied upon but experiment. Not a husbandman in ten can rely upon his own judgment or reason in deciding the pretensions of a new plough, or of a new mode of cultivation, until experience has taught him its merits or its defects. Hence, experience is continually correcting the errors of reason. Hence, an ounce of experience is worth a pound of reason in the common business of life. They then, who believe, or in other words, rely upon the experience of others in human affairs, err less frequently, and much less fatally, than they who rejecting faith, or the experience of others, set sail upon the ocean of speculation and reason. The wise man rests upon experience, until he is able to prove by reason, or by his own experiments, that his ancestors have erred. If every generation was to reject the experience and instructions of the past, there would soon be a rapid retrogression in the improvements of society. But, without being tedious, they use reason best, who pay a good regard to those who have lived before them, and never dare to rely on their own reasonings, any further than that they have proved them by experiment. He that drinks water to extinguish the burning sensations occasioned by swallowing vitriol, though he reasons plausibly, does not reason more discordantly with fact, than the majority of reasoners who reason themselves into universal doubt. If then, in the material world, and with reference to the common business of life, men more frequently err in implicitly following their own reason, than in following the experience related to them by others, how much dependence ought to be placed upon sheer reason, in the things pertaining to the invisible and future world. But there is one tremendous consequence attached to the errors of reason in things pertaining to the spiritual and eternal world, that is not necessarily attendant on errors pertaining to temporal affairs. Experiments may, generally do, and almost universally might, divorce us from these errors. But if experience of our mistakes in religious faith, or in rejecting faith altogether and adopting reason, is to be the means, the sole means of detecting them, deplorable beyond the powers of expression will be the detection of our own sophistry.

But whither have I strayed from my purpose? To return, then, to the symbolic worship:—

There is a most ingenious and instructive symbolizing or adumbrating of the christian history or facts in the whole history of the Jewish people. Their history, as well as their worship, seems to have been designed for figures or types of the Kingdom of the Messiah.

Joseph was sold into Egypt by his own brethren. He was sold, too, for thirty pieces of silver. His own good conduct and the Divine wisdom bestowed upon him, after a few years degradation, sorrow, and suffering, placed him upon the throne, or made him viceroy of Egypt. He forgave his brothers and provided an inheritance for them. Israel went down into Egypt;—Moses was finally raised up to bring them

out ;—and then a new scene of things commences. Now he must be blind indeed, who cannot see in the decree that exposed Moses, in his exaltation, Divine call, and mission, in his leading Israel through the Red Sea, in the mediation at Mount Sinai, in the perigrinations through the wilderness, and in a hundred incidents of this history, an exact coincidence with the facts recorded by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, concerning the Messiah. But these historic incidents though evidently figurative, and made to have a prospective reference to the incidents in the evangelical narrations, do not rank among those symbolic institutions, whose primary design was to prefigure the Messiah and his redemption. Such were the instituted acts of worship belonging to the tabernacle.

Sacrifice is as old as the fall of man, or at least was instituted immediately afterwards, and continued in practice among all those favored with divine revelations, till the sacrifice of the Messiah, when it legitimately ceased. All sacrifices since offered have been unauthorized by God. He accepted one sacrifice which forever perfects the believers as to sacrifices. This divine institution has spread all over the world. No nation of antiquity, and, perhaps, not a tribe now on earth is without some vestiges of it. It was an institution that human reason never could have originated. The idea that the blood or life of any animal could be acceptable to the Creator of the world has no archetype, model, or analogy, in the sensible or visible creation to originate it. The ancients confirmed all their covenants over the bodies of slain animals. But this practice seems to have originated from the sacrifices which were offered at the times when God commanded them in confirmation of any promise, which he gave to any of the human family. Thus the patriarchs confirmed their covenants, and from them the custom obtained of confirming all covenants with blood. Hence the seals of all the articles of stipulation of solemn import were seals of blood. And when this custom was laid aside, and wafers instead of victims became the seals of written contracts, they were colored red, as the symbol of the seals of blood.

Among the ancients, the gradations in the obligation and solemnity of all agreements were, first, a mere verbal promise without witnesses; second, a verbal promise before witnesses; third, an oath; and fourth, a victim slain. Thus when the national constitution of Israel was consummated, Moses, after he had audibly spoken the whole items and conditions, had, by divine appointment, animals slain, and the blood was scattered over the parchment and the people. So the highest pledge or assurance of God's love ever given to mortal man, greater than promise, oath, or even human sacrifice, is the blood of Jesus, by which the new institution has been ratified. But after these generals, we may come to particulars in the symbolic worship at another day.

CHRISTIAN UNION.—No. 3.

In our previous papers it has been made apparent that much of the happiness of the ancient christians flowed from their union. That it is sinful to make or keep up divisions in the body of Christ, we trust has also been satisfactorily proved. It now remains for us to show the

principal causes of disunion, and the principles on which all christians may meet and form one communion.

The causes of disunion. These are so numerous, that we fear to begin a particular specification. The grand and radical cause, however, is the want of conformity to the word of God. Were men guided by this, they never would hate or try to injure one of the human family. If the word of Christ dwelt in them richly," they would by their love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, and meekness, convince all who associated with them that they were filled with the spirit of Christ.

The cause of individual opposition and religious variance is easily solved. All who are properly instructed in the christian scriptures take pleasure and satisfaction in the company of those who love the Lord, although they may conscientiously differ. What then should prevent such persons from living in a Church together? But to the causes of separation.

Ignorance. Persons may be well instructed in the arts and sciences and ignorant of the living oracles. An individual may have read all the human productions ever written, and yet be extremely deficient in Bible knowledge. To become acquainted with the scriptures is essential to rational union. The more enlightened the christian, the more he desires to see all who love and serve the Lord forming one band of holy brotherhood.

Ignorance of each other's principles often keep christians separate. Should they meet frequently and have a cordial interchange of sentiment with the Bible in their hands, they would soon see the full amount of difference. The more distant religious persons keep, the more they magnify each other's supposed errors.

Agitating speculative questions. These gender strife. No person but partially acquainted with the scriptures will do this. We, therefore, sum up all the causes and difficulties amongst professors of religion in a want of scriptural knowledge, conformity in their lives to the word of God, and acquaintance with each other.

It was our design in the commencement of this article to go into a particular enumeration of the causes of disunion, but we have considered the subject carefully, and are satisfied that the best way to promote real christian union is to disseminate scriptural knowledge; endeavour to draw off the attention of the world from men's inventions, and fix them on the word of God—the scriptures of truth.

The Church was once united; all the disciples were of "one heart and one mind." They then had no human laws; they were wholly governed by the Apostles under the inspiration of the Spirit. Although there was a deep rooted animosity existing between Jews and Gentiles, still, when they surrendered themselves wholly to the teaching of the Lord's twelve princes, sitting on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel, they were one; they became united.

The church continued thus for a length of time. They passed many fiery persecutions by which every natural and national tie was severed; but their love to the Lord, his people, and cause, continued.

They knew no difference in the human family as Christians but that formed by virtue and vice. Those that believed and obeyed the Lord Jesus were their brethren.

In process of time, however, the disciples, desirous that their friends might become fellow heirs with them in the kingdom of the Lord, began to be conformed to the world. Soon heathenism and Judaism began to be mixed with Christianity; and thus the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, was muffled with the doctrines and commandments of men, and the truth shorn of its beauty, simplicity, and glory.

Some invented *original* or *birth* sin, and others *infant baptism* to wash it away; and then the Church was carnalized and secularized until, from the Emperor to the bandit, from the man of a century to the infant of days, all became members of "the Church." From such a mass of corruption it became a virtue to dissent. The cry was, and now should be heard—"come out of her my people." Many have professed to come out, but they bring so much with them, that they set up antagonist principles, and hate each other more cordially than the corrupt mass from which they have departed. But now we cry "*union*." We plead for a return of those days when all who loved the Lord were one.

If we should believe and practice as did the ancients, we should undoubtedly be united. The Church was one, and wrought efficiently until the introduction of associations, conferences, synods, councils, &c. Then originated that great curse to Christendom which is now the greatest barrier to Christian union—we mean *human creeds*.

It matters not by what name they are called—whether "articles of faith," "church discipline," or "confession of faith." The fact that such human productions have been and now are the principal cause of the want of scriptural knowledge and unanimity amongst the followers of the Lamb is too manifest to be denied. Neither is it necessary that a creed should be written or printed in order that one may exist. He who governs himself or seeks to govern others by any thing short of a "thus saith the Lord," found either in the word or practices of Apostolic Christians, has a creed which he either imposes on himself or others.

As we honestly consider human creeds or bonds of union the cause of the perpetuation of strife and division, we here substitute the remarks of, to us, an unknown author on the inutility and evil of

"**HUMAN CREEDS.**—From the principles elucidated in the preceding remarks, it must be perfectly obvious that human creeds, occupying the place and subserving the purposes they do in the church, are at variance with the great law of Christ's house, and should be forthwith abandoned. A synoptical view of the sentiments of a church we do not particularly object to, provided it is not considered as binding upon any one.

"Our objections to human creeds will be briefly stated in the following order:—

"1. No real benefit can be derived from them. They do not keep error out of the church, because they are all, more or less, erroneous.

This is introducing it into the church. The bible would be much better to keep error out of the church, because it contains no error. To say that they are more explicit and plain than the Bible, is to charge the Holy Spirit with incompetency. To say that they are more *concise* than the Bible, and therefore to be preferred, is to allege that the Bible is redundant. We are aware that human creeds are so *concise*, that they contain little else than human speculations. To say that they are a necessary bond to bind Christians together, is to deny the efficacy of Christian love. 'Love is the bond of perfectness.' It is the *only* divinely constituted bond of union.

"2. Their tendency is evil, only evil, and that continually. The history of the Church, from the time of the fabrication of the Nicene Creed, until the present period, is a continual demonstration of the truth of this position.

"3. There is no divine warrant for their use, either from precept or example. And the reason is very obvious: inspired truth, unmodified and uncommended, was the only authorized constitution of the church.

"4. They are the fruits of an unauthorized and sinful legislation in the church. Christ has never vested the legislative power in the church. That power he has wisely reserved to himself. That creeds are legislative enactments no one can doubt. They are made the laws of the church.

"5. They supersede the Bible. This is evident from the fact, that they constitute the basis of sectarian churches and ecclesiastical judicatories. Persons for admission are examined by the creeds. All their judicial proceedings are conformed to the same rule. Delinquents are tried by the Creed, and not by the Bible.

"6. They tend most powerfully to perpetuate the enormous evils of sectarianism. Specifications here are unnecessary.

"7. They eject real Christians from the church. A change of views which is acknowledged not to affect the Christian character of a person, is a sufficient reason for his ejection from the church, according to the creeds. Thousands have been cast out of the church for no better reason.

"8. They prevent real Christians from coming into the church. They cannot *conscientiously* comply with all their self-made terms of membership. Thus the privileges of the church are denied to the members of Christ's body.

"9 They prevent an increase of scriptural knowledge. If a man have imbibed error, it is *disorderly*, according to the creed, to retract them. If he shall gain any new light, he must be regarded as a heretic, and be treated accordingly. The creed stands with a drawn sword to prevent any member of the church advancing in the way of scriptural knowledge. It will not allow the mind to transcend its narrow limits. All beyond is forbidden ground.

"10. They are almost invariably made by the few, and imposed on the many. A few in one generation will fabricate the systems of faith for all coming generations. To question their infallibility, in ages afterwards, is regarded as truly schismatical in the Protestant, as it is in the Catholic church, to question the infallibility of the Pope.

“ 11. A desirable Christian union cannot be effected while they hold their present place in the church. They stand directly in the way of such a union. Their unauthorized terms of fellowship can never be complied with. They conflict with each other. So that creeds must be discarded, or the hope of the formation of a gospel union among Christians must be relinquished.

“ 12. It is rebellion against the great Head of the church to retain them. It is rebellion to leave the divine Constitution of the church, and make a human fabrication the rallying point. It is rebellion against the King of Zion to set a new and inhibited standard of action in his church. *His example* is made the only standard of action. To set up another, is most clearly to rebel. *To receive men as he receives them is our great law.* To receive them as Calvin, as Wesley, or as Fuller receives them, is a new and rebellious law in the church.

Therefore, creeds should be immediately discarded. To permit them to hold their present place and subserve their present purposes in the churches is unsafe—is productive of immense mischief, and is incompatible with submission to the prerogatives of Christ.”—ED.

BAPTISM.—THE ACTION. No. III.

WHEN all other rules of interpretation fail, we draw our conclusions relative to the meaning of a word or sentence, by examining the connexion in which it is found. The meaning of baptism we are willing to submit to any ordeal. We have opened the Old and New Testaments, and have found it invariably translated, when used literally, immersion; the classics say immersion and dipping is the meaning of *bapto* and *baptizo*; all learned men admit that immersion is the primary signification; a single word can express but one act; in its figurative use the idea of immersion is always connected with its application, and now we shall submit the last criterion to which interpreters resort for the truth, viz. examine the connexion in which the word is found.

5. The first occurrence of the word in the New Testament informs us that the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judea came out and were baptised of John in Jordan. Here the fact is obviously stated that baptism is the application of the subject to the water, not the water to the subject as the opposers of immersion practice. Now, there is a rule of interpretation which always holds good. It differs from all others in that it has no exceptions. It is this: Substitute the definition of the word for the word itself, it will always make sense. Let us make an application of the rule to the occurrence above alluded to. We argue that immersion is the only meaning of the word. Hear Matthew iii. 6—“And were all *immersed* of him in Jordan.” This reads easy and correctly; but take the other definition: “And were all *sprinkled* in Jordan!!” Now if it read they were “*sprinkled with Jordan*” still it would be as difficult to understand how John could take up the river Jordan, as it would be to sprinkle several thousand

people in the river. Again—"And were all poured in Jordan." Pouring people into the river would also be heavier work than immersing them. Reader, take any place in the scriptures where the word baptise occurs, and you will see the same difficulties attending pouring and sprinkling. We will notice a few more: Rom. vi.—"We are buried with him by *sprinkling* into death!" "Buried with him in *sprinkling*, wherein also you are risen!" I Cor. xv.—"Else what shall they do who are *poured* for the dead," &c. But I can proceed no further. The reader will think that the subject is not treated with that seriousness which its importance demands. Far be it from us to hold up the subject to ridicule; but if the quoting of the scriptures in the sense in which Paido-Baptists receive it causes it to sound so ridiculous to them, how must it appear to those who view its performance with a full conviction that it has no foundation in the word of God; but is the production of an age which spread blight and desolation over the fair face of God's moral vineyard!!

6. Not only does the connection in which the word is found require immersion as its invariable meaning, but the prepositions used in describing it, and the circumstances connected with its administration, go still farther to establish the meaning of *baptizo* to be nothing but immerse. If the prepositions have their literal and primary signification, and no honest translator gives a secondary meaning to a word, if the primary will possibly give the sense of the original, then, in every instance the language is one—and that is immersion. It is baptised *in* water; they go down *into* the water; they come up *out of* or *from* the water. We are aware of all that can be said about substituting *with* and *to*, &c. for *in* and *into* and *out of*; but the subterfuge is so miserable that we shall not stop to notice it, until we take up the objections generally.

The argument drawn from the prepositions, and the circumstances of baptism, is not one of minor consideration, although it is often ridiculed.

The justly celebrated Dr. Doddridge says, "I am more and more convinced that the vulgar [common] sense of the New Testament, that is, the sense in which an honest man of plain sense would take it, on his first reading the original, or a good translation, is almost every where the true and general sense of the passage. I choose to follow the plainest, and the most obvious and common interpretation, which indeed, I generally think the best." Now, no intelligent, candid Paido-Baptist can doubt that a common reader of the New Testament would, without hesitation, conclude that immersion was the meaning of baptism in every instance; unless he had had his mind previously warped by the prejudices of education.

In illustration of the above, we shall here introduce a well authenticated narrative, the truth of which cannot be disputed:

HOW INDIANS READ THE BIBLE.

While on a visit to the State of A——, in the summer of 182—, an occurrence was related to me, which, if you think it worthy of publica-

tion, you may give it to your readers. It was substantially as follows :

In the early part of the same year a *Pseudo-Baptist* preacher was employed by the Bible Society to distribute Bibles among the Indians of the Cherokee nation. On presenting a bible to a sprightly young man who understood the English language, the preacher said to him, "Please accept this book, read it, believe it, and do what it commands you." It was received with a nod of acquiescence.

The next summer the Indian attended a camp-meeting in the neighbourhood of the preacher, a short distance from the Tennessee river. He embraced the earliest opportunity of seeing the kind friend who had put into his hand a book, which taught him the way of life and salvation. During the interview the Indian said to the preacher, "Mr. M. I want you to go with me to the river." "Why," said the preacher, "do you wish me to go with you to the river?" "I want you to baptise me," replied the Indian. "I can baptize you without going to the river," said the preacher. "Where?" inquired the red man anxiously. "Here," responded the preacher. After looking hastily around him for a moment, the Indian inquired, in a tone indicating surprise, "How can you baptize me here where there is no water?" He was told that they could have water brought for the purpose. From the movements of the wild man, it was evident he did not understand how he could be baptised there. Observing his perplexity and want of comprehension, the *teacher* found it necessary to explain the *mode* of baptism to this child of nature, who, being unacquainted with the modern changes and improvements in the fashionable world, had, by reading the bible in the old fashioned way, foolishly understood it to mean what it said.—The ignorance of this uncultivated savage was removed by being informed that, by the ordinance as it *now* stood, they avoided both the disgrace and the trouble of going to the river, and it was to be performed by *pouring a little water on his forehead!*

The man of the woods had his eye steadily fixed on his spiritual instructor until the explanation was concluded, when his countenance fell; and gazing vacantly into space, he stood some time lost in thought; then, starting up as from a reverie, and fixing his eye again upon the preacher, he, in a tone of voice and with a countenance expressive of disappointment and surprise, inquired anxiously, "*Is that baptism?*" He was answered in the affirmative. A momentary pause ensued; then, as if calling to recollection something which had not occurred before to explain the mystery, he exclaimed—"WELL, IF THAT IS BAPTISM, YOU GAVE ME THE WRONG BOOK!"

His idea seemed to be that each sect (or *company*, as another Cherokee* once called the different denominations,) had a book or a bible of its own; and this gentleman had, through mistake, given him a *Baptist* bible; for that represented baptism to be immersion.

So reasoned an unsophisticated child of nature, who read the scriptures as they stand, without the aid of any expositor, and without ha-

* When asked why he did not become a Christian, he replied, "I am waiting to see which *company is right.*"

ring any system in his eye or any preconceived opinion to support, but to learn what the book required that he might do it.

Query.—If all read the Bible as the Indian did, would they not come to the same conclusion—viz. that if any believe baptism to mean any thing but immersion, they must learn it from some other book ?

The above was related to me by several persons who were present and heard the conversation between the preacher and the Indian.—Two of them were at that time members of the Paido-Baptist communion ; and if I am not mistaken, were led, from the remarks of the Indian, to read the Bible in the same old-fashioned way, and came to the same conclusion, and were afterwards immersed. One of them is now a preacher in the reformation, of more than ordinary talents.”

No person who has attentively read the New Testament, without being prejudiced in favor or against any system, can doubt but that the conclusion of the untutored son of the forest would be that of every man who would take the word of God alone as his guide.

7. Our next argument to prove that *baptizo* means to immerse, and nothing but immerse, is, the uniform practice of the Eastern or Greek Church until this day. Persons, but partially acquainted with Church history, are aware that the Greek Church, embracing all the Russian Empire and the Christian Churches of Turkey in Europe and Asia, with all that call themselves Christians, east and north of the influence of Romanism, ordinarily immerse their infants and proselytes !

Although, perhaps, the present language spoken by the Greeks, differs as much from classic Greek as the Italian language does from the Latin of Virgil and Cicero, yet the difference is not greater than the present English and that written and spoken seven hundred years ago ; and it is well known that all the principal words in our language are the same in signification as then ; at all events the English ought to be the best interpreters of their own language !

This much, then, we claim for the Greeks. They say that *baptizo* means to *dip*, and they therefore practice this whether in Russia's cold and dreary forests, or the warm and delightful isles of Greece !

This argument is of more consequence to the illiterate inquirer for truth than volumes of criticisms on the roots and derivations of words.

How must the clergyman, professing to be a scholar and a christian, who asserts that *baptizo* does not in any case mean to immerse, blush in the presence of a native Greek, acquainted with his own language, who never attached any other signification to the word !

“ If pity for the wretched be a generous passion, who can help indulging in it when he sees an illiterate believer in immersion hang his head, daunted and dismayed by the unfair criticism of a learned teacher who tells him the word baptize is Greek, and signifies pouring as well as dipping ? Great men love sometimes to trifle. The inference which these translators draw from their own version is not exactly logical ; for I prove, says the Doctor of Divinity, going to dedicate an infant to the Lord, that the word baptize signifies to pour as well as to dip. In virtue of this, what does he ? He takes the infant, and neither pours nor

dips, but sprinkles it, and then lifts up his voice and says to a congregation of plain English scholars, the Greek will bear me out!

Suppose an illiterate believer in immersion should stand up and say to such a man: "Sir, I have understood that Jesus lived and died in the East—that four of his disciples wrote his history in the Greek language—that his Apostles peached in Greek to the inhabitants of Greece, and that the Greeks heard, believed, and were baptized;—every nation understands its own language best, and no doubt the Greeks understand the Greek better than we do—now I have been informed—set me right if I am wrong—that from the first preaching of the Apostles to this day, the Greeks have always understood, that to baptize was to dip; and so far are they from thinking that to baptize is to pour or sprinkle, I have been told that they baptize by dipping three times. I do not understand Greek, but I think the Greeks themselves do. If, therefore, I were to dip for other reasons; and if I were obliged to determine my practice by the sense of the single word *baptism*; if I were drawn to the necessity of trusting somebody, my reason would command me to take the sense from the natives of Greece rather than from you foreigner! That this honest man would suppose a true fact is beyond all contradiction. In determining the precise meaning of a Greek word, used to signify a Greek ceremony, what possible chance has a session of lexicographers against a whole empire of native Greeks? Let the illiterate enjoy themselves, and recollect when they understand immersion to be the only valid baptism, they understand Greek exactly as the Greeks themselves understood it."*

"A few years since, I had an interview with the Captain of a Greek ship, from one of the islands of the Archipelago, who was a member of the Greek Church. He was wholly unacquainted with English, and his Greek pronunciation was difficult to understand. An Italian, well versed in both languages, was our interpreter. When informed that I believed in dipping, an approving smile kindled in his countenance, and he with great rapidity and emphasis pronounced *ego baptizo, ego baptizo*, at the same time bending his head forward, and putting his hand over it so as to meet behind, to show that to baptize was to plunge all over head and ears. This he did three times to represent their trine immersion. When something was said about sprinkling, he stretched forth his hand with a frowning aspect, and an indignant poh! as if it had nothing to do with *baptizo*." †

In our next we shall attend to objections.—EDITOR.

* Altered a few words from Robinson's Researches. † Benedict's Edition of Robertson's History of Baptism.

OUR OPPONENTS' OPINION OF "THE CHRISTIAN."

We were greatly amused not long since, on hearing an expression of popular opinion relative to our publication.

That our friends abroad may have an idea of the circumstances which surround us in the city; and the cause of much opposition, we submit the following facts in the form of a dialogue.

The reader will bear in mind that B. and C. are subscribers, and A. from denominational motives does not see fit to take the work.

A. seeing C. with the first number in his hands, with surprise exclaims—"Why, Mr. C., do you take that work?"

C. Well, I have *subscribed* for it.

A. You ought to examine it well before you take it into your family.

C. Not having yet read the work, I am unable to pass any judgment on it. What kind of work is it? Have you read it?

A. No; but "they say" the conductor's sentiments are extremely heretical!

C. As you understand religious subjects better than I do, I wish you would take the pamphlet—read it carefully through, and point out the errors; and if you think it would be dangerous to introduce into my family, I'll send it back and take no more.

A. I will do so as soon as I have time. When you call again I hope I shall be able to satisfy you. [C. *departs.*]

[According to promise A. reads the pamphlet to the end without being able to detect the heresy, so great was his disappointment that he read it over again! Mr. C. calls the second time.]

C. Have you examined the periodical, Mr. A.?

A. Yes; I have read it through twice.

C. Well, what is the result?

A. I must acknowledge that I was prejudiced; I read it in order to find all the fault I possibly could; but I should not dare to say that there was *one sentence* in it erroneous!

C. Here is the money—the work may be left at your house, as it is more convenient for the carrier than at mine.

[*Scene 2d.*—A. and B. walking down the street together.]

A. Have you seen Mr. E's magazine or pamphlet, Mr. B.?

B. I have. Have you read it?

A. Yes.

B. What do you think of it?

[A. honestly relates the conversation with Mr. C. and then adds:]

A. The sentiments, so far as I read, were undoubtedly the *truth*, BUT—it will not do to countenance the work—we know from whence it came.

EDITOR.

LETTER, No. III.

TO ELDER SAMUEL ROBINSON.

MY DEAR SIR,—Near the close of another month I find myself seated with my former letters before me to finish the task imposed on myself. I have carefully reviewed my letters, to see, if, in haste, I had penned any thing which I now regret; so that it may be cancelled before I proceed farther; but I see no sentiment advanced which I should be unwilling to sustain, unless it be a remark which one of my brethren in the City thought rather extravagant, viz. the spending "several hours of an evening, hearing what is called 'an experience.'" This

was considered an exaggeration. Perhaps it was; I should have written experience in the plural, and then it would have been all right.—Having made this correction without a demand from you, I hope it will be considered as an earnest of what we are willing at all times to do when convinced of an error, or an exaggeration.

In this letter, Sir, I wish to lay before you the injury I am confident has, and must result, from demanding a "Christian experience" from the unbaptised, in order to admission to that ordinance.

When I speak of injury being sustained, you will not, I hope, misunderstand me. Far be it from me to say or do any thing which would prevent persons giving a history of their childhood, youth, or manhood, or the time and place in which their attention was called up to think on their present and future well-being; nor do I object to hearing any thing which is true from Saint or sinner: but to this I enter my protest, viz. requiring a relation of these exercises as a *condition* of discipleship—as *evidence* of remission of sins. That Baptist Churches, Arminian, and Calvinian, sit as a Court of Inquiry or Jury to judge of such exercises, whether the subject of them has obtained pardon or not, is, a fact so obvious, that you, Sir, will not, I trust, dispute it.

Now, my first argument against the practice, is—We have neither *precept* nor *example* for it in the New Testament. By the New Testament I mean since the commencement of the christian dispensation. 'Tis true John required "fruits meet for repentance" of those who came to his baptism; but this was not for evidence of their pardon—but of repentance or reformation. These fruits were not the agitations of their minds, but a real reformation. Hear him addressing each class with reference to their respective characters: Luke, iii. 8–14. After he informed them that they must do something besides call Abraham their Father—the people say, "what shall we do?" Knowing, doubtless, that covetousness was the most prevailing sin, he answered, "He that hath two coats let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise." The publicans or tax-gatherers came to be baptized, saying, "Master, what shall we do?" "Exact no more than is appoint you." This being their prevailing sin, he thus struck at the root. The soldiers demanded, "And what shall we do?" John answered, "Do violence to no man—neither accuse falsely, and be content with your wages."—You will join with me in saying that this is admirable. Here he joins repentance and reformation. He does not tell them that these are minor things compared with the exercises of the mind; but these were the "fruits worthy of repentance." Here, be it remembered, however, that these things were not considered evidences of pardon and acceptance with the Lord, but the conditions of coupling to his baptism, which was "for the remission of sins."—Luke, iii. 3. I am as desirous, Sir, as you possibly can be, to ascertain of a sinner whether he believes with all his heart and sincerely repents of his sins before he is baptized; but I do not believe that his faith and repentance are evidence of his being in a state of pardon and justification; while some preachers connected with the Baptist Churches are very particular to tell the people that the candidate for baptism has ex-

perienced pardon long before he came there. But I trust this is not the case with you, Sir ; it *cannot be*, because you exhort sinners to be "baptized for remission of sins." Contrast the manner in which sinners came to the Church of Christ in Apostolic times, with the reception of sinners to a Baptist Church. Take the last first:—The person, perhaps a youth, comes to the Conference Meeting—with many doubts and fears—trembling, he arises—he gives an account of his first awaking—he tells the preacher how he felt under this and that discourse of his—of his distress of mind, and the peace and calm ensuit.g. He is questioned by the seniors, not as to his *confidence* in the Saviour, as the great sacrifice for sins, but in relation to his *feelings*; not concerning his *faith*, but the *exercises* of his mind. This being over he retires to another room. Now, to a sensitive youth, comes a time of awful suspense.—Shall I be accepted or rejected? are questions of awful moment to him. The church in the meantime consult together. The question is, has this person "experienced religion,"—that is, has he obtained pardon, has he received the Holy Spirit. What is the proof—the *exercises of the individual's mind*, and his *own word for it*; placed too, in circumstances that would naturally cause him to make out, as far he could consistent with truth, a history as nearly corresponding with the sentiments of the church as possible. [NOTE. Was there ever a case before where a person was permitted to give testimony for himself?] The question is put—lately the vote has usually been unanimous ; but perhaps you, m^r dear Sir, are aware that the personal opposition of one member has set the individual aside for a time to see if he can give this person satisfaction. Turn the child out of doors because it is weak, and see if it will live in the street a few weeks, if so, bring it into the house and feed it ! The Baptist churches however, cannot be accused of doing this lately. They are more anxious to enlarge the flock than formerly. But, I cannot pass by a peculiar case coming under my own cognizance, not many months since. The individual was an old gentleman of unblemished reputation. He visited this City. Having heard me preach, he was desirous that I should visit him. I did so, and spent some time in conversation with him. I announced the gospel to him—he declared his belief in it, and his desire to be baptised ; but added he, " I cannot tell the particular time when I experienced a change of heart, but I love the Lord, and desire to obey him in all things." He had to leave the city so soon that he could not then be immersed ; and another reason was, the community in which he lived were baptists, and he desired to put on the Lord in his own neighbourhood. He returned home—he requested baptism of a baptist minister of that place—think of it, Sir, an old Gentleman, quite unwell, yet in the full possession of his mental powers—trembling on the brink of eternity—beseeching a regular baptist minister to immerse him, *and yet he refused*. You are ready to ask what could he say under such circumstances ! Well, that minister said in this city—" I know that the old gentleman is one of the most upright men in the community—I doubted not his sincerity—but I could not obtain an evidence that he had been born again." Now, Sir, I

had rather baptise the whole Province of New Brunswick on their own word that they believed the gospel and were desirous of serving the Lord, than have to give the account of that minister!!

But to return to our candidate. Suppose he receives an unanimous vote that he is a christian—that his experience is a christian experience. He feels quite joyful. His doubts and fears are now gone. Fifty, perhaps two hundred have voted that they believe he has obtained pardon. Why is he more joyful now than formerly? Is it because God has done anything more for him? No; but “there are so many good people that have decided that I am an heir of God and a joint heir with Jesus Christ.” Here, then, Sir, is my main opposition to these experience meetings: they lead the individual to trust in *himself* and the *good opinion* the church forms of him.

Into what, then, is he baptised? His experience, undoubtedly; for no confession of faith would grant him the privilege. Why is he baptised? “Because Jesus went down into the Jordan,” he answers, “and we ought to follow his example.” And did not Jesus submit to circumcision—to many of the forms of Judaism, and to crucifixion? Why not follow him fully if you are baptised to follow him! But more on this at a more convenient season.

But to the contrast. A person seeking the Lord comes to the Apostles—what say they? Hear them: “Repent and be baptised,” (not because your sins are forgiven you but) “for remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” “Here is water—what hinders me from being baptised?” To such a question would not the majority of our baptist ministers, had they then lived, have said, “I’ll tell you what hinders you—you must go before the Church in Jerusalem or Samaria, and relate your experience, and if they approve of it, and give you an unanimous vote that your sins are forgiven—I’ll baptise you.” But Philip said to the Ethiopian officer, “If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest. And he said ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’” He was baptised and went on his way rejoicing. Why, my dear Sir, does not the baptist churches act on the same principle now? Questions more grave I have to present: Why do the Baptists so generally oppose us for pursuing the same course as Phillip did? Why do they seek to persuade the community that we require nothing of the sinner as prerequisite to baptism?

If the scriptures are to be our guide, what other course can we pursue? What experience had the thousands on the day of Pentecost to tell? If they gave a history of their awakening and conversion, it must have been something like the following: “We had visited Jerusalem to keep the feast of Pentecost; the sound of a rushing mighty wind attracted our attention—soon we found a number of persons assembled in an upper room—they were called Gallileans—we heard them speaking forth the wonderful works of God—we knew they had been illiterate men, yet they were speaking fifteen or sixteen different languages—on them sat cloven tongues like fire—they proved from our scriptures that the Messiah was to rise again—they declared that that Jesus, which fifty days before we execrated, and whom Pilate caused to be crucified, was

our long-expected Messiah—with all zeal they declared they were witnesses of his resurrection—we were charged with his betrayal and crucifixion—it was also shown from our own scriptures that he was to set on the throne above—they appealed to the appearance of fire which was on them, and their ability to speak in all languages, as proof that Jesus was sitting on the throne above, and had sent down his Holy Spirit.—We heard this—convinced of our sins—pierced to the heart, we cried, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’ They answered, ‘Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit,—they gave farther testimony to confirm our faith, and exhorted us to save ourselves from the untoward generation. When we heard there was pardon for us we gladly received the word and were baptised; looking for his promises joy filled our souls, and now we trust for salvation in him we crucified—blessed be his name.’”

Such, in substance, are the “experiences” (if the agitations of the mind and conviction of the truth and conversion demand such a designation) of the Samaritans—Cornelius and his household—Saul of Tarsus—the Ethiopian officer—the Jailer; and all the churches—so obvious is this that Paul to the Galatians speaks of it as a question on which there was no debate—“ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus; for as many of you as have been *baptised into Christ have put on Christ.*”

There cannot possibly be a member of the Baptist communion so ignorant of the scriptures as not to know that the ordinary way of receiving members into their fellowship has no foundation in the word of God. Do, my dear Sir, use your influence to induce your brethren to take the word of God alone as their rule of faith and practice.

Not long since, I saw an account, written by the venerable Elder Manning, of a Conference meeting, I think it was in a time of excitement in Cornwallis, at which *twenty-five* experiences were told—the meeting continued *nine* hours. I quote from memory—you perhaps may have the Magazine in which it is found. If I have made a mistake, I shall acknowledge it when corrected. Think of this—*nine* hours and *twenty-five* converts. On this ratio the Apostles would have been more than three months in session; *twelve* hours each day to examine the three thousand, or if they had twelve or eighty different meetings, still they would have found it impossible to have pursued the ordinary routine of the Baptist churches!

The course pursued by the Apostles, of requiring a distinct confession of faith after having heard the Gospel—a confession, doubtless, like that made by Peter, Matt. xvi. or the Eunuch, Acts viii. causes the individual to trust alone in him whose name he has confessed, not only by his mouth, but by being planted in the likeness of the Saviour's death. Those in the kingdom approve or give their voice only to his confession; thus the individual builds on the only foundation—and rests with implicit confidence on the word of Him who said, “He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved;” knowing that heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one word which he has spoken shall fail.

I have much more to write, but I know not whether I shall resume my pen on these subjects next month or not. The pages of *The Christian* are open. If you feel disposed to furnish me with a communication, it shall be laid before our readers.

With all benevolence, and with an ardent desire that we may be led into all truth, I subscribe myself your's, in hope of immortal bliss,
W. W. FEATON.

UNIVERSALIST COURTESY.

AFTER two-thirds of this number had gone to press, and part of the other in type, by mere accident we learned that Mr. TAYLOR had taken notice of our letter in No. 9. When we wrote the letter we requested a "Trumpet" in return, but not then nor when Mr. T. writes an article addressed to us can we get a glance at it only by the solicitations of a friend! We hope that common courtesy will induce the editor of the "Trumpet" to send us a paper when any thing is published in it respecting us. We have room only to add, that Mr. TAYLOR peremptorily declines an oral discussion; but proposes a written one to be carried on through the columns of the "Trumpet and Christian." We regret that our paper is so small that we cannot at present comply with his proposal. Why does not the "Trumpet" publish our letter? More of this in our next.

BROTHER JAMES M VEE, who visited us some few years since, reports the success of the Gospel under his ministrations in nearly every number of the "Detector." In one of his letters he says, I did not tell you the good news in my last, that the Baptist Church in Centerville, at our last meeting attended and unanimously agreed to change their name from that of Baptist Church to Church of Christ, united with the brethren, and also transferred their meeting house to the Church of Christ."

SYLVANUS again.—We have received an article from "SYLVANUS" on Baptism, but too late for insertion—the articles for this number having been arranged before it came to hand. We shall insert it in the next if he will inform us who "Conton" is, and give us the original of his extract from Plutarch. Give it in Greek characters if possible, for we are unable to make out the Greek of it in English letters!"

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN.]

H Y M N .

"Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee."—*Psalms* lv. 22.

Oh! when through life's desert
Thy lone footsteps stray,
And Hope's cheering star
Lights but dimly thy way—
When thy bosom is riven
With sorrow and pain,
Cast thy care on the Saviour,—
His grace shall sustain.

When thy bright morning sky
Is with dark clouds o'erspread,
And the wild tempest gathers
In gloom, o'er thy head,
When chill wintry winds
Shall assail thy frail form,
Oh! trust then in Him
Who directest the storm.

SAINT JOHN, APRIL, 1840.

In mercy the Father
Thy errors may chide,
But "he careth for thee,"
And thy footsteps will guide
To that Paradise region
Of glories untold,
Where thou in his beauty,
The King shall behold.

Oh! then, when deep waters
Thy heart shall o'erflow,
Cast thou on the Saviour
Thy burden of woe:
For he, too, hath traversed
This dark world of pain,—
He knoweth thy frailty,
And he will sustain.
