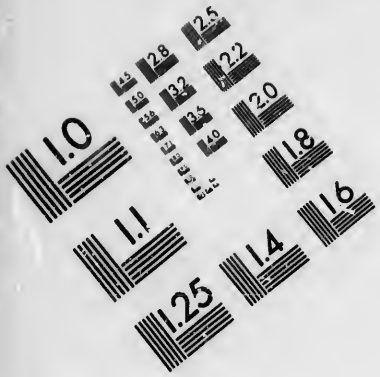

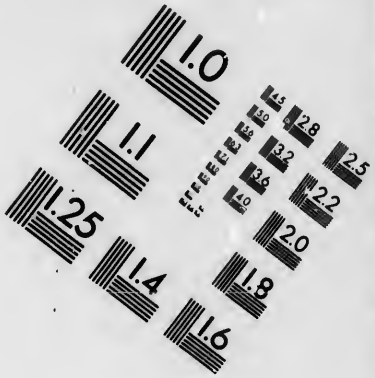

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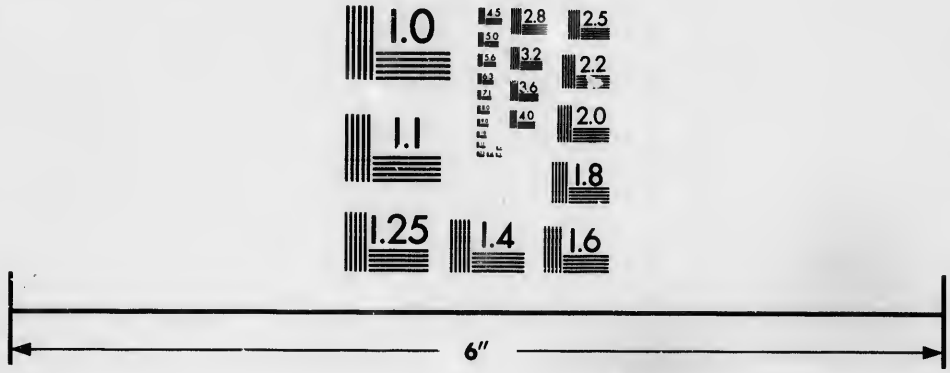

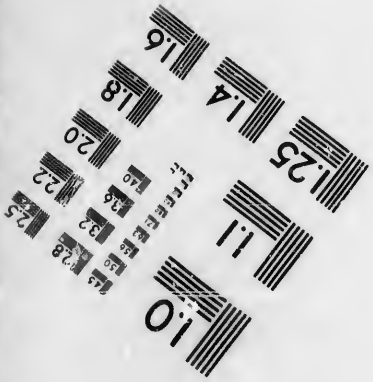

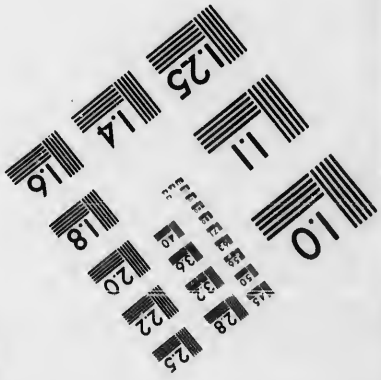

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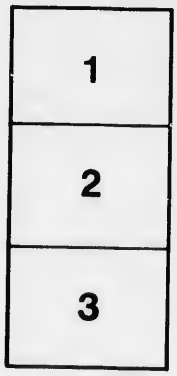

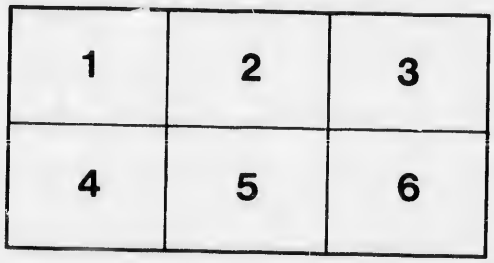

Mr Brown's
from the Author

TWO

ESSAYS AND A SERMON,

BY

ALEXANDER STEWART.

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TWO ESSAYS:

THE FIRST, ON THE GOSPEL;

THE SECOND, ON THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST;

AND

A SERMON ON BAPTISM:

WITH AN APPENDIX,

CONTAINING REMARKS ON LATE PUBLICATIONS:

BY

ALEXANDER STEWART

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL

YORK, UPPER CANADA.

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand: by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you part of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the scriptures.
1 Cor. 15. 1, 2, 3, 4.

Jesus answered, my kingdom is not of this world. John 18. 36.

One Lord, one faith, one baptism... Eph. 4. 5.

York:

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PREFACE

TO THE READER.

DEAR READER:—The celebrated Principal Chalmers of St. Andrews, in speaking of the Newtonian Philosophy, says, that its author, Sir Isaac Newton, took nothing for granted, but rested his systems of *philosophy and theology upon* PROOF. All I wish from my readers in perusing the following pages, is to adopt the same maxim.

I have addressed myself to those who profess to receive the bible as the only revelation from heaven respecting religious subjects. Let them make *it* the standard, and I shall rejoice in the consequences—but I wish them to let the bible explain itself. Let every religious system taught by men, be laid aside, and let the language of the bible be understood upon the same principles as other writings, and then *truth* will *shine*.

When men examine the word of God as lawyers sometimes examine the Statutes, not in order to learn the law from them, but in order to make the Statutes speak in favour of their client; then they are sure to err—but when they adopt the principles of Cornelius and friends of wishing to hear what God speaks to their souls, the blessing and benefit must follow.

Neither the love of gain nor the desire of applause has induced me to write the following sheets. I do not expect such sale as to bring gain, and I know my subjects to be so unpopular that enmity and evil speaking will be my earthly reward. My wish is to lead you to consider the scriptures for yourselves, to lead you to believe that gospel which saves the soul; and to obey its author. In handling all the subjects I have studied brevity and clearness, having no wish to please the learned by a high style, or a flow of imagery—my aim is to make the poor understand me, (not doubting but the rich may guess at my meaning) and to lead them to understand and obey the truth in all its parts.

I make no apology for publishing, as I consider it my duty to use every means in my power to propogate the gospel of Christ—to point out the nature of his kingdom—and the ordinances he has set on foot in that kingdom.

If any one be disposed to criticise my style or arrangement &c. they may

have their pains for their reward; and while my Lord and Master enables me I am ready to defend his kingdom with its doctrine and ordinances:—nor shall I desist from the combat because I have not a silver mounted sword to fight with. I know the sword of the spirit, and I shall not fail to wield it against every enemy, in the calm spirit of the gospel of peace.

I have had no desire to irritate or give offence to any one, but I cannot conceal truth to gain applause, or even to avoid persecution. Some may think I have said too much of ministers. I have said no more than I thought necessary to throw light on my subject, and to warn my readers against deception. Those ministers that preach the gospel, will rejoice in its circulation, of whom I rejoice to know some in every connexion; they will calmly consider what is said on its nature and ordinances, and perhaps some poor hireling may be converted to God.

If any minister thinks I have taught error, he is free to point it out;—calm investigation will never hurt the interests of the kingdom of Christ. If any one convinces me of an error I shall publicly acknowledge it, but let such remember the rule,—to reason "out of the scriptures." If all the christian fathers were to rise from the dead and contradict what I see in scripture, I would pay no attention to them.

My views of the gospel are not sectarian,—they are held by churchmen and dissenters; indeed, they are common to Christ's disciples:—and the other subjects are as clearly taught in scripture, as the gospel.

Though I have made the scriptures my only criterion, yet I have cited several important hints, particularly on the kingdom of Christ, from the late Mr. Charles Stuart, minister of Crammond's sermon on the same subject, as also from an essay from the pen of the late Abraham Booth of London.

The sermon on baptism is given as it was preached some years ago in the township of Chinguacousy, at the baptism of a professed believer.

My aim in the whole is to instruct believers, and convince sinners, and if I shall succeed in either, my labour will not be lost. Remember, dear reader, you and I must meet at the judgment seat of Christ—I trust I have wrote under a sense of this fact---Do you read under a sense of it---" and may the Lord give you understanding in all things."

I am, Dear Reader,

Your affectionate servant,

ALEXANDER STEWART.

York, 16*th July*, 1827.

AN ESSAY

ON THE GOSPEL.

THE gospel of Christ, though the most important of all subjects, has been very much misunderstood and perverted in the present age. The word gospel is in every one's mouth---professed and spoken of by every sect, yet it is to be feared that very few in reality understand the true application of the term as used in the scriptures. If we attend to the great mass of sermons delivered from the pulpit, or written, by those called preachers of the gospel, and compare them with the apostolic gospel, as recorded in the New Testament, we shall find an astonishing difference between them---and if we take a view of the effects which these gentlemen's gospel have, upon themselves, and upon their hearers, are we not ready to exclaim, surely this cannot be the gospel of Christ! No! The gospel of Christ produces holy fruit like itself in all its preachers, and believers. All who believe it, preachers and hearers, are devoted to the service of GOD. They love GOD and keep his commandments. They walk, "Not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit." Rom. 8. 1.

In order then to correct this evil, I shall endeavour to point out the *nature* and *effects* of the gospel of Jesus Christ---its import as preached by the APOSTLES and recorded in the New Testament---and its effects as pointed out in the commandments given by Christ and his Apostles and exemplified in the first christians.

In this attempt, let me observe, I shall pay no regard to the writings of men of any description. Those writings which explain and enforce the true gospel, cannot be hurt by an additional essay upon the subject---and those that oppose the pure gospel, will I trust, be exposed and confuted.

I do not design this essay as a piece of controversy, though I may occasionally oppose error in it; but only as an exposition of plain truth which of course must overturn all the errors opposed thereto.

I. The first thing that claims our attention on this subject is the explanation of the term gospel. This is the more necessary because few can give a scriptural answer to the question. What is the gospel?

The Greek word (euangelion) generally translated gospel, means glad tidings, good or joyful news; hence its translation in our common version of

the New Testament in the following passages, Luke 1. 19. & 2. 10. & 8. 1. Acts 13. 32. Rom. 10. 15. Compare Isa. 40. 9. & 41. 27. & 52. 7. & 61. 1. Gal. 3. 8.

In our explanations of the word of God we must abide by the plain meaning of words---otherwise, we must let the Holy Spirit explain his own meaning by comparing one part of his diction with another. It is very unfair to admit that the term gospel means glad tidings in many passages, such as the above cited, and to fix another meaning to the same word, without any foundation, in other passages of scripture.

The original Greek word, which occures about a hundred times in the New Testament, might with the greatest propriety of language, in every instance be translat d good news or glad tidings. Thus the Apostles preached the glad tidings of salvation through the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus Christ, and those who believed this gospel obtained eternal life.

II. SECONDLY. I shall point out what the gospel of *Christ* is. It is called the gospel of Christ, Rom. 1. 16. & 1 Cor. 9. 18. not merely because Christ himself proclaimed it, but because it consists of glad tidings concerning his person and work. It is called the gospel of the Son of God, because it is good news respecting him---news of his having come into this world "to seek and to save that which was lost." Luke 19. 10. It is called the gospel of peace, Eph. 6. 15. because it consists of glad tidings of "peace on earth, and good will towards the children of men," Luke 2. 14. It is the gospel of the grace of God Acts 20. 24. In other words, it is the joyful news of the manifestation of the free, sovereign, favour of Jehovah towards the children of men. Herein the justice of God in the salvation of sinners, through the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ is clearly exhibited, *through* faith *to the faithful.* Rom. 1. 17. It is the gospel of salvation. Eph. 1. 13. because it reveals a free and full salvation to the vilest of transgressors; and because all who really understand and believe the gospel are immediately justified and freed from every condemnation. "Be it known unto you therefore men and brethren, that through "this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that "believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by "the law of Moses. Acts 13. 38, 39. There is now no condemnation to them "which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit."--Rom. 8. 1.

From the meaning of the term gospel, the epithets applied to it, and the result of receiving it, we must infer; that it consists in some particular declaration, or testimony, which is calculated to give joy to the mind of a sinner; and to the reception or rejection of which important consequences are attached.

It is on the import of this declaration or testimony that men have so much opposed one another. While one thinks the term gospel means all the points of doctrine taught by Jesus Christ, and all his laws and institutions: another maintains it is some private declaration made to himself personally of his be-

ing a favourite of Heaven; and a third supposes the term means the whole New Testament. It would be an endless task to follow all the vain suppositions of professors upon this subject. I shall therefore notice that the gospel of Christ, or the good news of the free favour of God to the guilty, includes in it the following things.

I. The declaration that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. The apostle says "This is a *faithful saying* & worthy of all acceptation," that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom, he adds, I am a chief. 1 Tim. 1. 15. Here we have to consider, the person who came, his appointment for that purpose, and his appearance.

1st. The PERSON. This was no ordinary person. He was not a created being like men or angels. He was no less than the Great God manifesting himself in the flesh. The apostle says to Timothy, 1 Tim. 3. 16. "Great is the mystery of godliness; God manifested in the flesh &c." and in Heb. 2. 8. Jehovah is represented as adressing Jesus Christ by the title GOD, saying "Thy throne O God is forever and ever,—a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." This was the name given him by prophecy, Isai. 7. 14. (comp. Matth. 1. 23.) and 9. 6. and it is continued by the Apostles, "In the beginning was the word, and the word *was* GOD," John 1. 1. "This is the true GOD, and eternal life," 1. John 5. 20.

The title son of God, as applied to Jesus Christ, by himself and by others implied divinity. See Matth. 8. 29. and 14. 33. and 27. 43. 54. Rom. 1. 4. John 19. 7. and 20. 31. 1 John 5. 5. 10, 13. 20. "But Jesus answered them, my Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his father, making himself equal with God." John 5. 17, 18.

The perfections of Jehovah are applied to Jesus Christ; such as, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, eternity, Isai. 9. 6. John 3. 13. and 2. 24. Rev. 1. 8. These are what are generally termed God's incommunicable perfections; i. e. perfections which belong to Divinity only, yet the Holy Ghost applies them without reserve to Jesus Christ.

The character of Jesus Christ as a Divine person is proved from his works. Works are ascribed to him which Jehovah only could perform; such as, the creating and upholding of the world and its fulness. Concerning creation Jehovah says, "he will not give his glory to another, nor his praise to graven images," Isai. 45. 5—8 and 42. 8. 9. yet these very works are ascribed to Jesus Christ, John 1. 3. Col. 1. 15. 16. Yea Jehovah himself ascribes them to him AS GOD, Heb. 1. 10. Many other proofs of the divinity of Christ are recorded in scripture; such as his miracles wrought by his own proper power; his re-

surrection from the dead, by which he is declared to be the son of God with power; Rom. 1. 4. and his being appointed the Judge of quick and dead at the last day.

This is the person concerning whom we have the glad tidings of his having come in the flesh; John 1. 13. 14. and it is his character as the great God that makes his coming joyful news. It would be no joyful news to hear that a mere man---yea even an Angel, had taken upon him to save sinners, as neither the one nor the other could accomplish the work---but to hear that the Great God---the Mighty God---the Everlasting Father---that Eternal Being who sees, knows, and can accomplish all things---who upholds all things, Heb. 1. 3, 10.---to hear, from the best authority, that he came to save sinners, cannot fail to excite joy, as every one must conclude at once that he could accomplish the work. All that is necessary is a full conviction that this is the character of the Saviour, and that he has in reality engaged in, or even undertaken, the work, and the mind is set at solid rest as to the result. "To you is born in the City of David a Saviour who is Christ the Lord," was the good tidings of great joy to all mankind brought by the angels to the shepherds of Bethlehem.

2. We are to consider the appoinment of Jesus of Nazareth to the important office of saving sinners. The term Christ signifies anointed. Psal. 2. 2. Acts 4. 27. and 10. 38. John 1. 41. Isai. 61. 1. Comp. Luke 4, 18. From these passages, together with Christ's own declarations, John 10. 36. and 17. 19. Heb. 10. 29. it is evident that Jesus of Nazareth was appointed for the purpose of saving sinners; yea that it was for this very purpose the Mighty God vailed his glory and was made in the likeness of man. In the 40th psalm the Messiah is represented as addressing the Father thus---"Sacrifice and offering thou didest not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sacrifices thou hast not required." (i. e. to take away sin.) "Then said I, lo, I come: in the volume of the book (the Old Testament), it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God."

It is not for us to pry into the hidden council of Jehovah, as many have done, to find out when this appointment took place in the Divine mind---secret things belong to God, and the things that are revealed to us and to our children. We know of the appointment, and of the fulfillment. In these we rejoice; The development of the sacred purpose is to us glad tidings, or gospel.

3. We come now to consider the appearance of this great personage in the flesh---the coming of the true light into the world. The manifestation was just such as Jehovah had previously declared it should be---he appears, "meek and lowly, without form or comeliness, why we should desire him;" but manifested his character in all his works. For the certainty of Jesus of Nazareth's being what he declared himself to be, we have the testimony of the Angels, of the Father, of the baptist, of the Apostles, of his works, of his sufferings, and of his resurrection.

1. Of the Angels. When the son of God was about to appear an Angel was sent from Heaven to anounce the glorious event, Luke 1. 26.---39. This messenger told his mother that the babe that should be born of her should be the Son of the Highest; a Saviour, and a King to sit upon the Throne of his father David. His name was to signify his character, for the term JESUS signifies *Jehovah a Saviour*. This was told Mary when the Angel foretold his birth, Luke 1. 31. and again repeated to Joseph; Matth. 1. 21.

When Jesus was born, a host of Angles came to anounce the event; not to Herod, nor to the High Priest, nor to the Jewish Shanadrem, but to the humble, unassuming, shepherds of Bethelem. The Scriptures were *then* so far fulfilled that the Holy Child was born in a stable, and laid in a manger. Then one of the Heavenly Host spake thus to the shepherds, Luke 2. 10---16. "Fear "not, behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. "For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour which is Christ "the *Lord*. And this shall be a sign unto you, ye shall find the babe wrapped "in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger." Then the whole host of angels began to praise God, for the glad tidings of salvation---for the *gospel* sent by them to the sons of men.

We have little account of Jesus Christ, during the first thirty years of his life, only we are told that Herod murdered all the children in Bethlehem, in order to have him slain, but that Joseph and Mary had fled to Egypt with the child of promise. So true is it that, "Kings and rulers rose up against the Lord, and against his anointed." Psal. 2. 1. Having returned from Egypt at the command of Jehovah, his parents lived at Nazareth, that the scriptures might be fulfilled, Matth. 2. 23. Some years after we find him disputing with the doctors in the Temple, Luke 2. 46. after which we are told he was subject to his parents, Luke 2. 52. and, "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." The next particular account we have of Jesus, is in Matth. 3. 13. where we are informed of his coming to John to be baptised of him. At this time he was about thirty years of age. John was so sensible of the superiority of Jesus Christ that he told him he had more need to be baptised of him. Yes, John well knew that he was not worthy to bear, or unlose the shoes of this great personage.

2. I proceed to take notice of the Father's testimony of the character of Jesus Christ.

As soon as John had baptised Jesus Christ a voice came from Heaven to declare who he was. Matth. 3. 17. "And lo a voice from Heaven saying, this is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased." The same language is used by the Father respecting him on the mount of transfiguration. Matth. 17. 5. Comp. 2 Peter 1. 17. Isai. 42. 1, &c. Matth. 12. 18. Nor was this the only testimony of the Father respecting him---the pouring out of the Holy Spirit in

a bodily shape upon him bore witness. Matth. 3. 16. This was the sign given to John the Baptist, by which he should know him. John 1. 33. Comp. John 5. 37. Well might Jesus ask the Jews, when telling them that the Father who had sent him bore witness of him, "have ye not heard the voice and seen the shape?" Cumpbell's translation of John 5. 37.

3. Next comes the direct testimony of the Baptist. John 5. 33. He bore witness to the truth. He told the people that Jesus was, "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. John 1. 29, 36." That he was the Bridegroom of the Church of God---That he came from above and spoke the mind of Jehovah.---That God had loved the Son and given all things into his hands.---That faith in the son was absolutely necessary to the obtaining of eternal life---and that those who should neglect to hear him, should endure the everlasting wrath of Jehovah, John 3. 27. to the end.

3. Next to the testimony of the Baptist comes that which arises from the works which Jesus performed; upon which he places more stress than on the testimony of John, John 5. 36. and 10. 25. 38. and 14. 10. The works of Jesus were great and manifold. His obedience to the Law bore witness of him, as never man had obeyed it before, but he obeyed in thought word and deed. One sinful thought never crossed his mind. He was, "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners." "Guile was never found in his mouth."

But his miracles particularly pointed him out as the Son of God. Hence he says, "If I had not done works among them which no other man did, they had not had sin; (i. e. the sin of denying him), but now they have no cloak for their sin." John 15. 24, 22. True, Moses, Elijah, Elias, and the Apostles wrought miracles, but not by their own proper power and authority. They did so by the power of God, as a test of the truth of the doctrine they taught; but Jesus wrought miracles as a son over his own house. He commanded the devils and none durst refuse. He called the dead from the grave by his divine power---he healed all manner of sickness and disease with a word, and it did not matter whether the diseased were present or not: Go thy way, saith he to one, the devil is gone out of thy daughter; and to another. he saith, maid, I say unto the arise. Is it any wonder he should say to the Jews, "If ye believe not that I am *he* ye shall die in your sins?" John 8. 24.

4. A fourth proof of the character of Christ, is his sufferings. These prove him to be the Son of God. Who but a divine person could endure the wrath of the Almighty? Could drink up the cup of his firy indignation? Who but a divine person could make atonement for transgression, by becoming the propitiatory victim for sin? Who but a divine person could *finish* the whole work given Jesus to do---appease the wrath of God, and deliver a guilty world from condemnation? Jesus only was capable of saving sinners by the sacrifice of himself. He only could cry out, "It is finished." He only could say,

"Father I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work thou gavest me to do." What joyful news! The person smitten for the sheep is God's fellow! The very nature of the work he had to perform proves him a divine person. The Centurion and others who saw his sufferings, and marked them to the very last, till the vail of the Temple was rent and darkness covered the earth, exclaimed, "Truly this was the son of God." Matth. 27. 54.

5. Lastly, the resurrection of Christ from the dead, proves his divinity. Thus Paul says to the Romans, "And declared to be the Son of God, with power, according to the spirit of Holiness, by his resurrection from the dead." But as I shall treat more at large of the resurrection afterwards, I shall leave this part of the subject resting upon the above Apostolic declaration.

We ask now what truth is established upon such evidence? Not only is the evidence extensive, but the witnesses are beyond measure substantial. The Great God who cannot lie, stands at their head; and the others are such as every one must acknowledge are decisive. Here then rests the ground of the believers faith. The appearance of the Great God in the flesh to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself is proved to his full satisfaction---this is gospel---glad tidings of great joy to a guilty sinner.

Further I remark, that the tidings of the appearance of Jesus Christ in this world includes the end he had in view in coming, viz: to save sinners. Jesus repeatedly declares that he came to seek and save that which was lost.--Luke 19. 10. Matth. 18 11. & 15. 24. &c.—That Jehovah sent him, not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. John 3. 17.---That he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance---and Paul declares that, "this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners?" 1 Tim. 1. 15.

From all these testimonies it is evident the design of Christ's coming into the world was not to seek out, or to select the righteous; or those who had either no need of salvation, (if any such could be found) or who had partly, if not wholly, purchased their own salvation, (if this were possible;) but to save those wretched miserable creatures who had sinned against God, and were under his curse; and utterly unable to do any thing to save themselves. A declaration from Heaven, that a person of such a character, had made his appearance on earth, for the exact purpose of accomplishing such an object, must be matter of pure and boundless joy to those concerned---yea the Angels, who were not personally concerned, shouted with joy when they brought the good news. Alas for those to whom it is foolishness!

II. The gospel includes in it the tidings of Christ's having suffered, and died, as a substitute for the guilty.

We noticed already that Christ's sufferings were not common sufferings, but that he suffered the wrath of the Almighty. The sons of men are children of wrath, Eph. 2. 3. And under the curse of God, Gal. 3. 10. Therefore when Christ took upon himself their salvation he must pay the mighty debt---he must endure the wrath that was justly due unto them. This Jesus did by imputation. He never was a child of wrath, nor under the curse of the law; but he was *made under the law*—He volunteered to bear the wrath due to others---He took upon him to bear our sins, and to become a propitiatory victim in our stead.—Hence his sufferings were for us, "He who knew no sin was made sin for us (a "sin offering) that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, (i. e. that we might be justified through him.) "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us." 2 Cor. 5. 21. Gal. 3. 13.

If a person were confined for debt, how glad would he be to hear that a person had arrived in town that was able and willing to pay his debts; but how would his joy encrease upon decisive proof being laid before him, that his debt was paid and a full release signed by his creditor---and that all that remained to be done was the calling him forth from his confinement to enjoy his liberty.—This is the case as it regards sinners. Christ has come and paid the enormous debt, and now he calls them to come unto him and he will *seal* their pardon, and set them free forever. This plan of justification has the witness of that very law under the curse of which the sinner now lies, and also of the Prophets, Rom. 3. 21.---Is not this pure gospel---glad tidings of great joy?

O thou condemned criminal---Thou child of wrath---Thou slave of sin and Satan, who art groaning under the curse of a broken law, and under the tormenting accusations of thine own conscience, hear the voice of a merciful God and Redeemer.---"Look unto me all ye ends of the earth and be ye saved, "for I am God, and there is no Saviour besides me." "Ho every one that "thirsteth let him come unto me and drink," &c. &c.

III. The gospel includes the tidings of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When the Lord Jesus Christ was laid in the tomb his enemies thought they had gained the day, that his doctrine was buried with him, and that his fearful threatnings against them as hypocrites and deceivers were blown to air. They had no idea that he would ever rise from the dead. Indeed the Chief Priest and his party were Sadducees, and absolutely denied the resurrection of the dead.

They now exulted in having got this imposter, as they called him, out of the way, without any resistance from the people. Even his disciples were dejected and did not believe that he would rise on the third day. His enemies

set a watch lest his disciples should steal his body and report that he had risen; but so little faith had his disciples in his resurrection on the third day, that they did not look for it, nay they were astonished to hear that such an event had taken place, and they would not believe their own eyes when he appeared personally among them, Luke 24. 22, 37, 41. But behold what confusion takes place among his enemies, and what joy among his disciples when the conqueror arises and shews himself by so many infallible proofs.

His enemies are now put to their wit's end. The very guard they had so carefully placed to prevent his being taken away, come forward and declare that the conqueror had indeed arisen before they left the sepulchre. Now they must have recourse to bribery and falsehood. They must hire the guard to tell lies at the risk of their own lives. It was death for a Roman Soldier to sleep on guard, but these soldiers were bribed to say that Christ's disciples stole him while they slept. It is not easy to see how these soldiers while sleeping at the sepulchre, could see the disciples steal their Lord. Indeed the disciples, at this time, had too little faith in Jesus, and too much fear of their own safety to allow them so much as to visit the sepulchre. This was left to a few poor women, who, out of love to the deceased, went, not to see him rise, for of this they had no idea, but to anoint him with spices.

Jesus however, contrary to all expectation, arose from the dead, on that very day which he had appointed. His resurrection was proved, not to all the people, but to his chosen witnesses, by many infallible signs. He shewed them his hands and his feet, pointing to the print of the nails, and to the mark of the spear in his side. He appeared not merely to one or two, but at different times to the twelve, and at one time to five hundred at once, Luke 24. All. 1 Cor. 15. 5---9. Indeed such was the prejudice of the very Apostles that they were not easily convinced; but every opportunity was afforded, and they availed themselves of these, "They saw him with their eyes, they looked upon him, (i. e. minutely examined all his features, wounds &c.) and handled him?" 1 John 1. 1.

This truth is an important part of the gospel. The belief therefore is absolutely necessary to salvation. Rom. 10. 9. Its importance arises from the following considerations. 1st. It is the most decisive proof of the character of Christ as a divine person. 2nd. It is the strongest proof of the completeness of his obedience to the divine will. 3rd. It is a direct pledge of the resurrection of all his people to eternal life.

1. It is the most decisive proof of the character of Christ as a divine person.

Jesus himself said while in the world, John 10. 17. 18. "Therefore doth my "Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man "taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down,

"and I have power to take it again." See John 2. 19. Isai. 53. All. Jesus voluntarily, not by power of torture, laid down his life. He cried out in full vigour, "It is *finished*, and gave up the ghost" John 19. 30. and when the appointed third day arrived he took it to him again. Some will say, the resurrection is attributed to the Father, and to the Spirit---yes, and to Jesus. Hence this grand work is the work of the divine three. The Divinity is engaged in the work of redemption. The Father inflicts the punishment, the Son bears it, and the Holy Ghost supports him in the awful work,---then the Sacred Three engage in the resurrection---in affording us the great proof of the character and work of the Lord Jesus. He is, "declared to be the Son "of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness (i. e. according to the "former testimony of the spirit of God, Psal. 16. 10. 11.) by his resurrection "from the dead. Rom. 1. 4." Jesus has raised the temple in three days, as he had said, and has thus proved himself the Son of God. He who had raised others from the dead could, and has, raised himself---none but Jehovah could effect either.

2. The Resurrection is the strongest proof of the completeness of his obedience to the divine will. Had there been any defect in the obedience of Jesus Christ, he must have suffered corruption. But his holiness is brought forward as the reason of his not seeing corruption. Psal. 16. 10. Acts. 2. 24.

In this latter passage the Apostle reasons on the resurrection as arising from the complete satisfaction God had in the holiness and obedience of his son, and shews that the consequence is the out-pouring of the Spirit to preach the gospel. He shews that this Jesus was through the perfection of his obedience, and sufferings, (see Heb. 2. 10. & 5. 9.) made Lord and Christ—made the only King and head of the church.

The apostle Paul declares in Antioch, that it was in consequence of the resurrection of Christ, that forgiveness of sins was preached acts 13. 38. Thus the resurrection of Christ gives us the most positive certainty that the work he he has finished is well-pleasing in the eyes of Jehovah—and that on this footing repentance and forgiveness of sins is preached unto us as guilty sinners.

3. Lastly, the resurrection of Christ is a direct pledge of the resurrection of all his people to eternal life.

Jesus Christ arose from the dead as the first fruits of those that slept; 1 Cor. 15. 20. and Paul brings forward his resurrection as a pledge of his people's resurrection, v. 23. Peter says believers are begotten to a lively hope (a hope of life) through the resurrection of Christ from the dead 1. Peter 1. 3. "This is a faithful saying, if we be dead with Christ we shall also live with him; if we

suffer with him we shall also reign with him. In Tim. 2. 11, 12. Those who believe the gospel are dead to the law, and dead to sin, through faith in Christ Jesus; and all such shall be raised with him at the last day.

This cheers the souls, and animates the hopes of the people of God. If they had no hope of being with Christ beyond the grave they would be of all men the most miserable—but they know from the most undoubted testimony, that Jesus has arisen, and that God hath appointed a day wherein they all shall hear his voice and go forth to the resurrection of life. They look for the day when they shall be raised incorruptible from the grave, with glorified bodies, like the glorified body of their head.

In these points of view, then, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is glad tidings of great joy. What can give greater joy to a poor condemned sinner than the certainty that after Jesus had died for his sins, he arose from the dead as a proof of his glorious character as the Son of God—as a proof that all his obedience and sufferings are fully approved by the Father—and as a sure pledge of the future resurrection of all his people to eternal life? Nothing can prove equal gospel. Thus, "Christ died for our sins, and rose again for our justification.

4. I shall now notice one thing more as included in the gospel, viz. the tidings of Christ's second coming to judge the world, and to receive his people to himself, and place them at God's right hand in heavenly places.

When the Lord Jesus Christ had called his disciples together to eat the last passover with them, and to establish the Lord's supper in its stead, he addressed them in these endearing words, "John 14. 1. Let not your hearts "be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's "house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to "prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will "come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye "may be also." Hence the gospel teaches the people of God to look for the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Tit. 2. 13. Rev. 22. 12, 17, 20. If in this life only believers had hope in Christ they must be of all men the most miserable; for here they cannot take comfort in the things of time and sense as their chief good---and they are harrassed, tempted, persecuted; made as the filth of the earth, and the offscouring of all things. Sin and Satan are at constant war with them.---They have to fight, wrestle, strive &c. against the world, the devil, and the flesh. But Jesus and his Apostles bring the good news of eternal life to their ears. The record of God is, "that he giveth his people eternal life through his Son." 1 John 5. 11. Jesus has ascended on high to prepare a place for them, and he comes again to take them

home, and to put them in possession of that Kingdom he has reserved for them. The peace proclaimed on earth is everlasting. The good will of Jehovah towards men includes eternal salvation. Jesus Christ has "become the author of eternal salvation, to all them that obey him." Heb. 5. 9. The second coming of Jesus, then, to take his people home to himself, is, as it were, the head piece of the gospel. This makes the good news full and complete. It removes all sorrow and disquietude.

When we join all these particulars together they form one glorious message sent from heaven to perishing sinners. The message comprehends, as we have seen, the character, the appointment and appearance of the Son of God. It exhibits him as a person every way fitted to fulfil the whole design of his appointment. It points out his appearance in the flesh to accomplish the most important design, towards the sons of men, ever thought of in heaven or on earth, in conformity to a previous determination, and declaration of the Most High. It exhibits the greatest, wisest, and best of beings, as come into the most wretched of all habitations, to perform the greatest, and best of works---works which are the astonishment, not merely of man, but of those pure beings who inhabit the highest Heavens.

The finishing of this work forms a very prominent part of the good news; the obedience unto the death, of the Lord Jesus Christ in the room of transgressors—his substituting himself as the propitiatory victim for sin—his being made under the law, and enduring its curse—His giving himself a ransom for trangressors &c. fills the mind with joy and peace. Together with these, his resurrection from the dead, ascension to God's right hand, and the assurance of his second coming—finish the whole design of his coming and sufferings. The declarations, then, that Jesus Christ died for our sins—rose again from the dead, ascended to glory as the first fruits of his church, and comes again to take them to himself—form the grandest news ever spoken on the stage of time. Glory to God in the highest, peace is proclaimed on earth, and eternal good will to the lost sons of Adam.

Now redemption is completed,
Death, and hell, are vanquish'd foes;
Jesus has our foes defeated,
Let us triumph in his cross.

Some hold out that the gospel includes in its nature the promise of salvation to those who believe; hence the system of the assurance of faith being included in the belief of the gospel. But the gospel, being the declaration of God, must be a truth of itself independent of our reception of it; therefore it consists in the glad tidings of a salvation offered, or held forth, or testified to sinners—and the assurance of salvation to those who believe it is a promise annexed to the *reception* of the gospel. It is true that the fulfilment of

this promise is perfectly certain to those who believe, but the proof of our individual belief must arise from another source than the certainty of the truth of the gospel. Of this, however, I shall take more notice afterwards.

III. Thirdly I shall endeavour to shew to whom the gospel of Christ is addressed.

I observe, in general, that the gospel must, from its very nature, be addressed to *sinners*. The news is a proclamation of pardon and peace to sinners, therefore it must be addressed to the guilty. But men have racked their brains and puzzled their imaginations to distinguish one sort of sinners from another, and to confine the gospel to one kind of guilty criminals. Surely this is charging the Holy Spirit with folly in his not specifying the sort of sinners whom he addressed in the Scriptures. Christ tells his Apostles to go unto *all the world*, and preach the gospel to *every* CREATURE.

Some tell us the gospel is addressed to qualified sinners, whom they distinguish by their long course of mourning for sin, their fears of death, their despair, their terrors of eternal damnation, &c. Yet many of these sensible, or, as I should call them, frightened sinners, on their hearing the gospel make light of it, and despise it. What qualifies a person for the gospel's being addressed to him, is his being a transgressor of the law of God, whether he is sensible of it or not. The sick man, whether sensible of his sickness or not, needs the physician; and a sense of his disease does not increase his need of a cure. So a man's sense of sin, allowing an unbeliever could have a real sense of sin, as such, which we think cannot be, does not make him a whit more qualified for the gospel than he was when he lived in careless security and insensibility.

Others say that sinners have a share of common grace by the improvement of which they are fitted for the reception of the gospel of Christ. What they mean by this common grace I am at a loss to guess. That sinners have an understanding, a will, a memory, reasoning powers, and affections is evident from their common transactions in life. If this be what is meant by common grace, I believe all but idiots have it; and surely it is by the exercise of their understandings, memories, and reasoning powers that men come to the knowledge of the truth. But all men, idiots excepted, are on a level in this case of rational powers, though all have not the same degree of them; yet such are said not to "know the things of the spirit of God---they are foolishness "to them, neither can they know them because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. 2. 14. All the sons of men are "alienated from the life of God, "through the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their "hearts." Man is naturally (that is always till born again) at enmity with God---yet he is a rational, accountable creature, and as such must suffer the consequences of disobeying God.

Others say there is a principle of holiness planted in the soul, which disposes the sinner to receive the gospel. We read of no principle of holiness being in saint or sinner, but the gospel of the grace of God.---That is the only principle of holiness acknowledged by God, for "without faith it is impossible to please him." Heb. 11. 6. For "whatever is not of faith is sin." What is sinful, and does not please God, must be poor holiness, ill fitted for qualifying a sinner for the reception of the gospel.

But let me remark, that the persons to whom the gospel is addressed, are described in scripture as totally destitute of holiness, or any good. According to the testimony of the Holy Spirit all are sinners, that is, breakers of the law of God. The language of the law, is, "thou shalt love the Lord "thy God, with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and all thy mind: and thou "shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Matth. 22. 37---41. Now, where is the man that has kept this law? No where! Jehovah looked down from heaven to see if there were any that did good and he found none.' Rom. 3. 9---19. All had sinned and come short of the glory (i. e. approbation) of God. Rom. 3. 23. Both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin v. 9. The human race are not only sinners in practice, but the inherent principle of sin is interwoven in their very nature.---They are conceived and begotten in sin. Psalm. 51. 5.---They have the poison of sin inherent in them from their birth. Psalm. 58. 4, 5.---They are dead in sin---Eph. 2. 1, 2, 3. Their hearts are at enmity with God---Col. 2. 20, 21. Rom. 8. 7. It is impossible for the natural mind of man to obey God. As such they are under the condemning sentence of the law of God. Rom. 3. 19. Gal. 3. 10. Their mouths are shut, and all the world are guilty before God. Rom. 3. 19.

I remark, farther, that as such they are reckoned [illegible] children of wrath Eph. 2. 3. And the children of the devil. Thus all have sinned, and all sinners are under the wrath of Jehovah---under the condemnation of the law of God---under the curse of the most high.

Not only in this case, but they are utterly helpless, utterly unable to do any thing to save themselves. All their righteousness is as filthy rags before God. Their best performances, even their prayers, and sacrifices are abomination before God; as are all their thoughts. Pro. 15. 26. 8. 9. and 28. 9. All that a natural man performs, even his religious services, springs from wrong motives---self love is the spring of all, and destroys all its productions. "A corrupt tree cannot yield good fruit." Hence, "by the righteousness of the law shall no flesh be justified before God." Present duties, and these duties springing from sinful motives too, cannot atone for past transgressions. Therefore the persons addressed by the gospel are in a lost ruined condition, without any thing to recommend them to God, save their utter pollution and helplessness. Without the atonement of Jesus Christ they cannot be saved.

The righteousness of a just person must be imputed to them or they must perish for ever

The gospel then is the news of pardon to the lost. The perishing. The enemies of God. The children of wrath. The children of the devil. To these salvation is offered, in their present state, without money and without price. To these a full pardon is offered through the sovereign mercy of God, totally independent of any holiness, or preparations of theirs. This mercy is exhibited through the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, and on the entire footing of his obedience unto death only, are sinners called to take the blessings of salvation. This is sovereign free salvation.

The character of sinners---SINNERS in a lost ruined condition; both as it respects their guilt, and their power to save themselves, is *universal*---it comprehends the whole mass of mankind, without one individual exception, and to this lost world, to all the world, without excepting one individual person. Jew or Gentile, bond or free, black or white---to every sinful son of Adam is the gospel call addressed---Every male & female---Barbarian--Scythian--Indian and Negro, are called upon to "behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world." No exceptions are made---no qualifications required. "Look unto me all ye ends of the earth and be ye saved, for I am God, and besides me there is no Saviour."

IV. I shall point out what it is to receive the gospel.

It is said John 1. 11. 12. "He came to his own, and his own received him not: but as many as received him, to them gave he power (right or privilege) to become the sons of God; even to them that believe on his name." Here the receiving of Christ, and believing on his name are made the self same thing. To believe on the name of Christ is to believe the character given of him by the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures. That the word name means character or perfections, see Exod. 34. 6. 2. Sam. 5. 18., 1 Kings 1. 47. and 14. 21. Psal. 21. 1. and 44. 20. and 69. 30. John 5. 18. Acts, 2. 12. Exod. 3. 15. 6. 26. Rev. 15. 4. Many other passages might be pointed out where the word has the same meaning. To receive the gospel then, is to believe it---hence the many calls to believe the gospel given by the Apostles. Mark. 1. 15. John 6. 29. and 12. 36. and 14. 1. Acts 16. 39. and 15. 7. and 16. 31. Rom. 3. 22. and 10. 9. Hundreds of passages might be quoted to prove that to receive the gospel, is to believe the tidings, witness, or record which God has given of his Son Jesus Christ.

Some say that to receive the gospel is to believe that Christ died for them in particular. This is called an appropriating faith, or an applying the gospel to ourselves. This, however, is not a true faith, for Christ did not die

for any individual. He died for sinners, and every sinner that believes in his atonement for sin as the ground of his acceptance before God, is justified. The atonement of Christ is the propitiation for sin, and to the sinner who believes in his character and work, is his righteousness imputed; that is, the work of Christ, or object of the sinner's faith, is imputed to the sinner, and he is thereby justified. His sins are pardoned, and he is made an heir of eternal life.

Nearly a kin to this is another sentiment on faith, viz. that the gospel includes the promise of salvation to those that believe it; therefore faith say some, includes our belief in our own eternal salvation. I said before that the promise of salvation to those who believe, is not part of the gospel, but a promise annexed to believing it. It is perfectly true that every believer shall be saved, but it is equally true that *all professors are not* believers. The belief of the gospel brings along with it a consciousness that it is the truth we believe, but this consciousness does not amount to the full assurance of faith. It immediately inspires a hope, but does not amount to absolute certainty.—Full confidence needs the proof of the operation of the spirit of God in the soul, and fruit in the life to strengthen the same. But not to anticipate what must come on afterwards, I remark, that the belief of our own interest in Christ is no part of that gospel which Jesus commanded his apostles to preach to every creature throughout the whole world. Their gospel stands a glorious, precious truth, whether we are in Christ or not, and many of those who believe their own interest in Christ, believe a downright falsehood, of which many of them give ample proof in their conduct.

To believe the gospel, or to receive it, is the reception, or belief of that truth testified by the holy Spirit, in the Scriptures of truth, as the record of God concerning his Son. Of this record we have treated above and shewn that it is the testimony of God respecting the character---sufferings—death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. &c. Paul says 1 Cor. 15. 1, 5, "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, "which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand, by which also ye are "saved, if ye keep in memory (mar. hold fast) what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain; for I delivered unto you first of all that which "I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; "and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to "the scriptures." He who believeth this, or receiveth it as a truth, shall be saved; but he who believeth it not, shall be damned. When Jesus sent forth his disciples to preach the good news of his reign, he said, "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent "me." He then that receiveth the Apostles, as the Ambassadors of Christ, giving credit to *their* message as the truth of God, receiveth the Father and the Son. 2 John 9.

V. Fifthly.---I shall now take notice of the consequences of receiving the gospel, as they relate to the receiver personally, to God, and to others.

1st. The consequences to the receiver, are, justification, adoption into God's family, and eternal life.

1. Those who believe the gospel are justified.

Justification (that is the term) has two acceptations. It signifies, first, a persons being declared free from a certain crime laid to his charge, and of course free from the condemnation attached by law to that crime. Thus a jury after hearing all the evidence brought forward by the prosecutor, against a supposed criminal, declares him not guilty--i. e. not guilty of the crime laid against him. Thus he is justified by his peers, and the judge releases him. The law can hold him no longer. It can inflict no punishment upon him.

The other sense of the term justification, is when a person is found guilty of the crime laid to his charge, but is released, or set free on account of satisfaction given in his stead by some other person. When, for instance, a person is imprisoned for debt, he cannot get free until the debt is paid; but if a friend pays the debt, that moment he must be released.

This latter case is the sense in which a sinner is justified before God. He is absolutely guilty, under the just sentence of the law of God---under the curse of Jehovah: but he is set free on account of the satisfaction given to the law, and to the justice of God, by Jesus Christ the friend of sinners. Jehovah justifies him freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Rom. 3. 24. The solemn declaration of God is, that all who believe the gospel are thus justified. Acts 13. 39, or fully freed from condemnation and from the just wrath of God.

2. Again all who believe the gospel are adopted into the family of God. They are called out of darkness into God's marvellous light, and receive the adoption of children. See Rom. 8. 15—18. Gal. 4. 5, 6. Eph. 5. 8. 1 Thess. 5. 5. From henceforth, "they are no more strangers or foreigners, "but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." Eph. 2. 19, They are called to be saints. Rom. 1. 7. To be God's holy nation, his royal priesthood, his peculiar people. 1 Peter 2. 9. They are admitted into the fellowship of God the Father, and of his Son Jesus Christ; 1 John 1. 2. As also of Angels, and of the spirits of just men made perfect. Heb. 12. 23.

They are thus admitted to the most glorious privileges that can be obtained in this world; have all the blessings that belong to sons of God, and heirs with Christ Jesus on this side of eternity; and have the spirit of God dwel-

ling in them as the earnest of their future and more durable inheritance beyond the grave.

3. Nor is this all, they have eternal life secured for them beyond the grave. As I noticed, they have the Spirit of God as an earnest of their inheritance--this is the seal by which Jehovah seals them as his own, Eph. 1. 13, 14, the same as a man seals his property for preservation and security. Who can break the seal which Jehovah has fixed on his blood-bought property? They "are kept by the power of God through faith, unto salvation ready "to be revealed." 1 Peter 1. 5. Their salvation then is secure.

People may tell us of the saints falling; but God says, "though the righteous fall he shall rise again." Prov. 24. 16. Psal. 37. 24. Job. 17. 9. Psal. 37. 17. & 55. 22. Some may reprobate the perseverance of the saints, but such, "know not the scriptures, nor the power of God." They say salvation is connected with continuing in the faith; this is true; but it is also true that the power of God is engaged in keeping them in the faith, and that the Holy Spirit has sealed them as Jehovah's eternal property. They shall have salvation; for, "He that believeth shall be saved." Mark 16. 17. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." The certain consequence of believing the gospel is everlasting life.

2ndly. Let us now notice the consequences of a sinner's receiving the gospel as they relate to God.

Here the perfections of God are displayed. The Divine justice, holiness and unchangeableness of God, are exhibited in strict unison with his mercy, love, and goodness. "Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have embraced each other," in the salvation of guilty man; and every additional sinner that believes the gospel, is a farther display of Divine grace, in unison with Divine righteousness. How important then is the reception of the gospel? Glory is brought to God in the highest, and peace is not only proclaimed on earth, but also experienced in the hearts of the guilty who believe in Jesus.

3dly. Let us mark the consequences to others. These are great; for every sinner who receives the gospel, becomes, in one way or other, a serious, diligent preacher of that gospel. Thus the proclamation of peace from heaven is spread from kingdom to kingdom---brought into neighbourhoods, cities, families, workshops, market-places, &c. One proclaims the gospel publicly in cities, towns, villages.

He goes to the highway and hedges and compels them (by persuasion) to come in that Christ's church may be filled. Another preaches the gospel by

conversation with his friends and neighbours. Another by teaching his children and servants, and perhaps his neighbours' children and servants, the nature and glory of the good news. Another by his just dealings, attention to business, and holy conduct, powerfully points out the gospel. Another by his patience, and resignation, under severe and long trials and afflictions, beautifully exhibits the heart cheering doctrines of the cross, &c. &c.

Here then we have a host of missionaries, each preaching in his own way, but all according to the gift given them of God. All these ways of preaching, however, have been countenanced of Jehovah, and made useful to the salvation of guilty sinners. What important consequences then, are attached to the belief of the gospel of Christ!

But farther, the knowledge and happiness of the inhabitants of heaven are increased by sinners believing the gospel. The wisdom of God is made known "to principalities and powers in heavenly places by the church." And, "there "is joy in heaven, among the angels of God, when a sinner is converted."—Eph. 3. 10. Luke, 15. 7, 10. In every instance of conversion, the angels and the spirits of just men made perfect, behold a farther display of the glorious perfections of Jehovah. It is here his love and mercy shine forth in their greatest splendour.—It is here his mercy rejoiceth over judgment.

VI. I come now, in the sixth place, to point out the *invariable* effects of the gospel, in, and over, those who receive it.

As the gospel of Christ is one, in every age, not liable to be in the least affected by length of time or change of place, its effects must be one. It is the one seed, sown in the one soil. The seed is the testimony of God, proclaimed by the prophets and apostles, and the soil is the heart of man. That the gospel must be the same in all ages and climates cannot admit of a doubt, because it is the unalterable testimony of the one unchangeable Spirit of God. All its promulgators were directed by and under the unerring guidance of the Holy Ghost, from the first of the prophets to the last of the apostles. They are all uniform---all speak one voice. Therefore the gospel is the one uniform voice of the Spirit of God, spoken by Jesus Christ himself, and by his ambassadors. Notwithstanding the apparent differences among men, arising from their education, prejudices; &c. still the human heart is essentially the same also. The whole human race have the same faculties or powers of mind, in kind--their only difference is in the degrees, yea the very savage, who seems but a few removes from the brute creation, shews himself, among his own tribes, possessed of the same reasoning faculties in kind, such as understanding, will, memory, affections, as the most polite courtier. Nay more, the increase of improvement of the faculties of man, has led to an increase of manifestations of the natural wicked principles of the human heart, so that the increase of crimes in our civilized countries, far surpasses those among many savage nations. The

state of the human heart, as it regards God, is the same in every country, and in every man. All manifest their alienation from God, and their enmity against him. Jew and Gentile, bond and free; the polished courtier, and the savage of the wilderness, are, in this respect, on the same level. The difference in this case is the same as specified above; viz. that the polished gentleman, with all his philosophy, and academical advantages, shews the *most* enmity against God, and against his people. The splendid talents, and classical advantages of a Hume, a Priestly, and a Paine, have only enlarged their enmity against Christ, and against his glorious gospel.

The fair conclusion then is, that the gospel and the soil in which the gospel is planted, are, in every sense of the word, the same as from the beginning. Essentially one in every age and climate, so that the effects of the gospel must be the same in every land, and in every age; in every heart of every description of men, and in every life and conversation.

Whenever a sinner sees the least peep of the gospel, he feels anxious to obtain its inestimable blessings. When the *Holy Spirit* takes of the things of Christ & shews them to the soul, he "convinces of sin, of righteousness and of judgment." Then does the sinner look to his own lost ruined condition before God, and he begins to cry for mercy. Then does he behold the cross of Christ, otherwise his sufferings for sin, and feel anxious for an interest in these sufferings. Hence the first desires of his soul are expressed in prayer to God. He sees himself a child of wrath, and Jehovah's just and holy law cursing him to his face, without the least strength to save himself---he therefore stands afar off, smites upon his breast, and exclaims; not in a cold and formal, or unconcerned manner, as many do; but in real earnest, with the keenest desire of soul. "*God be merciful to me a sinner.*" Thus it was with Saul of Tarsus, when Jesus Christ appeared to him, his soul began to pour out its desires in prayer.

"Behold he prayeth." This was his *first* prayer in *faith*---and it is only the prayer of faith that Jehovah heareth. The disputes about the prayers of unbelievers being acceptable are soon settled by an apostle; "How can they call on him in whom they have not believed?" Rom. 10. 14. Indeed the supposition is absurd. In the nature of things a man must know God before he can call upon him, and to know him is eternal life. John 17. 3. In truth prayer is the first breathings of a new born soul, and is the result of the inward teaching of the Holy Ghost. Rom. 8. 26. 27. The moment the gospel is presented to the mind, in its true light by the Holy Spirit, that moment the soul breathes after all its blessings, and utters its feelings in prayer. How absurd would it appear that we should tell a child he must not ask his father any thing till he have it formally written!—equally absurd are forms of prayer. If a child asks his parent for a thing the father knows he does not feel the need of, or for a thing that would hurt him, how would he answer? And shall we expect to be heard re-

peating formal petitions which we do not understand? How many read prayers who neither understand what they read, nor look for the blessings asked! This is a mere task. "Let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord." James 1. 7.

1. The moment a guilty sinner discovers the cross of Christ his mind is relieved and he enjoys a perfect calm. He now feels one of those immediate effects of the gospel which has been experienced in all ages, viz. Peace with God. The troubled conscience is now set at rest. "Being justified by faith he has peace with God, through the Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. 5. 1.

I am aware I oppose many of the religious professors of the day upon this point. They say that a man may be a child of God for a long time and not have peace. For this they cite, Isai. 50. 10. & Matth. 5. 4. &c. The first of these passages refers to the Godly Jews being in darkness about the fulfilment of Jehovah's promises, hence they are exhorted to "trust in the Lord, and stay "themselves upon their God." That is, to walk as the people of God, trusting to his faithfulness for the fulfilment of all he had promised. With regard to Matth. 5. 4. and all those passages which teach the same doctrine, I remark; that the mourning of the people of God is consistent with the greatest peace and joy. They mourn, not because there is no salvation for them, but because they have so trampled upon God's authority, and done such despite to his Holy Spirit, by rejecting his pure testimony, through which they now obtain salvation. They mourn over their own corrupt natures—over their want of gratitude to God—and over their short coming of that entire devotedness to God in which their inner man delighteth. They mourn over the depraved state of their friends and neighbours, and of the world in general—and over the little success of the gospel in the world. But all this mourning proceeds from their having peace with God. The man that has not peace with God cannot wish the forwarding of his glory.

It is contrary to human nature to love, to serve, and to mourn over want of conformity to an enemy; one that will not grant us peace with him. Such an one is reckoned "a hard master, reaping where he hath not sown, and gathering where he hath not strewed." We cannot act to such a one as our friend.

It is not consistent with the nature of the gospel that a believer thereof should be without peace. The gospel is glad tidings to the guilty, *as such*, and its salvation is exactly suitable to the state of every sinner on earth—Therefore, when its contents are understood, and received as truth, peace must ensue. Is it "possible that any sinner can believe it to be a faithful saying, and worthy of "all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," and not have peace restored to his mind?

The gospel proclaims peace on earth, and good will towards men. Can this

peaceable declaration be received as truth, upon the veracity of that God who cannot lie, and the peace not enjoyed? But let us appeal to the scriptures. The reign of Christ is called a reign of peace Psal. 72. 3, 7. "God will speak peace to his people." Psal. 85. 8. "They have great peace who love thy law." Psal. 119. 165. "Peace shall be upon Israel." Psal. 125. 5. The peace of the children of God shall be great. Isai. 54. 13. & 55. 12. & 57. 2, 19. See John 14. 27. & 16. 33. Acts 10. 36. Rom. 2. 10. & 5. 1. & 8. 6. & 14. 17. Gal. 5. 22. Surely these passages are sufficient to shut the mouth of every gainsayer, as in every case we must appeal to the word of God. It is plain, then, from the scriptures, and from the nature of the gospel, that peace must be an immediate and invariable effect of the gospel upon, or in, every mind which believes it; and the fair inference is, that all who are destitute of peace of mind, have not right views of the gospel. Unless it can be proved that God has a people who believe not the gospel, it must be evident that all his people have peace—and if he has people that believe not, they must be condemned—for Christ says, "he that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned."

2. The next immediate fruit of the gospel is joy. The Apostle says that the justified by faith have, not only peace with God, and access to his favour and fellowship, but that they rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.—Rom. 5. 1, 2. A prophet foretold that believers would draw water with joy out of the wells of salvation, Isai. 12. 3. that the redeemed should return with joy and gladness, Isai. 35. 10. and that Christ would give them the oil of joy for mourning. Isai. 61. 3, 7. The New Testament represents joy, as the instantaneous result of believing the gospel. Acts 8. 8, 32. & 16. 34. 1 Thess. 1. 6. Gal. 5. 22. 1 Peter 1. 8. This also is an effect which must arise from the nature of the gospel. It is impossible for a sinner, under a sense of condemnation, to see the glory of Christ as the saviour of the guilty, and the suitableness of his salvation to his case as a wretched sinner, and to hear the invitation of heaven addressing him to come to Jesus and take of the waters of life freely, without money or price, and abstain from rejoicing. Here, however, we are again at issue with a certain class of professors. They maintain that a real believer may go mourning, without any comfort for days and years, without any cause; but that Jehovah hides his face in his sovereignty—yea some think these the best Christians. I would ask what such believe? Do they believe the gospel of Christ? No! Their belief is that they are such sinners as cannot be saved. The one thinks his sins are so heinous that God cannot pardon them—the other that his sins are such as God will not pardon. All of these views make God a liar. Jehovah declares, that Jesus Christ "is able to save those to the uttermost that come unto God by him." Heb. 10. 25, and that "his blood cleanseth from all sin." 1 John 2. 2. Therefore it is directly contradicting God to say that the number or greatness of ones sins is such as God cannot pardon. As to God's willingness to save his language is, "whosoever cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." John 6, 27. The reason then that professors do not

rejoice is, that they do not believe the gospel; for it proclaims pardon to the guilty, and all who believe it must rejoice. As to God's hiding his face let us hear the Prophet: "your iniquities have separated between you and your God, "and your sins have hid his face from you that he will not hear." Isai. 59. 2.

3. A third immediate result of the belief of the gospel, is the hope of eternal life. Here another class step in and say it gives certainty. It is perfectly certain that he who believeth shall be saved, but it is not so certain that all professors believe. I noticed before that the belief of the gospel carries with it a consciousness of its being the true gospel, but still there is a possibility of mistake. Not that the true believer is in danger, but that a professor may think it is the true gospel he believes while it is a spurious gospel—a lie instead of truth. A false gospel will give a false hope, a false peace, a false joy, and create false feelings in the mind not easily detected—not even by the possessor. He may verily believe all is right, and so may all his brethren. It is possible the light that is in a professor may be darkness; hence Christ warns his disciples of this delusion. Luke 11. 35.

The gospel, then, produces a hope of eternal life, immediately upon believing it, and believers have this hope "as an anchor of the soul both sure and stead-"fast, which entereth within the veil whether their forerunner has entered."—Rom. 5. 2. 1 Peter 1. 3. Heb. 6. 19. The hope, as well as the faith, of the gospel admits of increase, just in proportion as the believer has proof of his growth in grace, and in knowledge &c. so his hope is strengthened, until he comes to the full assurance thereof. Heb. 6. 11. I do not mean proof of the truth of the gospel, in this view believers receive the word in much assurance, for this assurance comes from God, and is full in the very outset, as to kind; but the believer comes to the assurance that it is the truth, and not a spurious gospel he believes, by a further examination of scripture, and comparing his views with them, and by the feeling of the power of the truth in his own mind, and witnessing its truth in his continual holy conduct. 2 Cor. 1. 12. & 13. 5. Gal. 6. 3, 4. From these he draws a fair inference, viz. that his faith is just, and of course his hope. This is plain proof to himself and others, that he holds the pure Apostolic gospel—and the professor that walks contrary to truth is proved an unbeliever, both to himself, and to all around him.*

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*Some will tell us that the scriptures pointedly say "he that believeth shall be saved," and that if we do not believe this we make God a liar. To this I agree, but I do not agree that you cannot be mistaken as to your own belief---therefore I look to other passages, such as "by "this we know that we are passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren"---"Take heed brethren lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from "the living God. Let every man prove his own works, then shall he have rejoicing in him-"self alone and not in another." 1 John 3. 14. Heb. 3. 12, 14. Gal. 6. 4. Paul told the bons. ting Corinthians who were puffed up, and enriched in all knowledge, &c. that were strong in Christ, to "examine themselves whether they were in the faith." I am certain, if sin is the fruit of unbelief, that many of our boasting professors who say they have the assurance of faith, will find themselves miserably disappointed at last---if mercy prevent not, and convert them to God. This is no rash judgment---"for he that doth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." 1 John 3. 10.

4. *Another inseperable effect of the gospel is,* PATIENCE, or resignation to the will of God, under the trials and afflictions of life.

Jesus Christ told his disciples, that in this world they should have tribulation. Paul says, "if any man live Godly in Christ Jesus he shall suffer persecution." The Hebrews, "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and the Apostles "rejoiced that they were reckoned worthy to suffer shame for Christ's sake."

The gospel teaches patience and long-suffering to all who receive it, both under the common trials of life, and under those they endure for the truth's sake. Peter says it is nothing to exercise patience when we suffer for our own faults. but that if we take our sufferings for righteousness sake patiently this is acceptable with God. See 1 Peter, 4th chap. (all.)

5. *The gospel produces a meek and humble disposition* in all who believe it.--Pride and arrogance are true characteristics of Satan and of his children, and are peculiarly hateful in the sight of God. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace (or favour) to the humble." Those who believe the gospel are brought low in their own eyes, and manifest a meek and quiet spirit.

6. *The gospel inflames the soul with* LOVE *to God and man.* The natural enmity of the heart against God, against his people, against his laws and ordinances &c. is slain by the gospel as soon as it enters the soul. The first sight of the glory of God, exhibited in the face of Jesus Christ (the gospel) captivates the soul and fills it with love to God; and this love is manifested to every object in which God appears. To his people as bearing his image.---To his laws and ordinances as so many exhibitions of his glorious perfections---yea even to his enemies as the productions of Jehovah. This love is not like the love of false professors, in word and in tongue, it is in deed and in truth. The believer's love to God is manifested by his keeping his commandments; and his love to the people of God is manifested by acts of kindness to them, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, &c. His love to God's laws and ordinances is known by his delighting to walk in them, and to hold them forth to others.

7. Another invariable effect of the knowledge of the gospel is, that the believer ceases *to do* EVIL *and learns to do* WELL. In other words, the gospel teaches *all* who know it, to "deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." Tit. 2. 11.

First it teaches them to deny ungodliness &c. The believer dies unto sin through faith. Rom. 6. 1. Sin has no more dominion over him, because he is under grace. He does not obey sin in the lust thereof.---The lust of the eye, the pride of life &c. have no more power over him; for he has crucified the flesh, with its passions and lusts. Thus he becomes a new man in his whole life and conversation in the world; having been renewed in the spirit of his

mind by the gospel. In a word, he hates, and forsakes, every practice which he knows to be sinful, or in any degree contrary to the mind of Jehovah. See Rom. 6. chap. throughout—and 1 John. 3rd chapter.

But, secondly, he is taught to do good. Many think all is well with them, because they do not live in open sin---their goodness is negative goodness. The tree that bears no fruit, however, must be cut down, the same as the tree that bears bad fruit. The believer brings forth the fruits of righteousness, which are, by Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of God. He lives soberly, in eating, drinking, dress, equipage &c. according to his income. If God gives him riches, he uses it to his glory. If he is poor he cares not for it, knowing that godliness with contentment is great gain. He is righteous, or just in his dealings with his fellows in the world, not taking advantage of the weakness or ignorance of the person he deals with. He acts righteously, to the best of his knowledge, as a parent, child, husband, master, servant, ruler, and subject. The will of God, in every case, so far as he knows it, is the sole rule of his conduct. He is godly, i. e. devoted to God, and all he needs, to make him obey God, is, to know his will. His eyes wait upon God to run wherever he commands; and it is as his meat and his drink to obey God.

Finally.—In all these things he perseveres. Much has been said about perseverance, and some affirm that believers may finally fall; i. e. so as to be eternally lost. Whence do they learn this? They say they have seen such. Yes, they have seen professors fall, but did they search their hearts for the truth of their profession? No! And their fall proves the fallacy of their profession.—Their light was darkness. Faith without works is dead; and those who cease to shew their faith by their works have no faith. "Shew me thy faith by thy "works, (if thou canst) and I will shew you my faith by my works." James 2. chap. Such as have not works, are hypocrites. The Lord says, "he that believeth shall be saved;" and "he that endureth to the end shall be saved." It would seem from this that it is only he who endureth to the end that believeth. Again Christ says he gives to his sheep, who know him, "eternal life; and that they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his hand." Nay, he says, that they are in his Fathers' hand and that none can pluck them from thence. John 10. 27, 28, 29. And to this agree the words of Peter. 1 Peter. 1. 5. That they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

All the warnings of scripture against backsliding, making shipwreck of faith, &c. are so many calls to professors to examine themselves---to take heed lest the light which is in them be darkness---and so many cautions to believers lest they belie their profession, and bring dishonour upon their Lord and Master, by denying him in their conduct. When believers walk contrary to their profession, the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles on that account; and when professors turn (as only false professors do so) like the dog to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire, they shew the world, what was true (though unknown) before, viz. that their faith was only

a name---an empty sound, or tinkling cymbal---that they only professed to know God but in works denied him. While they for a time appeared like whited sepulchres without, they were inwardly full of rottenness---their hearts were not right with God. But the believer endureth to the end---for God is able to make him stand. He continues in faith and holiness. Some will say; some are said to have believed and afterwards fallen away, such as Simon Magus and others---yes---so are those whom Christ calls the children of the devil to their face, said to have believed. John 8. 44, 31. This means no more than that they professed to believe.

"When he was in Jerusalem at the passover, on the feast *day*, many believed "on his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not "commit himself to them, because he knew all *men*, and needed not that any "should testify of man: for he knew what was in man."

He knew well their faith was vain, a mere profession; and that they did not understand his character or mission. Such is the case with all the pretended fallers from grace that we hear of. They may have fallen from many graces, and acted contrary to many mercies, but had they been the children of God by faith—their faith would have saved them. A lamp, and oil in that lamp, are two different things.*

* Some will say this is all well, but *experience* is not mentioned in all this. The author is not such a stickler for particular words as some folks, but he contends that he has exhibited the *experience* of the gospel in the foregoing particulars. I am very sorry that very many *teach*, and *tell*, the real fruits of unbelief as Christian *experience*. Others trace their experience from their first beginning to be afraid of condemnation, though their hearts for years after were at enmity with God.

The gospel produces experience of the *purest* and most *durable* nature. It changes every principle of the soul, and creates entire new feelings. It produces entire new feelings in its possessor as it regards himself. It shews him his own vileness and makes him cry out, "behold I am vile, what shall I answer— "Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips, and dwell amongst a people of un- "clean lips. In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good things; for when I "would do good evil is present with me, &c." nor is this cry an empty, hypocritical sound—he has a real feeling in his soul of the object of his bitter complaint. I fear many who talk much of experience have not such convictions, but they are common to every child of God.

At the same time it produces that peace joy and hope described above. *He feels* composure and peace of mind. He rejoices in Jesus Christ, as his Saviour, and in his sacrifice as the real satisfaction for his sins, and also in the hope of eternal life. He has new feelings towards God. He no more reckons him a hard master, gathering where he hath not strewed, and reaping where he hath not sowed. His enmity against God is wholely removed, and he loves him. His whole attributes are precious in his eyes. He loves the law of God, as being holy just and good. He has a real, experimental, feeling of this change. Such is his views of the justice, holiness, love and mercy of God, that he feels grieved, ashamed, and, if I may so speak, disgusted at himself for his former inattention to his character and will, and particularly, for his former enmity against God, of which he is now sensible.

Seventhly—I shall now notice, some of the hindrances to the reception of the pure gospel. One would think nothing should hinder the sons of men from believing and obeying their creator; and particularly that nothing should hinder lost ruined sinners from hearing and receiving a message of peace, and of reconciliation with an offended God. Yet both scripture and experience prove that they manifest the most stubborn resistance, to the will and voice of Jehovah in every case. I am not capable of pointing out the many particular prejudices of the human mind against the reception of the gospel of Christ. To

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He has entire new feelings towards his fellow creatures. The former objects of his hatred, the people of God, are now his delight. He loves God, and loves his brother also. These are his experimental feelings to all who love God. His feelings are changed towards his enemies also—now he pities them, prays for them, and tries to gain their affections to the truth.

In all cases his feelings of the power of the gospel regulate his words and conduct; His conduct to God, to his christian brethren, to the world in general, to his enemies, yea even to the brute creation. He feels a decided hatred to sin, and loves holiness & holy persons; yet while he laments his own vileness, and prays for more purity of heart, he has peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ, and rejoices in the hope of the glory of God.

This is christian experience. This is the true feeling of the truth.

That true christians may at times have feelings contrary to these, is freely granted; but that is not christian experience. It is the effect of corrupt nature, or of letting the truth slip. Although there is a general conformity between God's people as to experience, just as face answers to face, still there is a difference in all their feelings, *except* what are produced by the gospel. These are perfectly uniform. We pity Negroes, and Indians for reckoning real deformity beauty, and for painting their faces to make them look better;—but professors often act the same. They reckon what they ought to be ashamed of (such as their darkness, and distrust in God) a cause of Joy, and emphatically call it christian experience. These have nothing to do with christianity, but the very reverse. Nothing ought to be countenanced as true religion but the real effects of the gospel of Christ. To such as call dreams and visions christian experience I would say—"He that hath a dream let him tell it, and he that hath my word let him tell it."

The Devil put it into the heart of Judas to betray his Lord, and he makes many dream that all is well with them while they are his own captives. The Devil wills every kind of religion, but that of the gospel—and false experience is a rock on which many have split.

I am far from treating the infirmities, or even the failings, of the people of God with lightness; but the evils arising from the substitution of the vain imaginations of enthusiasts for christian experience are too many, and too great to pass the subject in silence.

Whoever attends some meetings in this country, will hear plenty of enthusiastic imaginations palmed upon them, as christian experience. Not only is this the case, but many tell experiences they never felt at such meetings. The vain, the giddy, the worldly, the covetous, the extortioners, &c. will tell you they hate sin, and love holiness; and that they are growing in grace; while all their neighbours see their daily growth in sin and vanity.

The gospel *only* crucifies the flesh with its passions and lusts, and *it* does so in *every* case. Every man and woman that believe the gospel, are sanctified and purified through faith in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the spirit of our God.

the Jews it was a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness. I shall, however, name some general things that have always helped to shut the mind against the simple truth as it is in Jesus.

First—early education, and custom. Man does not only beget sons like himself, but he is anxious to rear them up in his own principles and practice. Hence the education of youth is, in general, after the same strain as that of their fathers. Heathens do not send their children to christian teachers, nor professed christians their children to heathen teachers. Ungodly men do not select real godly teachers for their children; nay there is a strong prejudice in their minds against sending them to such if they should live in their neighbourhood. They hate their tenets, and are afraid their children should imbibe them. Pure and undefiled religion, is unpopular, and uncustomary. It is not, as the phrase is, the order of the day, nay the reverse is proved in every country, and in every neighbourhood. It may be customary in many places, to attend to forms, and certain ceremonies under the specious name of religion, but the spirit of true religion is hated, and its practice abhorred. Children thus grow up to manhood in ignorance, and even men of old age deprecate the idea of forsaking the faith and the customs of their forefathers. Hence if you propose the gospel—the *unadulterated gospel* of Christ to such, they look upon you as the Athenians did upon Paul, "a setter forth of strange gods." The cry is, "what has become of our forefathers"? "Are they all lost?" Thus the gospel of Christ is condemned, if we may so speak, without a hearing. They only hear till they see that it differs from the creed of their forefathers, and of their own younger days; then the cry is "away with such a preacher from the earth, It is not fit that he should live"—at least; away with such doctrine—and, it ought not to be permitted to be taught. They wonder government can allow such preachers to proclaim their unpopular harangues. All this from not using the bible as the standard of doctrine. Thus are their eyes shut against the pure gospel.

Secondly—False teaching stands as a strong bar against the reception of the doctrine of Christ. Christ said, "beware of false prophets; they come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." Many of the preachers of christianity in our day are hirelings; i. e. men whose *trade* is preaching, and who preach for wages; and who, if their wages fail, immediately become silent. They would not, in this case, go about like Paul, working with their hands for their own support, preaching Christ crucified. These men not only conform their preaching to the principles of their party, but often, in opposition to the better principles of their own parties, and to the *word of God*, conform their preaching to the prejudices of their hearers.

Some of these can preach Episcopal doctrine the one part of a Lord's day, and Presbyterian doctrine the other. Some can subscribe, and swear to a Calvinistic creed and articles, and preach Arminian doctrines. Some can preach

Calvinism and Arminianism at different times—yea mix them in the same discourse. Is it any wonder the hearers are led astray? Is it any wonder that sensible men become deists? Not knowing the pure gospel themselves, and trusting to their hireling teachers; and judging of the gospel by what they hear from these hirelings, they see such glaring contradictions in their sentiments, and so much unholy conduct in their lives, that the conclusion they draw is, that religion must be altogether a system of Priestcraft.

But let us look a little farther into this greatest of evils—false teaching. Those gentlemen, who come in sheep's clothing, but are inwardly ravening wolves careing nothing for the sheep, but earnest in pursuit of the fleece; taking the charge of the people, not of a ready mind, but for filthy lucre's sake; being, not examples of holiness and sobriety to the flock, but the reverse, and lording over God's heritage; holding men's persons in admiration because of worldly advantage, often preach doctrines directly opposed to the gospel of Christ. They are not ashamed to cry out against the simple faith of the gospel, and to substitute their own mysterious and nonsensical jargon in its stead. They cry up virtue as the only qualification to obtain heaven, but they are afraid to explain the term, virtue, lest their hearers should see how destitute they themselves are of it. They cry out against salvation by grace, through faith; and, like the ancient false teachers, hold forth works as the cause of salvation. They are like the ancient Pharisees, they bind heavy burdens, and lay them upon the shoulders of their hearers.—burdens which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear, (justification by works) yet they themselves will not touch them with one of their fingers. Thus they despise the righteousness of Christ, and go about to establish their own righteousness, at least teach their people to do so; for truly few of themselves have even a form of godliness. They do not consider themselves, it seems, under any obligation to be religious, only they are paid for teaching something under the name of religion to others. They attend to some of the outward forms of their party, but the spirit is gone; yea the very articles and confessions of their own party are often hated. Such are the teachers attended by many in our day, and such the example set before them. I forbear bringing forward what I know of the blasphemous talk of some ministers concerning the sentiments of others of their own party, and of the wicked conduct of some professed ambassadors of Christ. I know, what would not only make a christian mind shrink with horror, but what has made deists shrink. I lately had a conversation with a sensible deist from London and he told me the conduct of the priesthood (ministers) was enough to disgust any rational mind—and to make any man detest them and their religion. Indeed though any one should detest their religion he could not be convicted of a crime, as it would rather be a *cardinal virtue to detect such hypocrisy and falsehood.* Their religion has not the least resemblance to the religion of Jesus Christ. Their gospel is bad tidings of grief. What can be worse than to set a man a working out his own righteousness, when God declares that no flesh can be thus justified, but that such are under the curse of the law. Gal. 3. 10.

Others teach their hearers that they must be so and so prepared before they have a right to believe the gospel.—They must meet the Lord, as it were, half way by preparations.---They must strive---they must cry---they must stretch forth the withered hand---they must stay at the pool---they must prepare their hearts for the gospel by a long course of mourning and penance; and such, say they, and such only have any warrant to believe the gospel. Thus poor sinners are kept labouring, and heavy laden, and still forbid to apply to the true source of relief. Thus do their teachers exclude them from that very spring of comfort and salvation, to which they ought to lead them---the blood of atonement.

Some preachers have experienced so, and so, and it would be sacrilege, in their view, to apply the blood of Christ in any other way. If one iota of their experience is awanting, though this may have been all the workings of a natural mind, all is wrong---the person is pronounced unfit for the gospel. Others lead their hearers, not to the gospel of Christ, but to religion, as they call it, and exhort their hearers to strive to get *this* pearl of great price. And what is this religion; this pearl of great price? Why it is a violent agitation of the body, something like the ague, the palsy---or some nervous disorder. This is called a work of God. A work of God without regard to the gospel, and in which it has no hand! This is without any knowledge of the Son of God, whom to know is eternal life! Yea the faith of the gospel, without this conversion, as it is called, is made light of---and such as have not had these agitations are pronounced as destitute of experimental religion. No wonder such teachers deny perseverance, for it is not easy for those who are in health to persevere in fits. A healthy person may be surprised into fits for a time, but when his groundless fears are over he keeps calm. But to be serious upon this subject, those who have had these agitations without the faith of the gospel, cannot stand in the faith, for they never had faith. When they fall, they fall not from God, for he never knew them, nor they him. Such is part of the teaching that shuts up the mind against the gospel of Christ. You may tell your neighbour to repent and believe the gospel, and bring forward his daily conduct to prove him an unbeliever, but he will tell you he was converted at such a time. You may answer him, yea, but you was often drunk since, or you have been covetous, or an extortioner, &c. O yes---he was then fallen, but now he has gone through another fit, and he is restored, &c. &c. Indeed time and inclination would both fail in pointing out the many false doctrines taught and their awful evils; but one thing is manifest, viz; that the simple doctrine of the cross is despised through the teaching of these doctrines of men. I do not mean to deny *that* conviction of sin which is of the operation of the Holy Ghost. These are very different from it. He works all by the word only, but these are without the word. When he convinces of sin, he convinces also of righteousness, and of judgment. Every man made system of religion leads to keep sinners from receiving the gospel of Christ. No wonder Christ should warn his disciples against false prophets.

It is generally held out by these hirelings, that dissenters, that go about preaching for nothing, or without hire, are the false prophets. Christ says, "By their fruits ye shall know them." We can find great abundance of the fruits of unrighteousness with those who wear the gowns and bands, and whose religious systems are supported by law. We ought "to try the spirits, whether they are of God." Let the false prophets, or false teachers, be judged of by their fruits, whether among establishments, or among dissenters. It is not of churches we are now speaking, but of false doctrine, held forth by false teachers. Let us, "prove all things, and hold fast that which is good." 1 Thes. 5. 21.

People in general trust too much to teachers, and are thus led astray. They think they need not puzzle their brains examining about religion, while they pay the preacher to examine for them. If the duties, and interests of teachers harmonized---we might expect better teaching. But it is the duty of teachers to preach pure truth, and to warn their hearers of the danger of refusing to hear that truth. The hearers do not relish such truths, and warnings, therefore it becomes the interest of the preacher, in order to conciliate his hearers, to "*preach smooth things.*" Besides, the natural inclination of the preacher is against truth the same as that of other men, and if that inclination is not quite overcome by the powerful grace of God, he will not relish the declaring of truth. This much to shew how false teaching obstructs the gospel.

A third hindrance to the belief of the gospel is, the natural propensity of man to sin. Every sinner sees, at first sight, that the gospel forbids, and discountenances every species of iniquity---hence they will not come to this light, lest their deeds should be reproved. John 3. 30. Those that love darkness (error or sin) hate the light; and every thing that opposes their favourite system; yea even their friends they shun and hate if they oppose them. Therefore they cannot bear to hear the truth, and they are settled in their minds against it when they do hear it, as an enemy to that which they love. The desire of pleasing others, or the fear of being thought worse than others, or some other motive may, and does make them read and hear the gospel, but they hear it with a determination not to receive or believe it, lest it should cut them off from those sins which they love.

4. Fourthly---I shall only mention one thing more that operates as a hindrance to keep men from receiving the gospel, and that is, the natural enmity of the human heart against God, and against his gospel. It is possible so to overpower a man with arguments, that his conscience will agree, that early education, custom, false teaching, and even the love of sin should be laid aside, and God obeyed---but still something lurks within that opposes the gospel.---Still he "will not come to Jesus that he may have life." A man may hear, he may search the scriptures, from a conviction that they reveal eternal life, and

yet not believe that gospel through which sinners are made partakers of that life.

An apostle tells us that the natural mind, or the mind of the flesh, is enmity against God, it is not subject to him, neither can be. To the Jews the gospel was a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness. There is abundant evidence for the truth of the gospel, and of its suitableness to the state of man, yet man will not receive it. It is in the *will* the evil lies. All the sons of men taken together cannot convince Jesus Christ, or his apostles of any error in doctrine, for the gospel they preach is proved true by incontrovertible evidence, yet they will not believe them; and they can give no reason but that they *will not*. Men now act like the Jews at the crucifixion of Christ. Pilate asked them when they cried for his life, "Why? what evil has he done?" They could not say he had done any evil, they knew they had employed false witnesses against him, when true witnesses could not be found, and that even their false witnesses did not agree---still they cried out crucify him! crucify him!

Thus the sinner can find no fault with the gospel of Christ, yet the perpetual language of his heart is, away with it. He hates---he abhors it. Truth as it is, (and his conscience bears witness to its truth) he will not receive it. He hates both the gospel and its author---he has seen and hated, both Christ and his Father. Such is his rooted hatred to the gospel that nothing but Divine power can remove it.

8. I shall now point out the *obligation of all to receive the gospel.*

It is not only the privilege of sinners to have an offer of mercy made to them, through the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, but it is the absolute duty of every sinner who hears the gospel to believe it. We must remember that whatever God declares for *our* assent, we are bound to believe; and whatsoever he commands *us* we are bound to obey. This obligation rests upon us as the created, supported, and protected, creatures of God. Paul says we are all his offspring; for it is in him, or by him, we live and move, and have our being.—We then, as the offspring of God, are bound to believe and obey him. Whatever he points us to, and commands us to believe in, we are bound to look to and believe in that object. He calls upon all to believe in his Son. His language is, "this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased, *hear ye him.*" And, "behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world."—Matth. 3. 17. & 17. 5. John, 1. 29, 36. God commands us to believe in his Son, and it is at our peril we refuse to do so. John. 6. 29. 1 John. 3. 23.---John. 3. 18, 19. 36. Jehovah promised to raise up a prophet like unto Moses, him, says he "shall ye hear in all things; and it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hear that Prophet, shall be cut off from among the people." Deut. 18. 15, 18. This Prophet is Jesus of Nazareth, Acts. 7. 37. And, of course, those who do not believe God's witness respecting him, shall perish.--

Mark. 16. 16. John 3. 24. Those who refuse to hear the gospel, despise the wisdom, love, and mercy of God. They despise his plan of salvation, make light of his offered mercy, and slight his unparalelled love. What can shew greater contempt? Such make light of the sufferings of Jesus Christ, and account his blood the same as that of a mere man, unholy, and without merit.--- They do despite unto the Holy Ghost who testifies of Jesus. In a word, they are guilty of the greatest possible combination of sins, and deserve the most condign punishment. Hence Christ is to appear in "flaming fire, to take vengeance on those who know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord "Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the "presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." 2 Thess. 1. 8, 9. It is the bounden duty then of all who hear the gospel to believe it, and their not believing it will be reckoned a heinous, punishable, *unpardonable* crime.--- "He that believeth not shall be damned."

CONCLUSION.

WE have seen that the gospel means glad tidings of great joy to the guilty sons of men, and surely it deserves our most serious consideration, because, as we have seen, we are men of like passions, like failings, and like sins as others. Let us then seriously consider the *nature* of the gospel, its *aspect* towards us as sinners, the *source* from which it comes to us, and the awful *consequences* of our *rejecting it.*

The gospel is an address from Heaven to the sons of men. "God, who at "sundry times and in divers manners, (portions) spake unto the fathers by the "Prophets; hath in these last days (the gospel dispensation) spoken to us by his "Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things; by whom also he made the "worlds." Heb. 1. 1, 2. Paul adds that "we ought therefore to give the "more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we "should let them slip." Therefore---because, "spoken by the Lord, and confirmed by those that heard him. God also bearing witness, with signs and "wonders, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his will." Heb. 2. 1--5.

The truth of the scriptures is confirmed beyond a doubt. Besides their many external evidences, they bear such internal marks of their original as must exalt them above all other writings. Their prophecies, miracles, and power in controlling the passions of men, are such, that men must be mere sceptics if they do not receive them as the truth of God. No man who has seriously weighed the matter can withhold his assent to their truth, however much he may hate that truth, or misunderstand its contents. Every man of talent, who has really turned his attention to the scriptures, and examined their claims, upon rational principles, must acknowledge that they are from God. The gospel of

Christ is a truth, which must stand true, whether we believe it or not. Our unbelief does not make the faith of God a lie, (that is the object of faith presented by him.) Rom. 3. 3. Num. 23. 19. 2 Tim. 2. 13. No! This truth has far more evidence *of its truth*, and of its *divine origin*, than there is for any writings of equal age. Yea, the very language of scripture, has the stamp of truth, and of divinity on its very face.

But the believer of the gospel needs no external evidence for its truth. He needs not spend the midnight oil in searching the writings of Josephus, Justian Martyr, or Polycarp. No! He feels the evidence of the truth of the gospel in his own soul. He feels the comforting, cheering influences of the gospel, and rejoices---insensibly rejoices, in the hope set before him in the word of God.---He knows that God is true, and will stand true, if every man should be a liar.

Since the gospel then is the voice of Jehovah from heaven, spoken to us, the guilty sons of men, of how much importance is it for us to examine it! We know how much interest men take in general in searching out the sayings, and actions of great men; of how much more importance is it for us to examine the sayings and actions of the greatest of all beings---The King of Kings, and Lord of Lords!

We ought to pay attention to the gospel, not only from the assurance we have that it is the voice of Jehovah, but also because it is so exactly suitable to our own individual cases as sinners. We have seen that it is addressed to sinners, as such---and we must acknowledge that we are sinners. I have said that we are anxious to learn what great men have to say, but we are the more so when they speak exactly to ourselves. God speaks to us individually in the scriptures---He addresses our understandings, and affections. He addresses our hearts---speaks to the innermost recesses of our souls. The gospel is intended to reach, and discern the thoughts and intents of our inner man. Heb. 4. 12. We ought then to pay particular attention to this heavenly voice.

Think then, O reader, think of the folly of those who reject the gospel! They reject Jehovah. He, says Jesus to the seventy, that rejecteth you, (i. e. their preaching) rejecteth me, and he that rejecteth me, rejecteth him that sent me. Such despise the wisdom of God in devising the scheme of salvation, his love in sending his son to die for sinners, and in sending his spirit to declare his salvation to us. They despise the love of Christ in humbling himself, and bearing our sins. In short they say the whole scheme of salvation, from first to last, is all vain parade---such is your language, O vain sinner, in rejecting the gospel of the Son of God! Thus you reject your own mercies also. This gospel, which you reject, is the only means appointed of God for the justification, sanctification, and eternal salvation of sinners---the only means of comfort in this world, and of glory in the world to come. Nothing good, nothing pleasing to God, can be performed by you while you reject the gospel, for

"without faith it is impossible to please him." You can never do any thing that will please your neighbour while you make him a liar in all he speaks to you: and how think ye will God relish this conduct at your hand? O then, poor sinner, hear his voice! "Repent ye, and believe the gospel."

Now Sinner, think seriously for a moment on the awful consequences of rejecting the gospel---you thus lose eternal life, and secure to yourself eternal damnation. "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life. He who believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth upon him." John 3. 36. This single passage speaks volumes. It assures life everlasting to those who believe in Christ, justification and all its consequences, forgiveness of sin, and adoption into God's family forever—but it pronounces eternal condemnation to unbelievers. No excuse is admitted. Jehovah calls, we must hear, or be damned. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel "to every creature—he that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth "not shall be damned." Mark, 16. 16. I should only darken the subject by bringing forward any of my reasoning, to prove the certainty of the one or the other; that is, the certainty of life to the believer, and of damnation to the unbeliever. I leave the mind to *rest* upon these sayings of Jehovah.

Sinners ought to act like rational, accountable creatures, and laying aside all their former prejudices, receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save their souls, Jam. 1. 21. Prejudice means pre-conceived opinions. It does not matter whether these have arisen from early education, or from hearing false doctrine. We must hear God whenever he speaks, and he has commanded us to "Take heed what we hear"—and, "To take heed how we hear;" Mark 4. 23, 24. Luke 8. 18. Matt. 13. 9. and to "prove all things; and hold fast that which is good." 1 Thess. 5. 21. The bible is the only standard, let us prove all by its contents—prove the common views and customs of men—prove what we have been taught by our parents or guardians from our youth—prove what every preacher or teacher tells us, of whatever sect or denomination among men. To the law and to the testimony, if one and all of them speak not according to the scriptures, it is because there is no light in them. Let us carry the line and plummet of the gospel in our hand, and prove every step we move in knowledge, faith, experience, and practice, by these.

OF FALSE TEACHERS—with cautions to them. False teachers are those teachers who *add to*—or *take from*, the word of God; and the one error is as dangerous as the other. Teachers of scripture should sit as judges directing witnesses on oath how to act, viz;—to tell the truth—the whole truth, so far as revealed—and nothing but the truth. Some may say they tell the truth so far as they know. But what if they know not the truth at all? Why should a man unacquainted with figures, begin to lecture on arithmetic—or one who knows nothing of grammar begin to lecture on rhetoric or logic. The same absurdity, and much worse consequences, are attached to a man's professing

to teach the gospel without knowing it. Academies or colleges will never teach a man the knowledge of the gospel—*This is the work of the Holy Spirit.* 1. Cor. 2. 11.

It is too common, in our day, to consider preaching a trade. Hence men send their sons to college to learn them to be ministers, the same as to learn them to be physicians, or lawyers. But there is a very great difference between the different callings. Law is learned from the statutes of the land &c. Physic is learned by a minute acquaintance with the human body, and its diseases; and a knowledge of medicine---but divinity is only learned by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. We do not despise human learning, but value it as an excellent hand-maid to christianity---but many in this case exalt the hand-maid and despise the lawful wife.

Human learning, however good in its place, and extensive in its acquirements, will never teach one particle of the saving knowledge of the gospel. All the learning absolutely necessary for preaching Christ crucified, is such a knowledge of language as to be able to speak with propriety—otherwise, to be able to convey truth in a plain, simple, intelligible manner; so as to be understood by the weakest capacity. A man who is truly taught of God, with this degree of learning, will both instruct the people of God, and convince gainsayers.—Whatever more knowledge he can acquire, in the original languages, &c. &c. will be useful to himself and others; but the knowledge of the statutes of Heaven is the chief thing. This is the true ministerial qualification. If a Demosthenes had the degree of Barrister conferred upon him, he could not act without the knowledge of the statutes of the land--nor could he act as a Divine, without the knowledge of the pure gospel though created Dr. of Divinity, Bishop, or Pope. It is in the school of Christ the gospel is learned. All his people, and ministers, are taught of him. He acknowledges no others.

The language of the scriptures respecting false teachers is awful. Peter & Jude both describe them, as "clouds without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit; twice dead plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." They "speak great swelling words (of vanity) having men's persons in admiration because of advantage." Jude 12, 13. 16. 2 Peter 2. chapter. These are they that creep into the ministry. Jude 4.

Look at this quotation. These teachers have not the fruits of faith or labour of love. They are clouds carried about with every wind of doctrine. They have not their feet shod with the gospel of peace—for they do not know it.—They are twice dead, i. e. so much sunk in their own vanity and self-importance, that it is impossible to arouse them. They foam out their own shame, like the waves of the sea. What can be a greater shame for a man than to pro-

fess a trade of which he knows nothing? But this does not humble them, or make them diffident; no! They speak great swelling words of vanity. They would make their hearers think they only are the true ambassadors of Christ.--An imposter always needs boldness.—This they put in place of scripture and sound argument. They hold men's persons in admiration *because of advantage.* They bow and scrape, as the phrase is, to those that are in power. They would think it very wrong to say any thing upon religious subjects that would offend a King, Governor, or Patron. They look for places and pensions. They call themselves ministers of Christ, for the loaves. They hate Christ's work, but they love filthy lucre. All who can bestow livings in the church—who have the patronage of a parish—or who the chief *say* in a dissenting congregation—or who subscribe liberally to the support of the preacher—or who are active in obtaining subscriptions---are bowed to and caressed as good saints---yea though the hireling knows well they are wicked men, he lets their sins pass for fear of giving such offence as would decrease or destroy his *living*. Shall not God take vengeance of such hypocrisy? Yes, the blackness of darkness forever awaits such. God has declared, that those who add to his word, shall have the plagues described therein added to them---and that whoso taketh from his word, i. e. keeps back the truth, he will take his name out of the book of life. Rev. 22. 18, 19. Look at this ye preachers that make the applause of your hearers the rule of your preaching. Paul pronounces an everlasting curse upon you that preach a false gospel. Gal. 1. 8. Every unconverted sinner must endure the everlasting curse of God, but his curse will be doubled on the blind hirelings that lead the blind.

Look at the language of Jehovah against false prophets and teachers. Jer. 14. 14, 15, 16. & 23. 9. 11, 12, 13. to the end; and 27. 15. & 20. 8, 9. Ezek. 13. 1, to 17 verse, & 33. 1---17. & 34. 1---11. The people of God live on that gospel which those false teachers tread under their feet; Ezek. 34. 19. See Math. 7. 15. & 14. 11. 24. Mark 13. 22. 2 Peter 2. 1. 1 John 4. 1.

Though false teachers shall be punished forever for their daring effrontery in leading poor sinners astray; this will not excuse or save those who suffer themselves to be duped by their hypocrisy. It is their temporal interest to keep men in ignorance of the truth, it is for our eternal interest to judge for ourselves, and to hearken to God only as it regards the concerns of our souls. Jehovah will require the blood of the sinner at the hand of the unfaithful watchman.---but we shall die in our sins, and suffer the just reward of our own iniquity and unbelief, if we suffer ourselves to be led astray. Let us then try the spirits whether they are of God. Let us take heed what we hear, and how we hear. He who hears false doctrine, or bids its preacher, God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds, 2 John 10. 11.

Let us all study the scriptures for ourselves---they testify of Jesus. They

contain none of the errors of the present age. In them we have the pure gospel, and all the mention they make of error is to oppose it, or point out its punishment. In them we have the words of eternal life, and all who understand and believe them shall not come into condemnation.

Some may think that I speak with prejudice and irritation against other teachers, and that I also would accept of ecclesiastical preferment if I could obtain it. I can assure such they are mistaken. That I abhor the doctrine is true, but I wish their salvation. As to preferment I would not accept of any. I trust I have higher motives.

Some have thought that I oppose the support of ministers of the gospel, but I hold the very reverse. I believe those "who preach the gospel should live of the gospel"---and that "the labourer is worthy of his hire." Those professors who do not support the gospel, very ill deserve the name.

AN ESSAY

ON THE

KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

It was revealed by ancient Prophets that the promised Messiah should be a KING, whose dominion should be universal; and the chosen tribes in every age, expected his appearance under the regal character. While the general idea, however, of that expectation was fully warranted by the spirit of prophecy, the greater part of Abraham's natural posterity were under a gross mistake respecting the true design of Messiah's appearance, and the real nature of his kingdom; which mistake had the most pernicious influence upon their tempers and conduct when the gracious promise of his coming was fulfilled.

Ignorant of their own spiritual wants, and flushed with a false persuasion of interest in Jehovah's peculiar favour, on the ground of their carnal descent from Abraham, and of the covenant made at Horeb---the appearance of the doctrines and the claims of Jesus were offensive to them. His not appearing as a temporal Prince, his discovering no disposition to free them from the Roman yoke—and his frequently addressing their consciences with keen reproof on account of their pride and hypocrisy, superstition and covetousness, led them to reject, with determined opposition, all the evidence of his Divine commission, to treat him as an imposter, and to procure his crucifixion. After he was risen from the dead, and ascended up to heaven, some of them believed, and professed the christian faith; but the great majority of the Jewish nation continued in hardened impenitence, and persecuted the Apostles with unrelenting malevolence. Thus they proceeded till Divine forbearance being as it were, exhausted, "wrath came upon them to the uttermost," in the total overthrow of their city and nation, and civil, and ecclesiastical polity. We ought to beware of falling into the *kindred error* of secularizing the dominion of Jesus Christ. The great error, under the gospel dispensation, lies in attempting to make the kingdom of Christ, in effect, *a temporal kingdom*, and to *support* and *extend* it by *earthly* means.

In John 18. 36. we have the remarkable words uttered by Jesus Christ in his good confession before Pontius Pilate; "MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD." A concise, but comprehensive declaration, and worthy of him

that made it. There is not, perhaps, a more interesting passage in all the New Testament, respecting the new dispensation and the christian church, nor one which is better adapted to rebuke the pride and carnality of *Millions* who bear the christian name. My kingdom is not of this world, says the Messiah the Prince of the Kings of the earth. As if he had answered Pilate ---"I am a King---a KING OF KINGS; but Cæsar need not fear his earthly "throne, it shall not be claimed by me. I *am* a King but my reign is over "very different subjects; I have different laws to govern by, and quite a diffe- "rent plan of ruling. &c." Thus he also shewed his disciples that they need not look for worldly honours, or any worldly aggrandisement. Christ's kingdom is spiritual;---he rules in the hearts of his people. He established his kingdom by sealing the truth of his doctrine with his life. He sits on David's throne, but it is to rule the spiritual seed---the seed of Abraham according to the promise.

It is generally allowed that the kingdom of Christ is the gospel church, which is both distinguished from the world, and opposed to it. Relative to this kingdom and its divine sovereign, Jehovah says, Psal. 2. "I have set *my King* upon my holy hill of Zion." This prophecy was fulfilled when our Lord Jesus Christ arose from the dead, "led captivity captive, and received gifts for men"---when he sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high. Then was he most solemnly inaugurated, and proclaimed king of the New Testament church, amidst adoring myriads of attendant angels and spirits of just men made perfect. The consequence was that he gave gifts to men. He gave some Apostles, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers, endowing all with gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his sovereign will. His church is surrounded with foes, but he, "rules in the midst of his enemies," and shall rule, "till all his enemies become his footstool." His empire indeed, extends to every creature. All power, or authority in heaven, and in earth, is in his hands, and he is "head over all things, to the church!" But his reign over his people, or church, is quite distinct from his general providence. His providence reaches to them, and to all, even to the sparrows; but his reign as king of Zion respects those who hear his voice and *are of the truth*.---That is, all who believe the gospel of the grace of God.

Before entering more minutely upon the nature of the kingdom, we shall take brief notice of the character of the KING. Some may think we have said enough upon this part of the subject in the foregoing essay, but this is the great corner stone of every religious subject, and we cannot say too much upon it. This is the heart, soul, and spirit of the whole scriptures. Take away the peculiar character of Jesus of Nazareth, and all is gone---church, faith, and practice become all a mere bubble of air. The king of Zion is no ordinary person, He is the son of Abraham and of David according to the flesh, but he is also David's Lord. Psal. 110. 1.

This person is no less than the eternal Jehovah manifested in the flesh. 1st. This appears from the names and titles of Jehovah being applied to him. In Isai. 9. 6. he is called both the mighty God, and the everlasting Father; and this is the person that was to be king on David's throne, whose government and peace shall have no end. v. 7. In Isai 12. 2. he is called Jehovah, that is, the self-existent. In Isai. 41. 13, 14. he is called Jehovah, God, (or Lord God) and the holy one of Israel. The same is said, Isai. 48. 19. That it is Jesus, that is meant in all these passages is evident from his being styled the redeemer. He is called God in the following passages also. John 1. 1. Rom. 9. 5. 1 Tim. 3. 16. Tit. 2. 13. 1 John 5. 20. Jude 25.

2nd. This appears from the incommunicable perfections of Jehovah being applied to him, such as Omnipotence, Rev. 1. 8. Omnipresence, Matth. 18. 20. Eternity, Heb. 1. 11. Omniscience, John 21. 17. Rev. 2. 23. Immutability, Heb. 1. 10. &c. and 13. 8. He has life in himself, John 1. 4. and through the knowledge of this life men are justified. It is the light of men.

3. Jehovah claims the praise of creation, in all its widest extension. Isai. 44. 24. Yet these works are attributed to Jesus Christ. John 1. 2. Heb. 1. 10. Col. 1. 16. Surely creation proves Godhead. Rom. 1. 20. Jesus Christ claims equality with God. John 5. 17. & 10. 33. And counted it no robbery to be equal with him. Phil. 2. 6.

But the Divinity of the King of Zion is seen from what happened in this world.

4. The manner of his delivering his testimony was such as made his hearers marvel, for "he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes." Matth. 7. 28. This manner was, "verily, verily I say unto you." He wrought his miracles in the same way, "Lazarus come forth." And, "ephphatha, be thou opened." And, "I say unto thee come out of him and enter no more!"

5. His redeeming sinners is a strong proof of his Divinity. Comp. Psal. 23. with John 10 & 1. Peter. 5. 4. Who but a God could bear eternal wrath, and drink up that eternal cup at one draught! "The cup which my heavenly father "hath given me shall I not drink it!"

6. His instituting ordinances, and sending forth ambassadors in his own name shews his character, 1 Cor. 11. 23. 2 Cor. 5. 20. And some of these ordinances went to the changing of some other ordinances instituted by Jehovah from the beginning, such as the Sabbath, of which he is Lord; and to the total extinction of other ordinances, such as sacrifice, circumcision, &c.

7. Divine honour, and worship are to be given him, while the highest angels refused it. All men must "honour the son, as they honour the father."

John. 5. 23. & 8. 35. Yea, Angels must worship him. Heb. 1. 6. Rev. 5. 13. Christian baptism is to be administered equally in his name as in the Father's. Matth. 28. 19, 20. Thus putting them on a level.

8. His being appointed judge of the quick and dead points him out as a divine person, particularly as he is not to judge by the evidence of others; for he is to judge the thoughts of men—as also his raising the dead to be judged.--John. 5. 28. Rom. 2. 16. Who can pry into the secrets of men, and give each according to his inward motives, but an all seeing Jehovah?

9. I shall only notice one thing more, viz. that the same faith is required in the Son as in the Father. John. 14. 1. In short all the worship of the church, on earth and in heaven *is to him, and through him.* "To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, be glory and honour." Rev. 5. 12, 13, & 7. 10. &c. See the foregoing essay.

Might we not wonder that any man who has his sober senses, and acknowledges the bible to be of God, can hesitate for a moment to acknowledge the Supreme Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet such is the enmity of the human heart, that every art must be recurred to, and every just rule of criticism must be violated, to oppose this grand—this fundamental doctrine. Men would be gods,---would be independent of Jehovah,---and therefore deny the Divinity of Christ, in order to get rid of his atonement, and of salvation by the sovereign grace of God. From the above passages, however, it is plain beyond a doubt, from the uniform witness of Jehovah, by all his servants, as well as by his own audible voice from heaven, that Jesus Christ is, according to John's emphatic words, "the true God, and the eternal life." It was prophesied of this person that he should be a King. Zech. 9. 9. Comp. Matth. 21. 5. He was promised the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. Psal. 2. He was anointed King. Psal. 2. 2. 6. Heb. 1. And all judgment, is committed into his hands. John. 5. 22. & 17. 2. Matth. 28. 18. This is the *person* then of whose kingdom we are to treat in the following pages. It is a kingdom of redeemed sinners---of men and women bought by the blood of the King; and translated out of the kingdom of darkness, and of Satan, into the kingdom of *Jehovah's dearly beloved Son.*

I. The GOSPEL KINGDOM is not of this world with regard to its ORIGIN.

From the time of Nimrod to the present age, secular empires have generally originated in the vicious passions of their first founders; for in almost every instance, avarice and pride, ambition and lust of dominion, have been conspicuous. But not so with reference to the kingdom of Jesus Christ. By all comprehending wisdom, and infinite goodness; for the glory of God and the everlasting benefit of man, the remote foundation of Christ's dominion, was laid in the counsels of Heaven before time commenced---and the immediate basis on

which it stands is, his own VICARIOUS obedience to the divine law, both as to its penalty. Mercy and truth attend the whole administration. The origin of his kingdom then, is the love of God to the fallen race of Mankind, and his predetermination to save, sanctify, and glorify them. This was the moving cause of their being given to Jesus. John 17. 2. 6. 8. 11. 12, 24.

2. *The* SUBJECTS *of the kingdom of Christ are not of this world. John* 17.14. It is true that, in one sense, Christ rules over all. The Father hath given all power into his hands, as the son of man, so that he shall rule his enemies as with a rod of iron; and break them in pieces as a potter breaketh his useless earthen vessels. But we are here speaking of his subjects as the King and head of the church, over whom he rules as his own distinct and seperate people: of his spiritual subjects who are one in and with him. Men in general are of this world, friends to the world, and under the influence of worldly lusts, passions, and maxims---and walk according to this world. Such persons are what the scriptures call sinners. They delight in sin, and walk according to the dictates of their own flesh. They are at enmity with God, and this enmity is manifested in their disregard of his authority, and disobedience to his laws. The law of God is disregarded as a rule of conduct, and the natural propensities of the human heart, the common customs of the world; the gain, riches, honours, applause &c. of the world, are made the rule of human obedience. The question, with such, is not, "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" but "What shall I eat? what shall I drink? and wherewithal shall I be clothed? And how shall I gain the riches, honors, ease, applause and dignity &c. of this world?

Such people are opposed to the salvation of God as exhibited in the scriptures; they set up their own wisdom, in opposition to the wisdom of God; and go about to establish their own righteousness, in opposition to the righteousness of God.

These are properly styled the children of this world. "They are of the world, they speak of the world and the world hear them," and delight in them. They are children of darkness, because the knowledge of God, of the nature and privileges of his kingdom, and of his will, as revealed in the scriptures, has no place in their minds. They are called the children of the devil, because they obey not the truth, and do those things that please not God. "Whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." They not only hate God, but they hate his people also. In a word, they are of their father the devil, because they do his works. John. 8. 44. and are led captive by him at his will. 2 Tim. 2. 26. On this account also are they called the servants of sin, because the motions of sin, as they originate in their own hearts, and spring from their lusts and passions, are their leaders. They walk not according to the spirit, but according to the flesh. Such *are not subjects* of the kingdom of Christ---they are not

taught by him, nor are they subject to his righteous government. They are not only aliens, but the most determined rebels against the Almighty.

The subjects of Christ's kingdom are *all born of God*---born of the spirit, and of water; born of the incorruptible seed of the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. John 3. 3. 1 Peter 1. 22. This change takes place upon them through the knowledge and belief of the truth. Hence they are said to be, "of the truth, and to hear Christ's voice." Such have the law of God written in their hearts according to the ancient promise. Jer. 31. 31, ---34. Heb. 8. 8. 9. Instead of their being, as formerly, carnal minded, and of the world; of the law, and under its curse; of the wicked one and children of wrath--they are of God; and spiritually minded: of grace, and free from the curse of the law; they are God's children, adopted into his family, and have all the privileges of his holy inheritance. Hence they are new creatures, old things with them are passed away, all things are become new. God dwells in their hearts by faith, and they are wholly under his controul; for Christ reigns as a spiritual Monarch in their hearts. They love him because he first loved them, and they manifest themselves his friends by keeping his commandments. Hence they are called by new names, such as, children of the light, and of the day, saints, sanctified in Christ Jesus, holy persons, royal priesthood, holy nation, peculiar people, &c. The character, the sufferings, the death, the resurrection, the ascension, the intercession, the reign and second coming of Jesus, are all precious in their eyes. They delight in his laws and ordinances, in his people, and in his precious promises. They look for his second coming with joy, and exclaim; "come Lord Jesus, come quickly."

The Jewish nation were typically holy. They were members of the church then existing in virtue of their descent from Abraham, and of their attention to circumcision and other typical ceremonies---they had a relative holiness in virtue of their birth. Under that covenant people were acknowledged as the people of God, whose hearts were disaffected, and their obedience formal. Judges 8. 23. 1 Sam. 8. 6. 7. & 12. 12. 1 Chron. 9. 8. But the gospel church is under a better covenant, established upon better promises---having a better priest, a better sacrifice, and better and more durable privileges. Jehovah has written his law in the hearts of all its members, has put his spirit within them, and they are heirs and joint heirs with Jesus Christ their Lord.

In vain do sinners imagine that their being born in a christian land and of christian parents; baptised, or sprinkled, in their infancy, and when they come to age admitted to the Lord's supper, will make them subjects of the kingdom of Christ. This is false doctrine taught by ignorant, or selfinterested men. The axe is now laid to the root of the trees, and all the rotten, none bearing trees shall be cut down, and cast into the fire. "Every branch which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up!" Only those who are born

of God have the right or privilege to become his sons. John 1. 11. 12. Christ and his apostles acknowledge no man after the flesh.---If any man be *in Christ*, he is a new CREATURE. "Old things are passed away." 2 Cor. 5. 16. He has new knowledge---new feelings, and a new life and conversation. "He has his fruit unto holiness."

The former, or Sinai covenant, so much renewed now in professed gospel churches, was a mere shadow, or type of good things to come. That covenant, with all its shadows, types, sacrifices, and privileges, has come to an end; and a new and better covenant has been substituted in its place. Formerly the seed of Abraham according to the flesh had *all* a right to be members of the church, whether they believed the promise made to Abraham respecting the Messiah or not. Faith was always necessary to obtain eternal life, but not to entitle to admission into the Jewish church---circumcision alone entitled to this. This was the particular necessary token. But now circumcision is laid aside, with all the other bloody rites of the law, and faith in Christ Jesus is absolutely required, in every case, in order to entitle to admission into the gospel church.

The apostles received *no members* into the New Testament churches but such as *appeared to have received the truth in the love of it.* They must be all taught of God. Even Saul of Tarsus, who was as good a member of the Jewish church as any in Jerusalem, was refused admittance into the church of Christ till they got ample proof of his faith in Christ Jesus. Acts 9. 26. 27.---True the Old Testament church is called a holy nation, but so is their city, their land, their temple, with all its utensils. The ground and its produce, &c. were all holy, that is *set apart*, or separated (as the term means) from a common use to the service of God. These were all *relatively* holy---holy as being God's people, *as a nation*, God's temple, God's land, &c. as the King of Israel. The divine presence was among them, and thus were they made relatively holy. But the holiness of the members of the New Testament church begins in the SOUL. They have their *hearts purified* by faith. Acts 15. 9---They are justified, sanctified, and purified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God. 1 Cor. 6. 11. They are saved, "by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." They are "holy brethren, (i. e. truly set apart to God) and partakers of the heavenly calling." Heb. 3. 1.

As men are not made members of the church of Christ by birth, neither will mental or literary accomplishments make them such. The way of holiness, pointed out under the new dispensation is such, that the wayfaring man though a fool shall not err therein; but still it is a stumbling block to the Jews, and to the Greeks foolishness. The wisdom of this world is made foolish by the gospel; for "after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save those who believe."

Some of the most accomplished scholars have been ignorant of, and enemies to the gospel of Christ. The teaching of the spirit of God only, fits a man for membership in Christ's spiritual kingdom.

I need not here enter into a discussion on the nature of churches of human formation, for if the kingdom of Christ, or the New Testament church, consists of the real disciples of Christ---men who know the truth, love God, love one another, and walk under the influence of the gospel, "denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts---living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world---looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearance of the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ"---then every church which bears not these marks, must be antichristian. The true marks of Antichrist are, the want of the knowledge of the faith and of the obedience of the gospel. 1 John 2. 22. and 4. 3. 2 John 7. No one denied that Jesus of Nazareth had come in the flesh; nay the whole Jewish nation saw him, but they denied that this person was *Jehovah the Messiah*---or the great God manifested in the flesh,---this every one does who doth not attach just ideas to the Bible.

When the apostles formed the church of Christ into distinct bodies, according to their local residence, to attend to the ordinances of his kingdom, they were cautious, lest wood, hay or stubble should creep in among the gold, silver, and precious stones---and they declare that "if any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy." 1 Cor. 3. 17.

These churches, though entirely *independent*, and subject only to the Lord Jesus Christ, still had the closest fellowship with one another. They had no universal head, as Pope or Bishop. All the rulers they knew of, were the elders, or overseers of each particular church. These bishops, presbyters, elders, or overseers (only different names for the same office) had no authority over one another, far less over other churches of which they were not members. The modern schemes of giving one bishop authority over a number of pastors, or elders; or of all the bishops meeting together in a presbytery, synod, or general assembly, to settle the affairs of different churches, were not then known. Such schemes never entered into the minds of the Apostles, save when the spirit of prophecy inspired them to speak of the great apostacy, which was to take place when the man of sin should change the laws of the kingdom of Christ, and set up a church, or churches, upon principles foreign to the New Testament. It is plain as noon day, from that blessed volume, that wherever the gospel was believed, the *believers* professed their faith by attending to the ordinance of baptism; (immersion) and then joined themselves to the disciples. Thus united, they met together every Lord's day to attend to the Apostles' doctrine, and fellowship—breaking of bread, and prayer. Acts 2. 42. The Apostles' doctrine—the preaching of the gospel, fellowship or contribution for the poor--breaking of bread--the Lord's supper--prayer, and praise, were joined together. These churches looked out among

themselves, (not to colleges) for persons fitted by the Lord Jesus Christ (who was exalted to give gifts to men) for the OFFICE, (not offices) of bishop, presbyter, or elder. 1 Tim. 3. and Tit. 1. point out the qualifications. Having found such out, they solemnly, with prayer and fasting; set them apart to the office, by laying on of hands, not to confer spiritual gifts, but to point them out as the objects of the church's choice. Acts 14. 23, and 13. 3, and 6. 6. 1 Tim. 4. 14, and 5. 22. This being the plan appointed by the spirit of God, they looked upon these overseers as appointed by the Holy Ghost, and as such they submitted to them. Acts 20. 28. Heb. 13. 7, 17. They next ordained deacons, servants or ministers in worldly things, to take charge of their temporal affairs. Acts 6. Some of these preached, but not as deacons, for that was a temporal office, and the only one of the kind in the kingdom of Christ. Thus the first churches had their bishops and deacons in one church. Acts 20. 17. Phil. 1. 1. There were also teachers, or evangelists—that is, persons who preached the gospel, such as Philip, &c. but had no other office in the church.—These preached Christ crucified, in the churches, and to the world at large, as Philip and Timothy. These churches had nothing to do with the state; hence the civil magistrate had no power in them. The king and the beggar were on a level as members—for there was no superiority, because of riches or learning; all the distinction known in these churches was that of office, and of course office belonged to those who were qualified of God; neither was any authority owned among them but that of Jesus Christ.

III. THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST *is not of this world, with regard to the means he employed in its first establishment, and* THOSE *appointed for its enlargement and support.*

Craft and violence, injustice and cruelty have been often used in founding, supporting, and extending secular kingdoms. The Roman Empire was founded on, and grew to its height in blood. Even the Jewish republic was established, enlarged, and defended by force of arms, which was a plain proof that it was a kingdom of this world; and the Jews expected Messiah to set up such a kingdom. The princes of this world do not employ men of the greatest benevolence, integrity, piety, and philanthropy in general, to establish, maintain and extend their dominions. They generally choose those most eminent for political prudence, or martial bravery; for secret intrigue, or open hostilities—those who are best qualified to persuade by eloquence, to circumvent by cunning, or to subdue by force.

Very different were the characters employed by Jesus Christ our Lord, to establish, support, and enlarge his kingdom in the world. They were chiefly of low birth, and mean occupation. They had no academical or court advantages, and they knew not military tactics. They knew little of philosophy or eloquence. and were strangers to courtly address, or political quibbling.

The apostles of Christ, his only ambassadors, to whom he committed the keys of the gospel church; who shut out, and take into it, give it laws and ordinances—laws to suit bodies of subjects united upon the truth, and to suit every individual, in every possible state in which they may be placed in this world:—I say, these ambassadors had a mean appearance as to dress; their language was vulgar, so that they were known to be Galileans—in a word, they had no outward pomp or worldly show among men, but the very reverse.

Yet these men were the chosen witnesses of the King of Kings—his ambassadors, his secretaries for home and foreign departments. These were the confidential servants of the crown, and the SOLE promulgators of the will of their Sovereign. They declared the laws of life and death to the whole world; they preached glad tidings of salvation to sinners, and pronounced a curse upon all who would not hear them: and they are, to this day, the sole umpires to decide all religious questions and disputes. He that is of God heareth them, but he who pays no attention to them, who doth not believe their testimony, and who obeys not their laws, is a rebel against the King of Zion. In vain do emperors or kings, popes or prelates, synods or presbyteries, associations or churches, set up their laws, decrees, or resolutions against them—all these taken together, with all their councils, will be spurned at by the king, and the whole of the Apostolic doctrine, laws, and ordinances approved, confirmed, and forever established. Not one word they have recorded for our acceptance shall ever be rescinded—The violation of none of their laws will be dispensed with. Fearful and everlasting vengeance awaits the despiser of apostolic faith or practice—utter destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

As the persons employed were of mean birth and appearance, so the means employed by them were very different from the means employed for establishing common or earthly kingdoms. The apostles used no craft, (though Paul's enemies charged him with this) sent forth no spies, threatened no worldly punishment. They used no sword but the word of God. They went forth declaring the character of their king, and the love he had manifested in redeeming his subjects by laying down his life for them, the glorious privileges and blessings he would bestow on all who would submit to his authority, and the certain destruction that awaited those who would not hear him. They preached, they prayed, they persuaded men to embrace the truth; and they manifested their own faith in that truth by patience and fortitude, under all their trials and persecutions, and by a life of obedience to the gospel they proclaimed. All the compulsion they used was persuasion, and even in this they did not use the enticing, or ensnaring words of man's wisdom, but by manifestation of the truth in its simplest form, they commended themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. "The weapons of their warfare were not carnal, *but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds.*"

Satan had deluded the subjects of our gracious sovereign, but he paid the ransom for their transgressions, and sent forth his apostles with the gracious message of free unmerited pardon to the rebels. This was the effectual battering ram to overthrow the kingdom of the wicked one. Neither sword nor musket, cannon nor rocket, were employed by the apostles—only the armour of truth on the right hand and on the left.

As these were the means of the first founding his kingdom, they are the means of establishing and supporting it. The arts and devices of men are of no use. The church of Christ stands in no need of the power of emperors and kings—of ukasses, and acts of parliament to support and defend it—their help are but poor props—It is established on a sure corner stone, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. It has stood eighteen hundred years already, the greater part of the time under the oppression of all the great men of the earth. The BEAST and the PROPHET had enlisted all the *emperors, kings, and princes* of the earth in their service to *destroy* this heavenly kingdom, *but it triumphs still.* Not one stone of *that* heavenly fabrick has fallen out of its place—therefore it stands in no need of parliamentary props to uphold it—a powerful skilful pilot sits at the helm. Human laws are of no use to extend the kingdom of Christ; the preaching of the cross only will gather the subjects of Jesus Christ from among the nations of the earth. He may order these things that stand in the way of the spread of the gospel to be taken away in any way he pleases, and he may order circumstances to take place for the forwarding of his cause in any way that he sees for his glory. He may do these things by a whirlwind, by an ukasse, by an act of parliament, or an order of council; but the spread of the gospel only will increase his subjects.

Men have devised many schemes to uphold and increase, what they call the kingdom of Christ, but all to no purpose. Laws have been passed, penalties have been decreed, and provisions have been made for its preachers. The *professed* preachers of the gospel have been made a distinct order of men under the title of CLERGY. These men are provided with high livings, and exempted from many burdens, so that their office has been made an object of ambition. The consequence is, that men have pushed into the office for filthy lucre's sake. The living is sought after, while the duties of the office are not only *neglected* but in many cases *hated.* These pretended ambassadors of Christ must have dresses and titles corresponding to what they call their station and income—they cannot preach in common clothes, nor be called Peter, Paul, James, and John; they must have carriages, mansions, equipage and servants;* cloaks, gowns, and surplices. The must be called holiness! right reverend

* I am far from denying worldly titles. I approve of Majesty, Excellency, Sir, Mr. &c. as worldly distinctions, neither do I condemn men for living according to their station in society, either as to dress, houses or equipage. But these things do not belong to ministers of Christ as such. All such titles, so far as the pastors of churches of Christ are concerned, come from Babylon the great, the mother of harlots—hence many of all denominations have refused them.

father in God! reverend! very reverend! venerable! M. A. D. D. &c. They must be under the care of emperors, kings, queens, princes, legislative acts, &c. &c.

How unlike the kingdom of Christ! These things have done much to oppose the kingdom of Christ. The unscriptural sentiments, the foppery, the carelessness, and above all, the covetousness and unholy conduct of the *clergy*, have made many deists, and created in the majority of mankind a dislike to religion. Thus the means devised by the *wisdom of man* for the extension of what they call the kingdom of Christ, or the gospel church, have turned out to be one of those bulwarks of Satan, against which the true gospel, and the true church of Christ have to struggle. Jesus Christ did not allow his disciples, nor even his Apostles, to be called RABBI, nor to receive honour of men; he had no college of learning for the church; all he thought necessary was the teaching of the Holy Ghost—and his chosen ambassadors either lived on the *unstipulated* bounty of their brethren, or wrought with their hands for their own maintenance.

They had neither mansion nor carriage, neither equipage nor servants, curate, sexton, or session clerk. As for popes, archbishops, bishops (i. e. overseers of clergy), presbyters for settling church affairs, ruling elders, class leaders &c. the apostles knew nothing of them. These all are the offspring of carnal wisdom—perfectly unnecessary, if not hurtful appendages of the New Testament.

Had Christ seen those things necessary for his church, it was far more easy for him to establish them than for the king of England or the British parliament:—He could have commanded Ophir and Peru to yield *all* their gold in one day. He could have placed his apostles upon the different thrones of Europe and Asia. But no! These plans did not suit his spiritual kingdom. While he reigned over Israel as over a secular kingdom he allowed many such things; but they rejected him as their king, and he has rejected them as a people, and has set up a spiritual kingdom, under a new covenant, having new subjects, new laws, and new ordinances. This kingdom is established of a different kind of subjects, and promoted on a plan entirely new and spiritual, suitable to these new spiritual subjects.

IV. CHRIST'S KINGDOM *is not governed by* WORLDLY LAWS.

The people of God must be considered in two points of view, viz. as members of civil society, and as members of the church of Christ. As members of civil society they are bound to submit to the laws by which that society is governed. Nor is there in this case any set or invariable code of laws, that belong to them. They are to be subject to the laws of the country in which they live, and if they remove to a country that has different laws they are to be subject to them also. In a word, they are to obey the powers that be, in

every case, and in every country in which they statedly reside, save what directly opposes the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. His claim is paramount, and must extinguish every human claim. They are to give "tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, honour *(support)* to whom honour, fear *(or reverence)* to whom fear." This they are to attend to not through fear of punishment, or merely to please men, but as direct obedience to their king, Jesus Christ. This is his will and these are his commandments, and as loyal subjects to his authority, his people are to attend to these things. Those then that are not subject to their earthly rulers, and do not obey the laws of the country in which they live, are rebels against the authority of the King of Kings. An unloyal christian is a contradiction in terms, for Jesus countenances none such, and his churches ought to exclude such from their fellowship.

But we are to consider them as subjects of the kingdom of Christ distinct from the world.—As members of Christ they are "to call no man master," neither to pay any regard to laws made by sessions, presbyteries, synods, assemblies, popes, cardinals, councils—bishops, archbishops, parliaments or kings. They are to lend a deaf ear to any, *and every*, law made by men to regulate religious affairs, whether these laws respect faith or practice. The spiritual laws delivered by the Holy Ghost, through the instrumentality of the Apostles, are to be their only rule of faith and practice. Christ rules all his subjects by his word, not as explained by bishops, popes, or particular churches, but as understood by all those who are taught of God, in consistency with common sense. Much has been said by the enemies of Christ respecting the scriptures being contrary to reason, but those who speak so, not only shew their ignorance of the scriptures, but also their ignorance of right reason, or common sense. The whole world cannot point out one unreasonable sentence in the word of God.* The Apostles are the *only* lawgivers in the kingdom of Christ. They have the keys of the kingdom of heaven---"whosoever's sins they remit, they are remitted, (by God) and whosoever's sins they retain, they are retained." God has "committed to them the ministry of reconciliation," and all the *rule and authority* in his kingdom. Yea, say some, but the authority of explaining the scriptures, and of making laws, or acts, agreeable to the scriptures, is conveyed down to their successors.---But

*That many truths are revealed in the scriptures which the reasoning faculties of man cannot comprehend, is freely granted. There are also many things in nature that reason cannot comprehend; yet neither the one nor the other are contrary to reason. It is one thing for a subject in nature or in religion to be *above* reason, or *beyond its comprehension*, and quite another to be contrary to it. In order to prove a thing contrary to reason, it must first be proved that that subject, in all its parts, is within the sphere of reason. Reason, for instance, cannot comprehend the Almighty, for he is incomprehensible, but it is not contrary to reason to believe the revelation he has been pleased to give of himself. In truth right reason teaches us to believe whatever God has said, and to obey what he commands. This is the right use of reason.

who are the Apostles' successors? His holiness at Rome claims all to himself, while others call him antichrist, and divide his authority among themselves. The truth is, that every individual, and every church, that take upon themselves to make laws for the kingdom, or church of Jesus Christ, is *so far* antichristian. Antichrist is not a single man, nor a succession of men, it is that usurpation of power to change the laws of Christ Jesus, and to make others, that has existed in the world for a thousand years---and though that church which first usurped the power *is the mother of* HARLOTS, yet all those churches which follow her example, are HARLOTS ALSO, and they shall share her plagues in proportion as they have been guilty of her crimes.

The sheep of Christ will neither hear nor obey such laws. They know Christ's voice in all he says and they follow him, and a *stranger* will they not follow, for they know not (i. e. acknowledge not) the voice of strangers. Whether Jesus speaks threatening or comfort, reproof, or direction, his subjects hear him—but if all the churches, sessions, presbyteries, councils, conferences, bishops, popes, &c. on the face of the earth, should begin to reprove or threaten them, to comfort or direct them, they pay no attention any farther than these can shew that they speak the mind of the Holy Ghost. His voice they regard, come through what channel it may. O how foolish are those who submit to laws of man's making! Why may not every one make laws for himself?---One man has as good a right as an other. Some boast of their ordination &c. as laying a ground for their authority---perhaps we could trace all their ordinations to the mother of Harlots. Let them shew us Christ's authority and we will believe them---to this we bow, for he is our king---but we cannot become subject to any other. We will not take the glosses of interested attornies for truth---i. e. the attornies of sin and satan. Satan himself appeared in the shape of an Angel of light, and his ministers come in the garb of profession, of ministers of righteousness. One said, if certain books contained any thing that was not in the Koran, it must be error; and if they contained only what was in the Koran, they were unnecessary---therefore in either case they ought to be destroyed. The same may be said of creeds and confessions of man's making. The bible is enough.

In this blessed volume Christ gives laws to his churches as such, and to his people as individuals. He points out to his churches whom to receive as members, how to love and serve, comfort and cherish them as such---how to watch over one another---how to rebuke those who sin---how to restore them and confirm their love to them when they repent---and how to exclude them if they do not repent. He directs them to assemble themselves in his name, on his own day, and then to attend to his ordinances---such as singing, prayer, reading the scriptures, exhortation, eating the Lord's supper, collecting for the poor saints, and preaching the apostolic doctrine. He appoints all these to be attended to, decently and in order. He has left us beautiful examples of all in those churches which were formed and guided by the Apostles. These

laws of Jesus reach also to private conduct. He teaches his subjects how to act to one another, in love, pity, courteousness &c. in forbearing with one another's infirmities and weaknesses (for his sheep are not all equally strong) and in forgiving one another, when overtaken in a fault, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven them. He teaches them how to act in this world as husbands, and wives, fathers and children, masters and servants, and as subjects to civil governments. In all these cases they are to act as the servants of Christ. A christian wife is not to rebel against her unbelieving husband, except his orders contradict the will of Jesus---a christian child is to be obedient to its ungodly parent in all lawful things---a christian servant is not merely to obey the wise and prudent, but also the froward---and a christian subject is to obey wicked rulers in all lawful things---that is, in every thing that does not come in contact with the authority of king Jesus. If any superior prohibits obedience to the laws of Christ, or makes other laws in his name and demands obediance, the christian is to act like those of old who said, we are not careful *O king to obey thee in such matters.* It would be direct rebellion against their Lord, for christians to admit of any law as their guide not sanctioned by the Apostles.

The bible is the christian's book of statutes : to it he pays respect and walks in its light ; it is the light to his feet, and the lamp to his path ; he hides it in his heart that he may not sin against God ; it is the man of his counsel all the day long. There he sees the will of God written as with a sun beam. Others may adhere to their articles, creeds and constitutions, but the new testament is his only guide---there he finds the true faith, the true practice, and the true constitution of the churches of Christ. All the vain attempts of men to improve upon the apostles, is darkening council by words without knowledge. The Westminster divines and others may have been good and wise men, but we affirm that the Apostles were better and wiser, and therefore ought to be heard in preference. Shall we have the old cant brought forward, that these confessions make things plainer? We answer; the holy ghost could speak plainer than any common man. To say that any book is plainer than the new testament, is directly to impeach the wisdom and power of God.

Divine wisdom has been forever engaged in contemplating the faith and practice revealed by Christ and his Apostles, and in dictating every part of the divine record---hence all the taught of God understand this book. All is plain to him that understandeth---to that man who is taught of God.

V. The kingdom of Christ has no worldly splendour.---The eternal splendour and court equipage of the emperors and kings of this world we need not describe. The rich attire, the splendid apartments, and the delicate living of earthly princes and of their court favourites have no place in the kingdom of Jesus. The king himself appeared in a humble form---was born in a stable, and laid in a manger---and all along appeared in the humble habits of a poor

man---the carpenter's son. He rode only once, and that on a colt the foal of an ass---and then all his attendants were a few despised disciples, and a few children. 'Tis true they saluted him, and rejoiced in his presence as the king of Zion, but not with any worldly honour. His earthly crown was of thorns, and a reed was put in his hand as a mock for a sceptre.

His ambassadors, the highest ministers of his princely court, were chosen from the fishermen of Galilee, had no uncommon learning, and appeared in the ordinary costume of the country. When they were sent out to preach the good news of his reign, they were ordered not to take extra clothing or money with them. They were to live upon the bounty of the worthy wherever they went. During the whole of their ministry we find them wandering on foot from place to place, and often under great tribulation; they were counted as the filth of the earth, and the offscouring of all things; their places of worship were neither consecrated nor decorated, an upper room, or a school house was thought sufficient. There they stood, without robes, gowns, surplices, or bands, *proclaiming salvation* to perishing sinners---not in the learned harangues taught by man's wisdom---but according to the simple diction of the holy ghost, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. In order to see their preaching we need only read the new testament---there we have a fair specimen of their matter and style. They entreated---they besought---they prayed---they commanded sinners to repent and believe the gospel. "They taught every man, and warned every man in all wisdom, that they might present every man perfect before God." Col. 1. 28.

What a striking contrast between the appearance of the kingdom of Christ, as seen in himself and in his apostles, and that system called christianity in our day. Now we have splendid and ornamented houses, with altars, choirs, organs, &c. connected with great and numerous ceremonies. The houses are *consecrated*, and so is the *preacher*. The preacher appears in the clerical uniform with his suit of superfine black, his gown, and bands, or surplice and gown, and perhaps an elegant fire-shovel hat. Having mounted the rostrum, and gone through his *man made* forms of worship, he gives out a text from the BIBLE, (perhaps the only scriptural thing he does for the day) and then begins to display the orator, either in the way of discoursing about *undefined* virtue, or railing against those who hold the apostolic *faith* and follow the apostolic *practice*---these he brands with the undefined terms, of bigots, methodists, enthusiasts, madmen, &c. as men filled with blind zeal, with hypocrisy, and with enmity against the CHURCH---nor is he sparing of his anathema maranathas.---Compare this *Clericus* with the humble unassuming fishermen of Galilee---those poor men who would often be glad to feed upon the flour with which *Clericus* daubs his sacred head. Compare their appearance, their doctrine, their manner, and particularly their practice. 1 Thess. 1. 12.

As to the places of worship, for the church of Christ, conveniency is all that

is necessary, or consistent with the simplicity of his kingdom---and with regard to the consecration of places of worship it is downright Judaism, and dedication to St. Paul, St. Peter, St. Andrew, &c. is rank superstition. As to dress, surely that dress in which a clergyman takes his afternoon walk, (this same is clerical black) and visits his friends, is quite sufficient for preaching the gospel and administering ordinances in. As to language, sound plain English is all that is necessary, yea this is best for common hearers in this country.---They have no need of scraps of latin quotations, a translation would suit better. Neither do they need what the lovers of the marvelous call learned words, for they only display the preacher, but give no edification to the hearers. No man can benefit by unknown words. The speaker who uses unintelligible words speaketh to the air. This is what has been called preaching over the heads of the hearers.

It may be said all these were attended to by God's ancient people the Jews; but why not follow them in all their ceremonies? Why not be circumcised, wash before eating, preach barefooted, offer sacrifices, and pay tithes of anise, mint, and cummin? Why did not Christ and his Apostles follow these modes? The answer is plain---because that worldly kingdom was at an end, and its carnal ordinances laid aside; because Christ's kingdom is spiritual and must not have carnal appearances. The glory of his kingdom is reserved for another place, viz. for heaven. It is the church militant we are in now, therefore we are strangers and pilgrims and must assume that appearance, and press towards our kingdom which is in reserve for us. When Christ comes again we shall have real splendour---a city with its whole streets paved with gold, and its gates of precious stones, and crowns of glory will be put upon every head. Let those who follow forms of godliness cleave to them, they desire to be seen of men, and called Rabbi, verily they have their reward; but we seek a different kind of kingdom; one that cannot be removed, and we must walk as strangers here till Christ shall call us home, having our loins girt about, and our lamps burning, waiting for the coming of our Lord.

The worship exhibited by many is a compound, unknown in the bible, of Judaism and christianity, and is treated by too many ministers as a trade and not a divine service. By numbers of the people it is looked upon as an article of decent amusement, fitted for a holiday's recreation, not as a duty to God, or as a means of fitting them for the heavenly kingdom. "Men run to the church," says Erasmus, "as to a theatre to have their ears tickled." "The "prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means, and my "people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof." Jer. 5. 31. 1. Cor. 14. 19. All these articles of splendour, are additions to the worship instituted by the apostles, and, of course sinful in the sight of God. Some may tell us that dress, and ornamented houses, &c. are harmless. By no means; they shew a conformity to the *world*, which the word of God forbids. The wisdom of man takes this method of recommending christianity, but they

thus destroy its force and beauty. The *beauty* of the religion of Christ, is its *simplicity*, therefore the more like our religious ceremonies are to those attended to by Christ, and by his apostles the better. It is not what pleases the carnal eye that pleases God---he must have spiritual worship. Moses, in that politico-evangelico kingdom of which he was the earthly mediator, was commanded to do all things according to the pattern he had seen in the mount;---and we are, in all things, to follow Jesus Christ and his apostles. If the practice of the apostles, and of the first churches, so far as the apostles approved of it, is not firmly binding upon us, by what rules are we bound to their faith?---The truth is, the authority that binds us to believe ONE sentence of what the apostles preached, and to obey *one* of their precepts, must bind us to believe every sentence that applies to our case, and to obey every precept as far as they refer to us, and are in our power. Every sinner must believe the apostolic gospel, in the very sense in which the apostles preached it, and live a life of pure devotedness to God, at the peril of his own eternal damnation. Believers must lay aside the *trappings* of antichrist, and totally withdraw from her fellowship, under the awful risk of being partakers of her plagues. 2 Cor. 6. 17. Rev. 18. 4.

VI. The kingdom of Christ has no worldly IMMUNITIES, RICHES, OR HONOURS.—The princes of the earth bestow places of honour and profit upon their favourites, and almost every situation of trust has its emoluments attached to it. This is what secures the talents and exertions of placemen to the kings of the earth. It is not mere attachment to loyalty that unites all the nobles of a land to their king---they either *have* places of profit, or are *hunting* after them. Sometimes the love of authority and honour may operate, but in general the love of gain is the mainspring of attachment, and exertion. A patent of peerage, or a lucrative office gives no wisdom to the mind, no peace to the conscience, no holiness to the heart. The possessor, notwithstanding his plentiful income, and his splendid titles, may be a fool, a wretch, and a disgrace to the human species---the most unhappy of the creatures of God. Look at Haman, the prime favourite of Ahasuerus. The favours of earthly princes are seldom bestowed---very uncertain and of short duration.

The Lord Jesus Christ bestows *honours, immunities, and durable riches*, upon every individual member of his kingdom; but these are spiritual, and eternal; suitable to an enlightened mind, an awakened conscience, and the desires of a renewed heart; such as pardon of sin, justification, sanctification, complete acceptance with God, adoption into God's family, fellowship with God, and a full title to future glory, peace with God, joy in the holy ghost, and a hope of eternal life. These are some of the immunities and blessings of Christ's kingdom, blessings of value being spiritual, and durable in their nature. These blessings are not confined to a few court favourites, they belong to all Christ's subjects; his subjects are all enriched and ennobled with righteousness and peace and joy in the holy ghost.

The honours bestowed by the Lord Jesus are far superior to wordly honours. He makes all his subjects kings, and their kingdoms shall last like themselves, through the endless ages of eternity; "they shall reign with Christ forever and ever." In this world they are *minors*, and must submit to the tuition and privations, trials, and sufferings of that state. Their chief mercies are reserved until their minority be over—then shall *every one* have a kingdom and a crown of glory that shall never fade. Under the Jewish dispensation, health and long life, riches, honours, and victory over their enemies, were promised by Jehovah, to their eternal obedience. Exod. 15. 25, 26. & 23. 25—28. Lev. 26. 3—14. Deut. 7. 12—14. & 8. 7—10. & 11. 13—17. & 28. 3—13. Their punishments against flagrant breaches of the Sinai covenant were of a temporal kind—Lev. 26. 14—39, Deut. 4. 25, 26, 27. & 11. 27. & 28. 15—68. & 29. 22—28. [See also Dr. Erskine of Edinburgh's theological dissertations, pages 22—29.] This is understood strictly as to the Sinai covenant, for it was the duty of the Jews to believe and obey God with all their hearts, and it was through faith only they had eternal life; unbelievers among them could not enter into his heavenly rest, Heb. 3. 19. Still eternal obedience, such as a monarch (say a christian monarch) requires of his civil subjects, had temporal immunities added thereto—and a shortcoming of that eternal obedience was punished with corporeal punishment.

Our glorious Sovereign may still punish transgressions in this life at his pleasure, as all power in heaven and on earth are in his hand; but as his gifts are spiritual, and bestowed upon spiritual subjects, his punishments of them go to increase their spiritual interests—"to make them partakers of his holiness." The obedience of the people of God is rewarded in this life, not by giving of them the mammon, the ease, the honours, or the dignities of this world, but by admitting them to more close communion with himself, delivering them from the power of their spiritual enemies, providing for their spiritual wants, and increasing their faith and hope of the glory which awaits them beyond the grave. He gives durable honours, everlasting riches. The immunities he bestows in this life are worth thousands of worlds, and these are only very small foretastes of the inconceivable, incalculable, indefinable riches that await them beyond the grave. "No eye hath seen, nor ear heard, "neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the blessings laid "up by the Lord for those who love him." Oh the folly of those who make this world their portion! Oh the madness of those who hear not the voice of Jehovah as plainly revealed in the new testament! What riches, what mercies, what eternal glory they refuse! I say *refuse*, for all are volunteers in shutting their eyes against the truth of God. Nothing will, nothing can excuse a sinner for not hearing God. Every sinner, every minister, D. D. Bishop, Pope, &c. who have heard the gospel, or read the scriptures, will be justly condemned if they do not believe and obey the truth, just as it is laid down in the scriptures. How daring, how hardened in rebellion against God are those who take upon them to make alterations in the doctrine, laws, and

ordinances of Christ! How can they escape the damnation of hell! "Full well do such lay aside the commandments of God to establish their own traditions,"—yes, they will not receive a member into their communion without the mark of the beast in his forehead.

VII. *The Kingdom of Christ has no limits as to* PLACE, PEOPLE *or* DURATION. The kingdoms of this world extend only over a limited space of the globe, and we know their origin & changes, but the kingdom of Christ is far otherwise. "He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of "the earth. All things shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve "him—There was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom; that all "people, nations and languages should serve him. His dominion is an "everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that "which shall not be destroyed.—He shall reign over the house of Jacob for-"ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end."—Psal. 72. 8. 11. Dan. 7. 14. Luke 1. 33. Every place under heaven has experienced his gentle reign, the sound of his gospel has reached every land at one period or other, and his reign has been exercised in the hearts of *some* of every kindred tribe and nation. Those poor despised people who were reckoned outcasts from society, have become his subjects; the INDIAN, the NEGRO, *the savage rude barbarian*, have all tasted of the sweets of his fellowship, and rejoiced in the light of his countenance. He has not only "restored the tribes of Jacob, and the preserved of Israel, but has become a light to the Gentiles—Yea God's salvation to the ends of the earth." The reign of Christ is to last, "while the sun endureth"—yea the life which he gives is everlasting. His kingdom is without end, and the inheritance he gives, is "incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away." Well then may this kingdom be called the *kingdom of heaven*. This expression evidently points out the greatest distance between the kingdom of Christ and the kingdoms of this world. It is nearly allied to, and introductory to the heavenly state. Its subjects are "born of God—born from above," and are heirs of glory. They are governed by laws, indulged with privileges, and invested with honours which are entirely spiritual and from heaven. The truths they believe, the blessings they enjoy, the obedience they perform, and the hope they possess have all of them a regard to heaven.

The dominion of Christ respects the understandings, the consciences, the hearts, and the affections of men. It commences in regeneration, is carried on by faith and love, and ends in glory. He reigns over a willing, a cheerful, an obedient people; his reign is the reign of heaven in the soul: heavenly laws are implanted in the hearts of all his subjects, a heavenly spirit leads them into all the truth, heavenly love is shed abroad in their hearts by this spirit, heavenly affections inflame their souls, a heavenly hope supports them under all their trials. and animates them to a holy conversation in this present world. Their knowledge, their faith, their hope, their all is from heaven. "All things are of God."

"When the law was given by Moses, Jehovah appeared in awful majesty, 'and, "if so much as a beast touched the mountain, it must be stoned or thrust 'through with a dart." Every thing under that dispensation was calculated 'to strike the people with awe and reverence. The magnificence of his pa-'lace and all its utensils; his numerous train of attendants; the splendid 'robes of the high priest, who, though his prime minister, was not allowed 'to enter the holy of holies, save once a year; and, in all his administrations, 'was obliged to discover the most humble veneration for the king of Israel. 'The strictness with which all impurities and indecencies were forbidden, as 'things which though tolerable in others were unbecoming the dignity of the 'people of God, especially when approaching to HIM: all these tended to 'promote and secure the respect due to their glorious Sovereign." But under the new dispensation, "God as husband of the gospel church, claims from 'his people inward affection and love, and accepts them *only who worship him* '*in spirit and in truth*."---DR. ERSKINE'S THEO. DIS. p. p. 4. 5, 6. This is just to THE POINT. All who are born again, worship and serve God in truth, and are acknowledged as his people, and none else. Now the meanest believer has full access to God, and full fellowship with him---all draw nigh to him crying Abba Father. No terror crowns the brow of the king of saints; his rule is not the rule of a tyrant, nor of a haughty and austere commander, it is that of the kind and loving husband, or of the tender affectionate parent. He rules by love, and such is his own amiableness, such are his tender dealings with the weak of the flock, that he is served with cheerfulness and delight.---His subjects do not embrace him by half measures, they give him their hearts, and he has the chief place in their affections, they enter into all his revealed plans, do all in their power to forward his cause, and take peculiar delight in the success of his kingdom; they are forward to exert their utmost powers to put honour upon their beloved.

A true subject is always expected to walk in the statutes of the kingdom, and the subjects of Jesus shew their friendship by forwarding his cause, and their love by keeping his commandments. They have a heavenly mind conformed to the mind of the Angels, to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to that mind which was in Christ Jesus their forerunner and head, in their measure, and they manifest this mind by their attachment to the person of Christ, to his worship, and will as revealed in his word---and in their obedience to his *whole* will. Their minds are sunk as it were into the will of God, they are dead to the law, dead to the world, dead to sin, and to carnal enjoyments; their minds are heavenly, and their affections set on things above where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. In a word, they are new spiritual heavenly creatures in their souls, their citizenship is in heaven, and their minds are there also---this is not their home, they look for a city beyond the skies, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.---They are the kingdom of heaven.

VIII. I shall now take notice of the *kingdom of Christ* as it appears in the world in distinct and separate CHURCHES, or CONGREGATIONS, and of the *worship* and *ordinances* to which his subjects attend.

When the Lord Jesus Christ arose from the dead, he told his disciples that "all power in heaven and on earth was given unto him," and proceeded to give them directions as his prime ministers of state, how they should set in order the affairs of his kingdom. Universal authority over men and Angels is given to Jesus Christ as the *son of man*, and he has established the fishermen of Galilee as his secretaries, and ambassadors of state. These produce their credentials, they shew us their high commission as delivered to them by their glorious sovereign. "Go ye," saith the king of kings, "unto all the "world. and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is "baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."— "Mark 16. 15. 16. "Go ye therefore, and teach (lit. disciple) all nations, "baptising (immersing) them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of "the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have "commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the "world. Amen." Math. 28. 19. In this manner exactly, did the apostles fulfil their commission. They waited at Jerusalem, according to the commandment of Christ until the holy ghost came upon them---Acts. 1. 4, and then they bore witness of Christ in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. Acts. 1. 8. Wherever the people heard and believed the gospel, the apostles immersed all who believed, in water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It was thus they professed their faith. Acts. 2. 38, 41. and 8. 12, 13, 36. and 9. 18. and 10. 47, 48. and 18. 8. and 22, 16. Rom. 6. 3. Gal. 3. 27.

Those who were baptised united themselves together, into congregations or churches, to attend to the ordinances of Christ. Hence we read of the churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, Galatia, Rome, Ephesus, Corinth, Phillippi, &c. &c. We have the most ample evidence that these churches were made up of baptised believers. A sincere belief with the heart, and confession with the mouth, were required by the apostles and evangelists. They might be mistaken, as in the cases of Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5. & of Simon Magus Acts 8. but they were very cautious in baptising, and receiving members into the churches. Witness the case of Saul of Tarsus, "when he "came to Jerusalem (three years after his conversion) he essayed to join "himself to the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, and believed not "that he was a disciple." Barnabas had to bring proofs of Paul's conversion. Paul himself tells the Corinthians to take heed least they should mix wood, hay, and stubble, with the gold, silver, and precious stones; assuring them that all the churches were to be tried with fire, and that whosoever "defiled the temple of God, him would God destroy." Acts. 9. 25. 1 Cor.

3. 12, 17. They were to receive those who were weak in the faith, Rom. 14. 1, but to have no fellowship with unbelievers—2 Cor. 6. 14. &c.

Were Paul to apply now to some existing churches I fear they would refuse him upon very different grounds from those of the church at Jerusalem —some would exclaim, begone Paul, you are not of our tenets—you say our earnest endeavours to keep the law will not save us—you preach salvation by grace only—your faith is too simple for us—you preach individual election to eternal life---you preach the necessity of conversion and being a new creature---you preach perseverance---you put all the clergy on a level, and set a bad example for ministers to work,---you are too strict about holy conduct---you are an independent, and have the impudence to order particular churches to settle their own affairs; thus despising bishops, presbyteries, sessions, conferences, &c.---you are a baptist---you oppose oratory---you are an enthusiast, a hypocrite, a sectarian---you separated the disciples from the synagogue, though we know the Jewish and the christians churches are one---Begone! you can have no fellowship with us---it is not fit such a fellow should live. This is no vain picture---it is what Paul's followers meet with daily, and have met with for 1800 years. True indeed the same people would not join in every part of this great outcry---some would prefer one charge and others another charge, but when the whole charges are collected together the great mass is formed. Like the Mahometans about eating the swine, they disagree among themselves about that part of the hog into which the devils entered, but they eat it up among them. Thus professors make up the above catalogue of charges against those who follow the great apostle of the Gentiles. I wish all these opposers to mind that thus they oppose the Lord Jesus Christ, and of course must be reckoned his enemies. Those only are his servants who do whatsoever he commandeth---this did Paul, and he was approved of by Jesus Christ.

All the members of the first churches had a right to all the privileges and ordinances of these churches, and were reckoned members of the body of Christ. Hence their titles, "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, saints and faithful brethren in Christ Jesus." The apostolic epistles are all written to saints, and all address them as such, except the epistle of James, which seems intended for believers and unbelievers, for he sometimes addresses brethren in the Lord, and sometimes his Jewish brethren---that is his brethren according to the flesh. The epistles of Peter, though called general, are evidently written to the Gentile churches, hence he addresses them as the sheep of Christ.

What a wide difference there is between the apostolic churches, and the churches of our day! Now, people are made members of churches in infancy, by pouring or sprinkling a little water upon them, while they are confessedly destitute of the knowledge and belief of the truth. Indeed neither the

faith of the gospel, nor its obedience, are required---only a general acknowledgement of something *vaguely* called *christianity* by parents, or godfathers. The most strenuous advocates of this christianity will not attempt to define it, nor will they attempt to prove that even the majority of their church members are real christians. When I speak of real christians I do not mean to allow that there are christians who are not real---I mean only to distinguish christians from professors. The whole earth consists of two families.---The children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus, and the children of the devil. All unbelievers are the children of the devil. The apostles did not knowingly receive any such into fellowship.

The apostolic churches, as I hinted before, when in full order, had office bearers, these were bishops and deacons, Paul told Titus that his design in leaving him in Crete was "to set in order the things that were wanting, and "ordain *elders* in every city, according to his appointment." It seems from this that it was the appointment of the apostles, that every church should have elders, bishops, presbyters, rulers or overseers (one office). Hence we read of the elders of the church of Jerusalem, of the church of Ephesus, &c. and the bishops of the Phillippian church---Acts 15. 4. & 20. 17. Phil. 1. 1.

These elders, or bishops, were to be pointedly proved before their ordination. Paul commands Timothy to "lay hands suddenly on no man"---evidently cautioning him against rashness in ordaining to office. It is evident the apostles did not look to universities, or colleges, for bishops, though thousands might have become college learned during the period between Christ's resurrection and Paul's writing to Timothy and Titus. They looked from among themselves for persons qualified by the holy Ghost. Paul describes the qualifications, 1 Tim. 3. 1---8, & Tit. 1. 6---10. The examination was not to consist of their knowledge of grammar, logick, elocution, moral and natural philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, latin, greek, and hebrew, nor of the knowledge of the divinity of the schoolmen, &c. The gospel of the apostles did not need such additions. The Bishop must be apt to teach, that is, he must speak intelligible language so as to convey just ideas of his subject, and that is all the learning required. But a great deal was then necessary that is now dispensed with, such as being "*blameless, not selfwilled, not soon* "*angry, not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy* LUCRE; *a lover of* "*hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate,* HOLDING FAST "THE FAITHFUL WORD, &c. He must be *patient*, not a *brawler*, not COVE- "TOUS; must *rule* his own house well,---must NOT BE A NOVICE, (i. e. a new "believer)"---but (look to unbelieving bishops) must have "a *good report* of the world." Tit. 1. 1. Tim. 3. These are the qualifications for office in the churches of Christ, and woe be to the churches that overlook them---they certainly wrong themselves, besides despising the authority of Jesus Christ. Every one of them can now be dispensed with. If many of the clergy of the

present day could get the, *nots*, and noes blotted out of the first part of the above description, and placed in other parts of it, it might suit them better. When it would *read*, covetous, greedy of filthy lucre, soon angry, &c.---and *not* a lover of good men, of hospitality, &c. *not* sober, just, &c. Thus having been proved, they were solemnly set apart to the office, by prayer and fasting, and laying on of hands.* The deacons were set apart in the same way, Acts 6. 6. & 13. 3. & 14. 23. 1 Tim. 4. 14. & 5. 22. The deacons were the temporal servants of the church. We have often wondered how the clergy in general, have managed so well to keep the deacons in their own place, while they have usurped so much unlawful authority for themselves—authority never given them by Jesus Christ.

The first churches, being thus organised, if we may use the expression, attended to all things which Christ had commanded them. As I noticed before, these things consisted in prayer, praise, reading the scriptures, exhortation, preaching the gospel, eating the Lord's Supper, and the fellowship or contribution for the poor. There is not a doubt but the elders presided at all the meetings, and at all the ordinances, though we have no proof that attendance on ordinances depended on the existence or presence of elders - nay we think it can be proved that the disciples always attended to the ordinances every Lord's day from their uniting in church fellowship—and they could not ordain elders till they proved them, yet they had gifted brethren.

That *public* prayers, not only of the elders, but also of the brethren, according to the directions given them in general as a body--(Rom. 12. 12. 1 Cor. 11, 4. and 14. 14. Eph. 6. 18. 1 Tim. 2. 1, 2. Jas. 5. 16. Jude ver. 20. and as was exemplified in the first churches---Acts 1. 14 and 2. 42.) should be attended to, admits not of a doubt--and to their prayers and thanksgivings the whole church should say---Amen. 1. Cor. 14. 16.

"Praise is comely for the upright in heart." The first churches sang psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Matth. 26, 30. 1. Cor. 14. 15. Col. 3. 16. but they had neither organs, viols, nor flutes---neither had they singing bands of ungodly people set by themselves---it was the church which sang the praises of God as such.

The *public reading* of the scriptures was attended to by the Jews every Sabbath day, and the same end seems to be had in view in writing the new testament revelations, Acts 15. 20. 21, which was also commanded to be read in the churches as it was given forth; Col. 4. 16. 1 Thess. 5. 27, and so Timothy is exhorted to give attendance to reading, as well as to exhortation and

*They were also supported by the church, so far as they were able to do so, but not as a distinct body of clergy. Still many wrought for their living, and it was their duty to do so when the church could not support them. Paul set the example, still it is the bounden duty of believers to support their ministers comfortably.

doctrine, 1 Tim 4---13. It is evident this was in the Ephesian church as the epistle was written to him to direct him how to act in that church---1 Tim. 3. 14. 15.

Preaching and *expounding* the word, which is the proper work of elders, and teachers, or evangelists, who are to feed the flock, and labour in word and doctrine, (1 Peter 5. 2. 1 Tim. 5. 17. Acts 13. 1. &c.) is part of the apostolic practice---Acts 2. 42. They taught publicly and from house to house---Acts 5. 42. and 20. 20. 2 Tim. 4. 2.

Another ordinance to which the first churches attended, but which is now generally (as a godly friend of mine once remarked) thrown out at the doors of meeting houses, to make way for the splendid talents of the preachers, was the *mutual exhortations* of the brethren--A duty expressly enjoined, Col. 3. 16. 1 Thess. 4.18. Heb. 3. 13, and that when the churches were assembled together publicly. Heb. 10. 24, 25.

The *fellowship* (koinonia, contribution, communication, distribution, as in Rom. 15 26. 2 Con. 9. 13, Phil. 4. 14, 15. 1 Tim. 6. 18. Heb. 13. 16.) was the collection for the poor and other necessary uses ; this the church at Jerusalem continued steadfastly in, Acts 2. 42, and the apostles assign the first day of the week for it. 1 Cor. 16. 1, 2.

The first churches *eat the Lord's supper* when met together. This seems a social ordinance. Though the number of Christians who meet together to attend to this ordinance need not be great, still the ordinance is intended to shew their unity, as well as Christ's dying love---Matth. 18. 20. Luke 24. 30, 35. 1 Cor. 10. 16 17. Chap. 12. The main design of the supper is to keep in memory the death of Jesus Christ. Luke 22. 19.---The bread and wine being emblems of the body and blood of Christ, Matth. 23. 26. 28, those who surround his table see Christ as it were crucified before their eyes. Gal. 3. 1. It is the duty and the privilege of the people of God to attend to this ordinance.

The above quoted passages, in their plain meaning, aside from the quibbling of schoolmen, and from the glosses of those interested in denying these ordinances, prove to a demonstration, that they were all constantly observed by the first churches. It now remains to ascertain the stated time, or whether they had any stated time. Various particular reasons are shewn in scripture to induce them to observe the first day of the week as the stated time for this purpose. On this day the Lord Jesus arose from the dead. Matth. 28. 1—7, manifested himself alive unto his disciples, Luke, 24. John 20. 19, 26, poured out the holy Spirit upon them. Acts 2---and it is called the *Lord's day*, Rev. 1. 10. The first christians, under the direction of the apostles, kept this day sacred to the memory of Christ's resurrection, and upon it they statedly assembled to observe the ordinances of divine worship.---

Acts 20. 17. 1 Cor. 11. 18, 20, and 16. 2. This we ought to esteem equivalent to direct precept, indeed we have no other guide of religious practice but their example. The dispute about keeping the first day of the week as a day of rest and devotion is forever settled by its being called the *Lord's day*, and observed as such by the apostles and first churches; whatever is the Lord's must be devoted to his service---a withholding of his own from him is *robbery*. On this day then the disciples met together and attended to *all the ordinances*. Communion sabbaths, or covenant meetings, were then unknown, for the disciples eat the Lord's supper every Lord's day. The church at Troas came together on the first day of the week for the very purpose of eating the Lord's supper. Acts 20. 7. and this seems to have been their ordinary practice. It was the same in Corinth. 1 Cor. 11. 18, 20, 21, 23. (compare with chap. 16. 1. 2.) The church of Jerusalem attended to the Lord's supper as often as to preaching &c. Acts. 2. 42. If this passage proves that the first churches met on the first day of the week at all, it proves also that they eat the Lord's supper. All the ordinances were attended to at the church meeting, which was evidently every first day of the week.

The Lord's day then was appointed as a memorial of the resurrection of Christ, and on that day, viz. on the first day of *every* week, the churches of Christ, established by the apostles, attended to the memorial of his death, and to the other ordinances appointed by him for their edification.

The Lord's day is a memorial of Christ's resurrection, and the Lord's supper is a memorial of his death, and the other ordinances are his commandments, and intended for the growth of the church. Prayer and praise are acts of worship; reading, exhortation, and preaching, are the appointed means of edification, or growth in knowledge, and the fellowship is a manifestation of christian love. How suitable that all these should be attended to at once! As to the trifling excuses of inconvenience, &c. that are made to this simple apostolic plan, they are scarce worth noticing. Nothing can excuse disobedience to Christ but positive inability. The writer has attended to the ordinances in this manner for twenty-four years, and he never saw inconvenience arise, though he has been in town and country churches, both in Britain and in Canada. Some have said the attending to the Lord's supper every week would lessen our reverence for it. Does a man's being frequently engaged in prayer lessen the ferveney of his devotion? No. The reverse is the case. The oftener a christian's mind is drawn to the sufferings of Christ, the more will he be changed into Christ's image.

Those who attend to apostolic example will find it simple pleasant and instructive, there is no pomp, nor worldly shew in it, but it brings the *vitals* of christianity as it were naked before our senses, and every part of the service is impressive and instructive; all calculated to raise the highest devotion in the *soul*, to inspire the heart with zeal for the glory of God, and to fill the

mind with solid joy and peace. Let me *urge* all believers to follow apostolic example—the Gentile churches were commended for following the churches that were in Judea in Christ Jesus. If we do not follow their example we have neither precept nor example to guide us. The apostle tells the Corinthians (1 Cor. 11. 1.) that he will praise them if they keep the ordinances as he has delivered them; he also says that he ordains the same things in all the churches (1 Cor. 4. 17. and 7. 17. and 11. 16. and 14. 33.) what he received of the Lord he delivered to the churches, 1 Cor. 11. 23, and those who consent not to apostolic doctrine are not of God, 1 Tim. 6. 3 &c.

Some hide themselves under a cloak of their own weaving, viz. that we have no fixed rules laid down in scripture, and contend that if the Lord intended us to follow the first churches he would have said *so* and *so*. Is Jehovah obliged to reveal his will in the words we think proper? Can we lay down a better arrangement for him than his infinite divine mind can devise and establish? Shall my horse or my ox find fault with me for not speaking my mind in other language? "Vain man would be wise though born as a wild ass, colt;" and would dictate to the creator though he is only the clay in the hand of the potter. Rom. 9. 20, 21. But why not contend for a new faith? We have no doctrine spoken particularly to us in the New-Testament—all the faith was spoken to the first churches, and the practice was all commanded them. All we have then is an account of the faith and practice of apostolic churches; and if we think their faith necessary to our salvation, that faith must bring forth their practice. The same spirit indites both, and for the same end, viz. that we may believe and obey.

But mark ye, brethren, (believers only can obey) Jesus gave a pointed commandment to his apostles, to go and disciple all nations, and teach them to observe whatsoever he had commanded. Matth. 28. 18. 19. The command to teach all Christ's will is as pointed as the one to disciple and baptize. The apostles did as Christ commanded, they discipled by preaching the gospel, they gathered the disciples into churches, and taught them to do Christ's will. This command reached to all *nations* and to the *end of the world*. The apostles being dead yet speak in their writings, and Jesus countenances none but such as believe their doctrine, and walk in the commandments they gave, and in the ordinances they approved of and set on foot. Whosoever joins their directions and example have a plain rule of obedience in every possible case.

It is quite astonishing how people can profess to be the disciples of Christ, and yet live in silent neglect of almost all his own will. I fear many such will discover a *hole* in their mantle at last. By what authority some strenuously contend for holiness of life in one's general conversation, and neglect almost the whole of God's ordinances, I cannot conceive. The same God who said, "be ye holy, for I am holy," hath also said, "repent and be baptised *every*

one of you for the remission of sins," and also, "do this in remembrance of me," &c. I fear some are like the Jews of old. they believed (that is professed) but they did not confess the Lord Jesus, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; "for they loved the praise (approbation) of men, more than the praise (approbation) of God." "*Unless a man forsake all, take up his cross and follow me, he cannot be my disciple.*" "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." "If ye love me keep my commandments." "My sheep hear my voice and follow me." John, 15. 15, 21, 23. 1 John, 2. 5. & 5. 3. John 10. 27.

CONCLUSION.

DEAR READERS:

From what you have now gone over, you have seen that Jehovah, to whom all things, past present and to come are known, determined to erect a kingdom in this world upon the ruins of the kingdom of Satan; and that knowing from everlasting what would happen, he loved the sons of men, and determined to save a people for himself through the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, his only begotten son. You have seen that great and precious promises were made to mankind after the fall upon this subject, and that, in due time, all these promises were fulfilled. "God so loved the world, that he sent his only begotten son, (into it) that whosoever believed in him should not perish but have everlasting life." John. 3. 16—20. Thus in due time when there was no other remedy, Jesus Christ came to rescue man from the curse of the law—from the wrath of God due to him for sin. "He died the *just* for the *unjust* that he might bring us to God;" He became the propitiatory victim for sin, that we poor lost criminals might be justified thro' faith in him without the works of the law. All who believe in him shall be saved whatever was their former character; whether they wallowed in open sin, drinking up iniquity like the thirsty ox drinking water, being led captive by the devil at his will; or whether they were immersed in the honours, the pleasures, the riches or the cares of this world, or industriously engaged in establishing their own righteousness, in opposition to the righteousness of God. He that believeth, of any or of all these characters, shall be saved, and whosoever believeth not, however religious he may appear among men, and however good he may be in his own eyes, shall be damned.

You have seen, reader, that every believer is adopted into the family of God, and become a subject of the kingdom of Jesus Christ through faith. Jesus is exalted a *prince*, and *saviour*. God hath set his KING upon his holy hill; and all who believe the gospel, and none else, are the subjects of his kingdom, or members of his church. Such are enlisted under his banner, and are by him clothed, armed, and taught the christian warfare. They are

made a holy people, devoted to the service of the Lord Jesus Christ, and are governed by his *spiritual laws*. They are not endowed with the riches, honours, immunities, or splendours of this world—nay they are the poor and despised, the hated and persecuted among mankind—but they are loved by Jehovah, and *heirs* of an everlasting incorruptible kingdom beyond the grave. You have seen that this kingdom is not only distinct from all earthly kingdoms, but distinct from that established by Jehovah himself at Horeb. That was the type, this the antitype; that was the shadow, this the substance; that was the shell, this the kernel. This kingdom is established upon better promises. That had earthly promises, this has heavenly promises: that had earthly priests, this a heavenly priest; that had sacrifices of animals, this the sacrifice of God manifested in the flesh; that had laws relating to outward conduct, this laws to regulate the heart as the source of all conduct; that had earthly prospects, this heavenly prospects—in a word the one was a reign of Jehovah on earth as the prince of Israel, the other is the reign of heaven in and over the hearts and affections of men.—The one had carnal people and carnal ordinances, the other has spiritual subjects, governed entirely by spiritual laws, and attending to spiritual ordinances.

What then, dear reader, is your duty? Surely you ought to examine whether you are enlisted under the banner of Jesus Christ—whether you are adopted into this spiritual kingdom, and have your name written in heaven.—You ought to make "*your* calling and election sure." You ought to enquire whether you are clothed with the robe of Christ's righteousness—have put on Christ—have his word dwelling in you—are sealed with the holy Spirit of promise as the earnest of your inheritance—have put on the whole armour of God—& are standing fast in the truth contending against the wiles of the devil. You ought to see whether your affections are "set upon things above where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God"—whether you are "partaker of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" and are "crucifying the flesh with its passions and lusts." Examine whether you desire the riches, honours, applause, and pleasures of this life, or "the riches which cometh from God only." Is it the continual cry of your soul, "Lord teach me thy precepts"—and "Lord what wouldest thou have me to do!" Do you love the people of God as such? Have you joined their fellowship? Are all the New Testament laws and ordinances precious in your eyes? Have you come out from among the world, and publickly professed your faith in Jesus Christ? And are you now his devoted servant?

If my reader can answer these questions in the presence of God with a clear conscience, his state is happy however much he may be despised in this world. Christ lays upon you, dear brother, no other burden than to hold fast till he comes. "Lo, I come quickly, hold fast that thou hast, let no man take thy crown."

INCREASE OF THE CHURCH.

1
Shout, for the great redeemer reigns,
Through distant lands his trumpets spread,
And sinners, freed from Satan's chains,
Own him their Saviour and their head.

2
God's sons and daughters from afar,
Daily at Zion's gates arrive;
Those who were dead in sin before,
By sovereign grace are made alive.

3
The love of truth unites their souls,
Hence they are one in Christ their head,
His face by faith they all behold,
His holy paths they cheerful tread.

4
In Christ their King they all rejoice,
His laws are written in their hearts;
They know their shepherd by his voice,
And from his fold they ne'er depart.

5
O may his conquests still increase,
And may his pow'r his foes subdue,
While angels celebrate his praise,
And saints his growing glories shew.

6
Loud Hallelujahs to the Lamb,
From all below and all above,
In lofty songs exalt his name,
In songs as lasting as his love.

SPIRITUAL TEMPLE COMPLETING.

1
Sing to the Lord above,
Who deigns on earth to raise
A temple to his love,
A monument of praise;
Ye saints around, through all its frame,
The builder's name harmonious sound.

2
Beneath his eye and care,
This edifice shall rise,

Majestic strong and fair,
And shine above the skies:
Then shall be place the polish'd stone,
Ordain'd to crown this work of grace.

DAWNING OF THE CHURCH'S GLORY.

1

My soul, with sacred joy survey,
The glories of the latter day;
Its dawn already seems begun,
Sure earnest of the rising sun.

2

The friends of truth assembled stand,
(A chosen, consecrated band.)
The standard of the cross display,
And cry aloud, *Behold the way.*"

3

The north "gives up," the south no more
"Keeps back" her consecrated store;
From east to west the message runs,
All lands, and islands, yield their sons.

4

Auspicious dawn, thy rising ray
With joy I view, and hail the day;
Thou sun arise, supremely bright,
And fill the world with purest light.

THE LAMB TRIUMPHANT OVER ALL HIS FOES.

1

O 'Tis a sound should fill the world!
The sound of *mercy* through the lamb,
Lo, Satan from his seat is hurl'd,
Unable to withstand Christ's name,
From heaven like light'ning see him fall,
Struck by the arm that conquers all.

2

Lord give the word!—and wak'd by thee,
Let many tongues thy vict'ry tell!
That helpless sinners now may see,
That thou hast vanquish'd death and hell:
Sound, sound the joyful truth abroad,
And draw poor sinners near to God.

A SERMON ON BAPTISM.

Colossians II. 12.

Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

The Scriptures are given us by the inspiration of God, the Spirit. Whatever he reveals, we are bound to believe, and whatever he commands, we are bound to obey. The Spirit of God does not amuse our minds with non-essentials, as some would have us to believe; but gives us important doctrines to believe, and important ordinances to obey. The ordinance of baptism is none of the least important. It is not only a positive institution, but in this institution, or ordinance, we have very important truths figuratively held forth to our view. The consideration of this ordinance with its figurative or spiritual meaning shall form the following discourse.

I shall consider the subject under the following heads.

I. Baptism is an ordinance of Christ.
II. This ordinance is figurative.
III. It is a profession of faith in Christ.
IV. It is a binding duty on believers.
V. There is but one baptism.
VI. It is a profession of our having taken Christ's yoke upon us, &c.

I. Baptism is an ordinance, or institution of Christ.

The word baptism is a New Testament word, and holds forth a New Testament ordinance, or institution. Though there were divers baptisms, as the Greek term means, Heb. 9. 10. under the old, or Jewish dispensation, Num. 19. 7, 19. they were carnal ordinances, imposed upon a carnal people, purifying ceremonial uncleanesses—and only shadows of good things to come. Heb. 9. 9, 10. The N. T. baptism is an institution of Christ, given to a new creation of men, holding forth the most important doctrines of the gospel viz.—The death and resurrection of Christ as the substitute for sinners—and the believer's death unto sin, and resurrection to newness of life, through faith in Christ Jesus.

This ordinance began with John the baptist (see Matth. 3. 6. Mark 1. 4. Luke 3. 2—21. John 3. 23. to the end) was continued by Christ, John 4, 1,

2. and by him instituted as a standing ordinance in his church to the end.—Matth. 28. 19. Mark 16. 16. Some disputes have arisen about a supposed difference between the baptism of John and the baptism of Christ; and it has been said that Paul rebaptised John's disciples—Acts 19. 3, 4, 5: this is a mistake. Paul is here declaring John's doctrine and practice. John baptised into the faith of Christ as just at hand, & declared salvation through faith in him, John 3. 36, and therefore this was enough. Those disciples had been baptised into the faith of the character of Christ. In Christ's commission to his apostles, Matth. 28. 19. he commands those of all nations who should become disciples to be baptised. Here then we have a plain account of the institution:—let us see what the institution itself consists of.

1*st. Baptism is an immersion in water.*

This appears, *first*, from the meaning of the word baptism. The word is a Greek word, adopted into our language without translating it, with a varied termination. The Greek words are, bapto and baptismo—and in all the Lexicons I have seen—as, Schrevelli. Parkhurst, Ewing, More &c. they are translated, dip—plunge—immerse, but never sprinkle, or pour. I shall here quote two eminent pedo-baptist critics on the meaning of the term—Dr. McKnight of Edinburgh and Dr. Campbell of Aberdeen. Dr. McKnight says, in his harmony of the gospels, vol. 1. p. 56. speaking of John the baptist—"he was sirnamed the baptist, from his baptising, or washing, his disciples."---Again, p. 69. on Luke 3. 15, 16. he has these words as if expressed by John. "I am sent from God, and the message I bring is, that all ranks and orders of persons must *repent*. Withal, to impress this doctrine the more deeply upon their minds, I address their senses by *washing* all my disciples (in) with water. So far Dr. McKnight. Dr. Campbell translates Mark. 7. 3, 4, as follows: "for 'the Pharisees, and indeed all the Jews, observing the tradition of the el-'ders, eat not until they have washed their hands, by pouring a little water 'upon them; and if they be come from the market, by dipping them." In his 'note on the above he says, "for illustrating this passage let it be observed, '1st. that the two verbs rendered wash in the English translation, are different 'in the original. The first is *nipsontai* properly translated *wash*; the second 'is *baptizontai*, which limits us to a particular mode of washing, for baptizo denotes to *plunge* to *dip*. The Jews thought themselves more defiled when they went to the market than at ordinary times. Again Dr. Campbell says, diss. 8. p. 2 § 2. "for this reason, I should think the word immerson a better "name than baptism." In a note on Matth. 3. 11. he says, "the word bap-"tizein, both in sacred authors and in classical, signifies, to dip, to plunge, to "immerse." Here then we have the view of two of the first rate critics of our day of the meaning of the word baptism—critics the more to be regarded as they were pedo-baptists. If we are then, in our explanations of scripture, to abide by the plain meaning of words we must conclude, that the baptism instituted by Christ, *is immersion in water*.

This appears, SECONDLY, from the examples of baptism recorded in the New Testament. In Mark 1. 9. 10. we are told, "that Jesus came from Nazareth to Galilee and was baptised of John in Jordan, and straightway coming up out of the water" &c. (Dr. Campbell) "as soon as he arose out of the water." How natural this account. John immersed Jesus in the river Jordan; and he arose, or came up out of the water, and the heavens opened and the Spirit of God descended, &c. We are told, John 3. 23, that Jesus began to baptize, (that is by his disciples John 4. 2.) and that John was baptising in Enon, near to Salem, because there was *much water* there. After all the quibbles of pedo-baptists upon this passage, any common reader, and for such the N. T. was written, must infer that much water was necessary. Any common well would supply water to sprinkle thousands, but much water was necessary to immerse the whole body. The only other passage I shall bring forward is, Acts. 8. 38, 39. "and he (the Eunoch) commanded the chariot to stand still; and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunoch; and he baptised him. And when they were come up out of the water" &c. What a natural, exact account! Philip and the Eunoch went into the water, and Philip according to the Eunoch's own request, v. 36. immersed him. Could Philip have dispensed with immersion, and substituted sprinkling he would have surely done it in this case, as the person to be baptised was a great man, and neither he nor Philip could have clothes suitable for such an ordinance. But the command of Christ was positive--"Go and convert, or disciple, all nations, immersing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Philip understood the command, and acted accordingly. The Holy Ghost seems to have given this account the more full that none in after ages might plead ignorance. After reading such plain language, how can professed disciples of Jesus, *reject* or *neglect* this ordinance! O, the darkness of the human mind!

2nd. The next thing to be considered is, who are the proper *subjects* of this ordinance.

It is plain from the scriptures that *believers only* are fit subjects of baptism. This is seen, first from the words of institution, which we have in Matth. 28. 19. 20. and in Mark 16. 16. The first of these passages reads thus in our common bibles, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The margin reads, "making disciples, or christians, of all nations." Dr. Campbell--- "convert all nations." All comes to the same point, but the word means to disciple. The next passage is Mark 16. 16. "and he said unto them, go ye unto all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature: he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned."— Here is a plain command to baptise believers only. Dr. McKnight, having brought forward both these passages together, adds—"Withal those who believed in consequence of their preaching, he appointed to be received into his church by the rite of baptism, and be taught all the precepts he had enjoined them. Dr. Campbell says on Matth. 28. 19. 20. "There are manifestly three

things which our Lord here distinctly enjoins his apostles to execute with regard to the nations, to wit, to convert them to the faith, to initiate the converts into the church by baptism, and to instruct the baptised in all the duties of the christian life." I do not bring forward the above authorities because they make these passages plainer, for that is impossible, but because these men, as critics on the language, and at the same time Pedo-baptists, have been under the necessity of giving a fair scriptural view of the text. Let those who contend for infant baptism point out any such passage and we will believe them. Our statutes say that all males above sixteen years of age, thall serve in the militia, and that those who are twenty-one years of age, shall work on the high-ways —who would infer from this that infants must be militia-men, and work on the roads, merely because the statute does not expressly forbid their doing so? Yet such is the absurd reasoning used respecting the subjects of baptism.

Secondly. That *believers only* ought to be baptised is evident, from the uniform practice of the apostles. Even John the baptist refused baptism to those whose conduct did not evidence their repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. Their fleshly relation (which is contended for in the case of infants) was of no avail. A new dispensation, and new ordinances required new men. Matth. 3. 7—11. Luke. 3. 7—10. 17. Christ baptised only those who became disciples. John 4. 1. Peter baptised only those who gladly received the word, Acts 2. 41, after having declared to them the necessity of repentance as a thing previous to baptism. v. 38. Philip baptised the Samaritans on a profession of their faith in the gospel he had preached, Acts 8. 12. 16, yea Simon the sorcerer was baptised when he professed the faith. When the Ethiopian Eunoch said, "Here is water what doth hinder me to be baptised," Philip's answer was, "If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest." Then, upon the profession of his faith, Philip baptised him. It is perfectly plain, from these examples, that a profession of unfeigned faith in the gospel of Christ, and a corresponding conduct, only entitles to baptism.—Moreover, it was when Peter saw the effects of the Holy Ghost on the family and friends of Cornelius, that he commanded them to be baptised, Acts 10. 47, 48. It was when the Lord opened the heart of Lydia to receive the gospel preached by Paul, that she was baptised, Acts 16. 14. Yes, say some, but her household were baptised, and they are not said to have believed. Are they said *not* to have believed? Why should we restrict the grace of God in Lydia's house more than in other houses.

The household of the nobleman, John 4. 53; Cornelius, Acts 10. 2; the jailer of Philippi, Acts 16. 34; Crispus, Acts. 18. 8; Aristobulus, Rom. 16. 10. Narcissus, Rom. 16. 11; Onesiphorus, 2 Tim. 4. 19; Stephanus, 1 Cor. 1 16. & 16. 15; were evidently believers; and why not the family of Lydia?—If we have proof of the faith of eight families, and a ninth not mentioned, and that the family of a widow, of which there is no proof that ever she had children—can we conclude that her household were infants and that they were bap-

used, contrary to the command of Christ, and to every other example of scripture. His household were brethern, Acts 16. 40. The jailer and his house were baptised when they believed the gospel, Acts 16. 29.---35. Here Paul declares the jailer and his house should be saved if they believed in Christ. He preached the gospel to all the household—the jailer and his house believed, and rejoiced in God :—This was the man and the household that Paul baptised. Nothing but the most obstinate blindness of mind, and the most stern prejudice, can lead any man to deny the faith of the jailer's household. All the prelates in England, joined by all the learned Pædo-baptists on earth, never can find infants in Lydia's, or in the jailer's families, nor make their case an exemption from the general rule of baptising believers only. Here then we have the strongest possible proof—proof arising from the plain commandment of Christ, & from the uniform practice of John the baptist, of Christ, of his apostles, and evangelists, without one case of a doubtful nature presenting itself to our view, that believers of the gospel *only* should be baptised. True a profession of the faith only is required, but it is such a profession as includes the *knowledge of the truth, or gospel*, and a corresponding conduct *from the commencement of that profession.* Faith without works is dead.

A practice the reverse of this has been prevalent. Infant baptism was introduced, and by it believer baptism has been almost totally laid aside. Infant baptism began first about the third century. It arose from a wrong view of baptism itself and of the way of salvation. It was first contended that baptism was necessary to salvation—then that infants had as much need of salvation as others---and that, therefore, infants should be baptised. This is the origin of infant baptism. Now men plead for it on various grounds, widely differing from one another. Some call it regeneration, in direct opposition to the whole word of God. With such it is not worth the pains to contend, if it be not for the good of others, as their views shew their complete ignorance of the gospel of Christ, and of all its effects. Some, however, who give reason to hope that they have tasted that the Lord is gracious, hold this practice as an ordinance of Christ. They plead,

1st. The household of Lydia, and of the jailer, and say, that it is probable there were infants in them. Probability is no proof. Positive precept, or example must be brought forward to prove this subject, as it runs contrary to Christ's commandment, and to the example of the apostles. Inference however plausible, will never lay aside a command of Christ---nor establish a practice which he has not instituted---all such practices are will-worship.

2nd. Some say circumcision was the initiating ordinance under the old dispensation, and that infants were admitted to it; that baptism came in its place, and therefore infants ought to be baptised. Very plausible reasoning if true.--Here, however, two particular things must be proved. 1st. That baptism came in place of circumcision. To prove this it is contended that circumcision

was a seal of the gospel covenant, for which Rom. 4. 11. is quoted. This text proves no such thing. Circumcision was a seal of the righteousness (justness) of Abraham's faith. A testimony to Abraham that what he believed was the true gospel, Rom 4. 11, and a token that Jehovah was to be his God, and the God of his seed. Gen. 17. 7, 11. Instead of its being a seal of the gospel covenant it was a covenant (institution) of itself, Acts 7. 8. instituted to certify Abram's faith and God's relation to him as the God of his seed; and a sign that the land of Canaan should be given him---Gen. 17. Again---Baptism, say they, is said to be the circumcision of Christ. Col. 2. 11. It is not baptism, but the circumcision of the heart. Deut. 10. 16 & 30. 6. Jer. 4. 4. that is here meant, by which the sins of the flesh are crucified. Therefore there is no proof that baptism has come in place of circumcision. But though it were allowed, which I am not inclined to deny, that baptism, as well as circumcision, is an initiating ordinance---it remains to be proved,---2ndly. That the Old Testament and New Testament churches are the same. The reverse of this is plain. The people, and the ordinances thereof are quite different. The Jewish church was made up of the seed of Abraham according to the flesh. *holy or unholy:* but the N. T. church is made up of converted sinners---members of the body of Christ. Gal. 3. 26 to end. In Matth. 3. 9, 10, we are told that fleshly connection even with Abraham, the father of the faithful, is of no avail---that the axe is laid to the root of the trees---and that every tree, or professor, that has no fruit is rejected. In John 1. 12. 13. That parentage does not give a title to be members of the church of Christ, or sons of God. But that all such must be born again through faith. In 2 Cor. 5. 16, 17, we are told that the apostles acknowledged no man after the flesh, i. e. for his fleshly relation; but that all those whom they acknowledge are new creatures. Yea they acknowledged Christ no longer as the son of Abraham, but as the son of God, ---and Lord of all. And lastly Paul tells us, Heb. 3. 9. &c. that the old church, with all its ordinances, are done away, and a church established, whose members *all know the Lord*, from the least of them to the greatest. It is plain from the above passages, and many others that might be quoted, that the N. T. church is made up of believers *only*, and that to them only belong the ordinances of Christ. All baptised persons have a right to membership, and to the Lord's supper, indeed to all church privileges. There may be unworthy members in a church of Christ; such was the case in the apostolic churches; but the wholesome discipline of Christ, will bring them to repentance, or put them away. Matth. 18. 18, 19, 20.

3rd. Next we are told the children of godly parents are holy---(witness the families of Abraham and David) as the apostles state, 1 Cor. 7. 14. This holiness is neither of heart nor of life---and we know of no other.---It is no more than legitimacy the apostle has in view. Holiness signifies *being devoted to God*---when any prove themselves so, they have a right to baptism. No man may forbid water.

4th. The long practice of infant baptism is brought forward. It is very true, the practice began, as I noticed before, upwards of fifteen hundred years ago; but it did not begin with the apostles of Christ. It began with the *corruption* of the gospel, and has been *its* constant attendant. Men have long lived in sin.--Will this prove sin a duty! I know of no greater sin than supplanting an ordinance of Christ by an ordinance of man's making. Men have long despised Christ's ordinances.—Will this prove a warrant for rejecting these ordinances! More than two thirds of the human race reject the scriptures—Is this a reason for our neglecting them? If we call ourselves christians, let us drop the systems of men—and let us hold fast the doctrine and practice of the apostles of Christ. To them Christ committed the keys of the kingdom of heaven; Matth. 16. 9 and 18. 18. John 20. 22. 23—all that are of God hear them. 1 John 4. 6. One sentence from an apostle of Christ, is of more weight than all the councils of popes and prelates, and priests that ever were held in the world—yes, and a plain man, taught by the spirit of God, understands the word of God better than them all. The wisdom of this world can never find out the will of God. The teaching of the spirit *only* leads a sinner into the knowledge of the truth of God. 1 Cor. 2. 9. to the end.

The other reasonings, in favour of infant baptism, are not worthy of notice. They are the carnal reasonings of the human heart. The above are the chief grounds I ever knew held by believers. Early education, and the reasonings of interested men, have made an impression on some of the minds of the people of God by the above things; but I hope the day is now in its dawn, when all God's children shall see his authority and ordinances alike. What a pity that the people of God should stand at a distance from the ordinances of Christ, & from one another, while the scriptures are so urgent for their obeying Christ, and loving one another. Rom. 16. 26. 2 Cor. 10. 5. 1 Peter 1. 2, Rom. 6. 17. Rom. 2. 3. 2 Thess. 1. 8. 1 Peter 4. 17. 1 John 4. 7. 16. John 13. 35. Rom. 12. 9. Gal. 5. 6. 1 John 3. 10. and 5. 1. and 3. 14. It is perfectly evident these passages pointedly condemn the practice of many professors. Many professors, can scarcely shew common civility to a baptist, though their own consciences tell them these are godly people—and many baptists act the same to other professors. Let these read the above portions of the word of God.

II. This ordinance is figurative.

1st. It represents Christ's burial, which includes his death, and the believer's death and burial to sin through faith in him. Our text says, the Colossians were buried with him by baptism, and that in the same rite, they were raised with him through the faith of the operation of God. Paul says to the Romans, not only that they were buried with him by baptism, but that they were also raised with him to newness of life—moreover, that their old man was crucified with him, so as the body (or power) of sin was destroyed—that they might not henceforth serve sin. Rom. 6. 4—7. The people of God are

naturally dead in trespasses and sin, like other men; Ephes. 2. 1—4. They are alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, as others. Eph. 4. 18. They are enemies to God as others. Col. 1. 21. Rom. 8. 7. Carnally minded, and the servants of sin as others, &c. &c. Rom. 8. 5, 6. and 6. 16. 17, &c. But when they believe the gospel they are quickened thereby---yea, they are moulded into its doctrines. Their ignorance is dispelled, the power of sin is broke in their souls—and they become new creatures, see Rom. 6 throughout. This change is represented in a figure in baptism. The shedding of blood under the law, in circumcision, and in other rites, pointed out the shedding of the blood of Christ as an event that was to take place in Judea, and the ordinances of the N. T. point out the sufferings of Christ as past---the change and union of believers through faith in him---yea that purity of soul which is the common lot of christians---and the glorious life that awaits them beyond death and the grave. As Christ died *for sin* the believer dies *to sin* through faith in his name.

2. Baptism represents Christ's resurrection, and the believer's resurrection from the power and slavery of sin, to newness of life. What a striking figure to see a believer immersed in water, as a token of the burial of Christ---and arising out of the water, as a token of Christ's rising from the grave. As Jesus rose from the grave, so all his people leave their former lusts and passions, and cleave unto the Lord with purpose of heart---have their fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. While we are without the knowledge of Christ it is the motions of sin that regulate our conduct: but when we belive the Gospel, we are led by the Spirit of God. Rom. 7. and 8. 1. Some people suppose the difference made upon a man through the knowledge of the gospel is very small, particularly upon those who formerly lived a decent, if not a religious life. This is a great mistake. The difference to a bystander may appear little indeed, but it is great in itself, and great in the all-seeing eye of Jehovah. The unbeliever's conduct, however fair in the eyes of men, is in itself, and in God's sight *all wrong*. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" and, "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Heb. 11. 6. All the motives and springs of action of an unbeliever are wrong. All his good actions, even his religious services, spring from base motives. Self-love governs his mind. But when he believes the gospel, his works become works of faith and labour of love. It is then he serves God. Formerly he served himself, Sin, and Satan; but the anxious inquiry of his mind is now--"Lord what wouldest thou have me to do!" All this change upon the believer's mind and conduct we have represented to us in baptism.

3. Nearly allied to the foregoing remarks, I observe---that it is a figure of the purification from sin. In 1 Peter 3. 21. Peter says, that baptism is a figure, not of the washing of the body in water so as to purify the flesh, but of the answer of a good conscience. We have this explained, 2 Cor. 12. 1. The believer is purified in heart by faith, Acts 15. 9. and the same faith purifies his

conduct---so that he is manifested to have been made a partaker of the divine nature, by his having escaped the pollution that is in the world through lust.---2 Peter 1. 4. Thus feeling the power of the truth, purifying his heart and life, he has the answer of a good conscience. Ananias commands Paul, Acts 22, 16. to arise and be baptised, washing away his sins. The water in baptism can never wash away sin, but baptism represents the purifying of the soul by the blood of Christ—and the believer in baptism, professes to be thus washed in the blood of atonement. Baptism is then a figure of the purification of the soul and conduct of the believer, through faith in the blood of Christ.

4th. Baptism is a figure of the believer's being filled with the Holy Ghost.—John tells his disciples, whom he baptised, that he baptised only with water, but that Christ would baptise them with the Holy Ghost. Matth. 3. 11. Some contend for sprinkling, pouring &c. from this figure—but surely a full immersion in water is a fitter representation of the whole soul's being filled with the Holy Spirit. The outward sign then is a fit representation of the inward blessing. The sign is all one whether of a thing soon to be possessed, or of a thing possessed already. All the people of God are partakers of the Holy Spirit, Rom. 8. 9. and it is he that operates in enlightening their minds, and in subduing their nat[illegible] through the truth.

5th. Baptism is a figure of the believer's resurrection to eternal life. Rom. 6. 5. Those that now profess their faith in him in baptism shall be at last planted in the likeness of his resurrection. They now rise to newness of life, but they shall then rise from the dead and enter upon everlasting glory. This hope is produced in their souls by faith in his resurrection. 1 Peter 1. 3. What a glorious hope! How worthy of our taking up the cross, and of obeying all Christ's commandments! Many, in their zeal for the subjects and mode of baptism have, in their discussions of this subject, quite overlooked its figurative representations—but these should be our *chief* study. The ordinance becomes peculiarly sweet when we look at it in this point of view. We obey it as a command, but its figures fill our minds with comfort. Every subject fills the child of God with pleasure in which he beholds Christ.

III. Baptism is a profession of our faith in Christ.

The common account of baptism is, that it is a sacrament, which signifies an oath whereby we bind ourselves to give over evil and to do good. We learn nothing of this from the scriptures. What we learn from them is, that it is an act of obedience to Christ, whereby we profess our faith in him. Paul says 1 Cor. 10. 2. that the Israelites were baptised unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea-meaning that they were initiated into the faith of the doctrine of Moses, by being immersed in the sea and cloud. This was a most decided profession of belief in what Moses spoke to them. Who would venture into the heart of the sea, while the water stood in heaps on each side of them, under the shadow of a thick and dark cloud, on any other principle than pure

faith in the promised protection of God given by Moses. So the believer is baptised into Christ, Rom. 6. 3.—into the faith of his death and resurrection. What else but faith, unfeigned faith in the death of Christ as the only atonement could make a man forsake all,—all his self righteousness—all his good works---prayers---tears---and religious feelings and exercises, &c. and take up his cross and follow Jesus Christ? What but real faith in the promise of Christ, of everlasting life, would, or could, make a man become the butt of the enmity, malice, revenge, and persecutions of his relations, friends, and neighbours, and deny himself to every fleshly and every worldly gratification? What but faith in, and love to the Lord Jesus Christ, as the only saviour of the guilty, could make a man devote *himself* and his *all* to the service of God---and make him willing to suffer even unto death, not only for Christ himself, but also for his laws, and his ordinances—and his people? How true is it that faith purifieth the heart Acts 15. 9. overcometh the world, 1 John 5. 4. worketh by love Gal. 5 6. and leads us to endure every trial and every affliction in this world, see Heb. 11. throughout. Baptism is a fair and open profession of this faith. It is the first ordinance of the gospel, an enterance upon a new life of constant dependence upon Jesus Christ, and of unfeigned submission to his will,---and devotedness to his service. See Heb. 11 & 12. 1---6.

IV. Baptism is a binding duty on the people of God.

Whatever God commands, his people are bound to obey; if he has placed them in circumstances in which they can obey. There may be circumstances in which it is impossible to obey, such as deep distress. In such cases God will have mercy and not sacrifice. This is quite a different thing from abstaining from baptism for fear of persecution, want of convenience, &c. It has been asked how men can be immersed where there is no water, and that there are some places where water cannot be found. This is trifling with the will of God. Can it be seriously thought that any person would live in a place where there could not be so much water found as would cover his body? Would a man not travel one or two hundred miles for gain or at the command of his sovereign---and is it too hard if it be absolutely necessary, to travel that distance to obey Christ? Where is the man in Canada that could not reach a lake or river? "He who knoweth his master's will and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes." Many will tell us they cannot see this subject,---take heed lest you get stripes for shutting your eyes on a plain precept. When Christ instituted the preaching of the gospel, he instituted the baptising of all who should believe it. There is no exception made. If any would tell Peter or Paul that they believed the gospel, but could not submit to baptism, they would reject them---for it was thus the first Christians professed the faith. How would it sound with the Apostles to tell them that one professed their faith in infancy, through fathers, or godfathers. What! profess faith before you had it! profess faith by proxy! This would look to the Apostles, *as rank will-worship.*

See the pointed command of Annanias to Paul—'arise, and be baptised, why tarriest thou!" Why do ye linger in obeying God? Was it not your prayer on the way, "Lord what wouldest thou have me to do?" Christ would have you, Saul of Tarsus—you, lately the violent persecutor—Christ would have you to profess your faith in him by baptism—arise, and obey his will---Manifest your faith in him. No argument can excuse the neglect of this pointed command. Peter in his address to those who were pricked in their hearts on the day of pentecost, told them to *repent* and be *baptised*. It was no less their duty to be *baptised* than to *repent*. The one was necessary to their believing the gospel. (a change of mind) the other to their professing it. The same Lord commanded both---and all who profess to know the gospel, must manifest their knowledge by obedience. How many cry like Saul, "Lord what wilt thou have me to do," and lend a deaf ear to Peter's command. Astonishing. That a baptism, instituted by men in opposition to the baptism of Christ, as to mode and subjects---attended to in many cases by ungodly ministers, ungodly parents---and in *all to ungodly children*---should be called the baptism of Christ---and should blind men's eyes on a plain commandment of the Lord Jesus.

Some will be apt to say that we make every thing of baptism: no! we make it what it is; a pointed commandment of Jesus Christ, which must be attended to, at the risk of his displeasure; but we place every one of his commandments on the same level. All must be attended to in their proper places. Those who believe must be baptised.—They must join themselves to the people of God—love the brethren—obey all Christ's commandments, and attend to all his ordinances. This is a true manifestation of christianity. It is the character of God's people that they tremble at his word---that they know Christ's voice, and follow him---that they hear and obey the apostles.

V. There is only one baptism.

Some people, in order to throw dust in the eyes of their hearers, to keep them from seeing the truth upon this important subject tell us there were many baptisms under the law---and that the mode, if not the subjects of the N. T. baptism is of trifling moment. If the ordinance is attended to, it matters little in their view, whether it is in childhood or in old age; whether by sprinkling or by immersion---any resemblance of baptism is enough. There we have three or four distinct ordinances attended to, all under the name of christian baptism. Yea some will acknowledge the primitive mode---and subjects---but tell us that times have altered, climates differ, &c. and that this warrants a different conduct in this respect. It is good if they do not apply the same reasoning to the faith of the gospel. Indeed some do so to regeneration, and to the influence of the Holy Spirit. It is as just to apply this reasoning to the faith as to baptism. The application overthrows Christ's authority as much in the one case as in the other. Such would do well to weigh the words of Samuel to Saul, 1 Sam. 13. 13 and 15. 22, 23. "To obey is better than sacri-

fice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness as iniquity and idolatry; because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he also hath rejected thee from being king."

Paul says, Eph. 4. 5. that there is *one Lord, one faith, one baptism.* There is one God and Father, our creator, who has a right to command us as he pleases---one Lord Jesus Christ, the only mediator between God and man, through whom the chief of sinners are offered a free and full salvation---and *one baptism*, by attending to which we shew our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and our obedience to his will. The verses that close the N. T. ought to have their full force upon our minds. Rev. 22. 18, 19. "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add *unto him* the plagues that are written 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, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book." What solemn language!

It is the character of antichrist to change laws and times, Dan. 7. 25. and the people of God had better retire from Babylon, lest they partake of her plagues. Rev. 18. 4. Christ has ordained one baptism, and the man who changes, rejects, or despises this ordinance is accountable to him. What christian does not tremble at the idea of supporting antichrist---yet all who support infant baptism, are, however unwittingly, guilty of this crime.

VI. Though baptism is neither a sacrament, nor an oath, it is evidently a full profession of our having put on Christ's yoke, and enlisted under his banner; and we are bound by this profession to devote ourselves to his service.---Paul says, Gal. 3. 27---As many as have been baptised into Christ, have put on Christ. Put on his profession,---engaged in his service. Here we profess ourselves to be the purchase of Christ's blood, and therefore profess our entire obligation to serve him with our bodies and spirits which are his. The obligations under which we are laid are great and many. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." Rom. 12. 1, 2. See also Col. 3 all---Phil. 2. 1---17.

CONCLUSION.

1st. From what has been said you will see, that though baptism neither saves the soul, nor cleanses it from its pollution, yet it is of great importance as an ordinance of Christ; and also as a *figure* of that which purifies the soul from all its filthiness—and fits it for the heavenly kingdom. It is an outward figure of an inward grace, already possessed by the believer. It is a profession of faith in that blood which justifies the ungodly, and purifies the conscience from dead works to serve the living God. The outward ceremony brings the sinner no nearer to God than he was before—it neither purifies the heart nor the conscience—but is an act of obedience to Christ, in which the baptised professes to be a child of God, and servant of Christ.

2nd. From what we have said above it is plain, that it is the duty and the privilege of every child of God to be baptised. The duty arises from the commandment of Christ---and what a privilege, for a poor guilty sinner, formerly the enemy of God, to confess Jesus Christ as his saviour---his prophet---his priest---his king---his elder brother---his fellow heir---and his everlasting portion. This he does in baptism.

3rd. Some will think we are keen to *make people baptists*. This we deny. If this were the case we should not live five years among you, yea, seven years in Canada, without preaching on the subject. We never shrunk from giving our view on this or on any other subject when it came in our way---but we never till now selected the subject. We are not keen to make baptists. We would not, on any consideration, baptise one in whom we had not the fullest confidence as a christian. We are keen to get people converted to God, and then we would urge such to be baptised, and to observe all things that Christ hath commanded. This is our faith in the word of God, and thus have we acted for seventeen years. We are not among those that court controversy, but we shrink not from the fullest investigation of our faith and practice. We are very confident of having the right side of the question, and we know the more it is examined, controverted, and opposed, it will become the plainer. We wish every man and woman to be fully persuaded in their own minds. Blind obedience is not acceptable to God. It is the duty of every hearer and reader, to "prove all things, and hold fast that which is good." To "try the spirits whether they are of God." May the Lord open the eyes of sinners to see the gospel---and the eyes of believers to see his whole will as revealed in the scriptures. If the above have either of these effects our labour will not be in vain; and if otherwise we are confident we have done a duty which we owed to God, and to his professed people.

APPENDIX.

It is written, Isaiah 59. 19. "When the enemy shall come in like a flood; the spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." This standard of the spirit of the Lord must be lifted up through his people. They are commanded to prove the spirits whether they are of God, 1 John. 4. 1. and to contend for the faith delivered to the saints. Jude. 3.

Many attempts have been made in Canada, to prejudice the minds of the people against the scriptural view of christian baptism; and to exhort them to obedience to the commandments of men in baptising infants. The design of this appendix is to take brief notice of two of these attempts---the one by a periodical work called the *Christian Recorder* and the other in a small tract, said to be the production of the bishop of St. Asaph's. If the doctrine taught by these books be true, it must be a very sinful thing to neglect infant baptism. In the first of these the editor says, p. 91. "Let all christians remember that baptism is a solemn admission into the visible church---a title to grace and remission of sins, and that the grace promised, is not merely offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost in this sacrament, upon all who truly repent of their sins." Where is the scripture proof of this nonsensical jumble of ideas? We are first told that "it is a solemn admission into the visible church." Of this no proof is offered. The apostles admitted no infants. John 1. 12, 13. Secondly, "it is a title to grace and remission of sins." Does not this look like purchasing remission by submission to baptism? But where is the promise? Perhaps in Mark 16. 16. & Acts 2. 38. Here however repentance, and the belief of the gospel precede baptism; each of which infants are incapable. Next we are told, "this grace is conferred in this sacrament." Upon whom? *Is it on infants?* No! "Upon all who truly repent of their sins." Then as infants *cannot repent*, they cannot have this grace conferred upon them in baptism. Nay, they are thus excluded from baptism. But where do the scriptures say that grace is conferred in baptism? No where. Grace and remission in scripture are connected with repentance and faith; and the gift (or grace) of the holy spirit was conferred sometimes before baptism, Acts 10. 47. and sometimes after baptism Acts 8. 16. What then is the grace conferred in baptism?---We know of none but their being received into the church of England, and we know this is not the work of the holy spirit. If men have not the grace of God previous to baptism, the scriptures do not warrant their being baptised. As for the authority of churches, or bishops, we are not concerned about them, any more than about that of a Quaker, who denies the ordinance of baptism altogether. To the same purport is the reasoning of the e-

ditor's correspondent, S. G. only he adds something more gross; viz. That infants are regenerated, made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. p. 94. This is speaking out! The bishop says, "baptism, as hath been observed, is the appointed rite of admission into the covenant with God, through the merit of Christ. By such admission, we are removed out of that state of nature, wherein we were born the children of wrath, subject to the doom of that original sin, which we inherit from our first parents; and are placed in a state of grace and salvation, and made heirs of the kingdom of heaven. Children are just as capable of this benefit from baptism, as persons of ripe years." Caution against the dangerous errors of anabaptists, page 8.*

The first paragraphs in p. p. 9 & 11 are to the same purpose.

I am sorry to discover in these quotations, an error of much more consequence, than a wrong view of either the subjects or mode of baptism. Many who contend for baptism as a privilege, and duty of Christian parents, would spurn at the above doctrine, and exclaim---what a tissue of false doctrine! S. G. declares infants are regenerated in baptism; that is, says the bishop, in a quotation from Irenœus p. 12---"(a new birth) unto God."

The regeneration, or new birth, spoken of in scripture takes place upon the mind, and is the effect of the powerful operation of the spirit of God, operating by the word. "Except a man be born of water (or of the word Eph. 5. 25) and of the spirit he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3. 3, 5, 7. 1 Peter 1. 23. It is not the corruptible seed of a little water poured upon the head that begets a sinner to God, but the incorruptible seed of the word of God. See also, John 1. 13. Jas. 1. 18 & 1 John 5. 1.

The word regeneration occurs twice in the English translation of the N. T. In the first, Matth. 19. 28. it signifies the new state of things, or new dispensation. In the other, Tit. 3. 5. it evidently means the renovation of the soul, by the spirit and word of God, and this is the new birth held forth by our Lord. John 3. 5. It is a renewing of the mind, 2 Cor. 4. 16. Eph. 4. 23. Col. 3. 18. Rom. 12. 2. It is a changing of the soul to the image of Christ. 2 Cor. 3. 18. 2 Peter 1. 4. Rom. 8. 29. Eph. 4. 24. This image consists in knowledge, Col. 3. 10. righteousness, and true holiness. Eph. 4. 24. Not that spurious holiness, and righteousness required by the advocates of infant sprinkling. It is the real understanding of the truth, and living under

* The bishop knows this term comes from anna, against or back again and baptizo to baptize, (to immerse) and signifies against baptism or rebaptisers. We are against what he calls baptism, in every sense, but we contend for that baptism ordained by Christ, and practised by the apostles. We absolutely deny rebaptising for we are sure that infant sprinkling is not the baptism, of Christ--nor any other ceremony but the immersing of a real disciple in water as a profession of his faith in Christ. We suspect the bishop uses this term, as many others have done, as a term of reproach. We rejoice to suffer shame and reproach for adhering to the ordinances of Christ.

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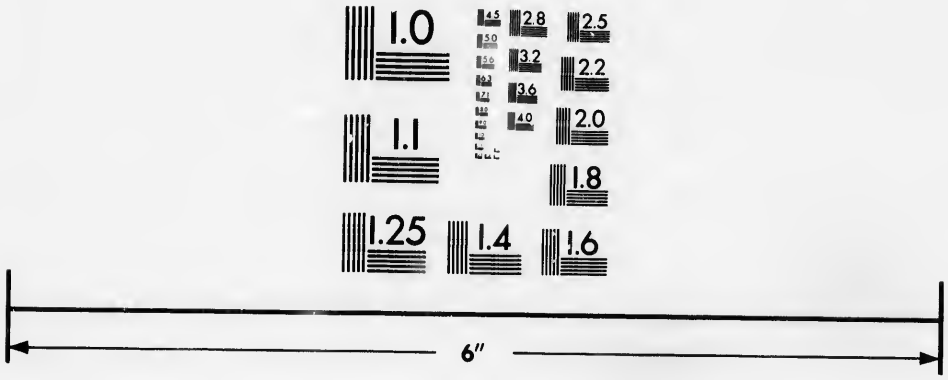

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its influence, that constitutes a man a christian, or gives him any title to any ordinance of Christ.

Is this the regeneration for which our authors contend as taking place in baptism? I fear not! Infants are incapable of this regeneration. Repentance and faith are its foundations, and infants are incapable of either. The command of Jesus is not, as the bishop affirms, "to baptise all nations," but to disciple the nations, as he himself proves p. 4. and then baptise them.---Both these authors, however, *lay aside the renovation of the spirit of God*, and substitute sprinkling with water in its place. All who hold this scriptural view are by them denounced heretics, and enthusiasts. Such however, was the enthusiasm and heresy of the apostles of Christ---such was the profession they required of those whom they baptised, and to whom they gave the Lord's supper, and we think no shame to bear reproach for holding their doctrine--and acting according to their practice. See, 1 Peter 1. 23. Eph. 2. 1, 10. Acts 15. 9. Rom. 6. 2, 17, 18, 22. 1 John 5. 4. & 3. 8, 9, 10. The fruits of the new birth are described. 1 John 3. 9. & 4. 7 & 5. 4, 13. &c.

Here then is an important error---an error that subverteth the soul, Acts 15 24.---A laying aside of that spiritual, inward change, which Christ says is absolutely necessary to *any one's* entering into the kingdom of heaven.

The bishop has a gloss upon this text, John 3. 5. and presses it into his service---but he cannot prove that the water in the text means baptism---the reverse is evident as the birth must be from above--- by the spirit---and the word is the sword of the spirit---by it he begets to God. Jas. 1. 18. 1 Peter 1. 22, 23. His translation of John 3. 5. & Matth. 28. 19. 20. is just and goes directly to prove our views of the subject. We are not afraid to meet a fair translation of scripture. Where the bishop found the dictionaries that translate baptizo, or its root or derivatives *only to wash* we know not, (the truth is, it signifies a particular kind of washing viz. by dipping, plunging, or immersing. It is not common to wash by sprinkling) but we have never seen them; and we have read many books on infant baptism, but none of their authors told us that they had seen such dictionaries. They must be scarce, and made by interested men. We know Dr. Campbell would have noticed them had they existed in his days. The church of England decided against them in her best days. S. G. and the bishop both maintain that infants are made members of Christ and children of God in baptism. What a pity they do not continue so. As soon as they come to age they manifest themselves members of this world,---servants of sin, and children of the devil. This is the case with them universally. They shew that they are still in a state of nature and children of wrath by walking after the maxims and practice of the world. Eph. 2. 2, 3. Tit. 3. 3. It will puzzle S. G. and the bishop to shew twenty or thirty of those baptised in infancy growing up holy and devoted to God from their youth. Notwithstanding the bishop's horror at leaving children without,

what he calls, their Lord's mark--yet his own children, and all the children of all the bishops & Drs. in England & Canada, without one exception, shew themselves children of the devil till converted to God through the belief of the gospel. Baptised and unbaptised children are the same in principle and conduct till they believe the gospel. True, the bishop would call unbaptised children, heathen, but as his baptised or christian children are the same in principle and practice, the name only does hurt. It makes them think themselves christians, while they are the children of wrath---SPRINKLED HEATHEN. * From all we can learn from the scriptures, men are made members of Christ, or members of his church, by faith in the testimony of God, and in *no other way*. Rom. 4 18, 14, 16. Gal. 3. 2, 7, 11. Eph. 4. 5. Heb. 11. 6. Rom. 3. 22, 28, 30. & 5. 1. Gal. 2. 16. & 3. 22, 24, 26. Eph. 3. 12. Acts 13. 38, 39. John 6. 40, 45, 51, 53. This faith is manifested by its fruits, Jas. 2. 14 to the end. 1 John 2. 3, 4, 5, 15. & 3. 3 to the end. If these passages speak truth, all our baptised infants, are not the children of God. They are only sprinkled heathen, whose conduct from the womb, Psalm 58. 3, 4 prove them to be the children of the devil. John 8. 44, 1 John 3. 8.

As to their being made heirs of the kingdom of heaven by baptism, it is of a piece with the rest, an *egregious error*. Let Christ and his Apostles speak upon this subject. Rom. 4. 16, & 8. 17. Gal. 3. 29. & 4 7. Heb. 11. 7. James 2. 5. 1 Peter 3. 7. From these passages we see that those only who are made children by faith in Christ Jesus are the heirs of eternal life. We do not say that children will not be admitted to heaven—nay we believe all dying in infancy will go there:---not by baptism—but by the sovereign mercy of God. Neither baptism nor any other ordinance gives a title to the heavenly kingdom; but the faith of the gospel; John 3. 36. *and the grace of God.*

As to the appointment of god-fathers, and god-mothers, it is of man's making. But it is truly astonishing that any one in his senses would come under such engagements. Can they fulfil their promise? Can they convert children when they please? Can they turn an enemy of God to friendship with him? Can they reconcile sinners unto God? What a burlesque upon common sense to require persons to become securities for what they cannot perform! Read 2 Cor. 5. 17 to the end. From this passage, and a thou-

* We recollect of a minister of the church of Scotland, upon sprinkling a child to as ungodly a man as himself, (and he was a drunkard and gambler, some said a profane swearer) commading to the parents and shaking hands with them saying---"I wish you much joy of your new made christian." Might we not ask if the children of the devil could make an infant a christian by sprinkling water upon its face! Are there none in Canada that think children are turned from heathenism to christianity by this charm? Alas! there are not a few---yet these new made christians in a few years turn out to be the children of the devil and do his works. They go astray from God telling lies, swearing &c. Yea some of these parents that vow, and swear to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, teach them to lie and cheat their neighbours.

sand others that might be quoted, it is plain, that the turning of a sinner from a state of nature to a state of grace, from a state of enmity against God, to a state of reconciliation; from being an heir of everlasting destruction to be an heir of eternal life, &c. &c. is the work of the spirit of God, through the medium not of baptism or of any other ordinance, but of the word of the living God as preached by Christ and by his Apostles. With respect to the bishop's quibbling upon various passages of scripture to establish a mode of baptism contrary to the word of God, and to the articles and long practice of his own church, we pay little regard to them. We have shewn the *mode* and *subjects* of apostolic baptism above. If the command of Christ, understood according to the plain rules of just criticism, & the example of the apostles are to be regarded, all his explanations fall to the ground. It only remains that he did not understand the scriptures, a thing too common with men of his coat. Those who wish to know the mind of Christ, will see, from what we have said above, what is meant by *baptism*, and to whom it belongs: as for others, they would not believe, *if even an old bishop were to arise from the dead and tell them the same things.* Our authors would have us to notice that it is the church that has ordained so and so. Be it so. What is the church to us! We ask the church; we ask all its votaries; who gave them this authority? It was not Christ—It was not the Holy Ghost—It was not the Apostles. No! it was Irenœus, a corrupter of the doctrines and ordinances of Christ. Justin Martyr does not say it was by baptism that christians were made disciples—no, it was by faith. It is the bishop that changes his meaning.

As to the bishop's forms of prayer &c. he may enjoy them for himself—we know all that are taught of God will pray by the influence and direction of the Holy Spirit in their own minds. Rom. 8. 26, 27. Forms of prayer may be convenient to those who know not God, and who know not their own wants, but their prayers are abomination to the Lord.

The Bishop more than hints that baptists were among the worst of characters, and may be so now; but he does not tell us who they were. It is a thrust in the dark. If he, or any of his friends, have any thing against the present baptists, let them come forward manfully and declare it. They may call our doctrines *blasphemy*, so did their *forefathers in sentiment*, the Scribes and Pharisees call the doctrine of Christ and his Apostles. If our lives are wrong they ought in charity to correct us. If we are against the state, (a very common charge against the people of God) let them apply the wholesome laws of our country to us. We shrink not from the fullest investigation. We have always denied fellowship to those who have, in any manner, acted contrary to the laws, or against our Sovereign King George. Our conduct, in this respect, has uniformly proved the sincerity of our profession. We *may* be charged with being opposed to *their* church, for we boldly affirm that it has not the marks of a church of Christ. Its members and ordinances are quite

different from the N. T. churches. Christ's Kingdom is not of this world. The introduction of infant baptism was a first corruption—a second was its being made subject to bishops and pontiffs---and lastly its being united to the state. We are sure these are corruptions, yet we wish no downfall of any church, not even of the church Rome, but by the word of God. For this we earnestly pray. We pray the Lord may open the eyes of every Pope, Bishop and churchman to see the simple truth as revealed in scripture, and lead them to give simple, but unfeigned obedience, to all the will of God as laid down in the New Testament. We know our prayers will be heard, though we know not the time.

We are enemies to persecution of every description. Persuasion is our only weapon. We wish freedom of conscience for ourselves, and allow it to others, and if we should be deprived even of this we should submit. We know who hath said, "avenge not yourselves---resist not evil—when ye are persecuted in one city flee to another." Our worship may be called "*Madness, Grimace*, and *Hypocrisy*," we care not for this. It is a small thing with us to be judged by man's judgment. To our own master we stand or fall. The bishop, and others, may boast of their having the true word of God expounded in sobriety, but we must judge for ourselves. We know Christ's sheep hear his voice and follow him—and we have shewn how far the Rev. Bishop is behind in these respects. He teaches another doctrine than Christ's, and attends to other ordinances. Let our readers judge for themselves. All our readers are accountable, not to us, nor to the Bishop, nor to the Editor of the Recorder, but to Christ. When he comes he will require of us all. *what we have heard*, or received for truth; and *how we have heard*. We all possess the only standard of truth, the Bible—let us prove all things, and hold fast that which is good.

Now let me, in my turn, caution my readers against the errors of the clergy. I do not mean all the clergy, I bless God many of them preach Christ crucified, and salvation only through faith in his finished work. But beware of those who would lead you to ordinances, or to any of your own doings for salvation. Christ tells you, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." Consult John 3. 5. 14---22, 36. & 7. 37, 38. & 14. 6. Acts 4. 12. & 13. 38, 39—42. & 15. 10, 11. & 16. 31. & 28. 24—30. Rom. 3. 10. to end, & 4. 5. 24. Gal. 5. 1—7. By the help of your margin bibles you may increase these passages, twenty or fifty fold; all teaching the same truth. The bishop, and others of his school will tell you they do not deny the belief of the gospel. So did the false teachers tell the Galatians, but Paul tells them, their adding the observance of ordinances to the faith as necessary to salvation, completely overturned the gospel. This is exactly the case here. The making of baptism the means of salvation—grace—heirship, &c, completely overturns Christ's plan of salvation. God has instituted only one way of salvation—and that is through

faith in Christ Jesus. He that is baptised from a view of its saving his soul, making him a child of God, and an heir of the kingdom of heaven, hath fallen from grace. Christ doth profit him nothing. He is a debtor to obey the whole law, and if he comes short in one instance, he is under the curse. Gal. 3. 10. Take heed then that no man begoile you. The wolves in sheep's clothing, are not confined to Baptists or Methodists, &c. though they may be among each of these parties. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Matth. 7. 16. Paul told the Ephesians that some of themselves should speak perverse things, and that wolves should enter among them, Acts 20. 29, 30.

Let me conclude with advising the Bishop and others of the same cast to consult, Gal. 1. 8, 9 and Rev. 22. 18, 19. *Can they overturn these passages at the judgment.* I have nothing personal against the above cited authors, nor against any minister or member of their church---a regard to truth--to the doctrine and ordinances of Christ--and regard for the good of the people of God, is my only motive. I know of nothing in the world that would give me more joy than to learn that any or all of these gentlemen were converted to God---born of God---and made obedient to his will. Then we should have *champions* on Christ's side.

N. B. From the author's desire to encourage the manufacturers of paper in Canada, the work had to be printed on four kinds of paper. This was unavoidable without a great delay, but not known till 40 pages were printed. He hopes, however, his readers will look more to the matter of the book than to the paper. As the work is printed in an octavo form it is not quite 100 pages, had it been in 12 mo. as first proposed, it would exceed 120 pages.

The reader is requested to correct the following mistakes with his pen—

Title page 1 Cor. 15. 1. &c. 4th line from bottom read *first* instead of *part*.
P. 32---17 line from bottom read *things* instead of *things*.
P. 35----4 line from bottom —— *detest* ———— *detect*.
P. 41----7 do. do. do. ----- *act* for *set* and *direct* for *directing*.
P. 41----6 do. do. do. leave out *how* after *oath*.
P. 43---11 from top---insert *have* after *or who*.
P. 49----2 do. do. insert *demands and*---before *penalties*.
P. 55----- Bottom line read Babylon.
P. 82---22 from top insert *we see* after *the verses*.