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THE CHRISTIAN GLEANER.

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

SCRIPTURAL ORDER OF CHURCHES, IN CONNECTION WITH THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL.

THE means pursued at present for the spread of the Gospel, do not appear to be quite scriptural, or well adapted for their intended purpose. Our exertions are made to depend too exclusively on the erection of places of worship; and on the education of Preachers. Do we read of the Apostles or the Churches, being restrained in their exertions for want of such means? or that when they visited a place and so preached that some believed, there was then a great struggle made in the first instance, to build a large house, and then to bring pastors from a distance? We read of no difficulties in the Bible on these heads. By adopting an opposite course, from the Apostles—we form a kind of union between the world and the church—and having incurred a debt to build a house, and having undertaken prematurely to maintain a preacher, the aid of the world is required to support our establishment; thus a temptation is held out to the preacher, and to the church, to be unfaithful in various ways. But to be more particular, the first, and frequent error appears to be, that after disciples are found in any place, they delay to unite together as a church of Christ. They wait perhaps until their numbers are so considerable, as to give respectability to the cause, and then, until they can obtain a preacher from a distance and can provide for his support, often also until they can obtain means to build a meeting house. During the interval of delay to their union, arising from these, or the like difficulties, they form themselves, into some kind of association of human devising which is too often the source of many subsequent difficulties. These are of different kinds, arising sometimes for instance from a more loose plan of admitting members than afterwards, sometimes from premature; and undigested discussions of their future duty, in an abstract, rather

than in a practical manner to do the will of the Lord—in short they are exposed to many dangers which may be always, expected to occur, when the flock is wandering from the shepherd's tents—not taking heed, to the words of the apostles, the only infallible teachers of the will of the Lord to the churches, and should they finally unite as a church, still they are unsettled. They have no idea of looking to the Lord for pastors, from among themselves—but unscripturally continue to depend entirely on a preacher from a distance. It often happens after the preacher comes, and has been with them a short time, that they are not pleased with him, or he with his situation, and another is to be sought for—and the work begun anew with renewed exertions, for money. All this often introduces questions of strife, and divisions among the brethren, and a spirit of intrigue and scheming, far removed from the simplicity and honesty of believers, especially as from certain considerations, not always the purest, the taste and inclinations of worldly hearers, are to be consulted as well as their own. Thus they have the name, of a church, but are very far from enjoying the advantages and security which the Lord by that ordinance, has provided for his people, while travelling in the wilderness.

Continuing long without pastors, the want is severely felt in different ways. Much confusion in the mean time often ensues, and wrong sentiments and principles are embraced and acted on, which afterwards it becomes very difficult to eradicate. Besides, they often conclude, that until they have pastors ordained among them, they have not a right to observe the Lord's supper; and thus they lose the benefit of this most useful and delightful ordinance, which is so much calculated to cement their union, and increase their faith, and to enable them as the church of Christ, the ground and pillars of the truth—statedly on every Lord's day to exhibit it, and to enforce for the conviction of themselves and all who attend, the truth and proof of the Gospel of the grace of God, in all its leading facts, the death, the resurrection, the coming of the Lord, the unity of his people, and their motives and obligations to live a life of faith and of holiness. It is easy to perceive how ruinous all this must be—how hurtful to Christians and the world—how obstructive to the diffusion of the Gospel, and the maintenance of its purity. * * By these means, many who at first appeared to run well, are hindered. Several of them, after a while, fall away, and go back to the world; and others, entirely discouraged by the attempt they have made, return to the unscriptural connexions from which they have separated.

The most perfect state to which the churches have yet attained, falls now to be considered. Here again it appears there are many deficiencies. An order has been adopted on the Lord's day, that is very far from being scriptural. That day is consecrated to the memory of the resurrection of Jesus our Lord, and for the meeting of the saints, in order that they may hold fellowship with him and with each other, in the observance of every social ordinance. Through the

whole of the day, however, one man alone is employed as the speaker, and the fellowship of the church is hardly, at all exhibited. ** The very important ordinances of prayer and exhortation by the brethren, and of discipline, are thus excluded altogether from the first day of the week. These, however, are acknowledged by the churches as social ordinances, and are observed on a week-day in the *church meeting* as it is exclusively denominated; which, from different circumstances, is attended but partially by the disciples, and by a very small number from the world. These last are even shut out from witnessing the discipline of the church, in its various exercises of receiving, reproving, or putting away members, duties which are highly calculated to carry conviction, and to convey instruction to their minds. Many evils arise out of this unauthorized arrangement. These ordinances being put out of their place, several mistakes are occasioned regarding them. Prayer and exhortation by the brethren are considered as an improper waste of the Lord's day, and discipline as not sufficiently holy for it. ** Neither is that improvement made in them that ought to be, nor that advantage to all the members derived from them which is intended. From the above order, by the unequal means of instruction afforded to the church, a foundation of schism is often laid; while the obtaining of pastors from the churches themselves, is rendered almost totally impracticable, and the doctrine or the necessity of a plurality in each church, becomes a mere speculation. On the whole, a method has been adopted on the Lord's day, not pointed out by the word of God but devised by human systems,—the popular mode in which all depends on the qualifications of one man, and in which every thing goes on well, independently of the state of the church, be that what it may. This perfectly suits a worldly society. It is equally fitted for all established churches. It is, in fact, practised by the church of Rome, the church of England, and the church of Scotland. * * *

As it is impossible that *they* should exhibit Christ's Kingdom in the world, how great a loss is sustained when his body, the churches of the Saints, fail in this respect to hold forth the word of life. But when these shall walk in all the ordinances of the Lord blameless, they will do more to bring the insulated and erring followers of Jesus out of Babylon, and into the fellowship of the gospel, than by all the reasonings that can be used on the subject; and by the same means, they will do more for the conversion of the world than all the missionary societies that could be instituted.

I shall now state what appears to me to be the scriptural mode of association, which is calculated both for the propagation and permanency of the gospel in its purity.

When there is one believer in any place, he must of course act as an individual. But when there are more than one, association is attainable, and therefore duty. Wherever there are two or three disciples, they should meet in Christ's name, and he will be in the midst of them, Matt. xviii, 20. Here is a church. For what is a church, but association and fellowship in the gospel, of which, in the

New Testament, we read of one kind only? The word *church*, which we use exclusively in religious matters, tends very much to mislead us on this subject. We are apt to annex to it something mysterious, as is done to some of the other ordinances. This is a most unhappy effect of introducing technical language into religion. ** Such a style however, is quite contrary to the manner of the apostles, as they appear uniformly to have used words in their common acceptation. To have done otherwise would have been degrading the subject. The service of God which interests men of all ages, professions, and different degrees of cultivation of mind, ought not to be perplexed by terms of art. But how many of these are found in our English translation! We have *church, ordination, preaching, gospel, ministration, &c.* ** In common discourse on religious subjects we have added to the list of these words which are so general, and we are so much accustomed to them, that it is very difficult to express ourselves otherwise, and to get rid of the language of *systematic divinity*. We speak, for instance, of *forming* a church. The Scriptures do not use this language. We there read of disciples meeting together, and this, we find, is what the apostles mean when they speak of a church, Acts i. 15. compared with Acts ii. 47.; Acts xi. ver. 21. with ver. 26. We neither read in the Scriptures of any ceremony in forming a church, nor of any *previous* or *preparatory* association, such as a prayer-meeting. The Lord has given uniform rules for his people in association, which become obligatory the moment they are practicable. For instance, wherever there are two or three (Matt. xviii. 20.) disciples, they can meet in his name, with Him in the midst of them, to observe all the social ordinances, as prayer, praise, reading, mutual exhortation, and the fellowship if necessary, shew forth his death, receiving additions to their number, or turning away from each other. When their numbers increase, the choice of elders and deacons becomes practicable and necessary, and as soon as they are able to support those who labour in word and doctrine, that also becomes a duty. In this way they at first proceeded. The meeting of the disciples at Jerusalem was, as far as it had gone, complete at the beginning, although the nature of the association required additions in its progress, an instance of which we have in the appointment of deacons, "*when the number of the disciples was multiplied,*" Acts vi, 1. In the same way, we read of the appointment of elders by Paul and Barnabas, on their return from those cities, where, in consequence of their preaching in going forth, associations of believers had taken place. By that time, the character and gifts of the members would be known to each other, so that men could be appointed, who possessed the qualifications for the office required by the Scriptures, and who had *also* been proved. 1 Tim. iii. **

In regard to their manner of worship, if not perverted at the beginning by the false teaching of human traditions, the disciples will diligently search the Scriptures, in order to regulate all their movements. They will perceive that the Bible, when left to speak for itself, is a very

plain and intelligible book. They will attend to the manner in which it teaches, sometimes by precept and sometimes by example. But in whatever way they gather the mind of the Spirit, they will consider themselves equally bound by it. I presume it will not be difficult to ascertain what follows in regard to their worship. The Lord has appointed certain social ordinances, and a particular day for the observance of them. We have the same evidence, that they were all attended to on that day. As an example of this, see 1 Cor. v. 4. discipline; ch. xi. 20. Lord's supper; ch. xiv. 23. and other parts of the chapter, exhortation, prayer, praise, and that the meeting was public; ch. xvi. 2. the day and fellowship. Indeed the first day of the week, which is consecrated to the memory of the resurrection of Jesus, and therefore in itself most proper to celebrate his victory in every act of social duty, is the only day in which Christians *must* meet, and in which they all *can* meet, except as prevented by some providential occurrence. It cannot then be lawful for them either to omit or to exclude from that day, the public observance of any of the ordinances. They will therefore observe them all. And in attending to these as within their reach, the social union of the brethren advances to its most perfect state. Thus the proper means are used for discovering the best gifts and qualifications among them for ruling and serving; and when in connexion with the means, prayers are offered to the Lord for pastors and deacons, there is not the smallest reason to doubt that these will soon be found. But if the institutions of Jesus are not observed; if the gifts of the brethren are not called into action; if one man only is employed as the speaker through the whole of the Lord's day; and if one mode of instruction, which is seldom attainable, except men have been regularly trained to it, exclusively assumes the name of preaching, the obtaining of pastors, as has been observed, in the churches themselves, becomes impracticable, and the education afforded by seminaries, instead of being subservient to the cause of truth, as it might be in a very high degree, is rendered an indispensable preliminary to the pastoral character. How much this must operate to hinder the gospel from having free course, it is easy to perceive. Many of the brethren may at present have all the qualifications of a bishop, described by Paul, and yet be forever excluded from rendering, in that character, any service to the church of God. Besides, the increase of churches must, in this way, be altogether limited by the number of preachers that can be educated for the service; and churches of long standing, where there are many aged and experienced disciples, must frequently choose for their overseers young men, whose experience is far from being matured; who, in the mean time, might have been very usefully employed in the vineyard in some other way; but who, being prematurely brought forward into situations, for which they are as yet by no means qualified, find it very prejudicial to themselves, while it is ruinous to the churches.

As soon as it is in the power of the brethren, they will see it to be their duty to support their pastors. Till this be the case, the pastors should labour like those at Ephesus, both for themselves and to assist others. From the beginning of the association, rooms, or places to meet in, should be procured, large enough for the church, and those who will attend with them: and the accommodation for meeting ought to be enlarged, from time to time, as far as may be necessary and practicable. Their means will in this way go before their expences; they will be saved from many temptations, and be prevented from becoming dependent on others, as it always is the case where this order is reversed. Thus, in following scriptural order, the churches of Christ, while they hold forth the word of life, wherever they are found, will cease to encounter those obstacles from their external arrangements, which at present tend so much to prevent their increase. Nor will their attention be confined to the vicinity in which their lot is cast, but as far as in them lies, they will exert themselves to diffuse every where the knowledge of the gospel; for in this as in other respects, they will imitate the recorded zeal and example of the first churches. They will therefore send, or assist other churches in sending out brethren, properly qualified, to preach the gospel; using every means, when necessary, in the way of previously affording them instruction, to increase their aptness to teach.

Here it is of importance to determine, in what light any brother, thus sent out, is to be viewed by those who, through his means may receive the truth.

He will not surely be considered as possessing the office of Timothy and Titus. He can shew no commission from an apostle to the churches, nor any authority delegated to appoint elders among them, and afterwards to superintend both them and their elders, rebuking the latter before all, when they do wrong; which the Evangelists, being fully qualified for it by the laying on of the apostle's hands, were to do "with all authority." He will not then claim *their* authority, more than that of an apostle. The possession of the last of these offices was proved by miracles, that of Timothy and Titus by a personal commission, neither of which he can exhibit. For as one church possesses no power over another, it is clear, that any church giving such a commission, would be imparting more power to others, than they themselves possess, which is impossible. The person they send out, however, can do all that is necessary. He can put the Scriptures into the hands of those to whom he comes, telling them, that these being completed, the will of God to man is fully revealed; that the extraordinary offices, for which men were qualified by the gifts of the Spirit, have now ceased; and that of course it has become competent for the disciples, wherever such may be, to arrange and conduct themselves in all respects according to the Scriptures of truth, by which they shall be judged at the last day. He will be ready to give them his best advice, and to help them with all the fruit of his experience, to which, if in a proper spirit, they will

attentively listen ; but they and he will transgress the rule to call no man father, if, in virtue of his connexion with the church from which he went out, or on any other pretence, he shall *command* them, or they shall *obey* him, as vested with the *authority* of Timothy or Titus or an apostle. The rule he brings, has indeed the same authority as they possessed ; but none of this authority, which was vested in them, is committed to him, any more than to those to whom the truth has now come ; and besides, in his interpretation he is fallible as well as they. This cannot be admitted in regard to the injunctions of Timothy and Paul, otherwise the churches were, or might have been misled by those who carried divine credentials, see 1 Cor. iv. 17. It may here be observed, that it is the duty of every believer, by whatever providential means he finds himself in any place, to do all in his power like Apollos, or the disciples scattered from Jerusalem, Acts viii. 4. to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation, and to act exactly in the same manner as those who have been sent out by churches. Of this we have a remarkable instance in Acts xi. 19. &c. recognized and approved by the church under the inspection of the apostles at Jerusalem ; for when Barnabas arrived at Antioch, he found a flourishing church of Christ, which he rejoiced to see, and only exhorted to continue steadfast. Sometimes, when the Popish distinction of believers into clergymen and laymen is made, it is asked, who authorised the latter to preach the gospel ? It may be asked in reply, who authorized the former ? Pastors are appointed to rule and feed a particular church ; and little or nothing is said about their preaching to the world, any more, than of the other brethren. The title of preaching to the world then, must be made out by the former, exactly in the same way as by the latter. The title and the duty of both, as they have opportunity and ability, is perfectly good, and perfectly equal. See Acts viii. 4. 5. xi. 19. xviii. 24. &c.

AN ESSAY ON THE OBLIGATION OF CHRISTIANS TO OBSERVE
THE LORD'S SUPPER, EVERY LORD'S DAY.

BY J. CRAMP.

The actual state of the Baptist Churches in this country, as it regards their observance of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, affords a melancholy instance of human inconsistency. They professedly separate themselves from the Church of England, on the ground that this church is unscripturally constituted. "An apostolic church," say they, "consisted of a single congregation, composed of professed believers in Christ, baptized on a personal profession of faith in His name, and coming steadily together into one place to observe the ordinances of public worship. Such a church was subject to no jurisdiction under heaven. It had **ONE LORD,**

one faith, one baptism, one God and father of all"—it owned no earthly head, had no liturgy, no thirty-nine articles to guard against heresy; it was constituted under the eye of the inspired apostle, who "had the mind of Christ, and such a pattern we consider ourselves bound to imitate. The church of Christ is his kingdom, and our allegiance to him requires that we strictly obey his will; we must, therefore, have express precept, or approved example for all that we practise, in the order of his house—the worship of his courts. When we can say, thus did the first Christians, and, therefore, thus do we, we feel our standing to be upon a rock; but if once we admit the lawfulness of practising in the worship of God, things that are neither commanded nor exemplified in the New Testament, we expose ourselves to every innovation which human caprice may suggest."

In all this we conceive them to be perfectly right, and we cordially go hand in hand with them. But let us apply these acknowledged principles to the article of communion, and mark what follows! Ask a candid, intelligent Baptist minister, where is his authority for the *monthly* observance of the Lord's supper, and he honestly confesses that he knows no other than that of *custom*! That the New Testament is as silent about it, as it is about the doctrines of purgatory, or transubstantiation. The question, therefore, recurs, and it demands serious consideration: does the New Testament afford us no rule regarding this matter for the regulation of our conduct—has the Christian Legislator omitted to express his will on this particular point—did the first churches consider themselves as left at liberty to attend to this divine institution, weekly, monthly, or annually, as best suited their inclination, convenience, and case—or is there any thing upon record relating to that ordinance from which we can collect that they had one uniform practice—that they all walked by the same rule, and minded the same thing? To investigate this subject, is the express design of Mr. Cramp in the essay before us; and to those who feel any interest in it, we would strongly recommend a perusal of his pages. He first of all produces the evidence which the New Testament furnishes for *weekly* communion; then he examines the subject in an historical point of view, goes through the earlier writers on the subject of Ecclesiastical history, traces the same practice among the Waldenses, prior to the Reformation, and the first Baptist churches in England in the seventeenth century. Mr. Cramp next presents us with a series of extracts from the writings of Cranmer, Calvin, Baxter, Dr. Thomas Goodwin, Dr. John Owen, Watts, Ames, Doddridge, President Edwards, and Mason, of New York, all affording their sanction, or suffrages in favour of weekly communion; but his two ablest advocates are, the late Dr. Erskine of Edinburgh, and the present Dr. John Pye Smith, of Homerton, who, about twenty years ago, published a pamphlet entitled, "A concise Statement of the evidence for the obligation of Christian Churches to celebrate the Lord's Supper every Lord's day,"—and what is better than all, introduced the practice into the church under his pastoral care, and has stately continued it to the present time. This is acting consistently, and is a conduct worthy of praise. Mr. Cramp's Essay closes with adducing some arguments in support of his main point, and answering the objections that have been raised against it. We only do him common justice when we add, that his Essay is ably drawn up, that it is written with great clearness and perspicuity of style, and deserves the careful consideration of his brethren in the ministry, as well as the churches over which they preside. We believe he is, at present, without a pastoral charge, having resigned his connection with the church in Dean Street, Southwark; but we hope that, with whatever church he may here-

after six, he will give the powerful sanction of his own *consistent conduct* to his able reasonings, by introducing the practice of weekly communion among them. *He will find this to have more weight in the scale of evidence that he believes the practice to be of Divine authority, than the writing of twenty essays.* The Independent churches in Scotland, both Baptist and Pædobaptist, practise weekly communion; and perhaps we may be pardoned in going so far as to supply an omission in Mr. Cramp's Essay, by adding, that there are three Baptist churches in London, that also have the Lord's supper among them every Lord's day, one of which churches meets at present in Aldermaubury, another in Red Cross-street, Cripplegate, and the third in Parliament-court, Bishopsgate-street.—*New Baptist Magazine, London.*

FAITH AND OPINION.

Question.—How shall we determine what is matter of faith, and what matter of opinion?

Solution.—Matters of faith are the facts testified in the Scriptures. God's promises, as well as his threatenings, are all facts. It is a fact that he has promised, that he has threatened, that he has uttered such things. Things done are facts.—Things spoken are amongst things done.—It is a fact that God created Adam—that he spoke to Adam—that he pronounced blessings upon the obedient, and curses on the disobedient, &c. The whole testimony of God is a record of sayings and doings. It contains precepts, ordinances, promises, threatenings, &c. All these are objects of faith—the promises are objects of hope—the threatenings objects of fear as well as of faith. Laws require obedience, but they are first received by faith—promises call for hope, but they are received by faith.—Jesus calls for love to himself, but he is an object of faith, &c. &c. I am doubtless understood.

Opinions are strictly, in my use of the word, and in that of Walker and other lexicographers, “persuasions of the mind, *without proof*,”—abstract views—notions. Opinion differs from both faith and knowledge. I *know* that the sun gives light, that birds sing, that a rose yields an agreeable odor, that sugar is sweet, and that marble is solid, &c. I *believe* that God sent Moses, that Pharaoh reigned over Egypt in the time of Joseph, that Washington was a patriot, that Joshua was the saviour of Israel, and that Jesus is the Messiah, &c. I *opine* that you are an honest man, that the electric fluid is the vital principle of animated nature, differently combined; that the world will exist only seven thousand years from its creation to its final dissolution.

Testimony is essential to faith; evidence of sense to knowledge, in its strict and philosophic import; and speculation, inference, or conjecture, to opinion. The ideas acquired by faith are, I own, in a subordinate sense, called knowledge; because of the certainty which the minds feels in good testimony. *By faith I understand or know* that the worlds were framed by the word of God. It is only by faith

that I understand or feel assured that the universe was *created by the word of God*. Thomas is said to have believed when he saw; but this imports not that faith comes by sight, but that he believed the testimony of those who saw the risen Jesus when he saw the print in his hands and feet. All exceptions and objections to this definition of faith, knowledge, and opinion, are easily disposed of; for in propriety of language and of mental philosophy, faith comes by hearing testimony—knowledge, by the exercise of our minds and senses upon the objects presented to our senses—and opinions, by our reasonings on all subjects where both testimony and experience are wanting.

To apply this to religion:—We have faith in God's testimony; knowledge when we understand and experience the truth revealed—and opinions upon all subjects of which we have neither testimony nor experience. *A* believes that all christians are the elect of God, and is of *opinion* that men are elected unconditionally before they believe, and that there are elect sinners as well as elect-saints. *C* believes that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son. &c. but is of *opinion* that it was the world of the elect. *D* believes that all who enter the kingdom of heaven and truly enjoy the blessings of the kingdom of Jesus in this present life, are born of the Spirit; and is of *opinion* that this is "by the direct and positive influence of the Spirit," operating abstractly upon the heart. *E* believes that every believer in Christ ought to be baptized; and is of *opinion* that infants without faith may be baptized.

Suffice it to say, that men may form some opinion upon every thing that is matter of record; but the things recorded are the only legitimate objects of faith; and all persuasions or notions, without proof, are but opinions concerning these things.

Extracts from the Presbyterian Review and Religious Journal.

“**The Work of the Holy Spirit in Conversion in its relation to the condition of Man, and the ways of God, &c. &c.** By John Howard Hinton, A. M. London.”

THE question discussed in this treatise is one of considerable difficulty, and at the same time of great practical importance. The author expressly asserts the necessity of divine influence to conversion, maintaining that conversion never has taken place, and never will take place, without the operation of the Spirit. He asserts also, that this influence in conversion is certainly effectual,—that wheresoever the Spirit begins to operate upon the heart of a sinner for his conversion, he invariably accomplishes the work. The question which

the author discusses, relates to the causes of this necessity,—Whence is it that without the influence of the Spirit no man ever has turned, or will turn to God? Is it because he is unable or because he is unwilling? Is want of disposition the sole hindrance to conversion, or besides this want of disposition, is there also a want of power?

Under existing circumstances however, we regard the publication before us as calculated to do good; though we are far from subscribing to all the sentiments which it contains.

The position which the author takes up and endeavours to establish is, that although man, until renewed by the Spirit, has no disposition, but on the contrary an extreme aversion to repentance, his heart being desperately wicked, yet he has power to repent without the aid of the Spirit, or, according to his definition of power, possesses the means of doing so. The means necessary to repentance, or to induce a change of mind towards God, he explains to be, 1st, “The opportunity of becoming acquainted with truths adapted and sufficient to produce such a change. 2d. A state of the understanding physically sound, competent to discern the true import of the matters presented for consideration. 3dly, A proper connexion between the understanding and the heart, so that there may be no obstruction to the influence of the truths discovered.”

That every person of sound mind who hears the gospel possesses the two former of these requisites, will readily be admitted. We can imagine, however, that in regard to the third, some difficulty may be felt. That certain perceptions of the understanding are invariably followed by corresponding emotions, will indeed be granted—the perception of danger, for example, by the emotion of fear,—or that of apparent and attainable good, by desire. But that this holds equally true, as it really does, in regard to our moral perceptions also, is perhaps not quite so evident. If the feelings of the heart uniformly respond to the views of the mind, whence is it, it may be asked, that the despot hears unmoved the cry of the oppressed; or that the votary of pleasure contemplates, without compunction, the future ruin of the victims whom he sacrifices to his momentary gratification? Or whence is it that the truths of the gospel are again and again presented to the mind of multitudes, without producing the emotions which they are fitted to excite? Now the answer is, that in all these cases the perceptions of the understanding are really followed by their corresponding emotions. The deflection from nature and from rectitude takes place, not here, but at a subsequent point. Were man so constituted as to be insensible to moral distinctions—did virtue and vice, acts of oppression and acts of kindness, excite in his bosom the same emotions, we cannot see on what principle it could be maintained that he is the subject of moral government, or that his conduct merits either praise or blame. But if the perception is followed by the emotion, how is it that the

action, or the state of mind which follows, is not in accordance with that emotion? Simply because man abuses his voluntary powers. "At the same instant he had a call from duty and from pleasure, he felt that of duty to be the most forcible; yet he lent to it so dull an ear, and listened so keenly to the voice of pleasure, that the feeble inducements of the syren prevailed. By his lending a quicker ear to what he knew to be the least forcible appeal, this deviation from rectitude has been produced; and for this he is held to be deserving of blame."

Such, in substance, is the view of our mental constitution given in the introductory part of the treatise,—a view with which, in general, we are inclined to coincide.

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The arguments which the author adduces from the Scripture in support of his position, are partly direct and partly indirect. Of the latter kind are the arguments from the nature of sin, moral obligation, and human responsibility. The actions and character of men, he remarks, are familiarly spoken of in terms which convey either censure or commendation. Now to the right bestowal of either of these, an essential condition is, the possession of power to have acted otherwise. Every man feels that when a fault is charged upon him, he makes a valid and perfectly satisfactory defence, if he can say truly, I could not help it—I did all I had power to do. The very use, therefore, of such terms as sin, unrighteousness, condemnation, supposes man to have had power to have acted otherwise. The issuing of commands, he remarks, is a thing of perpetual recurrence among men, but it implies always a peculiar condition, in order to give it propriety. One element of this condition is, that the power of the persons commanded should be proportionate to the obedience required. This is a point of obvious and indispensable necessity. One would naturally infer, therefore, that when God issues his commands, the very fact of his doing so, as a being of adorable justice, implies an appropriating condition on the part of men to whom they are addressed; they must have power to do whatever God enjoins them to perform. But God has not only issued a law to be obeyed, He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world. This part of the divine administration evidently proceeds upon a general principle of great importance, namely that God holds men answerable to Him for conduct; and doubtless if He does so at all, He does so with indisputable justice. But in order to just responsibility, there is required a peculiar and corresponding condition in the parties held to be responsible. No man holds all other men to be responsible to him; why does he hold any to be so? Plainly because of some peculiarity in their condition in relation to himself. But still in such a condition the possession of power is a uniform and essential element. A person may be my servant, and therefore I may consider him answerable to me for the occupation of his time; but if his power of labour is taken away, his

responsibility ceases. The awarding of praise and blame, of punishment and reward, so far as it is acknowledged to be just, proceeds universally upon this principle; and every deviation from it, is an admitted instance of partiality, wickedness, or folly.

The application of these remarks to the divine government, will lead us to a very easy and obvious conclusion. The Almighty holds men responsible to him for their conduct, but power over our own conduct is necessary to just responsibility; therefore, men have power over their own conduct.

Such is a condensed view of the author's argument from the topics mentioned at the commencement of the paragraph. Into his examination of the reasonings of those who maintain human inability in its literal acceptation, we will not enter. The weakness of many of their attempts to reconcile the system with Scripture and with common sense, he exposes very successfully. We have room only for a single extract on this point.

"It has sometimes been conceived sufficient to say, that the supposed mystery attending the responsibility of men will be cleared up hereafter, and that no doubt will be entertained of it at the judgment day. Most unquestionably this is a truth, but a truth which no way tends to lessen the importance of satisfactory information on the subject now. The justice of his responsibility is a thing which should obviously be made apparent to a sinner, not merely at the time of his punishment to silence him during his sufferings, but during the period of his probation to quicken him in his escape. To suppose knowledge communicated then, which is not accessible now, is to suppose the existence of a new case in which no probation is granted, but punishment inflicted without opportunity of refuge. It would enable a sinner to say, If I could have known this before, I might have been a different man; whereas the equitable character of the final judgment obviously lies in its simply carrying out the principles of the probationary state, and rewarding every man according to that which he might know, as determining the character of that which he has done.

* * * * *

We come now to the passages directly bearing on the question. These are classed under three heads—Such as expressly ascribe power to man—such as indicate the nature of the cause preventing right action—and such as describe the nature of the change wrought in the conversion of a sinner. As examples of the first class, the author produces Isaiah vi. 9, 10, as quoted by the evangelists—the remarkable passages, John ix. 39, 41, in which our Lord, addressing the Pharisees, says, if ye were blind, ye should have no sin; but now ye say we see, therefore your sin remaineth—the parables of our Lord—and the numerous passages which require and enforce consideration, not merely as a duty, but as the method of obedience to the divine will. In regard to the parables, the author remarks, that they are uniformly introduced for the illustration of moral actions, objects, or agents, in possession of the entire powers belonging to their nature.

"If an impenitent sinner be compared to a fig-tree, it is to a living, not a dead one. Luke xiii. 6, If the condition of man is shadowed forth by

that of servants who received talents to employ for their lord, they receive every man according to his several ability. Matthew xxv. 15. If the address of the gospel is likened to a feast, the parties to whom it is addressed have full power of accepting it. Luke xiv. 16, &c. We might go in the same manner through the whole of the parables, and not find a single instance in which a different idea is insinuated.

“This is a remarkable fact, and bears directly on our argument. These passages in which man, in relation to his moral conduct, is compared to objects possessing the whole power which naturally pertains to them, clearly intimate that man is in possession of all the powers requisite to moral actions. If this is not the case, the parables are founded on a mistaken analogy, and must lead to erroneous conclusions.”

In commenting on the passages which indicate the cause preventing the performance of right action, the author considers first the passage usually alleged by the assertors of human inability:—“No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him. Without me ye can do nothing. With man this is impossible.” John, vi. 44—xv. 5. Matthew xix 26. The explanation which he gives of these passages is, that the term *cannot* denotes determination, and not power. He contends that the term has always this meaning when it is applied to acts, whether internal or external, the performance of which depends upon the state of the mind.

“Whether, in a state of health and freedom, I rise or sit, I walk or remain in the house, I read or write, &c. depends solely on the state of my mind, that is to say, according to the state of my mind, I may and shall either do them or let them alone. Now, if in any of these cases I were to use the word *cannot*, or in saying I cannot walk just now, or I cannot come yet, the word *cannot* in this case would simply express my determination that I would not.”

* * * * *

Having disposed of the passages which have been conceived to indicate a want of power as the operating cause in a sinner's impenitence, and endeavoured to show that they express nothing more than the fixedness of the sinner's determination, he proceeds to notice some by which the latter idea is directly conveyed. He instances John v. 40; Mat. xxiii. 27; Prov. i. 25. “Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life. How often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not; ye would none of my reproof.”

“In these passages, he remarks, there is no metaphor. The words are used in their literal sense, and must be taken strictly to mean that man's determination not to come to Christ is the reason why they do not come. But if so then it cannot be true that they are unable. Here, in that case, their inability would be the reason, or at least a part of the reason, why they do not come.”

He notices under this head, Prov. i. 24, 25, 29; Acts xiii. 46; John iii. 19; and other passages.

The third class of Scripture proofs which the author brings forward consists of passages describing the nature of the change wrought in the conversion of a sinner. Into his remarks on these, however, we cannot enter. We shall now close our view of this part of our author's argument, with the following extract, on the tendency of the doctrine:—

“In ascribing to man the means, that is the power of loving and serving God, we do nothing to exalt him, but every thing to abase him. Let the sentiment we maintain be compared in this respect with that which is opposed to it. Affirm that man has no power to act right, does that abase him? It lowers him indeed, by denying the principal attribute, which raises him above the brutes, but it does not dishonour him; it sinks his nature, but it does not impugn his character. Upon this principle, in order to humble man, we should say that he has no power to think, none to reason, none to admire, none to be happy; and let us only go on in the same direction, and we may ultimately reduce him to an oyster or a zoophyte.

***** “The state of things which thus opens to us is truly admirable. Here are men who profess to hold doctrines abasing to the creature, and cry down a sentiment because it exalts him, while the doctrine they espouse annihilates the possibility of blame, and furnishes the sinner with a complete justification; and that which they oppose not only carries the guilt of the sinner to the highest pitch, but affords the only ground on which he can be convicted of criminality at all. Under what infatuation, can it be, that professing to maintain the deep criminality of transgression, they seize upon that on which the very existence of criminality depends, and strive to blot it out from the records of truth and from the conscience, of man? Allow that man has power to be and to do what he pleases, whether right or wrong, and you may hold him blameworthy; deny this, and let him be what he may, he is innocent. Yet this is the very thing which is singled out for denial. That is the doctrine, therefore, which exalts the creature, for it enables him to look with complacency on his heart and life, with all their iniquities, to justify himself notwithstanding all the accusations of the law of God, and even to lift up his head with insults in the presence of his Maker and his judge. Ours is the doctrine to abase man, and is the only doctrine which attaches to him a particle of real criminality. If he has power to serve God, then disobedience is a crime; the sinner himself cannot but allow it to be so; and a crime fully proportionate to the glory of God and the vastness of our obligations.”

WITNESSING FOR CHRIST.

We are to witness for Christ, enduring patiently the worst things for his sake. In this manner did the apostles speak forth the truth of their convictions. They suffered much, almost the whole of them witnessed in the way of martyrdom. We are not called to bear witness in the same way. In our days, the men of the world have fallen out among themselves, and the Church of God being placed in the back ground of the bloody scene, we have the liberty of professing what we believe to be scriptural, no man making us afraid. But in so far as our at-

tachment to Christ, or any part of his interest may expose us to the reproach of the world, or may prove an obstacle to honors or emoluments among men, we are to bear it with a patient and willing mind, for Christ's sake. If we are thoroughly persuaded of the truth of what we profess in religion, we never can suppose that we can suffer too much for it. Fretfulness, impatience, under the cross, is like a witness contradicting his own testimony. But when he can bear the greatest hardships and run the greatest risks, for Christ's sake, and the gospel, we give every degree of credibility to the testimony for Christ, which we have exercised.

We are to witness for him by a holy, tender, circumspect life and behaviour. In this manner, also did the apostles witness for their Master. They not only recommended holiness of life by the doctrines which they taught, and laws and regulations which they enforced; but they set the best pattern of these things in their lives. They could appeal to those among whom they lived, how holily, justly, and unblameably they had behaved themselves among them. That person is unworthy of the honorable name of a witness for Christ, who is careless and irregular in his manner of life. The religion of Christ gives no countenance to any thing like immorality. The grace of God, which bringeth salvation, teaches "us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lust, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in the present evil world?" The gospel does not make void the law but on the contrary, it establisheth the law; and those persons who are habitually immoral, show themselves to be unacquainted with the genuine spirit and tendency of the gospel. Some have been found in all ages, who, by their profligate conduct have been a disgrace to the Christian name. Infidels have taken occasion, from the manner of life which these persons have led, to say of Christianity, It is nothing but a cunningly devised fable. This is still their cry, and they can select in present times, too, many instances of those who by their manner of life give the lie to the whole system. Unless holiness of life is studied, no person can believe what we say with our lips, in favour of religion. We can believe a person to speak forth his own convictions, only in so far as we see him acting agreeably thereunto. If we believe what he says to be true, we must have other evidence for the truth of it, than his declaration, when we find that he contradicts the whole of his testimony. We witness for Christ therefore, only so far as our practice is consistent with what he requires. Let us, therefore study holiness in all manner of conversation.

We are to witness for Christ, by taking that comfort which the religion of Christ, is calculated to afford. In this manner, also, did the disciples testify their conviction to one another, and to the world, of the truth of Christ's resurrection: "The Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared unto Simon." "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." When the women got tidings of his resurrection, they departed from the sepulchre with fear and great joy. The Christian religion is full of consolation; its doctrine is an unexhaustible spring of comfort. What can be more cheering than the doc-

trine of the atonement ! to be assured upon the grounds, that expiation hath been made for sins ; that that atonement hath been accepted ; as an incontestible proof of this, Jesus is now raised from the dead. What can be more refreshing to the soul ? This doctrine is the pillar and ground of hope. It is fitted to minister such consolation to the heart, as may give to those who receive it a heaven upon earth. How great and precious are the promises of religion ! These are given, that we may have good hope through grace. But Christians often forget that it is a part of religion to be joyful, and that one of those ways in which they are to witness for Christ, is by rejoicing evermore. Enemies say of religion, it is a gloomy service : and that a person no sooner becomes religious, than he is more than half way advanced in a state of melancholy. We are certainly bound to contradict these aspersions, not only by saying with the lips, that wisdom's ways are pleasantness, and her paths are peace, but by showing in our lives that we are really joyful and happy. There is one grievous mistake under which many have labored. They wished to be happy ; and who does not wish to be possessed of comfort ? They panted after a copious consolation, but then they did not seek it in the right way. It was under the influence of a selfish spirit, rather than from a regard to what the law required, that they sought after enjoyment. They did not seek to abound in the exercise of joy as a duty ; but to be possessed of it as a privilege. Let them aim at this exercise, as a duty enjoined by the divine law, and as one of those ways in which they are to use their endeavors to wipe off the foul aspersions that enemies have cast upon the religion of Christ, and ere ever they are aware their souls may be like the chariots of Aminadab.

We are to witness for Christ, by a dutiful submission to the laws and ordinances appointed by Christ, for the order and discipline of the Church. This is a part of witness-bearing that never was less regarded than in the present day. All that bear the Christian name, seem to have some persuasion that it is their duty to avow themselves to be Christians ! but there are few that will bear testimony for Christ, by a practical submission to that order which office-bearers are bound to follow with delinquents. As if the discipline of the church were nothing but rage or tyranny, it is no sooner spoken of, than they begin to flee from it. Some of the churches have laid aside the use of discipline altogether. Their members may do what they please ; if the law of the land do not take hold of them, they will be permitted to enjoy all the privileges of the church. And where office-bearers are still endeavouring to be faithful, they meet with too many who, after having rendered themselves the proper subjects of discipline, refuse to honor Christ by a dutiful submission to it.—*Edinburgh Christian Magazine.*

CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES, &c. OF A CHURCH OF CHRIST IN HALIFAX, N. S.

The following is an extract, from a Sketch of the doctrinal sentiments, and social practices of a Baptist Church, in the city of London, published in the New Baptist Magazine, London.

We have had thoughts of giving some such outline, respecting the church (usually designated the 2nd Baptist) in this place, with which we worship—not only for the purpose of religious information and edification—but also to rectify and prevent mistakes or misrepresentation as to what may be deemed by some, *their* peculiarities—as this extract, as far as it goes, clearly expresses *their* sentiments on these subjects; and is itself interesting and worthy to be read—we have here adopted it for these purposes, and now would submit it, with the letter alluding to their order, and history, in page 197 of this volume, as a fair general exhibition of the nature of the principles, practices, order, &c. which as a Church of Christ they advocate, and endeavour to conform to, as scriptural—and which they think, none ought to object to, or dispense with, who make, and are consistent with the profession, of taking the New Testament, as their only directory, and rule of *faith and practice*.—*Ed.*

I. We believe the Holy Scriptures to be a revelation from God in which he has been graciously pleased to make known his mind and will to the children of men; and, therefore, we receive them as the *only* and unalterable rule of our faith and duty. *See the following texts of Scripture*,—2 Pet. i. 19—21. 2 Tim. iii. 15—17. Isa. viii. 19, 20. Jer. xxiii. 25—29. 1 John iv. 1—6. Heb. i. 1—3.

II. The bond of our union as a church is **THE TRUTH**, which we find to be testified in the Holy Scriptures concerning the person character, and work of Christ, with the salvation which he hath procured for the lost and ruined race of Adam. And if we are asked what we understand by this “Truth,” we reply, that it includes the testimony which God hath given of his Son—particularly that Jesus is the Christ, the promised Messiah—the son of God, or God manifest in the flesh—that he came into the world to save sinners—that he died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and was buried and that he arose again the third day according to the Scriptures—that having by himself expiated our sin, he ascended into the heavens and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high—that all power is committed into his hand both in heaven and on earth, and that he is appointed of God to be the Judge of the living and the dead—that to him all the prophets and apostles gave witness, that through his name **WHOSOEVER** believeth on him shall receive the remission of his sins; they shall never perish but have everlasting life. *See the following Scriptures*, Acts ii. 36—40. ch. iii. 26. ix. 22. x. 43. xiii. 26—30. 1 Tim. iii. 16. 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4. Heb. i. 3. ch. ii. 8.

III. We consequently believe that *Salvation is wholly of grace*, and not of works ; that all its blessings, such as, justification, or the forgiveness of sin ; peace with God ; adoption into his family ; the gift of the Holy Spirit, with its sanctifying influences ; and the enjoyment of the heavenly inheritance, are received, not in the way of working, but believing ; for “ *Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ the Lord ;*” and “ *it is of faith that it might be by grace—that the promise of salvation might be sure to all the seed.*” We further maintain that the faith with which salvation is connected is neither more nor less than crediting the record or testimony which God hath given of his Son, as being delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification. *See the following Scriptures*. Eph. ii. 8. 9. Rom. iv. 4. 5. 16. and ch. v. 1. John iii. 14—17. and ver 32—36. ch. xx. 31. Acts xiii. 38, 39. 1 Cor. xii. 3. ch. ii. 14. Phil. i. 29.

IV. We acknowledge no other Head, or King of the church but CHRIST,—no other Lord, no other Lawgiver ; no other rule of faith and duty but his word, as delivered to us either by himself or his inspired apostles ; and we consider the approved example of the first churches to have in it the very same obligation upon us, to follow it, in all we do as a church, that an express command would have. But while we reject all human traditions, all the doctrines and commandments of men, as having a tendency to turn us aside from the way of truth, we consider ourselves under the strictest obligation *to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded* ; being persuaded that his commands are founded in wisdom, and that they are the results of his love—the most fervent love that ever was shown among mortals ! We cannot therefore practically disregard any, even the very least of them, without sinning against our own souls. *See the following Scriptures*. Matt. xxviii. 18. Luke x. 22. John iii. 35. ch. v. 27. xiv. 21—23, xv. 9—17. 1 John ii. 3—6.

V. We believe the kingdom of Christ to be *not of this world*, either as respects its origin, nature, laws, privileges, immunities and honours, nor yet its subjects. That, being spiritual and heavenly in its nature, it consists in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost—that it does not admit of the interference of the civil magistrate, either in the way of defending, propagating, or supporting it—that its grand design and object is to gather the children of God out of the world unite them together in fervent love to the truth and to one another for the truth's sake—to train them by the discipline of his word and ordinances, into a conformity to himself here, in the way of patiently bearing the scorn and hatred of the world for his sake, taking up the cross and following him in humility, self-denial, heavenly mindedness, and disconformity to the world in order that they may partake with him in his glory hereafter. *See the following Scriptures*. John xviii. 36, 37. Rom. xiv. 17. John xv. 19. ch. xxvii. 14. 16. Matt. x. 32—39. Luke ix. 23—26. Phil. ii. 5—9. and ch. iii. 3—18.

VI. We consider it both our duty and privilege to meet together every first day of the week—the day on which the Saviour rose from the dead—after the examples of the first Christians, for the purpose of observing the ordinances of divine worship. And taking the church at Jerusalem for our pattern as recorded, Acts ii. 41—47. we steadily observe the following institutions:—the public *reading of the Scriptures* of the Old and New Testaments—the *preaching of the gospel*, and expounding the word of truth—the mutual *exhortation* of the brethren—offering up our *prayers*, intercessions, and giving of thanks for all men—and *singing the praises* of our God and Saviour in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. We observe the *Lord's supper*, or the breaking of bread every Lord's day, and have also the *fellowship*, or contribution for the poor, and other necessary purposes. As we find that all these institutions went together, and that the church of Jerusalem continued as steadfastly in the observance of one as they did in the other, we consider it our indispensable duty, to follow their example herein. See Acts xx. 7. ch. xv. 20, 21. Col. iv. 16. 1 Tim. iv. 13. 1 Cor. i. 21. Acts v. 42. ch. xx. 20. 2 Tim. iv. 2. Col. iii. 16. 1 Thess. iv. 18. Heb. iii. 13. ch. x. 24, 25. Rom. xii. 12. 1 Tim. iv. 1, 2. Acts ii, 42—47. 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. ch. xi. 23—29.

VII. In our social intercourse, as members of the same church or mystical body, we think it of great importance to pay due regard to the Saviour's words—"A new commandment I give unto you that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another: By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love to one another." As the Lord Jesus Christ here makes obedience to his new command to be the evidence or touchstone of genuine discipleship, it is manifest that it ought not to be a mere dormant, inactive principle. but a fervent beneficial love in deed and in truth, shewing itself by its fruits and effects, so as strikingly to distinguish them that are his from all the world besides, and point them out as his disciples. This leads us to cultivate a greater degree of intimacy with each other than is usually found in the dissenting congregations around us, the members of which do not appear to us to be more distinguished by an attention to this duty than are the members of the national church, or even those of the church of Rome: and if so there must be some radical defect in their religious profession. See on this subject. John xiii. 34, 35. 1 John iii, 14—24. ch. iv. 5—21. 1 Pet. i. 22. 1 Thess. iv, 9, 10. Eph. iv. 30—32. ch. v. 1. 2. Epistle of James throughout.

VIII. It is customary with the dissenting churches of the present day, to receive members into their communion on a *relation of their experience*, either verbally or in writing; but as we find nothing to sanction this practice in the New Testament we reject it, and receive only such as appear to be awakened to a sense of their lost and perishing state as sinners, and to have found relief to their guilty consciences in the gospel, and so confess their faith and hope in the Son of God, with

their purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord in the observance of his institutions. And should it afterwards appear that we have been mistaken in them,—that they are not under the influence of what they profess, nor walking agreeably to the rule of the word of God, we consider it our duty to deal with them in faithfulness by applying Christ's law of discipline, Matt. xviii. 15—17.

Thus we have given a brief outline of our religious sentiments and social practices, and we invite the attention of the numerous professors around us to an examination of them, by comparing them with the Holy Scriptures to which we have referred. If it can be shown us that we hold any doctrinal sentiment or contend for any practice inconsistent with the word of God, we shall esteem him our friend who undeceives us, having nothing more at heart than to find out the truth and walk in it. But if that whereunto we have attained, be found conformable to the mind of CHRIST JESUS, and to be sanctioned by *his authority*, however much it may be slighted and neglected by others in this day of general professions, we invite all those of our neighbours who truly love and fear him, as they value their own present edification and eternal interests, to become our companions in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. To all such persons the voice from heaven speaks loudly, "Stand ye in the way and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest to your souls," Jer. vi. 16. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Rev. xxii. 14.

CONCLUSION.

In bringing our volume to a conclusion, we are glad to have had *good evidence to believe that its use, importance, and necessity*, have been appreciated and experienced, by many who have *read it*—we are satisfied on a retrospect of its contents, that the general tendency of its selections, has been fairly to subserve the object we professed, and proposed in undertaking such a religious miscellany—to incite to the knowledge and practice of Christianity as delineated in the New Testament—to expose the evils, and to point out the only remedy of Sectarianism—to lead the honest inquirer for truth to discriminate between the facts or truths of the Bible, and the speculations on them, of men—between what God says, and what man thinks. The bulk of these selections offered to the public, are by no means of an ephemeral character; being generally well worthy of preservation, and reperusal—their subject matter, being not only diversified, and highly interesting to every student of the Bible, but being the production of men of the first piety, talents and Biblical attainments—many of whom have been led very peculiarly and providentially, to relinquish all mere party motives, and to adopt the Bible alone, in practice as well as principle, as the rule of their

faith; and to advocate and to point out, what it bids men to believe and to do—that they may obtain peace and holiness in life, a good hope in death, and at last eternal life—and who in consequence are more impartial witnesses of these things than others (however pious or learned) can be, who from the circumstances in which they are each differently placed, are obliged necessarily more or less to modify, and to identify the truths of scripture, with the views, practices and interest of that party they determine to support, and prejudge to be scriptural. The arguments of those writers, however scriptural, acute, interesting or edifying, they may be, (from want of party support and from causes connected with this; from that experience, which teaches, that discussion is fatal to mere human opinions and practices,) have little chance of being impartially noticed in any religious periodical, which has for one of its objects to sustain the interests of a human creed or party. The Gleaner contributes in these provinces to their investigation, as to what they deem truth? and to obtain for them, what they are claiming and gradually obtaining in other parts of the world—a hearing. Why almost all who have become leaders or influential in their respective denominations discourage as far as they can, writings whose object is professedly so single, and, which openly appeal to the Bible as the test by which their consistency may be easily proved; we will not now attempt to explain. We have no motive but what we avow in thus aiding free investigation in the way we do, it exposes us to a good deal of trouble, to the risk of being misconceived or misrepresented, and to some pecuniary loss. But we are encouraged by some beneficial results from our labours, and by solicitation and promises of assistance of some friendly to the cause of Christian unity for the truth's sake, and for the Bible alone, as their articles of creed---to persevere. We propose, God willing, to make preparations for the regular monthly appearing of another volume, the first number of which to be by the 1st of June next. We have various fields within our reach, from which we trust we may glean enough to satisfy any healthy appetite, or taste.

All we ask is, hear, before you judge, and what you hear, judge “by the law and the testimony,” by this alone, “prove all things that you may hold fast that which is good.”—*Ed.*

Who is my mother, or my brethren?
 Christ spake, and looked on them that sat around,
 With a meek smile, of pity bent with love
 More melting than e'er gleamed from human face,
 As when a sun beam, through a summer shower,
 Shines mildly on a little hill side flock;
 And with that look of love he said, behold
 My mother and my brethren; for I say,
 That whoso'er shall do the will of God
 He is my brother, sister, mother, all.

ERRATUM.—Page 260, 2nd line from top, for “it is said,” read, “is it said?”

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