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THE
CHRISTIAN GLEANER

NEW SERIES.—VOL. II.

CONSISTING OF

ESSAYS AND EXTRACTS

FROM VARIOUS

RELIGIOUS PUBLICATIONS, AND OTHER SOURCES.

INTENDED TO PROMOTE

THE

KNOWLEDGE, BELIEF AND PRACTICE OF CHRISTIANITY,

AS DELINEATED IN THE

NEW TESTAMENT.

“Prove all things, hold fast that which is good.”

HALIFAX, N. S.

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THE
CHRISTIAN GLEANER.

VOL. 2.

MARCH, 1836.

No. 1.

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

PREFATORY REMARKS.

THE following Extracts are from an Address to the Public, by one of the ablest, most consistent, and practical advocates the age has produced, for the Bible—the Bible alone—for the faith and practice of Christians.

They appear so appropriate to the occasion—and so well suited to a volume of Gleanings (largely indebted to his own labors of faith and love to enrich its pages) advocating the same good cause—that they are here adopted as our Prefatory Remarks.

‘ We now commence a periodical paper pledged to no religious sect in christendom, the express and avowed object of which is the eviction of truth and the exposure of error, as stated in the *Prospectus*.’

‘ We have often heard the leaders of devotion in popular assemblies confessing their great ignorance, praying for more light, and anxiously looking for a more desirable time, when knowledge, truth, and holiness should abound. This circumstance clearly argues that every thing is not right amongst them, themselves being judges. Yet we have often heard these same leaders of devotion vindicate themselves from error, and attempt to justify themselves and all their measures as soon as any reprover presented himself. This, though a common occurrence, is a singular proof that many deceive themselves, as well as their simple hearers, “ by good words and fair speeches.”

‘ We are very certain that to such as are praying for illumination and instruction in righteousness, and not availing themselves of the means afforded in the Divine Word to obtain an answer to their prayers, our remarks on many topics will appear unjust, illiberal, and even heretical; and as there are so many praying for light, and inattentive to what God has manifested in his word, there must be a multitude to oppose the way of truth and righteousness. This was the case when God’s Messiah, the mighty Redeemer of Israel, appeared. Ten thousand prayers were daily offered for his appearance, ten thousand wishes expressed for his advent, ten thousand orations pronounced respecting the glory of his character and reign; and, strange to tell! when he appeared the same ten thousand tongues were employed in his defamation! Yea, they were praying for his coming when he stood in the midst of them, as many now are praying for light when it is in their hands, and yet they will not look at it.’

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'There is much less diversity in the views, passions, prejudices, and circumstances of mankind, as respects the true religion in the different ages of the world, than at first thought we would willingly admit.'

'From the subscription we have already received to this work, having subscribers from almost all sects, we would at once despair were it our intention of pleasing them all—if the support of their peculiarities, or of the party to which they belong, were expected. We are happy to say that this circumstance so accords with our design of maintaining the apostles' doctrine only, in opposition to every system, how specious soever, that it will serve as a new impulse to keep us in the course intended. We must also keep in mind the fable of the man and his ass, who strove to please every body, but finally pleased neither himself nor any one else, and lost his ass into the bargain. Besides, when there are so many accommodating themselves to the bias of the people, and endeavoring to conciliate their good opinion, we might suppose that they would be able to endure one that might be disposed not to smile at their mistakes and countenance them in error. Amongst so many panegyrists, one monitor might be endured. These things, however, we say when viewing the subject through the medium of public opinion. We are assured there are many who will approve of what is truth, and the course adopted; and that many will know that we are not *alone* in the views to be exhibited; but that there are many who heartily accord with them.'

'We know from acquaintance that there are a goodly number of sensible and intelligent persons, at this day, entirely disgusted with many things *called* religious; and that, upon the whole, it is an age of inquiry. We are therefore somewhat sanguine that a fair opportunity presents itself for a work of this nature. We have learned that to make *truth* the *sole* object of our inquiries, and to be disposed to obey it, when known, serves more to guide us into it than all commentators. We have been taught that we are liable to err; we have found ourselves in many errors; we candidly acknowledge that we have changed our views on many subjects, and that our views have changed our practice. If it be a crime to change our views and our practice in religious concerns, we must certainly plead guilty. If it be a humiliating thing to say we have been wrong in our belief and practice, we must abase ourselves thus far. We were once trained and disciplined in the popular religion, and were then *steady* and uniform in one course for a time. But the foundation of our assent to, and accordance with, the popular religion was destroyed, and down came the edifice about our ears. We are thankful that we were not buried in the ruins. We have learned one lesson of great importance in the pursuit of truth—one that acts as a pioneer to prepare the way of knowledge—one that cannot be adopted and acted upon, but the result must be salutary. It is this: *Never to hold any sentiment or proposition as more certain than the evidence on which it rests; or, in other words, that our assent to any proposition should be precisely proportioned to the evidence on which it rests. All beyond this we esteem enthusiasm—all short of it, incredulity.* In this place I must cite the words of the justly celebrated Dr. *George Campbell*, author of the best translation of the

four gospels which ever yet appeared in our language. They are from the conclusion of his preface to the "*Preliminary Dissertations,*" volume I, page 59. They accord with our own experience and breathe our sentiments. He says, 'The language of our Lord to his hearers was, *If any man WILL come under my guidance.* Nothing is obtruded or forced upon the unwilling. Now, as the great source of the infidelity of the Jews was a notion of the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, we may justly say that the great source of the corruptions of christians, and of their general defection foretold by the inspired writers, has been an attempt to render it in effect a temporal kingdom and to support and extend it by earthly means. This is that spirit of Antichrist which was so early at work as to be discoverable even in the days of the apostles." "In the same page he says, 'If to make proselytes by the sword is tyranny in rulers; to resign our understanding to any man, and receive implicitly what we ought to be rationally convinced of, would be, on our part, the lowest servility.—Every thing therefore, here, is subjected to the test of scripture and sound criticism. I am not very confident of my own reasonings. I am sensible that, on many points, I have changed my opinion, and found reason to correct what I had judged formerly to be right. The consciousness of former mistakes proves a guard to preserve me from such a presumptuous confidence in my present judgment as would preclude my giving a patient hearing to whatever may be urged, from reason or scripture, in opposition to it. Truth has been in all my inquiries, and still is my great aim. To her I am ready to sacrifice every personal consideration; but am determined not (knowingly) to sacrifice her to any thing." 'These are the sentiments and determination of my heart, as though they had been indited there.'

'It is very far from our design to give any just ground of offence to any, the weakest of the disciples of Christ, nor to those who make no pretensions to the christian name: yet we are assured that no man ever yet became an advocate of that faith which cost the life of its founder and the lives of so many of the friends and advocates of it, that did not give offence to some. We are also assured that in speaking plainly and according to fact, of many things of high esteem at present, we will give offence. In all such cases we esteem the reasoning of Peter unanswerable. It is better to hearken unto God, in his word, than to men, and to please him than all the world beside. There is another difficulty of which we are aware, that, as some objects are manifestly good, and the means attempted for their accomplishment manifestly evil, speaking against the means employed we may be sometimes understood as opposing the object abstractly, especially by those who do not wish to understand, but rather misrepresent. We have only one request to make our readers—and that is, an impartial and patient hearing for which we shall make them one promise, viz. that we shall neither approve nor censure any thing without the clearest and most satisfactory evidence from reason and revelation.'

THE BIBLE.

There is, perhaps, no book read more than the Bible, and it appears as though no book generally read, was less understood. This, no doubt has arisen from a combination of causes which exists in relation to no other book in the world. If any other book in the English language had as many commentaries written upon it, had as many systems based upon it, or upon particular constructions of it; if any other book was exhibited in the same dislocated and distracted light, had as many debates about its meaning, and as many different senses attributed to its words; if any other book were read as the scriptures are commonly read, in the same broken, disconnected and careless manner; with the same stock of prejudices and pre-conceived opinions, there is every reason to believe that it would be as un-intelligible and as little understood as the bible appears to be. We often wonder at the stupidity of the Jews in our Saviour's time in relation to his pretensions and claims, and no doubt posterity will wonder at our stupidity and ignorance of a book which we read so often and profess to venerate so highly. There is a greater similarity in the cause and reasons of their and our indocility, than we are aware of. The evil one has the same interests in obscuring this volume which he had in obscuring the evidences of his mission: and the vitiosity of man, both natural and acquired, exhibits itself in the same aspect towards the bible as it did in reference to the person concerning whom it was all written.

But among the myriads who religiously read the bible, why is it that so little of the spirit of it, seems to be caught, possessed, and exhibited? I will give one reason, and those more wise, may add to it others. Many read the bible to have a general idea of what it contains, as a necessary part of a polite education; many read it to attain the means of proving the dogmas which they already profess; many read it with the design of being extremely wise in its contents; many read it that they may explain it to others; but alas! but few appear to read it supremely and exclusively that they may practise it: that they may be conformed to it, not only in their outward deportment, but in the spirit and temper of their minds. This is the only reading of it which is really profitable to men, which rewards us for our pains, which consoles us now, and which will be remembered for ages to come, with inexpressible delight. In this way, and in this way only, the spirit of it is caught, retained and exhibited. Some such readers seem to be enrapt or inspired with its contents. Every sentiment and feeling which it imparts seem to be the sentiments and feelings of their hearts; and the bible is to their religion, what their spirit is to their body; the life and activity thereof. The bible to such a person is the medium of conversation with the Lord of Life. He speaks to Heaven in the language of Heaven, when he prays in the belief of its truth, and the Great God speaks to him in the same language; and thus the true and intelligent christian walks with God and converses with him every day. One hour of such company is more to be desired than a thousand years spent in intimate converse with the wisest philosophers and most august potentates that earth ever saw.

RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY.

It is much to be desired that correct views should obtain in the church and in the world relative to controversy on matters of religion. If we rightly scan the signs of the times, there is a special necessity for making this subject prominent at the present day. A fair moral estimate of the true nature and legitimate ends of controversy is we believe of less and less frequent occurrence. Persons of amiable and pacific tempers are apt to be offended with the very term. The argumentative discussion of any topic of religion is unhappily associated in their minds with the encounter of angry passions—with bitterness and evil speaking—with an entire dereliction of the charities and courtesies of both christian and civil intercourse. And candor compels us to admit that too much occasion has been given in all ages for connecting these repulsive attributes with religious debates of every kind. But they are by no means its inseparable adjuncts. And no plea for the necessity of controversy ought to be construed as a plea for its common evils. We know not why the truest spirit of meekness and kindness towards the person of an opponent may not be coupled with the utmost force of reasoning in the defence of truth. Yet in the minds of many, these ideas appear to be wholly incompatible with each other; and to say of a tract, a treatise, a sermon, a book, it is controversial in its objects or complexion, is at once to fix an indelible odium upon it. No matter how clear and luminous its expositions of error, or its defence of truth—no matter how engaging or conciliating its spirit—still it is controversy, hated controversy—and wormwood and coals of juniper and firebrands and arrows—all rush into the imagination as through an open door, and forbid it the least favor.

This surely is not calling things by their right names, nor judging righteous judgment. What is the scope of religious controversy, but the vindication of religious truth? Is not this truth liable to be denied, distorted, corrupted, or frittered away? Is it not often entangled with specious errors, and charged with false consequences? Are its friends required to stand silent by, and see its dearest interests jeopardised, without coming forward to its defence? Is there any alternative left them but to enter the lists, and endeavour to show truth triumphant? By this we do not intend to advocate the belligerent spirit of controversy: however polemical or warlike may be our terms. But as to the thing itself, we see not but controversy is as inevitable as error and as harmless as its refutation. And there are fundamental truths in the gospel, and these truths are liable to be assailed, and they must be defended; and if they are continually assailed, they must be continually defended.

For this we unquestionably have the high authority both of Scripture precepts, and example. Mention is made of some "whose mouth is must be stopped;" and gainsayers are to be put to silence." And it ought to abate very considerably our aversion to every form of controversy when we find several of the Epistles written with the express design of confuting certain errors which had sprung up in the church, and were making head against the Apostle's doctrine. If inspired

men stand foremost in the ranks of controvertists, it is a sickly or sinful sighing for peace, that keeps us not in the back ground merely, but off from the ground altogether.

Now we have yet to learn that the day in which we live is so happily distinguished above former periods, as to absolve us from the necessity of controversy. Are errors less rife over the whole length and breadth of our land at this moment than in the times of our fathers? Is there a more general and cordial yielding to the pure principles of religion or morality? Are the advocates of the unadulterate doctrines of the Gospel listened to and reported of with more candor? Does the weekly press teem with a more hopeful issue, and send out through its thousand channels a better influence over the bosom of society? Are the prejudices naturally engendered by sectarian divisions, melting away, and the hearts of good men panting to break through party pales and flow together? Are the smaller points of difference more frequently viewed as small, than ever before, while all the true holders of the one Head are rallying round the central points of union?

If these auspicious omens were indeed visible, we might begin to think of discharging ourselves from this duty. But we do not see them. On the contrary, we see what we are taught in prophecy to expect; growing indications of a more powerful spirit of error. With more real liberality than formerly, we believe there is also more false. There is a disposition to relax the rigor of truth. And here, if we mistake not, bedded in fragrant flowers of lovely charity, lies the baneful canker-worm—an aversion to controversy. It is, in many cases, we are persuaded, the product of a spurious catholicism, which would bid us embrace error as well as truth—which would blind our eyes to the everlasting and indestructible distinction between them.

But we have wandered into a longer dissertation than we intended, though well aware, that much, very much, remains to be said on the subject, in order to present it in all its bearings. At present, our aim has been to intimate that a dislike of all controversy, in every form, is exceedingly unreasonable, inasmuch as a wholesale reprobation of it is very apt to be connected with an indifference to truth which has a bad aspect.

CHRISTIAN UNION—No. 1.

A. CAMPBELL TO WILLIAM JONES,* OF LONDON.

My much esteemed and venerable brother Jones,

YOU wish me to state whether we of the reformation in America, differ from our brethren in England in any articles of the christian faith and practice: and if we differ from you in any thing, to state wherein.

I trust that before this reaches you, the works forwarded you will have arrived in England; and from these you will more fully learn, than I can now write, our views of the ancient and the modern exhibi-

*Author of History of the Waldenses, Biblical Cyclopaedia, &c. &c.

tions of christianity, There is, in our judgment, a great difference between original christianity and the best modern forms of it; with which we are acquainted. But that I may be understood on the question before us, I will preface my reply with a few remarks on the cardinal difference between the original institution of Jesus Christ and the reformed religion of Protestant countries.

If I were to classify in *three* chapters the whole christian institution, after the fashion of the modern schools, for the sake of being understood, I would designate them christian *faith*, christian *worship*, and christian *mortality*. To these the moderns have added two others, which, using the same license, I would call human *philosophy* and human *traditions*. Now, in the first chapter, we, and all christians, are agreed: for as christian faith has respect to the *matters of fact* recorded—to the direct testimony of God found in the New Testament concerning himself—concerning his Son and Spirit—concerning mankind—what he has done, what we have done, and what he will do, there is no debate. I find all *confessions of FAITH*, properly so called, like the *four gospels*, tell the same story so far as matters of fact or faith are concerned.

In the second chapter we are also agreed that God is to be worshipped through the Mediator—in prayer, in praise, public and private—in the ordinances of christian baptism, the Lord's day, the Lord's supper, and in the devotional study of his word and of his works of creation and providence.

In the third chapter we all acknowledge the same moral code. What morality is—is confessed and acknowledged by all; but in the practice of it there are great subtractions.

We repudiate the two remaining chapters as having any place in our faith, worship, or morality; because we think that we have discovered that all the divisions in Protestant christendom—that all the partyism, vain jangling, and heresies which have disgraced the christian profession, have emanated from human philosophy and human tradition. It is not faith, nor piety, nor morality; but philosophy and tradition that have alienated and estranged christians, and prevented the conversion of the world. Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle deserved not the reputation of philosophers, if Calvin, Arminius, and Wesley were not worthy of it. The former philosophised morally on nature and ancient tradition—the latter, on the Bible and human society.

Religious philosophers on the Bible have excogitated the following doctrines and philosophical distinctions:—

'The Son eternally begotten of the Father;' 'An eternal Son;' 'The Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son;' 'God's eternal decrees;' 'Conditional and unconditional election and reprobation;' 'God out of Christ;' 'Free will;' 'Liberty and necessity;' 'Original sin;' 'Effectual calling;' 'Free Grace;' 'Sovereign grace;' 'General atonement;' 'Particular atonement;' 'Active and passive obedience of Christ;' 'Common and special operation of the Holy Ghost;' 'Imputed righteousness;' 'Inherent righteousness;' 'Progressive sanctification;' 'Justifying and saving faith;' 'Historic and temporary faith;' 'The direct and reflex acts of the Holy Spirit;' 'The

faith of assurance and the assurance of faith; 'Legal repentance;' 'Evangelical repentance;' and 'Falling from Grace;*' 'Perseverance of the Saints*;' 'Visible and invisible church;' 'Infant membership;' 'Sacraments;' 'Eucharist;' 'Consubstantiation;' 'Church government;' 'The power of the keys,' &c. &c. &c.

Concerning these and all such doctrines, and all the speculations and phraseology to which they have given rise, we have the privilege neither to affirm nor deny—neither to believe nor doubt; because God has not proposed them to us in his word, and there is no command to believe them. If they are deduced from the scriptures, we have them in the facts and declarations of God's Spirit; if they are not deduced from the Bible, we are free from all the difficulties and strifes which they have engendered and created.

We choose to speak of Bible things in Bible words, because we are always suspicious that if the word is not in the Bible, the idea which it represents is not there; and always confident that the things taught by God are better taught in the words, and under the names, which the Holy Spirit has chosen and appropriated, than in the words which man's wisdom teaches.

There is nothing more essential to the union of the disciples of Christ than *purity* of speech. So long as the earth was of one speech, the human family was united. Had they been then of a pure speech as well as of one speech, they would not have been separated. God, in his just indignation, dispersed them; but before he scattered them he divided their language. One of his Prophets, who lived in a degenerate age, who prophesied against the corruptions of his day, when he spoke of better times, of an age of union and communion, was commanded to say in the name of the Lord. "Then will I turn to the people a *pure language*, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him *with one consent*."† Purity of speech is here declared to be prerequisite to serving the Lord with one consent.

"The words of the Lord are pure words."† To have a pure speech, we must choose the language of Canaan, and abandon that of Ashdod. And if we would be of one mind, we must "speak the same thing." This was Paul's scheme of union, and no man can suggest a better.

It requires but little reflection to discover that the fiercest disputes about religion are about what the Bible does *not* say, rather than about what it *does* say—about words and phrases coined in the mint of speculative theology. Of these the *homousios* and the *homoousios* of the ever-memorable Council of Nice are a fair sample. Men are neither wiser, more intelligent, nor better, after, than before, they know the meaning of these words. As far as known on earth, there is not in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world the name of any person who was either converted or sanctified to God by any of these controversies about human dogmas, nor by any thing learned from the canons or creeds of all the Councils, from that of Nicaea to the present day.

It is a shame, then, to forget this scholastic jargon, and even the names of dogmas which have convulsed christendom. It is a con-

* Example corrupted. Scriptural phrases often misapplied, by which christianity has been corrupted. Jeremiah iii. 9. †Psalm xii. 6.

cession due to the crisis in which we live, for the sake of peace, to adopt the vocabulary of Heaven, and to return the borrowed nomenclature of the schools to its rightful owners—to speculate no more upon the opinions of Saint Austin, Saint Tertullian, Saint Origen—to speak of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit—of the gospel, of faith, of repentance, of baptism, of election, of the death of Christ, of his mediation, of his blood, of the reconciliation, of the Lord's supper, of the atonement, of the church of God, &c. &c., in all the phrases found in the Record, without any partiality—to learn to love one another as much when we differ in opinion as when we agree, and to distinguish between the testimony of God and man's reasonings and philosophy upon it.

The Apostle says, "There is one body, one spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one immersion, one God and Father of all." But no where is it said in the sacred book, *There is one opinion*. If, however, unity of opinion were desirable, to attain it, we must give the greatest liberty of opinion; for though once theory with us, it is now matter of experience, that the more stress is laid upon unity of opinion, the less of it, and the more division; and the less regard paid to it, the less emphasis laid upon it, the more we will have of it. This is founded in a law of the human mind, on which it is unseasonable and unnecessary to expatiate.

We have good reason to say, that there exists not the same number of professors in any department of christendom (amongst whom unity of opinion as much as unity of faith is the bond of union,) so much of one opinion in all matters pertaining to the christian institution, as amongst the brethren who have agreed cordially "to receive one another with regard to differences of opinion." They have not laid so much stress upon it, and therefore they have the more of it.

Amongst christians there is now, as there was at the beginning, a very great diversity in the knowledge of the christian institution. There are babes, children, young men, and fathers in Christ now, as well as in the days of the Apostle John. This, from the natural gifts of God, from the diversities of age, education and circumstances, is unavoidable. And would it not be just as rational and as scriptural to excommunicate one another, because our knowledge is less or greater than any fixed measure, as for differences of opinion or matters of speculation?

Indeed, in most cases where proscription and exclusions now occur in this country, the excluded are the most intelligent members of the society; and although no community will accuse a man because he knows more of his Bible than his brethren; and on this account exclude him from their communion; yet this, it is manifest, rather than heresy, (of which, however, for consistency's sake, he must be accused,) is, in truth, the real cause of separation.

If God has bestowed better gifts or better opportunities on one man than on another, by which he has attained more knowledge, instead of thanking God for his kindness to the community, they beg God to take him away; and if he will not be so unkind, they will at length

put him from among them under the charge of heresy. In most instances the greatest error of which a brother can be guilty, is to study his Bible more than his companions—or, at least, to surpass them in his knowledge of the mystery of Christ.

I need not say much upon the chapter of *human traditions*. They are easily distinguished from the *Apostles' traditions*. Those of the Apostles are found in their writings, as those of men are found in their own books. Some human traditions may have a show of wisdom, but it is only an appearance. So long as it is written, "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," so long will it be presumptuous folly to add the commandments of men to the precepts of Jesus Christ. I know but one way in which all the believers in Jesus Christ, honorably to themselves, honorably to the Lord, and advantageously to all the sons of Adam, can form one communion. All have two chapters too many in their present ecclesiastic constitutions. The contents of the aforesaid two chapters are various and different in all the sects, but they all have two chapters of the same name. In some they are long, and in some they are short; but whether long or short, let every one agree to tear them out of his book and burn them, and be satisfied with *faith, piety, and morality*. Let human philosophy and human tradition, as any part of the christian institution, be thrown overboard into the sea, and then the ship of the church will make a prosperous, safe, and happy voyage across the ocean of time, and finally, under the triumphant flag of Immanuel, gain a safe anchorage in the haven of eternal rest.

My dear sir, after this exposition you will no doubt perceive that it is a cardinal feature in the reformation for which we contend, to displace all the scholastic doctrines, phrases, terms of the "primitive fathers" and "the Protestant reformers," and to contend earnestly for the faith formerly delivered to the saints. I may add, that as far as I am informed of the faith, piety, and morality of the brethren in England, we are one with them; and even in matters of opinion, I opine there is a very general concurrence between them and us. We may have some philosophy and some traditions which we ought not to have, and you may unfortunately be in the same predicament; but so long as neither of us make these a bond of union, nor a term of communion, we can cheerfully and happily maintain unity of spirit by the strong bonds of christian peace. We no doubt necessarily differ in the extent of our knowledge of the whole revelation of God; but should you be more intelligent in the sacred Scriptures than we, we will thank you to teach us the way of the Lord more perfectly, and we will thank God for your assistance. We trust that we have been taught that if our brethren are more gifted than we, or have improved their opportunities better than we they are not on that account heretics, and to be treated as heathen men and publicans.

May favor, mercy, and peace be multiplied to you, and all the holy brethren with you, from God our Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord: to whom be glory now and forever.

ENTHUSIASM.

There are anatomists of piety, who destroy all the freshness and vigor of faith, and hope, and charity, by immersing themselves night and day, in the infected atmosphere of their own bosoms.—Let a man of warm heart, who is happily surrounded with the dear objects of the social affections, try the effect of a parallel practice—let him institute anxious scrutinies of his feelings towards those, whom hitherto he has believed himself to regard with unfeigned love—let him use in these inquiries, all the fine distinctions of a casuist, and all the profound analysis of a metaphysician, and spend hours daily in pulling asunder every complex emotion of tenderness that has given grace to the domestic life—and moreover let him journalize these examinations, and note particularly, and with the scrupulosity of an accountant, how much of the mass of his kindly sentiments he has ascertained to consist of genuine love, and how much was selfishness in disguise—and let him from time to time solemnly resolve to be in future more disinterested, and less hypocritical in his affections towards his family—what at the end of the year would be the result of such a process, but a debility and dejection of heart—and strangeness and sadness of manner, and a suspension of the native expressions and ready offices of zealous affection?—Meanwhile the hesitations and the musings and the upbraidings of an introverted sensibility absorb the thoughts—Is it then reasonable to presume that similar practices in religion can have a tendency to promote the healthful vigor of piety?—By the constitution of the human mind; its emotions are strengthened in no other way than by exercise and utterance—nor does it appear that the religious are exempted from this general law—The Divine Being is revealed to us in the Scriptures as the proper and supreme object of reverence, of love, and affectionate obedience—and the natural means of exercising and of expressing these feelings are placed before us, both in the offices of devotion and in the duties of life, just in the same way, that the opportunities of enhancing the domestic affections are afforded in the constitution of social life.—Why then should the Christian turn aside from the course of nature, and divert his feelings from their outgoings towards the supreme object of devotional sentiments, by instituting curious reseraches, into the quality, and quantity, and composition of all his religious sensations? This spiritual hypochondriasis enfeebles at once the animal, the intellectual, and the moral life, and is usually found in conjunction with the infirmities of judgment, infelicity of temper and inconsistency of conduct.—*Natural History of Enthusiasm.*

A real inclination of soul to seek after the precepts of God, to do them and to walk after them, is an infallible sign of a child of God. Ps. 119. 94.—*Thomas Cole.*

BEING LED BY THE SPIRIT.*

The author was a Baptist of high standing in England, and one who has been highly extolled by many who denounce the author of this work as an errorist. I will only add, he is one of the most learned of the Baptist writers.

Ed. M. H.

“ Having thus seen the rise and the accomplishment of the promise of an universal religion under the administration of Jesus Christ, and having got possession of the book that contains the whole of that religion, let us proceed to examine the book, and particularly with a view to the Holy Spirit, and his influence in religion, for “ as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” To give you at once my notion of the subject, I think our Apostle took his idea of the Christian church being “ led” by the Spirit from that favourite part of the history of his country so often mentioned in the writings of the Prophets, and so faithfully recorded by their first historian, Moses ; I mean God’s “ leading” the Israelites through the wilderness into the land of promise. Sometimes it is said simply, “ God led them” through the wilderness, Sometimes it is said, the Holy Spirit led them “ by the right hand of Moses.” Sometimes they are said to be led “ with a cloud, and with a light of fire :” and in this manner the wise men of the East were led by a star to Jesus Christ. God in all these cases made use of means, and the work was no less his for using means to effect his purpose. In this manner I suppose the Holy Spirit by the Scriptures guides all good men. The cloud was not in the Israelites, nor was the star in the wise men ; but there was in them a knowledge of the use and intent of these appearances, and a conformity of action to their own ideas.

Here, then, two things rise to view in our subject—a guide without us, and a disposition within us ; and the last seems to me to be an effect of the first, and both the work of one and the same spirit. Suppose a world without a Bible, and you have no idea of any Spirit of God as a spirit of religion in the inhabitants of it. Suppose, on the other hand, a Bible in a world without an inhabitant, and you have no notion of influence : the “ Spirit of God” is there, but nothing knows or worships him, “ the earth is without form and void, and darkness is upon the face of the deep.” If God calls for light, it will come : if for land and water, they will appear : if for sun, and moon, and stars, they will be ; if for fish, and fowl, and beasts, they will appear ; but there will be no religion till man comes, nor then any revealed religion till the book and the man meet, and then the child of God will be “ led by the Spirit of God.” My supposition is a fact. The Bible lies about in many parts of the world without readers, and there lies all our holy religion like Jesus dead in the sepulchre. There are on the contrary, many places where the Bible is read ; but it is not among men, but mere animals, who eat and drink, and marry and give in marriage, and buy and sell, and build and plant, and are so full of these ideas, that they never attend to religious truth, before death comes

*Gen. 24. 48 ; 27. 48. Deut. 8. 2. Ps. 78. 14. Is. 63. 12. Rom. 5. 14. Neh. 9. 12. 30.

and destroys them all. "So it was in the days of Noah, so it was also in the days of the Son of Man," and so it will be to the end of the world. In a word, there is no magic in the Bible to operate without reason and conscience; and there is no religion in man without revelation. If we lay aside the Scriptures we have no standard to judge by; and if we have no judgment the standard is of no use.

Let us apply these general observations to particular cases, in order to understand how the Spirit of God "leads" all good men. We have determined that it is by means of Scripture truths, and that it implies the exercise of some dispositions in us. I am aware of the questions you will ask, and I only defer stating the question till it comes properly before us, as it will presently by supposing a case, which is not a mere supposition, because it comes to pass every day. Suppose a man, who had never thought of religion, to lose by death the first of all earthly pleasures, the agreeable partner of his life, or, as a Prophet, calls his wife, "the desire of his eyes." O dreadful calamity, sound fit to raise the dead! "Son of man, behold I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke! I spake unto the people in the morning, and at even my wife died." Awhile the man thunderstruck can hardly believe it true, and hopes against hope, till time, cruel time, kills his hope, and drives him to despair. The more he thinks, the more occasion he sees for grief. Every thing he sees pierces him to the heart, and in every place a lovely picture of her that was, and the ghastly features of her that is no more, meet his eyes, and melt down all his soul in woe. The sun does not shine, the stars do not sparkle, the flowers do not scent, the world does not look as it used to do; the world seems dead, his house is a tomb, and all his domestics dreary ghosts. Now he feels the vanity of the world, takes up his Bible, perhaps to look after the desire of his eyes, and try whether he can find any thing in her present state to assuage his pain. This man hath religion to seek, and it is indifferent which end of the Bible he begins at—either will "lead" him right. If with the Prophets, they will hand him on from one to another, till they conduct him downward to Christ; if with the Apostles, they will direct him upward to the same person, who is a "light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of the people of Israel." This man, thus led to Christ, will be instructed by reading his sermons, by observing his actions, and by examining how his Apostles understood and explained his meaning, by applying it to several cases, both of individuals and collective bodies, which fell out after his death, and during their inspiration; and perceiving the truth and beauty of all this, and finding a satisfaction in it calming his mind and producing in him a pleasure never experienced before, he will become a convert to the Christian religion, and choose to make the truths of it the rules of his action, and the ground of his hope. This man is led step by step to a moment in life, in which he becomes a new man; rises, as it were, from the dead into "newness of life," and when he makes his appearance among Christians, the question will naturally be asked, "Who hath begotten me this man? Who hath brought up this man? Where hath he been? Christians, come round this man and inquire; he is of age, ask him, he shall speak for himself.

By whose direction did you come into this Christian assembly? His answer is, Jesus Christ informed me that "where two or three are gathered together in his name, there is he in the midst of them;" and "that if two" of his disciples "shall agree on earth as touching any thing they shall ask, it shall be done for them of his Father "which is in heaven." I come to join with you in worshipping God; and to be instructed by you who have studied religion longer than I have, in the truths contained in the Holy Scriptures. Ask him again, How came you an Englishman born near two thousand years after Christ, a Jew, who lived and died in the eastern part of the world,—how came you acquainted with Jesus Christ? His answer is, I have been lately reading his history, written by those who had "heard and seen what they declared," and who "wrote unto us that we also might have fellowship with them, and their fellowship was truly with the Father and with the Son Jesus Christ." Think it not presumption in me, a Gentile, to appropriate to myself all the benefits of a religion, which, though preached first to the Jews, was, "according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known unto all nations for the obedience of faith." This is "made manifest to me by the Scriptures of the Prophets," and in finding Christ, "I have found him of whom Moses in the law and the Prophets did write;" and the whole seemed to me as clear as the daylight, and as free as the air. Ask further, How came you to believe the truth of all this? He replies, I could not withhold my assent any more than I can help being warmed by approaching a fire. The evidences of the truth of the Gospel stood before me; I seemed to myself surrounded with Prophets and Apostles: nobody asked any favor of me, they all bore witness to the truth of one fact, and I could not help yielding to the force of evidence. Ask him once more: This fact subverts the whole order of your former course of living; how came you to examine a religion so utterly destructive of all your former sinful enjoyments? He tells you: "I was stript of all the pleasures of living by a death in my family, which, though I can never cease to lament, I am obliged to confess seems to me now necessary to rouse me out of that dead sleep of sin in which I lay. It seems a severe part of the government of God, but necessary to a man in my condition; and I consider it now as the language of one, whose absolute right to dispose of me empowered him to say, when he struck the blow, "Awake thou that sleepest, arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Once more, inquire how an event, which some scarcely feel, made him so very unhappy? He will go out of religion into a thousand subjects, as the accomplishments of his partner, the tenderness of his own feelings, and other articles of a like kind, all which traced back, will at last appear to have God for their first cause. This man hath always been a child asleep in the bosom of his Father, and when he woke he found himself in his arms. Call in now all the means used to "lead" this man to the spot where he now is, and examine which of them made this man a Christian. Was it any one of your Prophets or Apostles? We brought indeed, "the message which we heard of God, and declared" unto him; but we were not acquainted with him till lately;

He had, when we found him, eyes to read, ears to hear, and understanding to judge, a conscience to reprove, and he was in a condition neither melancholy nor mad, but disposed to make use of them. In a word; there is a chain of events, one of which brings on another, and of all which God is the first cause, and if you can suppose the life of the man just now mentioned to consist of a chain of five thousand events, and that three thousand and fifty came to pass before he touched the Holy Scriptures, and that his reading them was the three thousand and fifty-first event, I should call three thousand and fifty, acts of God as the God of nature; the three thousand and fifty-first an act of God as the God of grace; and though I should think him "led" all along before by the same God, yet I should from that moment date his being "led by the Spirit of God" as a Spirit of truth and holiness, revealing himself in Scripture as the Saviour of sinners, and in no other way."

CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

X "Make the tree good," was a maxim of the great Teacher. The good conscience, the pure heart, the holy life, or the good character in order to eternal life. Christianity begins with the conscience, and ends in perfect purity and felicity. Guilt; pollution, and the dominion of sin destroyed, are preparatory to that peace and love and joy on earth, the prelude of "the fulness of joy," and of the "pleasures forevermore" at the right hand of God. This arrangement explains why the remission of sins is the capital item in the gospel; why the Holy Spirit should be the inmate of the human heart.

But how is the christian character to be formed? and what is it when formed? The mould in which it is cast is the doctrine of the Apostles. But what is the Apostle's doctrine? It is the doctrine of the relations. Christian knowledge is the knowledge of these relations, and christian character is the filling up of these relations.

Jesus Christ first opened up to human sight all the relations in which man stands to spirit and sense, to time and eternity, to God, to angels, and to men. To live in accordance with these relations is the perfection of human character.—This is the great lesson which christianity teaches.

Human religion divorces man from a rational regard to some one or more of these relations. The Anchorite deserts the race to which he belongs, and seeks for perfection in the neglect of all social duties. The model of perfection which he sets before himself, is the phantom of an unchastened imagination. *There is no living to God in this world, but by living to men.* The purest women that ever lived were wives and mothers; and the most holy and renowned men of every age were husbands and fathers.

The soldier who deserts the army lest he should prove a coward, as well deserves the honors of a brave man, as he, the christian character, who shuns the natural relations, lest he should fail in the discharge of social duties.

But here is the peculiar excellence of the religion of Jesus Christ, that it makes the growth in divine favor, and the excellence of human character, to consist in filling up all relative duties. When the master fulfils the law of Christ to his servant, and the servant fulfils the law of Christ to his master, they are in the moral and religious world perfect equals—perfect characters, and equally fit for the honors and bliss of heaven. But as no man or woman stands only in one relation to mankind, it behoves them to have a proper regard to all relations, in order to perfection; and as some occupy many relations, excellency of character to them is of more difficult attainment, because it calls for the discharge of so many distinct classes of duties. Hence he that is only a master, and neither a husband nor a father, and he that is both a master and a husband, and not a father, may more easily fill up the outline of his relative duties than he who is both a master, a husband, and a father. In proportion as relative duties are multiplied, both in kind and in number, this perfection of character is of more difficult attainment, and is more honorable when attained. As in the parable of the talents he who gained two, having received but two, was as fully approved as he who had gained five, with five; so he who faithfully fulfils the law of Christ in all the relations in which he stands, is as perfect a character as he who stands in many more relations, and yet fills up the measure of them all.

Some in this lax and licentious age of reason, as well as of religion, imagine that a person may be a very eminent christian, because of some rare excellence, even though he very obviously fails in some very common matters, in discharging the more ordinary relative duties. Thus sister Lavinia was very much commended by brother David, because she appeared so heavenly minded as to neglect her household affairs. She read and sung, and prayed, half the day, and often visited her christian friends the other half; and it was not until her eldest daughter, Susan, was broken down in constitution by over exertion in domestic toils, and little Jane died in consequence of an autumnal cold, occasioned by the want of stockings and apparel suited to the season, that David could be convinced that hers was not the most excellent character in the church. David, too, was regarded as a model by all the disciples in the tabernacle, because he devoted so much time to instructing the youth of the neighborhood, and attending meetings far and near; and might have to this day been regarded as a perfect model of christian character, had not his sons grown up in comparative ignorance, and fell so much below the par of the neighborhood in both common and religious education.

Edward Early was the most liberal contributor for all religious and benevolent purposes in the town of Cairo, and was most constant in attending church. His whole household was in the first order; his children well educated, his servants just as they ought to be: he was beloved by all the neighbourhood for his punctuality, generosity, and good manners; but he was never known to pray in his family, nor to spend an hour in the week in his closet, either in private reading of the scriptures or in personal devotion.

But a thousand aberrations there are from the standard of christian perfection ; in producing which, the idea that christians may be accepted and approved for the possession of some special or rare qualities, or that a person may grow in the favor of God some other way than by filling and faithfully discharging all relative duties, is predominant. It is a fallacy.

No married woman can fill up the christian character, only in so far as she is a good or perfect wife, mother, mistress, &c. No married man can exhibit the christian character, only as he is a perfect husband, father, master, servant, &c. No minor, male or female, son or daughter, can grow in the christian character, only as he or she advances in *all* the perfections of a son or daughter, &c.

Paul teaches servants and masters, husbands and wives, parents, and children, how they may *adorn* the christian doctrine. It is by filling up the full measure of all relative duties. Thus in handling the hoe, in driving the loom, the plough, or the harrow ; in making a hat a coat, or a shoe, as the Lord commanded these things to be done, a person adorns the doctrine of God our Saviour. What a benevolent institution ! how wise and good ! which puts it in the power of every man to serve and glorify the Lord, and to *adorn* his gospel by every act of his life ! Reader attend. Be assured that there is more reformation needed here than in your creed.

FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIAN UNION.

“ I pray—for those which shall believe on me through their (the Apostles) word, that they all may be one—that the world may believe that thou (Father) hast sent me.”—Thus Messiah prayed—and well might he pray thus, seeing he was wise enough to teach that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. By civil dissensions any kingdom may be desolated—where dissenters are, no kingdom, no family can subsist. If this be true, in what moral desolation is the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. Was there ever at any time, or is there now, in all the earth a kingdom more convulsed by internal broils and dissensions, than what is commonly called the Church of Jesus Christ.

Look only at the English branch of the Protestant Faith—only where the English Bible is read, and how many broils, dissensions, anathemas may we compute ? I will not attempt to name the antagonizing creeds, feuds and parties, that are at eternal war, under the banners of the Prince of Peace—and yet we talk of love and charity, and of the conversion of the Jews, the Turks and Pagans !!! Shall we turn from the picture in despair ? No ! for Jesus has said, blessed are the *peace-makers* for they shall be called *Sons of God*.

But who can make peace when all the elements are at war ? The page of universal history whispers in our ears, as vain might you tarry, until all the belligerents lay down their arms and make the effort to unite, as he that sat by the Euphrates waiting until all its waters ran into the sea.

We are so sanguine—many will say so visionary, as to imagine that a nucleus has been formed or may be formed, around which may one day scripturally congregate all the children of God. No one at all events, can say that it is either impious or immoral, inhuman or uncharitable to lament the present divided state of Christ's Kingdom—or to meditate upon the possibility and practicability of any scheme for its union and increase, upon the foundation of the Apostles, under Christ alone. No one can say that such a result is absolutely chimerical, unless he affirms Messiah's prayer to be such, and that God will convert the world without answering that prayer—or rather in opposition to it, and in despite of all the moral desolation which has ensued upon all the broils and battles of five hundred sects in fifteen hundred years.

And as God has ever effected the most splendid revolutions by the most humble agents, and by means the most unlikely in the wisdom of all human schools; we think it not inconsistent to make the effort, and to put our hands to the work of peace and love. From Messiah's intercession in John 17, it is plain that union is strength, and disunion weakness—that the Apostles' teaching is *his* foundation—*his* appointed means for the oneness of his people—their unity on this foundation, his appointed means for the conversion of the world to know and acknowledge him as the Son of God, the Saviour of Sinners—to no mortal then belongs the honor of devising the plan for christian union and for the conversion of the world through their means. The plan is divine—is revealed.—Is any one impatient to hear it, let him again read the intercession of our Lord, which we have quoted as our motto—let him then examine the two following propositions and say whether they do not comprise Heaven's own scheme for the union and increase of the body of Christ—the Church.

First.—Nothing is essential to the conversion of the world but the union and co-operation of Christians.

Second.—Nothing is essential to the union of Christians, but the Apostles' teaching or testimony. That the union of Christians is essential to the conversion of the world, is universally conceded by all who admit a general prevalence of the Gospel in what is called the millennial state of the world—if moral means will have any thing to do with the introduction—who must not admit that the union of Christians is essential to that state of things.

The second proposition, viz.—That the word or testimony of the Apostles is itself all sufficient, and alone sufficient to the union of all Christians, cannot be rationally doubted by any acquainted with that testimony, or who admits the competency of their inspiration to make them infallible teachers of the Christian institution—and indeed all who contend for human systems of religion or human creeds; contend for them as necessary only to the existence of a party, or while the present schisms and dissensions exist. But to fully investigate the real character of these, and how to do without them is foreign to our present purpose.

It is perhaps sufficient at present to glance at the question.—How has what is called the Church, done with them?—Will not a very

superficial observation and a little experience convince every man, that human creeds have been the fruitful source, or occasion of all the discords, schisms, and parties now existing in christendom.—That they have failed of preserving in any instance the unity of the parties themselves, who have rallied under them?—Take for example two of the most popular creeds of the present day, the Westminster, and that of the Methodists—to say nothing of lesser schisms in the party. In 190 years have 9 or 10 communions originated, among the Presbyterians, some as discordant and aloof from each other, as were the Jews and Samaritans.

Nor have the Methodists done much better for their age—they now form several separate communions under different names. And what shall I say of the twelve or fourteen sects of Baptists, many of whom have as much affection for the Greek or Roman Church as for one another. It were useless to furnish other evidence in proof that human opinions, inferential reasonings, and deductions from the bible, exhibited in the form of creeds, can never unite christians; as all their fruits are alienation, repulsion, bickering, and schism. *No human creed in Protestant christendom can be found, that has not made a division for every generation of its existence.* And I may add—the more thinking, inquisitive, and intelligent the community which owns a creed, the more frequent their debates and schisms.

But the Bible will do no better, if men approach it with a set of opinions, or a human symbol in their minds, For then it is not the Bible, but the opinions in the mind, that form the bond of union. Men, indeed, had better have a *written* than an *unwritten* standard of orthodoxy, if they will not abandon speculation and abstract notions, as any part of christian faith or duty.

But all these modes of faith and worship, are based upon a mistake of the true character of Revelation, which it has long been our effort to correct. With us, Revelation has nothing to do with opinions, or abstract reasonings; for it is founded wholly and entirely upon *facts*. There is not one abstract opinion, not one speculative view, asserted or communicated in Old or New Testament. Moses begins with asserting facts that had transpired in creation and providence; and John ends with asserting prophetic or prospective facts, in the future displays of providence and redemption. Facts, then, are the *alpha* and the *omega* of both Jewish and Christian revelations.

But that the reader may have before his mind in one summary view, the whole scheme of union and co-operation, which the Living Oracles and the present state of the christian religion in the world demand; which has been, at different times and in various manners, illustrated and sustained in the present controversy, against divisions,—we shall here submit it in one period.

Let THE BIBLE be substituted for all human creeds; FACTS, for definitions; THINGS, for words; FAITH, for speculation; UNITY OF FAITH, for unity of opinion; THE POSITIVE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD, for human legislation and tradition; PIETY, for ceremony; MORALITY, for partizan zeal; THE PRACTICE OF RELIGION, for the profession of it;—and the work is done.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

FAITH AND SPECIAL INFLUENCE.

That faith is the belief of testimony, is admitted by all persons of reflection, on the subject of faith properly called human.—But many contend, that that faith so often spoken of in the Christian Scriptures, is something more than the belief of the testimony of God—what that something is has never been intelligibly defined or settled—with most it is the *effect* of regeneration, something irresistably inwrought in the heart of man either before or with the word—hence so much mysterious and contradictory reasoning, and so many questions of strife on the subject of “*saving faith*.”—As nothing of this kind of reasoning or definition appears in the inspired volume—and as it is manifestly opposed to every declaration and every example of faith which it reveals; from Adam’s hearing and believing God’s promise—to the revelation of the Spirit made to John at Patmos to be sent by him to the Churches—that they thereby might hear and obey what the Spirit saith to the Churches. We must leave its advocates to contend for the truth and use of their doctrines, not with us, but with the revelation of God on the subject.

That faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, whether by immediate and special revelation to the individual as to the Prophets and Apostles—or through these divinely inspired men, as God’s appointed means of revealing his testimony and will to others; that those who hear and obey these—hear God—are taught of God—are influenced by God; and that those who despise or reject the message of inspiration, despise God, and resist the authority and teaching of the Spirit of Inspiration, is the plain and unequivocal teaching of the Bible, and is not inconsistent with any statement or promise respecting the Holy Spirit, which it contains, and when duly considered, is systematically opposed by much of human teaching of the present day considered highly orthodox. But the scriptural statements on the subject are too simple, and will not satisfy those of a metaphysical taste, and who are philosophically inquisitive into the doctrine of causation.—But this is not the worst of it—one believer contemns another because he cannot soar as high as himself, he dislikes him too, not because he is not as good a christian, but because he is not so wise a philosopher as himself—hence one christian philosopher terminates his inquiry here “as many as were ordained to eternal life believed,” or “ye believe not because ye are not my sheep”—another who is not so strong, or perhaps stronger, terminates his inquiries here, “they searched the scriptures daily with all readiness of mind, therefore, many of them believed.” The theory is considered as the *truth* itself.—and texts are dis severed from their connexion, and strung together according to the martial skill of each belligerent to defend their several opinions—though perhaps not one of the texts were ever intended to prove any such thing as they are made to do:—thus is the war protracted—the strife maintained, which every Christian should desire to see terminated.—That the evidence of truth does not arrest the attention of all, is equally true of things human and divine—as it is, that men easily assent to what they wish to be true, or

dissent from what is contrary to their inclination ; this only proves the influence which the will has upon the understanding—the mere assent to scriptural truths from education, by those who do not understand their import, nor the evidence on which they rest, is not faith.—A man's saying he believes, while the truth does not work effectually in the heart and life, is no evidence that he believes to the saving of his soul.

'There is one point which I should like to have seen occupy some place in the systems of this day with a reference to this subject, viz. As respects the actual possibility of salvation to those without the Bible—whether there is any advantage at all, as respects salvation, to those who have the Bible, over those who have it not. Or is not an Englishman with the Bible, (unless some special influence be exerted upon him,) in exactly as hopeless a condition as a Hindoo without it?

We are apt to interpret an hundred things said of 'sinners,' of 'natural men,' of 'children of wrath,' of 'the dead,' of 'those without strength,' never taking thought that there are essential differences between those without, and those under, the revelation of God. This clearly apprehended, is like applying the pruning hook to the vine: it lops off a great many quotations and applications of scripture which are thought to bear upon these.

I have long felt an unconquerable repugnance to that system of religion which destroys the uses of the holy scriptures to unconverted or unregenerate men. The doctrine of physical and irresistible energies of God's Spirit upon unbelieving men, as absolutely and indispensably prerequisite to their deriving any religious benefit from all that is *written* on the sacred pages; from all that is *spoken* by christian tongues; from all and every moral or religious means; is, in my view, at war with Moses and the prophets; with the Lord Jesus and the apostles; with the whole Bible; with all rational analogies; with all the faculties yet belonging to the human race; with all and every thing, natural, moral, and religious, except the sheer inoperative dogma of some indoctrinated fatalist. I do therefore, with all my heart, oppose every sentiment, which either grows out of, or is connected with, the establishment of such a cold, lifeless, and inoperative system: believing it to be entirely unauthorised by the Holy Spirit, and that it is the most genuine wresting of the holy scriptures to the destruction of thousands, who are now, as they have been for centuries, standing all the day idle; some running into all manner of excess: and others looking with aching hearts for some irresistible wind, afflatus, or spirit, to carry them, not *literally*, but figuratively, as Elijah was taken, in a whirlwind to heaven.

I have contended that the Spirit of God *has done* something, which renders unbelief and unregeneracy a sin in all men who have access to the Bible, independent of any thing to be done: and I have taught that it *will do* something for those who, from what it *has done*, obey the gospel. What it *has done*, has given strength to the weak, life to the dead, and reclaimed enemies to God—what it *will do*, is to beget a holy spirit and temper, to fill with peace, and joy, and righteousness, those who believe. I will not, therefore, with the speculative philosopher, make what the Spirit of God has already done of none

effect, to make way for something yet to be done. Nor will I ascribe every thing to what the Spirit has done, in the enditing and confirming the testimony, to the exclusion of any influence upon the minds of believers or of the gift of the holy Spirit to them who ask. Thus the scriptures encourage all to activity. The whole world with whom the Spirit of God strives in the *written* word now, as it once did in the mouths of the prophets and apostles, have no excuse for their infidelity or unregeneracy—and those who have put on the Lord Jesus are invited to abound in all the joys, consolations, and purifying influences of this Holy Spirit. Such is the operative system of supernatural truth—the scope of the practical principles of the Bible.

Those who have contended for physical and irresistible influences, have found themselves at variance with the manifest scope or bearing of a large portion of the apostolic addresses to their auditors. They, to prevent or to obviate the charge of making the word of God of none effect by their traditions, have invented a curious doctrine of 'common operations, contradistinguished from the special; and, like the pious Mr. Baxter, have attempted to reconcile the jarring systems by making it *possible* for all gospel hearers to be saved—*certain* for some—possible for all who did not resist the common operations—and certain for all upon whom the irresistible or special operations were employed. This is a lame expedient. Their doctrine of common operations is as unscriptural, as their special operation is subversive of all praise or blame, of all virtue and vice, of all excellency in faith, or criminality in unbelief. The Bible doctrine requires not the aid of either system.

Let no man say that in explicitly opposing both systems, we argue that men are converted without the Holy Spirit. By no means. The Spirit of God works upon the human mind as well as dwells in it. It dwells in the record which God has given of his Son, as the spirit dwells in the body of a man—clothed with this record it enlightens, convinces, and converts men. It is never once said to work in any other way upon the minds of men since it consummated the record. Even in convincing the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, in the age of miracles, it did this *in words* concerning Jesus. When men hearken to the word, they hear the Spirit of God; when they will not hearken, they resist the Spirit of God,* **IT MAKES EVERY MAN WHO HEARS THE WORD ABLE TO BELIEVE;** so that his unbelief is wholly his own sin; owing to his aversion, and not to incapacity. Yet still they are enabled to believe by the Holy Spirit, and without his aid no man ever could have believed in Jesus, as God's own Son. In one sentence, all men who hear the spirit of God, have all natural inability removed, and faith is just as easy to them as it is to hear. Salvation, or the heavenly inheritance, 'is of faith, that it might be by grace or favor,' says an apostle. I rejoice to know that it is just as easy to believe and be saved as it is to hear or see. That the Spirit of the living God has made it so to every man, and so works upon all men who read or hear the record which God has given of his Son, as to remove all natural incapacity out of the way, is just what makes the record of Jesus *glad tidings of great joy*

* Acts 7. 51. 52. Nch. 9. 30.

to all people. And nothing less than the views above given make the gospel glad tidings of great joy to every body. There is not a phrase, word, or syllable in the New Testament that is in the least irreconcilable with this simple view of the gospel. Where the Spirit of God is not heard, men are *without strength*, and *cannot* receive the things of the Spirit of God. Where it is heard, every person is empowered to believe. And if any man ask me why all do not believe? I will tell him, it is because they do not wish to believe: or if they say they wish to believe, I will tell him then, 'They believe not because they are not of the sheep of Christ.' And if he ask me who are the sheep of Christ? I will tell him, *They who follow him*: for the reason why disciples are called *sheep*, is because they *hear* and *follow* the Master's voice. And in the mean time I will only add, that while many agree with this view of the gospel on one side, they take a view of it on another side incompatible with the nature of grace or favor altogether, by representing the whole matter as dependant upon some *will*-subduing operation, as physical as the creation of light—without which it is all a dead letter.

But what saith the Scriptures—"The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." That "God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past, unto the Fathers by the Prophets—hath in these last days, spoken unto us by his Son." "How shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation, which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him—God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"—"And the Spirit and the Bride say come, and whosoever will let him take of the Water of Life freely."

BIBLICAL CRITICISM. Exod. 34. 7.

"Forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear *the guilty*"—or more properly "that will not at all acquit"—Now the word *guilty* being a supplement instead of which if we supply the word *unjustly* we have the solution of this seeming paradox—as it is evident from Rom. 3. 24. that God does not acquit or justify the ungodly sinner who believes—*unjustly*—does not clear the guilty, but upon a *just* consideration; but if we retain the old supplement *the guilty*, we render the pardon or acquittal of such absolutely impossible—for if God will by no means clear the guilty, who then can be saved?—for all the world is become guilty before God.

APOSTOLIC ORDER.

Nothing more remarkably characterises the works of God than their divine simplicity:—When Jesus Christ would erect to himself a monument more lasting than the Pyramids of Egypt, he takes bread and wine and says—"Do this in remembrance of me." Acts 2. 24 represents the breaking of bread as a permanent and continued practice in their assemblies—for their steadfastness in the Apostle's doctrine and

fellowship, and breaking of bread can be understood in no other sense consistently *with* the connection. In the Apologetic of Justin Martyr, who wrote about 41 years after the death of the apostle John, is a good comment on this passage.—He tells us that—“on Sunday all christians in the city and country meet together, because it is the day of our Lord’s resurrection, and then we hear read to us, the writings of the Apostles, and Prophets; this done the president makes an oration to the assembly to exhort them to imitate and do the things they *hear*, and then we all join in prayer, and after that we celebrate the Lord’s supper; and they that are able and willing give alms.”

We must judge *doctrines*, in order to separate what we believe to be the truth of God, from the errors of heresy; but far be it from us to condemn *men*, for this is the sole prerogative of the Redeemer.

PROGRESS OF REFORM.

New-York, March 1833.

“We now consist of about 70 members; three from Elder M’Clay’s church lately united with us—one was brother Daniel Monroe, who had been a long time a deacon, and was considered one of the pillars of the Church. Last Sunday, in the midst of some hundreds of spectators, we immersed four for the remission of their sins, namely, Dr. Barker’s, the Elder’s wife—a most amiable young disciple; and a young married man who had been a deist, and had publicly harangued against the Saviour, but has come to that very cross he despised, and humbly confessed his sins, wondering at the mercy which saves such a wretch through that precious blood, shed on the cross to wash away his sins. A young woman was also baptised, and an elderly woman from 60 to 70 years old—both had been members of the Presbyterian Church. It was a joyful day to see those different descriptions of characters entering the visible kingdom through water, with songs of joy and praise.

Benjamin J. Hendrickson.

EXCELLENCIES OF THE SCRIPTURES.

I love the sacred book of God,
No other can its place supply;
It points me to the saint’s abode:
It gives me wings and bids me fly.
Sweet book, in thee my eyes discern
The image of my absent Lord;
From thy instructive page I learn
The joys his presence will afford.

And while I’m here thou shalt supply
His place, and tell me of his love,
I’d read with faith’s discerning eye!
And get a taste of joys above.

I know his spirit breathes in thee,
To animate his people here;
May thy sweet truths prove life to me,
Till in his presence I appear.

TERMS.

THE CHRISTIAN GLEANER—will be published in Monthly Numbers, each 24 pages—twelve numbers to constitute a volume.—The price of a volume, Five Shillings, payable before the delivery of the second Number, or Six Shillings afterwards.

Subscriptions will be received at the Drug Store of Mr. John Naylor, at the Stationary Stores of Messrs. A. & W. M’Kinlay, and Mr. John Munro, and at the Printing Office of H. W. Blackadar.

HALIFAX, March, 1836.