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THE
WITNESS OF TRUTH.

Vol. I.]

PICTON, JUNE 1, 1846.

[No. 8.]

IDOLATRY OF SECTARIANISM.

For they served idols, whereof the Lord had said unto them, you shall not do this thing. 2 Kings 17: 12.

According to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah. Jer. 2: 28.

Little children, keep yourselves from idols. 1 John 5: 21.

Nothing that I have spoken or written during the life of this monthly Witness has occasioned so much enquiry and so much alarm as a sentence composed of three simple words found on the ninth page in my general address. 'The offensive words are, 'sects worship Idols.' A recantation, or an explanation, or the strong and well founded assurance of logic and reason, has been called for and demanded in the most serious earnest in different ways and at diverse times, publicly and privately. For more than the half of three hundred and sixty-five days I have listened to every query and objection with all the candor I could afford, being well assured I would lose nothing in hearing impartially all that could be said against anything penned by myself or others, and fully determined to publicly counteract whatever of error, I, through haste or mistaken view, had formerly published to the world.

Even some of my most ardent friends have been found on the list of objectors and complainists. Not that they supposed I wielded a wrong sword, but that I struck too weighty a blow.— The weapon they acknowledge was of the right material, and of the proper shape and temper, but used with more dexterity and courage than the occasion required.

Willing to cultivate patience, and not willing to be hardened against penitence, I have until now declined giving my views, that I might by a very full hearing of what all parties had to say be the more able to perceive the pernicious tendency of my words, and that I might with the greater deliberation make the necessary amendment, apology, or retraction.

Since it is easy to err, and since it is noble to confess a fault.

I am almost tempted to break the tenth commandment of the law of Moses by coveting the pleasure of that person who feels he has transgressed and is forward to attest it by words and works. Yet I am now writing under the impression that at least the first volume of our testimony shall have been completed before I can lawfully realize this pleasure. Still, should I in this be mistaken, and should further evidence be produced leading to another decision, I will most certainly avow it openly; for, when convicted, I am neither afraid nor ashamed to say I have erred.— While infallibility belongs only to Rome and some of the highest peaks of Protestantism, I shall always regard it as one of the traits and graces of Christian humility in any one to believe it is possible for him to mistake or mis-act, and, on conviction, frankly confess.

But I will proceed without further introduction to submit my convictions and disclose my reflections to all whom it may concern. Two questions shall receive some attention before many arguments are deduced or applied. 1st, What is idolatry? 2nd, Does it now prevail? Other queries will find a place in due course, but these will make together a good firstly.

But here at the very threshold I am met by an objector who says that idols are only of the material form, wrought out by the craft of man and fashioned from wood, or stone, or some one of the precious metals, and that idolatry can only be ascribed to the people who literally bow down to these. The objection, indeed, is understood; but we take nothing for granted, and a little proof along with the assertion would be acceptable. Are they not idolators who worship the sun? who worship the host of heaven? who worship an unknown god? and who worship demons? Of what material are all these, and who made them! So easy is it to disprove what never was proved.

It is not the form, nor the artist, nor the material, nor the source whence derived, nor the peculiarity of the ceremony in paying homage, that makes the idol or constitutes idolatry. The idol, or the object of illegal worship, may have been made by God or by man; it may be in the earth or in the regions above; it may be carved from a tree or moulded from iron ore; it may be a statue or a painted picture; it may be in the person of a living man or a bodiless spirit; or it may be in lands, merchandize, or money: for, 'covetousness,' says an apostle, 'is idolatry.' The Persian who religiously honors the sun, the Egyptian who bows down to the crocodile, the Barbarian who sacrifices his fellow savage to appease the god of his fathers, the Infidel who loves his doubts and worships his reason, and the Civilian whose affections are supremely taken up with the joys and honors of earth, are all equally without the compass and jurisdiction of moral authority and alike idolators in the sight of heaven.

God alone is to be honored and enthroned in the affections ; and therefore any tribute of reverence or homage that does not centre in Himself, how high or how low, how great or how small the object that draws off the affections, even should it be the chief angel in the realms of glory, is in the true and proper sense of the word, idolatry. If any one will explain to me the degrees of guilt between the image and idol worship of Jews, Pagans, and papal Rome, I will use his own arguments and shew the difference in the sin of paying homage to angels, wooden stocks, and images formed according to the ideal capacity of the painter.

Any object, then, that we adore other than God, is an idol ; and any worship that has not God for its author and its supreme end, is idolatry. To this sentence I invite especial attention. It is submitted to the wisdom of the wise and the knowledge of the prudent.

The second enquiry refers to the prevalence of idolatry,—not its prevalence in times past, when ancient paganism reigned, or when the horns of the papacy were younger and stronger, but its prevalence in this our own day. And in relation to this question, if what I have already said be admitted, it will be a task far too easy to shew that idolatry is fearfully prevalent. For we have only to repeat over the names of a multitude of professors and professions, shew how spiritually empty they all are, and shew how this vacancy has been supplied by the barrenness of earthly subtlety, in order to shew the power, extent, and popularity of modern idolatry.

As we prove that where there is no light there is darkness, so we can demonstrate where there is little of the true worship of God there must be a consequent prevalence of the worship of false gods, or as the inspired David says, “the gods of the nations.” If the affections of men are not above, they are below ; if their treasures are not in heaven, they are on earth ; if the gospel is not received, it is rejected ; if God be not adored then Satan is the divinity. In this view, then, because the righteous are so few and the true worship so rare, I affirm that idolatry has at least as many votaries and altars now as in some of the best periods of the world’s history.

But I am not losing sight of the text which says that sects are idolators. Observe, it is not *a sect* but *sects* that I have charged with this sin. A sect, such as the one to which Paul belonged, may be free from idolatry ; but sects, taken in the plural, of necessity are idolators : for the very fact of denominational and factional interests which constitute and perpetuate sects, proves that they are “carnal, and walk as men.” “That which is born of the flesh, is flesh ;” and it makes little difference whether the gods are fleshly appetites or fleshly honors, a supreme regard to either is alike idolatrous. On this ground I feel as strong as the bul-

wark of creation ; but if any one is prepared to prove that this strength is my weakness, I will not despise his effort.

To approach still nearer the cardinal point, and, if possible, satisfy every demand, we here ask another question. What, in particular, are the idols of sects ? A most dangerous and delicate question to answer ; and yet, if as much depended upon this answer as was depending on the reception of Luther's ninety-five propositions against indulgences, I would neither falter nor fear.

I do not say that the objects of worship among the generality of sects are similar to the relics, crosses, and images of the old-fashioned or modern-fashioned Roman Lady, the Mother and Mistress of all religious Harlotry and Idolatry. But I do say that their anti-scriptural doctrines, their creed-books, their written rolls, their altars, their pulpits, their ministers, their fanatical excitements, their fasts, feasts, and holidays, are as properly called idols, and those who revere them, idolators, as any thing of the like nature under the authority of the Pope or the Emperor of China. Meetings, called religious, are announced and attended without one sacred feeling or holy aspiration on the part of forty-nine out of every fifty of the worshippers. It is the system, the past founder of the system, the present advocate of the system, the honor, order, glory, and popularity of the system that dwells supremely in the mind ; and if this be not idolatry, I will thank any one for the true definition.

Indeed, passing over all the peculiarities and appendages of sectarianism, with the exception of preachers and pulpits, I am prepared to show that these are idols of the genuine stamp.—Courteous reader, was you never in a mansion that people called a "Church", adorned with various elegancies of which it would be useless now to 'speak particularly,' but especially set off with a gothical figure towering towards the ceiling, and richly furnished with ornaments of carved work, crimson and silk, consecrated "a sacred desk?" This is the peface and the platform for an image of another kind, a living Reverend, called, sent, and ordained, who, in costly apparel, weekly ascends this throne of the sanctuary, and either reads or repeats from memory a sermon with "three heads and nine particulars", to the religious astonishment of all his hearers. Idolatry was never more fully developed. It is here in its germ, bloom, and fruit. The preacher worships the congregation, its honor, its silver, and its gold ; and the congregation worships the pulpit and the preacher, their splendor, their equipment, their sanctity and grace.

How often do we hear those who are either leaving or have left a meeting where a discourse has been delivered—how often do we hear them say of the preacher, 'What a smart man ;' 'A talented discourse indeed ;' 'He is a powerful speaker.' Such

expressions, unaccompanied with any serious thought about the discourse itself or the truths it contained, show how deeply seated is the idolatry of the people, and how fully the preaching idol reigns in their affections. For it is not the truth, but the man—it is not the doctrines of the discourse, but the learning and talents of the preacher—that occupies their thoughts and suggests the language of their admiration. Preachers of the gospel, real laborers in the work of the Lord, are often grieved to find the people taken up with themselves rather than with the truths they have declared* ; but these idols of the sects principally look and labor for their own honour.

“Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” Every other worship or religious servitude is idolatrous. No one can be in the devout service of God and in the service of man—of man’s traditions—of satan, or of satan’s devices—at one and the same time. To bridge over the infinite distance between God and Satan, to serve both in walking one path, would be impossible ; and all the schemes, crafts, and devices of sectaries seem to run in the direction of this vain effort.

Again I say it matters not what is the form or the nature of the object which alienates the heart from God and turns the tide of affection in another channel,—it is idolatry. The Jews who worshipped Ashtoreth, Moloch, the Queen of heaven, the brazen Serpent, a molten Image, Baalim, or Remphan, were alike guilty according to the law of God ; neither does it make any difference now whether the idol be a human system, a wooden cross, a paper picture, a priest, a pulpit, an altar, a painted pew, or a false doctrine.

If I have not in these remarks satisfied all my intelligent readers, I have yet in reserve a whole chapter on the elements, temples, priesthood, ceremonies, and sacrifices of modern idolatry. Still, I am more than willing this subject, in the meantime, should rest, and what has now been offered upon it serve as the materials of reflection until a number of bright moons shall have waxed and waned.

On the whole, although I am averse to controversy and severity for their own sake, I cannot regret that I have called the attention of the public to this capital item of sectarian defection. I am free to say that I would not unnecessarily wound the feelings of any living man, much less would I causelessly seek to arouse the prejudices of professors ; but when truth or duty demands courage, I am a stranger to consequences.

I desire that all my writings shall be neither so gentle nor so severe as some would approve. A few rules laid down for my regulation, will, with the help of the Lord, be strictly regarded. Duty sometimes calls for severity. I am fond of sweet but a

* Will the reader please examine Acts 14: 13-15.

little acid also is useful. I am delighted with smooth fields and extensive plains, but there is much sameness in a country without a hill or a valley. I am fond of a bright day and a beautiful sky, but storms and thunder are also necessary. A spider's web may be broken by a sparrow's feather, and the artist's pencil may draft a landscape; but when the walls of an enemy's strength are to be levelled, or the foundations of a castle to be razed, we must grasp something stronger.

CONDUCTOR.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN MR. LEAVITT AND THE EDITOR.

To all appearance

THE

BEGINNING, MIDDLE, AND END OF THE WRITTEN CONTROVERSY!

In answer to much inquiry, and in order to afford impartial documentary evidence by which to form a true criterion of the 'signs of the times' relative to Mr. Leavitt and myself, the sub-joined correspondence is published without note or comment for the benefit of all whom it may concern:—

PICTON, 22d January, 1846.

MR. D. LEAVITT,

My Dear Sir;—In our haste on the evening of the 7th, we omitted to arrange the preliminaries of our contemplated written discussion; and my object in writing is to call your attention to this subject. As you will affirm and I respond, the proposal in reference to the length and number of letters should properly belong to you; yet, as the letters will appear in the Witness, and as I am responsible for everything inserted in its columns, I too desire and consider it reasonable to say something relative to the length and breadth of the intended debate.

Not wishing to dictate, I simply in the meantime propose six letters on the part of each disputant, twelve letters in all, equal two and a half or three pages of the Witness each. Should you require more, or desire less, there is yet no decree to prevent further arrangement.

Respectfully,

D. OLIPHANT.

SOPHIASBURGH, 14th February, 1846.

MR. D. OLIPHANT,

Dear Sir,—Your letter of the 22nd January was duly received, and I improve the first convenient opportunity in answering the same, touching the preliminaries of our contemplated debate.

You say, that as I affirm and you respond, the prerogative "as to the length and number of letters properly belongs to me." Am I to understand by this that you have yielded the first proposition as indefensible, and that you acknowledge your inability to sustain it by scripture testimony? If so, then you are perfectly correct in saying that I affirm and you respond. If, on the other hand, you still believe in the endless wretchedness and misery of the greater part of mankind, yourself among that number, and still *hope* for the truth of this *glorious* doctrine, it will be your business to lead in the debate, and attempt, at least, to give us "a reason for the hope that is within you with meekness and fear," and the evidence on which that hope is founded; and my business shall be to examine your arguments, if *arguments* you have any; and I beg of you for your credit's sake, never again be guilty of a similar outrage against the rules of decency, propriety, and decorum; and allow me to say that I am in earnest when I assure you that I am ready to affirm the second proposition and lead the discussion as soon as you shall have made a reasonable effort to sustain the first, or *publicly* acknowledge your inability so to do.

I must also be permitted to observe, that the idea of discussing the two propositions in the space named by you in the Witness, and the number of letters you propose, is so supremely ridiculous, that I can hardly believe you in earnest in making the offer, unless you have fancied yourself a giant in establishing the first, and a Goliath in overthrowing the second proposition.

I desire and shall expect the privilege of writing six letters in opposition to the first, and six in favour of the second proposition, each letter occupying about six pages of the Witness. A letter from each of us for and against to appear in every number. The importance of the subject under consideration demands an enlarged consideration and a searching investigation.

I must also beg to dissent from the remark that you are to be responsible for what may appear in the columns of the Witness over my proper signature against the first or in favour of the second proposition. The principle on which this assertion is based is so much like the doctrine which teaches that we are guilty in consequence of Adam's transgression, and that God "will plunge our souls in woe for crimes six thousand years ago," that I must be excused from subscribing to a sentiment which outrages every principle of enlightened reason, and is opposed to the teachings of divine revelation.

If you have no safe opportunity of sending your answer by private conveyance please send by mail and direct to Belleville, C. W.

Yours respectfully,

DAVID LEAVITT.

PICTON, 17th February, 1846.

MR. D. LEAVITT,

Dear Sir,—Your welcome letter of the 14th, awaited my arrival in Picton to-day, and I without delay prepare a reply in order to forward by private conveyance, should such an opportunity offer.

The compliments of your letter, and its general style, not being in any respect the pattern of gentlemanly amiableness, and therefore not worthy of imitation, I make no apology for not following your example regarding manners.

You are not, my dear sir, to understand that I have “yielded the first proposition as indefensible” when I intimate that you lead and I follow in the proposed written discussion. *But you are to understand that we commence in the written debate where we discontinued in the oral debate; and that if we have any room, time, or inclination for any thing found in the first proposition after discussing fully that which contains the grand points at issue between Universalists and all Christendom, embraced in the second proposition, then sir you will find me with my sword in the very spot, to show that I am at least not afraid to attempt a defence of the doctrine of the first proposition.* I have too much respect for your intelligence, Mr. Leavitt, to suppose that you cannot see every thing necessary to be discussed in the proposition, “Do the scriptures teach that all mankind shall be finally and eternally holy and happy?” I previously consented to the discussion of the first proposition because of the clamorous desire of yourself and friends; but I never approved of the discussion of that proposition,—not because I did not heartily believe it, but because in my judgment not expedient.

Are you disposed to ask, ‘Have I become afraid to advocate my own doctrine?’ No: but shall I be compelled to prove that I am not ashamed of my own doctrine by bringing that doctrine into controversy!

No, my dear sir, I am prepared to enter into the discussion of points which will soonest terminate the controversy, and do the most justice to the whole subject, taking into view the limits of the “Witness.” Why take measures for setting the battle in array for two victories or double defeat, when once vanquishing or one victory is enough?

I have no disposition to enter into engagements for the half of a seven years’ war, when neither the community nor the cause you advocate demand it. Unscriptural doctrine which *is believed*, rather than unscriptural doctrine which *is not believed*, requires elaborate exposure.

Mr. Leavitt, have you been so prudent as to demand of me so many pages and so much of my own time in order to cover a glorious retreat? *I sincerely suspect it.* I will not say it positively until I receive your next letter.

I am aware that I am not responsible for anything written by you over your own proper signature, (except with regard to our country's law !) but I am responsible for the general contents of the paper under my supervision ; and should I make engagements with Mr. Leavitt or any other controversialist to receive and print letters of such a size, to such a number, on such a subject, as would fill its pages with useless matter, I at least would feel that I was unworthy of my present situation. It is in relation to *engagement* and *office* that I am reponsible.

My reasons for compressing the controversy into the number of pages stated, are, 1st, I desire to finish the discussion in this volume of the Witness. 2nd, Protracted controversies or wordy debates are not profitable to the community. 3rd, They are unprofitable also to the disputants. 4th, The tendency of this arrangement would be to keep the disputants to the points at issue rather than general wrangling. 5th, Universalism, among other existing evils, demands not greater attention. If your doctrine, sir, was the only great barrier to the reception of the regenerating truths of the gospel, or was it to become universally believed, I would cheerfully consent to the principal part of the periodical being taken up with this subject ; but these and other ills, and many more of an objective nature, require to be delivered of their doubtful gender.

You expect certain things, Mr. Leavitt, which, like many other expectations, are somewhat novel. To give you the reason of a hope of endless wretchedness, the plain meaning of a part of two sentences of your communication, would be a very serious kind of fanciful eccentricity. This request may be accounted for however, by supposing your father was a poet !!

Desiring and expecting to hear from you soon,

I am, Respectfully,

D. OLIPHANT.

DEAR SIR,—Your letter of the 17th February, reached me about the middle of March, and if I had not been previously convinced, the perusal of its contents would have convinced me, that the language of the prophet was verified in your case, when he said "*the sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath seized the hypocrites*"; and that in order to hide the weakness and deformity of your system, and at the same time keep your deluded followers in the bondage of ignorance and superstition, as saith the prophet, you are "*making lies your refuge, and under falsehood endeavouring to hide yourself*." I can readily excuse you for supposing that my letter is in no respect the "*pattern of gentlemanly amiableness*," knowing as I do from the unchristian, unmanly, low, vulgar course of conduct, and the miserable manifest falsehoods to which you have resorted from the first hour of our acquaintance, that you know not what constitutes "*gentlemanly amiableness*"; and you need not offer an apology for not follow-

ing my example regarding manners, for the perusal of your letter will convince the most skeptical that you either are the fool to avoid an honourable discussion, or that you know not in what good manners consist; and if shame and you once had an acquaintance, you have long since shook hands and parted forever. That same "intelligence", Br. Oliphant, which enables me to perceive that proving the second proposition true will necessarily prove the first false, also enables me to discover that, if you can establish the truth of the first proposition, the second will necessarily be overthrown; and as you appear so devoid of intelligence as not to perceive this, I take the liberty to inform you that such is the fact, and also to observe that the agreement between us is a mutual one, and I do not intend that you shall violate it with impunity. It is not your prerogative, Br. Oliphant, to dictate where we shall begin, what arguments I must use, how long it shall continue, and when it must end. No, my dear sir, *the question is a conjoint one—you have the affirmative of the first proposition*; the labouring oar is in your hand, and you are at liberty to select your own arguments, if arguments you have any. But I strongly suspect that our oral debate has radically cured you of the discussion fever, that you have learned that there was more truth than poetry in the declarations of Brs. Platt and Ketchum, who certified you at the time of our agreement, that swift and certain destruction awaited you in the discussion of the first proposition, that the dogma of endless punishment was unscriptural and could not be sustained, and I am confident you are in the same sad predicament now that you was in our oral debate, when, fancying you had both pockets filled with arguments, you carefully put your right hand into your right pocket, and to your sad surprise you found *nothing* therein: you then in a fit of desperation thrust your left hand into the other, and behold you found "*less than nothing and vanity.*" In relation to your false and unfounded assertion "that I well know that you never approved of the phraseology of the first proposition and that you consented to discuss it because of the clamorous desire of myself and friends," allow me Bro. O., plainly to observe, that I know no such thing. On the contrary, *I know and you know*, and the world will know, if you *dare or can* publish the truth, that the first interview was of your own seeking, that you was the assailant, that the clamour was with yourself and friends, *if friends you have any*, that you *did not disapprove* of "the phraseology of the first proposition" nor ask for a discussion of the second, until the bright thought generated from the brain of Br. Platt, (*and sure I am no other being in the universe ever would or could have made the discovery*) that altho' you should prove the doctrine of endless misery true, it would not militate against the doctrine of universal salvation. You then made a desperate struggle to violate our mutual agreement, denied that there ever had been a time named for the discussion to take place, (altho' you had given me the privilege of naming the time, and I had named the first of January) read a passage of scripture which said nothing about endless punishment to prove that a part of mankind will be punished *endlessly*, and then contended you had fulfilled your agreement. Thus you then had the *meanness* to forfeit your word, and this was the course you then took to cover a "glorious retreat" and sneak from a controversy of your own seeking, for if you did not wish a debate you should have let contention alone ere you meddled with it. I have asked no more of your time,

Br. Oliphant, nor room in the pages of the Witness than the importance of the subjects under consideration requires, your assertion to the contrary notwithstanding; and when, like you, I struggle to violate our positive agreements—dictate what arguments you shall use to be acceptable to Universalists—harp about the unprofitableness of debate and the importance of the subjects I had agreed to discuss, &c. &c. &c. you will be perfectly correct in supposing that I am seeking to cover “a glorious retreat,” and altho’ you may positively affirm that you are not afraid, that you dare discuss the first proposition and allow me to defend the second in the columns of the Witness, yet I must be excused from believing your naked unsupported assertions, knowing as I do, that actions *sometimes* speak louder than words. You have my thanks for acknowledging (altho’ I presume unwittingly) that you have been acting hypocritically in relation to our written discussion, and consequently you “have no disposition to enter into engagements for the half of a seven years’ war”, and the truth contained in your remark that “unscriptural doctrine which *is believed* rather than unscriptural doctrine which *is not believed* requires elaborate exposure,” justifies me in insisting on a discussion of the first proposition, for surely you will not affirm that the crude notion of ceaseless woe is not generally believed, (unless, indeed, you judge others by yourself) and sure I am it is the most false and pernicious system that the heart of man can invent or the tongue of an angel express.

I was well aware before you certified me of the fact in your letter, that the doctrine that Christ came into the world to save sinners, and arguments to prove that he will not *fail* nor be discouraged until he shall have accomplished the object of his mission, would be deemed by you unworthy of a place in the pages of the Witness and unacceptable to characters, who, like yourself, esteem “*themselves righteous and despise others*”, who say—“*stand by thyself—come not near me—touch me not, for I am holier than thou*;” and I have devoted some small share of my time in endeavouring to persuade such characters to “turn their eyes within and no longer search abroad for sin,” to “cast the *beam* out of their own eye before they undertake to pull the mote out of their *brother’s*,” convinced as I am that

“Could such painted hypocrites he brought their hearts to view,
They straight would fall at Jesus’ feet and cry for mercy too.”

It appears however, that you have *recently* discovered that “*discretion* is the better part of valour”; that my arguments in favour of “the truth as it is Jesus” will be *unacceptable* to your readers—that discussions are *unprofitable*—that your time *is very precious*—that Universalism is a *trifling* error hardly worth opposing, and a firm unwavering faith in the crude notion of ceaseless woe of little or no consequence to the children of men, and consequently you will not discuss it. For all these wonderful discoveries you have immortalized your name; your friends will view you as a *paragon of wisdom*, and worship you as one of the wise ones of the earth, and applying to you the language of Job to his “*miserable comforters*,” will say “*no doubt you are the people and wisdom will die with you*.” When you affirm that “the second proposition contains the grand points at issue between Universalists and all Christendom,” am I to understand that if you succeed in overthrowing the doctrine of “the restitu-

tion of all things, which has been preached by the mouth of all God's holy prophets since the world began", you will then have proven the *doctrines* of endless misery and *annihilation* both true, or do you mean to affirm that the members of your own society, the Deacons or Elders of *your* church, your bosom friends and companions are not Christians, for they have certified you that you was a false teacher—that the doctrine of endless misery was an unscriptural doctrine which they did not believe, and which you could not sustain. On the other hand you have affirmed that it was a bible doctrine, and those who believe not will be damned; and yet when you can now have the privilege of proving the doctrine true and thus convert and save every Universalist in the Province together with the Elders and members of your own church, who, according to your assertions, are "out of the ark of safety, in the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity", in the broad road that leads to endless perdition, it is forsooth, not worth *your while*, and *your time is too precious* to allow you to engage in so high and holy a calling. "Oh shame where is thy bush!" But methinks, in admitting that this doctrine is not worth contending for, you have admitted that it constitutes no part of primitive Christianity, inasmuch as we are commanded to "*contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints*," and surely it can be no great crime *in us* to disbelieve an unscriptural doctrine, and if, as you insinuate, you do not *hope for your own* or the damnation of others, and consequently can give us no reason for a hope you do not possess, you yourself can hardly be said to have faith in this doctrine, for, remember, Br. Oliphant, an Apostle has said, "*faith is the substance of things hoped for*." Your remarks about "the regenerating *doctrines* of the Gospel" are in perfect keeping with the character of "*the man*," who, to uphold a sinking cause, will add to the words of holy writ, being "*willingly ignorant*" of the fact, that in the volume of inspiration, when the word doctrine occurs in the plural number, it is always applied to *men or devils*; but as you are fighting under the black banner of satan, "*contending for the endless duration of his reign and kingdom*," it is not a surprising thing that you should call his doctrines scriptural and regenerating, for if "*satan is transformed into an angel of light*," it is no marvel that his ministers should transform themselves into ministers of righteousness.

Having now noticed every thing in your letter that deserves noticing, in conclusion, allow me to observe that the proposition of a *written* discussion originated with yourself, the question has been mutually agreed on, and if you now dare violate our mutual agreement, it will be convincing evidence that you are no more holy than you should be, "that *your righteousness* does not exceed the righteousness of the scribes, pharisees and hypocrites" of old, and is no better than filthy rags—that in the language of the prophet, "with your tongue you have used deceit, with your lips you have muttered perverseness, and if you have once been cleansed from your sins by water baptism, it has unfortunately happened with you, according to the proverb, "the dog has returned to his vomit and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire," and the world will justify me in refusing to discuss any question with an individual who disregards every principle of moral honesty, and delights to wallow in iniquity, and roll in the mire of infamy.

Altho' I cannot consistently say I hope the discussion will take place,

as I have no evidence to convince me that you dare fulfil your part of our mutual agreement, so fearful are you of a double defeat; yet I shall insist on its fulfilment, and expect you to commence the discussion of the first proposition in the next number of the Witness, and shall govern myself accordingly; and most fervently do I pray and firmly believe that it will be the means of opening the eyes of your understanding, enlightening the minds of yourself and brethren, translating you and them from the kingdom of satan into the kingdom of God's dear Son, and enable you to "comprehend with all saints what is the length and breadth and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."

Yours truly,

DAVID LEAVITT.

REV. D. OLIPHANT.

Belleville, 10th April, 1846.

DEMORESTVILLE, 28th April, 1846.

MR. D. LEAVITT,

Sir,—Yours of the 10th was received in Picton on the 24th. I am now in the act of responding. Your manner of writing is remarkably unlovely. I reply with reflection and self-command. I have not the least desire of imitating you. It is therefore my present business to keep from expressing anything like vulgar personality or serpentine venom.

To any one acquainted with some causes and effects, it is not difficult to arrive at the conclusion from your present letter that you are more gifted in speaking than in writing. Were there no other proof, this conclusion is demonstrated from the general tenor of the topics of your whole effort in this letter. Had you anything reasonable or useful to offer, or had you ability to embody on paper anything reasonable or useful, you could not and would not suffer yourself to descend to a style so unclean, which, were I to meet, would be to come into contact with something more unhealthy than ointment.

It would appear, so far as you are disposed, that the controversy is already ended. I have all along had my fears that my quondam opponent would not again be easily brought up to the debating point. It is however matter of regret that you should have excited public attention by promising what you are unwilling to perform, and in the meantime commit two faults instead of one by attempting to fasten the odium of faithlessness upon myself in preventing the discussion. Yet, on the whole, I know not if we should anticipate anything better. We must expect cold from the north.

It is only another species of boasting, Mr. Leavitt, for you to assert that I now wish to decline the discussion. In effect it is saying that your arguments were so powerful and overwhelming in the oral debate, your cause so well founded and fortified, and the champion I then encountered so

mighty and warrior-like, that I dare not again hear those arguments, oppose that cause, or stand before that champion. On this point I would speak modestly; but if you will convince any one who knows me even of your own party, whom you regard yourself as intelligent, that I am afraid either of yourself or your cause, I will, for a very small fee, allow you to say any thing you please of me.

You speak of a "mutual agreement". I certainly considered there was such an agreement. It now appears there was not. I agreed, as my note of the 22d January will show, that I was to be the respondent in the written controversy. Before hundreds of witnesses you agreed to write me at your "earliest convenience." What was you to write about? Was you to write in reply to something that I had never written and that you had never seen! It appears, according to your own authority, first and last, that there was no agreement, either "mutual" or otherwise: for you had one thing in your mind and I another—therefore no *agreement*. As the oral debate was of your seeking, you having given the challenge, and as the written controversy naturally grows out of the oral one, I say to you distinctly, Mr. Leavitt, that, if there be any further controversy, you must appear in your true attitude—the assailant and the battle-lover.

For reasons of a local character, I yielded to the masculine demands of yourself and a few others, and consented to appear an attackist when I should have only defended; and because of my past generosity, you seem now disposed to compel me into measures devised in your own crucible as suits the dictates of convenience or policy. No doubt this is good policy on your part; but a little more manliness and magnanimity would also appear to good advantage.

Although I yet cannot see any wisdom in the arrangement, I will again offer all that I have offered in relation to the first and second proposition; and I will add another proposal, or I might say proposals. I shall make a special contract with the printer to have the whole controversy in small type, and allow you the matter of six pages, usual Witness type, compressed into smaller room. I agree also to write in reply only four pages to your six. Thus, to bring you forward, I consent to pay extra to the printer, allow the number of pages you require although contrary to my own opinion of what is expedient, and give you one third more room than myself for words. We shall now see who is cowardly.

But, in accepting this proposal, there is one thing, Mr. Leavitt, that would be very acceptable, not only to me but more especially to the community. It is simply to obtain from some two or three respectable Universalists a certificate that you will be as courteous and gentlemanly in your efforts in the written as you was in the oral controversy. I will not imperatively

demand this; but I must say that in my judgment neither yourself nor your cause would suffer from this pledge of mannerly well doing.

In the copy that I kept of my second letter, the words "regenerating doctrines" are not to be found. I hope it is my hand in transcribing, and not your head nor your heart, that has made this alteration.

To satisfy many inquiries, I intend, next number, to publish the correspondence. The community will then judge of the merits of our respective positions.

Ready for the discussion soon as you lead the way,

I am,

Yours,

D. OLIPHANT.

TRUTH.

"Some say that wealth is power, and some that talent is power, and some that knowledge is power, and others that authority is power, but there is a maxim that I would place on high above them all, when I would assert, that truth is power. Wealth cannot purchase, talent cannot refute, knowledge cannot overreach, authority cannot silence her—they all, like Felix, tremble at her presence. Cast her into the seven-fold heated furnace of the tyrant's wrath—fling her into the most tremendous billows of popular commotion—she mounts aloft in the bark, upon the summit of the deluge. She is the ministering spirit, which sheds on man that bright and indestructible principle of life which is given by its Mighty Author to animate, illuminate, and inspire the immortal soul, and which, like himself, is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. When the mould has long been heaped on all the pride of wealth, and talent, and knowledge, and authority—when heaven and earth itself have passed away, truth shall rise like the angel on Manoah's sacrifice, upon the flame of nature's funeral pile, and ascend to her source, her heaven, and her home—the bosom of the holy and eternal God."

CHRISTIAN PRAYER.

No 1.

Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain. Joel 2 : 1.

Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee. Psalms 86 : 5.

Some christian professors are practical sceptics in prayer. Their religion never taught them that they are as dependant as children—that there is a throne of grace, ever needed, and always accessible—that the union of many temptations in this

unfriendly world requires a strength of resistance that must be derived immediately from God—and that the express declarations of the divine word, the spirit and meaning of every religious observance, and the example of the ‘author and finisher of our faith,’ as well as the practice of the apostles, alike enjoin this duty. No, these plain and most important instructions they have never learned; and, therefore, in theory and in reality, prayer has been lamentably disregarded and neglected.

To live therefore in the spirit of prayer, and to cherish all the graces of this most refreshing and soul-strengthening exercise, has not been a distinguishing trait in the character of these professing men. They have grown rich with scarcely a penny-worth of spirituality from the Lord’s treasury. For in things divine it is still true, that whatever is not worth asking is not worth receiving. Hence said the Saviour, ‘ask and you shall receive.’ Hence also the spiritual poverty of those who are rich enough without soliciting a single favour.

My evidences for all these conclusions are numerous and weighty. I have remained night after night and day after day at the houses of professors who offered not a religious petition, nor evinced by conversation that they had one supplicating thought. And I have remained at the dwellings of others where there was too much reason to believe, that, although prayer was formally respected while I or some other visiting brother was present, it was on all other occasions disregarded. This kind of prayer, and this kind of respect for prayer, has always appeared to me of the pharisaical order.

But, am I in these remarks alluding to my own brethren, Disciples? Alas, what shall I say?—they are called so!! But who can heartily call them brethren? I never expect to meet them in heaven, unless they reform and exhibit the spirit of Christ and the spirit of his holy religion. Brethren, indeed, they may be called, the same as we speak of persons as soldiers who have enlisted in the ranks of the army, although they possess not a single trait belonging to efficient or qualified soldiery. Or as we call certain individuals Students who have entered and attend College, while their talents, learning, and habits show that they are not given to study, and therefore not entitled to the name.

The worst, however, is yet to tell. Prayer is not only neglected, but there is a disposition on the part of some to argue themselves into a state of justification in this neglect. Many are the substitutes, apologies, and objections. Passing by for the present the whole catalogue of substitutes and apologies, let us attend particularly to the objections.

In front of the foremost rank of objectors, Mr. Moral-nothing steps forward and says that prayer is a sectarian practice. He

therefore considers that his conscience, although strong, would be defiled were he to shew any respect to a usage so fully approved by sectaries. But then his conscience is a very bad logician; for he sometimes reads the bible, or at least takes it into his hand, and on Lord's day he goes to meeting when not otherwise engaged,—and these also are sectarian practices. Better never to touch a bible, because a sectarian printed it; or read a bible, because a sectarian does so; or give a bible to a neighbor, because a sectarian bible society is constituted for the very purpose of distributing the bible. Whatever proves to much, proves nothing; and therefore Mr. Moral-nothing would be wiser to keep his logic for another occasion.

It is to be regretted that this reasoning is not fully carried out in another direction. It is a sectarian practice to read newspapers on Lord's day—to go all over the land visiting among friends and relations on this day of public worship—and to converse about almost everything but Christ and christianity. Yet Mr. Moral-nothing scruples not to join the company of sectaries in these, anti-christian customs. If indeed he would use his sectarian argument here, and resolve to discontinue these habits because they are fashionable among the "sects," it might not be altogether unprofitable.

Next, Mr. Prove-more-than-all, with some boldness in his countenance, objects, that prayer is no where commanded in the scriptures, meaning family or social prayer. Of this person I immediately wish to know what constitutes a command. Will something be demanded in the form of the decalogue, expressed in this language, 'Thou shalt kneel down and offer thy prayers to the Lord morning and evening, with thy wife if thou hast one, and with thy children if thou have any, and with thy friends and brethren if they be with thee: so shalt thou do continually?' This would be to convert the greater part of the New Testament into the ritual nature of Leviticus and Deuteronomy.

But, then, if prayer be not commanded, where is faith commanded? He who finds ample authority for teaching that men should exercise faith, and finds no authority for appearing before the Lord in prayer, is a person who reads his bible aslant, and not to be trusted with the decision of any question unless it could be fairly and justly determined by a law of partiality. However, let Mr. Prove-more-than-all remember that I am not proving any thing here, but simply meeting an objection on its own ground. In due time it will receive further notice.

Then, Mr. Rationalist, at once daring and doubtful, says that prayer is needless and useless, since God knows our wants already, and he can supply them if he pleases whether we ask him or not. There is something in this objection that no bible student could ever learn. It is theological philosophy reduced to a phi-

losophical ghost. If there be any meaning in it, and were it fully sustained or carried to its true issue, then all that God has ever done, all that he is now doing, and all that he will yet do for man's salvation, appears as useless and superfluous as a second sun in the heavens in order to make daylight more perfect.

On this principle, the heavenly Father communed with Abraham and made promises to him in vain; miracles were wrought for the Israelites and the inheritance of Canaan given them for nought; Christ's death, rising again, his commission, and his ascent to heaven as Saviour and Mediator are all splendid trifles and worse than nothing; nay, sin itself, if it should have been permitted at all, ought long ago to have been destroyed: for God could have taken away all its effects and made man happy by a simple volition of his will without any means either of his own or of ours!!!

Such reasoning is mischievous in the highest degree, and unaccountably profane. I would sooner meet a skeptic than a professor such as Mr. Rationalist. A skeptic, too, would be more useful in society. Alas for this age—alas for this reasoning—alas for this class of professors. If they will not pray for themselves, I will not cease to pray for them.

Lastly, Mr. Strange-think, in his objectory remarks, modestly considers that Christians when they pray should only pray in secret; and, yet, singular to tell, he approves of preachers at least praying as publicly as possible, amongst all orders, classes, and conditions of people. The duty of daily social prayer is objected to on the ground that we should pray secretly or privately, and in this manner only; but this objection evaporates, and becomes less than a shadow, in speaking of prayer in its most public form. Why this inconsistency?

But still the objector supports himself, like many other fainting theorists, by an appeal to scripture. 'When thou prayest, enter into thy closet--and--pray to thy Father in secret.' Now, if this means what Mr. Strange-think teaches, we should never allow saint or sinner, acquaintance or stranger, friend or enemy, to hear us offer one syllable of prayer. For, if otherwise, we become sinners or transgressors of law, since the command is imperative that we must enter into our closet to pray. But all this arises from a misapprehension of the whole passage. This will be proved immediately.

The Saviour in his teaching was warning his hearers against the hypocrisies of the Pharisees. In all their religious exercises they were vain, haughty, and man-pleasing. They loved to appear religious: but not so much before God as before men. Hence, prayers that should have been secret, were made public. In the pretence of secret devotion, they selected the most conspicuous parts of the streets of Jerusalem, for the sole purpose of

being seen by others. The Saviour therefore speaks of this deception, and warns his disciples against it. As if he had said, 'When you profess to pray in secret, do not imitate the Pharisees who stand up at the corners of the streets, that men may see that they pray. They are hypocrites—they pray openly when they should pray secretly. But as for you, be honest; when you profess to pray in secret, retire to your closet, and go not to the corners of public streets.' So the Saviour teaches—not that we should never pray only when we pray in secret, but that we should not pray in public under pretence of praying in secret.

Having thus made an attempt to pluck up and destroy, I will, the Lord giving ability, endeavour to plant and establish in the course of another month.

CONDUCTOR.

CONVERSATION BETWEEN A SHOEMAKER AND A DOCTOR OF DIVINITY,

About Priestly titles, and the age at which "a Child of God" should be "Confirmed."—Selected.

"The Lord Bishop of Toronto, in announcing the following appointments for Confirmation, requested that it may be understood that candidates are not admissible to that rite until they shall have attained the full age of 15 years."—"The Church" Newspaper.

Bishop.—Good morning, Friend! I see you have brought your boy with you: doubtless you intend that he shall be "confirmed" to-day, with others.

Shoemaker.—This was my intention, certainly, when I last saw you, Sir; but having lately directed my attention to the Bible upon this matter, I have had very serious misgivings about it, and other subjects also.

B. I can easily suppose that it would be so with an illiterate mind, for you had no religious instructor by you at the time, to explain the passages aright—that is, spiritually.

S. Well, I don't know; I have the idea that the Bible appeals to one's common sense; and that Jesus Christ, and his Apostles, who were plain hard-working men, could explain spiritual things to me as well, if not a great deal better, than the Parsons, who are sometimes, you know, very carnal men.

B. Carnal! They are the alone channel of spiritual good to the world;—the blessing descends wondrously in one chain, even "though the ordinance be administered by evil men." Read your Prayer Book, Sir, a little more carefully. Your manner and language are, I must say, offensive. Do you know in whose company you are?

S. I believe, Sir, you are called the "Lord Bishop;" and this reminds me of the notice in the Church Newspaper about the age of confirmation, in which you assume that title. Pray, Sir, can you tell me when Lord Bishops were first created? Did Jesus Christ create any "Lords" among the Apostles, or the Apostles any Lords among the Primitive Bishops?

B. The question is an impertinent one, coming as it does from a Layman; nevertheless, I direct you to one fact, that Peter was honoured with the Keys of the Kingdom.

S. True, Doctor; but this is the argument of the Romish Priests; and, let me ask, does the fact that you give the keys of the Cathedral to the Sexton, give him pre-eminence over others who go in at the door, or entitle him to be called "My Lord?" The supposition is ridiculous. Besides did not the Saviour positively condemn all supremacy among his Apostles? So I read in Matthew xx. 25, 27, and many other places.

B. I perceive, Sir, that you are not learned in the mysteries of national religion, nor have you ever read "the Fathers" of our Church, who lived nearer the Apostles' age than we do. They clearly teach that those honorable distinctions did exist among the Clergy at a very early age.

S. This may be, Sir; but, if I may be allowed the expression, I have read the lessons of "the Grand Fathers"—the Apostles, which you must admit to be more ancient, as well as infallible; and there I learn nothing of such things. Do we ever learn that Peter was addressed as "His Holiness," "His Lordship," "The Reverend," "The Right Reverend," "The Most Reverend," or that Paul or his associates were ever addressed as "Lords" or as "Honourable," and "Venerable?" Besides, when the great Apostle addressed the Bishops of the Ephesian church (Acts xx, 28) would he not, upon your principle, have said, "Take heed, 'My Lords,' unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you 'Lord Bishops,'" And finally, when telling them, as honest men, to work for their bread, he would have said, "I have shown you all things, 'My Lords,' how that *so labouring* (at some honest handicraft, as you have seen me do at tentmaking), ye ought to support the weak," &c. But no such titles are employed. From these facts I conclude that true Bishops then were plain hard-working men, and that there were no *Lords* among them; now, however; they are all *Lords* and *live upon the labour of others!*

B. Thus reasoning, Sir, away goes our venerable Hierarchy! sunk are all our Formularies and Standards! and the Ministry of the Succession would be no more!! Alas! alas! what an infidel age we live in!

S. Yes, Doctor, all should be infidels as to the opinions and teachings of men upon religious things—even although such Teachers may be called Right Reverend Fathers and Lord Bishops,—if their opinions and lessons are not sanctioned by the Word of God; so it seems to me, at least, from reading the Bible; and you know that all men (or what you call *the Laity*), are therein commanded to "Beware of false prophets or teachers," (Matt. vii. 16) and to "Believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits, whether they are of God," namely, by the light of God's Word.—1 John iv. 1.

B. We will waive this subject. I thought, Sir, that you wanted to be taught concerning "Confirmation?"

S. It is true, I therefore beg to be informed as to the age appointed by the Apostles for "Confirmation," for the circular in "The Church" newspaper limits it to *the full age of 15 years*.

B. The question, Sir, is impertinent; very.

S. Is it possible, Doctor, that you are a Successor of the Apostles?

B. Undoubtedly I am; and could trace my genealogy in a right line to Peter.

S. Yet, withal, you cannot say, from Apostolic testimony, at what age 'a child of God' should be confirmed!

B. Scripture enters not, I aver, into such details: they are evidently left to Episcopal judgment and convenience.

S. I can't agree with your assertion, Doctor. I believe the Bible does teach us, clearly and fully, upon this subject; and although a plain mechanic I think I could prove it.

The Bishop (laughing heartily at the idea of a Shoemaker teaching a Doctor of Divinity,) said, Well, go on, go on; give us proof.

S. I will most cheerfully; but, first; we must understand the plain common-sense meaning of the word "Confirm." I presume you will admit that it just means in Scripture what it does in ordinary conversation, otherwise the Bible would be no guide to *the poor*. We speak of one man being a confirmed scholar, of another being a confirmed skeptic or infidel, meaning, in both cases, that the individuals have by a course of training, been *confirmed*—the one in learning and the other in skepticism. Now, it is most evident that every case of *Confirmation* referred to in the New Testament had reference to persons who had before believed the Gospel, and had been baptized, upon a profession of their faith; and their Confirmation in the truth believed, followed *immediately after* by every true lesson they received, every miracle they saw, every spiritual gift they exercised.—Apollon, for instance, the eloquent teacher, was *confirmed* by the better *teaching* of a poor mechanic and his wife, immediately after preaching—not by the *hands* of a 'Right Reverend Father in God,' when he had arrived at the full age of 15 years.—(See Acts xviii. 24, 26.) The Christians at Antioch were *confirmed* by the *exhortation* of Judas and Silas.—(Acts xv. 32.) Paul and Barnabas went to certain cities, and there confirmed the souls of the disciples, by *exhorting* them.—(Acts xiv. 22.) Men were also led to believe the truth of God, or were established or *confirmed* in their belief by the miracles, wonders and signs which were wrought in their presence, to confirm it.—Mark xvi. 20, Heb. ii. 3, 4. They were also confirmed in the truth by receiving spiritual gifts—such as the power to speak foreign languages (Romans i. 11); but, ordinarily, by the study of the Revelation of God they were built up, established, or *confirmed*—Acts xx. 32, Col. ii. 7. But what resemblance has all this to the phrenological operation—the hocus pocus of *Lord Bishops* upon the skulls of those who have arrived "at the full age of 15 years?" I appeal, Doctor, to your own judgment, **WHETHER SCRIPTURE IS NOT DEAD AGAINST YOU**; and to your own conscience, whether the *Confirmation* of Episcopacy is not **CONTRARY TO COMMON SENSE**—a sort of Priestly Legerdemain—a **GRAND SPIRITUAL DECEPTION!** With these convictions, Sir, I certainly shall not encourage my boy to submit to the delusion. I will teach him to read his Bible—to think and pray; and, when he understands and believes its wondrous facts, and desires gratefully to enter into the service of Christ, I hope he will put on the Lord, as the early Christians did, by being baptized into his name. Thus will he intelligently enter the Church of the Living God, where, by diligence and fidelity in the use of the means provided for enlarging his understanding and impress-

ing his heart, will he be Apostolically *Confirmed* at once, and, I trust, unto the end, and be prepared for immortality.

B. You are, Sir, a very dangerous fellow in society, and would fairly turn the world upside down. I fear, Sir, you have been reading that wicked print "THE PEOPLE'S ALMANACK." (*The Bishop, ringing the bell with violence, orders the servant to show the Shoemaker and his boy to the door.*)

"A DISCIPLE" AGAIN.

March, 1846.

Dear Bro. Oliphant,—It is quite possible I may have misunderstood the author of "the reply," formerly referred to. I was aware, however, that the subject discussed in the "Christian Herald", is "*the theory of conversion.*" I certainly have not discovered "a mode of learning without instruction", and therefore as before stated, with the general tenor of the reply, I am satisfied.

But I hinted that the author has hardly kept himself pure from vain philosophy, and perhaps I should now state more definitely, my grounds for such intimation.

I desire to take no undue advantage of any unguarded expression, and shall therefore allow our author the full benefit of your comment on the word "communication", as used by him. I now request your attention to his remarks on prayer. "A Christian", says he "may therefore with great propriety, pray for the conversion of the world, * * * but I cannot think, that he is warranted from scripture, to prescribe a mode of converting men to God." Again, "When intelligence of the Divine will exists in the mind; where there co-exists with that intelligence, the firmest desire that that will should be 'done on earth as it is done in heaven,' there will also be the effort, however humble, to do the will of God, and thus there will be the accomplishment of that for which the Christian suppliant prayed." Our author *seems* to expect nothing more than he can ask and think, in reference to the conversion of men—*thus* prayer for the spread of the truth will be answered. Is this speculative theology, or is it pure Christianity? "I cannot think he is warranted from scripture, to prescribe a mode" of answering prayer.

But here a question naturally presents itself. If this view be correct, can any thing more be necessary than simply declaring the word? "I will not," says our author, "enter into any details in reply to this question, but would simply ask, whether an earthly Father does not employ other influence besides imparting the lessons of duty and obedience to his child", &c. To understand the propriety of prayer for the conversion of sinners, we must ascertain the influence employed by his father in training his son!

That all this is sound Christian doctrine, untainted with vain philosophy, I very much doubt. It may occur to you, however, that I have again incautiously criticised our author, and that I have not fairly represented him. You may refer me to the statement that "the resources of the infinite mind, are vast and inconceivable", and to many similar statements; still, if it be true, as the author affirms, that—*thus* prayer for the conversion of men will be answered, it follows, *that those vast resources are only employed in*

qualifying believers for doing the will of God. To limit the Governor of the universe to this single method of extending his kingdom, is to me as unphilosophical, as it is unscriptural. But all this comes of advocating a theory. The work of a minister of Christ is to *convert*—not to publish the theory of conversion. Believers who differ much as to the theory, may cordially agree in the *means* to be employed in conversion! If then you could prevail on such brethren to keep their respective theories to themselves, and to preach, and to pray, and to act as did the first Ministers of Christ, you would in my judgment, perform a good work. That you may greatly succeed in your efforts, to “destroy what is human, and to restore what is divine,” is the earnest desire of

A DISCIPLE.

REMARKS.

Turning my face towards you, friend “Disciple,” allow me to say, in the first place, that it neither requires much talent nor much force of reasoning to display great ability in the affair of fault finding. So easy is it, and so fully is the spirit of this faculty exercised, that not unfrequently we find persons who will bring the writings of inspiration into condemnation.

In the second place, I am not prepared to consider that I should be responsible for the errors of others, if, indeed, others be guilty. One edition of errors is enough for any one man; and therefore I am not willing to carry another’s burden when it is not to ‘fulfil the law of Christ.’ A man is not to be held accountable for the astronomical calculations of an almanac because he reads an anecdote from its pages: as little do I feel responsible for any thing erroneous in the pages from which I extracted. Although I speak in this style, yet,

In the third place, you have not with all your labour and effort, pointed out to me any error of a very alarming growth. In more than one instance indeed you disfigure and misrepresent, arising, as I presume, not from any hatred or enmity, but from the wafted mists of partiality and prejudice: and yet so elasticly gentle are the instruments with which you have pierced ‘our author’ that I entertain the best hopes of his recovery without the assistance either of surgeon or apothecary.

In the fourth place, no Christian approves of limiting the ‘Governor of the universe’ either in the means of conversion or in accomplishing any other great work his wisdom has devised and his power is to achieve. But where he has limited himself, I see no evil resulting from a knowledge of this limitation, and a cordial acquiescence in it. Where God draws the infallible and unerring circle, and says, ‘Hitherto shalt thou come and no further,’ we immediately sin when we overstep this boundary. It may be however, that you have dwelt in the land of anxious seats, or have worn a Quaker’s greatcoat, or received a very full scent of

the bottled unction of two-hundred-and-fifty-years-old ordination, and therefore, like yourself, I must be cautious!

In the fifth place, I heartily believe the apostle James when he says that 'the prayers of a righteous man availeth much.' I believe also that there is very little connexion between a philosophical and christian prayer; perhaps as little connexion as there is between the song of the sweet singing canary and the chirping of the blackbird. I furthermore believe that prayer is divinely important, as well for the world's conversion as for the accomplishment of all the purposes of God in relation to the Christian religion. Yet my charity is so unpopular that I cannot quarrel with any man when he opposes both the theory and the reality of a kind of prayer that produces, imparts, or transports a principle of faith to a knowledgeless trembling sinner, or brings down fire, hail, and thunder, all mixed together, to convert souls.

In the sixth place, while in the dexterous pursuit of others, and while entertaining the benevolent desire of curing the lame and the halt, you have yourself unfortunately become a cripple. You say, "believers who differ much as to theory, may cordially agree in the *means* to be employed in conversion." If I am not greatly deceived, you will find this as difficult of proof as the divinity of Joe Smith's golden plates. Thankful, however, that you have at length touched upon something that may be useful, I shall expect you will no longer attempt to multiply the wounds of 'our author', and that you will forthwith direct your shafts against myself for disputing this statement in your last paragraph.

In the seventh place, let me assure you that there are many good traits in your communications. Were I however to lose sight of your imperfections and dwell upon your excellencies, I fear you might censure me for a want of caution, since you have been so diligent in showing the example of using the rod and the lancet! Meantime, believing that in my case 'open rebuke is better than secret love', and that secret love should always prompt open rebuke, I trust I may ever be grateful for the well-meant rebukes of friends and brethren, and that I will ever shew myself worthy of their rebuking regard.

CONDUCTOR.

Hope differs from faith, in that it looks only forward to future objects. It looks not back, nor does it contemplate the present: "for," says Paul, "what a man sees, why does he yet hope for." Nor looks it on all the future; but only on future *good*. There is not one dark cloud, not one dark speck, in all the heavens of christian hope.