

THE
Gospel
And Its Elements.

BY
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1857.

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PREFACE.

The design of this work is, to present to the reader some of the reasons which made it necessary for a return to Apostolic Christianity, as seen in “the beginning;” and to develop its leading principles.

The work is intended for the masses, and is thus presented in a cheap but elegant form. It will be useful as a compend of religious teaching on great and sublime topics; and will supply a need among those who wish to know something about the Gospel and its elements, or to furnish others with the means of knowing. We commend it to all inquirers into the “truth as it is in Jesus;” and by the blessing of God, we trust it may prove useful to the cause of the Redeemer, in multiplying the number of the saved.

THE ORIGIN OF THE PRESENT REFORMATION AS PLEADED BY THE DISCIPLES.

We are naturally anxious to know all that can be ascertained in reference to the origin of all great movements, political or religious; just as we feel interested to know the origin of rivers which fertilize and enrich kingdoms and states, or the causes which produce great changes and revolutions in particular forms of society, and throughout the world. This is the chief duty and labour of the historian, and constitutes the most pleasing and useful portions of his work.

Opinions on all subjects, have been undergoing many changes during the last half century; and indeed since the days of Lord Bacon, who was the first to set aside the dogmatism of the schools for the deductions of reason, and the opinions of men for the truths of experimental philosophy. Before his day the theories held were chaotic and shifting; nothing was stable or permanent; and if a great and good writer is the friend and benefactor of his race, a great reformer is more so; and when a man unites both these, his claims upon the gratitude of the world are incomparable.

Many volumes have been written with reference to the origin of the Lutheran reformation, and they constitute a part of the literary wealth of our race. But the difficulties in the way of understanding the causes which led to it, and the obstacles in the way of its achievements, are insuperable, unless we have some knowledge of the times in which it originated, the age and the country which gave it birth, the chief actors in the scenes which were presented, and the objects and aims of its movers.

On all these subjects the pen of the historian and biographer has been employed, and large and numerous works have been written. Whilst innumerable treatises and sermons, lectures and essays have been given, and yet the theme is not exhausted.

The same may be said also in reference to the reformation as pleaded by John Wesley. Though the objects contemplated by him were not so grand and sublime, and the elements which he evolved and handled so mighty and fearful; yet his work is one that has enlisted the attention of men of the finest minds, and the labour he has accomplished is exerting a powerful influence over the destinies of large portions of our race.

Luther found the Word of God chained by the hand of an imperial ecclesiastic, and the salvation which is of God, placed in the hands of one who called himself the successor of Peter, and the souls of men, perishing for the bread of life, left to feed on ashes; the guilty and the ruined compelled to look to a self-constituted church rather than to Heaven for pardon; and the Roman Pontiff sitting in the Temple of God, and claiming all the honours and the prerogatives due only to the Father of Spirits. He found innumerable mediators between God and men, instead of the one Mediator — the man Christ Jesus; and the salvation obtained by him, bartered and sold in the market places to the highest bidder; and the gift of eternal life offered in exchange for works and penances, for silver and gold. He found the superior clergy sunk in the lowest state of ignorance and corruption. A Bishop of Dunfeldt congratulated himself that he had never learned Greek or Hebrew. The monks asserted that all heresies arose from the languages, but especially from the Greek. “The New Testament,” said one, “is a book full of serpents and thorns.” “Greek,” said he, “is a modern language, but recently invented, and against which we must be on our guard. As to Hebrew, my dear brethren, it is certain that whosoever studies that, immediately becomes a Jew.” If such was the condition of the clergy, that of the people was still worse, sunk in the lowest depths of ignorance and superstition, of moral pollution and death. The relation in which a reformer stands to his age — if he be a reformer — is that he is neither on a level with it, nor yet behind it — he must be before it. This was the case with Martin Luther, and all others who have left their true impression on the world. If he is not its forerunner, he is simply dragged along by the wheels of current opinion, or sullenly walks after it. The latter is but the dupe of his own vanity, the blind devotee of some new or antiquated dogma, and his work, upon the Temple of Truth, but “wood and hay and stubble.” Luther attempted the overthrow of the Papacy, and simply reformed it.

Of John Wesley it may be said, that he did not attempt a reformation of the faith of the Episcopacy, but rather the piety of its members. He had no disposition to destroy existing usages, nor yet to reconstruct on the basis of original Christianity. He adhered to the creed and the liturgy of the Church of England, and lived and died in its communion. And the immense institution now called

Methodism, was only in its origin a little, feeble society, designed for the purpose of promoting a higher element of piety and purity. It has reached, long since, its acme; it has accomplished its chief work. It can proceed no further, in the way of reform. And indeed much of its power has ceased with its numbers, its wealth, its irresponsible ministry, and its outward conformity to the ways of this evil world.

But we must proceed to consider the origin and objects of the reformation as plead by the Disciples in the beginning of the present century.

It was not a reformation from the abuses and corruptions of a dominant sect, like that effected by Luther in the Papacy. It was not simply the elevation of the piety of those who adhered to the forms and the usages of a popular state religion, like that of Wesley, in the Episcopacy. But it was rather a restoration in letter and spirit of original, apostolic Christianity, as found simply and alone in the sacred writings of the Evangelists and Apostles of Christ. And this was effected, not by a reformation only, but by a revolution. This will account for the fierceness of the opposition with which it was met, and the war of words it occasioned, and the system of proscription it aroused, from the press and the pulpit, in synods and presbyteries, in associations and conventions.

Every inch of ground won, has been secured by the spiritual weapons employed by the advocates of restoration. Many sore battles have been fought, and victories achieved. The scene of this religious warfare hitherto has been chiefly confined to the valley of the Mississippi, but the triumphs it has obtained have gone far and near. We doubt not but that much of the work is to be re-enacted here and elsewhere, and it becomes us to estimate aright the value of the principles which it has developed, and the importance of the objects it designs to accomplish.

We have much to encourage us in the East and the North, from the general intelligence existing among the people, from whom we confidently expect a larger amount of candour, and a freer spirit of discussion, in reference to the subjects embraced in our advocacy.

The divisions of Protestant Christendom into numerous sects, spending their time in subtle and profitless controversies, wasting their energies, embittering their spirits, and affording sport for the adversaries of the cross of Christ, has long been its reproach, its blight, and its curse. This state of things not only existed and exists

in the West and the South, but in every other section of our country; and throughout the entire limits of Protestantdom.

The present popular exhibition of the Christian religion is a strange commixture of the false and the true; and it is impossible to estimate fully the evils which have resulted from it.

In many instances forms have displaced the simple worship and service found in the Church of God; human creeds have legislated out of the Kingdom of God the divine creed of Christianity. Opinions have superseded the faith once delivered to the saints; and the spirit of the sect has driven out of the Christian profession the spirit of Christ. Whilst the Gospel of the party has been preached for the Gospel of the kingdom, and the traditions of men have made void and empty the commandments of God.

In the midst of this confusion and misrule, the reformation we now are pleading arose like the sun behind the dark clouds and heavy atmosphere which enveloped it, and one of its first, and most difficult works, was the attempt to dissipate and scatter them, and to clear the way for the bright shining after the dark and the cloudy day.

If ever there was need for such a reformation, it is in the age in which we live. In many instances the weaker and less efficient parties are accomplishing nothing for the furtherance even of their own interests; and will, in the course of time, be entirely absorbed. With the more dominant sects but little can be done, but through a still greater conformity to the spirit of the world, so as to bring the Church on a level with it. And thus the building of splendid temples, to minister to the pride and vanity of the age. The rich garniture and splendid decorations within, and the paid services of professional singers, to chant by proxy the praises of God.

Splendid orations in the pulpit on all subjects, from the icy extremes of materialism, up to the rarified regions of spiritualism; from the northern icebergs of Calvinism, to the southern regions of Arminianism (for both these belong to the polar regions), with all the intermediate regions, until they reach the flowery and gorgeous regions of the tropics, in which both preachers and people are wafted along by gales of richest odours, or are fed on fruits which pall upon the taste, and gratify only a sickly and depraved appetite, instead of ministering to the spiritual health and growth of the renewed heart and soul.

The Church, originally one and indivisible, has been cut up into innumerable sects and parties, founded on some partially conceived idea of religious truth, or some difference in its policy and government; and which has been the endless cause of strife and persecution, of bitterness and wrath.

Human creeds have been published and laid down as the basis of the Church, and men have been called upon to subscribe to them, in order to gain admission, and to enjoy the fellowship of the party. Our opposition to creeds, arises from the position they are designed to occupy in the Church of God. We don't object to any party setting forth a defence of its religious principles and worship, but we protest against making its own views of religious truth the basis of Christian union and communion. "Our opposition to creeds arises from a conviction that whether the opinions in them are true or false, they are hostile to the union, peace, harmony, purity, and joy of Christians; and adverse to the conversion of the world to Jesus Christ."

In the first ages of the Christian Church, there were no human creeds, and these were the only ages of the Church in which there were unity, harmony, and love, in the Christian brotherhood. The introduction of human creeds was the commencement of war and division.

To remedy these evils, and to introduce a purer element of Christianity, has been the chief design of this present reformation. To return to the ancient and well-defined landmarks, to restore the Apostolic Gospel and order of things, which obtained and were established at the beginning, are the chief and only objects contemplated by this movement.

To sum up then in a condensed form the abuses of Christian doctrine and the evils which need to be corrected and removed, — the following will suffice.

The oppressive influence of human and unauthorized creeds over the individual faith and consciences of men, and the order, peace, and unity of the Churches of Christ. This we deem to be an enormous evil, and one directly opposed to the union of Christians and the conversion of the world.

The unauthorized nature of associations and conventions, which too often interfere with the religious liberty and rights of the independent Churches of Christ, and thereby lord it over the

heritage of God.

The bold assumptions and dominant influence of the “Clergy” — many of whom profess to be called of God as was Aaron, as was Peter, James and John, as was Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles; and who pretend to speak and act under the immediate influence and teachings of the Holy Spirit.

The metaphysical and dogmatic theology of the pulpit, preached and propagated on every Lord’s Day, to the exclusion of the word of life — the doctrine which is according to godliness and the observance of the divine ordinances.

The want of the Apostolic Gospel, which originally converted the world and will do it again — a Gospel consisting of facts to be believed, of commands to be obeyed, and of promises to be enjoyed, instead of which anything and everything now is called Gospel, which men may choose to propagate.

Unscriptural terms of admission into the Church. Some requiring infant baptism as the initiatory ordinance; others a knowledge of the Catechism and a subscription to the Articles; and a third a delivery of a “Christian experience” before the party has become a Christian, — instead of demanding simply faith in his name and a sincere repentance and amendment of life, in order to baptism and admission into the Christian Church.

The deferring of Christian baptism until monthly meetings shall convene for the purpose of sitting in judgment upon the candidates to ascertain if their experiences correspond with their own, or if they reach the imaginary standard the Church has adopted by which to measure the spiritual dimensions of the candidates. How often is it the case that the bold and self-confident are cordially welcomed and received, whilst the meek and the humble are looked upon with distrust, if not in the end rejected!

The want of a perfect and scriptural organization of the churches. Of a proper reverence for the Lord’s day and the Lord’s house. In the ancient Churches they continued steadfastly in “the Apostolic doctrine and fellowship, in breaking of bread and prayers.” They kept the ordinances as they had been delivered to them by the Apostles. They had elders appointed in all the churches. They had no monthly meetings to hear experiences, and to administer baptism and the Lord’s Supper. No quarterly meetings for extra visitations of presiding elders, and to take up collections to

make up for past delinquencies. They had no semi-annual meetings for one to afflict him self, by fasting and prayer, in order to partake of what is called “the Sacrament,” — a name equivalent to a Roman oath, and derived from the Papacy. They had no yearly conferences or conventions to redeem the past, and to lay in an extra amount of piety for the future. But on every first day of the week in honour of the resurrection, the first Christians met to read the Word of God, to hear the Apostolic teaching, to sing the simple but sublime songs, celebrating the praises of God and of the Lamb, to break the loaf and drink the cup, in remembrance of the sufferings and death of their gracious Lord, and to give into the treasury of the Lord as they had been prospered during the previous week. To cultivate all kind and Christian sympathies and affections one with the other. To inquire after the sick, the bereaved, and the absent, and to devise ways and means to do good to all men, and especially to the household of faith. And lastly, we object to the use of far-fetched and unscriptural terms as expressive of religious ideas and institutions, believing that a return to the pure speech of the Bible would remove many errors from the Christian Church, and unite us more nearly together. One of the great evils which resulted from the captivity of the Jews in Babylon was, that they lost the pure language of the Hebrew and adopted the mixed speech of the Chaldean. Many of the terms now employed in the Christian Church are wholly unmeaning, others convey false ideas, and some, though right in the main, yet are foreign to the pure speech of the kingdom. We will enumerate a few of these mixed and Babylonish terms which need to be expurgated: as “Trinity — Eternal Son — Sovereign Grace — Spiritual Life — Spiritual Death — Original Sin and Total Depravity — Effectual Calling — Free Will — Free Grace — Eternal Election — Eternal Justification — The Perseverance of the Saints — Elect World — Elect Infants — Light of Nature — Natural Religion — General and Particular Atonement — Legal and Evangelical Repentance — Faith to Believe — The Christian Sabbath — Holy Sacraments,” &c., &c.

These, and similar phrases, have introduced a new language into the Kingdom of God, and which has been the fruitful occasion of endless disputations and strife. With us we choose to call Christian things by Christian names. We do not seek, however, to detect heresies in the use simply of words; nor do we make a man an

offender for a word.

If in the Christian profession men are willing freely to speak of Christ in the language of the Spirit — to give him all the names found in the New Testament — to repeat what he has said in good faith, and to re-report what he did; if they are willing to believe what the Prophets and Apostles have taught in regard to the Messiah, and to do what he has required; we do not ask them for their opinions, their secret thoughts, their ill-digested and immature speculations.

We require of those who seek to enter the Church of Christ, nothing more or less than what he himself required — Faith in him as the true Messiah as promised by the prophets; the Son of the living God as revealed by the Father, with a willingness to render a cheerful obedience to him as Lord and Christ. We teach that “Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of the living God,” is the only foundation of the Church, and the belief of which the only test of Christian qualification for membership, as it is the only basis of Christian union and communion among the Disciples of Christ.

We believe in the one Lord, and the one Faith, and the one Baptism; the one body, and the one spirit, and the one hope of our calling; the one God and Father of all, who is above all, and in all Christians. And we earnestly pray in the language of Christ, that all may be one who believe on him through the word of the Father as given us by the Apostles — that word which announced the grandest of all oracles, “Behold my Son the beloved, in whom I am well pleased;” and that, believing this, and submitting to his authority, the Church may be restored to its original unity, and the world thereby converted to God.

ORIGIN AND PRINCIPLES OF THE REFORMATION.

The Church originally was one, and has been spoken of in the Scriptures by various names, all descriptive of this unity: as for instance, the Kingdom — the Kingdom of Heaven — the Vineyard — the Vine — the Bride — the Lamb's Wife — the Tabernacle — the Body, of which Christ is the Head — the Temple of God. These and similar words are employed by the inspired writers to represent the Church, as one united and harmonious community, and such it was at the beginning, but not so now; and from present appearances, it is to be feared that it will never be again.

The spirit of faction very early appeared in the Christian Church, and warnings were often given by the Saviour and his Apostles on this head. The leaven was then at work secretly even under the eyes of the chosen Apostles, and their letters to the several Churches show how much they felt upon this subject. The jealousy with which they guarded the Church from all tendencies towards schism, and denounced those who should thus destroy the Temple of God, "which Temple ye are," may be seen in all their epistles.

The great divisions of the Church, as found on the historic page, are the Greek and Latin, the Papist and Protestant, and, in more modern times, the Protestant sects. Among the latter may be enumerated, under their respective names, the following, each of which again are divided into numerous parties: namely, the Episcopalians, the Presbyterians, the Lutherans, the Methodists, the Independents, and the Baptists.

Whilst there are but few lines of distinction in doctrine, separating these great parties, they have arranged themselves under different forms of Church government, and have thereby destroyed the visible unity of the Body of Christ.

There are no solid reasons to be assigned, why all the Paedobaptist Churches, so far as faith and principle are concerned, should not unite as one. And the same may be said of all those who wear the name of Baptist. Especially so, in regard to the great and dominant parties which we have now enumerated. The faith and the piety of the one is the same in all, and would pass current throughout the entire domain of these respective divisions of Protestant Christendom. They agree in faith, in doctrine, in everything which constitutes Christian character, in all that is essential to piety and

Christian worship; and only differ in reference to certain peculiarities in their organization, in ecclesiastical policy, and government.

These divisions have arrayed the respective parties one against the other. They have weakened the energies of the Church, and dried up her resources. The success of the one party is at the expense of all the rest, whilst the contentions and strifes of all are the occasion of distrust and jealousy, if not of secret and open hostility against the unity of the true Church of God, or any attempts to restore it in our midst.

In truth, they have destroyed the visible unity of the Church, and, like a family or kingdom arrayed against itself, they cannot stand.

In ancient times it was enough to say, "I am a Disciple," — "a Christian." And this was a passport into the Church as found in all parts of the world.

But as in the Church of Corinth some said, "I am of Paul," and others, "I am of Apollos, and I of Cephas," now it is, "I am of Luther" — and "I of Calvin" — and "I of Wesley." It is now deemed an arrogant assumption for one to style himself a disciple of Christ, or a Christian. The very name itself has fallen into disuse and reproach, only as a generic to distinguish the parties professing Christianity, from Paganism, Judaism, and Mohammedanism. Like the tent which the fairy gave to Prince Ahmed, it is now so small that it may be carried in one's hand, and when stretched out, will spread not only over the armies of powerful nations, but over all the parties, Papal and Protestant, which sit under its shadow.

The reformation we now plead, is a return to original Christianity, in matter and spirit, in faith and worship. It does not seek to establish a new sect, nor to reform an old one, nor yet to unite and harmonize the parties now in the field. Its highest aim is to restore the ancient Gospel and Apostolic institutions and worship to the world and to the Church.

We believe that much of its faith and worship have been set aside or rendered vain and empty by new elements introduced into the divine institutions.

All attempts hitherto known to reform a religious party, have only added another to those already in existence; and, therefore, the many sects which have grown out of the Westminster Confession of

Faith, both in Europe and in America. This confession originated in the sittings of one hundred and twenty reverend gentlemen, ten peers, and twenty commoners of illustrious birth, called together in the chapel, called the King's Chapel, on the first of July, 1643. This famous creed has been the occasion of forming a new religious party during every twenty years since it originated. And yet it was made to settle differences, to keep down heresies, to destroy all sectional tendencies, and to unite into one harmonious brotherhood all who should adopt it as the symbol of their faith.

In this city, and in all the cities of the Union, we see its effects in the numerous sects which adhere to it; and, especially, in the two grand divisions of modern times, of New and Old School Presbyterians, which alike claim it as the foundation of their respective parties; and yet neither will acknowledge the other as having any right to do so, and refuse full fellowship and intercommunion, one with the other.

Surely the history of this creed and its workings should warn us of the folly and the danger of adopting human articles of faith to the neglect of the divine creed of Christianity, as given by its Founder. "On this rock," said Jesus, when Peter confessed that "he was the Christ, the Son of the living God" — "On this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

The Baptist Confession of Faith was originally put forth by the elders and brethren of more than one hundred congregations of Christians (baptized upon confession of their faith) in London, 1689, and adopted by the Philadelphia Baptist Association, 1742. It is still adhered to by them, under the direction of the Association, according to the order of that venerable body in 1837.

This Confession consists of twenty-four articles; and the only one that ought to have been adopted was the first, and this should have been presented rather as a preamble, than as an article of faith. It reads thus: — "The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience; the supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest."

This testimony is true, and so far as it sets forth the Scripture as the only sufficient and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith,

and Christian obedience, it is unexceptionable, and there the Church should have rested. On this basis it should have been founded; but instead of this, numerous articles were adopted, which, true or false, are but a tithe part of the Holy Scriptures, and are presented in a crude speculative form, as much unlike the word of God as the bare skeleton is to the living body, or double distilled alcohol is to the living grain from which it is extracted.

The article in this creed also which sets forth the nature of the Church, shows that the party which formed it, had more just and scriptural ideas of its organization than than now. For we do not know of any Church of that body that adheres to it. It reads thus, — “The Church is a ‘particular body’ gathered and completely organized according to the mind of Christ, and consists of officers and members; — and the officers appointed by Christ to be chosen and set apart by the Church, are Bishops or Elders, and Deacons.”

Thus, according to this article, the Church consists of “members and officers;” the members of course are persons baptized or immersed on the profession of their faith in Christ, and the officers of each particular Church are simply, Bishops or Elders, and Deacons.

Originally the Baptist Church had in it a plurality of Bishops or Elders, and from this they have departed. They now have over each church simply a Pastor. They have dispensed with their “Ruling Elders,” an essential part of the Divine institution. They still retain the Deacons, but the Bishops or Elders in each respective church they have set aside and disbanded.

In a work recently published by Elder J. B. Jeter, and endorsed by twelve ministers of the Baptist Church, he says, “That it must not be forgotten in enumerating the causes which facilitated the progress of the Reformation, that Mr. Campbell taught many important truths, exposed some serious evils, furnished some striking illustrations of Scripture passages, which, if not original, were new to his hearers, and laboured diligently to awaken an interest in the study of the Scriptures.”

He also makes this concession in behalf of the religious tenets of this distinguished Reformer: “By some persons Mr. Campbell was suspected and charged with leaning towards Unitarianism. For this impression I have never found any good ground. In his zeal to introduce what he termed ‘ a pure speech,’ he rejected the words

‘Trinity’ and ‘Trinitarianism,’ and also some notions, more or less prevalent, concerning the Trinity; but so far as I can discover, he clearly and uniformly maintained the doctrine of Christ’s Godhead, and the vicarious and expiatory nature of his sufferings.” Again he says: “Mr. Campbell holds many, and most important, principles in common with all Christians. Nobly did he vindicate the authenticity and inspiration of the Scriptures, and the vital principles of Christianity, in his debate with Robert Owen of Scotland, the champion of infidelity, and by that service entitled himself to the gratitude and commendation of the friends of morality and social order.” Many similar concessions in this recent work are found, on all the “vital principles” of the Gospel of Christ, in favour of the views entertained by Mr. Campbell on the nature of the Gospel, the necessity of faith and obedience, the Spirit’s influence in connection with the word, in conversion and sanctification, and in regard to the order and worship to be observed in the Church of Christ, and in the necessity for a reformation in the Protestant churches, and his own in particular. These, coming from an adversary, after thirty years’ acquaintance with the views published by the Reformers, and a searching inquiry into the prominent principles as held in common among them, are worthy of consideration by all their opponents.

It may be affirmed that the causes of alienation and separation between them and the Baptists at large, are not so great as those which distinguish them from the Evangelical denominations with whom they interchange all Christian courtesies, except that of fellowship at the Lord’s Table; nor yet any greater than those which separate the different parties in their own communions. As for instance the Revisionists and Anti-Revisionists, the Free Will and Calvinistic Baptists, the Mission and Anti-Mission Baptists, the Gillites and the Fullerites, the Particular and General Baptists, and other divisions of this great Baptist family — not to mention the Open Communion and Close Communion Baptists; the former of which chiefly make up the Baptist denomination in England, and the latter in America. The points in which they differ from their Baptist brethren, compared with those in which they agree, bear no greater proportion to each other, than does the trembling lustre of a star to the meridian blaze of the summer sun Whilst we would seek to express our sentiments with Christian simplicity and candour, we long to see the day when bigotry and alienation shall give place to

the influence of Christian liberality and love.

We need not call attention to the system of proscription adopted and practiced in the West and South by the Baptists against the Reformers. They were characterized by much ignorance, bitterness, and malice; and it would be well if the mantle of charity could be spread over the acts of the Dover Association in Virginia, and other associations in Kentucky and elsewhere, which followed in their wake. The faithful historian in the future will pause to weep over the weakness and the folly — not to say the bigotry and malevolence which marked the era to which we refer. And many have lived to see the day, when they have repudiated these acts, and have publicly confessed their error and haste, their ignorance and folly in regard to them.

Such precipitate and rash proceedings are incident to all great movements; and it is known that no bitterness and alienation are so great as that which exists among members of the same family. But time and reflection will cure all these evils; and we may hope to see the day when a better spirit and a larger amount of Christian liberality will characterize those who have opposed their brethren the Disciples.

It would be well if the Baptist denomination would look back to the history of the persecutions to which they were subjected, from the days of John Bunyan to John Rogers, and from his day to their imprisonments in Virginia in 1768 and 1775.

An interesting case is recorded in their history in the days of Patrick Henry. Three of their preachers were brought to trial for preaching the Gospel. The indictment brought against them was, "For preaching the Gospel of the Son of God," contrary to the statute in that case provided, and therefore disturbers of the peace. The clerk was reading the indictment in a slow and formal manner, and as he pronounced the crime with emphasis, "For preaching the Gospel of the Son of God," a plain-dressed man dismounted from his horse, entered the court-house, and took his seat in the bar. He was known to the court and lawyers, but a stranger to the mass of spectators who had gathered on the occasion. This was Patrick Henry, who, having heard of the prosecution had rode sixty miles to volunteer his services in behalf of the prisoners. He listened to the indictment, the first sentence of which caught his ear, which was, "for preaching the Gospel of the Son of God." When the indictment

was read, and a few remarks had been submitted by the prosecuting attorney, Henry arose, stretched out his hand, and received the paper. "May it please your worship: I think I heard read by the prosecutor, as I entered this house, the paper I now hold in my hand. If I rightly understood, the King's attorney of this colony has framed an indictment for the purpose of arraiging and punishing by imprisonment three inoffensive persons before the bar of this court, for a crime of great magnitude — as disturbers of the peace. May it please the court, what did I hear read? Did I hear an expression, as if a crime, that these men, whom your worship are about now to try; and for what?" And continuing with a low, solemn, heavy tone, "For preaching the Gospel of the Son of God!" Pausing, amidst the most profound silence and breathless astonishment of his hearers, he slowly waved the paper three times around his head, then lifting up his hands and eyes to heaven, with extraordinary and impressive energy he exclaimed, "Great God!" The exclamation — the action — the burst of feeling, were all overpowering. Mr. Henry resumed in an appeal on the subject of Christian liberty, of the most impassioned eloquence, in which, waving again three times around his head the indictment, with the same solemn exclamation to God, he concluded, "May it please your worship, permit me to inquire once more, for what are these men about to be tried? This paper says, 'For preaching the Gospel of the Son of God.' For preaching the Saviour to Adam's fallen race." After another pause, in tones of thunder, he inquired, "What law have they violated?"

The court and the audience were now wrought up to the highest pitch of excitement. The face of the prosecuting attorney was pale and ghastly; he was trembling with alarm and terror, and the judge, with a tremulous voice, put an end to the scene, now becoming extremely painful, by the authoritative command — "Sheriff, dismiss these men!"

The reader will excuse me for the introduction of this narrative. To me, however, it is deeply affecting and suggestive.

A lesson should be learned from it by our Baptist brethren. They should remember that when few in number, the dominant party held them in contempt, persecuted and imprisoned them. They were then regarded as heretics, and disturbers of the peace. But they were then a purer and better people than they are now. This should teach them to treat with patience and much long-suffering, those who differ

from them — and especially those so nearly allied to them.

May we not ask with Patrick Henry, — Would that we could do it with half his energy and impressiveness, — “what law (human or divine) have the Disciples violated?”

They have preached, to the best of their ability, “the Gospel of the Son of God.” They have preached salvation through his name, to perishing sinners. They have called upon all men everywhere to repent, and turn to God. They have plead for a return to the Ancient Gospel of Christ, and to the order of things established by his Apostles. And is it for this that they have separated them from their communion, and denied them their fellowship and sympathy? On what evil times have we fallen! Surely there is need for reformation, and for a return to the good old paths of the Prophets and the Apostles.

In view of the tendencies of the corrupt heart to depart from the ways of God, the history of the Church and its apostasies from the ancient faith, the abounding corruptions of the Protestant sects, the destructive heresies which have crept into the Church, the Popish abominations which threaten not only the dismemberment of the state, but all that is holy and pure in the Church of God; we exhort them to consider well the evils which have resulted from opposition to the attempt of restoring original Christianity; and to unite with the Disciples in reforming all abuses, in cleansing the sanctuary, and in bringing about that unity of the faith and worship which shall herald afar the conversion of the world.

THE REFORMATION AS PLEAD BY THE DISCIPLES.

In our attempts to find the causes which lead to any great movement in the way of reform, serious difficulties often appear, according to the standpoint from which we view them, the prejudices existing in the mind of the inquirer, and the field of vision he may survey. This may account for the different and conflicting opinions given in history of the efforts of that sect called the Paulicians, which gave such a powerful check to the progress of the Papacy; in which its power was for a time broken down, with all classes, from the great feudal princes down to the cultivators of the soil; in which the clergy of the Church of Rome were looked upon with loathing, and their power despised. To the friends of the Hierarchy, this sect would be looked upon as the vilest and most abhorred of mankind, the massacre of whom would be an act most pleasing to God; whilst to the historian of the rise and progress of Protestantism, they would be regarded as the lineal descendants of that sect — the Christians — which in the times of the Apostles were “everywhere spoken against.” It is certain that Rome, fearing that a single generation would see the reformed doctrine spread from the centre of Europe to Lisbon, to Naples, and to London, cried for help to the warriors of Northern France, and appealed to all the baser passions, among a deluded and superstitious people, for aid. To the rapacious and cruel, she offered the rich bounty of flourishing cities and fertile fields; and to the devout, pardons and indulgences sufficient to reward them for all the sacrifices they might make in her behalf.

The same observations might be made in regard to the opinions entertained of the reaction of the Papacy, after the rise of the Jesuits, under the preaching of Ignatius Loyola, the champion of the woman clothed in scarlet. To the Papist it was thought to be owing to the truth of the tenets advocated by the Catholic Church, her unity, apostolic succession, and the divine power claimed for the supreme Headship of the Church. But, to the Protestant, it is more justly declared it was owing to the war which the renovated zeal of the Papacy waged against the degenerate Protestantism, a hundred years after the death of Luther. The contest in his day was between the pure faith of the Gospel and the bold infidelity of the Church of Rome; the indomitable zeal of the Monk of Erfurth against the ease

and indolence of Pope Leo; between the Christian morality of the Reformer, and the vice and corruption of the leaders of the Papacy. But the zeal and purity of the Protestant nations grew cold and inconstant; and while the war of the Papacy was pushed with the utmost energy against the Protestants, these directed all their resources against each other, and so have continued until this day. This will account for the maintenance of the territory claimed for the Papacy, and the little success which has crowned the efforts of the Protestant world for the last two hundred years. With them it has been a civil war — a house divided against itself. With the Papacy, notwithstanding its numerous parties and opposing sects, they have always united against a common foe in the ranks of the Protestant faith. And while Protestantism remained at home, inactive and unaggressive, Rome built colleges, and richly endowed them to educate and send out missionaries to the ends of the earth, for the propagation of her faith; and what she lost in one country, she would more than repay herself by the addition of new territory, either in the old world or in the new.

Among the causes which rendered the reformation as advocated by the Disciples necessary, we will briefly call attention to the following.

1st. The imperfect and defective exhibition of Christianity among the dominant parties.

We do not single out any particular denomination: we believe that the objection lies against all. And whilst there were some, and still are, which hold to and maintain a larger portion of Christian truth than others, yet, in no single denomination, do we think that the Gospel, in its facts, commands, and promises, in its principles and privileges, is fully and faithfully announced to the world. And in regard to the ordinances and services of the congregation of the Lord, there is much that is wanting to bring it up to that standard of duty and privilege found in the Apostolic Church. Undue prominence is given to certain points of Christian doctrine, to the neglect of matters equally as important and necessary to be known and understood. And as there is much that is defective in the manner and matter of teaching Christianity, so there is just as much in the character of the individual membership as of the congregation itself. It is certain, that as is the teacher and his teaching, so will it ever be with the taught. The servant is never above his master — the

disciple above his teacher.

It should be an admitted fact that there is something in Christianity higher and purer than any exhibition of it yet known. Partyism does not necessarily grow out of Christianity, but is in fact opposed to it. And although it may have unavoidably arisen from an attempt to reach a purer and healthier atmosphere, it has failed in its aspirations, and has been doomed to descend to a common level with those it attempted to reform. It should be the aim of all earnest and sincere minds to rise superior to what may be regarded as accidental, and to reach a loftier faith and sublimer hope, on the original platform found in the Christian religion.

Under the pressure of the Papacy it was impossible for the human mind to arrive at that point by which it could survey the field of inquiry, which would lead to more extended views of the designs of the Author of the Christian religion; and since the Lutheran Reformation the Protestant world have been struggling hard to maintain the vital elements of the Gospel of Christ, and in this she has nearly failed.

May it not be the fact that the Church of modern times, in her attempts to reach the standard of duty found in the Christian religion towards its Author, she has lost sight in a great measure of those reciprocal duties which man owes to man? The time may now have come, when this subject should claim a higher attention than heretofore, and a greater approximation to that standard of duty and of right which reverence for humanity, as taught by the Saviour, should prompt us to cherish.

Christianity has singled out each man from the masses, and seeks to elevate and improve him. It claims no dominion over the state, nor yet over communities of men, only so far as they are brought into that organism called the Church. Its appeals are made to the individual man, — to his heart and his conscience, — and points out the duty which each owes to all others in every possible relationship which it recognises as lawful and right.

It never transcends its own limits to interfere with the political regulations of the state, but seeks the purification of each of its members, and thereby removes all that is unjust and oppressive in human government. It asks no power from the state — it makes no appeal to the secular arm. It only asks to be permitted to pursue its own peaceful career, working from the individual to the masses, and

thereby reforming all that is wrong, correcting all abuses, and diffusing the principles of a sound morality throughout the body politic.

Men, in their impatience to remove moral and physical evils from the state, would defeat the ends of the Christian religion, and make it the instrument of persecution and insurrection.

It should ever be remembered that so far as Christianity is concerned as a system, there is no room left for human progress. It was perfect as it came out of the hands of its Founder. No one has, no one can add any new thought to it. It is unlike the subjects of political economy, mental and moral philosophy, mathematics, and geometry, which admit of any amount of development and progress.

Christianity, like all the works of God, is the same yesterday, today, and for ever. But while we thus speak in regard to it as a system, yet it must not be forgotten that in its operation on the individual mind and heart it never ceases to improve, to reform, to elevate, and purify. Its progress is objective; and so far as this is taken into the account, there can be no limits to its influence and power.

We do not know that the New Testament shows any preference to any political form of government. It rather bids us to "obey the powers that be" "to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's." It reveals broad and eternal truths designed to operate upon the masses, in regard to the units of which they are made. It seeks to work out the regeneration of the race, by its appeals to the individuals of which it is made.

2dly. The want of a certain and infallible rule of salvation.

Whilst the Scriptures are plain and explicit on this head, it is lamentable to witness the ignorance and failure, on the part of the popular sects, in furnishing that information that is needed by the serious inquirer on this point. All sorts of doctrine by all sorts of people are taught on this important subject, whilst the public mind is left almost entirely in doubt and in darkness in regard to the means of salvation. It was not so in the times of the Apostles, it need not be so now. No directions can be given on any question of ordinary interest, more plain or explicit than those which are found in the inspired oracles, on the question, "What shall I do to be saved?" It is involved in no mystery, left in no uncertainty by the Apostles, and we have but to consult the heaven-inspired record, and all our needs

are met, all our difficulties are solved, and the way of salvation is made as plain as the road that leads to any point in the Union from our city. This has ever been the method of God, in his dealings with men under every dispensation.

Abel knew how to obtain justification, after sin had entered into the world; and compliance with the plain directions given, was sure of obtaining the promise granted.

This was also true in regard to Noah, and the temporal deliverance which he and his family enjoyed; when the flood destroyed the world of the ungodly, moved by faith in the divine word, he built an ark for his own salvation and that of his family. His faith in God's Word, the ark that he built, his entrance and continuance in it, were not more certain to secure his salvation from the impending judgments, than are the infallible conditions upon which are suspended the salvation by Jesus Christ. The same principles mark the divine procedure in smaller and more minute matters, affecting the state and condition of individuals.

The crimson thread of Rahab indicated the deliverance she and her family were to enjoy at the destruction of Jericho; a neglect of this simple command would have involved them in the common destruction to which that city was doomed. The same was true in regard to Lot and family; they were to flee from Sodom and not look back, whilst the family enjoyed salvation from the fiery flood which desolated the cities of the plains; a single act of disobedience resulted in the death of Lot's wife, and gave her as a monument of salt, to warn all future ages of the danger of disobedience to the commands of God.

An error in regard to the means and conditions of salvation may prove fatal, and involve the loss of the soul; and it is not to be supposed that this would be justly chargeable to God, who desires not the death of him that dieth, but that he should turn to him and live.

The popular method of answering this great question of man's salvation leaves the mind in doubt, and fails to satisfy the anxious inquirer on a subject of all others the most important.

Who has not felt the embarrassment to which we refer, when awakened to a proper sense of his guilty and helpless condition? Who has not read and prayed and striven under the most serious difficulties, to ascertain what would be acceptable to God and

satisfy the demands of the Gospel of Christ?

“O, that I knew where I might find him!” has been the anxious language of many a sincere person besides that of the Patriarch Job. The Saviour has answered this searching demand of an afflicted conscience, by the most express directions in his Word. And yet such has been the mystery in which the whole question of man’s salvation has been involved, in the apprehension of the public teachers of the Christian religion, that the sinner has been compelled to look into his own heart, to examine his own experience, to compare the exercises of his mind with those of others, and to seek for light from the Holy Spirit; when God has made it plain in his Word, and has assured us we have not to ascend into heaven to bring Christ down from above, nor to descend into the abyss to bring him up again from the dead, as though a personal interview was now needed; but directs us to that Word which is nigh us, even in our heart and in our mouth — the word of faith — the Gospel as preached by the Apostles: that, if we shall confess with our own mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in our heart that God has raised him from the dead, we shall be saved. Or, in the language of the Messiah, “Go, preach the Gospel to every creature;” “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.”

A 3d reason which led to the reformation as plead among us, was — The speculative, instead of the Evangelical view of presenting Christian truth.

This has been for ages past a sore evil, and has been the occasion of great mischief to the cause of Christ. The Rabbis, in the time of the Saviour — the Pharisees and the Sadducees — indulged freely in it, and by their traditions made void the commandments of God. The Judaizing teachers in the Apostolic Churches, and the Greek philosophers, introduced their crude speculations into the house of God. The one taught that unless the Gentiles were circumcised, and kept the law of Moses, they could not be saved. They idly spent their time in dwelling upon the endless genealogies of the Jewish tribes; and the others dwelt upon the principles taught by Plato and Aristotle, and other famous philosophers among them. “Beware lest any man spoil you, through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ,” said an Apostle. “Let no man judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath

days, which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.”

The Gnostics of old, and the fathers of the church, have all indulged freely in the introduction of a false philosophy into the simple teachings of Christ; whilst, in more modern times, instead of preaching the Word, men have taught their opinions about it. Instead of preaching the Gospel, they have speculated upon the subjects of original sin; total depravity; the need of the Spirit’s influence; the mystery of the new birth; on general and particular atonement; on the decrees of God; his secret purpose towards the elect; the final perseverance; or in answering the question, “Are there few that be saved?” These, and a thousand similar subjects, constitute the endless themes of the pulpit; whilst the sinner is left untouched by the sword of the Spirit, and starved to death upon the chaff, rather than fed upon the pure wheat of God’s Word.

Such was not the plan adopted by the Apostles. They announced the great facts of the Gospel of Christ. They preached Jesus, and him crucified. They made known the testimony of God. They left much to the apprehension of the popular mind; and, in a bold, ingenuous manner, proclaimed the way of salvation to the ruined and the lost. They used the language of men in revealing the will of God, and made all men see what was the fellowship of that mystery which had been hid in God, but now revealed to his holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit.

Doubtless, one reason why the Saviour chose humble and unlettered men to preach his Word, was that they were incapable of preaching their own speculations. They were shut up to the Gospel committed to their care, for they could not “but speak the things which they had learned.” The Saviour thanks the Father that he had revealed his will “to babes,” rather than to the “sages and the learned.” Thus it seemed good in the sight of God. Even Paul — the learned, the logical, the eloquent, the wise — was so effectually converted, and had such abundant revelations made to him; was so furnished with all necessary aid, — for he had seen Christ in person, received the Gospel from his lips, graduated in the third heavens, and received his diploma from the Chancellor of the skies, so that he determined “to make known nothing among men, save Jesus, and him crucified.”

“But I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached

of me, is not after man; for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of God;" and he also says, "We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth."

The Apostles preached Christ that men might receive the Spirit — now the Spirit's influence is taught that men may receive Christ. They preached that Christ died for our sins according to the Scripture, that men might be saved by it from their sins — now men preach that the atonement was made for the elect, in order that the church may be saved from heresy, in regard to doctrine.

Correct theories are now taught in order that the mind may be saved from error in regard to the system of salvation. Then the Gospel was preached that men might be saved by believing and obeying it. No theory of medicine, however good, ever saved the sick — no speculations ever raised the dead. It is medicine that effects the one — it is the power of God which accomplishes the other.

4th cause. The misapprehension of the creed of Christianity, and a substitution of one of human device.

This was an error of long standing, and one which meets us at every point. Human creeds had been in existence for fifteen hundred years, and were still rife in the churches. Every new body that started in existence put up one as the sign or symbol of its faith. Many and various were the reasons assigned for this practice, but none of them were deemed sufficient or reasonable, and all of them regarded by us as an assumption, at war with the peace and unity of the Church, and the crown rights of the King of Zion.

There is but one creed of Christianity, and that was given to the world by God himself, under circumstances of peculiar solemnity and authority. It was at the baptism of Jesus, and announced over his head from between the parted skies. The nation which had received the Law from Mount Sinai, amidst the awful signs of the Divine presence, once again heard the voice of the God of Abraham, laying down in express terms the foundation on which should be built the Church of the Messiah — "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The chosen tribes in the wilderness had heard, fifteen centuries before, the voice of God, announcing the oracle that "Jehovah their Lord was one Lord!" And now, at the opening of the mission of the seed of Abraham — the Messiah — and in view of the dispensation to be put under his control as "Lord and Christ," He

again spoke, and authoritatively declared, that Jesus of Nazareth was “his Son, the beloved.”

“On this rock,” said the Messiah to his disciples, during his ministry, “will I build my Church.”

This was the stone of stumbling to both houses of Israel, and yet it became the chief corner. This was to become the central truth, the sublime oracle, on which the whole system should rest.

Every precept and command, every promise and principle taught in Christianity, derives its force and authority from this great truth.

God had now put all things under the Son of man, and was about to constitute him head, not only of a new empire, but head over all things, the Father himself excepted, for its benefit and triumph, — angels, principalities, and powers being put in subjection to him.

No church, to our knowledge, had been formed expressly on this foundation. If the truth was recognised, its importance was lost sight of, or its value depreciated by the introduction of foreign matters, which had claimed pre-eminence over it. Search the creeds of Christendom, and where will you find this great formula as a vital element of them? Some but faintly mention his name, and none of them regard this oracle as of prime importance in the Christian institution.

The foundation of the Christian Temple was thus displaced, so far as the creed was concerned. The differential features of Christianity and Judaism on the one hand, and of all other systems on the other, was thus lost sight of. It was the privilege of the Disciples to replace this corner-stone, and the first to build upon it in these latter times. We began to call the attention of the world to this great oracle as supreme — to proclaim and defend it — to establish and prove it — to give prominence and vitality to it; and the results were glorious. Thousands who had been insensible to the claims of Christianity awoke to its importance. Infidels in great numbers were converted; men of talents and learning were struck with its divine simplicity and grandeur, and at once embraced the doctrine of the Cross, as exhibited by us. Thousands who had been turned away from the popular forms of Christianity, and were looking for something beyond it, gladly hailed the rising of a better day, and were admitted into the Church.

The chief mover in this great reformation held many debates on

the elements of the Gospel, and one on the claims of the Bible as an inspired volume with Robert Owen, the champion of infidelity, and achieved a glorious triumph in favour of the truth; and subsequently with Bishop Purcell on the Papacy, setting aside the arrogant assumptions of the Man of Sin, and establishing the claims of the Church, founded on the Rock-Christ in opposition to the Church assumed to have been founded on Peter; and of more recent date, his debate with Mr. Rice on all the questions involved in this great advocacy, the results of which have proved the strength of the principles developed, as they have won large numbers over to the cause of original Christianity.

But he has not laboured alone; others of acute reasoning powers, of education and talent, with wonderful skill and address, have arranged and simplified the elements of the Gospel, in a form which will give them permanency in all coming time. They have descended to the very depths of the foundation of the Christian Temple, and have discovered the rock on which it rests, so that there is nothing left for future labourers to do but to build thereon, by the aid of the mighty principles thus developed and brought to light in the Christian Scriptures.

Churches which had grown old and in a state of decay were revived and re-established upon the original basis, and many new organizations have arisen in all parts of the land. And the word of the Lord grew as of old and "mightily prevailed and now in our own country, chiefly in the West and South, our numbers are daily increasing. In Canada and the Provinces of the British Empire, in England and Scotland, in California and in Australia, and even so far as Jerusalem, the cause we plead has made its converts. And when we recollect that the result of all this success is owing to an intelligent conviction of the truth, and the strength of the principles advocated, it is the more remarkable and encouraging.

The sublimity and grandeur of this movement are not even properly appreciated by those who are its friends and advocates. It may be the last great effort to restore original Christianity before the "King of kings comes." It is the trumpet blast, summoning all men to the recognition of God's Son as the Saviour of the world, and charging them to embrace his person, lest he be angry with them, and they perish from the way when he arises to shake terribly the earth.

It is but the republication of that great truth which won its trophies from the centre of Jerusalem to the waters of the Tiber, from the publicans and sinners of Galilee to the members of Caesar's household.

“Behold my Son,” said the Father to the tribes at the baptism of the Nazarene. “No other foundation can any one lay than that which is laid,” said the Apostles of the Lamb. No other do we want, said the first converts — and so we have also declared.

Come, then, and embrace with all your heart, Jesus as the Son of the Highest. Touch his sceptre and live. Believe with all your heart that God has raised him from the dead, as the great demonstration of his Messiahship, and confess him to be the “Lord to the glory of God the Father.”

CAUSES WHICH ORIGINATED THE REFORMATION.

The theology of all religious institutions is in some respects foreign to the systems out of which it is formed; and is consequently imperfect and defective. It assumes the shape and form of the previous opinions and habits of the times in which it originated. It therefore is destined to undergo changes in the course of time, and will either pass entirely away, or be modified to suit the advancing progress of opinions which characterize the times. This will account for the unsettled spirit of the public mind on all subjects which belong to the department of theology.

It should be remembered that so far as Christianity is concerned as a divine system, there is no room left for modification or change. No improvement in art, no advance in science or philosophy, will ever replace it. It was perfect as it came from the hands of its Author; no one can add anything to it, and no one can take anything from it. Like the system of nature, its elements remain the same, and no disturbing forces can make it otherwise than it is. The only power that can alter or reform, much less destroy it, is that which gave it birth. And we have no reason to believe that he will do it. What may be the character of that age or dispensation which shall follow the present, we do not know. The Prophets and the Apostles have spoken of a glorious future in regard to the great principles of truth and righteousness. The knowledge of the Lord will yet cover the earth as the waters do the seas. The veil that covers all nations will be dissipated by the Sun of Righteousness, and the darkness of Paganism, and the blindness of Judaism, will be removed by the bright shining of the Millennium day. But until that period shall arrive, we are compelled to adhere in matter and spirit to the "form of sound words," delivered to us by the Apostles of Christ.

In regard to all subjects pertaining to this life, there is ample room for progress; and the stimulus which the human mind has experienced, has resulted in the achievements of all the wonders of the age. The subjects of political economy and human government, in mental and moral philosophy, in mathematics and geometry, and their application to the arts, admit of any amount of development and progress. But not so in respect to Christianity. The first Christians knew as much of Christ and his religion, as any who have succeeded them. No one can be wiser than the Apostles; none can

add a new truth to that which was taught by the Founder of the Christian religion. The same facts which underlie the Christian system, the same commands and promises which gave origin to the faith and obedience of the converts in Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth, produce the like results now. But while we thus speak, it must be observed, that every age witnesses new proofs of its divine origin in the fulfilment of prophecy, and the accumulations of the past become the inheritance of the present. And as time advances, new applications of Christian principles are made, in respect to human rights and privileges; a larger spirit of Christianity is being infused into the whole system of philosophy, of legislation, and of the social institutions. These are gradually absorbing its principles, and by their secret and pervading influences, are assuming higher forms of beauty and perfection. And while it is no part of the duty of legislation to establish and enforce any of the dogmas or institutions of Christianity, it may surely require that its code of morals — the purest and the best the world has ever known — shall be incorporated into the institutions of our country. Ours is not a Pagan, Jewish, Mohammedan, or Mormon government. The prevailing religion of the country is Christianity, and therefore an open Bible not only should be found in all our churches and families, but in our schools, especially our public ones. And no hand should be permitted to shut, much less remove it, from the place in which our fathers put it.

The Divine hand which led the Puritans across the ocean, and preserved them amidst the dangers of the seas; which sustained them in their first settlements in an inhospitable clime; which led us through the perils of a long war, and saved us from treason and disunion, and bitter dissensions, we should continue to recognise; and as they felt the influence of Christianity through all these struggles, and laid the basis of our government in its principles, we should not fail to accept the boon at their hand, and maintain the ascendancy of its heaven-inspired morality, whoever may oppose or deny it.

But we proceed to inquire into the reasons which led to the proposed reformation; and on this head we would observe that the spirit of partyism, instead of the spirit of Christian union, was one of them.

On this subject we have had occasion to dwell in some of our

previous chapters, but it is not by any means exhausted. It is an evil of great magnitude, and we propose to look at it in regard to the influence which it exercises over the minds and actions of those who come under it; and here we would observe that, in the first place, it is wanting in charity — a chief element in Christianity, and without which all our traditional orthodoxy is vain and empty. Charity, or love, is the end of the Christian religion. For that was it instituted, and all its principles tend towards it. Any system of things which fails in this particular must be wrong. And who needs to be taught that in this, there has been a most wilful departure from the designs of the Christian religion? We can scarcely exaggerate the enormity of the evils which partyism has brought upon us from this direction. Has it not separated families and friends? Has it not arrayed, not only churches and neighbourhoods against each other, but states and kingdoms? Its heartless formalism, its frigid theology, and its exclusive Pharisaism, who has not seen and felt?

All persons who come fully under the influence of Christianity are one in spirit and disposition. They feel alike, and sympathize truly with each other. Under the first bloom of the affections, awakened and kindled into life, they indicate a like origin and source, and show a common type and genus. They do not think even of the difference which may exist in age, in experience, or in habits of thought or opinion. Having the same spirit of faith, they coalesce and unite on the great basis of Christian doctrine; and, if left alone, would live, and labour, and die together, as heirs of a common inheritance. But no sooner do they fall under the influence of partyism, than the generous and kindly spirit of the Gospel is absorbed, and they are left in the attitude of rivals or opponents; and, henceforth, in proportion to their zeal to build up party, and to defend the creed, is the separation widened between them. Thus the outgrowth of their piety is at the expense of the noble charities which have their root in the rich ground of God's benevolence, as revealed in the gospel of Christ.

It is wanting in humanity. This is a serious charge to be brought against the partyism of the day; but it is justly liable to it; and we do not hesitate to say that its influence has been felt, deeply felt, in checking, and in some cases annihilating even the natural springs of benevolence and kindness, which the heart of man possesses, independent of the principles of Christianity. Who does not know

that the exclusiveness and pride, the jealousy and rivalry, the persecution and violence, which result from opposing sects, is at war with all the common and ordinary feelings of humanity? If the Jews, in their departure from Moses and the prophets, put to death the Messiah and murdered his disciples, what have not professed Christians done, in their zeal to sustain their party creeds and sectarian institutions? Whilst we do not deny that the religion of Christ may exert a reforming influence over many persons blinded by denominational pride, yet it is in despite of the untoward influence which the spirit of the sect has exercised upon them; and they would have grown to the full stature of Christian men and women, had they been left wholly under the influence of the Gospel of Christ independent of the sect. How often are we reminded in the writings of the Apostles, of the self-denial of Christ, who sought not his own; who considered not himself; who, though he was rich, for our sakes became poor; “Who pleased not himself” in seeking the salvation of a lost and ruined world! How frequently are we exhorted to love our neighbour as ourselves; to please our neighbour for his good to edification; to let the same disposition be in us which was also in Christ Jesus; to love even our enemies, and to pray for those who despitefully use us; to do good to all men, especially to the household of faith! Now these broad and wholesome precepts of Christianity are neglected and despised, under the influence of sectarian pride and presumption. And “what do ye more than others?” may be asked of all those who are wedded to partyism, in matters of religion. Christianity does not create any new affections in the heart of man. It only revives, directs, and purifies those which God has already given us. It opens up new channels for them to flow in, and new objects for their exercise. It cultivates our taste for whatever things are lovely and of good report. But partyism circumscribes and narrows down the limits within which our affections should play, and teaches us to love those only who love us.

Our Saviour rebuked this spirit as seen even in the disciple whom he loved, — “Master, we saw one casting out demons in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us.”

It is opposed to the wants and the interests of the poor.

Whatever may be the respect which the Gospel has shown to all classes of the human family (and it has left none uncared for), it especially has made the most abundant provisions for the poor. Whilst but few of the sages and the learned, the rulers and the princes of this world, embraced the Gospel of Christ, — the common people heard him gladly, and welcomed the doctrine which gave rest to their souls, and mitigated their sorrows, and relieved their burdens.

“Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance when it was weary. Thy congregation hath dwelt therein: thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor,” — that this passage in the Psalms of David had primary reference to the times of the Messiah, is evident from what follows: “The Lord gave the Word; great was the company of those that published it.”

This Psalm contains one of the most specific references to the Saviour, as it celebrates his ascension to the heavens: “Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them and therefore prophetic of the times of the Messiah. “The provision then, which God of his goodness has made for the poor,” has respect to the Gospel. But even in regard to the things of this life, it is equally true that he has had respect to them. God has given the earth a wonderful power of productiveness, sufficient to meet the wants of all his creatures. Our hills and our valleys stand thick with waving corn, to supply amply the need of all our earth’s population; and there never has been a period when the supply was not equal to the demand. If one country failed in its harvest, if the fig-tree did not blossom, nor the ripened fruit was seen upon the vines; if the labour of the olive failed, and the fields yielded no meat; if the flock was cut off from the fold and no herd was fattening in the stalls, yet in other countries there was not only an abundant supply to meet their own wants, but a surplus on hand for purposes of commerce. Thus, when there was a famine in Canaan, in the time of Jacob, there was still a seven years’ supply of corn in Egypt.

It is the ignorance and thriftlessness of the people, and the extortion and cupidity of the rich, or the maladministration of God’s bounties, that occasion famine and want.

God has given seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, regularly to the world, and has multiplied thirty, sixty, and even an hundred fold the seed sown, and abundantly rewarded the labour of the husbandman, so that not only has he had enough for himself, but a large supply for his neighbour. If the products of the field were justly distributed, there would be at all times a surplus on hand to meet any emergency that might occur. But we do not believe that any condition of society will ever be seen on our earth, until the millennium, in which the poor will cease out of the land. "The poor you have always with you," said the Almighty. "I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people," said God to Israel, "and they shall trust in the name of the Lord."

But if this state of things, in regard to the temporal condition of the poor, exists, and will continue, under the present suffering condition of this sin-stricken world, God has especially made provision for the spiritual wants of the poor in the Gospel of his Son.

He has loved the entire race, rich and poor.

He has sent his Son to die for the world, for us men and for our salvation. The Saviour on earth was a friend of publicans and sinners. He taught them the way of life. He wrought miracles upon their sick, their blind, and their deaf. He raised the children of the poor from the dead, and he fed them when hungry. And among other proofs of his Messiahship he said "That the Gospel was preached to the poor."

He chose poor men to preach the Gospel, so that the chief of the Apostles, to whom the keys of the Kingdom were committed, had no purse or scrip. "Silver and gold," said Peter and John, "we have none." And the Apostle of the Gentiles could say that "He was sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

Of the vast multitudes who obeyed the Gospel, how few were noble! how few were rich! The Gospel appeals to the common understanding and wants of men, on subjects of the highest moment. They all have faculties to appreciate it. Even the profoundest truths of Christianity are brought on a level with the weakest minds; and it is wonderful to see what a deep insight many attain, whose education and circumstances are so limited in their nature. The Gospel, like its Author, is meek and condescending, lifting up its voice not only in the halls of learning, but in the humble paths of

life; in the highways and hedges, and along the great thoroughfares of this world. "To you, O man, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men." Now it is a most fearful charge against partyism, that it does not make provision for the poor. It does not meet their spiritual wants. It is not careful to bring them under the influence of the Gospel of Christ. It leaves them on the great highway, without a guide to direct, a voice to warn, and a hand to lead. While the favoured few have every provision made for them in the erection of stately churches, whose heaven-directed spires would build the largest of chapels; whose fretted walls and costly garniture nurture pride and vanity, and the pomp of this world that is passing away; the poor have no provision made for them. The dress and equipage of the fashionable churches put them to shame; and even if the pews are not bolted at all times against them, as in a few churches, they will not sit by the side of those whose only ambition it seems to be to minister to the pride of life, and to while away an hour under the luxurious sounds of professional choristers, or the still more mellifluous voice of eloquent declaimers.

Surely there is something in Christianity, higher and purer than any exhibition of it now known. The results, as they appear before our eyes, cannot be what its Author designed only to reach.

We do not wish to be severe; we do not claim any right to break down the distinctions which exist among us. We have no faith in any of the infidel schemes to bring upon a level the framework of society. We do not think it possible to equalize in temporal matters the condition of the world. Nor do we think, if it was done, that it would continue for a day. But we do say, that the soul of one man, in the sight of God, is of as much value as the soul of another; that Lazarus, clothed in rags, was of as much importance in the eyes of God as the rich man who fared sumptuously every day; and, so far as his moral character was concerned, of more value. We do say that the servant in your kitchen, in the sight of God, is of as much value as the mistress who claims her labour, and leaves her uncared for, so far as the soul is taken into account. We do say that the apprentice in your shop has an equal right with his master, to consider the wants of his spiritual nature; and that the day-labourer, who toils hard for a scanty pittance, is as truly an object of the Saviour's care as his rich employer, and should be brought under the influence of the Gospel of Christ, and partake of its richest enjoyments.

Is there no need for reform on this head? Let the Church do what our Sunday schools are doing — gather the rich and the poor together, and make the most ample provision for all; and if any are neglected, let it be the rich — they can take care of themselves. Let the great masses be provided for. Let them be educated, reformed, elevated. Apply the lever to raise them to that position, in a moral point of view, which the Gospel contemplates.

There would be no need for widows' homes, or houses for friendless women and children; no orphan asylums, no almshouses, no workhouses for the poor, no houses of correction, no jails and penitentiaries, no courts of justice, if Christianity universally prevailed. There would be no masonic lodges, no odd fellows' temples, no sons or daughters of temperance, no Howard associations. These are but shoots which have sprung up from the dry and withered trunk of a decayed Christianity. I do not speak disparagingly of them. I only say, that if the masses had been cared for, they would not have been needed or known.

The great body of the people are not brought within the pale of Christianity. They are left to perish in their ways, and no one cares for their souls. They are doomed to years of toil and suffering, with only a crumb from the master's table doled out to them in scanty measure, and but little adapted to meet their pressing necessities.

As it was in the days of Aaron, so is it now. "Wrath has gone out from the Lord against them," and the plague of sin is fast sweeping them away. Where is there now one with his censer, ready to rush into the midst of the tainted population, and, standing between the living and the dead, arrest the plague?

The destroying angel is sweeping over the land, and consuming all upon whose doors the blood of sprinkling is not found. And where is the voice heard now like Abraham in behalf of the doomed Cities of the Plain; like Moses in behalf of Israel; like Christ in behalf of his enemies; or like the Apostles in behalf of the world?

As it was with the Israelites when smitten before Ai, so of the Church it may be said, "your hearts have melted and become like water." But get thee up; wherefore liest thou upon thy face? There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel! Thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you. Up then, up; sanctify yourselves, and the Lord will do wonders among you."

If these things be so, do we not as a people possess a large share of responsibility? As those who cry for reform; who demand a restoration of Apostolic Christianity; as the stern opposers of the corruptions of the church; as champions of the truth against error, are we not occupying a most dangerous pass — the very Thermopylae of the Church?

But where is our union of effort and prayer? Is all our religion expended in the public assemblies?

Do we cry “the Temple of the Lord — The Temple of the Lord — The Temple of the Lord are we!”

It is in the closet that we are to trim our lamps, to furnish oil for our vessels, to lay the incense, and leave it upon the golden altar. It is here that we are to gain strength for the public duties of the sanctuary. If the closet has been deserted, no wonder that levity has taken the place of seriousness, that formalism has taken the place of devotion, lukewarmness of zeal, and indolence of self-denial.

The influence of a church is in proportion to its piety — the piety of its members. But has not pride and worldliness, like a cankerworm, eaten into the very roots of all Christian churches, and left them shorn of their beauty and strength? Instead of living under the elevating influence of Christianity, they have brought themselves down to a level with the world. They seem to think that if they can gain as much of this world as possible, as little of heaven will suffice to meet their spiritual wants.

In the choice of society, in their modes of living, the tenor of their conversation, they pay far greater deference to the rules of fashion than to the demands of God’s Word.

How can we expect to prosper while this state of things exists? Impossible! The Great Teacher said, and his word cannot be gainsayed, — “Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”

Christians! Let your constant prayer be, — “Send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me; let them guide me to thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacle.” “Repent, and do thy first works.” Has the pure gold become dim? seek to burnish it anew. Has the fire become smouldering embers? seek by prayer and self-examination, and the supplies of the Spirit of God, to revive it.

Let there be great searchings of hearts among us to know where the difficulties lie, together with a diligent use of the means for our recovery. Then will the “Lord arise and have mercy upon Zion.”

“Save now, we beseech thee, O Lord, O God, we beseech thee, send prosperity.”

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST IN OPPOSITION TO THE GOSPEL OF THE SECT.

This subject is one of no ordinary importance, and deserves our particular attention. Other topics may claim a passing notice, as they stand related to the things of earth and of time, but this is one which relates to the soul and to eternity. And as we have but one message sent to the nations, called the Gospel, it is of the highest moment that we know what it is, and attend to its authoritative commands.

The Gospel in promise and in prophecy has enlisted the attention of the wisest and best men of all past ages, and cannot be unworthy our enlightened consideration. It was the great subject with reference to which God was pleased to make special and abundant revelations, during not only the infancy of the race, but in its more advanced State under the Patriarchal and Jewish institutions.

It was with reference to this, that after the fall a medium of communication was opened between heaven and earth, and angels ascended and descended upon the Son of Man. Silence for ever would have remained over our heads, unbroken by a single word from the Father of Light, had it not been for the anticipated relief to be brought to us by the Gospel of Christ. Our race, having forfeited every claim upon the justice of heaven, would have been doomed to the darkness of an eternal night, but for the hope which the glad tidings of great joy have brought to us.

The chains of darkness which bind the angels who sinned to their prison-house in “penal fires” to the judgment of the great day, would have been used for us, but for the grace which has been revealed therein. Sword in hand, insulted justice would have summoned us to appear before its dread tribunal, without redress and without relief, but for the blood of atonement, which had set its red seal on this message of mercy to man.

For the introduction of this “golden age,” — the reign of heaven, a long list of holy men were raised up, reaching from the gates of Eden to the wilderness of Judea, connecting the altar of Abel with the baptism of John, and both with the blood of Christ. “Through faith, the just subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouth of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, grew strong from sickness, became valiant in fight, overturned the camps of the aliens; and women,

emulating the courage of men, were made valiant in weakness; others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection; others had trial of mockings and scourgings, of bonds and imprisonments. They were stoned, they were tempted, they died by slaughter, they went about in sheepskins, being destitute, afflicted, maltreated; of these the world was not worthy: they wandered in deserts, and mountains, in caves and holes of the earth.” Now all these ancient worthies, though commended on account of their faith, did not receive “the promise,” did not enjoy its fulfilment, “God having provided something better for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”

The Gospel then is both the faith and hope of sin-oppressed humanity, and in comparison with which, wealth and fame, earthly rest and peace — all that renders life and country dear, are as nothing. “Seeing the promised good, the ancients confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims in the land.”

Without the Gospel we should have had

*“No patron, intercessor none; now past
The sweet, the clement, mediatorial hour;
For guilt no plea, to pain no pause, no bound,
Inexorable all — and all extreme.”*

From these considerations, may we not say that no duty is so imperative as that which demands our devotion to its claims. But before we can do so, we should first ascertain — “What is the Gospel?”

The Gospel is glad tidings to all creatures; a proclamation from the Prince of Salvation to the guilty and the lost, and proceeding from the highest authority in the universe.

Many have been the proclamations sent of God, on special occasions, to man; and all of them contain a distinct and clearly-ascertained message, leaving the mind in no doubt in regard to the objects proposed, or the duties required. These are characteristic of all messages proceeding from authority, whether human or divine. The Gospel, under the commission given to the Apostles, implies an official announcement.

There are several proclamations to be found in the Old Testament Scriptures, which indicate the nature of such acts; and to a few of them we invite your attention.

God said to Moses, "Speak unto the children of Israel, concerning the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations;" "six days shall work be done; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest; ye shall do no work therein," Leviticus 23:1.

This is one of God's proclamations; and what can be more specific? Surely, no Israelite could mistake its meaning, or fail through ignorance to attend to the duties required therein. Six days they might work; on the seventh they should rest, and do no work on that day.

In the Prophets, the word proclaim frequently occurs, and always with reference to a distinct message. Thus, Isaiah speaks concerning the mission of the Messiah: "He hath sent me to proclaim liberty to the captive, the opening of the prison to them which are bound," &c. Isaiah lxi. 1.

Among all nations, the solemn acts of war and peace are announced by proclamation; and they are always designed to be of a most definite and specific character. Many things may be said in the public press, and in conversation, and even in the halls of legislation, on the subjects of peace and war; but none of these amount to a proclamation. Even the ruler of a nation may threaten to chastise a foreign foe, and make all necessary preparations for war; but this is not a proclamation. It is something that proceeds in due form from the sovereign authority of the state. And so is it in relation to the Gospel. It is a proclamation of mercy, sent to the nations, by the Prince of Peace; a direct and specific message, couched in few words, so that he who runs may read. It should be placed on the corners of the streets, on the public highways and great thoroughfares of the nation. It is seen and read of all men. Such a proclamation must of necessity be made in few words, that all may understand it. It must be made in the language of those who are chiefly interested in it; and by heralds and messengers, by the voice and the public press of the nation, brought within the reach of all classes of men — to every creature. Such, then, is the nature of the Gospel message, proclaiming peace by Jesus Christ, to those who are nigh, and to those who are afar off.

Thus no historical records of the Old Testament, no biographical notices of the ancient worthies, no prophetic announcements, none of the sacred songs of the Psalmist of Israel, none of the wise sayings of Solomon, no moral precepts, none of the parables of the

Saviour, no expositions of Scripture, no letters sent to the Churches, no apocalyptic visions of John in the isle of Patmos, no moral lecture, no essay upon any of the elements of the Christian religion, no system of theology, however true, can be dignified by the name of the Gospel as proclaimed by the Apostles of Christ, no more than the discussions in the Senate or the House on the subject of war, and the ten thousand allusions to it, or conjectures about it, can be called a proclamation. Much is taught on every Lord's Day, and faithfully taught out of the Scriptures, which is dignified by the term Gospel, in the common acceptation of the word, but which deserves not the name. To teach is one thing, to preach another. Our Saviour both taught and preached, and so did the Apostles.

We shall now call your attention to several portions of Scripture, in which the word Gospel occurs, in order to ascertain the precise meaning of the term, and the uses to which it is applied.

The first of these references will be found in the letter to the Galatians: "And the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." Galatians 3:8.

Here we have the Gospel — the Gospel preached to Abraham, and the announcement also that the Scripture preached this Gospel to him. And why is it said that the Scripture preached it? Simply because it was first announced by God to Abraham, and afterwards it went to record, and became a portion of the inspired Scripture. It was thus proclaimed to Abraham, and afterwards written in the divine oracles, that in him, and in his seed, which was Christ, all the families of the earth should be blessed. This is what we simply call the Gospel in promise.

Again, we have another application of the word, as used by Paul in his letter to the Hebrews: "For unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them." Hebrews 4:2. But what does the writer here mean to indicate by the Gospel, as preached to the Israelites? He means simply, a distinct announcement to them of the entrance into the land of Canaan, after the toils of their desert life should be past; or at farthest, their entering into that rest of which Canaan was a type. For the same Gospel, concerning a rest for the people of God, is announced to the Christians, as was announced to the Jews.

The Gospel then proclaimed to the Israelites primarily had reference to their entering into Canaan. But as David had spoken of

another rest, which the Jews did not obtain when they entered into Canaan; and, as this was spoken many centuries after the possession of the land of Canaan, the Apostle concludes that it still remains for the people of God. In a more extended meaning, therefore, as given by Paul, the Gospel here spoken of is simply a promised rest, in that land of which Canaan was a type.

So fully did the Jews understand the nature of this proclamation, in its primary application to Canaan, that they trod the wilderness for the space of forty years in hope of its fulfilment. Some did not enter into that rest, through unbelief, but this was not owing to any want of distinctness in regard to the proclamation, but in consequence of their obstinacy and wickedness — their unbelief. The announcement was plain and simple, but they did not believe it; and, therefore, failed of enjoying the blessing that it promised them. This is equally true in regard to the spiritual and eternal rest proclaimed to us in respect to another world.

To those who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality — eternal life shall be. To such, an abundant entrance will be administered into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

And again we have another use of the word as given us by one of the Evangelists: “Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God; and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand.” Mark i. 14, 15.

Here Jesus is said to have preached the Gospel — the Gospel of the kingdom — the Gospel of the kingdom of God. And you will observe how specific that Gospel was which he preached: he preached, saying “The time is fulfilled.” The time spoken of by the prophets for this event to occur — “the kingdom of God is at hand.” It was now at their very doors.

The language could not be more specific than if the superintendent of a railroad should stand at the depot and say: “The hour is now twelve, and the train is coming — it is at hand.” It is important to apprehend fully the nature of this proclamation of Christ, or we will not be able to distinguish between the Gospel as announced by him in person, and the Gospel as announced by the Apostles subsequently in his name.

If the Gospel, as proclaimed by the Apostles under the last commission, is a distinct message, and we are called upon to believe

it; if it presents certain commands, which we are called upon to obey, and promises designed to operate as motives to action; then it is plain if we receive any other message in its stead, — obey any other commands not specified, or are moved by any other considerations not known in the proclamation, we may fail of receiving the Gospel altogether, and deprive ourselves of that salvation which it announces.

Suppose, now, I should believe the five points of John Calvin — or what is familiarly styled the doctrines of grace — or the articles of the Westminster Confession, or the liturgy and thirty-nine articles of the Protestant Episcopal Church, or the twenty-five articles of the Methodist Episcopal establishment, or the six articles, more or less, of the Friends, Meeting, or the ten articles of the Free-Will Baptists, or the entire body of the faith as contained in the Philadelphia Confession, on which the Baptist Churches are founded. Is it certain that I shall, by so doing, believe the Gospel in matter and spirit, as preached by the Apostles of Christ?

Certainly if the Gospel is in Calvin, it is not in Wesley. If in the Friends' Meeting, it is not in the Episcopacy. If in the Free-Will Baptists, it is not in the Bound-Will Baptists; unless it can be demonstrated that two things essentially different are one and the same thing — that sweet is bitter, and bitter sweet; that light is darkness, and darkness light.

It is most certain that, with all the apparent charity existing among the so-called Evangelical parties, if we take their respective creeds as the true exponents of their faith, it is more in name than in fact, as the faith of the one sect destroys the faith of all the rest. If any one of them is true, then all others which differ from them must be false.

There are no sects in heaven; there will be none in the millennial age. They will be Saints, Disciples, Christians, then; and why should they not be so now? What they expect to become when the darkness is past, we aim to be now; and as they affect not to know us by the Scriptural names of Disciples or Christians, but would wish us to assume some earthly badge of distinction, so they may in a future day so effectually change their creed and name as hardly to be able to know themselves or one another!

If the names of the respective parties in existence are not in the Bible, then there is no need for them; and if the creed contains

nothing but the Bible, why is it adopted? And if contrary to it, or not exactly in conformity with it, it ought to be rejected. As well might we call a planetarium representing the solar system, the universe, and substitute it for that system, as to adopt the creed as a better symbol of the faith than the Scriptures of truth. Will the planetarium give us day and night, seed-time and harvest, summer and winter? Will it furnish us with the elements of fire and air, earth and water, or light? Will it impart and sustain life in the vegetable or animal kingdoms? No more can the creed!

Far easier would it be to give us a material structure by human hands to take the place of the solar system, than a moral one to supersede the spiritual organism found alone in the Bible. It is here, and here alone we find our spiritual universe; our sun, moon, and stars; our light and fire; our earth, air, and water. Here we find all religious truth arranged in due order, and in the nicest proportions, by a hand that understands the wants of man. He “who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out Heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance:” — He has given us His Word, and “magnified it above all his name.” “Who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he should be His counsellor?”

But, says one, The creed is but an epitome of the Bible. The Gospel of the sect then is only the Gospel in epitome, and not the true Gospel of Christ.

Give us the Gospel as it came from the hands of the Author. This will make us wise to salvation, and perfect us in love.

The Gospel as preached by the Apostles was not from men, neither by men, but given by the command and the revelation of Jesus Christ. “And if we,” said Paul, “or an angel from heaven (as now among the spiritualists) declare unto you a Gospel different from what you have received, let him be Anathema!” This is Paul’s decision and judgment, not ours.

The Gospel of Christ — What is it? It is a great Evangel — glad tidings to all people. It is called the Gospel of peace — the Gospel of the grace of God — the Gospel of your salvation.

Many are the references found in the New Testament concerning the facts and principles of the Gospel. We call your attention to a few of them. “God so loved the world, that he gave his

only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.” “This is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.” But Paul gives us several brief compends of the Gospel, from which we select the following as being the most perfect and complete.

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, by the which also you are saved, and in which also you stand. How that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.” 1 Cor. 15:1-4.

On this formula we would observe, that Paul reaffirms the Gospel that he originally preached to the people of Corinth. He declares that they received this message from his lips, and that they were saved by it, and now stood in it. In his proclamation to them he announced the following facts, — That Jesus died; that he died for their sins; that he died for their sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose from the dead on the third day according to the Scriptures. These facts then as announced by the Apostle, he calls the Gospel, which saved those who received it.

But in the Acts of the Apostles we have three discourses recorded, which exhibit most faithfully the manner and matter of the Apostolic preaching.

The first is the discourse of Peter in Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost: Acts 2. The next is the discourse by the same Apostle, to Cornelius and family, when “God first visited the Gentiles, to take out a people for his name.” Acts 10. And the other is Paul’s sermon to both Jews and Gentiles, at Antioch of Pisidia, in which he repeated to the Gentiles what he had preached to the Jews, making no distinction between them, but preaching to them alike, the same Gospel: Acts 13.

These discourses contain a few plain facts with reference to Jesus of Nazareth: that he sprung from David according to the flesh — the royal seed promised to him; that he was approved of God by miracles, signs, and wonders; that he suffered the death of the Cross; was buried and raised again from the dead on the third day, and exalted to the right hand of the Father, as Prince and Saviour; made both “Lord and Christ,” and constituted the Judge of the living and

the dead; and that to those who should believe on him, repent, and be baptized, their sins should be forgiven them on account of his name.

Such then is a faithful account of the Gospel of Christ, as given us in these discourses. Those who received it as such, and complied with its requisitions, were saved by it. They are spoken of in the Acts of the Apostles, and in the epistles, as converted, pardoned, justified, sanctified, adopted, reconciled, redeemed. They are called saints, chosen of God, sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, kings, priests, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.

What need have we then for any other Gospel of salvation from angels or men?

Let us hold fast the form of sound words, as announced by the Apostles, in faith and love “charge you,” says the Apostle, “therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead at his appearing and kingdom, — Preach the word.”

WHERE AND WHEN WAS THE GOSPEL FIRST PREACHED?

We present this subject in the form of two questions, which we will endeavour to answer in the light of Scripture testimony. Much depends upon the proper solution of this subject. For the want of clear and scriptural views in regard to it, much error and confusion exist in the public mind, both in respect to what constitutes the Gospel, and where we should look for infallible directions on the subject of man's salvation.

Christianity is a system of great beauty and order. It has its facts and dates. It is a matter of history, and deserves to be studied as you would study any of the records of the past.

Unlike the fables of antiquity, or the false religions of the pagan world, Christianity has its geography and chronology, its persons and things. No records have ever passed through a fiercer ordeal than the books of the New Testament. They have no parallel in the history of any other books. Their authenticity and inspiration; the allusions of the New Testament to contemporaneous history; its references to the state of public morals, and to the political and social condition of the Jewish and Pagan worlds; to science and to philosophy and the arts, have all been critically examined. The doctrine which it inculcates; the system of ethics it embodies; the character, honesty, and qualifications of its writers, and the credibility of their statements, have all been subjected to the most careful, and in some instances most malignant species of examination. But the ablest and most patient of all the adversaries of the Christian religion, both ancient and modern, have been compelled to admit even a large amount of historic truth in the New Testament, in favour of the Christian system.

The New Testament contains the history of a great person — Jesus of Nazareth — and the establishment of a new religious institution, of which he was the author and finisher.

In the Gospel which he intrusted to his Apostles, there are facts and testimonies to challenge our faith; there are commands proceeding from the highest authority to secure our obedience, and promises of the most exalted character to inspire our hopes and to move us to action. It has, in addition to these, a constitution and creed, exhibiting great principles and truths, which need to be studied with care, if we would fully apprehend them. Much has been

given us, in the form of general precepts, for the regulation of our temper and lives, and adapted to the spiritual wants of our nature. We are not wholly left to the exercise of a servile obedience to specific laws and precepts, for this would be doing violence to the reason of man, and would render the volume which contains our religion too large and ponderous to be read and studied.

All constitutional truth is important and vital. What is it that distinguishes our republican government from all others, but simply its constitution? Unless, however, this instrument be understood, and its principles obeyed, it will fail to answer the ends for which it was given; and so of Christianity.

Judaism had its divine constitution, which gave it all its peculiarities. A departure from this was the occasion of all the evils which fell upon the nation of Israel during the different stages of its history. It was this that brought upon them all the judgments of God denounced by Moses and the Prophets, by John the Baptist and the Messiah.

So great is the importance attached to Christianity, that both its Author and the great facts of its history became the subjects of prophecy. Thus, events which lay at a great distance from the prophetic ages, and those which were nearer, invoked alike the spirit of prophecy. It is our object to call your attention to two of these: one with respect to the geography, and the other with the chronology of Christianity; or, in other words, the one to place and the other to time. Where then was the Gospel in fact first preached? and when was it first preached?

In pursuance of our plan, we will attempt the answer to these questions. It was not first preached in the garden of Eden. It was here that sin entered and despoiled our race, but not here was the Gospel first announced to man. Eden, — lovely spot! the home of earth's happiest pair; the garden of delights! The only objects which now remind us of the innocence and loveliness of that blessed retreat are the flowers which bud and bloom in spring and summer, and throw their balmy fragrance upon the air; and the birds which show their glossy plumage to the light, and sing their sweet carols to the listening ear. It was not in Eden, where sin laid its blight upon the root of our common stock, and sent disease and death through all its fibres, and on all its fruit, in which the Gospel was first preached.

Before they left those happy walks and shades, a promise was

given them, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent." And thus in the judgment denounced against the foe, which had too fatally plotted their ruin, a gleam of hope was awakened, and a strong intimation given, that all was not lost; and that in some way, to them unknown, relief would be sent, And thus, this promise coming to them in the shape of a judgment threatened against the serpent, became the seed of all the piety and worship which characterized the race until the days of Abraham. Mysterious as was the language, vague and indistinct as was the utterance, it awakened and nourished the hope of the ruined for centuries. It was hidden in the heart as a sacred earnest of a better day and a better life. It was as a sheaf gathered out of the field of God's mercies, giving promise that a richer harvest would one day be reaped, when the joyful husbandman, with a shout, would bring his treasures home.

The Gospel was not first preached in Ur of the Chaldees, or in Canaan in the days of Abraham. To him the first strong utterance was given of a blessing to all nations, through his promised "Seed." And thus the hope of the world was hidden in the oracle granted to the father of the faithful. What was obscure in the threatening pronounced on the head of the serpent, was now better defined in the promise made to Abraham, with reference to one who is called his seed. This promise was repeated to Isaac, and also to Jacob, and by him to Judah, and finally was limited to David, the son of Jesse. It is said by Paul in his letter to the Galatians, that the Gospel was preached to Abraham, "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel to Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." Galatians 3:8.

We must not be imposed on by a word. The term Gospel is of frequent occurrence in the Scriptures, and simply signifies good news. It was a joyful word, announced to the patriarch, that not only the Israelites, but all nations would be blessed in him. This was the Gospel in promise, but not in fact, just as the world had the promise of the Saviour before his advent. But the promise and the realization of it are two different things. The acorn gives promise of the oak, the bud of the fruit, but we do not suppose that they are one and the same.

The Gospel was not first preached in Arabia, when the tribes

assembled around the rock of Horeb. Here they received the Law, not the Gospel; for the Law was given by Moses, the grace and the truth came by Jesus Christ. The Law, called by the Apostle “the letter” which kills, was quite a different thing from the Gospel, which makes alive. The one was the ministry of condemnation, the other the ministry of righteousness. But the tribes were not left without some hope or means of relief. They still had access to God through the shadowy symbols of their Law. The altar and the bleeding sacrifice, the incense and the burning censer, were seen among them; and the Tabernacle was reared in their camp, and its solemn services were observed. The institution had its Sabbaths and its appointed feasts, and its great day of atonement. The faithful worshippers could come to the one offering for the sins of the many, when they approached the altar of sacrifice, though unconscious of its secret virtue, and ignorant of the anticipated provision made for those under both covenants. “And for this cause he is the mediator of the new covenant, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.” Hebrews 9:15.

The true worshippers under the first covenant in approaching the altar of sacrifice, in some sense unknown to them, approached Christ, just as those under the second, in obeying the Gospel, come to him; though it would seem that the transgressions committed by the Jewish worshippers were not formally blotted out, until the Redemption was obtained for the sins of the world by Jesus Christ.

The Gospel was not first preached in the wilderness of Judea. John the Baptist was the morning star of the new creation. He was a burning and a shining light — a voice crying in the wilderness, “Prepare ye the way of the Lord” — a voice, distinct and clear, breaking the silence which reigned in the prophetic heavens, and shaking the forests of Judea, along the waters of the Jordan, and the lonely beach of the Dead Sea.

John preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. He was a bold reprover, a sterling reformer, a mighty restorer. But it was not given him to preach the Gospel of the grace of God. He lived as the connecting link between the Law and the Gospel. His light for a short period gilded the hill-tops of Judea, until it was lost amid the superior splendours of the orb of day. The Kingdom of

Heaven, in his day, was at hand, and he was sent to prepare a people for the Lord, by calling them to repentance and to a belief in him who was coming after him — the Messiah.

The Gospel was not first preached in Bethlehem, nor in Nazareth, nor Capernaum. Parables, sermons, and instructive lessons by the way, in the synagogues, in the temple, on the hillside, on the sea of Galilee, were given by the Saviour. Innumerable conversations he held with friends and foes. He preached the doctrine of the kingdom, announced his approaching reign, and developed the principles of his government. He gathered together the elements of his mighty empire during his brief sojourn on earth. One of the ancient prophets foreseeing the results of his mission, thus spoke of him: "Behold my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved in whom my soul delights. I will cause ray spirit to abide upon him, and he shall give laws to the nations. He will not contend nor clamour, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break; and a dimly burning taper he will not quench till he render his laws victorious. Nations also shall trust in his name."

Thus the Messiah was to give laws to the nations, to the Gentiles as also to the Jews, and they should trust in his name. This was done when he sent his Apostles to the world under the commission to preach the Gospel to every creature and to all nations. The work of preparation was limited by him to his own nation. He was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He was "A minister of the circumcision on account of the truth of God, in order to confirm the promise made to the fathers."

In person he did not preach to the nations. His labours were confined to the tribes of Israel. It will be remembered that in the New Testament, Jews and Gentiles embrace the whole family of man. But to these two grand divisions, a third was added; that of "the Church of God." Jews, Gentiles, and the Church of God, are the subdivisions furnished us by the Apostle to the Gentiles.

Jesus had chosen from the midst of his disciples twelve men, who had been with him from the baptism of John until the day of His ascension. They were to be his witnesses to the nations.

He called them his Apostles, as he was the Apostle of the Father. To them he gave commission on the day that he was taken up into heaven, to preach the Gospel to all nations, and to every creature,

and promised them the Holy Spirit, to bring all things to their remembrance whatsoever he had taught them, to show them things to come, and to assist them as an advocate to plead his cause. These men were thus chosen, to carry his name to the ends of the earth, and to convert the nations.

But where should they begin? At Jerusalem — Beginning, said the Messiah, at Jerusalem. “For thus it is written, and thus it behooved the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins in his name should be preached among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” Luke 24:46, 47.

“Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high;” “And they returned to Jerusalem with great joy.” “They returned from the mount called Olivet;” both Peter, James, and John with the other Apostles, and here they found a number of disciples, in prayer and supplication, waiting for the fulfilment of the promise in regard to the baptism of the Holy Spirit, Acts 1:12-14.

It will give additional interest to the facts now authenticated to learn that the Prophets Isaiah and Micah predicted this event in language plain and emphatic.

“The word that Isaiah saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem: And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it: and many shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” Isaiah 2:1, 2. Micah 4:1.

No fact is better established than that the capital of the kingdom of the Jews was the chosen spot in which the Gospel was first preached, and from whence it was to go forth to the nations of the earth. To Jerusalem, then, we must look for the Gospel as originally announced by the Apostles to the world, and not to Rome or elsewhere.

The Papal Church only goes back to Rome as the mother and mistress of all churches. We go farther back than Rome — to Jerusalem; the Church in Jerusalem was the mother of all Christians. Galatians 4:26.

The Church of Rome boasts of being the most ancient of all churches, — the Jerusalem Church was in existence before her, and gave her the disciples of which she was formed. “Strangers of Rome, Jews, and proselytes,” were among the hearers and the converts first made under the preaching of the Apostles, in Jerusalem. Where then is her vaunted supremacy and priority?

The Romish Church now existing differs as widely from the Church in Rome in the days of the Apostles, as Arabia Deserta from “Araby the Blest,” or as a “continent of mud” from the Garden of Eden.

The Papal Church now existing had its rise in the year of our Lord 606, when the Roman Emperor, Phocas, constituted the Bishop of Rome a Universal Bishop — from thence is she known in prophetic history as “The Apostasy,” “The Man of Sin,” as “Mystery, Babylon,” “The Mother,” not of all churches, but “of Abominations.”

We come to the second division of our subject — When was the Gospel first preached?

As the first was a question of place, this is a question of time. Time and place constitute the two eyes of history. If we can ascertain the place where a certain transaction was performed, and the time when, it will assist us materially to understand the nature of the event itself. Especially is it so, if the subject-matter is one of fact and of history. May we not hope, then, to obtain clearer light in regard to the original message announced by the Apostles, from these ascertained facts?

In answer to this question, we would observe that, according to the best chronological dates given of the time when the Gospel was first preached, it must have been in the year of our Lord 33. Tiberius was then in the year of his reign 17 or 18; Pontius Pilate being Roman Procurator in Judea, Annas and Caiaphas High Priests. But, to ascertain with still more accuracy the time when it was preached, the New Testament furnishes the most conclusive testimonies. It was preached on what was called by the Jews “the Day of Pentecost;” a feast observed by them, which commemorated the giving of the Law at Sinai. It was called Pentecost, because it was to be observed fifty days after the Passover; another feast of the Jews, which commemorated the slaying of the “first-born,” on the night of the departure of Israel from Egypt.

It will be remembered that Jesus was slain during the Passover week; and just fifty days from this event the day of Pentecost came. And when it “was fully come,” the disciples with one accord were all in one place in Jerusalem; and, suddenly, there came a voice from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the house where they were sitting. This preceded the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and the power from on high; and, consequently, the announcement of the Gospel. So far, then, as the time was concerned, it would appear to have been on the Pentecost, which occurred after the Passover during which our Saviour was slain.

The appropriateness of the time referred to, will appear from the following considerations.

And first, from the close resemblance of the giving of the Law and the giving of the Gospel, both occurring about the same time. Fifty days after the first Passover in Egypt, the law on Sinai was given to Israel; and, in consequence of the sin of idolatry in the worship of the golden calf, there were slain by the command of God three thousand of the nation. Now, to show how exactly the type and the antitype agree, Christ was slain during the last Passover which legally was observed by the Jews; and, fifty days after this transaction, the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus was given. And, to show the superior grace of the Gospel to the Law, three thousand, instead of being slain, were brought to life by the head of the new institution, our Lord Jesus Christ.

And, secondly, on the day of Pentecost, the heads of the respective families of the Jews were required to bring the first fruits of the land to the place which the Lord should choose, and set it before the altar of the Lord. These offerings, since the temple was erected, were always brought to Jerusalem; and now, on the day of Christ’s coronation, the “first fruits” gathered under the new dispensation, were brought to Jerusalem, and laid upon the Christian altar. How striking is this coincidence! Deut. 26; James 1:18.

And, thirdly, on this day, Jehovah, at Mount Sinai, was recognised as the King of the nation of Israel, and from his hands they received the constitution of their kingdom; and so on the Pentecost to which we refer, Jesus was crowned King of the New Empire, and sent down the Holy Spirit as witness of the fact “Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath shed

forth this which you see and hear.” Acts ii. 33-36. But, as if to show the importance to be attached to the events of this day, Luke, in the Acts of the Apostles, has not only given us the day, but the very hour in which the Gospel was first announced. He calls it the third hour of the day, answering to the hour of nine in the morning, according to our computation of time.

But the last consideration to which we call your attention is, that it happened on the first day of the week — the Lord’s day of the Christians.

Now, on the first day in the week of creation, light was created. God said, Let there be light, and light was. On the first day of the week, Jesus arose from the dead, and brought life and immortality to light. On this day a new Sun arose never to set. On this day he ascended up on high, and was received into the heavens. “Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and let the King of Glory come in,” was the song of those who bore him to the gates of the celestial city. “Let all the angels of God worship him,” said Jehovah. “Sit on my right hand, until I make thy enemies the footstool of thy feet.” “Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedeck.”

On the first day of the week the Church of Christ began — the first announcement of the Gospel was made. How fitting that on a day, so hallowed in the recollections of men, the Gospel should first be preached. Hallowed day! Pearl of all the days! How dear to the hearts of the Christian! It was given to sweeten the waters of Marah, and to heal the bite of the serpent. On this day the heaven of heavens sheds a stronger light on the soul of the Christian. How sweet are its services, how glorious its recollections!

From the considerations now offered, it will appear how necessary it is for us to go back to the place of the beginning, — to Jerusalem — to the day of Pentecost, to the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles.

It was here the Gospel was first preached. It was here the dew descended upon Zion — even life for evermore. It was here the King sent down his message from the throne by his witness and advocate — the Holy Spirit. It was here the ambassadors of the Prince Messiah were all met with “one accord,” and “Peter stood up with the eleven,” to open the seal of the new covenant. It was here, by special miracle in the “gift of tongues,” the Gospel began to be announced to the nations.

And as the “first fruits” of the resurrection in the person of our Lord had been welcomed with joy by the disciples; so at every return of this day, it should be hailed with expressions of gratitude and songs of praise by all the redeemed.

On this first day, the festival of the Pentecost meets with a higher and deeper significance than among the Jews; and should be remembered with thanksgiving, as it commemorates the “first fruits” gathered out of the harvest field and waved before the Lord, when three thousand converts were made upon it.

And we cannot but think, that any allusion made to it, and the wonders it records, occasions a deeper thrill of rapture in the minds of the Apostles, to know that the events of that day are still fresh in the recollections of the Saints, and that there are those in these latter times, who rejoice in the fulness of that salvation which it brought to the sons of men.

BY WHOM WAS THE GOSPEL FIRST PREACHED?

We have ascertained the place where, and the time when, the Gospel was first preached. It now remains for us to consider the person by whom it was first preached.

There is no one who may not obtain a large degree of importance in the eyes of men, by being placed in stations of great responsibility, or as a medium of communication to others. Moses, in the bulrushes, held in his hand the destinies of a nation; David, the son of Jesse, tending his father's sheep, was destined to exchange the crook for the sceptre; Jeremiah, before he was born, was ordained "a prophet unto the nations;" and Amos, "the herdsman of Tekoa," was commanded to "Go, prophesy unto my people Israel." Thus heaven and earth may unite to cast a splendour upon an insignificant person, and ever after he shall be regarded as a consecrated person.

We look even upon the lily of the valley and the clambering vine, with a deeper interest, from the fact that our Saviour gave them a voice to teach us lessons of humility and fruitfulness. Even those places which have given birth to great and good men, we visit with pleasure; and the humble graveyard which contains their ashes we visit with feelings of awe. What stranger in this city would fail to visit the humble house of Penn, to gaze upon its ancient walls, its lowly roof, and its now unsightly form? To him it possesses a deeper interest than the stateliest mansions or the proudest structures of more recent times. And who would be satisfied with his survey of the city, if he had not seen Independence Hall, and taken his seat in the old arm-chair, and looked at the old bell which "proclaimed liberty throughout all the land," when a nation was emancipated and set free? Not the palace of the Czar of all the Russias, nor the proudest thrones of Europe, are invested with so deep an interest as these.

Gods ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts. He stains the pride of men. He displays the strength of his arm through the weakness of the instrument he employs to do his work, and dispels the vain imaginations of men. He puts down potentates from their thrones, and exalts the lowly. It was this that occasioned the thanksgiving of Christ, for having made choice of the fishermen of Galilee, rather than the sages and the learned, as the medium of

his communications to men.

But the question now before us is, By whom was the Gospel first preached? We mean that Gospel Which, beginning at Jerusalem, was to be preached as a witness to all nations.

To Peter was this trust committed, — a fisherman of Galilee. His name was Simon, surnamed Cephas, a Syriac word signifying a stone; and in Greek, Petros; in English, Peter. He was destined to become the Hero Apostle. He was the son of Jonah, and was born at Bethsaida; on the coast of the sea of Galilee. Originally he was a disciple of John; at least, one of his hearers; and from his testimony, and his own personal knowledge of the Messiah, he became one of his followers. He was a constant attendant on the ministry of Christ. He was doubtless present at Cana of Galilee, and witnessed the first miracle. Peter, James, and John were honoured with the special intimacy of their teacher, and were present with him on all occasions of marked interest. When the daughter of Jairus was restored to life; at the transfiguration of the Messiah; at the agony of the garden, they were present. Peter seems to have been married at the time of our Saviour's call to him, and moved from Bethsaida to Capernaum, where his wife's family resided. And at Peter's house in this city, when in Galilee, Jesus Usually sojourned.

Peter's character incidentally is portrayed in the writings of the Evangelists. His sincere attachment to the Saviour is unquestioned. His boldness and presumption are marked features in his character. He is the first to answer all questions put to the disciples; and his ardour and zeal knew no bounds. If occasion demands, he can venture to walk on the sea, or draw his sword in defence of his Master. His self-confidence and weakness are both displayed in the loud asseverations of attachment to the Saviour, and in his subsequent denial of Him. But we see in the elements of his character, the man best adapted to do the work assigned him.

He was frank and ingenuous, bold and intrepid, and ready for any work to which he was called; and his frequent faults and failures, his fall and recovery, chastened his heart, subdued his will, and humbled his self-confidence. But Christianity never destroys the characteristic features of the man, — it only sanctifies and directs them. And therefore the acts of Peter, after the ascension of Christ, were in keeping with his life before it. And thus was he the first to propose an election of one in the place of Judas; and the first

to preach the Word on the day of Pentecost, and in the portico of Solomon's temple. He healed the lame man at the gate. The first who was imprisoned and brought before the Sanhedrin. He detected the fraud and imposture of Ananias and Sapphira.

He preached not only in Judea and Samaria, but was the first to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius.

It may be observed that Peter was the first who was called to be an Apostle of Christ. His name always appears first in the roll of Apostles. He was probably the oldest of the twelve. He was the last with whom our Saviour spoke before his ascension. Yet he never claims any superiority over the other Apostles. He calls himself an Elder, or Presbyter, in common with other Elders. And Paul took occasion to minister a rebuke to him for his Judaizing tendencies. If he had possessed any headship over the Church, Paul would not have condemned the Corinthians for saying "I am of Cephas," Peter himself disclaims all headship in the congregation in his celebrated defence before the Sanhedrin, as if he anticipated the claims which the Papacy would set up for him. "This is the stone which was set at nought by your builders, that is become the head of the corner; and there is salvation in no other, for there is no other name under heaven given, or known among men, by which we can be saved." Thus according to the testimony of Peter this ancient prophecy concerning the headship of the Church, is applied exclusively to the Messiah, and to no other under the heavens.

We now call your attention to a remarkable passage in the sixteenth chapter of Matthew's testimony. A passage which has occasioned much dispute, and on an erroneous view of which the Papal Church has built up a system of spiritual despotism huge as the Alps, and still swelling and increasing like their thundering avalanches.

On that memorable occasion, in Caesarea Philippi, when Jesus asked the disciples, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" They answered, some say that you are John the Baptist, some Elijah, others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. But, "Whom," replied the Saviour, "do you say that I am?" Simon Peter then answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus responded, "Happy art thou, Simon, son of Jonah; for flesh and blood has not revealed this to thee, but my Father, who is in heaven. I tell you likewise, that you are Peter (named stone), and on this rock I will build my

Church, over which the gates of hell (Hades) shall not prevail.”

In consequence of this confession made by Simon, the Messiah said to him, “I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.”

The Rhemish translators of the New Testament, in their note on Matthew xvi. 19, in which the keys of the kingdom were promised to Peter, say that this act “signifies the height of government, the power of making laws, of calling councils, of the principal voice in them, of confirming them, of making canons and wholesome decrees, of abrogating the contrary; of ordaining bishops and pastors, of deposing and suspending them: finally, the power to dispense the goods of the Church, both spiritual and temporal. Moreover, it signifies that men cannot come into heaven but by him. The keys signifieth to open and shut.”

Such is the tremendous power that the Papal Church claims for Peter, by the keys, not only for him, but for his assumed successors — the Popes of Rome!

We do not know which most to be astonished at, the claims which the Papacy sets up for the humble Galilean — Peter; or the audacity with which they pretend that the long list of ambitious, secular, proud, scheming, lewd, and mendacious Popes, male and female, should be his successors! One would suppose that the only things in which they can lay any claim to have been his successors, were in his denial of Christ, and the curses with which it was accompanied. For these, like a stream of burning lava, have been sent through the world, for the space of 1260 years. To this might be added the sword of Peter, which cut off the ear of the servant of the High Priest; only they have used it far more effectually — in severing the heads of the servants of Christ!

Even Newman, in his attempt to bring the Church into the arms of the Papacy, is obliged to admit that the doctrine of the “regalia Petri” was unknown in the early ages of the Apostolic Church. But it is to be remembered, that the secret meaning of “Thou art Peter” was not developed until the political basis of the Church of Rome was in danger of being subverted by the Bishop of Constantinople. It was then that Leo awoke to the importance to be attached to these words; and in his famous letter to the Bishops of Gaul, he thus writes:

“It was the will of our Lord that all nations should hear the truth through the Apostolic trumpet; yet it was also his pleasure that the blessed Peter should preside over the other Apostles in the discharge of this duty, that all the Divine gifts should flow to the body from him, as the head; so that none could partake of the blessings of the Kingdom of God, who should dare to depart from the rock Peter. This office of Peter Christ proclaimed, when he said, ‘Thou art Peter,’ &c. Thus was the structure of the eternal Temple, by the wonderful grace of God, made to rest on the rock, — Peter.”

In the fifth century, whatever outward appearance may seem to the contrary, there existed between civil society and religious society, incoherence, contradiction, contest; for they were essentially different, both in their origin and in their nature.

It was in the midst of this chaos of elements that the Papacy was born; of this society Leo claimed to be the divinely appointed head, and all the energies of a powerful and inventive mind were exercised to accomplish it; and he too fatally succeeded. Old Rome fell, and out of its ruins new Rome, civil and ecclesiastic, arose, and to this day exists.

Simon Peter figures largely on the historic page of the Church, as he does in the great events connected with the origin and progress of Christianity, as it came from the hands of its Author. He was called Cephas — a stone — the same as Peter, in anticipation of the confession he should make that “Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God,” and the consequent use that Jesus would make of his name in suggesting the term, rock. “Thou art stone — a stone — on this Rock will I build my Church.” It will be observed that Jesus does not say on thee, a stone, will I build my Church; but just as the waters of the well of Samaria suggested to the Saviour the “well of water springing up to eternal life;” and as the vine of Judea suggested the saying, “I am the vine;” and the shepherds guarding their flocks, the saying, “I am the good shepherd;” so the word Cephas suggested the saying “On this rock will I build my Church,” Other foundation, says Paul, can no man lay. than that which is laid, that Jesus is the Christ. This is the chief corner stone; the rock of offence to Israel; the foundation of the Christian Temple: and not Peter.

There are two different stages of development in the life of Peter. The one was the period from his call to the apostleship until

the resurrection of the Messiah; the other from this event to the close of his life. In these two stages he appears like two different men, or as if possessed of a double nature. Nothing can account for this, but a consideration of the truth of Christianity, of which he was deeply convinced. No one knows himself until circumstances shall develop his nature and character. How different the Peter, who stood shuddering by the side of a few lighted fagots on the night of the betrayal, and the Peter girt with fiery tongues on the Pentecost, when his soul was immersed in the spirit of inspiration! What a storm of mighty eloquence was now poured from his lips! What a surcharge of burning thoughts and pregnant words fell from his tongue! and what a focal point did prophecy reach in that one heaven-inspired discourse! What an array of testimony and argument, of illustration and logic, of reason and persuasion!

The speaker had upon his head the fit symbols of those words with which he spoke, as the lambent flame gleamed over his swarthy brow. It shone not with greater intensity than the fire which kindled in his eye. No wonder that there was lightning in such a cloud! He was filled with the celestial fire. As he stood before that mass of human faces, what glory environs him! Though rough his features, and rude his form, he stands before the assembly as the personification of eloquence. He hangs over the audience as a thundercloud, retentive of its lightnings. No one knew what was in him, not even the eleven. He did not know himself. He was like one of the mighty forces of nature, only in check until the occasion is demanded for its energy to remove the mountain and to toss the seas. How subdued and self-possessed, and yet what promptitude and courage! What irresistible passion and power! His was the greatest effort of speech ever made — the most effective discourse ever heard! The preparation for the discourse, the exordium in the sound of the mighty rushing winds, the cloven tongues of fire — the dread messengers of Jehovah — these could not have been misunderstood by a devout Jew! Attention deep and agonizing was awakened in the dense crowd assembled on that day. Amazement and doubt filled every mind, each saying to the other in subdued speech, “What does this mean?” Some, mocking, said, “These men are full of new wine.” But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice and said, “Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell in Jerusalem, be this known to you, and hearken to my words. For

these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.” Then follows the discourse, which wrought on the hearts of three thousand persons, and brought them as willing converts into the Church of Christ.

How delightful to go back to the days of the Apostles, and catch the first words which fell from their lips, and listen to one of those men who preached the Gospel with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, and to witness its effects. Here we have a discourse from one of Christ’s ambassadors — a model for all those who wish to turn men to righteousness. It presents no speculative truths to the mind, and is entirely free from all those words which make up the nomenclature of modern discourses. He did not employ the time of his hearers in listening to learned disquisitions on speculative theology or systematic divinity, such as God’s sovereignty and man’s responsibility, rolling the stone Sisyphus-like up the hill Difficulty only that it may come back with renewed force to commence the same endless task. It was not his work to pour water into empty sieves to be spilt upon the ground, or to pace the same bleached and wearisome paths without a purpose or an end. He did not speak as the fatalist would, “Wait your time,” “Submit to your destiny,” “You can’t do any thing,” “If you are to be saved you will be saved but like the true philosopher, hearing of a fatal explosion of noisome vapours in a mine, invented a safety lamp, and removed the evil; or like one who having heard of a ship with its rich cargo sinking to the bottom of the seas, descends with his diving bell and brings it again to light; or like Hippocrates, the Prince of Physicians, hearing that a city of one of the Grecian states was depopulated nearly with the plague, stayed not in his own beautiful island of Cos to theorize upon the nature of the disease, or to meditate upon the evils of life, and exhaust his sensibilities in poetic sympathy and sorrow, but collecting together his remedies, and summoning his courage and his skill, he fled to their relief, and by a word of encouragement here and counsel there, and the use of the medicines which experience had taught him, he arrested the hand of the destroyer, and received the gratitude of a city for his services.

So Peter, when the question was asked, “What shall we do?” promptly answered, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

The subject-matter of Peter's discourse was precisely in keeping with the true method of the inductive system of philosophy. He saw the wants of the people, he knew their precise condition, and prescribed the only means of relief. He did not discourse on the endless themes of the Jewish or Pagan schools, the useless fables of the one, and the sublime theories of the other. There was no attempt to solve the enigmas of either, or urge his hearers to the attainment of frames and feelings of mind, which none could reach, or if reached, would prove to them utterly fruitless and vain.

We have now answered the question proposed by us at the commencement of this chapter. And it will thus appear that Simon Peter was the first man who preached the Gospel of Christ for the salvation of the nations; and hence it will appear that neither Moses the lawgiver, nor Isaiah the prophet, nor John the harbinger, nor even Jesus the Messiah, was the first to preach the Gospel of the grace of God; nor yet was it James or John, but Peter, to whom was committed the keys of the kingdom of heaven, which he employed on the day of Pentecost in opening the door to all those who inquired the way of entrance into it, and were willing to submit to the terms proposed to them in the message he was sent to proclaim.

To him, then, must we go, if we would find an infallible answer to that greatest of all questions, "What shall I do to be saved?" and, having heard the answer, gladly receive it, and submit to him who is the crowned Monarch of the skies.

WHAT IS FAITH, AND HOW IS IT OBTAINED?

We should learn to distinguish between things that differ. All who have thought and written upon subjects of a moral character, know the difficulty of finding suitable terms to express accurately their ideas; and yet it is of the first importance, that the terms of a proposition should be used with caution and care.

The only attempt at a definition of faith in the Scriptures is given us by Paul — “Now faith is the confidence of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen:” Hebrews 11:1. And yet this is not a purely logical definition, as the Apostle rather designs to show that faith answers all the purposes of a demonstration, and realizes the actual existence of things not seen; and then proceeds to give the reader a number of forcible examples in illustration of the power of this great principle.

There are three words which have often been confounded, but which differ widely in their signification — knowledge, opinion, and faith.

The first has respect to our own consciousness; the second to the inference we draw from whatever premises may be before us; and the last is the induction we reach from the consideration of facts or testimonies.

Opinions may be well or ill founded, false or true. Faith may be weak or strong, according to the nature and amount of evidence before the mind, and the disposition of the heart towards the thing believed; but knowledge has in it all the elements of a demonstration, and therefore is more certain than either.

The one may be possible, the other probable, the last certain; and yet, in all the affairs of this life, we are governed more by the former than by the latter. In trade and commerce, in war and peace, in the pursuits of life, men do not ask for knowledge, because it cannot be had. They satisfy themselves in regard to the possibility, and still more the probability of events; and by acting upon either the one or the other, or both, they often attain to the actual knowledge of things.

We must not think that these definitions are puerile or unnecessary. The actual meaning of a thing, and the sense we form of it, are materially affected by the terms we employ; and indeed, words properly used heighten the impression, and give dignity to the

sense. A word “fitly spoken,” says the wise man, is “like apples of gold in a framework, or basket of silver.” The openings of the network will serve to display the golden fruit within, giving it additional beauty and attraction.

The figure is taken from the custom of putting fruit in baskets made of silver wire, which serve to heighten its beauty.

What then is faith? This question is not once asked in all the New Testament. The Apostles proceeded in their work of making disciples, as if their hearers fully understood all the terms they used.

The Gospel was adapted to the popular mind, and the language employed in its exhibition was taken from the public mint, with its true value stamped upon it; and if at any time words were used not generally understood, or provincialisms were employed, the Apostles took pains to explain their signification. Such as “Corban,” “Talitha cumi,” “Aceldama,” “Golgotha,” “which being interpreted, signifies,” they add; and then proceed to give their true meaning.

Now it is evident that if the Apostles had used the term faith, the principle of all religious enjoyment, in an extraordinary sense, they certainly would have given a true definition of it. The fact, then, that they never attempt such a definition, is proof positive that none was needed.

We would observe that faith and belief are used in the New Testament with the same meaning attached to them. They are the same word in the Greek of the original Scriptures.

Faith, then, is simply the belief of truth, or the receiving of a proposition as true upon its proper testimony; and in order that the person addressed in the Gospel may have a distinct object before his mind on which his faith may repose, one great article or proposition is ever presented, viz. “That Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” This is the matter of faith — the thing to be believed. From whatever point in the whole range of testimony the Apostles commence, they lead you to this formula of religious belief. Prophecy and miracle both unite to prove and defend this great oracle.

To him all the prophets bear witness; of him Moses in the Law writes; and David in the Psalms declares that the royal seed of Abraham, the Son of the Virgin, is the Messiah, the Son of God. He was David’s son and David’s Lord. When Jesus was asked by the people what they should do to work the works of God, he replied,

“This is the work of God,” the work which he requires, “that you believe on him whom he hath sent.” And again, “you believe in God,” “believe in me also.”

Testifying, says Paul, “both to the Jews and the Greeks; repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

When the Holy Spirit at the baptism of Jesus descended, and remained upon him, “I saw,” said John, “and bore record that this is the Son of God.”

To receive Jesus as the Messiah promised in the ancient Scriptures, and the Son of God, as revealed by the Heavenly Father, at his baptism in the Jordan, constitutes the faith of the Gospel. He who accredits this, from the testimony before his mind, be it great or small, has the faith of the Gospel. His faith may be weak or strong as the force of evidence may or may not preponderate; but he has to all intents and purposes the faith which Christianity demands. There is a great difference between a grain and an ingot of gold in value and in weight, but not one particle in their nature. Both alike are gold.

It is not knowledge of which we speak, but faith. It is not opinion, but belief.

To bring the blessings of the Gospel within the reach of all men, they are promised, not to him who has a certain amount of knowledge on any given subject, nor who has formed a correct opinion on certain matters of a speculative character; but all things are possible “to him,” and to him only “who believes.”

Many persons are deterred from obeying the Gospel and uniting with the Church, because their faith is weak, defective, and wavering. This state of mind may be rectified by an increase of knowledge, and an observance of such commands as the Saviour urges, in becoming a disciple.

It will increase a man’s faith very much in a physician to take the medicine he prescribes, if by so doing it shall restore him to health.

It increased greatly the faith of the Israelites in Moses, when they, in obedience to the command of God, went forward, in the passage of the Red Sea. On the opposite shore, when they found deliverance, they sung the praises of the Lord. The Ethiopian went on his way rejoicing, when he arose from the waters of baptism, and received the knowledge of salvation in the remission of his sins, through the tender mercies of our God.

We have never seen an instance to the contrary, where a person

confiding in the word of promise, though with trembling heart, obeyed the Gospel of Christ. They sooner or later rejoiced in the testimony of a good conscience; and doubt and fear gave place to confidence and peace.

It is with the deepest sympathy we look upon the timid, trembling sinner, awakened to a sense of his danger, casting about him for some means of escape, finding all hope of relief in himself giving way; the ground on which he trusted shifting like the earth shaken by some hidden fires; or like a traveller descending some Alpine cliff, beneath which in the deep abyss he hears the angry billows growling and thundering; step by step with caution he proceeds, estimating the sense of his danger by the measure of sound from beneath, and the keenness of his sight from above. But still he proceeds.

“My safety,” he says, “depends upon my courage and caution, my decision and firmness. If I can leap this gulf and scale that height, I shall be safe.” By the utmost effort he reaches the point at which he aims, and finds only a projecting rock, forming the angle of a dizzy precipice, now revealing the awful danger before him. He stands mute with fear; to advance a step further is impossible, to retrace his steps is full of danger; and while calculating the chances of escape, the rock on which he stands, by the additional weight of his person, begins to yield. He seizes upon the limb of a projecting tree from a crag above his head, and finds a momentary relief from the danger which surrounds him. Each unexpected difficulty only increases his alarm, and each new peril awakens the instinctive desire for self-preservation, until languor and weakness, irresolution and despair, take possession of his mind.

This gives but a faint idea of the agitation and suspense, the terror and alarm to which the sensitive mind awakes, under the apprehension of danger, so long as he trusts in himself. But let him look to Christ — the Rock of Salvation — and place his feet on him, and though the earth be ashes under his feet, and the mountains be removed to the depths of the seas, and every deceitful refuge shall fail, and all the expedients of reason and the glimmerings of hope shall prove Unavailing, he shall be safe. “Their rock is not as our Rock,” said one of old, who had fully tried it.

The Church built upon the Rock — Christ — shall never be overcome, and he who is placed upon it can never be moved.

Faith is not an agreement with the opinions of others, however correct they may be. One may give his assent to the articles of the creed, and yet not have the faith of the Gospel; at best it is only credulity, and should not be dignified by the name of belief.

Faith is not the blindness of despair, embracing without a reason the Gospel, as the only expedient of salvation in danger. This is often done in extreme peril, as in a storm at sea, amid the devouring flames at midnight, in the alarm of an earthquake, on the bed of sickness, and in view of death. And not unfrequently philosophers, men of education, statesmen, and warriors, sick of the world, vexed and disappointed, worn down by the cares and perplexities of life, rashly and without examination, in fear and in doubt, but without the confidence which an enlightened belief inspires, have thrown themselves upon Christianity, as the forlorn hope of a bad and irreligious life.

But, we repeat it, this is not the faith of the Gospel. It is the last effort of the ruined and the wrecked.

To believe the Gospel is to acknowledge the truth of Christianity, that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God; that he died for our sins, and was buried, and rose again from the dead; and this with a reliance on him for life and salvation. And in all those portions of Scripture in which pardon and eternal life are promised to the believer, it is implied and understood that the faith spoken of is an obedient, living, working faith — a faith in the head, in the understanding, and the heart; a faith controlling the will, and directing the affections; a faith that overcomes, that fights, that wrestles, that prays, that comes to God, that endures, as seeing him that is invisible. This is the “precious faith” of the early Christians — the faith of “God’s elect,” that “cries to him day and night.”

How is faith obtained, or what are its conditions?

On every other subject except that of Christianity, men reason upon correct principles. When this comes up for consideration, they think that it is rather a compliment to Christianity that they shall dispense with reason altogether.

Christianity on the one side is eminently divine, on the other human. It addresses men as they are, and expects no new faculties to receive it as true, or to observe its conditions, other than what God has given us.

To believe the Gospel is to receive it as a divine message upon

its proper testimony; and therefore the only condition of faith in the Messiah is the evidence which supports his claims. As there is no hearing without sound, no sight without light, so there is no faith without evidence. "Faith comes by hearing" — by hearing "the Word of God."

But we must clear away certain difficulties which have embarrassed this subject, and which prevent a proper understanding of it.

1st. Is not faith the gift of the Spirit? We answer, in one sense it is. It is his gift, through the means which he has appointed. The whole institution of Christianity is called by an Apostle, "the ministry of the Spirit;" and the Gospel, in contradistinction to the law, is called the "Spirit." And Jesus, in consequence of the spiritual nature of his religion, calls his words "spirit and life." But we are not to suppose, from these expressions, that faith is a gift, bestowed without a hand, or an immediate gift without any conditions. This would be to destroy all responsibility in man, and to deprive him of all agency in the matter of salvation. But even a gift may be rejected. A beggar at your door must stretch forth his hand to receive your charities. There must be a hand to receive, as well as one to give.

We will examine a few cases in which the persons are said to have believed, and if we can ascertain how they obtained their faith, it will settle the question in regard to its conditions.

Noah believed — and how? Being warned of God, and receiving it as true, he became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. "And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me: for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth." God then required him to build an ark for his salvation, and that of his house; and "thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he;" and so became heir of the righteousness by faith.

Abraham believed — and how? As he is the father of all believers, their type and representative, it is important to know the conditions of his faith. Hear what account Moses gave of it: "And behold the word of the Lord came unto him saying, This (Ishmael) shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth from thee shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them. And he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the

Lord; and he accounted it to him for righteousness.”

Thus God spoke to Abraham — he heard — and believed the word spoken.

John the Baptist believed — and by what means? This case is quite an interesting one, inasmuch as he was filled with the Holy Spirit from his infancy. Speaking of Jesus, he said, “I knew him not, but he that sent me to baptize with — “or in” — water, said to me, upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining, the same is he, who baptizeth with the Holy Spirit; and I saw, and bare record that this was the Son of God.” It was not the Spirit that was in John, but the Spirit which he saw, that enabled him to believe.

The Gentiles believed — and by what means? Hear the Apostle Peter: “God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the Gospel and believe.” Acts xv. 7. Their faith came by hearing the word by the mouth of Peter. To this agree Romans 10:14, 17, Ephesians 1:12, 13.

Instead of faith being the immediate gift of the Spirit, the Spirit is a gift to the believer — the obedient believer.

Of the Bereans, it is said that “They were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore, many of them believed.” Acts 17:11, 12.

Thus, their faith was occasioned by a readiness to receive the word, and a careful examination of the prophetic Scripture, to ascertain if what the Apostles had preached was in accordance with its statements. — “Therefore, many” of the Bereans “believed.”

Of the Corinthians, it is said that Paul “reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. And when Silas and Timothy were come into Macedonia, Paul was pressed in spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ; and whilst many of his hearers opposed themselves, and defamed, Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord, with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized.” Acts xviii. 5-8

Thus, Paul preached that Jesus was the Christ, and reasoned with the Jews and Greeks out of the Scriptures, and persuaded them to embrace the Gospel. He testified to them that Jesus was the Christ. And the result of this reasoning and persuasion, and of this testimony was, that Crispus and his family believed, and so of many

of the Corinthians. It is also added, "And he publicly convinced the Jews, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ." Acts xviii. 28.

Of the Romans, it is said, that to those who came to his house, Paul expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening. And the result of this "expounding and testifying" was that some believed the things which were spoken, viz., the Gospel, and some believed not. Acts xxviii. 23-24.

In Paul's letter to the saints at Rome, he thus writes: "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of great things! But they have not all obeyed the Gospel: for Isaiah saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Romans 10:14-17.

Thus, then, there must be a preacher — a preacher sent of God, like the Apostles. He must have something to say, he must preach — preach the Gospel. The people must hear what he brings them, and thus hearing, they believe and call upon the name of the Lord. Faith then comes by hearing the word of the Lord.

Thus, it is said that some who saw the Saviour believed; others who did not see him, but heard of him, also believed. Of some it is said that they heard the Gospel, and searched the Scriptures to see if what was preached was so, and therefore believed; and of others, they simply heard the Gospel from the lips of the Apostles, and believed it.

We here would add, that there is no excuse for unbelief; inasmuch as the testimony is abundant to assure any reasonable mind of the truth of Christianity. Unbelief is either the result of inattention to its claims and its testimonies, or comes from a perverted and depraved will and conscience.

The faith which the Gospel brings to the soul may be accompanied with doubt, and, like the "rocking stone," the mind may move to and fro, and vacillate to the right and left; but, under the influence of the truth, it will become steady, and nothing can move it from its firm foundation.

Faith is the result of testimony received. It is a grand induction from the premises furnished in the Word of God; and, although these may not always be present to the mind, we should rest satisfied with the conclusion to which we have arrived, and not be moved from the hope that is set before us in the Gospel: "He that believes shall not be ashamed," or easily moved.

Faith is the channel through which the love of God enters the soul of man, and the blood of Christ reaches the conscience of the sinner. All things, indeed, are promised to him who obediently believes. Our faith should incorporate itself with our feelings, and quicken us to obedience, and keep the soul healthy in all its dispositions and hopes.

We close with an extract from the "Literary Remains" of Coleridge: "Sin is the disease. What is the remedy? Charity? Pshaw! Charity, in the large apostolic sense of the term, is the health — the state to be obtained by the use of the remedy; not the sovereign balm itself — faith of grace — faith in the God-manhood — the cross — the mediation — the perfected righteousness of Jesus, to the utter rejection of all righteousness of our own! Faith alone is the restorative. Faith is the source; charity, that is the whole of the Christian life, is the stream from it. It is quite childish to talk of faith being imperfect without charity: as wisely might you say that a fire, however bright and strong, was imperfect without heat; or that the sun, however cloudless, is imperfect without beams. The true answer would be, It is not faith, but utter reprobate faithlessness."

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

We would add that the faith of many is produced by an argument, rather than by a demonstration; as in the case of Nathaniel, and in that of the Ethiopian officer of Egypt. And so is it true of those born of Christian parents, and who have never doubted concerning the truth of Christianity.

A small amount of testimony to a weak understanding may produce the same conviction as a large amount to a strong and enlightened one; and it will never be required of us how we entered the kingdom, provided faith in the Messiah is present to the mind, and an obedience based on his authority be added to it. Faith in its beginning, in its increase, and in its perfection, is the same in nature; as it is the concurrence of the will and the understanding, and rests on the Word of God.

Faith is the first-born of the twins, but love issuing in obedience obtains the inheritance; and in this case also, the elder shall serve the younger. For only they who do the commandments have a right to the tree of life; and therefore is it called the obedience of faith.

The power of faith may be seen in the lives of the eminent men of the Scriptures. The faith of Abraham made him live a sojourner; the faith of Moses made him “despise the treasures of Egypt;” the faith of Joshua made him a “valiant” man; the faith of Joseph made him chaste; the faith of Mary the Magdalen made her weep; the faith of Paul made him suffer and labour in the cause of Christ; the faith of all Christians “overcomes the world,” “works righteousness,” and “purifies the heart;” and thus all the actions of a good man are the fruits of faith.

FAITH AND SIGHT.

Few and simple are the principles which give origin to the almost infinite variety of phenomena that exist in the kingdoms of nature and of religion; and were these reduced to their real value, they would be found to be still fewer than our philosophy has hitherto conceived.

Amongst the many evidences given us of the divine origin of the Christian religion, not the least striking are the analogies existing between it and the system of nature. God is most wise and economical in all the arrangements of the empires of matter and of mind. He never employs more agencies to accomplish his objects and secure his ends, than are barely sufficient; and if by the operation of any one law he can accomplish his will, he uses no other.

The phenomena which nature affords us, constitute the first principles of all our reasoning in her department. The student of nature never ventures beyond what is appreciable by his senses; facts and observations constitute the basis of all his knowledge in relation to the things "that are seen." All beyond these, to him is a land unknown.

It is equally true in religion. Its facts are the substratum of all our spiritual knowledge — beyond them we dare not go.

With what pleasure do we survey the wide-spread regions opened before us in the divine revelation. How greatly are we enriched in the possession of so great a treasure! For where reason falters and sense is blind, faith, taking the lamp of life, boldly enters into the realms of the invisible and eternal, and feels as safe and as much at home, as in the domains of sense and of reason.

To keep the mind steady in its gaze upon the revelations of God, and to appreciate their worth and beauty, is an important matter; how greatly do they enlarge the soul, enrich the understanding, and refine the taste! What sublime thoughts do they awaken; what feelings of awe and reverence do they not inspire!

If ever a man rises above his fellows in the sublimity of his conceptions, the strength of his imagination and the purity of his emotions; it is when his eye, by faith, turns to the bright, the glowing scenes, which pass before him in this great panorama, — the Word of God.

*“Of all that is most beautiful — imaged there
In happier beauty: more pellucid streams,
An ampler ether, a diviner air;
And fields invested with purple gleams;
Climes which the sun, who sheds the brightest day
Earth knows, is all unworthy to survey.”*

All that is beautiful in thought to awaken joy; all that is tender in love to awaken sympathy; all that is grand and magnificent to inspire with awe, lie before us in the revelations of God. In contemplating the rich and varied scenery spreading before us here, the soul reaches that elevation of which it is capable, and that moral grandeur for which it was destined.

The sages of antiquity, the philosophers of Greece and of Rome, the statesmen, the jurists, the poets, the orators, the renowned captains of ancient and modern times, bear no comparison with the lofty spirits of either Testament, “who, through faith, subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, — out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight; turned to flight the armies of the aliens.”

We are fearfully and wonderfully made, said the Royal Psalmist. Man is a complicated piece of workmanship, he is divided into the outer and the inner man; by the one he is related to the visible, by the other to the invisible. The world of feeling is opened to him by the first, and the world of thought by the last. We feel before we think, sensation exists before reflection, and the natural man before the spiritual, appear to be the order of nature.

If divested of any of our senses, or if they shall become diseased, we are deprived of all the enjoyments which that sense was designed to afford, and if deprived of each, we are cut off from all connection with the natural system; creation to us is a perfect blank, the universe of matter to us is at once annihilated.

How invaluable is the sense of hearing in conveying to the mind all that rich variety of sound heard from the ten thousand voices in nature! How invaluable, as the medium through which thought by language is transmitted to us! By it we are enabled, not only to commune with the present, but to chronicle the past, and by the aid of prophecy to anticipate the future; and thus by language, to become “the being of every country, the contemporary of every

age.”

Thought expressed by language is a chain extending from the birth of man to the present moment, one age and one nation, sending their rich contributions to all others — truth thereby dispelling error, and error for a moment dispelling truth. Through the medium of language and the influence of faith, time in fact is annihilated; the past and the future become present, and a thousand forms, beautiful or terrific, as spectres, start up before us. The mind is thus peopled with the multitudes which lived before the flood; the ancient kingdoms of Assyria and Persia, of Macedon and Greece, and of Imperial Rome stand before us, together with the arts and sciences, the literature and religion of these dead empires. Like the wand of the enchantress of Endor, it calls up from Hades the spirits of the departed. The thoughts of poets and sages, of prophets and apostles, are transmitted to us; we hold converse with the dead, not through spirits which “mutter and peep,” inhabiting the brains of enthusiasts, and electrifying the nerves of those who turn away from the truth to fables. Not through media far more fleshly than spiritual; not by visions and spectres with

“Looks

That threaten the profane.

Ghostly shapes,

Waiting at noontide — fear and trembling hope,

Silence and forethought — death the skeleton,

And time the shadow.”

But we hold converse with the dead through the medium of language transmitted to us from the past, and spoken by lips of flesh, or written by hands as full of muscles as our own. In the language of inspiration we hold fellowship with them in all that they saw and heard, and contemplated in the records they have left us.

Deprived of this sense, we are cut off

“From the sound of music, and of eloquence divine,

Of mother’s tender voice and father’s tongue.”

And what an amplitude of space does the eye survey! suns, moons, stars, systems, revolve upon its retina. By the aid of the telescope, a thousand worlds burst upon us, and the light of the most distant orb in the milky way sheds its quick radiance upon this

wonderful organ! The student of nature, when he casts his eye off from the diminutive objects that surround him, and penetrates into those azure depths, cannot but feel inspired with conceptions too mighty for utterance. His imagination though kindled with the fires of poetry, his intelligence though guided by the light of philosophy, falters; and like David, his soul, in silent adoration, bows before the High and Holy One, who “tells the stars by number, and gives to them their names;” who has spread out the heavens as a curtain, and makes the blue vault his pavilion.

*“What though in solemn silence all
Move round this dark terrestrial ball?
What though no real voice, nor sound,
Amid their radiant orbs be found;
In reason’s ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice;
For ever singing, as they shine,
The Hand that made us is divine.”*

“Knowest thou the ordinances of Heaven?” said Job. “Canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth? Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds? Canst thou send thy lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are? Who hath put wisdom into the inward parts? or who hath given understanding to the heart? Who can number the clouds in wisdom? or who can stay the bottles of Heaven?”

The sun, moon, and stars, air, earth, fire, and water, are all ordinances of God, and are the appointed means of bestowing upon man the blessings of this our natural life.

The sun gives us the light by day, the moon by night; the stars shed upon us their mild radiance: thus we have solar, lunar, and sidereal light, each from their respective sources. No solar light but from the sun, no lunar light but from the moon, no stellar light but from the stars. Without the atmosphere we could have no clouds, without the clouds no rain, and without its pervading influence the earth would never be fanned with the soft breath of summer, nor purified by the rough winds of winter. Without the air no song of the minstrel, no human voice with eloquence divine, no sound would ever reach our ear. Silence eternal would reign upon the earth, and in all the habitations of men.

Without the soil we should have no fruits or flowers; spring and summer and autumn would leave no memorials behind them. The world we inhabit would be a dreary desert, without an offering and without a blessing. With what a melancholy sadness did the great English poet look back upon the day in which he enjoyed the sense of vision! Like a fugitive from home and country, he looked back to the days of other times, and sighed for the pleasures which then regaled his sense of vision.

*“Thus with the year
Seasons return, but not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer rose,
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine,
But cloud instead and ever-during dark
Surround me.”*

But we must now call your attention once more to the subject of faith. The principle is so important, and exercises such a pervading influence in spiritual things, that we cannot too frequently dwell upon it. There is no law of our nature better understood or more certain in its operation, than that of credit to testimony; not even sensation or reflection, memory or consciousness.

The mind from infancy is taught its exercise, and in all the affairs of life it is constantly put into requisition.

Faith has often saved the child from the devouring fire, or the deep pit. The soldier, the statesman, the merchant, the peasant, and the prince, live and act constantly under its influence.

The wife confides in her husband, the husband in his wife; the child trusts the parent, and the parent confides in the child. In the charmed circle of home, each is bound to the other by this reciprocated, undoubting confidence. Its abuse is the destruction of all peace and love, of all harmony and confidence. Take an illustration.

We step into a railroad car a perfect stranger; we venture life and limb upon the hazards of the journey. In a moment the whistle is heard, and we bound through the air with the swiftness of the bird. The night is dark, the track passes around mountains, dips into the valleys, sweeps over plains, leaps over gulfs, crosses over bridges, runs on the side of dizzy precipices; rocks and rivers, houses and

hamlets, seem to leap from their places as we move along. A switch out of place, a drawbridge unattended to, the least delay or increase in time, a moment's hesitation or neglect on the part of its officers, and ruin and disaster will ensue. And yet, for the most part, we ride secure. And why? because we confide in the skill, the prudence, the fidelity of those who have the arrangement of the road. Or rather we trust in the company, which has made all necessary arrangements for the safety and comfort of the passage. We give ourselves up to the guarantee they have afforded us, for the security of our persons and property in this rapid transit. And on what principle do we thus act? On the faith we put in the general integrity and fidelity of our fellow-men. But it will be remembered that it is not by faith alone, that we reach the end of our journey. This only leads us to confide our person to the safe-keeping of the cars. Had we not entered and continued in them to the end, we would not have reached the point proposed. Faith alone in a railroad never took a passenger a single inch upon its track.

This leads us to speak of that faith which James in his letter calls a "dead faith." This was simply a belief in the speculative and abstract notion of the unity of God. It was the faith in a theological abstraction. It was the metaphysical creed of demons, a belief in unity. They believed that there was one God. They felt also the influence of their faith, for they connected it with the attribute of justice, and it made them "tremble." Christians connect their belief with the mercy of God, and it inspires them with love and hope.

If the Gospel addressed merely our sense of generosity, our love for virtue, our admiration for goodness, our taste for the beautiful and sublime, whilst it would be looked upon and regarded as a "thing of beauty and a joy for ever," it would not be adapted to the wants of the miserable and the lost.

Its first and strongest appeals are made to our abhorrence of death, and our instinctive love of life.

Perishing with thirst, it says, "Come unto me and drink." Weary and faint, it says, "Come unto me, and you shall find rest." Captives and in prison, it says, "Let the prisoners go free." It heals the broken-hearted, comforts those who mourn, and gives the oil of joy for the spirit of heaviness.

No one is commanded to believe out of compliment to God, or to show his acquiescence in the means of salvation; nor yet because

there is any virtue or merit in the mere assent of the understanding to the testimony of God.

It is not because duty prompts us to accredit, without reason and without conviction, the statements found in the Scriptures of Truth, or because they originate in an authority that is infinite and supreme. This would be to degrade the intellect and to debase the man in becoming the Christian.

Still higher and more important objects are to be secured by our believing the Gospel than any or all of these. It is that the soul may fully be impressed with the moral meaning of the things believed, and feel their influence upon the heart. For it is not our belief nor manner of believing, but the things believed, which renovate our whole moral nature, and make us hew creatures in Christ Jesus.

The soul of man has wandered from God; the chain is broken that bound him to the throne of the universe; and faith furnishes the invisible link that unites the Christian with the Infinite Father. That link broken or not yet formed, and the sinner falls back into the blackness of darkness for ever, from which no arm can redeem, no power can save him.

Under the influence of this faith the soul lays hold of the arm of Omnipotence; the heart becomes steady and firm. Along the mysterious links of this chain, the prayer of the believer reaches the throne; and while it is yet ascending, answers of peace and mercy run to meet and to bless him.

How pure the thoughts, how profound the emotions, how triumphant the hopes, which the faith of the Gospel inspires! Under its influences what energy of purpose, what zeal and fervour, what patience and fortitude, does it bring to the soul! How sublime the worship! how tender the affections; how eternal the joys it awakens and reveals! We look with chastened pleasure on an amiable countenance; with admiration at the dignified stature and the noble bearing of man; with pride and exultation we gaze upon the wonderful productions of the pencil and the chisel; with gladness and reverence we contemplate the works of nature and of art; but when the eye of faith turns to the Saviour — the humble and the lowly, the gentle Teacher, the kind Shepherd, the able Advocate, the “first born among many brethren,” the Brother-

Man, the son of Mary and the Son of God: the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the mighty God, the founder of the Everlasting Age, and

the Prince of Peace, the suffering, the sorrowing, the crucified! the risen! the ascended! the glorified! — then it is that the soul wonders and adores, and in the exaltation of an intelligent faith exclaims, “My Lord and my God!” And when we turn to the sacred pages, and pore over their hallowed themes, what variety and richness, what glory beams in every line! The extent of their prophecies, commencing in the garden of Eden, extending through the Patriarchal and Jewish ages in one continuous and unbroken chain, closing with the Apostles; the last link fastened to the Apocalypse in the island of Patmos, the testimony for Jesus, the spirit of each prophecy, and the burden of them all; we feel overwhelmed with astonishment at the wisdom and foresight, the goodness and the grace which has furnished us such a rich and abundant repast for the growth and nourishment of our souls in all knowledge and true holiness.

The pages glow with the dreadful threatenings of the flood; the call of Abraham; the shadowy eternity of Melchisedeck; the fiery baptism of Sodom; the deliverance of Lot, and the warning remembrances of “Lot’s wife.” Jacob, the mighty wrestler, the prevailing Israel, on his dying couch catches the heaven-descending flame, and while the paleness of death is settling on his cheeks, he exclaims, “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come!”

Moses catches from the burdened cloud volumes of inspiration on the Holy Mount, and as he descends, with his face brightened with glory, exclaims, “A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up from the midst of your brethren, like unto me. To him shall you hearken.”

Job, in the day of his extreme calamity, covered with dust and ashes, cries out, “I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that in the latter day he shall stand on the earth.” And the blasted seer, the unwilling Balaam, on the top of Mount Peor, exclaims, “I shall see him, but not now.” He caught the first glimpse of the Star of Jacob, and said, “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.” David, wrapt in more heavenly visions, strikes his harp to the highest and sublimest notes in praise of his greater Son, the anointed Prophet, Priest, and King of the approaching reign of the Highest.

Then Jonah, Hosea, Amos and Micah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel

and Daniel seal up the testimony of the old prophets, and the Immerser opens, and the Apostles close the new; while the burden of all they utter, sing, and write, is the testimony in behalf of Jesus, as the true Messiah, the Son of the living God.

But in conclusion we would add, that faith, in order to the enjoyment of the spiritual blessings of the Gospel, must be embodied in an active and cheerful obedience to all the requirements of God.

Christianity is a Divine system of ordinances which must be observed, to reap its full intent in saving and perfecting the soul.

These ordinances are, the reading and hearing of the Word of God, repentance, confession and baptism, prayer, praise, the sacred observance of the Lord's day, the Supper, the contribution. And finally, to obtain eternal life, a patient continuance in well-doing; a life of piety, purity, and devotion; a consecration of self, talents, gifts, and means to the service of God and the good of men; the cultivation of a meek and quiet spirit; the daily exercise of humanity and benevolence, of forgiveness and love.

“Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.”

THE PROVINCE OF REASON IN REGARD TO MATTERS OF FAITH.

It is important to understand the boundaries and limits of human reason, in relation to all subjects claiming our religious belief. And we propose calling your attention to this topic.

God has endowed man with reason. It is his highest gift, his chief excellence. He owes all his superiority over the beasts that perish to this endowment, and by it he stands related to the firstborn sons of light — the angels; and to the Supreme Intelligence — God, who alone dwelleth in light.

But, whilst we acknowledge man's superiority over all created beings of this world, in having reason for his guide, and not mere instinct, as the inferior creation, yet we must not attach too much importance to this faculty, or suppose that it can answer all the purposes of our moral being, independent of other aid.

The history of the past, and the experience of the world, show that unassisted reason cannot attain to a certain knowledge of the existence of God; of his will, and the means of securing present and future happiness.

The harmonies of creation, and the marks of design everywhere seen, to the thoughtful mind, may suggest the idea of a first cause. But the mere light of nature never has revealed the will of God, or furnished man with an infallible rule in relation to his moral obligations.

Indeed, such a thing as the law of nature, in regard to religion, only exists in the imagination. The knowledge of God and his will, in all ages, have been derived from revelation, or tradition; to this it owes its origin, and not to nature, or the mere exercise of human reason.

“The world by wisdom knows not God.”

Revelation and language came into existence at the same time. He who gave speech to man, gave him the knowledge of himself; and thus, whilst he made man a reasonable, he made him a religious being; or, in other words, he made him a reasonable, by constituting him a religious being.

Nothing is more unreasonable than to divorce reason from revelation; inasmuch as they were co-existent, and had it not been for the one, we never should have had the other. The birds of the air and the beasts of the field have no religion, because they have no

reason. They have instinct, and some of the lower faculties which belong to man; but are not gifted with reason, and, therefore, not religious.

It is no province of reason to seek for a revelation on subjects which lie within the domain of the senses. Whatever, by the due exercise of reason and the senses of man, we can acquire, God has never condescended to reveal; as this would be to give us faculties without requiring of us their use.

Everything, therefore, that comes under the dominion of the five senses, and all that belongs to nature and art, and the laws by which they are governed, and the uses to which they are appropriated, are the proper subjects for human reason.

The human mind has been left to its own resources in working out all the problems which may be started in reference to the sciences, some of which are so recondite and sublime, that they require almost as much faith as reason to receive them as true, much less to comprehend them.

Reason should not expect, in revelation, any dogmas or precepts on the subjects of natural history or astronomy. On these subjects, the inspired historians never speak, but in the language of the times in which they lived. They never anticipate their age, in any of those things which belong to the province of human reason or of human research.

The prophets were not philosophers, astronomers, or chemists. They were not taught geology, or the exact sciences, by inspiration. They spoke on all subjects within the compass of human research, as other men of their own times. Had it been otherwise, had they anticipated their age on subjects belonging to the province of human reason and research, they would have involved themselves in endless disputes with their contemporaries on inferior subjects, to the neglect of the higher objects of their mission.

Enlightened reason, or knowledge such as we enjoy now, on the subjects to which we refer, in the infancy of the world would have been mistaken for stupidity and perverseness; and would have prejudiced the minds of the ancients against the revelations with which the prophets were intrusted, if made a part of divine revelation.

The inspired writers have told us nothing about the mariner's compass, the art of printing, the application of steam, or the wonders

of the telegraph; and I rejoice that they did not. For, if these, and similar communications, had been made to man, independent of all mental exertion, he would have long since become a perfect driveller, a mere passive instrument in the hands of another. There would have been no development of reason, no robustness of intellect, no independence of thought, no progress or improvement.

We should learn to separate what is in a book, purporting to be a revelation, from the revelation itself. There is much to be found both in the Old and in the New Testaments which do not belong to the supernatural. Historic events, facts and incidents innumerable, are found in the Bible, independent of inspiration, and which form no part of it.

It is not a supernatural event that Joseph went down into Egypt, or that Saul was the first king of Israel, or that Paul left his cloak at Troas. But the deliverance of Israel by the hand of Moses, in the smiting of the waters of the Red Sea; their being fed with manna in the wilderness for forty years, were supernatural events. The one class belongs to the domain of Providence, the other to revelation.

Many of the objections which infidelity arrays against the Bible, arise out of the want of this obvious distinction.

As there are many things in this world which are not of it, so there are many things in the Divine Oracles not of them.

God made the world good, and pronounced it so; but man has sought out “many inventions.” We must not confound “the inventions” of man with the works of God, or make him responsible for the sins and follies of his creatures.

Whatever irregularities there may have been in the lives of Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Jacob, Judah,

Moses, and Aaron, David, Solomon, and others, are chargeable to human, not to divine, influences; these show that they were men of like dispositions with ourselves, and that piety and purity struggled with weakness and corruption, even among the best of men, then as now; that the flesh lusted against the spirit, in their case as in ours, and that whenever they reached any superior eminence or excellence, it was owing, not to a finer organization, or because they belonged to a privileged class, unaffected by the virus of a sinful nature, but simply to the influence of a higher element than that of flesh or of reason — the influence of faith. Let then infidelity gloat over the frailties of the men of the Bible, and denounce in

unmeasured terms whatever of wickedness may be found in their lives. To all such we reply, in the language of the Bible, "Wherefore you are inexcusable, O man, whosoever you are who condemn; for in condemning another you pass sentence upon yourself, because you, who condemn, practise the same things."

The sins these men practised, are the sins justly chargeable to unbelief, or infidelity — they proceed from flesh, not faith; they are the legitimate fruits of reason unsanctified by the element of religion. They are the bitter and poisonous fruits of the animal man, and serve as a foil to set forth in clearer light the beauty and grandeur of a life under the dominion of faith. In the absence of this principle, the lives of these men would be comparable only to the lives of unbelievers at large, and would never rise above them. But whatever gave them superiority to others, was owing to the pervading influence of a piety and a morality, due alone to the influence of that revelation which inspired them with faith — the confidence of things hoped for, and the conviction of things not seen.

To set this matter in a still more forcible light, we would observe that the very sins charged to these men, were sins in direct violation of the will of God, and subjected them to his displeasure; and the very revelation which their actions are supposed to impugn, receives a higher sanction of Divine authority from the fact that the "Wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth by unrighteousness."

It would be strange indeed if the law forbidding murder, theft, adultery, profanity, drunkenness, and all wickedness, and which denounces the heaviest judgments of God and man upon those who are guilty of them, should be held responsible for their commission; and that a Book which inculcates and approves every virtue which adorns our nature, should be justly condemned for the vices which it abhors.

Certainly it is not the province of human reason thus to act in relation to the great purposes of a Divine revelation. If this is reason, it is perverted reason. It is reason blinded by prejudice, and surrounded by the foggy atmosphere arising from the Stygian pools of passion and corruption.

If you wish to see the contrast between these two principles —

flesh and faith, or reason and revelation — a few examples will suffice.

Flesh and unassisted reason had their type in Cain, who brought his thank-offering to the altar, and, under the influence of envy and resentment, slew his brother. The first blood ever shed on earth was the blood of a righteous man, from the hand of a brother under the dominion of the flesh. It was the bloody offering of infidelity at the shrine of unassisted reason.

If you would have one drawn from the New Testament, look at the Jews who gnashed upon Stephen with their teeth, and took up huge stones and hurled them at him, until he falls to the earth covered with blood. This was the fruit of human reason under the influence of the flesh. But faith led the dying saint to cast up his eyes to the heavens, saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit — lay not this sin to their account!”

It is perfectly within the province of human reason to distinguish between truth and error, darkness and light, between things that differ; but in so doing she should avail herself of all the light which nature and religion have afforded her, and not to pronounce judgment until the facts and the testimonies shall be fully presented.

It is the province of human reason to distinguish between a false and a true revelation, but not to sit in judgment upon the impossibility of a divine revelation, inasmuch as it is not permitted us to know how great may be the resources of infinite wisdom. Besides, until the powers of the human mind have been fully taxed, and its resources developed, we shall not be able to know with absolute certainty what it is capable of accomplishing; but from the history of the past we draw the conclusion that the regions of faith hitherto have been a terra incognita, a land unknown and untrodden by the foot of unassisted reason. And if we shall ever receive any light from the world to us invisible, it must come from beyond us. “Faith,” says an Apostle, “is the evidence of things not seen.” The Christian endures as “seeing Him who is invisible.”

Faith consists in such a firm persuasion of the things which God has declared and promised, as clothes them with an evidence equal to that of sense. The examples given us in the Scriptures — of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, prove this; as by the principle of faith the whole tenor of their lives was regulated.

Faith gives to the invisible and the distant a power equal to the

visible and the present. It realizes to us the existence of a world not seen, which eclipses by its glory the world that surrounds us.

It brings the new heavens and earth in full view, and the jasper walls, the pearly gates, and the golden streets, and the thronged worshippers of the City of God within the field of our vision, as by a telescope. Faith answers all the purposes of a demonstration, because founded upon the veracity of God.

Of Johnson it is said, that a man who told him of a waterspout or a meteoric stone, he would give the lie direct to — when told of a hurricane in the West Indies, and, a poor quaker, who told him of red hot balls fired at the siege of Gibraltar — “It is not so, it cannot be — don’t tell that story again; it makes you look so ridiculous.”

Scepticism with some men is a disease. They say, as David, “in his haste — All men are liars.” This class of men will believe in second sight, in ghost stories, in dreams, in spiritual knockings; but on the best of evidence they refuse to believe in the truth of a divine revelation. Thus scepticism commences where reason ends; and their faith is strong in the direct ratio of the want of evidence.

It is the province of human reason to distinguish between a true and a false miracle; not its province to pass judgment, a priori, on the impossibility of a miracle.

The usual objection, first started by Hume against a miracle — that it would be contrary to our experience, has been proved to be sophistical, a mere begging the question — for whilst a miracle may be contrary to your experience or to mine, or to those living in this generation, it may not have been contrary to the experience of others. The objection proceeds upon the basis that each individual mind is competent to sit in judgment upon all the events which have occurred, and to decide upon them, independent of the experience and testimony of others.

It accords not with my experience that the world was once destroyed with a flood, or that it was created by the word of God.

It accords not with my experience that Lisbon was once destroyed by an earthquake, or that the cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum were destroyed by the eruption of a volcano, or that many years since, there was a shower of meteors which extended over half the globe; but nevertheless these events corresponded with the experience of others. And it is no part of the province of human reason to ignore the testimony of others, whose reason for their

knowledge was equal to our reason for our belief.

Besides, who shall limit the Holy One of Israel? Who shall say what boundaries are to circumscribe the wonders of Omnipotence?

He who creates a myriad of perfect animals and places them in a drop of water; who has given to certain insect tribes eyes with innumerable lenses; who created the sun and placed it ninety-five millions of miles from the earth, to give us light and heat, to serve both as the foundation and head of the solar system; He who existed before all things, and gave existence to all things; — who will have the temerity to say of him that he cannot heal the sick, cleanse the leper, and raise the dead?

It was enlightened reason that addressed the question to King Agrippa: “Why should it be judged an incredible thing by you, that God should raise the dead?” Creation, throughout its whole extent, speaks of innumerable acts of Omnipotence, equally incredible; or we might add rather, as wonderful as this.

It is not the province of human reason to say that it is either improbable or impossible that God should speak to man.

It is more in accordance with reason that if our necessities shall require it, he will speak, to us. If God is our Creator, and he has endowed us with intelligence, we ought to become acquainted with him. If he is our Father, we ought not to be ignorant of him; and if our happiness and obedience are objects worthy of his regard, we think that it is highly probable that both his wisdom and benevolence would prompt him to reveal himself to man.

He who gave instinct to the animal, would not withhold revelation to his accountable, because we are his rational, creatures.

As to the impossibility of such a revelation — he who gave eyes to man, can he not see? ears to man, cannot he hear? language to man, cannot he speak? The eye is greater than light; the ear more mysterious than sound; the reason more sublime than speech: man is more marvellous than the revelation made him. It was our Saviour who said, “Is not life a greater gift than food, and the body than raiment? Consider the fowls of heaven. They neither sow nor reap. They have no storehouse; but your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you much more valuable than they?”

It is perfectly within the province of human reason to examine the evidences for the truth of a revelation purporting to be divine, and to subject it to all the criteria of investigation which a subject of

this nature admits. And never does a man show greater homage to his reason than when engaged in a work of this nature. Only let him bring to the examination all the candour, simplicity, teachableness, and humility which he can summon.

We ask him to do for revelation what he would do for chemistry, astronomy, and the exact sciences — to examine first, and then decide, patiently investigate the whole ground before him, as he would in any great induction; to be careful to have before him all the premises, before he draws the conclusion; and if in so doing he fails to become a believer, we do not think that God will hold him responsible for his unbelief. He will treat him as a creature by the act of God free from all moral obligation, as an infant or an idiot, as one suffering under some natural obliquity of disposition, some paralysis of intellect, which renders him incapable of appreciating truth or the demands of duty. His faith under these circumstances would not be a reasonable faith, nor his unbelief a sinful one.

If, therefore, any human being shall make use of all the faculties with which God has endowed him, and appropriate all the means within his reach of acquiring a knowledge of his will, and fails in the attempt, he will not go to the judgment-seat of Christ to be condemned. We believe that he will be treated with all the lenity due to a sincere and honest heart in the search of truth, which by a stern necessity for ever eluded his grasp.

But let no one take encouragement from this concession to neglect his duty in the premises, or wantonly refuse to open his eyes, because he loves the darkness better than the light, as this will only subject him to a heavier doom, and a more certain condemnation.

“If I had not come among you,” said Jesus, “and performed the works no other man could do, you had not sinned; but now there remains no excuse for you.”

It was this that made him utter the woes upon Chorazin and Bethsaida, and Capernaum. It was this that occasioned that wail of sorrow over Jerusalem — “O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem,” &c. If any one is incapable of forming a correct judgment on such questions, he will be classed among idiots and children, without law and without responsibility. Surely infidelity needs to be humble, when its pretensions subject them to such a judgment. In the pride of its heart it rejects that which dooms the unhappy subject to a level with the most unfortunate of our race, or to the condition of imbecility and

childish weakness which belong to infancy. Happy would it be if this indeed were the case. But far otherwise will it be for those who, in the exercise of reason on the visible and the sensible, have developed such intelligence and displayed such skill. A tithe part of the same research and earnestness of purpose would have led them to receive the Gospel as true, and would have brought them to bow in submission to the claims of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of the Highest.

The service of Christianity is a reasonable service, and all the disciples of Christ are required to give a reason to every one who shall ask them for the hope of immortality that is in them.

It is reason maddened by passion, bewildered by prejudice, besotted by sensuality, blinded by lust, dethroned by rebellion, — man-dishonoured, God-dishonoured reason, — that rejects the Gospel which was preached by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, and confirmed by signs and wonders and powers from on high. It is not for the want of light, but because men prefer the darkness to it, that they reject the Gospel of the grace of God. It is not because revelation is impossible or improbable, or not needed — much less unreasonable — that infidelity rejects it, but because man, in the pride of his intellect, and the corruption of his heart, refuses to surrender himself to its divine teachings.

“If I had not come among you, and had done the work which no other could have done, you had not sinned; but now there remains no cloak for you.”

THE DOCTRINE AND DUTY OF REPENTANCE.

Repentance is the burden both of the Old Testament and of the New. Its demand grows out of the alienated state into which we have entered in consequence of sin and transgression.

The command to repent is not only a reasonable and necessary one, but is enforced by the highest authority in the universe.

The righteous are not summoned to repentance, they are not the proper subjects of it. Jesus came to call sinners to repentance.

The ninety-and-nine which need no repentance, so far as this demand is to be taken into the account, are uncared for. The Good Shepherd leaves them in safety, to search for the one who has gone astray, and having found it, rejoices over it, and brings it home.

It is a doctrine full of encouragement to the sinner, as it is his only hope of return from his wanderings; without it he would proceed from bad to worse. He would either give himself up to despair or to the doing of all unrighteousness.

The sinner whose conscience is seared, and is past feeling, commits sin with greediness; he glories in his shame. He allies himself to the demons of the pit, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever, and for whom there is no repentance and no pardon.

The only encouragement sinners have to cast themselves on the mercy of God, is found in the doctrine and the duty of repentance.

The apostasy of man from his Maker is a fearful one, and but for the "repentance unto life," proclaimed in the Gospel of Christ, it would render our condition utterly hopeless, and without remedy.

The language of Paul in the first chapter to the Romans, describing the wickedness of the world, is most fearfully true, and time and experience proves it to be so. And to this agree the statements found in the writings of the poets of Greece and of Rome, and their most profound and observant philosophers, about the period of the advent of the Messiah; they speak the language of despair, in regard to any hope of a better day, from any means or appliances hitherto known. One of them thus expresses himself: —

*"Alas! the tender herbs, and flowery tribes,
Though crushed by winter's unrelenting hand
Revive, and rise when vernal zephyrs call.
But we, the brave, the mighty, and the wise,*

*Bloom, flourish, fade, and fall — and then succeeds
A long, long, silent, dark, oblivious sleep; —
A sleep which no propitious power dispels,
Nor changing seasons, nor revolving years.”*

The intimate connection between sin and suffering has been universally admitted; and therefore the expedients used to remove the cause, by sacrifices and altars smeared with blood in the Pagan World. And in seasons of calamity, how solemn their processions! Their temples were crowded with blind and infatuated worshippers; and even the choicest of the race were sacrificed to appease their malicious deities.

In all these false and corrupt forms of worships there are underlying some deep and significant truths, dimly seen or known, but which find their full expression in the heart of man and in the elder revelations of God.

It was a dictate, no less of reason than of religion, which prompted the appeal of the Saviour to his countrymen: “Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things?” “Except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish!” How strikingly just and pungent the personal appeal to his hearers; like others, ever ready to pass judgment upon their fellows? and blind to their own true state. They thought that the dreadful calamity which brought ruin upon eighteen men, by the sudden falling of a tower, was owing to some heinous offence of which they had been guilty; not knowing that they themselves were exposed alike, not only to similar judgments, but to perish eternally, unless they reformed.

Men have always been inclined to look at the failings of others, and to pass a harsh judgment upon them, and to be forgetful of the fact that they too are sinners. They see the mote in their brother’s eye, but know not the beam in their own. Our Saviour corrected on all occasions this evil and pernicious habit — one, alas, too common everywhere!

“Are there few who shall be saved?” is the language of curiosity: “Strive to enter into the strait gate, for many shall seek to enter, but shall not be able,” is the language of earnestness. “What shall I do to be saved?” is the appropriate language of the sinner; and it always finds a ready answer in the Scriptures of truth.

The sin of the race is linked with the sufferings of the race; and, therefore, the innocent and the guilty, the good and the bad, alike suffer in the patient life. The sin of the individual, though sometimes, is not always, in this life, connected with the particular sufferings of the individual; for this world is not the scene of the judgment. The retributions of justice are reserved for another state; and therefore the guilty in this life often escape.

It is appalling to think what an amount of suffering is transmitted from one age to another, and what an amount the present generation will transmit to the future: "treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath." The sin of Jeroboam ran through many generations, until it reached a fearful crisis of guilt and suffering in the apostate race which followed. Who can tell the amount of evil which the life and writings of Paine, Voltaire, Hume, and other infidels have brought upon our race? The bitter waters issuing from these sources will run to the judgment. Their influence is cumulative, through successive ages and generations; and therefore the fearful responsibility which rests upon the men who profane their genius, and pervert it to minister to the guilt and sufferings of our race.

The judgments which now come upon us are the couriers in advance, warning us of the danger which awaits us if we delay repentance, or neglect it. They are the sad and solemn premonitions of the day of wrath that is coming upon the world of the ungodly; the heavy clouds and portentous meteors which precede the terrible eruptions of a volcano. Like the wars and rumours of wars, the famine and pestilences, the earthquakes and the anguish of desponding nations, spoken of by the Saviour in his memorable predictions, which are "but the beginning of sorrows."

God's plan has always been to give warning beforehand; judgement is delayed, to give opportunity to reform. A period of one hundred and twenty years respite was given before the flood. Abraham gave warning, and so did the angels of God, to Sodom, before the sheeted flames fell upon the cities of the plain. Forty years followed the warning, before Jerusalem was trodden down by the Gentiles. And the coming of the Son of Man to the judgment is preceded by the day of grace and of salvation, through the patience and forbearance of God.

The doctrine of repentance is clearly revealed in the oracles of

God. In the Old Testament all the warnings and appeals made by the Prophets were designed to show its necessity and urge an immediate attention to it. They rose up early and went to the nations with the command to reform. "Rend your hearts, and not your garments." "Turn, turn, for why will you die?" "Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." "Therefore, say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord, Repent, and turn away your faces from all your abominations."

We have many cases of personal and national reform given us in the Old Scriptures. Job said, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and I repent me in dust and ashes." Of Manasseh it is said, who made Israel to err and to do worse than the heathen, "That when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto him; then Manasseh knew that the Lord was God." Nineveh, the ruins of which now, in anticipation of its inhabitants, are rising up in the judgment to condemn the impenitent and the unbelieving — of Nineveh it was said by Jonah, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed." How short, how solemn the warning! from street to street, in the crossroads and public places of resort, the warning is heard, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed." And the warning was not in vain! No mercy was promised, no repentance was proclaimed! But mark the results: "The people believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest even to the least, and God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way," and he did not execute his threatened judgments; his hand was stayed by their repentance.

All the threatenings and promises of God are conditional, whether expressed or not. This is the settled law of his kingdom. "The soul that sinneth it shall die, but if he turn from his iniquities he shall live." These are the unchangeable purposes of the unchangeable God!

Infidels have made use of this passage, in the shallowness of their reasonings, to show that there is fickleness in the God of the Bible, and contradictions in the Scriptures. They had better take warning from the case than find fault with the proceedings found

therein. "For the men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment," said Jesus, "against the men of this generation, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and lo! a greater than Jonah is here."

In the New Testament John the Baptist opens his mission with these words: "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." He was sent to turn the hearts of the fathers together with their children, and the hearts of the children together with the fathers, lest God should come and smite the land with utter destruction.

The Messiah also commences his work with the same message. Every word of warning from his lips, and all the splendid array of miracles to enforce them, were designed to bring the nation to repentance, — and when he failed in his solemn purpose, "O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! thou that killest the prophets, how often would I have gathered you!" came from his crushed heart like the wail of pity, mingled with despair.

The Apostles, in the last commission they received from the Saviour, were especially commanded to preach "Repentance and the remission of sins in his name, among all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

This was the burden of every sermon, the end and object of every exhortation; and thousands were cut to the heart, multitudes turned to the Lord, the tear of penitence fell upon many a cheek, and the wail of anguish fell from many a lip. "What shall we do?" was the language which saluted their ears wherever the Apostles proclaimed the Gospel of the grace of God.

They announce the fact, that God commands all men everywhere to repent, and that Christ is exalted to grant the privilege of repentance and, the offer of pardon to Israel, and that he has given "repentance unto life," to the Gentile world by the offer of salvation in the Gospel.

Repentance might have been required without the offer of life. The past might have been redeemed to men without any promise of the future. The old debts might have been cancelled only to subject the sinner to a future bankruptcy and a sterner requital. But God in the riches of his mercy has not only granted indemnity for the past, but he has made ample provision for the future. He calls the Christian to glory and to courage. He grants "repentance unto salvation."

The duty of repentance is everywhere and at all times enjoined

upon all men. God commands it — and it should be heeded on this account, if on no other. Our necessities demand it. We are exposed to death, lying under condemnation, and unless we repent we must perish. The sinner is lost; repentance brings him out of his bewildered state, and shows him the way of safety and deliverance. It leads him to the straight and narrow path that ends in everlasting life. The sinner is dead — dead in trespasses and in sins; repentance is one of the conditions of life, and is called therefore “repentance unto life.” The sinner is defiled and fatally diseased; repentance is the appointed means of his cure, the process by which he maybe restored to the enjoyment of health. The sinner is poor and blind, and wretched and miserable; repentance gives him riches, anoints his eyes that he may see, and pours into his heart all heavenly consolation and peace. The sinner is exposed to destruction, the wrath of God abides upon him; repentance points out to him the city of refuge, to which he may fly and find security from the hands of the destroyer.

To delay, then, our repentance is an act of suicide; it is to become our own destroyer; it is to choose death rather than life, sickness rather than health, guilt rather than pardon, wretchedness rather than peace. To presume on the mercy of God in deferring our repentance, is to tempt God to visit us by the sword of his justice; and if once he rises to the judgment, who shall stand before him?

To put off the duty of repentance until tomorrow, when God calls us to-day, is to harden our hearts, and to adopt repentance as a convenient method of avoiding punishment; as a compounding with God between his mercy and our lusts, and to use as an expedient, what God urged as a command.

Love is ever quick and prompt in the discharge of its duties. Hate is slow and reluctant. Sinners hate the light lest their deeds should be reprov'd. They love the darkness in preference to the light. Whatever then is done as a religious duty in the absence of love, is wanting in the very element which gives to it all its value. To delay repentance is a deception we practise on ourselves, which blinds us to our certain ruin. Who ever found that the easiest way to break off from any evil habit was to indulge in it to the last? If the duty of repentance is difficult now, will it not be more difficult tomorrow? Besides, what reason has the sinner to believe that he will be better disposed to repent in a future day than at the present?

Did he not think so in days gone by? Has he not passed already beyond the hour in which he promised himself a reformation from the errors of his life? And why may it not be so to the end?

Does not God command now, and has he not a right to command? Does he not know our danger, and kindly point out to us the way of escape? "When I called," says Wisdom, "ye refused."

No liberty of choice granted to the sinner in relation to the time of his repentance. Tomorrow is not in the calendar of repentance. It has no existence. He who defers it until tomorrow has not lived long enough by a day; and even should tomorrow come, it will bring along with it no new motives to reform that have not already been neglected and despised.

To hear God's Word in the Gospel, and to obey our own will, is the height of folly and of wickedness. It is to set up our own wishes as the standard of duty, and to depose the King, and erect a government of our own.

But, let us look at some of the reasons urged for our repentance in the Scriptures.

The goodness of God is designed to lead to repentance; and is this not a powerful motive? In creation, providence, and redemption, his goodness everywhere is seen. Life, health, friends, home, country, all the gifts of his hands, are so many reasons why we should reform. To refuse is ingratitude, to delay is rebellion, to despise is the seal of perdition.

The long-suffering of God affords another motive to repentance. How long has God borne with us! How slow to anger! What innumerable provocations have we given him! From what dangers has he not preserved us! Through what trials has he not brought us! How many friends has he not called away from us! What repeated warnings has he not sent us!

The chastisements of his hands are sent for the express purpose of calling us to repentance. Sickness, loss of health and fortune, disappointment and crosses, bereavements, all have visited us to awaken us to this imperative duty. It was in this way he stopped the prodigal's career, and caused him to repent.

Ye orphans! cast upon the cold charities of the world, why has God taken from you the prop and the staff of your life? Was it not to teach you to look to, and lean upon him? — the Father of the fatherless!

And ye, from whose arms death has stricken down the best beloved of your hearts, and left you like the section of an arch, with nothing to lean your head upon, why has God so dealt with you? Was it not that you might find in him one who never would leave — never would forsake you? Is not God the husband of the widow in all generations?

And ye mothers! why have your children been taken from your embrace? Why does Rachel mourn them, because they are not? The early dew has been exhaled to heaven, to form the rainbow of hope, to allure you thither. The rosebud, oh how fragrant! has been plucked from the stem, to be placed in the coronal of the Saviour. The olive plants have been taken from around your beard to flourish in fairer climes, and to break the spell which binds you to the earth, and to lead you to where there is fulness of joy.

Oh! you remember that look of love — of unutterable love which lingered upon the face of that dying friend. Her last words breathed into your ear! The attenuated hand, how cold! which you pressed to your heart. The prayer which she sent up to heaven in your behalf, and the promise of repentance, by the side of the dying, you made. Is it not all recorded in heaven?

But, in conclusion, the judgment is the last appeal God makes to the sinner. Solemn thought! O day of decisions, of unalterable doom! It is the last judgment! The great assize! From the verdict of that court there is no appeal.

Would you not make all necessary arrangements for a trial in an earthly court, when fortune or life was at stake? And will you rush to the judgment without a thought, a friend — an advocate?;

Remember, this day may come to you at any hour. For, “after death, the judgment.”

EXTERNAL ORDINANCES.

There are no merely outward ordinances in the Christian religion, if the terms of the proposition shall be strictly considered; and therefore we shall be at some pains to examine the subject with both the light of reason and of Scripture for our guides.

And first we shall inquire into the nature and meaning of the terms employed, as this is certainly the true method of procedure in all questions of this character. A proper definition will often enable us to settle questions, which otherwise would be both obscure and difficult of meaning, as all the controversies in regard to the proper action of baptism fully prove, — the word itself is a word of form, and its true definition or translation is its only meaning. Words are often used by both speakers and writers with great latitude of meaning, and without any special reference to their strict philological import; and this is particularly the case in theological discussions; and therefore the first thing to settle is, the meaning of the terms to be considered. This will often adjust difficulties, without the time too often wasted in empty words.

What then is an ordinance? It is a rule established by authority — a permanent rule of action — an established rite or ceremony. In no instance, either in society or religion, is it ever strictly considered as a useless or unmeaning thing; but as a matter originating in the state, or established by authority or custom, and to be observed out of respect for the authority that ordained it. Thus all laws in relation to the mode of selecting officers of the state, their induction into office, their pay, and the obedience due to them, are made matters of special ordinance. All laws regulating the rights and privileges of citizenship, marriage, divorce, and property are guaranteed by law, and must be obeyed to the letter; not one of them is to be neglected or disobeyed, without incurring the displeasure of the state, and subjecting the offender to certain disabilities and punishment.

It is equally so in regard to all ordinances proceeding from divine authority; only with this difference in their favour, that they demand and are deserving a larger amount of respect, and a stricter obedience, as they are the dictates of infinite wisdom, and originate in the highest possible authority. The offender cannot by any means escape the consequences of his acts of disobedience. We have only to refer you to the statutes and ordinances of the Law on Mount

Sinai, to show the nature of the obedience required, and the punishment threatened against all the violators of its divine appointments.

“Every transgression and disobedience will meet with a just retribution.”

But what is meant by the word “External?” — an “external ordinance?” External signifies outward, exterior; as the external surface of a body, opposed to the internal.

In ecclesiastical matters, it refers to “rites and ceremonies,” — “viable forms,” as established, not by Christ and his Apostles, but by councils and conventions, which take to themselves the authority of altering the divine ordinances “somewhat!” Now it is certain that, neither under the Law nor under the Gospel, did God ever ordain any outward institutions, as opposed to the inward; nor did he ever give authority to uninspired men to alter, change, or modify, much less to abolish, any of his ordinances — not even to the regulating the fringe on the vestments of the high priests, the bells which hung upon their garments, or the taches and tenons of the Tabernacle. There were no unmeaning “rites and ceremonies” from divine authority under the law, and those ordained by “the Fathers” only made void “God’s commandments by their traditions.”

Take for example circumcision, the diverse immersions, the Sabbath, the Passover, sacrifice — were these merely outward ordinances? Had they no inward significance and life? Were they bodies without souls; “rites and ceremonies” without any moral? Or were they dead customs, which might or might not be observed, — “non-essentials?” Far otherwise! The man who neglected circumcision broke the covenant, and was cut off from the people. He who neglected “the Sabbath” was sorely punished. One was even stoned to death for picking up sticks on this hallowed day — the Jewish Sabbath.

The case of Uzziah, for his trespass in touching the Ark with unpriestly hands, and was stricken to death, is a solemn warning to those who deal in unessentials in religion; and also Nadab and Abihu, who were destroyed for offering strange fire on the altar.

Now if these things were so under the Law, what shall we say of the same principle, as it obtains under the Gospel? “If the things spoken by angels were steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience met with a just retribution, how shall we escape if we

neglect so great salvation, which first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by those (the Apostles) who heard him?"

The Law was but the shadow of good things to come, of which the Gospel is the substance; the one is the image of the truth, the other is the truth itself. The one a fleshly, the other a spiritual institution. There is not a statute or ordinance of the Gospel that is merely outward. But all of them are designed and adapted to reach our spiritual nature. This was their chief characteristic. The very words of Christ are "spirit and life" — spiritual and life-giving, designed to give life to the spirit of man.

So deeply does this feature pervade the Christian religion, that it is called by Paul to the Corinthians — "Spirit," in contradistinction to the Law, which he denominates "letter" — the law which kills. Under the Gospel, the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus is not written on tables of stone, but on the fleshly tables of the heart; it lies imbedded among the warm and living affections of the soul, written there by the finger of God. No service that does not proceed from a renewed life is acceptable to God. He must be worshipped "in spirit and in truth" — not in spirit only, but in truth; not in "truth" only, but also in "spirit."

Can it then be supposed that any ordinances proceeding from the Messiah, with special reference to the spiritual wants of our nature, can fail in this particular? To judge so would be to impeach the wisdom and the goodness of the only Law-giver, who can save and can destroy. It would prove indeed that Christianity was a failure, and its ordinances no better than dead fruit, hung on the tree of life; or the automaton motions of a wooden man.

The very fact, that there are but few ordinances in the Gospel, indicate the necessity for their observance, and the importance to be attached to them. There may be many wheels to a watch, and an intricate machinery, but it has only one main spring; and all this would be of no value without the hands upon its face to indicate the time. The hands, you say, are of little value by themselves considered? True; but on the face of the watch they are indispensable, — so far as the notation of time is concerned, the most essential part of the watch, — without them it would be of no value whatever as a time-piece. We have a thousand statutes in the state; there is but one in regard to the act of naturalization. So we

have but one Lord's day, one Baptism (in English, Immersion), one Supper. The very fewness of the ordinances of the Gospel, in the midst of so many precepts in connection with the two great commandments on which both the Law and the Gospel hang, show that they are of prime importance, and are not to be dispensed with or neglected, without the sternest necessity require it.

I would ask then, Is the Lord's day a mere outward ordinance? Has it no significance, no life, no meaning? What then becomes of the resurrection of the Messiah which it commemorates? Is this an idle tale, an abortion? Has the grave not yet yielded up its dead? Has it not relented, at least for once, and given back "a reanimated corse" "to dwell for ever in a vernal bloom?"

The Lord's day is not a useless, unmeaning rite, but a great commemoration, a glorious jubilee! It celebrates not the rest after creation, But the birth of a higher, nobler creation than the seventh day did. It tells us that humanity has achieved a mighty triumph over the great enemy, by the Son of God. And as each first day appears, it calls us together with songs of rapture and loud hallelujahs, to chant the praises of Him who has wrought for us so great a deliverance.

No Jewish Sabbath, no grand festival of the nation, no Greek or Roman celebrations or kingly triumphs were ever so jubilant as this, our Lord's day, to the devout disciple of Christ. If Christianity had given us nothing but this day, for calm and social enjoyments, "the pearl of all the week," to arrest the spirit of worldliness and trade, to stop the endless wheel of labour, to restore strength to the wasted energies of man and beast, and for the blessings it brings to the individual, the family, the state, and above all for the spiritual necessities it meets, and the sublime hopes it cherishes, it well deserves our reverence and praise.

Surely, then, the Lord's day is no "external ordinance," but a soul-cheering, life-animating, hope-awakening day. It has filled, and is still filling the world with light, and life, and hope; and points through the open tomb of the Nazarene, the way that leads to glory and to incorruptibility.

*"The path which winds 'mongst gorgeous trees,
The streams, whose bright lips kiss the flowers,
The winds, that swell their harmonies
Through the sun-hiding bowers,"*

are not so pleasant or so grateful as this day, which brings us back to the risen Saviour, and leads us on to the glory to be revealed at His appearing and kingdom.

Is the Lord's Supper a mere bodily rite, an external ordinance? What an abuse of terms, what an insult offered to the Son of God! Do these elements of bread and of wine which are found on the table on every Lord's day represent nothing? Are they dead and unmeaning rites? or do they not symbolize the greatest of all acts of kindness and of love, of meekness and condescension? And who was it that said, "Do this in remembrance of me"? Where is the seat of memory? is it on the outer man? Is it not within the soul; and are not some of the richest pleasures of the mind derived from it?

The Supper, by its social properties, the harmonizing influence it exerts over us, the joint communion which it enjoins, and the solemn, joyful remembrances it awakens, is most spiritualizing in its tendency and nature. The very simplicity of the ordinance, and the materialistic nature of the elements; the breaking, the handling, the eating of the bread, the drinking of the cup — not to gratify the taste, to satisfy the appetite, to supply the wastes of the body, but to feed and nourish the soul, by its sacred and eternal memories, show its adaptation to the inner man.

When properly observed, memory is sanctified, love for the gift of Christ is warmed into divine fervour, penitence for past failures is felt and promises of amendment are made, and hope for the future salvation is quickened into a new life at the promise of the Messiah's return.

"Forms," says one, "unduly exalted, dethrone our Divine Master from his supremacy, bring the palsy of formality upon our souls, and a withering blast upon our ministry."

Whilst this is true in regard to forms unauthorised by the Saviour, and of mere human origin, it cannot be said truly with respect to any of the institutions which God has ordained for our observance. They contain in them the grace which he administers. They are the reservoirs of his mercy, the conduits through which enters into the soul the true grace of God.

So long as we are in the flesh, forms of worship are and will be needed, not those of human but of divine origin. We can scarcely conceive of an ideal worship, a mere inward service — the silent homage of the mind; nor can we represent to our selves an inward

reverence for divine things, without some outward symbols as expressive of it. Words and acts are the true expressions of life, both in the natural and the spiritual kingdom; and if we would move others, or be moved ourselves, we must give body to the spirit of worship.

The Catholic worship runs to one extreme on this head, and the Protestant on the other. The one is characterized by activity, the other by passivity; the one is too outward, the other too inward. The Papacy treats us as children, in a state of absolute ignorance, the reformed churches as angels in a state of perfection. Christianity observes the just medium between these extremes.

The ordinances of the Gospel are characteristic of its truth. They are the Gospel in symbols. They concentrate the scattered rays of divine truth into a common focus. Take, for example, Baptism and the Lord's Supper; they give us a vivid picture of the great truths of Christianity, which the mind at once seizes upon. This, however, is only so when these ordinances are observed in perfect form, and after the express command of the Saviour and the approved precedent of the Apostles. They are the summary of religion in significant acts. Christianity is a system, perfect only with all its parts; and the removal of one stone from the building mars the sublime structure altogether.

To the frequent observance of "the Supper," that is for weekly communion, we offer the following testimonials from those who knew nothing of us a people, and whose views in other respects differ widely from our own: —

"Every week at least the table of the Lord should be spread for Christian assemblies." — Calvin's Institutes.

"The Independent Churches in England," says the biographer of Dr. Owen, "at the beginning observed the Lord's Supper every first day of the week."

In the Baptist Confession of Faith, published in 1611, is the following article: "That every church ought, according to the example of Christ's disciples, primitive churches, upon every first day of the week, being the Lord's Day, to assemble together to pray, prophesy, praise God, and break bread, and perform all other parts of Scriptural communion for the worship of God, and their own mutual edification, and the preservation of true religion and piety in the Church." — Crosby's History of the Baptists.

“When we speak of innovations in the Church of Christ, we are not to inquire what was done by our fathers, but what was the order of the Church from the beginning. How did Christ ordain? How did his Apostles conduct? In what state did they leave the Church? Now it is notorious, that during the three first centuries of the Christian era, communions were held with a frequency of which, among us, we have neither example nor resemblance. It is also notorious, that the original frequency of communion declined as carnality and corruption gained ground; and it is no less notorious that it has been urged as a weighty duty by the best of men and the best of churches, in the best of times. It is demonstrable that among the primitive Christians, the celebration of the Supper was a part of the ordinary sanctification of the Lord’s day. In this manner did the spirit of ancient piety cherish, the memory of a Saviour’s love.” — Dr. Mason, of New York.

Christianity begins with the heart, and works outwardly on the life, like the hidden forces of the vegetable world. The life of the seed is deposited in the earth, and shows itself in the reproduction of its kind; as, for instance, the oak from the acorn, and the harvest from the grain.

Is Christian baptism, then, a mere external ordinance? By no means! Like all the other ordinances of the Gospel, it has its place in the Divine economy. It is the outward expression of grand and sublime facts, and stands as the expressive symbol of the most important truths. It has its form, like the acorn, and enfolds its hidden life; and, unless you obtain its outward form, you fail in securing it. All the imitations of an acorn could not make an oak. To show that Christian immersion is not an “external ordinance,” we would observe: —

1st. It is not designed to operate as an end on the outer man. The outer man fully is subjected to the element of water; but certainly it is not administered as an ablution for the body.

2d. It is not designed either for the cleansing of the bodies of men, or to effect any cures on the outer man; it is not for the purification of the flesh, as were the Jewish ablutions.

3d. It is not to be regarded, as were many of the Jewish institutions, as a fleshly ordinance; but a highly spiritual one, reaching to the conscience of the obedient disciple.

4th. The nearest conception we can form of baptism as a bodily

rite, is, when administered to a penitent believer, without any express design, as in some of the popular churches; unless it be when a few drops of water in the name of the Lord are administered upon the bodies of children, before they know or feel that they have any spirits whatever. Paedobaptism is a merely external ordinance — a bodily rite — an outward observance.

God never did require any one to observe a command of his, without annexing to it some promise: “Ask, and you shall receive — seek, and you shall find — knock, and it shall be opened to you — Look, and be saved.” This is the tenor of all his precepts in the Scriptures. It would be strange, in deed, if the first act of obedience to the Messiah, as “Lord and Christ,” should be an exception to this rule.

Unless a man be “born of water and the Spirit,” he cannot enter into Christ’s spiritual kingdom. “By water here,” Albert Barnes says, “is evidently signified baptism.” All commentators so understood it, until Calvin taught otherwise.

Baptism is the turning point of a man’s conversion to God, when the sinner renounces his former disobedience, and becomes a disciple of Christ.

It is the entrance into a new life. And what more appropriate figure than a birth could be employed when such an event occurs? How different this from “baptismal regeneration,” without faith, repentance, or even the germ of a new life in the soul of the subject!

Baptism introduces the penitent believer into that state in which, according to God’s promise, pardon may be found; just as prayer, in confession of sins, introduces the Christian into that state in which God has promised to cleanse him from all unrighteousness.

Baptism is not to be regarded as a mere duty — a duty, doubtless, it is — but it is also a special ordinance, a positive institution designed to impart, according to promise, the knowledge of salvation to the believer, by the remission of sins.

It is the kiss of the father to the returning prodigal. It is the ring of marriage to the new-made bride. It is the song of the reaper for the harvest- gathering. It is the proof of naturalization to the welcomed alien.

Talk you of external ordinances, when the heart, the soul, the conscience, the memory, the affections, are all quickened, touched, reached by this solemn and expressive institution?

As well might you call the lips an outward organ, a mere bodily act, when they pour out from the heart the deep tones of fervid praise for the redemption which Christ has wrought; or the resurrection of the dead an outward rite, when the soul shall be clothed upon with its immortal vestments, at the sound of the last trump.

THE EVERLASTING KINGDOM, AND THE MEANS OF ITS ENJOYMENT.

“But for this very reason also do ye, contributing all diligence, furnish in your faith, fortitude; and in fortitude, knowledge; and in knowledge, self-control; and in self-control, patience; and in patience, godliness; and in godliness, brotherly kindness; and in brotherly kindness, love. For these things being yours and increasing, render you not idle nor unfruitful as to the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he that lacketh these things is blind, being near-sighted, having forgotten the cleansing away of the old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, be diligent to make your calling and election sure; for doing these things, ye shall never fall: for so there shall be richly furnished unto you the entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” 2 Peter 1:5-11. (Revised version. American Bible Union.)

No one ever gained a kingdom but by the most strenuous effort. Most of the kingdoms of this world have been won by the greatest expense of treasure and of blood. But this kingdom is the greatest of all, it is an everlasting kingdom, and summons for its attainment the endeavours of a lifetime; once gained, the title is secure and perpetual, a kingdom never to be shaken or moved.

But chiefly are we concerned in reference to the means for entering into this kingdom, and the qualifications for its enjoyment.

Let us, in the light of the improved version, which exactly represents the original in this passage, carefully examine this subject.

You will observe the striking difference there is between the “revision” and the common version of this passage. And first, “contributing all diligence, furnish in your faith, fortitude.” To contribute is a voluntary act. It is the giving freely of our substance. This is to be done, not carelessly or irregularly, but with diligence — with all diligence. This word in the passage allies itself to another. What we give, we furnish, and therefore the contributions spoken of, the richest indeed that men can give, furnish in our faith certain ingredients, treasures, excellencies, which it is our design chiefly to consider.

1st. Faith stands at the head of this list, embracing eight distinct items — a perfect octave; and like the eight notes in the scale, which

furnish an infinite diversity of sounds, so this octave is as full of harmony as any which the divine art of music has ever discoursed. But faith occupies pre-eminently a position different from all these elements, yet mingling itself with each. The sound of the first note of faith lends its harmony to them all, without the least possible discord to break into their perfect unity. Or rather it is a centre from which they all radiate, terminating in their utmost bounds to the great circle of love, and lending each from one common centre, strength, beauty, and compactness; a wheel within a wheel, the centre of which is the heart of faith, the utmost bounds, the heaven of love.

It is certain that faith holds a most important and influential place in this great system. It pervades every part of it, and sends its equalizing heat throughout the whole. The very system is not unfrequently called "The Faith," not so much on account of the act of the mind in believing, but because it moves itself in the all radiant influence of this great principle. It rejects as gross and unsuitable to its nature everything which assimilates not to itself, — and says to all men, "It is impossible to please God" without the exercise of faith in his Word.

2d. In this your faith, as a Christian, you are to furnish "fortitude." A new element must be introduced within the domain of faith, an element of great power and strength, indispensable to its efficiency, and bearing to it a striking relationship.

As leaven in the three measures of meal, so fortitude must be introduced within the domain of faith, and pervade every part of it. Or as one color is mixed with another, to give to it new beauty and effect, so fortitude must be placed within your faith, to give it life and strength and efficiency.

It is not by its own force that faith brings into existence this new element. It is not its ever ready and legitimate growth, but it is by the diligence of the disciple that this contribution shall be furnished; and as, by the exercise of any moral excellence, it gains strength and power, so the greater the diligence, and the larger the contribution, the purer and the more perfect becomes this virtue.

Beautiful indeed is the relation between faith and fortitude. One, indeed, is of no use without the other. Of what efficacy would be the faith in the absence of the fortitude? and how sturdy and despotic the fortitude in the absence of the faith?

Chiefly was fortitude needed in primitive times. It endowed the soul with manliness and courage to endure the taunts' of the proud, and the oppositions of the wicked; it fired with a lofty zeal the hearts of the disciples, and filled them with a most indomitable spirit.

This virtue is the opposite of tameness, cowardice, and pusillanimity; traits of character the most despicable in any cause, but particularly so in a good one.

It is also the opposite of passion, excitement, frenzy; the infatuation of the lawless, the intoxication of the fierce, the fanaticism of the ignorant. It allies itself to coolness and gentleness, to that sedateness and composure which the leader of a great army in times of peril is endowed with, to moderate and check, to restrain and to curb, "to suffer and be strong."

3d. In your fortitude, furnish knowledge.

Fortitude is naturally blind; it allies itself more to sentiment and passion than to reflection or judgment, and therefore, in the absence of knowledge, would be a dangerous element to trust. But when under the control and guidance of knowledge, it acts as a mighty force in the accomplishment of good. Fortitude may be compared to the steam force, which when alone and misdirected is an element of uncontrollable might, but when subjected to proper laws, and under the direction of intelligence, is among the most useful of all mechanical agents. Fortitude feels, it never reasons. It has in it no philosophy. Fortitude arms us for the battle of life; we come into the world in a state of war. Disease and want, trial and suffering meet us at every step; and therefore the need for heroism. This is the true equipment of the soul; it gives us self-reliance, and teaches us to do, to suffer, and be strong — it is not to be wearied out by opposition; it arms the soul against the world, and makes us feel the dignity of our own nature. Having chosen its part, it persists without compromise, and waits not the tardy justice and the blind sympathy of the age it outstrips.

It laughs to scorn the baits and temptations and flatteries of the base and hypocritical, and bears all suffering for truth and righteousness with calmness and composure; and if human virtue, or the call of God, demand a champion or a sacrifice, it throws itself into the breach, or lays itself upon the altar, with not only all freedom from fear, but with exultation and joy. Is it not said of the Apostles when returning from the scourge, that they rejoiced in that

they were counted worthy to suffer on account of the name of Christ? Others received joyfully the taking of their goods. Our great Leader, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross and despised the shame!

Knowledge of one's self, of the powers and attributes of the soul, its resources and capabilities, is an indispensable qualification for the doing good. The great fountain of religious truth is found in the oracles of God; and these should be daily and devoutly studied. The Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms of the Old Testament; history, prophecy, the preceptive and didactic portions of the ancient Scriptures. The entire body of revealed truth in the Old Testament will be found profitable for teaching, for conviction, and instruction in righteousness; and this, in connection with the writings of the New, should command our daily attention.

We should study the Scriptures, search into the oracles of God, look intently into the perfect law of liberty, and meditate upon the Word of God day and night; and thus with our fortitude mingle knowledge, and give to it eyes, and light, and all necessary intelligence. It is the entrance of God's Word that giveth light — that gives understanding to the simple.

4th. In your knowledge, furnish self-control. This word is rendered "temperance," in the common version, and by others "continence," but neither words fully represent the force of the original. The former as well as the latter are but forms of self-control — specifications under a general head. Self-control is a noble but difficult virtue. It regulates the passions, appetites, and propensities of the inner man, and requires the utmost effort of the will, and an enlightened judgment; and therefore is allied to knowledge.

In this, as in all the specifications enumerated in this formula, there appears to be a most apt and suitable relationship existing. Knowledge does not always associate itself with duty; the one often outstrips the other, if indeed it is not too often thought to be superior to it "Knowledge puffs up — love builds up." It will be seen, then, how important that self-control shall blend itself with knowledge; the one acting as a check, as well as a guide to the other. This virtue is indispensable to the formation of all those habits which give dignity to the man, and secures him against the many temptations to self-indulgence which lie around him. It allies itself to all that is heroic and sublime in our moral actions; making us disinterested

and self-sacrificing; exalting the mind above all that is mean and base; repressing all that is mercenary and illiberal; correcting all that is immoral and vicious; imparting strength of mind to guard against the weakness of the flesh; giving courage to the irresolute, wisdom to the indiscreet, and assistance to the weak side of our nature, and all necessary aid to calm and control, as well as to subdue, the foibles and failings of the flesh. It leads us to give due credit to the excellence of ethers; to endow us with a noble disinterestedness, which will not permit us to look so much on our own things as on the things of others; rebuking all egotism, self-love, self-indulgence, and self-interest. Truly, this is a noble virtue, and, when mixed with knowledge, it is Godlike — Christlike!

5th. In your self-control, furnish patience. As self-control is a difficult virtue, and one in constant demand, how important that the ingredient of patience should mix with it, to give it permanency and endurance!

To be weary in well-doing, to be faint in the day of temptation, to cease to war against the flesh for a single hour, is dangerous to our character, and is the harbinger of apostasy. A patient continuance in well-doing is necessary to the attainment of eternal life. Habits often are extremely inveterate. Take, for instance, the life of the intemperate. By the most strenuous efforts, he may overcome his love for the use of strong drink; for years he may exercise the most perfect self-control; but, if, by temptation, he is overcome, if he exercises not patience or perseverance, one fatal cup may undo the labour and the self-denial of years.

These virtues, like all the rest, are related to each other, and we see the wisdom and the fitness of blending them together, to form the perfect character of the Christian. All that is embraced in the ideas of wakefulness, vigilance, and painstaking; all that we understand by the terms, to plod, to ply, to persist, in the path of duty, we find in this word, patience. It stands opposed to inaction, when effort is demanded, either for our own good or that of others; to sloth, the rust of the soul, which blunts its edge, and renders it inefficient. It rouses the sleepy, it rebukes the laggard, it quickens the supine. It prompts us to assiduity in the life of self-denial and obedience ready for every good work — holding fast the beginning of our confidence and the boasting of our hope to the end.

6th. In your patience, furnish “godliness.” This is a still higher

element of character, as it allies itself to all that is divine in the life of the Christian. Enduing our patience with an attribute of heavenly birth, it relates us to God, who always acts like himself. All that we understand by veneration for what is sacred, sanctity in our life, and consecration of our persons to the Most High, are to be found in this element of character. It is the highest religious attribute in the life of the Christian, rendering him saintly; enshrining within the soul, God; cherishing all holy thoughts, all heavenly desires, all devout affections. It leads us to worship, to adore, to pay homage to the Father of Spirits; to offer up prayers and supplications with thanksgivings; to observe all the duties, private and public, which Christianity enjoins, as a religious institution — steadfastly continuing in the teaching of the Apostle — the contribution — the breaking of bread and prayers.

It stands opposed to all will-worship, idolatry, and self-immolation; it forbids all sorcery and magic, all necromancy and fascination, all second-sight, ancient or modern, and all that is understood by exorcism and spirit-rapping; elevating the soul far above all these unworthy and malignant influences, and leading it to find its chief solace in the knowledge of God, his worship and praise.

It leads us to abjure all allegiance to man in matters of religion, under whatever name or designation — Pontifical, Episcopal, canonical — to call no man master but One in religion, and no one Father in the true spiritual sense of that word, but God.

It receives not into its vocabulary “Primates,” “Archbishops,” or “Prelates,” “Deans,” “Prebendaries,” or “Canons,” “Popes,” “Pontiffs,” or “Cardinals.”

It has no monks or friars, no nuns or novices, no lay-brothers or mendicants, no Carmelites or Campbellites. It has no matins or vespers, no Eucharist or christening, no water sprinkling or pouring, no rosary or pyx, no tiara, triple crown or crosier, no Easter.

These belong not to the elements of godliness, but must be classed under the head of the Apostasy, and belong to the dominion of him who sits in the Temple of God, and receives worship from his devotees as if he were a God. From such turn away.

7th. In your godliness furnish brotherly kindness.

The element of godliness at once suggests the idea of sonship, of children of the Divine Father, of wearing the image of the

incorruptible God. Under the reign of the Messiah all the subjects are sons, sons of God by a birth and an adoption, and because they are sons, God has sent forth the spirit of his Son into their hearts, by which they cry “Abba — Father.” But as the relationship of sons implies other relationships; being sons, they are brothers, and whilst the filial affections grow out of the one the fraternal grows out of the other. We are taught of God to love one another.

Love to the brotherhood is the new commandment of the new institution. It is a “gem of purest ray serene,” enchased in the golden casket of godliness, their colours interfusing and their light mellowing each other. It is a treasure worthy the divine setting it receives. It is as a star shining all alone in the heavens, anticipating the trooping heraldry of night.

It was among the last of the precepts given by our Saviour to his disciples.

It was the utterance of a great thought which lay nearest his heart, which the affecting scenes then before him did not so much absorb as give to it intensity. How brilliant is this gem when set in godliness! The softening shadow of the one blends itself with the light and beauty of the other. It is a jewel worth a kingdom. Love abides and shall abide for ever. It is the greatest of the noble three. Like the three warriors in the army of David, this has won eternal fame!

8th. But the spirit of benevolence, breathed in Christianity, is as broad as the divine philanthropy, and therefore another setting is introduced by this Christian philosopher, a gem within a gem, a jewel enchased within a jewel.

The Apostle adds — “In brotherly kindness — love.” This is the crowning virtue; it is the end of the sacred list enumerated by the Apostle, and, in the language of Paul, it is the end of the commandment. “The end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, out of a good conscience, and out of faith unfeigned.”

We will only add: “For these things being yours and increasing, render you not idle or unfruitful as to the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ — for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall. For so there shall be richly furnished you the entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

THE END.