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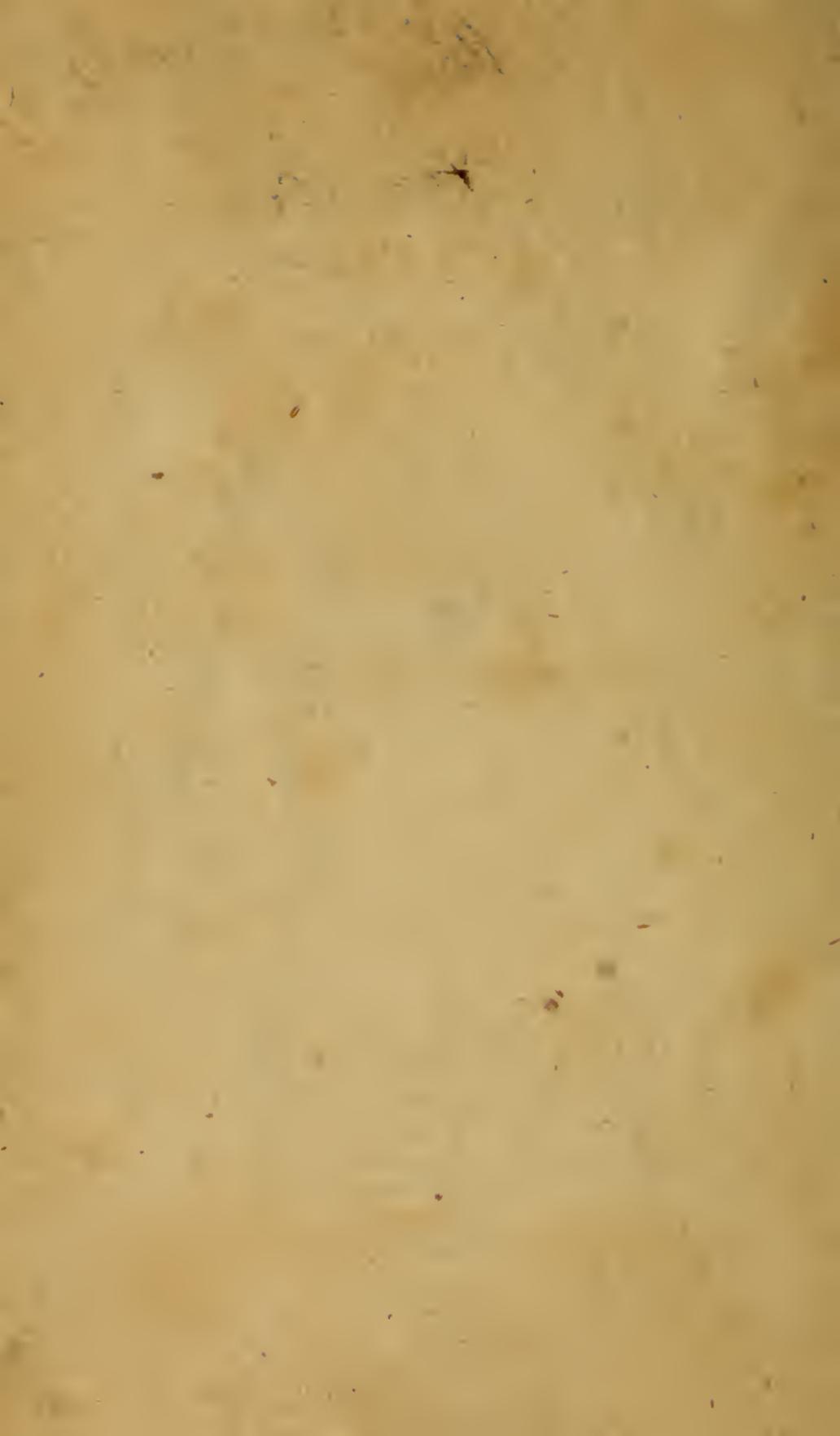
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ESSAYS

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INQUIRIES

RESPECTING

THE GIFTS AND THE TEACHERS

OF THE

Primitive Churches.

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BY ALEXANDER MACLEOD.

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1813.



## PREFACE.

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**I**F the gospel of Christ, which is “the power of God unto salvation,” is infinitely the most important subject with which the human mind can be engaged, we must assign to public teaching, which is the “manifestation of the truth,” a very high place among the positive institutions of Jesus. By the publication of his own word, God has prepared multitudes for a happy and glorious immortality—a result for which the “wisdom of this world” was perfectly inadequate. “For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by (what was reckoned) the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe.”

How much also on the state of public teaching depends the benefit which we derive from other divine ordinances. The propriety and fervour of our prayers to God, our delight and animation in the singing of his praise, and our discernment and consolation in showing forth the Lord’s death, as well as our general regard to the commandments of God, will ordinarily correspond to the measure of spiritual understanding and enjoyment which he is pleased to impart to us by means of public teaching. “Take heed unto thyself and unto thy doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”

The Lord therefore has given to the church the

promise of pastors and teachers; and the church, without glorying in men, hath reason to bless God for these means of edification and comfort. Although “neither is he that planteth (*comparatively*) any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase,” it seemed good in his sight to appoint the labour of planting and watering, in order to “cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all nations.”

Every change therefore made on the ordinance of public teaching, must be followed by a train of great practical consequences. Even when the truth is not kept back, corrupted or opposed, any material defect in the manner of its communication, greatly obstructs its success. Is this affected, perplexed, feeble, uninteresting, cold and tedious—or is it perspicuous, eloquent, animated, powerful and affectionate—and will not the consequences differ immensely? Consider how small a portion of time is devoted to public teaching! To the soldier, the traveller, or the labourer, who has but short intervals for rest and refreshment, it is not of small moment, whether, in those intervals, he is fed with wheat or with chaff—with strong meat, or with milk only. Jesus has appointed one day in seven for a season of special rest and refreshment for the souls of his disciples. Only a part of that time can be devoted to teaching; and as but *one* can be heard at once, we ought not merely to consider, whether that one be a wise or a weak man—we ought also to determine, whether he has need to be taught himself “the first principles of the oracles of God;” or whether, as a “scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven,” he “bringeth forth out of his treasure *things* new and old.”

The subject of public teaching has been much discussed within a few years in a series of publications. More than three-fourths of these have defended the practice of promiscuous teaching or exhortation, in opposition to those in which it is maintained, that public teaching is the work of teachers only; that is, of qualified and selected persons. On both sides, it is allowed that the decision of this question not a little involves the interests of religion. And we presume, that the comparative loss of edification, is not the only evil resulting from adherence to the wrong side of it. The influence of this on the temper, unanimity, subordination, harmony, peace and usefulness of Christians, is truly a matter of very serious consideration.

The present question, we confess, is not at all a novelty in the church of Christ. Among the Puritans, and others also, both in this and foreign countries, there were persons who defended either promiscuous teaching, or something very like it. They who now defend the practice, tell us, that even the late Mr. Newton of London objected to the dissenters in England that it was neglected by them. This coincidence in the opinions of men of different ages and countries, will probably be regarded as strong evidence of the truth of these opinions. But coincidences of this kind may be brought to support both sides of almost any question. The Scriptures must be fulfilled. "There is no new thing under the sun." The older any opinion is, and the more it has been received, there is the louder call to examine whether it has any foundation in the word of God.

After a long, a full, and minute investigation of this subject, to which the writer of these pages was at first led, in circumstances exceedingly pre-disposing

to the adoption of the sentiments which he has been compelled to reject, he is fully convinced, that in the first churches there was no such thing as an ordinance of exhortation by the brethren at large, distinct from the public discourses of prophets and teachers. This to many is a most obnoxious doctrine. They consider it to be chargeable with hiding what has been splendidly called "the gifts of the brethren," with hindering the reformation of churches and the progress of the gospel, with favouring the claims and pretensions of priestcraft, and with being a fit associate for the corruptions of national churches, if not of popery. Some, or all these charges, have been brought against it in various publications, according to the zeal of their respective authors. Our's then is the unpopular and ungracious side of the question. Our arguments besides are supposed to be clearly and irrefragably confuted, and the question to be completely and forever set at rest, in favour of promiscuous exhortation.

From the foregoing observations, the reader may be induced to conclude, that the whole of these pages are of a controversial nature. This, however, is not the case. Our object has been to represent the actual state of things in the first age, and to notice occasionally what others have said respecting it. No doubt some may think we have attended too much to the statements of our brethren who differ from us. But be this as it may, we readily allow, that mere argumentation of any kind is of little moment, compared with the illustration of divine truth; and we trust, that accordingly a considerable portion of the following pages will be found employed in attempting to elucidate such passages and events of Scripture as serve to place in a clear and just light the subject of

inquiry. It is pleasing to turn from the opinions of men to the oracles of God. "The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein."

Among those who fear God, there is but one opinion as to the importance of understanding the actual state of things in the first Christian churches. To what extent soever good men think themselves bound to conform to the primitive practice, or whatever allowance they contend should be made for difference of circumstances, they all profess that the Scriptures alone are the only rule of faith and practice. All accordingly endeavour to enforce their several opinions and usages by producing what they conceive to be Scripture authority. And how pleasing is it to consider, that amidst the jarring of divers opinions relative to matters of inferior moment, every genuine believer firmly adheres to the never-failing "faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

It is obvious, that conclusions so different as 'teaching by select persons only,' and 'teaching by the brethren promiscuously,' must be drawn from different premises, or different views of the practice of the first churches; and that on the one side or on the other, this practice has been misunderstood. It may not therefore be improper to point out the difference between the manner in which those who argue for indiscriminate teaching determine the practice of the first churches, and the way in which we endeavour to ascertain what that practice really was.

First then, they so blend together the gifts of the first churches, and the gifts which they suppose to be now possessed, and so represent under one view the primitive practice and their own, that the one cannot

be contemplated without beholding the other. Hence, if the difference between the primitive practice and their own were ever so great, the reader is necessarily impressed, in consequence of this mode of interweaving them, with the idea that they are precisely the same. The primitive prophets and other gifted men are usually called "the brethren," or "members of the church," and their public exercises, "the exercises of the gifts of the brethren," and not of the prophets and teachers. From this an easy and seemingly natural transition is made to modern church members, and their exhortations. Take an example from Mr Carson: 'The circumstance of the brethren of the first churches possessing miraculous gifts, is no more a reason why brethren who have not miraculous gifts should not exhort,' &c. Now supposing that the brethren referred to were select individuals, who, in consequence of having received extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, taught as prophets and teachers, can any thing be more confounding in description, or more unjust in argument, than to place them on the same level, and to give them merely the same designation with private unofficial church-members in the present day?

Secondly, we remark, that they attend but occasionally, and some of them not at all, to what was *actually done* in the first age. The manner of each will appear afterwards; for they materially differ the one from the other. They rest the sentiment, not so much on points of fact as on matters of theory—on such passages as "edify one another," and "comfort one another with these words." Such admonitions, though acknowledged by themselves to be addressed to all indiscriminately without respect to age, sex, or

condition, establish with them a distinct public institution. But to the endowments, designations and character of those who are known to have actually taught, they pay but little regard; and some of them even censure those who act otherwise. In short, they explain the general precepts which were delivered to the primitive disciples, independently of the particular usages which unquestionably existed among them. About these usages our brethren differ at least as much from one another as they do from us. Hence they disagree about the *foundation*, however they seem to unite in raising the *superstructure*.

In the following pages, we hope that the eye of the inquirer will, if we do not deceive ourselves, be pretty uniformly directed to the circumstances and usages of the first churches only. We have endeavoured not to blend with these any existing system whatever; but to represent the institution of God unmixed and unencumbered with either our own practice or that of others. And how indeed can we copy the pattern shown in the mount, if we daub that pattern (let our intention be ever so good) with colouring of our own?

Again, it may be observed, that instead of appealing to the general precepts referred to for a complete representation, or indeed any representation at all, of the public teaching of the first churches, we follow what appears to us a more excellent way. We think it incumbent on us to prefer matter of fact to theory; and in the present case we have it in our power to do so. We endeavour first of all to ascertain the nature of the gifts which are known to have been communicated to the first believers of the gospel; we examine in what manner, and to what extent, these gifts were

communicated ; and we contemplate their actual teaching and worship in public, as exhibited “ in deed and in truth,” and not as described by argument and induction from theoretical premises or precepts expressed in general terms.

By some it will doubtless be concluded from this view of the plan which we propose to follow, that instead of exhibiting the practice of the first churches, a vain attempt is made to explain the subject of spiritual gifts—a subject which is said to be exceedingly obscure, and at any rate but little connected with teaching and exhortation. Yet they who speak most strongly of the difficulty of this subject, have themselves argued from the practice of inspired men in favour of promiscuous teaching by those uninspired.

The subject of spiritual gifts is considered as obscure, because we have no experience of these. But it ought to be remembered, that, as matters of fact, miracles and inspiration, which constitute the subject of spiritual gifts, are as clear and intelligible to us as are many of the events of ancient, and even of modern times, of which we have no experience. What experience have we of the genius of Milton, or of the talents of Newton? Have we any experience of the climates and customs of distant regions? Have we felt as they do who live under a vertical sun? or do they feel as we do in the severity of a winter storm? It was the want of this kind of experience which made the king of Siam expel as deceivers the European missionaries who informed him of the ordinary appearances of an European winter. With equal reason, and on the same principle, our countryman Hume has argued that a miracle is contrary to experience, and therefore impossible, or at least impossible to be proved.

The effects of miraculous agency, like the ordinary occurrences of providence, were as evident to persons of the weakest, as to those of the strongest capacity. As matters of fact, miracles are still as level to our apprehension as any historical event whatever. Can any thing be more evident, than that Moses and the prophets were inspired? that Jesus wrought miracles? that the Holy Spirit fell upon the disciples? and that they consequently prophesied, spoke in foreign tongues, preached the gospel to mankind, and did many wonderful works? Is it not as clear that Stephen, Philip, Timothy and Titus preached the gospel of Christ by means of extraordinary gifts, as that Luther, Knox, Whitfield and Swartz preached the same gospel without such endowments? Nor is it less clear, that Jesus healed the ear of Malchus by miracle, than that Peter had cut it off with a sword? or that the apostle John spoke Greek by inspiration, as that Rabshakeh spoke in the language of the Jews without inspiration? Curious, unprofitable questions do not in the least invalidate the evidence of plain well-attested facts of whatever kind; nor ought curious and speculative questions about known events, to interfere with practical considerations which flow from their nature and effects. If this endeavour is worthy of being committed to the care and influence of the Head of the church, no doubt he will give a blessing with it. But if, by endeavours of this kind, we should not greatly contribute to the prosperity of the church of Christ, we may yet promote its prosperity and our own, by frequent fervent prayers for her to the God of all grace. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee."

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## ESSAY I



*On the Difference between Spiritual Gifts, and the saving Influence of the Holy Spirit.*

ALTHOUGH in many cases it may now be difficult to determine whether the abilities of a Christian are competent to the work of public teaching, or adapted for the performance of private duties only, there can be no difficulty in pointing out the wide and obvious difference between the ordinary and extraordinary operation of the Holy Spirit. A clear understanding of this difference lies at the foundation of just views of the means by which public worship was conducted in the first churches, their instruction and growth were promoted, and the conversion of unbelievers was accomplished. We shall therefore endeavour to point it out with care, but with all possible brevity. And first of all, a few remarks will be made on the terms by which the spiritual gifts are in general denominated.

In various passages, the epithet *spiritual*, is alone employed to denote spiritual gifts. Our translators have therefore inserted the word *gifts*, and marked it as a supplement, in 1 Cor. xii. 1. xiv. 1. 12. In other passages of Scripture, gifts are denoted by this word alone, without the epithet *spiritual*. Only in one place does this epithet occur, where the word gift

is also added: "For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift," Rom. i. 11. Dr Owen observes, that 'whenever they are called *πνευματικα*, there *χαρισματα*, denoting their *general nature*, is to be supplied; and where they are called *χαρισματα* only, *πνευματικα* is to be understood, as expressing their *especial difference* from all others \*.'

Mr Carson, however, thinks it quite certain, that because the epithet spiritual is connected with the word gift in the passage last quoted, 'this proves, 'that where the word is not thus qualified, it can have 'no such restriction †;' and he is at great pains to establish this position. We shall waive much of what occurs to us *on the other side*, because Mr C. contradicts this himself. He observes, 'The gift referred 'to, 1 Tim. iv. 14. and 2 Tim. i. 6. was a spiritual gift. 'How do we know this? By the name? No, but from 'the circumstances and account of it.' p. 50. Now, the word gift is employed in Scripture to denote various expressions of the munificence of God. And Mr C. observes, p. 48. 'Redemption is called a gift, 'Rom. v. 15, 16. vi. 23.; continence is considered a 'gift, 1 Cor. vii. 7.' But how does Mr C. know these, rather than other things, to be meant in these passages by the word gift? Is it by the name? No, but by the circumstances and account of them. And are not these considerations equally necessary, and equally sufficient, to ascertain in every case the specific application of the word gift? Hence the passages in the epistles to Timothy which are quoted by Mr C. are in direct opposition to his positive affirmation, 'That 'wherever the word gift is not qualified by the epithet

\* Discourse on Spiritual Gifts, p. 111. Edit. 2d, Lond. 1717.

† Carson's Answer to Ewing's Attempt, p. 49.

' spiritual, it cannot be restricted to the extraordinary ' endowments, which have ceased ;' for, in manifest inconsistency with this, he restricts it himself in the preceding quotations, and in others also, (Rom. xii. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 31.) on which to argue would be tedious and fruitless. It may however be of consequence to attend to his remarks on Eph. iv. 7.

' It appears to me,' says Mr C. ' that every thing is ' considered to be a gift which may be called grace. " But unto every one of us is given grace according ' to the measure of the gift of Christ." Besides, ' Christ's giving grace according to the measure of ' his gift, is considered in the 8th verse as the ful- ' filling of the words of the Psalmist, " Wherefore he ' saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity ' captive, and received gifts for men,"' p. 57.—Now, this very consideration is subversive of Mr C.'s hypothesis ; and had he extended the quotation to the following words, *viz.* Apostles, prophets, &c. as the context, to make the sense complete, manifestly requires, his explanation would appear to be exceedingly forced. In reference to the same event, namely, the effusion of the Holy Spirit after the ascension of Jesus, Peter, in addressing the multitude that first witnessed its accomplishment, uses the following words : " Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear," Acts ii. 33. Nothing can be more evident, than that the object of the prophecy of Joel, which was the promise of the Father for which the disciples were to wait at Jerusalem, is *the grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ*, concerning which Paul writes to the Ephesian believers, but

this was not the grace of God in the salvation of men. —Mr C. argues, that as every believer has grace, (that is, saving grace), so every believer must have a spiritual gift. Now this will be allowed, if it can be proved, that the word *grace* always means the saving grace of God, or that, in the place before us, the word has this meaning. The ordinary signification of the word *grace* is well enough understood by Christians in general, and Mr C. need not be told, that *grace* is used as well as *gifts*, in considerable latitude of application; and that its specific meaning must in every place be determined by the connection. But of all the particular acceptations of this word, none occurs more frequently, or is less liable to be misunderstood, than that of *gifts*, and *office*. Speaking of the gospel which he preached among the Gentiles, the apostle says, “Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me, by the effectual working of his power,” Eph. iii. 7. Is not this the very language of the 4th chap. concerning gifts and office? In many other places, the word *grace* has the same import. Rom. i. 5. xii. 3—6. xv. 15. Gal. ii. 9. Eph. iii. 8. 1 Cor. i. 4. iii. 10.

The indefinite phrase in this place, “every one of us,” cannot occasion greater difficulty, nor render its application proper to that grace of which all Christians partake, any more than the same phrase in another place, which refers exclusively to the gifted men. “The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal,” 1 Cor. xii. 7. *Man* is not in the original in any of these places. The expression is elliptical; and the relative supplied must be like the antecedents who are spoken of, namely the persons endowed with supernatural gifts. After enume-

rating the several gifts, the apostle adds, "But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to EVERY MAN severally as he will," ver. 11. As here, so in other places, such phrases as the one in question are frequently used without restriction, in reference to a particular description of men, whether this comprehend a large majority, or only a small minority of the human race, 1 Cor. iv. 5. Therefore, though in point of number, the gifted men were but a certain proportion of the church at large, even as the believers were of the whole of the unbelieving multitude, this indefinite mode of expression would have been as suitable in the one case as in the other, because in both it would have had an indefinite application to the whole of a particular class.

But if the discussion were allowed to rest here, it might perhaps be supposed we had overlooked the connection between the 6th and 7th verses of this chapter; where, of God the Father it is said by the apostle, "who is above all, and through all, and in you all;"—and then verse 7. "But unto every one of us is given grace." Now it does not seem more evident, that "all" in the 6th verse, and "every one" in the 7th, have not the same extent of application, than that the "whole church," and the word "all," in 1 Cor. xiv. are not of equal extent. "If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in *those that are* unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say, that ye are mad? But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or *one* unlearned, he is convicted (convicted) of all, he is judged of all," verses 23, 24. "Are all prophets? do all speak with tongues?" are interrogations which show who those were, who could

*all* speak with tongues and prophesy.—See also Rom. v. 19.—If then the apostle, in Eph. iv. 7. had been speaking of the saving grace of God, his language would have properly comprehended every believer of the gospel ; but since, as we have shown, he evidently speaks of the grace of fitness for peculiar functions in the church of Christ, the word comprehends only those who, in the same place, are particularized as having the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit.

Mr C. is farther of opinion, that ‘ the church at ‘ Corinth, from their carnality valuing these (gifts) ‘ more than those fruits of the Spirit,’ (the Scripture phrase is “ the fruit of the Spirit,”) ‘ which are equally gifts of the Spirit, it appears were beginning to ‘ appropriate to the former the denomination of spiritual gifts,’ p. 50. The supposition, that the Corinthians were *beginning to appropriate* to the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, the denomination of spiritual gifts, *to the exclusion of the fruit of the Spirit*, appears, if not the most indefensible, certainly one of the most conjectural and ill grounded in all his book. Paul is the only person by whom the denomination in question is thus applied. The fruit of the Spirit is no where called spiritual gifts ; and if the Corinthians were carnal in withholding from it this denomination, why does the apostle not reprehend, but rather sanction this carnality, by always applying this language to the gifts, but never to the fruit of the Spirit ? ‘ But,’ says Mr C. ‘ that they are not exclusively gifts, ‘ is both clear in itself, for whatever the Spirit of God ‘ communicates must be a spiritual gift, and is also ‘ clear from what the apostle teaches on the subject,’ p. 50. In the latter part of the sentence he refers to 1 Cor. xii. 1., &c. which the reader may consult for

himself. With respect to the assertion, that it is clear in itself, for whatever the Spirit of God communicates must be a spiritual gift, we presume the fallacy of this will be made manifest in the sequel. In the mean time, we observe, that the Spirit of God operates universally in all the works of God. "By his Spirit he garnished the heavens," Job xxvi. 13. The Spirit of the Lord bestowed martial skill and valour on the judges and kings of Israel, Judg. iii. 10. vi. 34. Psal. cxliv. It was said to Mary, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee,"—to which is attributed the conception of the Son of God, Luke i. 35. The re-animation of the bodies of the saints will be effected by the same power, Rom. viii. 11. Now in all these operations, something is supposed to be communicated or effected, as well as when gifts and fruit are spoken of; but how preposterous would it be, to call the something communicated, for instance in the resurrection, a spiritual gift? yet Mr Carson's argument requires this palpable misapplication of the language of Scripture. Indeed to explain the meaning of words by the nature of things, in opposition to their actual and established acceptance, which is the *jus et norma loquendi*, would introduce universal confusion and uncertainty, and even sanction as the soundest logic, the versatile vexatious practice of punning and playing upon words.

The foregoing remarks will, we are afraid, appear to some to be too extended on a topic which may perhaps be deemed by them a mere strife of words. Here then we shall have done with it, and proceed to show wherein consisted the difference between the fruit of the Spirit, and the spiritual gifts.

8      *On the Difference between Spiritual Gifts,*

1st, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," Gal. v. The spiritual gifts are such as "prophecy, tongues, the interpretation of tongues, and the working of miracles." The latter are accordingly distinguishable from the former, as the implements of the husbandman are from the produce of the soil. Spiritual gifts were given for the purpose of cultivating and bringing to maturity the fruit of the Spirit. "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. For we are labourers together of God: ye are God's husbandry; ye are God's building," 1 Cor. iii. 6. 9.

2d, As a further illustration of the difference between the fruit of the Spirit and the spiritual gifts, we may remark, that the former was produced only by believers, while the latter were possessed by some who never knew the Lord after a saving manner. In order to bring forth good fruit, the tree must be good; but without this quality it may be adorned with goodly gifts. These several effects of the agency of the Spirit not only differ from each other, but they are in a manner contrasted in the 13th chapter of 1 Cor. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have *the gift* of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing." Here it is supposed that a man destitute of love, the most eminent fruit of the Spirit, might notwithstanding possess the most useful and splendid spiritual gifts. Balaam, Saul the son of Cis, and Judas Iscariot, with many others, Heb. vi. 4, 5. had for a time extraordinary gifts, but never the fruit of

the Spirit. On the other side, all genuine believers have produced the latter, while few comparatively ever enjoyed the former. By means of the extraordinary operation of the Spirit, men indeed became servants, qualified for every kind of office in the church; but by his ordinary operation, they became sons in the house of God\*. Saving grace takes possession of the whole man, transforms the soul into the image of God, and imparts to it a new and holy nature. Not only is the mind savingly enlightened, but a principle of spiritual life is infused into the soul, by which it is disposed and enabled to consecrate all its powers to the service of God in faith, and love and holiness. But gifts have not this efficacy. They may indeed in the exercise of them greatly move the affections of their possessor; but they do not cleanse the heart, they do not renew the mind, nor transform the soul into the image of God. These different results corresponded to the design of each kind of spiritual influence. That of his extraordinary agency, of which the accompanying symbols were a mighty rushing wind, and cloven tongues of fire, was to deliver to the church the oracles of God; and to confirm the inspiration of them, "by signs, and wonders, and various miracles:" that of his ordinary influence, which is often compared to the dew of heaven, was to endow men with the understanding, faith and love of the doctrine of Scripture, to purify their hearts from the defilement of sin, and to enable them to observe the laws and institutions of the word of God.

The fact, that men who were unsanctified in heart did notwithstanding possess extraordinary gifts, being

\* Some sentences following are in substance borrowed from Dr Owen, though the expression be different.

undeniable, it therefore follows, that to be “born of the Spirit,” “to have the Spirit himself bearing witness with their spirits that they are the children of God,” “to have the love of God shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Spirit,” “to be sealed by that Holy Spirit of promise,” to have the earnest of the Spirit in their hearts,” “to abound in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit,”—it follows, that all these things are included in the saving operation of the Spirit, and they are accordingly effected in believers, only as the subjects of redeeming mercy. “BECAUSE YE ARE SONS, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father,” Gal. iv. 6. But none of these things could possibly belong to gifted men as such, because some miraculously gifted persons were not the sons of God; nor will any one pronounce holiness, love, hope and joy, effects of miraculous operation. Such men as Judas were not sealed by the Spirit until the day of redemption. “Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?” Hence the affecting declaration of the Lord Jesus; “Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then I will profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity,” Mat. vii. 22, 23.

Although persons of very different characters were sometimes the subjects of the ordinary and extraordinary operation of the Spirit, we may just observe, in order to avoid misconception, that for most part gifts were conferred only on genuine believers, that unbelievers retained their gifts no longer than they continued to maintain a credible profession of the

gospel, and that though some inspired believers fell into glaring sins, yet saving grace and spiritual gifts being mutually helpful to each, none excelled in respect of either, so much as those who at the same time enjoyed the benefit of both extraordinary illumination, and also the blessing of that ordinary saving illumination, which is the peculiar privilege of the saints\*.

3d, Extraordinary powers were given to men perhaps *not until long after they had believed the gospel*, but the saving influence of the Spirit invariably and of necessity accompanied *the reception of the gospel* at the very first; for it is undeniable that men receive the Holy Spirit when they believe, Prov. i. 23. Eph. i. 13.

4th, The fruit of the Spirit is attributed also to the Word of God, without which it is never produced by the agency of the Spirit alone. The illumination of the mind, the renewal of the heart, and the subsequent improvement, comfort and usefulness of believers, are attributed respectively to the efficacy of the word and the operation of the Spirit; and hence to the joint influence of both these causes, 1 Pet. i. 22, 23. Rom. xv. 13. 2 Thess. ii. 13. But miraculous effects are produced by the agency of the Spirit alone: the word, as in the other case, is not said to be the cause of these. Hence the peculiarity of the language of Scripture respecting the extraordinary influence under which inspired men both spoke and acted. Sometimes the Spirit is represented as being himself the only speaker: "As the Holy Ghost saith, To-

\* Various proofs of this might be mentioned, which are here omitted, for the sake of brevity.

day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart." "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith." "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Sometimes he is spoken of as using the instrumentality of men. "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word *was* in my tongue." Again, we find the testimony and decision of the Spirit distinguished from those of the individuals by whom he spoke to men. "The Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me; and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things." The Spirit is also represented as absolutely governing men in reference to particular actions. Jesus "was led by the Spirit into the wilderness." "And now, behold," said Paul, "I go bound by the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things which shall befall me there." But sometimes by a different construction, the Spirit is considered as if he were merely a subordinate agent, or the means by which inspired men spoke or acted. Simeon "came by the Spirit into the temple." "How then doth David by the Spirit call him Lord." "Agabus signified by the Spirit, that there should be a great dearth throughout all the world." "No man, speaking by the Spirit, calleth Jesus accursed; and no man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." "He that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue, speaketh not unto men but unto God; for no man understandeth *him*: howbeit by the Spirit he speaketh mysteries." This latter kind of phraseology is indeed employed to express the spiritual influence common

to all believers, Rom. viii. 13, 14. Yet in the passages last quoted, and in some others, where the same phraseology is used, the scope of the connection renders it abundantly striking and unequivocal, as expressive of that influence which was extraordinary, and which therefore is not combined with the efficacy of the word of God.

The work of the Spirit of God may be illustrated from that spiritual influence which is the direct reverse of it. It is incontrovertibly a doctrine of Scripture, that Satan employs a fatal influence on the minds of all wicked men, Acts xxvi. 18. Eph. ii. 2.; the ordinary effects of which are, ignorance, pride, entire pollution of soul, and the perversion of the powers of the mind and body to the service of sin, especially to the malevolent work of persecuting the saints. "He that committeth sin is of the devil." "Cain was of that wicked one, and slew his brother: And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you," 1 John iii. 8. 12, 13. But actual possession by demons has been confined to a few only of the human race. In these, the evil spirits are said to have spoken, using, no doubt, the organs of the possessed. Unusual mental faculties, and prodigious bodily strength, were sometimes the consequences of demoniacal agency, Mark v. 3, 4. Acts xvi. 16. The afflictions brought upon human beings by means of evil spirits, were altogether singular and affecting; such as, a state of extreme and peculiar insanity, violent, excessive agitations and convulsions of body, and both dumbness and deafness preternaturally induced. The remedy for these terrible afflictions lay in the extraordinary agency of the Holy

Spirit. Jesus gave the twelve disciples "power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases," Luke ix. 1. On the other hand, the cure for the more malignant and fatal, though apparently easy and imperceptible influence of the devil in the adversaries of Christ, is contained in that benign and secret energy of the Holy Spirit, which accompanies the gospel of the grace of God. "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will," 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26.

5th, Extraordinary illumination was connected with extraordinary elocution, ordinary illumination imparted no unusual faculty of utterance. God has indeed not only connected, but in general proportioned intelligence and language in the constitution of all rational beings. The poverty of ideas in savages and children, bears an exact proportion to the fewness of their words; while advancement in knowledge, and the growth of the reasoning faculty in enlightened people, are marked by a corresponding acquaintance with the meaning and powers of language. The connection between words and ideas remarkably appeared in Adam before the fall, on an occasion thus marked by our great poet Milton:

I nam'd them, as they pass'd, and understood  
 Their nature, with such knowledge God endu'd  
 My sudden apprehension:————

Yet we must distinguish the knowledge of the meaning and powers of language, from the faculty of a ready elocution; for many persons of extensive in-

formation have been bad orators. Nor must we confound an irksome unedifying loquaciousness, with the freedom of speech which has been happily employed to convey to society the intellectual treasures of the wise and good. This freedom of speech (*παρρησια*) was remarkably the privilege of inspired men. Supernatural clearness, vivacity and strength of conception, were expressed by that clear, animated, energetic language, which, above every human composition, adorns the sacred Scriptures. Both the thought and expression having been given by the same Spirit, knowledge and utterance went hand in hand, Psalm xlvi. 1. Matt. x. 19, 20. also ch. xxi. 15. 1 Cor. ii. 13. —Ordinary illumination is distinguishable from this, as not being necessarily connected with great elocution. Can it be a matter of doubt, whether any one may be so taught by the Holy Spirit as to have his understanding enlightened,—his heart melted and made glad by a sense of redeeming love,—his will made subject to the law of God, and his affections purified and set on heavenly things, without any other means of expressing the thoughts and feelings of his soul, than merely broken sentences rendered abundantly intelligible and delightful by lively emotions and a countenance glistening with joy? The degree of utterance, however, of which Christians in general are possessed, is known from experience; the perfection of this in inspired persons is evident in Scripture.

The highest degree therefore of the ordinary work of the Spirit in the illumination of believers, is not to be compared, as the means of teaching others, with the very lowest degree of his work in the inspiration by which the doctrine of Scripture was given to mankind; neither dreams, visions, and other original and

extraordinary revelations, nor the knowledge of future events, as the names, characters and actions of persons to be born, the revolutions of kingdoms, and the vicissitudes of the church of God, belong to the spiritual understanding which is common to the saints. Nor is the performance of any kind of miracle effected by the largest measure of the grace by which they fulfil the benevolent and self-denied duties of their Christian profession. And in regard to those who stately taught in the churches, the effects of spiritual gifts being called revelation, knowledge, prophecy, and doctrine, 1 Cor. xiv. 6. 26. which things are all to be connected with corresponding utterance, ch. i. 5. manifests how wide the difference as teachers, was between them and their brethren who had not spiritual gifts. Gifts were given for one end, saving grace for another. Considering then the declared intention and the known effects of each, it seems as inconsiderate and erroneous to affirm, that saving grace alone fitted men to be teachers, as that spiritual gifts made them saints. Therefore until "the heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly," there is no scripture authority for employing them as teachers.

6th, The saving work of the Spirit, though in every case made manifest in its effects, was quiet, reserved, unobtrusive, compared with his miraculous operation, which was energetic, bold, impetuous, brilliant and irresistible. By means of the former, the church of Christ received a new life; by means of the latter, it became an organized body. The one resembled the insensible actions of the vital spirit in all the stages from infancy to manhood, the other may be likened to the ostensible actions of man as he came vigorous and

perfect from the hands of the Creator, or to the mighty achievements of gigantic strength.—Accordingly no visible signs ever accompanied the communication of the Spirit in making men partakers of eternal life. But miraculous powers were imparted with the accompaniment of visible signs, which arrested the attention of beholders. On our blessed Lord the Spirit descended in the form of a dove. Cloven tongues of fire, and a mighty rushing wind, accompanied the communication of gifts to the hundred and twenty disciples. On others generally who received the gifts of the Spirit, the apostles laid their hands. But whether these signs took place or not, the effects of extraordinary gifts gave evidence of their existence. It was presently known, that Eldad and Medad prophesied in the camp, that Saul also was among the prophets, and that the spirit of Elijah rested on Elisha. On the day of Pentecost, in the family of Cornelius, and in the city of Ephesus, the believers spoke with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. We need not multiply examples. The grand incontrovertible evidence which then attested the veracity of the preachers of the gospel, was the testimony which God bore them, “both with signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will,” Heb. ii. 4. Hence of every gift in particular it is said, “the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every one to profit withal,” 1 Cor. xii.

7th, The last point of difference which we shall notice, is, that the one dispensation of the Spirit was intended to be temporary, the other to be permanent. This indeed is the principal reason why we distinguish between them, as either ordinary or extraordinary. The cessation in the church of extraordinary gifts, (probably

at the decease of the gifted brethren of the first age), seems to be intimated by Paul in his first epistle to the Corinthians. “Charity never faileth, but whether *there be* prophccies, they shall fail, whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away,” ch. xiii. 8. That they did cease, is certain; but that there was an influence of the Spirit to be enjoyed by the church in all ages, is equally certain; this being not only implied in the continuance of the fruit of the Spirit, verse 13. but clearly and positively promised in the everlasting covenant, which the Lord Jesus ratified by the shedding of his blood. Compare Isaiah lix. 20, 21. with Heb. viii. 10, 11.

But though the extraordinary dispensation of the Spirit has ceased, the benefits of it have not ceased; we richly enjoy the greatest of them in the oracles of God. Yet when we consider, that the immediate consequence of that which was temporary, was merely the appointment to office in the church, of the persons who were subjects of it, while the effect of that which is permanent is the restoration of the church itself to the image and enjoyment of God, may we not say with the apostle on another occasion, “If that which is done away *was* glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious,” 2 Cor. iii. 11.

Did some consider this subject, they would not scornfully reject the doctrine of divine influence, as the abiding privilege of the church of God; nor would they deride the enjoining of the practical holiness of the apostolic age, as an extravagant pretension to vie with apostles and prophets; they would not sneer at the idea of divine teaching and aid, in order to understand and obey the will of God revealed in Scripture, as if this were professing to have the gift of inspiration. Either the fruit of the Spirit does not exist at

all, or it is still produced by the Spirit as in former times. None indeed can consistently deny, that the Holy Spirit is the author of love, joy, peace, except those who deny that such things are essential to Christian character. In fact, they speak of the church of God in former times, and of the church of God now, as the heathen poets did of the golden and iron ages of the world. And they may well do so, if the Spirit of God does not now, as formerly, illuminate, renew and comfort the heirs of salvation. But know, O man! whosoever thou art that thus judgest, if God spared not some who prophesied, cast out devils, and did many wonderful works, because they imitated not the holy example of Jesus and of his genuine disciples, neither will he spare thee! "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live," Rom. viii. 13.

Inattention to the difference between the miraculous and saving operation of the Spirit, has doubtless opened a wide door for the introduction of manifold and pernicious errors. Some who have degraded the gospel of God into a system of cold philosophical speculation, or a defective code of unsanctified morality, have, by greatly confounding the ordinary with the extraordinary work of the Spirit of God, almost entirely got rid of the doctrine of divine influence in the salvation of men. Others, running to the opposite extreme, have claimed as a common privilege, and explained as matters of their own experience, various extraordinary operations which have ceased. 'Almost all the enthusiastical errors, which are recorded in church history have arisen from this source\*.' Accordingly, many deluded persons have in every age carried on a wild traffic in dreams, visions, notices,

\* Ewing's Attempt, p. 42.

signs, omens, revelations, impressions, and divers prognostications. Some, as the French prophets in the reign of Queen Anne, have professed to be supernaturally inspired, and to be endowed with the power of working great miracles, as the raising of the dead. These strong delusions are greatly subservient to the devices of the adversary of souls, and to the calumnies of despisers of the gospel and of spiritual worship, who never fail to misrepresent the illumination and enjoyment common to all the children of God, by associating their scriptural profession of "these necessary things" with the extravagant pretensions to extraordinary communications of visionaries and rhapsodists.

But though it were highly unjust to class good men, on account of partial mistakes, with those who wander to the extremes of error, it must be acknowledged to be a frequent mistake among even good men, to associate together in doctrinal discussions, and to apply to the common experience of the saints, passages of Scripture, which doubtless speak of the peculiar state and duties of inspired persons. Not that ordinary Christians are supposed now to speak or act by the inspiration of the Spirit, but they who did so, being in certain passages, viewed by some expositors as in the ordinary condition of believers, and not in their extraordinary one of inspired persons, these passages are therefore erroneously applied to the ordinary agency of the Holy Spirit; as, for instance, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day," Rev. i. 10. Mr Riccaltoun of Hobkirk, who makes excellent remarks on "the Spirit and inspiration," has yet in part forgotten to distinguish between the two grand dispensations of the Spirit. 'All,' he says, 'who believed in Christ, had the Spirit given them, even in a sensible manner, by the laying on of the hands of

‘ the apostles ; insomuch that the apostle says expressly, “ If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” ’ Here the communication of spiritual gifts by the hands of the apostles, is injudiciously confounded with his indispensable influence on all who believe. Again, he observes, ‘ There never was, nor ever will be, a real Christian, who is not as really inspired with the truths of the gospel, as the apostles themselves were, and by the same Spirit too, though in a different manner and degree, which accordingly produces the same effects proportionally,’ vol. i. p. 420. and 422. In this quotation, the effects of apostolic inspiration are erroneously identified with those of the saving influence of the Spirit, which was equally indispensable in all believers, whether they were inspired or not.

There have been also practical errors on this subject, which, though they cannot be classed with the wild enthusiasm of the French prophets, yet will be owned to have been exceedingly disgraceful and injurious to the cause of truth. From the days of the apostles until now, and from the lofty head of the Roman hierarchy to the most inconsiderable dissenter from all hierarchies, strange misconceptions of the nature and design of miraculous agency, have frequently operated in a powerful manner, to the confusion and oppression of professing Christians, by the introduction among them of offices and usages which were peculiar to such as were miraculously gifted. To the Judaism of the first age many have added what we may venture to call the *miracleism* of succeeding ages, insomuch that Dr Owen had much reason to observe, that ‘ as in these extraordinary officers and their gifts, did consist the original glory and honour of the church in

‘ an especial manner, and by them was their edifica-  
 ‘ tion carried on and perfected ; so by an *empty pre-*  
 ‘ *tence* unto their *power*, without their order and spirit,  
 ‘ the churches have been stained and deformed, and  
 ‘ brought to destruction.’

It will appear by the instances which follow, how persons who are confessedly entitled to a portion of our regard, are apt to fall into practical errors with respect to this subject.

In early ages of the church, exorcism was performed on men before they were baptized, as if this were the same thing as the casting out of devils in the first age. Of heretics in particular, it was said by Vincenius, bishop of Thibarus, ‘ If they would turn and come  
 ‘ to the Lord, *we have a rule of the truth* which the  
 ‘ Lord commanded the apostles saying, Go in my name,  
 ‘ lay on hands, and cast out devils \*.’ This fancied ordinance of casting out devils, where there were none such to be cast out, nor power to expel them if there were, was supposed necessary to precede baptism ; which was again followed by another fancied ordinance, the imposition of hands, to impart to the baptized the Holy Spirit. Cyprian of Carthage, who, as well as many of his cotemporaries, was not a little devoted to the ecclesiastical traditions which began in those days greatly to accumulate, says in reference to his own practice, ‘ This custom is now observed by us,  
 ‘ that they who are baptized in the church, may re-  
 ‘ ceive the Holy Spirit through the prayers of the go-  
 ‘ vernors of it and the imposition of their hands †.’ Even the church of England still holds that the Holy Spirit is communicated in baptism and ordination.

Prefixed to a small treatise on baptism by John

\* King’s Enquiry, Part ii. p. 69. † P. 89. of the same.

Norcott, printed in London in the year 1721, is a list of recent publications, among which we observed the following: 'Laying on of hands on baptized believers as such, proved a gospel ordinance of Christ; by Benjamin Keach.' Now, Benjamin Keach was a good and faithful preacher of the gospel, and like Aquila of old, he laid down his neck for the name of Jesus. But, alas! his publication in favour of this supposed ordinance, must have been the cause of bondage and trouble to scrupulous consciences, and a sad handle to the fickle, the sanguine and censorious. Indeed a long controversy on this subject was carried on by the Baptists of that age, as may be seen in Crosby's Hist. vol. ii. p. 277. Besides Mr Keach, Messrs Grantham, Ives, D'Anvers, and others, engaged in the controversy. Dr Owen relates, that some in his time contended for anointing the sick with oil; which he justly observes was to turn the practice into a lie; because, being once the token of certain healing and recovery, when such did not follow, it became a mere deception. Mr Whiston and others contended for this in a recent period. See Whiston's Life, vol. i. pp. 296, 297, 298. 314. 71. 77. Flavel too somewhere speaks of persons who contended, that all should teach publicly, because it is written, "Ye may all prophesy one by one." This passage we have ourselves heard applied to the brethren at large; and we could not but think at the time, that they *might* all prophesy, and work miracles likewise, provided they were able.

I am very sorry to add to the number of those inattentive to the difference between spiritual gifts and sanctifying grace, one whom I much esteem and respect. Mr Haldane, in his *Observations on*

*the association of believers, &c.*, we are sorry to say, expresses a fear, lest discussions on the subject of spiritual gifts, should prove inimical to the work of the Holy Spirit in the salvation of men. With particular reference to the reasoning of Messrs Ewing and Aikman, 'a weapon,' he observes, 'is put ' into the hands of those who deny the operation of ' the Spirit in the present day, the force of which it ' is impossible to resist,' p. 40. But let no man's heart fear because of this mighty weapon. Such as it is, we have it in possession, and we shall find it a necessary instrument in repelling the assaults of the adversaries of this doctrine. The matter ought therefore to have been very differently stated. Unless the distinction in question be clearly established, it will be difficult, if not impossible, completely to confute the arguments which are used against the continued existence of divine operation. This we think has been made evident in the preceding illustration. But we have at hand another kind of evidence. Dr Tomline, bishop of Lincoln, in his late boasted Refutation of Calvinism, affirms, in opposition to the necessity of divine influence, that those to whom the gospel was preached, Jews, Samaritans and Gentiles in general, 'expressed their faith in Christ before ' the Holy Ghost was poured out upon them \*.' ' We are authorised to attribute their faith to the voluntary exercise of their reason.' ' They were converted before they received the Holy Ghost †.' Unfortunately however for the Doctor's argument, there was no necessary connection of any kind be-

\* Tomline's Refutation of Calvinism, as quoted in the Edinburgh Quarterly Review and Magazine, No 2. p. 254.

† See Scott's Remarks on the Refutation, Vol. i. pp. 31. 37.

tween the work of the Spirit in conversion, and the reception of extraordinary endowments ; which he has most egregiously confounded with it : but fortunately for the satisfaction of Mr H. the Doctor has furnished him, not only with ground for candidly withdrawing the charge he brings against his brethren, but for considering his own unavoidable exposure to it, on account of his palpable disregard of the difference between the spiritual gifts of the first age and the saving operation of the Holy Spirit. Both being distinguished in Scripture, they ought by no means to be confounded by us. To blend together a number of different propositions, may seem to some to wear the appearance of great simplicity of method, great strength of argument, and plainness of speech, while it is in fact calculated to conceal the variety and deface the beauty and harmony of divine revelation, and to foster innumerable mistakes in judgment and irregularities in practice.

The Quakers, if we mistake not, are the only people that uniformly and completely confound the inspiration by which the Scriptures were dictated, we do not say with the saving illumination of believers, but with that inward universal light which they attribute to, and which is no doubt possessed by all mankind. Shall it then be left to the Quakers, to confute the systems that scarcely allow of any influence of the Spirit in the salvation of men ? Mr H., I am sure, would not entrust them with this work : and yet an uncandid opponent might prove logically enough, that, according to the statement of Mr H., they would be the fittest persons for it. So clearly however are both the miraculous and saving operation of the Spirit taught in the word of God, that, did we choose to rummage the volumes of those

who are known to have held doctrines subversive of every fundamental truth of revelation, hundreds of citations might be produced to show, that they did not theoretically deny the influence of the Spirit in the salvation of men. But "they say and do not." This doctrine is *practically* disregarded by them. An eminent writer justly observes, 'We should hardly go beyond the truth in asserting, that for the most part their notions on this subject are so confused and faint, that they can scarcely be said, in any fair sense, to believe the doctrine at all\*.' And we may also remark, that, in proportion as men deny or pervert this doctrine, they act in the same manner in regard to the depravity and guilt of mankind, the divinity and atonement of Christ, the necessity of holiness or gospel morality, and the efficacy of the word of God, to which is attributed, in conjunction with the Spirit's influence, the peace, hope, holiness, and joy of believers. And do they not sap the foundation of all these together, by their erroneous and defective representations of the moral perfections of God?

It is obvious then, that without carefully distinguishing between the miraculous and saving work of the Spirit, it will be difficult to prove the inspiration of the apostles of Christ, in opposition to such writers as Dr Priestly. The clearness, energy and certainty with which the oracles of God were delivered to mankind, were as miraculous in their nature, as the mighty deeds which were performed on the bodies of men. We distinguish therefore between the extraordinary dispensation of the Spirit, and his continued agency in all who believe the gospel. On this ground we resist both the unbeliever, who calls in question the in-

\* Wilberforce's *Practical View*, &c. p. 75.

spiration of the sacred penmen, and the spurious enthusiast, who arrogates to himself similar illumination. On the same ground, we justify our own professions of having the Spirit of Christ, ward off the shafts of ridicule, and show that they who throw them (whether secret or open enemies of true religion) know not the Scriptures, nor the saving grace of God. And further, if believers wish to be able, on the one hand, to detect, and expose the artful and arrogant pretensions of designing men to the powers, prerogatives and functions which ceased in the church at the withdrawal of miraculous agency, or, on the other, to preserve the church now from the "enmity contained in ordinances," sometimes brought in by even good men, they will pay particular attention to the work of the Spirit of God, as being either ordinary or extraordinary. Nor will even this be sufficient. We must further determine which of the offices in the first churches were extraordinary and temporary, which ordinary and permanent. Some attention will be given to this topic in a subsequent place.

When therefore Dr Paley says, 'If any man ask, what is meant by the scripture expressions, *regenerate*—*born of the Spirit*—*new creature*, &c? we answer, 'Nothing, nothing to us, nothing to be sought for or found *in the present circumstances of Christianity*:' we, for our part, must answer again, "Art thou a teacher of Israel, and knowest not these things?" But when any consider us to be following hard in the track of that dignitary, because we refuse to acknowledge the promiscuous exhortations of brethren, for instance, (and this is our chief crime in their view), as standing in the stead of the work of extraordinary office-bearers, we beg leave to say to them, "How forcible are

right words! but what doth your arguing reprove!" The heedlessness manifest in such accusations, is the best excuse for the injustice of them. This excuse we willingly admit. Some of our opponents, we are convinced, have not attended to the subject with sufficient care to speak of it in a just and consistent manner\*.

We ought at the same time to remember the danger we are in of urging too far distinctions, which have their foundation in truth, and which must therefore be established for the illustration of it. We formerly adverted to the advantage which personal religion, and the gift of inspiration, derived from each other mutually. Though entirely distinct, and accordingly residing in some instances with persons of the most opposite characters in the sight of God, both were formed for the closest and most endearing union as the offspring of the same parent, and the instruments of promoting jointly, as well as severally, the same glorious design. And therefore we conceive, that though in almost every passage of Scripture, there may be a primary reference either to the one or to the

\* The above quotation from Paley is made by Mr Carson in his answer to Mr Ewing, p. 15. Dr Paley appears to have changed his mind very materially, upon this subject. We wish that a *profession of repentance* had accompanied it. In the volume of Sermons which he appointed his executors to print, and deliver to his hearers, after his death, and which they have been obliged to *publish*, finding it impossible to confine it to the circle of readers for whom alone it was intended, there are three discourses, in which the universal necessity and existence of the influences of the Holy Spirit in all Christians, in every period, are maintained with no little energy, and with his accustomed perspicuity.—Indeed it is pleasant to remark, the very opposite style of this and of several of the posthumous Sermons, and of some of the former works of this able author

other, there are some in which both are included. But the number of places, in which either of them is alone spoken of, will enable the Christian teacher to treat with sufficient accuracy the passages in which both are comprehended, as the work of one and the same agent. Similar attention will be equally necessary in a variety of cases, where different but related objects may be summarily spoken of, which in other parts of Scripture, are clearly and distinctively represented.

## ESSAY II.

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### *On Prophecy and Tongues.*

THE use which was made of prophecy and tongues, especially in Corinth, the importance of understanding the practice of the church there, the opposite views which are taken of their practice, and the contradictory conclusions which are drawn from it, render it necessary for us to offer some remarks on these two gifts.

Prophecy, in point of order and importance, demands our attention in the first place. On our knowledge of the nature of this gift, depends, in no small degree, our understanding of the practice of the first churches. The word of God, we are convinced, speaks of the prophetic character and function, with a copiousness, perspicuity and precision, that leave little room for either great mistakes or keen discussion.

Prophecy was not, like many of the gifts of the primitive churches, peculiar to the economy of the new covenant: it was frequently possessed and largely employed by a particular class of men during the existence of the old covenant. We shall not therefore confine ourselves in our remarks upon it to the New Testament Scriptures, more especially as no attempts have been made to represent as uninspired teachers, that class of persons who are acknowledged in the Old Testament as the prophets of Jehovah. Now, if these were the same with the description of persons who

are denominated prophets in the New Testament, it will necessarily follow, that the claims of the latter stand in every respect on a footing with those of the former.

Prophets are invariably represented as persons who received communications from God, either in dreams and visions, or by the illumination of the Holy Spirit. As in a subordinate sense, Moses was a God to Aaron, so, in a corresponding sense, Aaron was a prophet to Moses, *Exod. iv. 16.* : he declared to Pharaoh, and to the children of Israel, what Moses had in a manner revealed to him. It was this relation to Moses, the viceroi of Jehovah himself, and not, as some have supposed, his having been the chief speaker in the presence of Pharaoh, that in this case conferred on Aaron the appellation of prophet. Yet even at this time he appears to have been entitled, on other grounds, to the prophetic character, *Num. xii.*

Now, as every imposture, forgery or counterfeit is contrived in imitation of some original, of which it is sure to exhibit a pretty accurate general likeness, we may easily discover in the pretensions of the false prophets a sufficiently correct sketch of the character of the true. Those bold impostors stole the word one from another, and lied in affirming, "I have dreamed, I have dreamed!" yet these spurious dreams were received by the people with the greatest cordiality.

Unless the true Messiah, with his apostles and prophets, had been expected or acknowledged among men, many false Christs, apostles and prophets would not have pretended to sustain those characters, *Mark xiii. 22. 2 Cor. xi. 13.* And had not the primitive churches been richly endowed with the prophetic spirit, they had not stood in need of an apostolical admoni-

tion to try the spirits whether they were of God, because many false prophets had gone out into the world, 1 John iv. 1. Let any man now attempt to introduce himself to enlightened persons as a prophet of the Lord, and they will presently reject his claims as extravagant and prophane ; because there is not on earth a true prophet, on whose acknowledged reputation such claims could be founded.

The description then of prophets that the New Testament brings to our view, does not exhibit persons inferior to those who are recognised by that name in the Old. Highly as the people esteemed John the baptist, their respect for him altogether arose from their being persuaded that John was a prophet, Luke xx. 6. Hence in their presence the chief priests and the scribes durst not assert that his baptism was of men, because a denial of his inspiration would have doubtless implied a denial of his prophetic character. But had they understood the easy expedient of reducing him to the humble rank of a good man, who was indeed entitled to be called a prophet, because he exhorted the people, while nevertheless, under that character, he might teach erroneous doctrine, (as any fallible mortal, how upright soever, may do occasionally), they could after all have reconciled their opinion of the baptism of John with the notion of his having been a prophet. The admiration which was excited in the breasts of the people by the wonderful works of Christ, compelled them to exclaim, " That a great prophet is risen among us, and that God hath visited his people," Luke vii. 16. The two disciples who were going to Emmaus after his resurrection, described him as " a prophet mighty in deed and in word before God and all the people," Luke xxiv. 19. These passages show what

kind of persons they were who, before the day of Pentecost, supported the character of prophet.

When the extraordinary powers on that day imparted to the disciples, had excited in the people the greatest wonder and amazement, Peter addressed them in these words: "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; and on my servants, and on my hand-maidens, I will pour out in those days of my Spirit, and they shall prophesy," Acts ii. 17, 18.—As the light and glory of the Messiah's kingdom far exceeded those of every former period, is it conceivable, that Joel gave a higher description of the latter days than the event fully verified? Or was Peter ashamed to direct the attention of the people to the things which they then saw and heard, as the accomplishment of Joel's prediction? In fact, the agreement between the prediction and the event, is too manifest to be disputed. Peter unquestionably represented Joel as describing the same Spirit of prophecy, by which he was himself inspired to predict the effusion of it in the last days. What resemblance has this to exhortation in modern times? And if such exhortation is a thing distinct from prophecy, can we be instructed by having them confounded?

Dr Whitby observes, that the fathers used arguments against the Jews to convince them that God had left their church, and had owned and embraced the Societies of Christians, because he had left them no prophets, but had transferred that gift to the Christians.

Although all the prophets of the Lord were actually

inspired, they had not all the same measure of the gift of inspiration. Some prophets were certainly greater than others; as among the twelve there were "the chiefest of the apostles." But the reviving fruit of inspiration always grew upon the tree of life, though every separate branch was not equally loaded. God in "sundry portions, (*πολυμερως*,) and in divers manners, spake to the fathers by the prophets," Heb. i. 1. Hence it is certain, that though more of divine truth was revealed to David and Isaiah than to Obadiah and Malachi, the writings of these four prophets are to be equally regarded as different portions of the oracles of God. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost," 2 Peter i. 21.

If the prophets of the first churches were at all inspired (and how could they be prophets without inspiration?) it would be vain and fruitless speculation to inquire in what degree they were inspired. The measure of inspiration could not affect their character as prophets. Different orders of beings are distinguished and compared according to their rank and office in creation. On the same principle of discrimination, men class and arrange different inanimate substances, as metals, minerals, vegetables, &c. agreeably to the nature or intrinsic value of each sort. Thus the smallest piece of gold excels in quality the largest of silver. In like manner kings and prophets are distinct orders of men, whose rank or character is not affected by the extent of territory which the former possess, or the degree of inspiration with which the latter are endowed. Whoever therefore had the gift of prophecy on this account belonged to that class of persons who were next in importance to the apostles themselves. There does not then

appear to be any better reason for distinguishing those of the first churches into superior and inferior prophets, than for the fancy of the Jews who reckon up eleven kinds or degrees in prophecy; which they rest on the most futile distinctions. (see Lowth on Hebrew poetry, Vol ii. p. 62. Gregory's translation). In fact we may venture to question whether any two prophets, or indeed any two persons, ever possessed the same acquaintance precisely with either divine or human things. What vast variety do we observe in the figures, countenances and voices of men? And do we not discover in their minds as endless diversity and modification?

In the epistle to the Romans the apostle thus addresses them: "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith," ch. xii. 3.—This injunction seems to have been directed to those among them who had spiritual gifts, and who on this account were liable to indulge in too much self-gratulation. As every one of them was to judge soberly of himself according to the measure of his faith\*, (and taking the language in any sense this will be found a much soberer standard than many will choose to be measured by), it is enjoined on the prophets to exercise their peculiar gift according to a corresponding rule, or indeed the same rule differently expressed, "the proportion of faith." Whitby, by a quotation from Philo, shows that the measure of one's faith signifies the strength of it. But inde-

\* This we apprehend is the faith spoken of in 1 Cor. xii. 9. and xiii. 2. which certainly was not saving faith.

pendently of such evidence, what else can be the meaning of these expressions? If any one is attached to the idea, as founded on this passage, of explaining Scripture according to what has been called the analogy of faith, he will find most judicious observations on it in the iv<sup>th</sup> Preliminary Dissertation of Dr Campbell. The prophets, however, were not expositors of Scripture, but the original organs of the Holy Spirit. Now, the degree of inspiration was precisely in proportion to the measure of their faith. Beyond the sure ground of the inspiration they received, it was not the duty of the prophets to proceed; for if they delivered in the church the mere suggestions of their own minds, they must be liable either to advance error, or at least to occupy the time to very little purpose.

It may be observed in passing, that prophetic inspiration is distinguishable, by its suddenness and vigour, from that of other gifted men. To the prophets, as they sat in the church, something is supposed to have been revealed by a powerful afflatus of the Spirit, which, as it were, impelled them to speak more than one at a time. So too the prophets of old were in a manner constrained to speak. Both Jeremiah and Amos make use of strong figures to express the urgency to speak which they felt under divine inspiration, Jer. xx. 9. Amos iii. 8. The apostle notwithstanding, directed that no prophet to whom any thing might be revealed, should stand up in the church before the first had done speaking. They could all speak in rotation, because the spirits of the prophets were subject to the prophets. God did not impel them to speak unseasonably, or by pluralities, the things which he gave them by the Spirit; and therefore he was not the author of the con-

fusion, which their disorderly practice occasioned in the church\*.

That the prophets of the first churches were actually and literally prophets, and not mere exhorters, is evident from their possessing the faculty of foretelling future events. "And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem to Antioch. And there stood up one of them, named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit, that there should be great dearth throughout all the world, which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cesar," Acts xi. 27, 28. The same person afterwards foretold Paul's imprisonment in Jerusalem; and, after the manner of the ancient prophets, he accompanied the prediction with the affecting symbolical action of binding his own hands and feet with Paul's girdle, chap. xxi. 11. Nor was he the only prophet that gave previous intimation of the apostle's sufferings. Since he had directed his course towards Jerusalem, the Holy Ghost testified in EVERY CITY, that bonds and

\* Although 1 Cor. xiv. 31. Δυνασθε γὰρ καθ' ἑνὰ πάντες προφητεῖν, should undoubtedly be rendered, not, as in our common version, "Ye may all prophesy one by one," but "Ye are all able to prophesy one by one," or successively, yet this appears to be of no consequence as to the duty of churches in the present time; unless, as some think, these prophets were uninspired exhorters; which we are now considering. It is however of consequence to do justice to the oracles of God. "Ye are all able to prophesy," &c., is certainly the literal and grammatical rendering, although Macknight's, "Ye can all prophesy," &c. also gives the sense. But "ye may," &c. does not convey the apostle's meaning; because he is not giving the prophets liberty to speak, for that was never denied them, but shewing them that they could refrain from speaking, though under inspiration, until the first speaker had finished his discourse.

imprisonment awaited him, Acts xx. 23. Similar to this was the warning which the sons of the prophets who were at Bethel, and those again who were at Jericho, gave to Elisha, that Elijah his master was about to be taken away, 2 Kings ii. 3. Paul nevertheless proceeded on his journey, and coming to Tyre, he there found disciples, who said to him by the Spirit, "that he should not go up to Jerusalem," Acts xxi. 4. If these facts do not elevate these prophets to the sublime heights of Isaiah and David, they at least place them on a level with ancient prophets of less note; a level on which modern exhorters cannot with sobriety and decency pretend to appear. The church of Christ, however, was not without prophets, whose predictions are great and interesting. The apostles Paul and John revealed the grand events of future generations. Yet we ought to remember, in judging of the gift of prophecy in the first age, that the Scriptures of the New Testament are intended not to furnish us with many new predictions, but to illustrate and confirm the predictions of ancient times. We are therefore to look for the use of the prophetic gift, not so much in the foretelling of future events, as in those other exercises in which it was employed previously to the coming of our Lord.

May it not then suffice to say with respect to the nature of the prophetic function, that our Lord himself, in his Sermon on the mount, connects prophesying in his name with casting out devils, and doing many wonderful works? Mat. vii. 22. Paul ranks the gift of prophecy with speaking the languages of men and angels; and with removing mountains, or performing the greatest miracles, 1 Cor. xiii. Often in Scripture are the prophets ranked next in order to the apostles, Eph. iii. 5.

1 Cor. xii. 28, 29. Prophecy is accordingly pronounced the best gift, 1 Cor. xii. 31. and chap. xiv. 1. 39. They who exercised it in the church were greater than those who spoke with tongues, except they also interpreted, and the church received edification.

Is it then a matter of doubt, whether prophecy was an ordinary, or an extraordinary gift? Mr Ballantine has said, 'It is plain' (very plain to be sure, *i. e.* he wishes this given up to him, without any argument,) 'it was 'an ordinary, not an extraordinary gift.' This position being granted, it irresistibly follows, as the same writer asserts, that 'they were to desire it before any 'extraordinary gift, as being more useful!' Can any thing be more absurd than this conclusion? Yet it fairly follows from the premises. The absurdity then of the conclusion demonstrates the fallacy of the premises. It really 'shocks all common sense' to be told, that what is *now* called a gift for exhortation, should be *more useful* than any of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit. By this kind of reasoning, the apostles, prophets, evangelists, &c. are utterly degraded, and the exhorting brethren exalted to super-eminence. This is a greater evil than that of which Solomon complained, "Folly is set in great dignity, and the rich sit in low place." "I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth," Eccles. x. 7, 8.

Although Mr B.'s positions and inferences carry along with them their own refutation, and although Mr Ewing has evinced, in the clearest and most convincing manner, that the primitive prophets spoke by the inspiration of God, the doctrine of Mr B. has taken fast hold of the minds of many; and I apprehend it has tended on this subject to warp the better judgment even of Mr Haldane.

Instead of meeting Mr Ewing's arguments, he has, I am sorry to say, perplexed the subject with objections and difficulties of his own creating. These however I shall now endeavour to obviate.

He observes, p. 35. 'It is taken for granted, that the prophets in 1 Cor. xiv. spoke by immediate inspiration. But I find in that very chapter, a sharp reproof to them, amongst others, for erroneous sentiments. What! says the apostle, came the word of God out from you, or came it unto you only? If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.'

I do not wonder that Mr H. has interpreted the apostle's words in this sense; others did the same before him. It is the general sentiment of all those who maintain the duty and propriety of indiscriminate teaching by all the males in churches, and it seems first of all to have given origin to this favourite idea. But as to the erroneous sentiments of the prophets and spiritual men, what were these? The apostle has not mentioned one in all this chapter, nor can Mr H. show that he has. The manifest intention of the verses quoted by Mr H. and of the whole chapter, is not to correct erroneous sentiments, but to rectify disorderly practices. Had the apostle in the preceding context been refuting or reproofing erroneous doctrine, then the particular reproof which Mr H. has quoted would be naturally understood as implying a censure of those who taught such doctrine. But since his object was of another kind—the regulation of their conduct and manner while they prophesied, we are obliged to understand his reproof as pointed against the irregularities which were

introduced into the church, by the speaking of several prophets at the same time, the use of foreign tongues, and the speaking of the women. Accordingly he required them to understand the things which he said, not as the doctrine, but as the *εντολαι* the commandments of the Lord. Had a similar reproof to the prophets and spiritual men been administered in the following (the xv.) chapter, in which the apostle proves the doctrine of the resurrection, in opposition to some among them who said that there was no resurrection of the dead, it would in that case be obvious to understand him as reproofing the prophets and spiritual men for erroneous sentiments. The case, however, as it stands, is entirely different; for while a man might prophesy with his head covered, and a woman with her head uncovered, (ch. xi. 4, 5.) their inspiration is not denied, but their behaviour is corrected. Or while one might speak mysteries by the Spirit in a foreign language, or several prophets prophesy at the same time, the existence of their gifts is not called in question, but directions are given how to use them to edification.—Not only were the disorderly practices of these prophets consistent with their being inspired, but they even prove their inspiration. Who but a king Asa, or a Jehoshaphat, or a Hezekiah, could have oppressed the people, or made a league with the king of Israel, or sinned in the matter of the ambassadors of Babylon? And who but inspired teachers could have exhibited the scene which the xivth of 1 Cor. describes? In short, the expostulation of the apostle implies both the possession of spiritual gifts, and impropriety in the use of them. And his appeal to the prophets and spiritual men (ver. 37.) is itself an acknowledgment of their superior endowments.

Their improprieties of conduct do not, after all, bear such characters of sin as mark the behaviour of Moses and Aaron at the water of Meribah in Kadesh, of Jonah in regard to Nineveh, and of Peter and Barnabas towards the Gentile converts at Antioch. The doctrine which was spoken by inspiration, was invariably true; but even the best of inspired men could say as to obedience, "In many things we offend all," James iii. 2. It is not disputed whether Timothy had extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, yet directions of every kind are given him, "that he might know HOW TO BEHAVE (*conduct*) HIMSELF in the house of God." The necessity of these directions is very obvious from this, that even inspired persons might act inconsistently with the light of nature and a sense of decency, 1 Cor. xi. 13—15. Nor was the great apostle of the Gentiles above the necessity of watchfulness and self-denial, 1 Cor. ix. 27. Spiritual gifts did not confer a holy nature, far less perfection of character upon any.

Mr H. again observes, p. 36. 'I find the brethren repeatedly exhorted to covet to prophesy. Does this mean, that they were to covet an office next in dignity to the apostles?'

If the gift of prophecy to which they were commanded to aspire, was not that which would place them next to the apostles, it must have been, according to Mr H.'s hypothesis, that uninspired faculty of prophecy, or exhortation, by which men taught, with other things, erroneous sentiments. That believers were commanded earnestly to desire the former, as being the best and most useful gift, and not the latter, seems to us highly probable. But with respect to Mr H.'s question, I would remark, that another might ask with equal propriety, did the nature of the case leave any room for

incredulity, Was a certain man of Lydda, named Eneas, who had kept his bed eight years, and been sick of the palsy, confidently to expect that he himself was to be suddenly cured by a great miracle? But both miracles and prophecy were at that time matters of promise, and therefore proper objects of expectation and desire. The commonness of either, in comparison of its appearance in former times, cannot sully the lustre of the heavenly gift; or if this circumstance must reduce the value of prophecy, must it not likewise invalidate the evidence of miracles?—But does Mr H. really mean, that the apostle commanded the Corinthians, who were enriched “in all utterance and in all knowledge, to desire spiritual gifts, to seek that they might excel to the edifying of the church, to seek that they might prophesy,” 1 Cor. xiv. 1. 12. 39. while at the same time he meant nothing should be aspired after, besides an ability to speak like ordinary church-members in the present day? But where does Paul exalt an ability of this sort above that assemblage of spiritual gifts which were confessedly miraculous, and which, as Mr H. acknowledges, were “eminently the manifestation of the Spirit?” With these extraordinary endowments, he does not class an ordinary faculty for exhortation, nor does he indeed mention such a thing at all. It is impossible therefore to reduce to this modern standard, those who ranked so high among the miraculously gifted men.

The strength of Mr H.’s objection seems to lie in the supposed presumptuousness of seeking the highest and most useful qualifications. But there is no presumption either in seeking or in exercising qualifications of any kind. Presumption usually appears in arrogating qualifications, or in attempting to perform duties with-

out them. Could any thing have been more agreeable to the genuine operation of love and humility, than the desire of that kind of eminence which prophecy bestowed—eminence in doing good to the souls of men? Do we not now judge it to be consistent with the purest love to God and to his people, to wish for as great a resemblance, even to an apostle, in knowledge and utterance, as well as in holiness and usefulness, as is attainable in the present state? How do some judge of what is called a gift for exhortation? Do they not view it as the best gift, and speak of it as a lawful object of desire? Respecting the principal standing office in the church, is it not said in Scripture, “If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work?”

‘I also find,’ says Mr H. ‘the gift of prophecy comparatively undervalued at Corinth. Now I cannot persuade myself that those next in order to the apostles, and consequently possessing superior talents to all others, were in much danger of being despised,’ p. 36.—But strange as it may appear, the very possession of supernatural talents emboldened men occasionally to set themselves in opposition to those who in this respect were far their superiors. This corresponds to what happens among all other classes of men, who suppose themselves to be on a level. A supposed equality with Moses in regard to inspiration, afforded a pretext to Aaron and Miriam for speaking against him. “And they said, Hath the Lord indeed only spoken by Moses? hath he not also spoken by us?” Num. xii. Does not every reader of the New Testament know very well, that Paul himself was comparatively undervalued and despised at Corinth? yet among the Corinthians, he truly performed “the signs

of an apostle ;” and as to gifts, he could “ speak with more tongues” (in more languages) than they all could. It was not therefore without a very obvious reason, that he warned them against despising Timothy, who had been appointed to the work of the Lord according to prophecy, and had received a gift by the imposition of the apostle’s hand. “ Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear, for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do. Let no man therefore despise him,” 1 Cor. xvi. 10, 11. Is it any wonder then, that men who are taught to make an over-weening estimate of their own talents and proficiency, should be inclined to despise the best means of instruction with which we have been acquainted ?

In a note, p.36. we find a plausible objection, which, as it involves a variety of considerations, requires to be pretty fully answered. ‘ It is not a little extraordinary, that the false teachers should have had so great success in the church at Corinth, in which, according to our brethren, there were so many prophets speaking under immediate inspiration. How came these prophets to be misled ? or how came it, that they did not oppose the false teachers with the same success as the apostle, whose epistle produced so great an effect ? they were indeed inferior to him, but if it was known that they spoke by inspiration, those who rejected them would equally have rejected him.’

If there is any force in this argument, it presses as much on the hypothesis of Mr H. as it does on that of the writers whom he opposes. He observes, p. 35. ‘ that there were prophets, who are classed next in order to the apostles, is certain, 1 Cor. xii. 28. but that all who are said to prophesy were of this order

'is by no means clear.' And is it easier for Mr H. to account for the disobedience of the church, by supposing that there were some only of their prophets who spoke by inspiration, than if he granted that they all did so? Was it not as sinful to resist a few prophets, as to resist many? But though I think Mr H. has no claim upon others, which they have not upon him for the removal of this difficulty; and though I might on this account pass it by, as not affecting the character of the prophets at Corinth, I shall offer the following remarks as illustrative of the subject in general, and as accounting in particular for the fact which has been mentioned\*.

1st, False teachers made their way into the churches by coming under the assumed character, either of apostles, prophets, or teachers. They who came to Corinth seem to have brought along with them "epistles of commendation." Besides, men might have actually prophesied, cast out devils, and done many wonderful works in the name of Jesus, and have perished eternally after all, Mat. vii. By means of these then, the churches might have been injured for a time, the pretensions of such as were once inspired might not be soon detected, and in the mean time they would do some mischief. Mr H. himself introduces the case of uninspired brethren, (were they not the false brethren mentioned in Gal. ii. ?) who, under pretence of having authority from the apostles in Jerusalem, subverted the souls of the believing Gentiles. These things account for the entrance of false teachers into the primitive churches. 2d, In the 1st Book of Kings, we find that a prophet was led astray, in

\* This objection would deprive, not only the church at Corinth, but almost every other, of inspired teachers.

opposition to an explicit and positive injunction, which he had himself received from the mouth of the Lord, by a feigned revelation which another prophet pretended also to have received from God, chap. xiii. In like manner. prophets and spiritual men in the first churches might have been deceived by false visions and revelations. The apostle strongly warns Timothy against seduction, though he was not less capable than other prophets or teachers were of resisting its insinuating influence, 1 Tim. i. 19. iv. 7. and 16. vi. 20. 2 Tim. i. 13, 14. ii. 16. Hence it appears evident, that though inspired men, in the legitimate exercise of their gifts, are not supposed to have taught error, they were not beyond all danger of being entangled in the snares which were laid for them by others. The best of the Lord's servants knew but in part, and they prophesied but in part. We are therefore able to reconcile the success of the false teachers in Corinth with the inspiration of those who prophesied in the church. 3d, God saw it fit to permit imposition to go on for a time. Winds of doctrine and schisms put to the test the wisdom, sincerity and steadfastness of the churches; insomuch, that those who were approved were made manifest among them, 1 Cor. xi. 19. And thence too the apostles saw it necessary to give answers to various questions, which should more or less involve the peace and happiness of the church of God in all ages. Only, however, for a season were false brethren able to stand their ground. "Now, as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no farther; for their folly shall be made manifest unto all men as theirs also was," 2 Tim. iii. 8, 9.

Hence the procedure of God, in permitting such persons to go on for a time, is fully recommended by its salutary consequences. 4th, That the Corinthians were not wholly ignorant of the real character of the false teachers, appears from several passages of Paul's two epistles to them. He reproveth them severely for having some among them who had not the knowledge of God, 1 Cor. xv. 34. Yet the ascendancy which the false teachers gained in Corinth, is not more surprising than the mighty influence of Diotrephes seems to be. Nor is it so unaccountable, that the Corinthians should have borne with them, or with others who had a form of godliness, as that they should have suffered the incestuous person to remain in the church. In respect of both, however, they were disobedient, not only to apostles and prophets, but to Christ himself, the Head of the church. Yet Mr H. asks a question, which supposes that Paul's first epistle settled the case of the false teachers. 'How came it that they (the prophets) did not oppose the false teachers with the same success as the apostle, whose epistle produced so great an effect?' But though it produced considerable effects on the church at large, it neither silenced nor removed the false teachers. "His letters, say they, are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible," 2 Cor. x. 10. Hence, in his second epistle, he makes manifest references to them in more severe language than he employed in the first; and besides he threatens to punish them by his apostolic power, when the obedience of the church should be fulfilled, 2 Cor. x. 6. xiii. 2. 10. Was it the want of instruction or authority from God that made some of the seven churches of Asia "bear them who did evil?" We fear that it is

still too common with churches to endure them that do evil. How many instances of negligence and partiality could an apostle point out in churches! There is, alas, in human nature, too much of the fear of man "which bringeth a snare," and of "respect of persons," its necessary effect. Hence, connected with publicly rebuking those that sinned, is the solemn charge before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, to "observe these things, without preferring one to another; doing nothing by partiality," 1 Tim. v. 21.

Now, though Mr H. mentions those who are spoken of 'as exhorting or prophesying, 1 Cor. xiv.' p. 37. as if exhortation and prophecy were the same precisely, he yet distinguishes these from each other, as from teaching and ruling. 'Prophesying and exhortation,' he observes, p. 33. 'are distinguished from teaching and ruling, Rom. xii. 6.' Although we think it is a mistake to suppose teaching and exhortation to be two distinct ordinances, we are glad to find, that Mr H. does justice to the subject in hand so far as to distinguish both teaching and exhortation from prophecy. But he can maintain this distinction, only by affirming, that the prophets in Rome belonged to those prophets who, in his opinion, ranked next to the apostles. There is, however, no conceivable reason for making the prophets in Rome, and the prophets at Corinth, to differ as much from one another, as an inspired prophet and an uninspired exhorter in the former place can be made to do. In Rome the prophets were not the exhorters, at Corinth they were. Here prophecy is exhortation—there it is not. Under the powerful and variable operation of such a theory as this, the prophets are completely at the mercy of the theorist,

who, as occasion requires, may assign them on the one hand a plenitude of inspiration, or leave them on the other to speak among their brethren the best way they can.

Indeed, so very incongruous is the scheme of reducing inspired prophets to the level of uninspired brethren, that those who define prophecy to be exhortation, have very seldom spoken of them as exchangeable terms in reference to their own practice ; nor do they, that I recollect, ever call the brethren prophets. Mr Ballantine indeed, says of some who gave up exhortation, ‘ It was not only despising, but neglecting ‘ prophesyings.’ Those then who neglected to prophesy, were prophets ; for only prophets can prophesy. Yet Mr B. does not, I believe, directly call the brethren prophets. Though the introduction of a text of Scripture often obliges him to speak of prophecy and exhortation as if they were the same, he is in general glad to get off with all speed from prophecy to exhortation, like one that makes haste to flee from forbidden ground. Mr Haldane seems still more cautious in using the words *prophecy* and *prophets* in regard to the brethren. The former he uses only once, and that in a theoretical way, and the latter merely by implication. This we must declare to be very inconsistent, while they treat prophets as other brethren, and prophecy as exhortation. It is a strong indication of the embarrassment which they must have felt ; and even a tacit surrender of the argument, especially by Mr Haldane, who, in a tract on salutation, contends for the general usage among Christians of applying the language of Scripture to the standing institutions of Christ’s kingdom. Why then does not Mr H. enjoin exhortation in the language of the 14th chap. of 1 Cor.

since he makes so much use of it to establish his view of exhortation as an ordinance? Upon his own principles, he ought either to apply that chapter to the brethren who exhort in the church, or to renounce the scheme of indiscriminate exhortation, so far at least as he has founded it on the language in which a particular class of extraordinary office-bearers is described.

In only one of two ways can exhortation be made to serve for prophecy. 1st, If the prophets were extraordinary office-bearers, it must be shown, (not merely asserted), that the brethren are their successors. 2dly, If the prophets were ordinary, uninspired, unofficial exhorters, persons of a similar description may be considered their successors; but in this case they must be called prophets, and their discourses prophecy. Some contend for exhortation in the one way and some in the other, and some make sure of it by taking both ways. At one time it is maintained, that *although* the prophets *were* inspired, the brethren should exhort in their stead; at another it is argued, that *because* the prophets *were not* inspired, the brethren should exhort. Let the premises be what they may, the conclusion is the same—the brethren must exhort.

As to the subject itself, however, independently of their mode of expressing it, there can be no difference in reality between exalting the brethren to the rank of prophets, and reducing the prophets to the level of brethren. Either of these schemes is equivalent to the other. It matters not whether the man is brought to the mountain, or the mountain to the man, if in any way they come in contact. If other men were not so strong as Samson, when he bore away on his shoulders the gates of Gaza; surely Samson be-

came weak, and was like any other man, after the seven locks of his head had been shaved off. By performing a similar operation on the prophets, our opponents do not leave them aught which does not belong to any other disciple. Hence Mr Braidwood had reason to express some surprise, that private brethren should be called to speak publicly under the denomination of prophets, a class of extraordinary men who were divinely inspired.

Let us suppose that Mr Braidwood were seated for once in a religious assembly, where the president should expostulate with the brethren in these words: ‘ Now, brethren, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophecy, or by doctrine?’ If in order to expose the confusion which they created in the church, he proceeded to ask them, ‘ How is it then, brethren? every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation:’ If, as attributing their gifts to supernatural agency, he should lay down this rule, ‘ If any thing be revealed to him that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace; for ye can all prophesy successively, because the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets:’ Finally, if to enforce decency and order, he should thus finish his expostulation, ‘ If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge, that the things which I say are commanded in Scripture:’—would not Mr Braidwood—would not any sober-minded person, lament over so much conceit and extravagance? And would not Mr Ballantine too, suppose himself to be placed among those persons of weak minds, or bordering on insanity through religious pride, among whom he tells us a man’s religion

is not established, until he assume the prophetic function.

But though we think it a just thing to exhibit the practical enthusiasm to which the theories of our brethren would directly lead us, we must confess it would procure deserved reprehension, did we charge them with displaying any of this enthusiasm in their own practice. And good it is for society, that though in matters both civil and religious, men may be imposed on by the plausibilities of erroneous speculation, the influence of these on practice will be often limited by the dictates of common sense and the necessary condition of human life.

We trust we may now affirm, without seeming to be arrogant, that exhortation is not prophecy, and that brethren are not prophets in any sense whatever. The only question then of any moment is, Did the prophetic office cease like that of the apostles, or is it still a standing office which ought to be filled up in the churches of the saints? The reader is probably at no loss for an answer to so plain a question. But we must discuss it formally, in a proper place, with other questions of the same kind, because, as is well known, the practice of the prophets is the chief precedent for the modern ordinance of promiscuous teaching. And I feel constrained to add, that I have with much reluctance brought forward these arguments in opposition to Mr Haldane. I believe his mistakes have not originated with himself; and I fondly hope that he will yet renounce them. His sincerity and zeal have been made fully manifest; and his various writings show the soundness of his knowledge of the doctrine of Scripture. This is surely quite consistent with misapprehensions of a special practice. I wish I could

now take my leave of his views of this subject ; but I cannot do this, much as I wish to spare the feelings of their author, and I may add my own.

We may now consider the gift of tongues. There is so little room to doubt whether this was a faculty of speaking foreign languages by inspiration, that we know not if a contrary opinion is to be found within the wide range of human conjecture. But we do not find that any one has asserted, much less attempted to prove, that the gift of tongues invariably belonged to apostles, prophets and teachers. If it did, the fact should be established, as without this we cannot ascertain and distinguish the different orders of teachers in the first age. We shall then endeavour to show, 1st, That the doctrine of those who spoke in foreign tongues was given by inspiration of God ; and 2d, That they who exercised this gift in the churches were either prophets or teachers.

It was before remarked, that with extraordinary illumination was connected extraordinary utterance. As a counterpart to this remark, we may now observe, that extraordinary utterance in whatever language was the result of extraordinary illumination ; words and ideas went hand in hand.

In those who spoke by inspiration, the gift of tongues was evidently connected with spiritual ideas, in the same way as their vernacular language. The newly acquired tongue was employed as a necessary vehicle to convey to strangers the mind of the Spirit, and not the mere fruit of the speaker's own invention. Thus, on the day of Pentecost, the hundred and twenty disciples declared " the wonderful works of God" in a great variety of languages. Others again " spake with tongues, and magnified God," or " spake

with tongues and prophesied," Acts x. 46. xix. 6. And in the church, where the gift of tongues will appear in its permanent condition, it is said of him who used it, that "by the Spirit he speaketh mysteries," 1 Cor. xiv. 2. In case of there being no interpreter present, he is directed to "speak to himself and to God." But when, by means of an interpreter, his discourse was made intelligible to the church, it is supposed to be equally conducive to their edification with the gift of prophecy. Hence the view of the gift of tongues which this chapter exhibits, connects it with such a measure of spiritual understanding as compels us to conclude, that its possessors were fully competent to discharge the duties of *public teaching*, according to the true sense of that phrase. For a mere acquisition of foreign words, cannot be supposed to have fitted a newly converted Jew or Heathen for teaching the church of God; far less to have placed him in this respect on a footing with the prophets.

Some facts which are all along understood in the 14th chapter of 1st Corinthians, confirm the position which we are establishing, and tend to show the reason why the use of foreign tongues was at all permitted in the church. The apostle there speaks as if all languages were foreign, except one, namely the Greek, the current language of Achaia. This language was of course understood and spoken by the whole church; for an assembly of people who had not one common language, Greeks and Romans for example, must on every occasion have employed an interpreter for the sake of one of the parties. But at Corinth, it is supposed that the whole church might be instructed by a discourse which was pronounced in one language only. Again, every foreign language which a man used

in the church, is supposed to be the gift of inspiration. This indeed is considered to be the reason of its being at all used in the church. For though a native of Achaia had, in the ordinary way, acquired so complete a knowledge of one or more foreign languages, as to be able to speak them as readily as he did his mother tongue, there could be no sufficient reason for using any of the former in preference to the latter; nor would the apostle suppose him, in this case, to need an interpreter. It cannot be supposed that a man who is master of both English and French, should need an interpreter either in London or in Paris. And if an Englishman should speak the French language ever so fluently, it would be superlatively ridiculous in him to converse with his friends at home in that foreign tongue, and to be absolutely silent if no interpreter were at hand. But such must have been the conduct of the Christians at Corinth if they were supernaturally taught a foreign language, without being at the same time furnished with supernatural knowledge of spiritual things: which they could not declare, except in the language in which the Spirit impressed these things upon their minds. But what is worse, the apostle must be viewed as sanctioning this supposed extravagance; for he says, "If there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church." The matter however appears clear and natural by viewing it as it was. The Spirit was pleased to communicate various truths to the spiritual men in some foreign language, in which alone they could deliver them without the gift of interpretation. For had they chosen to speak in a foreign language, when they could have done so in the language common to the whole church, would the apostle have acknowledged

this capricious choice as a sufficient reason for speaking by an interpreter? would he not rather have censured it, as being a wilder abuse than any other? In fact, the whole of what he says on the subject proves, that when believers were endowed with the gift of speaking any foreign tongue, this was not for the purpose of declaring their own private meditations, but of declaring the mind of the Spirit, who gave them ideas, of which the words of that tongue were the signs, both to themselves and to those that heard them. The evidence by which this proposition is supported, requires that we consider the gift of tongues to have always belonged to such only as had other spiritual endowments for giving instruction.

Because the things spoken in a foreign language, were to be interpreted for the edification of the church at large, and not, as we have seen, for the sake of individuals among them, we conceive these things to have been highly calculated to edify the church. One may also observe, that as the speaker could discourse in both the foreign language and his own, he must, in the latter, have been able to give some account of that, which, as it edified himself, he certainly understood. But without a special inspiration for the purpose, he could not accurately convey his meaning from the one language to the other; as may be easily conceived by any one who has tried extemporaneous translation. Lest any part therefore of the mind of the Spirit should have been suppressed or misrepresented, the inspired interpreter, an infallible medium of communication, was provided. This care on the Lord's part to have his precious word delivered pure and complete to the whole church, reminds us of the two olive trees of the prophet Zechariah, ch. iv. which, through the golden

pipes emptied the precious oil out of themselves into the golden candlestick.—And it is not very conceivable, that the thoughts which, through the medium of two extraordinary gifts, were delivered to a church that was enriched “in all utterance and in all knowledge,” were any thing less than inspired truth. Let a similar procedure be now adopted by churches, and that church, in respect of talents for public teaching, must be poor indeed, that would at all relish it, or be required to do so, unless the things thus spoken should be truly excellent. One may justly suppose, that the warmest abettors of promiscuous teaching are not seriously of opinion, that things similar to those which they urge the churches to receive as an ordinance of God, would have been twice told in a primitive church, abounding with prophets and teachers.

As only two or three prophets were permitted to speak in the church in the same meeting, so the use of tongues was restricted to the same number of persons. Macknight thinks that the *two* or *three* in 1 Cor. xiv. 27. are to be understood of the number of sentences which should be pronounced and interpreted at once. But besides the inconsistency of explaining the same kind of phraseology in the one verse of sentences, and in the other (ver. 29.) of persons, it is ridiculous to suppose that inspired teachers could err in such a case. Their fault lay in speaking at all without an interpreter, not in pronouncing too much or too little at a time. That fault alone is therefore corrected by the apostle, with an additional caution against the too frequent use of the gift of tongues. And was it not as necessary to limit the number that should exercise this gift, as the number of prophets who should speak in the church?

The preceding observations will fully show, that

they who spoke with tongues were invariably inspired. Their example therefore can be no precedent for indiscriminate teaching. That the persons who spoke with tongues were prophets and teachers, will, we presume, be evinced by the remarks which follow.

Prayer and praise, and in short every thing which was delivered in the language common to the whole church, is considered as having been occasionally expressed in a foreign language, 1 Cor. xiv. 6. and 14—17. If then every part of the public exercises of the church was performed in a foreign language, it follows, that this gift was possessed by every class of persons that spoke in the church. We are therefore safe in attributing it both to prophets and teachers. Respecting the former, there can be no dispute, Acts xix. 6. But, on the other hand, there was nothing said in a foreign language, which was not also spoken in the language common to the whole church: mysteries or revelations, knowledge, psalms and doctrine, ch. xiii. 2. xiv. 26. are all distinguished from speaking with tongues; for though foreign tongues were necessarily connected with spiritual ideas, these were not necessarily connected with foreign tongues: they could have been delivered, as they are supposed to have been, in the common language of the place. As nothing then was revealed or taught in a foreign tongue, which was not revealed and taught in the current language of the church, it clearly follows, that those who had the faculty in question were distinguished from other teachers by this faculty alone. We conclude therefore, that the persons who in the church discoursed in foreign languages, were certain of the prophets and teachers on whom God was pleased to bestow this gift.

As this appears to be a just and scriptural view of

the gift in question, so it is apprehended to be the only view of it that will reconcile the account of the gifts and exercises of the Corinthians, with the accounts of the gifts and exercises of other churches. In the church at Antioch, there were prophets and teachers, Acts xiii. In like manner, there were prophets and teachers in Rome, ch. xii. and in Thessalonica, 1st epis. v. 12. and 20. But in none of those places are any distinguished by the gift of tongues. Yet there is no room to doubt, that some possessed not only this, but other extraordinary gifts.

It also deserves attention, that along with apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, Eph. iv. no mention is made of those who spoke with tongues, notwithstanding the appearance which these made at Corinth: Yet prophecy and tongues were bestowed on some of the Ephesian believers, Acts xix. But if the latter was a mere change of raiment, in which inspired persons could occasionally either appear among strangers, or receive visits from them, there was no more reason for mentioning it than the interpretation of tongues, or the gift of healing. Indeed there can be no doubt, that apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, possessed every kind of extraordinary gift. Therefore the enumeration in Eph. iv. includes all who are mentioned in 1 Cor. xii. 28—30.

We have no reason whatever then to suppose, that the persons who spoke in foreign tongues, were a class of teachers distinct from apostles, prophets and teachers. But there is, we presume, satisfactory evidence, that only these exercised this gift. Was not Paul, who could speak in many languages, the same kind of teacher, whatever language he used? A prophet or evangelist did not acquire a new and distinct charac-

ter, with every tongue in which the former prophesied, or the latter preached. Indeed the case is evident, and the same remark is equally applicable to all who exercised the gift of tongues. Unless this be admitted, we cannot make the apostle's representation of the gifts and public exercises of the Corinthians, consistent either with itself, or with that of the gifts and exercises of other churches. Hence we shall destroy the unity of order and worship, which must have existed in the apostolic age.

The reader will, I trust, consider, that a position such as this can be established only by indirect and presumptive evidence. Tongues having been too much brought into notice and admired at Corinth, it was necessary to treat them accordingly ; but not explicitly to say by whom they were possessed, as no information could be required on that head. The confidence with which we have advanced the position before us, may perhaps seem stronger than the evidence which we have adduced in support of it. But this confidence has arisen from strong conviction of the truth of the position in question. It is not possible, without a distinct explanation of the various gifts of the first churches, to bring forward all that might be said in the present case \*, or even to give to what has been said all the force which it might receive. But let what has been advanced be duly considered. The fact, that the possession of tongues did not constitute a distinct class of teachers, will, if established, remove many difficulties on the subject of spiritual gifts by the rejection of wrong principles and distinctions, and the display and operation of the radical genuine principles of Scripture.

\* If the public were desirous of it, an attempt towards this, *which is in writing*, might be laid before them.

## ESSAY III.

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### *On the Manner and Extent of the Communication of Spiritual Gifts.*

WE have, it is asserted, ‘ the strongest reason to ‘ presume, that the Holy Ghost was given, only by ‘ the laying on of the hands of the apostles.’ Yet the only proof of this assertion is, that the Holy Ghost *was* given by the laying on of their hands. In the same way it might be proved, that they only preached the gospel and performed miracles. That in general, gifts were imparted by the imposition of their hands, we do not incline to deny ; but we must deny, that they were always thus imparted. Let us take a short survey of facts. These shall comprehend instances from both the Old and New Testament, because there is a striking coincidence between the circumstances of miraculous agency under both dispensations.

When the seventy elders, who had been chosen to assist Moses, were called to assemble at the tabernacle in order to receive of the Spirit that was on Moses, Eldad and Medad remained in the camp and prophesied there. Joshua, thinking this to be discreditable to the ministry of Moses, said, “ My lord Moses, forbid them,” Num. xi. 28. It is now difficult to determine in what manner this gift was most frequently

imparted to the ancient prophets. Can the circumstances of Zacharias, Elizabeth and Mary's receiving the Holy Spirit, be reduced to the rules of systematical arrangement? Had there been a certain, definite mode of communicating the gift of inspiration, would not this have helped the people to know who were really inspired? In answer, however, to the question, "How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken?" it was said, "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken," Deut. xviii. 21, 22. The word of the Lord having come to men in a great variety of circumstances both by night and by day, the people were to ascertain the character of the prophet by the fulfilment of his word, 1 Sam. iii. 19, 20. Rules suited to the ordinary function of the primitive prophets, were in like manner given to the disciples, to "try the spirits whether they were of God," 1 John iv. 1, 2.; and besides, certain persons were endowed with the gift of "the discerning of spirits," in order, it appears, to discern whether what was delivered as prophecy was from God, 1 Cor. xiv. 29. From the various modes of communicating the Holy Spirit, and the frequent pretensions of deceivers, such provision was of great consequence for the preservation of the churches.

In the days of Christ's ministry, one who did not accompany his disciples, was seen by them casting out devils in his name. On the day of Pentecost, the Spirit descended upon the whole company of the disciples at the same time, and not first on the apostles, and then on the rest, by the laying on of their hands. In the same way, the Spirit came upon the family of Cornelius. The language of Ananias to

Paul will not easily bend to the position, that only by the imposition of the hands of the apostles, the Holy Spirit was given: "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, that appeared to thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost," Acts ix. 17. This is a plain fact, but it has greatly puzzled theorists. Some have told us, that Ananias had a special commission; others, that Christ spoke to him only about the restoration of Paul's sight. To the first argument it is answered, that special commissions were then common in the church, chap. viii. 26. x. 3, and 11. xiii. 2. xvi. 9; to the second, that the omission in one place of a circumstance, which is mentioned in another, is also common in Scripture. It is enough, however, for our purpose, that Paul now received the Holy Spirit without the imposition of the hands of an apostle.

The question of Paul to the twelve disciples found by him in Ephesus, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" seems strongly to imply, as Mr Aikman observes, that the Lord did not confine himself to one definite way of bestowing the gifts of the Spirit, Acts xix. 2. Again, the apostle directs the Corinthians to desire spiritual gifts, but rather that they might prophesy, 1 Cor. xiv. 1. and 39. In Mr Haldane's opinion, this implies that these things were thus attainable. Can it then be doubted whether this was a different mode of obtaining gifts from the laying on of the hands of an apostle? So much then for the manner of bestowing spiritual gifts. The facts we have adduced will speak for themselves; and when Scripture facts and human theories cannot be made to agree, we ought to admit the former, and to reject

the latter. Doubtless we have certain ground to conclude, that gifts were sometimes given without the imposition of an apostle's hands. The "Spirit divideth to every man severally as he will;" not only with respect to the kind of gifts given, but to the time and manner of giving them.

We shall now consider how far the communication of spiritual gifts extended. The promise of God, and the actual fulfilment of it, will evince, that the communication of gifts extended to the church of Christ at large. We need not here contend, that when Peter said to the Jews, "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even as many as the Lord our God shall call,*" he meant "the gift of the Holy Ghost," which he had just mentioned, and the effects of which they had seen and heard. When this apostle afterwards perceived, that the family of Cornelius "spake with tongues and magnified God," he remembered the promise of Jesus thus to baptize his disciples with the Holy Ghost, Acts xi. 16. Of this indeed our Lord made frequent mention. "These signs shall follow them that believe: in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover," Mark xvi. 17, 18. This promise, so important to the church, and therefore so often repeated, was faithfully performed.

In the epistle to the Ephesians, where, as we endeavoured to show, the prophecy of Joel evidently appears to be "the promise of the Father," of which David also spoke, the church of Christ at large, and not any particular part of it, is declared to have ex-

perienced its accomplishment. The same declaration is likewise made in the 1st epistle to the Corinthians. "God hath set some in the church, first apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that miracles; then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues," xii. 28. Though this, like the former passage, comprehends the whole church of the redeemed on earth, the slightest attention to the connection may in both places convince any, that every separate society, being in itself complete, enjoyed the gifts necessary for its own edification. "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular," chap. xii. 27. See also James v. 14.

The actual state of the church in those days is set in the clearest light, by the passages which we have just quoted. Yet it is argued, that some churches had not spiritual gifts. 'It has been justly observed,' we are told, 'that we do not know that all the churches were possessed of miraculous gifts.' But this observation is palpably unjust, inasmuch as it goes to support a position, which is not only destitute of evidence, but which stands opposed to the promise of Christ, and to the known condition of the whole church. They by whom the position adverted to is advanced, are bound to support it by showing, that though gifts were promised to the church at large, and though the apostle declares that it accordingly possessed them, yet there are instances of individual churches in which there were no gifted persons. Unless they can point out some undeniable instance of this kind, we must adhere to the description given of the body of Christ as endowed with extraordinary faculties, according to the divine promise.

Let us glance a little at the state of the churches

which are spoken of in the Acts and Epistles, and see what ground there is for even supposing that any of them was destitute of spiritual gifts. The endowments of those which were planted by apostles are not called in question. As to such as were gathered by other labourers, as the persons scattered by the persecution which arose about Stephen, were these destitute of gifted men? Did not Philip, one of them, teach as well as convert the Samaritans? Would not the men of Cyprus and Cyrene have done the same? Were not the apostles and their fellow-labourers as careful to instruct the churches, as they were zealous in converting them? When the apostles heard of the success of those who had preached at Antioch, they sent thither Barnabas. It seems he did not think the church there in a destitute condition, though he seems to have wished so promising a field of usefulness to be occupied by other labourers; for he left them and went "to Tarsus to seek Saul." Many were then employed in the Lord's vineyard. "In these days came prophets from Jerusalem to Antioch," Acts xvi. 27. Agabus, one of them, is not mentioned with the prophets and teachers who are spoken of in the 13th chapter. But Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, are mentioned. Is it not probable that these were among the first who preached the gospel in that city? It cannot then be said, that churches gathered by such persons were destitute of gifts, neither can it be shown that some in those churches had not received the Holy Spirit, even though they had not seen an apostle.

The churches in Rome, Colosse and Laodicea are usually referred to as not having seen any of the apostles. They afford, however, a degree of evidence

which is not a little perplexing to the theories of those who reason on the supposition that some of the first churches had not spiritual gifts. The church in Rome, for instance, had both prophets and teachers. This, one would think, should teach people to speak with some caution relative to other churches which are supposed to have been destitute of gifts, because they had not been visited by an apostle. And I may remark besides, that, in any case, it is rash to affirm, that such or such a church had not seen an apostle, because we cannot prove that it had. When Paul went up to Jerusalem, where he remained fifteen days, he saw only Peter and James, the Lord's brother, Gal. i. 18, 19. Where were the rest of the apostles? Does it not appear, that besides Paul and Barnabas, other apostles preached among the Gentiles? 1 Cor. x. 5.

Whoever will peruse Dr Macknight's preface to his paraphrase of the epistle to the Colossians, will perhaps conceive it to be highly probable, if not altogether certain, that the churches of Colosse, Laodicea and Hierapolis, were planted by Paul and Timothy. These were cities of Phrygia; and both there and in Galatia, Paul and Timothy preached the gospel and planted churches. In one place we are told, that they travelled with the gospel "throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia;" in another, that Paul "went over *all* the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples," Acts xvi. 6. and xviii. 23. Now, we cannot well suppose, that, contrary to their usual plan, they would have passed by the chief cities. And since the churches in Galatia were planted by Paul, and by his instrumentality were endowed with the Holy Spirit, chap. iii. 5. is it not highly probable, that the churches in Phrygia enjoyed the same

benefits? or, would it not be inconsistent to deny, that they had been planted by Paul, and to affirm that some other person had planted them; when the former position is supported by strong evidence, and the latter by supposition only?—We are then to distinguish the churches at Colosse and Laodicea from those which had not personally known Paul. As to his hearing of their faith and love, chap. i. 4. (by Epaphras it would seem, verses 7. and 8.) this cannot imply, as some have thought, that he had not seen them; for in like manner he speaks of having heard of the faith and love of those whom he had certainly seen, Eph. i. 15. 1 Thes. iii. 6. Phil. 5. Although it has been said, that there is no evidence in the epistle itself of Paul's having been at Colosse, I think it will be found, that there is fully as much evidence of this kind as in that to the Ephesians. To the evidence collected from the epistle itself by the writer last mentioned, I may add a consideration to which the reader will probably attach some importance. Onesimus is said to be one of the Colossians, chap. iv. 9. because he was to be with them, as Epaphras is, because he came from them, ver. 12. Now Onesimus was to reside in the family of his master Philemon; who appears to have been converted by Paul, Phil. ver. 19. and also to have belonged to the church at Colosse. Compare Col. iv. 17. with Phil. ver. 2. The presumption therefore is, that Paul had been there. Such considerations might indeed be set aside, as Doddridge does the one in question, by supposing that Philemon had been converted by Paul at Ephesus. But this supposition is altogether groundless and unnecessary, since we are assured, that Paul laboured in the country where Philemon resided.

If what we have advanced relative to the church at Colosse be correct, it may serve to show the impropriety of supporting theories by suppositions ; while little pains are taken to ascertain the real state of things. It is certainly unjust to assume without evidence, the position that this or that church was destitute of what Christ so often promised to his disciples in general, and what the apostle declares to have been possessed by the whole church of the redeemed on earth. If such assumptions are consistent with perfect candour, they are nevertheless not very consistent with mature consideration of the subject. Ought not those to have carefully studied the subject, who take upon them to place the churches on new foundations as to social order? We have doubtless reason to complain of that inattention to facts which our friends discover, and which, with all their confidence, leaves them to the necessity of leaning upon suppositions and reasonings. If inference be an adequate source of evidence, it must be inference from undeniable premises, and not from mere assumption. That any church whatever was destitute of spiritual gifts, is surely mere assumption without evidence ; while there is satisfactory evidence, that every church of which we read was collected by apostles, or those who had been with them ; that gifts were sometimes given without the instrumentality of apostles ; and that the body of Christ at large was possessed of gifts according to the divine promise.

Although the whole church of Christ was endowed with extraordinary gifts, it does not follow, that every individual believer had some gift of this kind. All the first converts may in many places have received gifts, as seems to have been the case in some places to which

we have already referred ; but this will not prove, that every succeeding convert was similarly endowed. The distinction between those who had gifts, and such as had them not, is thus made in the 12th chapter of the 1st epistle to the Corinthians. The former are said to have been set in the body, wherein they are distinguished by the gifts they possessed, as the hand, the foot, the eye, and the ear. These indeed form a part of the body ; but then they are distinguished by the functions which they perform. For this reason, they are considered to be the strong, the comely, and more honourable parts. Now they who are thus described are the apostles, prophets, and others who were set in the church ; and who, though a part of it, were distinguished by their peculiar gifts and functions. If one could now teach by the inspiration of God, either in his own or in a foreign tongue ; if another could infallibly interpret such discourse by the same means ; and a third, perform a cure miraculously, these would unquestionably be noted for this very reason. Must not those by whom such things were done in the first age, have, on that account, been distinguished from their brethren ? As they who had gifts are distinguished from such as had them not, by the appellations given them, the place they held in the body, and the functions they performed ; so they who had them not are distinguished from those that had them : they are compared to the uncomely, the more feeble and less honourable parts : for their sake gifts were bestowed on the others. “ God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that *part* which lacked.” This honour and comeliness bestowed on the less efficient

members, doubtless refers to the grace and benefit they received by means of the gifted brethren.

In the conformation then of the body of Christ, the Holy Spirit selected proper objects to whom his gifts were imparted. He knew the future circumstances and wants of believers. The wisdom displayed in the admirable organization and structure of the human body, contrived the parts and proportions of what has been called the mystical, which, being fitly framed together, "increaseth with the increase of God." We are not therefore to conceive of a profusion of spiritual endowments conferred without discrimination. Gifts were no doubt given in abundance, but the limited number of the apostles may convince us, that the number, though much greater, of other classes of gifted men, corresponded to the work assigned them. "*Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?*" 1Cor. xii. 29,30. In matters of far inferior moment to the formation of the church, the great unerring Agent always displays order, proportion, economy, harmony and beauty. When God looked on all his works, he pronounced them to be good; but after the creation of man in his own image, he declared them to be *very good*. Such doubtless above every other work, was the excellency which he beheld in the "new man," of which Christ is the head.

That only some were endowed with spiritual gifts, is not to be doubted; yet at first sight the fact may not seem to agree with the promise of gifts to the disciples at large. But if we consider, that by the exercise of gifts they became the property of all the

saints indiscriminately, the promise will appear to have strictly conformed to its actual fulfilment. The saving influence of the Spirit cannot be the privilege of any whole society, until they all receive it individually. But a gift for public teaching belongs to them all equally, by whomsoever it is exercised in their social meetings. Christ "received gifts for men," in general, "for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell *among them*;" but he committed these gifts to "some" for the use of the whole. "All things are your's," said the apostle to the Corinthians, "whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present or things to come; all are your's." Hence Paul does not speak of imparting some spiritual gift to an individual, but to the church in Rome; because it would become theirs so soon as it should have been resident and exerted in any particular member of the body. "I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established," ch. i. 11.

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## ESSAY IV.

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*Only they who had Spiritual Gifts taught in the first Churches.*

As all the spiritual gifts are enumerated in 1 Cor. xii. 8, 9, 10. so all the gifted men are also enumerated towards the end of the same chapter. Here they are classed according to their respective endowments; but in the 4th chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians, those of them who taught in the church are ranked according to the office they held. No kind of spiritual gift, no class of gifted persons, no office which had respect to teaching, we have reason to think, is omitted in these enumerations. If any deny this, let him inform us what has been omitted. If he will show, that Paul has forgotten to mention, either some spiritual gift, some class of gifted persons, or some office which had respect to teaching, many will hold themselves indebted to him for the discovery; only they will carefully examine the truth of it, as each of those enumerations is considered to be already complete.

To prove, that only such as had spiritual gifts gave public instruction in the first churches, is declared by some to be impossible. The information in Scripture on a point so highly important to the order, peace and comfort of the churches of the saints, cannot be thought to be deficient or obscure. Those of an

opposite opinion, however, seem to rest in the confidence of having unanswerably evinced the contrary sentiment of promiscuous teaching. Yet we shall not trouble the reader with answers to all their arguments in favour of it; for indeed they are very numerous, and on some of them it is not very easy to lay hold. At the same time, the chief, by which the fabric is supported, are sufficiently conspicuous; and these we presume are not so numerous, nor are they very strong. We shall therefore advert to them but briefly; believing the "manifestation of the truth" to be the best confutation of error: if the commandment of God be clearly evinced, the rival tradition must of course be discredited. Both, however, shall have a place proportioned to their importance in the following remarks. The evidence to be adduced in support of the position we have laid down, will consist principally in the illustration of three general propositions.

I. *God never did by miracle what could have been effected by ordinary means.*—To elucidate this proposition, our first remark is, that miraculous supply did not, when afforded, extend so far as to supersede the use of care and diligence. It was the appointment of divine Wisdom to leave to the prophets as much work as could be accomplished by their own endeavours. The prophets in general are represented by Peter, as "searching with respect to whom or to what time the Spirit of Christ that was in them did refer, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow."

The principle on which God acted in communicating knowledge, was strictly observed in bestowing things needful for the body. He gave the people manna in the wilderness, but not gathered into heaps,

or divided into omers, much less ground or baked for their immediate use : on the contrary, it was spread abroad in small grains like hoar-frost ; which they had themselves to collect, to divide and to prepare. Yet when the harder condition of an eminent prophet required food in a state of preparation, it was brought him at one time by ravens, at another by an angel, 1 Kings xvii. 6. xix. 6. And because his journey was to be long when he fled from Jezebel, he was commanded to take a second time of the food which the angel had brought, ver. 7. see also Deut. vii. 20. Josh. iii. 15, 16. iv. 18. These instances will strike the mind of the reader as affording clear evidence, that miraculous supply never extended beyond the actual necessities of men.

In after times, the age of miracles and peculiar favour, the Lord Jesus and his apostles departed not from the established order of things with respect to miraculous and ordinary supply. It was then appointed, as in ancient times, that men should unite their best endeavours with the gifts and energies of the Holy Spirit that dwelt in them. Indeed, if Timothy had not received a spiritual gift, or if that gift had been incompetent to make him " a good minister of Jesus Christ," we could not suppose him in need of greater industry or closer meditation, than are enjoined in connection with the right use of his gift, in the two epistles written him by Paul, 1 Tim. iv. 13—16. 2 Tim. i. 6. 13, 14. But we stand on higher ground when we adduce Paul himself : " Praying," he says, " for me that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel," Eph. vi. 19. What need could one so highly endowed have of the prayers of others,

the common means of helping the weak and insufficient? Could not the Almighty Spirit of grace and truth that inspired the prophets, that imparted a gift to Timothy, and to Paul “abundance of visions and revelations,” have easily extended his power so far as to raise them above so much dependance on their own diligence and the prayers of the faithful? He certainly could, if that had consisted with the vigilance and exertion incumbent on men, and the economy observed by him who said, after working a signal miracle, “Gather up the fragments that nothing be lost.”

These examples relate only to spiritual matters: we shall now advert to some which relate to things temporal. The power which raised up Lazarus from the dead neither rolled away the stone from the sepulchre, nor loosed the bands from his body; these things were commanded to be done by others. After the Lord had also restored to life the daughter of Jairus, he commanded some food to be given her, Mark v. 43. A deathbed must have exhausted the food on the stomach; and he who raised her from the dead did not put her in a condition to subsist without food, though he fitted her for receiving it. Of Peter’s extraordinary deliverance we have the following account: “And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon *him*, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from *his* hands. And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals: and so he did. And he saith unto *him*, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. When they were past the first and second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city, which open-

ed to them of its own accord; and they went out, and passed on through one street, and forthwith the angel departed from him," Acts xii. 7, 8. 10. Time was given to Peter to make ready, but no time was lost. After having completely delivered him, the angel went away; nor did Peter delay to escape speedily from the rage of Herod.

Those who wrought miracles are never said to have at any time depended on these for the supply of their own wants; yet they were often hungry and thirsty, and cold and naked. The only case in the New Testament where any thing like expectation of receiving food in an extraordinary way, is expressed, is when Jesus was tempted in the wilderness. Having fasted forty days and forty nights, Satan proposed to him to turn stones into bread. Our blessed Lord, having been led thither by the Spirit, as Israel of old had been conducted to the desert, had the authority of Scripture to expect a supply of food, if necessary; corresponding to the extraordinary guidance under which he acted. Hence he quoted part of the words of Moses respecting the provision which, in a similar case, God was pleased to make for the children of Israel. Compare Mat. iv. 4. with Deut. viii. 3. "And behold," it is said, "angels came and ministered to him," Mat. iv. 11. Might not this have been for the sustenance of the natural life, agreeably to the Scripture quoted by our Lord, and to the manner in which Elijah had been supplied with food by an angel, when he fled from Jezebel?

Again, we may remark, in confirmation of the proposition which we are endeavouring to establish, that extraordinary means were withheld so soon as ordinary means were afforded. As a matter of necessity,

the children of Israel were fed with manna in the wilderness, during the period of forty years; but after they had entered the land of Canaan, the manna was withheld. "And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land: neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year," Josh. v. 12. Had it been withheld the day before, the people very probably, would have been ill supplied, but to have been continued till the day following, would not have consisted with the procedure of him who does nothing in vain.

Under this head too, an example will be found relative to the illumination of the mind; for with regard to things both intellectual and physical, the giver of all good acts on the same principles.

The inspiration of Bezaleel, in the wilderness, is universally acknowledged. The Hebrews, being shepherds, were little, if at all, versed in the arts which were practised in Egypt. Afterwards the Philistines, having removed all the smiths that were among the Israelites, only Saul and Jonathan had either sword or spear in the day of battle, 1 Sam. xiii. 22. But indeed the arts were never cultivated by them. Their inferiority in this respect was manifest, even in the prosperous reign of Solomon; when chariots and fine linen were brought from Egypt; masons and carpenters from Tyre. And the prophet Ezekiel represents them at the market of that celebrated city with the productions of their own country in their simple state, while other nations are represented as carrying thither a rich variety of manufactured articles, chap. xxvii. In answer to the charge of having never been the authors of any new and useful invention, Josephus, who

entered warmly into the subject against their adversaries, could vindicate his countrymen only on the ground of their strict and stedfast adherence to their ancient law and institutions. This perhaps would not have gone far towards their vindication from the imaginary reproach of deficiency in science and the arts. The above view, however, of their condition relative to improvement in the arts, taken in connection with their sequestered situation in the wilderness, evinces the necessity of divine inspiration to qualify Bezaleel, for the ingenious, diversified and singular workmanship of the tabernacle, the vestments of the priests and the sacred utensils. “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, See I have called by name Bezaleel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones to set *them*, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship,” *Exod. xxxi. 1—5.*

As Moses had received in the mount the pattern of all things belonging to the tabernacle, so did David by the Spirit the pattern of the temple, and of all things belonging to it. But though there was a copious effusion of the Spirit since the days of Samuel, we do not find that any were inspired to execute the arduous and diversified workmanship of the temple. Some might have expected that God would now inspire another Bezaleel: the Jews might have thought of looking out “among themselves” for expert workmen. Solomon, however, does not seem to have had any such expectation. Accordingly he sent to the

king of Tyre, not only for masons and carpenters, but for Hiram, an ingenious worker in brass, who had acquired that art with his father in Tyre. He, with the others employed, at length completed the celebrated work of building and ornamenting the temple of the Lord. Now, though the manna was presently succeeded by the old corn of Canaan, we presume the reason of the change from extraordinary to ordinary means, is not at all more striking than in the case before us. Here then are two instances, the one relating to the body, the other to the mind, which gives the most ample confirmation to the position we laid down, That God never does by miracle what may be effected by ordinary means.

Having in every case where we remember the subject to have been introduced, (except in some recent publications), understood the principle we are defending to be acknowledged as incontrovertible, I must beg to be excused for having offered so tedious an illustration of it. It is indeed a hardship to waste time and labour in so plain a case. But, in contending for truth, even with its real friends, a development of first principles is often indispensable.

Mr Carson 'will grant, that all the first bishops 'possessed miraculous gifts without exception,' because 'the mere possession of a qualification in an 'officer, does not necessarily imply that such a qualification is necessary in his office; it must be otherwise known that such a thing is required,' p. 211. But this is mere talk. Must we judge of the arrangements of infinite Wisdom by the common accidents of life, where we often see little agreement between the duties of an office and the qualifications of the officer? But when did the Almighty ever scat-

ter the blessing of miraculous supply with such undistinguishing profusion as is here supposed? It may be more safely granted, that besides the gifts necessary to their office, some of the first bishops might have had gifts which answered other ends. But then such gifts were necessary for these ends. They all seem to have had the gift of healing, Jam. v. 14. If then it cannot be shown, that in one instance God ever did by miracle what might have been effected by ordinary means, it is impossible to maintain, without great extravagance, that he may have done so in hundreds of instances. But if the Scriptures show that miraculous gifts were actually possessed by all the first bishops, they at the same time prove that these gifts were essential to their office.

We shall next hear Mr Haldane. 'He that prophesieth speaketh to men to edification, exhortation and comfort, 1 Cor. xiv, 3. To do this miraculous gifts are not necessary; and therefore I conclude that whether all the persons alluded to in this chapter were possessed of such gifts (which I greatly doubt) or not, this is a mere circumstance, and not essential to exhortation in the church,' p. 36.

This quotation I must regard as an example of the practice of confounding the present state of the church in regard to gifts, with its condition in the first age. Who supposes that miraculous gifts are now essential to exhortation (I mean scriptural exhortation) in the church? But was this the case in the first churches? Does the passage quoted by Mr H. prove that it was? With what propriety has he quoted a passage, in which the gift of prophecy is considered to have been exercised to edification and exhortation and comfort, as a proof that such gifts were not then necessa-

ry for these ends? Was not the cause necessary to produce the effect? and was not the cause in the instance adduced, one of those gifts which Mr H. affirms to have been unnecessary? If the theory he defends is indeed agreeable to Scripture, it must admit of a better defence; for the passage which he has brought to establish, goes in fact to subvert it. But he regards the possession of miraculous gifts as a mere circumstance, and not essential to exhortation. It is, however, a circumstance which seems greatly to puzzle him, and those who are like-minded with him about promiscuous exhortation. Sometimes they allow to spiritual gifts all their vast importance, but presently they reduce them to a mere superfluity. But before they prove miraculous gifts to have been a mere circumstance, and not essential to exhortation in the first churches, they must be able to invalidate principles which are interwoven throughout the evident contexture of both the Old and New Testament.

I hardly think that any will have recourse to so poor and fallacious an argument in opposition to the preceding illustration, as that the churches might have been edified, and the gospel confirmed, with less prophesying and fewer miracles than are spoken of in Scripture. As well might it be said, that though the waters had issued less copiously at Kadesh, and the manna had been given with a less bountiful hand, the people after all might have subsisted well enough. In a plentiful harvest, no doubt some sheaves might be dispensed with; but would the springing of the corn be therefore unessential? When God is pleased to bestow either in a miraculous or ordinary way, it does not become men to prescribe how much. But the highest ground may be taken as to the spiritual gifts.

If inspiration and miracles were at all necessary, (and no Christian will deny this), *all* the knowledge, the revelations, the prophesying, the doctrine, the signs and wonders, and the divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, in the first age, were altogether necessary to give to the church of Christ, the intelligence, and holiness, and comfort, and stability, and fruitfulness, and extent, and glory, to which God had appointed her to the praise of his grace, at her first establishment among the nations of the world. How different indeed the language of the apostles when *they* speak of gifts, from the language of our brethren: "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and *in* all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," 1 Cor. i. 4—7.

Since then it is undeniable, not only that miraculous supply was never afforded, except in cases of necessity, but that the primitive churches were miraculously supplied with gifts for public teaching, it is obvious, that the peculiarity of their circumstances rendered such supply absolutely necessary. This then shall be the substance of the proposition which we are next to elucidate.

II. *The circumstances of the first churches absolutely required that their teachers should possess extraordinary gifts:* first, because they *had not* the *Scriptures* of the New Testament; and secondly, because *many* in the churches *had* extraordinary gifts.

Believers will consider, in judging of this subject, how much they themselves owe to the daily perusal

of the oracles of God ; and how much to the same cause is to be attributed the information and comfort they derive from public teaching. It certainly will not be disputed, that the books of the New Testament furnish the Christian teacher with the most valuable and necessary materials for the edification of the church of God. This luminous portion of divine revelation is of the greatest importance, not only on account of that clearer light which, like the sun, it only can supply, but for the aid which it affords in searching for those treasures of grace and truth which lie concealed under the veil of the Mosaic economy. When we reflect that the best discourses we have ever heard, were taken immediately from Scripture, and especially the aid which every teacher is obliged to receive from the Scriptures of the New Testament, we must surely allow, that without their assistance, uninspired men were but poorly qualified to teach the church of God, compared with similar teachers in our own days who have all these books in the most convenient form, besides the writings of Moses and the prophets.

They who omit in their discussions on public teaching, the subject of spiritual gifts, as if it were either too obscure or unnecessary to demand attention, might at least try to explain to us, (because the question is neither unintelligible nor unessential), how men who had not spiritual gifts could have become useful public teachers without the Scriptures of the New Testament. But they have prudently omitted the investigation of this matter ; or rather, as we really apprehend, they have in the ardour and hurry of reformation, as they judge it, laid before the public, crude, undigested, erroneous positions, as if these possessed all the evidence and authority of the axioms of revelation.

‘ All,’ it is said, ‘ that was necessary for the edification of the churches, was the holding fast the traditions which they had been taught, either by word or writing, 2 Thes. ii. 15. 1 Cor. iv. 1. 17. 1 Tim. iv. 6. 2 Tim. ii. 14. 2 Pet. i. 12. 15. iii. 1. Now this might be done without miraculous gifts\*.’ This quotation contains a strong assertion, and much appearance of Scripture proof, but for the sake of the writer, we could wish it had not been written. He asserts that miraculous gifts were not necessary to hold fast the doctrine of the apostles. The first part of the proof is 2 Thes. ii. 15. “ Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.” The epistle referred to, was doubtless Paul’s first epistle to themselves. Before they received it, they could hold fast, of the doctrine of the apostles, only what they had heard “ by word.” In doing so, miraculous gifts were exercised: they had among them both prophets and teachers, 1 Thess. v. 12. 20. Miraculous gifts were therefore necessary. The second part of the proof is 1 Cor. iv. 17. “ For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.” How this passage can be supposed to prove the position in dispute, I cannot at all perceive. Before this time, however, we do not know that the Corinthians had any epistle to guide them. Their manner, in their public meetings, of continuing in the doctrine which they had heard “ by word,” will be seen in the 14th chapter throughout. There we read of

\* Mr Haldane’s Observations, &c. pp. 38, 39.

miraculous gifts only : these therefore were necessary. The third proof of the assertion in question is still more unhappy. " If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained," 1 Tim. iv. 6. 2 Tim. ii. 14. is of the same import. These passages speak of the ministry of Timothy himself ; which we know he fulfilled, by exercising a miraculous gift which had been given him by the laying on of the apostle's hands. Here then a question may be fairly asked, If, in order to continue in the doctrine of the apostles, it behoved Timothy to exercise a miraculous gift, was not some gift of this kind necessary also for other teachers ? The texts in the 2d epistle of Peter, to which Mr H. refers, being in our opinion nothing to the purpose, we offer no remarks upon them.

' But certainly,' says Mr H. ' considering the state of ignorance and blindness from which the Gentiles especially had been called, miraculous gifts were highly important,' p. 39. To this Mr Carson will add, what Mr H. has partly forgotten, that ' the want of the New Testament Scriptures, made miraculous gifts more necessary at that period,' p. 230. But this writer goes on most erroneously to affirm, that ' the great design of them is said to be for a confirmation of Christianity, agreeable to prophecy.' Mr C. might complain, were we not to mention his proof of the foregoing assertion. It is this : ' Some of them, as the gift of healing, had no reference to the duty of the pastoral office, and others are said to be a sign to them that believe not.' But we presume the chief design of miraculous gifts, was to reveal and propagate the gospel. This was the first and great end

of them ; their second and subordinate end was to confirm the truth of the gospel. Accordingly in 1 Cor. xii. apostles, prophets and teachers are put before workers of miracles, and such as spoke with tongues, and in the 4th chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians such gifts as miracles and tongues are not at all referred to, because these were included in the qualifications of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. I need not enlarge further on a point which is almost self-evident.

We must however proceed to call the reader's attention somewhat more particularly to the condition of the first churches. Any one may judge, that none of the epistles could have been written till many years after the ascension of the Lord Jesus. The precise date of them does not affect the argument. None of them, it is generally allowed, was written sooner than about seventeen years after our Lord's ascension. It took, at least, forty years more to publish at different times the whole of the epistles. With respect to the four gospels and the book of Acts, the common opinion is, that Matthew wrote his gospel, not sooner than eight years, or perhaps not till fifteen years after Christ's ascension. The gospels by Mark and Luke were written at subsequent periods. The book of Acts is of a still later date, chap. i. 1. John wrote his gospel after he had returned from Patmos. Now, some time must have elapsed before all these books could have been circulated and collected for the use of all the churches—a benefit which they could not have possessed till after the death of most or of all of the apostles. No doubt God made the cessation of extraordinary gifts, and the possession of the Scriptures, suit the necessities of the church, as he had formerly done

in regard to the Israelites : the manna ceased to fall, after the people had eaten of the corn of Canaan ; and the gift of inspiration seems to have been withheld, after the Scriptures of the Old Testament had been completed.

In the first age of the gospel, the Old Testament Scriptures could not have been generally perused in Judea, as they were not written in the Syro-Chaldaic, the language spoken by the Jews since the captivity, but in the ancient Hebrew, which had been spoken by their fathers. Therefore Ezra and the Levites, in reading the Scriptures according to the law, “ gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.” ‘ In other words,’ as Mr Aikman remarks, ‘ they translated the original into the modern Hebrew or Syro-Chaldaic.’ The practice of reading the law and the prophets every Sabbath-day, must doubtless have required the work of interpretation to be as often repeated. Accordingly, we are informed, that there were interpreters in the synagogues. These, it is reasonable to think, were taught in the seminaries of the scribes. Hence, because Jesus was known not to have been thus taught, the people were astonished at his knowledge and eloquence. “ How knoweth this man letters having never learned ?”—a question which they would not have asked, if it had been the common privilege of any Jew to read in his vernacular tongue the writings of Moses and the prophets. The Hellenistic Jews, on the contrary, could read the Greek translation of the Scriptures ; and they could therefore search the Scriptures daily, as did the inhabitants of Berea. Now to be “ mighty in the Scriptures,” did not, in those days, consist in folding down a dozen corners of the leaves of a pocket Bible, and reading in public the

places so marked, with perhaps a few superficial observations—no, it consisted in a thorough knowledge of them, including an ability to quote them, and to reason out of them, from memory. This it was which made Apollos mighty in the Scriptures. “For he mightily convinced the Jews, *and that* publicly, shewing by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ.” A large roll of many skins would not have suited that dry, tedious, ill-connected, arithmetical enumeration of chapters and verses by which some now display their ability to edify their brethren. This concordance-preaching was not then in use. Hence in boasting of what men can now do with their Bibles in their hands, it should be remembered, that the Bibles of the first Christians were too large and clumsy to be thus held in their hands—that these Bibles did not include the books of the New Testament—and that among the ten thousands who believed in Judea, only a few comparatively could have a Bible in possession. These things ought to be considered in examining the practice of the first churches; for if it differed materially from the modern practice of promiscuous exhortation, the difference should, if possible, be clearly understood.

Since the “things which were written aforetime were written for our learning,” it may be useful in passing to glance at the condition of mankind in the days of old. During the period from Adam to Moses, in which no revelation of the divine will was committed to writing, Jehovah may be said to have ordinarily conversed with men in a manner, which having ceased, we now regard as extraordinary. In Lord Barrington’s *Miscellanea Sacra*, notice is taken of the gracious intercourse of God with Adam and Eve in paradise; which, it is observed, would most probably have been

continued, if they had persevered in their obedience to God. But though sin, in a great degree, interrupted the intercourse of God with men, and rendered some of it terrible to the impenitent, his purpose of mercy in Christ Jesus opened up a new and most gracious medium of communication. Not only did God bear testimony to the sacrifice of Abel, but he called Cain to account for the murder of his brother. To Enoch and Noah he granted revelations. And besides conversing with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, he spoke to Abimelech, Hagar and Laban. The book of Job seems clearly to intimate, that this was the usual method of conveying to men instruction, warning and reproof. "In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; then he openeth the ears of men, and scaleth their instruction, that he may withdraw man *from his* purpose, and hide pride from man. He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword," chap. xxxiii. 15—18. But from the continuation of Elihu's discourse, in which the condition of the same person seems to be represented, one would be apt to conclude, that these visions of the night did not alone reclaim the individual, but were only preparatory or aiding to the instructions of enlightened men, who had a faculty of interpreting such dreams, but who in those days were thinly scattered among the apostate descendants of Noah. "If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness; then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom," ver. 23, 24. The dreams of Abimelech, of Laban, of Pharaoh, of his butler and baker—the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar, and the hand-writing seen by Belshaz-

zar, connected with the prayer, reproof, interpretation and counsel of Abraham, Jacob, Joseph and Daniel on those occasions, if viewed all together, afford ample illustration of Elihu's doctrine. Whatever ingenuity the magicians and wise-men of Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar might be accustomed to display in the interpretation of the dreams which came "through the multitude of business," and in which there were "divers vanities," they could not explain the portentous admonitory dreams of these two kings: this honour was reserved for men who had another spirit in them.

Although these were but the first and feeblest rays of the light of Heaven upon a world which had fallen under the power of darkness, they cannot, by any means, be classed with matters of "doubtful disputation." Tradition, it has been often said, transmitted to successive generations the knowledge of the true God. But is it not evident, that the preservation in the world of the knowledge and worship of God, also depended on extraordinary causes? Where, without these, do we find God certainly known and worshipped before the giving of the law? But when the light of the moon was as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun seven-fold, as the light of seven days, how glorious in our eyes the bursting forth of spiritual light from the Sun of righteousness himself! God poured out his Spirit upon all flesh: upon the fathers and the children, the servants and hand-maidens, of both the Jews and Gentiles, and they prophesied! If before the Old Testament began to be written, such manifestations of God had been necessary to preserve to himself a people in the world, can it be matter of wonder, that he should, for the same reason, have held extraordinary communications with his saints ere the Scrip-

tures of the New Testament were committed to their hands?

In fact, the introduction of the new covenant dispensation required the full promulgation of the nature of that covenant. The books of Moses and the prophets could no more direct the churches of Christ, than the book of Genesis could have directed the Israelites after the introduction of the Sinai covenant. This will not be disputed. The question then is, Did God leave the first Christian teachers without any extraordinary aid, to drink only of the narrow, muddy, uncertain stream of tradition? Such, we dare affirm, must the doctrine of the apostles have become in a course of years, if men had nothing but ordinary aid against prejudice and error of every kind. Nor were extraordinary endowments more than sufficient to preserve them in the truth. Churches that unquestionably possessed extraordinary endowments, experienced much trouble from "divers and strange doctrines." What a prey then must churches have been to error and imposition, if they had no such endowments! Indeed, the condition in which our brethren would place the first teachers, is altogether contrary to the procedure of God, and quite inconsistent with just sentiments respecting the weakness and darkness of the human mind in spiritual matters. I trust we shall in the sequel be able to show, that it is evidently contrary to the plainest and fullest accounts in Scripture of the actual state of things in the first age. The remarks we are now making, serve only to clear the foundation of the rubbish which has been cast upon it.

As examples of what was then the common condition of teachers, let us consider those of Antioch, Iconium, Derbe and Lystra. In these cities the gospel

was preached, and churches were planted by Paul and Barnabas ; and when they had accomplished their work in those parts, and ordained elders in every church, they returned to Antioch in Syria, where they had been recommended to the grace of God. Now after a long lapse of time, how little could the memory of those elders have retained, (supposing them to have received no spiritual gifts), of the doctrine of the apostles ! This is a palpable case, which the most ordinary understanding is able to comprehend. The elders in those places cannot be supposed to have been sent to cultivate the Lord's vineyard, like a man who, without the usual implements of husbandry, is sent to till the ground, as it were, with his staff in his hand ; while to the Corinthians and others, the apostle imparted abundance of spiritual gifts. And in how many ways did he prove his solicitude for the advancement in knowledge of all the churches of the saints ! By his own unwearied assiduity in teaching them, by sending other labourers to places where they were wanting, by writing epistles, by his prayers, by his strong desire to impart some spiritual gift to those he had not seen, by directing such as had gifts to the humble and diligent use of them, and by exhorting all indiscriminately to the duty of mutual edification, it is evident that he felt the most ardent desire that all the churches should have " the full assurance of understanding." Let any man, if he is able, reconcile these things with the incredible notion that they who taught and exhorted publicly had not spiritual gifts. But one half of its incredibility has not yet appeared ; for not only did the previous blindness, especially of the Gentiles, make spiritual gifts " highly important," and the want of the New Testament make them the " more

necessary ;” but the actual possession of gifts by many in the churches made it very necessary that all those who taught publicly should themselves have been so endowed.

No gifts were more frequently imparted, or were more valuable for the purposes of edification, than prophecy and tongues. In Ephesus these endowments were at the beginning given to twelve disciples, whom Paul found there. Afterwards, in the same city, he preached the gospel with great success ; nor is there any room to doubt whether the gifts of the Spirit were communicated to others also who believed. Now certainly, the elders of the church in Ephesus had a most difficult task assigned them, if, without miraculous gifts themselves, they had to teach disciples who could speak with tongues and prophesy. To these very elders the apostle said, “ I take you to record this day, that I *am* pure from the blood of all *men*. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood,” Acts xx. 26—28. On this affecting occasion, we will not say that they did not eagerly listen to the last and most impressive address of the great apostle ; but may we not be allowed to suppose, that when their minds began to be relieved from the solemnity of the parting scene, they might have expressed the mingled emotions of their hearts in words to this effect : ‘ By the hands of our faithful  
 ‘ and happy apostle, how gloriously hath the temple of  
 ‘ the living God been lifted up above the temples of  
 ‘ the idols ! He hath indeed taught us publicly and  
 ‘ from house to house, most faithfully and affectionate-

'ly, warning every one night and day with tears.  
 ' How many and great also were the miracles and cures  
 ' which he performed; and how wonderful and preci-  
 ' ous the gifts which were given to the brethren by the  
 ' laying on of his hands! Yet one cannot help think-  
 ' ing how arduous hath been our work since we enter-  
 ' ed into his labours. They who enjoyed *his* teaching,  
 ' for the space of three years, in public and in private,  
 ' cannot certainly be much instructed by *our* poor en-  
 ' deavours. Nay, till this very day, when two or three  
 ' of the prophets or other gifted brethren, happen to  
 ' speak in rotation, we are afraid to begin after them;  
 ' for what are we, though the pastors of the churches,  
 ' in comparison of inspired men! Nothing truly ap-  
 ' peareth so unaccountable of all that hath happened  
 ' until this day, than that gifts for public and private  
 ' edification should have, from the first, been given to  
 ' so many of the brethren, while no gifts of this kind  
 ' have been imparted unto us, who have been solemnly  
 ' charged to feed the church of God. But shall the  
 ' thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast  
 ' thou made me thus?'

What a desperate undertaking for men without gifts, would the work of teaching and oversight have been in the church at Corinth, where, according to Mr Carson, the taught or exhorting brethren were prophets and speakers with tongues. Indeed all who hold the same sentiments, in some form or other maintain the same position. They must abide then by all the absurd and improbable consequences which are fairly deducible from their respective statements.

All men, it is now said, come into the church with the liberty of teaching publicly if they please to exercise this liberty. And who can wonder that this is the

opinion of those who would convince us, that in the circumstances of the first churches, the uninspired were the teachers, the inspired, the taught. But to a man of sense and genuine humility, to a Jew for instance, newly turned away from the traditions of the elders, or to a young Gentile convert, delivered from the grossest idolatry and ignorance of God, this pretended liberty to be exercised among prophets and other gifted men, would not we presume have been at all so enviable as the inestimable privilege of hearing from *their* lips the oracles of God. It is surely a fair question to ask of teachers now, If you had never seen the New Testament Scriptures, would you really think yourselves fit to teach and to rule, where several of the brethren could speak by inspiration? What could *you* do in such a case, but retail to the church, very imperfectly, what the gifted brethren had said before you in greater abundance, and to much better purpose? Would *you* not think the temple of God better “framed together” if *they* were the teachers and *you yourselves* the taught? And one might also ask the exhorting brethren, In such a case as this, *without the Bible in your hands*, would you like to exhort the inspired brethren, rather than that they should teach and exhort you? You might indeed agree to give exhortations mutually; but some might be inclined to dispense with your services, lest for gold you should bring brass, and for silver iron. Such, however, being the supposed condition of public speakers in the first age, their ability, on the one hand, to teach and exhort must have been far inferior to yours, now that you have the apostolic writings; while their work, on the other, was much more difficult, because they had to teach men who were certainly inspired: your own immense superiority to them as teachers

and exhorters, is one of the modest and credible inferences deducible from your premises! But as we really hope that our brethren will abandon some of their positions, rather than abide by this fair consequence, we wish them to consider us as lending our best aid to remove them from a system which appears to us to be untenable and dangerous.

Another proposition yet remains to be elucidated, on which the whole argument may be allowed to rest.

III. *The fitness of men, both for public teaching, and for edifying the churches, are invariably attributed to spiritual gifts.*

We formerly offered a pretty full illustration of the difference between spiritual gifts and the saving influence of the Spirit. By means of spiritual gifts, men were qualified to become teachers; by means of the saving influence of the Spirit, they became the children of God. It is not therefore necessary to enlarge a second time on these several effects of divine operation.

What is said of our blessed Lord himself, remarkably illustrates the extraordinary agency of the Holy Spirit. ‘His intimate knowledge of all truth,’ it has been well observed, ‘is uniformly ascribed, either to his having been with God, before he appeared on the earth, or to his receiving, in his human nature, the Spirit of God without measure, John iii. 11—13; 31—34\*.’ Luke’s account of the descent and operation of the Spirit relative to the Lord Jesus, is as follows: “Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and pray-

\* Missionary Magazine, Vol. xvii. p. 49.

ing, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape, like a dove, upon him; and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased. And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all." In the synagogue of Nazareth, "there was delivered to him the book of the prophet Esaias: and when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord," iii. 21, 22. iv. 14, 15; 17—19. Until thus anointed with the Holy Ghost, Jesus did not commence his public ministry; and to the same anointing is in general ascribed both his teaching and his miracles, Acts x. 38.

The apostles, who so fully enjoyed the ministry of Christ, were in a manner children before the day of Pentecost: their apprehensions of spiritual matters were inconsistent and obscure, their expectations as to the nature of the kingdom of God were mixed and worldly, and their courage, with Christ himself to animate them by his counsel and example, often failed them in the hour of trial. Therefore the Lord never employed them as fellow-labourers with himself, except that he sent them once to preach the gospel and to work miracles. This preaching we have reason to think was little more than a simple proclamation of facts, agreeably to the import of the original word

κηρυσσειν, *to proclaim*, as the common crier does, Luke ix. 2. The command of sentiment and language, the "mouth and wisdom" which was promised them, appears to refer to the illumination which they should afterwards receive, when brought before kings and rulers for a testimony against them and the Gentiles, Luke xxi. 12—17. The Lord also sent forth the seventy by two and two to announce to the cities of Judea the kingdom of God, and his own determination to visit them successively. They were empowered, in like manner, to confirm their message by miracles. But never do we find, either them, or the apostles, employed stately to instruct the people, much less in synagogues giving a word of exhortation: they left this to Jesus their divine Teacher. In public they attended his ministry, and in private he expounded to them the more difficult parts of his public discourses, besides giving them such other information as should prepare them for becoming his messengers to the world. All this time the Lord was himself incessantly and laboriously employed in preaching the gospel of the kingdom. "But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly *is* plentiful, but the labourers *are* few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest," Matt. ix. 36—38. When therefore we ask, Why did not Jesus send his disciples constantly to labour among the people that pressed himself to remain among them? we do not say to him, What doest thou? but to our brethren we say, Why did Jesus act in this manner? The answer

doubtless is, the disciples were not qualified for steadily teaching the people. How clouded were their ideas of the nature of his kingdom on the very day of his ascension to heaven! "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" Acts i. 6. But Jesus "commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saieth he*, ye have heard of me." And he said to them, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth," verses 4. and 8. Accordingly on the day of Pentecost, the scene entirely changed. The children grew in one hour to the stature of perfect men; like Aaron's rod which brought forth almonds in a night. They who were formerly of slow capacity as scholars, instantly became teachers of the highest eminence. They who had all along been timorous and distrustful, astonished by their boldness their powerful and merciless enemies. Indeed nothing is more wonderful than their sudden transition from weakness to strength, from the fearfulness of the lamb to the boldness of the lion, from darkness and hesitation of mind to the most luminous and enlarged spiritual understanding. Under the invincible afflatus of the Spirit, they threw open the doors which were shut for fear of the Jews, and with freedom and propriety of speech not to be surpassed, they came forth to charge the rulers and the people with the murder of the Prince of life—through whose name they preached to them repentance and remission:

of sins. "With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus."

If the apostles, after so long enjoying the ministry of Jesus, were unfit to be employed as teachers in his kingdom, how much more unfit must have been new converts, whether Jews or Gentiles, to act as stated teachers in the newly gathered churches. The apostles indeed received the highest illumination; but the other disciples who were with them, also received the Holy Spirit: "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." To this extraordinary cause is attributed the irresistible wisdom and energy with which Stephen preached the gospel, and confounded its adversaries. In a word, all the gifted brethren partook of the promise of the Father, and the consequence unquestionably was, such a measure of knowledge and utterance, as enabled them so to speak, that "all might learn, and all might be comforted," 1 Cor. xiv. 31.

But the position we are establishing, involves a serious difficulty which must not be concealed. All our opponents deny, that spiritual gifts were necessary to qualify the pastors of the first churches for their work.

In our apprehension, on the other side, the most unequivocal testimony is given in Eph. iv. to the position, that pastors and teachers, as well as apostles and prophets, were qualified for their work, by the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit. To the same cause precisely, the qualifications of these several classes of gifted persons are expressly attributed. As, however, persons were not appointed to the apostleship on the ascension of Jesus, but only received power to fulfil

their ministry; so none were then appointed as pastors of churches, but the gifts which fitted men for the office were then sent down by the ascended Redeemer. Now, the Scriptures do not speak of natural abilities, and ordinary improvement, as gifts sent down from heaven on the ascension of Jesus. In like manner, though God fed his people in Canaan with "the finest of wheat," it was said of the manna, "He gave them bread from heaven to eat." We presume we have already given sufficient reason to conclude, that the gifts, as well as the bread from heaven, were of an extraordinary kind, and therefore suited to the peculiar exigencies of the church at the commencement of the gospel dispensation.

Mr Carson observes on this passage, that 'the apostle refers to the gift of institution of these offices,' (was the office of apostle then instituted, or before?) 'which certainly implies, that Jesus did then gift those 'invested with this' (the pastoral) 'office with suitable 'qualifications,' p. 61. These qualifications he explains to have been, 'what was in every church communicated by miracle,' p. 67. Now, since Mr Carson's own view of this passage supports the position, that the first pastors were qualified for their work by means of spiritual gifts, what avail all his arguments against it? They are indeed well calculated to confound the subject, but certainly not to satisfy an inquirer. The reader may however be surprised to find this writer involved in so palpable an instance of self-contradiction; but this too often attends the reasoning of Mr Carson.

All our opponents argue that spiritual gifts were not necessary for the first pastors, because they are not expressly mentioned in 1 Tim. iii. and Tit. i. But

this is a mere difficulty. What signify such against the testimony of God? Almost every subject has its difficulties. The difficulty in question will naturally come to be considered in another place. If gifts were implied, this is quite sufficient. Doubtless a gift is implied in 1 Tim. iv. 6. because it is spoken of in the 14<sup>th</sup> verse of the same chapter.

From the passages formerly quoted, Mr Haldane concludes, that spiritual gifts 'were not necessary for 'stated and official teachers,' p. 37. Yet he admits, that 'no positive example can be adduced from Scripture of the public teaching of an uninspired elder. 'God indeed bestowed miraculous gifts, both on elders and other members of some churches,' p. 49. But will Mr H. inform us, where were the elders and churches on whom he did not bestow miraculous gifts? He thinks, and with reason, it may be asked, 'Where 'do we read in the New Testament of any one teaching or exhorting in a church who was not possessed 'of extraordinary gifts?' p. 35.

On this question Mr Braidwood takes the same side with Messrs Carson and Haldane. 'If they 'were extraordinarily qualified,' observes Mr B. 'by 'the gifts of the Holy Spirit, must they not have 'been prophets, evangelists, workers of miracles, or 'those who possessed the gifts of healing, (this they 'were, Jam. v. 14), or the gift of tongues, or the interpretation of tongues\*.'

Now it is to me a little extraordinary, that though this interrogation *must* have been taken chiefly from a passage (1 Cor. xii.) where they who are called teachers, have a very conspicuous place, being twice mentioned after prophets, and before four or five other classes of

\* Letters on a variety of subjects, p. 159.

extraordinarily gifted persons, these are yet omitted in the list which Mr B. has been pleased to make out ! Indeed how could he have mentioned them, without either blunting the edge of his argument, or affirming, in opposition to the clearest evidence, that these teachers had not spiritual gifts ? Yet after all, we wonder at this omission, and the more so, that in arguing for the necessity of ordinary teachers to render churches complete, he considers the teachers mentioned in that chapter to have been the stated teachers of the churches ; for he marks them in italics thus, ‘ thirdly, *Teachers,*’ p. 60. as he also does, ‘ *Pastors and Teachers,*’ p. 58. But I am willing to suppose, either that Mr B. having made out the above list from memory, he quite forgot to mention teachers, or, that he did not regard their being ranked so high among the supernaturally gifted brethren, as any proof whatever that they were themselves supernaturally gifted. If this be his opinion, very few, if any, it is presumed, will venture to accede to it.

He grants, however, that ‘ some of them might be ‘ workers of miracles, and have the gift of tongues.’ They who had the gift of tongues spoke by inspiration. But as Mr B. does not seem inclined to allow the first pastors, (what he cannot deny to many in the first churches), the privilege of speaking by inspiration of the Spirit, he probably means that they did so when they addressed strangers only, but were uninspired when they taught the church. Inspiration was enjoyed by them to declare to the ignorant the first principles of religion, but not in teaching the enlightened the way of God more perfectly !

Mr B. also grants, that ‘ some of them might be ‘ workers of miracles.’ A liberal concession truly ! but

we have no need to lay hold on it. But why grant merely the *possibility*, and that only to *some* of them, of having been workers of miracles, when the apostle James supposes the *certainty* of *all* of them having the power of miraculously healing the sick? "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up," Jam. v. 14, 15. Does not even this passage imply, that the elders of the churches were possessed of the most useful spiritual gifts? For as gifts were various, and only some of the gifted brethren had the one in question, doubtless the Lord, in bestowing gifts, had particular respect to the situation of elders, since they are supposed to have always possessed the gift of healing, and since the sick disciple is directed to apply to them for a cure, rather than to any other who might be similarly endowed. If elders had a gift for healing the sick, much more surely for edifying the body of Christ. Had the case been otherwise, they might have looked in vain for that affection and confidence, without which they never could have ruled the church of God. What children must they have been, if without gifts, among the gifted brethren! Human nature was the same then as now. The servants of Christ were often exposed, as they have been since, to ungrateful and unbecoming treatment from such as were bound to "esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake." No person indeed seems better acquainted with the fact, and the reasons of it, than the writer last mentioned. He duly appreciates, and justly characterizes accordingly, the nature and consequences of that levelling spirit, which, with great pretensions

to humility, is the genuine offspring of pride, and the 'fruitful source of envying, strife and confusion,' p. 99. To counteract the tendency of this spirit, so destructive of love, peace, and prosperity in churches, he has said many excellent and weighty things. But this, like another kind of evil spirits, is not easily expelled. There is a system of religious anarchy, under whose specious wings, it is sure to find nourishment and shelter. Unless, therefore, something more efficacious than words be employed to expel it; unless scriptural subordination and scriptural practice, produced by their proper principles, be maintained, the disciples will still wondering inquire, Why could not we cast him out?

In the passages considered, (1 Cor. xii. and Eph. iv.) the apostle, as was remarked on a former occasion, speaks of the whole church of the redeemed on earth. The teachers, therefore, who are mentioned in the one passage, and the pastors and teachers spoken of in the other, include all the stated teachers of the first age. The plain testimony of Scripture then settles this point; and irrefragably proves, what has been so pertinaciously denied, that the first pastors had extraordinary gifts.

Who indeed could have preached the gospel every where, infallibly instituted laws and ordinances, and confirmed the whole as a revelation from God, unless Christ had qualified some to become apostles? Who could have predicted things to come, composed hymns for divine worship, and edified the church with knowledge and understanding, without having received extraordinary gifts? These were "the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof." Yet they were precisely what circumstances required; and wherever

cause of fitness for teaching is explained, they are that cause. Must they not consequently have been the means of edification? This consequence is unavoidable; and it is supported by the explicit declaration of the word of God.

The passages to which we shall appeal, are acknowledged, even by our opponents, to comprehend the whole of public teaching in the first churches. It is certainly of consequence, when we reason about ordinances, to determine first in what passages of Scripture these ordinances are clearly and fully taught. If in any place we have a clear and full account of any ordinance, thither we must go to be instructed as to the form and nature of that ordinance; and if brief obscure notices of it in other places are explained, in opposition to the clear and full account, we must conclude that such notices are misunderstood.

Although we are obliged to differ frequently from Mr Carson, we cordially accede to the following remark: ‘Is it to be expected, that an apostle would formally institute, or minutely detail an ordinance, which they to whom he wrote had been long observing? A full account of an ordinance could be admissible only to rectify the mistakes of a church which had begun to pervert it. Such was the case with respect to the supper, and such was the case with respect to the exercise of the gifts of the brethren.—Part of the abuse of the supper consisted in eating it in a disorderly manner, and to rectify their order, as well as their views of this ordinance, he repeats the institution at large,’ pp. 19, 20. 34.

The reader will be fully aware of the importance in the present discussion, of the chapter, (1 Cor. xiv.)

in which the apostle treats at large on the gifts of the brethren and the ordinance of public teaching. It certainly contains by far the most circumstantial account we have in the New Testament of the teaching, prayers and praises of a primitive church. Their prayers and praises being spoken of, as well as their teaching, shows how completely their whole worship is exhibited.

In coming together, then, the gifted brethren at Corinth had each of them "a psalm, a doctrine, a tongue, a revelation, an interpretation," ver. 26. It is further evident, that only two or three prophets were enjoined to speak at the same meeting. By forbidding a greater number of prophets to speak on the same occasion, the apostle doubtless supposes, that more than two or three might be prepared to speak by the inspiration of God. The number is also fixed of those who, by the Spirit, should deliver discourses equally edifying in a foreign language. And is not the opinion, that others spoke who had not such endowments, absurd and inadmissible? It is absurd, because, in order to make room for them, prophets and other gifted men must be completely silenced: inspiration itself must be suppressed, lest the uninspired brethren should be prevented from exercising their gifts!—gifts, which have had no existence, but in the imaginations of modern churches. If any man can swallow a theoretical camel, let him prepare himself for the one now before him. We for our part, are unable for so prodigious a morsel. In fact, the position, that men without spiritual gifts were called to teach in those circumstances, is to us altogether inadmissible; not only from the nature of the thing, but from the silence of the apostle as to any such custom.

As, in Mr Braidwood's opinion, Mr Ewing 'has explained 1 Cor. xiv. in a manner so just, and so convincing, that it would be quite superfluous to attempt a further illustration of that passage,' I shall add but one or two observations.

If there was no kind of prayers or praises, or any kind of teaching in the church, that is not comprehended in this chapter, by what authority do teachers now pen up in a corner the exhortations of the brethren at large, while, by their own teaching, the most of the time is occupied? I reason merely on this chapter; on which Mr Carson rests the controversy about promiscuous exhortation. Some there are in churches that adhere to this practice, who deny (and with reason) the distinction made between teaching and exhortation, as if these were two distinct ordinances. Hence they maintain, consistently with taking this chapter as the ground for exhortation by all the brethren promiscuously, that the whole time allotted to public speaking should be occupied by all, without respect of persons as teachers or taught. And if they do not wish to stop the progress of reformation, by continuing to connive at unscriptural distinctions, they will urge the further discussion of the subject, in order completely to emancipate the churches from the trammels and shackles of worldly wisdom.

There is no proof whatever, that the Corinthians used any precomposed collection of psalms and hymns; but there is clear proof, that while one had a revelation or a doctrine, another had a psalm. And this psalm, like any other inspired composition or discourse, was sometimes delivered in a foreign language. If subjects for praise were produced in the primitive churches by the same persons that prophesied "or exhorted," our

brethren ought to examine their warrant for neglecting this ordinance, and substituting in its stead the productions of ingenious and pious men. That the studied compositions of these persons, should supersede the exercise of the poetical gifts of the brethren, in the conception and recitation of extemporaneous psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, while their prosaic gifts are exercised in giving spontaneous exhortation, after the manner of the primitive prophets, is perhaps the most glaring vestige of Babylonish corruption to be found among them. It is surely high time for them to consider the ground on which they continue to sing the compositions of Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, Moravians, and Independents, to the utter neglect of such things as they could find among "themselves." Certainly singing praise is as much an ordinance as teaching; and corruption and will-worship in the one, are as insufferable as in the other, especially among those who profess to imitate the apostolic churches in all things, and who alone are desirous of observing *all the ordinances* in their *simplicity*.

At all events, the chapter before us clearly shows who they were who taught in the church. It also shows how vain it is to speak of imitating in all things the apostolic churches; and how unjust and inconsistent in any who imitate them only in some things, to censure others for not imitating them in all things.

Clearly as this chapter proves, that they only who had spiritual gifts gave public instruction in the first age, the very reverse of this has been argued from it. It is argued, that because the women were forbidden to speak in the church, *all the men* might teach or exhort. But *what* women spoke in the church? Certainly they who prayed or prophesied, because they had the gift

of inspiration. Are *we* induced to adopt this opinion by our dislike of indiscriminate exhortation? It was from a very different cause surely that Mr Ballantine adopted the same opinion. He reckons the women who in the xith chapter are considered as publicly praying or prophesying, to be the same that in the xivth chapter are forbidden to teach or speak in the church \*. Now, if the Corinthians thought that several prophets might all speak at once because they were inspired, as if it had been wrong even to delay uttering what the Spirit had revealed to them, is it any wonder, that the women should, for the same reason, have declared what had been revealed to them? If, without regard to decency and order, inspiration was taken as a signal and warrant for a plurality of men to speak at the same time, doubtless inspiration was a signal and warrant for a woman to speak, independently of the usual regard to modesty. Such having been the case, the apostle in the xith chapter, censures the indecency of the *manner* of the prophetesses in speaking with their heads uncovered; but in the xivth chapter he positively forbids their speaking at all, or even asking questions; "for it is a shame for women to speak in the church." In like manner, he treats the practice of eating meats sacrificed to idols: first reasoning against it as casting a stumbling-block before a weak brother; and then prohibiting it absolutely, as communion or fellowship with the heathen gods, 1 Cor. viii. and x. It is therefore a sorry argument, that because the women were forbidden to teach in the church, all the men might—the weakest, the most injudicious, the most recent convert who knew only that he himself was a sinner, and that Christ was a Saviour, might teach, let there have been

\* Treatise on the elder's office, p. 52

ever so many prophets and teachers present. Will our brethren say, *We* do not carry the matter quite so far? Your argument, we answer, carries it so far precisely. Like many other arguments, it shows some inattention to the real state of things. By proving too much it proves nothing, and therefore it is good for nothing, but to perplex the subject.

How strange to reject the luminous evidence exhibited by the actual practice of the church, and eagerly to lay hold on such a sorry argument as a foundation of a public ordinance! Was there ever a vainer phantom, than indiscriminate exhortation in the church by the Corinthian believers, who had not spiritual gifts? What Mr Carson has advanced respecting the gifted brethren, may well chase away this phantom from the strongest imagination. One is really ashamed to speak about such things. It is an unpleasant, humiliating employment, to dispute with our brethren about the existence of an ordinance, which even some of themselves explicitly and completely exclude from the clearest and fullest description in the New Testament of the teaching and worship of a primitive church.

On the chapter before us, we may just add, that the only public teachers mentioned in it are included in the enumerations of gifted persons in the xiith chapter. Now these are, not the men as distinguished from the women, but the gifted brethren as distinguished from the rest of the believers. And Mr Braidwood will inform-us, that 'no instance can be produced of the brethren in general being called elders, pastors, teachers, overseers, the angels of the churches, or those who have the rule over them,' p. 113. He is also of opinion, that the brethren at large 'cannot receive benefit to themselves, nor can they profit others, by

‘ meeting with encouragement in the vain conceit, that  
 ‘ they are prophets, ministers, teachers and rulers. This  
 ‘ is tempting them to think more highly of themselves  
 ‘ than they ought to think,’ p.161. To the wiles and  
 assaults of this insinuating, powerful temptation, some, it  
 is to be feared, have fallen a prey. How apt are the inju-  
 dicious and inexperienced to wonder with great self-ad-  
 miration, at hearing themselves utter, with some degree of  
 fluency, a mere medley of words! But how much more  
 edifying is the unconstrained familiar discourse of Chris-  
 tian men and women upon religion, in the ordinary inter-  
 course of private life, than the public exhortations of un-  
 qualified persons! and how peculiarly irksome and pain-  
 ful are such exhortations, when they obstruct the exer-  
 cise of those talents which are competent to the edifi-  
 cation and comfort of the body of Christ \*!

We shall next consider an important passage in the  
 ivth chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians. On this  
 passage Mr Braidwood remarks, that ‘ provision was  
 ‘ made for every branch of that work’ (of the minist-  
 ry) ‘ by the gifts which Jesus sent down when he en-

\* We have already adverted to the absurdity of supposing,  
 that the inspired were commanded to be silent that the unin-  
 spired might speak. Public teaching, it seems, must not now  
 be confined to teachers or qualified persons, for this reason,  
 with others, lest the talents of the rest should be thereby hid.  
 But when the church is deprived of the instructions of those who  
 are able to teach them, and by whom all are edified, in order  
 to make room for persons of another description, talents are  
 surely hid, and that too under most unpleasant circumstances,  
 occasioned by an unscriptural theory. It is, however, one  
 thing to employ unqualified persons as teachers, as if this were  
 exercising gifts, and quite another to endeavour to ascertain in  
 a proper manner who has abilities for public teaching. On  
 this, some attention may be afterwards bestowed.

‘tered into his glory. And they were all necessary for  
 ‘the complete fulfilment of the work of the ministry,  
 ‘ordinary pastors and teachers, as well as apostles,  
 ‘prophets and evangelists,’ p. 155.

The communication of the gifts here spoken of was foretold by David. “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*,” Psal. lxxviii. 18. The Lord Jesus “ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.” He filled the church with every spiritual gift, and with “all spiritual blessings,” so that it became “an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

Among his ancient people, God dwelt in the tabernacle ; afterwards, in the temple he took up his permanent abode. His eyes and his heart were here perpetually. His worshippers accordingly approached it as the house of God \* ; and in waiting upon him they experienced unutterable joy. But he intimated by the prophet, that he should leave this habitation, Isa. lxvi. 1. The glory was accordingly removed from it to the churches of the saints. No longer did his wrath consume the offerers of strange fire ; neither did fire from heaven burn the sacrifices of the children of Israel, nor did a visible cloud filling the temple prevent the priests

\* It is a gross misapplication of Scripture language, and much calculated to mislead the ignorant, to call a place where worship is performed “the house of God.” God never dwelt in any house or temple made with hands since he forsook the temple at Jerusalem ; which, with its worship, was typical of the living temple, or church of Christ, and the spiritual worship of the New Testament. “Ye are the temple of the living God ; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*,” 2 Cor. vi. 16.

from entering it. But among the followers of Jesus, and in their assemblies, the glory of the Lord was displayed. At the words of Peter, Ananias and Sapphira his wife fell down dead, the place was shaken where the disciples prayed, and the living temple was "filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost," Acts iv. 31. v. 9. xiii. 52.

God, putting an end to the typical economy, he brought into its place the grace and truth of the gospel. This dispensation of light and comfort required other means by which the Lord God should dwell among his people: they were such as were fittest to display his power and glory under the new and better covenant. And what were these? Doubtless the gifts of the Spirit, which Jesus had imparted for the edification of his mystical body. When the treasures of the gospel were poured forth abundantly, when fervent prayers were offered, and joyful songs sung unto the Lord, when the dying love of Jesus was called to remembrance, what life, and peace, and joy, then filled the spiritual temple! This was a work in which those were blessed, and made blessings, who had received grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. What! will it be said, will God confine his presence to this narrow uncertain medium? But is it either narrow or uncertain? Will the promise of God fail, Isa. xxx. 20.? And may it not be asked in return, Did he confine his presence to the temple at Jerusalem? Certainly in every place, even during its subsistence, the true worshippers found the light of his countenance making their hearts glad. Yet the Lord loved "the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. For the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it." And here they be-

held the beauty of the Lord, and thought of his loving kindness. In particular reference to the times of the gospel, it is promised, "I will abundantly bless her provision : I will satisfy her poor with bread. I will also clothe her priests with salvation ; and her saints shall shout aloud for joy," Psal. cxxxii. 13—16. And the experience of many Sabbaths, the testimony of those who believe, but above all the faithful record of God himself, gives us the fullest assurance, that the Lord is pleased to dwell in a particular manner in those assemblies of his saints, where the riches of his grace are suitably displayed. But substitute weakness, and confusion, or error, for the able teaching of faithful men, and then utter what big words we may of churches, ordinances and saints, "the glory is departed." The word of God, and the experience of his people, are against you, if you make not "knowledge and understanding," by pastors according to his heart, the medium by which God has promised to make himself known in the assemblies of his people. If under the law, God appointed a particular place, a particular edifice, a particular altar, and particular sacrifices and offerings, that the true worshippers might see his power and his glory, was not all this altogether just and reasonable ? And why should he not prescribe the particular means with which he connects the manifestation of himself to his peculiar people under the gospel ? Was there not also a suitableness in those shadowy rites to convey life and joy to the true Israelite ? And is there not a superior suitableness in the ordinances of the gospel, when observed by means of proper teachers, to build up the body of Christ ? But where they are not observed in a due manner, they almost sink into the weakness of beggarly elements, and the unprofitableness of

bodily exercise. What then is the reason, that they who edify in private by their spiritual conversation and kindness, sink under the weight of public duties, and render their hearers languid, weary and impatient, by their attempts to perform a function for which they are unqualified? Do not our brethren who oppose our views of teaching, abundantly extol the great benefit of observing the ordinances in their simplicity? Now, this is precisely what we have in view. With respect to the ordinance in question, the passage before us contains satisfactory information.

The words on which we have enlarged in the foregoing remarks, are particularly explained in the verses which follow: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ," verses 11, 12.

In the 12th verse, the apostle begins to compare the church to the human body, in which the functions of the several parts and members for the benefit of the whole depend upon their union and mutual connection. In like manner, the exercise of the strong efficient organs and members, as it respected the body of Christ, or the work of the ministry as it related to the whole church, and also the exercise of every part, not excepting the most feeble, resulted from the union of each with the church as a part of it in its organized state. In another place the same idea is represented under a different figure: "In whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord," Eph. ii. 21. The idea of their organization, in order to their growth, is almost concealed by the common translation of the verse before

us. The word *καταρτισμος*, rendered, *perfecting*, properly signifies a compacting or fitting together. It is no where else used in the New Testament ; but *καταρτιζω*, from which that word is derived, is, in 1 Cor. i. 10. expressive of union and order in opposition to schism and confusion. In Gal. vi. 1. it signifies to restore one to his place in the church, as a dislocated member is reduced to its proper position in the body. In Heb. xi. it denotes the organization or framing of the worlds ; and in chap. x. 5. the preparation or organization of a body for the Son of God. Agreeably then to the leading sense of the word in the original, and to the scope of the connection, the 12th verse should be thus translated : “ For the conformation of the saints, in order to the work of the ministry, in order to the edification of the body of Christ.” As this view of the passage will, it is presumed, appear just and natural, I shall add only, that in other descriptions of the body of Christ, the idea of organization is exceedingly conspicuous. “ God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that *part* which lacked,” 1 Cor. xii. 24. and Col. ii. 19.

They who received the gifts which Jesus sent down from heaven, were employed in the work of the ministry. A ministry without gifts, is ‘ a mock ministry, and no ordinance of Christ :’ and a ministry in which gifts are not faithfully employed, is but a nominal ministry, resembling more a miserable expedient in a case of distress, than the happy fulfilment of the divine promise, “ I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding,” Jer. iii. 15. It has been observed, that the words expressive of the ministry denote a

laborious kind of employment. They who are engaged in it, are called labourers, workmen, husbandmen, shepherds and soldiers: and if they study to approve themselves to God, as workmen who need not to be ashamed, they will neither abandon themselves to idleness and gossiping, nor be hackneyed and hard-driven in extensive worldly business. Public teaching, when connected with close meditation and diligent oversight of the Lord's flock, is itself a work of the greatest magnitude and occupation. Men may dispute about it as they will, but happy shall be the faithful servant when his Lord comes!

The end of the gospel ministry is "the edification of the body of Christ:—till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," ver. 13. The unity of the faith, is doubtless an attainment of believers in the present world; in heaven, faith will be turned to sight, and hope to fruition. The belief of the gospel at the first is the most essential part of this unity: the removal of remaining ignorance, prejudice and weakness, is necessary to render it complete, Col. ii. 2. 1 Thess. iii. 10. In the passage quoted, the apostle seems as it were to ascend in fixing the final object of the ministry of the gospel. "A perfect man," "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," are expressions which appear to denote both the standard to which the servants of the Lord should endeavour to bring their work in this world, and the fulness of perfection which it shall attain in the world to come. They watch for the souls of men as they who must give account to Christ: "Whom," says the apostle, "we preach, warning every man, and

teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus," Col. i. 28.

By this means the disciples were to be preserved from being any "more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine," or of *teaching*, as Wicliff renders it very properly. Sudden and variable gusts of wind are not more effectual to overthrow and scatter a company of children, than "blasts of innovation" to injure the harmony and comfort of believers who have not attained a good measure of knowledge and stability. It is peculiarly the duty of teachers to protect the saints from winds of doctrine; not however by arbitrary measures, but by warning and teaching every man in all wisdom, Acts xx. 29—31. 1 Tim. i. 3. Tit. i. 9—11. They will find it needful themselves to avoid foolish and unlearned (un-edifying *απαίδευτους*) inquiries, profane and vain babblings and oppositions of knowledge falsely so called; for if by introducing these seeds of discord and ungodliness into their public or private teaching, they seem to treat them as matters of serious concern, the flock will be infected by the shepherds who ought to be examples to the believers "in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." 'Sad is the condition of those churches,' says Dr Owen, 'which either have such ministers as will themselves toss them up and down by false and pernicious doctrines, or are not able by sound instructions to deliver them from such a condition of weakness and instability, as wherein they are not able to preserve themselves from being in these things imposed on by cunning slights of men that lie in wait to deceive. And as this ministry is always to continue in the church, (v. 13.) so it is the

‘ great means of influencing the whole body, and  
 ‘ every member of it, into a due discharge of their  
 ‘ duty, unto their edification in love,’ ver. 15, 16.

The opposite of being tossed about with winds of doctrine, is, “ Holding or maintaining the truth in love.” That this, and not simply *speaking the truth* in the way of public exhortation, is the proper rendering of *αληθινοτες*, has been satisfactorily proved by Mr Ewing: and it is most agreeable to the scope of the connection \*. Even Dr Watt, who replied to him,

\* Miss. Magazine, Vol. xiii. p. 247. Fifteen different renderings are adduced, all of which agree with Mr Ewing’s view of the expression. I shall here quote a few of them.

*Syriac*—“ But let us be steady in love.” Schaaf’s rendering is, “ Sed simus firmi in charitate nostra.”

*Vulgate*—“ Veritatem autem facientes in charitate.” “ Doing the truth in love;” and so the Rhemish N. T. and Wicliff.

*Castellio*—“ Sed verum tenentes cum charitate.” “ Holding the truth with love.”

*Coverdale, Tyndal, and English Geneva Bible*.—“ But let us followe the truth in love.”

*Doddridge*—“ But maintaining the truth in love.”

*Locke’s Paraphrase*—“ But being steady in true and unfeigned love.”

In Prov. xxi. 3. and Isa. xlv. 26. the same word occurs; and signifies in the former to act uprightly, in the latter, to *verify* or *perform* a promise or prediction. Now, though a prediction consists in words, the accomplishment of it must consist in *deeds*; and the prophet here refers, not to the declaration, but to the accomplishment of the counsel of the Lord’s messengers. Much stress has been laid on the common rendering of the word in Eph. iv. 15. Messrs Haldane and Braidwood have printed in italics the expression “ *SPEAKING the truth in love,*” evidently considering it as a clear and emphatical injunction to male church-members to practise indiscriminate exhortation in the church. It seems to me, after

allows that the duty enjoined is “to stand fast with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel,” and to “contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.” ‘The duty,’ he says, ‘commanded by such a word, may often be action, as in the performance of a promise, or accomplishing the duties professed. In this sense it often requires *action* as well as *diction*.’

By adhering to the truth in love, the whole church would “grow up unto him in all things, which is the head, *even Christ*: from whom the whole body, fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” On this passage we need not say much. It is evident, the edification of the church depends not only on the work of the ministry and public ordinances, but on the union, fidelity and love of all the members. Accordingly “love edifieth,” 1 Cor. viii. 1. The conduct of believers when agreeable to Scripture, is calculated to edify, Rom. xv. 2. 1 Cor. x. 23. Useful conversation edifies, Eph. iv. 29. So does meditation and the singing of praise, 1 Cor. xiv. 4. and 17. Questions or investigations are often destructive of edification, 1 Tim. i. 4. “Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.”

all, of little consequence as to the question about exhortation by the brethren, what rendering is preferred, though I think the true meaning of the expression of great consequence, that we may understand the apostle’s beautiful description of the body of Christ, and undoubtedly our version of the word is erroneous.

The more feeble members then are necessary:— *πολλω μαλλον*, are *much more* necessary; as the brain, lungs, heart, blood-vessels and intestines, in the human body, are more necessary to its existence than the hands or feet, or the organs of seeing, hearing or smelling. Every disciple, how inconsiderable soever in the eyes of men, has his proper place to fill up in the church of God. And it would be strange indeed to suppose, that none could contribute to the growth, purity, health, happiness and vigour of the body of Christ, without becoming public teachers. I am afraid the system we are opposing, with all its pretensions of honouring the brethren, is calculated to bring some of the best of them into comparative contempt. If, however, men deny the importance of every believer whatever to the edification of the church, they deny the affirmations of Scripture, and the uniform experience of the saints. But if they acknowledge this, they must cease to argue, that the edification which the body of Christ receives from every part of itself, is any proof at all that every part may contribute its two mites of public instruction, or indeed that any part is called to do so, except that which God has adapted, and therefore appointed to this particular function.

It is granted, that from the apostle's account of the edification of the church by the various classes of gifted men, (ver. 11, 12.) 'the duty of the brethren to exhort one another could not be inferred.' Can it then be inferred from the enumerations of gifted men in 1 Cor. xii.? If the practice cannot be inferred from these two places, neither can it be inferred from the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of the same epistle: here we find no mention of any public speakers that are not compre-

hended in these enumerations. All these portions of Scripture therefore, unite like a three-fold cord ; “ and a three-fold cord is not quickly broken.”

‘ It is strange,’ we are told, ‘ that any one should suppose that 1 Cor. xiv. which as they contend, refers to ‘ miraculous gifts,’ (were not prophecy and tongues miraculous?) ‘ a subject with which we are wholly unacquainted, is more plain than such passages as 1 Thess. ‘ iv. 18. v. 13. and Heb. x. 24, 25.’ This does not appear strange to Mr Carson ; nor is it strange in itself. Besides, we know more about the gifts which are actually spoken of than such as are not, but only imagined. At any rate, must either the clear institution or the full exhibition of an ordinance, by whatever kind of gifts it was conducted, be plainer than general precepts respecting that class of duties to which the ordinance belongs ? Might we not as well be told of the strangeness of supposing the detailed account of the Lord’s supper in 1 Cor. xi. to be plainer than the various cursory notices of feasts and breaking bread in the New Testament ? Who would take upon him to plead from these notices, for such additions to the supper as should amount to a distinct ordinance, or nearly so ? There can be no end of inventions and changes, if, on such grounds, men will use the liberty of introducing ordinances which are not clearly taught and exemplified in Scripture.

Mr Braidwood recommends it as ‘ a good old rule ‘ which is perfectly safe,’ to ‘ explain those (examples) ‘ which are narrated in a summary way, by those ‘ which are full, circumstantial and explicit. And ‘ beware,’ he says, ‘ of acting on a mere supposition ‘ of any thing which God hath not revealed, especial-

‘ly in those cases wherein he hath given a direct and  
‘ positive rule of duty,’ p. 8.

This rule is well applied by Mr B. himself in opposition to those who, from such passages as Col. iii. 16. argue, that the brethren in general may in some measure do such things as are the proper work of pastors and teachers. This he owns has ‘ an *appearance* of Scripture authority,’ p. 111. And he further remarks, ‘ Private teaching is unquestionably the  
‘ duty of every one who is capable in any measure to  
‘ instruct and edify. This is no encroachment on the  
‘ elder’s office, for old women are commanded to  
‘ teach younger persons of their own sex.’—But here the operation of the good old rule ceases with Mr B.; for by a rule the very reverse of it, he argues for exhortation by the brethren with precisely the same *appearance* of Scripture authority he formerly rejected.

‘ The apostolic epistles,’ he observes, ‘ addressed  
‘ not to bishops, but to the churches, are full of pre-  
‘ cepts and earnest entreaties *to exhort, to comfort,*  
‘ *to teach, to admonish, and to edify one another.*  
‘ The greater part of those precepts are given in ge-  
‘ neral terms. But, unless it can be proved, that  
‘ men, as well as women, are prohibited from speak-  
‘ ing in churches, or that the public exercise of gifts  
‘ which some may possess, is unsuitable to the nature  
‘ of their connection, and therefore cannot tend to  
‘ edify, we ought to admit, that the orderly affection-  
‘ ate and self-denied exercise of such gifts, is included  
‘ in the general precepts to which I refer,’ p. 164. He adds in reference to Eph. iv. 15, 16. ‘ Is it not  
‘ suitable to the whole scope of the passage to consi-  
‘ der it as including the public exercise of all gifts  
‘ which are adapted to public usefulness?’ p. 166.

If by *gifts for public usefulness*, Mr B. meant the gifts of the teachers there enumerated by Paul, (and this idea suits his remark as well as the other), he could, by the explicit language of the preceding context, have made good his point, according to the rule recommended by himself, independently of this begging of the question. One would think from his own language, that these gifts only are included in the passage. 'Thus in Eph. iv. 14—16. the apostle,' he says, 'after recapitulating the various gifts which had been given by our exalted Lord, mentions the purposes for which he gave them,' p. 165. Of these very gifts he says in another place: 'They were all necessary for the complete fulfilment of the work of the ministry, ordinary pastors and teachers, as well as apostles, prophets and evangelists,' p. 155.\* Is Mr B. then able to point out a gift or an office which the apostle has not mentioned? If the apostle has 'recapitulated the various gifts,' what ground has

\* When those of this opinion come to facts, the only gifts they can point out are such as are mentioned in 1 Cor. i. 7. or in the xvth chapter of the same epistle. Yet they all along take for granted, what they cannot prove, that there were gifts of another kind. 'Churches,' says Mr Carson, 'which possessed, and churches which possessed not miraculous gifts, must have observed the same things,' p. 235. But can he tell what churches had not miraculous gifts? We think he cannot. Yet in the same place he observes, 'There can be nothing more unfruitful than speculations that proceed upon arbitrary assertion. What these churches met to do, of which we have no account, we must learn from the observances of those whose practice is recorded.' His own remarks then must be applied to his own practice in this instance. 'It is appealing,' as Bensen observes, 'from what is known to what we know nothing about. It is the way to put an end to all reasoning, to throw all into confusion, and to render all evidence of none effect.'

Mr B. to take for granted the existence of any other gifts? And if there were no other gifts, what becomes of promiscuous exhortation? Why should this supposed ordinance be included, unless its existence can be clearly ascertained by an example at once 'full, circumstantial, and explicit,' such as Mr B. requires to explain those which are narrated in a summary way? Shall we be told to be aware 'of acting upon mere supposition,' and then called upon to admit supposition, as if it were 'a clear and positive rule of duty?' Even allowing any passage of Scripture to contain every iota relative to both public and private teaching, would it for that reason be sufficient to warrant the practice of any ordinance, which cannot be shown to have existed in the days of the apostles? Unless either the institution, or the practice, of a particular ordinance can be pointed out in Scripture with clearness and certainty, its existence can never be proved by general precepts, which respect that class of duties to which the supposed ordinance belongs. In the Scriptures of the Old Testament, there is a multitude of injunctions, expostulations, warnings, and threatenings, relative to both private integrity and the administration of public justice according to the law. But on such ground as this, would any have presumed to enforce as a 'statute of judgment,' to be managed by the Jewish brethren at large, a specific institution neither described nor exemplified in all the law of God? It is indeed the bounden duty of all believers to teach, to comfort, and edify one another, and to do so daily. Injunctions of this kind comprehend equally old and young, male and female. Under the Jewish economy, when the true Israelites were mingled with the carnal, and not formed into distinct societies by

themselves, as the churches of the saints under the gospel dispensation, "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard it; and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name," Mal. iii. 16.

Mr Braidwood, we have seen, knows what ground to take when his peculiar sentiments are opposed. 'We have clear and express authority,' he observes, 'for choosing office-bearers, whose character and work are also specified with the greatest precision. Here we tread upon sure ground. But can we suppose that Christian churches are at liberty to devise *substitutes of their own invention* for divine institutions, and give the exercise of that power,' (it would have better suited our ideas were it said, and assign the performance of that work,) 'whatever it be, which God hath reserved for pastors and teachers, to another class of men *nowhere named, or described, or exemplified, throughout the whole New Testament,*' p. 103. I do not despair of Mr B.'s applying this very just remark to the exhorting brethren in a wider sense than he at first intended; for doubtless they are precisely such a class of persons as he has here represented. But the speakers in the first churches are named, described and exemplified. "Let the prophets speak two or three." "If any speak in an *unknown* tongue, *let it be* by two, or at the most *by* three."

Turning our eyes for a moment from the practice of the first churches to that of churches in the present day, What do we see?—an ordinance without any law to govern it. No man can show by Scripture who is qualified to exhort. In some churches, not only is every man permitted, but required to exhort. If men speak about religion as they do about their temporal

affairs, this with some is exhortation. The only question which seems necessary is, Whether a man *can speak* at all? If he can speak, let him exhort the church? Nay, some have actually talked of calling in question the Christianity of those who would not or do not thus exhort; and of excluding them from the church. And are they not consistent? If all, except women, are commanded publicly to exhort, all are bound to exhort; and if they do not, they must be counted not in the spirit of their profession, disobedient, and as such excluded. In other churches, though all are permitted, only some are required to exhort—such as are supposed to have “useful gifts.” But then who can show any rule by which to determine what an useful gift is, if the rule of Scripture relative to teachers be laid aside. ‘If he,’ (the elder) it is said, ‘does not generally excel those over whom he presides, it is by no means likely that he will edify their souls.’ How then can a brother edify their souls, unless he also excel? In a word, the churches being without law, are a law unto themselves; or, as in the days when there was no king in Israel, every man does that which is right in his own eyes; and that too, while professing to be directed in every thing by the strict precise rule of Scripture!

There remains to be examined only one passage, which, on both sides, is acknowledged to contain the whole of public teaching. “Having then gifts, differing according to the grace that is given to us; whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, *let us wait on our ministering*; or he that teacheth on teaching; or he that exhorteth on exhortation,” Rom. xii. 6—8. The duties which follow, namely giving with simplicity,

ruling with diligence, and showing mercy with cheerfulness, do not materially affect the subject before us, any further than they help to determine on what principles the whole of this passage ought to be explained.

The clause, "he that exhorteth on exhortation," on which some here fasten, others have given up as not supporting indiscriminate exhortation.

I have delayed till now to examine the claims of this practice to the name of *exhortation*, as its peculiar, appropriate and scriptural designation. To argue about the name of an ordinance, is not to carry on a strife of words. Could it be proved, that a certain heir at law did not assume a family name, till after he had formed the design of claiming the family estate, this, with all reasonable people, would be strong presumptive evidence, that the supposed heir was an impostor. Some have reasoned thus about what is called the ordinance of exhortation. Said they, If the name be misapplied, the thing may be a fiction;—if the word of God authorises all who speak publicly either to teach or to exhort as they see occasion, where is the ground for the ordinance in question?

It is known by every one who has read the publications of those who maintain the duty of all the brethren to exhort in the church, that they consider teaching and exhortation to be two distinct ordinances, the former to be managed by the teachers, and the latter by the brethren who are not teachers. Hence this practice is as well known among them by the name of *exhortation*, as the jubilee, the passover, the Lord's supper and baptism are known and distinguished from other institutions by the terms employed to designate them.

Mr Haldane's words are as follow : ' I understand  
 ' exhorting each other to refer simply to that one ordi-  
 ' nance of mutual exhortation, just as I suppose that  
 ' 1 Cor. xi. 20—34. refers exclusively to the Lord's  
 ' supper,' p. 54. These words are plain enough : a  
 distinct ordinance is represented under a distinct name.  
 ' Public teaching,' says Mr Braidwood, ' is a great  
 ' and leading part of the pastoral work, for which el-  
 ' ders must be qualified by being " apt to teach, and  
 ' able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince  
 ' gainsayers." Mutual exhortation is the province of  
 ' the brethren.' But Mr B., instead of telling us  
 from Scripture, as in the former case, that the brethren  
 must be qualified by being " apt to exhort," has  
 been pleased to add, *upon his own authority*, ' And  
 ' the more they dwell on practical subjects, without at-  
 ' tempting to investigate doctrinal points, the more  
 ' they will grow in grace, and edify the whole church.'  
 p. 112. Mr B., however, speaks soberly of the merits  
 of this practice. He thinks, ' that two or three per-  
 ' sons, or a greater number of disciples, whose worship  
 ' is not conducted by an approved teacher, calling them-  
 ' selves a church of Christ,' render both themselves  
 and the ordinances of the Lord Jesus Christ, ' objects  
 ' of ridicule and contempt ;' and ' degrade the Chris-  
 ' tian worship in the eyes of all men,' p. 92. Yet he  
 considers such a society capable of practising the ordi-  
 nance of mutual exhortation. See pp. 169, 170.

Mr Carson likewise contends, that exhortation is an  
 ordinance distinct from teaching, and that the former  
 denotes the public speaking of unofficial men, because  
 the rulers of the synagogue in Antioch said to Paul  
 and Barnabas, who had no office there, " If ye have  
 any word of exhortation for the people, say on," Acts

xiii. 15. pp. 253, 254. What then shall we think of this,—that the apostle being permitted *merely to exhort* actually preached the gospel? In truth we believe, that when he preached the gospel he did no more than the rulers permitted him to do. This he did also in a synagogue in Ephesus, where he “spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing (discoursing, *διαλεγόμενος*) and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God,” Acts xix. 8.

It is remarked by a strenuous advocate for indiscriminate teaching, that some allow, ‘that the brethren ‘may exhort in the church, but they must not *preach*,’ and he censures this distinction as maintaining in form, though disclaiming in words, ‘the distinction of *clergy* and *laity*.’ Now this will suffice to show, that among those who differ from us, there are some who utterly reject as unscriptural, distinctions on which their coadjutors raise their mightiest arguments.

In 1 Thess. ii. 2—4. the preaching of “*the gospel*,” is called by Paul “*our exhortation*.” This explains and justifies the conduct of Paul himself in the synagogue of Antioch, and subverts the distinction of which the writer last referred to, complains as made between public exhortation and preaching.

In more than twenty places in the New Testament, either *exhort*, *exhorting*, or *exhortation*, is employed (often alone) to denote the public speaking or instruction of apostles and other teachers, but not nearly half so often in reference to the practice of all indiscriminately. On the other hand, men and women are mentioned as teachers, and considered as teaching, Col. iii. 16. Tit. ii. 3. Heb. v. 12. Why then do not our brethren plead, that to teach is the peculiar duty of the brethren, to exhort, the peculiar duty of the teachers? To be sure, this would at first sight seem somewhat

forced and preposterous ; but, if examined to the bottom, as good ground would be found for it as for the contrary sentiment. Hence, according to the usage of Scripture, the distinction to which we object is altogether arbitrary and groundless.

This distinction is contrary, both to the qualities of Scripture, and the nature and design of public teaching. " All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness ; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works," 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. Upon these qualities of sacred truth is grounded the injunction which follows : " Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine," chap. iv. 2. Our blessed Lord and his apostles united teaching and exhortation together. This practice is just and natural. Duty, whether taught publicly or privately, officially or unofficially, must be explained and defined as well as enforced. " Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine." " These things teach and exhort," 1 Tim. iv. 13. vi. 2. " Teaching and admonishing one another, in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord," Col. iii. 16.

Further, the practice of the church at Corinth shows the fallacy of the distinction maintained with so much formality and confidence. The speakers in that church prophesied and spoke with tongues ; they had every one of them " a psalm, a doctrine, a tongue, a revelation, an interpretation," xiv. 26. Not one of them is said to have had any thing that is distinguished by the name of *exhortation*. The prophets indeed spoke " to edification and exhortation and comfort ;" and so we are sure did all the rest, when they used a language which

was understood by the whole church. Does not this evince the absurdity and injustice of calling the promiscuous speaking of church-members exhortation,—the ordinance of exhortation,—as if the Holy Spirit had given it this name? A system of absurdity must be a system of oppression. How cruel to call on men to speak in public, and to cramp their genius by allowing them to exhort, but not to preach or teach! Many, according to the bent of their mind and their furniture for public speaking, having launched out into criticism, exposition, argumentation, &c. have been severely dealt with, because they did not confine themselves to exhortation merely, and leave those higher branches of the work to the teachers. Indeed, much of what is now called exhortation is any thing but exhortation. This is not to be wondered at. The most able and experienced teachers know how much wisdom and skill are put to the test in the application of divine truth, they have confessed how deficient they themselves are in it, and how sorry a figure in this respect, not only injudicious persons, but men of first rate talents, are apt to make.

In a word, there is not on record a clerical canon more fanciful and arbitrary than the distinction between teaching and exhortation, as if these were two distinct ordinances. There is equal reason to set up an ordinance of warning, or of reproof, or of putting in remembrance. In the same manner, praise might be distinguished into three ordinances, because we read of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. As to another solemn ordinance, it might be branched out into several, each denoted by one of the words used by Paul in his first epistle to Timothy, “I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks, be made for all men,” ii. 1. At this rate

we might have as many ordinances of any kind as the Roman Catholics have sacraments. But if we follow the usage of Scripture, we shall consider public speaking to consist in teaching, exhorting, warning, reproof, convicting and putting in remembrance ; and we shall reckon all believers without exception bound to teach, to exhort, to warn, to reprove and comfort one another.

Much as I wish to have done with this part of the discussion, I cannot but take notice of a common enough observation,—that though the brethren cannot teach, they can put the churches in remembrance. Yes, doubtless they can ; but is not this frequently, as when a person is reminded of the well known scenery of his native country by the superficial description of the way-faring man who tarried in it only for a night ? One way, it will be acknowledged, in which the intelligent and judicious may learn even from the simple and uninformed, is by hints which give origin in the former to a train of reflections which never occurred to the latter. But this does not justify public teaching by such persons. And the supposed benefits of it, in furnishing teachers with topics on which to enlarge, must, one would think, encourage a loose unpremeditated mode of teaching, different from what might be expected, if the precepts of Scripture were observed. “ Meditate upon these things ; give thyself wholly to them ; that thy profiting may appear to all,” 1 Tim. iv. 15. It so happens, however, that the idea of putting in remembrance cannot without violence be connected, as is done, with modern exhortation ; for the brethren at large are not any where said to put in remembrance. On the contrary, this is said to have been done by the Holy Spirit himself, by the apostles of the Lord, and

by other teachers. The Holy Spirit could teach the disciples all things, and bring to their recollection whatever Christ had said to them, John xiv. 26. Peter, by inspired epistles, reminded the believers of the things they had formerly heard : by means of these epistles, they were, after his decease, " to have these things always in remembrance." Timothy, by putting the brethren " in remembrance," was to be " a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine," 1 Tim. iv. 6. If then the idea of putting in remembrance is always in Scripture connected with the work of the ministry, is it not unfair to represent this as if it attached to what is called " exhortation ?" And does not this, with other misapplications of Scripture, tend to show, either that the ordinance of exhortation is a modern invention, or that our brethren find it hard to defend the practice by a fair exhibition of Scripture facts, and a just application of Scripture language ?

If no such thing existed in the days of the apostles as an ordinance of exhortation, distinct from the teaching of the gifted men, it clearly follows that no such thing can be referred to in the passage which we proposed to consider. Let us hear Mr Carson on this passage. ' He that teacheth, on teaching ; he that exhorteth, on exhortation : the same person may be preacher, teacher and exhorter ; but the things themselves are sufficiently different. Nay, they may all be found in the same address, without having their distinction in the least confounded,' p. 252. What then, we ask, should such an address be called ? Might it not be called either preaching, teaching or exhortation ? This would be agreeable to Scripture, where doubtless these words are often used interchangeably.

To suppose every clause of the passage under consideration to refer to a distinct class of persons, or to a distinct ordinance, would lead to the establishment of offices and ordinances which cannot be found in other parts of Scripture. In such enumerations, a change of persons is not always intended, though a distinct attribute or duty is specified. Thus the expressions, "He that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth, and no man openeth,"—all refer to the Lord Jesus, to whom these various attributes belong. If, as we endeavoured to prove, they who had the gift of tongues invariably possessed some other gift besides, it follows, that the enumerations of gifts and gifted persons in 1 Cor. xii. cannot be explained without the aid of the principle which warrants our applying the different expressions in Rev. iii. 7. as quoted above, to the Lord Jesus Christ. Again, "the law was made for (lies against) ungodly, and sinners, unholy and profane," 1 Tim. i. 9. All these characters belong to "the lawless and disobedient," who are mentioned in the same place, yet few of this description have been "murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers." This shows, that in such enumerations there is sometimes a change of persons, sometimes not. In the passage before us the prophet may be fairly distinguished from the teacher, because the prophets and teachers were generally different persons. He too that ruled must have also taught, because all those who were to rule the church must have been "apt to teach." Nor is it with us a matter of doubt, whether the same person both taught and exhorted, because the Scriptures enjoin these things on the same person. All however

we contend for is, that the enumeration in the passage before us, will never support the exhortation for which our brethren contend. Some of them acknowledge this. Let those who deny it prove, that in the first churches there was an ordinance of exhortation by those who had not spiritual gifts. If the preceding remarks did not appear to us to demonstrate the direct reverse, we might have enlarged them ten times in extent.

As the apostles taught the same things in every church, (how often do our friends tell us this!) the church in Rome could have no ordinance that was not observed, for example, by the churches in Ephesus and Corinth.—The church in Rome had prophets and teachers in common with other churches. On these is enjoined by Paul, the exercise of their respective gifts. But the further edification of the church was an object which he earnestly desired to promote. “For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established,” chap. i. 11. This new gift being superadded, would give them a fresh display of the grace and power of Jesus; and accumulate their treasures of wisdom and spiritual understanding. Hence, since the apostle could not make too high an estimate of his own services, or of the benefits to result from his intended visit to Rome, his longing to see the believers there, in order to impart to them some spiritual gift, exhibits in a light which could not shine more clearly, how much on these depended the improvement of the saints.

Thus have we endeavoured to elucidate the position, that both fitness for public teaching, and the edification of the churches, are invariably attributed to spiritual gifts. Let those who think they have reason to

be of a different opinion, invalidate the evidence, and try to prove the contrary. But if the plain account of the institution of an ordinance, in one epistle, the naked exhibition of it in another, and injunctions to continue in it, in a third, afford clearer and more certain information, as to its nature and extent, than the reasonings of men urged with ever so much impetuosity and confidence, we are bound to reject such reasoning, and the practice founded on it, for the sake of a scriptural practice, established upon a scriptural foundation.

Against the position, that only they who had spiritual gifts taught in the first churches, the most cogent argument in all Mr Haldane's publication, is, in his own opinion of it, That the false teachers spoke without spiritual gifts. 'Here then,' he observes, 'are instances which cannot be set aside, of persons who had not the Spirit, teaching in the primitive churches; and this fact subverts the foundation of the theory of those who oppose exhortation, on the ground that we have no instance of an uninspired person teaching,' p. 58.

If Mr H. had properly attended to the nature of the evidence arising from this fact, he would have seen it to be positively subversive of his own theory. We formerly adverted to the reason of the success of the false teachers. They spoke in the churches because they *were FALSE teachers*, and therefore deceitful arrogant pretenders to the function of either apostles, prophets or teachers. Accordingly "they served their own bellies," and obtained "filthy lucre," which shows that they assumed a different character from modern exhorters, whom Mr H., I presume, would not requite with lucre of any kind. In doing so, they

imitated something *which existed*, that is *teaching by select persons*, and not what did not exist, namely exhortation by all the men promiscuously. What then are we to gather from there having been false Christs, false apostles, and false prophets? that the disciples practised indiscriminate exhortation? No, but that there had appeared the true Messiah, who sent forth apostles and prophets. But where can a positive example be found of a true disciple teaching publicly, who had not some extraordinary endowment? Mr H. both feels the necessity of this kind of evidence, and admits the want of it, when he tries to make so much of a fact which militates against his system, as much in reality as that Paul, or Agabus, or Epaphroditus, spoke in the primitive churches.

Notwithstanding the length to which this discussion has already extended, notice must still be taken of what is said in Heb. x. 25. “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.” This passage has, in our apprehension, been inconsiderately made a foundation of argument in support of public exhortation by the brethren promiscuously.

They who contend from it in favour of this practice take for granted; first, that there was such an ordinance, distinct from regular teaching; and secondly, that this ordinance is in Scripture called exhortation—‘that one ordinance of mutual exhortation.’ But we have already endeavoured to evince, that the ‘one ordinance’ contended for, had no existence whatever in the first age; and that to apply to such a practice the term exhortation, as if it were thus denominated in Scripture, is altogether ground-

less. We shall now attempt to show, that they who most strenuously contend for it from the passage before us, have been guilty of great inconsistency and self-contradiction, and that the passage is no ground for such an ordinance at all.

The Jews and Gentiles being united in Christ, had the same ordinances. There can therefore be no ordinance enjoined on the Hebrews, which was not taught to the Corinthians, and observed by them. But the public speakers in Corinth were not the men, as distinguished from the women, but the gifted men as distinguished from the rest of the disciples, in the very same way in which the former are distinguished from the latter in the epistle to the Ephesians, chap. iv. and 1 Cor. xii. Unless then the passage under consideration is contrary to these, it enjoins no public exhortation by the brethren who had not spiritual gifts. It is evident there was no ordinance of brotherly exhortation in the church of Corinth, besides the prophesying and teaching of the gifted men.

‘The Hebrews,’ says Mr Ewing, ‘had persons among them who either as apostles, gifted brethren, or bishops, had “the rule over them,”—“watched for their souls,”—and “spoke to them the word of God.” We have seen, that persons of these descriptions were enjoined to give public exhortations. If we allow that, in the passage in question, Paul, in a single word, alludes to the whole exercises of their assembled church; ought we not to refer this allusion to the work of those, whose duty it is known to have been, to conduct those exercises. Must we set aside the exhortation of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, in order to make way for exhortation by other brethren, who are never said in Scripture to have attempted any such thing?’

‘ May we even add this last sort of exhortation to that of the others?’ p. 178.

To this Mr Carson replies, ‘ I resist this mode of reasoning, not merely as setting aside this ordinance, but as setting aside all the privileges and duties of Christians. I resist it, as opposed to the definite meaning of language, and subversive of truth, in general,’ p. 261.

Now, what does Mr C. resist?—The reasoning which confines public exhortation to the same kind of persons, who, he insists, were the exhorting brethren at Corinth. ALL persons of the same description that exhorted at Corinth, it is allowed to him, exhorted in Judea, and, yet this sets aside in Judea the ordinance as observed at Corinth!! When Mr Carson then ‘ would rest with every confidence’ on the practice of the church at Corinth, as a clear and full warrant for promiscuous exhortation, ‘ were there not one injunction in all the Scriptures to this purpose;’ and yet would suppose this ordinance to be set aside by the same view of the public exercises of the Hebrews, which he takes himself of the public exercises of the Corinthians—it follows, that either his confidence in the practice of the Corinthians is unfounded, or his reasoning about the practice of the Hebrews is erroneous: that his confidence in the former is unfounded, has been proved already; that his reasoning about the latter is erroneous, is a necessary consequence.

Mr C. resists the reasoning of Mr Ewing, ‘ as setting aside all the privileges and duties of Christians.’ But he must have a wrong view indeed of the foundation of Christian privileges and duties, if he contends, that these are set aside by pleading, that the practice of the churches in Judea was the same with that of the churches in Greece. Mr C. reasons thus: ‘ The same body which is commanded to assemble,

' is commanded to exhort. Every thing that limits ' the term exhorting, must limit the term forsaking,' p. 262. Now, supposing the term exhorting to refer to public exhortation, (whether it does so or not will be afterwards considered), we shall prove Mr C.'s notion of the passage to be erroneous, both from principles allowed by himself and others, and from the language of Scripture.

' I proceed then,' says Mr Braidwood, ' to justify ' public speaking in the churches, by all who are possessed of useful gifts, requesting that I may be considered as extending the obligation no farther,' p. 163. To argue that it is ' the duty of *all* the brethren to ' exhort in the church, whether they are possessed of ' gifts or not—this refutes itself,' in the opinion of Mr Haldane, p. 16. And Mr Carson says, ' If it is ' possible that among a hundred Christians, none ' could be found capable of reading, praying, &c. (we presume the &c. includes exhorting) ' to edification, I ' think they are not called upon to observe any ordinance in public,' p. 245.

Do not these sentiments proceed from the very rational belief, that only those who had ' gifts,' ' useful ' gifts' and could ' speak to edification,' exhorted publicly in the first churches? To such then must be limited the injunctions of Scripture respecting public exhortation; unless it can be shown, that those who had *not* useful gifts, and could *not* speak to edification, were commanded actually to exhort in public. What then is the difference between Mr Ewing and his opponents? It is this. He confines exhortation to those who are known to have publicly exhorted; they also confine it to such as had gifts for public speaking, but among this number, they unhappily include many

who are never said in the word of God (though often in their books) to have done any such thing.

Again, if the injunction in the tenth chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews were found in one of the epistles to the Corinthians, would the apostle's limitation of public teaching to the gifted brethren, be contrary to the definite meaning of that injunction? Yet these were not the body, but particular members that were "set in the body:" they were not the church, but inspired individuals who were "set in the church." Hence Mr C.'s position, 'that every thing which 'limits the term exhorting must limit the term forsaking,' is evidently erroneous. The term exhorting is limited by the exclusion of all the women, but not the term forsaking; for the women were to assemble, but not to exhort publicly; and the one term is limited, but not the other, by the exclusion of all the ungifted men, for they also were to assemble but not to exhort in public. Hence too, if all who were commanded to assemble, were commanded to exhort when assembled; and if, as Mr C. contends, the contrary opinion is 'opposed to the definite meaning of language—subversive of truth in general —and sets aside all the privileges and duties of 'Christians,' Mr C. himself, and other abettors of promiscuous exhortation, advance principles which are chargeable with all these terrible consequences. It were therefore to be wished, that they really understood their own principles better than they seem to do. At any rate, it is nothing to us, nor to truth, nor to the church of God, whether the principles which we defend, (or rather which defend us), agree in every respect with 'the very same canons of criticism' with which Mr C. would not care 'to engage Mr Ewing 'and Mr Brown in the same volume.' And if ever

he write such a volume, he may add to the list of his opponents Mr Braidwood, John Wesley, Count Zinzendorff, Dodwell, and Cardinal Bellarmine; and in short, all who differ materially from himself, how much soever they may differ the one from the other. But the lines of separation between *professing* Christians are often too distinct, and every *true* Christian must too deeply deplore the evils of needless separation, to be much comforted by the prospect of seeing different parties conjured together into one harmonious denomination, by Mr C.'s canons of criticism.

The passage in question, however, even supposing it to refer to public exhortation, cannot be made the ground of any other exhortation, than that which was given by the gifted men. Some indeed may be so much accustomed to associate with this passage their notions of brotherly exhortation, as to depend more on their own interpretation of it, than on the light afforded by other passages of Scripture, be these ever so clear and satisfactory. Doubtless 1 Cor. xiv. is incomparably more full, circumstantial, explicit and decisive on the subject of teaching, than Heb. x. 25. can be thought to be. Those therefore who contend that the prophesying of which the apostle there writes, is the public exhortation enjoined in the latter passage, cannot, without great inconsistency and confusion, contend for more from it than is exhibited in the former, (1 Cor. xiv.) and expressly declared in other parts of Scripture, namely, the teaching of the prophets and other gifted men. But if they choose to argue from Heb. x. 25. in preference to 1 Cor. xiv. they ought clearly and distinctly to assign their reasons for this preference. If they grant, that both passages agree, they ought to show the consistency of arguing for an ordinance from the

one which the other does not exhibit. If it cannot be evinced from other parts of Scripture, that the ordinance commonly called exhortation, existed in the first churches, it is unreasonable to contend for it at all from the passage in question, unless this passage can be proved to be so clear and conclusive on the subject, as to establish promiscuous exhortation, let other passages say what they will. In this case, instead of explaining Heb. x. 25. as a brief notice, by 1 Cor. xiv. as being a clear and copious description, the evidence afforded by the latter is enveloped in a cloud, and no thread conducts us through the labyrinths of speculation which issue from the former. Such reasoning, however, like arguments and pretended demonstrations against the testimony of our eyes and ears, though they may puzzle some, and surprise others, instead of producing rational and satisfactory conviction, are calculated only to expose the weakness of the cause which they were intended to support.

To us the passage appears to refer, not to public, but to private exhortation. Formidable things have been said against taking this view of it ; but they who say such things, must excuse us, because such had been our view of it before the recent controversy began to be agitated ; at a time too when we happened to have only the Bible to consult, without note or comment ; and when in our own apprehension at least, we did not stand chargeable with giving preference to those views of divine truth, which, with most unwarrantable liberty taken to judge the secret motives of men's hearts, are alleged to arise from desire to support ' the honour of the officiating clergyman \*.'

\* ' As long,' says Mr Carson, ' as the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews is allowed to possess, I do not say inspira-

Our first remarks on the passage under consideration shall respect the phraseology and terms employed. In the expressions which follow, "Be not faithless but believing—Be not drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit—Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life"—the meaning is the same as if it were said, Be believing and not faithless—be filled with the Spirit, and not drunk with wine—labour for the meat which endureth to everlasting life, and not for the meat which perisheth. So in the passage before us, the meaning, we presume, is the same as if it were said, "Exhorting one another, and not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together." It evidently makes no difference as to the meaning of expressions of this kind, which member of the sentence is put foremost; and yet it appears to us, that the strength of the argument from this passage for promiscuous exhortation in public, rests on the circumstance, that "not forsaking" is placed before "exhorting." On this ground it is argued, that they must assemble in order to exhort. But had the term *exhorting* been placed before the phrase *not forsaking*, might it not be as justly pleaded, that the Hebrews must exhort in order to assemble? Again, were

'tion, but *common sense*, I will understand Heb. x. 25. of the public exhortations of the brethren. It appears to me, that before I could think otherwise, I must believe, not only that the Scriptures are *false*,' &c. p. 257. But a thousand such intemperate expressions, weapons of warfare never employed in the word of God, though powerfully calculated to overawe weak consciences, and to deter from calm investigation, would not amount to the shadow of an argument; yet to some, we doubt not, they are more impressive than a thousand arguments. They make them tremble!

believing females to adorn their minds in order to become modest in their apparel, or to become modest in their apparel in order to adorn their minds? 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10. 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4. The truth is, in injunctions of this kind two things are brought to view; the one to be done, the other not to be done: but no intimation is given which is to be first or last. What! it will be said, is it not evident, that they were first to assemble and then to exhort? If this be evident, it is either from the phraseology of the text, or from the nature of the things spoken of: but neither of these considerations will prove that they were first to assemble, and then to exhort. Unless it can be proved, that believers could not exhort until they had assembled publicly, it is impossible to show that the apostle means, exhort when assembled, any more than assemble when you have exhorted\*.

\* Mr Haldane considers Archbishop Newcome's version of this passage as arbitrary and unnatural—an interpretation, not a translation. But exhorting *to it*, is not more arbitrary, and not more an interpretation, than *exhorting one another*, in our version. The sentence is evidently elliptical, and something must be supplied to complete the sense. An active verb, *exhort*, must have something to act upon. Surely Mr H.'s own interpretation, "*when assembled, should exhort one another*," is as arbitrary as the version he opposes.

Neither does it seem fair, to represent his own interpretation as the meaning, 'of the truth of which Mr Ewing *seems sensible*,' p. 54. Mr E. merely waves the question of the meaning of the passage, that he may show, that even this conceded would not establish *exhortation to be a particular ordinance*.

I am far from wishing to determine the signification of any passage of Scripture by authority. The reasons, and not the names of commentators, ought to be regarded. On the present occasion, however, it may not be improper to quote the opi-

The Hebrews at this time were evidently persecuted. In various passages, they are supported under the troubles they were called to suffer for the sake of Jesus, chap. x. 32—36. xii. 2—13. xiii. 13. And who that ever read of the persecutions of either ancient or modern times, knows not, that besides bitter opposition from relatives at home, believers were often way-laid, insulted and apprehended on the road to the place of public meeting; that when assembled, they were exposed not only to molestation, but to certain peril, and that strong faith and much patience were necessary, in order to persevere in such circumstances in their attendance on the worship of God. “Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake. And many shall be offended (or

nions of some reputable commentators to show that the sense in which this passage is here understood, is not the result of desire to support hypotheses, which I would readily desert, if it can be shown that they are not founded on the word of God.

Thus Guyse writes: ‘Let us admonish, excite and encourage each other to frequent our religious assemblies on all occasions, and to go on with cheerfulness in the ways of the Lord.’—Exhorting one another not to desert our ‘assemblies.’—It is an ellipsis of the opposite. *Grotius and Estius in Poli Synopsi ad loc.*—‘But exhorting, viz. one another to assemble.’ Carpzovius in *Ep. ad. Heb.* p. 475. and Rosenmuller also adopts this.

But the truth is, that the word *παρακαλεω*, here rendered *exhort*, as truly and frequently, both in the Septuagint and New Testament, denotes *to encourage, to strengthen, or to comfort*. See Deut. iii. 28. Job iv. 3. Isa. xxxv. 3. lvii. 18. apud LXX. Mat. ii. 18. v. 4. Luke xvi. 20. Acts xvi. 40. 2 Cor. i. 4. ii. 7. vii. 6. Eph. vi. 22. Col. iv. 8. and many other places.

Were the word to be so rendered here, ‘Not forsaking your

ensnared), and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall arise and deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved," Mat. xxiv. 9—13. It is easy then to see what was to be suffered in a season of persecution by those who would not forsake the assemblies or churches of believers. And even until this day, in those places where "the reproach of Christ" is dealt out in pretty full measure, the feeble-minded and the unstable are not a little discouraged from regular attendance on the means of grace.

In these words, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is, but exhorting *one another*," there is evidently an antithesis

assembly, (for the word is *πιστευαγωγην*, not the verb) as the manner of some is, but encouraging, strengthening or comforting one another," the object of the admonition might appear fully as suitable to the connexion, and to the scope and end of the whole epistle. What tends more to discourage and weaken the minds of Christians, than the irregular attendance of their brethren on religious assemblies, and their withdrawing from these in consequence of worldly apprehensions or dread of suffering! How necessary was the admonition, that they should fortify and encourage one another to attend the assembly where the means existed, to promote their stability and growth in grace! This was the way to prevent their apostasy, and to counteract the persecutions by which they were shaken, and in danger of perishing, after they had received the knowledge of the truth. Wakefield accordingly renders the words, "Not abandoning our association, as the manner of some is, but encouraging each other." And it will be allowed, that where he was not warped by his system, no man was his superior in understanding the original language. Some old English versions, and even Wicklif's, were indeed before him in this.

or contrast. But instead of attending to this, some insist that exhorting is connected with assembling. The fact, however, evidently is, that exhorting is not connected with assembling, as they contend ; but contrasted with forsaking the public assemblies. It is proper to consider wherein this contrast lies. Did not private and mutual exhortation to persevere in the faith and in stedfast attendance on the worship of God, form a striking contrast to the conduct of those, whose manner it was to neglect the assembling of themselves together ? Did such continue to “ consider one another to excite to love and to good works, and to exhort one another ?” Does not the context show that their example was in every respect discouraging and dangerous ? Do they who now neglect the worship of God in public, maintain the cause of truth in private, and encourage others in the way which they have themselves forsaken ? And would it not be suitable to say to those who are in danger of following their example, Beware of backsliding, and do not forsake the assemblies where the Father is worshipped in spirit and in truth, but exhort and encourage one another, whatever you may suffer for the sake of Jesus ? In this view of the passage, it appears to us suitable. Was it not suitable to say to the disciples, Some who once suffered with us, and professed to rejoice in Jesus, have now turned back to the synagogue, the temple and the sacrifices, which could never take away sin. They have their reward. They have escaped persecution. Let us not be imitators of them. Let us be faithful unto death, let us exhort one another, and not forsake the public assemblies where we have so often seen the power and the glory of our God and Saviour.

Again we remark, that a disposition to exhort publicly is not the contrast of a disposition to apostatize. It was the carnality and not the spirituality of some of the gifted men at Corinth, which made them over forward to exercise their gifts in public. This was decidedly the case with the false teachers, who, though eager to become public speakers whenever it consisted with their safety, were at the same time studious to escape persecution, Gal. vi. Nor can a fondness to speak publicly be now, in itself, regarded as evidence of godly zeal, and great courage. That many who have proved unstable and self-conceited, and such as have made shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience, have been most forward to exhort, is abundantly well known. While such continue to meet at all, they will not be backward to exhort. But that in times of persecution, persons of this description would be most apt to support the sinking minds of others by their private example and admonition, is by no means evident. Such however seems to be the conduct enjoined in the passage before us, in opposition to cowardice, unsteadiness and apostasy. "And let us consider one another, to provoke unto love, and to good works : not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is ; but exhorting : and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully (*i. e.* deliberately and positively apostatize) after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth not yet a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful foreboding of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." How solemn and impressive are these words ! What pity that the awakening and powerful instruction

which they contain should be nearly lost amidst the collision of discordant sentiments !

We may observe in passing, that to those who see no ground whatever to conclude that there was any such ordinance of public exhortation, as our brethren contend for, it must seem strange to affirm, that the apostle singles out this practice as the principal object for which the Hebrews were to assemble publicly, and as being eminently calculated to confirm their faith, and to preserve them from apostasy.

The idea is unnatural and ridiculous in the highest degree. Yet, we are told, that the reasons are obvious why the Hebrews were commanded to assemble for this kind of exhortation. What ! is it indeed obvious, that in preference to the exercise of spiritual gifts, the speeches of those who had not such gifts, and who in other respects were far less furnished for public teaching than even exhorters in our own day, —that these things should be selected as the great object for which it was most desirable to assemble in times of persecution, and in the age of inspiration and miracles ? Can any one conceive, far less see it obvious, that a kind of exhortation, which must have been inferior to modern promiscuous exhortation, should in such circumstances have been enjoined as the primary object of Christian fellowship, and the chief means of edification and comfort ? Think of Corinth, and believe this !

But we, for our part, must believe, that the prophesying and teaching of the gifted men, with the reading of the Scriptures, prayer, praise and the commemoration of the dying love of Christ, were incomparably better fitted for the increase of their faith and love, than public exhortations from the uninspired



We shall now conclude these remarks, by submitting to the judgment of the reader the following illustration. The Jews of old were commanded to serve the Lord, and to assemble from all parts of Judea, three times a-year in Jerusalem. The lxxxivth Psalm shows the spirit and perseverance with which the true Israelites obeyed this command. But distrust in God, the fear of exposing their cities, their families and possessions to surrounding enemies, the length of the journies, the time required from first to last to perform them periodically, and the expense attending them, not to speak of the idolatries to which some in almost every age were addicted, must have discouraged many from duly observing the appointed institutions. The high priest, therefore, after blessing the people, takes notice of these things. He shows the danger—the condemnation, to which the disobedient and apostate were exposed. He beseeches the people in the name of the Lord, to stimulate one another to works of truth and peace, and not to forsake the assembling of themselves together in Jerusalem as the manner of some was, but to encourage and exhort one another to appear before the Lord in the place which he had chosen, and so much the more as they saw the day approaching, when their trials and discouragements should come to an end.

Now, with respect to the language to be used, Is there any essential difference, whether the Jews of old were discouraged from attending in Jerusalem by the causes which have been assigned, or whether their posterity afterwards were discouraged by other causes from assembling together as Jesus had appointed? Nor is it of any consequence, whether in such a case the high priest should have exhorted the Jews,

or the apostle the Christians. Enough then—perhaps too much, has been said upon this passage. It certainly will never establish what our brethren contend for—a public ordinance of promiscuous exhortation in the days of the apostles, by those who were neither apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, nor teachers.

The history of Apollos may perhaps occur to some as affording a presumption, that brethren might have taught without extraordinary gifts. We shall mention freely what occurs to us respecting this eloquent and zealous disciple. After having been instructed by Aquila and Priscilla, he went to Achaia, where he greatly helped the brethren, by proving, in opposition to the Jews, “that Jesus was the Christ.” His zeal, eloquence, and extensive acquaintance with Scripture, may perhaps with consistency be supposed to have qualified him, without any extraordinary gift, for establishing the fact, that Jesus was the promised Messiah. But to have established this fact in opposition to the Jews, required less acquaintance by far with the doctrine, though not perhaps with the history of Christ, than teaching the believers did. At any rate, Apollos was a man of distinguished abilities and acquirements at the time of his greatly helping the brethren in Achaia, many of whom were inspired; for the church in Cenchrea would not have been unprovided with those gifts which were so richly bestowed on their neighbours the Corinthians. The fact is, however, that Apollos, from his first acquaintance with the doctrine of Christ, *might* have received some spiritual gift. It is not said indeed, that either he, or Titus, or several other labourers in the gospel, had at any time received gifts of this kind.

But is it not enough, that others are said to have received such gifts, who needed them as little as Titus, for instance, would have done? And is it not evident, that the apostles, prophets, and teachers of the kingdom of God, are all in the clearest manner represented as endowed with extraordinary gifts?

I should not do justice to the subject in hand, were I to take no further notice of the irreconcilable contradictions which are exhibited by the statements which others have opposed to what has been set forth. Perhaps few have submitted to the disagreeable labour of comparing together their various discordant hypotheses. Their sentiments, however, respecting exhortation, have been received in the gross by many individuals and churches. Those writers do not forget to admonish us to be aware of human opinions in religion. Every man should recollect, in giving an admonition of this kind, that his own opinions are human opinions. I doubt not that it will presently appear, that more flagrant contradictions, and greater confusion, never were displayed among those who wrote on the same side of any question, than among our opponents, respecting the practice of the first churches. This certainly tends to discredit their opinions respecting that practice.

We feel cordial satisfaction in mentioning the just and candid acknowledgments of Mr Braidwood. He considers, as was remarked before, Mr Ewing's explanation of 1 Cor. xiv. to be 'so just, and so convincing, that it would be quite superfluous to attempt a further illustration of that passage.' He not only abandons it as a ground for promiscuous exhortation, but expresses surprise, that Mr Ewing's opponents 'should call private brethren to the pub-

‘ lie exercise of their gifts, under the denomination of  
‘ *prophets*, proposing for their example a class of extra-  
‘ ordinary men who were divinely inspired,’ p. 160.

Where then, it may be asked, does Mr B. find the ordinance of exhortation, seeing he excludes it from this chapter? He finds it in the description which, in the xiith chapter, is given of the body of Christ, because every member of the body is represented as ‘ contributing to the good of the whole!’ Yet Mr B. is consistent with himself. As he gives up with cordiality the language of Eph. iv. respecting prophets, pastors and teachers, and contends for exhortation by the brethren from the apostle’s account of the edification received by the body at large, from all the members indiscriminately; so, with equal reason giving up the inspired teaching of the Corinthians as a precedent for exhortation, he goes to the xiith chapter for proof of it, by such as had not spiritual gifts. But to make credible the existence of that practice as a public ordinance, a place must be found for it among the actual exercises of the church.

Mr Carson, we believe, no where calls in question the extraordinary nature of the gifts of the persons who spoke in the church at Corinth, nor does his theory need that he should. The notice we have already taken of his opinion of the practice of that church, almost precludes the necessity of inquiring, Does he, with Mr Braidwood, refuse to ground on it the exhortation of the brethren? or does he, in opposition to him, make it the foundation of the practice in question? This he plainly does with all manner of confidence. ‘ Were there not,’ he says, ‘ one injunction  
‘ in all the Scriptures to this purpose, upon the prac-  
‘ tice of the church at Corinth, I would rest with

‘ every confidence,’ p. 257. ‘ In short, it is their  
 ‘ (the bishops’) duty to see this ordinance conduct-  
 ‘ ed according to the apostolical injunctions, 1 Cor.  
 ‘ xiv.’ p. 251.

No man, however, is further than Mr Carson is,  
 ‘ from confounding the distinction between the teach-  
 ‘ ers and the taught.’ He conceives, ‘ that distinc-  
 ‘ tion to be as real, during the exhortation of the  
 ‘ brethren, as at any other time,’ p. 251. Does it  
 not then follow, that as Mr Braidwood goes to the  
 xiith chapter for the ordinance of exhortation, because  
 he finds nothing in the xivth chapter but the teach-  
 ing of inspired men; so Mr C. must go to some  
 other chapter for the ordinance of teaching, because  
 he finds nothing in the xivth but the exhortations of  
 the brethren?

By the distinction between the teachers and the  
 taught, Mr C. evidently means that between rulers or  
 bishops, and other members of churches, as if those  
 alone were teachers. Of the rest he observes, ‘ Though  
 ‘ they all possessed miraculous gifts, they did not on  
 ‘ that account cease to be private members,’ p. 225.  
 ‘ Miraculous gifts do not make their possessors church-  
 ‘ rulers. If all the miraculous gifts that ever were  
 given by the Holy Spirit, were found to centre in  
 ‘ one man, he would not thereby be made a bishop,’  
 p. 157. These are wonderful assertions! The man  
 in whom all the spiritual gifts resided, (though not  
 ordained a bishop), would thereby be qualified to be  
 first, an apostle, secondly, a prophet, thirdly, a teach-  
 er, after that a worker of miracles, and in a word  
 whatever was extraordinary, eminent and useful in  
 the church of God! And is this one of Mr C.’s pri-  
 vate brethren? Is this one of his more exhorters?

What a gigantic exhorter must he be among the giftless brotherhood! Behind the transcendent lustre of this unofficial luminary, how many little stars might retire into illustrious obscurity!

It cannot then seem strange in Mr C. to deny the prophets to have been of the teachers, and to level them with the taught, or mere private members. The reader, however, is requested to recollect the fact, as he will afterwards see, that these private unofficial brethren are elevated by Mr C. himself to the rank of extraordinary official persons.

But though our opponents are so greatly at variance as to the exhorters in the church at Corinth, they are perfectly agreed that those who had not spiritual gifts might have been teachers and rulers, both there and in other churches similarly endowed: that is, the uninspired were the teachers, the inspired the taught! Is this the body of Christ, as fitly framed together by infinite Wisdom? or is it the deformed offspring of human imagination? How contrary is it to every just idea of the nature and design of public teaching! Alas, alas, that our brethren should have taught this new kind of transubstantiation! Does it indeed belong to systems, which are valued and vaunted on account of their plainness and simplicity, or to the inscrutable mysteries of the ghostly mother-church?

This statement of the sentiments we oppose, would be very incomplete without a further exhibition of Mr Haldane's views. In fact, no opinions on any subject can be more sceptical and indeterminate, than Mr H.'s are on that of spiritual gifts. He does not profess to have arrived at any certainty respecting it. 'Our theories upon it,' he thinks, 'must be very

‘problematical. That there were prophets who are ‘classified next in order to the apostles, is certain; but ‘that all who are said to prophesy were of this order, ‘is by no means clear,’ p. 35. He greatly doubts whether all the persons (the prophets in particular) referred to in I Cor. xiv. were possessed of extraordinary gifts; yet some of them are allowed to have possessed such gifts, p. 36.

Hence one would naturally expect, that his practical directions from so problematical a theory, would be delivered with a degree of hesitation corresponding to the uncertainty which marks the theory itself. But this is far from being the case. He reasons all the while, as if he had established without any doubt, that prophecy was merely uninspired discourse. Without waiting to decide whether the foundation is sand or rock, or both these together, the corner-stone is laid, and the building goes on with rapidity. Now, is Mr H. commendable in this? Is this Lord Bacon’s plan, which Mr H. recommends in his *View of Social Worship*? Must not facts be ascertained, or principles established, before we can proceed to induction, and reason from them with certainty and satisfaction? This surely is not less necessary on the point in hand than on any other topic whatever; as indeed appears from his manner of handling the subject of spiritual gifts. The whole is thrown into a state of confusion and uncertainty. But a suitable precedent, we confess, is thereby established for common practice in indiscriminate teaching.

‘I have said so much,’ observes Mr H. ‘on I Cor. ‘xiv. not because I regard this chapter as ‘both ‘the authority and example for the duty of brotherly ‘exhortation,’ if by this be meant the only, or even

‘ the chief authority and example \*, but to correct  
‘ some misapprehensions about spiritual gifts, and es-  
‘ pecially to bear my testimony against a mode of  
‘ reasoning from them, which, if followed to its fair  
‘ and legitimate consequences, must lead believers to  
‘ think, that unless they are public teachers they have  
‘ no gifts for which they are accountable, and must  
‘ throw every thing loose in the order of a church of  
‘ Christ,’ p. 40. And how has Mr H. corrected those  
misapprehensions? First, by pronouncing the subject  
inexplicable; secondly, by involving it in obscurity;  
and thirdly, by converting prophecy into exhortation.  
And what is the mode of reasoning of which he dis-  
approves? It is this: Spiritual gifts are considered  
to have been of a miraculous nature; and to have  
completely fitted those on whom they were bestowed  
for the duty of public teaching. They therefore offi-  
ciated, and were distinguished among their brethren,  
as the teachers among the taught. From this it is  
inferred, that public teaching should be still a work  
by select persons only, and not by all indiscriminate-  
ly, and that churches should still consist of the teach-  
ers and the taught. This is the mode of reasoning,  
and these some of its fair legitimate consequences,  
which Mr H. thinks ‘ must throw every thing loose  
‘ in the order of a church of Christ †.’

\* Mr Carson makes it ‘ the chief authority and example,’  
inasmuch that he would rest on it with ‘ every confidence,’  
were there no other in Scripture. To appeal from this chap-  
ter to Rom. xv. 14. for instance, is, to say the least, unworthy  
of just views of evidence.

† Not only do we think that our opponents have in many  
respects violated the order of churches, but we lament that  
their system has introduced a desolating scheme, which has a

After all, we presume Mr H. has given us reason to think, that had he maturely considered the subject of spiritual gifts, he would not have contended for promiscuous exhortation. 'Had the Lord intended the edification of the brethren to be exclusively promoted by men in office, we should have found miraculous gifts bestowed only on elders, that an example might be left on record for our direction,' p. 33. This remark is, upon the whole, worthy of the good sense of the writer. Now, if we have proved that his idea is verified, and that actually only those in office, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, had gifts for the edification of the churches, we have clearly recorded the supposed example. The number of these is nothing to the purpose. The teachers are distinguished from the taught. All were not prophets: all were not teachers. If then the speaking of pastors and teachers is too high a precedent for the exhortation of the brethren, so doubtless is the teaching of prophets and evangelists. These possessed an office as well as those did. If then the Lord gave spiritual gifts exclusively to men in office, who are those who throw every thing loose in the order of the churches?

Now, before our brethren can succeed in convincing those who differ from them as to the practice of the

tendency to annihilate churches. Messrs Haldane, Carson, &c. contend that two or three make a church. Mr Ballantine now holds that one alone may eat the Lord's supper! Against such things Mr Braidwood reasons strenuously. The number of little, captious, censorious factions produced by this doctrine, is a terrible evil to the church of God. What were the churches of which we read in the New Testament? Societies of a permanent nature, gathered and set in order by the apostles and their fellow-labourers

first churches, they must first attain some tolerable agreement among themselves. For they are not in this instance at variance in their treatment of subordinate arguments, but of what must ever remain the surest foundation of our practice in regard to teaching, either by select persons only, or by the brethren in general. 'When men,' it has been said, 'dispute against the truth, what one of them builds up, is presently pulled down by another.' Whatever cordiality and agreement our opponents preserve in urging into their service precepts of a general nature, (and it would be the wisdom of all of them to take their stand here), with respect to the practice of the church so often referred to, the scene entirely changes: they halt, they stumble, they contend and are dashed one against another. Do we then plead for any thing which our opponents, either jointly or severally, have not completely surrendered? With Mr Braidwood, we believe the gifted men at Corinth to have been all inspired teachers; with Mr Carson, we view them to have been the exhorters there; and with Mr Haldane we must confess, that if only men in office had miraculous gifts, an example is recorded to distinguish in all ages between the teachers and the taught.

Messrs H. and C. we would observe in passing, appear to maintain, that none are to be acknowledged as teachers, unless they are also pastors. Mr B. we think is of a different opinion, p. 59.; and so have all Christians been hitherto. All denominations employ men as teachers, who are not for a time, and perhaps not at all, appointed to be pastors. Were the teachers mentioned in 1 Cor. xii. all pastors? Or is there any proof, that any one of the teachers at Corinth was yet appointed to this office? Are the pastors and teachers in Eph. iv. to be considered the same? Is it

not evident, that from the time men received extraordinary illumination, they became either prophets or teachers, according to the nature of the gift bestowed on them? But none became pastors till they were chosen by the church, and regularly set apart. Is it not clear from 1 Tim. iii. that men might be even "apt (qualified) to teach," who could not be chosen as pastors. A new convert must not be chosen, yet new converts were inspired to teach. This was the opinion of at least some of the fathers, of the reformers, and of the old English independents, and it appears to be agreeable to Scripture, and to what all denominations are obliged to practise.

Tertullian, we have been reminded, has declared that the distinction between the priests and the people is of the church's making. Unscriptural distinctions of any kind, we do not wish to acknowledge; nor do we like to employ unscriptural terms; yet in the language of prophecy, the teachers of the church of Christ are sometimes called priests and levites, as the gospel worship is in it described in the phraseology of Moses. We are nevertheless bound by the usage of the New Testament, to employ the terms which are strictly expressive of the real character and work of pastors and teachers. But if Tertullian must be understood to mean, that the distinction between the teachers and the taught had no higher origin than the church's making, we must class this opinion with his other known extravagancies.

Some light will be afforded on the practice of the churches in those days, by the following passage from Sir Peter King's "Enquiry into the Constitution, &c. of the Primitive Church." We must, however, first premise, that by clergy and laity the writer evidently

means, such as were ordained to be bishops and presbyters, and those who were not. This we deny to be the scriptural distinction between the teachers and the taught. ‘As for the preacher himself, it was usually the bishop of the parish. So saith *Justin Martyr*, ‘*The bishop preaches by way of INSTRUCTION and EXHORTATION to the imitation of those excellent things which we read.* Or else he desired a presbyter, or some other fit person, to preach in his room.’ *Origen*, going from *Alexandria* to *Palestine*, by the desire of the bishops of that country, publicly preached in the church, and expounded the Holy Scriptures, although he was not yet in holy orders. At which action, when *Demetrius*, bishop of *Alexandria*, was offended, *Alexander* bishop of *Jerusalem*, and *Theoctistus* of *Cesarea*, writ to him in defence of it, as follows: *Whereas you write in your letter, That it was never before seen or done, that laymen should preach in the presence of bishops, therein you wander from the truth; for wheresoever any are found, that are fit to profit the brethren, the holy bishops, of their own accord, ask them to preach unto the people. So Eusepius was desired by Neon bishop of Laranda, and Paulinus by Celsus of Iconium, and Theodorus by Auticus of Synnada, our most blessed brethren; it is credible, that this is likewise done in other places, though we know it not.\**

We shall observe on this passage only, that *Alexander* of *Jerusalem*, and *Theoctistus* of *Cesarea*, seem to have better understood the principles of Scripture, than the lofty bishop of *Alexandria*. And if any now should be found to deny to churches, the liberty of calling

\* Part ii. pp. 14, 15.

those to teach them whom they judge to be qualified, his interference should be rejected as promptly and decidedly, as if, on the contrary, he maintained their obligation to hear such as they judge to be unqualified.

It is much indeed to be lamented, that on the distinction in question has been reared the proud superstructure of priestly domination. The ancient Scribes and Pharisees exhibited a pattern which has been too successfully copied by innumerable followers. Their covetousness, their titles, their peculiar robes, their jealousy and hatred of other teachers, their contempt of the people, and their high notions of their own importance, form the soul of priestly authority, and exhibit the genuine features of spiritual pride. But although Jesus held up the conduct of the Scribes to decided and everlasting reprobation, and warned the disciples against their baneful example, he did not abolish the office of teacher for fear of the recurrence in his kingdom of similar abuses. Nor would the disciples need such warning, unless their gifts, employment and respectability might induce others to give, and them to receive, the meretricious and sordid distinctions in which the Scribes so much delighted. Every proper teacher is more or less in the same danger\*. His attainments, functions and usefulness, in some measure expose him to it. But when persons are appointed to be teachers who are not qualified to teach, or whose time and thoughts are much engrossed and entangled by the affairs of this life, though they may honour themselves, perhaps others will not. Their inaptitude to teach will

\* None however are in so great danger of being elated in their office, as they who are unfit to fill it.

in some degree preserve them from the danger of being called Rabbi, Rabbi; and the respectability which arises from usefulness in the church and in the world, will seldom introduce them to the chief seats and uppermost rooms.

All however acknowledge the distinction between the teachers and the taught, and their practice may justly be viewed as the application of this principle. But to acknowledge, that all are not teachers, nor fit to teach, and to affirm that all may teach publicly and are so commanded, is most inconsistent. The truth to be spoken, the persons to be addressed, and the object of addressing them, are in every case the same, whoever is employed to edify the church. If the Scriptures have made no distinction between the teachers and the taught, neither ought we to make any. But if indeed we admit of any, let us adopt that which is made in the word of God. There cannot be any other of a rational kind. It is marked in Scripture by the possession of gifts, by the necessity of these for this end, and by the benefits ascribed exclusively to these as the means which God was pleased to provide for the edification of the church.

Some of the above remarks will, I hope, prevent the tendency of the preceding illustration from being misunderstood. To that illustration no addition shall be made, not because materials are wanting, but because it is presumed so much has been already said, as abundantly demonstrates, that only they who had extraordinary endowments gave public instruction in the first age. In no part indeed of Scripture, is mention made of any church or individual as possessing the knowledge and utterance essential to the duties of public teaching and exhortation in

the churches of the saints, without such special gifts as were then imparted to prophets and teachers. The silence of Scripture will never prove that men who had not spiritual gifts, were appointed to be teachers in that age of light and power, wherein signs and wonders and divers miracles and distributions of the Holy Spirit universally accompanied the progress of the gospel: a position so obviously untenable, as that for which our brethren contend, would need to be supported by the plain sober language of reference to facts. These are numerous and circumstantial on the subject of public teaching by qualified and select persons. In the midst of Scripture testimonies, shines as a lamp of peculiar splendour, the exhibition of the whole teaching and worship of the church at Corinth. Around this as a centre may be variously arranged many other lights, of less magnitude indeed, but of equal brightness, forming altogether a most luminous constellation. To this our brethren would do well to take heed, "as unto a light that shineth in a dark place," as they would not wish to be found misleading by their speculations the churches of the living God.

The sum of the evidence we have offered is this: Miraculous supply having never been afforded but in cases of necessity, shows, that the spiritual gifts of the first churches were essential to their edification;—the circumstances of their teachers with respect to the Scriptures, and the persons to be taught, rendered these gifts indispensable:—accordingly, wherever the subject is explained, both the fitness of teachers, and the edification of the saints, are uniformly ascribed to this one cause;—and the attempts which have been

made by the most intelligent and experienced of our opponents, to set aside the fact, appear so inconsiderate, contradictory and strange, as to confirm the truth by the feebleness of opposition. The conclusion then is, That the supposed ordinance of exhortation, the very name of which is a Scripture term perverted, owes its existence wholly to human speculation ; while that of teaching and exhortation by fit and select persons, is too clear to be denied, either by our opponents in this controversy, or by any other persons who retain in their assemblies the form of public worship. Richly may the church of God experience the fulfilment of the divine promise—" And *though* the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left," Isa. xxx. 20, 21. Faithfully may her teachers perform the important work to which the Lord has called them—" Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly ; nor for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind ; neither as being lords over *God's* heritage, but being ensamples to the flock," 1 Pet. v. 2, 3. And peacefully may the disciples walk in the way of holiness—" Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves : for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account ; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you," Heb. xiii. 17.

## ESSAY V.

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### *How far do Ordinary supply the want of Extraordinary Means?*

HAVING in the former essay endeavoured to evince, that those only who had spiritual gifts gave public instruction in the first churches, it is now necessary to inquire, how far, or in what cases, does ordinary supply compensate for the want of that which was extraordinary? This comprehends the important question, Which of the offices that then existed ceased, and which have been continued? But our design in this place, obliges us to confine our observations chiefly to the prophetic office, and to that of the stated teachers of the churches.

The subject under consideration has been much misunderstood. There is no extreme, it seems, without its opposite. Some, as observed in the first essay, have boldly claimed prerogatives and powers, and attempted to perform various functions and actions peculiar to miraculous agency. Others, on the contrary, deny that the acquirements of ordinary teachers can be a proper substitute for any extraordinary gift. Neither appear to have considered, that miraculous supply was given both for ordinary and extraordinary ends. By ordinary ends, are meant such as being essential to the usual condition of mankind,

were accomplished by means which were not miraculously bestowed, either before or after the miraculous supply was afforded. By extraordinary ends, are meant those which, not having been necessary to the usual condition of mankind, were never accomplished but by miracle alone. This remark will apply to miraculous interposition, whether it respected objects of a physical or intellectual nature.

If, in all cases, extraordinary supply had been given for extraordinary purposes, ordinary means could in no case compensate for the want of it. If, on the other hand, extraordinary supply had, in all cases, been afforded for ordinary purposes, ordinary supply would in every case have come in its stead. But if it is undeniable, that extraordinary supply was given, sometimes for ordinary, and sometimes for extraordinary ends, the question doubtless is, In what cases does ordinary supply compensate for the want of that which was extraordinary? Unless the Scriptures contain principles to determine this point, we are left, on the one hand, under the power of scepticism, or on the other, are abandoned to the impulse of extravagance. But in our opinion, the principles on which the decision of this question should rest, are simple and obvious, although they have been much perplexed by the heedlessness of controversy and by some other causes.

Ordinary ends were effected by miraculous interposition, when mankind were supplied with the necessities of life. In the wilderness, the children of Israel were fed with bread from heaven, their drink was made to issue from a rock, and their raiment did not grow old during the period of forty years. As we do not suppose, that their raiment was of better quality

when preserved by miracle, than when provided by themselves, so we conceive the old corn and the water of Canaan to have been substitutes equivalent in every respect, for the purpose of nourishment, to both the manna and the water which were miraculously provided. But should it be contended, that the ordinary provision was inferior in point of quality, still it will be granted, that it came in the room of the other, which is all we need to maintain.

Extraordinary ends were answered by miraculous interposition, when the Red Sea was divided by the stretching out of Moses's hand, when the walls of Jericho instantly fell at the sounding of the trumpets, when the unwholesome water was made healthful by the salt which Elisha cast into it, when the leprosy of Naaman was cleansed by his dipping seven times in the river Jordan, when the dead were raised, and every kind of malady and affliction was removed by the word or touch of Jesus and of his apostles. The ends accomplished by these miraculous interpositions, in the effects which were *instantaneously produced*, were certainly extraordinary, and never were, nor could have been accomplished by ordinary means.

Another remarkable difference of which we ought to take notice, is, that the manna, the water and the raiment, were suited in their very nature to effect the purpose for which they were afforded. But the rod in the hand of Moses, the sound of trumpets, and the salt, were altogether inadequate in their very nature, to effect of themselves the ends of their appointment. In the former case, the miracle consisted in *providing* means; in the latter, it appeared in making means *effectual*. In the one case, both the means, as the manna, and the end, namely the nourishment by it

of the people, corresponded exactly to the ordinary circumstances of mankind. In the other, they did not, as when dipping in water cleansed a leprous person in an instant. Such a sudden cure of such a disease, could never have been effected by ordinary means.

Among the ends which never were, and never could have been accomplished without miraculous interposition, were those which, under the former dispensation, were accomplished by the ministry of Moses and the prophets; and under the present, by that of the apostles of Christ. No one ever pretended to have been appointed the successor of the Mediator of the old covenant. Even among the prophets of the Lord, there was not any one who could sustain so eminent a character. Nor is it, we presume, supposed, that the prophets themselves were at any time provided with successors; for none could do their work without their immediate call and inspiration. As to the office of apostles, it was doubtless extraordinary. Some things which were done by them could indeed have been well enough performed by others, who had not their peculiar and distinguished powers. But to publish clearly and infallibly to the world the gospel scheme of salvation, to unfold its mysteries, to determine its institutions and precepts, and to confirm the whole by innumerable and stupendous miracles, being the grand end for which their office was designed, it was consequently of too high and extraordinary a nature to require or admit any thing corresponding to it in any future age or condition of the church. Yet some have hitherto claimed more or less of the power which was peculiar to the apostles. It is however an inauspicious circumstance, when

only the power, honour and rule of extraordinary officers are claimed; but no evidence is afforded of similar endowments being possessed, no disposition shown to suffer similar privations, and no attempts are made to undertake or perform similar labours in the gospel of Christ.

These remarks may throw some light on the prophetic office; the nature of which, and the claims of men to come forward as their successors, shall be now considered. Was their office ordinary or extraordinary? It was doubtless extraordinary, and equally so under the former and present dispensations. But Mr Carson, it was observed, asserts the prophets to have been but private church-members; and accordingly, on their practice, with that of other gifted men, he rests with 'every confidence' as a ground for exhortation by the brethren promiscuously. Who could think that Mr C. after this, should assign the prophets an office in the church? 'Διακονία,' he remarks, 'is never exclusively appropriated to the ministry of the bishop. It refers to the ministry of all the orders, and includes the *offices* of apostles, PROPHEETS, evangelists, and pastors and teachers,' p. 70. Nor does Mr C. now, (that he has a mind to exalt the prophets) think it sufficient to assign them an office merely: he makes them EXTRAORDINARY OFFICE-BEARERS, for whom it would be absurd to attempt to provide successors. Speaking of a certain office, he asks, 'If this was an extraordinary office, has it not ceased like others? The Scriptures, and not ordinary bishops, must supply its place. The apostles and prophets we have in the Scriptures,' pp. 67. 71. These words determine his view in this place of the prophetic office, and exclude every idea of succession,

even by approved teachers, and far more, we should suppose, by those who are not teachers. 'What share have the bishops of churches,' he asks, 'in the work of an extraordinary order of teachers?' p. 68. We answer, none at all; but *we* ask in return, What share have the private brethren in the work of extraordinary office-bearers? and such, in Mr C.'s present view of them, were the primitive prophets. Mr C. will doubtless answer, They have no share at all in this kind of work. Again, he repeats the same sentiment as before, 'If this was an extraordinary office, it has ceased.' We are then glad to find, that what Mr C. took away with the one hand, he has restored with the other; and we hope he never will have cause to repent of this act of justice.

We must again advert to Mr Haldane's view of the primitive prophets. Some of them he hardly thinks were prophets at all, or inspired. But then he allows that other prophets were prophets indeed. These had an office next in dignity to that of the apostles, to which he thinks it would have been a little presumptuous in the brethren to aspire. 'Were they to covet an office next in dignity to apostles?' pp. 35, 36. He further allows, that the public teaching of the brethren could not be proved from Eph. iv. wherein mention is made of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. Now the prophets here spoken of, were, as we observed on a former occasion, the prophets of all the churches of the saints, and not of any individual church. Hence Mr H. does not argue very consistently with the above concessions: 'If mutual exhortation is to be given up, because we read of prophets exhorting (it might be prophets prophesying, verses 3. and 31.) in the church at

‘ Corinth, there is no saying how far we may be cal-  
 ‘ led to depart from apostolic practice, on the ground  
 ‘ of our circumstances being different from those of  
 ‘ the first churches,’ p. 34.

It is certainly strange to charge us with departing from apostolic practice, because we give up the idea of continuing, as the successors of extraordinary teachers, persons who are acknowledged to be unfit to perform the duties of *ordinary* teachers. To urge a number of such persons to speak in a church, under the idea of reviving a discarded ordinance, has indeed “ a show of wisdom and humility,” when compared to the practice of exalting men to be popes, cardinals and metropolitans. But every encroachment on the authority of Christ ought to be resisted, even in its most plausible and least assuming forms. If we do not give up the notion of exhortation as legitimately succeeding prophecy, there is no saying how far we shall presume upon reviving extraordinary offices. We maintain, that nothing more unwarrantable can be attempted in this way, except the revival of the office of apostle. “ God hath set some in the church, first, apostles ; secondarily, prophets.” Those therefore have to ascend but one step in the scale of extraordinary offices who take upon them to occupy in the churches the prophetic office. He who would have presumed to stand in the room of an Old Testament prophet, would have appeared to the Jews in the same light in which a man would now appear who presumed to act instead of an apostle. Is it not this that renders the pope so odious a picture of arrogance and folly ? In proportion as the apostles were superior to the prophets, is the extravagance of those who pretend to be successors to the former, greater than that

of such as think they stand in the place of the latter ; and in proportion as the prophets approached the eminence of the apostles, does the absurdity of saying to the brethren, *Ye may all prophesy one by one*, resemble that of saying to the Roman Pontiff, *THOU art Peter*.

Here then is a very wonderful thing. Those averse, in the greatest degree, to undue authority in pastors, teachers and preachers,—those who treat clergymen also with indignation and scorn, usurp higher authority than any of them pretend to possess. Say the exhorting brethren, “ Ye take too much upon you ;” but we also have a right to speak in the church ; for it is written, “ Ye may all prophesy one by one !”

We further insist on the impossibility of supplying the place of the prophets, from the nature of their endowments. This indeed is implied in their office, but still it requires to be distinctly remarked. To say that some things were done by prophets, which were done also by others, is no more in fact than might be affirmed of the apostles. But, viewing them as possessed of that high kind of inspiration, which comprehended new and original revelations, and the knowledge of future events, we must deem their endowments to have been as certainly peculiar and extraordinary as those of the apostles. There is nothing which corresponds to the gifts of either in the ordinary condition of the church. We formerly spoke of the sounding of trumpets, and the application of salt, for extraordinary ends. Now as these means, and every thing corresponding to them, are utterly out of our power, because we cannot give them *efficacy*, so the gifts of the apostles and prophets are equally out

of our power, because we do not *possess* these, nor any thing corresponding to them.

But ordinary office-bearers were fitted for their work by extraordinary gifts. This, we presume, has been established by evidence which will not be easily invalidated. To these gifts of ordinary teachers, there must be something now to correspond, as there is no doubt that their office continues. Nor is the sufficiency of what has been truly, but perhaps not quite gravely styled a *succedaneum* for the gifts of the Holy Spirit, a matter of doubt with us; so far as it respects the ordinary offices and duties of the kingdom of God. But if the idea is absurd, with whom does the absurdity most abound? I do not hesitate to say, that none have equalled some who differ from us about public exhortation, in going beyond the limits prescribed by Scripture, when on the practice of the prophets they ground the exhortation of the brethren—a poor substitute this, and poor its advantages, when compared with the fruit of prophetic inspiration.

We have already spoken of the skill of Bezaleel and Hiram, the former of whom was taught by the inspiration of God, the latter by a course of ordinary instruction. Bezaleel, we are told, was filled with the Spirit of God “in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship,” *Exod. xxxi. 3.* Of Hiram, it is said, that “he was filled with wisdom and understanding, and cunning to work all work in brass,” *1 Kings vii. 14.*; also, like the other, he was “skilful to work in gold and in silver, in stone and in timber, in purple and in fine linen and in crimson,” *2 Chron. ii. 14.* Between the endowments of both, there was evidently a

most striking resemblance, although their respective endowments were obtained in different ways. The ends which were answered by these several endowments, were doubtless of the kind we have termed ordinary, because in the one instance, that of the Tyrian, these ends were accomplished without any miracle. Nor is it possible to gainsay the inference, that for certain mental endowments, supernaturally imparted, as well as for physical means, such things sufficiently compensated as God was pleased to bestow in the ordinary dispensations of his providence.

Mr Carson pleads, that if extraordinary gifts were necessary in the first age to qualify men for the pastoral office, they are still necessary for the same end. 'You must prove,' he says to Mr Ewing, 'not merely, that bishops in the first churches possessed miraculous gifts, but that this was made necessary in their office. When you have done so, we will next inquire by what authority you substitute a succedaneum in the room of the requirements of the Holy Spirit,' p. 211. 'No corresponding acquirements can be supposed substituted for miraculous gifts,' p. 214.

But notwithstanding these strong assertions, Mr Ewing, or any other man, can demand 'corresponding acquirements' in pastors, by a higher authority than Mr C. can produce for making the exhorting brethren the successors of the prophets. Further, Mr E. can show, that the authority by which he can demand suitable acquirements, is acknowledged even by Mr Carson himself, while the authority of the same writer, in making the brethren the successors of the prophets, is destroyed by himself. That Mr C. acknowledges authority sufficient to demand suitable acquirements in the room of extraordinary gifts,

will, it is presumed, appear from the following remark :  
 ‘ The circumstance of the brethren \* of the first  
 ‘ churches possessing miraculous gifts, is no more a  
 ‘ reason why brethren who have not miraculous gifts  
 ‘ should not exhort, than the circumstance, of the  
 ‘ first bishops having miraculous gifts, is a reason why  
 ‘ bishops who have not miraculous gifts should not do  
 ‘ the duties which the first bishops did,’ p. 257. Ac-  
 ‘ cording to this mode of reasoning, he says, p. 76.  
 ‘ Had you allowed these pastors to have been ordi-  
 ‘ nary, though inspired bishops, I would have grant-  
 ‘ ed without hesitation that the same work was the  
 ‘ duty of bishops still, as fully as if they were inspir-  
 ‘ ed.’ But how could Mr C. have granted this with-  
 out hesitation, unless to have done so were agreeable  
 to Scripture? In his opinion then, (I mean his pre-  
 sent opinion), though ordinary pastors in the first age  
 had been inspired, the pastors in the present day are  
 bound to do the work of those pastors. This accords  
 with the principle for which we contend, that when  
 extraordinary endowments were given for ordinary

\* No doubt the prophets, and all who are mentioned as  
 having extraordinary gifts, were *brethren*. Ananias is called a  
 “disciple,” though he was sent that Saul might receive his  
 sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. We can therefore  
 have no objection against calling prophets, &c. *brethren*, if this  
 do not imply, what it surely ought not, that they were no  
 more than brethren, *i. e.* unofficial or private church-members.  
 Judas and Silas were “chief men among the brethren.” “I  
 desired Titus, and with *him* I sent a BROTHER.” And we read  
 of “the BROTHER, whose praise is in the gospel throughout  
 all the churches.” The question then is not, whether these  
 were brethren, but whether their being so called affords a pre-  
 text, either for denying that such were endowed with gifts as  
 prophets and teachers, or affirming that *brethren in general*  
 may now step forward in their place.

purposes, these extraordinary endowments were compensated by those which were ordinary.

After such concessions, it may well be asked, With what reason or consistency does Mr C. argue thus : ‘ If we are to have corresponding accomplishments with respect to some miraculous gifts, why not with respect to all? If it is not necessary that all miraculous gifts should have corresponding accomplishments in the bishop, it cannot be necessary that any one of them should have something to correspond to it. If the office was ordinary, miraculous gifts could at no period have been necessary,’ pp. 212, 213. All this is evidently erroneous, and contrary to what Mr C. himself has admitted, and even pleads for, relative to exhortation. The plain meaning of it is, that miracles were never performed to supply the common wants of mankind, and that in no case miraculous supply is compensated by the bestowment of ordinary means.

Mr C. in our opinion, argues soundly and justly in the words which follow : ‘ Had he intended that certain qualifications, then usually communicated immediately by his miraculous operation, should be accounted indispensably necessary in office-bearers, he would have specified such qualifications with respect to each office, and not have made the *manner of communication* the criterion,’ p. 214. Now, the Holy Spirit has done the very thing precisely which Mr C. pleads he would have done in the case supposed. In 1 Tim. iii. and Tit. i. the qualifications which respect the pastoral office are distinctly specified, and no mention whatever is made of the ‘ *manner of communication.*’ Therefore, since not the *manner of communication*, but the qualifications

communicated, are mentioned by the Holy Spirit, these qualifications are to be required in every one who desires the "good work;" and wherever they may be found, the manner of communication, or way of obtaining these, makes no difference.

Did it consist with our design, we might show, that the gift peculiar to teachers in the first age, bore the same resemblance to that of able teachers in the present day, that the endowment of Bezaleel bore to that of Hiram; insomuch, that the same language will aptly describe both the inspired and uninspired teacher. But the language which is expressive of the qualifications, character and work of extraordinary teachers, cannot be applied to the qualifications, character and work of ordinary teachers of any kind. The case, as we have seen, is very different with respect to the permanent offices of the church of Christ. We have not apostles and prophets, but we have pastors and teachers; yet all these orders had spiritual gifts, and we are sure the Lord will raise up teachers in every age, for he has promised to do so; but who expects to see apostles, or prophets, or workers of miracles?

The objection against the inspiration of the primitive pastors, from there being no mention of spiritual gifts, in the description of their character in the epistles to Timothy and Titus, has, I trust, been fully obviated. The wisdom of God endued them with gifts. These gifts must therefore have suited the nature of their office. Hence the language of Scripture respecting pastors is exactly descriptive of their character and work. He who appointed the office, will, in all ages, endue men with suitable qualifications for discharging the duties of it. Therefore

the account which is given of the qualifications of bishops must be fully applicable to bishops in all ages.

The difference between spiritual gifts and saving illumination, which appears so conspicuous in Scripture, leads us to expect that God will in every age adapt the aid of his Spirit to the duties and trials of his people. Inspiration has ceased, but certainly not such assistance from God to his servants as is essential to their encouragement and success in his work. The Holy Spirit, as remarked on a former occasion, is an universal agent. He employed an influence on the minds of men in times of old, suited to the pleasure of God respecting them. That God will in all ages endow with sagacity, foresight, prudence, fortitude and zeal, those who shall be instruments of great good to his cause, no sober-minded well informed Christian can call in question. Who can suppose, for instance, that the characters of such men as were most active and useful in the reformation from Popery, were not formed by divine wisdom for a work perilous, difficult and momentous in a very high degree \*? Certain indeed it is, that every faithful, humble, zealous preacher or pastor, feels it necessary earnestly to implore divine assistance both in his private studies and public ministrations. And such assistance, we doubt not, was promised by Jesus when he said, "Lo I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world."

\* Mr M'Crie has performed a signal service to the cause of truth and religion, by his late excellent and justly admired *Life of John Knox*. Who can contemplate without wonder and admiration, the attainments and achievements of that "good soldier of Jesus Christ," all within the period of thirty years,

It is not in any respect our intention to decide as to the comparative excellence of the faculties which God was pleased to impart miraculously. Mr Ewing's observation on this point is peculiarly just. 'All of them were most likely enjoyed in a degree of excellence, that must ever distinguish them from the little attainments of man, as in the animal creation we see the difference between the perfection of instinct and the slow advances of reason.'

The result of this investigation is, that prophesying ceased, but that teaching has continued. This result will not be viewed the less favourably by the writers whose sentiments have been opposed in the preceding discussion, that it agrees with the usual apprehensions and practices of Christians. Nay it agrees with positions, which have been admitted by themselves, though it disagree with the practice which they recommend. Have we not then peculiar claims on their attention? If, however, our reasoning should not convince them, they will at least allow, that their reasoning, so far from being calculated to convince us, is highly calculated to confirm us in our own opinions. At any rate, it is presumed, that the

that is, from his first illumination in the reformed doctrine in 1542, to the end of his course in 1572! If the reformers had not written, and preached, and suffered, Mr Hume would never have appeared as an author to requite his obligations by calumniating their character, nor would Dr Robertson have pursued the bubble reputation, in a work in which the reformers receive only the poor tribute of faint praise and of frigid compliments. But "the memory of the just is blessed," and will be held in high and lasting estimation by those who know how to regard the servants of the living God, notwithstanding all their imperfections, mistakes, and we add sins, which their greatest admirers must confess and lament.

real character of the prophets has been sufficiently ascertained. Though Mr Carson has in one place reduced them to the rank of private church-members, he has amply made up for this mistake by declaring them to have been extraordinary office-bearers, whose work cannot be performed even by the pastors of churches. The strongest argument then for indiscriminate exhortation has been removed by the concession of Mr Carson, with the consent of Mr Haldane and the hearty approbation of Mr Braidwood. Who then will replace it? But if the prophetic office were ordinary and permanent, even this would afford no ground for indiscriminate teaching. All were not prophets; and if some were prophets, still this would afford no warrant, and far less would it create a necessity for what is called exhortation. In short, 'the apostles and prophets we have in the Scriptures,' as the Jews had Moses and the prophets. Let us search the Scriptures. Let us consider the order of the churches which we profess to imitate. "Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks; consider her palaces; that ye may tell *it* to the generation following," Psal. xlviii. 12, 13.

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## POSTSCRIPT.

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*Hints on the Question, Is promiscuous Exhortation in Churches necessary, that Pastors and Teachers may be obtained ?*

THE object of the preceding Essays having been to point out the practice of the first churches, leaving to others to judge of the best way to bring about the imitation of them, we wished to avoid such questions as the one now before us, lest we should seem to attempt to propose regulations for directing the consciences of our brethren, with respect to those matters, which the word of God has not explicitly determined. As, however, it has been confidently urged, it seems, that without promiscuous exhortation in public, churches cannot obtain pastors, we submit the following brief hints to those who think they see any force in this argument: to all others these will, in a great degree, be uninteresting and superfluous.

To argue, then in the first place, as some have done, for public promiscuous exhortation on this ground, is to rest a positive, stated institution on the sandy foundation of expediency—a foundation from which they who thus argue profess to have departed; and from which they loudly call upon others in like manner to depart. Certainly they argue from expediency, and on no better

ground, who insist on a stated, permanent ordinance for a purpose of occasional temporary occurrence. When churches possess office-bearers, are they to be told, you must practise promiscuous exhortation in order to obtain pastors? Must they not reply, We are in this respect already provided for: unless therefore you can show us that we are bound by the express authority of God, or the practice of the first churches, to attend to this kind of exhortation as an institution of Christ, we must judge ourselves bound to reject it as a human expedient—for which besides, in our present circumstances, there is no need whatever.

Again, it is granted, that if only men in office taught in the first churches, this is ‘an example’ for the imitation of Christian churches in all ages. The plain meaning of this concession evidently is, that no argument from expediency, such for instance as the one already stated, can alter the divine rule. Let it therefore be determined first of all, whether such a rule is contained in Scripture. If it is, doubtless all will allow, that this rule is not to be set aside, in order to ascertain who has talents for public teaching. History and experience evince, that without this ordinance of exhortation, as it has been called, the churches of God have enjoyed the ministry of able and faithful teachers. Is not this sufficient to confute an argument from expediency, not found in the Scriptures?

By insisting on the necessity of promiscuous exhortation, in order to obtain pastors and teachers, some provision certainly is intended to be made for those societies, now become numerous, and still increasing, in which no one is either pastor, teacher or ruler. Such societies no doubt need rules as well as others; and in general it will be found, that they stand in

need of rulers also. But a few or many acting in a church-capacity without any approved teacher or guide, is a case not mentioned or exemplified in Scripture; how much soever provided for in some recent publications. The Scriptures then being silent as to every such case, all we dare say is this—If such cases must occur, the individuals concerned should act the best way they can: we know what David did when he was hungry, &c. &c.

To propose the preaching of the gospel for the end of discovering who in the churches possess gifts to preach it, or talents for public teaching in general, is nowhere mentioned in Scripture. *Edification* is the end of the ordinance of public teaching. “The work of the ministry is appointed, and should be undertaken, in order to the edification of the body of Christ.” Hence the apostolic injunction, “Let all things be done to edifying.” And how was this to be effected?—Not by the disorderly speaking of the gifted men, far less by the speaking, orderly or disorderly, of the ungifted brethren—but by the decent and orderly exercise of the gifts of a competent number of prophets and other qualified persons.

With us in later days, if it is not always evident who are qualified for becoming teachers, it is generally evident enough who are totally *unfit* for this—the greater number we should think are in general unfit. To this number, we doubt not, belong the majority of those who exhort. Now, when all the brethren promiscuously are invited to speak in rotation, or as many of them as incline to do so, there can be no doubt, that some other end is answered by such a usage than the instruction and comfort of all the disciples. Let this end be the trial and discovery of gifts. Where is

this sanctioned in Scripture? Is it not virtually condemned, where edification is mentioned as the sole end of public teaching? Great fear is due to God in the assemblies of his saints. Let every one take heed lest, by frequent unedifying experiments, he deprive God of the honour, and the saints of the instruction, improvement and consolation connected with the proper observance of divine ordinances. "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart."

In the age of the apostles, promiscuous exhortation certainly could not be needful to discover who had gifts. The extraordinary gifts of that age were made manifest by their effects, from the period of their having been imparted at the first. In consequence of having received a variety of gifts, some prophesied, some taught, some spoke in foreign tongues, some interpreted, some wrought miracles, and healed the sick. Such as prophesied and taught needed not to be called to order, or to be silenced, or to be admonished or reprov'd, after a few awkward blundering attempts at addressing their brethren: this is nowhere supposed in Scripture. False prophets and teachers were to be proved and rejected; nor can the necessity be ever set aside, of making ample trial of the character and abilities of such as are acknowledged, or deserve to be acknowledged as preachers and teachers. This, however, is quite a different affair, from inviting all indiscriminately to become teachers. It was one thing to prove the inspiration of a person professing to have received the Holy Spirit, and another, under the notion of observing an ordinance, to invite men to try to prophesy or teach, who neither had received any extraordinary gift, nor professed to have received any.

But still the question recurs, How are pastors and teachers to be obtained? With respect to pastors in particular, we think we know what was done in the first churches, nor do we suppose it difficult to draw the fair inference, viz. That as the pastors in the apostolic age were chosen from among the teachers, so pastors ought still to be chosen from among such as are acknowledged capable of teaching.

In regard to the appointment of men to be teachers, (for these we here distinguish from pastors), it becomes us to speak with caution—"to be swift to hear and slow to speak." In an important sense, we are commanded not to be "many teachers, (the meaning of which I take to be, that we are not to be creed or system-makers, dogmatically and censoriously fixing what the law of God has not determined), lest we receive the greater condemnation." How we are to ascertain who ought to be employed as teachers, is still a difficulty in theory, and we may add in practice too. The remarks which we subjoin on this head, are intended, not so much to point out how the difficulty may in all cases be surmounted, as to show that it both is and has been surmountable.

The intellectual talents, as well as the moral qualities of men, it will be acknowledged, are discernible in common life. In private, men speak as well as act. Hence the character of their minds, as well as the power and influence of their principles, is frequently and variously tried and made manifest. As members of society, are not some persons well known, not only as being vigilant and able to rule their own families well, (so far, we mean, as to maintain subordination and decency), but as men of research, information and utterance? The "clo-

quent orator," as well as the "cunning and skilful artificer," is still, as of old, (Isa. iii.) distinguishable among men: the tree is known by its fruit, be that fruit what it may.

One would conclude from Jethro's advice to Moses\* respecting rulers of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens, who were to be "able men, such as fear God, men of truth and hating covetousness;" and from the injunction of the apostles in regard to deacons, who were required to be "men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost, and of wisdom,"—that somewhat of the fitness of men for public stations may appear previously to their being called to occupy these offices, or engaging in the duties of them. Does this hold true of every function, except that of teachers? Do not the history of the church, and even our own experience, teach us, that fitness for the work of the ministry may be ascertained, at least in some degree, on the same principles on which men determine fitness for any other important public stations?

Where there are teachers or guides, if they be judicious, and men of experience, (and we must say that only such cases are exemplified and provided for in Scripture), these, with the concurrence and aid of the disciples, will be instrumental in bringing forward persons of promising abilities and character.

We formerly took notice of the success of the missionaries at Serampore, in discovering fit persons to preach the gospel. *They* speak, as if among the disciples they perceived talents for public usefulness; they make trial of such talents, and eventually judge whether or not these persons are competent to the work of the ministry. With us a sad reverse is seen. Very many preachers, in fellowship with the abettors

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\* Exod. xviii. 21—26.

of indiscriminate exhortation, have returned to their ordinary employments; and we apprehend they are encouraged, if not enjoined, and obliged indeed by imperious necessity, to do so. The discovery and exercise of gifts, are spoken of; but their decay and disappearance, where they may have existed, too often take place by this system. Some churches of these sentiments, seem to consider a person's being wholly devoted to the work of the Lord, as a sort of spiritual abomination—a clergyman—a priest—or it may be—a kind of Pope in the kingdom of Christ. Preachers who happen to come within the sphere of their attraction generally abandon to their more clerical brethren, the work of stately and permanently preaching the gospel at large.

Where such things take place, it is really inconsistent and ridiculous, to talk of gifts for preaching the gospel at large, or of evangelizing destitute and distant places. Why should we not entertain a much higher opinion of our brethren, than to suppose that none of them will discern the fallacy of these cold theories, which benumb like the palsy, and spread barrenness and desolation like the east wind? Why may we not cherish the hope, and offer supplication, that God may incline them to renounce these altogether, for the fervent, zealous, active, useful measures, though perhaps not altogether scriptural, which they formerly pursued with so evident and so extensive a blessing from God?

To return from this digression, we remark that private prayer and teaching will and must be attended to in a variety of ways, if churches abide in the faith and if the precepts of Christ are to be obeyed. And we not only grant, but maintain, that without mutual

teaching and admonition, it is impossible to know who ought to be encouraged and brought forward as public teachers. Our brethren seem to speak, as if they alone enjoyed in this respect the benefit of mutual edification. But we presume this is not the case; neither can it be proved, that the necessity of private mutual teaching and exhortation evinces the necessity of an ordinance of public promiscuous exhortation: for unless, in like manner, there be mutual and promiscuous *action*, men's temper and character cannot appear.

To satisfy, if possible, the advocates for promiscuous exhortation as a stated ordinance, it may be observed, that though there does not appear to be any warrant for such an ordinance, yet perhaps no material objection appears to lie against something of this kind, but rather the reverse, considered, and accordingly managed, as an exercise of Christian liberty. Though we have no commandment to carry thus far the practice of mutual teaching and admonition, it does not hence follow, that we have no permission to do so, especially "in the present distress." Some indeed seem not to perceive this difference. If it be not an ordinance, it is sinful. But this is confounding private usages with public institutions. Private exhortation by all is both a privilege and duty. Who can determine the precise point at which this exercise ought to cease? Propriety, decency and edification must be studied. Now, if as many as can meet on a working-day spend time in reading, prayer, praise and speaking from the Scriptures, and care be taken to encourage only those who appear to be somewhat qualified to officiate, all the ends of promiscuous exhortation in public will be answered, and many evils and

vexations prevented which attend the elevation of that practice into a public ordinance. In such a case, none are bound to attend, and if they who do so reckon on being sometimes occupied to little purpose, what then? It is their choice, not the effect of an ordinance binding on the church. And further, do not information and facility in expressing one's thoughts, appear in addressing a few as well as in addressing many? When Christ addressed the woman of Samaria—Philip, the eunuch—Paul, the Philippian jailor—or, in Ephesus, when he taught from house to house as well as publicly, did no evidence of superior minds appear? Shall we suppose, that no proofs were exhibited on these occasions of their great superiority, even to the teachers of their own times? Besides, is not addressing a small number in a private way, more suitable to the inexperience and diffidence of persons beginning to teach formally, than attempts to address a numerous assembly?

We may observe in passing, that if they who desire to be useful to their fellow-men by preaching the gospel of the grace of God, employ themselves where they have opportunity in instructing the children of those who are not themselves capable of training them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, in visiting the sick, the prisoner and the afflicted, they will find such exercises, though performed from pure disinterested motives, exceedingly conducive to their own improvement, and the best preparation for public teaching, as well as a test to others whether they have received gifts for this. And where persons desiring to be engaged in the work of the ministry do not, like Timothy, give evidence of their zeal, courage, devotedness and prudence to those who are more in-

timately acquainted with them, there is great reason to fear that much good will not be done by them to the church of God, or perhaps that their principles and motives are not what they ought to be.

If nothing were contended for but the best possible method of obtaining the greatest possible number of faithful able preachers and teachers, and if there were *in fact* greater zeal, more exertion displayed, and more good to the souls of men actually done by this new scheme than in any other way, far we trust would it be from us to oppose so desirable an event.

Our brethren who espouse a different opinion from us on this subject, complain much of the evils arising from trusting wholly to academies for teachers, and of the unfitness very generally, and want of Christian experience, as well as of the knowledge of the Scriptures, in persons educated in these for the work to which they are appointed. It must be owned, that there is too much ground for this, and that such institutions have proved snares in place of helps to not a few of those preparing for the ministry. We apprehend, however, they carry their censures much too far, just as they immoderately commend what they have themselves adopted. "But let every man prove his own work." Many able and most useful labourers have been brought forward by means of these seminaries, who might have languished in obscurity and uselessness in churches such as our brethren admire. If, on the other hand, some are admitted without sufficient trial, (and it is to be feared that this may too frequently happen), this is unquestionably a very great evil which ought by all means to be sedulously watched against. God forbid that we should become the advocates of any such abuse! Our heart's desire and

prayer to God for his churches is, that he would supply them with ample means of edification, and shut up every avenue against the introduction of ungodly as well as unqualified persons to the important work of building up the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. Besides, if academies should ever set aside the practice of calling to the ministry able men who have not, and perhaps who needed not to have been so instructed, this will doubtless tend to retard the progress of the gospel.—Here however we must stop, lest we advance into a field, the precise boundaries of which will never perhaps be determined by controversy, to the entire satisfaction of any one who closely considers the subject in all its bearings. ‘The Scriptures furnish us with general principles, by which, if our minds are under the influence of a simple desire to follow the Lord in the path of duty, we shall be guided by him in a right way. Surely nothing more is necessary.’ So say our brethren from whom we differ on the present question: and so say we. Let them pursue the path of this sentiment, and they will arrive at the same conclusion with us. And into this unity of faith, love and obedience, may the infinite mercy of JEHOVAH lead us, and them, and all his people! Amen.

## CONCLUSION.

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**T**HUS have we stated all that appeared to us necessary to be advanced relative to the public teaching of the first churches. The particular object which we had in view, did not permit us to attempt to trace the subject in all its branches, but only to consider first principles, and these too chiefly in relation to matters of external arrangement.—Though part of the foregoing pages was written in comparative haste, the facts insisted on, and the sentiments defended, have been a long time attentively considered. Perceiving how much error had already been advanced, and how much confusion necessarily followed, we wished not to make haste to show our opinion, like one who dreams a dream at night, and tells it in the morning. Mature consideration is surely highly necessary on subjects which materially involve the order, edification and unanimity of churches. Above all, it is desirable to give a fair unentangled view of the constitution appointed by the Lord Jesus Christ. In our zeal for primitive institutions, it behoves us to inquire what primitive institutions are, and carefully to distinguish them from those of man's invention. By retaining entire the institutions of Christ, with a temper and spirit becoming their profession, believers will mani-

fest their well-grounded admiration of divine wisdom, and their conscientious regard to both their own improvement and the general prosperity of the cause of Christ on earth.

‘ If,’ says Mr Carson, in his answer to Mr Ewing, ‘ you can allege any just exceptions to the evidence ‘ which we produce in favour of any part of order, ‘ *oppose us on the ground of misrepresenting the practice of the first churches,*’ p. 41. This is the ground on which we have opposed him and others in the preceding observations ; and Mr C. himself being judge, he has greatly misrepresented the practice of the first churches. If their gifts and teaching had been duly considered, it is presumed, we should never have heard of the ordinance of brotherly exhortation. That the abettors of this so called ordinance, have either mistaken or overlooked the actual gifts and exercises of the first churches, is apparent from their various and irreconcilable hypotheses. And if their premises are false, so must be their conclusions. It is of no consequence that they agree together as to what churches should now do, while they entirely differ as to what was done by the first churches. Judges who agreed together as to the sentence to be pronounced by them in an important case, while they essentially differed as to the testimony of the witnesses, and the nature of the precedents on which they should act, would not by such administration of law, (we cannot say of justice), obtain the confidence of the public respecting the equity of their decisions. Although our conviction of the truth of the principles which have been defended in the preceding inquiry, rests entirely on the clearness and precision with which

they are laid down in the oracles of God, we may candidly acknowledge, that the views of our brethren are to us a kind of confirmation of the truth of these principles. The way in which error is defended, is often as convincing as the refutation of it. In fact, they admit all that we contend for ; so that their various and contradictory defences of indiscriminate exhortation, have done as much to discredit that disputed ordinance, as all that has been written on the other side.

If we have made no apology for the unavoidable defects of the foregoing observations, this has not been owing to want of a feeling sense of our great inability to do the subject complete justice. But our manner of treating it, how deficient soever, will not, we hope, be confounded with the merits of the question. They by whom the imperfections of what we have advanced will be most readily perceived, will as readily perceive the strength of the ground on which we have stood. It will then, in their opinion, require one kind of labour to point out these imperfections, and another to demonstrate that the principles defended are not those of Scripture. Indeed we have no expectation, that promiscuous teaching will be better defended than it has been already : our real expectation is, that some who have contended for it, will reconsider their arguments, and heartily renounce, as unauthorised by Scripture, what they prematurely but honestly adopted.

We shall now, in concluding, offer a few remarks, first, respecting ordinances in general ; and secondly, respecting the ordinance of public teaching in particular.

First, with respect to ordinances in general, it seems obvious to us, that existing differences of opinion sel-

dom relate to the precise number of these, any more than to the number of fundamental truths of divine revelation. The ordinances and leading truths of Scripture, have, as so many points of fact, commonly commanded, by their prominence and distinctness, the assent of almost all denominations of professors. Any denomination, even the most unscriptural, may be found to observe every positive institution of divine appointment. Mankind are seldom hostile to the "form," although only some will be found to favour "the power of godliness." And does not much of the form consist in the observance of public institutions? Isa. lviii. 2. Zech. vii. 5—7. Luke xi. 42. The form then may remain where the spirit may have vanished. Men may be primitive and ancient, in regard to order, when to every great and excellent purpose they may be abundantly modernized. Nay, it is possible they may come the length of delivering to Satan, as ignorant and corrupt, all those who follow the noble zeal and diffusive benevolence of apostolic times, while, with the foolish fondness of popish superstition, they may themselves doat upon the lifeless images of apostolic ordinances. It is the meaning of the leading truths of Scripture, and the seasons and manner of observing ordinances, and not the precise number of the one or of the other, which usually occasion difference of opinion among professing Christians. There is indeed no shadow of a reason to doubt, that men may misconstrue the leading truths of revelation, in a manner so egregious as to wrest them "unto their own destruction." As little can it be doubted, that the positive institutions of the gospel may undergo such alterations in regard to the time and manner of observing them, as to become in a great measure use-

less, if not absolutely pernicious, 1 Kings xii. 33. Mal. i. 13. But this does not by any means affect our position: the number of each may still remain undiminished. Whatever alteration then is proposed to be made in regard to the time or manner of attending to any known ordinance, it may well excite inquiry, if a new ordinance is proposed to be adopted.

The design of every ordinance is, that we “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” By an unbiassed regard to this object, we must regulate every part of divine worship. The Lord has fixed the number of ordinances, because in every case Christian churches are supposed capable of attending to them all. The only difficulty lies in the application of principles to practice. Regard to their circumstances and abilities, must fix the hours of assembling and dismissing, and in general\* regulate their conduct as to the relative order in which ordinances are to be observed and the proportion of time to be assigned to each; for it is certain, that the word of God does not determine matters of this kind, otherwise than by furnishing general principles, which the wisdom which God has given to his people will enable them to apply according to their means, and the situation in which they are placed.

The history of the church of Christ, especially in the early ages after the death of the apostles, is well

\* We have said *in general*, because we know not in what order of time reading, teaching, prayer, or praise, was attended to in the first age; but we have positive evidence, that the Lord's Supper was observed in the afternoon, and not in the forenoon, although the reverse of this has been lately introduced as no small improvement. But to enter upon this, and other topics of a similar kind, would be foreign to our purpose.

calculated to teach us the evil of making additions to those few public ordinances which they delivered to the churches. In proportion as new customs and new ordinances were introduced, some of them borrowed from the Mosaic ritual, and others continued in imitation of practices peculiar to times of inspiration, (the two grand sources of innovation and will-worship under the economy of the gospel), formality and bigotry began to take place of the easy, animating usages of the apostolic period; insomuch, that, at length, the great mass of professing Christians (many of whom were unbelieving heathens, baptized at the point of the sword) submitted to the unwieldy and baleful yoke of Romish institutions.

One great perversion of Scripture, which our Lord reprehends in his sermon on the mount, is, the turning of public institutions into private customs, the converse of which certainly is, to change private customs into public institutions. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," Mat. v. 38. Now, this rule having been delivered to the Jews for the public administration of justice, we are bold to say, that our Lord did not repeal it\*. The reader may consult the whole of the passage from which these words are taken, Lev. xxiv. 17—22. What then does Jesus forbid? Certainly private animosity, and revenge; passions which are often enough gratified in the way of litigation, and which must operate abundantly, if the rule referred to should regulate men's conduct in their ordinary in-

\* This has been most improperly called, 'the law of retaliation.' It was perverted by the Jews into such a law, but with equal reason may every principle of equity be perverted into a law of retaliation, and then so named to the dishonour of all just laws.

tercourse. But the very opposite of this was taught by the law of Moses.

The converse of that misapplication of Scripture to which we have adverted, is to change private customs into public ordinances. That the most binding private duties may be set aside, by, as it were, transferring the obligation to perform them to things of quite another kind, there can be no room to doubt, Mat. xv. 4—6. Since salutation has been introduced as a stated ordinance to be observed publicly in churches, we have heard it affirmed, that Christians are under no obligation from Scripture to practise salutation in any form whatever in their ordinary intercourse. Perhaps this violation of the dictates of natural and Christian affection is no unnatural consequence of introducing this custom as a stated ordinance. If attending on the Lord's day to a public mess or dinner, does not help to relieve men of the burden of entertaining strangers, it will certainly release them from the apostolic injunction, "And if any man hunger, let him eat at home.—What! have ye not houses to eat and drink in?" We have seen enough to warrant us to suggest, that they who practise promiscuous exhortation as a stated ordinance, may, for that reason, be in peculiar danger of neglecting to "exhort one another daily," as enjoined in Scripture.

If the principle, that whatever is enjoined on the whole church, is to be observed by it in its associated state, be held as a rule for interpreting and applying the precepts of Scripture, it is impossible to calculate on the changes which must thence ensue. We once thought it sufficient to expose the fallacy of this sweeping principle, that, contrary to what nature itself has taught to all mankind, and the examples recorded in

the word of God, it required salutation to be practised as a stated ordinance. It seems that this consequence has not been rejected by some, although others have rejected it, who yet somewhat inconsistently argue from the principle from which it flows, in favour of public indiscriminate teaching. Upon the same principle, the confessing of our faults one to another, and the paying of tribute to whom tribute is due, might, with equal plausibility, be shown to be church-ordinances. Indeed, so great a proportion of the morality of the Bible is enjoined in this manner, that, on the principle in question, a very great number of the duties of believers must all be converted into public institutions. Therefore, either to convert private customs into public institutions, or public institutions into private customs, is subversive of the true order and interests of Christian churches: it is in fact to lay aside the commandments of God for the traditions of men; and to subject his people to another yoke than that of the Lord Jesus Christ. "He hath made every *thing* beautiful in his time;" but out of time and place, what is not deformed and useless?

Notwithstanding all the confident outcry which has for some time past been made about ordinances, inasmuch that some have shamefully accused their brethren of denying that they are bound to attend to all the ordinances of Christ, we know not as yet of so much as one ordinance of public worship which was not well known, and accordingly attended to, many years ago. Even they who have been accused of observing only some of the ordinances, will be found to observe the same number precisely, one for one, with those that profess to observe them all,—except promiscuous exhortation. And "the true worship-

pers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth : for the Father seeketh such to worship him."

These remarks are not intended, and we trust they are not calculated, to lessen in the estimation of believers the value of the positive institutions of the kingdom of God. Would that these were better understood, and the benefits of observing them in a scriptural and spiritual manner more generally felt! Yet we shall be happy, if any thing we have said, contribute to moderate the over-keen and disproportioned zeal which has been displayed on the subject of church-order—a zeal too, to which we cannot feel indebted for discovering to us any new ordinance, or even for adding to the efficiency and comfort of those already known, but indeed rather the contrary. Such expressions as the following, show, we fear, an unhappy tendency to formality in religion. 'That truth,' says a writer on church-order, (of whose piece we take no other notice), 'that truth which alone makes the guilty free, for the observance of all the ordinances of the Lord Jesus Christ.' How different is this from the language of our Lord himself! "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." If man was not created for the observance of the Sabbath, neither does Christ make his people free for the observance of ordinances. He "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."—"Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him." He has therefore given us ordinances to promote our growth in grace, and for this end chiefly was the Sabbath day appointed. "For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might, through the

thanksgiving of many, redound to the glory of God." We were not then created, we were not redeemed from wrath, nor delivered from the power of sin, for the observance of ordinances, but to be a holy, happy, peculiar people both in this world and in that which is to come, to the praise of the glory of the grace of God. Such is the view of things which the Bible teaches, and dangerous indeed it is so much as to appear to teach a different view of them.

We shall now, as was proposed, offer, in the second place, some remarks relative to the ordinance of public teaching in particular.

In imitating the first churches, some dislike to hear of making any allowance for difference of circumstances. No doubt this principle has been grossly abused in justifying culpable deviation from apostolic practice; but has not the reverse of it, viz. that no change is warranted in our practice by the undoubted change of circumstances—also led to the enjoining what is now utterly impracticable, and what has therefore ceased to be binding. Without attempting to speak further of the egregious impropriety of retaining vain shadows of extraordinary offices, it may be observed, that there is one circumstance which must in general be felt in appointing men to the work of the ministry. To say nothing of the great number of the believers in the first age, and the extraordinary manner in which God as it were instantaneously enriched them with all needful gifts, (and these things ought not to be forgotten), we beg it to be remarked, that *the believers were then united, while now they are divided*. Although, in that age, the believing multitude, when acting in concert, should have been well furnished with the means of instruction,

would it therefore follow, that, divided into parties, each separate band should have many teachers? Might each of these parties claim an exclusive interest in the divine promise of pastors and teachers? Was it not sufficient to justify the faithfulness of God, if their wants were supplied while they remained united? But if, through their own folly, any were deprived of the promised blessing of regular and able teaching, they might indeed choose the best among themselves, and still be miserably destitute of the means of instruction. We believe it to be not only a possible case, but an unquestionable fact, that many separate societies in the present day have not one individual among them who could be heard with tolerable satisfaction and benefit by the most candid intelligent Christians. How ridiculous in a modern church of three score, or three dozen, perhaps of half that number, to talk as if, in regard to the number of teachers, it were on a footing with a primitive church of as many hundreds, or even of thousands. Some, we fear, are too much inflamed with the desire of office-bearing. It is not now a rare thing, to find a church of about a dozen, or even only half the number, one third of whom, or more, are pastors and deacons; with fewer officers than this, they would be deemed out of order. But if at this rate office-bearers had been chosen in Jerusalem, instead of hearing of seven deacons, we should have heard of seventy times seven. At any rate, we request the attention of our brethren to the melancholy but undeniable fact, that believers are not now united as in the first age, but sadly disunited, by diversity of sentiment about inferior things; that the promises of God respecting pastors and teachers are not given to every separate party, but to the

whole of his people in a state of unity, and that every little society, however pure its principles, or just its ground of separation from others may be, should not presume too much on possessing within itself all the means of edification, which a *believing multitude* might reasonably expect to enjoy.

It is manifest from views which have been recently advanced, that gifts for public usefulness are considered to be exceedingly abundant among us. This is no wonder, when it is contended, that the first converts to Christianity had abundance of gifts, besides those which are spoken of in the New Testament. For our part, we believe, as we ever did, that comparatively few are qualified to be useful as public teachers. On any other supposition, we do not see the importance of the Lord's promise of giving teachers to his people. But if the number endowed with talents for general usefulness is really so great as some appear to think, the difference between the promise of raising up teachers, and that of gathering the people to Christ, is not at all so great as we used to apprehend. The number, however, qualified to teach, must always depend on the sovereign good pleasure of God. Though it is certainly our duty to provide those who seem to have abilities with every possible advantage for cultivating and improving these, it is no more in our power to make men pastors after his heart, than it was to have turned them from darkness to light. It behoves us therefore to consider our talents, and not to go beyond the rule of Scripture for the sake of having many teachers. Yet a great number is surely most desirable. "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few." May the great and munificent God, who has the residue of the Spi-

rit, supply his people with ample means, not only for their own edification, but for the preaching of the glorious gospel to every nation under heaven !

Although, in some instances, there has been of late an almost unprecedented increase of public teachers and exhorters, certainly there has not been in these cases a proportionable increase of zealous and successful efforts for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom. Yet in the days of the apostles, and even at one time in our own day, an increase of labourers has in other cases been usually followed by an increase of labour and increasing usefulness. The cause of these different results, will probably be found in the different views, talents and circumstances of the preachers on both sides. On the one side, the work of the Lord is made an object of primary or constant attention, on the other it is not. Not merely labour, or the work of the hands on account of absolute necessity, but shops, merchandize, worldly occupations and anxious speculations in trade, with some of those called pastors of churches, engross much more time and attention, and must do so, than pastoral duties; and members of churches are not excited to support pastors, that they may wholly devote themselves to the ministry, but are thought so capable of edifying one another, that little is judged to be wanting, though pastors are either wanting or absent. But what is entrusted to all, will seldom be done well by any. And if mankind in general should begin to dabble with any worldly calling, profession, or employment which they have no abilities, time and inclination to prosecute with vigour, diligence and constancy, and those should be laid aside who used to follow it with success, the result will resemble the consequences of almost all becoming teachers and exhorters.

Much confidence too has been expressed in the efficacy on the minds of unbelievers, of seeing churches attending to ordinances according to the manner lately recommended. This has been not inaptly called the '*indirect* method of spreading the gospel,' in opposition to the direct preaching of it to the consciences of men. But if two roads lead to any place, the one direct and approved, the other indirect and untried, he who is anxious to get speedily and certainly to his journey's end, need be at no loss which of them to take. Indeed there is nothing said in Scripture about the spreading of the gospel by the exhibition of ordinances. It is, the direct declaration of the gospel publicly, and from house to house, confirmed by the evidence of miracles, and recommended by the holy, just, irreproachable lives of those who preached and of them that believed it, by which sinners are said to have been brought to the knowledge of salvation. They who are anxious for the diffusion of the gospel, ought wisely to consider the means for that end which God has appointed. High commendation of schemes, which, if they have been proved at all, have been found not very productive of great zeal, efforts or success in the way of bringing sinners to the knowledge of the Saviour, is certainly premature, and we presume ill-grounded. Let men say what they will, this new scheme of spreading the gospel by observing ordinances, will be found too indolent, feeble and indirect a substitute for the labour of preaching and teaching, as appointed by divine wisdom, and practised by those who doubtless best knew how to imitate their Lord, and to carry into effect his purposes of mercy.

It is obvious, that the interests of religion must suffer materially by the prevalence of sentiments

which tend to cramp, enfeeble or set aside the ministry of the gospel. While men will not spare a vestige of clerical domination, they would do well to be aware of pursuing such measures as essentially impede the work of the ministry. That work, it is clear from the word of God, whatever some may choose to say to the contrary, ever was, and ever must be the principal means of converting sinners to God, and of building up the body of the Lord Jesus. We claim not honour for men. We know it is written, "Who then is Paul and who is Apollos?" But is it not added, "Ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?"

They who firmly and practically adhere to the principle of gathering churches by the preaching of the gospel, (for that can scarcely be called a religious principle which exists only in barren speculation), ought to consider, that the plan which they follow is not to be promoted by publications and changes, but by vigorous, persevering, self-denied exertion. To keep men constantly engaged in the ministry of the word, either as teachers in churches, or for the benefit of the public at large, besides often placing those men in very trying situations, makes a demand on the property of Christians which, if we may judge from what happened at the beginning, they will not in general be forward to consider as a just debt, and to comply with, at least until they become acquainted with and relish the injunctions of Scripture in regard to this part of Christian duty, Phil. iv. 15. No wonder then, that a system which professes to do great things without the usual labour, expense, and self-denying sacrifices for supporting pastors and teachers, and which perhaps also gratifies the self-complacency of men, by

leading them to imagine that they possess among them many noble gifts and extensive information, should be eagerly received. But a wise man has said, "In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips *tendeth* only to penury."

Further, we may take the liberty of observing, that where pastors and teachers do not take heed to themselves, as well as to their ministry, by anxiously guarding against sloth, haughtiness and avarice, the souls of men cannot be profited, and great temptations will be felt to fall in with any new scheme which promises a larger measure of edification and comfort, as all new schemes usually do. They who have received abilities and office from God, are bound to employ these for the good of his people. Teachers are the servants of their brethren for Jesus' sake; and they should watch for their souls as they who must give account. Oh, that there were such a spirit in them as in him who said, "I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory! And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved. Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all." In the present time especially, they are called upon to show the Lord's flock that they seek not their's, but them. If they strive to labour abundantly in the gospel of Christ, and he is pleased to countenance their labours for the conversion of sinners, or the edification of believers, or in respect of both these, Christians will learn to judge truly and soberly of every man's work, according as the Lord shall distribute to each. But indolent and unfaithful must that ser-

vant be, who is not content to wait for the sure reward of eternal glory, whatever be his recompence from men. "Thou therefore endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." "The husbandman must first labour to partake of the fruits." And they that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament: and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

I cannot bring these remarks to an end, without expressing my conviction, and reminding my brethren, that earnest endeavours to promote mutual edification is the bounden duty, and should be the daily employment of all believers indiscriminately, as God gives them opportunity. The apostles themselves taught not only publicly, but from house to house. There certainly was much private teaching in primitive times. Though only two or three prophets might speak on the same occasion in the public meetings, a far greater number might edify their brethren in their daily intercourse. Why was the gift of prophecy bestowed upon females, but for private edification? The daughters of Philip exercised this gift before Paul, probably in their father's house, Acts xxi. 9. In Corinth also, females had the gift of prophecy, 1 Cor. xi. 5. The prophesying referred to in both passages, was, we presume, the singing of praise—a delightful and edifying exercise, very common in the families of believers in the ages which succeeded, in which they doubtless imitated those who were before them. "At midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them." Happy would it be for Christians, if frivolity, gossiping, evil speaking and sloth, were laid aside for the pleasing and beneficial exercises so

much enjoined in the word of God. “ And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess ; but be filled with the Spirit ; speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord ; giving thanks ALWAYS FOR ALL THINGS unto God, and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” “ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God : and the dead in Christ shall rise first : then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air : and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

*THE END.*

