





(128)

EXTRACTS

FROM THE

WRITINGS OF THE EARLY MEMBERS

OF THE

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

ON

THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST, THE BENEFITS OF
HIS COMING, THE SCRIPTURES, &c.

TOGETHER WITH

SOME ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS ON THESE AND OTHER SUB-
JECTS CONNECTED WITH THEM.

*The whole designed to Vindicate the Character of our Primi-
tive Friends, and the Doctrines they maintained.*



BY ELISHA BATES.



REPRINTED FROM THE MOUNT-PLEASANT
EDITION.

.....

1825.

FRIENDS LIBRARY,
142 N. 16TH STREET,
PHILADELPHIA.

INTRODUCTION.

THAT our primitive friends were eminently favoured with wisdom, is a proposition that will be readily admitted by their successors in religious profession. Their doctrines, their lives, and their sufferings will endear them to the latest posterity; and give weight to their sentiments on religious subjects. Copious as their writings were in the beginning, and scarce as those writings are at the present, as respects the Society at large, there are many, even within the Society itself, who lie open to the danger of receiving wrong impressions as to their views on religious subjects. And the circumstance of a large portion of those early writing being rather refutations of erroneous opinions than declarations of belief, adds to that danger. To guard the sincere inquirers after Truth, against the influence of the names of those worthy instruments, in giving currency to sentiments which *they never held*, is but an act of justice to *their* character, to the principles they held, and to those who stand in need of such information.

But when we look at the *subject* itself, it rises into very imposing magnitude. It embraces not merely the character of our primitive friends—but the character of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the benefits he has conferred upon us. On subjects thus lying at the foundation of the Christian religion, and which have an intimate relation to our feelings of love, gratitude, and obedience to our Divine Benefactor, it is certainly desirable that no discordance of opinion should exist among the members of the visible Church. To guard as much as possible against such a diversity of opinion, and connectively, against those feelings which naturally spring from such causes, is the object of the following Essay. E. B.

MOUNT-PLEASANT, OHIO, }
5th month, 1825. }

Examined and Approved, by the Meeting
for Sufferings of Ohio Yearly Meeting, Fifth
Month, 1825.

4/4/40
Thomas G. ...
Haverford College
D.D.

Tr. R.
289.6
B329E

EXTRACTS, &c.



It must be admitted, that the present is an age of much speculation on religious subjects. And as such speculations endanger not only the faith of individuals, but the peace and order of society, it is important that all classes should keep a watchful and guarded care over their thoughts, as well as expressions. Great is the influence of *principles*, on our feelings; and consequently our preservation and improvement, have a very intimate relation to the doctrines and opinions we hold. The injurious consequences of erroneous opinions, are not confined to those with whom they originate—they have a powerful tendency to spread an evil influence, as said the apostle—"their word will eat as doth a canker." Thus, in different ages of the world, the peace of the Church has been destroyed, and her doctrines tarnished with the inventions and speculations of men. Not only have men departed from the doctrines of the gospel, and been turned unto fables, but grievous dissensions and controversies have been produced, which have grown into open persecution, with fines, imprisonments, exiles, massacres, and all the dreadful catalogue of outrages, which mark the grossest depravity of man.

Even when these worst consequences are not produced, the natural effects of these exciting causes, in their most simple and circumscribed character, are yet highly injurious to the reputation and best interests of religious society. The following extracts, from "CAVE's Lives of the Fathers," convey some

idea of the effects to be expected to take place, whenever the same causes are brought into operation. "These pernicious principles," says he, "which Arius* propagated, both by word and writing, were greedily entertained by persons of loose and unstable minds: as indeed, men are naturally disposed to novel and curious opinions."—"All places were filled with schisms and factions; of feuds and quarrels; and that not with open enemies, but amongst friends and neighbours: nothing but disputes and controversies heard in every company; and the common people, who were least capable to understand, were made not only spectators of the differences, but judges of the most abstruse and intricate doctrines of religion: nay, the very Gentiles themselves, were furnished with matter of scorn and laughter, and the sublimest articles of the Christian faith, made sport for the *theatre*." [Page 350, 356.]

How appropriate therefore were the remarks of Constantine the Emperor, when he said, that Arius should not at "first have conceived [his doctrine,] or having conceived it, should have passed it over in silence"—"a fruitless contention of idle brains, which if conceived at all, should have been kept within the inner closet of the mind." For "who," said he, "is there in sifting out so curious a question, that can well pass the peril of plunging into error? Wherefore, in such cases we must refrain from verbal disputation, lest that either by reason of the imbecility of our wit, we cannot explicate our mind; or our auditors, when we teach, by reason of their

* Arius lived in the beginning of the fourth century. He denied the Divinity of Christ, and declared that he was a CREATURE—of his own free will capable of vice or virtue. Grievous were the commotions and calamities produced in the Church, by the propagation of these doctrines, and which lasted with little abatement for almost a hundred years.

dull capacity, cannot comprehend the curious drift of our doctrine; whereby the people of necessity, incur the danger either of blasphemy, or the poisoned infection of discord." [*Soc. Eccl. Hist. b. 1, c. 3.*]

The examples of past ages ought to admonish us, to avoid the rocks on which others have made shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. For though the arm of secular power may not be brought into action, yet the peace and harmony of society may be as completely laid waste, as in any age of the world. The human mind may still busy itself in vain speculations, instead of submitting to the renovating power of truth: or it may depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines which stand opposed to the great truths of redemption by Jesus Christ.

These truths our primitive friends maintained. And their faith was made manifest by many clear testimonies, in word and writing; and tested by deep sufferings. In those times of persecution, divers of their doctrines were misrepresented by their enemies, in order to injure their Christian reputation. Against these perversions of their principles, they defended themselves with great ability and clearness, making distinct declarations of their meaning, in those parts of their writings which had been differently construed; that they might bear a standing testimony to the various doctrines of the Gospel. What was then charged upon them by *enemies*, though, as some of them said, a thousand times denied, is now taken up by professed admirers of their lives and principles, and represented as their real sentiments.

It has therefore become necessary to raise up a memorial of those faithful instruments, in vindication both of their characters, and the dignified principles which they held. The various trials of their day, they endured with unshaken constancy; and

maintained the testimonies which had been committed unto them to bear, with a zeal proportioned to their importance. In all their various trials, they were supported by an invincible Arm of power. We then, their successors in the same faith, and believers in the same precious promises on which they relied, may derive encouragement from their example faithfully to discharge that portion of labour, which has devolved upon *us*. We have still to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. Though the circumstances of that contest are different, the principle is still the same. It is one consolation, however—an important advantage that we enjoy—that though they are removed from works to rewards, their writings have descended as an inheritance to us—in which, “being dead, they yet speak.”

No one article, written by the members of this Society, has been more unfairly represented, than William Penn’s “Sandy Foundation Shaken”—a treatise written in the early part of his life, and on purpose to confute some gross conceptions of the Divine Nature, and the Divine *purposes*, in preparing the means of redemption.

This treatise was construed, by his enemies, into a denial of the Divinity of Jesus Christ, and the benefits of his sufferings and death: in consequence of which, William Penn was committed to prison. Here, though he was never driven from his principles by persecution, but was as bold in suffering as in writing or in preaching, yet perceiving the inferences which had been drawn from what he had written, he published a treatise, which he called, “Innocency with her Open Face.” This treatise was considered by his enemies, as a *recantation*, and he was accordingly released from confinement,—but his friends and he himself, regarded it only as an explanation.* In that

* Clarkson’s Life of Penn.

treatise, he asserts his innocence of the opinions imputed to him, from the Sandy Foundation Shaken, and uses a train of arguments from Scripture, to prove the Divinity of Jesus Christ—that he is truly and properly God.

The doctrine commonly called the Trinity, he handled with great freedom, to expose the inconsistency of his opponents' doctrines. On another occasion, however, we find him making the following declarations: "*Concerning the Father, the Word, and the Spirit*:—Because we have been very cautious in expressing our faith concerning that great mystery, especially in such school terms and philosophical distinctions as are *unscriptural* if not *unsound*, (the tendency whereof hath been to raise frivolous controversies and animosities amongst men,) we have, by those that desire to lessen our Christian reputation, been represented as deniers of the Trinity at large: whereas, we ever believed, and as constantly maintained the truth of that blessed, (Holy Scripture,) "three, that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, and that these three are one;" the which we both sincerely and reverently believe, according to 1 John, v. 7. And this is *sufficient* for us to believe and know, and hath a tendency to edification and holiness; when the contrary centres only in imaginations and strife, and persecution, where it runs high, and to parties, as may be read in bloody characters in Ecclesiastical Histories." [*Penn's Testimony to the Truth*, § 8.]

This treatise was written thirty years after the Sandy Foundation Shaken. But we see this testimony from the same author, and after so many years, of what he, in common with his friends, "ever *believed*, and *constantly maintained*."

About the same time that the Sandy Foundation

Shaken was published, that is, in 1668, the Society of Friends issued a tract, entitled:—

“An Epistle from the people in scorn called Quakers; for all people upon earth to read over, that they may see what the people called Quakers hold, concerning God, Christ, his death, his resurrection, his blood, his offering, redemption, salvation, justification, faith, and hope.”

In this Epistle they cite that passage from John, “And there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, and these three are one.”

As the principal object of this Epistle seems to be, to defend the Society from the charge of denying the Divinity of Christ, &c. I shall refer to it again in its proper place.

John Brown, a Presbyterian minister, having published what he called, “An Examination and Refutation of Robert Barclay’s Apology.”—R. B. published a vindication, in which he says: “I have written nothing, says he, [John Brown,] of the nature and attributes of God”—to which R. B. replies: “I write not to atheists, but Christians, who already acknowledge; and I judge it not my work to write books to persuade men of that they already profess to believe. But I write not expressly and distinctly of the Trinity; yet himself after acknowledges that it would seem, I am orthodox herein; that he finds not any clear ground to the contrary: I wrote as expressly and distinctly of that, as is expressed in Scripture; which I hope, J. B. will not say is defective in sufficiently expressing this article of faith.” [*Barclay’s Works, fol. ed. page 733.*]

But the most material charge against the Society, arising out of the discussion of the doctrine of the Trinity, so called, related to the Divinity of Christ. William Penn, as we have already noticed, was sup-

posed to have denied this article of Christian faith, in his *Sandy Foundation Shaken*. We have also noticed that he denies and refutes the charge, in his "Innocency with her Open Face:" and refers to a treatise written before the *Sandy Foundation Shaken*, for further arguments in support of the Divinity of Christ. But I shall give, in the sequel, some further evidences of his belief.

George Fox, in a Letter to the Governor of Barbadoes, recorded in his Journal, vol. 2. p. 145, says: "We own and believe in Jesus Christ, his beloved and only begotten Son, in whom he is well pleased: who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary; in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins; who is the express image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature; by whom were all things created that are in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, dominations, principalities, or powers: all things were created by him. And we own and believe, that he was made a *sacrifice* for sin, who knew no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; that he was crucified for us in the flesh, without the gates of Jerusalem, and that he was buried and rose again the third day, by the power of the Father, for our justification; that he ascended up to heaven, and now sitteth at the right hand of God— This Lord Jesus Christ, the heavenly Man, the Emmanuel, God with us, we own and believe in: he whom the high priests raged against, and said he had spoken blasphemy; whom the priests and elders of the Jews took counsel together against, and put to death; whom Judas betrayed for thirty pieces;— after he was risen from the dead, the history of the acts of the apostles set forth how the chief priests and elders persecuted the disciples of this Jesus, for preaching Christ and his resurrection: this we say,

is that Lord Jesus Christ, which we own to be our Life and Salvation.”

The Epistle from the Society already quoted, and which, from the style, appears to have been written by George Fox, contains almost the whole body of Scripture evidence in support of the Divinity of Christ, and the benefits of his sufferings and death. In this very large body of evidences, mostly in Scripture language, are the following: “Christ Jesus—the Emmanuel, God with us—whom all the angels must worship. Christ offered himself, through the eternal Spirit, without spot to God, and by his blood, purges our consciences from dead works to serve the living God. And so we know that Christ, by one offering hath forever perfected them that are sanctified. And so as people walk in the Light, they have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin. And Christ, who his own self bare our sins in his body on the tree, that we, being delivered from sin, should live unto righteousness—by whose stripes you are healed. And we, being justified by the blood of Christ, shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life,” Rom. 5. 8—10; to which the following simile is added: “So that it is not that people should live in their sins, and unrighteousness, and ungodliness, to dishonour God. For if you should redeem a man from Turkey from being a slave, would it not grieve you for that man to go into Turkey again to be a slave again, after you had paid a great ransom for him? So Christ redeeming people from sin and iniquity, from ungodliness—by his blood, and death, and offering, and this is God’s Love to mankind, through Christ Jesus,” [did not design that they should live in sin.]

To this Epistle is a P. S. from which the following extract is taken:—

“And this is to clear us from all those pamphlets which are spread and scattered up and down among people, that we should deny the God-head, his Eternal power, or his offering, or his Blood, or that we should be bought with a price. For it pleased the Father that in him the fulness of the God-head should dwell bodily—and the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit we do own. And so let all stop their mouths that say that the Quaker’s principles are hid till now, for we have manifested our principles, both in our printed books—and would that all people knew our inside as they know our outside: and we do know, (and also others know it,) that we have an *esteem* of Christ’s *sufferings*, and *death*, and *blood*, and the *Scriptures* of the prophets and apostles, more than any other people.”

GEORGE FOX,
ELLIS HOOKS.

This Ellis Hooks was the first Clerk of the Yearly Meeting in London, and the Yearly Meeting was held for some years in the beginning, at his house.

We hardly can conceive that this P. S. could have been more applicable at the time in which it was written, than it is at present. It still stands as a refutation of “those pamphlets scattered up and down among people,” representing those eminent worthies as denying the Divinity of Christ, and the benefits of his sufferings and death; and also detracting from the just estimation of the Scriptures.

Robert Barclay, in his Apology, says: “Hence he is fitly called *The Mediator between God and man*; for having been with God from all eternity, being himself *God*, and also in *time* partaking of the *nature* of *man*, through *him* is the goodness and love of God conveyed to mankind, and by him again man receiveth and partaketh of these mercies.” Prop. 2. § 5.

“ We do not hereby intend any way to lessen or derogate from the Atonement and Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, but on the contrary do magnify and exalt it. For as we believe all those things to have been certainly transacted which are recorded in the Holy Scriptures, concerning the Birth, Life, Miracles, Sufferings, Resurrection, and Ascension, of Christ; so we do also believe that it is the duty of every one to *believe* it to whom it pleases God to reveal the same, and bring him to the knowledge of it. Yea, we believe it were damnable unbelief not to believe when so declared: but to resist that holy Seed, which, as minded, would lead and incline every one to believe it, as it is offered to them: though it revealeth not to every one the outward and explicit knowledge of it, nevertheless it always assenteth to it, *ubi declaratur*, where it is declared. Nevertheless we firmly believe it was necessary that Christ *should come*, that by his *death and sufferings* he might *offer up himself* a *sacrifice* to God for our sins, who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree; so we believe that the remission of sins, which any partake of, is only in and by virtue of, that most satisfactory sacrifice, and no otherwise. For it is by the obedience of that One, that the free gift has come upon all, unto Justification. For we affirm that as all men partake of the fruit of Adam’s fall, in that by reason of that evil seed, which through him, is communicated unto them, they are *prone* and *inclined* unto evil, though thousands of thousands be ignorant of Adam’s fall, neither ever knew of the eating of the forbidden fruit; so also many may come to *feel* the influence of this Holy and Divine Seed and Light, and be turned from evil to good by it, though they know nothing of Christ’s coming in the flesh, through whose obedience and sufferings it is purchased unto them. And as we affirm it is absolutely needful that those do be

lieve the history of Christ's outward appearance, whom it pleased God to bring to the knowledge of it, so we do freely confess, that even that outward knowledge is very comfortable to such as are subject to, and led by the inward seed and light. For not only doth the sense of Christ's love and sufferings tend to humble them, but they are thereby also strengthened in their faith, and encouraged to follow that excellent pattern which he hath left us, who *suffered* for us." Prop. 5 and 6, § 8.

"How many are injured by Adam's fall, that know nothing of ever there being such a man in the world? or of his eating the forbidden fruit? Why may they not then be saved by the gift and grace of Christ in them, making them righteous and holy, though they know not distinctly how that was purchased unto them, by the *death* and *sufferings* of Jesus, that was crucified at Jerusalem? especially seeing God hath made that knowledge simply impossible to them. As many men are killed by poison infused into their meat, though they neither know what the poison was, nor who infused it, so, also, on the other hand, how many are cured of their diseases by good remedies, who know not how the medicine is prepared, what the ingredients are, nor oftentimes who made it. The like may also hold in spiritual things, as we shall hereafter prove." ib. § 25.

"*Secondly*. God manifested his love towards us, in sending his beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ into the world, who gave himself for us, an *offering* and *sacrifice* to God, for a sweet smelling savour; and having made peace, through the blood of his cross, that he might reconcile us unto himself, and by the *eternal spirit*, offered himself without spot unto God, and suffered for our sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God."

"*Thirdly*, then—Forasmuch as all men who have

come to man's estate, (the man Jesus only excepted,) have *sinned*, therefore all have need of this *Saviour*, to remove the wrath of God from them, due to their *offences*, in this respect he is truly said *to have borne the iniquity of us all, in his body on the tree*; and therefore is the only *Mediator*, having qualified the wrath of God towards us; so that our *former sins* stand not in our way, being by virtue of this most *satisfactory sacrifice, removed and pardoned*. Neither do we think that remission of sins is to be expected, sought, or obtained, any other way, or by any works or sacrifices, whatever; (though as has been said formerly, they may come to partake of this remission, that are ignorant of the history.) So then, Christ, by his *death and sufferings*, hath reconciled us to God, even while we are *enemies*, that is, he offers *reconciliation* unto us, we are put in a *capacity* of being reconciled, God is willing to forgive us our iniquities, and to accept us, as is well expressed by the apostle, 2 Cor. v. 19: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them: and hath put in us the word of reconciliation." And therefore the apostle, in the next verse, entreats them in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God: intimating that the wrath of God being removed, by the obedience of Christ Jesus, he is willing to be reconciled unto them; and ready to remit their sins that are past, if they repent."

"We consider then, our redemption in a two-fold respect or state, both which in their own nature are perfect; though in their application to us, the one is not, nor can be, without the other."

"The first is the redemption performed and accomplished by Christ for us, in his crucified body without us. The other is the redemption wrought by Christ in us: which no less properly is called and accounted a redemption, than the former. The first

then, is that, whereby man, as he stands in the fall, is put in a capacity of salvation, and hath conveyed unto him a measure of that power, virtue, spirit, life, and grace, that was in Christ Jesus; which is the free gift of God, is able to counterbalance, overcome, and root out, the evil seed, wherewith we are naturally, as in the fall, leavened. The second is that, whereby we witness and know this pure and perfect redemption in ourselves, purifying, cleansing, and redeeming us, from the power of corruption, and bringing us into unity, favour, and friendship, with God." Prop. 7, § 3.

"The doctrine of the *incarnation, sufferings, death* and *resurrection* of Christ, are necessary every where to be preached, and being preached, to be believed and improved, as being and belonging to, the integral parts of Christianity and the Christian religion." [*Barclay's Quakerism Confirmed, sec. 4, prop. 14.*]

Here let it be observed, that a considerable time previous to the publication of Barclay's Apology, a meeting called the Second day's Meeting, had been instituted in London, for the examination of such works as related to the Society, or its doctrines or discipline. This meeting consisted of the most qualified members of the Society, and without whose approbation no such work could be published. The Anarchy of the Ranters, was written before the Apology. In some proceedings had in relation to that former work, we find the judgment of that Meeting, (published in Barclay's Works, p. 250,) signed by thirty-three Friends, among whom were John Burnyeat, Stephen Crisp, Thomas Elwood, C. Marshall, John Osgood, and William Penn. These facts are stated to show the care that existed in the Society, even at that early period, in relation to whatever was published to the world as the belief of the Society. And as we cannot suppose those men, so eminent for

their talents as well as their virtue, would, after examining and revising manuscripts over which they had absolute control, suffer such to be published as were contradictory to one another—we must conclude that the true meaning of those keen; controversial strictures on particular doctrines, which are to be found among their writings, did not clash with those clear and unequivocal declarations of Faith, which were published under the immediate sanction of the Society, in its official capacity. The extracts which have been made from Barclay's Apology and his other writings, are of this description—they are not exposures of the opinions of others, but declarations of the doctrines of the Society. They were carefully examined by the Society—were acknowledged then, and have been from that day to this, as the true principles of the Society.

These principles of the Society, respecting the Divinity of Christ, and the benefits of his coming, being then almost universally admitted by Christians; (for though different societies connected certain opinions to these principles, yet the principles themselves, they generally admitted,) it did not appear to be necessary, as Robert Barclay observed to John Brown, "to write books to persuade men to that they already professed to believe"—or as John Richardson told George Keith in a public meeting, that there was "any necessity frequently to press a matter, so universally believed among Christians."

The doctrine, however, of the immediate operation of the Spirit and Grace of God in the hearts of men, and the necessity of a life of righteousness, not being so generally admitted, it became one of the great objects of their ministry and writings, to open and enforce this doctrine.

But in order to prevent misconstructions, and to avoid losing sight of one part of the doctrines of the

gospel, by particularly pressing another, and also to explain their true meaning in their controversial writings, they still, from time to time, adverted to these subjects, and made such declarations of their faith, as never can be misunderstood, without a determination not to take their own declarations as evidence of their meaning.

The extracts from the Apology alone, considering the circumstances attending its publication, the character in which it was held at the time, and which it has maintained ever since, would be sufficient to establish the belief of the Society at that day, in all the points embraced in those extracts. But in order to show that the doctrines of the Society stand on a much broader ground, I will present the reader with a few, out of a large mass of corroborating evidences, which might be taken from the writings of our primitive Friends.

William Penn, in his *Christian Quaker*, [chap. 18, § 2,] says: "That as there was a necessity that one should die for the people, so, whoever then or since believed in him, had, and have a seal or confirmation of the remission of their sins in his blood: and that blood, alluding to the custom of Jewish sacrifices, shall be an utter blotting out of former iniquities, carrying them into a land of forgetfulness. This great assurance of remission from wrath, due upon the score of former offences, do all receive in the ratifying blood of Christ, who repenting of sins, believe and obey the holy light with which he hath enlightened them."

And that he believed the Gentiles were as deeply interested in his appearance as the Jews, is gathered from the following expressions:—

§ 3. "He at once became both the author of a more heavenly dispensation, and therein an example to all, as well Jews as Gentiles; sealing such a com-

mon and general religion to both, with his blood, as would forever end the difference, and slaying the enmity, that they might be all one in Christ. Thus did he end the Jews' external services, and overturn the Gentiles' idolatry, by his own most pure and spiritual offering and worship."

§ 5. "That expression of his, is greatly worth our notice,—I lay down my life for the world. All he did, was for the good of the world: and particularly the laying down of his life, that he might both express his love and our duty."

§ 7. "But there is yet a further benefit that accrueth by the blood of Christ, viz. That Christ is a propitiation and redemption, to such as have faith in him. For though I still place the stress of feeling of a particular benefit upon the *Light* and Spirit revealed and witnessed in every particular person, yet in that general appearance there was a general benefit justly to be attributed to the blood of that very body of Christ, which he offered up, through the eternal Spirit, to wit, that it did propitiate. For however it might draw down stupendous judgments upon the heads of those who were authors of that dismal tragedy and bloody murder of the Son of God, and died impenitent, yet doubtless it thus far turned to very great account, in that it was a most precious offering in the sight of the Lord, and drew God's love the more eminently to mankind, at least such as should believe in his name."

§ 9. "Nor is this all the good the coming and sufferings of that blessed manhood brought into the world: for having been enabled so effectually to perform the will of God, living, and having so patiently suffered the will of wicked men—dying; therein freely offering up his most innocent life for the world, he certainly obtained exceeding great and precious gifts; which, as every man comes to believe in the light

wherewith Christ Jesus hath enlightened him, and to be led by it, he shall assuredly feel a particular benefit to himself, accruing from that general one procured by Christ, who so laid down his life for the world."

In his "Key," § 8, he mentions the charge which had been made against the Quakers, that "they expected to be saved by the light within them, and not by the death and sufferings of Christ." To which he replies: "This is both unfairly and untruly stated and charged upon us. But the various sense of the word Justification obliges me here to distinguish the use of it. For in the natural and proper sense it plainly implies *making men just that were unjust; godly that were ungodly; upright that were depraved*"—"In the other use of the word, which some call a *law* sense, it refers to Christ as a *sacrifice* and *propitiation* for *sin*, as in Romans 5. 9; "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." And 1 John 2. "If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Which though a great truth, and most firmly believed by us, yet no man can be entitled to the benefits thereof, but as they come to believe, and to repent of their evil ways,—wherefore we say that whatever Christ *then* did, both *living* and *dying*, was of great benefit to the salvation of all that *have* believed, and now do, and that shall hereafter believe in him unto justification and acceptance with God. But the way to come to that Faith is to receive and obey the manifestations of his divine light and grace in their consciences; *which leads men to believe and value, and not to disown or undervalue Christ as a common sacrifice and Mediator.*" "And because this people say, That Christ's

outward coming and sufferings, profit not to *their* salvation that live in sin, and rebel against this Divine Light, some have untruly and uncharitably concluded that they deny the virtue and benefit of Christ's coming and sufferings in the flesh, as a sacrifice for sin. Whereas we only deny and oppose a false and dangerous application of them in and to a disobedient state. For we believe Christ came not to save men *in* their sins, but *from* their sins.—For we have seen a shoal or sand here, that we fear many thousands have split upon, which we desire to avoid, and are earnest that others should beware of it also, viz. That because Christ died a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, by which he put mankind into a capacity of salvation, and has given every one a talent of grace to work it out by, they presume upon the sacrifice, and sin on, without a thorough repentance, reformation, and conversion to God.”

“By all which it is evident to any moderate inquirer, that we acknowledge Christ in his double appearance; as in the flesh of the seed of Abraham, so in the Spirit, as he is God over all, blessed forever.” Wherein is a full confession, both to him, as a blessed *person*, and as a divine *principle* of Light and Life in the soul—the want of which evident and necessary distinction, occasions our adversaries' frequent mistakes about our belief and application of the Scriptures of Truth, concerning Christ in that two-fold capacity.”

And in his “Primitive Christianity Revived,” chap. 8, § 1, he says: “I shall first speak negatively, what we do not own—which perhaps has given occasion to those who have been more hasty than wise, to judge us defective in our belief of the efficacy of the death and sufferings of Christ, to Justification.

§ 2. “First. We cannot believe that Christ is the *cause*, but effect of God's Love.

“Secondly. We cannot say that God could not have taken another way to save sinners than by the death and sufferings of his Son, to satisfy his justice—and indeed, we are at too great a distance from his infinite Wisdom and Power to judge of the liberty or necessity of his actings.

“Thirdly. We cannot say Jesus Christ was the greatest sinner in the world, (because he bore our sins on his Cross, or because he was made sin for us, who knew no sin;) an expression of great levity and unsound, yet often used by great preachers and professors of religion.

“Fourthly. We cannot believe that Christ’s death and suffering, so satisfy God, or justify men, as that they are *thereby* accepted of God. They are indeed put in a state capable of being accepted of God, and through the obedience of Faith and sanctification of the Spirit *are* in a state of acceptance. For we can never think a man justified before God, while self-condemned, or that any man can be in Christ, who is not a new creature.—Though Christ did die for us, yet we must, by the assistance of his grace, work out our salvation with fear and trembling. As *he* died *for* sin, so *we* must die *to* sin, or we cannot be said to be saved by the death and sufferings of Christ, or thoroughly justified with God. Thus far negatively. Now, positively what we own as to Justification.

“We do believe that Jesus Christ was our holy *Sacrifice, Atonement, and Propitiation*: that he bore our iniquities, and that by his stripes we are healed of the wounds Adam gave us in his fall: and that God is just to forgive true penitents, upon the credit of that holy offering Christ made of himself to God for us, and that what he did and suffered, satisfied and pleased God. And that through the offering up of himself once for all, through the eternal Spirit, he hath forever perfected those, (in all times,) that

were sanctified, who walked not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

"In short, Justification consists of two parts, or hath a two-fold consideration.—The first part of justification we do reverently and humbly acknowledge, is only for the sake of the death and sufferings of Christ. Nothing we can do, though by the operation of the Holy Spirit, being able to cancel old debts, and wipe out old scores. It is the power and efficacy of that propitiatory offering, upon faith and repentance, that justifies us from the sins that are past: and it is the power of Christ's spirit in our hearts that purifies and makes us acceptable before God."

And finally, in his defence of a paper called "Gospel Truth," against the exceptions of the Bishop of Cork, he says of the Bishop: "His second paragraph allows us sufficiently to have expressed our Christian belief in *two* articles, viz. "Justification by Christ, and submission to the civil government:" and adds, "I heartily rejoice to find you acknowledge the necessity of Christ, as a propitiation, in order to the remission of sins, and justifying you, as sinners, from guilt. It is the first time I have heard of it among you." To which William Penn replies: "If so, it is the Bishop's own fault, and seems to me next to impossible: since before that paper was given to him, he was pleased to acknowledge he had read several of our books; particularly my *Rise and Progress of the people called Quakers*—also Robert Barclay's *Apology*, which states and vindicates our principles at large, in which the two doctrines aforementioned are very clearly declared and maintained, notwithstanding he seems to make this look like a new discovery. But however, I am pleased that the Bishop is so, at two of the Gospel Truths. I am of the opinion if he had well considered the force and compre-

hensiveness of our belief in Christ, that pleases him so well, he might have saved himself the trouble of what he has published to the world upon the rest of them. For whoever believes in Christ as a propitiation, in order to the remission of sins, and justification of sinners from the guilt of sin, can hardly disbelieve any fundamental article of the Christian religion: since every such person, must necessarily believe in God, because it is with him alone man is to be justified. To be sure he must believe in Christ, for that is the very proposition. He must also believe in the Holy Ghost, because he is the author of his convictions, repentance, and belief. He must believe Heaven and Hell, Rewards and Punishments, and consequently the Resurrection of the just and the unjust: for why should he be concerned about being freed from the guilt of sin, if he were unaccountable in another world? So that acknowledging Christ as a propitiation, in order to the remission of sin, comprehends the main doctrines of the Christian religion: and as so many lines drawn from the circumference to the centre, they all meet and centre in Christ. Indeed it is as the characteristic of the Christian religion."

Thomas Story, in a discourse with a Priest, on the subject before us, speaking of Christ, and the benefits of his coming, spoke both of the Jews and Gentiles, to the former of whom his *appearance* in the flesh, was principally confined: but to the latter he was promised no less than to the former—being "proposed as the object of faith unto all nations."—"That God, who is divine and eternal love, infinite in goodness and mercy, is pleased of his own nature and love to mankind, thus to send his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, into the world, who, by a *voluntary death* upon the tree of the cross, according to the fore-determined council and purpose of the Father,

declared his mercy and free pardon of the sins of the whole world, upon terms suiting the state, reason, and understanding, of mankind." Page 333.

In page 308, he relates that a young man took some exceptions to what was said in a meeting about infants. In explanation of his views, to this person, he queried: "Dost thou not believe that many ages and nations of people, fell under some disadvantages by Adam's sin, who never heard of him outwardly? He said yes. Then said I, why may not they through the boundless mercy and goodness of God, manifested by Christ, have the advantages by the death and works of Christ, who never heard of him outwardly? To this he was silent."

Page 603 of Story's Journal—"On the 18th, (being the last day of the meeting, and our parting time, the Lord being still with us,) in the forenoon, I had a large open time: and though I was very weak, and ill of a great cold I had taken—yet the Lord gave me strength and utterance, so that many things were opened to general satisfaction. One thing happened somewhat remarkable in it. For as I was concerned to speak of the crucifixion of Christ, and mentioned the large incision in his side by the spear, whence issued blood and water; which clearly evinced he was wounded to the heart, through the pericardium which held that water: and this being for the sins of men, without which it would not have been put upon him, I myself was so much affected with it, as also the whole auditory, that I could not go on; but being much broken, stopped and stood still, till my spirit was a little unburdened by an efflux of many tears; and the whole auditory was bowed, and many surprised, and generally broken and melted. So that many confessed the Truth, and that they had never known the like. And after some time I went on with the matter, which opened so full as I believe nothing stood in the way,

before all was ended. As this was the Lord's work, and his hand plainly in it, so to Him alone be the glory and thanks, now and forever—Amen.

In the early periods of the Society, two writers distinguished themselves for bitterness of enmity, and unfairness of representation—George Keith, and the “Snake in the Grass.” Both of these charged the Society, and William Penn, in particular, with many false doctrines, but none were more insisted on than the denial of the Divinity of Christ, and the benefits of his sufferings and death. G. Keith even called one of his books “The Deism of William Penn and his brethren.” The Snake, was cotemporary with Keith, and some supposed, a mere tool to answer his purpose. Thomas Elwood undertook a reply to Keith, and Joseph Wyeth to the Snake. They both quoted from W. Penn some of the most pointed passages which I have selected in this collection, which they gave as a fair statement of the sentiments held by him and his friends. Joseph Wyeth says:—“I do here of set purpose, declare it as a truth, which now is, and always has been, (since we were a people,) believed and declared by us.” “Yet such hath been, and is, the inveterate malice of our enemies, that our writings, (no more than our words,) must not mean what we so often and solemnly have declared we do mean by them; but what our adversaries will have them to mean, that so they may not seem to want proofs for these their false and envious charges.” [*Switch for the Snake*, p. 192, 199.] And Thomas Elwood says, in his reply to Keith, [see his Journal, p. 408, &c.] “These things, I say, G. Keith certainly knows have been constantly held, believed, professed, and owned, by William Penn and his brethren, the Quakers, in general, both privately and publicly, in word and writing. These things are so often testified of in our meetings, and have been so fully and plainly as-

serted and held forth in our books, that we might call in almost as many witnesses thereof, as have frequented our meetings or attentively read our books."

Were I to gather up all the evidences out of our Friends' writings, as T. Elwood observed on the same occasion, "I might therewith fill a large volume." I will however add one more testimony, because it is not only clear, but stands very much as an act of the Society, and also embraces the name of one individual, whose character deserves this justice to be done to it; I mean George Whitehead. I allude to an Epistle written in 1692, by Friends in London, to Friends in Pennsylvania, on the occasion of their troubles with G. Keith: an extract of which is recorded in Gough's History, vol. 3, p. 328. They testify that the dispensation of the gospel "committed to them, was a spiritual dispensation; in no wise to oppose, reject or invalidate, Jesus Christ's outward coming, suffering, death, resurrection, ascension, and glorified estate in the heavens; but to bring men to partake of the remission of sins, reconciliation and eternal redemption, which he hath obtained for us, and for all men, for whom he died, and gave himself a ransom, both for Jews and Gentiles, Indians, Turks, and Pagans, without respect of persons or people. And Christ is fully to be preached unto them, according to the holy Scriptures, by them whom he may send unto them for that end; that as the benefit of his sufferings extends to all, even to them that have not the Scriptures, or outward history thereof, they may be told, who was and is their chief friend, that gave himself a ransom for them, and hath enlightened them; yet not excluded those from God's mercy or salvation by Christ, *who never had nor may have the outward knowledge or history of him, if they sincerely obey, and live up to his light; for his light and salvation reach to the*

ends of the earth; yet still we that have the holy Scriptures, and those plain outward confirmed testimonies concerning our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, both as to his coming in the flesh and in the Spirit, have cause to be thankful to God for the peculiar favour, and that these Scriptures are so well preserved to posterity; and we beseech you let us keep to the plainness and simplicity of Scripture language in all discourses about matters of faith, divinity and doctrine; and sincerely believe, own, and confess, our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, in all his comings, appearances, properties, offices, and works, both for us and in us."

"This Epistle," says Gough, "which is very long, concludes with the excellent counsel of the apostle," "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ; if any comfort of love; if any fellowship of the Spirit; if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, and one mind; let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind, let every man esteem others better than himself."

Signed by

<i>George Whitehead,</i>	<i>Samuel Waldenfield,</i>
<i>John Field,</i>	<i>Benjamin Antrobus,</i>
<i>William Bingley,</i>	<i>John Vaughton,</i>
<i>Alexander Seaton,</i>	<i>Daniel Monro,</i>
<i>Patrick Livingston."</i>	

Great have been the perversions of the writings of our primitive Friends, in relation to the Scriptures. This subject afforded the Snake in the Grass, and all the ancient enemies of the Society, a copious theme of declamation. Every expression of our Friends, that could bear a construction to suit their purposes, they gathered up, and endeavoured to make them detract from the estimation in which the Society have always held those sacred writings. Some expres-

sions of George Whitehead were thought particularly to answer this purpose : in which he said—"That which was spoken from the Spirit of Truth in any, is of as much authority as the Scriptures, or chapters are, or even more." These expressions, *though not the whole sentence*, were taken up by the Snake, and represented as meaning, that the writings, sermons, &c. of our Friends, were of as much authority, or even more than the Scriptures. Joseph Wyeth denies this construction; asserts that G. Whitehead made a direct application of his remark to the Pharisees' reading of the *letter*, and he illustrates it by "our Saviour's denying the Sadduces, when they spoke and repeated the Law, (Matt. xxii. 24,) and thus also he denied the devil, (Matt. iv. 6,) when the devil repeated the prophecy of the Psalmist: and thus also he denied the Pharisees, of which there are divers instances." [*Switch*, p. 171.] Thus it appears from the evidence of a writer, living at the time in which these things were written, that the meaning of G. Whitehead in what he says, that was construed disparagingly of the Scriptures, or chapters, related to the use of Scripture language in a sense which was not intended—adduced under an evil influence, and for a wrong purpose.

The sentiments of the Society in relation to the Scriptures, have been so well understood—the daily perusal of them so often recommended by the Society in its collective capacity, and even incorporated into the Disciplines of the different Yearly Meetings, that I need not take many extracts at the present. I shall therefore content myself with a few: one from Francis Howgill's Works, which are very scarce at the present day: and the others from the writings of Robert Barclay, which have always been regarded as fair statements of our Doctrines, and therefore are good evidence, in questions as to what the Society believes on particular points.

“It is not my intention to vindicate other men’s quarrels, which is no part of my faith; notwithstanding I should be sorry but that every thing had its true weight and measure, and shall not in the least detract from the price, value, and true worth of the words of truth, to wit, the Scriptures of Truth, which were spoken forth by the Spirit of Truth and by the Holy Ghost, as it gave utterance; but as men erring in their judgments, run sometimes to the right hand, and sometimes to the left hand, and walk not in a straight path; some men are sitting them up above that which they were intended for, and placing them in the stead of God, Christ, and the Spirit; and others are too much debasing them and dis-esteeming them, as that they would set up the judgment of variable and changeable men, who hold and teach things in contradiction to the Scriptures, and repugnant to the mind of the Spirit in them that spoke them forth.

“But first of all, I say not against thee in this thing, that the sole or whole Scriptures are not sufficient of themselves to teach true faith, and give the knowledge of God without the Spirit: for many have got the words, and yet have not received the Spirit, nor the power which the Scriptures declare of, such wrangle and contend with the words, and oppose the Life and the Power; the Jews had the Scriptures, and knew by them where Christ should be born, and knew by them what his works should be when he was manifest, and yet rejected him, unto whom all the prophets bore witness, from Moses to Samuel, and from him to John; and they were never intended by God, as to be set up as judge and guide, to wit, the words without the Power and Spirit of God; yet notwithstanding, though I cannot set them up in the place of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, nor contend ignorantly, as some have done, that they are the author of true faith, and that they are the Eternal

Word of God, which the world was made by, that they are the Light and the Way, the truth and the Life, and that they are the decider of all controversies, and sole and absolute, and only judge of all matters of faith, and of all matters that ever have been, or ever shall be in controversy to the end of the world, without the Spirit of God; neither am I of that ignorant mind, as some are, that the letter and the Spirit are inseparable, as that whosoever hath the Scripture must needs have the Spirit, or whosoever hath the Scripture must needs be infallible without the Spirit; all that are of the aforesaid judgment are but wranglers for the most part about words, and contenders against the power of God and Godliness, and bring the words to oppose the Life, and them that have the Spirit, and walk in it; for a natural man may read the Scriptures, and yet not perceive the things of God, neither perceive the mind of the Spirit, but wrest to their own destruction, as Peter saith, because they are unlearned and untaught, (by the Spirit's teaching,) though otherwise learned enough in languages, tongues, and speeches.

“*Secondly.* Yet I cannot detract from them, neither undervalue them, or dis-esteem them as uncertain, or of no use, or of little use; but whatever themselves declare themselves to be, that I own them to be, to wit, the words of God, the words of Christ, the words of the Holy Prophets, and Patriarchs, and Apostles, who were endued with the Holy Ghost, and spake forth the Scripture as they were moved thereby, in several ages, of several things, and unto several states and conditions, as they were led thereto by the Holy Spirit; and they are a certain declaration of things that were done, and believed and practised by the Jews under the first covenant, and by the apostles and primitive Christians in the new covenant, and contain many precious and holy precepts

and commands, doctrines, examples, exhortations, admonitions, reproofs, and instructions, and are as lively examples and holy patterns for all the saints in light to follow, by which we are given to understand what faith, what hope, what patience, what love, what mercy, what long-sufferings, what consolation, what virtue and what inheritance the saints in light were made partakers of, through faith in Christ Jesus; likewise, what doctrines were held forth, and what practice they used in the primitive times, when they walked in the order of the Gospel, and had fellowship with God the Father and the Son, and one with another in the light of the Gospel, which is the Power of God, through which they witnessed salvation and remission of sins, and published it unto others that they might believe.

“*Thirdly.* The Scriptures testify of Christ, and were written, that they might be believed, and received, and read, that thereby every one that believed might be made wise to salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus, 2 Tim. 3. and instructed in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished with all good works; and whosoever doth teach any doctrines contrary unto the holy men of God, who spake as they were moved by the Spirit of God, which dwelt in them; the Scriptures are witnesses against such, that they have not the Spirit of God, but are led by another spirit, which brings forth contrary doctrine, and another faith than was once delivered among the saints; and whosoever brings in, sets up other precepts, constitutions, orders, and practices in point of worship, in opposition and contrary unto those practices which were held forth in the primitive times, and would set up other traditions than the apostles delivered either by word or writing, such are manifest to have the spirit of error, and are innovators and bringers in of other

things, as necessary in point of worship among Christians, which the apostles and ministers of Christ did not see necessary then, and yet they wanted no part of the counsel of God; for Paul said, he had declared the whole counsel of God; and furthermore they said, we have the mind of Christ, and Christ's mind is not variable.

Fourthly. Though divers of the writings of the prophets and apostles be lost, doubtless, as is evident by divers places of Scripture, yet blessed be God that there are those preserved which do bear witness of the one thing absolutely necessary unto salvation, and of the ministrations that were appointed of the Lord for the Church of God to observe, both in the first and second covenants; so that Christians of this last age are not left without example and precedent, which all ought to have an eye unto, and a diligent regard; and though there be divers copies of that which is called the original tongue, and divers translations, yet he unto whom the Spirit of God is given, and waiteth in the measure of Christ's Light, shall receive it, doth see and shall see the mind and will of God in every age, and the mind and intent of the Spirit in them that spoke forth the Scripture, and can receive the matter therein contained, as though they had heard them speak that spoke it at the first; and though the translators were men, yet I have such an honourable esteem of their labour, that I believe they have not varied wittingly and willingly from the best copies that were extant in their age, neither that they were altogether void of the Spirit of God in such a good work, which conduced to the benefit of mankind, but were assisted by it for so good a Work; and there be many figures and tropes, improprieties of speech, mysteries and difficulties, yet all these come to be made easy and plain to them that are witnesses of the same Spirit that gave them forth: and though

there be diversity of judgments and professions of religion, one clashing against another, thwarting and contradicting another, and all will seem to bring the Scripture for their proof, which yet cannot maintain and prove every thing good, especially when their doctrines contradict one another; this is granted, it is only their private interpretation, and not the Scripture; and for want of that spirit that gave it forth, for that alone gives the true understanding of it; and they that are without this are like to kill one another about words, and names, sounds, title and iotas, but still want the Key that opens, and gives an entrance into the knowledge of the things of God, which alone is the Spirit of God, that gave forth the Scriptures.”

[*F. Howgill's Works*, p. 635, &c.]

“We then trust to and confide in this Spirit, because we know and certainly believe, that it can only lead us aright, and never mislead us: and from this certain confidence it is that we affirm, that no revelation coming from it can ever contradict the Scriptures’ testimony nor right reason.” [*Barclay's Apology*, Prop. 2, § 15.]

“From these revelations of the Spirit of God to the saints have proceeded the *Scriptures of Truth*, which contain,

I. A faithful historical account of the actings of God’s people in divers ages; with many singular and remarkable Providences attending them.

II. A prophetic account of several things, whereof some are already past, and some yet to come.

III. A full and ample account of all the chief principles of the doctrine of Christ, held forth in divers precious declarations, exhortations and sentences, which by the moving of God’s Spirit were at several times and upon sundry occasions spoken and written unto some Churches and their pastors.

Nevertheless, because they are only a declaration

of the fountain, and not the fountain itself, therefore they are not to be esteemed the *principal* ground of all truth and knowledge, nor yet the adequate *primary* rule of faith and manners: yet because they give a true and faithful testimony of the first foundation, they are and may be esteemed a *secondary rule*, subordinate to the Spirit, from which they have all their excellency and certainty. For as by the inward testimony of the Spirit we do alone truly know them, so they testify, that the Spirit is that guide, by which the saints are led into all truth; therefore, according to the Scriptures, the Spirit is the first and principal leader. Seeing then that we do therefore receive and believe the Scriptures because they proceeded from the Spirit, for the very same reason is the Spirit more originally and principally the rule, according to that received maxim in the schools: *Propter quod unumquodque est tale, illud ipsum magis est tale*: That for which a thing is such, that thing itself is more such.”

[*Ib.*—*Thesis to Prop. 3.*]

“ Though then we do acknowledge the Scriptures to be very heavenly and divine writings, the use of them to be very comfortable and necessary to the Church of Christ, and that we also admire and give praises to the Lord, for his wonderful providence in preserving these writings so pure and uncorrupted as we have them, through so long a night of apostacy, to be a testimony of his truth against the wickedness and abominations even of those whom he made instrumental in preserving them, so that they have kept them to be a witness against themselves; yet we may not call them the principal fountain of all truth and knowledge, nor yet the *first* adequate rule of faith and manners; because the principal fountain of truth must be the Truth itself; *i. e.* that whose certainty and authority depends not on another.”

[*Ib. Prop. 3, § 2.*]

“Secondly, God hath seen meet that herein we should, as in a looking-glass, see the conditions and experiences of the saints of old; that finding our experience answer to theirs, we might thereby be the more confirmed and comforted, and our hope of obtaining the same end strengthened; that observing the providences attending them, seeing the snares they were liable to, and beholding their deliverances, we may thereby be made wise unto salvation, and seasonably reprov'd and instructed in righteousness.” [*Ib. prop. 3, § 5.*]

“In this respect above mentioned then we have shown, what service and use the Holy Scriptures, as managed in and by the Spirit, are of to the church of God; wherefore we do account them a *secondary rule*. Moreover, because they are commonly acknowledged by all to have been written by the dictates of the Holy Spirit, and that the errors which may be supposed by the injury of time to have slipt in, are not such but that there is a sufficient clear testimony left to all the essentials of the Christian faith; we do look upon them as the only fit outward judge of controversies among Christians; and that whatsoever doctrine is contrary unto their testimony, may therefore justly be rejected as false. And for our parts, we are very willing that all our doctrines and practices be tried by them; which we never refused, nor ever shall, in all controversies with our adversaries, as the judge and test. We shall also be very willing to admit it as a positive certain maxim, *That whatsoever any do, pretending to the Spirit, which is contrary to the Scriptures, be accounted and reckoned a delusion of the devil*. For as we never lay claim to the Spirit's leadings, that we may cover ourselves in any thing that is evil; so we know, that as every evil contradicts the Scriptures, so it doth also the Spirit in the first place, from

which the Scriptures came, and whose motions can never contradict one another, though they may appear sometimes to be contradictory to the blind eye of the natural man, as Paul and James seem to contradict one another." [*Ib.* § 6.]

"The last, and that which at first view seems to be the greatest objection, is this:—

If the Scripture be not the adequate, principal, and only rule, then it would follow that the Scripture is not complete, nor the canon filled; that if men be now immediately led and ruled by the Spirit, they may add new Scriptures of equal authority with the old; whereas, every one that adds is cursed: yea what assurance have we, but at this rate every one may bring in a new gospel according to his fancy?

The dangerous consequences insinuated in this objection, were fully answered in the latter part of the last proposition, in what was said a little before, offering freely to disclaim all pretended revelations contrary to the Scriptures.

But if it be urged,—That it is not enough to deny these consequences, if they naturally follow from your doctrine of immediate revelation, and denying the Scripture to be the only rule;—

I answer:—We have proved both these doctrines to be true and necessary, according to the Scriptures themselves; and therefore to fasten evil consequences upon them, which we make appear do not follow, is not to accuse us, but Christ and his apostles who preached them.

But secondly, We have shut the door upon all such doctrine in this very position; affirming, That the Scriptures give a full and ample testimony to all the principal doctrines of the Christian faith. For we do firmly believe that there is no other gospel or doctrine to be preached, but that which was delivered by the apostles; and do freely subscribe to that

saying, Let him that preacheth any other gospel, than that which hath been already preached by the apostles, and according to the Scriptures, be accursed.

So we distinguish betwixt a revelation of a *new gospel* and *new doctrines*, and a *new revelation* of the *good old gospel* and *doctrines*; the last we plead for, but the first we utterly deny. For we firmly believe, That *no other foundation can any man lay, than that which is laid already*. But that this revelation is necessary we have already proved; and this distinction doth sufficiently guard us against the hazard insinuated in the objection." [*Ib. Prop. 3, § 9.*]

In a dispute between Robert Barclay and George Keith, on one part, and some students of Aberdeen on the other, the following argument was advanced by a Student:

Student. "That which may beguile a man is fallacious: But

According to the Quakers, the Scriptures may beguile a man, without the indwelling of the Spirit: Therefore,

According to the Quakers, the Scriptures are fallacious.

R. B. I deny thy second Proposition: for the Scriptures cannot beguile any man, although men may or have beguiled themselves by a wrong use of it.

Student. Take notice people, the Quakers say, the Scriptures cannot beguile you.

R. B. Speak louder yet; for we do and have constantly affirmed it: and we hope, it will help to clear us of those misrepresentations, as if we despised or spake evil of the Scriptures." [*Barclay's Works, p. 576, 577.*]

The sentiments of many professors at the time of the rise of our Society, (and no doubt at the present day,) were very objectionable, in relation to the

Atonement, or Redemption by Christ, and many other articles of faith. It was asserted then in some of the controversies in which our friends were engaged, that our Lord Jesus Christ suffered *infinite wrath—eternal death*—was the *greatest sinner in the world*, (from imputation)—that his sufferings and death so paid the debt for all mankind, that believing in him, they were justified by his blood, though in the daily practice of sin during life—that a freedom from sin in this life, was absolutely impossible—and that a belief in the operations of the Spirit of Truth in the heart, was an extravagant and dangerous doctrine. Against these ideas our primitive Friends earnestly laboured. The teaching and operations of the Spirit of Christ in the hearts of men, cleansing them from sin—regulating their thoughts, words, and actions—teaching that denying ungodliness and the world's lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world—this teaching, sanctifying principle, was the leading doctrine of the Society—on this they insisted—because it immediately applied a remedy to all the moral evils to which we are exposed—while they conceived the opposite doctrine of the atonement, had a tendency to perpetuate sin—and thus at once both to injure man, and dishonour God.

To draw conclusions either then or now, that they denied the benefits of his sufferings and death, because they insisted on the necessity of improving the benefits which were purchased for us, by those very means, must be considered by the candid, as a perversion of their meaning. *They* taught, and *we* have believed, that according to the inscrutable counsels of Infinite Wisdom—through the coming, suffering, death, resurrection, ascension, and mediation, of Jesus Christ, the whole human race are put in a capacity of obtaining salvation—the free gift has

come upon all men—which free gift so come upon all—is a powerful redeeming Principle—the Grace of God that brings salvation. This free gift—Light—Redeeming principle—by whatever name it may be called, being the remedy by which we may be raised out of the fallen nature, was procured for us, by what Christ has done and suffered for us. For however we must co-operate with the divine principle, in the great work of sanctification, yet in *obtaining* this remedy, it is clear we could have no co-operation. To be thus disenthralled—set at liberty to rise again into the Divine Image—may properly be called a *Redemption*—like opening the prison doors, and paying the price for the ransom of the slave. This, Robert Barclay, and others of our primitive Friends, called the *first part* of redemption or justification. But it must be evident it would not be proper for the prisoner or captive to rest satisfied with this part of redemption alone. Something remains for him to do. He must improve the privilege thus bestowed upon him. Though the prison doors be set open before him, he may still drag out his days in the dungeon—though the ransom be paid for his emancipation, and liberty be thus within his reach, he may still remain in the house of bondage, and realize no advantages from all that had been done for him. From views of this description, our Friends were earnestly concerned to stir up the minds of their fellow men to the necessity of embracing and improving the great and glorious privileges which had been procured for them, through Jesus Christ. But they never designed to detract from the character of our divine benefactor. For how ungrateful must it be in the captive exile, set at liberty to return—redeemed from bondage “not with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish,” (alluding to the ancient sacrifices,)

to deny the benefits of that interposing friend—that Redeeming love! This ingratitude never was justly chargeable to our primitive friends—it never can find place in the minds of true Christians. The feelings of these, in unison with the language of the redeemed in heaven, will still arise in humble acknowledgment and reverent adoration—“Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood,” &c.

Having thus brought a few extracts together, from various writers among the leading members of the Society, to show what their principles were in the beginning, I may take the liberty from the interest which I feel in those gospel truths they maintained, and for which they suffered, to add some additional observations on the same subjects.

The extent of Divine mercy, and the means of redemption through Jesus Christ, is a subject of infinite importance to every rational soul. If the means of salvation are not within the reach of all, how miserable—how deeply to be lamented must be the condition of those to whom it is not possible! And if the belief of such an exclusion from heaven—from happiness—from the participation in the mercies of God, may be brought to operate on the mind of each individual, how powerfully must such reflections tend to destroy our hopes, and deprive us of all those animating feelings of gratitude and love to God, which make up our happiness here! “We love him, [said the apostle,] because he first loved us.” Whenever, therefore, his love to *us* becomes doubtful, our love to him is cut up at the very root. *Gratitude* to him, lies at the foundation of obedience, hope, and faith, in him. Take from us the belief of his having made salvation possible to us—gratitude can have no existence in our minds—hope perishes forever—and *faith*, where is it? Thus a belief in the goodness of God, stands next to the belief in his ex-

istence—so the apostle has given us to understand, in the simple declaration—“He that cometh to God must believe that he *is*, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” Heb. 11. 6.

And as redemption is only to be obtained by Jesus Christ, we are led to the important consideration of the extent of the benefits derived to mankind, from Him. It must be admitted that the prophecy of Joel related to the gospel dispensation. If the prophecy itself were not sufficient evidence in the case, the testimony of the apostle Peter would be conclusive: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh.” To the fulfilment of this prophecy, the apostle Peter bore a very striking testimony, when the Holy Spirit was “shed forth,” after the ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ. In explaining the fulfilment of this prophecy, the apostle brings into view the *death* of our Saviour, according to the Divine purpose—his resurrection, and the impossibility of its being otherwise—his ascension and exaltation through the prevalence of Divine Power, and the shedding forth of the Divine Influence, in connexion with the preceding events, of the death, resurrection, and ascension of our blessed Lord. The intimate relation which these events had to each other, as related by the apostle, is very clearly corroborated by our Lord himself, in that memorable discourse with his disciples: “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” John 16. 7, 8. Here the coming of the Holy Spirit, which brings convictions for sin, and gives a true sense of righteousness and judgment, was evidently made to be dependent on the death of Christ, as on a

means, without which the end could not be obtained. We may well say that the respective events enumerated by the apostle Peter, was each dependent on its preceding event. For without the Divine counsel, our Lord could not have been delivered to be crucified.—This is evident from many passages of Scripture. Our Lord said to Pilate, Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above. And to Peter he said, Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? but how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? And again, For this cause came I unto this hour—and again, I lay down my life for the sheep; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again: No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself—this commandment have I received of my Father—and again, No man laid hands upon him, because his hour was not yet come: and the church, when under Divine Influence, lifting up their voice with one accord, said, that the combination of Herod, and Pilate, with the Gentiles and people of Israel, was to do what the Divine hand and counsel had determined before to be done.

Thus it is evident he could not have been delivered, crucified, &c. had not the Divine hand determined it before to be done. So his resurrection could not have taken place, had he not previously been crucified. His ascension follows this in order—and lastly the pouring out of the Holy Spirit is brought into view, as resulting from, or in immediate connection with the preceding events.

It was, according to Scripture testimony, through the eternal Spirit, that our Lord Jesus Christ offered up himself: and this became the means of the effusion of the Divine Influence upon the children of men, as appears by the concurrent testimony of the

inspired writings. If then, these events were in fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel, the effects must be of universal extent, for the prophet expressly declared, that it should be on *all flesh*. There was, therefore, no exclusion of any part of the human family; for all classes are included in the prophecy.

“I will also give thee,” said another prophecy, “for a light to the Gentiles, [and for] salvation to the end of the earth.” This related to our Lord Jesus Christ, and in common with the other prophecies concerning him, had respect to his advent, and what he would do for the redemption of fallen man. This promise, it may also be observed, was not limited in its application—it embraced the whole human race, —to the end of the earth. Therefore the benefits of the coming of Jesus Christ, and what he did and suffered were of universal application.

Accordingly we find a large accession to the true Church was made from among the Gentiles—from the very depth of pagan darkness.—The means of redemption were placed within their reach, while in that state, for there is no other means by which they could have risen from their dark and depraved condition, but those which were provided by Jesus Christ. The preaching of the apostles, and the other outward helps they received, were not the *primary*, but secondary means in the great work of their salvation. “By *Grace* ye are saved,” said the apostle, “and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God:” and again; “grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” So that the primary cause of their salvation was *Grace*, the gift of God, through Jesus Christ.—This placed them in a capacity to believe the truths of the gospel, and also enabled the apostles to preach that gospel. So that in its original distribution, it could not be dependent on instrumental means, such as preaching, &c. It was the great work, for which

the Word that was in the beginning with God, and truly was God—took flesh—and humbling himself unto death, even the death of the cross—tasted death for every man—died for all men, for that all were dead—became the propitiation for the sins of the whole world; through whose obedience the free gift is come upon all men to justification.

That the sanguinary sacrifices which were universally practised by the pious of all nations, before the Advent of the Messiah, had reference to his sufferings and death, I think is established by incontrovertible Scripture evidence. And to my mind, the command to Abraham to offer up his *only son*—the *son of promise*, was a lively figure of the very event. It was in that transaction of the patriarch's, that his faith is most particularly spoken of. Our Lord said: "Abraham saw my day and was glad." He had a view of his son's being raised from the dead. The transaction took place on a mountain in the land of Moriah—probably the very scene of our Saviour's sufferings. And as it was the greatest exercise of his faith—so at that time too, he received the promise, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed;" "which seed" the apostle says "was Christ."

The term, *shedding of blood*, in its plain, simple, and obvious meaning, conveys the idea of *violence* done to the subject whose blood was shed. This was literally true of all those beasts whose blood was shed in the sacrifices prescribed in the law, and practised during the continuance of that typical dispensation. For there was of necessity *violence* done to those things which were sacrificed, nor indeed is it possible, according to those institutions, that there should be a shedding of blood—or a sacrifice, without violence. And so closely did the apostle make the application of these types and figures, to Jesus

Christ and his sufferings on the cross, that he employs much of the epistle to the Hebrews, and several others, to show that relation. The application was made in various particulars of our Lord's sufferings and death: even to the *place* where he suffered. Thus we find the apostle to the Hebrews, making the following illustration:—"For the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest, for sin, are burned without the camp—wherefore Jesus also, [that great sacrifice to which all others pointed, and in which they ended,] that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." Heb. 13. 11, 12. Now, in that he laid down his life—that his blood was shed—was a sacrifice—it was through violence done to his person.

Here let it be remembered that in these events—these sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ, the whole ceremonial law ended. There was no further occasion for the effusion of the blood of slain victims. And all those mighty preparations for sacrifices at the temple, were abrogated forever: and why? To what mighty and efficient cause are we to ascribe this important change? Why was it that the whole system of religion, as to outward forms—which had begun in the very infancy of time, and by successive discoveries of divine revelation, not only received the most unequivocal demonstrations of divine sanction, but was wrought up to the highest point of outward glory, was abrogated forever? Those sacrifices in which the most eminent patriarchs and prophets had found acceptance—those institutions which were given upon Mount Sinai—when the great Jehovah descended, with a visible glory, before whom the mountain trembled to its foundation, and its smoke rose up as from a furnace—these sacrifices and these institutions, thus solemnly attested for four thousand

years, now lost their divine obligation. It was the introduction of a new dispensation, altogether as much under the divine control as that which was ratified from Mount Sinai—and though it was more simple, it was infinitely more glorious. Not one single event, essential to the introduction of that more glorious dispensation, could the Jews or any other human power prevent. They could not destroy the Messiah when Herod sent forth and slew the children from two years old and under—They could not lay hands on him before his ministry was accomplished—because his hour was not yet come—They could not prevent the sun from being darkened—They could not save the veil of the temple from being rent—They could not control the earthquake, nor prevent the rocks from being rent asunder—They could not, with all their guards, prevent the angel from descending and rolling back the stone from the Sepulchre—They could not prevent the Lord Jesus Christ from rising from the dead—appearing to his disciples—instructing them from the law and the prophets, of the necessity of his death—and finally making them eye-witnesses of his ascension to heaven. But they had power to mock—to buffet—to crucify him—to wound him to the heart—and cast lots for his garment; because in these events, he became that one great offering to which the blood of victims for four thousand years, had constantly borne witness: and the divine hand and council had determined before that they should be done. Almighty God, who had delivered the Law with such evident demonstrations of his immediate presence and authority—who made it a figure and representation of things to come—in the practice of which figures the righteous of all ages, through faith, might be made partakers of those good things thus represented—even He also abrogated it, when those

events had taken place to which it pointed, and to typify which it was at first instituted.

Thus ended the Jewish system—and at the same time, through the greater effusion of the Holy Spirit which was shed forth, the heathen idolatry was overturned, and a change took place among the Gentiles altogether as great as that which took place among the Jews.

The institution of sacrifices, and of approaching the divine presence, through the Mediation of a priest, and with the blood of slain offerings, was not peculiar to the Jews. We find these things recorded among the first religious performances that are related after the fall. The acceptable offering of Abel was of this description. It was practised by the patriarchs one after another. And so far as we are informed from sacred and profane history, they were common in all nations and in all ages. For as they began in the infancy of human society—that is, after Redemption became necessary, so like some other things in which the welfare of the whole was concerned—they were common to all. All nations were immediately interested in the means which were appointed for a common salvation; and all nations appear to have been in the practice of those rites, which typified those means. It is true that the knowledge of God became very early obscured by heathen superstition: and the selecting of one nation for the preservation of that knowledge, was for purposes of universal good. Yet the Gentile world was not left without witness. They still retained a sense of a Supreme Power, as an unknown God, and continued to approach that Supreme Power through the Mediation of a Priest and sacrifices. Though they had corrupted and adulterated those simple principles of Truth, which had been universally distributed or communicated to men—though they were

plunged into darkness and superstition, and their ideas were confused as to the *object* of adoration, yet they were in the practice of rites and ceremonies, bearing a striking resemblance to those which, in the ceremonial law pointed to the Messiah, and that offering which he made of himself.

That the heathen sacrifices were offensive will be readily admitted—so was their belief of Deity. It was the corruption which took place in those principles of religion and devotion that made them offensive. But it proves that they had a sense of an eternal Source of good—and of that worship which pertained to the dispensation of that time. The religious performances of the Jews were likewise offensive, when their hearts became alienated from God. For he that killed an ox was as if he slew a man—he that sacrificed a lamb as if he cut off a dog's neck—he that offered an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood—he that burned incense, as if he blessed an idol—(Isa. 66.) and even the solemn meeting was iniquity—an abomination.

That the blood of sprinkling is mentioned in a spiritual sense is true. But if taken altogether unconnected with those deeply interesting events which took place at Jerusalem, if understood to have no relation to those events, the terms would be unintelligible or dangerous in the extreme. Who would not see an alarming and monstrous incongruity in the expressions, We are reconciled to God by the death of his Son, unless we have reference to those ideas of *sacrifice* which were inculcated by the blood of victims from the earliest ages of the world: and which, with a few cardinal points of religion, appear to have been universally impressed on the minds of all nations? The terms in a spiritual acceptation, cannot relate—it would be monstrous to suppose that they did relate, to violence done to the divine principle in the

hearts of men. But they have a reference to those important benefits which were placed within our reach by the Mediation of Jesus Christ, and the offering he accomplished for us in his sufferings and death. To realize these benefits to ourselves, in our individual experience, is to have our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience: and in the expressions in that spiritual sense, there is still a memorial preserved of the death of our dear Lord and Saviour, who procured the means of salvation, and of all heavenly blessings, by inexpressible agonies, and a death on the cross: that in all our attainments—in all the spiritual blessings we enjoy—we are still to bear about in our bodies, the dying of the Lord Jesus.

That what he did and suffered for us, was not to place us in a situation to sin with impunity—is an everlasting truth. Unless we submit to the operations and regulating power of his Spirit in our hearts, so far from being saved by his death and sufferings, they will stand in the day of final retribution, in judgment against us, and awfully aggravate our condemnation.

But though this is indispensably necessary—though to those who have attained to years of rational reflection salvation is not possible without this operation and government of the Divine Principle in our hearts, yet the belief in, and a reverent regard for, what Christ has done and suffered *for us*, is as necessary for *us*, (who have had the opportunity of that knowledge,) as the receiving of him outwardly, was for those who, in the days of his flesh, were favoured with that visible appearance. For though he did not show himself to the whole world *then*, yet those to whom he did appear, could not have him as their Saviour, while they withstood the belief and acknowledgment of him in that visible appearance—so, though the knowledge or history of those events is

not now universally diffused among men, yet those to whom that knowledge is afforded, cannot have him as their Saviour, while they reject the belief in, and reverent regard for, what he then did and suffered for us. For as the Eternal Spirit, which in its fulness dwelt in him, and through which he offered up himself for the redemption of men, led to the acknowledgment of him *then*, so the same Spirit in the hearts of men *now*, will lead all those who are under its influence, to the acknowledgment of all *that he then did*, when declared to them. To this our early Friends bore a pointed testimony, as we have seen—and it has been the concurrent testimony of all ages, since those important events occurred.

It must be supposed that his disciples formerly, were under the influence of that Divine Principle, in becoming his disciples—leaving all and following him, and that they did believe in him, as the Messiah: though it was evident, from many clear passages of Scripture, that they did not understand the whole mystery of his kingdom. And one of the most eminent of them, even after he had been a disciple for years—been enabled to heal diseases and cast out devils, did not understand the doctrine of his death and resurrection. For when he began to show unto his disciples how that he must go up to Jerusalem, and suffer many things, and be killed, and raised the third day, Peter exclaimed: “Far be it from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee.” But he was severely rebuked, and told, that he savoured not the things of God—and these events were the things he did not savour. Thus they found continually, occasion for the exercise of faith, in things on which they could not reason: and hence that expressive appeal, “Lord, I believe—help thou mine unbelief.”

He who made this short but pathetic appeal, could not have been under the influence of the opinion,

that we are not bound to believe what we do not understand.

This opinion, and especially when connected with a disposition of speculation or curious inquiry, appears to me to have a very dangerous tendency. There is so nice a shade of difference between *not believing* and *disbelieving*, that the distinction may easily be lost, when applied to practice. Taking it on the latter ground, few propositions would be more prejudicial to religious principles and religious improvement. No finite being, it is presumed, can comprehend the Divine Nature, in all its infinitude and perfection. Our conceptions, comprehensions, and faculties, themselves, are limited, and therefore, if our belief or assent, is not to exceed these *limits*, we must consider the attributes of the Deity as limited and imperfect.

We meet with many things in the visible creation, which cannot be explained by any reasoning on the knowledge already obtained. Certain facts are known to exist, and yet the cause of those facts lies far beyond the reach of our limited comprehension. Those whose minds are most stored with the accumulated knowledge of past ages—who have made the greatest progress in the researches of science—are most ready to make the confession of their incapacity, to explain the whole order and operation of nature.

If this is true in relation to visible objects—things which are under our continual observation—which enter into all our feelings, and make up our sufferings and gratifications, why should it be considered strange, that we should not know every thing of the *invisible* world, and of the Divine Nature, and of his purposes and motives, in his providence and government of the Universe?

Or if, when certain facts are proposed to us, facts

which he has caused to be divulged to us by his special messengers and servants, are we at liberty to disbelieve them, because we cannot, by any course of reasoning of which we are capable, arrive at an understanding of the causes and motives that would lead to such results?

The Dispensations of God to man through all ages, would be disbelieved on this proposition. By what train of reasoning, either from individual experience or from nature, should we arrive at a belief in the Scriptural accounts of the primitive affairs of the world—of the general deluge—of the communication of the Divine will, by the ministry of angels—the passage of the children of Israel through the Red Sea—their subsistence in the wilderness forty years—the giving of the Law, from Mount Sinai—the visible descent of the Divine Glory on that occasion—or in any miracles whatever? Any of the general answers which can be given to these questions, will apply to the Christian doctrine of Redemption. The absolute fitness of the ceremonial Law, and the reasons for instituting it, were not discoverable by human reason, any more than the mysteries of the *New Dispensation*. Indeed the very existence of a God, is the greatest of all mysteries. We cannot conceive how the universe should exist, without an Omnipotent Power, by whom it was originally created, and by whom it is still upheld. But whenever we approach the Divine Character, a Being Infinite in all his attributes—before whom the whole universe—with all this vast assemblage of worlds, is but as the dust of the balance—a Cause without a cause—an Infinite Intelligence, existing from all eternity—reason becomes prostrate as in the dust—we cannot investigate—we cannot argue—we cannot comprehend—but we must believe and adore.

Thus we are bound to believe many things which we cannot so understand as to be able to explain.

We must believe in the existence of God, but we cannot reason on his self-existence, or on the Infinity of his Attributes. We must believe that he created the Universe, and still upholds it by the Word of his Power, though we cannot be assured that we are fully acquainted with his designs in doing so. We must believe in his moral government of the world, though we may not always be able to understand the interposition of his Providence in human affairs. We must believe in the existence of *matter*, of which all visible objects consist, and yet no one has yet been able to explain what it is. We must believe that certain portions of matter are endued with animal life, and others with vegetable life, but we cannot explain how this is effected. These subjects open a wide field of observation and wonder, in which we find at every step, the evidences of our own limited capacity; and that if we disbelieve all that we cannot understand, we shall be driven to a state of scepticism of which the most barbarous nations upon earth would be ashamed.

For if, with the professed infidel, we deny the doctrine of the incarnation, the sacrifice, the atonement, and mediation of Jesus Christ—because it embraces *mysteries*, and abandoning the doctrines of the gospel, resort to what they call *natural* religion—there we shall meet with mysteries in the very Being of God, as much beyond our comprehension, as those we had discarded. If still determined not to bend our exalted minds to the belief of what we could not understand, we denied the existence of Deity, and become unqualified atheists; still mysteries surround us on every side—even our very existence would become inexplicable, and we should be driven to deny it, or renounce the principle on which we had set out in the beginning. Thus we shall be driven from

Christianity to deism—from deism to atheism—from atheism to universal unbelief, not excepting even our own existence.

How dreadful is this contest against God and ourselves! And what a refuge—what an inexhaustible source of consolation is opened to us by the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ! Here the wise and the simple are received on the same ground—and their hopes and their enjoyments rest—not on human comprehension—but FAITH.

Whether they have trodden the paths of science, or been excluded from the treasures of human knowledge, they can equally adopt the language of the Psalmist—in contemplating the goodness of God—“Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, it is high, I cannot attain unto it.” Or that of the apostle—“Oh the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out.”

For whether we contemplate the Divine Character in the creation of worlds—or in that superintending Providence by which the whole frame of nature is supported, or the various dispensations of his goodness to man, in different ages of the world—in no case do we find such powerful claims on our gratitude, love, and adoration, or grounds for so firm a trust—so lively a hope—so animating prospects, as in the doctrine of redemption by Jesus Christ.

When we bring to thankful remembrance the condescension of our Lord Jesus Christ, in descending from the height of his divine glory—taking our nature upon himself—enduring the various indignities and sufferings to which he was exposed, and finally becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, on which he was not only nailed through his hands and his feet, but wounded to the heart—that he did and suffered all these things for our sakes—

what powerful claims do we feel upon our gratitude, love, and obedience! And how clearly do we see the force of the reasoning of the apostle, when he sets forth the awful consequences of trampling under foot the Son of God, and counting the blood of the covenant an unholy thing!

When we further reflect on that wonderful system of sacrifices, which began immediately after the fall, and was as universal as the belief of a Supreme Power—which pointing to the Messiah, and the offering which he made of himself, ended when that one great offering was accomplished—when we further bring into view the repeated declarations that these events emanated from the love of God, and were the highest evidences of that love—instead of inquisitively prying into the reasons and motives of Almighty God, for the hidden portions of his counsel, we ought to give place to those feelings of love, gratitude, faith, and obedience, which are intimately connected with a right view of the subject.

In closing this little essay, I may perhaps be permitted to express the desire that I feel for the preservation of the Society to which I belong:—That they may maintain the faith once delivered to the saints—and walking in the light of the gospel, have fellowship one with another. We have seen what were the principles of our primitive Friends—we have seen their fellowship and brotherly love—their patience under persecution—their animating hope in the hour of death—that through all the rage of persecution—all the vicissitudes of time—in perils by sea, perils by land—perils by open enemies and among false brethren—they could adopt the language of the apostle—“In all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us:” and “this is our victory, even our faith.” Shall we

leave this sure foundation on which they stood, and against which no storms or tempests could prevail?

When some of the disciples formerly, unable to comprehend the deep yet divine doctrines of our Lord and Saviour, turned from him and walked no more with him—he queried with the twelve, “Will ye also go away?” How appropriate was the responding language, “Unto whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.” Let us make this language our own, and we shall be enabled in the conclusion, to bear the same noble testimony which that same disciple also bore—“We have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

THE END.







