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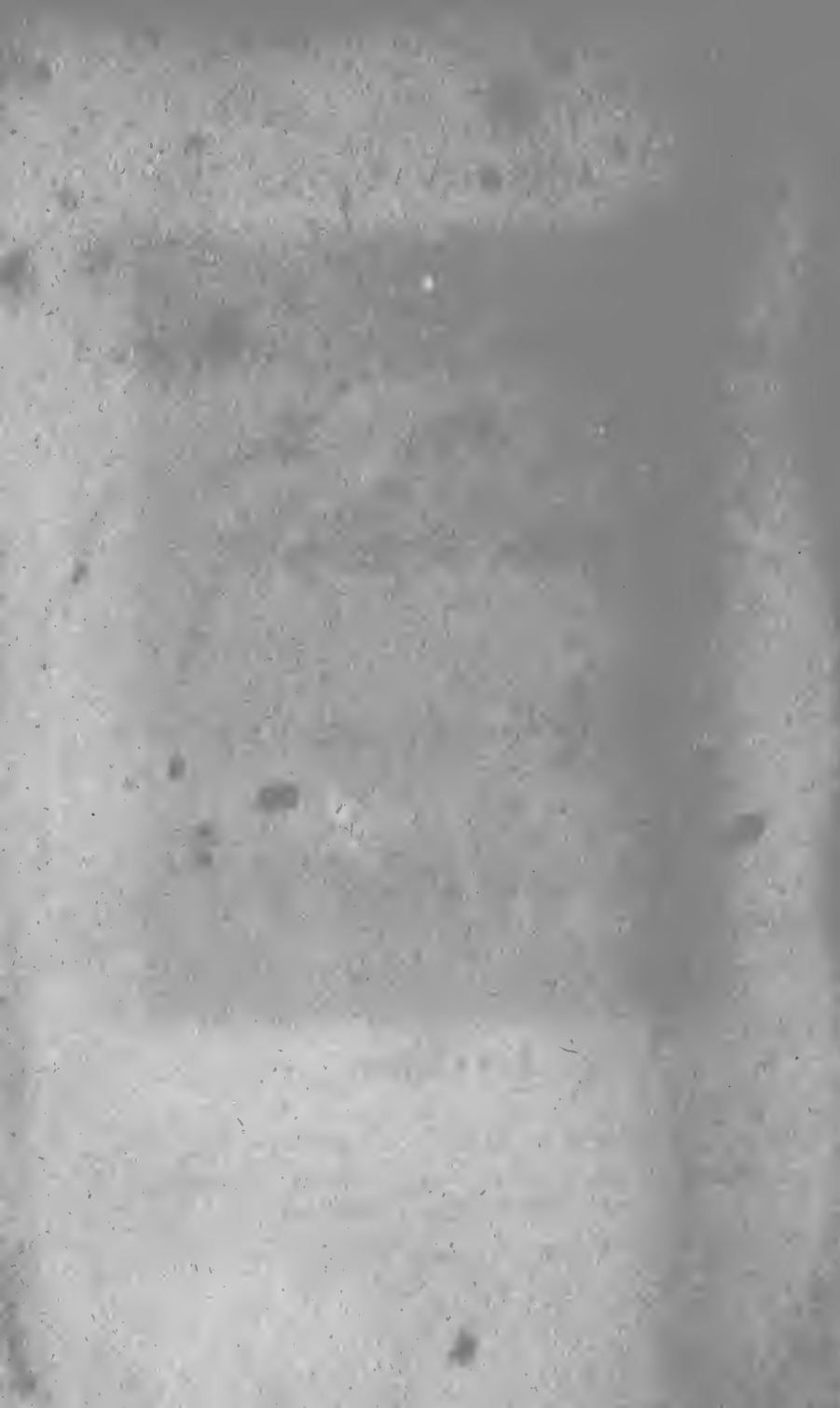
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Yours sincerely,
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OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

RELIGIOUS PECULIARITIES

OF THE

Society of Friends,

BY

JOSEPH JOHN GURNEY.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS NOT IN WORD, BUT IN POWER. 1. Cor. iv. 20.

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P R E F A C E.



AMONG the arguments employed in the course of the following observations, there are some which are urged upon the attention of such persons, *exclusively*, as already possess an intimate knowledge of the character and circumstances of the Society of Friends.

The present volume is in fact intended not so much for the information of the public in general, as for the use of the junior members of that Society. To these the essays, contained in it, may be considered to be addressed. I am persuaded that there are not a few of our young men and women, who, although brought up in the Society, are nevertheless not sufficiently informed respecting the religious principles by

which it is distinguished, and who perhaps have seldom reflected *with accuracy* on the christian and scriptural grounds of our several peculiarities.

It has fallen to my lot to be brought into much familiar acquaintance with serious christians of several denominations; and, although I enjoyed a birthright in the Society, my situation, after I had arrived at years of discretion, was of that nature which rendered it in rather an unusual degree incumbent upon me *to make my own choice of a particular religious course*. Under these circumstances, I was led, partly by research, but chiefly I trust by a better guidance, to a settled preference, on my own account, of the religious profession of Friends. Nor ought I to hesitate in expressing a heartfelt gratitude to the "Shepherd of Israel" who has bestowed upon me a resting place in this department of his fold: for although in some degree aware how much there is of vital christianity in other societies, I may acknowledge that I have found the situation thus provided for myself to be one accompanied with true safety and with a variety of substantial advantages.

Such having been my experience, and having, in reference to this selection of a particular course, been at various times engaged in much reflexion and in some scriptural investigation, I am inclined to submit, to the candid attention of my young friends, the grounds on which I was originally led more closely to attach myself to Friends, and on which I have since been confirmed in the persuasion that I was right in doing so.

Although, however, these essays are addressed principally to the junior members of our own body, I confess that I have also had in view a number of individuals who do not actually belong to us, but who have some intimate connexion with us, and appear to be brought, in various degrees, under the same peculiar religious administration.

Should the younger members of our Society receive, from this humble endeavour to serve them, any instruction, or any encouragement to persevere in that restricted path which providence has cast up for them,—and should the individuals last alluded to be confirmed, by any of

the arguments here adduced, in the choice which they appear to be making of the same restricted path—my object in publishing the present statement of thought and sentiment will be sufficiently answered, and I shall rest satisfied in the comforting persuasion, that my labour (which I trust has been a labour of love,) has not been in vain in the Lord.

Here it may be proper for me to remark, that, although the various subjects considered in the present work are discussed in distinct dissertations, and although it may be hoped that these dissertations, when separately read, will be found sufficiently intelligible, yet it has been my endeavour to maintain, through the whole course of the work, one continued train of reflexion and argument; in such a manner as that the several parts of the series might be closely connected with one another, and that all might tend in harmony to the same general conclusion. Such having been my plan, I may now venture to request the reader to abstain from forming a final judgment of any particular section or chapter, until the whole volume shall have passed under his review.

Since, lastly, the views which I have attempted to unfold are of a nature entirely *religious*, it has of course been necessary for me largely to refer to that sacred book, to the test of which all religious opinions are rightly brought, since it was given by inspiration of God, and contains a divinely authorized record, both of the doctrines which we ought to believe, and of the duties which we are required to practise. In thus referring to the Holy Scriptures, I have often found occasion, on critical points, to appeal to the decisions of various commentators, both ancient and modern. While, however, I have not hesitated thus to avail myself of the well-applied learning and useful researches of these writers, I wish to take the present opportunity of expressing my conviction, that, for the *most important* practical purposes, the common English version of the Bible may be understood with sufficient precision, without the aid of the critic or the annotator. Above all, may it ever be remembered, that if the Scriptures of Truth are to make us “wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus”, that spiritual eye must be open in us, which alone is capable of a just and efficacious per-

ception of their divine contents: for it remains an incontrovertible truth, that as no man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him, "*even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God*".



C O N T E N T S.



CHAP. I.

On the grounds of Religious union which subsist among mankind in general, and more especially among true Christians	PAGE. 1
---	------------

CHAP. II.

On religious peculiarities. General observations on those of the Society of Friends - - - - -	28
---	----

CHAP. III.

On the perceptible influence and guidance of the Spirit of Truth	36
--	----

CHAP. IV.

On the disuse of all typical rites in the worship of God - -	60
--	----

CHAP. V.

On the nature and character of the Christian ministry - -	130
---	-----

CHAP. VI.

On the selection, preparation, and appointment of the ministers of the Gospel - - - - -	158
---	-----

CHAP. VII.

On the pecuniary remuneration of the ministers of the Gospel 191

CHAP. VIII.

On the ministry of Women - - - - - 215

CHAP. IX.

On silent worship - - - - - 228

CHAP. X.

On Oaths - - - - - 242

CHAP. XI.

On War - - - - - 267

CHAP. XII.

On the moral views of Friends. Plainness of speech, behaviour,
and apparel - - - - - 299

Conclusion - - - - - 349



OBSERVATIONS,

&c. &c.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE GROUNDS OF RELIGIOUS UNION WHICH
SUBSIST AMONG MANKIND IN GENERAL, AND MORE ESPECIALLY
AMONG TRUE CHRISTIANS.

To a series of observations on the particular tenets and peculiar religious advantages (as I deem them) of a comparatively small body of persons, I know of no more salutary introduction, than a survey of those grounds of union in matters of religion which subsist, first, among mankind in general, and secondly, among the true members of the visible church of Christ. Such a survey will, I trust, produce the effect of animating our hearts with the love of our neighbour, and will prepare us for a calm and charitable discussion of those particulars, which appertain more or less exclusively to our own religious situation in the world and in the church.

I. Let us then, in the first place, endeavour to form some estimate of the breadth of that foundation in religion, on which we are standing in common with

mankind in general. God is the Creator and merciful Father of us all. Christ died for us all. A measure of the influence of the Holy Spirit enlightens and, if obeyed, would save us all. Upon these successive positions I will venture to offer a few remarks, and will adduce a selection of scriptural declarations by which they appear to me to be severally established.

1. That God, to whom alone can be attributed the existence of the universe, and of every thing which it contains,—“from whom, and through whom, and unto whom, are all things,”—is the Creator of all men, is a point which none but atheists deny, and which I shall therefore take for granted. Now it is expressly asserted in Scripture of this omnipotent Author of our being, that he is “Love”, I. John iv. 8; and again, the character in which he proclaimed himself to his servant Moses, was that of “the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth”; Exod. xxxiv. 6. Hence we can scarcely fail to conclude, that, as the Father of the whole family of man, he extends over them *all* the wing of his paternal care, and graciously offers to them *all* his help, his protection, and his mercy. It was on this principle, or on a principle *still more* comprehensive, that the royal psalmist, after describing Jehovah as “merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy”, calls upon “*all* his works in *all* places of his dominion to bless his holy name”; Ps. ciii. 22. And again, on another occasion he expressly declares that “the Lord is good to all, and that his tender mercies are over *all his works*”; Ps. cxlv. 9.

The attributes of God, as the Creator and Father of all mankind, were admirably unfolded by the apostle Paul, in his address to the philosophical Athenians: "God", said he, "that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all, life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; *that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he be not far from every one of us*; for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, *for we are also his offspring*"; Acts xvii. 24—28.

Let it not be imagined that God is the merciful Father of all mankind, only inasmuch as he makes his rain to fall, and his sun to shine for them all, and bestows upon them all a variety of outward and temporal benefits. The Scriptures plainly declare that he wills for them a happiness of a far more exalted and enduring nature. Fallen and corrupt as they are, and separated by their iniquities from the *Holy One* of Israel, "he willeth not that any should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance"; II. Pet. iii. 9. And to all mankind he proclaims the same invitation; "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon;" Isa. lv. 7. The

apostle Paul expressly assures us, that “the grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared to *all men*”, Tit. ii. 11; that God our Saviour would “have *all men* to be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth”; I. Tim. ii. 4. And again, he exclaims “we trust in the living God, who is the *Saviour of all men*”; I. Tim. iv. 10. “Look unto me and be ye saved, *all the ends of the earth*”, said Jehovah himself, “for I am God, and there is none else”; Isa. xlv. 22. Nor are these expressions to be understood as being of a merely general and undefined character. He who offers deliverance to all men, has appointed for all men a way of escape; he who would have all men to be saved, has provided for all men the means of salvation. “God was in Christ, reconciling *the world* unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them”; II. Cor. v. 19. “God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that *the world* through him might be saved;” John iii. 17.

2. This concluding observation naturally leads to my second proposition, that *Christ died for all*—a proposition in order to the proof of which I need do nothing more than simply cite the explicit declarations, on this subject, of inspired writers. “My little children”, says the apostle John in his general epistle, “these things write I unto you that ye sin not. And 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 ours only (that is, not only for the sins of christians, to the whole company of whom this epistle was probably addressed¹) but *also*

¹ See *Michaëlis Introd. N. T. by Marsh, vol. iii, ch. 30.*

for the sins of the whole world"; I. John ii. 1, 2. The same doctrine is affirmed by Paul; "There is one God", says he, in his first epistle to Timothy, "and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time"; chap. ii. 5, 6. We may presume it is the same apostle who writes as follows in the epistle to the Hebrews, "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God *should taste death for every man*"; chap. ii. 9. Lastly, in his epistle to the Romans, after declaring that we are "reconciled unto God by the death of his Son", and in drawing the comparison between Adam, in whom man fell, and Christ, by whom he is recovered, Paul argues as follows, "Therefore as by the offence of one (judgment came) upon *all men* to condemnation: even so by the righteousness of one, (the free gift came) upon *all men* unto justification of life; for as by one man's disobedience, many (or as in the Greek "*the many*"²) were made sinners: so by the obedience of one, shall the many be made righteous. Moreover, the law entered, that the offence might abound: but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord"; chap. v. 18—21. The complete parallelism observed in this passage between the effects of Adam's transgression on the one part, and those of the righteousness of Christ on the other, appears to afford a plain and

² οἱ πολλοί.

satisfactory evidence for the truth of the doctrine of universal redemption. The two things are described as being in their operation upon mankind absolutely co-extensive, and as it is true, without limit or exception, that all men are exposed to death through the sin of Adam, so it is true, without limit or exception, that all men may obtain eternal life through the righteousness of Christ. Multitudes there are, undoubtedly, by whom this free gift “unto justification of life” is despised, disregarded, and rejected. Nevertheless, among the children of men there are *none* “upon” whom it has not “come”—none to whom it is not freely offered.

3. Since Christ died for all men, and has thus placed within their reach the free gift of justification unto life; since such is the natural proneness of mankind to sin, that none can avail themselves of the benefits of the death of Christ, or receive the free gift of God, except through the influence of the Holy Spirit; and since it cannot without great irreverence be imagined that the mercy of God in Christ, thus gratuitously offered, should in any instances be merely nominal and nugatory in point of fact; I cannot but draw the conclusion that a measure of this influence of the Spirit is bestowed upon all men, by which they are enlightened, and by which they *may* be saved.

Christians can have no difficulty in acceding to the doctrine of Elihu, that “there is a spirit in man”, and that “the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding”, Job xxxii. 8; nor will they fail to form a just estimate of the words of the Wisdom of God, as recorded in the book of Proverbs, “I will

pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you"; chap. i. 23. That the Spirit which in these passages is probably alluded to, and which dwelt in the servants of God during the early ages of the world, was that very Spirit, the more abundant effusion of which was the most distinguishing feature of the christian dispensation—that this Spirit was the true enlightener and sanctifier of men, *before* as well as *after* the coming of Christ in the body—and that multitudes of those who lived previously to the christian era, and whose view of the character and mediation of the Messiah was comparatively faint, were really saved by its influence from the power of sin and fitted for eternal life,—will not be disputed by any persons who esteem as sacred the records of the Old Testament. Since therefore so many persons in those ancient times were saved by the operation of the Spirit of Christ, who for the most part possessed nothing more than an indistinct apprehension of the person and offices of the Messiah, it seems a very reasonable inference that the outward knowledge of Christ is not absolutely indispensable to salvation, and that other persons who are *altogether destitute* of that knowledge, may *also* be saved from sin and from the penalties which are attached to it, through the secret operations of divine grace.

To this argument from analogy, may be added another of no inconsiderable weight. Between the effects of Adam's sin and those of the obedience of Christ, there is, in various respects, a perfect coincidence. The doctrine of universal redemption has already been deduced, on the authority of the apostle

Paul, from the universality of the fall; and it appears to have been provided by the mercy and *equity* of God, that in both the *extent* and *manner* of their operation, the analogy should be preserved between the disease and the remedy—that the operation of the one should still be adapted to the operation of the other. Now, as men participate in the disease arising from the sin of Adam who are totally ignorant of its original cause, so we may with reason infer, that men may also participate in the remedy arising from the obedience of Christ who have received no outward revelation whatever respecting that obedience.

The inference deduced from these premises appears to derive, from certain passages in the New Testament, substantial confirmation. However Cornelius the Roman centurion, previously to his communication with Peter, might have been aware of the events recorded in the gospel histories, it is obviously improbable that he knew Jesus Christ as the *Redeemer of men*; yet that he had received the gift of the Spirit of grace is indisputable, for he was a *just man living in the fear of God*; Acts x. 22. And what was the remark suggested by the case of Cornelius to the apostle Peter?—“Of a truth I perceive”, said he, “that God is no respecter of persons; *but in every nation, he that feareth him and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him*”; ver. 34, 35. When the apostle used these words, the truth which he contemplated appears to have been this: that amongst the nations of the Gentile world, ignorant as they generally were, both of the institutions of the Jews and of the offices of the Messiah, there were indivi-

duals who, like Cornelius, feared God and worked righteousness³—who had experienced, therefore, in some degree, the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit—and that such individuals were accepted by the Father of mercies, who is no respecter of persons. It is true that the mercy of God towards Cornelius was displayed after a particular manner, in his being brought to the outward knowledge of his Saviour: but before he was introduced to that outward knowledge, he was accepted of the Father, and, had he died in his condition of comparative ignorance, we can scarcely doubt that he would have received, with all the children of God, his eternal reward through the merits and mediation of Christ. And such, also, we may believe to have been the happy experience of all those Gentiles whom the apostle was considering, who might be so influenced by the power of the Lord's Spirit, as to *live in the fear of God, and to work righteousness.*

That this was, to a great extent, the character of some of the most virtuous of the ancient Gentile philosophers, their recorded sentiments and known history afford us strong reasons to believe: and that it was the character also of many besides them, who were destitute of an outward revelation, we may learn without difficulty from the apostle Paul. "Not the hearers of the law are just before God", says this inspired writer, "but the doers of the law shall be justified. For

³ "ὁ φοβούμενος αὐτὸν καὶ ἐργαζόμενος δικαιοσύνην. *Colens eum, et exercens virtutem, pro modulo cognitionis primæ, ex lumine naturæ haustæ. Etiam inter paganos fuerunt, qui recte de Deo ejusque providentia et regimine statuerent. Ἐργαζόμενος δικαιοσύνην, recte agens, secundum legem naturæ; Rom. ii. 13—27.*"
Rosenmüller Schol. in loc.

when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another"; Rom. ii. 13—15. Upon this striking and very lucid passage of Scripture, it may be observed, first, that the law here mentioned is not the ceremonial law, as the whole tenor of the apostle's argument plainly evinces, but the moral law of God, which was outwardly revealed to the Jews, and was with still greater completeness unfolded under the christian dispensation: secondly, that the Gentiles, here brought into a comparison with the Jews, were not those Gentiles who had been converted to christianity; (for, of persons who had received the most perfect outward revelation of the moral law, it could not, with any truth, be asserted that they *had not the law*;) but they were Gentiles who had received no outward revelation whatever of the moral law of God: thirdly, that the work of the law was nevertheless written on their hearts, and that many of them (according to the apostle's obvious supposition) were thereby actually enabled to become doers of the law: and lastly, that these persons were justified or accepted of the Father.⁴

⁴ A curious exemplification of the apostle's doctrine respecting the practical excellence of some of those Gentiles who are destitute of any knowledge either of the Jewish law or of the christian revelation, will be found in the following extract from an account of the *Saods*, a moral sect of the Hindoos, who dwell in the north-western part of Hindoostan. It has been kindly communicated to me by W. H. Trant, a gentleman of great respectability, who once occupied an important post in the civil service of the East India Company, and who personally visited this singular people.

Those who accede to this view of the passage before us (and such a view is surely just and reasonable,) will probably find no difficulty in admitting this additional proposition—namely, that the work of the law written on the hearts of these Gentiles, through which they

“In March 1816, I went with two other gentlemen from Futtehgurh, on the invitation of the principal persons of the Saud sect, to witness an assemblage of them for the purpose of religious worship in the city of Furruckhabad, the general meeting of the sect being held that year in that city. The assembly took place within the court yard (*Dalan*) of a large house. The number of men, women, and children was considerable: we were received with great attention and chairs were placed for us in the front of the *Deorhee* or hall. After some time, when the place was quite full of people, the worship commenced; it consisted solely in the chaunting of a hymn, this being the only mode of public worship used by the Sauds.

The Sauds utterly reject and abhor all kinds of idolatry, and the Ganges is considered by them with no greater veneration than by christians, although the converts are made chiefly, if not entirely from among the Hindoos, whom they resemble in outward appearance. Their name for God is *Sutgur*, and *Saul*, the appellation of the sect, means servant of God; they are pure theists, and their form of worship is most simple, as I have already stated.

The Sauds resemble the Quakers in their customs, to a remarkable degree. Ornaments and gay apparel of every kind are strictly prohibited; their dress is always white; they never make any obeisance or *salam*; they will not take an oath, and they are exempted in the courts of justice,—their asseveration, as that of the Quakers, being considered equivalent. The Sauds profess to abstain from all luxuries, such as tobacco, pawn, opium, and wine; they never have nautches or dances. All attack on man or beast is forbidden, but in self-defence resistance is allowable. Industry is strongly enjoined. The Sauds, like the Quakers, take great care of their poor and infirm people; to receive assistance out of the punt or tribe, would be reckoned disgraceful, and render the offender liable to excommunication. All parade of worship is forbidden; secret prayer is commended; alms should be unostentatious; they are not to be done that they should be seen of men. The due regulation of the tongue is a principal duty.

The chief seats of the Saud sect are Delhi, Agra, Jypoor, and Furruckhabad, but there are several of the sect scattered over the country. An annual meeting takes place at one or other of the cities above mentioned, at which the concerns of the sect are settled.

The Magistrate of Furruckhabad informed me that he had found the Sauds an orderly and well conducted people. They are chiefly engaged in trade.

Bhuivancee Dos (one of their leaders) was anxious to become acquainted with the christian religion, and I gave him some copies of the New Testament in Persian and Hindostanee, which he said he had read and shown to his people, and much approved. I had no copy of the Old Testament in any language which he understood well, but as he expressed a strong desire to know the account of the creation, as given in it, I explained it to him from an Arabic version of which he knew a little. I promised

were thus enabled to bear the fruits of righteousness, was nothing less than the inward operation of the Spirit of truth; for christianity plainly teaches us that without such an influence there can be no acceptable obedience to the moral law of God.⁵ Here it may be observed, that this inward work of the Spirit ought not to be confounded with the operation of the *conscience*. The two things are separately mentioned by the apostle, and I would submit that they are in fact totally distinct. The law written on

to procure him a Persian and Hindostanee Old Testament if possible. I am of opinion the Sauds are a very interesting people, and that some intelligent and zealous missionary would find great facility in communicating with them.

(Signed)

Calcutta, 2 Aug. 1819.

W. H. TRANT."

W. H. Trant informs me that previously to the adoption of their present views, the Sauds do not appear to have received any christian instruction. The head of their tribe assured him that they knew nothing of christianity.

⁵ This consideration is strong and palpable enough to afford, in itself, a sufficient evidence, that when the apostle makes mention of their performing the works of righteousness "*by nature*", he cannot be understood as alluding to *nature unassisted by divine grace*. The fruits of the flesh—that is, of the carnal and unregenerate state of man—are not righteousness; but, as the apostle himself declares, "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry", &c. Gal. v. 19: and, when speaking of men in their fallen condition, without grace, he expressly asserts that they are the "children of wrath", Eph. ii. 3; "that there is none that doeth good, no, not one"; Rom. iii. 12. Besides, after using this expression, he goes on to attribute the righteousness of the Gentiles, not to their natural reason or acquired wisdom, but to the "law written in their hearts". Now this law of God written in the heart, can be nothing less than a divine illumination; and the larger measures of such illumination are described *in the very same terms*, as one of the choicest blessings of the christian dispensation; Jer. xxxi, 33. The word *φύσει*, appears to refer to that natural condition of the Gentiles, by which they were distinguished from the Jews—a condition of comparative darkness, and one in which they did not enjoy the superadded help of a written law, or outward revelation. Not having a law, they performed the works of righteousness *by nature*, i. e. "without the law". Just on the same principles, in verse 27, the uncircumcised Gentile *in his natural condition*, and fulfilling the law, is compared with the Jew, who *possesses the letter and the external rite*, and nevertheless infringes the law. In both passages, the state of nature is placed in opposition, not to a state of grace, but only to one of outward light and instruction.

the heart is a divine illumination : the conscience is a natural faculty by which a man judges of his own conduct. It is *through* the conscience that the law operates. The law *informs* the conscience. The law is the *light* : the conscience is the *eye*. The light reveals the beauty of any given object : the eye “ bears witness ” to that beauty : it beholds and approves. The light is of an uniform character, for when not interrupted, it never fails to make things manifest *as they really are* ; but the eye may be obscured or destroyed by disease, or it may be deceived by the influence of surrounding substances. So the law written on the heart, although capable of being hindered in its operation, is of an unchangeable nature and would guide *invariably* into righteousness and truth : but the conscience may be darkened by ignorance, deadened by sin, or perverted by an illusive education. The conscience indeed, like every other natural faculty of the human mind, is *prone* to perversion, and the law written in the heart is given not only to enlighten but to rectify it. Those only have “ a good conscience ”, who obey that law.

As the Gentiles to whom the apostle was here alluding were, according to their measure of light, sanctified through the spirit, and when sanctified accepted ; so I think every christian must allow that they were accepted not because of their own righteousness, but through the merits and mediation of the Son of God. Now the benefit of those merits and that mediation, is offered according to the declarations of Scripture, only to those who believe ; for “ without faith it is impossible to please God ”. The doctrine that we are justified by

faith, and that without faith none can obtain salvation, is to be freely admitted as a doctrine revealed to mankind on the authority of God himself. Let it, however, be carefully kept in view, that God is *equal*. It is unquestionably true in great as well as in little things, that “if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not”; II. Cor. viii. 12. The extent of faith required in man in order that he may be accepted with the supreme Being, will ever be proportioned to the extent of light communicated. Those to whom the merits and mediation of the Son of God are made known, are undoubtedly required to believe in the merits and mediation of the Son of God. Those from whom the plan of redemption is concealed, and to whom the Deity is made manifest only by his outward works, and by his law written on the heart, may nevertheless so believe in God, that it shall be counted to them “for righteousness”.

The reader will observe that I have already deduced the universality of saving light from the declarations of Scripture that God’s tender mercies are over *all* his works, and that Christ died for *all* men. The most plausible objection to this inference, arises from the notion, so prevalent amongst some christians, that the Spirit of God operates on the heart of man *only* in connexion with the outward knowledge of the Scriptures and of Christ, and that consequently such outward knowledge is indispensable to salvation. Having, therefore, endeavoured to remove this objection, and to show on apostolic authority, that there were individuals in the Gentile world who had no

acquaintance with the truths of religion as they are revealed in the Holy Scriptures, but who were nevertheless enabled to fear God and work righteousness, I consider there is nothing in the way to prevent our coming to a sound conclusion, that, as, on the one hand, God is merciful to *all* men, and Christ is a sacrifice for *all* men, so, on the other hand, *all* men have received *a measure* of that spiritual influence, through which alone they can permanently enjoy the mercy of God, or participate in the benefits of the death of Christ.

In confirmation of this conclusion it remains for me to adduce the apostle's memorable declaration respecting the Son or Word of God, that he was "*the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*"; John i. 9. In order to apprehend the true force of these expressions, it will be desirable to cite the entire passage of which it forms a part.

1. "In the beginning", says the inspired apostle, "was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
2. The same was in the beginning with God.
3. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.
4. *In him was life, and the life was the light of men.*
5. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended (or received) it not.
6. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.
7. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the light, that all men through him might believe.
8. He was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light.
9. *That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*
10. He was in the world,

and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. 11. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 12. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe (or believed) on his name. 13. Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. 14. And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth”.

In this solemn and emphatic preface to his gospel history, John has unfolded the character and attributes of the Word of God ; that is of the Son in his *original and divine nature*. That this is the true meaning of that title, is almost universally allowed by christian commentators both ancient and modern ; and is in my opinion amply proved by the known theology of the Jews, at the time when the apostle wrote. At the conclusion of the passage, we are informed that this divine Word was made flesh (i. e. *man*), and dwelt amongst us ; and that so his glory as the glory of the only-begotten Son of God, became *visible*. But the order in which the apostle has treated his subject, plainly leads us to suppose, that in the previous verses, he is speaking of Christ in his condition of pre-existence, or at least solely with reference to this *original and divine nature*. I would suggest that the declarations respecting the Word contained in verses 10 and 11, that he was “in the world” and “came unto his own”, form no exception to this observation ; for these declarations may very properly be explained of the appearances and visitations of the

Son of God, (whether visible or merely spiritual) before his incarnation. But even if we interpret these verses as connected with verse 14, and as forming a part of the apostle's account of the incarnation, it certainly appears most probable, that the preceding doctrine, respecting Christ, relates to his operations, *only* in that glorious and unchangeable character, *in which he was with God in the beginning, and in which he was God.*

Accordingly it is declared, first, that by him *all things were made*; and, secondly, that *in him* (or *by him*) *was life, and that the life was the light of men.* Let us then enquire in what sense the eternal Word of God was thus described as the author or medium of *life* and *light*? Since all things were made by him, he is undoubtedly the origin of their natural life, and bountiful giver of those intellectual faculties by which man is distinguished from the inferior animals; but those who take a comprehensive view of the writings of the apostle John can scarcely suppose that he is here speaking only of the natural life and of the light of reason. The "life" of which in every part of his works he makes such frequent mention, is the life of which they only avail themselves who are the true children of God—that spiritual life, in the first place, by which the souls of men are quickened in the world, and that eternal life, in the second place, which is laid up for them in the world to come; see John iii. 15, v. 24, 40, vi. 33, 63, viii. 12, xiv. 6, &c. That such is here the apostle's meaning is confirmed by a comparison with the opening passage of his first epistle, in which Jesus Christ, in reference to his pre-existence, is expressly denominated that "*eternal life*"

(i. e. that *source of eternal life*) “which was with the Father”. So, also, the word *light* is no where used by the apostle to designate the intellectual faculty or the light of reason. With him that substantive denotes spiritual light—the light which is enjoyed by those who come to a real knowledge of the truth—the light in which the children of God walk before their Father ; see John iii. 19, viii. 12, ix. 5, I. John i. 7, ii. 8, &c. I conceive therefore that the apostle’s doctrine declared in the fourth verse of his gospel, is precisely this—that the Son or Word of God, or the Messiah in his original and divine character, was the giver of eternal life and the spiritual *quickeuer and illuminator* of the children of men. And this inference is strengthened by the consideration that “the life” here mentioned *was* “the light”; for it is the peculiar characteristic of the Spirit of Christ that it quickens and enlightens at the same time. That very principle within us which illuminates our darkness raises our souls from the death of sin, and springs up within us unto everlasting life.

Since such appears to be the true meaning of verse 4, we cannot reasonably hesitate in our interpretation of verse 9. In the former, the light is said to be *in* or *by* the Word; in the latter, according to a very usual figure of rhetoric, the Word being the source of the light, is himself denominated “light”. The *light* in either case must be of the same character, and if there be any correctness in the view we have now taken of the whole passage, it can be no other *than the light of the Spirit of the Son of God*. Hence, therefore, I conclude, on the authority of the apostle John, that a measure of *the light of the Spirit of the Son of*

God, "lighteth every man that cometh into the world".⁶

Such, according to my apprehension of scriptural truth, are the religious advantages which may be deemed the common allotment of mankind in general. God is their equal judge, and compassionate Father: the Son of God, when clothed with humanity, gave his life a ransom for them all: and lastly, through the operation of his Holy Spirit, a moral sense of right and wrong, accompanied with a portion of quickening and redeeming power, is implanted in them universally. Here, then, we may perceive grounds of union and brotherly kindness co-extensive with the whole world; and whilst we cultivate a sense

⁶ JOHN i. 9. Ἦν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινὸν ὃ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον. "That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." It was observed by Augustine, (*De Peccatorum meritis et remiss.* lib. i. § 38.) and the suggestion has been adopted by many modern critics, that the words ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον, in this passage, are capable of being construed in connexion with φῶς "the light", instead of with πάντα ἄνθρωπον "every man", in which case the sentence must be rendered as follows; "That was the true light, which, coming into the world, lighteth every man." Now it ought to be remarked, that the term "every man" is in itself very strong and precise. It denotes every individual man, and since there is nothing in the context to limit its signification, it must be considered as signifying the whole of mankind. Were we, therefore, to adopt such a construction and translation of the passage, there would still be good reasons for interpreting it, not of that outward knowledge of Christianity which is enjoyed by a comparatively small number of human beings, but of an internal light bestowed universally on man. It is, however, obvious, that the commonly adopted construction of this sentence is more agreeable to the order of the apostle's words, and therefore more consistent, than the other, with the general simplicity and perspicuity of his style. That construction is, moreover, confirmed by the consideration that John has here adopted a phrase well known amongst the Jews, in its usual sense. With that people, "to come into the world" was a common expression signifying "to be born"; and "all men who come into the world", a customary description of "all mankind"; Vide *Lightfoot Hor. Heb. in loc.* The ancient fathers in general appear to have construed this passage in the same manner as the authors of our English version. See for example *Tertullian, adv. Prax. cap. 12. Ed. Semler. ii. 214*; *Theodotus, epitom. in Ed. Bened. Clement Alex. p. 979*; *Origen, in lib. Judicium Homil. Ed. Bened. ii. 460.* See also the two *Syriac, Æthiopic, Persic, and Vulgate, versions.*

of these animating truths, we shall be disposed neither to think too highly of ourselves, nor to despise others. On the contrary a feeling of true charity towards our neighbour, of whatever colour or country, will spread in our hearts; and a lively disposition will arise in us to labour for the happiness of that universal family, who not only owe their existence to the same Creator, but are the common objects of his paternal regard and of his redeeming love.

While I am persuaded of the existence of these broad grounds of union; while I am well satisfied in the conviction that there is bestowed upon all men that moral sense and that measure of a quickening influence of which I have spoken; and while, lastly, I am convinced that such a sense and such an influence can be justly attributed only to the eternal Spirit of the Lord, I am very far from forming a low estimate of the sinfulness and degradation of the heathen world. However universally visited by a moral light, it is a mournful and melancholy fact, that men have very generally yielded themselves a prey to the deceitfulness and depravity of their own hearts. Multitudes indeed there are amongst those who have not been made acquainted with the truths of christianity, who, “when they knew God, glorified him not as God, neither were thankful”; but have “changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things”; Rom. i. 21, 23. Hence hath God given them over “to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts”,

and hence may be applied to them that awful description used by the apostle;—"Gentiles in the flesh—aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world;" Eph. ii. 11, 12.

We are not to forget that the same apostle, who has drawn this affecting picture of the Gentile world, has declared that the Jews, on whom was bestowed the written law, were not "better than they"; Rom. iii. 9—that all will be judged by a perfectly equitable Being, according to their *own* demerits, the Gentiles "without the law", the Jews "by the law", Rom. ii. 12; and finally, that God "hath concluded them all in unbelief, that *he might have mercy upon all*"; Rom. xi. 32. Nevertheless, a contemplation of so mournful a scene may serve to convince us of the unutterable advantages of that outward revelation, by which are so clearly made known to us the glorious attributes of the one true God, the awful realities of the eternal world, and the various offices of that divine Saviour who is made unto us, of the Father, "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption". This consideration naturally leads to the second branch of my present subject, and will fitly introduce a brief view of those religious advantages, which are not bestowed upon the world in general, but are nevertheless common to all true christians.

II. The visible church of Christ, upon earth, may be regarded, either in its most extensive character, as consisting of the whole of that proportion of mankind who *profess* christianity; or in that narrower, yet more accurate point of view, in which none can be looked

upon as its members except those persons who really love and serve their Redeemer, and who evince, by their conduct and conversation, that they are brought under the influence of vital religion.

It is to such as these alone, that my present observations will be directed. Merely nominal christians may indeed be considered as so far participating in the religious advantages of the church of Christ, as they receive their share of benefit from that *general* amelioration of the moral views and habits of mankind, which has, in so remarkable a manner, been effected by the introduction of christianity. But from the more important, substantial, and enduring privileges of the followers of Jesus, the careless and disobedient hearers of the truth are plainly excluded. Nothing indeed can be more fraught with danger, than the condition of those persons, who, whilst they profess to believe in Jesus, and are called by his name, are nevertheless the servants of sin, and are living to the "lusts of the world; the lusts of the flesh; and the pride of life". The light of the Sun of righteousness has risen upon them; but they hide themselves from its beams. They love "darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil". In despite of those awful truths, which, on the authority of their Creator himself, have been proclaimed in their hearing, they pursue without interruption the mad career of vice and dissipation. If there be any class amongst mankind, by whom, above others, the punishment of "many stripes" may justly be expected, it is surely that class who profess without practising christianity, who *know* their Master's will and *do* it not. "And

every one", said our Lord Jesus, "that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man which built his house upon the sand : and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house ; and it fell ; and *great was the fall of it*"; Matt. vii. 26, 27.

Let us therefore direct our regards to that scattered family and flock of Christ, appertaining to various kindreds, nations, and denominations, who have received revealed religion in the love of it ; who have been made willing in the day of the Lord's power ; and who, with earnestness and honest determination, are fighting the good fight of faith, and laying hold of eternal life.

The religious privileges which are common to the whole of this family of true believers in Christ are unspeakably valuable. At some of the principal of them we may now shortly glance.

1. *They are brought out of darkness into marvellous light.* "Ye are a chosen generation", said the apostle Peter to some of the early christians, "a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people ; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of *darkness into his marvellous light*"; I. Pet. ii. 9. Furnished with ample and satisfactory evidences of the truth and divine authority of christianity, they have found in that holy religion, as it is recorded in the Holy Scriptures, a plain statement of all those truths which appertain to man's salvation—a clear account of the character of man—of the attributes of God—of the future life—of eternal rewards and punishments, and more especially of that divine Saviour,

the incarnate Son of God, who died for our sins, and rose again for our justification. That outward knowledge, which has been thus graciously communicated to them, may truly be denominated a "*marvellous light*". Yet these expressions are more properly applicable to that spiritual illumination, by which the humble followers of Jesus are enabled to form a right *estimate* of the things of God. True christians may be described as persons whose moral optics are rectified. God has given them the spirit of "a sound mind". Every thing connected with religion appears to them (as far as is consistent with the narrow limits of the apprehension of mortals) in its real dimensions. From the secret illumination of the Lord's Holy Spirit, and by the instrumentality of the outward revelation of divine truth, they are enabled to form a comparatively just view of themselves—of their Creator—of virtue and vice—of the world and eternity—of heaven and hell,—and more particularly of Jesus Christ, as their Mediator with the Father, as their divine and all-powerful Redeemer. Such persons can acknowledge with humble gratitude, that "the darkness is past", and that "the true light now shineth"; I. John ii. 8.

2. The religion respecting the truths of which christians are thus enlightened is a *powerful* religion. In other words, it is the medium through which the power of God operates upon them, for the great purposes of sanctification and salvation. Thus the apostle Paul expressly asserts, that the gospel of Christ is "the *power* of God unto salvation"; Rom. i. 16. Again he says, "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved

it is the *power* of God", I. Cor. i. 18: and in addressing his Ephesian converts, he makes particular mention of the "*exceeding greatness*" of the "*power*" of God "*to us-ward who believe*, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places"; Eph. i. 19, 20. We may conclude, therefore, that "the grace of God which bringeth salvation", and which "hath appeared unto all men", is, with a pre-eminent fulness of measure, poured forth on the believers in Jesus. "We trust in the living God", says the same Apostle, "who is the Saviour of all men, *specially* of those that believe"; I. Tim. iv. 10.

Faith in the Son of God is not the mere assent of the understanding to the mission and divinity of Jesus. *It is a practical and operative principle of wonderful energy.* Those who live by this faith enjoy an access unto the Father by a new and living way, which Christ hath "consecrated for them through the veil, that is to say, his flesh". Their dependence is placed, not upon their own strength and wisdom, but upon that Great High Priest of their profession, who "ever liveth to make intercession" for them—who "is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him", Heb. vii. 25; and at his gracious hands, they receive that more abundant effusion of the Holy Spirit, by which they are enabled in a distinguished degree, to mortify the deeds of the flesh, and to become conformed to the will of a righteous and holy God. Thus do they experience, that, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed

away; behold, all things are become new"; II Cor. v. 17.

3. The followers of Jesus Christ being enlightened in their darkness, and strengthened in their weakness, are animated during the varied course of their earthly pilgrimage, with the *clear hope of immortal joy*. Their treasure—their conversation are in heaven: their desire is fixed on "that city which hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God". They are seeking "a better country, that is, a heavenly". Often indeed are they cast' down under a humbling sense of their great infirmities, and many transgressions; and are at times scarcely able to entertain the belief that they shall "be counted worthy of the kingdom of God". Yet, as their regards remain steadily fixed on that Saviour who died for their sins, and rose again for their justification; as they are "kept by the power of God, through faith"; they are seldom permitted to sink into despondence, or finally to lose a peaceful expectation of that inheritance which is "reserved for them in heaven"—"an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled and that fadeth not away"; I. Pet. i. 4.

4. Lastly.—They are in a pre-eminent manner "baptized by one Spirit into one body". How delightful is the union which subsists among the numerous members of this holy family! It is true that their views, in some respects, are far from being perfectly coincident.—It is true that they are ranged under various banners, and are designated by a considerable diversity of denomination.—It is true also, that they do not all possess the same measure of light; and that the sentiments of some amongst them are of a more spiritual character than those of others.

Nevertheless, their ground of accordance is at once wide and substantial. Their footing is placed on the same Rock of ages, and that Rock is Christ. They enjoy a true fellowship one with another, even because their fellowship is “with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ”. Love is the blessed principle by which they are united, and which animates them in the prosecution of joint efforts, conducted on common principles, in support of the same cause.

Such then are the religious privileges which appear to distinguish, from mankind in general, the members of the true visible church of Christ; and which as it relates to *them*, are universal. They are in a peculiar manner brought out of darkness into marvellous light—they experience the *exceeding* greatness of the power of God revealed in Christ for their salvation—they are cheered by a prospect of immortal joy clearly manifested to them by the gospel; and in a pre-eminent degree they are brought into spiritual fellowship one with another. May the love, which cements together the varied members of this mystical body of Christ, more and more abound: may the barriers which ignorance or prejudice have reared amongst them be broken through and demolished: may christians be enabled increasingly to *strive together* for the hope of the gospel; and while they individually draw nearer to the Fountain of all good, may they be enabled *yet more perfectly*, to enjoy “the communion of the Holy Ghost”,—to “keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”!

CHAPTER II.

ON RELIGIOUS PECULIARITIES.—GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON
THOSE OF THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

THE members of the true visible church of Christ, some of whose common religious privileges have now been described, are divided, as the reader cannot fail to know, into a variety of particular societies. United as they are in the fundamental principles of repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, these societies are distinguished from one another by different and sometimes even opposite views and practices in connexion with several particulars in religion of a less essential character.⁷

When we consider the infirmity and deceitfulness of the heart of man, and remember how often the power of habit and prejudice are found to interfere with a just and enlightened apprehension of truth, it is no

⁷ I am well aware that in the various societies of professing christians, many persons are necessarily included who cannot, on any sound scriptural principle, be considered members of the *true* visible church of Christ. To such nominal professors of religion, under whatever denomination they may be ranged, I am not now alluding; and I must in a particular manner request my reader to observe, that in treating of the Society of Friends as *forming a part of that true church*, my views are directed *only* to those persons of our peculiar profession, who are really living under the influence of vital religion.

matter of wonder that such a result should have taken place. Nor ought we, in tracing the causes of these differences, by any means to forget, that on many points of a merely secondary nature—those particularly which relate to *modes* of worship and of church government—there is to be found, in the divinely authorized records of the christian revelation, very little of precise direction; and thus is there obviously left, in reference to such points, a considerable scope for the formation of different views.

However indeed the diversities, which are permitted in some degree to divide from one another the servants of the same divine Master, may afford many humbling proofs of weakness and imperfection, and in some instances of real degeneracy from the original strength and purity of truth, we ought, nevertheless, to acknowledge that, while christians are preserved in the love and fear of God, these diversities are in various respects *overruled* for their good. The existence of different opinions, respecting minor points, entails on us the necessity of a careful selection of our own particular course, and thus operates indirectly as a stimulus by which we are induced to bestow a closer attention on religion in general. Such a difference of sentiment brings with it moreover a course of *moral discipline*; for many occasions arise out of this source which call for the exercise of christian charity—of mutual liberality, meekness, and forbearance; nor is it unreasonable to suppose that as we rightly avail ourselves of this discipline, it will be one means of preparing us for a perfect unanimity of sentiment in a better state of being. While, lastly, a reasonable hope

may be entertained that, as the church militant proceeds in her appointed career, a gradual yet certain advancement will take place among her members to a state of greater unity and more entire simplicity, yet it can scarcely be denied that in that variety of administration, through which the saving principles of religion are for the present permitted to pass, there is much of a real adaptation to a corresponding variety of mental condition. Well therefore may we bow with thankfulness before that infinite and unsearchable Being who, in all our weakness, *follows us with his love*, and who, through the diversified mediums of religion to which the several classes of *true* christians are respectively accustomed, is still pleased to reveal to them all *the same* crucified Redeemer, and to direct their footsteps into *one* path of obedience, holiness, and peace.

The particular sentiments and practices which distinguish respectively the different classes of true christians, may be denominated *religious peculiarities*;⁸ and before I proceed to the discussion of those which distinguish the Society of Friends, I would invite the candid attention of the reader to two excellent rules, laid down by the apostle Paul, on the subject of somewhat similar distinctions in matters of religion.

The first of these rules enjoins, that christians,

⁸ The term *religious peculiarities* has been adopted for the sake of convenience and perspicuity, and I conceive it to be accurately descriptive of *those opinions and customs which distinguish, from other parts of the church, any one community of christians*. It is far from my intention by the use of such a term, to convey the idea that such distinctions are of little practical consequence. With regard to the religious peculiarities of Friends, it is the very object of the present work to evince their importance, and to show their real connexion with the fundamental principles of the gospel of Christ.

united as they are in the great fundamentals of doctrine and practice, should abstain from judging or condemning one another on account of their minor differences. "Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand;" Rom. xiv. 3, 4.

The differences of opinion and conduct to which Paul was here alluding were indeed of less magnitude, and appertained to matters of less practical importance, than many of those which now exist within the *more extended* borders of the church of Christ; but whatever change may have taken place in this respect in the circumstances of christians, it is plain that the apostle's principle of mutual liberality still holds good; and that, while in our various allotments within the church we are respectively endeavouring to "live unto the Lord", it is our unquestionable duty to refrain from the crimination and condemnation one of another. Had this principle been uniformly observed among those who call themselves christians, where would have been the vexatious disputes, the polemical severity, and above all, the cruel persecutions, which have retarded the progress and disgraced the profession of a pure and peaceable religion?

The apostle's second rule respecting the different views maintained by christians in his own time, is applicable, with an increased degree of force, to those

more important religious peculiarities, by which in the present day the church is divided into classes. "Let every man", says he, "be fully persuaded in his own mind"—a rule to which may be added his emphatic remark, "happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth"; Rom. xiv. 5, 22. In order to obtain that "full persuasion" to which we are thus exhorted, it is plainly necessary for us to comply with another precept of the same inspired writer,—"*prove* all things"; I. Thes. v. 21. That it is very generally desirable for christians, who are arrived at years of sound discretion, to *prove* those peculiar religious principles in which they have been educated,—to examine the foundation on which they rest,—to try them by the test of Scripture and experience,—and more especially, with all humility and devotion of heart, to seek the counsel of God respecting them,—will not be disputed by persons of good sense, candour, and liberality. Such a course seems to be prescribed, not only by the rule already cited, but by the exhortation of the apostle Peter;—"Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue *knowledge*"; II. Pet. i. 5; an exhortation perfectly coincident with the injunction of Paul,—“Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, *but in understanding be men*”; I. Cor. xiv. 20.

This careful and devout examination might, in various instances, lead to the discarding of views and practices which are useless and irrelevant, and which have no favourable influence in promoting the cause of vital and practical religion. On the other hand, should any christian be led by such a proving of his

peculiar principles, to a "*full persuasion*" that, being founded on the law of God, they are calculated to edify himself, and to promote the spiritual welfare of the church in general, it becomes him again to obey the dictate of the apostle, and to "*hold fast that which is good*"; I. Thes. v. 21.

Having premised these general remarks, I shall proceed, in pursuance of my main object, to apply them to the religious peculiarities of that society of christians of which I am myself a member.

There are, I believe, few persons accustomed to a comprehensive view of the whole militant church, and of the course which true religion is taking amongst mankind, who will be disposed to deny that the situation occupied in the body by the Society of Friends is one of considerable importance to the cause of righteousness. My own observation has indeed led me to form the conclusion, that there are some spiritually-minded persons, not immediately connected with Friends, who go still farther, and who even *rejoice* in the consideration, that, among the various classes of the christian church, there is numbered one fraternity who bear a plain and decisive testimony against warfare in all its forms—against oaths under any pretext—and against all hiring or paying of the ministers of the gospel: a fraternity whose practice and history afford a sufficient evidence that God *may be* acceptably and profitably worshipped without the intervention of a single typical ceremony, and without the necessary or constant aid of any human ministry. However such persons may differ from us in the precise view of these very subjects,

they appear to be aware that the *tendency* of our peculiarities is good, and they will allow that christianity in its progress through the world may derive no trifling advantage from the circumstance, that these religious principles are, by *some* at least among the followers of Jesus, plainly and resolutely upheld.

That such an apprehension is well founded—that the consistent and religious part of the Society of Friends are actually occupying an important and useful station in the mystical body of Christ—that their peculiar principles are of an edifying tendency, and are calculated to promote the spiritual welfare, not only of Friends themselves, but of the church in general—is the deliberate conviction of my own mind; and it is probable that the persons for whose use this work is principally intended may very generally unite with me in entertaining that conviction.

If such be the case, I would remind them, that no religious views or practices can be salutary in the long run, or truly promote the spiritual progress of the militant church, which are the mere creatures of human reason and imagination, and which do not arise directly or indirectly out of the essential and unalterable principles of the *law of God*. I may with humility acknowledge my own persuasion, that the religious peculiarities of the Society of Friends do indeed arise out of those principles; and to the proof of this point my future observations respecting them will be chiefly, if not exclusively, directed. In the first place, however, I must call the reader's attention to a few arguments and reflections respecting

an important doctrine of religion, which, although by no means peculiar to Friends, is certainly promulgated amongst them with a peculiar degree of earnestness, and which lies at the root of all their particular views and practices—the doctrine of the *perceptible influence and guidance of the Spirit of truth.*

CHAPTER III.

ON THE PERCEPTIBLE INFLUENCE AND GUIDANCE OF THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH.

IT is generally allowed among the professors of christianity, that in us, that is, in our “flesh”, or *natural man*, dwelleth no good thing; that we are unable of ourselves to fulfil the law of righteousness, or to serve the Lord with acceptance, and that the fountain of all true moral excellence in mankind, is the Spirit of God. The serious and enlightened christian of every denomination will readily confess that it is only through the influence of this Holy Spirit that he is enabled rightly to apprehend God, to know himself, and to accept Jesus Christ as his all-sufficient Saviour—that it is only through such an influence that he is converted in the first place, and afterwards sanctified and prepared for his heavenly inheritance.

The differences of sentiment which exist in the church, on this great subject, have respect not to the question whether the Holy Spirit does or does not operate on the heart of man, for on this question all true christians are agreed; but principally, if not entirely, to the *mode* in which that Spirit operates.

On this point there appears to exist among the professors of christianity, and even among serious christians, a considerable diversity of opinion. Some persons conceive, that the Spirit of God does not influence the heart of man *directly*, but only through the means of certain appointed instruments ; such as the Holy Scriptures, and the word preached. Many others, who allow the direct and independent influences of the Spirit, and deem them absolutely essential to the formation of the christian character, refuse to admit that they are perceptible to the mind, but consider them to be hidden in their action and revealed only in their fruits. Now with Friends (and I believe with very many persons not so denominated) it is a leading principle in religion—a principle on which they deem it to be in a peculiar manner their duty to insist—that the operations of the Holy Spirit in the soul are not only immediate and direct, but perceptible; and that we are all furnished with an inward Guide or Monitor who makes his voice known to us, and who, if faithfully obeyed and closely followed, will infallibly conduct us into true virtue and happiness, because he leads us into a real conformity with the will of God.

That our sentiments on this important subject are well founded—that the principle in question forms a constituent part of the unchangeable truth of God, is satisfactorily evinced, according to our apprehension, by various declarations contained in the Holy Scriptures.

In a former chapter I have called the attention of the reader to the doctrine that a measure of the Spirit

of the Son of God is bestowed upon all mankind, and I have endeavoured to shew it to be in reference to his spiritual appearance in the hearts of his creatures, that Christ is styled “the *true light* which lighteth every man that cometh into the world”. Now it is certain that nothing can justly be denominated *light*, which does not *make manifest*. “All things that are reprov’d”, says the apostle Paul, “are made manifest by the light, for *whatsoever doth make manifest is light*”; Eph. v. 13. Since then Christ, or the Spirit of Christ, in those operations which are altogether internal and independent of an outward revelation, is *light*, it is plain that this Spirit in such inward operations *makes manifest*—communicates an actual moral sense—teaches what is right and what is wrong, in a perceptible or intelligible manner. Thus the Psalmist prayed as follows; “O send out thy light and thy truth, let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill and to thy tabernacles”; Ps. xliii. 3. The light and the truth for which he thus offered up his petitions, could not be the written law of which he was already in possession: the expressions are rather to be understood of the light of God’s countenance, and the truth revealed by his Spirit; and these, according to the views of the Psalmist, were at once perceptible and powerful, for they were to *lead* him in the way of righteousness, and to bring him to the holy hill and tabernacles of God.

Under the christian dispensation the Holy Spirit is poured forth in pre-eminent abundance, as has been already observed and as the Scriptures testify, *on the souls of true believers in Jesus Christ*. Of the oper-

ations of divine grace under this new covenant, none of the inspired writers appear to have enjoyed a clearer view than the apostle Paul. Often was he led to expatiate on the Spirit who “dwells” in the children of God, and who enables them, on the one hand, to mortify their carnal affections, and, on the other, to bear the peaceable fruits of righteousness. It is *in* or *after* this Spirit that the apostle commands us to *walk*: “If we live in the Spirit let us also *walk* in the Spirit;” Gal. v. 25: and again, to the Romans, he says, “there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, *who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*”; Rom. viii. 1. Now to walk in or after the Spirit who dwells in us, can be nothing less than to conform our life and conversation to his dictates; and this we could not do unless those dictates were perceptible to the mind. On the same principles the apostle has on two occasions described christians as persons who are led by the Spirit. “If ye be *led* of the Spirit, ye are not under the law;” Gal. v. 18. “For as many as are *led* by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God;” Rom. viii. 14. Any one, who impartially examines the two chapters from which these quotations are derived, will easily perceive that the *leading*, of which Paul is here speaking, is not the instruction derived from inspired preaching, or from divinely authorised Scripture, but an internal work carried on by the Spirit in the soul of man. If then there be given to us an internal communication of the Spirit of truth by which we are to be *led*, it is surely very plain that such communication must be made manifest to our

mental perception, or otherwise we could not follow it.

The Spirit whose practical influence the apostle thus describes is the Spirit of Christ. With this inspired writer the declarations *that the Spirit is in us* and *that Christ is in us* appear to be equivalent. “But ye”, says he, “are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the *Spirit of Christ*, he is none of his. And if *Christ* be in you, the body is dead, because of (or as it relates to) sin; but the Spirit is life because of (or as it relates to) righteousness”; Rom. viii. 9, 10. Since then the apostle teaches us that we are to be led by the Spirit, and that the Spirit by whom we are to be led is the Spirit of Christ, we may without difficulty understand the principle on which Christ is denominated “the Shepherd and Bishop of souls”; I. Pet. ii. 25.

The character of Jesus, as the Shepherd of his people, was unfolded in very touching expressions by our Lord himself. “I am the good Shepherd”, said he, “and know my sheep, and am known of mine, . . . other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd”.—“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand;” John x. 14, 16, 27, 28. The disciples of Jesus who were gathered to him during his short abode upon the earth, undoubtedly enjoyed the privilege of being instructed by his outward voice, but that voice of Christ, which was to be afterwards heard by his sheep who

were not of the Jewish fold, and which is still heard by his faithful followers, whom he leads "in the way of righteousness", we may conclude to be the voice of his Spirit—a voice inwardly communicated to the soul of man. Such a view of our Lord's pastoral office and of the method by which it is conducted, is perfectly accordant with the promise which he made to his disciples on a subsequent occasion:—"I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of Truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he *dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*" "But the comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall *teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance* whatsoever I have said unto you;" John xiv. 16, 17, 26.—"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, shall come, he will *guide you into all truth*; for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak; and he shall shew you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine and *shall show it unto you*;" John xvi. 13, 14.

These passages contain a plain description of the *perceptible* guidance of the Spirit of Christ; and the same doctrine was declared with equal clearness by the apostle John, at a period when the promises thus made by the Lord Jesus had been graciously fulfilled in the experience of his disciples. "But ye", says the apostle, "have an unction from the Holy One, and ye *know* all things" "The *anointing* which

ye have received of him *abideth in you*, and ye need not that any man teach you : but *as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie*, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him ;” I. John ii. 20, 27.

It may indeed be remarked that the disciples who personally received these promises, and many of those primitive christians whom the apostle was thus addressing, were endowed for special purposes with miraculous powers, and with a correspondent *extraordinary* measure of the Holy Spirit; but it cannot, I think, with any reason be denied that the promise of the Holy Ghost, the fulfilment of which is described in this passage of the epistle of John, was addressed to *all who might believe in all ages of the church of Christ*. “He that believeth on me”, said the Saviour, “out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water”, John vii. 38; and in a passage already cited, he expressly declared that the Spirit whom he thus promised to believers should abide with them “*for ever*”. “Repent”, cried the apostle Peter to the listening multitude, “and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. *For the promise is unto you and unto your children, and to all that are afar off, even unto as many as the Lord our God shall call*”; Acts ii. 38, 39. Hence, therefore, it follows that the true believers in Jesus, of every description and in all ages, are in a peculiar and pre-eminent manner visited and guided by the Comforter. No longer are they to *depend* on the teaching of their fellow creatures, for the anointing which they have received of

Christ abideth in them, and teacheth them of all things, and is truth, and no lie.

Such was indeed one of the most striking characteristics of that new dispensation under which all real christians are living ; and I cannot better conclude this selection of scriptural evidences on the perceptible inward guidance of the Holy Spirit, than by citing a well-known prophetic description of that dispensation :—“ Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah : not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt ; which my covenant they brake, though I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord ; but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel ; after those days, saith the Lord ; *I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts ;* and will be their God, and they shall be my people. *And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord : for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them,* saith the Lord ; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more ;” Jer. xxxi. 31—34. *comp.* Heb. viii. 8—13.

Thus explicit are the declarations contained in both the Old and New Testaments, respecting the actual illumination of divine grace—the intelligible voice of the true Shepherd—the perceptible guidance and instruction of the Spirit of Truth in the souls of men.

While it may be hoped that the spiritually-minded

christian will readily admit the force of these scriptural evidences, and will cheerfully embrace that profitable truth which they so clearly unfold, it is not to be forgotten, that *the human imagination is very active and very delusive*; and that persons who are superficial in religion, or who are not sufficiently watchful, may sometimes mistake the unauthorized dictates of their own minds for the voice of a divine and unerring guide. That errors of this description have on many occasions occurred must be freely allowed; and that under particular circumstances they may probably continue to occur, will not be denied by those, who are sufficiently aware of the infirmity and deceitfulness of the heart of man. It appears, therefore, on the one hand, that the inward illumination of the Spirit of God is mercifully bestowed on us as a perceptible guide to righteousness; and on the other hand, that we are exceedingly liable to be led about by the dictates of our own imagination. Such a view of the subject necessarily introduces the enquiry by what characteristics the voice of the Lord's Spirit and the voice of unauthorized human imagination in matters of religion, may be distinguished from each other.

That the two influences of which I have spoken,—the true guide and the false guide, are in reality absolutely distinct, different, and sometimes even opposite, the least reflection may serve to convince us. The true guide is the “day-spring from on high”, and comes immediately from God, in whom there is no mixture of evil, and who is the original and unfailing source of all good. The false guide is the creature of

human infirmity and misapprehension, and frequently the source out of which it arises is positively evil and corrupt. Those who are faithfully following the true guide are the dedicated children of a holy God. Those who are following only the false guide have constructed for themselves an *unsound* religion, and are mere enthusiasts.

As the voice of the true Shepherd and the voice of the stranger are thus really distinct and in fact opposed to one another, so, I believe, the sincere and humble christian, who has been taught the lesson of waiting upon God, and whose religion is of no shallow character, will be, by divine grace, enabled to discern the one from the other. He will find that they are clearly distinguished, first, by the mode of their operation, and secondly, by the fruits which they produce.

First, with respect to the mode of their operation. The human imagination, when applied to matters of religion, may often be justly described as working in the whirlwind. It is violent in its impulses: it lays hold of us, and leads us astray when we are in a condition of restlessness and temporary confusion, and when the disquietude in which we find ourselves, affords a sufficient evidence to any candid mind, that *self* is predominant. On the other hand, the voice of Christ in the heart is not more pure than *gentle*. Justly may it be denominated the "*still small voice*", and clearly is the mode of its operation, as distinguished from the mode in which the dictates of mere imagination operate, *illustrated* by that part of the history of the prophet Elijah, from which these expressions are borrowed. When Elijah

stood before the Lord on mount Horeb, we read that “the Lord passed by, and a great and a strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord ; but *the Lord was not in the wind* : and after the wind an earthquake ; but *the Lord was not in the earthquake* : and after the earthquake a fire ; but *the Lord was not in the fire* : and after the fire *a still small voice*”! I. Kings xix. 11, 12. When the pride of the heart is laid low, when the activity of human reasoning is quieted, when the soul is reduced to a state of silent subjection in the presence of its Creator, then is this “still small voice” intelligibly heard, and the word of the Lord as it is inwardly revealed to us, becomes “a lamp” unto our “feet” and a “light” unto our “paths”. Here it may not be improper to remark, that in order to maintain this state of humble and quiet dependence upon God, the habit of a frequent retirement from the common occupations of life is of great use and importance. Nevertheless, such a frame of mind may be preserved even when we are engaged in the pursuits of business. Watchful christians are taught to live with a heart subjected before the Lord, and with an eye ever directed towards him in real simplicity. While such is their condition, the true guide to peace will not forsake them. When they turn to the right hand or when they turn to the left, a voice shall still be found to follow them, saying, “*This is the way, walk ye in it*”. If, however, there are persons (as I believe there are) of real piety, who sincerely desire to follow the guidance of their Lord and Master, and yet have not learned to distinguish as they would wish to do, the internal manifestations

of his Holy Spirit, let them not be unprofitably discouraged. Let them rather pursue their course in humble reliance on the mercy of God, and let them cultivate the animating hope, that, as they are preserved in dedication to the divine will and grow in grace, they will gradually become better acquainted with the word of the Lord within them, and will be comforted, in a greater degree, with the light of his countenance. See Isa. l. 10.

Secondly, with regard to the fruits which these opposite influences respectively produce, the suggestions of the human imagination in matters of religion, as they prevail over us when we are in a state of restlessness and confusion, so when they are followed they confirm and aggravate that condition. While they tend only to the elevation of self, and to the gratification of the eager desires of the unsubdued mind, they may indeed inflame us with a false and misdirected zeal, but they can never soften the obdurate heart, bring the restless mind into stillness, or truly pacify the troubled conscience. On the contrary, the sure effect of obedience to the "still small voice" of our Divine Master in the soul, is quietness, tenderness, humility, true sanity of mind, and substantial peace.

But we may extend our views farther, and consider the consequences of these respective influences, not only on the inward frame of the mind, but on the outward conduct and conversation of the man. Here the difference between the fruits of two distinct and even opposite principles becomes completely manifest. The imaginations of the heart of man, when not

subdued and rectified by the power of divine grace, are continually prone to evil, and however Satan may transform himself into an “angel of light”, and conceal his operations under the cover of a religious profession, and even of a sincere enthusiasm, his fruits will still be fruits of darkness and unrighteousness; and those who in the heat of their own spirits commit themselves, without reserve, to so delusive and perilous a guidance, will not fail to make shipwreck, in many particulars, of the great moral principles of the gospel of Christ. Again and again will they be found breaking the law of their Redeemer,—the law of kindness, charity, order, submission, gentleness, integrity, purity, or peace. And truly the end of such a course is sorrow. “Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand, *ye shall lie down in sorrow* ;” Isa. l. 11.

On the other hand, those who follow the Lord’s Spirit will assuredly be found to bear the *fruits* of the Spirit, which are “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Against such there is no law”; Gal. v. 22, 23. That there are very many persons not of our religious body who are endeavouring to follow the Spirit as a *perceptible guide*, there can be little doubt. Nevertheless there will, I trust, be no impropriety in my making an appeal, in connexion with the present branch of my argument, to the observation and experience of those persons to whom this work is principally addressed. However discouragement may often overtake

us through the misconduct of unsound brethren, my young friends with myself have undoubtedly enjoyed a very easy opportunity of observing the life and conversation of many persons, who profess that the internal manifestations of the Holy Spirit are their rule of life; and who by a long and tried course of patience, submission, and self-denial, have fully evinced the sincerity of their profession. Now we are certainly well aware, and we need not, I think, fear to acknowledge, that the character and deportment of such persons is distinguished for sobriety and substantial excellence, and that however varied they may be as to their situations in life, their talents, and their gifts, they resemble one another in this main characteristic—that they are fulfilling the law of love, and living a life of piety and usefulness.

Our observation of others may suffice to convince us that when that great principle of religion to which I am now adverting, is conscientiously and strictly maintained, these pure and lovely fruits are invariably produced. And further, as far as we ourselves also, who are younger in religious growth, have been enabled to order our conversation by the same rule, and to “mind the same thing”, our own experience will oblige us to confess that the Shepherd of Israel, as he is *thus* followed, is a safe guide, and that he would ever lead us away from the snares of the enemy, from the vanities and sensualities of the world, and from the pride of life, into humility, charity, and pure morality. Finally, may we not with gratitude acknowledge, that in observing the latter days and death of many faithful servants of the Lord who once

occupied a place among us, we have been furnished with ample evidence, that the end of a life passed in obedience to the inward monitions of the Spirit, united with a dependence on Christ as an all-sufficient Saviour, is *quietness and peace*.

That God is *able* to illuminate the souls of men with the immediate visitations of spiritual light, the most incredulous metaphysician will not venture to deny. On the other hand, we may readily accede to the principle laid down by the celebrated Locke, that we can entertain no reasonable confidence in any supposed inward spiritual illumination, farther than as we are furnished with evidence that such illumination proceeds from God; See *Essay on the Human Understanding*, Book iii. ch. 19. Now, that the perceptible influence of the Holy Spirit on the soul, proceeds from God, the christian enjoys satisfactory evidence—first, in the declarations of Scripture that such an influence shall be bestowed upon him—and secondly, in the practical results into which it leads. “He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself;” I. John v. 10. He brings his own sensations to the test of experience. *He knows the tree by its fruits*.

This general argument will be found to derive confirmation from a view which we may now briefly take of some main *particular* characteristics in the practical operation of this perceptible guidance. In discussing those characteristics, I must of course be understood as appealing to the experience of my readers; and happy should I be were my observations to serve as way-marks to any of them, by which they may learn

more accurately to distinguish the spirit of truth from the spirit of error.

1. The light of the Spirit of Christ in the heart *tends to the humiliation of man*: for, in the first place, it reveals to him his many iniquities, and affords him the clearest evidence that he is fallen, corrupt, and prone to evil; and, in the second place, as he endeavours to follow this light, he is again and again instructed in the lesson, that his own strength is utter weakness, and that he can do no good thing of himself. Besides, it is ever to be remembered, that divine grace in the soul is not only light, but power. It softens all that is hard, and levels as with the dust all that is lofty within us; those persons, therefore, who are truly subject to it, will of necessity become *tender, contrite, and lowly, of heart*. The operation of the same principle tends moreover to the *exaltation of Christ*. That light and that power which convince us of our own iniquities, lead us also to form a right estimate of the character and merits of our Lord: and while in our endeavours to follow his guidance, we are brought to the humbling discovery of our own weakness and worthlessness; we are taught that in this weakness, the strength of Christ is made perfect; and we cannot but extol that Saviour, who supports us in every difficulty, arms us against every temptation, restores our souls, and leads us in the path of righteousness for his name's sake.

2. Since fallen man is corrupt and perverse; since his natural inclinations, if not checked in their operation, will infallibly lead him, under some form or other,

into the vanities of the world and the sins of the flesh ; and since it is the great purpose of the christian system, to recover him from this lost condition, and to bring him into conformity with the will of God, we may rest assured that the true voice of Christ in the heart will conduct us in the path of *daily self denial*. And such undoubtedly is the experience of all those persons who have committed themselves to the guidance of this inward Monitor. They find that he leads them through the “strait gate” and by the “narrow way”, and that in order to follow him, it is indispensably necessary for them to resist their own desires, and to mortify those perverted selfish principles, which constitute the character of the natural man.

When our Lord declared that if any man would come after him, he *must take up his cross* and follow him—(the cross being the instrument employed for the infliction of capital punishment)—he might perhaps intend to impress upon his immediate followers, that in order to be *his* disciples, they must be willing even to die for his name’s sake. Such a doctrine was well adapted to the circumstances in which these persons were placed : but in that spiritual sense of which our Lord’s words are obviously capable, it will be found to coincide with the experience of every real christian. None can “follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth”, without being conformed to his sufferings—without bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus—without dying themselves to the lusts of the world, the sins of the flesh, and the pride of life. “We are buried with Christ by baptism *unto death*, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead

by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life;" Rom. vi. 4. But let us not fear this death, or shrink from the cross of Christ! He who imposes it in order to our highest good, will render it more than tolerable; and it is the enemy of our souls, who magnifies in our view the pain and difficulty of bearing it. To the dependent, simple, yet decided christian, the yoke of Jesus becomes easy and his burthen light.

3. Those who resist and grieve their heavenly Guide, and quench that delicate flame of light with which he condescends to visit them, gradually envelop themselves in gross darkness. They become incapable of the instructions of their divine Monitor, and thus they continually form a lower and a lower standard respecting right and wrong. On the contrary, the Spirit of Christ, as it is closely followed and scrupulously obeyed, rectifies, illuminates, and quickens, the faculties of the conscience. Our perceptions of good and evil become more and more just and lively, and at the same time our apprehension of spiritual things is enlarged and strengthened. Thus is accomplished in the experience of his followers the promise of the Lord Jesus, that "unto every one that hath shall be given"; Matt. xxv. 29. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day;" Prov. iv. 18.

4. Since the inward manifestations of divine light in the soul, if attended to, lead invariably into the practice of christian virtues; and since those virtues are clearly described and enjoined in the Holy Scriptures (especially in the New Testament); it is

plain that these two practical guides to righteousness, will ever be found in accordance with one another. The law written in the book, and the law written in the heart, have proceeded from the same Author: the only standard of both these laws is the will of God; and the former corresponds with the latter, as the image in the mirror corresponds with its original. It ought, however, to be remarked that the written law, for the most part, consists in *general directions*. Now the inward manifestations of the Spirit of Christ, while they confirm the principles on which those general directions are founded, will instruct us how to apply them in our daily walk, and under all the various circumstances and exigencies of life. For example, the outward law declares, "thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself". The inward law will not only inculcate the same rule, but will point out to the obedient followers of Christ, in what manner, and on what occasions this love is to be brought into action.

5. It is worthy, in the last place, of particular observation, that the monitions of the Holy Spirit within us, direct an *exact, comprehensive, and unmixed*, obedience to the will of God. How imperfect is the obedience of those persons, who acknowledge only the written law, and who in the application of that law to the various incidents and occasions of human life, are accustomed to seek no other direction than that of their own reason, and to depend upon no other strength than that of their own wills! While in the secret of their hearts there dwells a spirit of rebellion against that Lord who would lead them into

self-mortification; how readily can they plead excuses and urge the doctrine of expediency in opposition to the dictates of truth! Notwithstanding their professed regard to the Scriptures, how soon does their moral sense degenerate, and how easily do they learn to “call evil good, and good evil”, to put “darkness for light, and light for darkness”, to put “bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter”! Isa. v. 20. In such unsound professors of religion, there is no full coming out—no effectual emancipation—from that which is evil in the sight of God.

It may, moreover, be questioned whether something of the same kind of imperfection may not be detected in the experience even of seriously-minded christians, who, while their dependence is mainly placed on the grace of God, are not fully believing in the light of Christ, *as it is inwardly revealed to the soul*. I am, in some measure, aware of the depth of human iniquity, and know how difficult it is to escape from its secret influence; but I believe that christians would not be so much perplexed as they often are with a sense of imperfection and sin in the performance of their various religious duties, were that performance less of themselves and more of God; were it less dictated by the activity of their own minds, and derived with greater simplicity from the fountain of all good. Great as is our own infirmity, deep as is our natural defilement, it is certain that the inward Guide, of whom we are speaking, is *entirely holy*, and he still upholds to his followers the very highest standard of action—“*Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*” He com-

mands them to be of clean hands, and to refrain completely from every thing which his own light has made manifest to be evil. He admits of no excuses; he sacrifices his law to no apparent expediency; he is satisfied with no mixed obedience; and when he calls us into active duties and more especially into religious services, he is ever ready to assist us in our humble endeavour to offer unto the Lord an “offering in righteousness”—even a *pure* offering.

Such are the tests and such are the fruits of the perceptible guidance of the Holy Spirit in the soul. In reverting to the course of argument adopted in the present disquisition, the reader will recollect that the doctrine of such perceptible guidance rests upon the authority of Scripture; being clearly declared by the prophet Jeremiah, by the apostles John and Paul, and by our Lord himself—that the dictates of the Spirit, which lead into truth, are totally distinct from the dictates of the human imagination, which lead into enthusiasm;—that the two principles are to be distinguished, first, by the mode of their operation, and, secondly, by the fruits which they produce—that the dictates of the Spirit operate in a *gentle* manner on the waiting and prostrate soul—that the fruits of the Spirit are the “peaceable fruits of righteousness”—that these fruits afford a substantial evidence of the divine origin of that guiding principle which leads to the production of them—and, lastly, that this general argument is greatly strengthened when we come to trace some particular characteristics in the practical operation of the principle in question; for as it is closely followed, it is ever found to lead to the

humiliation of men, and to the exaltation of Christ; to the denial of self, and to the bearing of the cross; to the increase of moral and spiritual light; to the confirmation and right application of the divine law as it is recorded in the Holy Scriptures, and to a peculiarly *exact* fulfilment of that law.

Before I dismiss the subject of the perceptible guidance of the Spirit, it is necessary for me somewhat more distinctly than I have hitherto done, to advert to the outward religious points which distinguish the Society of Friends. The principal of them may be enumerated as follows:—their disuse of all typical observances in the worship of God: their refusal to recognize any ministry in connexion with divine worship, which they do not conceive to be dictated by the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit: their acceptance of the public ministry of females: their objection to human ordination, and also to the paying or hiring of preachers: their practice of silent worship: their abstaining from all warfare, and from the use of oaths: their plainness in speech, behaviour, and apparel. In the preceding chapter has been advanced the sentiment (which I believe to be held by many persons without as well as within the pale of the Society) that these peculiarities are of an edifying *tendency*, and that the maintenance of them by Friends is calculated to promote the spiritual welfare of the church at large. It has also been observed that this can be true, only inasmuch as they arise out of the principles of the divine law: and

I have stated that in the future discussion of them, it was my intention to direct my remarks chiefly to the proof of this very point—*that they arise out of the principles of the divine law.*

Now the first argument to be adduced in support of this position, is immediately connected with the doctrine unfolded in the present chapter. If the question be addressed to us why we consider it to be our duty to adopt our several religious peculiarities, we may answer, *because we believe we have been led into them by the Spirit of truth.* The casual observer indeed may attribute our maintenance of them to the mere force of habit and education, and certainly there is much reason to apprehend that with too many amongst us they rest upon no better foundation. Nevertheless, you whom I am now addressing can scarcely fail to be aware, that with *real* Friends, the adoption and punctual observance of such a line of conduct, are not only matters of honest principle, but are truly the consequences of obedience to their *inward Guide.* It is a fact which the world can scarcely be expected to notice, but which is well known to every experienced Quaker, and will not be denied by any persons who possess an intimate knowledge of the Society, that the *very same guiding and governing principle which leads the sincere-hearted and serious amongst Friends into the practice of universally-acknowledged christian virtues, leads them also into these peculiarities.* I am not asserting that such would necessarily be the experience of all persons who endeavour to follow the guidance of the Spirit; nor would I in any

respect venture to set limits to the sovereignty, freedom, scope, and variety, of divine operation. I assert only that this is *our own* experience. Such, therefore, being our experience, we cannot but derive from it a strong and satisfactory conviction, that our religious peculiarities truly appertain to the law of God; for it is certain that the Spirit of truth, by whose influence alone men are made truly righteous, and brought into conformity with the divine will, will never lead *any* of the followers of Jesus into a course of conduct which is not founded on the principles of that law. The inward manifestations of the Spirit are in themselves *the law of God written on the heart*.

I may now proceed to confirm this general argument by more particular observations on the several peculiarities already enumerated; and in endeavouring to trace the connexion of each of them with the law of God, I shall appeal to the principles of that law as they are unfolded in the New Testament. For I consider that it is only under the new and more spiritual dispensation, that the divine law is revealed to us in all its purity and in all its completeness.

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE DISUSE OF ALL TYPICAL RITES IN THE WORSHIP OF GOD.

ALTHOUGH it is almost universally allowed among christians that when the New Covenant was established in the world by the death of Christ, the ceremonial observances of the Jewish law were abolished, there are two religious rites of a very similar description, the maintenance of which is still very generally insisted upon, as necessary to the edification and true order of the church of Christ. These rites are *baptism with water*, and that participation of bread and wine which is usually denominated the *sacrament of the Lord's supper*. So great is the virtue and efficacy attributed to these ceremonies, that they are considered by very many christians to be especial means of grace; or mediums through which grace is conveyed to the soul, and not a few theologians both ancient and modern, appear to have entertained the extraordinary opinion that the rite of baptism more especially, is of indispensable necessity in order to man's salvation.

On the other hand I am informed, that in some parts of the continent of Europe, there are small societies of pious christians by whom water-baptism and the ceremony of the Lord's supper are entirely disused;⁹ and that such is the fact in the Society of Friends is very generally understood. It is our belief that we have been led out of the practice of these rites by the Spirit of truth; that we could not recur to them without grieving our heavenly Monitor; and that in fact they are not in accordance with the entire spirituality of the gospel dispensation.

In order to explain our principle on the subject with clearness, I must remark *in limine* that the ceremonies in question, as now practised among christians, must be considered as constituting a part of *their system of worship*: for they are, in the first place, in the strictest sense of the terms, *religious rites* performed in supposed obedience to the command of the Almighty; and, secondly, they are employed in immediate connexion with the more direct and generally with the public acts of divine worship. Such being the state of the case, the objection of Friends to the use of these ordinances will be perceived to have its foundation in a principle of acknowledged importance, and one which is clearly revealed in the New Testament, that under the christian dispensation, the worship of God is not to be formal, ceremonial, or typical, but simply spiritual.

This principle was declared in a clear and forcible manner by Jesus Christ himself. When the woman

⁹ This is the case as I understand with the Inspirés in Germany and with the Malakans in South Russia.

of Samaria with whom he condescended to converse by the well of Sychar, spake to him of the worship observed by the Jews at Jerusalem, and by the Samaritans on mount Gerizim, our Lord answered “Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father....The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father *in spirit and in truth*; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth”; John iv. 21—24. In this passage of our Lord’s discourse, there is an evident allusion to two separate and distinct systems of worship, appertaining respectively to two different dispensations; and it is equally clear that the change was then about to take place from one of these to the other; that the one was about to be abolished—the other to be established. The system of worship about to be abolished was that which the Jews were accustomed to practice at Jerusalem and which the Samaritans had endeavoured to imitate on their favourite mountain. Now every one who is acquainted with the records of the Old Testament, must be aware that this was a system of worship chiefly consisting in outward ceremonies; in figurative or typical ordinances. The greatest nicety of divine direction accompanied the institution of these various rites which were a “figure for the time then present”, and which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on the Israelites *until the time of reformation*; Heb. ix. 10. But now that *time of reformation* was at hand, and the law was

pronounced by the great Mediator of the New Covenant, that men were henceforward to worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The new worship which was thus to distinguish christianity, was to be *in spirit*; because it was to consist, not in outward rites of a formal and ceremonial nature, but in services dictated by the Spirit of the Lord, and in direct communion of the soul with its Creator. It was to be *in truth*; not simply as arising out of a sincere heart—a description which might apply with equal force to the abolished worship of the Jews—but because it was to consist in substantial realities. It was to be carried on, not through the old medium of types and figures, but by the application to the heart of the great and essential truths of the gospel dispensation; for the type was now to be exchanged for the antitype; the figure for the thing figured; the shadow for the substance.¹ Such then and such exclusively is the true character of christian worship.

Here it may be proper to remark, that we ought by no means to disparage the forms and ceremonies of the Jewish law, as connected with the covenant to which they appertained. We cannot forget that this ministration of worship was appointed by the Almighty himself, nor can we refuse to acknowledge that it was, in its own time, glorious. For although these ceremonies could not make him that did the service perfect as pertaining to the conscience, yet was the whole system of which they formed a part, perfectly

¹ A similar explanation of our Lord's expressions respecting christian worship, will be found in the commentaries of the following biblical critics—Theophylact, Calvin, Jac. Cappellus, Grotius, Rosenmüller, Whitby, Gill, Scott, and Doddridge.

adapted by divine wisdom to the condition of the Israelites, and the ritual law served a purpose of high importance to the ultimate promotion of the cause of righteousness. To that purpose we have already alluded: it was to typify, prefigure, and *introduce* the better, purer, and *more* glorious ministration of the gospel: for it is precisely in reference to these ceremonial observances, that the apostle describes the Jewish law as being “a figure for the time then present”; and as “having a *shadow of good things to come*”; Heb. ix. 9, x. 1.

But important as was the purpose thus answered by the establishment and maintenance of the ceremonial law, it was one of a merely temporary nature. When the Messiah was come—when he had revealed the spiritual character of his own dispensation—when he had died for our sins—when he had risen again for our justification—when he had shed forth on his disciples the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit—then were all the types fulfilled; *then was the law of types abolished*. “There is verily” saith the apostle “a disannulling of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof; for the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God”; Heb. vii. 18, 19. Again, “Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared *me*: in burnt offerings and (sacrifices) for sin thou hast had no pleasure: then said I, Lo! I come, (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above, when he said Sacrifice and offering and

burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein ; which are offered by the law ; then said he, lo ! I come to do thy will, O God. *He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second ;*" Heb. x. 5—9. The system of types and sacrificial ordinances therefore being "taken away", and the system of spiritualities being by the coming of Christ established, we are no longer to worship the Father through the intervention of a human priesthood, of formal ceremonies, or of typical institutions, but *solely* through the mediation of the High Priest of our profession, and under the immediate and all-sufficient influences of the Holy Ghost. Although the shadows of the old law formed an essential part of the *Jewish* dispensation, they were no sooner imposed upon christians than they became *unlawful*, and assumed the character of an unrighteous bondage and of "beggarly elements" ; Gal. iv. 9. "Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ, from the rudiments of the world", says the apostle Paul to his Colossian converts, "why, as though living in the world, *are ye subject to ordinances*?" Col. ii. 20, *comp.* 14, Eph. ii. 14—16.

Having thus endeavoured to unfold the nature of that spiritual worship of God which the Lord Jesus enjoined on his followers, and to show how clearly it was distinguished from the old ceremonial worship practised among the Jews, I may now take up the more particular consideration of the rites of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. These rites have both received the name of "sacraments",—a word which properly signifies *oaths*, and formerly designated more especially the oaths of allegiance required of Roman soldiers ;

but which, as applied to these religious ceremonies, may be considered as denoting “sacred and obligatory ordinances”.

It is imagined by many persons, that the ordinances, thus held to be of a sacred and binding character in the church, are but little connected with those Jewish institutions, which are on all hands allowed to have been abolished by the coming and sacrifice of the Messiah; that they are on the contrary, (with the single exception of the baptism of John) of an origin exclusively christian. On the supposition of the correctness of this opinion, it is nevertheless undeniable that these rites, as they are now observed, are of *precisely the same nature* as the ceremonies of the ancient Jews. They are actions indifferent in themselves, employed as religious forms and as a constituent part of a system of divine worship; and like those Jewish ceremonies, they are mere types or shadows, representing in a figurative manner certain great particulars of christian truth. It is plain, therefore, that the *principle* on which these practices are founded appertains to the old covenant; and equally plain (in the opinion of Friends) that such practices are not in accordance with that *entirely* spiritual worship, which is described as so distinguishing a feature of the dispensation of the gospel.

Although, however, the rites of baptism and the supper have been so generally adopted, as appertaining to their own religious system, by the professors of faith in Jesus, I cannot consider it true in any accurate sense of the terms, that they are of christian origin. On the contrary, there is every reason to believe, that

before the coming of Christ these practices actually formed a part of the customary Jewish ritual.

First, with respect to *baptism in water*. It is notorious, that according to the ceremonial law of the Jews there could be no removal of uncleanness, no purification either of things or persons, without ablution in water. On various occasions the performance of that ceremony was appointed by the divine law, and on many others it was observed on the authority of Rabbinical tradition. Now these "divers carnal washings", to which the Jews were so much accustomed as a ritual means of purification, are in the Greek Testament described as *baptisms*, Heb. ix. 10, Mark vii. 4, Luke xi. 38; and it is certain that the principal of them were effected by dipping or immersion. Before going into the temple to minister or officiate, the priests of the Jews were accustomed to dip their whole body in water, and the house in which this ceremony was performed was denominated "the house of baptism"; *Cod. Joma, c. 3, quoted by Hammond on Matt. iii.* Persons of every description who had contracted any bodily pollution, were strictly enjoined by the law to wash or *bathe* their flesh, see Levit. xv. 5, 8, 11; and the learned Jews determine, that if the least part of the surface of the body was not wetted by the dipping, the purification was incomplete. In the Greek original of the book of Ecclesiasticus, a person purified after touching a dead body, is described as one *dipped* or *baptized*; ch. xxxiv. 25. Judith, when on the point of performing an action which she erroneously deemed to be of a highly religious nature, "washed (or, as in the Greek, baptized) herself in a fountain

of water": ch. xii. 7. The Jew not only washed, but, on particular occasions, *dipped* himself before he sat down to meat; Mark vii. 4, Luke xi. 38, *Greek text*. Now although the baptism practised by John and by the apostles did not in all its circumstances resemble those Jewish washings to which I have now adverted, yet it was precisely similar to them in that main particular of *immersion in water*, and in all these instances this immersion was typical of one and the same thing—that is to say, of *a change from a condition of uncleanness to one of comparative purity*. But the Jewish dipping from which the baptism first of John and afterwards of the apostles principally took its rise, and of which those baptisms may indeed be considered as mere instances, was the *dipping on conversion*. We read in the book of Exodus that three days before the delivery of the law, “the Lord said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to-day and to-morrow, and let them *wash their clothes*”; in pursuance of which command, we are afterwards informed that “Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and *they washed their clothes*”; Exod. xix. 10, 14. From the comparison of other similar passages, it appears probable that the washing of clothes here mentioned was a baptism or immersion in water of the whole body together with the apparel; *comp.* Levit. xi. 25, xiv. 47, xv. 5, &c. Such is the express judgment of the Rabbinical writers, and they further determine that this baptism was commanded and observed, on the principle that the Israelites were then about to be introduced to a new religious cove-

nant or dispensation ;—that, in other words, it was a *baptism of conversion* to a purer and more excellent system of worship, faith, and conduct, than that to which they had hitherto been accustomed ; *Maimonides Issure Biah, cap. 13, Lightfoot Hor. Heb. in Matt. iii. 6.*

Hence, as it is declared by Maimonides and other Jewish writers, arose the *baptism of proselytes*, or of the Gentile converts to the religion of the Jews.² It was a principle well understood amongst that people, that *as it was with the Israelite so it should be with the proselyte* ; see Num. xv. 15 : and accordingly, as the Israelites had entered into their covenant by “circumcision, baptism, and sacrifice”, the same introductory rites were considered indispensable to the proselyte. According to the traditions of the Rabbins, circumcision, baptism, and sacrifice, were enjoined on every male and the two latter on every female convert from heathenism to the Jewish faith. It was a trite axiom, as Lightfoot informs us, that no man could be a proselyte, until he was circumcised and baptized. In the Babylonish Gemara, (part of the Talmud) we find the following disputation. “The proselyte who is circumcised and not baptized—what are we to say of him ? Rabbi Eliezer says, Behold he is a proselyte ; for so we find it was with our fathers (the Patriarchs) that they were circumcised and not baptized. He that is baptized and not circumcised—what are we to say of him ? Rabbi

² The proselytes were of two descriptions : *proselytes of the gate*, who forsook idolatry and worshipped the true God, but did not conform to the Jewish law, and *proselytes of justice*, who went farther and embraced the whole legal and ceremonial system. It was the latter only who were baptized.

Joshua says, Behold he is a proselyte, for so we find it is with females. *But the wise men say, Is he baptized and not circumcised? or is he circumcised and not baptized? He is no proselyte until he be circumcised and baptized.*" *Jevamoth fol. 46, 2. Lightfoot Hor. Heb. in Matt. iii. 6.*

Maimonides, who was a man of extraordinary sense and learning, and was deeply versed in the laws and customs of the ancient Jews, has stated a variety of particulars respecting the baptism of proselytes. It appears that about three days after circumcision, the convert to Judaism was conducted during the day time, to a confluence of waters whether natural or artificial, sufficiently deep to admit of entire immersion. Having been placed in the water, he was instructed in various particulars of the Jewish law, by three scribes of learning and authority who presided over the whole ceremony; and when these doctors had received his promises of a faithful adherence to the Jewish institutions, and had fully satisfied themselves respecting his motives and condition of mind, he completed the immersion of his whole person by dipping his head. He then ascended from the water, offered his sacrifice to the Lord, and was thenceforward considered as a complete Jew and as a new or regenerate man; *Issure Biah, cap. 13, 14. Wall on Infant Baptism, p. xliv. Selden de Synedriis lib. i. cap. 3.*

I am aware that the existence of the rite of proselyte baptism, before the christian era, is disputed by some of the learned, on the ground that such a rite is not specifically mentioned either in the Old Testament or in the most ancient uninspired writings of the Jews:

but this omission is very far from being sufficient to prove the negative; and the doubt which it occasions, appears to be very greatly out-balanced by positive evidences in favour of the antiquity of the practice. It seems necessary shortly to glance at these evidences.

1. The Jewish writers who make mention of the baptism of proselytes, expressly describe it as an ordinance practised among their countrymen at a date long prior to the christian era. Thus it is said in the Talmud, that Jethro the father-in-law of Moses was baptized as a proselyte; *Tract. Repudii, Hammond on Matt. iii.* From Maimonides we learn that the baptism of proselytes was practised *from age to age*,³ after the Israelites themselves had been initiated into their covenant in the days of Moses; and again he makes mention of the proselytes in the time of David and Solomon, as of persons *who had been baptized*; *Issure Biah cap. 13.*

2. There was a marked resemblance in several leading particulars between the baptism of proselytes, as described in the Talmud and by Maimonides, and the baptism practised by John and the early teachers of christianity. The baptism of the proselytes was a complete immersion, and was appointed to take place in a *confluence of waters*. The baptism of John and of the christians is generally allowed to have been of the same character. "John baptized in Ænon near to Salim, because *there was much water there*," John iii. 23; and when the Ethiopian was to be baptized, we read that he and Philip went down or "*descended into the water*", and afterwards that they "*came up out*

³ לדורות

of the water"; Acts viii. 38, 39. It has indeed been remarked that, as the proselyte dipped his own head, he might be considered as baptizing himself, whereas the convert to christianity was baptized by the minister who converted him, and the disciples of John were baptized by that prophet. But I apprehend the supposed difference in this respect is merely imaginary; for although the proselyte plunged his own head in conclusion of the rite, he might properly be described as being baptized by the persons who placed him in the water and who arranged the whole ceremony. Accordingly I observe that the Jews speak of "*baptizing*" their proselytes, just as christians make mention of "*baptizing*" their converts.⁴ Again—during the act of baptism the proselyte was instructed and made to stipulate for himself by the scribes; *Selden de Syned. lib. I. cap. iii. p. 785*: that the same circumstances now attend the rite of baptism as practised among christians is well known, and that they have been from very early times the accompaniments of that ceremony is generally allowed; see *Macknight and others on I. Pet. iii. 21*. Again—when the proselyte was baptized, the rite was frequently administered not only to himself but to his family. So also it appears to have been with the early baptism of the christians: we read, that Lydia was baptized *with her household*; that Paul baptized "the *household* of Stephanas"; and that, when the jailer at Philippi became convinced of

⁴ "Even as they circumcise and *baptize* proselytes, so do they circumcise and *baptize* servants who are received from Gentiles, &c.;" *Maim. Issure Biah cap. 13*. "When a proselyte is received he must be circumcised, and when he is cured they *baptize* him in the presence of two wise men, &c.;" *Talmud Babyl. Mass. Jevamoth. fol. 47*.

the truth of christianity, he and "all his" partook together of the same ceremony; Acts xvi. 15, 33, I. Cor. i. 16. *Gemara Babyl. Chetub. c. i. fol. 11, &c. Wall p. xlix.* Again—the proselyte, who had entered into covenant by circumcision, baptism, and sacrifice, was considered as a new man, or to adopt the language of the Jews, as "a child new born", *Gemara, Jevamoth, c. iv. fol. 62, 1. Maim. Issure Biah cap. 14. Wall p. lvii.* and of this new birth or introduction to a better and purer faith, *immersion in water was evidently used as the expressive sign.* So it is notorious that the genuine convert to the faith of Christ is ever represented in the New Testament as one regenerate or born again, and baptism as employed by John and the apostles was a type or representation of this regeneration. These points of resemblance between the proselyte baptism of the Jews and the baptism of the christians are so important and so striking as to render it nearly indisputable that the one baptism was borrowed from the other. Since therefore it is altogether incredible that the Jews should borrow one of their leading ceremonies from the christians whom they despised and hated, there can be little reasonable doubt that the baptism of John and the christians was derived from the proselyte baptism of the Jews, and that, of course, the latter was of a date anterior to christianity.

3. Our Saviour's discourse with Nicodemus is considered (and I think with justice) to contain an allusion to the baptism of proselytes; for he there describes *conversion* under the figure of a second birth—a birth of "*water and of the spirit*". Here there is a precise

accordance with the known Jewish doctrine respecting proselytism, and after having thus treated of that doctrine and applied it in a spiritual sense, our Lord adverts to the want of intelligence displayed by Nicodemus on the subject, as to a surprising circumstance; “*Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?*”

4. Although the baptism of proselytes is nowhere expressly mentioned in the Old Testament, it was the natural and indeed necessary consequence of the admitted principle of the Jewish law, *that unclean persons of every description were to be purified by washing in water*, and of the custom which so generally prevailed amongst the ancient Jews of effecting this washing by *immersion*. On whatever occasion the rite of baptism was employed,—whether as a preparation for religious service, or for the removal of uncleanness, or as a type of conversion to a holier faith—whether it was enjoined on the High Priest, or on the leper, or on the proselyte from heathenism, or on the disciple of John, or on the convert of the apostles,—it was I believe in all cases a *rite of purification*. Thus we find that the baptism of John excited a disputation between him and the Jews on the subject of *purifying*, John iii. 25: thus Paul was exhorted by Ananias to be baptized (or as in the Greek to baptize himself) and *to wash away his sins*, Acts xxii. 16: and thus in apparent allusion (although in a spiritual sense) to the rite of baptism, the same apostle describes his own converts as *washed and sanctified*, I. Cor. vi. 11, *comp.* Eph. v. 26, Heb. x. 22, &c. Now it is certain that at the christian era

the Jews considered the Gentiles to be *unclean* persons, so that they were not permitted to associate with them or to eat in their company; see Acts x. 28, *comp.* John iv. 9, &c. Hence therefore it must have followed *as a matter of course* that no Gentile could become a Jew—could become clean himself, or fitted for association with a clean people—*without undergoing the rite of baptism.*

Such are the positive evidences and plain reasons which appear to prove, in a very satisfactory manner, the antiquity of the Jewish rite of *baptism on conversion*, and which confirm the opinion of Hammond, Selden, Lightfoot, Wall, and other learned writers, that this ceremony was perfectly familiar to the Jews, before the incarnation of our Lord. Accordingly we may observe, that, when John “baptized in the wilderness and preached the baptism of repentance, (or conversion) for the remission of sins”, his doctrine was very far from being strange or surprising to his hearers, nor did they evince the least difficulty in submitting themselves to the ordinance. On the contrary, multitudes pressed around him for the purpose, “and there went out to him”, says the evangelist, “all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins”; Mark i. 4, 5.

It was the office of the Baptist to proclaim the approach of that heavenly kingdom—that more perfect dispensation—for which the pious among the Jews were so anxiously looking; and the faith into the profession of which he baptized, was faith in the coming Messiah, the long expected ruler of restored

and renovated Israel. “John, verily”, said Paul, “baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that *they should believe on him which should come after him*, that is, on Christ Jesus”; Acts xix. 4. On the ground of his being either the Christ himself, or Elias the expected forerunner of the Christ, no objection could be taken to his baptism by the Pharisees who came to dispute with him; for in either of these characters he would be the authorised minister of a new and purer faith, and as a matter of course a *baptizer*. It was because of the declaration of John that he was *not* the Christ—that he was *not* Elias—that he was *not* that prophet, and for that reason exclusively, that the Pharisees addressed the question to him, “Why baptizest thou then”? John i. 25.

And so it was also with the disciples of Jesus. As John baptized on conversion to a faith in the Messiah to come, so they baptized on conversion to a faith that Jesus was the Messiah. Both John and the apostles were engaged in the work of converting—in making disciples to a new system of faith and conduct, to a holier law and to a more spiritual dispensation—and therefore, on a well known Jewish principle, and in conformity with an acknowledged Jewish practice, *they respectively baptized their converts in water*.

Secondly, with respect to the “*Lord’s supper*”. It may be doubted whether this supper, as it was observed by the primitive christians, could justly be considered as a direct ceremonial ordinance. But upon the supposition that the apostles and their com-

panions, like more modern christians, were accustomed to practise it as a religious rite and as a part of their system of divine worship, such an institution must be regarded as immediately connected with the Jewish Passover. The lamb eaten at the Passover and the bread broken and wine poured forth in the christian Eucharist were equally intended as types, and they were types of the same event—the death and sacrifice of Christ. The two ceremonies, therefore, may be looked upon as the same *in point of principle*. But it is more especially to our present purpose to remark, that the breaking of the bread and the pouring forth of the wine, together with the blessing and giving of thanks, which distinguish the ceremony of the Eucharist, actually formed a part of the *ritual order* to which the ancient Jews were accustomed, in celebrating the supper of the Passover. This fact is sufficiently evident from the narrations contained in the gospels of our Lord's last paschal meal with his disciples, and is fully substantiated on the authority of the Rabbinical writers, who, in their minute statements respecting the right method of conducting that ceremonial Jewish supper, have explicitly directed the observance of these several particulars: see *Extracts from the Talmud and Maimonides, in Lightfoot Hor. Heb. in Matt. xxvi.*

Before we draw a conclusion from the facts now stated, it may be desirable briefly to review the former part of the argument. In explaining that great law of the New Covenant, that God who is a Spirit must be worshipped in *spirit and in truth*, I have adverted to the comparison so evidently instituted by Jesus Christ, when he pronounced the law in question,

between the spiritual and substantial worship thus enjoined on his own followers, and that which was customary among the ancient Samaritans and Jews. The two systems of worship are described as completely distinct; the one was about to die away, the other to be established. The old worship consisted principally in the performance of typical rites. The new worship was of a precisely opposite character. The ordinance was to cease; the shadow was to be discontinued; the substance was to be enjoyed; and in the total disuse of ancient ceremonial ordinances, communion was now to take place between the Father and the souls of his people, only through the mediation of Jesus Christ, and under the saving influences of the Spirit of truth. On the supposition, therefore, that the ceremonies of water baptism and the Eucharist are truly of christian origin, yet, being shadows and types and nothing more, they perfectly resemble the ordinances of the Jewish law, and plainly appertain to the principle of the old covenant. But further—on a fair examination of the history of these ceremonies, we find that they not only appertain to the *principle* of the old covenant, but were practices observed on that principle by the Jews themselves, before the introduction of the christian revelation. Thus, then, it appears that they actually formed a part of the ritual system of Judaism itself; and, since it is on all hands allowed that the whole of that ritual system, although observed for many years after the death of Jesus by most of his immediate disciples, is nevertheless null and void under the christian dispensation, we appear to be brought to a sound conclusion,

that in connexion with the worship of christians, *the ceremonies in question are rightly disused.*

That in this view of the subject there is much of reasonableness and of consistency with the leading characteristics of christianity, will scarcely be denied by any persons who entertain a just view of the spirituality of true religion. But, on the other hand, it is pleaded that the New Testament contains certain passages, in which the practice of these rites is not only justified but enforced, and which in fact render such practice obligatory upon all the followers of Christ.

In order to form a sound judgment whether this notion be correct or erroneous, it will be necessary for us to enter into a somewhat detailed examination of the passages in question, and of several others in which baptism and the dominical supper are either alluded to, or directly mentioned. Previously, however, to entering on such an examination, I may venture upon one general observation; namely, that if, on philological principles, any such passages are found fairly to admit of either a literal or a spiritual interpretation,—and if it be allowed (as I think it must be, for the general reasons already stated) that the latter is far more in harmony than the former, with the admitted character of the christian dispensation,—in such case we are justified by the soundest laws of biblical criticism, in adopting the spiritual and in dropping the literal interpretation.

I shall commence with *baptism*.

The first passage to be considered, in reference to this subject, is that in which the apostle John has

described our Lord's conversation with Nicodemus on the doctrine of regeneration. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee", said our Saviour, "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born *of water and of the Spirit*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God": John iii. 3—5. I cannot deny, that, when our Lord thus spake of being born of water, his words contained an *allusion* to the practice of water baptism. It has been already remarked that the doctrine on which he thus insisted in a spiritual sense, and respecting which the ignorance of Nicodemus, that master in Israel, was adverted to in so pointed a manner, was one which, in its merely external bearings, was perfectly familiar to the Jews. The proselyte who had forsaken heathenism and adopted the Jewish religion, was considered as one *new-born*, and of this new birth his baptism in water appears to have been the appointed sign. The new birth of the true christian—that indispensable preparation for his entrance into the kingdom—is therefore fitly illustrated by the circumstances of the baptized proselyte. But though it is sufficiently evident that our Lord alluded in this passage to the Jewish rite of baptism on conversion, it appears to be equally clear that he made that allusion in a merely figurative and spiritual sense. Those who would prove, that to "be born of water" in this passage literally signifies to be *outwardly baptized*, defeat their own purposes by proving too much. If the *possibility* of an entrance into the kingdom of heaven, which a multitude of moral sins does not preclude, is precluded by the

infraction of a merely positive precept, and by the omission of a rite *in itself* absolutely indifferent, it may almost be asserted that the system of christianity is overturned, and that the gospel falls to the ground. To impose on an obscure and ambiguous expression a sense which thus contradicts so many general declarations made by the sacred writers, and which is directly opposed to the fundamental doctrines of the New Testament, is obviously very inconsistent with the laws of a just and comprehensive criticism. Nothing, one would think, but absolute necessity would compel any reasonable critic to the adoption of such an alternative.

But in point of fact the expressions thus employed by Jesus are capable of being otherwise interpreted with the greatest propriety. Numerous passages might be adduced from both the old and new Testaments, in which the carnal washings or baptisms of the Jews are alluded to in a merely spiritual sense, and in which more particularly we find the grace of the Spirit—that sacred influence given to men for their conversion and sanctification—described under the obvious figure of “water”; See Ps. li. 2, 7, Isa. i. 16, Jer. iv. 14, Ezek. xxxvi. 25, John iv. 10, vii. 38, I. Cor. vi. 11, Eph. v. 26. According therefore to this known scriptural phraseology, “to be born of water” may be properly understood as signifying *to be converted, cleansed, and introduced to a newness of life, by the Spirit of God*. Such is the interpretation of these words, which is adopted not only by Friends, but by various pious writers and commentators on Scripture, who have no connexion with that Society ;

See *Scott, A. Clarke, Gill, &c.* This interpretation is by no means precluded by the addition—“*and of the Spirit*”; for our Lord’s words may here be understood not as relating to two things, but as representing one thing, first by means of a figure and afterwards without that figure. Such a mode of expression is not unusual in the sacred writings. Just in the same manner the apostle Paul describes his own converts, first as “*washed*” and immediately afterwards as “*sanctified*” by the Spirit of God, I. Cor. vi. 11; and when John the baptist declared that Jesus who was coming after him, should “*baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire*”, he probably employed *both* those terms to represent *one* internal and purifying influence.

That spiritual interpretation of our Lord’s expressions which on critical principles is thus plainly admissible, is moreover confirmed by the immediate context. Jesus says to Nicodemus, (according to the common English version) “*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*”; and again he says, “*Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*”. It is, I think, obvious that the latter of these sayings is nothing more than *an explanatory repetition* of the former, and that, in point of meaning, they are to be regarded as equivalent. Now it appears from the comparison of the other passages in the writings of this apostle, in which the same adverb is used, that the term rendered *born again*, although denoting that birth which was in fact a second one, ought rather to be rendered “*born from above*”; See ch. iii. 31.

xix. 11, 23, *comp.* Matt. xxvii. 51, Mark xv. 38, James i. 17, iii. 15, 17. So *Schleusner in lex.* It follows therefore that to be “born from above” and “to be born of water and the Spirit” are expressions which have the same meaning. But “*to be born from above*” can surely signify nothing less than to undergo that true regeneration—that real change of heart, which is indeed “from above”, because it is effected only by the Spirit and power of the Almighty. Again, after speaking of this heavenly birth “of water and the spirit”, our Lord immediately drops his figurative allusion to baptism, and contrasts the *moral* change, of which alone he is speaking, with the birth of the flesh, “That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and *that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit*”; ver. 6.

When the apostle Paul described the Corinthian christians as persons who were “washed”, “sanctified”, and “justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of God”, I. Cor. vi. 11; and when, on another occasion, he made mention of the whole church as sanctified and cleansed “with the washing of water by the word”, Eph. v. 26; it can scarcely be doubted that he derived his figurative language from the well known rite of baptism in water; and yet the impartial critic will scarcely deny that the doctrine which he couched under that language related *solely* to the operations of divine grace. But there is in the writings of this apostle another passage, which, while it plainly illustrates our Lord’s doctrine respecting a birth “of water and of the Spirit”, affords additional information on the subject of true christian baptism. “For we ourselves also”, says the apostle

to Titus, “were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, *not by works of righteousness which we have done*, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the *washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost* ; which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour” ; Tit. iii. 3—6. Here, as in John iii. 3—5, there is a very obvious allusion to that outward rite of baptism on conversion, which was understood among both Jews and christians to be the sign of regeneration or of the second birth : and yet where is the enlightened christian who will refuse to allow, that under these figurative expressions the apostle is promulgating a doctrine entirely spiritual ? The “washing of regeneration” which is here distinguished from all our own works of righteousness, attributed solely to the merciful interposition of God our Saviour, and described as a *divine operation* efficacious for the salvation of souls, can surely be nothing else than the baptism of the Spirit, or, to adopt the apostle’s own words of added explanation,—“*the renewal of the Holy Ghost*”.

Another passage of no very dissimilar import is found in the epistle to the Hebrews ; an epistle which I deem to be rightly attributed to the same inspired author. “Having, therefore, boldness,” says the apostle, “to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh ; and

having an High Priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies *washed with pure water*"; ch. x. 19—22. The "pure water" mentioned in this passage is explained by some critics as signifying the water of an outward baptism, but a little examination may serve to convince the candid enquirer, that such an interpretation is inconsistent with the whole scope of the apostle's argument. Every one who attentively peruses the ninth and tenth chapters of this admirable epistle, will observe that Paul is there unfolding the great principles or doctrines of the christian dispensation, as they were prefigured by the circumstances of the Jewish ceremonial law. The ritual appointed to be observed on the great day of atonement, as described in Levit. xvi. is that part of the Jewish institution to which he is particularly adverting. On that day, the High Priest was accustomed to enter into the Holy of Holies or inner sanctuary of the temple, after a careful washing or bathing of his own body. After this purification he offered up a bullock and a goat as an atonement for sin, and sprinkled the blood of the victims on the mercy-seat and on the altar. These and similar ceremonies (among which he particularly mentions "divers baptisms") are treated on by the apostle as denoting the spiritual realities of the New Covenant, and when he proceeds to describe those realities, it is from the ordinances of Judaism that he borrows his figures. As the mercy-seat and the altar on the great day of atonement, and the people themselves on other occasions,

were sprinkled with the blood of bulls and of goats, so are the hearts of christians to be sprinkled from an evil conscience by the blood of Christ; and as the flesh of the priest, of the unclean person, or of the proselyte, was bathed in pure water, so is our body or natural man, to be cleansed and renewed by the purifying influence of the Holy Ghost. The “sprinkling of the heart” and the “washing of the body” are expressions equally metaphorical. The one denotes our deliverance from guilt; the other our purification from sin. The one is the application of the sacrifice of Christ; the other is the baptism of his Spirit. So *Calvin, Gill, and other Commentators.*

Such are the passages in the New Testament which contain indirect allusions to *baptism in water*, and in which the circumstances of that rite are figuratively adverted to, in descriptions relating *exclusively* to the work of grace. I shall now proceed to consider certain other passages of the same general import, in which the verb “baptize” or the substantive “baptism” are actually introduced. In the passages already cited, the baptism of the Spirit is represented by its characteristic circumstances. In those to which I am now about to invite the reader’s attention, it is called by its name; it is described as a *baptism*.

The first passages to be adduced of the description now alluded to, are those which contain the declarations of John, the forerunner of Jesus, respecting the baptism of the Messiah, as contrasted with his own: one of these declarations is recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and the other by the apostle John. “I indeed baptize you with water

unto repentance", cried the Baptist to the Pharisees and Sadducees, and to the whole multitude by whom he was surrounded, *comp.* Luke iii. 16, "but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: *he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire*: whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire"; Matt. iii. 11, 12. Luke has recited the Baptist's declaration in nearly the same words, ch. iii. 16, 17; and Mark records it simply as follows: John "preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I indeed have baptized you with water; but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost"; ch. i. 8. *The baptism with fire*, mentioned in Matt. iii. 11, and Luke iii. 16, is explained by some commentators solely of the punishments to be inflicted by the Son of God on the unbelieving Jews and on the wicked in general. That this expression contains some allusion to punishment, is in my opinion in some degree probable from the following verse: but the manner in which it is introduced to notice, in immediate connexion with the baptism of the Holy Ghost, affords strong reason to believe that this fiery baptism represents *more particularly* the enlightening, inflaming, and purifying operation of the Spirit, upon the hearts of men. *One* thing is described, as Grotius observes on Matt. iii. 11, by two different modes of expression—an observation which derives confirmation from Mark i. 8, in which passage the baptism attributed

to Christ, is that of the Holy Ghost *alone*.⁵ The other declaration made by the Baptist to the same effect, is related by the apostle John as follows: "And John bare record saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him, and I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he *which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost*. And I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God"; ch. i. 32—34. Such is the contrast drawn by John between his own baptism, and the baptism of Christ. The one is with water and merely external; the other is with the Spirit and fire, internal and powerful. The one is the work of man, and, like the minister who practised it, is "of the earth, earthly": the other is *divine*, the work of the eternal Son of God, who came from heaven, and "is above all"; John iii. 31.

A precisely similar comparison was afterwards made by our Saviour himself. When he was on the point of quitting this lower world, the sphere of his humiliation, and was about to shed forth upon his disciples in freshness and abundance the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, he commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem but to wait there for the "promise of the Father"; for "John truly," said he, "*baptized with water*; but ye shall be *baptized with*

⁵ Such is the view taken of the "fiery baptism" here mentioned, by many learned and able critics: for example, Munster, Erasmus, Vatablus, Clarius, Lud. Capellus, and Calvin. Grotius I have already mentioned; See *Critic. Sacr. in loc.* An excellent exposition of Matt. iii. 11, will be found in the well known and justly valued commentaries of the late Thomas Scott.

the Holy Ghost, not many days hence"; Acts i. 5. Although the immediate disciples of Christ were endowed with pre-eminent and extraordinary measures of the divine influence, it is always to be remembered that the promise of the Father was to all in every age who should believe in Jesus, Acts ii. 39: we may conclude, therefore, that all in every age who should believe in Jesus, were to receive as well as the apostles themselves, the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Such, it is expressly declared was the case with Cornelius and his family, Acts xi. 15, 16; and such undoubtedly must be the case with every christian, whether more or less *gifted*, who is converted and sanctified by the powerful influence of divine *grace*. Now the general doctrine to be deduced from the declarations thus made both by the Baptist and by our Saviour, may be explicitly stated in a few words. It is, first, that the baptism which properly appertained to the dispensation of John, and which *distinguished it from christianity*, was the *baptism of water*; and, secondly, that the baptism which properly appertains to christianity, and which distinguishes it from the dispensation of John, is the *baptism of the Spirit*.

The baptism of the Spirit is expressly mentioned by the apostle Paul. When describing the union which subsists among all the living members of the church of Christ, he writes as follows:—"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. *For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body*, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made

to drink into one Spirit"; I. Cor. xii. 12, 13. Baptism with water, as adopted among the early christians, was nothing more than a sign of that conversion which introduced into the church of Christ. The baptism of the Spirit here mentioned by the apostle, is that powerful and divine operation, which really effects such an introduction, and by which, therefore, all the believers in Christ are brought together and united as fellow-members of the same body.

Since this apostle has so frequently alluded to the work of the Spirit on the heart, *under the figure of washing in water* (as in I. Cor. vi. 11, Eph. v. 26, Tit. iii. 5, Heb. x. 22), and since in the passage now cited he has plainly used the verb *baptize* in reference solely to that internal work; there can be no critical impropriety in attributing to him a similar meaning on other occasions, when he makes use of the same verb or its derivative substantive, in a manner somewhat less precise and defined. The examples to which I allude are as follows:—"Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him *by baptism* into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life"; Rom. vi. 3, 4. "In whom (that is in Christ) ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with him *by baptism*, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead;" Col. ii. 11, 12. "For as many of you as *have been*

baptized into Christ have put on Christ. — There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female : for ye are all one in Christ Jesus ;” Gal. iii. 27, 28, *comp.* I. Cor. xii. 12, 13. I am aware that the plurality of commentators interpret these passages as relating to an outward baptism. But for the general reason stated above, they are plainly capable of being understood in a spiritual sense ; and that we are *correct* in so understanding them, they will severally be found on examination to afford a strong internal evidence. In Rom. vi. 4, baptism appears to be described as the *efficacious cause* of our dying to sin and of our walking in newness of life. In Col. ii. 11, 12, to be buried and to rise with Christ in baptism, are mentioned in immediate connexion, and apparently represented as identical, with being spiritually circumcised *in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh* ; and it is moreover declared that the good effects of this baptism—this redeeming influence—are produced in us by the *faith of the operation of God*. In Gal. iii. 27, those only are described as baptized into Christ who have actually *put on Christ*, or who, in other words, are invested with his character, *comp.* Rom. xiii. 14, Eph. iv. 24 ; and who are thus brought into a real unity with his members. Now the whole of these descriptions apply with the greatest accuracy to that baptism of the Spirit, to which Paul in other parts of his epistles has so frequently adverted, and they are, I think, as completely inapplicable to the mere outward rite of immersion in water. On a general view, therefore, of the passages in which the apostle makes

any doctrinal allusion to this subject, we may fairly conclude that the only baptism of importance in his view, was that of the Spirit; and that it was exclusively to this inward work that he intended to direct the attention of his readers, when he expressed himself as follows:—"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, ONE BAPTISM"; Eph. iv. 4, 5.

A very lucid declaration on the same subject, may be found in the writings of the apostle Peter. After adverting to the events which happened in the days of Noah—"while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls were saved by water"—that apostle continues, "the *like figure* whereunto *even baptism* doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ"; I. Pet. iii. 21. The common English version of the first part of this verse is calculated, to produce an erroneous impression of the apostle's meaning. There is nothing in the original Greek which conveys the idea that christian baptism is a "*figure*". The word rendered "the *like figure*" signifies, as is justly remarked by Schleusner, nothing more than that which is *similar* or *corresponding*. So Archbishop Newcome renders the apostle's words, "*And what answereth to this (even) baptism doth now save us*". I apprehend, however, that the Greek would be still more accurately rendered, "A corresponding baptism whereunto doth now save us".⁶ We are informed by the apostle Paul that the Israelites, who were led by the cloud,

⁶ ὁ καὶ ἡμᾶς ἀντίτυπον νῦν σώζει βάπτισμα.

and passed through the sea, “ were all *baptized* unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea”; I. Cor. x. 2. On a similar principle, I conceive Peter to insinuate that Noah and his family who were saved in the ark “ by water” underwent a baptism of their own. By that baptism their natural lives were saved; and christians enjoy a *corresponding* baptism which effects the salvation of their immortal souls. After drawing this comparison between the baptism of Noah, by which the life of the body was preserved, and the baptism of christians, by which eternal life is secured for the soul, the apostle proceeds still farther to determine his meaning by adding a definition, first, of that which this saving christian baptism *is not*, and secondly, of that which *it is*. Accordingly he informs us that it *is not* the putting away of the filth of the flesh—or, in other words, not the immersion of the body in water; and that it *is* the answer (or stipulation) of a good conscience toward God. Here there is probably an allusion to the circumstances which attended the outward rite of baptism; for whether the person baptized in water, was the proselyte to Judaism or the convert to christianity, he was (as is generally allowed) instructed and interrogated during the course of the ceremony, and made to stipulate for his future conduct. But while the outward rite supplies the apostle with his figures and suggests his phraseology, he explicitly discards the sign, and insists only on the substance. The answer or stipulation of a good conscience is the result of a moral change, of a real *regeneration*. This is the baptism which the apostle here describes as distinguishing christianity and as

saving the soul of the believer. Nor is it like the baptism of water, the work of *man*. Peter expressly informs us that it is “by the resurrection of Jesus Christ”. It is effected by the power of that Saviour who is risen from the dead—“who is gone into heaven and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him”.

With the exception of Mark xvi. 16, (a text presently to be cited) I believe we have now examined the *whole* of the passages in the New Testament which contain any *doctrinal* statement on the subject of baptism. Now the reader will probably recollect, that in the epistle to the Hebrews, which contains so noble an exposition of the entire spirituality of true religion, the “doctrine of baptisms” is mentioned as one of those elementary principles of truth, which were familiar even to the babes in Christ; Heb. v. 13, 14, vi. 2. Of the nature and principal features of that doctrine, the information of which we are in possession respecting the old baptisms of the Jews, together with the several passages of the New Testament which have now been considered, will enable us to form a sound and satisfactory estimate. Judging from the documents before me, I should say, that this well-known “doctrine of baptisms” must have been nearly as follows. That under the legal dispensation, “divers carnal baptisms” were observed by the Jews as rites of purification, Heb. ix. 10; that among those rites was numbered the *baptism on conversion*, a ceremony to which the Israelites themselves submitted on their original entrance into the covenant of the law, Exod. xix. 14; and which was afterwards

invariably practised on the admission of the proselytes of justice to the character and privileges of the native Jew, John iii. 5, 10 ; that under divine authority this *baptism on conversion* was applied by John to the peculiar purposes of his own ministry; John i. 32—34: that these ancient Jewish baptisms were severally effected by washing or immersion in *water*; that they were all figures of another and a better baptism, by which christianity was distinguished from every preparatory dispensation—a baptism of which Christ is the Author, and his disciples in every age and country the objects; that this true christian baptism appertains not to the body but to the soul, and is effected entirely by the power of the **Holy Ghost**; that by it we are regenerated or converted, sanctified and saved from sin; and finally, that without it, no man can find an entrance into the mansions of eternal rest and glory.

We cannot fail to observe, that “the doctrine of baptisms”, as it is thus unfolded on the authority of Scripture, is exactly in accordance with that great principle of the divine law, to which in the preceding part of this chapter, we have so particularly adverted; namely, that under the last or christian dispensation, God is no longer to be worshipped through the old medium of ceremonies, shadows, and types, but simply and exclusively in *spirit and in truth*.

Having thus examined the doctrine of baptisms, we may proceed to consider another passage of the New Testament, in which it is very generally imagined that the practice of water baptism is instituted as a christian ordinance, and imperatively enjoined on the

ministers of Christ. Matthew concludes his gospel with the following narration of our Lord's last address to his eleven apostles: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, 'All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, (or as in the Greek, "Going therefore, make disciples of all nations") *baptizing them in the name* (or "*unto the name*") *of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." Matt. xxviii. 18—20.

That the participle "baptizing", as it is used in this passage, is capable, on common philological principles, of being interpreted in its literal sense, as relating to an outward immersion, it would be at once uncandid and useless to deny. That persons in all ages of the christian church who have been accustomed to regard that external rite as sacred, should adopt such an interpretation, can be no matter of surprize. And that those ministers of the gospel, who in conscientious conformity with the words of Christ, *according to their own view of them*, continue the practice of baptizing their converts in water, are no proper subjects of blame or condemnation, is, to my apprehension, equally evident. Nevertheless it ought to be observed that there is no mention made in the passage of *water*, nor any thing whatsoever in the terms used, which renders such literal interpretation imperative upon us. On the contrary, I am persuaded that a sound and impartial view of the various collateral points which throw light on the true meaning of our

Lord's injunction, will lead us to a very different estimate of that meaning.

Jesus commands his apostles to make disciples of all nations ; and in executing that high commission, it was to be their duty, as we learn from his subsequent words, to baptize the persons whom they taught, *unto the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*. Now the peculiar solemnity of that parting moment, and the apparent improbability that on *such* an occasion a merely external ceremony should be so prominently insisted on—the method so often employed by Jesus of conveying instruction and precept concerning spiritual things, in words which bore an outward allusion to the flesh⁷—the frequent occurrence of the terms “baptize” and “baptism” in the New Testament, and particularly in the discourses of Christ himself, in a sense purely metaphorical—the abolition under the new dispensation, of the whole Jewish ritual, and the substitution of a worship entirely spiritual—the evidence derived from so many other explicit passages of Scripture, in favor of the doctrine that the baptism of christianity is the work of the Spirit only—the pointed manner in which Jesus himself, in a preceding part, as is most probable, of this very conversation, contrasted that efficacious influence, the privilege of his own followers, with the water-baptism of John, Acts ^{iii.}5—all these are collateral circumstances which bear with no slight degree of force on the passage before us, and which when considered as a whole appear to afford substantial evidence that the baptism

⁷ See for example John iii. 5, iv. 14, 32, vi. 53, vii. 38.

of which the use was thus prescribed to his apostles by the Redeemer of men, was simply and exclusively, a *spiritual baptism*.

Here it may be remarked that the converts to christianity who submitted to the rite of immersion in water, are sometimes described as baptized "into the name of Jesus"; that is, as the words simply signify, "*unto Jesus*"; because that rite was the *sign* of their conversion from their old sins *unto him*, or, in other words, unto that faith and allegiance of which *he* was the object; see Acts ii. 38, viii. 16, &c. *comp.* I. Cor. x. 2. But although this form of expression is occasionally used in relation to water-baptism, it is with still greater correctness applicable to the baptism of the Spirit, by which alone the work of conversion unto Jesus Christ, or unto the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, is *actually effected*.

It is indeed true that the baptism of the Spirit is elsewhere attributed to Christ himself. Undoubtedly it is a divine work, and he who properly causes it and carries it into effect, is one participating in the nature and attributes of God. But originating, as it ever must originate, with our divine Master, this baptism might nevertheless *be administered* by the instrumentality of his servants. In as much as the apostles of Jesus Christ were enabled, through the efficacy of an inspired ministry, to turn away their hearers from idolatry and other sins, to introduce them to a state of comparative purity, and to convert them to the true faith; in so much did they possess the power to baptize, in a spiritual sense, unto the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy

Ghost. It appears to be on the same principle, that Christ is described by the apostle Paul as applying to his own church the baptism of the Spirit—as sanctifying and cleansing it “with the washing of water”—“*by the word*”,⁸ that is probably by the ministry of the gospel; Eph. v. 26, *comp.* Rom. x. 17, Eph. vi. 17. “The preaching of the cross” when prompted and dictated by the Holy Spirit, is often found to be “the power of God”; I. Cor. i. 18. The ministers of the gospel, ought however, always to remember that they can administer the baptism of the Spirit, only through the power of their Lord and Saviour; and in their humble efforts to comply with so sacred an injunction, they must derive their encouragement from that gracious promise with which it was accompanied—“*Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.*”

Upon the present point it only remains to be observed, that the observations now offered on Matt. xxviii. 19, 20, will be found to derive material support from the parallel passage in the gospel of Mark; “And he said unto them”, writes that evangelist, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*”, &c. ch. xvi. 15, 16. Here the baptism to which our Lord is described as adverting, is classed with *saving faith*. *It is the baptism which saves*. Now we are assured that the baptism which saves is “not the putting away of the filth of the flesh”, nor any work of righteousness which we can perform for

⁸ The expression in the original Greek, is not *λόγος* which sometimes signifies the essential Word of God, and is applied as a title to the Son himself; but *ῥήμα*.

ourselves, Tit. iii. 5 ; it is that birth of water and the Spirit, which is “from above”, and which prepares us for an entrance into the kingdom of heaven, John iii. 5 ; it is “the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ”, I. Pet. iii. 21 ; it is “the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” ; Tit. iii. 5.

On a review of the various passages cited in the present chapter, many of my readers will probably agree with me in the sentiment, that there is no part of the New Testament in which the observance of baptism *in water* is either *commanded or declared to be necessary*. Such being the case I know of nothing which remains to be pleaded in support of that ceremony as a part of the religious service of christians, but *the example of the apostles*. That many of the apostles were accustomed both before and after the ascension of Jesus to baptize their converts in water, is indeed rendered indisputable by certain passages in the gospel of John and in the book of Acts. But this fact by no means affords any sufficient evidence that the practice of a similar rite is universally imperative on the ministers of christianity. The entire spirituality of the new dispensation—the great principle that God was no longer to be served by the intervention of sacerdotal and typical institutions, but only through the mediation of the Son, and under the influence of the Holy Spirit, was very gradually unfolded to these servants of the Lord. It is notorious that many of them adhered with strictness to a great part of the Jewish ritual long after it was abrogated by the death of Christ ; and

even on the Gentile converts, they enjoined an abstinence from things strangled and from blood (that is from the blood of animals) no less imperatively than from the sin of fornication; Acts xv. 29. It is true that after they had ceased to recommend circumcision to the Gentiles, they continued to baptize them in water. But the reason of this distinction is plain: namely that circumcision was the sign of an entrance into the covenant *of the law*, but that baptism, although a Jewish practice, and observed on the principles of Judaism, was the type of conversion to christianity itself; and was therefore very naturally considered by the apostles as appropriate to the specific purposes of their own ministry. As long as they observed the ceremonies of Judaism in their own persons; as long as they continued unprepared for a full reception of the doctrine, that the ordinances and shadows of the law were now to be disused, and that God was to be worshipped in a manner entirely spiritual; so long would they, *as a matter of course*, persevere in the practice of baptizing their converts *in water*. Neither are we to imagine that in this respect the apostles acted in opposition to the will of their divine Master, who appears to have imposed upon them no sudden change of conduct respecting ritual observances, but simply to have left them in possession of those great principles of spiritual religion, the tendency of which was to undermine all such observances at the very foundation, and thus in a gradual manner to effect their abolition.

But there is another reason why the example of the earliest christian teachers affords no valid evidence that the practice of water-baptism is still incumbent on

the ministers of the gospel of Christ—namely, that this example was not uniform. Its uniformity is known to have been interrupted by two exceptions of peculiar weight and importance. The exception which I shall first notice is that of the apostle Paul. That eminent individual, who was not “a whit behind the chiefest apostles”, and who had formerly been a “Pharisee of the Pharisees”, and a zealot in the support of the Jewish law, when he was once converted to the christian faith, was the first to throw off the bondage of that law; and he presently excelled his brethren in his views of the spirituality of the gospel dispensation. Accordingly we find that baptism with water was in his judgment by no means indispensable, or inseparably connected with the duties of a christian minister. However it may be admitted, as a probability, that his converts received baptism at the hands of other persons, it is certain that a great proportion of them were never baptized in water by the apostle himself. He expressly asserts that among the whole multitude of the Corinthians who had been converted by his ministry, he baptized *none*, save Crispus and Gaius, and the household of Stephanas; I. Cor. i. 14—16. It is not, however, merely the apostle’s personal abstinence from the use of the rite, which claims our attention in reference to the present argument: it is rather the ground and principle on which he declares that he abstained from it. The practice of this ceremony in the christian church, is supported chiefly by the generally received opinion, that Christ commanded his apostles, when they made disciples of all nations, to baptize them with water; and that from

the apostles this duty has descended to all the rightly authorized ministers of christianity, who, like them, are engaged in the promulgation of christian truth. But Paul, highly favoured as he was as a minister of the gospel, and engaged far more extensively than any of his brethren in the work of making disciples of all nations, abstained to a very great extent, from the act of baptizing with water ; and for this express reason—*that he had received no commission to perform it* :—“For Christ,” said he, “sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel”; ver. 17.

The other exception alluded to, is one of still greater moment : it is that of the Divine Founder of our religion himself. The holy Jesus, that first and most eminent of the preachers of the gospel, rendered in his own person a complete obedience to all righteousness, as it was observed under the law ; and therefore he submitted to the baptism of John. But his own converts who belonged to that spiritual institution, which he so frequently denominates the “kingdom of heaven”, (See Matt. xi. 11. &c.) he *baptized not*. Although he permitted his disciples to practise that ceremony, he abstained from it himself. This fact is noticed by the apostle John, who after stating that “the Pharisees heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John”, carefully adds, (for the prevention of error, no doubt, on so interesting a subject,) “though (or howbeit) *Jesus himself baptized not*, but his disciples;” John iv. 1, 2. Those preachers of the gospel, therefore, who consider it their duty, in conformity with the great fundamental law of christian worship, to abstain from the practice of baptizing

their converts in water, have the consolation to know that in adopting such a line of conduct, they are following the example of him, who is on all hands allowed to have afforded us a *perfect* pattern.

Since therefore water-baptism was a Jewish ceremonial or typical observance: since, under the new dispensation, the plan of divine worship is changed, and all such observances are by a general law abolished: since, in precise conformity with that law, “the doctrine of baptisms”, as unfolded in various passages of the New Testament, appears to attribute to christianity *only* the baptism of the Spirit: since that particular passage in which the outward rite is supposed to be enjoined upon christians, may with the truest critical propriety be otherwise explained: and since the example of the first preachers of christianity in favour of that ceremony, arose out of peculiar circumstances, and was interrupted by two overpowering exceptions—I cannot but deem it undeniable that the Society of Friends are fully justified in their disuse of water-baptism.

I may now proceed to the consideration of those parts of the New Testament which relate to the institution denominated the *Lord's Supper*.

In order to clear our ground respecting the nature and character of that ordinance, it will be desirable in the first place to direct our attention to the tenth chapter of the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians—a chapter which contains a remarkable allusion to the Lord's supper, as it was observed by the early christ-

ians. It appears that some of the Corinthian converts had so far sacrificed their religious consistency as to join the banquets of their heathen neighbours, and to feast with them upon meats which had been previously offered to the idols. Such was the unchristian practice which suggested to the apostle Paul the following reproof and exhortation; "I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, (or for which we give thanks) is it not a *joint participation in* (*Eng. Trans.* "the communion of") the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a *joint participation in* (*Eng. Trans.* "the communion of") the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one (or that same) bread. Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices, *joint participants in* (*Eng. Trans.* "partakers of") the altar? What say I then, that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should *be joint participants in* (*Eng. Trans.* "have fellowship with") devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?" I. Cor. x. 15—22. In reciting this passage, the reader will perceive that I have ventured upon some slight alteration of the common English version. The word "communion" is properly defined by Johnson, "a participation of something in common"; and this, no

doubt, is the sense in which it was here employed by our translators. I have exchanged that word for "*joint participation*", merely for the purpose of showing the manner in which the true meaning of the original expression,⁹ as it is here applied, is fixed by the use, in two other parts of the same passage, of the corresponding noun, rendered *joint participants*.¹

On a comparison with certain parts of the following chapter, (hereafter to be noticed) it must in all fairness be allowed, that the bread broken and the cup of blessing, which the apostle here describes as a "*joint participation in the body and blood of Christ*", are the bread and the cup of wine which were eaten and drunk, in a literal sense, at the supper denominated by the apostle himself, *the Lord's supper*, ch. xi. 20. It appears then that those who ate and drank together of that cup and wine, were joint participants in the body and blood of Christ, on the same principle, and in the same sense, that the Jews who ate together of the sacrifices ordained by the law, were joint participants in the altar, and the christians who united with idolaters in the eating of meats offered to false gods, were joint participants in *devils*. As no one imagines that these mixed companies of idolaters and christians united in eating *the devils*; or that the Jewish worshippers united in eating *the altar*, so it is altogether an error to suppose that the christian communicants are here represented by the apostle, as feeding on the *body and blood of Christ*. When we compare the three cases together, the whole that we can gather from the apostle's description of the bread and wine

⁹ κοινωνία.

¹ κοινωνοί.

is this : that as the eaters of meats sacrificed to the idols were joint participants in those things which respected the service of devils, and as the Jews who ate the victims sacrificed under the law, were joint participants in those things which respected the altar ; so the christians, when they met to celebrate the Lord's supper, were joint participants in those things which respected the body and blood or the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

I have entered into this examination of the passage before us, not so much for the purpose of disproving the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, as in order to show that the apostle's words give no real countenance to the notion so generally entertained among protestants, that those who communicate in the rite of the Lord's supper, *do thereby feed together, in a spiritual sense, on the body and blood of Christ.*

The declarations of this doctrine, unfounded as it appears to be on the authority of Scripture, are in the communion service of the church of England both frequent and striking. The "sacrament of the Lord's Supper" is there denominated a "*holy mystery*", and a "*banquet of most heavenly food*". Thanksgiving is enjoined unto God "for that he hath given his Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, not only to die for us, but *also to be our spiritual food and sustenance* in that holy sacrament"; and on another occasion this service teaches us, that when "we receive that holy sacrament, then we spiritually eat the flesh of Jesus Christ and drink his blood : then we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us : we are one with Christ, and Christ with us".

By such language a mystical importance is attached

to this outward rite, which appears to have no foundation in the original use of the ordinance, as a simple memorial of the death of Jesus. In these days of increasing light and spirituality, as we may justly esteem them it is necessary to say but very little on this branch of our subject. Although the communicants in the rite of the Lord's supper may sometimes be permitted to "eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man", no arguments need now be advanced to prove that this spiritual eating and drinking, has no necessary connexion with any external ceremony; and that in every time and place it may be the privilege of the humble christian, who lives by faith in the Son of God, and whose soul is subjected to the purifying yet sustaining influence of his Holy Spirit; See John vi. 53, 63. Neither will it be any longer disputed, that when persons of such a character meet in companies for the solemn purpose of worshipping the Father, they may, without any use of the outward ordinance, *feed together, in a spiritual sense, on the body and blood of Christ*, and experience the truest communion with their Holy Head, and one with another *in him*; see Matt. xviii. 20.

Having premised these remarks on the apostle's description of the Lord's supper, we may henceforward consider it in that more simple light in which alone I believe it to be regarded, in the present day, by many of those persons who observe it, namely, as an *outward ceremony, constituting part of divine worship, and intended typically to represent and thus to bring into remembrance, the death and sacrifice of Christ*; and we may proceed to examine those passages of the New

Testament which have given rise to the opinion so generally entertained by modern theologians, that such a rite was ordained by our Saviour, and that the practice of it is universally obligatory on believers in Christ. The passages to which I have to refer, under this head, are only two in number. The first is in the gospel of Luke, who in describing the last paschal supper which Jesus ate with his disciples shortly before his crucifixion, writes as follows: "And he (Jesus) took bread and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, 'This is my body which is given for you: *this do in remembrance of me*'. Likewise, also, the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you'; Luke xxii. 19, 20.

The second passage alluded to, contains a declaration of the apostle Paul's, which fully confirms the particulars related by Luke. It appears that the Corinthian converts had so greatly abused the practice to which the injunction of Christ had given rise, that when they met together for the purpose of eating the Lord's supper in company, there was found among them a total want of order and harmony, and many of them availed themselves of the opportunity thus afforded them, for the intemperate indulgence of their carnal appetites; "For in eating" says the apostle, "every one taketh before other his own supper; and one is hungry and another is drunken". In order to correct habits of so disgraceful a character, Paul sharply reproveth these Corinthians and calls to their recollection the origin and object of the observance. "For I have received of the Lord" says he, "that

which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, 'Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you; *this do in remembrance of me*'. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, 'This cup is the New Testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me'. For as often" adds the apostle, "as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh condemnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body"; I. Cor. xi. 23—29.

It will be observed that in this address to the Corinthians, the apostle is not *enjoining* upon them the practice of celebrating the Lord's supper. The passage contains no *command* of the apostle's to that effect: it was intended solely to warn them against their abuse of that practice, and to explain to them its origin and true purpose. Accordingly he briefly recites the circumstances which had given rise to it. The knowledge of these circumstances, it appears, he had "received of the Lord";² and the apostle's statement founded on the instruction thus given to him on the

² For I have received of the Lord. Ἐγὼ γὰρ παρέλαβον ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου. Many commentators assume from these words that the circumstances which the apostle here narrates, were communicated to him by an *immediate and special revelation from Jesus Christ himself*; and some writers have even imagined that this simple fragment of our Lord's history is to be numbered among those unutterable

subject, substantially accords with the narration of Luke. We are therefore to consider it as a fact resting on *confirmed* evidence, that when our Lord at his last paschal supper invited his disciples to take and eat

mysteries (ἀρέτητα ἔηματα) into which Paul received an insight when he was caught up into the third heavens; II. Cor. xii. 4.

I would suggest that the apostle's expressions above cited are so far from containing any apparent allusion to that extraordinary vision, that they do not necessarily convey the idea of *any direct revelation whatsoever*. The Greek verb παραλαμβάνω, as it is used in this and many other passages of Paul's epistles, signifies "I am taught" or "I learn"—disco, instituor, edoceor; Vide Schleusner in voc. no. 3. This apostle had learned or had been taught of the Lord the several particulars respecting the last supper which he afterwards communicated to his Corinthian converts: but in *what manner* he received the information in question, the text does not specify. It might be by that merely spiritual illumination which he enjoyed in so large a measure. It might also be through the medium of his inspired brethren, or through that of some written document which rested on divine authority. Whatever, indeed, this apostle knew in connexion with christian truth, and in whatever manner his knowledge of it was acquired, he might without impropriety describe himself as having learned it all of the Lord, who had interposed in so striking a manner for his convincement and conversion. Now that the information given to him respecting the circumstances of the Lord's supper, was received *mediately*, and not by any direct or extraordinary revelation, appears most probable, because those circumstances were simply historical, and were perfectly known to Paul's eleven brethren in the apostleship who were present on the occasion, and who would, as a matter of course, communicate with him on a subject in which he was equally interested with themselves.

This view of the case is considerably strengthened by the apostle's having made use, in this passage, of the preposition ἀπὸ instead of παρά; for in connexion with verbs implying a reception of knowledge or instruction, the latter preposition is almost uniformly employed before the name of the person who actually gives the information so received. This observation applies to the New Testament in general, and more particularly to those passages of the epistles of Paul in which he introduces the verb παραλαμβάνειν. See Gal. i. 12, I. Thes. ii. 13, iv. 1, II. Thes. iii. 6, comp. John v. 34, vi. 45, viii. 26, x. 18, xv. 15, Acts x. 22, xxviii. 22, II. Tim. ii. 2, &c. The preposition ἀπὸ, on the contrary, is of a more general signification, and is but seldom used in that particular sense which has now been described as attaching to παρά. It may rather be considered as referring to the *original cause*. On the supposition that the apostle was taught the history of the last paschal supper, by his fellow apostles according to the divine will, or on divine authority, he might be properly said to have received his knowledge on the subject, παρά τῶν ἀποστόλων, ἀπὸ τοῦ Κυρίου.

That commentators are by no means unanimous in the opinion that an immediate revelation is here intended, will be sufficiently evinced by the following short ab-

the bread which he had broken, he added, “*This do in remembrance of me*”: and further, we learn from the apostle, that after Jesus had handed to them the cup to drink, he repeated a similar command,—“*This do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me*”.

Persons, who have long been habituated to consider these expressions of our Lord’s, in immediate connexion with the rite of the Eucharist *as they themselves observe it*, are very naturally led to explain the former by the latter; and thus with respect to the passages now quoted, they lose sight of those plain and simple principles of interpretation, which they would of course apply to any other part of the sacred volume. I confess I see no other way of accounting for the sentiment still so prevalent among christians, that when our Lord after participating with his disciples in their last paschal meal, said to them “*Do this in remembrance of me*”, he instituted a religious ceremony, which was thence-forward to form an essential part of worship, and which in that point of view was to be obligatory in all ages on the believers in Jesus. That the words of Christ when tried by the test of common

stract given in Poole’s Synopsis from the remarks made on this passage by certain eminent critics, and particularly by Beza. “It may be doubted whether the apostle learned these things *mediately* from those who were eye and ear witnesses, and on the narration of the other apostles, or immediately by revelation. He learned them of *the Lord*, that is, as proceeding from the Lord; the information being given to him by Ananias or the other disciples; or else of the Lord by revelation. In the latter case however he would not have said ἀπὸ, but παρὰ, according to the usage of Greek authors in general, of the writers of the New Testament, in particular, and more especially of Paul himself”. Other commentators understand the passage in a still more general sense, as implying only that the matters which Paul communicated to the Corinthians respecting the Lord’s supper, were no invention of his own, but rested on divine authority. So Camero, and Calvin. Rosenmüller, one of the most able and impartial of modern biblical critics, expresses a clear judgment that no direct revelation was here alluded to by the apostle. Vide *Schol. in N. T. in loc.*

rules, and explained by the circumstances under which they were spoken, *do not appear, and cannot be proved to have been fraught with so extensive a meaning*, will probably be allowed by the candid and considerate critic: and I would suggest that no such meaning can justly be applied to them, for two reasons.

That our Lord's words, in the first place, are not rightly interpreted as fixing the institution of a *typical ceremony in connexion with christian worship*, there arises a strong presumption, on this general ground—that such an interpretation (a completely adventitious one as far as relates to those mere words) is directly at variance with the acknowledged principle, that the old Jewish system of typical and ceremonial observances was to be abrogated by the death of Christ, and with our Saviour's own law, that the Father was now to be worshipped, not according to the shadowy ritual of the Jews and Samaritans, but in spirit and in truth.

Secondly, it is to be observed, that the command of Jesus respecting the bread and wine was addressed only to twelve persons, and was of a nature simply *positive*. It is true that all the precepts of Jesus were addressed to those persons who were in his company at the time when they were uttered, and many of them probably to his apostles only: but there is an all-sufficient reason why the bulk of them are to be received as of universal obligation,—namely that they are *moral* in their nature, and appertain to that unchangeable law of God which, when revealed, demands the obedience of all men at all times. But a merely positive precept has no connexion with that unchangeable law,

and does nothing more than enjoin, for some specific purpose, a practice *in itself* indifferent. Such a precept, therefore, appears to contain no sufficient *internal* evidence of its being binding on any persons, except those to whom it was actually addressed, and others who were placed under the same particular circumstances. I would submit that an universal obligation on the followers of any *moral* lawgiver to obey a precept of the nature now described, cannot be rightly admitted, unless it be by such lawgiver expressly declared: and that its not being expressly declared affords an indication that no such universality was intended.

The present argument may be fitly illustrated by another example of a similar nature. On the very same affecting occasion when Jesus directed his apostles to observe the practice now under consideration, he also enjoined them to *wash one another's feet*. We read in the gospel of John, that after that last paschal supper, Jesus rose from the table, took a towel, girded himself, poured water into a bason, and "began to wash his disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded". After thus evincing the lowliness of his mind, he said to his disciples, "know ye what I have done unto you? Ye call me Master, and ye say well: for so I am. If I then your Lord and Master have washed your feet, *ye ought also to wash one another's feet; for I have given you an example that ye should do, as I have done to you*". Here was an injunction conveyed to the apostles in words fully as explicit, and with accompaniments equally emphatic, as was the pre-

ceding command respecting the bread and wine. Yet since that injunction was simply positive, relating to an act of no moral importance in itself, and since that act was particularly connected with the habits and situation of the persons thus addressed—no one supposes that an obedience to such an injunction, is necessary for christians of every age and country. Undoubtedly that mutual respect and benevolence, of which the washing of one another's feet was thus prescribed to some of his servants as an instance and a sign, is universally incumbent on the followers of Jesus. Universally incumbent upon them also is that love and allegiance towards their Saviour, and that dependence upon his meritorious death, which the apostles were accustomed to express by their commemorative supper. But in both cases, according to the view of Friends on the subject, the outward circumstance may be omitted without any real infraction of the revealed will of God.

In confirmation of these general arguments, the reader's attention may now be called to a very striking fact; namely that in the gospel of Matthew, which was written by an eye witness, and probably at a still earlier date than that of Luke, and which contains a very exact description of our Lord's last supper with his disciples, of the breaking of the bread, of the handing of the cup, and of the comparison made by Jesus of the one with his body, and of the other with his blood; the words upon which *alone* could have been founded the institution of this supposed christian rite—"Do this in remembrance of me,"—*are entirely omitted.* We are not

to conclude from this omission that those words were not spoken. That they were spoken, on the contrary, is certain on the authority of both Luke and Paul. But since Matthew describes all the circumstances of the occasion and narrates the whole of our Lord's address, with the single exception of these words, we can hardly suppose him to have understood that the precept of Jesus was of that *very leading* importance which is generally imagined; or that our Lord then instituted a rite, which was in every age to form an essential part of divine worship, and to be universally obligatory on the professors of christianity. Precisely the same observation applies to the gospel of Mark, which is supposed to have been written under the immediate superintendence of the apostle Peter.

What then may be deemed a fair and reasonable interpretation of our Lord's very simple precept? and in what signification would the twelve apostles, to whom these words were addressed, naturally understand them? In order to give a satisfactory answer to this enquiry, we may in the first instance observe, that those twelve apostles, to whom our Lord addressed himself, were all Jews or Galileans; that they had long been accustomed to observe the rites of the supper of the Passover, and that among those rites were numbered (as has been already stated) the breaking of the bread and the handing of the cup, with the blessing, and giving of thanks. As they had already been habituated to these customs, so was the Lord Jesus well aware that they would still maintain them: for as it has been already remarked, the apostles

continued in the practice of parts of the Jewish ritual, long after the crucifixion of our Lord; and although that ritual was in fact abolished by his death, the sudden disuse of it does not appear to have been enjoined upon them by their divine Master. Having these facts in our view, we may reasonably interpret the words of Jesus as commanding nothing more, than that his apostles should call *him* to their recollection, when they met together to celebrate the supper of the Passover. "This cup" said Jesus, "is the New Testament in my blood". Now it was not every cup of wine which represented the New Testament in the blood of Christ; it was the cup of wine drunk at the supper of the Passover—an institution which they were then celebrating, and which in some of its circumstances, was expressly typical of the death of the Messiah. It appears then, by no means very improbable, that it was to the cup of the passover exclusively, that our Saviour's injunction applied—"This do ye, *as oft as ye drink it*, in remembrance of me;" that is, as often as ye meet together to celebrate the supper of the Passover, and to drink of that cup, which represents the New Testament in my blood, take care that ye forget not the true purport of the ceremony—do it in remembrance of *me*.

Such appears to be an easy and natural interpretation of our Lord's words. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that they are capable of a sense somewhat more extensive. Although the breaking of the bread, the handing of the wine, &c., undoubtedly formed a part of the Jewish ceremonial order of the Passover supper, there is reason to believe that a very similar

method was observed in the conduct of those more common meals, of which the Jews were accustomed to partake in one another's company. Thus when Jesus on a subsequent occasion "sat at meat" with the two disciples at Emmaus, we again find him blessing, breaking, and distributing, the bread, Luke xxiv. 30; and when Paul had induced his companions on the voyage, to unite with him in taking the needful food, we read that "he took bread, and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat"; Acts xxvii. 35. Such being the common practice of the Jews, it is very probable that the apostles might understand our Lord's injunction as not confined to the Passover supper, but as extending to other more familiar occasions, when they might be gathered together to participate in a common meal. On these occasions as well as at the Passover supper, they might consider it a duty laid upon them by their beloved Master, to break their bread, and to drink of their cup, not only for the satisfaction of their natural appetites, but in commemoration of the body which was broken, and of the blood which was shed for their sakes.

That the Lord Jesus was thus understood by some of his hearers, may be collected from the known practice of the church, at the very earliest period of its history. Of those numerous persons who were converted by means of the ministry of Peter on the day of Pentecost, we read that "they continued stedfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers"; Acts ii. 42. Since the "breaking of bread" is here mentioned among other

signs of religious communion, it probably signifies (according to the general opinion of biblical critics) *that* breaking of bread, which was introduced as a memorial of the death of Christ. Nevertheless, that the practice in question was observed as a part of the social meal, is evident from the immediate context. "And all that believed", adds the historian, "were together, and had all things common....and they continuing daily with one accord in the temple and *breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart*"; verse 46. On another occasion, when we are informed that "on the first day of the week" the disciples at Troas "came together to break bread", Acts xx. 7; there is no reason to suppose that they met for the purpose of performing a religious ceremony. It appears rather that they came together to participate in a brotherly repast, of which, it is probable that, *one* particular object was the joint commemoration of the death of their Lord. After Paul had taken the opportunity afforded him by this meeting, of preaching at length to the disciples, it is obvious that he broke bread with them in order to the refreshment of his body and the satisfaction of the demands of nature. "When he therefore was come up again", says Luke, "and *had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed*"; ver. 11.

Lastly, the same fact is evident from the description given by Paul of the abuses which had crept in among his Corinthian converts in their method of conducting these common repasts. "When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat

the Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church (or assembly) of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not;" I. Cor. xi. 20—22. After thus reproving them, and after explaining to them in a passage already cited, the origin and true object of the observance which they had thus abused, the apostle, zealous as he was for the right order of this christian meal, concludes with the following exhortation: "wherefore my brethren, *when ye come together to eat*, tarry one for another; and if any man hunger,³ let him eat at home, that ye come not together unto condemnation."

The supper which the apostle here describes as the Lord's supper, which the Corinthians had so shamefully mis-conducted, and during the course of which the bread was broken and the wine handed about in commemoration of the death of Christ, was probably the same as was otherwise denominated "love" or the "supper of love". "Their coming together", says Theophylact on I. Cor. xi. 20, (or rather Chrysostom, from whom his commentaries were borrowed,) "was intended as a sign of love and fellowship, and he *denominates this social banquet the Lord's supper*, because it was the imitation of that awful supper which the Lord ate with his disciples".⁴ These sup-

³ Vid. Grotii *Comm. in loc.* "Est *χλευασμός* (*irrisio acerba*). Loquitur enim tanquam pueris qui ita solent esse *ὄξυπείνοι* (*famelici*) ut quidvis arripiant, nec alios ad partem vocent, neque velint *ὄνα μερίζειν* (*ficus partiri*)."

⁴ So Grotius, Estius, Justinian, and others,—see Poole's *Synopsis*.

pers of love or “love feasts” are alluded to by Peter, II. Pet. ii. 13, and by Jude, ver. 12; and are described by Pliny, *Ep. lib. x. 97*; as well as by Tertullian, *Apol. adv. Gentes. cap. 39*; and other early Fathers, *Clem. Alex. Pæd. lib. ii. c. 1*, *Constit. Apostol. lib. ii. c. 28, &c.* It appears that they were public repasts of a decent and frugal character, in which the poor and the rich of the early christian churches participated together, and which were considered as being both the symbols and pledges of mutual harmony and brotherly love. Such then was the “Lord’s supper” of the primitive christians: such were the occasions on which they were accustomed to break their bread, and to drink their wine, as a memorial of the body and blood of Christ.⁵

To the simple practice which thus prevailed among these primitive christians, (if preserved within proper bounds) there appears to be nothing which can fairly be objected. It was a practice which might be classed rather under the head of pious customs, than under that of direct religious ceremonies. It was perhaps little more than giving to one of the common occa-

⁵ Vide *Schleusner Lex. in voc. ἀγάπη*, No. 7. “*Ἀγάπαι*, agapæ, (love feasts), fuerunt convivia publica in conventibus Christianorum sacris instituta, conjuncta in primitiva et apostolica ecclesia cum celebratione festiva cœnæ Dominicæ, ita dicta quod christianæ charitatis symbola essent et tesseræ,” &c. The celebration of the Eucharist and that of the *love feast* appear to be mentioned by Ignatius (A. D. 101), as identical. “Let that be considered” says the ancient father “a *valid Eucharist* which is under the care of a bishop, and in which he takes a part. Where the bishop appears, there let the people attend. It is unlawful either to baptize or to celebrate the *love feast* without the bishop”; *Ep. ad Smyrn. ch. 8*. So we are informed by Tertullian (A. D. 200), that even in his day, the Eucharist was received by christians in connexion with their meals; “*Eucharistiæ sacramentum et in tempore victus, et omnibus mandatum a Domino, etiam antelucanis cœtibus, nec de aliorum manu quam præsentium sumus*”; *De Coron. Milit. cap. 3, Ed. Semleri, iv. 311*; See also *Grotius and Whitby on 1 Cor. x. and xi.*

sions of life, a specific direction of an edifying character, and under the peculiar circumstances of these early disciples, it might be considered no inconsistent result of that general law, that, whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, all is to be done to the glory of God and in the *name of the Lord Jesus*. But appropriate as these feasts of charity might be to the condition of the infant church, when the believers were comparatively few in number, and in a considerable degree possessed all things in common, they would evidently be much less adapted for the use of those vast multitudes of persons very slightly connected with one another, who profess christianity in modern times. As the numbers increased in any church, who would as members of it possess a right to attend the *love feasts*, there would necessarily arise a great danger of abuse in such a practice; and that this abuse actually took place in the church of Corinth to an alarming and disgraceful degree, we have already noticed on the authority of the apostle Paul.

On the one hand, therefore, we may allow that those persons who continue the observance of the Lord's supper, not as a religious ceremony constituting a necessary part of divine worship, but *on the simple system of the primitive christians*, are not without their warrant in the example of those christians, for the adoption of such a course. On the other hand it is no less evident that the apparent unsuitableness of the custom to the present condition of the visible church, its known liability to abuse, and more especially its close *affinity* with the abolished practices of

the Jewish ritual, afford very strong reasons for its discontinuance.

That there is nothing in the history of the origin of that custom which precludes, under so obvious a change of circumstances, the *liberty for its disuse*, the reader will probably allow, for reasons already stated. Here, however, it appears necessary to notice a particular expression of the apostle Paul's from which many persons have derived an opinion, that this practice is obligatory on believers in Jesus, *until the end of the world*. "For as oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup", says the apostle in a passage already cited, "*ye do show the Lord's death till he come*". The inference deduced from these words respecting the *necessary* permanence of the rite of the Lord's supper, appears to be ill-founded. For in the first place they contain no *command* to the Corinthians to continue the practice in question until the Lord's coming; and in the second place, it is evident from the context, that it was not here the apostle's object to impress upon his friends the *duration* of the custom, but only its *meaning* or *direction*. The stress of his declaration plainly lies upon the words "*ye do show the Lord's death*". The words "*till he come*" were probably added as a kind of reservation; for the purpose of conveying the idea that when the Lord himself should come, such a memorial of his death would be obsolete and unnecessary.

It appears from various passages in the epistles, that the early christians, and even the apostle Paul himself, lived under a strong impression that the

coming of Christ in glory was *near at hand*. But although this impression on a point professedly not revealed to any of the inspired servants of God (Matt. xxiv. 36) was erroneous; there is a sense in which it may be truly declared, that the Lord Jesus is already *come again*. He is come in those spiritual manifestations of his divine presence, by which his faithful disciples in every age are upheld, strengthened, and comforted. While I by no means intend to assert that this is the second appearance of Christ to which Paul is here alluding, I cannot but remark that the *principle* on which he upholds the coming of our Lord as the termination of the outward ordinance, is plainly consistent with the sentiment of Friends, that the spiritual manifestations of the Lord Jesus, and the direct communion with him enjoyed by his obedient followers, virtually abrogates any practice in his service, which is of a merely symbolical or typical character.

The view now taken of the apostle's doctrine will fitly introduce a concluding observation—that while Friends consider it to be their duty to abstain from that ritual participation in bread and wine, so usually observed among their fellow-christians, there are no persons who insist more strongly than they do, on that which they deem to be the only needful *supper of the Lord*. That supper, according to their apprehension, is altogether of a spiritual nature. Now it is a circumstance which strongly confirms the general view thrown before the reader in the arguments already stated, that according to the narrations severally presented to us by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, of the last paschal meal of Jesus with his

disciples, our Lord availed himself of the very occasion which has given rise among christians to the rite of the Eucharist, in order to direct the attention of his disciples, to the supper now alluded to—a repast of a totally different description, and one which may be enjoyed by the disciples of Christ. independently of every outward ordinance. “With desire I have desired”, said Jesus to his apostles, “to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for *I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God*”; Luke xxii. 15, 16. Again, “This is my blood of the New Testament, which is given for many for the remission of sins. *But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom*”; Matt. xxvi. 28, 29. Again, “Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that *ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom*”; Luke xxii. 28—30.

We may indeed believe that these gracious declarations are accomplished *in all their fulness*, only in the heavenly state of happiness of glory; but it is sufficiently evident, and is allowed by various commentators, that our Lord’s expressions, now cited, cannot be considered as relating exclusively to the world to come. When Jesus Christ had died on the cross a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, the type of the passover had received its fulfilment in the kingdom of God. When his blood had been shed for many, for the remission of sins, and when he had ascended to

the right hand of the Father Almighty, that kingdom or reign, conducted through the mediation of the Messiah, was established in the earth. Then therefore did the day arrive, as we may fairly deduce from these impressive passages, when Jesus was again to eat the passover with his disciples, and to drink the new wine in their company; according to his own declaration on a subsequent occasion, “Behold I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will *come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me;*” Rev. iii. 20. When the faithful disciples of our glorified Redeemer open the doors of their hearts at the voice of his Holy Spirit; when, more especially, they are engaged in rendering unto him their joint and willing service, and in worshipping God in unison; he is often pleased to come in amongst them, to sup with them, and to permit them to sup with him. Then does he bring them into a holy fellowship with the Father, with himself, and one with another; breaks for them the bread of life; and gives them to drink of his most precious blood; and thus while their souls are refreshed, nourished, and comforted, they are brought, in a living and effective manner, to the remembrance of that crucified Lord, who is their strength, their joy, and their salvation.

On a general review, then, of the particular passages of the New Testament which relate to the observance of the Lord’s supper, I may venture to recapitulate my own sentiments, that such a practice has no proper or necessary connexion with a spiritual feeding on the body and blood of Christ—that the history of our Lord’s last paschal supper with his

disciples, affords no reason for believing that he then instituted a religious ceremony, which was thenceforth to form an essential part of the worship of christians—that our Lord's injunction on that occasion may be understood, either as relating solely to the rites of the Passover, or as intended to give a religious direction to the more common social repasts of his disciples—that it was in connexion with such repasts and particularly with their love feasts, that the primitive christians were accustomed to commemorate the death of Christ—that the custom of those love feasts, however appropriate to the circumstances of the earliest disciples, soon fell into abuse as the numbers of believers increased, and appears to be, in a great degree, inapplicable to the present condition of the christian world—and lastly, that under the influence of the spiritual manifestations of our Redeemer, we may participate in that *true* supper of the Lord which he has himself so clearly upheld to the expectation of his disciples, and which alone is indispensable for the edification, consolation, and salvation of his people.

Although, for the reasons detailed in the present disquisition, it may fairly be concluded that the practices of water baptism and the Lord's supper are by no means needful, it is certain that these practices have been very generally observed by the professors of the christian name. This fact is easily explained not only by the known power of example and tradition, but also by that principle in our nature, which leads us so commonly to place our dependence upon outward and visible things. Man is naturally prone to trust in any thing rather than in the invisible Creator, and

he is ever ready to make the formal ordinance a part of his religious system, because he can rely upon it with ease to himself, and may often find in it a plausible substitute for the mortification of his own will. Now I would suggest that the ordinances which we have been considering, so far from being like the moral law of God *universally* salutary, are evidently fraught with no little danger, as occasions by which this deceitful disposition in the human heart is naturally excited and brought into action. And here our appeal may be made not only to theory but to facts, for it is indisputable that the outward rites of baptism and the supper as observed among the professors of Christianity, have been the means of leading multitudes into gross superstition. How many thousands of persons are there, as every spiritually-minded christian will allow, who place upon these outward rites a reliance which is warranted neither by reason nor by Scripture, and which so far from bringing them nearer to God—so far from reminding them of Christ—operates in the most palpable manner as a *diversion* from a true and living faith in their Creator and Redeemer! How often has the ignorant sinner, even in the hour of death, depended on the “sacrament” of the Lord’s supper as upon a saving ordinance! And how many a learned theologian both ancient and modern has been found to insist on the dangerous tenet, that the rite of baptism is *regeneration*!

While the Society of Friends believe that ordinances which are so peculiarly liable to abuse, and which have been the means of exciting, not only the

superstitions now alluded to, but endless divisions and contentions, and many cruel persecutions in the church, cannot truly appertain to the law of God; while they are persuaded on the contrary, that the spirituality of that law is opposed to the continued observance of any typical religious rite; and while on these grounds, they consider themselves amply justified in the omission of such practices; they entertain, I trust, no disposition whatever to judge their fellow-christians, who conscientiously make use of these ceremonies. They are, it may be hoped, too well aware of the importance of obedience to the Lord Jesus, to condemn others, who from their very desire to obey him, are led to differ from themselves.

For my own part, I am persuaded that there are many persons who avail themselves of the rites in question, on principles which cannot be deemed superstitious, and who even derive through these *signs and memorials* a real instruction and edification. Such instances may serve to convince us that God continues to accept the sincere heart, and that he is still pleased to bless a variety of means to a variety of conditions. Nevertheless I cannot but deem it probable that there are many christians not of our profession, who, as they draw yet nearer in spirit to an omnipresent Deity, will be permitted to find in *the disuse of all types*, “a more excellent way”.

CHAPTER V.

ON THE NATURE AND CHARACTER OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

THE influences of the Holy Spirit on the hearts of men are both general and extraordinary. By the general influences of the Spirit I mean the work of *grace*,—a work essential to the salvation of the soul, by which alone we are turned from our evil ways, enabled to serve God out of a pure heart, and preserved alive as members of the body of Christ. “The grace of God which bringeth salvation”, says the apostle Paul, “hath appeared to all men; teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world”; Tit. ii. 11, 12. Again, he says, “By grace are ye *saved* through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God”; Eph. ii. 8. The *extraordinary* influences of the Spirit, are those which qualify individuals for particular religious services: they are by no means indispensable to salvation: it is not by *them* that we maintain our spiritual life: neither are they *as a whole* the common allotment of

all the living members of the true church, but are variously bestowed—one upon one person, and another upon another.

These extraordinary influences are usually denominated the *gifts* of the Spirit. “To one”, says Paul, “is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge, by the same Spirit; to another faith, by the same Spirit; (that is, probably, such faith as qualified for the execution of some peculiarly important service;) to another the gifts of healing, by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another the discerning of Spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will”; I. Cor. xii. 8—11.

This apostolic description of the distribution of divine gifts in the church, is introduced by the declaration that “the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man⁶ to profit withal (or as in the Greek, *in order to that which is profitable or useful*⁷)”. And as every member of the natural body contributes by the exercise of its own functions to the welfare of the whole body, so it may be presumed that there is no real christian who is not, sooner or later, endowed with some particular spiritual capacity for usefulness in the church, and called to the performance of some specific services, in the great cause of truth and righteousness.

When, however, we consider any one gift of the Spirit, we plainly perceive that it is not bestowed

⁶ ἐκάστω.

⁷ πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον.

generally, but is the portion of those individuals only, upon whom is laid that peculiar office in the church to the exercise of which such gift is directed. Now the gift to which I am about to advert, is pre-eminent above all others as a means of general usefulness—of conversion, instruction, and consolation : it is that which is now generally denominated the gift of “ministry”, but which in the Scriptures is sometimes described as the gift of “prophecy”; I. Cor. xiv. 3. Undoubtedly, there have existed at various periods and for particular purposes, other gifts of the Spirit, which require a higher degree of supernatural influence ; such as those of “miracles” and of “tongues”; but the gift by means of which divine truth is outwardly communicated and applied, is of constant and therefore of paramount benefit ; and when we take into our view the weakness and imperfection of human nature, we may consider it as equally important in every age, to the maintenance, edification, and enlargement of the militant church.

I believe it to be generally allowed among christians, that none can be true ministers of the gospel, who are not called to the exercise of that office by the Holy Ghost ; and consequently that the faculty of ministry is still to be considered a *gift of the Spirit*. But although this doctrine is generally admitted, it is very far indeed from being consistently or universally carried into practice. Many rush into the sacred office, and enjoy the temporal privileges with which it is so usually connected, whose whole deportment evinces in the plainest manner, that they are destitute of qualification for any such undertaking. Others,

whose views are of a somewhat more serious complexion, and who are actuated by a general desire to perform their duty, are obviously depending in their ministry, not upon that Spirit who can alone qualify for the exercise of his own gifts, but upon human learning and merely intellectual exertion. Their discourses are so far from arising out of the intimations of a divine influence, that they are the mere produce of their own reflexions, and their own industry—unless indeed they be borrowed, as is too frequently the case, from the reflexions and industry of others. Such discourses may be the word of the preacher, or they may be the word of his neighbour, but they cannot with any degree of strictness or propriety, be described as “the word of the Lord”.

Happily, there is still another class of ministers among various denominations of christians (as I can testify from my own observation), whose views on the present subject are of a much more spiritual character. In the first place, they enter into the sacred office under very decided impressions of christian duty, and in the humble yet full persuasion, that they are called into this field of service, by the great Head of the Church. And in the second place, when invested, according to their own apprehension, with the office in question, they exercise its important functions, not only with zeal and fidelity, but with a real feeling of dependence upon the divine Spirit. Such persons are evidently the servants of the Lord Jesus Christ; and we can scarcely fail to observe how frequently their labours are *blessed* to the conversion

and edification of the people. Nevertheless, it must be confessed respecting even *these* preachers of the gospel, that their ministry is not the *unmixed* offspring of the Lord's Spirit. The principle upon which they generally (I will not say universally) conduct their religious services, appears to be this—that having been called to the work and invested with the office of preachers, they are constantly to seek for the assistance of divine power in the exercise of its functions: nevertheless, that the discourses which they actually utter, are not to be immediately prompted of the Lord, but, under the more general and indirect influences of the Holy Spirit, are to be the produce of their own minds, and mostly of previous study, research, and reflexion.

Little as I am inclined to cast any blame upon others who are evidently accepted and assisted by their "own Master", I conceive it to be a duty plainly laid upon the Society of Friends, to hold up a still higher and purer standard respecting the christian ministry. It is a principle generally understood and admitted by the members of that Society, that the faculty of the christian ministry is a gift of the Spirit which cannot be rightly exercised, *otherwise than under the direct and immediate influence of that Spirit*. Friends are not, therefore, satisfied with any general impression that it is their duty to preach the gospel; nor do they venture, under such impression, either to employ their own intellectual exertions as a preparation for the service, or to select their own time for performing it. If it be the divine will that they should minister, they believe it will be manifested to

them by the divine Spirit, when they are to speak, whom they are to address, and what things they are to express. In the exercise of so high and sacred a function, they dare not depend either in a greater or less degree upon their own strength or wisdom; but they feel constrained to place their *sole* reliance upon him who “searcheth the reins and the hearts”; upon him who “hath the key of David”; who “openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth”; Rev. iii. 7.

The individual who, according to the apprehension of Friends, is a true minister of the gospel, (and there may be many such persons in a single congregation,) avails himself with strict regularity of the opportunities provided amongst us, as in every religious society, for the purpose of divine worship. In company with his brethren and sisters, he waits in public upon Him, who is alone the author of every good and perfect gift. His soul is humbled in true prostration before God; and while he continues in this condition, he is often sensible not only of a general desire for the spiritual welfare of his friends, but of a strong yet secret exercise of mind on their account. Now as he patiently waits, in reverent dependence upon Christ the great Minister of the sanctuary, this exercise of mind often assumes an explicit direction; and when he apprehends that the secret command has gone forth towards him, *vocally* to address either the congregation in preaching, or the Almighty in prayer; he obeys the mandate of his Lord, and speaks as the Spirit gives him utterance. When he has been enabled to discharge himself of the burthen which

has thus rested upon him, he returns to a state of silence, and is often permitted to experience a consoling feeling of relief and tranquillity. The quietude and true ease which then prevail in his mind afford him an evidence of which he may with humility avail himself, that in thus exercising his gift, he has been following, not the carnal imaginations of his own heart, but the voice of the true Shepherd.

Here I would particularly observe, that, with every humble and devoted minister who acts on these principles, and who carefully maintains the watch, the internal operations of the Spirit will not only prompt to a right exercise of the gift, but will afford a constant check upon its abuse. There will be found in those internal operations, a secret discipline, a salutary correction, for those who exceed the limits of their calling, and stretch their gift beyond its true measure. If, however, in any persons, who have received the gift of the ministry, a watchful dependence upon God is not maintained, and thus their services degenerate into the use of words without life, the spiritually-minded hearer will not fail to observe so important a change; and thus, while the members of a religious society are "subject to one another in love", and a right christian oversight is preserved among them, it will not, for the most part, be found a difficult matter, to prevent the continuance, in any congregation, of a *spurious* ministry.

The use of the christian ministry whether in preaching or in prayer; whether in the public congregation, or even in the more private circle, is immediately connected with the worship of God. It is universally

understood to constitute a part of that worship. The sentiments of Friends, therefore, on this subject, like those on the rites of baptism and the supper, arise out of that part of the divine law, as revealed under the New Covenant, which declares that God is a Spirit, and must be worshipped by his followers *in spirit and in truth*.

They conceive that true spiritual worship consists in that communion of the soul with its Creator, which is not interrupted either by the use of ceremonial ordinances, or by any religious services originating in the invention and contrivance of man; and therefore they apprehend, that no verbal administrations properly consist with worship, but those which arise simply and immediately from the influence of the Holy Spirit. They believe that God can be rightly praised only by his *own works*. Now among those works may be reckoned the spiritual ministry of which I am speaking; for, however it may be affected by the infirmity of the instrument through which it passes, (and this may be the case in a greater or lesser degree,) it is nevertheless prompted, ordered, and directed to its right object, by the Lord himself.

Here I would observe that there appears to exist a material distinction between *teaching* and *preaching*. While in the exercise of either of these christian duties, the dependence of the true christian will be placed on the grace and Spirit of God, it may be fairly admitted that in *teaching*, a much greater liberty is given for the use of our merely human faculties, than in the higher and more important office of prophecy or preaching. The Spirit operates through

a variety of administrations: and there often arise opportunities, when the composition of treatises on religious subjects, when commenting on the Scriptures, and when the use of other means of christian instruction, are not only allowable, but desirable. But such an allowance by no means affects the principle of Friends, that with occasions so solemn as those of the congregational worship of the Deity, no ministry can be in true harmony, but such as is dictated by the direct influences of the Holy Spirit. It is then, that in a peculiar and preeminent manner, the Almighty Saviour of men is present with his people. The sacred canopy of their heavenly Father's love is spread over them; nor can they worship him aright, unless the reasonings and imaginations of their own minds are brought into subjection. At such, times the mandate is proclaimed to the spiritual worshipper. "Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord; for he is raised up out of his holy habitation;" Zech. ii. 13. If incense is then to be offered unto him, its sweet savour must arise out of no "strange fire"; Levit. x. 1. If the ark of the covenant is to be uplifted among the people, none may touch it to whom the command is not given; II. Sam. vi. 6. If the pure temple of the Lord is to be built up, he himself must prepare the materials, "and neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron"—nothing of the *unauthorized* instrumentality of man—must be "heard in the house"; I. Kings vi. 7.

In offering the description now given of the nature and operation of that which we deem to be true ministry; in adverting to its divine origin, and in

marking its coincidence with the pure spirituality of christian worship, I have not forgotten our own infirmities and deficiencies ; and it has been very far indeed from my intention to convey the idea that we are found universally to maintain in *practice* this high yet simple standard. I am remarking only that this is our *principle*, and that it is a principle which evidently arises out of the divine law, and accords with its holiness and perfection.

There is another point of view, in which the present subject requires to be considered.

Although the object for which christians meet in congregations, is the worship of the Deity, and although it is by means of a direct communion between God and the soul, that the worshipper is *chiefly* edified, the "Master of assemblies" is pleased to appoint the outward ministration of preaching, in immediate connexion with the service thus offered to himself, for the purposes of *conversion, edification, and consolation*. It is obvious that, in any assembly of persons, there is always a variety of internal conditions ; and the mental state even of a single individual is varied from time to time, by circumstances known only to himself and to his Creator. In order then to be useful to its fullest extent, the ministry of the gospel ought to consist not only in a statement of scriptural truths, but in a right experimental application of those truths, as occasion offers, to all *this variety of internal condition*. Now, although the preacher, from his own observation, may form some opinion respecting the states of his hearers ; he cannot penetrate the secrets of the heart, and his judgment never fails

to be obscure, uncertain, and imperfect. Thus his administrations may or *may not* be fitted to those persons for whom they are intended. But the Minister of ministers *searches the hearts of men*, and under the immediate influence of *his Spirit*, the preacher of the gospel is enabled to unfold the condition of individuals; and rightly to apply to their several wants, the word of consolation, reproof, or instruction. Such was the character of that prophesying or preaching of which we read in the epistles of Paul. “If all prophecy”, says he, “and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: *and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth*”; I. Cor. xiv. 24, 25.

So also in public prayer, the minister prays as the representative of the congregation, and the minds of the hearers are supposed to accompany the words of the speaker. If he utter the written prayer, and the congregation follow him in the same words, it is sufficiently obvious that the expression of the lip and the feeling of the heart, will often be in total dissonance. The obdurate sinner may be found addressing an omnipresent Deity, in the language of contrition—the sorrowful and desponding spirit, in the voice of praise and thanksgiving—the happy and rejoicing believer, in the words of mourning and woe! Nor can it be considered that a less inconsistency prevails, when the prayer of the minister is extemporaneous, but proceeds, not from the Spirit of the Lord, but from his own powers of invention and composition.

The words which under such circumstances he may express, however satisfactory to his own mind, may often be in absolute discordance with the feelings and real condition of his hearers. Were we in our public assemblies of worship, to use addresses either to the people or to the Almighty, not dictated by his Spirit, but either previously written or extemporaneously composed, we should, *with our views of the subject*, consider ourselves not as honouring the God of our fathers, but as making an unauthorized and improper use of his holy name. And we are persuaded, from long experience, that under that dispensation of religion into which we have been led, such a mode of conducting the administrations of the gospel, would greatly injure the *life*, and as greatly lessen the *true efficacy* of our christian worship.

In confirmation of our principle on the present subject, and as a farther proof that it legitimately arises out of divine institution, I have now to appeal to the numerous and plain examples of inspired ministry, recorded in the Bible.

Various instances are on record in that sacred volume, of ministry uttered either publicly or on private occasions of peculiar importance; and the prayers, praises, and discourses, thus spoken, bear the character, not of compositions prepared beforehand, through the exertions of human intellect, but of effusions flowing spontaneously from that divine Spirit who animated and impelled the speakers. When Joseph interpreted the dream of Pharoah; when the dying Jacob pronounced his blessing on his children and grandchildren; when Moses sang aloud his song

of rejoicing; and when he recited to the people the marvellous dealings of God with them; when Joshua also recounted the mercies of the Lord, and exhorted the Israelites to obedience; when Deborah and Barak uttered their triumphant hymn; when Hannah in the temple poured forth her loud thanksgiving; when Samuel communicated the word of the Lord to Eli, and on another occasion pleaded the cause of God with the people; when David sung his psalms of penitence, prophecy, and praise,⁸ and when his successor uttered his proverbs of wisdom and his thousand songs, I. Kings iv. 32; when Solomon, when Hezekiah, and when Ezra, lifted up their voices in audible supplication before the assembled multitudes; when Elizabeth addressed with a loud voice the mother of her Lord, and when Mary responded with the voice of thanksgiving; when Zacharias praised the Lord who had “visited and redeemed his people”; when John the Baptist proclaimed the personal presence and approaching reign of the Messiah; when all these and many other individuals thus exercised the gift of ministry (as it would now be denominated),

⁸ From various statements contained in the recorded history of David, it may be collected that he sometimes uttered his prayers and psalms, before they were committed to writing; See II. Sam. vii. 18—29, xxii. xxiii. 2. Nor can we doubt that the Spirit often led him in the first instance to write that sacred poetry, which was afterwards sung both by himself and others. While, however, it is evident that psalmody prevailed among the ancient Hebrews to a great extent, it is to be remembered that the songs which they introduced into their worship, were the songs of prophets and *originated* in direct inspiration.

The psalms to which the earliest christians were accustomed, I conceive to have been often uttered without premeditation, and under the immediate influence of the Holy Ghost. In two of his epistles, Paul describes them as “spiritual songs”, Eph. v. 19, Col. iii. 16; and on another occasion he numbers the “psalm” among those inspired administrations, which distinguished the public worship of primitive times; I. Cor. xiv. 26.

there is every reason to believe (and in some of the instances alluded to, it is expressly declared,) that they spake as they were immediately moved by the Holy Ghost.

Among the ancient Israelites, the duty which properly corresponds with that of the christian minister, was not exercised by the Priests and Levites, whose office it was to perform the service practised in the temple, and to offer the sacrifices appointed by the law. It rather appertained to the prophets, who, at various periods of the Israelitish history, were a numerous body of men; and were distinguished from their countrymen, not by hereditary dignity or official appointment, but simply by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These persons, as we find from a multitude of passages in their written works, were by no means exclusively engaged in predicting events to come, but were often sent forth to proclaim the judgments and mercies of the Lord, to warn the people, and to exhort them to faith, obedience, and holiness. The gift of "prophecy", therefore, during the more ancient periods of sacred history, frequently assumed the same character, as in the days of the apostle Paul, who described it as identical with the gift of preaching; I. Cor. xiv. 3. Now whether the prophets exercised their gift, in predicting or in exhorting, it is on all hands allowed that their words were dictated by the direct influence of the Spirit of God. They delivered not the productions of their own invention, but the messages of Jehovah. It was not they who spoke: it was the Lord who spoke by them.

Very similar to the case of the prophets, was that

of the apostles of Jesus Christ. All christians allow that the verbal ministrations of these servants of God were immediately inspired of the Holy Ghost. When our Lord sent forth his disciples to heal the sick and to preach the gospel, he said to them, "Ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour, what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you"; Matt. x. 18—20. On a subsequent occasion immediately before his ascension, we read that Jesus opened the understanding of the apostles "that they might understand the Scriptures", when he addressed them in the following manner; "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. *And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you* (i. e. the Spirit): but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, *until ye be endued with power from on high*"; Luke xxiv. 46—49. In pursuance of this declaration, the apostles when gathered together on the day of Pentecost, were "*filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance*"; Acts ii. 4. Paul in a very particular manner has explained the nature and declared the authority of his own preaching. "And I was with you" says he to the Corinthians, "in weakness, and in fear, and in much

trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power : that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God” Again, “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God ; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God ; which things also we speak, *not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth;*” I. Cor. ii. 3—5, 12, 13.

But the immediate operation of the Spirit, as productive of ministry, was by no means confined, under the gospel dispensation, to the apostles of Jesus Christ. There are in the book of Acts a variety of passages, which prove that the gifts of the Holy Ghost were poured out in great abundance upon others also. On that memorable day of Pentecost, more especially, the Spirit descended from above not only on the apostles, but on the whole company of their followers. Then, according to the express declaration of Peter, was accomplished the prophecy of Joel ; “And it shall come to pass in the last days (saith God), I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh : and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams : and on my servants and on my handmaidens will I pour out in those days of my Spirit, and they shall prophesy;” Joel ii. 28, 29, Acts ii. 16—18.

The same truth may be without difficulty elicited from various passages of Paul's epistles ; for he often

mentions the gifts of direct inspiration, with which his own converts were endowed by the Lord Jesus. On one occasion particularly he reproves the Corinthians for the misapplication of the gift of tongues; and gives them very explicit directions respecting the manner in which that gift, and others of a similar nature, were to be exercised. “*If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all; he is judged (or discerned) of all. And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth. How is it then, brethren? When ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done to edifying. If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God. Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be comforted. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets: for God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all churches of the saints;”* I. Cor. xiv. 23—33.

This remarkable passage of Scripture, as well as the whole chapter of which it forms a part, plainly relates, as is universally allowed by commentators, to the conduct of the early christian converts in their public assemblies for divine worship; nor is there I believe any other existing document which throws the same degree of light upon that interesting topic. The passage naturally suggests a few remarks.

It is to be observed in the first place, that the ministry which the apostle describes as exercised on these occasions, was not prepared or premeditated, but arose out of the direct impulses of the Spirit of God. That this was the character of the gift of tongues, or of ministry in foreign languages, by which the original preachers of the gospel were *miraculously* enabled to promulgate the truth among all nations, cannot be denied. Nor is it less clear that the *prophesying* which the apostle so much commends as profitable for consolation, conviction, and edification, and which comprehended not merely predicting, but more especially preaching, praying, and singing praises, was uttered under the direct and extraordinary influences of the Holy Ghost: for it is in reference to those very influences, that the public ministry alluded to, is thus denominated by the apostle. It was "prophecy" for no other reason than because it was directly inspired.⁹ Koppius, a learned biblical critic, remarks that this word, as employed by the

⁹ "*Prophecy* was another spiritual gift which St. Paul hath defined (I. Cor. xiv. 3) to be 'a speaking unto men for edification, and exhortation, and comfort'.

"I have never found *prophesying* used in the Old or New Testament for mere explaining the Scriptures, or teaching *without inspiration*. But it appeareth to me to be always meant of speaking or acting *by inspiration*. Sometimes it is to

apostle, describes a faculty possessed "by a certain description of christians in the apostolic church, who being in a singular manner affected by divine power, were accustomed to speak publicly in their assemblies for worship; uttered prophecies; laid open the secret designs of men; prayed with a remarkable impetus and fervor of mind; rose up *under the sudden impulse of the Holy Spirit*, to teach, exhort, and console; and sung hymns which bore the stamp of a divine origin." See *Excurs. iii. in Ep. ad Ephes.* So also *Schleusner in voc., Grotius, and other commentators.*

It appears in the second place, that these gifts of the Holy Spirit, although truly of a divine origin, were capable, through unwatchfulness or perverseness, of being misapplied and abused; and were in some measure placed under the control of the persons on whom they were bestowed. The "spirits of the prophets" were "subject to the prophets", and to preserve a right order in the use of their ministry, it was necessary for them to cultivate individually a sound and enlightened judgment, and a tender regard for others. Such a state of mind could in fact be preserved, only through a watchful dependence upon the Lord, who is the source of wisdom and of all spiritual illumination. Under *his* guidance and influ-

be understood of foretelling future events, such as no human sagacity could have foreseen. But that is not always its signification.

"In Scripture, *prophesying* is sometimes to be understood as a *delivering by inspiration of some doctrine, direction, or exhortation*, more peculiarly suited to the state of that church, or of some part of it. At other times *praying by inspiration*, or singing *psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs*, come under the general name of *prophesying*. For all these were performed in the primitive church *by inspiration*, and were a speaking not only unto God, but unto men also; and that for edification, or exhortation, or comfort"; See *Benson's Essay on the Public Worship of the first Christians—in his Work on the Epistles, Ato. Ed. col. i. p. 609.*

ence every man would find his own place ; all might then prophesy and all be edified in their turn, and thus would it be made manifest in all the churches of the saints, that God, the inspirer of his chosen servants, “ is not the author of confusion, but of peace”.

Lastly, the reader cannot fail to notice, that the ministry, which at that early period was exercised in christian assemblies for worship, was not the prayer and lecture of any appointed individual ; but consisted in the unsolicited and spontaneous effusions of many ;—of all, who were impelled by the Spirit, and to whom the word of the Lord was revealed on the occasion.

Such are the principles upon which were regulated the preaching and praying of the earliest christians in their assemblies for worship ; *and such precisely are the principles on which, in their own religious meetings, the Society of Friends profess to conduct the ministry of the gospel.*

An opinion, I am well aware, is commonly entertained, that those extraordinary endowments of the Holy Spirit which distinguished the period when christianity was first promulgated, have long since ceased to be enjoyed in the church of Christ ; and in order to complete the present argument, it is necessary for me to state the grounds on which I am persuaded that this opinion, *in the full extent to which it has been carried*, is by no means correct.

It may indeed be readily allowed that several of the endowments in question, such as the gifts of healing and of tongues, were of a nature absolutely miraculous. As such, they were peculiarly adapted

to the great work of *establishing* in the world a religion, which was not only new to almost the whole of mankind, but was directly opposed to their favorite maxims and habits. That object being now effected, it is by no means surprising, according to my apprehension, that such gifts should be withdrawn from the church: and there does not appear to be any reason for supposing that under the present circumstances of christianity, they are likely to be called into action. Nor are we to forget that many of the original promulgators of the gospel on whom this work of establishing a new religion devolved, and several of whom were employed in composing those records of divine truth which are of permanent and universal authority, were gifted in a *far more eminent degree* with divine inspiration, than now appears to be the case with any of the Lord's servants. But, although these points are to be freely granted, there are good reasons for the conviction entertained by Friends, that the immediate operations of the Spirit, as productive of ministry, continue to this very hour to be bestowed on the followers of Christ.

In the first place, there is a great probability *a priori* that such would be the fact. Since, even under the dispensation of the law, the ministry was prompted and exercised by means of those immediate operations, it is altogether inconsistent with the analogy of divine truth, to suppose that, under the more spiritual dispensation of the gospel, the church should be deprived of so important and salutary a privilege. Again, it is to be remembered that the "prophesying" of which we are speaking was intended, as the apostle declares,

for the great purposes of exhortation, edification, and comfort; I. Cor. xiv. 3. Now since exhortation, edification, and comfort, are required at the present day, as much as they were in the times of the apostles, and since the Great Head of the church is ever willing and able to supply the need of his servants, there are obvious reasons for our believing, that the gift which was directed to those purposes, would still be permitted to operate.

The strong antecedent probability now adverted to, may be sufficient to throw the *onus probandi* upon those who *deny* the continued existence of the gift of inspired ministry. Nevertheless it is desirable for us to remark, in the second place, that this antecedent probability is confirmed by certain plain promises contained in the holy Scriptures. The prediction of Joel, as it is cited by the apostle Peter, declares that an abundant measure of this very gift, should be poured forth on the servants of the Lord in “the last days”; Acts ii. 17.¹ From the comparison of various other passages of the Bible, it appears that by the “last days” are intended the “times of christianity”—“the times of the last dispensation”—and it will scarcely be denied that these expressions include the whole of that dispensation—its career and termination, as well as its commencement; *comp.* Isa. ii. 2, Heb. i. 2, I. Pet. i. 20, I. John ii. 18. It is most probable, therefore, that the promise of the Lord, through his prophet, did not relate *exclusively* to the

¹ In Joel ii. 28, we read, “And it shall come to pass *afterwards*”—Hebrew אַהֲרֵי כֵן. Kimchi, the celebrated Jewish commentator, informs us that this phrase signifies *In the last days*; and it is well known that by “the last days” the Jews denote the *times of the Messiak*.

events of the day of Pentecost, but is rather to be interpreted as describing some of the *permanent characteristics* of the christian dispensation.

Such a view of this celebrated prophecy appears to have been entertained by the apostle who cited it. After explaining to the people that the wonderful events of the day of Pentecost, were effected by the Son of God, who had “received of the Father the *promise of the Holy Ghost*”, and who had *shed forth that which they then saw and heard*; he proceeds to declare the continuance and universality among believers, of the same divine influence. “Repent and be baptized every one of you”, said he “and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost: for the *promise* is unto you, and to *your children*, and to *all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call*”; Acts ii. 38, 39. This passage has been cited on a former occasion, to prove that the Holy Spirit was not to be withdrawn from the church, as a *guide to morals*. Now when we look at the circumstances under which these words were spoken, and consider their immediate connexion with the prediction of Joel and with its fulfilment, we can scarcely fail to perceive the evidence which they *also* afford, that the Holy Spirit was not to be withdrawn from the church *as a guide to prophesying*. It was probably in reference to both these spiritual operations—the one general, the other peculiar—that our Lord himself when he promised to his disciples (who then represented his church militant) the effusion of the Holy Ghost, declared that this divine Teacher and Monitor, should abide with them “*for ever*”; that is, I presume, through the whole

course of the christian dispensation ; John xiv. 16.

Lastly, an appeal may be safely made *to the persons addressed in this work*, when it is asserted that the sentiments of Friends on the present subject are confirmed by their own experience. That Society has for more than a century and a half, been acting, in reference to the ministry, on the principles which have now been stated, and they certainly have never found reason for considering those principles either untrue or inefficacious. Although we are very far indeed from pretending to those *higher degrees* of inspiration, which for peculiar and specific purposes were bestowed on some of the immediate followers of Jesus, we know that there are individuals amongst us who have received that gift of prophecy, which is profitable for “exhortation, edification, and comfort”: that these persons are incapable of exercising their gift in their own strength, or at any stated periods ; but that as they are preserved in watchful dependence upon their holy Leader, they are sometimes really anointed for the service ; and that on such occasions, their prayers and their preaching, however little adorned with the enticing words of man’s wisdom, are evidently accompanied with life and power.²

² In connexion with the subject of the present section, I wish to present to the reader’s attention, a very curious passage selected from the Pastor of Hermas, a work probably composed during the first century after Christ, and although in many respects a fanciful composition, held in considerable repute among many of the early christians.

THE ELEVENTH COMMAND.

That the Spirits and Prophets are to be tried by their works, and of a two-fold Spirit.

He showed me certain men sitting upon benches, and one sitting in a chair ; and he said unto me, seest thou those who sit upon the benches ? Sir, said I, I see them. He answered ; they are the faithful ; and he who sits in the chair, is an

In reviewing the principal particulars of the present chapter, the reader will observe that the influences of the Holy Spirit are both general and extraordinary—that the former effect our conversion and sanctification,

earthly spirit. For he cometh not into the assembly of the faithful, but avoids it. But he joins himself to the doubtful and empty; and prophesies to them in corners and hidden places; and pleases them by speaking according to all the desires of their hearts. For he, placing himself among empty vessels, is not broken, but the one fitteth the other. But when he cometh into the company of just men, who are full of the Spirit of God, and they pray unto the LORD; that man is emptied, because that earthly spirit flies from him, and he is dumb, and cannot speak any thing. As if in a store-house you shall stop up wine or oil; and among those vessels shall place an empty jar; and shall afterwards come to open it, you shall find it empty as you stopped it up: so those empty prophets, when they come among the spirits of the just, are found to be such as they came.

II. I said, how then shall a man be able to discern them? Consider what I am going to say concerning both kinds of men; and as I speak unto thee, so shalt thou prove the prophet of God, and the false prophet. And first try the man who hath the Spirit of God; *because the Spirit which is from above is humble, and quiet; and departs from all wickedness; and from the vain desires of the present world; and makes himself more humble than all men; and answers to none when he is asked; nor to every one singly: for the Spirit of God doth not speak to a man when he will, but when God pleases. When, therefore, a man who hath the Spirit of God shall come into the church of the righteous, who have the faith of God, and they pray unto the Lord; then the holy angel of God fills that man with the blessed Spirit, and he speaks in the congregation as he is moved of God. Thus therefore is the Spirit of God known, because whosoever speaketh by the Spirit of God, speaketh as the Lord will.*

III. Hear now concerning the earthly spirit, which is empty and foolish, and without virtue. And first of all, the man who is supposed to have the Spirit (whereas he hath it not in reality,) exalteth himself, and desires to have the first seat, and is wicked and full of words; and spends his time in pleasure, and in all manner of voluptuousness: and *receives the reward of his divination; which if he receive not, he does not divine.* Should the Spirit of God receive reward and divine? It doth not become a prophet of God so to do. Thus you see the life of each of these kind of prophets. Wherefore prove that man by his life and works, who saith that he hath the Holy Spirit. And believe the Spirit which comes from God, and has power *as such.* But believe not the earthly and empty spirit, which is from the devil, in whom there is no faith nor virtue. Hear now the similitude which I am about to speak unto thee. Take a stone, and throw it up towards heaven; or take a spout of water, and mount it up thitherward; and see if thou canst reach unto heaven. Sir, said I, how can this be done? For neither of those things which you have mentioned is possible to be done. And he answered; Therefore as these things cannot be done, so is the earthly spirit without virtue, and without effect. Understand yet further the power which cometh from above, in this similitude. The grains of hail *that drop down*

and, as such, are essential to salvation and common to all the Lord's children—that the latter are not intended for the salvation of those to whom they are imparted, but for the uses of the church; and are variously bestowed upon various persons—that any one *gift* of the Spirit such as that of “the ministry” appertains only to a selected few—that while the faculty of ministry (called by the apostle, *prophecy*) is loosely acknowledged to be a gift of the Spirit, this doctrine is, to a great extent, practically disregarded among the professors of christianity—that by the Society of Friends, no ministry is admitted in connexion with the worship of God, but such as is considered to arise immediately from divine influence—that their views on this subject, as well as those respecting typical ordinances, are founded upon that part of the divine law, which prescribes that God being a Spirit, should be worshipped spiritually—that in order, moreover, to be accurately applicable to the mental condition of the hearers, the ministry must be prompted and ordered by Him who alone “searcheth the reins and the hearts”—that the examples of preaching and public prayer recorded in the Bible, have in general the character of unpremeditated effusions, flowing immediately from the Spirit of truth and righteousness—that such, more particularly, was the *prophesying* exercised in their assemblies for

are exceeding small; and yet when they fall upon the head of a man, how do they cause pain to it? And again; consider the droppings of a house; how the little drops falling upon the earth work a hollow in the stones. *So in like manner the least things which come from above, and fall upon the earth, have great force.* Wherefore join thyself to this Spirit, which has power; and depart from the other, which is empty; *Archbishop Wake's Version of the Apostolic Fathers, p. 255.*

worship by the primitive christians—finally, that analogy, Scripture, and experience, unite in bearing evidence, that the immediate influences of the Spirit, as productive of such administrations, were not to be withdrawn from the church on earth, and that they continue to operate to this very hour.

To conclude:—if the weapons wielded by the Lord's servants in the cause of righteousness are to be "mighty for the pulling down of strong holds", they must be spiritual and not carnal: if the "preaching of the cross" is to be the "power of God", it must be *divine* in its origin: if the ministry of the gospel of Christ, is to enliven and cleanse the recipients, it must be derived with true simplicity from the *Source* of life and holiness. Observation may serve to convince us that these sentiments are gradually extending their influence among true christians. "All the minister's efforts will be vanity and worse than vanity", said a late enlightened clergyman of the Church of England, "if he have not *unction*. *Uction* must come down from heaven, and spread a savour, and relish, and feeling, over his ministry"; See *Cecil's Remains*, p. 12. I am persuaded that there are many pious ministers of various denominations, whose hearts will respond to such a declaration, and who are more and more convinced that in the exercise of their gift, they must no longer rely on human learning or intellectual effort, but rather on the powerful visitations of that sacred influence, which when it is withheld, no man can command, and when it is poured forth, no man can rightly stay. Under such circumstances it is plainly very important, that Friends

should be faithful in maintaining their principle on this subject, in all its vigor and in all its purity; and that they should continue without wavering to uphold in the church the *highest* standard respecting the nature and origin of true christian ministry. May we, therefore, on the one hand watch unto prayer, that our preaching and praying may never degenerate into the expression of words without life; and on the other hand, may we be diligent in the use of the gift committed to us, and exercise a still firmer confidence in that divine anointing, which can impart even to the foolishness of preaching, *an authority not to be gainsayed!*

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE SELECTION, PREPARATION, AND APPOINTMENT, OF THE MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL.

IN the preceding chapter I have endeavoured to explain in what manner the views of Friends, respecting the true nature and character of the christian ministry, arise out of that well known principle of the divine law, that God who is a Spirit, must be worshipped spiritually. Now the sentiments of Friends respecting the steps which precede the exercise of the ministry—respecting the pecuniary remuneration of preachers—respecting the public administrations of females—and respecting silence in worship—will severally be found inseparably connected with the doctrine, that, in order properly to consist with divine worship, the ministry must arise out of the immediate impulses of the Holy Spirit. These peculiarities therefore may be considered as all equally arising (whether directly or indirectly) out of the same essential principle of the divine law. The reader's attention will, in the present chapter, be directed to the steps which precede the exercise of the ministry of the gospel.

The standard upheld by any body of christians in reference to the selection, preparation, and appointment of the ministers of the gospel, will ever be found to coincide with their standard respecting the nature and character of the ministry itself, when brought into exercise. Those who are satisfied with a ministry which requires for its performance nothing superior to the powers of man, will look for nothing superior to those powers, in the selection, preparation, and appointment, of the individuals who are to minister. Those who are accustomed to regard the ministry as the offspring partly of divine influence, and partly of human study, will indeed consider a divine call essential to the object, but they will not, for the most part, admit such a call to be sufficient without the addition of preparatory intellectual efforts, nor without the interposition of the authority of man. Those, lastly, who admit no ministry but such as flows immediately from the Spirit of truth, must of necessity leave the *whole* work of selection, preparation, and appointment, to the Lord himself.

In order to unfold this general rule with some degree of precision, it may be desirable to examine in the first place, how far it is exemplified by the known practices of the Anglican church, and of the generality of English protestant dissenters. I trust, however, it will be clearly understood by the reader, that in attempting such an examination, I have no intention to throw discredit on any denomination of professing christians; much less to discourage the sincere in heart from the pursuit of those duties, which appertain to their own condition and situation in the church

universal. My view is simply to illustrate the subject on which I am treating, and to introduce in a clear and explicit manner, the sentiments entertained on that subject by the Society of Friends.

When the bishop of the Anglican church ordains to the priesthood, he lays his hand on the head of the individual to be ordained, and says, "receive the Holy Ghost, for the office and work of a priest in the church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands". Here is a plain recognition of the doctrine, that the person ordained is to exercise his ministry by means of the influence of the Holy Ghost; and it is in perfect coincidence with such a sentiment that the candidate for the sacred office, in the same church, professes that he is "inwardly moved" to the assumption of it, "by the Holy Ghost"—that he is "called" to the work "according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ". That there are many among the ministers of this denomination, who, in the exercise of their ministry, really depend in a great measure on the influence of the Holy Spirit, and who would by no means have undertaken the work of the gospel, had they not apprehended, that they were inwardly moved to such a duty by the Holy Ghost, my own knowledge of such individuals enables me freely to allow. On the other hand it will not be disputed, that much of the ministry actually employed within the borders of the Established Church, is the production of human effort; that it is universally understood to have no other origin; and that nothing whatever of immediate inspiration, in connexion with the work, is either expected by the

preacher, or required by his hearers. The multitude who are accustomed to this low standard, respecting the nature and character of the ministry itself, are habituated to a standard equally low, in relation to the steps which precede the assumption of the sacred office. First, with respect to *selection*: the choice of the individual who is afterwards to proclaim to others the glad tidings of salvation, is very usually understood to rest with his parents, with his friends, or with himself. Secondly, with respect to *preparation*: nothing is required for the most part, but the passing of a few years at one of the universities, in order to the attainment of mathematical and classical literature, and of a certain moderate stock of theological knowledge. Lastly, with respect to *appointment*: the personal authority of the ordaining bishop is, for this purpose, generally deemed to be all-sufficient. Were it true, that by the laying on of his hands, the bishop of modern times like the apostle of the earliest church, was miraculously enabled to communicate to the candidate for sacred orders, the gift of the Holy Ghost; the most spiritual christian could advance no objection to episcopal ordination. But since this is not true, and since it is perfectly known not to be true, the ceremony plainly resolves itself into an appointment to the office of the ministry by the Bishop only; and with the exception of those individuals who are *really* called to the work by the inward motion of the Holy Ghost, the ministers thus ordained must be considered as undertaking the office of the preacher, upon the sole authority of that appointment.

Among the generality of protestant dissenters in this country, much less of form is observed in conducting the administrations of the gospel, than is customary in the Anglican church. The written sermon as well as the printed liturgy are for the most part discarded, and make way for the extempore discourse and prayer. While, however, it appears to be an opinion *generally prevalent* among English protestant dissenters, that the faculty of praying aloud and preaching is the gift of the Spirit; I believe there are few of their ministers who hesitate either to prepare themselves for the work by previous study and reflexion, or to preach and pray at periods appointed by others, or fixed upon by themselves. With this mixed standard, respecting the nature of the ministry itself, the practices of these christians, with reference to the preceding measures, will be found exactly to correspond. While the necessity of a divine call and the preparation of grace in the heart are generally admitted, the first selection of the dissenting minister depends, in great measure, on the church to which he belongs. When any young person is considered as affording a sufficient evidence of suitability for the ministry, in point of conduct and talent, as well as of a general call into such a field of labour, he is mostly recommended by the church (with his own consent and that of his friends) to some preparatory academy. There his attention is directed to the acquirement of general literature, and to those branches of study, more especially, which bear immediately on his great object. Thus prepared, he is invited by some congregation,

to come and preach the gospel among them ; and finally, when all parties are satisfied, several dissenting ministers, who have been already established in their office, unite in ordaining him as an authorized preacher, and as the minister of that congregation. This may, I believe, be considered an accurate description of the course adopted in reference to the selection, preparation, and appointment of ministers, by some of the leading bodies of dissenters in this country ; and among many others to whom such a description will not precisely apply, the same principles are, nevertheless, recognized and enforced—namely that a divine call and the work of grace are in the first place indispensable ; but that to these are to be added the application of outward means, and the interposition of human authority.

Before we proceed to consider the principles and practices of Friends in reference to the present branch of our subject, it may be well for us to examine whether any sanction is given in the Holy Scriptures to that practice so general among modern christians—the human ordination of the ministers of the gospel.

That the apostles and some others of the earliest christians were enabled by the laying on of their hands to draw down upon individuals, in a miraculous manner, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, has been already remarked ; Acts viii. 18, I. Tim. iv. 14. But it will be allowed by the impartial reader, that the human ordination of preachers when connected with this extraordinary power, resolves itself in point of fact into a divine appointment, and affords no authority for such ordination, when the power ceases to

exist. There are, however, two passages of the New Testament, in which we read of human ordination, independently of any miraculous communication of the Holy Spirit. We are informed in the book of Acts, that when Paul and Barnabas revisited the churches which they had planted at Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, they “*ordained* them elders (or presbyters) in every church”, Acts xiv. 23; and on another occasion, Paul thus addresses himself to Titus, “For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and *ordain* elders (or presbyters) in every city”; Tit. ch. i. 5.

Here, on the supposition that the example of Paul and Titus may be safely followed by uninspired persons, we find a direct authority for the human ordination or appointment of christian *presbyters*; and since the office of preaching is understood among many modern christians, to be inseparably connected with the station of a presbyter, the inference is easily deduced that the human ordination of the preachers of the gospel is authorized in the New Testament. But I apprehend that such an inference is founded upon an original error of no slight importance. In the times of primitive christianity, there was no necessary connexion between the gift of preaching or prophecy, and the offices of bishops, presbyters, and deacons. The fourteenth chapter of the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians affords abundant evidence, as we have already found occasion to notice, that when the earliest christians assembled together for the purpose of divine worship, it was not the bishop or overseer, nor the presbyter or elder, nor the deacon or subordinate

manager, who preached and prayed, *ex officio*, in the congregation. Being for the most part persons of a spiritual character, they might indeed be frequently included in the number of those who preached and prayed in the churches; but the work of the ministry was at that time restricted to no appointed individuals: it devolved promiscuously upon all persons—whether men or women—whether governors or governed—to whom the word of God was revealed, and who were visited by the fresh and heavenly influences of the Spirit of prophecy.

The office of the Bishops or Overseers, and that of the Presbyters or Elders, was, in the earliest christian churches, identical. The Overseers were denominated Elders, and the Elders, Overseers.³ Their situation in the body corresponded with that of the chief Rulers of the ancient Jewish synagogues. “It was their duty,” says the elaborate Schleusner, “to rule the church of Christ, but *not to teach*: more especially, to preside over matters of worship; to administer the sacraments (or at least the Eucharist); to make decrees in ecclesiastical affairs; to provide assistance for the poor and the sick; to maintain in the church integrity of doctrine and sanctity of manners, and to settle the differences which arose among christians”.⁴ This able critic appears to have been somewhat hasty in excluding from the offices of the Bishops and Presbyters the duty of *teaching*. The gift of teaching—a gift

³ PHIL. i. 1. “Paul and Timotheus, &c. . . . to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi with the bishops and deacons.” Theodoret in his note upon this passage says, “He calls the presbyters, *bishops*; for at that period they were called by both those names;” so also Theophylact.

⁴ See Schleusner in voc. πρεσβύτερος.

which is sometimes distinguished from that of preaching or prophecy—does not, indeed, appear to have been universal among them; but the apostle in his general directions respecting the character and qualifications of the Bishop or Overseer, nevertheless recommends that he should be “apt to teach”, I. Tim. iii 2; and again, that he should “be able by sound doctrine (or teaching) both to exhort and to convince (or rather to refute) the gainsayers”; Tit. i. 9. But although the Elders and Overseers of early christianity, as the spiritual governors and appointed guardians of the flock, who were to protect their followers from the incroachment of false doctrine, and of every root of bitterness, were often called upon in the exercise of their christian authority, to advise, instruct, exhort, and argue; they were not (like the Bishops and Presbyters of modern times) necessarily ministers of the gospel. Between the *public preaching and praying practised in assemblies for worship*, and the offices of these persons, there does not appear to have been any indispensable, peculiar, or official connexion.⁵

⁵ In the Jewish synagogues, which were probably *in some respects* the patterns of the early christian assemblies for worship, the duty of preaching does not appear to have devolved on any appointed officer. The officers of the synagogue were, *first*, the Rulers, who corresponded with the christian elders and bishops: they governed the church and regulated the order of divine service. *Secondly*, the Sheliach Zibbor, or angel of the congregation, who read the forms of prayer. *Thirdly*, the Chozenim or Inspectors, who appear to have answered to the christian deacons: it was their duty to keep every thing belonging to their place of worship in its proper order; to correct those who misread the Holy Scriptures, &c. *Fourthly*, the Interpreter, who translated into vernacular Syriac, the portion of Scripture which had been previously read in Hebrew. The lessons of Scripture were divided into seven parts, and read by seven persons, most of whom were selected from the congregation at large, by one of the Rulers. If the reader desired it, he was at liberty to expound: and persons who were totally destitute of office in the church, were accustomed to avail themselves of the opportunity thus afforded them, for preaching to the people. Such was very frequently the case with our Saviour

So also the *deacon* of the early christian church was not officially a preacher. His office probably embraced a variety of subordinate services, but it is supposed to have been principally directed to the care of the sick, and to the management and distribution of the funds raised in any church, for the maintenance of the poor.⁶

himself, who taught in the synagogues throughout Galilee and Judea; and also with the apostle Paul, as is plainly recorded in the book of Acts; ch. ix. 20, xiii. 5, 15, xviii. 19. Now if there were no officers appointed for the purpose of preaching in the Jewish synagogue, it is very improbable that there should be any such officers in the early christian assemblies for worship, which probably differed from the synagogues only in being conducted *on a far purer and more spiritual system*; See *Prideaux Con. fol. Ed. i. 306.*

Since the Presbyters, Bishops, and Deacons, in the early christian church, must have been selected as persons of an eminently spiritual character, we may presume that many of them, like Timothy and Titus, were distinguished by the gift of prophecy or preaching. And since they were at the same time possessed of office and authority in the church, the erroneous doctrine might very easily arise (as the spirituality of the church declined), *that they alone might preach.* At how early a period the change took place from the congregational administrations described by the apostle Paul in I. Cor. xiv., to the modern system of pulpit lectures, it is impossible now to ascertain. The extract given from *Hermas* in a note upon the preceding chapter, may suffice to show that the original practice of the church in this respect, continued to be maintained in the latter part of the first century; and I observe that *Polycarp* (A. D. 108), in his description of the duties of Presbyters and Deacons, makes no allusion whatever to their preaching; but speaks of them only as the superintendents and managers of ecclesiastical discipline; *Ep. ad Philipp. cap. v. et vi.* In the following curious passage of his epistle to the Philadelphians, *Ignatius* (A. D. 107) describes the divine origin of his own ministry. "I exhorted you, when I was with you, in a loud voice, to obey the Bishop, the Presbyters, and the Deacons; and some persons suspected that when I thus addressed you, I was previously aware of the divisions which existed among you. But he is my witness for whom I am in bonds, that I knew it not from any man, but the *Spirit preached by me*, saying in this wise, &c.," *cap. 7.* *Justin Martyr* (A. D. 133), in his dialogue with *Trypho the Jew*, declares the continued existence of the gifts of prophecy, and that these gifts were exercised by both men and women; *p. 308, Ed. Paris, 1636, Benson vol. i p. 624.* Lastly, *Irenæus*, bishop of Lyons, (A. D. 178) describes the spiritual gifts exercised, at his time, in the church, in terms which plainly accord with the account given to us of the same faculties, in the epistles of Paul. "We hear many brethren in the church" says this father "who are endued with prophetic gifts; who speak by the Spirit in all kinds of languages; who bring to light the secrets of men for good purposes, and who declare divine mysteries;" *Adv. Hæres. lib. v. cap. 6.*

⁶ See *Schleusner in voc. διάκονος.*

On the whole, then, it may be allowed that the human ordination or appointment of Elders, Overseers, and Deacons, (provided that it be effected under the influence of devout feelings, and of a sound and enlightened judgment) is by no means inconsistent with the true order of the christian church. Such officers are nominated and appointed by their brethren, in the Society of Friends. But it by no means follows from such an allowance, that *man* is at liberty to ordain or appoint the preachers of the gospel of Christ.

Having premised these observations respecting Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons, we may proceed to apply the general rule stated in the commencement of the present disquisition, to the known views and practices of the Society of Friends. In the former chapter, their sentiments respecting the true nature and character of the christian ministry have been fully detailed; and it has been stated that they admit no preaching or audible praying in their assemblies for worship, but such as they deem to be prompted by the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit. Since, therefore, the ministry, according to the apprehension of Friends, ought never to be brought into exercise unless it be suggested, ordered, and directed, of the Lord; since, as far as is consistent with the infirmity of the instrument, it thus assumes, in their view, the character of a divine work; and since the influence which alone leads into such a work, is in no degree placed under their authority; it necessarily follows that they cannot interfere in any of the preceding steps—in the selection, preparation, and appointment,

of the ministers of the Gospel. They conceive that it is the undivided prerogative of the Great Head of the church himself, to choose, to prepare, and to ordain, his own ministers. A few observations may now be offered upon each of these points.

I. SELECTION. "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." Such was the declaration of the Lord to Jeremiah, although the prophet *deemed himself* to be a mere child, completely incapable of the office to which he had been called; Jer. i. 5. A very similar declaration was made respecting an eminent apostle of Jesus Christ. We find that Ananias, the messenger of the Lord to Paul, considered this persecutor of the christians to be utterly unfit for the exercise of the ministry of the gospel; "but the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a *chosen vessel unto me*, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel"; Acts ix. 15. Accordingly Paul himself declares he was "*separated unto the gospel of God*", Rom. i. 1—that *God separated him from his mother's womb, and called him by his grace to reveal his Son in him, that he might preach him among the heathen*; Gal. i. 15, 16. As it was with Jeremiah and Paul, so undoubtedly it was with all the other prophets and apostles of whom we read in the Holy Scriptures. They were "witnesses chosen before of God". In the secret counsels of their heavenly Father, they were selected from among the children of men, and were pre-ordained according to his foreknowledge

for that peculiar service in the church and in the world, unto which it was his good pleasure to appoint them. They were not in general such persons as men would have chosen for the work: they were but very humble instruments in their own sight, and in the sight of others. Nevertheless, the Lord, who is alone the searcher of hearts, had selected them in his own wisdom, and for his own work. "Ye have not chosen me",—said our Saviour to his disciples, whom he was soon to anoint with his Holy Spirit and to send forth in the work of the gospel,—“but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain”; John xv. 16. Now there is evidently no reason why the same principle should not apply to every true minister of the gospel of Christ. Man is no adequate judge beforehand of the capacity of his brother for such a work; and often are the individuals whom in our own wisdom we should be prone to prefer for the purpose, passed over of the Lord. But as he is pleased, with the powerful influence of his own Spirit, to anoint *some* of his servants for the work of the ministry; so must it be allowed, that, in his perfect knowledge and boundless wisdom, he *chooses* these individuals for their office in the church, before he thus anoints them in order to its execution.

Now the selection of which we are speaking, is to be regarded, not in the light of an unconditional and irresistible decree, but in that of a gracious purpose, which requires to be met with corresponding duties. This purpose may in its operation be disappointed by the negligence, or perverted by the activity of

man. Many an individual, doubtless, whom the Lord would have numbered among his preachers, has, through unwatchfulness and neglect of the Shepherd's voice, fallen short of the station designed for him. And many a body of christians, also, by taking the choice of their ministers into their own hands, have imposed the sacred office upon those for whom it was not intended, and have been found in effect to say to the prophets of the Lord—"Prophesy not". There can be no reasonable question, that in every age of the church, the Lord chooses the individuals whom he is about to intrust with his message to man. What then can be the corresponding duty of his people, but to wait patiently on their divine Master with prayer and supplication, until he shall be pleased to raise up and anoint, for their service, those whom he has chosen ?

II. PREPARATION. Every christian will allow that the prophets, apostles, and evangelists of ancient times, who were chosen beforehand in the divine counsels to be the bearers of the message of their Lord, were *prepared* for their office before they were called upon to exercise its duties ; and it is equally incontrovertible, that this preparation, which in some instances appears to have been gradual and long continued, and in others, short and sudden, was of the Lord, and not of man. They were fitted for the exercise of the Lord's *gifts*, by the work of his *grace*. Possibly there might be occasions when, under very peculiar circumstances, and in order to answer some extraordinary end, even the impenitent sinner might be made to prophecy. But such instances, if any such

there were, can be considered only as rare exceptions to a general rule. No reasonable theologian will refuse to admit, that in general, the individuals whom the Lord raised up among the Israelites and in the infant christian church, to be prophets and preachers of the word—to be instruments of conversion and edification in others—were themselves previously subjected to the influence of redeeming power, cleansed to a considerable degree from their old sins, and taught to live in the fear and love of God. Utterly unable would they have been to proclaim unto others, in demonstration of the Spirit, the righteousness which is by faith; had they not, in the first instance, obtained for themselves an experimental acquaintance with that righteousness. “Create in me a clean heart, O God”, cried the Psalmist, “and renew a right spirit within me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit; *then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee*”; Ps. li. 10, 12, 13, *comp.* II. Tim. ii. 19—21.

Now Friends are of the opinion, that, with respect to the preparation of ministers, as well as with reference to their original selection, no valid distinction can be drawn between the preachers of the word in ancient times, and those who are rightly authorized for the service in the present day. The latter indeed may receive a *far lower* degree of inspiration than the former. Nevertheless, they are gifted of the Lord according to their own measure, and minister to the people under the immediate influence of his Spirit. We hold it then to be an undeniable position, that for the right exercise of such a gift, (unless, as

before mentioned, it be under very peculiar and extraordinary circumstances) the work of divine grace in the heart, is an invariable and indispensable preparation.

Here it ought to be remarked, that this work of grace in the heart, as it is preparatory to the christian ministry, is often found to assume a character of more than ordinary depth. The religious experience of all true christians will indeed be found to accord in every main feature; for where is the living member of the church who has not some practical acquaintance with the converting and sanctifying power of the Lord; with the path of self-denial, and with a conformity to the sufferings of Christ; as well as with the refreshing and sustaining influence of his redeeming love? But those whom the chief Shepherd of the flock is secretly preparing to minister to others, are sometimes introduced into stronger mental conflicts, and brought under more powerful spiritual visitations, than many of their brethren. It is often their lot, in no ordinary measure, to be introduced into a variety of secret trials and temptations, and to be led as blind men through an unknown and dreary wilderness; See Isa. xlii. 16. Thus are they taught to surrender their own wills to the divine guidance, and are experimentally prepared for those duties of sympathy, which are so peculiarly adapted to the office designed for them; and when they have at length been permitted to experience the delivering and redeeming power of their Lord, they are ready to open their mouths in his service,—to utter his praise, to promulgate his law, and to proclaim his mercy.

The work of grace, which is carried forward in the

hearts of his selected servants by the Lord himself, is deemed by Friends to be at once indispensable and *sufficient*, as a preparation for the christian ministry. The addition of literary attainment, upon which some persons are accustomed to lay so great a stress, they regard as a non-essential circumstance. Our views on this branch of the subject are justified alike by the records of Scripture, and by our own experience, as a religious body. Among the prophets and preachers of ancient Israel, and the apostles and other early disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, there were indeed numbered individuals (such as king Solomon, the apostle Paul, and the evangelist Luke,) who were distinguished, in various degrees, by the acquirements of learning; but in many other instances it must be confessed, that the persons who were called upon of the Lord to become the preachers of righteousness, were altogether destitute of the advantage of erudition. That this was the matter of fact, in an especial degree, with most of those pre-eminently able ministers, the apostles of Jesus Christ, is universally understood and acknowledged. Nor, with the single exception of the gift of tongues, does this absence of literature appear to have been supplied by their inspiration; for this, *in general*, had no other effect than that of enlightening them respecting the simple truths of christianity, and of clothing their humble preaching with true energy, life, and authority. Even Paul, who was brought up in all the learning of the Hebrews at the feet of Gamaliel, discarded the “enticing words of man’s wisdom”, visited his brethren in weakness, fear, and trembling, and determined *to know nothing among*

them, “*save Jesus Christ, and him crucified*”; I. Cor. ii. 2, 3, 4.

Such are the facts recorded in Scripture respecting the preachers of the word of God, and our own history and experience, as a religious society, is calculated to impress upon us a very similar lesson. It is an indisputable fact, that many of our most useful and convincing ministers, both in the first age of the Society, and in more modern times, have been persons of very humble origin, and destitute of every thing which could fairly be described as literary attainment. Many such persons have been known to go forth from among us, and to proclaim the spirituality of the gospel dispensation, with an authority and success, which have plainly evinced, that in the work carried on in their hearts by the Lord himself, they have found all that was *essential*, as a preparation for their ministerial functions.

As an academical preparation for the specific object of the ministry is considered by Friends to be unnecessary and improper, so the opportunity of it is precluded among them by a single consideration; namely, that according to their sentiments, it is the Lord alone (as I have already endeavoured to explain) who selects the ministers of the gospel, and that until the work be actually commenced, the Society is ignorant who have been selected. Those who, like Friends, allow that *he* only can choose his ministers, must also allow, as a necessary consequence, that *he* only can prepare them. The principle which excludes the interference of man in the one particular, plainly excludes it in the other also.

In bringing to a conclusion the present branch of our argument, it will be desirable for me (in order to the prevention of erroneous impressions) to offer one or two farther remarks on literary attainments, and especially on scriptural knowledge. The known opinion of Friends, that academical studies are unnecessary as a preparation for the ministry, has given rise among some persons, to a notion that the Society avoids administering any encouragement to the general pursuit of literature. The individuals whom I am now addressing are well aware, that such a notion has no real foundation. I trust it is a principle acknowledged by Friends, as well as by their neighbours, that it is the duty of the christian, as well as the privilege of the man, to avail himself of every proper opportunity for the cultivation of his mind, for the enlargement of his talents, and for the acquirement of knowledge. George Fox informs us in one passage of his interesting journal, that he advised the institution of an academy for the children of Friends, that they might be instructed in "*whatsoever things were civil and useful in the creation,*" fol. ed. A. D. 1765, p. 395; and I am persuaded that many Friends in the present day entertain an earnest,—I hope an *increasing* desire, that their young people may be so instructed. Whatever be our calling in the world, and whatever our station in the church, it is unquestionable that the exercise of our intellectual faculties, and the collecting of useful knowledge, will enlarge our capacity for the service of our great Master; and on this principle it is to be freely admitted that learning may produce, *collaterally and subordi-*

nately, a desirable effect, even on the ministry of the gospel. Not only may the powers of the mind be strengthened for that, and every other good purpose, by means of a liberal education; but occasions frequently occur in which information upon various points may be made to subserve the great object of the christian minister. Thus, for example, when the apostle Paul was engaged in preaching to the polite and fastidious Athenians, it gave him no slight advantage with his audience, that he was able to illustrate his doctrine by an apposite quotation from one of their own poets; Acts xvii. 28.

While, however, our capacity for usefulness in the church, may be in some degree enlarged by almost every description of innocent intellectual pursuit, there is no species of mental cultivation, to which this observation applies with nearly equal force, as to that which has in itself a directly edifying tendency—the acquirement of christian knowledge, especially through the study of the Holy Scriptures. An accurate acquaintance with that divine book, will be found of no little avail in the performance of almost any services which may be allotted to us in the church: for where is the moral condition, where is the religious engagement, to which something applicable may not be discovered among the examples, the doctrines, or the precepts, recorded in the Bible? But it must on all hands be allowed, that to the christian minister, a knowledge of the Bible is of peculiar and pre-eminent use and importance.

It is one of the leading excellencies of the sacred volume, and one of the practical proofs of its divine

origin, that it contains an inexhaustible stock of materials for the ministry of the word. The experience of Friends in this respect is in accordance with that of other religious bodies. Although our ministers can prescribe no limits to the diversified directions of that divine influence under which they profess to act, yet we know that, in general, it is Scripture which supplies them with the subjects of their contemplation ; it is Scripture which the Spirit of truth recalls to their recollection, and impresses upon their minds ; it is the language of Scripture which they quote ; it is the doctrine of Scripture which they unfold and apply.

Now, although our religious principles plainly prevent our instituting a course even of scriptural study, as a preparation for the office of preachers, it is to be remembered, that the perusal of the sacred volume is a duty enjoined by the Society of Friends on all its members ; and probably, very few among them will be found less liable to the omission of such a duty, than those whom the Lord is preparing for the office of the ministry. While he is carrying on the work of grace in their hearts, and leading them through many a secret conflict, they will be little inclined to the neglect of these inspired records, by means of which they may so often be strengthened in their weakness, instructed in their ignorance, and comforted in their sorrow. And thus, when at length they are anointed for their service, and commissioned to proclaim the gospel, they are seldom if ever found destitute of an useful and experimental acquaintance with Holy Writ. Lastly, after they have been acknowledged as ministers, a frequent perusal of the Bible and a careful attention

to its contents, is considered by the Society to be one of their especial duties. *See advices to ministers and elders—Book of Extracts.*

III. APPOINTMENT. By the appointment of a minister, I do not mean his original selection, but his actual introduction to the office—that introduction which in episcopal churches is considered to be effected by the ordaining act of the bishop. In this last of the measures which are generally understood to precede the exercise of the christian ministry, as well as in the two anterior steps already considered, Friends esteem the interference of man to be needless, improper, and, on the principles which they entertain, impossible. It is needless, according to our apprehension, because the authority of that Being who really invests with the office is incapable of any augmentation. It is improper, because he has no counsellor, and no man may interrupt his designs, or interfere with his will. It is on our principles impossible, because, as we are ignorant who among us have been selected and prepared for the work, so are we destitute of any adequate means of judging, to whom the exercise of that work may rightly be committed.

Although the gifts of the Holy Spirit were in early times miraculously communicated by the laying on of the hands of the Lord's inspired servants, there is nothing in Scripture, as we have already found occasion to observe, which justifies, in any degree, the merely human appointment of the preachers of the gospel. Paul declares that he was an apostle, "not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead"; Gal. i. 1.

Such was the case with Paul; nor could it be otherwise with the apostles in general, or with their companions and associates in the work of the gospel. Whether they were or were not subjected to the laying on of human hands, they were really invested with their sacred office, not by their bishops,—not by their churches,—but by Him who had already selected them for the work, and from whom alone the spirit of prophecy could ever emanate. When the one hundred and twenty persons, who were gathered together on the day of Pentecost, were all filled with the Holy Ghost, they spake with tongues and prophesied. These persons were appointed to the office of the ministry, and invested with its faculties, by an authority and power which precluded all interference; and which demanded nothing, at the hands of the rulers of the church, but submission and praise. “Unto every one of us,” says Paul to the Ephesians, “is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ”; Eph. iv. 7—12.

Now however the gifts of the Holy Spirit may be found to vary at different periods in measure and degree, yet as long as the ministry is exercised under the immediate influence of the Spirit, so long the principle of ordination to such a function must evidently continue unchanged. When the Lord Jesus

has selected his ministers from among his people ; when he has carried forward and completed the work of their preparation ; when finally he has issued his gracious command that they should go forth and preach the gospel, and has anointed them for the purpose by the influences of his Holy Spirit ; there is but one right and proper course for them to pursue—the course of simple and unhesitating obedience. They know that man has no right to interfere with their appointment, and they dare not look to him for their warrant and authority. It is their Lord and Redeemer who has invested them with their office, and to him alone they are responsible for its execution.

Let it not, however, be imagined that, in the decision of the question *whether or not he is truly appointed to that office*, the minister is to depend exclusively on his own judgment. Christians are ever to be subject one to another in love, and it must, in great measure, devolve on their brethren, to determine whether those who speak the word, are rightly invested with their functions, or whether their communications rest on no better foundation than their own will. The generality of my readers are probably well aware that one of the principal duties of the elders in our religious Society, is to watch over the ministry, to guard against the encroachments of unsound and unauthorized doctrine ; to encourage the feeble and the diffident, and to restrain the forward and the hasty among the Lord's servants. Nor is the office of judging respecting the ministry confined to the Elders alone. As the whole body of the church in

any place, is interested in the question respecting the authority of its ministers, so is the whole body concerned in the decision of that question. When a congregation of christians have bestowed on the ministry of any individual, a due and patient attention—when they are brought to a satisfactory sense that it is attended with the life and power of the Spirit of truth—when they have fully experienced its enlivening and edifying influence—they are enabled to form a sound and valid judgment, that such an one is “inwardly moved” to the work “by the Holy Ghost”; and then, though they have no concern with his appointment to the ministry, it is required of them, by the order of christian discipline, (and it is a practice universal in the Society of Friends,) to *acknowledge* that he is a true minister of Christ, and to yield to him that station in the church which so important a calling demands.

Before we dismiss the subject of the appointment of ministers, it will be desirable to make a few remarks on a secondary branch of it. In many christian churches the appointment of the minister is twofold—the “*ordination*”, by which he receives his authority to preach, and the “*institution*”, by which he is entrusted with the spiritual superintendence of a particular flock. In the church of England, the ordination is truly the act of the bishop alone; the institution, although the official act of the bishop, depends in reality on the patron of the living. Upon him rests the awful responsibility (I might almost call it the divine prerogative) of providing a flock for the shepherd, and of selecting a shepherd for the

flock. Now it may be freely allowed, that this most important prerogative is sometimes exercised with a pious care, and with an earnest solicitude for the spiritual welfare of all the parties. But, on the other hand, who is not aware, that, in consequence of the prevalence of such a system, the holy things of God are often miserably profaned—that livings are bestowed and accepted for the mere purpose of temporal advantage—and that, in general, the more unfit any persons are for an authority to appoint to the care of souls, the more ready they are to exercise that authority, without consideration?

Among the generality of protestant dissenters, the choice of the minister, as I have already stated, rests exclusively with the people; and his *ordination* serves the double purpose of giving an established authority to his ministerial functions, and of appointing him as the preacher to a specific congregation.

Now with respect to this secondary appointment of the ministers of the gospel, Friends believe it to be their duty to adhere to the principles already unfolded, and to refrain altogether from any interference with the will and work of the Lord. We are thoroughly persuaded that as he alone can bestow upon us the gifts of the Spirit, so he alone can rightly determine the line of our services, and the field of our labours. Within the compass of whatever meeting a minister is raised up in the Society, there, for the most part, he continues to reside and to exercise the duties of his calling; nor will he, if he be rightly disposed, venture so to change his residence, as to transfer his services to another congregation, unless he can entertain the humble confidence

that, in adopting such a measure, he is acting in conformity with the will of his divine Master.

As our principle, on this subject, evidently applies to the fixing of the usual residence of the minister of the gospel, so does it also apply in a very specific manner, to his itinerant labours. Every one who is acquainted with the history of the Israelitish prophets, must be aware that, in all their religious movements, they acted under the direction of "the word of the Lord"; that is, probably, of the perceptible inward communication of his Spirit. The "word of the Lord" sent them forth on their errands, and plainly directed them to the persons for whom their message was intended, and to the places in which it was to be delivered; See, for example, I. Kings xvi. 7, xvii. 2—9, xviii. 1, xix. 15, Isa. vii. 3, Amos vii. 14, 15, Jon. i. 2. So also there is every reason to believe that the proceedings of the apostles, and of the other preachers of early christianity, although not in general described in the same manner, were in fact regulated by the same principle. The Spirit by whose immediate revelations they were alone enabled to preach, would not fail to direct their ministry to the right persons, and in the right places; nor can we imagine that these servants of the Lord were, in this respect, destitute of that immediate guidance, with which, in the other branches of their high duty, they were so clearly and so eminently favoured. In the narration, contained in the book of Acts, of two of the apostle Paul's journies in the work of the ministry, a plain description is given of the authority and influence under which he commenced

and conducted the undertaking. We read that, as the christians at Antioch “ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them: and when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being *sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia, and from thence they sailed to Cyprus, &c.* Acts xiii. 2—4. Again, in the history of Paul’s second journey, (when Silas was his companion,) we are informed that “when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were *forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, after they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; but the Spirit suffered them not*”; and we are afterwards told that, by a special vision from the Lord, they were encouraged to cross the sea, and to go forward into Macedonia; Acts xvi. 6—10, *comp.* ch. viii. 26, 39.

There appears to be no good reason why that divine direction which was thus bestowed upon the ancient prophets and apostles, should be withheld from the servants of the Lord in the present day, who conduct their religious administrations under a lower degree of the same immediate influence. Accordingly the itinerant labours of their ministers, are ever considered in the Society of Friends, to be regulated by the perceptible guidance of the Holy Spirit; and in adopting this principle, we conceive that we have been amply justified by a long-continued and multiplied trial of its practical operation. A short description of that which Friends deem to be

on such occasions the proper experience of the minister, as well as his right method of proceeding, will perhaps be acceptable to such of my readers, as are not at present well informed on the subject.

In the first place, then, we ought to remark, that it is plainly recognized in the Society to be the general duty of ministers, not only to exercise their functions in the place of their own residence, but to be diligent in visiting the churches which are scattered abroad, and to be ready, when called of the Lord, to go forth and promulgate, in other places, the spirituality of the gospel dispensation. Now as the minister is preserved in humble dependence upon his divine Master, he not only feels the importance of this general calling, but is often made sensible of an impression, that it is his duty to exercise it in particular parts of the Lord's heritage. The current of christian love in his heart assumes a specific and peculiar direction. On general grounds he can feel, with the apostle, that he is a debtor to all men—but there are particular portions of men to whom that debt is now commanded to be paid. The burthen of the Lord rests upon him, and he endeavours to dwell patiently under its influence, until his views are so cleared and ripened, that he can lay them before his brethren and sisters of the meeting to which he belongs. They unite with him in the deliberate consideration of the subject, and if on waiting in silence together, they come to a judgment, that the undertaking of the minister truly originates in the divine will, they set him at liberty for his journey; commend him to the gracious care and protection of the good Shepherd; and, for the satisfaction of those persons among whom his lot may be cast, bestow upon

him a certificate of their own unity and approbation.

Thus provided with the recorded sanction of his friends, and "sent forth", as he humbly trusts, "by the Holy Ghost" to the work appointed him, the minister proceeds on his journey; and whether his labours be directed only to Friends, or also to their neighbours of other denominations, (who on such occasions are frequently invited to attend our religious gatherings,) he endeavours to follow no other guidance, throughout the progress of his travels, but the gentle and secret intimations of the divine word within him. Under this guidance he passes from place to place, and from meeting to meeting. Poor and empty in himself, and totally unprepared for his successive labours by previous study and reflection, he acts on a principle of simple faith in his Governor and Guide. As this faith is maintained, he finds himself again and again renewed in his spiritual strength; and as often as the right opportunity recurs, he is revisited by the enlivening Spirit of the Lord, and anointed afresh for his service. At length, when the work assigned to him on the present occasion has been executed, the burthen which had rested with so much weight upon him, is removed. He returns to his home: he restores to his friends the certificate which they had given him, and he is for the most part permitted to resume his usual occupations, with a remunerating and confirming sense of rest, liberty, and consolation.

In reviewing the principal contents of the present dissertation, the reader will recall to his remembrance, the general rule laid down at its commencement; that the standard maintained by any body of christians,

respecting the steps preparatory to the ministry, will always be proportioned to their standard respecting the origin and nature of the ministry itself. He will recollect that this rule is illustrated and confirmed by the known practices of the Anglican church, and of the generality of English protestant dissenters—that the human ordination of the preachers of the gospel, so prevalent among modern christians, derives no authority from that ordination of Presbyters, which is recorded in Scripture, as having taken place in primitive times; because the Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons, of the early church, although rulers, managers, and even teachers, were not officially the *preachers* of the word—that Friends who allow no ministry in connexion with worship, but such as they deem to spring from the immediate influence of the Spirit, can take no part whatever in the steps antecedent to the exercise of such a gift; but conceive it to be their duty to leave the whole work of selection, preparation, and ordination, to the Lord himself—that Jesus Christ, according to their apprehension, chooses his own ministers before-hand, and that no man may interfere with his choice—that he prepares them for the office, by the work of his grace—that this preparation is of itself sufficient without literary attainment; although mental cultivation and learning are in themselves desirable, and produce *collaterally* a good effect even on our religious services—that a practical knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, more especially, is of pre-eminent use to the christian preacher—that when the Lord has chosen and prepared his ministers, he anoints them for their service,

sends them forth on his own authority, and directs them in the course of their labours—that, nevertheless, the decision of the question, whether the minister be really acting under divine authority, or otherwise, rests not so much with himself, as with the church—finally, that the views and practices of Friends, in relation to these several particulars, are in precise accordance with a variety of declarations and examples recorded in Holy Writ.

Having completed my argument on the present subject, I may venture, in conclusion, to suggest to the consideration of my friends an important practical reflection. It has often and justly been observed, that every species of true excellence and virtue has its imitating and corresponding vice; and certainly it is the obvious duty of christians, while they earnestly endeavour to embrace the one, to be no less diligent in avoiding the other. Now that passive course which it is the object of the present essay to recommend—that absence of all human interference with the sole prerogative and peculiar work of the Lord—however excellent and desirable in itself, will, I believe, be found to have its imitating and corresponding vice, *in spiritual dulness and inactivity, in a real neglect of the divine call, and in the omission of required duty.* Such is our own liability to error, and such the artfulness of our spiritual enemy, that the very doctrine of our own insufficiency may be made a cover for inertness, and for a culpable and cowardly secession from the good fight of faith. The mental poverty and discouragement, also, to which even the Lord's faithful servants are liable, may often be so fostered as to

prevent their laying hold on that arm of power, which is able to support them in the most arduous conflicts, and to qualify them, notwithstanding all their weakness, for their labours in the gospel of Christ. Exposed as we are to these points of danger, and very generally placed in a condition of outward ease and security, we had need exercise a peculiar care, lest, while we are making a pre-eminent profession of spirituality, our conduct should be marked by *real indolence* in the service of our Redeemer.

Now where is the preservative against such an indolence? Surely it will not be found in the desertion of those pure and exalted principles, which it is our especial duty to uphold in the church, but rather *in watchfulness unto prayer*. Let us then be more diligent in seeking the animating and strengthening influence of the grace of God: let us be alive to every touch of the divine finger: let our hearts breathe the expressions of Samuel, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth": and, since "the harvest truly is plenteous", and the labourers "few", let us unite in earnest supplication to the Almighty, that he will be pleased, yet more abundantly, to pour forth of his Spirit upon all flesh, and thus to "*send forth labourers into his harvest*".

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE PECUNIARY REMUNERATION OF THE MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL.

WHEN Jesus Christ sent forth his seventy disciples to heal diseases, and to proclaim the approach of the kingdom of heaven, he forbade them to provide any stores for their journey. They were to place their confidence in the providential care of their heavenly Father; and in the houses which they might visit, they were freely to avail themselves of the hospitality of their friends, for the supply of their bodily wants. "Into whatsoever house ye enter," said he to them, "first say, Peace be to this house; and if the Son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again. *And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give; for the labourer is worthy of his hire; Luke x. 5—7.* So also the apostle Paul, when addressing his Corinthian converts, among whom he had so diligently laboured, as a minister of the gospel of Christ, asserts the claim upon them, which, when so engaged, he clearly possessed, for such a provision of carnal things as his necessities might require. "Have we not power",

says he, “*to eat and drink?* . . . or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working? Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth, should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope, should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things *live* of the things of the temple? And they which wait at the altar are *partakers with the altar*? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel, should live of the gospel”; I. Cor. ix. 4—14.

That particular provision of the Mosaic law which is here cited—when regarded in its ulterior sense, as applicable to the labourers in the cause of righteousness—appears to express, in a manner at once full and simple, the *principle* on which the apostle asserts his right to a provision for his natural wants. “Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn”: or, in other words, *While the ox is treading out the corn, thou shalt not muzzle him*. When the seventy disciples of Jesus forsook for a time all their secular employments: when they went forth in the name of their Lord, to heal the sick, and to preach righteous-

ness: when they were engaged in travelling from place to place, in order to publish to their countrymen the glad tidings of salvation, it is plain that their whole time was occupied in their religious services; and, deprived as they were, during the continuance of such services, of the opportunity for earning their own bread, it was right that they should cast themselves, without reserve, on the kindness and liberality of their friends. It would have been improper in the visitors to decline such assistance, and shameful in the visited to withhold it. Very similar were the circumstances of the apostle Paul, who had sacrificed his original pursuits, and knew no settled or permanent home; but moved about from place to place, according to the will of his Lord, in order to disseminate, among his fellow men, the truths of christianity. In as much as he was constantly engaged in these missionary labours—in as much as his time and talents were devoted exclusively to the work of an evangelist—in so much he possessed an undeniable moral claim, on those in whose behalf he laboured, for the supply of his outward necessities.

The same rule, respecting the maintenance of the ministers of the gospel, is admitted in the Society of Friends. Occasions frequently occur, as has been remarked in the preceding chapter, when our ministers, as they apprehend, are sent forth from their homes by their divine Master. Constrained by the gentle influences of his love in their hearts, they visit the churches which are scattered abroad, and for a time devote themselves without intermission to the exercise of their ministerial functions. During the progress

and continuance of such undertakings, they cannot be expected to provide for themselves ; and it is, therefore, a practice generally prevailing in the society, to pay the expences of their journies, and to maintain them during the course of their labours. Like the seventy disciples to whom we have already alluded, they eat and drink at the houses which they visit ; and if they be found true evangelists, it is universally acknowledged by their brethren, and not only acknowledged, but felt—that “the labourer is worthy of his hire”; or, as the sentiment is expressed in the gospel of Matthew, that “the workman is worthy of his meat”; ch. x. 10.

Although, however, Paul upholds the general rule, that the ox when actually treading out the corn is not to be muzzled ; he was evidently very jealous of its being, in any degree, misapplied, or extended beyond its true bearing. Deprived as he was of any permanent home, and singularly devoted, both in mind and time, to the duties of an apostle, he might very reasonably have depended altogether upon the churches for his food and raiment ; but no sooner did he take up his residence in any place, for a considerable length of time, than he began to apply himself to some manual labour, in order that he might earn his own bread ! avoid being burthensome to his friends, and throw no impediment whatsoever in the way of the gospel. “If others be partakers of this power over you”, says the apostle to the same Corinthians, “are not we rather ? Nevertheless, we have not used this power ; but suffer all things, *lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ*. . . . What is my reward then ?

Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, *that I abuse not my power in the gospel*"; I. Cor. ix. 12, 18. As the apostle declined receiving a maintenance from his friends at Corinth, so he observed the same line of conduct at Ephesus; where indeed he not only supported himself, but contributed to the support of others. Diligent as he was, during his tarrance in that city, in the exercise of his ministry—teaching “publicly from house to house”, and warning “every one night and day with tears”—he was nevertheless enabled to address the Ephesian Elders in the following terms: “I have coveted no man’s silver, or gold, or apparel; yea, ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and *to them that were with me*”; Acts xx. 33, 34. And after thus adverting to his own conduct, he proceeded to enjoin a similar course upon those whom he was addressing; “I have shewed you all things, how that *so labouring* ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” ver. 35.

On the whole, therefore, while the general rule is to be admitted that the preacher of the gospel, during the periods when his time is exclusively devoted to his ministerial functions, may properly derive his sustenance from those among whom he is thus engaged; it is quite evident that according to the mind of the apostle Paul, any application of this rule, beyond its true limits, is inconsistent with the purity of the divine law, and injurious to the cause of christianity.

Now, it is the opinion of Friends, that the limits of the rule are transgressed, and the rule itself dangerously perverted, in the practice so usual among christians of *hiring the ministers of the gospel*. Here I must beg my reader to understand that in using the word "hiring", it is altogether foreign from my intention to express any thing in the least degree offensive to christian ministers of any denomination. That a considerable proportion of these persons, are truly the servants of the Lord Jesus,—that many of them undertake the oversight of the flock "not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind", and are incomparably more intent upon the winning of souls, than upon their own temporal advantage,—I both know and am happy to acknowledge. But we are here discussing a general principle, and I use the word in question, simply because it is the only one which can properly express my meaning. It is, then, indisputably a practice prevalent in many christian societies, to *hire their ministers*; that is to say, to engage the services of their ministers in consideration of pecuniary salaries. As a gentleman agrees with his servant, and a merchant with his clerk, to pay them particular sums of money, on condition of the performance of particular descriptions of work; so are christians accustomed to agree with the preachers of the gospel, to remunerate them with such and such salaries, *on condition of their preaching*; and instances sometimes occur in which the amount of the salary given, is regulated, very precisely, by the frequency of the ministry required. Whether this agreement actually takes place between the minister and his flock, as

among many dissenting bodies ; or whether the contract between the two parties is permanently fixed by the law of the land, as in the Anglican church, the principle which the system necessarily and universally involves, is still the same—namely, that certain work is to be performed, and pecuniary wages given for its performance.

According to our apprehension, this hiring of preachers degrades the character, and corrupts the practical operation, of the ministry of the gospel. It is evident that such a system is very closely connected with the notion, that the preacher may exercise his high functions on the authority and according to the pleasure of *man*, and in practice it unquestionably tends in a very injurious manner, to the confirmation and establishment of that notion. Were it true that the ministry of the gospel is properly the work of man, requiring no other sanction than *his* appointment, and no other forces than *his* exertions, no objection whatever could be made to such a method of proceeding. In that case it would arise out of those fundamental laws of justice, which ought ever to regulate transactions *between man and man*. But no sooner is the opposite principle recognized ; no sooner is it admitted that the ministry of the gospel is the work of the Lord ; that it can be rightly exercised only in virtue of his appointment, and only through the effusions of his Spirit ; and that man has no power to command and no authority to restrain the influence which leads into such a service—no sooner are these things understood and allowed—than the compact which binds the minister to preach, on the

condition that his hearers shall pay him for his preaching, assumes the character of absolute inconsistency with the spirituality of the christian religion. "Though I preach the gospel", says the apostle Paul, "I have nothing to glory of: *for necessity is laid upon me: yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!* For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, a *dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me*"; I. Cor. ix. 16, 17.

These observations will enable the reader to form a just view of the reasons which actuate the Society of Friends, when, on the one hand, they accede to the doctrine, that the ox when treading out the corn is not to be muzzled; and when, on the other hand, they totally abstain from engaging their ministers on pecuniary stipends, and from otherwise paying them for the exercise of their gift. Such pecuniary provisions would indeed be in total dissonance with our sentiment, that no ministry ought to be allowed in connexion with divine worship, but such as originates in the choice and appointment of the Lord, and is dictated by the immediate influence of his Holy Spirit. It has never been heard of in the whole annals of sacred history, that *prophecy* has been purchased, or the *true prophets* hired: and we apprehend that, whether the immediate gifts of the Spirit operate in a higher or a lower *degree*, they are still in their nature absolutely free. No man can exercise them in pursuance of an agreement with his fellow creatures. They are delayed, withheld, withdrawn, or poured forth, according to the good pleasure of *him*, who searches the reins and the heart, and who only knows the

needs of his own church. Those who preach under such an influence, do not preach because their congregation requires it of them; but because their hearts are filled with the love of Christ, and because they are sent forth and impelled by the Spirit of the Lord, and can find no rest for their consciences, but in obedience to that Spirit. Our ministers cannot say to us, ‘Pay us and we will preach’; for a woe is upon them if they preach not the gospel; and the same injunction is laid upon them as upon the servants of God in ancient times, “Freely ye have received, freely give”; Matt. x. 8. There is not one of them, who is truly called into the work, who would *dare* to receive from the hands of men a payment for his labours, lest he should thereby sin against God, who requires of him a willing sacrifice, and should for ever prevent the effusion of that heavenly oil by which he has been anointed; nor would his brethren *dare* to propose such a payment to him, lest a curse should come upon them—the curse of spiritual darkness and desertion—for presuming that the free gifts of God might be purchased for money; Acts viii. 20. In addressing our ministers we would use the words of the apostle Peter: “As every man hath received the gift, *even so* minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth; that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever”; I. Pet. iv. 10, 11: and we would add, *Cast all your care upon the Lord, for he careth for you.*

In point of fact, experience has furnished the Society of Friends with ample evidence, that the Great Head of the church who calls his own servants into the work of the gospel, and who thus gently constrains them in behalf of others, as well as on their own account, to “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness”; adds unto them all things needful for their temporal maintenance. When they are travelling from place to place, and when their whole time is thus exclusively devoted to the work of the gospel, the necessary supply of their outward wants is not withheld from them; and when they are at home, they avail themselves, like other persons, of their own industry, and of the openings of a benevolent providence, in procuring for themselves and for their families, an honest and respectable livelihood.

Such being the sentiments of Friends respecting the direct spirituality and perfect freedom of the ministry of the gospel, it evidently becomes their duty, in a plain and consistent manner, to uphold those sentiments in their practice. Not only, therefore, do they refuse to pay or hire their own ministers, but they also decline making any contributions to the paying or hiring of ministers of other denominations. Did they act otherwise, they might justly be deemed unfaithful to the light bestowed upon them, and they would in fact be subverting with one hand the edifice which they are professing to erect with the other.

The reader will be aware that I am now adverting to the course so generally pursued in our society, in reference to tithes and other ecclesiastical imposts. It is certain that whenever these demands are made

on the true and consistent Friend, he will not fail to refuse the payment of them : not because such refusal is generally insisted on in the society ; but because the religious sentiments which he has embraced, and which have been unfolded in these essays, inevitably lead him, if he be faithful, into that result. He feels that it is a duty laid upon him by his divine Master, uniformly to maintain the spirituality and freedom of the christian ministry, nor will he venture *by any action of his own*, to lay waste his principle and to weaken the force of truth, in reference to so important a subject. Such an action, beyond all question, would be the voluntary payment of tithes.

This conclusion is by no means affected by the consideration, that the payment of tithes is imposed on the inhabitants of this country by the law of the land ; and that, therefore, the clergy have a legal claim to such a remuneration. Faithful as Friends desire to be to the legal authorities of the state under which they live, it is plain that as christians, they cannot render to the law an *active* obedience in any particular which interferes with their religious duty—that is to say, with their duty to an infinitely superior power. They cannot obey man, rather than God. The only obedience to the law, which can be allowable under such circumstances, is that which the most scrupulous Quaker will not be found to withhold—I mean a *passive* obedience. It is no part of the practice, and it would be altogether inconsistent with the sentiments, of the society, to *resist* the “powers that be”. In those matters in which they find an active compliance with the law precluded by the dictates of conscience,

Friends are, I trust, prepared to suffer, and quietly to allow the law to find its own course. While they abstain from taking any part themselves in those things which they deem to be wrong, they are ready to stand still and abide by the consequences. On these grounds, therefore, although they refuse to pay tithes, they oppose no resistance to those legal distrains by which tithes are taken from them. It is surprising that any persons of reflexion should form an opinion (not unfrequently expressed), that there is no essential distinction between these practices, and should assert that the suffering of the distraint, in a moral and religious point of view, is tantamount with the voluntary payment. The two courses are, in point of fact, the respective results of two opposite principles. The Friend who voluntarily pays tithes, puts forth his hand to that which he professes to regard as an unclean thing, and *actively* contributes to the maintenance of a system, which is in direct contrariety to his own religious views. The Friend who refuses to pay tithes, but who (without involving himself in any secret compromise), quietly suffers a legal distraint for them; is clear of *any action* which contradicts his own principles. He only follows up another branch of those principles, in not opposing force to force, and in rendering a passive obedience to the law.⁷

⁷ It is sometimes remarked that, in refusing to pay tithes, Friends withhold the property of their neighbour, and thus, in their endeavour not to counteract their own views on the subject of a free ministry of the gospel, involve themselves in a breach of common integrity. Now, it appears to us that such a charge is wholly fallacious. Although, in the first place, the conscientious Friend cannot take any active part in the satisfaction of ecclesiastical demands, he opposes no obstruction to those legal operations by which that satisfaction is, without difficulty, obtained. And secondly, we deem the notion that any part of the produce of our lands is the

It would by no means accord with that quietness of character, which it is the desire of Friends to maintain as a religious body, were they eager and violent in their efforts to promote their own peculiarities, or clamorous against other christians who differ from themselves. Nevertheless, they consider it to be their indispensable duty, by the explicit, yet unobtrusive, language of conduct, to bear what they very properly call their *testimony* against such opinions and practices as they conceive to be inconsistent with the spirituality of the gospel dispensation. This observation is completely exemplified in their refusal to pay tithes. By such a conduct, they expose themselves to much expence and inconvenience which might otherwise be avoided; but by the course which they have thus adopted, they not only keep themselves clear from any involvement in that which they conscientiously disapprove, but they plainly *express their*

property of the priest, to be destitute of any sound foundation. If it were his property, his title to it must be clear and unexceptionable. On what, then, rests the title of the priest to this supposed property? On the assumption of a *divine right* to the tithes on the part of the church, and on the recognition of that *divine right* by the British legislature. See *Statutes at large*, 29 *Hen. VIII. ch. 20*. Since almost all Protestants allow that no such right exists, and since, for our own parts, we are persuaded that the assumption of it is directly opposed to some of the leading principles of christianity, we cannot admit that the priest has any valid title whatsoever to a property in any part of the produce of our lands. His claim, however groundless in itself, is indeed sanctioned by the law of the state; and the individual who buys land, pays a smaller sum of money than he otherwise would have done for his purchase, because it is known by both parties that a certain proportion of that which is annually grown upon it, can be legally claimed, and will be actually taken, by the ecclesiastical incumbent. Nevertheless, every particle of the land which a man purchases, or inherits in fee, is his own property; so that he can at all times use it as he pleases;—crop it profitably—crop it unprofitably—or allow it to run to absolute waste and ruin. And as every particle of the land is his own property, so also is every particle of its produce; unless, indeed, he let the land to another person, when the produce of it becomes, on certain conditions, the property of his tenant.

dissent from that system of sentiment and practice out of which the institution of tithes has arisen, and with which it is still inseparably connected. A few observations respecting some of the particulars against which Friends endeavour thus practically to testify, will enable the reader to form a more complete view of the whole subject.

By a refusal to pay tithes, then, they express their dissent, *first*, from the practice, so prevalent in the christian world, of hiring and paying the ministers of religion; *secondly*, from that description of ministry which is capable of being so procured—which is capable of being exercised at a man's own time, and in pursuance of an agreement with his fellow creatures: *thirdly*, from those human appointments to the ministry originating respectively with the bishop and with the patron, by means of which the clergyman is invested with a legal claim on the tithes of any parish. On these three points, I have already endeavoured to unfold the sentiments of our Society. It only remains for me, therefore, to invite the reader's attention, somewhat more particularly, to two other branches of the same subject.

In the *fourth* place, therefore, it may be remarked that, by refusing to pay tithes, Friends express their dissent from a notion very commonly entertained—especially among persons who have received but little religious instruction—that the sacerdotal office is continued in the church of Christ. The institution of tithes in the christian church, is generally supposed to have taken place during the fourth century; or rather, the contributions made for the poor began

about that period to be denominated *tithes*. By degrees these contributions were diverted from their original channel, and were applied, either in part or in whole, to the pecuniary remuneration of the ministers of religion. At length, during the progress of the middle ages, and after kings, emperors, and states, had very generally fallen under the spiritual dominion of the papacy, the *tenth of the produce of the land* was boldly claimed by the clergy as appertaining to them of *divine right*; and thus, for the partial and voluntary offerings of former days, was gradually substituted a general and compulsory tax. See *Rees' Cyc. Tithes, Great Case of Tithes, by A. Pearson, &c. &c.* Now it is certain that while these changes were taking place, the professors of the religion of Christ were quickly degenerating from the simplicity and purity of their forefathers, and were retrograding in the most obvious manner, into the ceremonial system of the old Jewish law. It is more especially to our purpose to observe, that from the fourth century downwards, the ministers and bishops of the church were taught to consider their office *sacerdotal*, and to assume the obsolete titles of priests and high priests.⁸ Since, therefore, under the Jewish law, tithes were appointed for the maintenance of the tribe of Levi, and especially for the support of the priests, upon whom lay the duty of sacrifice and intercession, and the charge of the whole ritual daily practised in the Lord's temple; there is evidently a strong probability that the assumption of a right to tithes by the clergy of the christian church, arose immediately out

⁸ ἱερωτικῶς and ἀρχιερωτικῶς, See *Suiceri Thes. in voc. ἱερεῦς*.

of the notion that the priesthood—the sacerdotal office—still existed, and was still to be maintained.

This notion derives, in modern times, no little support from the ambiguity of the word *Priest*, which, as it is employed in the established forms of many christian churches, probably signifies nothing more than *Presbyter* ; but which is nevertheless generally understood to denote a person invested with the *sacerdotal office*. Now, although the total abolition of that office is asserted by many enlightened writers, it is certain that the opposite error vulgarly prevails to a great extent, and is productive of very injurious practical consequences. In Roman Catholic countries a dependence is notoriously placed on the priesthood, which can be explained or justified only on the principle that the office of the christian minister is directly sacerdotal ; nor can it be denied that remnants of the same superstition—of the same undue reliance on the authority and mediation of the priest—are very usual even in our own land.

Were it true that the sacerdotal office is continued in the church of Christ, Friends could with no propriety refuse the payment of tithes, which were divinely appointed for its maintenance ; and therefore they consider that in refusing to pay tithes, they explicitly uphold the doctrine, that the office in question is abolished. That doctrine is allowed by the generality of well-instructed Protestants, nor will the reader entertain any doubts on the subject after an attentive perusal of the seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth, chapters of the epistle of Paul to the Hebrews. It is, indeed, altogether an error to suppose that the

duty of the *preacher* was ever necessarily connected with the office of the *priest*. In the more ancient periods of the Israelitish history, that duty lay not upon the priests, who were consecrated for the service of the temple, but upon the prophets. Afterwards in the ministration of the synagogue service of the Jews, one only of the seven persons who read the Scriptures and discoursed to the people, was required to be of the sacerdotal order; and even *his* place might be supplied, in case of need, by any other Israelite; See *Prideaux's Con. fol. ed. vol. i. p. 306*. But however the preaching of the word might be ordered among the Jews before the introduction of christianity, it is certain that the ceremonial law, the priesthood by which it was administered, and the provision appointed for the maintenance of that priesthood, ceased in point of authority on the death of Christ, when the whole typical and ritual system was fulfilled and abrogated. It was for the Jews of old to approach their almighty Governor, through the mediation, intercession, and sacrificial ordinances, of a human priesthood: but it is the happiness of christians, to acknowledge no other Mediator than our Lord Jesus Christ, who is “made a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec”, Heb. vi. 20: who is “an high priest over the house of God” ch. x. 21: who is “touched with the feeling of our infirmities”, ch. iv. 15: who “by one offering hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified”, ch. x. 14: who is “able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them”, ch. vii. 25.

I have already found occasion to observe that the

legality of ecclesiastical claims, is no just or sufficient cause, why Friends should take any active part in satisfying them. I may now advance a step farther, and remark, that the establishment of such claims by the law of the civil state is in itself one reason, among others, which renders a refusal to comply with them binding on their consciences. For, by refusing to pay tithes and other ecclesiastical demands imposed upon them by the law of the land, they express their dissent, in the *fifth and last* place, from that compulsory support of the hierarchy which originated during the darkest ages of papal superstition ; and *generally* from the interference of merely human and civil authority with the affairs of religion.

No one who takes a calm and just view of the condition of mankind, will deny the usefulness and importance, within their own sphere, of established forms of government, and of those various restrictions and regulations, by which the order and comfort of civil society are promoted and maintained ; and the reader is probably well aware that Friends, as well as other christians, consider it to be their bounden duty in civil matters, to obey “the powers that be”, and to be faithful in rendering “unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar’s”; Matt. xxii. 21. We apprehend, however, that the affairs of religion appertain not to any civil polity ; but to the kingdom of heaven, or as it is otherwise described, the kingdom of God and of Christ. Although, if we are true christians, we cannot fail to render, to our earthly rulers, the homage and service which are their due ; yet in those things which appertain to the salvation of the soul, we profess to

call no man Master, but to live under the undivided reign of Christ himself. The law which christians are bound in such matters to obey, is revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and is engraven on their hearts, and we believe that their celestial Monarch exercises his dominion over them principally by an unseen and spiritual agency, with which no mortal, nor set of mortals, can ever possess authority to interfere. Now, this kingdom or reign of Christ is not of this world. The head of it is almighty, and, in the prosecution of his gracious designs for the extension, edification, and final perfection, of his church, we are persuaded that he neither requires the protection, nor sanctions the interference, of the laws and governments of men.⁹

The history of the last eighteen centuries does, indeed, afford, in various ways, a strong presumptive evidence that the cause of true christianity has very

⁹ In thus stating a very important *general* sentiment, there are two or three points which I think it desirable to guard. In the first place, it ought to be observed that there is nothing in that sentiment, intended to be opposed to those internal regulations which are adopted, for the maintenance of its own order, by every religious society: for I conceive that if such regulations are properly formed, and the officers on whom it devolves to execute them are rightly appointed, the discipline thus established in the church, is so far from interfering with the government of Christ, that it is rather to be considered (according to various declarations of Scripture,) as one of the means through which that government is conducted. And in the second place, it cannot be deemed, on religious grounds, objectionable, when the civil authorities come forward, either by the exertion of prerogative, or by the enactment of law, to prevent those various breaches of *christian* morality, (including drunkenness, sabbath-breaking, gaming, &c.) which plainly interfere with the true welfare of the body politic. For my own part, I could extend this admission a step further, and confess that I see no objection, in *point of principle*, (however doubtful in the case may be the question of prudence,) to those human laws which prohibit all public attacks on the divine authority of our holy religion, because I conceive that these laws are intended for the benefit, not of the church, but of the state; and are grounded upon the plain and undeniable truth, that, for the security and right order of civil society, by far the most effectual guarantee is to be found in the unalterable principles of the christian faith.

materially suffered in the world, in consequence of the forced and arbitrary connexion between two systems, founded on such different principles, regulated by such different laws, and directed to such different objects, as those of the *church* and the *state*. While it does not appear that the *state* has derived any real advantage from its supposed union with the church; it is probably in great measure the consequence of such an union (invented and contrived as it has been by the wisdom of man) that the *church* has assumed in almost all christian countries, so secular a character—that christianity has become so lamentably mixed up with the spirit, maxims, motives, and politics, of a vain and evil world. Had the union in question never been attempted, pure religion might probably have found a freer course; the practical effects of christianity might have been more unmixed and more extensive; and it might have spread its influence in a much more efficient manner than is now the case, even over the laws and politics of kings and nations.

It was in the reign of the emperor Constantine (A. D. 325) that the christian religion was first established by law, forced into connexion with the body politic, and handled as a matter appertaining to the state. Now, though we ought not to attribute to a single cause an effect which may have had its origin in many, we cannot but be confirmed in our view of the present subject, when we remember, that, before its union with the state, our holy religion flourished with comparative incorruptness; and that afterwards it gradually declined in its purity and its power, until

all was nearly lost in darkness, superstition, and spiritual tyranny.

Independently, however, of these considerations, which relate to the interference of civil authority with the affairs of religion in general; there appears to be a distinct moral objection to the legal establishment in any country, of *a particular form of christianity*, to the disparagement of other modifications of the same essential religion. However the provisions of such a legal establishment, may have been rendered liberal and softened down (as has been so evidently the case in Great Britain,) by the powerful operation, on the legislature, of public opinion; it may reasonably be questioned, whether there must not always exist in these provisions, a radical opposition to a free, unbiassed, and inclusive, religious liberty. I would therefore suggest, that we cannot, conscientiously, contribute in an active manner, by the voluntary payment of tithes or church rates, to the maintenance of the Established Church; not only because we object to the system on which it is, in various respects, conducted; but also because it appears to be inconsistent with the divine law, that any human government should compel us, either to adopt for ourselves, or to uphold for others, *a mode of religious worship at variance with our own principles.*¹

On the review of this essay, it will be recollected

¹ It ought to be noticed that, although several observations offered in the present chapter relate specifically to *tithes*, most of them are, on general grounds, equally applicable to other ecclesiastical taxes, such as those denominated *church rates*. *Tithes* and *church rates*, though differently applied in detail, are intended for the support of one and the same system: and the Friend who refuses to pay church rates, as well as he who refuses to pay tithes, *thereby expresses his dissent from that system*,

that in the New Testament, and especially in the writings of Paul, the doctrine is clearly promulgated that the preacher, when actually labouring in the cause of the gospel, has a claim upon those who hear him, for the supply of his outward wants—that Paul while he allowed and even enforced this doctrine, was exceedingly jealous (as was proved by his own conduct) of its being in any respect perverted or abused—that, according to the opinion of Friends, it is dangerously perverted and abused in the practice, so prevalent among christians, of hiring the preachers of the word—that such a practice degrades the character of the christian ministry, and is closely connected with the notion, that it may be brought into exercise according to the will of man—that since Friends admit no preaching or public praying, but such as they deem to be offered under the immediate influence of the Spirit, they cannot pay, or otherwise remunerate, the Lord's servants for the use of a gift which is of a nature entirely free; but they hold that as every man has received the gift, so he is bound to minister it—that the preachers among Friends, when engaged in itinerant labours, are supported by their brethren; and when resident at home, find, in general, no difficulty in maintaining themselves—that the same principle which prevents Friends from hiring or paying their own ministers, prevents their contributing to the hiring or paying of those of other denominations—that in their refusal to comply with ecclesiastical demands, they bear a practical testimony against all such hiring and paying of preachers; against that description of ministry, which is capable of being so

procured ; against those appointments to the sacred office, which introduce to the possession of a claim on tithes ; against the vulgar notion that the sacerdotal office is continued in the church ; against the forced maintenance of the clergy and the arbitrary union of church and state ; and against the legal obligation to maintain, either for themselves or others, a system of religious worship inconsistent with their own views.

In concluding this dissertation, I cannot be satisfied without remarking, that our refusal to comply with ecclesiastical demands arises from a desire to uphold certain great principles which we deem to be both true and important, and is not, I trust, in any measure dictated by a spirit of enmity against the particular church established by law in this country. On the contrary, we regard the members of that church with a friendly eye, and rejoice in the evident extension of true religion within her borders. For my own part I consider it only justice to avow, that I know of few persons who are more generally free from useless prejudices, more zealous in the cause of religion, and more ready for every good word and work, than many serious and devoted ministers of the Anglican church. It may, moreover, be remarked that some of them whose labours of love are abundant, receive *very small* pecuniary stipends ; and that others make a point of expending their whole parochial income, in relieving the necessities of their poor neighbours, and in promoting other objects of a benevolent nature.

To such individuals we might safely make our appeal respecting the practical excellence of those views which have been unfolded in the present chap-

ter. Without any fear of an answer in the negative, we might address to them the enquiry, whether they do not find that the sacrifice of their personal interest is a vast advantage to them in their ministerial labours; whether it is not a circumstance which gives great currency to the doctrine preached by them, that they derive little or no temporal advantage from preaching it, and that in the promulgation of divine truth they are known to be actuated by no other motives than a sense of religious duty, and an ardent love towards God and man? While, therefore, we encourage a liberal and friendly feeling towards our fellow-christians *of every denomination*—while we readily make allowances for the various circumstances and conditions in which they are placed—it is certain that we cannot be too faithful in upholding our own testimony against the paying and hiring of preachers. For have we not reason to believe that the further the church advances in her great career, the more generally will serious persons of other religious professions sympathize with our solicitude, that the contrivances of man may not be allowed to interfere with the work of God; that avarice, ambition, and selfishness, may be for ever excluded from the motives which lead christians into the professed service of their divine Master; and that the standard may be more and more elevated among believers, of such a ministry of the gospel, as shall be exclusively spiritual in its origin, and absolutely free in its operation?

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN.

WHILE, by the bulk of the christian world, the public preaching and praying of women is strictly excluded, and it is even considered as an indisputable doctrine, that the duties which peculiarly appertain to their character and station in society, and the offices of the christian ministry, are absolutely incompatible; Friends believe it right, freely and *equally* to allow the ministry of both sexes. That this is indeed a necessary consequence of those sentiments respecting the ministry which I have already endeavoured to unfold, must be plain to the reflecting reader. Since we conceive, on the one hand, that all true ministry is uttered under the immediate influence of the Spirit of Christ; and since, on the other hand, we confess that the wind bloweth where it listeth—we cannot reasonably do otherwise than make way for the exercise of the gift by those persons, of every description, whom the Spirit may direct into the service, and whom the Great Head of the church may be pleased

to appoint as his instruments, for the performance of his own work. It is, indeed, declared that “the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets”, and hence it may be inferred that in the conduct of our gifts, we ought not to neglect the dictates of a sound and enlightened discretion: but we believe that we must not limit the Holy One of Israel, or oppose to the counsels of infinite wisdom our own fallible and unauthorized determinations. We dare not say to the modest and pious female, “Thou shalt not declare the word of the Lord”, when, from an infinitely higher authority, there is issued a directly opposite injunction, “Thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee, thou shalt speak”.

Now that women are often led to proclaim the word of the Lord amongst us—that it is laid upon them as an indispensable duty—that they are, from time to time, constrained under the influence of the Spirit, to rise up in our assemblies for worship, in order to instruct, exhort, convince, and console; or to kneel down and address the Most High, as the organs of the congregation; and further, that their services of this description are frequently accompanied with life and power, and greatly tend to the edification of their hearers—are facts, the truth of which long experience has taught us; and which no persons who are intimately acquainted with our society, will be disposed to deny.

Nor is there any thing either astonishing or novel in this particular direction of the gifts of the Spirit. Nothing astonishing, because there is no respect of

persons with God; the soul of the woman, in his sight is as the soul of the man, and both are alike susceptible of the extraordinary as well as of the general influences of his Spirit. Nothing novel, because, in the sacred records of antiquity, there are found numerous examples of women as well as of men, who were impelled to speak to others on matters of religion, by the direct and immediate visitations of the Holy Ghost. It was, doubtless, under such an influence, that Miriam responded to the song of Moses; that Deborah uttered her psalm of triumph; that Hannah poured forth in the temple her acceptable thanksgivings; that Huldah prophesied to king Josiah and his officers; that the aged Anna spake of Christ "to all them that looked for redemption in Israel"; that Elizabeth addressed the mother of her Lord; and that Mary sung praises to her God and Saviour. Of the individuals now mentioned, Miriam, Deborah, and Huldah, are expressly denominated prophetesses. The wife of Isaiah was a prophetess; Isa. viii. 3. We read also of false prophetesses—a circumstance which affords an obvious indication that there were true prophetesses who were the objects of their imitation, and from whom they were distinguished; Ezek. xiii. 17, Neh. vi. 14.

Among the early ministers of the gospel dispensation, particular mention is made of the four daughters of Philip, who prophesied or *preached*; Acts xxi. 9, *comp.* xv. 32, I. Cor. xiv. 3. The same office probably devolved, in a very eminent manner, on Priscilla the wife of Aquila, *to whom all the churches of the Gentiles gave thanks*, and whom Paul expressly de-

nominates his "helper", or, as in the Greek, his "*fellow-labourer* in Christ"; Rom. xvi. 3, 4, *comp.* Greek text of ver. 21, II. Cor. viii. 23, Phil. ii. 25, I. Thes. iii. 2. Again, on another occasion, the apostle speaks of the *women* who "laboured" with him "in the gospel"; Phil. iv. 3. In order, however, to establish the point now under consideration, nothing farther would be necessary than a reference to the history given in the book of Acts of that great day of Pentecost, when the Spirit was so abundantly poured forth on the disciples of the Lord Jesus. It is recorded in that history, that when the men and women were collected together, to the number of about one hundred and twenty, they were *all* filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake as the Spirit gave them utterance; ch. i. 14, 15, ii. 1—4. Here we have the declaration of a plain and indisputable fact; and that fact is of the more importance because of its correspondence with the prediction of the prophet Joel. It was expressly provided and ordained, as is amply proved by that celebrated prediction, that in the last days, or under the last dispensation, the Spirit should be poured forth "upon all flesh"—that no distinction should in this respect be made between the male and the female—that the *daughters* as well as the sons; the *handmaidens* as well as the servants, should receive the heavenly gift and *prophecy*; Acts ii. 16—18.

On the opposite side of the question, however, it has often been remarked, that Paul in one passage of his epistles, has commanded women "*to keep silence in the churches*", and in another declares, that he suffers them not "*to teach*". The passages alluded

to are as follows : “ Let your women keep silence in the churches : for it is not permitted unto them to speak ; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. *And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home* : for it is a shame for women to speak in the church” ; I. Cor. xiv. 34, 35. Again : “ I will, therefore, that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. In like manner, also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety, &c. . . . Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman *to teach*, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence, for Adam was first formed, then Eve ;” I. Tim. ii. 8—13.

Now, on the comparison of these injunctions with the other passages of Scripture already cited, and especially with the prophecy of Joel, and the history of its fulfilment, the interpreter of the sacred volume appears to be driven into one of two decisions : the first, that the apostles and prophets, whose works must be ultimately traced to the same divine Author, have contradicted one another ; and this on a point of considerable practical importance : the second, that the public speaking of women, so positively forbidden by Paul, was not that description of speaking which arose out of the immediate impulses of the Holy Spirit.

Even were it impossible to throw any farther light on the question, I presume there are few readers of Scripture, who would hesitate in choosing the latter alternative ; especially since it is quite unreasonable to suppose that the apostle would venture to forbid

any administration which was inspired, and which was therefore fully sanctioned by his *divine Master*. But in the adoption of that alternative, we are yet further confirmed by critical investigation.

In the former of these passages the clue to the apostle's real meaning, in forbidding the public speaking of women, will be found in the words of v. 35—“*And if they will learn any thing*”, says he, “*let them ask their husbands at home*”. It has already been observed, that the whole of this chapter of the epistle to the Corinthians, relates to their assemblies for divine worship, and was intended to correct certain abuses which had rendered those assemblies unprofitable and disorderly. Now in the Jewish synagogues, after the pattern of which the meetings for worship of the earliest christians, were probably in many respects regulated; *it was customary for the hearers to interrogate the ministers on such points of their doctrine, as might require further explanation*; See *Lightfoot, Hor. Heb. in loc.*: and it appears probable that a similar practice had been introduced in the church of Corinth, and that the women of that church were peculiarly prone to it. Such a practice might, under peculiar circumstances, be allowed to *men*; and especially to the Elders and Overseers, who were possessed of authority in the body, and were the managers of the public congregations, but it was evidently very inconsistent with that diffidence which ought ever to distinguish the character and deportment of females. The apostle, therefore, enjoins them to keep silence in the church; and to restrain their eager desires for farther instruction, until they could obtain it in pri-

vate, from their own husbands. “In the synagogue”, says the learned Benson, “any man who had a mind might ask questions of his teachers, and demand a further explanation of what had been said. And this custom was also transferred into the primitive christian church, and that with the approbation of St. Paul. Only he would not permit the women to do so; as the judaizers at Corinth would have had them. No! if they wanted to have any farther instructions, they were to ask their own parents or husbands at home; and not enter into such conferences publicly in the church”; *On the Public Worship of the First Christians, Com. on Epist. vol. i. p. 628.* Such then, we may conclude, was the public speaking forbidden by the apostle, and not that inspired ministry which originated in the will of Christ, and was immediately prompted by his Holy Spirit.

The second passage above cited is worded in a manner somewhat obscure; but appears to be best construed (according to the opinion of various commentators—See *Poole’s Synopsis*;) as conveying an injunction that women, as well as men, *should pray every where*, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting.² Having issued this injunction together with one relating to attire, the apostle proceeds to command the women in the church of Ephesus (in conformity with his directions to those at Corinth) to “learn in silence with all subjection”: and further he

² I. TIM. ii. 8. 9. Βούλομαι οὖν προσεύχεσθαι τοὺς ἄνδρας ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ, κ. τ. λ.—Ὡσαύτως καὶ τὰς γυναῖκας ἐν καταστολῇ κοσμίῳ, μετὰ αἰδοῦς καὶ σωφροσύνης, κοσμεῖν ἑαυτάς, κ. τ. λ. “I will, therefore, that men *pray every where*, &c. Likewise also the women, in a modest dress; comp. I. Cor. xi. 5: (I would have them) adorn themselves with shamefacedness and sobriety,” &c.

expressly declares that he suffers them not "to teach". The verb "to teach" is one of very general import, and, together with its derivative nouns, is applied in Scripture to religious instruction of various descriptions; but in this passage it probably designates a specific duty or faculty in the church, which is repeatedly *distinguished* by this apostle from the gift of *prophecy* or *preaching*; Rom. xii. 6, 7, I. Cor. xii. 28, Eph. iv. 11. Now, although both these faculties, as enjoyed in the primitive church, are described as being divinely bestowed, there is reason to believe that the impulses of the Spirit were of a far more direct and positive nature in the one case than in the other. I conceive that the *teaching* which the apostle suffered not to be performed by women, differed from *prophecy* or *preaching*, in three respects: first, that it was dictated rather by the general impressions of christian love and duty, than by any immediate inspiration; for had it been immediately inspired, the apostle could not have forbidden it: secondly, that, although adapted to a variety of occasions, both private and public, it was not, *like modern teaching*, employed as the ministry of the word, in assemblies for worship; for all the various administrations employed in those assemblies, appear to be described in I. Cor. xiv. as spontaneous and divine effusions: thirdly, that, according to the hint given by the apostle in the passage before us, it involved the assumption of personal authority. This duty probably appertained in a particular manner to the Elders and Overseers, whose calling it was to exercise a spiritual superintendence over others, and who were the appointed guardians and governors of

the flock. Thus we learn from I. Tim. iii. 2, (as already stated) that the Bishop or Overseer was to be *apt to teach*; and from Ephes. iv. 11, that certain persons who are there *distinguished* from the prophets or inspired ministers of the word, bore the joint character of “pastors and teachers”.

A very similar view of this passage is taken by Grotius. “*To teach*,” says he, “was the office of the president (or bishop), though he sometimes committed this branch of his duties to other persons, especially the Elders. The apostle suffers not the women to perform such an office—that is to say, not *unless* they have, and only *while* they have, the prophetic impulse. *Prophecy is beyond the reach of positive laws*”; See *Com. in loc.* “The apostolic rule,” says Benson, “was that when they were under immediate inspiration, the women might pray or prophesy in the church. But when they were under no such inspiration they were not to speak; i. e. neither to pray, nor read, teach, nor ask questions, there”; *vol. i. p. 620.*

That the interpretation now given of these passages in Paul's epistles, is substantially correct—that he had no intention to forbid that ministry of women which was dictated by the immediate impulses of the Holy Ghost—is rendered abundantly plain by another passage of his first epistle to the Corinthians, in which he recognizes the public prophesying of females, and gives particular directions respecting their conduct and appearance, during the performance of that sacred duty. “Now I praise you, brethren,” says he, “that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as

I delivered them unto you. But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. Every man *praying or prophesying*, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that *prayeth or prophesieth*, with her head uncovered, dishonoureth her head; for that is even all one as if she were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn; but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. . . . For this cause ought the woman to have power (or a covering) on her head because of the angels. . . . Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God, uncovered? &c.”; I. Cor. xi. 2—13. That this passage, as well as the fourteenth chapter of the same epistle, relates to the conduct of the Corinthian christians in their public assemblies for worship, is allowed by commentators, and is indeed evident from the whole tenor of the advice which is there imparted. The apostle, therefore, plainly recognizes the public prophesying of females; and since he gives directions respecting their dress and deportment during the performance of this service, it is plain that he had no intention to forbid the service itself. With respect to the prophesying to which Paul has here alluded, as exercised both by men and women in the churches of the saints, its nature has already been defined. The reader will remember that the gift was directed to the “edification, exhortation, and comfort” of believers; and to the conviction of unbelievers and unlearned persons, See I. Cor. xiv. 3, 24, 25; and that in fact it was nothing else than speaking aloud, either in

prayer or preaching, under the direct and immediate influences of the Holy Ghost.

Such, and such only, were the public services of women which the apostle recognized and allowed; and such was the ministry of females predicted by the prophet Joel, and described as so leading a feature in the economy of the gospel dispensation.

It appears then that the allowance of the public preaching and praying of women, in the Society of Friends, necessarily arises out of their principles respecting the character of all true ministry—that we dare not in this respect, more than in any other, limit the Holy One of Israel in the exercise of his own prerogatives—that our practice in reference to the present subject is justified by the records of Scripture, respecting the effusions of the Spirit of God in times of old—that even under the legal dispensation many female servants of the Lord were called to the exercise of prophetic gifts—that of the gospel times, the common participation of those gifts by men and women, was a decisive characteristic—and that the injunctions of the apostle Paul against the public speaking and teaching of women, can only be understood (himself being witness) of speaking and teaching which were not inspired—which were not *prophesying*.

Such are the general sentiments entertained in the Society of Friends respecting the ministry of women—a subject which suggests in conclusion one or two reflexions of a practical nature.

When the apostle Paul said, “I suffer not women to teach”, he added “*nor to usurp authority over the man*”; I. Tim. ii. 12. Had the women in the church

of Ephesus, after receiving this injunction, assumed the office of pastors ; had they attempted that description of public teaching which was immediately connected with the government of the church ; they would have been guilty of infringing the apostle's precept, and would have usurped an improper authority over their brethren : but as long as their ministry was dictated by the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit and consisted in the orderly exercise of the prophetic gift ; so long must they have been free from any imputation of that nature. Women who speak in public assemblies for worship under such an influence, assume thereby no *personal authority* over others. They do not speak in their own name. They are the instruments through which divine instruction is communicated to the people ; but they are only the instruments ; and the doctrine which they preach derives its weight and importance, not so much from the persons by whom it is uttered, as from that Being in whom it originates, and by whose Spirit it is prompted. This remark is not only in accordance with the principles which obviously appertain to the present subject ; but is confirmed, as many of my readers will be aware, by our own experience ; for we well know that there are no women among us, more generally distinguished for modesty, gentleness, order, and a right submission to their brethren, than those who have been called by their divine Master into the exercise of the christian ministry.

Lastly, I may venture to direct the attention of my friends to a fact which I deem to be worthy of the consideration of the society ; namely, that during the

earlier periods of the history of Friends, the work of the ministry devolved much more generally and extensively upon the men, than upon the women. If in the present day, a similar result from our religious principles does not take place; if, on the contrary, the ministry of the women is found rather to preponderate in the society over that of the men; such a circumstance can by no means be deemed a favourable sign. Justified, as Friends appear to be, by the doctrine of Scripture, and by the powerful operations of the Spirit of truth, in equally admitting the ministry of both sexes; it is far indeed from being an indication of life and soundness in the body at large, when the stronger sex withdraws from the battles of the Lord, and leaves them to be fought by those whose physical weakness and delicacy have an obvious *tendency* to render them less fit for the combat. Were we of that stronger sex less devoted than we now are to secular objects—were we less prone to a worldly spirit, and more diligent in seeking “*first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness”—there can be little doubt that we should be called forth in greater numbers into the arduous duties of the ministry of the gospel; nor would the burthen of the word be found to rest, in so large a proportion as it now does, on our mothers, our sisters, and our daughters.

CHAPTER IX.

ON SILENT WORSHIP.

SINCE Friends allow of no audible administrations in connexion with public worship, except such as arise out of the immediate impressions of the Holy Spirit, it is evident that when those impressions are withheld or withdrawn, and at all times, except during the actual utterance of ministry, their assemblies must continue in a state of silence. When they meet together for the solemn purpose of worshipping their common Lord and Father, they dare not rush into his sacred presence with offerings of confession, prayer, and praise, prepared beforehand or extemporaneously invented. They sit down, therefore, in reverent stillness before him, and whenever it happens that no one present possesses a gift in the ministry, or that the individuals who possess such a gift are not called into the exercise of it, the silence with which the meeting commences, continues uninterrupted until the time arrives for its separation.

During the earlier periods of the society's history, the number of its ministers was very large, and I

cannot but think it probable, that in the present day, were our religious body in a more lively, healthy, and vigorous, condition, the gifts of the Holy Spirit would be more abundantly poured forth upon us, and would be exercised *more generally* in our assemblies for worship, to the edification of the people, and to the glory of the Great Giver. But although this allowance may, I believe, be safely made, it is certain that those who have imbibed the religious principles of Friends, will ever place a high value on the opportunities so often afforded them in that society, for the public yet silent worship of God. While much of silence in our religious meetings is the necessary consequence of our sentiments respecting the ministry of the gospel; it is a consequence which we are far indeed from regarding as a hardship or disadvantage. On the contrary, such silent worship is in complete harmony with the whole tenor of our principles, and we believe that to those who rightly avail themselves of it, it seldom fails to become the means of unspeakable usefulness.

Our profession and our desire, when we meet together to worship the Father, is to perform this sacred duty in spirit and in truth. To this end we conceive that a condition of outward silence is pre-eminently adapted. For worship in spirit and in truth consists neither in the practice of typical ordinances, nor in the forced or formal use of words, which may or may not be accordant with the feelings of those who utter them, or in whose behalf they are spoken; but in the communion of the soul with God, in inward prostration before him, and in those heart-felt offerings of supplication and thanksgiving which, in order to

enter into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, need not the intervention of any vocal utterance.

In order to unfold this interesting subject with some degree of clearness, it will be desirable to advert to a few of its principal particulars.

I. Were the enquiry addressed to me, What is the first and most essential qualification for a right and spiritual worship of the Almighty—for such a worship as would at once edify the creature and glorify the Creator—I should feel but little hesitation in replying, *A deep humiliation and subjection of soul before the divine Majesty.* True worship may often be properly expressed by the services of the lip; but it is, in itself, the homage which the *soul* offers to its Maker;—it is the reverential communion of man with his God. Now this homage can never be acceptably offered—this communion can never take place in a right or perfect manner—until the mind of the worshipper is made in some degree sensible of the real relative situation of the two parties concerned—of himself and his God. The worshipper is the creature; the object of his worship is the Creator: the former is finite, ignorant, weak, and helpless; the latter is omniscient, eternal, and omnipotent: the former, without grace, is fallen, sinful, and corrupt; the latter is of “purer eyes than to behold iniquity”: the former is capable of receiving either wrath or mercy; the latter is able either to punish or to forgive. “Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity;” Ps. lxii. 9. “All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than

nothing, and vanity ;” Isa. xl. 17. In order therefore to make acceptable approaches in spirit to the Almighty, it is abundantly evident that men ought to be humbled, prostrate, and in a mental condition of profound reverence and awe ; under a sense of their own vileness and of his perfections—of their own unworthiness and of his power—of their own nothingness and of his infinity. Nor will such a state of true humiliation, fail to procure for them the gracious regards of their heavenly Father. “The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool : where is the house that ye build unto me, and where is the place of my rest ? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all these things have been, saith the Lord : but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word ;” Isa. lxvi. 1, 2.

The frame of mind which I have now attempted to describe, is indeed, in some measure, *at all times* inherent in the true christian : but on occasions appointed for the high and especial purpose of communion with the Almighty, such a frame is in a pre-eminent degree necessary ; and is required to be formed in a much more perfect and uninterrupted manner, than during the active pursuits and mixed avocations of common life. Now, in order to this end—in order to the production of this entire humiliation, in those who are met together for divine worship—there is perhaps no outward condition nearly so well adapted as one of silence. The soul of man, however it may frequently be fraught with honest and pious intentions, is laden with many infirmities, and

on these solemn occasions, it appears to require the opportunity which silence so naturally affords, before it can find its own true level ; before it can be brought to entertain *with a sufficient degree of completeness*, a just sense of itself and of its Creator. There is reason to fear, that such a sense is often *very imperfectly* formed, and that it is sometimes materially interrupted, by the use of words which form prescribes, or which human imagination invents. Even sincerely religious people may draw nigh unto God with their lips, while their souls are far from being sufficiently humbled before him ; and if it be so, they worship their Creator *superficially*, and their religious exercises will ever be found unprofitable, in proportion as they are shallow. It is when the soul of the christian is thoroughly subjected in the presence of the Most High ; when his pride and activity are subdued ; when the restless imaginations of his natural mind are quieted and laid low, that he is prepared to adopt the words of the Psalmist, “ *Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord ;*” Psalm cxxx. 1.

Now silence may be considered not only as affording a most useful opportunity for the production of this complete prostration before God in divine worship, but as being eminently suited to that condition of mind when it is already produced ; for experience may serve to convince us, that it is the natural and frequent accompaniment of humiliation and subjection. As such it is repeatedly described by the ancient Hebrew prophets. “ I was *dumb with silence, I held my peace* even from good”, said David, when he had been suffering under the chastisement of the Lord,—

“*I was dumb, I opened not my mouth*, because thou didst it”; Ps. xxxix. 2, 9. “Why do we sit still?” cried the mournful Jeremiah—“assemble yourselves, and let us enter into the defenced cities, and *let us be silent there*; for the Lord our God hath *put us to silence*, and given us water of gall to drink, because we have sinned against the Lord”; ch. viii. 14. So also the prophets Habakkuk and Zechariah, when engaged in proclaiming the presence of Jehovah among men, did not fail to enjoin the *silence* of his creatures; “But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth *keep silence* before him;” Hab. ii. 20. “Be *silent*, O all flesh, before the Lord, for he is raised up out of his holy habitation;” Zech. ii. 13. *comp.* Ps. xxxi. 18, Isa. xv. 1, I. Pet. ii. 15. Rev. viii. 1.

II. A second particular of indispensable importance to a true and spiritual worship, is *waiting upon God*. The worshippers of the Almighty Jehovah, must not only be humbled and cast down under an awful apprehension of his divine power and majesty; they must not only feel their own vileness and wants; but they must also look upwards unto God, as unto the Father of mercies, the Fountain of wisdom and life, the Author of every good and perfect gift. Their expectation must be placed on him alone, and they must learn *patiently to wait upon him*, until he shall be pleased to reveal his mercy, and to bestow upon his unworthy children, “grace to help in time of need”. On the subject of this important characteristic of true worship, none of the sacred writers appear to have received a more powerful impression, than the devout and afflicted David. “Unto thee

lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens. Behold, as the eyes of the servants (look) unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes (wait) upon the Lord our God, *until that he have mercy upon us;*" Ps. cxxiii. 1, 2. "My soul, *wait thou only upon God;* for my expectation is from him;" Ps. lxii. 5. "*Wait on the Lord:* be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: *wait, I say, on the Lord;*" Ps. xxvii. 14. *comp.* xxxvii. 7, 9, cxxx. 5, Isa. xxx. 18, &c.

When a person is anxiously expecting any particular benefit from his fellow-creatures, it is very natural for him to be *silent*; for anxious expectation and silence, even in the common affairs of life, are closely associated. Still more plainly, however, does this appear to be the case, when the blessings and benefits which he desires are of a heavenly nature, and when the great and glorious God is the Being on whom his expectation and reliance are placed. A holy silence of soul, accompanied by an outward stillness, appears to be a frame of the man peculiarly well adapted to this waiting upon the Lord; and such a frame will I believe, often be found a very salutary *introduction* to the more active communion of the soul with its Creator—to the actual offerings, whether secret or vocal, both of confession and prayer.

Were such offerings, as they are presented on the altar of the Most High by christian worshippers, less the product of their own efforts; were they dictated more completely by that Spirit who "maketh intercession" for us "with groanings that cannot be

uttered"; and did they more generally arise out of that condition which has now been described, of reverent *waiting* on the Lord; there is much reason to conclude that they would be still more acceptable than they now are to the great Searcher of hearts; and efficacious in a higher degree, for the edification of those who worship him. And now it only remains for me to confirm these remarks by the additional observation, that waiting upon God, as well as prostration and subjection before his divine Majesty, is, in the Holy Scriptures, expressly recognized as connected with a state of *silence*. The words of the Psalmist "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him", may be more literally and properly rendered, as in the margin of the common English version, "*Be silent to the Lord*³ and wait patiently for him"; Ps. xxxvii. 7. In Isaiah xl. 31, it is declared, that "they who wait upon the Lord *shall renew their strength*"; and in the following verse the command is proclaimed "*keep silence* before me, O islands; and let the people *renew their strength*"; Isa. xli. 1. Lastly, in a highly instructive passage of the book of Lamentations, the benefit of true waiting upon God, and of the silence with which it is so naturally accompanied, are described as follows: "The Lord is good unto them that *wait for him*, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for (in the Hebrew, *be silent for*⁴) the salvation of the Lord. It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. He sitteth alone and *keepeth silence*, because he hath borne it upon him. He put-

³ Heb. דום ליהוה. ⁴ דומם.

teth his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope"; Lam. iii. 25—28. It appears, therefore, both from Scripture and from experience, *first*, that a condition of mental waiting upon God, is a very important constituent of spiritual worship; and, *secondly*, that silence is a natural and perfectly adapted accompaniment of such a condition.

III. Among the choicest blessings in the expectation of which the true worshipper is taught to wait upon his Lord, and for which he is most accustomed to present his humble yet earnest petitions at the throne of grace, is the illumination and instruction of the Holy Spirit. It is the happiness of all true christians that they are taught of the Lord. "All thy children", said the prophet to the church, "shall be *taught of the Lord*, and great shall be the peace of thy children"; Isa. liv. 13. The law of God is written in legible characters on the hearts of his followers. Under that new and spiritual dispensation into which they have been introduced, they need not that one man should say to another "Know the Lord", because from the least to the greatest of them, all may know him for themselves, Jer. xxxi. 34; they need not that any man teach them, because the anointing which they have received of Christ abideth in them, and teacheth them of all things, and is truth and no lie; I. John ii. 27. One is their teacher—even Christ.

The obedient family of God, as I have already found occasion to observe, are, in all their ways, instructed and illuminated by their divine Master. Even while they are prosecuting the active business of life, if they are but careful in maintaining the watchful spirit

and the single eye, they will not fail to receive, on every needful occasion, the secret yet perceptible motions of the Spirit of truth. But in an especial manner may they expect to experience this grace, when they are gathered together, in the name of Jesus, for the solemn purpose of worshipping the living God. In pious expectation they fix their souls upon their Redeemer, and that "Minister of the true tabernacle", who has promised to be in the midst of his disciples, when they are thus engaged, is ever ready to carry forward his work in their souls, to perform his own part in the covenant of life, and to bestow upon them the teaching of his Holy Spirit—a teaching which, when received with submission, never fails to be efficacious, because it is derived without mixture from the source of wisdom, and is not only light but *power*. Many are they of various christian denominations, who can bear witness that the Lord Jesus does indeed condescend to instruct his people *himself*. It is Christ, that spiritual Teacher of the children of God, who makes manifest to them their real condition; detects their iniquities and convinces them of sin; brings them into humility, tenderness, and contrition of soul; and thus prepares them for the exercise of fervent and persevering prayer, for pardon, and deliverance. It is Christ also who reveals to the soul of man the mercy of God, and secretly proclaims to his penitent followers the extent and efficacy of redeeming love. Thus is the contrite sinner relieved and comforted, and becomes rightly qualified to offer up at the throne of grace, the acceptable tribute of thanksgiving and praise. Lastly, it is Christ who

plainly sets before his people, as in the light of his sanctuary, the path of self-denial, obedience, and true holiness : he shews to them the beauty and excellence of that narrow way, and inspires them with an ardent desire to walk in it : and at the same time he invites them to rely with confidence upon the power of his grace, that by this sacred influence they may be strengthened in all their weakness, and actually enabled to take up their daily cross and to follow their Lord and Saviour. Such is a faint and general outline of the teaching of the Son of God ; and where is the experienced christian who will venture to deny that he thus instructs his people, not only by means of the ministry of his servants, but by the secret and immediate operations of his Holy Spirit ?

If this point be allowed, and if it be further granted, as I think it must be by the spiritually-minded reader, that the periods appointed for the congregational worship of God, are times when the immediate teaching of Christ may reasonably be expected ; the propriety of *silence* on such occasions is at once established. When any persons are receiving the instructions of a human teacher, they find that a state of silence on their own parts is both beneficial and indispensable. Not only is such a state the proper and natural token of submission to their instructor, and of their willingness to receive his lessons, but it is literally impossible for them to listen to his words, or to derive any benefit from those lessons, unless they keep silence. Every one who is accustomed to public worship, must know with what peculiar force these observations apply to the experience of christians, in reference to

the ministry of the gospel. The preacher proclaims the word of truth ; he declares the messages of God to his people ; and he instructs them in a knowledge of the divine law. But all his efforts will be mere vanity, unless he receive from his hearers that respectful and submissive attention, to which their entire silence is absolutely and undeniably essential. And so it is also during those times in the hours appointed for worship, (and that there are such times we are well aware from our own experience) when the “ Master of assemblies” calls forth no human instrument for the performance of his work ; when he is pleased to take the office of teacher into his own hands ; and when he condescends to visit his unworthy children with the immediate illuminations of his Holy Spirit. They cannot avail themselves of this divine teaching ; they cannot hear it ; they cannot profit by it—unless they be silent—unless they maintain that stillness of soul which is naturally and, under such circumstances, *necessarily* accompanied with an outward silence. “Be still, and know that I am God”, is the command which, in his character of universal Sovereign, Jehovah still addresses to his reasonable creatures : nor can there be any occasions on which an obedience to this command is more seasonable or more plainly desirable than those which are appointed for public and congregational worship. While this true silence is preserved by christian worshippers, they will often be permitted to hear the gentle and alluring accents of Israel’s Shepherd ; their Guide, Instructor, and Comforter ; and in listening to those accents with reverent submission, they will in an eminent degree experience

that renewal of strength without which they can make no advances in the "way everlasting".

On recurring to the leading particulars of the present chapter, the reader will observe, that much of silence in the time appointed for public worship is the necessary consequence of our principle, that no verbal administrations, except those which arise directly out of divine impulse, are on such occasions to be admitted—that so far from deprecating such a consequence, we consider that the maintenance of silence in our religious assemblies eminently accords with that divine law, that God, who is a Spirit, must be worshipped spiritually—that in this sentiment we are confirmed by a consideration of some of the principal constituents of true and spiritual worship, viz. humiliation before the divine Majesty, waiting upon God, and submissive attention to the immediate teaching of the Lord Jesus—that to these several duties the silent subjection of the soul is peculiarly suited and even absolutely indispensable, and that this frame is, in our judgment, most easily obtained and most effectually preserved through the medium of an outward silence.

Such are the reasons for the value which Friends are accustomed to attach to silence in worship, and which will, I trust, be found more and more to recommend so salutary a practice, to christians of every name and profession. In conclusion, however, it ought to be remarked, that although silence is a natural attendant of this inward state of prostration, waiting, and attention to the divine teaching, the former may often be maintained when the latter has no existence. It is easy for any man to be outwardly

silent, while he allows his mind to be occupied with a thousand passing reflexions which have no proper connexion with his religious duty ; and when this is unhappily the case with persons who are met together for the professed purpose of rendering a public homage to the Almighty, it must be confessed that their worship is as inefficacious and nearly as much of a mockery, as it would be, did it consist in the use of words at total variance with the feelings of the heart. How clearly then is it the duty of Friends, of every age and station, to maintain a true watchfulness, and diligence of soul, that their silent worship may not be marred by the influence of worldly thoughts, and thus degenerate into a barren and lifeless form ! It may indeed be freely allowed, that a condition of true internal silence, is one of no easy attainment. Great is our infirmity in this respect, and difficult do we sometimes find it to stay the rapid course of our own cogitations, and to present ourselves in real quietness, a living sacrifice to our God. But we do not expect to accomplish this object in our own strength. In our endeavours to worship God in spirit and in truth, we are taught to rely on him alone ; and while such continues to be our reliance, experience will still enable us to testify, that he is often pleased to arise for our help—that he has the will as well as the power to bring our vain thoughts into silence—to raise our souls into holy communion with himself—and to say to the multitudinous imaginations of the natural man, *Peace, be still.*

CHAPTER X.

ON OATHS.

IN the preceding chapters I have endeavoured to give a clear account of those religious peculiarities of the Society of Friends, which appertain particularly to the subject of worship, and which, therefore, involve duties (whether positive or negative) especially affecting our relation with the Supreme Being himself. The points still remaining for discussion, have reference to our conduct in common life, and more especially towards our fellow-creatures: for there are several matters of this description also, respecting which Friends entertain sentiments, and adopt practices, different from those of the bulk of their fellow-christians. Of these practical peculiarities, the first which presents itself for our consideration is the *disuse of oaths*. Profane and irreverent appeals to the Almighty, and those conversational blasphemies which, even in christian countries, continue to disgrace the various classes of worldly society, are indeed unanimously condemned by all true christians: but Friends

(in accordance, as I understand, with the Moravians) advance a step further, and consider it their bounden duty to avoid swearing of every description, and on every occasion. Such a line of conduct they deem to be both justified and required, *first*, by certain plain moral principles, and, *secondly*, by divine commands of the most impressive and comprehensive character. On both these heads I may venture to offer a few observations.

Of the moral principles alluded to, the first may be considered as lying at the foundation of the apostolic precept, “*Let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay, lest ye fall into condemnation*”, Jas. v. 12; and as deriving a clear confirmation from the declaration of Jesus himself, that “*whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil*”; or as the Greek may be more accurately rendered, ‘*of the evil one*’;⁵ Matt. v. 37. Since the law of truth in the verbal communications between man and man—a law strenuously supported even by heathen moralists, and obviously essential to the well being of all human societies—is very frequently enjoined in the records of God’s revealed will; since it is plainly of universal obligation on the followers of Jesus; and since, on the other hand, there is nothing more decisively condemned in the sacred volume than the false tongue: it follows that with true christians, a deliberate and serious yet simple affirmation or negation possesses a force so perfect in its kind, as to be incapable of any real augmentation. Hence there arises a plain moral obligation in conformity with the precept of the apostle James, that our yea

⁵ ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ.

should be yea, and our nay, nay—that is to say that our affirmations and negations should be naked, and simple, and wholly unaccompanied with any form of oath. For if on any particular occasion a man swear in addition to his yea or nay, in order to render them more obligatory and convincing, their force becomes comparatively weak at other times, when they receive no such confirmation. If such an one be a believer in the Lord Jesus, and especially if he be a serious professor of religion, it is plain that by his conduct he gives countenance to the false and dangerous notion, that the oath of the christian is more binding upon his conscience, and *therefore more credible*, than his deliberate word, and thus he inevitably lowers the *standard* of the law of truth.

Nor is the deduction of this consequence the work of mere theory. Experience bears ample testimony to the fact that the prevalence of oaths among men (christians not excepted) has produced a very material and very general effect in reducing their estimate of the obligation of plain truth, in its natural and simple forms. Even the heathen philosophers of old were well aware of the deleterious results of the practice of swearing, and some of them have left on record an express condemnation of that practice.⁶ Truly,

⁶ Epictetus says, *παράιτησαι ὄρκον εἰς ἅπαν*—“Avoid swearing altogether”: Plato, *ὄρκος περὶ παντὸς ἀπέξω*—“Let an oath be avoided on every occasion”: Chærilus, *ὄρκον τ' οὐτ' ἀδίκον χρεῶν ἔμμεναι οὐτε δίκαιον*—“No oath, whether it be a just or an unjust one, ought to be allowed”: Menander, *ὄρκον δὲ φεύγε καὶν δικαίως ὀμνύης*—“Abstain from swearing, even though it be justly”. See *Grotius on Matt. v. 34*. “Stobæus, *Serm. 3*, relates that Solon said, *A good man ought to be in that estimation that he need not an oath; because it is to be reputed a lessening of his honour, if he be forced to swear*. Pythagoras, in his oration, among other things, hath this maxim, as that which concerns the administration of the common-

then, may it be asserted, that those awful appeals to a superior agency, by which, in every oath, the truth is supposed to be confirmed, (whatever may be the occasion on which such oath is employed,) arise out of an evil source,—produce an evil consequence,—and are at variance with the principles of that perfect law, to which christians, above all others, so plainly owe an exact and universal obedience.

The true christian cannot, indeed, be ignorant that he is in the presence of an omniscient God, who is perfectly aware both of his secret thoughts and of his open declarations. Nevertheless, the principle to which I have now adverted, appears to afford a substantial reason why he should abstain from attempting to add to the force of his yea or his nay, by making such an awful appeal to the Deity as constitutes an oath. But further: there appears to be a distinct moral objection to oaths, on the ground that, according to general usage both ancient and modern, they plainly imply an imprecation—a conditional calling down upon oneself of some dreaded penalty. A man swears either by something which is dear and valuable to him, or by some personal object of his reverence and dread. In the former case, the penalty which he means to attach to himself, on the supposition that his oath is untrue, is the loss of that which he loves; and in the latter case, it is the wrath and vengeance of him whom he fears. When the ancient Grecian, for instance, swore by his head, he professed to sub-

wealth, *Let no man call God to witness by an oath, no not in judgment; but let every man so accustom himself to speak, that he may become worthy to be trusted even without an oath;*” *Barclay’s Apology, Prop. xv. § 12.*

ject himself to the loss of his head; and when he swore by Jupiter, he cursed himself with the wrath of Jupiter, provided his oath should be false or broken. Now it is a very affecting consideration that the oaths in use among the professors of christianity are unspeakably more terrible than any heathen oath; in as much as the penalty which the swearer calls down upon himself, on the supposition of his swearing falsely, is one of infinite weight and severity. It is nothing short of damnation—the destruction and eternal punishment of his immortal soul.

That such is the import of the common juridical oath of this country, is notorious. An individual who is called upon to give evidence in an English court of justice, swears that he will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and he adds “*So help me God*”; or, as the words were formerly recited, “*So help me God at his holy dome*”; that is to say, *Let this be the condition, on which God shall help me in the day of judgment*; See *Rees’ Cyclopædia*, “*oath*”. The help of God thus technically adverted to—the help of God in the day of his holy dome—plainly signifies that help by which alone the soul of man can be saved from eternal misery, and introduced to a state of never-ending happiness. Thus, then, the English swearer, in his appeal to an all-seeing omnipotent Deity, voluntarily and expressly appends his own salvation to the condition of his speaking the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. On the supposition of his infringing that condition, he curses himself with the loss of God’s help, and with consequent damnation.

Even were it absolutely certain that the alternative, on account of which a man calls down upon himself this everlasting ruin and destruction, could by no possibility occur, the reflecting christian who dwells under a just sense of the judgments of the Lord and of the unutterable importance of eternity, will scarcely fail to acknowledge, that such a cursing of self is in a high degree rash and irreverent. But how much more evidently presumptuous, how much more awfully dangerous, is such an imprecation, when it is connected with an alternative, the *negative* of which must always, in the very nature of things, be deemed, in a great degree, *uncertain!* The senses of men frequently deceive them: their memory easily fails them: when they are surrounded with appalling circumstances, or perplexed with difficult questions, their presence of mind is very commonly disturbed or destroyed: and, above all, their own hearts are corrupt and deceitful—so that perhaps a person who is about to give evidence in a court of justice, can never be absolutely assured that he shall speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth: and yet, in appealing to the omnipresent Jehovah, he presumes to stake upon this frail and fallible condition; the salvation of his immortal soul!

Those who are acquainted with the history of the Society of Friends, must be aware how uniformly they have objected to the use of oaths; how fully persuaded they have at all times been, that they could in no case comply with the prevalent custom of swearing, without grieving and offending their heavenly Guide and Governor; and how multifarious were the

sufferings which the early members of that society preferred, to the infringement of their duty in this important practical particular. Nor will the reader be surprised by the decision and steadiness of their views and conduct in reference to the present subject, when he has candidly reflected on the moral principles which have now been stated; when he has considered their clearness on the one hand, and their weight and importance on the other. It is not, however, solely on account of these moral principles, that Friends regard it as their indispensable duty to abstain from all swearing; but more especially because of the express commands of Jesus Christ himself, and of one of his apostles. “Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time”, said the Lord Jesus, in his sermon on the mount, “Thou shalt not forswear thyself; but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: but I say unto you, *Swear not at all*; neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thine head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black: but let your communication be yea, yea, nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil”; Matt. v. 33—37. The apostle James has also adverted to the subject in forcible and explicit terms:—“*But above all things, my brethren, swear not; neither by heaven; neither by the earth; neither by any other oath; but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation;*” ch. v. 12.

It might have been supposed that such plain injunctions, would have convinced the generality of

persons who derive their moral standard from the New Testament, that oaths, on any occasion, and under any pretext, are absolutely unlawful for the followers of Jesus. But the very prevalent notion that they are necessary to some important purposes of civil society, has evidently been the means of preventing this result. Many persons have accordingly acceded to the glosses by which commentators endeavour to escape from the force of these passages ; and that with a far greater readiness and facility than those glosses deserve. The objections which many of the learned, and especially the late William Paley, have made to the more comprehensive interpretation of these prohibitory declarations, centre principally in a single point ; namely, that the oaths here specified both by our Saviour and his apostle, are oaths, not by *Jehovah*, but only by his *creatures*. Since the latter oaths alone are specified, these writers conclude that they alone, or they principally, are forbidden ; and since it appears that in their courts of justice, the Jews swore not by heaven, the earth, Jerusalem, or their own heads ; but only by God himself, and that they used these inferior oaths on more familiar occasions ; it is argued that the injunctions of Christ and his apostle were not directed against judicial swearing, but exclusively against that which was common and conversational. Now as the inference thus deduced depends entirely upon the supposition that the swearing forbidden by our Lord and his apostle was *only* or *chiefly* swearing by the creatures, and not the oath by *Jehovah* ; it follows that if that supposition be disproved, the inference itself must fall

to the ground. I hope then to make it plain to the reader's apprehension, that in these passages, every kind of swearing is forbidden, and *especially swearing by Jehovah*.

In the first place, the terms in which our Lord expresses his new law are of the most decisive and comprehensive nature. "But I say unto you, *Swear not at all.*"⁷ The apostle, whose words may be regarded as a sort of commentary on those of Christ, maintains, and even increases, the force and extent of these terms: he says "*Above all things, my brethren, swear not*": and after specifying the oath by heaven and that by the earth, he completes the significancy of his sentence by the subsequent clause, "neither by *any other oath*". The negative injunction is, moreover, in both instances, elucidated and confirmed, by another of a *positive* character. "Let your yea, be yea, and your nay, nay", says the apostle—that is, let them be naked, simple, plain, absolutely destitute of any oath. "Let your communication (or "your speech"⁸) be yea, yea, nay, nay", says our Saviour, "for *whatsoever* is more than these"—whether it be the lesser or the greater oath, the oath by the creature, or the oath by the Creator—"whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil". Here our Lord has justified and explained his law, by a *declaration*. Now that declaration extends to every description of swearing; *it applies to the higher kinds of it with still greater force than to the lower*: and it must needs be understood as universal, because, whatever exception may here be imagined by christians, none is expressed

⁷ μή ἠμόσαι ὄλωσ.

⁸ λόγος.

—none, even in the most distant manner, hinted at or alluded to, by Christ himself.

It is to be observed, in the second place, that oaths of a secondary kind are forbidden by our Lord on the express principle, *that they were nearly assimilated to more solemn oaths, and that some of these forms did in fact involve a real swearing by Jehovah*: “Neither by heaven, *for it is God’s throne*: neither by the earth, *for it is his footstool*: neither by Jerusalem for it is *the city of the Great King*”—*the Lord of Hosts*. Those, therefore, who swore by the heaven, by the earth, or by Jerusalem, virtually swore by that divine Being who dwells in them and uses them as his own; according to the clear doctrine of the Lord Jesus, on another occasion—“Whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein; and he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon:” Matt. xxiii. 21, 22. If then swearing by the creature was to be avoided, simply because of its virtual connexion with swearing by the Creator, how much more plainly exceptionable was the direct and awful oath by Jehovah himself! I would suggest that our Lord’s meaning may be paraphrastically expressed as follows:—“But I say unto you, Swear not at all—on no occasion and by no description of oaths—not even by those of a secondary form, which you are accustomed to use familiarly, and to regard as harmless and unmeaning. Such oaths are, in point of fact, fraught with solemnity, and are of the very same nature as swearing by the living God. Keep strictly, therefore, in all your speech, to the yea and nay; for

whatsoever method of swearing may be employed to augment their force, it cometh of the evil one.”⁹

Lastly, the true import of the precept of Christ respecting swearing is to be gathered from that of the Jewish law, to which that precept is placed in opposition. It has already been observed that the worship prescribed to the ancient Hebrews, was in general of a much lower and less spiritual character, than that which is enjoined upon the disciples of Jesus; and in complete coincidence with such a fact, it appears with equal clearness, that the *moral law*—the law of practice—was less fully revealed and less properly understood under the Mosaic, than it is under the christian dispensation. In condescension to a state of comparative ignorance and weakness, many things were permitted, and even temporarily enjoined, which the full light of christian truth has evinced to be now unlawful. Every reader of the New Testament is acquainted with the comparison instituted by our Lord, in his Sermon on the Mount, between the system of morals, which the Jews had grounded on the law of Moses, and his own purer and more perfect law. The law of Moses forbad murder: the law of Christ extends the prohibition to injuries and insults of every description, and enjoins the subjugation of those angry and malicious feelings which are the *source* of overt wrongs. The law of Moses

⁹ “*Graviter falluntur*”, says Grotius on this passage, “*qui solam a Christo improbari putant consuetudinem jurandi per res alias extra Deum. Nam Jacobus optimus Christi interpret ait, Non jurandum, neque per cælum, neque per terram, neque alia quavis jurandi formula. Imo sensus Christi est, Non jurandum; ne quidem (not even) per cælum, per terram, per Hierosolyma, per caput; quod ostendit membrum oppositum, Sit autem sermo vester, est, est, non, non*”. The Greek particle *ωήτε* is capable of being rendered ‘not even’ as well as ‘nor’; *comp.* Mark. iii. 20.

forbad adultery: the law of Christ proclaims the iniquity of those secret desires and intentions, in which alone such crime originates. The law of Moses allowed of divorce on trifling occasions: the law of Christ repeals that provision, and holds up the highest standard respecting the security and completeness of the marriage union. The law of Moses sanctioned the principle of retaliation, Exod. xxi. 23—25, Num. xxxi. 17—21; the law of Christ enjoins the suffering of injury, and the return of good for evil. The principle of the law of Moses was love to friends, and hatred to enemies:—that of the law of Christ is love to all. So also the law of Moses, while it forbad both swearing falsely, and swearing lightly,¹ allowed the use of oaths when required by the order of civil and religious society, as it was then established: but the law of Christ goes farther: it cuts off all opportunity of perjury, and of every other abuse of the oath, by the complete prohibition of swearing. “Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time—Thou shalt not forswear thyself—but I say unto you *swear not at all.*” The oaths which the ancient Israelites were thus enjoined not to infringe, were taken in the name of Jehovah, the living God, and were employed principally in their courts of judicature, and on other occasions of seriousness and importance. Such then are the oaths, as well as others of a less solemn form and character, from which christians are commanded by their own lawgiver, *entirely to abstain.*

¹ Both these meanings are considered by commentators, and especially by Jewish commentators, to be included in the injunction “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God *in vain*”; Exod. xx. 7.

For all the reasons now stated I cannot but consider it abundantly evident that our Lord, in this passage of his memorable discourse, and also the apostle James, who has expressed himself in so similar a manner, *have absolutely forbidden swearing of every description, and on every occasion.* In this conclusion we are confirmed by the express judgment of the early fathers both Greek and Latin, who have almost uniformly interpreted these passages as completely destitute of any limitation. “I say nothing of perjury”, says Tertullian, “since swearing itself is unlawful to christians”; *De Idol. cap. 11. ed. Semler. tom. iv. 161.* “The old law”, says Basil, “is satisfied with the honest keeping of the oath: but Christ cuts off the opportunity of perjury”; *In Ps. xiv. hom. ed. Ben. tom. i. 356.* “He who has precluded murder by taking away anger”, observes Gregory of Nysse, “and who has driven away the pollution of adultery by subduing desire, has expelled from our life the curse of perjury by forbidding us to swear: for where there is no oath, there can be no infringement of it”; *In Cant. Cant. Hom. 13, ed. Ben. tom. i. 657, 8.* “Let the christian entirely avoid oaths, in obedience to our Lord’s prohibition”, exclaims Chrysostom; “do not therefore say to me, I swear for a just purpose. It is no longer lawful for thee to swear either justly or unjustly. Let us preserve our mouths free from an oath”; *In Gen. ii. Hom. xv. ed. Ben. tom. iv. p. 122.* “It is our absolute duty”, says Gregory Nazianzen, “strictly to attend to the commands of our king, and by all means to avoid an oath—*especially such an one as is taken in the name of God*”;

Orat. 53, ed. *Colon.* A. D. 1690, tom. i. 760. See also *Justin, Apol.* i. cap. 16, ed. *Ben.* p. 53; *Clement Alex. Pæd. lib.* 3, ed. *Ben.* p. 299. *Strom. lib.* v. p. 707; *Origen, in Com. Matt. serie, tract.* 23. ed. *Ben.* tom. iii. 842. *Cyprian, Testim. lib.* 3, § 12; *Hilary, Episc. in Matt.* v. 34, ed. *Ben.* p. 628; *Theophylact, in Matt.* v. 33; *Ambrose, in Ps.* 118, *Expos.* 14 ed. *Ben.* tom. i. p. 1145; *Jerom, in Matt.* v. 34; *Isidorus Pelus, lib.* i. ep. 155; *Barclay's Apol. prop.* xv. § 12.

Since Jesus Christ has thus forcibly, explicitly, and without limitation or exception, prohibited his followers from swearing, the corresponding duty on their parts, is evidently that of *a total* abstinence from the practice. By way of excuse, however, for not abstaining from it, christians may often be heard to remark, that Jesus himself took a judicial oath—that Paul swore in his epistles—and that oaths are expedient for the security and welfare of society. It is impossible for me to complete the present argument, without taking some notice of these several objections.

When the Lord Jesus stood before the Jewish Sanhedrim, and the false witnessess had delivered their testimony respecting him, “the High Priest arose and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace. And the High Priest answered and said unto him, *I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.* Jesus saith unto him, *Thou hast said*”; *Matt.* xxvi. 62—64. The reply made by our Saviour on this occasion is generally, and I believe rightly, interpreted as an affirmative: and since he was

adjured by the High Priest, to declare whether he was or was not the Christ, the Son of God, it is readily concluded that Jesus was here put upon his oath, and *took it*. Were this the matter of fact, it would, in my opinion, afford no sufficient reason why christians should swear in contravention of the direct command of their divine Master. It ought to be remembered that at the period when these circumstances happened, the Mosaic law was still in force, and obedience to that law, was evidently one of the principles which regulated the life of Jesus. Nor can there be any just comparison between the oath of one who was absolutely incapable of either falsehood or error, with that of others who are perpetually liable to both. A little investigation, however, may suffice to convince the reader that Jesus, in the passage cited above, is *not* described by the evangelist as taking his oath.

When an ancient Jew was examined in a court of justice, he swore to the fact to which he might be deposing, in the following, or some equivalent terms : “Behold I swear by the name of the Lord God of Israel, that such or such is the truth”: or otherwise he was put upon his oath, or sworn by the judges, who said, “We make thee swear by the Lord God of Israel, that such or such is the truth”: to which adjuration the deponent was accustomed to reply, “Amen”; See *Buxtorf. Synag. p. 682*. Now it does not appear that in the present instance the Lord Jesus either swore himself or was sworn by his judges. He was not attending the court as a witness, neither was there any fact to which he was called upon to depose. He was accused of having assumed the di-

vine character: the evidence brought in proof of the point, was of a suspicious and unsatisfactory description, and it was evidently for the purpose of entrapping him into the repetition of his supposed crime, that the High Priest *solemnly enjoined* him to declare to the Sanhedrim whether he was or was not the SON OF GOD. With this solemn injunction Jesus complied: and no sooner had he uttered his answer, than “the High Priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy”; verse 65. Schleusner, in his lexicon of the Greek Testament, expressly remarks that the verb rendered in this passage “I adjure”² does not here signify “I make to swear, or put upon oath”, but only “I solemnly, and in the name of God, exhort and enjoin”. That this verb in its more simple form³ is repeatedly employed in this latter signification, such of my readers as are accustomed to peruse the New Testament in its original language will be well aware. Thus the evil spirit cried out to Jesus, “*I adjure thee by the living God*, that thou torment me not”; Mark v. 7. Thus Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, “*I charge (or adjure) you by the Lord*, that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren;” I. Thess. v. 27. Thus also in Canticles ii. 7, v. 8, (passages in which we find the same verb in the Septuagint version, and a corresponding one in the Hebrew text), the spouse exclaims, “*I charge (or adjure) you*, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up my love till he please: *I charge (or adjure) you*, O daughters of Jerusalem,

² ἐξορκίζω.

³ ὀρκίζω.

if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him I am sick of love". The comparison of these passages of Scripture with that now under consideration appears to afford ample evidence that the Lord Jesus, when he complied with the solemn injunction of the High Priest, no more took an oath, than the Thessalonians did when they read Paul's epistle unto all the holy brethren—than the daughters of Jerusalem did, when they abstained from waking the bridegroom, and when they delivered to him the message of the bride—or than our Lord himself did, when he acceded to the earnest entreaty of the evil spirit.

It is objected, in the second place, that the apostle Paul, in some parts of his epistles, has made use of oaths. "God is my witness", says he to the Romans, "that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers"; Rom. i. 9. And again, to the Thessalonians, he says, "Neither at any time used we flattering words—God is witness"; I. Thes. ii. v. It is almost needless to observe that in these passages the apostle does not swear, but confines himself to the declaration of a truth which no man could dispute; namely that God was the witness of his secret exercises and of his plain address. Again, on another occasion, when describing to the Galatians the course which he pursued after his conversion, the apostle expresses himself in a somewhat similar manner. "Now the things which I write unto you, *behold, before God, I lie not;*" Gal. i. 20. Here was a solemn affirmation made in the confessed presence of that Being who alone searches the heart; but no oath, no imprecation, no calling down upon himself of any

dreaded penalty. Precisely the same remark will, I believe, be found to apply to another passage in which Paul appeals still more directly to the Deity. "Moreover", says he to the Corinthians, "I call God for a record (or a *witness*) upon my soul (or *of my mind*) that to spare you, I came not as yet unto Corinth"; II. Cor. i. 23.

Although that appeal to an omniscient Deity which in the former of these passages is implied, and in the latter plainly expressed, can by no means be considered as in itself constituting an oath, it may be freely allowed on a principle stated in the first part of the present chapter, that such an addition to a deliberate yet simple yea or nay, in confirmation of their truth, would be of dangerous application in the common affairs of life. But we are to remember that the apostle was an inspired man, and that in the promulgation of the gospel, as well as in the government of the churches, he was in a pre-eminent degree invested with the sanctions of a divine authority. That authority he was very frequently led to assert; See Rom. i. 1, I. Cor. i. 1, ii. 13, xiv. 37, Gal. i. 1, &c. When, therefore, we consider the peculiar circumstances under which he was thus placed, we may very reasonably interpret *as instances of such assertion*, the appeals here made to that Almighty Being by whose inspiration he was protected from error, and by whose direction his whole conduct as an apostle was so conspicuously regulated.

Here, however, it ought to be acknowledged that the latter of these passages contains certain expressions which have been very usually interpreted in such a

manner, as to give to the appeal there made to the Deity, the force of a complete oath. The expressions alluded to⁴ are, in our common English Version, rendered *upon my soul*. If we take the preposition here rendered “upon” in the sense of *against* (a sense in which it is sometimes used) and the substantive rendered “soul” as meaning either the *natural life* or the *immortal spirit*, we must conclude with many commentators, that Paul, when he declared to the Corinthians that to spare them he came not again unto Corinth, not only called upon God as the witness of that truth, but actually staked either his natural life or his soul on the veracity of his assertion, and thus involved himself in a real *oath*.

Now on the supposition of the propriety of such an interpretation, it may be observed in the first place, that the apostle’s oath related to a branch of his conduct, in which he was immediately directed of the Lord, and in reference to which, while he continued under the influence of inspiration, it was impossible for him to promulgate any falsehood. An oath taken by such a person, under these very peculiar circumstances, appears to afford no real countenance to the swearing of uninspired persons, on matters of a merely temporal nature. And secondly, though there is an obvious difficulty in reconciling the supposition that the apostle Paul has sworn in his epistles, with that comprehensive and absolute prohibition of the practice which was issued by his Divine Master, yet I apprehend that no reasonable christian in the regulation of his own conduct, would pretend to justify himself

⁴ ἐπὶ τὴν ἐμὴν ψυχὴν.

by the *example* of Paul, in the infringement of the law of Christ.

The signification of that law is, I would submit, far too plainly ascertained to be affected by the supposed collateral circumstance, that the apostle Paul has here made use of an oath. But now, on the other hand, it may be observed that, the very existence of such a law naturally and very properly leads us to a different interpretation of the apostle's expressions—an interpretation of which they are obviously capable, and which at once removes from the passage before us the true characteristic of an oath. The substantive already alluded to as sometimes signifying the *natural life* or the *immortal spirit*, still more frequently denotes *the mind*—the seat of the intentions, thoughts, and dispositions. The apostle, therefore, may here be understood, as is observed, on the authority of two eminent critics,⁵ in Poole's Synopsis, simply to appeal to the Deity as the witness of his *condition of mind*—of his real motives and intentions—that *to spare them*, he came not again unto Corinth. “The holy apostle”, says Theodoret, “wishing to persuade them of the truth of his assertions, calls in the testimony of Him who was the *inspector* of his thoughts”.⁶

⁵ Vatablus and Castalio.

⁶ It is observed by Pye Smith, in his valuable work entitled *The Scripture Testimony to the Messiah*, that Paul, in his epistles, has sworn “by Christ”. Such is the interpretation given by this writer to the expression ἐν Χριστῷ in Rom. ix. i, a passage which he renders “I speak the truth; by Christ! I lie not”; See *vol. ii. part II. ch. iv. p. 637*. That ἐν followed by a dative is sometimes used in the formula of an oath appears from Matt. v. 34, Rev. x. 6, &c. But surely it is altogether unnecessary to attribute to the apostle, so light and irreverent an use of the name of his Saviour. The expressions ἐν Χριστῷ are of very frequent occurrence in Paul's

Before we proceed to the remaining branch of the present subject, it may be desirable very briefly to notice a passage in the epistle to the Hebrews, which has sometimes been adduced in support of the practice of swearing: "For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, saying, 'Surely blessing I will bless thee &c.'. *For men verily swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife (or all litigation):* wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath;" vi. 13—17. On this passage it may be remarked that although Jehovah who is infallible was pleased to swear by himself, it can never follow from such a fact, that men, who are fallible, are at liberty to swear by Jehovah, who has himself forbidden them, in the moral law of christianity, to swear *at all*. Neither does the apostle speak in *commendation* of the practice of putting an end to litigation, by the confirmation of an oath. He only illustrates his argument by adverting to the actual prevalence of that practice among mankind.

Lastly, it is objected that oaths are, on many occasions, expedient for the purposes of civil society, and useful, more especially, in promoting the ends of justice. Now, while it is plain that no expediency can justify the infraction of a divine mandate so

epistles, and in scarcely any instance are they capable, on any fair critical ground, of being thus interpreted. It appears to me that the true explanation of Rom. ix. 1. is to be found in the apostle's well known doctrine, that whatever the christian says or does, he is to say or do in the name of Christ—in the character of a disciple of Jesus; *comp.* II. Cor. ii. 17, xii. 19.

clear and comprehensive as the law of Christ against swearing, it may perhaps be admitted that a real adaptation exists between the practice of judicial swearing, and that lax and imperfect morality which so grievously prevails in almost every part of the world. But where the principles of the gospel of Christ become really influential, there the expediency of swearing entirely ceases; nor does the congruity of the practice with a condition of second-rate morality, appear to furnish the true christian with any just excuse for relinquishing the lofty ground on which he ought ever to be found standing, or for disobeying the direct command of his divine Master. Those who are christians in deed as well as in profession, ought ever to remember that it is their high and peculiar privilege, to drop, in moral questions, the consideration of apparent expediency; to render to their Lord a strict and consistent obedience; and entirely to leave the consequences to his wisdom, love, and care. It is through the steady adherence of really religious persons to their own holy principles of conduct, that practical truth may be expected to *spread* among men; it is thus that "the little leaven" will gradually extend its purifying influence, *until the whole lump be leavened*. Nor will such a course be ever attended with any substantial or permanent disadvantage to the interests of the community at large. No one pretends, for example, that those interests have suffered from the liberty allowed, upon so many legal occasions, to Friends, of *affirming* instead of *swearing*; and there are few persons, perhaps, who will refuse to admit that the license thus afforded

them, might be extended, without any real danger, to cases of every description. As it is with Friends in this respect, so it might be with serious christians of every denomination. A steady and determined adherence to the law of Christ, in this important particular, would soon be the means of procuring for them a similar liberty from the governments under which they live, and that liberty would be no less harmless to the public, than beneficial to themselves.

But the utility of juridical oaths, even among those whose standard of morals is not the standard prescribed by true christianity, is, in all probability, greatly overrated. Magistrates are ever accustomed to judge of testimony, not so much by the solemnity of the obligation under which it is pronounced, as by the manner in which it is delivered, and by the known character of the parties who deliver it. And in persons whose moral sense is feeble and degenerate, and who have in their own minds little real objection to the infraction of truth, veracity of evidence is far more likely to be obtained by the *uniform* and *speedy* infliction of punishment on the breach of an affirmation, than by the easily disregarded influence of any form of words, however expressive, and however solemn.

In reverting to the principal heads of the present dissertation, I have again to observe, that while christians of every denomination unite in condemning irreverent and conversational swearing, Friends decidedly object to any use of oaths whatsoever—that their objection is grounded on moral principles, as well as on the revealed will of God—that the introduction of swearing on particular occasions, plainly lowers the general

standard of simple truth—that the self imprecation essential to every oath is always presumptuous ; and in juridical swearing, as practised among modern christians, peculiarly rash and dangerous—that the precept of Christ, and that of his apostle James, against oaths, are of the most comprehensive and explicit character—that the attempt to explain those precepts as relating exclusively to conversational swearing, is, by several plain critical considerations, evinced to be futile—that the notion of our Lord's having been himself sworn in a court of justice, appears to be erroneous—that if it be true that Paul swore in his epistles, his example cannot be safely followed in opposition to the law of his divine Master ; but that on examination he in no case appears to have employed expressions which really amount to an oath—that true christians are far from being justified in breaking the law of Christ because oaths may be deemed expedient among persons who are accustomed to an inferior standard of morals—and that even this expediency is exceedingly doubtful.

Since the moral principles on which we object to oaths are of so much practical weight ; and since the authority under which we act, in refusing to swear, is at once so high and so clear, we may well be encouraged to a persevering faithfulness in such a line of conduct. The steady sufferings of our forefathers have indeed been the means of earning for us, in reference to this particular, a great degree of facility.

I cannot but indulge the hope that as such a faithfulness is maintained among Friends, and as their light is thus made to shine before other men, reli-

gious persons of every denomination will gradually perceive the obligation which so plainly rests upon them, to abstain from all swearing. Certainly it must on all hands be allowed that the standard to which the professors of christianity are at present accustomed, in reference to this subject, is *miserably low*. Not only are oaths, in our own enlightened country, introduced in connexion with matters of solemn import, and in promotion of the ends of justice ; but they are multiplied in every direction ; are required by the law and taken by the subject on a thousand occasions of comparatively trifling consequence ; and are very generally administered in a loose, technical, and irreverent manner. Such provisions are utterly disgraceful to the christian character of Great Britain ; and demand the speedy interference of those members of our legislature, who are blessed with a deep sense of the importance of the principles of the gospel, and who know that the real prosperity of every nation depends on the consistency of its counsels with the will of God.⁷

⁷ Having already quoted Paley as a defender of the use of oaths, I have the more pleasure in calling to the recollection of my reader the following excellent passage in his work on moral philosophy. "The obscure and elliptical form (of the English oath) together with the levity and frequency with which it is administered, has brought about a general inadvertency to the obligation of oaths, which, both in a religious and political view, is much to be lamented ; and it merits public consideration whether the requiring of oaths on so many frivolous occasions, especially in the customs, and in the qualification for petty offices, has any other effect, than to make them cheap in the minds of the people. A pound of tea cannot travel regularly from the ship to the consumer, without costing half a dozen oaths at least ; and the same security for the due discharge of their office, namely, that of an oath, is required from a church warden and an archbishop, from a petty constable and the chief justice of England. *Let the law continue its own sanctions, but let it spare the solemnity of an oath. And where it is necessary, for the want of something better to depend upon, to accept men's own word or own account, let it annex to prevarication penalties proportioned to the public consequences of the offence ;*" vol. I. chap. xvi. p. 193.

CHAPTER XI.

ON WAR.

OF all the practices which disturb the tranquillity and lay waste the welfare of men, there is none which operates to so great an extent, or with so prodigious an efficacy, as *war*. Not only is this tremendous and dreadfully prevalent scourge productive of an incalculable amount of bodily and mental suffering,—so that, in that point of view alone, it may be considered one of the most terrible enemies of the happiness of the human race—but it must also be regarded as a moral evil of the very deepest dye. “From whence come wars and fightings among you?” said the apostle James, “come they not hence, even of your lusts which war in your members? Ye lust and have not: ye kill and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war: yet ye have not, because ye ask not”; ch. iv. 1, 2. War, therefore, has its origin in the inordinate desires and corrupt passions of men; and as is its origin, so is its result. Arising out of an evil root, this tree of bitterness seldom fails to produce in vast

abundance, the fruits of malice, wrath, cruelty, fraud, rapine, lasciviousness, confusion, and murder.

Although there are few persons who will dispute the accuracy of this picture of war—although every one knows that such a custom is evil in itself and arises out of an evil source—and although the *general position*, that war is at variance with the principles of christianity, has a very extensive currency among the professors of that religion—it is a singular fact that Friends are almost the only class of christians who hold it to be their duty to God, to their neighbour, and to themselves, absolutely and entirely to abstain from that most injurious practice. While the views of Friends on the subject are thus comprehensive and complete, the generality of professing christians, and many even of a reflecting and serious character, are still accustomed to make distinctions between one kind of war and another. They will condemn a war which is oppressive and unjust; and in this respect they advance no farther than the moralists of every age, country, and religion. On the other hand they hesitate as little in expressing their approbation of wars which are defensive, or which are otherwise undertaken in a just cause.

The main argument of a scriptural character by which the propriety and rectitude of warfare in a just cause (as it is termed) is defended and maintained, is *the divinely sanctioned example of the ancient Israelites*. That the Israelites were engaged in many contests with other nations; that those contests were often of a very destructive character; and that they were carried forward, on the part of the Israelites, under the

direct sanction, and often in consequence of the clear command, of the Almighty, are points which no one who is accustomed to peruse the history of the Old Testament, can pretend to deny. But we are not to forget that the wars of the Israelites differed from wars in general (even from those of the least exceptionable character in point of justice), in certain very important and striking particulars. That very divine sanction which is pleaded as giving to the example of that people an authority of which other nations may still avail themselves in the maintenance of a similar practice, did, in fact, distinguish their wars from all those in which any other nation is known to have been ever engaged. They were undertaken in pursuance of the express command of the Almighty Governor of mankind; and they were directed to the accomplishment of certain revealed designs of his especial providence. These designs had a twofold object: the temporal preservation and prosperity of God's peculiar people, on the one hand, and the punishment and destruction of idolatrous nations, on the other. The Israelites and their kings were, indeed, sometimes engaged in combating their neighbours without any direction from their divine Governor, and even against his declared will; and these instances will not of course be pleaded as an authority for the practice of war: but such of their military operations as were sanctioned and ordered of the Lord (and these only are adduced in the argument in favour of war) assumed the character of a work of obedience and faith. They went forth to battle, from time to time, in compliance with the divine command, and in dependence

upon that Being who condescended to regulate their movements, and to direct their efforts, in the furtherance of his own providence. These characteristics in the divinely sanctioned warfare of the Hebrews, were attended with two consequences of the most marked and distinguishing character. In the first place, the conflicts in which this people were thus engaged, and which so conspicuously called into exercise their obedience and faith, were far from being attended by that destruction of moral and pious feeling, which is so generally the effect of war; but on the contrary were often accompanied by a condition of high religious excellence in those who were thus employed in fighting the battles of the Lord—an observation very plainly suggested by the history of Joshua and his followers, of the successive Judges, and of David. And secondly, the contests which were undertaken and conducted on the principles now stated, were followed by uniform success. The Lord was carrying on his own designs, through certain appointed instruments; and under such circumstances, while failure was impossible, success afforded an evidence of the divine approbation. Now it cannot be predicated even of the justest wars, as they are usually carried on among the nations of the world, that they are undertaken with the revealed sanction, or by the direct command of Jehovah—or that they are a work of obedience and faith—or that they are often accompanied with a condition of high religious excellence in those who undertake them, or that they are followed by uniform success. On the supposition, therefore, that the system of Israelitish morals is still in force without

alteration and improvement, it is manifest that we cannot justly conclude from the example of God's ancient people, that warfare, as it is generally practised, even when it bears the stamp of honour or defence, is consistent with the will of God.

In addition to the example of the Hebrews, the defenders of modern warfare are accustomed to plead the authority of John the Baptist; See *Grotius de Jure Belli ac Pacis lib. I. cap. ii. § vii. 5.* It is recorded in the gospel of Luke, that when that eminent prophet was preaching in the wilderness, various classes of persons resorted to him for advice and instruction. Among others "the soldiers demanded of him, saying, And what shall *we* do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages"; ch. iii. 14. Since the precept of John to these soldiers that *they should do violence to no man*, probably related to their deportment among their friends and allies, it may be allowed that he did not on this occasion forbid the practice of fighting. On the other hand, it must be observed that the expressions of the Baptist afford no direct encouragement to that practice. I would suggest that, with reference to the present argument, his doctrine is neutral. The question whether war was in itself lawful or unlawful, is one which was probably placed beyond his scope, and which he obviously did not entertain. On the supposition that the soldiers would continue to be soldiers, he confined himself to recommending to them that gentle, orderly, and submissive, demeanour, which was so evidently calculated to soften the asperities of their profession.

But although John the Baptist was engaged in proclaiming the *approach* of the christian dispensation—the kingdom of heaven—he did not himself appertain to that kingdom ; See Matt. xi. 11. He belonged to the preceding institution, and his moral system was that of the law. Now although, on the supposition that this system continues unchanged, it may fairly be denied, for the reasons now stated, that the example of the Hebrews or the expressions of the Baptist, afford any valid authority for warfare as generally practised, it ought to be clearly understood that the objection of Friends to every description of military operation, is founded principally *on that more perfect revelation of the moral law of God, which distinguishes the dispensation of the gospel of Christ.* We contend, and that with no slight degree of earnestness, that all warfare—whatever be its peculiar features, circumstances, or pretexts—is wholly at variance with the revealed characteristics and known principles of the *christian* religion.

In support of this position I may, in the first place, adduce the testimony of the prophets ; for these inspired writers in their predictions respecting the gospel dispensation, have frequently alluded both to the superior spirituality and to the purer morality of that system of religion, of which the law with all its accompaniments, was only the introduction. In the second chapter of the book of Isaiah we read the following prophecy : “ And it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow

unto it. And many people shall go and say; Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and rebuke many people; *and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more;*” ver. 2—4. The prophet Micah repeats the same prediction, and adds the following animating description: “But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it;” Mic. iv. 1—4.

It is allowed by the Jews that the “last days”, of which these prophets speak, are the “days of the Messiah”; and the unanimous consent of christian commentators confirms the application of those expressions to the period of that glorious dispensation, which was introduced by our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Accordingly, the actual predictions of his coming are elsewhere accompanied with similar descriptions. In Isa. ix. 6, the Messiah is expressly denominated the “Prince of Peace”. In Isa. xi. the reign of Christ is painted in glowing colours, as accompanied by the universal harmony of God’s creation. Lastly, in Zech. ix. 9, 10; we read as follows: “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an

ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. *And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth;*" comp. Ps. xlv. 9.

It is undeniable that, in these passages, a total cessation from the practice of war is described as one of the most conspicuous characteristics of christianity. Such a consequence is represented by Isaiah as arising from the conversion of the heathen nations,—as resulting from their being led into the ways, instructed in the law, and enlightened by the word, of the Lord. Whoever indeed were to be the members of the true church of God, she was no longer to participate in the warfare of the world. The chariot was to be cut off from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem. It is true that for the full accomplishment of these glorious prophecies, we must look forward to a period yet to come. But let us not deceive ourselves. The inspired writers describe this complete and uninterrupted peaceableness, as a distinguishing feature of the dispensation under which christians are living—as the result of obedience to that law which they are at all times bound to follow: and we may therefore infer, that if the true nature of the christian dispensation were fully understood, and if the law by which it is regulated were exactly obeyed, a conversion to our holy religion, or the cordial and serious holding of it, would be uniformly accompanied with an entire abstinence from all warfare. Thus the prevalence of the law of peace would be found com-

mensurate, in every age of the church, with the *actual* extent of the Messiah's kingdom over men.

As the language of prophecy clearly suggests this doctrine, so it will be found that, on the introduction of christianity, there were promulgated certain moral rules which, when fully and faithfully obeyed, infallibly lead to this particular result. Here I am by no means alluding exclusively to those divine laws, which condemn aggressive warfare and every species of unjust and unprovoked injury; for these laws (however it may be the intention of christians to obey them) are far from being powerful enough to produce the effect in question. They were, indeed, commonly admitted in the world, long before the commencement of the christian dispensation; and neither before nor after that era, have they ever been found sufficient to convert the sword into the ploughshare, and the spear into the pruning hook. In point of fact, the distinction which men are accustomed to draw between just and unjust warfare is, in a great plurality of instances, entirely nugatory; for there are few wars, however atrocious, which are not defended, and not many perhaps which the persons waging them do not *believe* to be justified, by some plea or other connected with self-preservation or honourable retribution. In addition therefore to the laws which forbid *spontaneous* injury, some stronger and more comprehensive principles were obviously needed, in order to the accomplishment of this great end; and these principles are unfolded in that pure and exalted code of morality which was revealed, in connexion with the gospel. They are, *the non-resistance of injuries, the*

return of good for evil, and the love of our enemies.

It was the Lord Jesus himself who promulgated these principles; and promulgated them as distinguishing his own dispensation from that of the law. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, *That ye resist not evil*: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain, &c. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, *Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that spitefully use you, and persecute you*; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect*;" Matt. v. 38—48, comp. Luke vi. 27—29. So also the apostle Peter commands the believers not to render "evil for evil, nor railing for railing, but, contrariwise, blessing", I. Pet. iii. 9; and Paul in the following lively exhortation, holds up the very same standard of christian practice: "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather *give place unto* wrath: for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay

saith the Lord'. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him ; if he thirst, give him drink : for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, *but overcome evil with good ;*" Rom. xii. 19—21.

In the delivery of that holy law, by obedience to which, christians may be brought, in their small measure, (*and yet with completeness according to that measure,*) to a conformity with the moral attributes of their heavenly Father, *our Lord has laid his axe to the root.* He has established certain principles which, as they are honestly observed in conduct, must put an end to every evil practice ; and thus is the tree which bears the fruits of corruption cut down and destroyed. Of this nature precisely are the principles which we are now considering, and which, when followed up with true consistency, cannot fail to abolish warfare, whether offensive or defensive, whether aggressive or retributive, whether unjust or just. The great law of Christ, which his disciples are ever bound to obey, is the *law of love*—love complete, uninterrupted, universal, fixed upon God in the first place, and afterwards embracing the whole family of man. And, since war (of whatsoever species or description it may be) can never consist with this love, it is indisputable that, where the latter prevails as it ought to do, the former must entirely cease.

It is observed that our Lord's precepts, which have now been cited, are addressed to *individuals*. Since this is undeniably true, it follows that it is the clear duty of individual christians to obey them ; and to obey them uniformly, and on every occasion. If,

during the common course of their life, they are attacked, insulted, injured, and persecuted, they ought to suffer wrong, to revenge no injury, to return good for evil, and to love their enemies. So also, should it happen that they are exposed to the more extraordinary calamities of war, their duty remains unaltered ; their conduct must continue to be guided by the same principles. If the sword of the invader be lifted up against them, the precept is still at hand, that they resist not evil. If the insults and injuries of the carnal warrior be heaped upon them, they are still forbidden to avenge themselves, and still commanded to pray for their persecutors. If they be surrounded by a host of enemies, however violent and malicious those enemies may be, christian love must still be unbroken, still universal. According then to the law of Christ, it is the duty of *individuals* to abstain from all warfare ; nor can they avoid such a course if they follow his law. We are informed by Sulpitius Severus, that when the Roman Emperor Julian was engaged in bestowing upon his troops a largess with a view to some approaching battle, his bounty was refused by Martin a soldier in his army who had been previously converted to christianity. “Hitherto”, said he to Cæsar, “I have fought for thee : permit me now to fight for my God. Let those who are about to engage in war accept thy donative ; I am the soldier of Christ ; *for me*, the combat is unlawful” ; *De Vita B. Mart. Ed. Amst. A. D. 1665, p. 445.* Where is the solid, the sufficient, reason, why such, under similar circumstances, should not be the expressions of every true christian ?

The man who engages in warfare, retains his private responsibility; and, whatever may be the proceedings of his countrymen, whatever the commands of his superiors, he can never dispossess himself of his individual obligation to render to the law of his God a consistent and uniform obedience. But, secondly, the unlawfulness of war, under any of its forms, is equally evident when it is regarded as the affair of nations. Doubtless there may be found in the Scriptures a variety of injunctions relating to the particulars of human conduct, and applicable to men and women only as individuals; but it is one of the excellent characteristics of the moral law of God, that its *principles* are of universal application to mankind, whatever be the circumstances under which they are placed; whether they act singly as individuals, or collectively as nations. No one, surely, who has any just views of morality, will pretend, for a moment, that those fundamental rules of conduct, which are given to guide every man in his own walk through life, may be deserted as soon as he unites with others, and acts in a corporate capacity. The absurd consequence of such a system would be manifestly this—that national crimes of every description might be committed without entailing any national guilt, and without any real infraction of the revealed will of God.

Now among these fundamental rules—these eternal, unchangeable, principles—is that of *universal love*. The law of God, which is addressed without reservation or exception to all men, plainly says to them, Resist not evil: revenge not injuries: *love your enemies*. Individuals, nations consisting of individuals,

and governments acting on behalf of nations, are all unquestionably bound to obey this law ; and whether it be the act of an individual, of a nation, or of a government, *the transgression of the law is sin* ; I. John iii. 4. Nations or governments transgress the christian law of love, and commit sin, when they declare or carry on war, precisely as the private duellist transgresses that law, and commits sin, when he sends or accepts a challenge, and deliberately endeavours to destroy his neighbour. It ought also to be observed that, through the medium of the nation, the case is again brought home to the conscience and responsibility of the individual. The man who takes a part, either himself or by a substitute, in the national warfare, takes a part also in the national sin. He aids and abets his nation in breaking the law of Christ. So far then is the example of his countrymen—the authority of his legislature—the command of his monarch—from being sufficient to justify his engagement in warfare, that he cannot follow that example, avail himself of that authority, or obey that command, *without adding, to his private transgression, the further criminality of actively promoting the transgression of the state.*

For the reasons now stated, I consider it evident that a total abstinence from warfare on the part both of individuals and of nations, would be the necessary result of a strict adherence to the principles of the law of Christ. But it will not be difficult to carry the argument a step further, and to show that one of the precepts, now cited from the sermon on the mount, appears to bear a specific and peculiar allusion

to the subject of war. “*Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy ; but I say unto you, Love your enemies.*” In the preceding chapter I have found occasion to remark that our Lord, in the first part of his discourse, has instituted a comparison between the system of morality which, under the sanction and influence of the Mosaic institution, prevailed among the Israelites, and that purer and more perfect law of action, of which he was himself both the author and the minister. In calling the attention of his hearers to the sayings uttered “by them of old time” on the several moral points of his discourse, such as killing, adultery, divorcement, perjury, and retaliation—he has uniformly quoted from the law of Moses itself. It was with the principles of that law, as they were understood and received by the Jews, that he compared his own holier system, and he improved, enlarged, or superseded, the introductory and more imperfect code of morals (as was in each particular required) in order to make way for one which is capable of no improvement, and must endure for ever. Now the precepts of ancient times to which he last refers—the precepts respecting love and hatred—formed, in all probability, like the whole preceding series, a part of those divine edicts which were delivered to the Israelites by Moses. That which related to the love of their neighbour is recognized at once, and is as follows: “Thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge against the *children of thy people*, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself”; Lev. xix. 18. The reader will observe that the love here enjoined was to be directed to the

children of the people of Israel. The neighbour to be loved was the fellow-countryman ; or if a stranger, the proselyte ; and the precept in fact commanded no more than that the Israelites—the members of the Lord's selected family—should *love one another*. So also the injunction of old, that the Israelites should hate their enemies, was exclusively *national*. They were not permitted to hate their private enemies, who belonged to the same favoured community. On the contrary they were enjoined to do good to such enemies as these : “ If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray”, said the law, “ thou shalt surely bring it back to him again” ; Exod. xxiii. 4. But they were to hate⁸ their national enemies—they were to make no covenant with the foreign and idolatrous tribes, who formerly possessed the land of Canaan. “ When the Lord thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it”, said Moses to the assembly of his people, “ and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou ; and when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee, thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them ; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them” ; Deut. vii. 1, 2. *comp.* Exod. xxxiv. 11—13. On another occasion, a similar injunction

⁸ The verb “ to hate” as used in the Holy Scriptures (Heb. שָׂנֵא, Gr. μισέω) does not imply *malignity of mind* so much as *opposition and enmity in action* ; as the reader may be fully convinced on a reference to the concordances ; See *Schleusner, Lex. voc. μισέω, no. 1.*

was delivered respecting the Amalekites : “ Therefore it shall be, when the Lord thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the *remembrance of Amalek from under heaven ; thou shalt not forget it ;*” Deut. xxv. 19.

Such was the hatred of enemies enjoined upon ancient Israel, and such was the manner in which it was to be applied—in the persevering, exterminating use of the national sword.⁹ Now it is to these edicts, delivered in the times of old, and under the peculiar circumstances of the dispensation then existing, that the law of Christ is placed in opposition : “ But *I* say unto you, *Love your enemies*”. How much soever, then, we may be justified by the undoubted universality of this law, in applying it to the circumstances of private life, we can scarcely fail to perceive that it was principally intended to discountenance these *national* enmities ; and that the love here enjoined was specifically and peculiarly such as would *prevent the practice of war*. The Israelites were commanded to combat and destroy with the sword the nations who were their own enemies, and the enemies of God. But christians are introduced

⁹ Grotius, in his work *De Jure Belli ac Pacis*, has himself insisted on this interpretation of the saying of old times respecting hatred, “*Odio habebis inimicum tuum, puta septem populos, quibuscum amicitiam colere, quorumque misereri, vetantur*” ; Exod. xxxiv. 11, Deut. vii. 1. “ His addendi Amalecitarum, in quos Hebræi jubentur bellum habere implacabile ;” Deut. xxv. 19. *Lib. I. cap. 2, § iii. 1.* The correctness of the observation thus made by this learned defender of war is, I think, indisputable ; but it is surprising that he did not notice the argument which it so obviously affords, in favour of the doctrine *that under the christian dispensation, war is unlawful*.

to a purer and more lovely system of moral conduct ; and the law which they are called upon to obey, is that which proclaims peace upon earth and good will to men : they are commanded to be the friends of all mankind. If they are sent forth among idolatrous nations, it is as the ministers of their restoration, and not as the instruments of their punishment ; and as they may not contend with the sword against the enemies of their God, much less may they wield it for any purpose of their own, whether it be in aggression, retribution, or defence. Armed with submission, forbearance, and long-suffering, they must secede from the warfare of a wrathful and corrupt world ; and whatever be the aggravations to which they are exposed, must evince themselves, under the softening influence of universal love, to be the meek, the harmless, the benevolent followers of the PRINCE OF PEACE.

I know of nothing in the New Testament which has any appearance of contravening the force of these divine precepts, or of the deductions now made from them, but a single passage in the gospel of Luke. We are informed by that sacred historian, that after our Lord's paschal supper, and immediately before he was betrayed into the hands of his enemies, Jesus thus addressed his disciples : "When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing ? And they said, Nothing. Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip : *and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.* For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, 'And he was reckoned among the transgressors' :

for the things concerning me have an end"; ch. xxii. 35—37. The words employed by the Lord Jesus on this occasion may, when superficially considered, be deemed to inculcate the notion that his followers were permitted and enjoined to defend themselves and their religion with the sword; but the context and the circumstances which followed after these words were uttered, evidently decide otherwise. The disciples appear after their usual manner to have understood their Lord literally, and they answered, "Here are two swords", and Jesus replied, *It is enough*. Now in declaring that two swords were *enough*, although they were then exposed to aggravated and immediately impending danger, he offered them an intelligible hint that he had been misunderstood—that the use of the sword in defence of their little company, was neither consistent with his views, nor really implied in his injunction. But the opportunity was at hand on which the disciples were to be completely undeceived. The enemies of Jesus approached, armed and caparisoned as if they were in pursuit of some violent robbers. When the disciples saw what would follow, they said unto Jesus, "Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" and Peter the most zealous of their number, without waiting for his Master's reply, rushed forward and smote the servant of the High Priest, and cut off his ear. Then were he and his brethren clearly instructed by their Lord, that it was their duty, not to fight but to suffer wrong. "Suffer ye thus far", said he to Peter, and immediately afterwards he confirmed his doctrine by action: he touched the wounded man and healed him. Then,

in expressions of the greatest significancy, he cried out to Peter, "Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" See John xviii. 11; and as an universal caution against so antichristian a practice as that of using destructive weapons in self-defence, he added, "*All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword*"; Matt. xxvi. 52. Lastly, when soon afterwards he was carried before Pilate the Roman Governor, he plainly declared that his kingdom was of such a nature, that it neither required nor allowed the defence of carnal weapons. "My kingdom", said he, "is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, *then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence*"; John xviii. 36.

It is sufficiently evident, therefore, that when our Lord exhorted his disciples to sell their garments and buy swords, his precept was not to be understood *literally*. Such, indeed, is the explicit judgment of the generality of commentators. We may, therefore, either conclude with Erasmus that the sword of which our Lord here spake was the sword of the Spirit—the word of God, See *Com. in loc.*; or we may accede to the more prevalent opinion of critics, that the words of Jesus imported nothing more than a general warning to the disciples, that their situation was about to be greatly changed—that they were soon to be deprived of the personal and protecting presence of their divine Master—that they would be exposed to every species of difficulty, and become the objects of hatred and persecution—that they would no longer be able

to trust in their neighbours, and would, therefore, be driven to a variety of expedients in order to provide for their own maintenance and security. See *Estius, Vatablus, and others in Poli Syn., Gill, &c.*

In order to complete the present branch of the argument, I have, in the last place, to remark, that the doctrine of the Society of Friends respecting the absolute inconsistency of warfare with the moral code of the christian dispensation, was one which prevailed to a very considerable extent, during the early ages of the christian church. Justin Martyr, (A. D. 140) in his first apology, quotes the prophecy of Isaiah, (already cited in the present chapter,) respecting the going forth of the law and of the word of God from Jerusalem, and the consequent prevalence of a state of peace. "That these things have come to pass", he proceeds, "you may be readily convinced: for twelve men, destitute both of instruction and eloquence, went forth from Jerusalem into the world, and by the power of God gave evidence to every description of persons, that they were sent by Christ to teach all men the divine word: *and we who were once slayers of one another* (that is to say, commonly engaged in warfare) *do not fight against our enemies*";¹ *Apol. i. cap. 39, p. 67, Ed. Ben.* Irenæus Bishop of Lyons (A. D. 167) discusses the same prophecy, and proves its relation to our Saviour, by the fact that the followers of Jesus had disused the weapons of war and no longer knew how to fight;² *Adv. Hær. lib. iv. cap. 34.*

¹ οὐ πολέμοῦμεν τοὺς ἐχθροὺς.

² "Si autem libertatis lex, id est, verbum Dei ab apostolis, qui ab Hierusalem exierunt, annuntiatum in universam terram, in tantum transmutationem fecit, ut gladios et lanceas bellatorias in aratra fabricaverit ipse, et in falces quæ donavit ad

Ed. Ben. p. 275. Tertullian, (A. D. 200) in one part of his works, alludes to christians who were engaged together with their heathen countrymen in military pursuits, *Apol. cap. 42, Ed. Semler. v. 102*;³ but on another occasion, he informs us that many soldiers who had been converted to christianity, quitted those pursuits in consequence of their conversion;⁴ and he repeatedly expresses his own opinion that any participation in war was unlawful for believers in Jesus—not only because of the idolatrous practices enjoined on the soldiers of the Roman armies, but because Christ had forbidden the use of the sword and the revenge of injuries;⁵ *De Idol. 19; Ed. Semler. iv. 176; De Coron. Mil. 12, iv. 355.* Origen (A. D. 230) in his work against Celsus, says of himself and his brethren, “We no longer take up the sword against any nation, nor do we learn any more to make war. We have become, for the sake of Jesus, *the children of peace*”; *Lib. v. 33, Ed. Ben. i. 602.* In another passage of the same work he maintains that christians are the most useful of subjects because they pray for

metendum frumentum demutaverit, et jam nesciunt pugnare, sed percussi et alteram præbent maxillam; non de aliquo alio Prophetæ dixerunt hæc, sed de eo qui fecit ea.”

³ “*Navigamus et nos vobiscum et militamus.”*

⁴ “*Plane si quos militia præventos fides posterior invenit, alia conditio est, ut illorum quos Ioannes admittebat ad lavaerum; et centurionum fidelissimorum, quem Christus probat, et quem Petrus catechizat: dum tamen suscepta fide atque signata, aut deserendum statim sit, ut a multis actum; aut omnibus modis cavendum, ne quidquid adversus Deum committatur;*” *De Cor. Mil. cap. ii.*

⁵ “*Quomodo autem bellabit, imo quomodo etiam in pace militabit, sine gladio, quem Dominus abstulit? Nam etsi adierant milites ad Ioannem et formam observationis acceperant; si etiam centurio crediderat; omnem postea militem Dominus in Petro exarmando discinxit;*” *De Idol. cap. 19.* “*Licebit in gladio conversari, Domino pronunciante gladio periturum, qui gladio fuerit usus? Et prælio operabitur filius pacis, cui nec litigare conveniet? Et vincula et carcerem et tormenta et supplicia administrabit, nec suarum ultor injuriarum?*” *De Cor. Mil. cap. ii.*

their monarch. "By such means", says he, "we fight for our king abundantly: *but we take no part in his wars, even though he urge us*";⁶ *Lib. viii. 73, Ed. Ben. i. 797.* Here we have not only the declarations of this ancient and eminent father, of his own sentiment that war is inconsistent with the religion of Christ; but a plain testimony (corresponding with that of Justin and Irenæus) that the christians of those early times were *accustomed* to abstain from it. Traces of the same doctrine and practice are very clearly marked in the subsequent history of the church. Under the reign of Dioclesian (A. D. 300) more especially, a large number of christians refused to serve in the army, and in consequence of their refusal, many of them suffered martyrdom; Vide *Grot. de Jure Bell. lib. I. cap. ii. § 8, Ruinart Acta Martyrum; de S. Maximiliano. Ed. Amst. p. 300.* Now although the conduct of these christians might partly arise, as Grotius suggests, from their religious objections to the idolatrous rites at that time mixed up with the military system, it is probable that the unlawfulness of war itself for the followers of Christ, was also a principle on which they acted. Thus Lactantius who wrote during the reign of this very emperor, expressly asserts that "*to engage in war cannot be lawful for the righteous man, whose warfare is that of righteousness itself*";⁷ *De vero Cultu, lib. vi. cap. 20.* And again, in the twelfth canon of the Council of Nice, held under the reign of Constantine (A. D. 325), a long period of excommunication

⁶ οὐ συζευρατευόμεθα μὲν αὐτῷ, καὶ ἐπέεργη.

⁷ "Ita neque militare justo licebit, cujus militia est ipsa justitia."

is attached, as a penalty, to the conduct of those persons who, having once in the ardour of their early faith renounced the military calling, were persuaded by the force of bribes to return to it—"like dogs to their own vomit"; Vide *Mansii Col. Concil. tom. ii. p. 674.* The circumstances particularly alluded to in this canon, might indeed have taken place during the tyranny of the idolatrous Licinius, whom Constantine had so lately subdued; but the canon itself was, I presume, intended for the future regulation of the church; and such a law would scarcely have been promulgated under the reign of the converted Constantine, had not an opinion been entertained in the council, that *war itself*, however prevalent and generally allowed, was inconsistent with the highest standard of christian morality. We have already noticed the declaration of Martin, addressed to the Emperor Julian, (A. D. 360) that it was unlawful for him to fight, because he was a christian; and even so late as the middle of the fifth century, Leo the Pope declared it to be "contrary to the rules of the church that persons after the action of penance (persons then considered to be pre-eminently bound to obey the law of Christ) *should revert to the warfare of the world*": *Epist. ii.*⁸

Having thus endeavoured to establish and confirm the sentiment of Friends, that all participation in this warfare of the world is forbidden by the law of Christ, and especially by that provision of it which enjoins the *love of our enemies*, I must, in order to do full

⁸ "Contrarium esse ecclesiasticis regulis, post pœnitentiæ actionem redire ad militiam secularem"; Quoted by Grotius, *De Jure Bell. lib. I. cap. ii. § 9.*

justice to the present important subject, advert to another principle, which appears to me *equally* to evince the total inconsistency of the practice of war with the true character of the christian religion—the principle *that human life is sacred, and that death is followed by infinite consequences.* Under the dispensation of the law, the Israelites were, on various occasions, enjoined to inflict death; both in the capital punishment of their own delinquents, and in those wars which had for an object the extermination of idolatrous nations. When the destruction of the life of men was thus expressly authorized, by the mandate of the Creator, it is unquestionable that the life of men was rightly destroyed; but the searcher of the Scriptures will not fail to remark that the sanction, thus given to killing, was accompanied with a comparatively small degree of illumination respecting the true nature of life and death—respecting immortality and future retribution. Bishop Warburton, in his work on the divine legation of Moses, has endeavoured to prove the truth of the miraculous history of the Old Testament, on the ground that the Israelites, who were destitute of all knowledge on the subject in question, could be governed, as they were governed, *only* through the medium of miracles. Now although the Bishop may have overstrained his argument, and although it may readily be allowed that there are certain passages in the Old Testament which allude to a life after death, and to a future judgment, it is sufficiently evident that the *full* revelation of these important truths was reserved for the dispensation of the gospel of Christ. Those who are accustomed to read the declar-

ations of Jesus and his apostles, can no longer conceal from themselves that man is born for eternity; that when his body dies, his soul ascends into Paradise, Luke xxiii. 43, &c. or is cast into hell, Luke xvi. 23; and that, after the day of resurrection and of final and universal judgment, we shall all reap the full and eternal reward of our obedience or our rebellion, of our virtue or our vice. Christians thus instructed and enlightened are constrained to acknowledge, that the *future* welfare of an individual man, is of greater importance than the present and merely temporal prosperity of a whole nation; nor can they, if they be consistent with themselves, refuse to confess that unless in such an action they are sanctioned by the express authority of their divine Master, they take upon themselves a most unwarrantable responsibility when they cut short the days of their neighbour, and transmit him, prepared or unprepared, to the awful realities of an everlasting state. Since, then, no such express authority can be found in the New Testament; since, on the contrary, it is clearly declared in that sacred volume, that the kingdom of Christ is not of this world, and that his followers “war not after the flesh”—I cannot but conclude that for one man to kill another (under whatever circumstances of expediency or provocation the deed may be committed,) is utterly unlawful under the christian dispensation.

The *visible* effects of the far-famed battle of Waterloo were sufficiently appalling—multitudes of the wounded, the dying, and the dead, spread in wild confusion over the ensanguined plain! But did christians fully know the *invisible* consequences of such a

contest—could they trace the flight of thousands of immortal souls (many of them disembodied, perhaps, while under the immediate influence of diabolical passions) into the world of eternal retribution—they would indeed shrink with horror from such a scene of destruction, and adopt, without further hesitation, the same firm and unalterable conclusion.⁹

Such, then, are the grounds on which Friends consider it to be their duty entirely to abstain from the practice of war. On a review of the whole argument, the reader will recollect, that the wars of the Israelites bore, in various respects, so peculiar a character, as to afford no real sanction to those of other nations, even on the supposition that the dispensation of the law is continued—also that the precept of John the Baptist to soldiers appears, in reference to the present question, to be negative—but that the opinion of Friends on that question rests principally on the moral law, *as revealed under the christian dispensation*—

⁹ It is evident that the principle now stated applies to the punishment of death as well as to war. The use of such a punishment was, indeed, consistent with that inferior degree of moral and religious light which was enjoyed by the people of God, before the coming of the Messiah; but, on the ground now mentioned, it appears to be at total variance with the characteristics of the christian revelation. Such was the opinion of some of the early Fathers of the church, as well as of more modern philanthropists. Tertullian classes a participation in capital condemnations, with the aiding and abetting of idolatry itself: for in one of the passages already cited from his works, we find him reasoning on the possible innocence of a war, *cui non sit necessitas immolationum (of sacrifices to idols) vel capitalium judiciorum*; *De Idol.* 19. So also Lactantius; “It is unlawful for a righteous man, to prosecute any person capitally: for it matters not whether we kill by the sword or by the word—since all killing is prohibited. This divine law allows of no exception. It must ever be a forbidden wickedness to put man to death: for God has created him a sacred animal”; *De Vero Cultu, lib. vi. cap. 20.*

On the subject of the *inexpediency* of capital punishments and of their practical inconsistency with the present condition of the British population, the reader is referred to the speech of Thomas Fowell Buxton, delivered in the House of Commons, during the session of 1821, and since published.

that abstinence from warfare, among the followers of the Messiah, was predicted by the prophets, as one of the principal characteristics of that dispensation—that in the code of christian morality are fully unfolded the principles which are alone sufficiently powerful to produce this effect, namely, those of suffering wrong, returning good for evil, and loving our enemies—that since these principles were so clearly promulgated by Jesus and his apostles, the *individual* who engages in warfare and destroys his enemy, whether it be in aggression or defence, plainly infringes the divine law—that nations when they carry on war, do also infringe that law—and that the christian who fights by the command of his prince, and in behalf of his country, not only commits sin in his own person, but aids and abets the national transgression—that on a consideration of the Jewish precepts, with which is compared the injunction of Christ to his followers respecting the love of their enemies, it appears that this injunction was specifically directed against national wars—that when our Lord exhorted his disciples to sell their garments and buy swords, it is evident, from the circumstances which followed, that his expressions were to be understood figuratively—that the sentiments and practices of Friends, in reference to the present subject, are so far from being new and extraordinary, that they form a striking and prevalent feature in the early history of the christian church—lastly, that the practice of warfare is utterly at variance with the full light enjoyed under the gospel dispensation respecting life, death, and eternity.

Notwithstanding the clearness and importance of those principles which evince the utter inconsistency of the practice of war with the christian dispensation, it is continually pleaded that wars are often expedient, and sometimes absolutely necessary, for the preservation of states. To such a plea it might be sufficient to answer that nothing is so expedient, nothing so desirable, nothing so *necessary*, either for individuals or for nations, as a conformity in point of conduct, with the revealed will of the supreme Governor of the universe. I may, however, in conclusion, venture to offer a few additional remarks on this last part of our subject.

Let reflecting christians, in the first place, take a deliberate survey of the history of Europe during the last eighteen centuries, and let them impartially examine how many of the wars waged among christian nations have been, on their own principles, really expedient or *necessary*, on either side, for the preservation of states. I apprehend that the result of such an examination would be a satisfactory conviction, that by far the greater part of those wars are so far from having truly borne this character, that notwithstanding the common excuse of self-defence by which, in so many cases, they have been supposed to be justified, they have, in point of fact, even in a political point of view, been much more hurtful than useful to all the parties engaged in them. Where, for instance, has England found an equivalent for the almost infinite profusion of blood and treasure, which she has wasted on her many wars? Must not the impartial page of history decide that *almost the*

whole of her wars, however justified in the view of the world by the pleas of defence and retribution, have in fact been waged against imaginary dangers, might have been avoided by a few harmless concessions, and have turned out to be extensively injurious to her in many of their results? If christians would abstain from all wars which have no better foundation than the false system of worldly honour—from all which are not, on political grounds, absolutely inevitable—from all which are not, in reality, injurious to their country—they would take a very important step towards the adoption of that entirely peaceable conduct which is upheld and defended by the Society of Friends.

After such a step had been taken, it must, indeed, be admitted, that certain occasions might remain, on which warfare would appear to be expedient and, according to the estimate of most persons, *actually necessary*, for the *mere* purposes of defence and self-preservation. On such occasions I am well aware that if we are to abide by the decisions of that lax and subordinate morality which so generally prevails among the professors of the christian name, we must confess that war *is right, and cannot be avoided*. But for true christians, for those who are brought under the influence of vital religion, for those who would “follow the Lamb *whithersoever* he goeth”, war is *never* right. It is *always* their duty to obey his high and holy law—to suffer wrong—to return good for evil—to love their enemies. If, in consequence of their obedience to this law, they apprehend themselves to be surrounded with many dangers—if tumult and

terror assail them—let them still remember that “cursed” is “the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm”: let them still place an undivided reliance upon the power and benevolence of their God and Saviour. It may be his good pleasure that they be delivered from the outward peril by which they are visited; or he may decree that they fall a sacrifice to that peril. But whatever be the result, as long as they are preserved in obedience to his law, so long are they safe in his hands. They “*know* that ALL THINGS work together for good to them that love God”; Rom. viii. 28.

Godliness, however, has the promise of this life, as well as of that which is to come; we may, therefore, entertain a reasonable confidence that our temporal happiness and safety, as well as our growth in grace, will in general be promoted, by obedience to our heavenly Father. It is not in vain, even in an outward point of view, that God has invited his unworthy children to cast their cares upon him; and to trust him for their support and protection; for though he may work no miracles in their favour, the very law which he gives them to obey, is adapted, in a wonderful manner, to convert their otherwise rugged path through life, into one of comparative pleasantness, security, and peace. These observations are applicable with a peculiar degree of force, to those particulars in the divine law, which, as they are closely followed, preclude all warfare. No weapons of self-defence will, on the whole, be found so efficacious as christian meekness, kindness, and forbearance, the suffering of injuries, the absence of revenge, the return of good

for evil, and the ever-operating love of God and man. Those who regulate their life and conversation with true circumspection, according to these principles, have, for the most part, little reason to fear the violent hand of the enemy and the oppressor. While they clothe themselves in the breastplate of righteousness, and firmly grasp the shield of faith, they are quiet in the centre of storms, safe in the heart of danger, and victorious amidst a host of enemies.

Such, in a multitude of instances, has been the lot of christian individuals, and such might also be the experience of christian nations. When we consider the still degraded condition of mankind, we can hardly at present look forward to the trial of the experiment; but was there a people who would renounce the dangerous guidance of worldly honour, and boldly conform their national conduct to the eternal rules of the law of Christ—was there a people who would lay aside the weapons of a carnal warfare, and proclaim the principles of universal peace; suffer wrong with condescension; abstain from all retaliation; return good for evil, and diligently promote *the welfare of all men*—I am fully persuaded that such a people would not only dwell in absolute safety, but would be blessed with eminent prosperity, enriched with unrestricted commerce, loaded with reciprocal benefits, and endowed, for every good, and wise, and worthy, purpose, with irresistible influence over surrounding nations.

CHAPTER XII.

ON THE MORAL VIEWS OF FRIENDS. PLAINNESS OF SPEECH,
BEHAVIOUR, AND APPAREL.

FROM the statements contained in the two preceding chapters, it will have been observed, that on two practical points of a very leading and important character, Friends have been led to adopt a higher and purer standard of action, and one which appears to be more exactly conformed to the requisitions of the divine law, than that which generally prevails among their fellow-christians.

In point of fact, the adoption of an exalted standard of action is the proper result of their main and fundamental principle, that, in matters of conduct, man is bound to follow the guidance of a perfectly wise and holy Monitor—even the Word of the most high God, revealed in the heart; a guide who will never fail to distinguish the good from the evil, the precious from the vile. According to the doctrine of the inspired author of the epistle to the Hebrews, this Word of God “is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any

two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature", adds the apostle, "that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do"; Heb. iv. 12, 13.¹

True christians of every name and nation will ever be found producing the fruits of the Spirit: it is by those fruits alone that they are known and distinguished, nor can any one who does not bear them, however right his opinions, or orthodox his profession, justly claim a membership in the mystical body of Christ. Being thoroughly convinced of these truths, I am little disposed to forget either the virtues of those real christians who do not coincide with us in our peculiar views, or the moral deficiencies and delinquencies, which when we forsake the Fountain of living waters, quickly make their appearance among ourselves. Nevertheless, the impartial observer will probably allow that the force and clearness, with which Friends maintain that great principle of religion to which I have now adverted, is accompanied in the serious part of the society, with a corresponding com-

¹ It might undoubtedly be said of the word of God, as it is outwardly preached, (when dictated and applied by the Spirit of truth,) that it is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword. When however we view this passage *as a whole*, we can scarcely fail to perceive that the apostle is speaking of the essential Word of God, that divine Person "*with whom we have to do*", and who, in the subsequent verse, is plainly described as "a great high priest—Jesus the Son of God"; see ver. 14. Such is the express judgment of a variety of able commentators; See *Poli Synopsis*. On the supposition that the passage describes the Son of God, it appears very plainly to relate to *the secret operation of his Spirit in the hearts of men*; *Comp.* John i. 4, 9, II. Cor. iii. 17.

pletteness of view respecting good and evil. “Where- with shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but *to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*” Mic. vi. 6—8. As Friends have been much impressed with the inefficacy of sacrificial rites and other formal ordinances; so have they been led to direct a very particular attention to the several branches of *moral duty* which are inculcated in this passage of Scripture, and which, under the gospel dispensation, are unfolded and required in their true perfection. A few examples will elucidate and justify this assertion—it being always understood that my appeal is not to the practice of the unsound professor or mere formalist amongst us, but to the principles of the society as they are recognized and enforced in its public acts,² and as they are in some small measure, I trust, manifested in the known conduct and deportment of its more consistent members.

With regard then, in the first place, to the great christian law of *truth and integrity*, the reader may

² The laws by which the discipline of Friends is regulated, and the moral and religious principles by which the society is distinguished, will be found recorded under various heads, (as many of my readers are probably well aware) in an invaluable volume entitled the “*Book of Extracts*”—a book consisting of selections made by the authority of our yearly meeting, from the public acts and advices of that body. To this book a very useful and interesting appendix has lately been added.

already have remarked that the testimony of Friends against the use of the *oath* in confirmation of the *assertion*, is founded on a just though exalted view of this law. A similar high standard, in reference to the same law, may be traced in the peculiar care exercised (by means of our meetings for discipline) throughout the society in this realm, that the king may not be defrauded by any of our members, of his customs, duties, or excise; and that there be no using of goods or dealing in them, if they be even *suspected* to be contraband.³ The views of Friends with respect to the nice honesty which ought ever to be observed in trade, are also conspicuously strict. Thus, for example, it is a principle universally recognized amongst us, that however a tradesman who has entered into a composition with his creditors, or has been made a bankrupt, may have become legally clear of all pecuniary demands against him, he is nevertheless honourably bound *whenever the means are in his power*, to carry on and complete the liquidation of his debts. The Quaker who, under the circumstances alluded to, omits the performance of such a duty, is considered by his brethren as a delinquent and a dishonest man:⁴

³ The following query is addressed to the preparative, monthly, and quarterly meetings of Friends throughout Great Britain and Ireland, and answered by them respectively to their superior meetings, *once every year*. "*Are Friends clear of defrauding the king of his customs, duties, and excise, and of using or dealing in goods suspected to be run?*"

⁴ And it is the sense and judgment of this meeting, if any fall short of paying their just debts, and a composition is made with their creditors to accept a part instead of the whole, that, notwithstanding the parties may look upon themselves legally discharged of any obligation to pay the remainder, yet the principle we profess, enjoins full satisfaction to be made, if ever the debtors are of ability. And in order that such may the better retrieve their circumstances, we exhort them to submit to a manner of living in every respect the most conducive to this purpose. 1759. P. E. See *Book of Extracts*, "*Trade*", p. 196. § 5.

nor is it customary with Friends, even for the support or education of their poor, to receive contributions from any persons who have failed in business, until such a liquidation has been effected.

With reference, secondly, to the christian law of mercy, charity, and love, the same high standard will be found to prevail in the professed sentiments, and, to a great extent, in the known history of the Society of Friends. On this ground rests, as has been already stated, their total abstinence from military operations—the care which has prevailed among them, from their first origin to the present day, to administer no support or encouragement, direct or indirect, to the warfare of the world. A similar quickness and nicety of apprehension, and general clearness of conduct, has been the result of their religious principles, with regard to *capital punishments, the slave trade, and slavery.*

It has long been the usual practice of Friends, at whatever cost to their own convenience, to abstain from prosecution, in such criminal cases as might probably terminate in the death of the persons prosecuted. George Fox so early as in the middle of the seventeenth century, publicly remonstrated with the rulers in his day, respecting the cruelty, antichristian tendency, and radical injustice, of the punishment of death, as it is enacted and applied by British law, in connexion with so many offences of a subordinate nature. Since that period, Friends have often declared their sentiments, and sometimes have addressed the authorities of the state on this subject; and in so doing they have abstained from all political views

of it, and have grounded their testimony against the bloody provisions of our criminal code, on the plain and fundamental principles of the gospel of Christ.

The line of conduct which they have observed in reference to the slave trade and slavery, is very generally known. Suffice it now to say that long before those interesting topics successively claimed the attention of the christian world in general, the sentiments of the society had been both established and declared, that the nefarious and abominable traffic in men, and also the subsequent holding of them in hopeless, cruel, degrading, bondage, are utterly inconsistent with the unalienable rights of the human race, and still more obviously so with the dictates of christian love.⁵

It is unnecessary to advert particularly to the various efforts which Friends, in unison with other christians, have found it their duty to make, with a view to the relief of the distressed, and in promotion of philanthropic objects ; and I may conclude this branch of my remarks on the moral views of the society, by simply calling to the attention of the reader, the care which has always been exercised by Friends in the support and education of their poor, and in the maintenance of love and harmony among all the members of their own body. If any Friends fall into poverty and are found to be unable to provide for their own wants and those of their families, they are not accustomed to avail themselves of that parochial aid to which the poor of other denominations so frequently have recourse ; for it is the uniform

⁵ See Book of Extracts, " Slave Trade and Slavery", p. 177.

practice of the religious Society to which they belong, to supply them with such things as are needful for their sustenance and comfort. A similar care is exercised with respect to the education of their children, who, under such circumstances, are usually sent to our public seminaries, where they are clothed and fed, and instructed both in the elements of useful learning, and in the principles of religion. With regard to love and harmony among all the members of the body, this is a subject which occupies much of private care throughout the society, and on which we are almost annually advised by our yearly meeting; and in order, moreover, that it may never be neglected amongst us, our subordinate meetings are called upon, three times in every year, to render an explicit answer to the following close enquiry: "Are Friends preserved in love towards each other; if differences arise, is due care taken speedily to end them; and are Friends careful to avoid and discourage tale-bearing and detraction?"

Lastly, with respect to a *humble walk with God*. This highly important characteristic of true religion is evinced more clearly by nothing, than by a transformation from the spirit of the world, and by the watchful avoidance of the lusts, follies, vices, and vanities, so prevalent among unregenerate men. "Know ye not", says the apostle James, "that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God"; James iv. 4. Such a circumspect and harmless walk in life is the inevitable consequence of that change of heart—that new and heavenly birth—with-

out which no man can be a true christian, and will indeed be ever found to distinguish the sincere and diligent followers of Jesus, of every name and profession. On the present occasion I would only remark that no one sect of christians of whom I have ever heard, have been led to uphold a higher standard than that maintained among Friends, respecting the importance of an entire abstinence from those customs, prevalent in the world, which are necessarily impregnated with moral evil: for example, from profuse and extravagant entertainments—from the unnecessary frequenting of taverns and public houses—from excess in eating and drinking—from public diversions—from the reading of useless, frivolous, and pernicious books—from gaming of every description, and from vain and injurious sports⁶—from unnecessary display in funerals, furniture, and style of living—from unprofitable, seductive, and dangerous amusements—and generally from all such occupations of time and mind, as plainly tend to levity, vanity, and forgetfulness of our God and Saviour.⁷

⁶ The following extract from one of the printed epistles of our Yearly Meeting, is well worthy the attention, not only of Friends, but of christians of every name: “We clearly rank the practice of hunting and shooting *for diversion*, with vain sports; and we believe the awakened mind may see that even the leisure of those whom Providence hath permitted to have a competence of worldly goods, is but ill filled up with these amusements. Therefore being not only accountable for our substance, but also for our time, let our leisure be employed in serving our neighbour, and not in distressing the creatures of God for our amusement.” *Book of Extracts; ‘Conduct and Conversation’, p. 25.*

⁷ There is much reason to fear that some individuals among Friends who take a strong view of the inconsistency of worldly vanities, with the pure and devotional religion of Christ, have not been equally alive to the necessity of avoiding that “*covetousness* which is idolatry”. Excluded as we are by our principles from some of “the professions” and appertaining so generally to the middle class of the people, it is very usually our lot to be engaged in trade; and such being the case, peculiar

Before we proceed further, I must request the candid reader explicitly to understand that, in making the observations which have now been offered, on the moral system maintained among Friends, I have been very far from any intention to *panegyrize* the members of that society. On the contrary, when we consider the high degree of religious light which has been so mercifully bestowed upon us, and the clear views into which we have been led of the spirituality

watchfulness is undoubtedly required in us—even watchfulness unto prayer—that we may not be numbered among those whose delight and trust is in riches; for truly it remains to be impossible to “serve God and Mammon”. However reprehensible may be the disposition and conduct of some of us in this important respect, the society to which we belong has not failed, in its public advices, to hold out for our instruction a pure standard on the subject; as will be amply evinced by the following passages selected from the Book of Extracts; See head, ‘Trade’ p. 195 *et seqq.*

1. “Advised that none launch into trading and worldly business beyond what they can manage honourably and with reputation; so that they may keep their words with all men, that their yea may prove yea indeed, and their nay, nay: and that they use few words in their dealings, lest they bring dishonour to the truth.” 1688. P. E.—1675.

3. “It is earnestly desired that Friends be very careful to avoid all pursuit after the things of this world, by such ways and means as depend too much on hazardous enterprises; but rather labour to content themselves with such a plain way and manner of living, as is most agreeable to the self-denying principle of truth which we profess; and which is most conducive to that tranquillity of mind which is requisite to a religious conduct through this troublesome world.” 1724. P. E.—1801.

7. “Dear Friends, the continuance of covetousness and of earthly-mindedness in many, calls upon us to endeavour to awaken such as are infected by it, to a sense of what they are pursuing, and at what price. The great Master hath shown the unprofitableness of the whole world, compared with one immortal soul; and yet many are pursuing a delusive portion of it, at the expence of their soul’s interests. But were all thus awakened, what place would be found for extensive schemes in trade, and fictitious credit to support them? To mix with the spirit of the world in the pursuit of gain, would then be a subject of dread; and contentment under the allotment of providence, a sure means of preservation.” 1788. P. E.

8. “Circumscribed even as we are more than many, it is not unusual, in our pursuit of the things of this life, for our gain and our convenience to clash with our testimony. O then may we be willing to pause, and give time for those passions to subside, which would hurry us to the accomplishment of the desired purpose, ere the still voice of wisdom be distinctly heard, to guide us in the way in which we should go!” 1795. P. E.

of the gospel dispensation, we may readily confess that, in the inadequacy and shortness of our good works, we have peculiar cause for sorrow and humiliation. Nevertheless, the known views of the society, and the general conduct of many of its members, may be sufficient to evince that our religious principles have an edifying *tendency*. It is then to the practical efficacy of *those principles*, that I am desirous of inviting a more general and a closer attention, and especially to the unspeakable value and power of that word of God in the heart—that law of the Lord inwardly revealed—which it is so much our profession to follow, and which, *as it is followed*, will never fail to detect for us the *peccant part* in the vain customs of men, and to lead us into the true, and pure, and solid excellence of the christian character.

Having again insisted upon this point, I may now proceed to discuss a subject to which it will be desirable to allot the remainder of the present disquisition, *viz. plainness of speech, behaviour, and apparel*. This *plainness* is one of the most obvious of our characteristics. Whithersoever we bend our steps, and in whatever business we are engaged, it continually meets the eye or the ear of those among whom we dwell, and manifests itself in a variety of particulars, which, though little, are striking. But obvious and constantly perceptible as are these minor features of our conduct and conversation, there is reason to believe that the grounds on which we have adopted them are by no means generally understood: and indeed the laxity apparent in so many individuals of our own body, with reference to these peculiarities, affords a strong

presumption, that the principles from which they spring have not been sufficiently considered even amongst ourselves. It is a prevalent notion in the world, and one which many young persons in the society have probably been led to entertain, that the peculiarities in question are employed only because of their expediency, and that they are to be regarded in no other light than that of a sectarian badge, intended for the purpose of distinguishing and separating us from the rest of mankind. In treating, then, on the peculiar plainness of Friends—a subject which, according to my view, is fraught with no little interest—I shall endeavour to show that our practice in this respect is by no means adopted merely because it is considered expedient: but that, on the contrary, it is truly grounded on the law of God;—that, in point of fact, it is one result (perfectly consistent with others already mentioned) of a complete view of christian morality.

I. PLAINNESS OF SPEECH.

The phraseology which prevails in the modern world, and, with the exception of Friends, among christians of all denominations, is replete with a variety of expressions, used either in addressing or describing persons, which are of a nature simply complimentary, and have no foundation in truth. The terms to which I allude are familiar to every one, but for the sake of clearness, the principal of them may now be specified.

The words *Sir* or *Madam* are very generally employed, both in speech and in writing, as a form of

address, and of written addresses, to any individual, one of these words almost uniformly forms the commencement. He who makes use of such terms, verbally professes that the person to whom he is speaking or writing, is his lord or his lady. Such I conceive to be the generally acknowledged meaning of the expressions in question; for the word *Sir* is obviously a contraction of the French term *Seigneur*, *Lord*,⁸ and *Madam*, also derived from the French, plainly signifies *My lady*. This verbal profession of subjection to the individual addressed is frequently completed by a declaration, very usual at the conclusion of letters, that the writer is the *humble* or *obedient servant* or *most humble* or *most obedient servant* of the person to whom he writes; and among foreigners, more particularly, expressions to the same effect are accumulated with a profuseness which renders the art of complimenting conspicuously ridiculous.

Precisely on a similar principle the man is denominated *Mister*, the boy, *Master*, the married woman, *Mistress*, and the unmarried woman, *Miss*—being the same term contracted. These expressions severally denote, that the persons to whom they are applied, are placed in a situation of authority or mastery over others, and, if I mistake not, more particularly over the individual by whom the terms in question are employed. They, therefore, represent that which is by way of compliment supposed, but which, generally speaking, is nevertheless untrue.

⁸ Dr. Johnson derives *Sir* from the French *Sire*, an expression denoting the rank and authority of a *father*; but when we consider the use of the French word *Monsieur*, and the easy transition from *Seigneur* to *Sieur*, and from *Sieur* to *Sir*, little doubt can remain that the latter is the true origin of the English term.

Again, by a similar abuse of language, epithets expressive of a high degree of personal excellence are applied *pro forma*, and worthily or unworthily, (as it may happen,) to a number of individuals who hold certain offices, or enjoy particular stations, in religious or civil society. Thus, whatever be their real character—whatever their conduct and conversation, either in public or in private life—a king is *his most gracious Majesty*—a duke, *his Grace*—a peer of another rank, and a member of the privy council, *Right Honourable*—a son of a peer, and a judge, *Honourable*—an archbishop, *Most Reverend*—a bishop, *Right Reverend*—a dean, *Very Reverend*—an arch-deacon, *Venerable*—a priest or deacon, *Reverend*. Similar terms are often applied in the loose extravagance of compliment, to other individuals who are destitute both of office and of high station. Those who are acquainted with the language and manners of the Italians, must be well aware, for example, how frequently and indiscriminately they employ their *illustrissimo* and *eccellenza*. In the common parlance of Spain, every gentleman is addressed as *Your Worship*; and, in this country, persons of no peculiar virtue or eminence are often represented, at the conclusion of letters which they receive, as being *so* honourable, *that it is an honor to be their most humble servants*. Again, among modern latin critics, a member of their own fraternity, however obscure, is seldom, if ever, mentioned without the passing declaration that he is *most celebrated*. So common is become the *celeberrimus* on such occasions, that it is now reduced into the particle *cel.* and is in this shape

prefixed to the name of every writer of the description now mentioned, almost as regularly as is the English contraction *Mr.* to those of other men. Not unfrequently, indeed, do these authors attach to the name of any brother critic whom they may happen to cite, a Greek term which may be considered the very consummation of complimentary phraseology; for it denotes nothing less than that the writer cited is *entirely* excellent, or that he comprehends in his own person an *universality of learning and talent*.⁹

In Great Britain, as in other civilized states, there are a variety of legal dignities, corresponding with certain situations in the body politic, and constituting what is usually denominated *rank*. The lowest of these dignities is that of an *Esquire*, which legally appertains to many individuals and especially to all those persons who hold any office or commission under the king. Now the world appears to imagine that the possession of some title or other is indispensable to the character of a gentleman; and therefore by a falsification of speech, perfectly similar in principle to those already noticed, every person of gentleman-like station in life, who is destitute of all legal dignity, is *denominated* an *Esquire*. The gentleman to whom a letter is directed without the addition of that title, is considered in the world to be almost affronted by the omission.

But among the various modes of expression upon which it is my present object to treat, the most common and at the same time most absurd, is the application to *individuals*, of pronouns and verbs in the

⁹ ὁ πᾶν.

plural number. The use of the plural form of the first personal pronoun, instead of the singular, is commonly adopted in their public rescripts and other documents, by monarchs, and sometimes by other persons placed in a situation of high authority. The common style of a royal mandate or declaration is as follows: 'We George', or 'We Frederick', or 'We William, command or declare', &c.; and the fiction which such a form of speech represents, appears to be precisely this—that the monarch is not to be regarded as an individual, but as many persons combined—that in that single man are centred the authority, wisdom, dignity, and power, of many. Since this rhetorical fiction is thus employed by powerful and exalted personages, as a mark of their superior dignity and authority, it easily became a matter of compliment among men in general, to apply it in their addresses one to another. Such a custom, in its early commencement, was probably adopted only as a mark of respect to *superiors*; and unquestionably for a long period of time, it found no place in addresses made to *inferiors*. But even this distinction is gradually wearing away; a form of speech which was at one time a mark of distinction, is become universally familiar: the *Thou* and *Thee*, in the daily communications between man and man, are disused; and every individual as if supposed to consist of several persons combined, is addressed with plural pronouns and plural verbs.¹

¹ In Germany the art of complimentary phraseology is carried to a very high point. The German, in addressing his superiors or his equals, is not content with the commonly received use of the plural pronouns and verbs, but for the sake of manifesting

Now we apprehend that our heavenly Guide, whose Spirit is expressly denominated the "Spirit of truth", and whose will is directly opposed to all unrighteous vanities, of whatsoever magnitude and description they may be, has taught us in our communications one with another, and with our fellow-men, to abstain from the use of these various complimentary fictions. The substitution of a plain mode of expression, in the place of one so nearly universal, has indeed the effect of rendering us singular; and the singularity which is thus occasioned, and which sometimes entails upon us ridicule and contempt, is often in no slight degree mortifying to the natural inclinations, especially to those of the young and tender mind. Nevertheless, we are persuaded that this is one of the particulars of conduct, in which, however trifling the subject may appear to some persons, a duty is laid upon us to deny ourselves, patiently to endure the cross, and faithfully to bear our testimony against the customs prevalent in the world at large. It is plain, according to our view of the subject, that the common mode of speech from which we have thus been led to abstain, is at variance with certain acknowledged and important principles in the divine law. Such a phraseology may very fairly be deemed objectionable, *first*, because it is intended to flatter the pride of man: and *secondly*, because it is inconsistent with truth.

I. It was one of the charges which our Saviour adduced against the unbelieving Jews, that they re-

a yet more profound deference and respect, recites them *in the third person*. Thus instead of "Wilt thou eat or drink?", he would say to his honoured guest "Will *they* eat or drink?"

ceived honour “one of another”, and sought not “*the honour which cometh from God only*”, John v. 44; and truly, a similar character is still very generally prevalent among men. While they neglect to strive after that true “glory” which is the end of a “patient continuance in well doing”, Rom. ii. 7; there is nothing in the pursuit of which they are more generally intent, than the honour of the world—the honour which is bestowed by man. To be exalted among our fellow-creatures, to receive the tribute of their homage and the incense of their flattery, to be the objects of their eulogium and polite submission, are circumstances perfectly adapted to the pride of their own hearts, and grateful, beyond almost any other worldly advantages, to the natural disposition of the human mind. Here it may be observed that the eager desire to be thus exalted, admired, and commended, is closely and almost inseparably connected (though perhaps in somewhat a hidden manner) with a spirit of undue fear, dependence, and subserviency, in reference to our fellow-men. And this probably is the reason why those persons who are themselves the most desirous of receiving adulation, are often the most ready to bestow it. There appears to exist among the children of this evil world, a sort of understood convention, that they shall praise and be praised, shall exalt and be exalted, shall flatter and be flattered.

Amongst the various means which mankind have invented in order to effect this object, and to gratify their own antichristian dispositions to adulation on the one hand, and to pride on the other, is evidently to be numbered the complimentary phraseology to which

we have now been adverting. We read that the worldly-minded Pharisees who loved the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, loved also the "*greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi*"; Matt. xxiii. 6, 7. Since, therefore, the use of the expressions in question proceeds from a corrupt source, and is plainly intended to foster the vain desires of the carnal mind, it may reasonably be concluded that a total abstinence from such a mode of speech is not only commendable and desirable, but necessary to a *complete* conformity with the divine law.

It is needless on the present occasion to cite the numerous passages of Scripture and more especially of the New Testament, which forbid the exaltation of the creature, and enjoin humility and self-abasement. One passage only will suffice, in which our Lord insists on this branch of the divine law in immediate connexion, as it appears, with the subject of the present section. When charging the Pharisees with pride, and with their love of being called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi, he adds the following emphatic injunction, addressed to his own followers; "But be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your Father upon the earth (namely, as a complimentary title); for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called Masters; for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you, shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself, shall be exalted"; Matt. xxiii. 8—12. This instructive passage of Scripture may be regarded in two points

of view. We may allow, in the first place, that it indirectly inculcates the general doctrine, that, in matters of religion, christians are not to depend upon the teaching and authority of their fellow-men, but rather upon those of the Father and of Christ. They must, in this respect, be careful to set up neither themselves nor others. They must ever remember that they have individually cause for deep humiliation; that they are all brethren; that one is their Father, even God; that one is their Master, even Christ. And, secondly, the use of merely formal and complimentary appellations, as one of the means by which men are accustomed to exalt themselves and others—a means which had been so eagerly adopted by the Scribes and Pharisees—is, in this passage, forbidden to the followers of Christ. The complimentary titles here mentioned by our Saviour, viz. *Rabbi*, *Father*, and *Master*, were, at that period, of very late extraction.² In the better times of Israelitish history, as some of the Jews themselves confess, no such corruption of speech was known; for the patriarchs, the prophets, and even the earliest doctors of the Rabbinical schools, were called and addressed by their simple names. But as the Jews gradually departed from

² The Greek words ἐπίβιβι or διδάσκαλος, πατήρ, and καθηγήτης, as Lightfoot has observed, represent respectively the Hebrew terms רַבִּי (honourable person), אָבִי (father), and מַרְי (master); expressions which appear to have been used at the christian era, in the same formal and complimentary manner, as are the terms Sir, my Lord, your Grace, &c. in the present day. In order to recommend those titles, one of the Talmudic authors pretends that king Jehosaphat made much point of employing them in addressing any scribe. "Whenever Jehosaphat" says this author, "saw a disciple of the wise men, he rose from his throne, embraced him, kissed him, and thus addressed him, Father, Father; Rabbi, Rabbi; Master, Master". *Babyl. Maccoth. fol. xxiv. 1. Lightfoot.*

their ancient simplicity, and shortly before the coming of our Saviour, their leading men of learning and authority, claimed the distinction of these flattering appellations ; and if, perchance, any of their disciples addressed them according to that simple method which was usual in better times, it was even pretended that such persons *offended against the majesty of heaven*. In the discourse of which the passage before us forms a part, our Lord sharply reproves the Scribes and Pharisees on account of their attachment to so absurd and ungodly a practice—an attachment which he mentions as one among many fruits of their vanity, pride, and presumption ; and then turning round to his own disciples, he distinctly forbids them to assume for themselves, or to apply to others, the complimentary titles in question ; showing that the formal use of such expressions is at variance with the true condition of those persons who are children and disciples of one Lord, and whose duty and privilege it is to humble themselves before God, and to serve one another for his sake ; See *Lightfoot Hor. Heb. in loc., Poli Syn.* It may indeed be observed, that the Scribes and Pharisees probably claimed these verbal distinctions, as marks of their *religious* superiority ; and that the expressions of the same nature which are now so common, have a more general application. But whether such expressions be addressed to clergy or to laity, whether they be intended as compliments to the ministers of the church, or to the members of society at large, they are still equally objectionable, on our Lord's principle of christian simplicity and humility. They are still derived from the pride of man, and

still do they foster the passion from which they spring.

Our Lord's precept on this subject was remarkably exemplified both in his own conversation, and in the verbal or written communications of his inspired disciples. The mode of address which he employed, and which the evangelists and apostles also adopted, though in many instances distinguished for its kindness and true courtesy, was not less remarkable for its plainness, and for the absence of all complimentary phraseology. I know of nothing in the New Testament which has the appearance of contravening this observation, unless it be the epithets *Most excellent* and *Most noble*; the former applied by Luke to Theophilus, Luke i. 3; the latter by Paul to Festus, Acts xxvi. 25; and also the title *Sirs*, by which that apostle is represented as addressing the inhabitants of Lystra, and the companions of his voyage to Rome; Acts xiv. 15, xxvii. 10, 21, 25. *comp.* vii. 26. But in all these instances our common English version is in fault, and there is no reason to suppose that the expressions, as used in the original Greek, were in any degree misapplied. The Greek adjective³ which in Luke i. 3, is rendered *most excellent*, and in Acts xxvi. 25, *most noble*, properly denotes neither excellence nor nobility, but an eminent degree of *power*. The epithet was probably not inapplicable to Theophilus, of whom we know almost nothing, but who from the use of this very word, is supposed by commentators to have been the governor of some province; and certainly it was properly descriptive of Festus, who as proconsul of Judea was, in that country, possessed of the supreme

³ κράτιστος.

authority; See *Schleusneri Lex. in voc.* With respect to the appellation rendered *Sirs* in Acts xiv. 15, xxvii. 10, 21, 25, it signifies not *lords* or *masters*, but simply *men*. The term used in these passages is not indeed the generic name of man. It is applicable only to the male sex, and in as much as it represented the strength and manliness of that sex, it was probably considered as a term of respect. Nevertheless it described literal truth, and was therefore no complimentary expression.

I have often thought that the speeches of Paul to Felix and Agrippa, afford an excellent specimen of the true christian method of addressing our superiors, for they are distinguished by respectful courtesy united to entire plainness. "Forasmuch as I know", said he to Felix, "that thou hast of many years been a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself": again, "I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee, touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews: especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews, wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently": again, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest", &c. To these speeches we may find an excellent parallel, in point both of propriety and of plainness, in the public addresses which have at various times been made by Friends to high and royal personages; and more particularly in Robert Barclay's celebrated dedication of his "Apology" to king Charles II.

II. It has been already remarked, that in this

country as in most other civilized states, there are a variety of titles legally attached to persons who occupy particular offices or stations in the body politic. To the use of these titles there does not appear to be any moral objection. There is no good reason, as is generally allowed by Friends, why Kings, Earls, Barons, Baronets, and Esquires, should not in the conversation or letters of christians, be so denominated, since these are not names of mere courtesy, but are given in conformity with the constitution of the country, and appropriately represent the office or condition of the persons who bear them. Nor ought the servant to feel the least reserve or hesitation in calling his master *Master*, and his mistress *Mistress*. So far indeed is it from being inconsistent with christian principle, to describe our fellow creatures by the denominations which properly belong to them, and which correctly represent their *actual situation*, that such a practice may rather be deemed to be enjoined by the apostolic precept—"Render to all their dues"; Rom. xiii. 7. But to those various complimentary expressions from the use of which Friends consider it to be their duty to abstain, there is, on the other hand, this radical objection, that according to their general usage and in a great plurality of instances, they represent falsehood. To call a man *Sir* or *Master*, who has no authority over us—to declare ourselves to be his obedient servants, when we know that we are no such thing—to style him, as a matter of course, honourable or reverend, when, as a matter of course, he is neither one nor the other, and to describe him as most celebrated, though he be destitute of all celebrity

—is in our apprehension to depart from that plain law of truth, by which the words of christians ought ever to be strictly regulated. That truth of speech which in the Holy Scriptures is opposed to the lying tongue, and is so frequently, so clearly, and so earnestly enjoined, obviously consists in the honest and accurate conformity of our words (according to their acknowledged signification) to facts and realities. Since then these complimentary expressions are not honestly and accurately conformed to facts and realities; since, according to their commonly received meaning, they denote feelings, dispositions, or relations, in those who use them, which have no existence; they may justly be considered inconsistent with a simple and unbending veracity.

Persons are sometimes heard to remark that the expressions in question are not to be understood literally—that those of them which appear to express subjection, are to be interpreted as indicative only of civility—that their signification is either lessened or lost—that they may even be considered as meaning *nothing*—and hence it is easily concluded that the formal use of such terms involves no sacrifice of truth. But the reflecting reader will scarcely fail to detect the fallacy of these observations. There are none of the expressions in question, which on philological principles can fairly be interpreted in a subordinate sense. Used as they are in a familiar manner as current tokens of respect, it is evident that they serve such a purpose only because of their intrinsic meaning; and that intrinsic meaning is, I would submit, undisputed and unaltered. So far indeed are

some of these terms from being of uncertain application, or destitute of signification, that there are scarcely any words in language, of which the sense is more obvious, or more clearly fixed. Who does not know, for example, that a *humble and obedient servant* is a person of lowly mind and servile condition, who obeys his master—that an *honourable* or *reverend* gentleman, is a gentleman truly worthy of honour or reverence—that a *most celebrated* or *most illustrious* author, is an author who has attained to a very pre-eminent degree of literary fame—and that the plural personal pronouns, denote a plurality of persons? The meaning of such terms is plain and cannot be disputed; and all that can be urged on the other side of the question, will probably be found to resolve itself into a single position, viz. *that the falsehoods which these expressions represent are so customary, that they are become inefficacious—that they no longer deceive.* That this effect has in a very considerable degree taken place, may readily be admitted; but such a result affords no sufficient excuse for the adoption of such a mode of speech. It may justly be contended, that the use of words, which according to their *known signification* represent things untrue, constitutes a falsehood—that however absurd or unavailing that falsehood may be, it is nevertheless real—that such a practice arises out of an evil origin—that it is in its nature evil—and that however it may defeat its own ends, and become inoperative in proportion to its prevalence, it can never change its character, or cease to be inconsistent with an *exact* obedience to the law of Christ.

To the sincere-hearted christian, who has hitherto perceived no evil in the use of a complimentary phraseology, may in conclusion be addressed the remark, that there are various degrees of insincerity, and that the passage from the lesser to the greater measures of it, is exceedingly easy. He who has no scruple, for example, to declare himself (without any foundation in literal truth) to be the humble, obedient, or devoted servant of the person whom he addresses, is prepared, as it appears to me, to advance a step farther, and to make other less formal professions of civility or service, which he is equally without the intention of fulfilling. Thus his sense of truth is gradually weakened; his feelings and intentions, and the words by which he expresses them, become more and more dissonant, and at length his communications assume the character of insincerity in so great a degree, that our dependence upon them for practical purposes is very materially shaken. No one scarcely who is conversant with the business of the world, can fail to have remarked how easily these consequences result from the sacrifice, however formal, of literal truth. It may indeed be admitted, that this observation will not attach, in any great degree, to the more common and less conspicuous terms of compliment; but all these expressions are of the *same nature*, they appertain to the *same principle*, they spring from the same source, and they naturally lead to one another. On the whole, therefore, it may fairly be concluded that the line of true safety, in reference to the present subject, must be drawn at the foundation of the whole system, and must preclude the use, in

conversation and addresses, of *any* expressions which are merely complimentary, and which, according to their plain and acknowledged meaning, represent any falsity.

There is another particular connected with the plainness of speech peculiar to Friends, of which a very brief notice will be sufficient. It is their practice, as my reader is probably well aware, to avoid the commonly adopted names of months and days, and to indicate those periods by numerical appellations, according to the order of their succession: as the *first, second, or third month*, the *first, second, or third day*, &c. Their reason for making this alteration is simple and forcible. All the days of the week and many of the months of the year have received the names by which they are usually described, in honour of *false gods*. Thus January is the month of Janus, Thursday the day of Thor, &c. This relic of heathenism is not only needless and indecorous, but according to our sentiments, is opposed to the tenor and spirit, as well as to the letter of those divine commandments addressed to the Israelites, which forbade the use of the names of false gods, and every other the slightest approach to idolatrous practices. See Exod. xxiii. 13, Josh. xxiii. 7. *comp.* Deut. xii. 3, Ps. xvi. 4, &c. Idolatry was indeed a sin which easily beset that ancient people, and to which, in the present enlightened state of society, *christians* are but little tempted. But it will scarcely be denied that the various precepts contained in the Old Testament on the subject, form a part of that law which changes not; and that the standard of truth in this particular was heightened

rather than lowered by the introduction of the gospel dispensation. Although, therefore, we may now be in little or no danger of falling away into the worship of false gods, it appears that the maintenance of a custom which had its origin in such worship, and by which a *verbal* honour is still given to ideal deities or to devils, is inconsistent with the *pure* piety, and *unmixed* devotion of the simple christian.⁴

II. PLAINNESS OF BEHAVIOUR.

The more consistent part of the Society of Friends consider it to be their duty to uphold the standard of plainness not only in speech, but in manners, deportment, or behaviour. Their *general* views on this branch of our subject, are in full accordance with those of all the humble followers of a crucified Redeemer. Where is the seriously minded christian who will not allow, that servility, vanity, and affectation in manners, afford a sure indication of a worldly spirit, and of a heart not yet converted from darkness to light; and on the other hand, that a true simplicity in our carriage towards other men, whether they be our inferiors, our equals, or our superiors, is one of the most genuine ornaments of the christian character?

There is also another constituent of plainness in behaviour, respecting which Friends are on common ground with other christians; I mean the absence of

⁴ May it not be considered in some degree discreditable to the religious profession of our country, that the votes of the British Parliament, passed as they are after the daily recitation of prayers addressed to the ever blessed Jehovah in the name of Christ, should, when printed, uniformly bear about them the stamp of classical heathenism? These documents are dated in Latin; "*Die Veneris, Quarto Martis; Die Mercurii, Secundo Julii;*" &c.

levity—*religious seriousness*. An innocent and wholesome cheerfulness is far indeed from being precluded by the law of Christ: for what persons have so true an acquaintance with *pure pleasure* as those upon whom are shining the beams of the Sun of Righteousness; or who are so much at ease and liberty to enjoy themselves, as they who have obeyed the calls of duty, and have trodden the path of the cross? While this allowance may be made without reserve, it is perhaps no less evident that a lightness and wantonness of manner and an ill regulated, extravagant, mirth, are totally at variance with the great features of the christian life. No one surely will be found to indulge in them, who entertains any adequate notions of the importance of his moral condition, of the great purposes for which he is called into being, of the immortality of his soul, and of the terrors and hopes respectively set before him in the christian revelation.

Having made these observations on that simple and serious deportment which all real christians endeavour to maintain, I may proceed to remark that there are certain particulars of conduct and manners, in which Friends observe a plainness of behaviour, in a great degree peculiar to themselves. We conceive it to be our duty to abstain from the use of those *obeisances*, upon which, in the world and more especially in the upper classes of society, a scrupulous attention is very generally bestowed. In presenting ourselves before our fellow-creatures, we believe it right to avoid the *submissive* inflection of the body and the taking off of the hat, as a token of personal homage.

The principles on which are founded our objection

to these practices are in part the same as those which have been unfolded under the last head. The bowing down of the body and the pulling off of the hat in honour of man, are actions perfectly coincident with a servile and complimentary phraseology. Words in the one case, and actions in the other, are obviously intended to denote the same thing; namely that the person addressing *submits himself* to the superior dignity and authority of the person addressed. Whether then it be by our expressions or by our carriage, that we cherish and foment the vanity one of another—whether the complimentary *falsehood* be spoken or acted,—we cannot but entertain the sentiment, that in adopting, in either way, the customs prevalent in the world, we should be departing from that simplicity and godly sincerity by which our conversation among men ought ever to be regulated.

There is, however, another reason, and that a reason of a very substantial nature, why Friends conceive it to be their duty to avoid some of these obeisances; namely, that they are the very signs by which christians are accustomed to denote their allegiance *to the Almighty himself*. This is generally understood to be the case more particularly, with the taking off of the hat as a mark of homage—a practice usual among Friends, as well as among other christians, on certain occasions of a religious nature. When we approach God in supplication, or address others in his name, we uniformly take off the hat, and kneel or stand *uncovered* before him. It is probable that in every age of the world, there have been certain customary external indications of the worship of Jehovah; and this un-

doubtedly is one of those indications in the present day. The action in itself is absolutely indifferent, but through the force of custom it has become significant—significant of religious homage offered to the supreme Being. Now we consider it to be inconsistent with that reverence which is exclusively due to the Deity, and hold that it involves a very dangerous confusion, to address to our fellow-creatures, however exalted they may be, those very acts which, on other occasions, denote nothing less than the worship of *Him*, who “bringeth the princes to nothing, and maketh the judges of the earth as vanity”.

Such are the principles which have given rise to one of the most conspicuous peculiarities in the deportment of the plain Quaker. It is generally known that when a person of this description approaches even the earthly *monarch* to whom he both owes and feels a real allegiance, he dares not either to bend the knee or to uncover the head, in token of that allegiance; and for this plain and, as it appears to me, fully sufficient reason; that these are the very outward signs by which he is accustomed to designate his submissive approaches to the Lord of Lords, and the King of Kings—the God and Father of us all.

In bearing this testimony against the semi-idolatrous practices of the world, I cannot but consider it plain that Friends are acting in conformity with the divine law, which while it forbids us either to flatter or deceive our neighbours, is, if possible, still more imperative as to the restriction of the acknowledged acts of worship, to their only proper object—Jehovah. “All these things will I give thee”, said the tempter

to Jesus, “if thou wilt *fall down and worship me*”;⁵ Then saith Jesus unto him, “Get thee hence Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship⁶ the Lord thy God, and him *only* shalt thou serve”; Matt. iv. 9, 10.

The prostration of the body on the ground (like the taking off of the hat or kneeling, among modern Europeans) was one of those tokens by which the ancient inhabitants of the East were accustomed to designate *worship*, whether that worship was addressed as homage to their superiors among men, or as religious adoration to the Deity himself; and the greek verb, signifying *to worship*, literally imports such a prostration. Had that divine mandate which our Saviour quoted in answer to the tempter, been fully observed by the Israelites of old, they would surely have confined these obeisances to the Lord himself; and their not having so confined them appears to afford one proof among many, that even the more enlightened of their number fell short of a just apprehension of the extent and perfection of the law of God. But that a confusion so dangerous in the application of such obeisances, is, under the purer light of the gospel dispensation, strictly precluded, the history of the New Testament affords satisfactory evidence. We find from the records of that sacred volume, that the prostration of the body on the ground, was an act frequently employed by christians, in the worship of the Father, I. Cor. xiv. 25, Rev. vii. 11, &c. and also in that of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God, participating in the Father's nature, and *one* with him; Matt. xiv. 33, John ix. 38. It

⁵ προσκυνήσεις.

⁶ προσκυνήσεις.

was, I think, plainly for this reason, that Jesus never refused to receive such an homage; but no sooner was it addressed to the *creature*, than it called forth the just and earnest reprehension of the Lord's servants. Two instances of this kind are recorded in the New Testament. When the apostle Peter was coming into the house of Cornelius, the latter "met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him (or prostrated himself before him): but Peter took him up, saying, Stand up, *I myself also am a man*"; Acts x. 25, 26. So again in the book of Revelation, we read that the apostle John, greatly smitten, as we may presume, with the glory of the angel who showed him the vision, fell down at his feet "to worship him" or to *prostrate himself before him*. Yet the angel earnestly forbade his doing so—"See *thou do it not*", said he, "I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus; *worship God*"; Rev. xix. 10.

It cannot with any reason be supposed that the act of reverence addressed by Cornelius to Peter, and by John to the ministering angel, was, in either case, intended as a sign of spiritual worship. Cornelius, who was a devout man, redeemed from the errors of idolatry, and taught to live in the fear of the Lord, could never for a moment have entertained the notion that Peter was to be adored as a god; nor is there any real probability in the supposition, that the apostle John, after having been favoured with so repeated a vision of the glory both of the Father and of the Son, should mistake for either of them that messenger of Christ, who was appointed for the bare purpose

of *shewing him these things* ; Rev. xxii. 8. We may conclude, therefore, that this act of reverence, as employed by Cornelius and the apostle, was, like the obeisances of the present day, directed *solely* to the purpose of evincing humiliation and subjection in the presence of a superior. Nevertheless, since it was otherwise used as a sign of religious adoration, it was, on both these occasions, strenuously forbidden, on that main and simple principle of religion, that *God alone is the object of worship*. Now this principle appears to be applied with equal propriety, in prohibition of the modern and perfectly analogous practices of kneeling and uncovering the head, as tokens of our homage to *men*.

In the observations which have now been offered on plainness of speech and behaviour, I have been very far from any intention to disparage so useful and amiable a quality as *courtesy*. On the contrary, experience has thoroughly convinced me of the great practical importance of that quality, as a means of smoothing down the little asperities of society, and of rendering the communications between man and man profitable, easy, and agreeable. Under these impressions, I cannot rightly do otherwise than express my earnest desire, that the junior members of our religious society, may more and more estimate the advantage of polite manners, and study a true civility towards all around them—that they may never so mistake the religious principles professed by Friends, as to imagine that there is any thing to be found in those principles, which justifies a want of refinement, gentleness, and delicate attention, or which

can lead us to withhold from our superiors, that respectful demeanour and that willing service, so evidently their due.⁷

True courtesy of manners is one of the natural fruits of the love of God “shed abroad” in the heart. It is christian benevolence carried into detail, and operating upon all the circumstances of social life. “Be kindly affectioned one to another”, says the apostle Paul, “with brotherly love; *in honour preferring one another*”; Rom. xii. 10. “Be ye all of one mind”, exclaims Peter, in the same spirit, “having compassion one of another; love as brethren; be pitiful, be *courteous*”; I. Pet. iii. 8. It is surely undeniable that a true politeness—a christian courtesy—may be exercised without the intervention of complimentary phraseology, or of bodily obeisances. It is indeed very evident that these practices, especially when applied in excess, are nothing more than a formal and fictitious representative of the genuine quality; and that, in the society of the world, they are very frequently employed as a mere cover for the want of it. Those persons who are brought to abstain from them on christian principle, from the humble desire to walk circumspectly before God, and from a genuine love of the law of their Redeemer, will be preserved in *meekness and tenderness of mind* towards their fellow creatures. Obedience to the

⁷ I venture to take the present opportunity of suggesting to the consideration of my young friends, whether it be not proper for us when we speak to a person older than ourselves, or otherwise our superior, to use the family name, in addition to the first name of the person addressed. This simple and unexceptionable mark of deference, prevents the appearance of undue familiarity: and let it be remembered, that undue familiarity not only involves a breach of good manners, but is often productive of moral injury.

“still, small, voice” of the Spirit of Christ is, in an eminent degree, calculated to promote these dispositions; and the very cross which such an obedience entails upon us, will be found efficacious in promoting the same end. Now this meekness and tenderness of mind will be found the best of antidotes against unkindness of conduct, or rudeness and incivility in deportment. United with christian benevolence, they will generally be effectual in polishing the roughest materials, and in converting even the homely tradesman or the humble mechanic into the real gentleman.

III. PLAINNESS OF APPAREL.

It is much to be regretted, as the more reflecting observers of the christian church will probably allow, that so many persons who are blessed with a serious view of religion, and who profess to be the dedicated followers of a crucified Lord, appear to entertain scarcely any objection to the decking and ornamenting of their frail bodies: bodies destined so soon to moulder into dust, and to become a prey for worms! Such a conduct however general in the world, and however slightly observed because of its being general, is far more worthy of the untutored Indian who fondly delights in the bauble and the bead, than of the christian, who serves a spiritual master, and lives with eternity in view.

Although no one can move in what is called the *religious world*, without meeting with instances which justify these reflexions, it ought to be acknowledged that among many others—perhaps the plurality of serious christians—a great degree of moderation is

observed in the ornamenting of their persons; an observation which, I believe, applies with a peculiar force to the Wesleyan Methodists. Nevertheless, on a general view of the habits of christians in this respect, it will not perhaps be considered irrelevant, if entire plainness of apparel be treated on as one of the "religious peculiarities" of the Society of Friends.

The principles which we entertain on this subject are very simple, and they appear to have an immediate connexion with the divine law. Among those numerous modifications of self-love which are displayed in the character of unregenerate man, is to be numbered *personal vanity*. Ridiculous and absurd as is this petty propensity of the human mind, it may reasonably be questioned whether there is any passion more general. While the prevalence of such a disposition affords a lamentable proof (among many others) that the heart of man is "*deceitful* above all things"; it must surely be allowed that this is one of those affections which the law of Christ forbids us to indulge, and commands us to mortify. Since then the custom of ornamenting the body plainly originates in personal vanity, and is as plainly calculated to encourage the passion from which it springs, it follows, that such a custom must be at variance with the law of Christ.

We ought to distinguish between *clothing* and *ornament*. Clothing is intended to cover and protect the person; ornament to beautify it. The former is necessary both for the maintenance of decency, and for the preservation of health; and the provision which is made for it in nature, calls aloud for the

tribute of thankfulness to the Author of all our mercies. The latter is altogether needless for the body and evidently hurtful to the mind. The world has mixed clothing and ornament together. Some parts of dress are made to serve the purpose of clothing, and others that of ornament. Now it is the principle of Friends to retain those parts of dress by which the body is *protected*, and to disuse those by which it is only *adorned*.

It may indeed be observed that those parts of dress which are necessary for protection, may be more or less ornamental. There are the coarser and finer materials, the more sober and the brighter colours. On this point I would remark, that excluding splendid and costly apparel, the materials of our clothing may fairly be regulated, to a great degree, by our circumstances and situation in life—and that with respect to colours, those which are the least showy and glaring, are evidently the most *in harmony* with the sobriety of the christian character.

That there can be no moral virtue in any particular form of dress, is obvious ; and the reflecting reader will probably agree with me in the sentiment that to insist upon any such form, as if the wearing of it were a religious obligation, is to interfere with genuine christian simplicity, and to substitute superstition for piety. It is not an uncommon error to suppose that Friends make it a matter of religious principle, to insist upon a certain form of dress. As far as I am acquainted with their sentiments, the main principle which they entertain in reference to the subject, is that to which I have already adverted—namely that

personal vanity is a passion which christians ought not to indulge, and therefore that nothing is to be introduced into our clothing or added to it *for the sake of ornament*. The appearance of form, I might rather say "uniform", in the dress of Friends, may be considered as arising in a great degree from two causes: *first*, that the disuse of all the ornamental parts of dress has, in itself, the inevitable effect of making them in their attire *differ* from other people, and *resemble* one another; *secondly*, that Friends have not allowed themselves to change their mode of dress from time to time, in pursuance of the ever-varying *fashions* of the world. Those who refuse to comply with such changes in fashion, except when they really promote convenience, will presently discover that their personal appearance is singular. And yet such a refusal to follow a series of changes so generally grounded on the merest folly and vanity, is surely no more than consistent with christian simplicity and gravity.

The precepts in Scripture respecting plainness of apparel are directed specifically to the female sex. In considering those precepts, however, it becomes us to remember, that the principles on which they are founded are equally imperative upon both sexes; nor will it be disputed that if the adorning of the person is reprehensible in women, it must be far more evidently blamable in men, whose circumstances place them under much less temptation to any practice of the kind.

From certain descriptions in the Old Testament, it may be inferred, that under the legal dispensation the standard maintained of plainness in dress, like

that of so many other particulars of conduct and conversation, was by no means uniformly of the highest or strictest order. Thus among the gifts which Abraham sent to Rebekah were ear-rings and bracelets with jewels of gold and silver, Gen. xxiv. 53; and the virtuous wife who is so much commended by king Lemuel, is described as making for herself "coverings of tapestry", and as being clothed in "purple"; Prov. xxxi. 22. Nevertheless, we may learn, from the apostle Peter, that many of the holy women of old were exemplary in this respect, I. Pet. iii. 5; and we know that the profusion of ornament, by which the Jewish women of a worldly character displayed their personal vanity, called forth the righteous indignation of the supreme Being. "Moreover, the Lord saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks, and wanton eyes, walking, and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion. In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, the chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, the bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the ear-rings, the rings, and the nose-jewels, the changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping-pins; the glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils. And it shall come to pass that instead of sweet smell, there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle, a rent; and instead of well set hair, baldness;

and instead of a stomacher, a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty"; Isa. iii. 16—24.

I have endeavoured to shew, that the sentiments which Friends entertain, on the subject of plainness of apparel, arise out of the principles of that branch of the divine law, which enjoins the mortification of the carnal affections and vanities of the human heart—of the "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life". Now it will probably be allowed, that the extent of the requisitions of the law of God, in these respects, was made *fully* apparent only under the more spiritual dispensation of christianity; and accordingly it is in the New Testament, alone, that ornament or finery in attire is expressly forbidden. There are in the apostolic epistles two passages to this effect. "I will, therefore", says Paul to Timothy, "... that women adorn (or dress) themselves in modest (or neat) apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; *not with broidered (or curled and braided⁸) hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array*; but (which becometh women professing godliness,) with good works"; I. Tim. ii. 8—10. The apostle Peter gives very similar directions. "Likewise, ye wives", says he, "be in subjection to your own husbands, &c. . . . whose adorning, *let it not be that outward adorning, of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel.*"⁹ But let it be the hidden man

⁸ πλέγμασι. "πλέγματα notat cincinnos, crines intortos, capillos artificiose flexos et inter se nexos"; *Schleusner in voc.*

⁹ It plainly appears from the context that by "the putting on of apparel" the apostle means the putting on of costly or splendid apparel. The Syriac and Ethiopic translators have added epithets to that effect. "The apostle", says Dr. Gill, "means such apparel as is unbecoming and unsuitable, for he cannot be thought to forbid the putting on of any apparel"; *in loc.*

of the heart, in that which is not corruptible; even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price"; I. Pet. iii. 1—4.

It has been sometimes remarked, that in the two passages now cited, the female christian is not absolutely required to disuse ornament in dress, but only to make the graces and fruits of the Spirit (which, by these apostles, are described as ornaments,) the *principal* object of her attention and pursuit. But I would submit that the impartial examiner of the words of Paul and Peter, will by no means accede to such an observation. Each of these passages contains both a positive and a negative injunction: each of them teaches us how christian women *ought*, and how they *ought not* to adorn themselves—what things *are*, and what things *are not* to be their ornaments. Peter assigns to them for an ornament "a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price"; and Paul, a modest dress with good works. On the other hand, Peter declares that their adorning *ought not* to be "that outward adorning of plaiting the hair and of wearing of gold, and of putting on of (splendid) apparel"; and Paul plainly commands them *not* to adorn themselves with "curled or braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array". Between the positive and the negative injunction respectively given by the two apostles, there is evidently preserved a complete parallelism. Both are to be taken according to their plain and obvious signification, and both must, in all fairness, be considered as binding on the followers of Christ. Since, therefore, a decent and modest dress, good works, and a meek and quiet spirit, are here

plainly *enjoined*, it must surely be allowed, that the wearing of splendid apparel, the curling and braiding of the hair, and the use of other personal ornaments, are *forbidden*.

It was the remark of a noted infidel writer, in reference to that plainness of dress so customary in the Society of Friends, that there is no *quakerism in the works of nature*; and nothing perhaps is more usually urged in justification of splendid and ornamented apparel, than the brightness of the flowers, and the gay plumage of the feathered tribes. True indeed it is, that the great Creator, who has made so many gracious provisions for the gladdening of our hearts, and for the gratification of our eyes, has scattered his ornaments in rich profusion over the face of nature: nor is there any thing, save redeeming mercy, more calculated to excite in the christian the feeling of humble adoration, than the harmony and beauty of created things. Were then our objection against finery in dress grounded on the absurd principle, that *nothing beautiful or splendid can be good*, such an objection must undoubtedly vanish before the plumage of the peacock, the beauty of the rose, the gaiety of the butterfly, and the variegated radiance of the setting sun. But we are not so foolish as to object to beauty under any of its forms, merely because it is beauty; we scruple only *such a mis-application of things supposed to be beautiful, as is attended with an evil operation on the human mind*. In a happy sense and grateful admiration of the ornaments of nature, there is nothing inconsistent with a religious objection to *those* ornaments which deck the persons

of the children of fashion. The former appertain to the excellent order of God's creation, and are so far from producing any undesirable moral effect, that they tend to exalt his praises, and teach his intelligent creatures to adore his power, his wisdom, and his goodness. But the latter are ornaments misplaced and perverted: they serve only to amuse the thoughtlessness, and to gratify the vanity, of fallen man.

Besides the objection entertained by Friends to the indulgence of so antichristian a passion as personal vanity, there is a further reason why they regard a plain dress as peculiarly adapted to the profession and views of the christian; namely, *that it demands very little thought, and occupies very little time.* Every one, on the other hand, who has followed the footsteps of the fashionable world, must be well aware that there are few things which engage more attention, or consume a greater number of precious hours, than a gay, fanciful, and studied, attire. The advantage, in this respect, of plain apparel over that of an ornamental character, will be most properly appreciated by those persons who desire to devote their time and talents to their Redeemer, and who are looking forward to the day when they must render, to the Judge of all flesh, *an account of their stewardship.*¹

¹ The general principles, on which Friends consider it their duty to maintain plainness in their apparel, are applicable, in a great extent, to the subject of *furniture*. A due moderation in this respect is particularly recommended to us in those general advices of the Yearly Meeting which are ordered to be read once in the year in our Quarterly, Monthly, and Preparative Meetings. See *Book of Extr.* p. 148. The following caution on the subject of furniture contained in the printed epistle from the Yearly Meeting of 1809 is well worthy of our continued attention: "A fear has prevailed among us at this time that not a few elder Friends, and even

On reverting to the principal heads of this essay on plainness, the reader will recollect that the subject has been treated in reference respectively to speech, manners, and dress. The *plainness of speech* which distinguishes Friends consists in the disuse of a complimentary phraseology—such phraseology being considered by them objectionable, *first*, because it is intended to flatter the pride of man, and, *secondly*, because it is made up of falsehoods. To the *plainness of behaviour* observed by all true christians, Friends have added the peculiarity of avoiding bodily obeisances ; *first*, because, like the phraseology already adverted to, they are merely complimentary, and *secondly*, because some of these obeisances are the known outward signs of the worship of God himself. *Plainness of apparel* has been adopted by the Society, partly to prevent the undue engagement of time, but chiefly because ornament in dress is employed to gratify that personal vanity, which, with every other modification of the pride of the human heart, christians are forbidden to indulge and enjoined to subdue. It will moreover be recollected that these peculiarities in our conversation, carriage, and appearance, grounded as they thus are on certain plain principles of the divine law, are severally supported by explicit injunctions contained in the New Testament.

some who take part in our discipline, have not been sufficiently exemplary with regard to plainness ; particularly in the *furniture of their houses*. It seems therefore right to caution all against giving way in this respect to the varying and often costly fashions of the age. Though it is a weakness which does not seem to savour so much of personal pride as does vain attire ; yet it bespeaks a mind engaged with trifles, and a fondness for show, which is inconsistent with the christian character ; and it disqualifies for duly advising such as may rush into further degrees of extravagance.' See *Book of Extr. App.* p. 269.

This branch of our subject suggests, in conclusion, one or two general remarks.

I. We are much accustomed to denominate our scruples respecting speech, behaviour, and apparel, "*minor* scruples"; and since it is evident that supporting a paid ministry, the awful practice of swearing, and engaging in warfare and bloodshed, would constitute a more serious infraction of what we deem to be our religious duty, than a failure of strictness with respect to plainness, it may be allowed that the word *minor*, as thus used, is not improperly applied. But let it be remembered, that while the particulars of conduct, into which these scruples lead, are comparatively *little*, the principles on which they are founded are *great*. Nothing is insignificant which really appertains to the divine law; nor are there any parts of that law more important than those with which our sentiments respecting plainness are connected, and which enjoin, upon the followers of Christ, a godly sincerity, a true simplicity, and a consistent humility. The present life is, in a great measure, filled up with comparatively trifling circumstances; and although the christian is sometimes called upon to act on occasions of moment, his conduct, if narrowly examined, will be found to consist generally and chiefly in the constant succession of the *little* fruits of *great* principles. If plainness of speech, behaviour, and apparel is reckoned, as I think it clearly ought to be, among the *little fruits of great christian principles*, let it not be disregarded or despised: for its importance is to be estimated not so much by the minuteness of the particulars in

which it is manifested, as by the magnitude of the fundamental rules out of which it arises.

II. Plainness of speech, behaviour, and apparel, being thus grounded on great and important principles, and being required, as we apprehend, to complete the circumspect walk of the christian, is attended with certain practical consequences very influential in promoting our religious welfare. Such a plainness produces a striking distinction, which is in itself of real value. Who does not perceive, that the young Friend, who submits to such restraints upon his language and personal appearance, is armed with an important defence against the temptations of the world? While he adheres to that simplicity of diction which marks the profession of a strict and spiritual religion, he cannot easily join in the loose ribaldry and obscene conversation of the idle and the dissolute; and, while he maintains in his apparel an entire plainness of appearance, his access will be very difficult to the haunts of folly, fashion, and dissipation. The language and dress which distinguish him, will not only have the effect of discouraging others from any attempt to entice him into the vices of the world, but, by reminding him, from hour to hour, of the high profession which he is making, will be found to operate as a constant check upon himself, and thus will not fail to prove an useful barrier against those multiplied vanities and immoralities which abound amongst men.

III. Such being the practical effect of the peculiar plainness of Friends, I may now remark that although it is not adopted by them on any principle of mere

expediency, it is nevertheless useful and *expedient*. Nor is this utility confined to the experience of individuals; it extends to the society at large. Our plain language, manners, and dress, may be regarded as forming an external bulwark, by which Friends, considered as a religious community, are separated from the world, and in some degree defended from its influence. Did we differ from other christians only in the maintenance of certain speculative views, such a bulwark would perhaps be little needed. But this is not the true state of the case. The whole religious peculiarity of Friends consists *in a series of testimonies, which they believe it to be their duty to bear, in their own conduct, against a variety of particular practices, affecting partly the worship of God, and partly his moral law, which are still prevalent not only among unregenerate men, but among sincere christians.* In thus running counter to many of the common customs both of mankind at large, and of other christian societies, and in upholding what we deem to be a higher and purer standard of action, it is plain that we have to tread a path of some difficulty, trial, and personal mortification, and in order to a consistent walk in such a course, while our dependence must ever be chiefly placed on the power of the Lord's Spirit, we nevertheless need every outward assistance and defence, which can be legitimately derived from our own principles. Such an assistance and such a defence are undoubtedly found in our peculiar plainness.

We well know from experience that when any persons amongst us allow themselves to disuse the

customary language, deportment, and dress, of Friends, the effect very often produced is this—that they become negligent of our other testimonies, gradually depart from religious communion with us, and finally, perhaps, connect themselves with christian societies of less strictness, or merge in the irreligious world. Instances of this description must be familiar to every one who has any intimate acquaintance with the circumstances and history of Friends. Now there is much reason to believe that the causes which thus operate on individuals, would, in the same manner, and under parallel circumstances, affect the society at large; and that were we to sacrifice these protecting peculiarities, we should not long continue to maintain, in other respects, our particular and appropriate place in the church of Christ. Not only would such a sacrifice of our minor scruples naturally introduce a relaxation respecting those major ones which arise out of the same root, but, the line of demarkation, by which we are now so providentially surrounded, being removed, there would be little to prevent our becoming *completely mixed up with general society*. Thus should we be gradually subjected to an influence directly opposed to all our peculiar views, and, with our distinctness and singularity as a religious body, might very probably be lost the high and conspicuous standard which it is now our privilege to uphold, respecting the christian law of peace, and respecting the complete spirituality of the gospel dispensation.

If then our young men and women are aware of the importance and excellency of that standard,—if they have good reason to believe that our religious

society is raised up for the purpose of *shewing forth* certain practical truths, not yet fully embraced by christians in general,—let them not venture to break down that “hedge round about us”, which not only affords an useful protection to themselves, but appears to be graciously provided by our heavenly Father, for the purpose of preserving us in our peculiar place, and of facilitating the performance of our peculiar duties, in his church universal. Nor will those distinguishing habits, which are thus useful in promoting our own particular views, produce the slightest interruption in our harmony and unity with the serious members of other christian communities. Experience amply proves the contrary to be the fact. The religious and consistent Friend is at peace with all the world, and is capable of a free communion of spirit with many who have little or no participation in some of his views. The more faithful we are in filling up that place in the body which has been assigned to us by the great Head of the church, the greater will be our capacity for a true brotherhood with all those persons who are building on the same foundation—with all who love, serve, and follow, the Lord Jesus Christ.

CONCLUSION.

OUR discussion of the several religious sentiments and practices in great measure peculiar to the Society of Friends being now brought to its conclusion, the reader is invited to take a short and general review of that train of reflexion which has been pursued in the present volume. For this purpose, his recollection will be assisted by the following summary.

However the members of any particular religious community may rejoice in those privileges, which, in consequence of the adoption of certain principles, attach in a pre-eminent manner to themselves, they ought never to lay aside a just and candid view of the spiritual blessings which are offered to all mankind, and of those, more particularly, which appertain to all the true members of the visible church of Christ. All men are the children of God by creation, and over all he extends his loving kindness and tender mercy. Christ died for all men, and all, as we may conclude from certain passages of Scripture, are endued with a measure of the moral light and redeeming power of the Spirit of truth. With respect to the true members of the visible church of Christ, these, to whatever

name, sect, or country, they may belong, are the common participants of the *especial* favours of their Lord. It is their happiness to love and serve an incarnate, crucified, risen, and glorified, Redeemer. They enjoy a superabundant light; an exceeding grace; a revealed and established hope; and a pre-eminent degree of the communion of the Holy Spirit.

United as all real christians are on the basis of fundamental truth, they are found to differ from one another in their view and estimate of various particulars in religion. Thus (for the present) do those principles, which are essential to the salvation of souls, pass to the various classes of true christians, through as various mediums; and although some of these mediums are evidently purer and more spiritual than others, it may be acknowledged, (with gratitude to that Being whose mercies are manifold and whose resources are infinite,) that this consequence of human infirmity is overruled for good, and that there is permitted to exist, in the christian church, a real and even useful variety of administration, under one Head.

Christians, however, while they abstain from judging one another on such matters, and rejoice in their great and common salvation, ought nevertheless to endeavour after a *full persuasion* respecting their peculiar religious views;—to examine the foundation on which they rest;—to leave hold of them and suffer them to pass away, if their foundation is a bad one; but, if they are grounded, according to the decision of their deliberate judgment, on the unchangeable truth of God, to cleave to them with integrity, patience, and perseverance. Let us, who belong to the Society of

Friends, apply these remarks to our own religious peculiarities. They are evidently of a striking character, and of considerable importance in their practical results, and even at first sight they appear calculated to promote the tranquillity of the world, and the spiritual prosperity of the church of Christ. What then is the nature, what the authority, of those principles out of which they spring?

In reply to this enquiry it may be observed, in the first place, that the great doctrine which lies at the root of them—a doctrine declared in Scripture, and admitted to be true by the generality of pious christians—is that of the immediate and perceptible guidance of the Holy Spirit. Whatever may be the experience of other persons, it is certainly *our* experience, that the very same guiding and governing Spirit, which leads the right-minded amongst us into the practice of universally acknowledged christian virtues, *also* leads into these peculiarities; and hence we derive a satisfactory conviction that they are truly consistent with the law of God, and arise out of its principles.

In order to the confirmation of this general argument, we cannot do better than bring our several peculiarities, respectively, to the test of that clear revelation of the divine will, which is contained in the Holy Scriptures, and which more particularly distinguishes the New Testament. Such has been the work attempted in the present volume. The points first considered, in pursuance of this plan, have been those which have a more immediate connexion with our religious duties towards God himself. Again to recapitulate the arguments adduced, on the several parti-

cular subjects alluded to, would be at once tedious and unnecessary: but the reader will recollect that our disuse of typical ordinances,—our refusal to admit any ministry in our congregations but such as flows from the immediate influences of the Holy Spirit,—our views respecting the selection, preparation, and ordination, of the ministers of the gospel,—our declining to participate in the prevalent system of hiring preachers, or of otherwise making for the ministry pecuniary returns,—our allowance of the public praying and preaching of females,—and our practice of waiting together upon the Lord *in silence*,—are all grounded on the great christian law, that they who worship God, who is a Spirit, “*must worship him in spirit and in truth*”. We conceive it to be in precise accordance with the principle of this law,—a law which in some respects distinguished the dispensation of christianity from that of Judaism,—that we abandon all ceremonial and typical ordinances, all forms of prayer, all written and prepared ministry, all human interference in the steps preceding the exercise of the sacred office, and all purchase or hire of its administrations; that we attempt not the use of words when words are not required of us; and that, while we endeavour to place an exclusive reliance on the Great High Priest of our profession, we do not hesitate to make way for the liberty of his Spirit, and to suffer the wind to blow *where it listeth*.

The views thus entertained by the Society of Friends, on the subject of worship, arise from the entirely spiritual principles, as we deem them, of the christian dispensation. We conceive, however, that

the divine Author and Minister of that dispensation not only brought to light and instituted, among his followers, the highest standard of divine worship, but promulgated also a perfect code of practical morality. It is the deliberate opinion of Friends,—an opinion which they have often found it their duty to declare,—that this moral code ought to be maintained, by the followers of Jesus, in *all its original purity*; that no compromise ought to be made between the law of the world and the law of God; that the latter can never rightly yield, either to the dictates of human wisdom, or to the requisitions of apparent expediency. In consequence of the impression made on our minds by this general sentiment, (a sentiment which, however far it may be from being confined to ourselves, is probably maintained in our society with a more than common degree of completeness,) we have been led to avoid various practices, which are still usual, not only among worldly-minded persons, but among many sincere and even pious christians. We conceive it to be in true consistency with the requisitions of the divine will, when rightly understood, that we abstain from lowering the standard of *truth*, and from a presumptuous cursing of self, by the utterance of oaths; from infringing the law of *love*, by taking any part either in offensive or in defensive warfare; from fomenting the pride of man by the use of flattering titles and expressions, in their nature wholly complimentary; from addressing to mortals those acts of reverence which are on other occasions employed to mark our allegiance to the Deity himself; from gratifying our own vanity, by

the useless ornamenting of the person or the apparel; and from a conformity with some other common customs which we consider to have an evil tendency.

Now the reader will recollect that these several peculiarities — appertaining partly to worship, and partly to the conduct of common life—are not only, according to our apprehension, the natural and lawful results of certain plain christian principles, but are for the most part found to derive no slight support and confirmation from particular passages of the sacred writings, and especially of the New Testament, which appear to bear to them respectively a precise and specific relation.

Such is a short and general summary of the contents of the preceding essays. It may now be remarked, that another general argument, in favour of the christian origin of our religious peculiarities, is suggested by the consideration of them *as parts of a whole*. The religion of Friends, when regarded as *a system* of doctrine and practice, may be described as consisting of many points, on which their views are coincident with those of their fellow-christians, and of others the holding of which is, more or less, confined to themselves. Now, among the various parts which constitute this whole, there exists an uninterrupted and very striking harmony. Whilst our peculiarities are in no degree inconsistent with those fundamentals in religion, which are common to all true christians, they will be found in a remarkable manner *adapted to one another*. Our high view, respecting the unprofitableness of religious ceremonies, and the total abolition of types, is completely in

accordance with views equally high, in relation to the true nature and right exercise, the divine origin and absolute freedom, of the christian ministry. And with our sentiments in regard to the ministry, nothing can be more properly coincident, than our doctrine respecting the importance and utility of silent worship. Nor is it less evident that the estimate which we have been led to form of christian morality, as evinced in a practical testimony borne against all swearing and fighting, and in favour of complete plainness and simplicity in conduct and conversation, is *on a level* with such of our principles as appertain to the subject of worship, and constitutes a necessary part of one complete and harmonious view of the purity, spirituality, and true perfection, of the gospel dispensation. We know that in systems of religion which are of merely human invention—which have no better authority than the wisdom of the creature—there are ever found some inconsistent and discordant particulars, which betray the secret that the work is of man. In the absence of such inconsistency, therefore, in the nice and accurate adjustment of part with part, of sentiment with sentiment, of practice with practice, in the unbroken harmony which pervades the great whole,—I cannot but perceive a strong confirming evidence that the religious system of Friends results from the operations of the divine Spirit, and is bot-tomed on the unvarying principles of the law of God.

Since then the views and practices which have been considered in the present work are maintained, *as a whole*, by no christian society except that of Friends, and since they appear to be rightly grounded on certain essential principles in the divine law, and to be adapted, with singular exactness, to the purity and spirituality of the gospel dispensation, I may venture with humility to express my own sentiment, that Friends, viewed as a distinct fraternity in the church universal, have been brought to a greater degree of religious light, and to juster views of the true standard of worship and conduct, than any other class or denomination of christians with whom I have the privilege of being acquainted. While, therefore, I well know the value of that fellowship in the gospel which subsists among all the true believers in the Lord Jesus, and while I hope never to forget the vastly *paramount* importance of those great and fundamental principles which are common to them all, I find myself in an especial manner attached to that particular society, and the conviction which I have now expressed is the ground of this attachment. While I am far from depreciating the usefulness of any existing class of serious christians, and while I believe that they are severally permitted to occupy appropriate departments in the fold of the great Shepherd, I nevertheless entertain the sentiment (in unison, it may be hoped, with the views of many of my readers) that a peculiar importance attaches to the station maintained in the church of Christ by the pious among Friends; and for this reason—that they appear to be the appointed depositaries of certain plain,

practical, christian truths, which are at present far from being generally received, but which, originating in the will of God, as it is both inwardly and outwardly revealed, may be expected, as the church on earth gradually advances to a condition of greater spirituality, to become more widely disseminated, and more fully allowed.

Small as are the numbers who properly belong to our society, and who are connected together by the wholesome rules of its discipline, it will perhaps be admitted that this result has already taken place in no very inconsiderable degree. The inefficacy of all merely human forms and contrivances in the work of religion,—the inconsistency of typical rites with the *entire* spirituality of the christian law of worship,—the propriety of waiting upon God from time to time in reverent silence,—the excellence and advantage of a ministry of the gospel, neither appointed nor paid by man, but freely exercised under the direct influence of the Spirit of Christ,—the danger and sinfulness of all swearing,—the value of an *undeviating* principle of christian love, forbearance, and peace,—and the beauty of a correct and complete simplicity in word, appearance, and deportment,—are points, as we may humbly hope, gently yet plainly opening to the view of many serious christians of different denominations, and in various parts of the world. Nor can I conceal from myself, that any such approach towards the religious sentiments entertained by the Society of Friends must be of real and important advantage to the church at large: for, however the name of quakerism may be disregarded and ultimately perhaps forgotten, the

more general adoption of those principles by which Friends are at present distinguished, must, according to my apprehension, have a decided and very powerful tendency to the introduction of a *better day*;—a day, when all men shall cease to place an undue dependence upon the teaching of their neighbour, and shall know the Lord for themselves; when the government of his own church shall rest more exclusively upon him who is Wonderful, Counsellor, the Prince of Peace; when the sword shall be beat into the ploughshare, and the spear into the pruning-hook; when the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the lion lie down with the kid; when the glory of the Lord shall be more immediately and abundantly revealed, and when “all flesh shall see it together”.

The reader can scarcely fail to understand, that, in thus expressing my attachment to the Society of Friends, in preference to other christian bodies, my attention is still directed exclusively to the religious principles which Friends profess, and by which many of them sincerely endeavour to order their walk in life. I am very far from forgetting our deficiencies and imperfections as a community, or how very apt we are, as individuals, to fall short in our conduct of that high spiritual and moral standard which so plainly, so pre-eminently, attaches to our profession. One great reason why the religious principles of Friends are not found to take a more rapid and extended course, in the church and in the world, is probably this—that so many of us fail, in various respects, from properly regulating our practice according to those principles. I desire

to apply this observation, in the first place, to myself, and, secondly, I cannot be satisfied to conclude these essays without urging on my young friends, and on all my brethren and sisters in religious profession, the importance, to ourselves, to the society of which we are members, and to the church universal, *of our walking worthily of the vocation wherewith we are called.*

This subject may be considered, in the first place, as it relates to those christian testimonies which distinguish our own body in the church, and which have been considered at large in the present volume. Since we have so much reason to be convinced that these religious peculiarities have originated, not in the imagination of men, but in the will of God,—that we have been led into the practice of them by the Spirit of truth,—that they accord with the dictates of the divine law, as it is recorded in the Scriptures,—that they are of an edifying tendency, and are calculated to promote the spiritual welfare both of our own society and of the church at large,—and finally that they are in a particular manner deposited in our keeping,—it unquestionably becomes us to maintain them during our walk through life, with simplicity, sincerity, firmness, and diligence.

That it is our true interest as well as duty to be faithful in the observance of such a course, is sufficiently evident, from this single consideration,—that, in the sight of Him who is the Judge of all men and the Author of every blessing, “*to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams*”; I. Sam. xv. 22. But the same inference may be

deduced from another position—equally incontrovertible; viz., that the christian's religious prosperity and advancement in grace will ever be found to depend, in no inconsiderable degree, upon his keeping his own *right place* in the body of Christ.

It is by no means difficult to figure to ourselves the case of a loose and *latitudinarian* quaker, and to mark the dangers by which he is surrounded. Placed by the good hand of divine providence under that high administration of christianity which I have now been endeavouring to describe, and plainly called upon to glorify God by the steady maintenance of our peculiar religious testimonies, he flies from the mortifications which they involve, and pacifies his conscience with the persuasion that nothing more is necessary for him, than an adherence to those fundamental truths, the profession of which is common to christians in general. The impartial observer will probably allow that such an individual greatly deceives himself, and falls into a very dangerous snare. He stifles the secret convictions of his own mind, quenches the gentle and salutary influences of the Lord's Spirit, leans to his own understanding, indulges himself in plausible and mis-applied reasoning, and departs from that *practical* confidence in God, which is the life and substance of true religion. However he may cherish the notion that he is still maintaining the general principles of christianity, he neglects to carry those principles into detail, omits his *own* duty, and fails to occupy that station in the church which has been really assigned to him by the Shepherd and Bishop of souls. The lamentable consequences of

such a failure—of such a frustration of the gracious purposes of his divine Master—are but too evident. So far is he from growing in grace, and from prospering in that christian course which is trodden by all the followers of Christ, that he too often dwindles into a carnal, lifeless, and worldly, spirit, and gradually loses his footing on the Rock of ages.

It has occasionally happened that some of our members who have never thoroughly understood or embraced the sentiments of Friends, and who have been thrown into much intimate association with other christians, have quitted the ranks of the society, and have been permitted under some other administration of religion, to pursue their christian course with seriousness, zeal, and fidelity. Although I am persuaded that such persons would never have forsaken so pure and practical a form of christianity, had they been more fully aware of the christian grounds and real value of our principles; it is not *to them* that the observations now offered are intended to be applied; but to another class of persons somewhat more numerous than they;—persons whose notions of religion are derived almost exclusively through the medium of Friends, and who are secretly convinced of the veracity of our principles; but who, nevertheless, are unfaithful to the light bestowed upon them, and pusillaninously forsake the peculiar testimonies of the society, as soon as they are exposed by them to the necessity of denying their own wills and of bearing the cross of Christ. Such persons have both known and slighted the visitations of divine love in their hearts, and now perhaps they are left in a state of

dwarfishness and sterility, destitute at once both of the form and of the substance of religion. Our gracious Redeemer appears to have marked out for us within his varied and extended fold, a little space, where we may dwell in safety and find abundant opportunity to promote "the glory of God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will to men". But no sooner do we transgress the limits by which we are encircled, forsake our own station, and neglect the performance of those particular duties in the church which are committed to our charge, than we lose our religious strength, and are in great danger of falling back into the spirit of a vain and irreligious world. Finally, when this lamentable effect is produced, "the salt has lost its savour", and is "thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men"; Matt. v. 13.

Let us then be circumspect, steady, and bold, in the observance of our peculiar religious testimonies. Believing, as I trust we do, that they are given us in charge by Him who hath "all power in heaven and in earth", let us pray for his grace, that we may be preserved from the snares of the enemy, and may be enabled, in an awful day to come, to give a good account of our stewardship. We know that in exact proportion with the measure of light bestowed upon us is the weight, the extent, the awfulness, of our responsibility!

Here it may not be improper to remark, that the true efficacy of our religious peculiarities will greatly depend on the degree of *completeness* with which we maintain them. The double-minded man is declared

to be “unstable in all his ways”, and nothing surely is more calculated to diminish our usefulness in the church, than a want of true consistency. The garment “mingled of linen and woollen” was forbidden under the law, and such a garment (to employ the expressions in a metaphorical sense,) is worn by those persons, who, in some of their actions, adopt the highest standard of christian conduct, and on other occasions, are content with one of a very subordinate character. Is not such a description in some degree applicable to the member of the Society of Friends who refuses to take an oath, but consents to the payment of ecclesiastical demands? or to him, who bears a clear testimony in respect to tithes, but indirectly assists in military operations or carries arms in self-defence? or to him, who is faithful in all these particulars, but conforms to the fashions of the world in his language, manners, and appearance? or to him who wears a plain dress, but scruples not the use of flattering titles? I have already found occasion to remark, that throughout the religious system adopted by Friends, there exists an unbroken harmony—a real adaptation of practice with practice, and of part with part; and no sooner is any one of our testimonies forsaken, than this harmony is interrupted, and the work is in some degree (whether greater or less) marred upon the wheel. Undoubtedly it cannot be expected that those persons, whether members of the society or otherwise, who are under the influence of *convincement*, should be brought to see the whole of their duty at once. It is more probable that the several points of the prospect should open upon them

in succession. But as they are preserved in watchfulness unto prayer, and enabled to "*follow on to know the Lord*", I believe they will find that our several religious views and practices are the result of perfectly accordant principles, and flow from the same Spirit; and that in order to glorify God in the way which he has thus cast up for us, it is needful that we maintain them *all*, in a simple, undeviating, and consistent, manner.

Many of my readers must indeed be well aware, that the performance of our duty in these respects is no light, easy, or familiar, matter. In abstaining from so great a variety of practices which we deem to be inconsistent with the spirituality and purity of the gospel, and in thus opposing the opinions and habits of the generality of our fellow-christians, it is our lot, as I have already observed, to tread a very narrow path, and to be exposed to many circumstances of a mortifying nature. Let us then seek to be preserved in *deep humility*; for this is a condition of mind, which, above all others, will be found to soften the asperities and to diminish the difficulty of our course. The more our own pride and vanity are laid low; the more we are redeemed from the pursuit of that false honour, which is given and received by man, the better shall we be prepared for the service of Christ, and the less will be the pain of our conflict, in *becoming fools in the sight of the world, for his sake*. And, truly, we need not fear to take up the cross which we are thus called upon to bear, for, if we be but faithful in following the monitions of our heavenly Guide, we shall find that his grace is sufficient

for us, and that true wisdom is still “justified of her children”. It will be amply demonstrated in our experience, as it is in that of every humble and devoted christian, that the “foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God stronger than men”. Nor shall we dare to repine, when we reflect on the known characteristics of the christian calling: “For ye see your calling, brethren”, said the apostle, “how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty: and base things of the world, and *things which are despised* hath God chosen, yea and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence”; I. Cor. i. 26—29.

Having thus considered the dangers and evils which attach to the latitudinarian professor of the truth, as we hold it, we ought by no means to forget those which are equally inseparable from the condition of the *formalist*. Such is the weakness, such the deceitfulness, of our hearts, that our very abstinence from forms may sometimes become formal, and our several religious peculiarities may be maintained in the very spirit of the Scribes and Pharisees, who paid “tithes of mint and anise and cummin”, and omitted “the weightier matters of the law—judgment, mercy, and faith”; Matt. xxiii. 23. It is an awful thing to be liable in any respect to the charge of hypocrisy; for this is a sin which, as it finds a place in us, must not

only render us very offensive in the sight of God, but can never fail to retard the progress of that cause which we profess to love and to promote. When those who object to war in all its forms, as inconsistent with the christian principle of love, forget in their private life the law of meekness and long-suffering, and yield themselves a prey to wrath, malice, envy, and bitterness; when those who speak of worshipping the Father in a pre-eminently spiritual manner, are really living in the neglect of devotional duty; when those who sedulously shun the idle vanities of general society, are seduced into that covetousness which is idolatry, or are found indulging their gross and sinful appetites; when those who, in professed adherence to the law of truth, refuse to substitute even the *You* for the *Thou*, are found defective in common sincerity of language, or integrity of conduct;—then, indeed, the cause of truth is fearfully laid waste, and all that is distinguishing in our religious system is thrown, to the eyes of the enquiring world, into a deep and almost impenetrable shade.

However reasonably we may entertain the hope that the character of but few of our members will correspond in any great degree to the description now given, that description may nevertheless be partially and slightly applicable to many; and all of us, indeed, who are attached by the force of long-continued habit to the practices of Friends, have great need of watchfulness, lest we fall into this snare of our enemy;—lest, while he leaves us in quiet possession of the *figure* or *shell*, he rob us of the *substance* and *kernel* of our religion.

In conclusion I would remark, that the true preservative from any such dereliction of the virtue, honour, and love, which become our religious profession, as well as from the neglect of those duties which are in some degree confined to ourselves, will ever be found in the fear of God, and in a steady, abiding, reliance upon our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. If Christ be made unto us, of the Father, “wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption”, we shall not fail to live “as obedient children”. Reconciled unto God through faith in our Redeemer, and subjected to the government of the Holy Spirit, we shall order our steps aright, imitate the goodness of our heavenly Pattern, grow in grace and holiness, and experience a happy deliverance from the power and dominion of the prince of darkness.

Let us ever remember that there is no use or security in the superstructure, except it be erected upon a sure foundation; and that, in religious matters, “*other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus*”. Solicitous as I am that our peculiar testimonies should be maintained by us with all that faithfulness and vigour which their practical importance demands, I am perfectly aware that they are no sooner separated from *vital christianity*, than they become vain and unprofitable—deprived at once of all their efficacy and of all their stability. May it then be our humble and diligent endeavour to draw nigh unto the Father of Mercies, through “*the blood of the everlasting covenant*”, and to live “*by faith in the Son of God*”. Thus, and thus only, shall we be enabled to bear with acceptance the goodly fruits of

righteousness, to glorify the name of our God, and to fulfil the particular purposes for which he has seen meet to raise us up from among the children of men, to be, during his own good pleasure, a distinct and separate religious people.

THE END.

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