

*The open Address of New Testament Evidence :*

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THREE PLAIN MONUMENTS

Authenticating THREE FACTS, on which the  
Divinity of our Holy Religion has its Support.

Humbly proposed to PUBLIC CONSIDERATION,  
in an unthinking Age,

By CALEB FLEMING, D. D.

*—At the Mouth of three Witnesses shall the Matter be established.*  
DEUT. XIX. 15.

L O N D O N :

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

**A** Primary motive to this publication, was, the placing of three christian institutions in a light of evidence, which I apprehend will be new to the generality of christians.—A sincere aim is had at reviving a lost spirit of devotion, and at promoting the real interests of genuine christianity.

I presume to have formed much the same ideas of the gospel dispensation with two ancient prophets; one of whom foretold,—“that  
“ the way of holiness should be so very plain,  
“ that the way-faring man, though a fool,  
“ [i. e. of small abilities] should not err  
“ therein.” And the other said,—“they  
“ shall no more teach every man his neighbour,  
“ and every man his brother, saying,  
“ KNOW THE LORD, for they all shall know  
“ me, from the least of them, unto the greatest  
“ of them, saith the Lord.”

N. B. The views which, as a Pædobaptist, I have taken of the infant right to baptism, in the second discourse, is not with the least

## ADVERTISEMENT.

design to revive, or ever more engage in that controversy.

Should the interpretation, here given, of these monuments meet with a favourable reception, and my life be continued, it may be followed with an arrangement of thoughts upon another threefold testimony; and in as short a compass.

Hoxton Square,  
Feb. 18, 1771.

C. F.

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*On the Reason and End of the Christian Sabbath.*

**I**N discoursing on the three institutions, which I understand do give testimony to the truth of the Christian system, shall chuse to begin with the Christian Sabbath; and distinctly treat on the subject, from that text, Mar. ii. 27, 28. “And he (i. e. Jesus) said unto them, The sabbath was made for man; and not man for the sabbath: Therefore, (or, so that) the Son of man is Lord, even of the sabbath.”

Both St. Matthew and St. Mark mention the fact of our Lord's disciples plucking the ears of corn, as they went through the fields on the sabbath-day. They report this as giving great offence to the captious chief Pharisees, who considered it as a violation of the sabbatic-law; which occasioned that defence of them, here made by their divine master. Indeed these two evangelists do record different parts of his reasoning. St. Matthew has made his master's plea to support upon what God said by Hosea, of the superiority which the moral has to the ritual: viz. “God will have mercy rather than sacrifice.” “Hence,” says Jesus, “had you known what that maxim of the divine government meaneth, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.” St. Mark has omitted this in his narrative; but then he has noticed what St. Matthew has not, viz. “the sabbath was made for man; not man for the sabbath.”—

Nevertheless, they are consistent; inasmuch, as we may reasonably conclude, our Lord's defence

would contain in it, the reasons mentioned by both historians. Probably, his discourse upon a subject so very important, and so little understood, would be very distinguishing and copious.

Among other things which this serves to illustrate, it shews that those learned men \* were mistaken, who have been of opinion, “ that St. Mark “ only copied St. Matthew’s gospel ; ”—at the same time it well accounts for the other variations that are found of our Lord’s teachings, in the narrative given by the four historians ; since we have no reason to suppose that any one of them has recorded the whole of his discourses to the people. It is therefore enough, that the fundry variations found in their several narratives, are no way discordant.

Further, when we consider with what a degree of superstition the Pharisees had perverted the law of the sabbath, and of how much use and importance that law originally was, we may reasonably conclude the blessed Jesus would not omit one view of the reason of a capital law, that was apt to inform, or to convince, and so remove prejudice from that people.

According to St. Mark, he first refers them to an instance fully in point, of a freedom, which David and the men with him took, far greater than that of his disciples ; “ for they went into the house “ of God and took the shew-bread, which was “ only lawful for the priests to eat : ” which freedom, says he, your own rabbis do justify.—Nay more, your very priests themselves do much more servile work every sabbath in the temple service, than my disciples have now done ; and yet those  
priests

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\* Mr. Whiston, and others. Against which consult Dr. Lardner’s Supplement, Vol. I. ch. v. sect. v. Cred. Vol. III. p. 403.

priests are blameless. Indeed, Lightfoot observes, that some of their most learned doctors say,—“there is no sabbatism at all in the temple.”—Thus much premised,

In treating on the subject before us, our business will then be, to inquire,

First, into the original law of the sabbath.

Secondly, into the reason, design, and end of the institution.

Thirdly, in what sense the Son of man is Lord, even of the sabbath.

If we carefully examine into the original law of the sabbath, we shall be persuaded, from the pen of Moses, that the Creator of this solar system, did separate and sanctify a seventh part of time, for the religious observance of man, from the beginning—and though the Hebrew historian makes no mention of a weekly celebration in the antediluvian world, yet we may reasonably conjecture, he would have it taken for granted, that this creation-law did operate, and must have been a standing rule throughout its ages; and also to Noah and his descendents after the flood.

Mr. Bedford, the scripture chronologist, was of opinion, that the Hebrew sabbath was thrown one day backward from the original weekly sabbath; and was thus changed, to be a monument of Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage\*. This sanctification

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\* His words are these. “As the beginning of the year was altered from one season to another, so the day of the sabbath

tification of the sabbath, was to be marked out by a cessation from every kind of civil and secular labour; and from all those recreations and loose gratifications which are not compatible with such a religious separation: for whatever God sanctifies or separates, must appear to be, in its own nature, distinguished from what is common; i. e. from what has upon it no mark of holiness.—Look into the fourth commandment in the decalogue, and you will find it to run thus: “Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God; (or, to the Lord thy God) in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man servant, nor thy maid servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it.”

Thus evident is it, that the original law of the sabbath is expressive of a rest from all secular, servile, bodily labour; and from every of those amusements and recreations, which are inconsistent with a keeping holy the seventh, or sabbath day.

N. B. I have mentioned those amusements and recreations which are not consistent with the original

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“was also altered from one day of the week to another. That which was the seventh day from the creation, was the first day of Adam’s life; and so it was the first day of the week, according to their computation: but now it is altered to the seventh day of the week; to be observed by the Israelites as a sabbath, in commemoration of their deliverance out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage.” Bedford’s Script. Chronol. p. 298.

nal law of the sabbath: And for this I will cite supreme authority.—The great God says, by his prophet Isaiah, when he makes a promise of favouring a people; “if thou turn away thy foot from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; then shalt thou delight in the Lord.” *Is. lviii. 13, 14.*

On the contrary, “every one that defileth the sabbath shall surely be put to death; for whosoever shall do any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done, but in the seventh is the sabbath of holiness to the Lord; whosoever doeth any work on the sabbath day shall surely be put to death.” *Exod. xxxi. 14, 15.*

Such is the original law of the sabbath, that a violation thereof was a capital crime, and to be punished with death; as that law operated under the Mosaic dispensation. So it is, that when God, by Ezekiel, describes the enormous depravity of a people, he mentions this impiety, “thou hast profaned my sabbaths.” *Ch. xxii. 8.* Hence it is observable, that it ever has been essential to moral virtue, and to an establishment in righteousness, that man “remembered to keep holy the sabbath day.” The law of the sabbath essentially belongs to the system of the divine moral: and tho’ we call it a law of the first table, yet, on our observance of it, greatly depends the regard we pay to the duties we owe both to God and man: for if we express the highest reverence of God, and suffer not any debasing ideas of him, either by images or pictures, and supremely venerate the authority of his

his name, we then shall sanctify his sabbaths; for this will, all of it, be implied in that sabbath sanctification. So respecting the relation in which we stand to mankind, we shall honour our parents; not dare to injure any human life; neither by fraud nor force alienate the properties of others; not dare to violate the chastity of any body, nor stab their reputation; and finally, we shall not suffer the illicit desire of another's property to have place in our breasts.

But, on the contrary, if we make no conscience of hallowing God's sabbaths, we shall neither pay him homage, nor regard the rights of our fellow men: whereas, in fact, a contemplation, a serious renewed attention to the system of moral obligation, is the proper employment of a weekly sabbath; and the way in which it is to be sanctified.

So much may suffice for a plain and easy stating of the original sabbatic law itself, which required a religious weekly recess from all civil and secular labour.

We are, secondly, to inquire into the reason, design, and end of the institution. "The sabbath was made for man; not man for the sabbath." The sense of which divine declaration appears, to me, to be this, viz. that the real benefit, and best advantage of man, gave the reason and end of the institution, as it is adapted to keep alive the sense, both of his dependence upon, and obligation to his Maker. If, therefore, that law should be understood in a sense that is injurious to this his piety, it must be a very mistaken interpretation. But inasmuch as the sabbath was made for man, it is thence evident that "man was not made for the sabbath;" because the sabbath institution being but a means to  
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an end, it cannot possibly be, at the same time, both the means and the end. It follows, that to make the law of the sabbath, in fact, incommodious, disgusting, injurious, or prejudicial to man, exposing him thereby to sundry evils, as the superstitious Pharisees were wont to do, would be in effect to affirm, that "man was made for the sabbath." Man is not therefore to deny himself thereon what relates to the necessaries of life; he is not to forego any of those refreshments which heaven has designed him; he is not to sacrifice either his health or his safety, because of the law of the sabbath. The reason of which is manifest, since the institution was to be wholly for his benefit, or in his favour, as a creature whom God has made for the pure and sublime pleasures of religion! Whatever, therefore, would depress his spirits, or indispose him for the rational, chearful, delightful services of admiration, thanksgiving, and praise, must be carefully avoided, as far as in his power, on that holy day.

Let us now attempt to enter yet more fully into the reason and end of the institution: and here we must again advert to the Mosaic history. "Thus  
" the heavens and the earth were finished, and all  
" the host of them; and the seventh day God  
" ended his work which he had made. And  
" God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it;  
" because that in it he had rested from all his  
" work which he created to make." Gen. ii. 1,  
2, 3. But if Deity may be said to have rested from creating, and to have taken, as it were, a retrospect of his own works on that day, as they were designed by him to display his own perfections; it is but reasonable that man should be taught to employ himself in those acts of religious contemplation, which are most proper to solace,  
delight,

delight, and improve the mind in a knowledge of the Creator, and in a devotedness to all his will.

And, indeed, if we are his creatures, and have a necessary incessant dependence on him, if the rectitude and improvement of our faculties and powers do require a religious attention to his divine teachings, and a stated thankful recognition of the infinite debt we are under to his adorable goodness! assuredly, no institution could have been more apt, none better suited for the purpose of keeping alive the spirit of devotion, than the law of a weekly sabbath.

No one, who thinks at all, can mistake the reason and end of sanctifying one seventh part of time. Were we to imagine that when the Creator had formed man in his own image, and made him capable of discerning the traces of his infinite, his absolute perfections, as they are conspicuous all around us; and yet, that he should leave him quite undirected to any stated times of paying his social homage to his Maker, this would argue a most indeterminate, disordered, lawless, state of man: whereas a weekly sabbath, sanctified for a religious recess from all secular labour, and to the purpose of attaining to an improved acquaintance with the Author of our beings, and the preserver of our lives; has, upon the very face of it, all the marks and tokens of adorable wisdom, and of divine care and fatherly benevolence.

There truly is in it an amazing tenderness and compassion, even when abstractedly viewed, as only a weekly rest or recess from the toils and bodily labours of man, in his civil and secular pursuits. Mercy is therein shewn to a creature destined to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow: busied, im-  
mersed

mersed in the cares of this precarious mortal life. Nay, the very beasts of burden are compassionately allowed the benefit of a weekly rest from their labours.

Whichever way we contemplate the original law of the sabbath, we see a design and end worthy the Creator of the world—whereas to suppose man without such a law of recess from secular labour, and from all the amusements or the pleasures of a sensitive indulgence, would be to suppose his Maker indifferent to, and unconcerned about the well-being of his own intelligent, rational workmanship:—and which would infer a flagrant solecism in the government of God.

As the divine appointment now stands, no objection can possibly arise either because of a too near, or a too remote distance of the days of religious rest. Six days are an interval sufficient for all our secular bodily labours, and for every laudable attention to the more common businesses of humanity.—But a longer interval, would be apt to wear off the serious impressions, made by our solemn and devout sabbath engagements.

Again, more than one day in seven, God has not sanctified, nor separated for social, public, solemn worship. “Six days shalt thou labour, and do all that thou hast to do”—*q. d.* One in seven thou shalt keep holy.—Men therefore, who presume to make other days holy, do daringly counteract his express command, who said—“Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work\*.”

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\* Look into the church calendar of saint-days, and other holidays, and despise the authority.

I would further observe, were we only intended for these sensitive scenes, and had no concern with a future state of being, I do not see how the institution of a weekly rest could answer to more than for the relief and the refreshment it gives from the fatigue of merely bodily labour. The idea of a religious rest, of our sanctifying the sabbath, or keeping it holy, would then have but an unsatisfactory meaning, as the apprehensions of our concern with God must be so transient and precarious; and, at longest, but of a momentary short continuance.

On the other hand, a sanctifying of the sabbath has, in the most corrupt times, given the distinguishing characteristic of God's people. So Malachi represents—"Then they who feared the  
 " Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord  
 " hearkened and heard, and a book of remem-  
 " brance was written before him for them that  
 " feared the Lord, and that thought on his name.  
 " And they shall be mine, said the Lord of hosts,  
 " in that day when I make up my jewels, and  
 " I will spare them as a man spares his own son  
 " that serves him. Then shall ye return and  
 " discern between the righteous and the wicked,  
 " between him that serveth God, and him that  
 " serveth him not." Chap. iii. 16. I cannot but be of opinion, that here must be a reference to men who kept his sabbath, since his name is upon that institution, and there is no greater external evidence of men's fearing the Lord, than that of their religiously observing a day he has sanctified, and separated for the purposes of recommending to one another a supreme reverence of his name. By sanctifying and prophaning his sabbaths, a distinction was ever made between "him who serveth God,  
 " and

“ and him who serveth him not.”\* Even an apostle exhorts Christians, “ not to forsake the assembling of themselves together, as was the manner of some.” Heb. x. 25. And in the same epistle he mentions the rest of a seventh-day sabbath, as emblematical of that rest which remains for the people of God. Chap. iv.

Affured we may be, the Deity would never have divulged a creation-law, relative to the religious rest of man from his secular labours, and enforced the observance by capital sanctions; he would never have erected such a monument of his uncontrovertible claim of supreme homage, if he, in his unerring wisdom, had not seen it calculated to keep alive an universal sense of his supreme dominion, and of that unrivalled right of sovereignty which he has in his moral kingdom.

Having thus shewn the reasons, design, and end of the institution, shall, thirdly, enquire in what sense “ the Son of man is Lord even † of the sabbath.” Some have been inclined to understand “ Son of man,” here, as applicable in common to the human species. I am persuaded, it is and can only be applicable to Jesus Christ; since the phrase is never once used by him on any other occasion, but to denote himself; nor is it supposable, that a creation-law should be abolished, by the man Christ Jesus’s declaring himself “ Lord even of the sabbath.” He came not to destroy or  
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\* Associations at coffee-houses and taverns, or at the Royal-Exchange, or in public walks, do not seem to have upon them the air and spirit of sanctifying the sabbath.

† I should think *καί*, to be here an expletive, that makes the phrase more emphatical, and not a copulative, and so read it *even*, rather than *also*.

relax any part of the creation-law, or the prophets; his professed business was to revive and restore the lost moral among the people. Among whose degeneracies we find the law of the sabbath had been sadly violated. See If. lviii. 13, 14. Lam. i. 7. Ezek. xx. 13, 16, 24. Amos viii. 5.

So our Lord came to fulfil, or give energy to the law and the prophets, and to give a sanction to the law of the sabbath. "That he is Lord even of the sabbath," appears from many reasons that are conclusive. In the first place, his authority as the supreme head of a new creation, took place upon his resurrection, which was on the first day of the week; and as the last dispensation of God's truth and grace introduced and opened by him, was to be distinguished from all other dispensations, so it was fit and reasonable, that the weekly rest should be changed from the seventh to the first day of the week, in demonstration of that great event, viz. his resurrection.

If the opinion I mentioned of Mr. Bedford's be right, as to the original sabbath having been moved one day back, when the Hebrew covenant was made at Sinai, it would then follow, that by the change from the seventh to the first day of the week, our Lord restored the sabbath to its primitive state, under the gospel covenant.

However this was, it is reasonable to conclude, that he, whom God has made head over all things to his church, should so adapt the model of Christian worship, as would render his authority more conspicuous to all who examine into the constitution of his church and kingdom. "If any man be in Christ, (says an apostle) he is in a new creation; old things are passed away, and behold

“ behold all things are become new.”—Light-foot comments thus upon it: “ A new church, “ the Jews that were unbelieving cast off, the “ Gentiles taken in ; new ordinances in his church, “ ceremonious worship taken down, and spiritual “ set up ; new sacraments, baptism and the Lord’s “ supper—a new covenant, a new and living way “ into the most holy — a new creature — and in a “ word, all things new. So that in this case, a “ new manner of worship, new ordinances, new “ sacraments to be committed to the old sabbath, “ would have been improper, and a new sabbath “ must have been for these, as well as they them- “ selves are new.” Besides, he, the Christian’s Lord, lay in the grave all the old sabbath ; but he rose on the new sabbath.

It must be confessed, after all, we have no explicit canon, no commandment from Christ, that expresses the change of the sabbath ; but yet we may account for our not having it from his lips, who was made under the law, since his death was to dissolve the Hebrew covenant, Eph. ii. 14, 15, 16. Col. ii. 14, 15, 16. On the other hand, if we are allowed to consider it as the original sabbath ; or when we compare this declaration with the Lord’s appearance to his disciples, convened religiously on the first day of the week ; with St. Luke’s account of the Christians meeting together at Troas, to break bread on the first day of the week, Acts xx. 7. with the orders given to the church at Corinth, to make their charitable collections on that day, 1 Cor. xvi. 2. and again, compare these things with the testimony of the earliest Christian writers, we shall find the evidence quite satisfactory, full, and convincing.

Justin Martyr, in his Apology, who flourished in the year 140, says, "That on the day, called  
 " the day of the Sun, all the Christian inhabitants,  
 " both of city and country, met together, where  
 " the LECTOR read some portions of the holy scrip-  
 " tures; and the bishop preached unto them, and  
 " administered the eucharist\*." And Tertullian, who flourished in the year 200, says in his Apology,  
 " That because of their religious observance of  
 " Sunday, they were accused by the heathens of  
 " reverencing and adoring the sun†." These are very early and authentic testimonies.

Moreover, as this Son of Man did most perfectly understand the divine constitutions, and was able to determine with certainty what did, and what did not belong to the law of the sabbath, he might with propriety thus affirm of himself, " that he was  
 " Lord even of the sabbath;" and we know that, as he came not to destroy or relax the law or the prophets, but to fulfil, he must have given spirit and energy to the sabbath law. Hence he shewed the people, that that institution could not counteract the law of reason, the law of truth, and the law of nature; or that the observance of a sacred rest from secular labour would not controul or counteract any act, either of necessity or of mercy. On all these considerations, he could therefore with propriety affirm, " that the Son of Man is Lord  
 " even of the sabbath."

### SOME REFLECTIONS.

I. It appears from the sabbatic law, that man was made for the contemplation, adoration, and  
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\* Lord King's Primitive Church, ch. II. part I. page 42.

† Ibid. part II. page 22.

fruition of his Maker ; for as much as the Creator sanctified a seventh part of time to be a weekly rest, in imitation of his own rest from creating. No doubt, this is said in condescension to our infirmities. The process of creation is represented in that gradual order, which might best assist the human mind in its conceptions and contemplation. But, were we to form our ideas of creative power, in a mere abstract manner, we should be inclined to conclude, Deity no sooner spake than it was done: no sooner commanded, than it stood fast: infinite wisdom and almighty power can assuredly produce instantaneously, and without labour.

Yet, should we suppose numbers of limited intelligences to have been witnesses of the production of this amazing solar system, we might then consider it as a progressive production, in six days divine operation : and from a sublime passage in the book of Job, this should seem to have been the case ; for Jehovah asks Job, “ Where wast thou when I laid the foundation of the earth ? “ when the morning stars sung together, and when “ the sons of God shouted for joy ? ”

This renders the Mosaic account free from difficulties, and shews that the Creator did graciously adapt the energy of his creative power to the more distinct contemplation of those pre-existent intelligences. And because the Creator is represented as ceasing from his works on the seventh day, and as sanctifying that day for man’s weekly rest from his labours ; hence it appears, that God designed man should employ himself on that day in admiring, adoring, and felicitating views of his Maker.

II. The reason of thus sanctifying one day in seven, renders the law of the sabbath incapable of any limitation or abatement in its divine obligation. It is an institution that has alike consulted the weal of man, in every age of the world. To my purpose, a writer says, "Religion is as necessary to the formation and establishment of political society, as to the preservation and tranquil state of the individual. It was long ago observed by one, most intimately acquainted with the sundry workings of the human heart, that he would sooner believe a city might be built without a foundation, than a government formed and upheld without the belief of a Deity. It is the full and firm persuasion of a God, and of an equal, impartial retribution in a world to come, which is the very cement of society, that imparts life, spirit, and vigour to all its parts, and universally excites to respective engagements and duties."

"If men did not now and then retire from the anxious cares of this life, and openly profess their belief of God's continual presence with, and his watchful eye over them; the desire of requesting of him what they want, and of returning thanks for what they have, would gradually decline, and in time lose all guidance and influence over them. Hence the limitation of the seventh part of our time to rest and sacred offices, is an act of the great God, coeval with the creation of man\*."

"The sabbath was made for man:" *i. e.* His piety and yirtue ever did, ever will depend upon  
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\* An Address to the People of England on the Manners of the Times, pages 5 and 9. A. D. 1767.



humiliation and distress. The sabbath was made for the highest benefit of man, and therefore not any thing should be imposed on him, that may discompose or disable him from the chearful services of thanksgiving, admiration, and praise\*.

“ Man is not made for the sabbath.” Hence he is not allowed to take such freedoms with the law, as would load the observance with any thing fanciful or superstitious. He may neither refuse his food, deny himself of the refreshment, which nature requires, nor make the services of the day such as would too much fatigue and exhaust his spirits, or hazard and injure his health, by the rules of observance.

IV. Since “ the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath,” we may well be satisfied, that he had an undoubted right to change the seventh-day rest to that of the first day of the week. The reason of the change seems very obvious ; since it is thus made a divine monument, on which is recorded and signified to all future ages, that the fact was real, of “ Christ’s resurrection from the dead.” An event, in its own nature and consequences, the most astonishing! An event, that has given spirit, power, and life to this last dispensation. An event, on which so much depends, that apostles do reckon that without it, all our faith, and all our hope, and all their preaching too, would have been vain. 1 Cor. xv. 14, 17, 19.

You have found us assigning many reasons for the change of the sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week, which, when duly considered, have in them a weight sufficient to justify  
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\* Yet, what grimace, what affected solemn airs do some enthusiasts put on, in their Sunday’s Services!

an observance of it, in honour of our Lord's resurrection. For, by the means of his resurrection, St. Peter tells us, "we are begotten again  
" to the lively hope of an inheritance, incor-  
" ruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away,  
" reserved in the heavens for us." 1 Peter i. 3, 4.

V. How astonishing is it, that Christians, in our day, should take such very licentious freedoms, as they do, in sabbath-prophanations! Do you say, the times are enormously corrupt and degenerate, that impiety and profligacy do give the spirit and complexion of the present age? That its debaucheries and vices are almost, if not altogether, unexampled? Be it so: what then? Why, do but carefully and critically investigate the cause, and you must be obliged to attribute and ascribe the source of this shocking malignity to sabbath-prophanation. For, verily, just as it is with individuals, so will it ever be with any great community, the more illicit freedoms are taken with our weekly sabbath, the greater will be the progress of impiety and vice. For if a man cannot be delighted with devoting one day in seven to a religious recess from secular labours, to a devout contemplation, and to acts of thanksgiving and praise; he will never be found to make religion his business; nor will an acquaintance with his maker ever be his study, or attainment.

We might add, those men who call themselves Christians will be utterly unable to reap the least advantage from the resurrection of Christ, if they cannot take a divine pleasure in the stated weekly recognition of that event. So that in truth, if there be not a great reformation, by some means wrought upon us, as a nation, we may expect that some-

thing like what God denounced on idolatrous Israel by his prophet Hosea, must soon be our public condition, viz. "I will cause her mirth, her feast-days, and her sabbaths to CEASE."

Would to God our youth would consider how very much depends upon hallowing the sabbath. It would promise them the very best security against the deadly infection of the times—for how extremely perilous is their present condition! How shockingly faulty is our police! How shamefully little regard is shewn, even by our magistrates, to the religious observance of the weekly sabbath! "All avenues to vice are set open, both within and all around this great city." The great, the rich, the noble, the princely, are themselves exhibiting the most shocking spectacles of sabbath-prophanation, in open contempt of law, both human and divine. Nay, even card-tables are said to be common in the houses of families of rank and title; and what is more astonishing, in some card-parties, the Cleric is found! The consecrated priest thus defecrates and disgraces his function. In fact, the day which God has sanctified for a religious rest men impiously convert into a day of pleasure, or of loose gratification: a day of travelling, of banquetting, routs, of revelling, and debauchery.

Every where the common people are closely copying such enormous impieties; spending these holy days, in all the dissipations and wantonnesses of pleasurable amusement, and in every depraving indulgence.

How ungrateful! how shockingly disingenuous such behaviour towards that infinite, almighty, eternal

eternal Spirit, who made all, who preserves all, who incessantly refreshes, and so bountifully accommodates his immense creation!

And how offensive is it to the Son of Man, “who is Lord even of the sabbath!” No divine protection for Britain, profligate Britain, can surely be expected from this Lord, the prince of the kings of the earth! who has a name given him above every name! But assuredly every individual, who dares to despise God’s sabbath, shall find himself cut off from his favour, who is the inexhaustible fountain both of light and of life.

VI. Whoever enters with care and precision into the doctrine of the sabbath, as delivered by the divine Jesus, must be persuaded, that the change of it from the seventh to the first day of the week, was intended to be a perpetual monument of the fact of his own resurrection from the dead; and which must remain a conclusive evidence of that fact: for it will be very difficult for any to shew, either from the New Testament records, or from ecclesiastical history, how the Christians came to sanctify the first rather than the seventh day of the week, but upon the fact of his having risen from the dead on that day.

Nor could those Jews, who remained infidel, blame the Christians for this change of the sabbath, since it seems highly probable, that Moses changed the creation-sabbath, in order the better to accommodate it to the deliverance of the people from Egyptian bondage. For so Moses ordained, “That they should eat seven days of unleavened bread; and in the seventh day there should be an holy convocation to them, no manner of work should

“ should be done thereon—for in this self-same  
“ day have I brought your armies out of the land  
“ of Egypt; therefore shall ye observe this day  
“ in your generations, by an ordinance for ever.”  
Exod. xii. 15, 16, 17. But if God by Moses could  
make this a reason for their observing the seventh  
day sabbath, (chap. xx. 2 and 8.) it is but rea-  
sonable to conclude, that the resurrection of Christ,  
on the first day of the week, shall restore the sab-  
bath to its original appointment, and give a de-  
monstration to all succeeding ages of the truth of  
that his resurrection. “ Thus the Son of Man is  
“ Lord even of the sabbath.”

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*On the Reason and End of Christian Baptism.*

AS the author's practice has been to baptize infants, he hopes to be allowed the liberty of stating more fully the ideas he has formed of such application of baptism; he keeps in his eye an injunction laid down by St. Peter, 1 Ep. ch. iii. v. 15.

What he fixes upon as a theme for the following discourse, is, 1 Pet. iii. 21, 22. "The like figure  
" whereunto, even baptism, does now save us (not  
" the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the  
" answer of a good conscience towards God) by  
" the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is gone into  
" heaven, and is at the right hand of God; angels,  
" authorities, and powers being made subject to  
" him."

The doctrine of Baptism has been much controverted among Christians, both as to the subjects, time, and mode of baptizing. It has been affirmed by some, that it was an initiating rite applied to proselytes to Judaism. I was once of that opinion; but am now persuaded that the writings of Moses do give it no countenance, but rather the reverse; since "one ordinance, one law, and one manner  
" shall," he says, "be for you, and for the  
" stranger that sojourns with you." Exod. xii.  
48, 49. Lev. xxiv. 22. Numb. ix. 14. ch. xv.  
15, 16.\* And whatever learned men have said of  
the

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\* N. B. The late excellent Dr. Lardner first convinced me of the mistake I had made about proselyte baptism.

the Talmuds, and Talmudical writers, they have no credit, because the Jerusalem Talmud was not finished till about A. D. 300, and the Babylonish not till about 200 years after,\* and we know the rooted enmity the Jews had always to Christianity. I am fully convinced, that baptism is a divine institution, originally designed to distinguish the religion of Jesus from all other religious professions in the world: and that accordingly his harbinger was ordered to come baptizing with water.—As to the question put by Pharisees to John, “why baptizest thou, if thou be not that Christ, neither Elias, neither that Prophet?” It does not infer any such usage having antecedently obtained. His declaring that “the kingdom of heaven was at hand;” that he himself “was sent before to prepare the way;” were ground enough for an enquiry. And inasmuch as the baptism of repentance, preached by John, was an apt means of disposing the people for the reception of the Messiah; so likewise was the baptism applied by the disciples of Jesus, during his personal ministry. They baptized into the belief of the kingdom of heaven’s being at hand, since its foundations were now actually laying by their divine master. But Jesus having been invested with sovereign power after his resurrection, he then commanded his disciples to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; i. e. with the fullest possible divine authority.

Having premised thus much about the origin of baptism, we may proceed to give a more direct attention to the theme chosen.

But

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\* See Dr. Lardner’s Jewish and Heathen Testimonies. Vol. I. ch. v. p. 177, 178.

But here we should observe, the design of this epistle is, to encourage Christians to stedfastness in their profession, though exposed to the rage of the persecutor. He is extremely solicitous that none of them should suffer as evil doers, and would have them think it a matter of glorying, if they endured suffering only because of their religion; since it would be to imitate Christ in his sufferings; nay, he asks “who could do them any real harm, if they were but followers of that which is good?” And he affirms, “it would be much better for them, if the will of God were so, that they suffered for well-doing—for Christ hath also once suffered for sins, the just by the hands of the unjust, that he might bring us to God: being put to death in the flesh, but quickned by the Spirit; even by that same divine Spirit which preached to the Spirits in prison; i. e. preached to the old World whilst under sentence of condemnation; whilst God waited in the days of Noah with much long suffering, all the time the Ark was preparing, wherein few, i. e. only eight souls were saved by water.” Thus the words of my text are found in connexion,—“the like figure,” &c. We are,

First, to shew how our being saved by baptism may be considered as an antitype\* to that of Noah’s salvation by water.

Secondly, what baptism, nevertheless, does not do for us: and,

Thirdly, what it does, and what is the reason of the ritual.

Under the first head, we are to observe, that the

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\* An antitype, is that which is shadowed by the type.

manifest intention of baptism is, that of its being the monument of a fact, viz. "Christ's exaltation to the right hand of power." This appears from the institution of baptism, wherein men are authorized to baptize "in his name." Matth. xxviii. 18, 19. From St. Peter's first sermon after the ascension, Acts, ii. 36, 38. and from the words of my text. The baptized were to be taught to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them.

As to the symbol, water; the prophets of old used it metaphorically, to describe the purifying and refreshing influences of the gospel times. "The thirsty lands shall become springs of water." II. xxxv. 7. "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come to the waters." Ch. lv. 1. "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." Ch. xii. 3. A very pleasing image in hot countries, where water was so extremely refreshing. We shall thus be prepared for seeing how our being saved by baptism, may be considered as an antitype of Noah's salvation. If I do at all understand the type, it was Noah's salvation by water; the antitype must then be water-baptism, which is said to save us. Now there was no saving causality, either in the type or antitype, but only an instrumentality. Water was what separated righteous Noah, and those with him, from a wicked world, destined to destruction: So baptismal-water separates the baptized from a wicked world, by initiating into a constitution that is holy: baptismal-water does not save, as applied to the body, but as it requires the answer of a good conscience towards God. Nevertheless, this does by no means exclude the idea of an antitype in the baptismal-water.\*

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\* The Greek text I should translate, "which antitype, baptism,"

We then conceive of it thus; as all those taken into the Ark with Noah were preserved from the general destruction, by the Ark's being buoyant on the flood; so that which was made the instrument of destruction to a wicked world, was made salutary to Noah and his family; in resemblance of which, baptismal-water now saves, as it separates the baptised from a world that lies in wickedness, and puts under the protection and guidance of the Saviour of mankind. Apostles will tell us, that the condition of the converted Pagan, was as different from his former state, as light is from darkness, and as life is from death.

Again, the similitude runs high between Jesus and Noah; for as Noah was a preacher of righteousness to the old world, and for 40 years the long suffering goodness of God urged their repentance; so Jesus was a preacher of righteousness to the Jewish nation, and foretold their destruction if they remained impenitent; which destruction actually took place, as it had done with the old world, within the 40 years.

Those Jews who became Christians, were temporally saved from the destruction by Titus Vespasian; "for after the Romans, under Cestius Gallus, had made their first advance towards Jerusalem, and then, very unaccountably, withdrew on a sudden; thereby was the signal given to the Christians, who all retired, some to Pella, others  
" to

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" baptism, even now saves us." Mill has in his note  $\delta \epsilon \gamma \tau \upsilon \pi \alpha \nu \tau \omega \nu \kappa \eta \eta \mu \alpha \varsigma \sigma \alpha \zeta \epsilon \iota$ , and not  $\tilde{\alpha}$ . Beza reads, "the which corresponding exemplar of baptism also now saves us." His words are, "cui nunc correspondens exemplar baptismi nos quoque servat." And it is observed in the notes of the New Version of 1729, p. 893. that the Alexandrian and several of our best manuscripts have  $\delta \epsilon \nu \nu \alpha$ .

“ to mount Libanus, or to the mountains of  
“ Perea.” \*

Though this could not be St. Peter’s primary idea of salvation by baptism, yet, we may allow him to have foreseen the destruction of his own nation, as nearly approaching, and also how the Christians would be delivered; since he wrote this epistle in the year 64. †

But he has a much more universal and exalted sense of salvation, as appears from his exhorting Christians to rejoice, even in their martyrdom, since the spirit of God and of glory did rest upon them; or, as St. Paul has expressed himself about the safe condition of Christians, “ Their very lives  
“ are hid with Christ in God.” Col. iii. 3. And thus, in a spiritual and divinely moral sense, the similitude will lie between baptism’s now saving the Christian as emphatically, as men were saved with righteous Noah in the ark, when a whole world was deluged.

Thus much for the agreement between the type and antitype.

Secondly, we are to notice, what baptism does not do for us.

And it ordinarily cannot secure the baptized from temporal evil. In its first application, it more directly exposed to the hand of persecution; for St. Paul asks, What they shall do, who are baptized for the dead? 1 Cor. xv. 29. alluding to the soldiery, accustomed to raise new levies, to supply the numbers slain in the field of battle—just so a  
supply

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\* Josephus’s Wars of the Jews, B. 11. ch. xix. sect. 6. note. Whitton’s translation.

† Dr. Lardner’s Supplement; Vol. III. p. 253.

supply was made of those who fell by the hand of the persecutor. Neither can I suppose, that the application of baptismal water can communicate any real virtue, or saving grace to the mind of the baptized. It is not then “an outward sign of an inward and spiritual benefit received thereby,” since many receive baptism, without any such good effect. Indeed, baptismal water can reach no further than the surface of the body: it cannot purify the mind. It only initiates into a divine polity, a kingdom of truth and holiness, and is an open recognition of the lordship of Jesus.

Neither can water-baptism secure us of any saving benefit, by our being thus initiated into the Christian church; that must wholly depend upon our subsequent behaviour—and yet, there are great numbers called Christians, who, when administering the baptismal rite, do solemnly supplicate, “that God would sanctify this water to the mystical washing away of sin; and grant that the person now to be baptised may receive the fulness of his grace, and ever remain in the number of his faithful and elect children, through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Also instantly after baptism, they do declare the baptized “to be now regenerate, and give thanks to Almighty God for the benefit;” and likewise they pray, “that being now born again, and made heirs of eternal salvation through Jesus Christ, they may continue his servants, and attain his promises.”

But, assuredly, the application of water, by whatever priestly hand, can have no renovating, no regenerating effect. It is a groundless idea, that

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baptism

baptism can work a moral change in the baptized. Thus we have shewn what baptism can not do.

III. We are to shew what it can do. Here we may observe, that the original institution, Matth. xxviii. 19. where men are ordered to baptize "in his name," seems to be generally mistaken. Hence some would read, baptizing *into* his name, as if it referred to the baptized: whereas, to me, it appears evidently to intend that authority, *in* or *by* which the apostles were to baptize: an authority the most expressive, viz. of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, i. e. of the Father, who had given all power to the Son, and also confirmed his divine mission by miracles. In this amplitude of authority are the apostles to baptize all whom they disciple, and to teach them to do whatever their Lord has commanded, who promises to be always with them, even to the end of the gospel-age. "*In* the name," here, does therefore signify the authority, by which they baptized, not into which men were baptized.

Baptism does consequently save, as it initiates into a divine constitution; at the head of which the Saviour of the World presides. And every way fit it was, that when the convert was entering into a new creation, he and his household should have that same ritual applied, which is the monument of Christ's exaltation to the right hand of power. In truth, under all divine dispensations where God has graciously covenanted with man, the parent and family were always included together in the covenant or promise. So St. Peter says of the gospel dispensation, "the promise is to you and "to your children."

My text is very express in this matter, and shews how baptism does save, viz. "by the answer of a  
" good

“ good conscience towards God.” In this apostle’s idea, the baptized must be considered as pilgrims and strangers, ch. ii. 11. or, as St. Paul, he is to “ have his conversation only as becomes the “ gospel; adorning the doctrine of God and of his “ Saviour in all things: in simplicity and godly “ sincerity, he must have his conversation in the “ world.”

Infants are as capable of this as their parents, when they grow up to the age of judgment and consent; for the answer of a good conscience is what follows baptism. I might shew, that not only the New Testament history of baptism, but that all antiquity is for the baptizing of infants\*.

By applying baptism to infants, the parents recognize the lordship of Jesus, and bind themselves to consider and treat them as the subjects of his kingdom, and under his protection.

There is a further idea of baptism’s saving us; and that is by “ the resurrection of Christ, who is “ gone into heaven, and is at the right hand of “ God, angels, authorities, and powers being “ made subject to him.” We are not to wonder that St. Paul should speak of this as a new creation; and of Jesus, as the visible image of the invisible God; the first-born, or most excellent of every creature, *by*, or *for* whom all things were created that are in heaven, and that are in earth; whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: and that he is the head of the body of the church;

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\* See L. King’s Enquiry into the constitution, &c. of the Primitive Church. Part 2. ch. 3. sec. 1. Bingham’s Antiq. Vol. I. B. 1. ch. iv. sec. 7. & 9.

who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that among all he might have the pre-eminence; and also, that in him dwells the fulness of the god-head bodily: i. e. the fulness of the display made of Deity in his moral government, in every part and age of his church, which is his body; and said to be the fulness of him who filleth all in all.

Thus baptism puts the baptized into a constitution, or renders him a member of a body, over which the presiding head has a superiority given him to all other orders of beings, that can any way affect either the safety or the weal of man; for he even has the keys of hades and of death; and therefore he is to him the resurrection and life, and final judge.—If the ends of baptism are thus religiously kept in view, we become not only related, but united to him, and are joint-heirs with him of eternal life. We can have no reasonable ground of fear, that our condition towards God will either be unsafe or uncomfortable; nay, we may be assured of its being everlastingly joyous and happy! we may, when we religiously attend to his high appointments, and to the plenitude of his power and influence in God's church and kingdom.—N. B. He is not represented by apostles, as thus dignified and exalted, only for his own fruitions; but as the vital, as well as governing head of the church, in order that the faith and hope of men, in his administration, may be strengthened and invigorated, in fixing on an object that is able to save to the uttermost, all who come to God by him! We are, if real Christians, interested in all his advancement.—He himself saw it in this very light, when he said, “I will that  
 “ those whom thou, Father, hast given me, be with  
 “ me where I am, to behold the glory which thou  
 “ hast given me.” And so St. Paul, “If we  
 “ receive abundance of grace, and the gift of  
 righteousness,

“righteousness, we shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ.” And again, “This is a faithful saying, if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with him.”

Here we may make some observations concerning the reason of the ritual. We cannot but discern the fitness of some monument's being erected in the Christian church, which should perpetually recognize a fact of so high and important a nature, as that of the exaltation of Jesus to the seat of sovereign power! whom his nation had put to death as a criminal, and treated as an *anathema*; though God had borne witness to him by prophecy, by signs, wonders, and divers miracles. It is not less than reasonable we should conclude, that upon his being made both Lord and Christ, anointed with honours above all other orders of beings, some open memorial would be appointed. But what could have been a more apt and expressive symbol of his acknowledged sovereignty, than a rite which initiates into his church and kingdom, and is the profession of homage we so gladly pay the one Lord.

There is, we know, a monument to recognize his sufferings and death, which is to remain till the ages finish; and there is also another which recognizes his resurrection from the dead; both which were intended for a weekly celebration; but, by a parity of reasoning it must be supposed, that an event of the utmost importance, which crowns the whole of our Lord's ministrations and sufferings, and is the reward of all his humiliation, should have a very significative, a very expressive monument; and is no other than that baptismal rite which initiates into his kingdom, and recognizes his authority as the one Lord.

All religions have ever had some rite of initiation; but that of the Son of God being of a nature far superior to all others, it was meet the initiating symbol should be understood as intended to confess his sovereignty, and to own him Lord, to the praise and glory of God the Father. In truth, we own, that Christians have had differing opinions, both of the nature of baptism, and of its use and application.—Some wholly disuse it, others have it applied with great indifference; and great numbers entertain very abusive notions of its original design or intention: Nay, it is to be feared but very few will see or understand its divine reason and end. The religion of Christian baptism, in the professing world, seems to be almost lost and gone; but where it is applied to the purpose of recognizing the exaltation of Jesus to the right hand of power, and as a rite of admission into God's kingdom, under the administration of the one Lord; and as binding the baptized to an observance of all that Jesus has commanded; it must be owned to be an appointment every way worthy of him, who is made unto us, of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

There is a substantial reason for the ritual, which arises out of its original intention, viz. its being a monument which attests the fact of the man Christ Jesus having such an amazing exaltation, as is every where reported of him in the writings of evangelists and apostles—a fact which none can dispute with any shadow of evidence, who are attentive to the scripture doctrine of baptism, and give credit to ecclesiastical history, as reporting the ritual to have been in use among the generality of Christians, from the age of the apostles until this very day.

Had it not been a fact, that Jesus was so exalted, the ritual must long since have gone out of use, or have been exposed to universal contempt, from the abusive ideas originally affixed to the institution. But such has been the care of Providence, that as the fact is real, and of such exceedingly high importance, so the monument should remain to the end of ages.—Further,

Every good civil government requires, in its subjects, some recognition of its supreme authority, as well as gives the infant members of the state or community, privileges and immunities, as born under a wise and well regulated constitution. There is cognizance taken of \* them as native members of the public system, or body; and proper provisions made for them. But the infant offspring of Christians are to be considered as God's creatures, that are made for him, and therefore should be devoted to him; hence infant-children were ever included in the covenants God made with his people. See Gen. xvii. 23. Josh. viii. 35. 2 Chron. xx. 13. Ezr. viii. 21.—“If children, then heirs.” Rom. viii. 17.

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\* The law takes notice of the power of parents over their children, the reciprocal interest in each others estate. Wood's Institute, &c. p. 63.

An infant in the mother's womb, may be supposed to be born to many purposes. Ib. p. 11. An infant that is born after the death of his father, who was a senator, shall be esteemed a senator's son, if his father kept his dignity till his death. Puffendorf, B. iv. ch. xii. sec. 10.

In the succession to intestates, by the guidance of reason, and by the consent of all the known kingdoms, children have the preference to all others, even of parents themselves. A father discharges his duty as he ought, when he makes his son his heir. Puffendorf's Law of Nature, B. iv. ch. xi. p. 427 Barbeyrac's note.

So we are informed that the ancient Greeks had a rite of dedication, by which they devoted the newborn infant to the protection of their household gods.\*

Indeed, when we consider that the blessed Jesus looked upon infants as proper subjects of his blessing, Mar. x. 16. we cannot reasonably suppose they would be excluded the initiating rite; and especially when they were to be trained and educated as actually under his sceptre. The application of this rite to our infant-children, is therefore a recognition we make of his authority, who is constituted of God, the one Lord, and law-giver to his church, in whose hands the everlasting interests of all his people are secure.

Will any now ask, whether the baptismal rite has any signification? Will any one doubt of its having had a divine establishment?

If I have not mistaken its original design and end, it must demand a religious observance so long as God has a church in the world, under the government and protection of Jesus; or, until the Son himself shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father, when God shall be all in all.

This doctrinal view of Christian baptism will enable us to make some reflections.

I, The three great facts by which the founder of our religion is distinguished from all others of the human family, by their important instruction and beneficial influence, are,—his crucifixion,—resurrection,—and exaltation. And because of their universally interesting meaning, three distinct monuments

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\* See Potter's Greek Antiq. Vol. II. p. 328,

ments have been instituted, as so many conclusive visible evidences of their truth, in order to keep alive the credibility of these facts, and to urge their moral and salutary influence and impression.—Why we have reserved the monument of the crucifixion for our last discourse, will be shewn hereafter.

At present, we may plainly perceive the wisdom and goodness of God, as illustrious in these appointments; since they serve, in every age of the church, as so many undoubted testimonies of the facts which they commemorate. Any one, not blinded with prejudice, may see that a religion intended for all future ages in the world, would require some perpetual monuments of its divine original: but these give their testimony as conclusively in the more future, as they did in the first age of Christianity. I wonder more notice has not been taken of this conclusive evidence, by writers professedly engaged to prove the divine original of our holy religion.

II. We ought carefully to guard against all superstitious, as well as against absurd and contemptuous opinions of baptism: they are extremes, into which mankind are very apt to run. Such who will have the application of baptismal-water, by an *opus operatum* to produce a real change in the moral complexion of the baptized, must surely be chargeable with a very abusive idea of the ritual. Or, they who reckon that the ordinance of baptism does receive a divine virtue from the hand that administers the rite, are guilty of a gross superstition. Yet, hence it was that some Christian professors at Corinth split into parties, and rendered baptism the source of bitter animosities, and fiery contentions; as if Paul, Apollos, or Cephas, had baptized in their own names: for which reason it was, that St. Paul did thank God he had baptized so few of that church.

church. All ideas of a consecrated hand, or of consecrated water used in baptism, must be the very quintessence of absurdity.

As to the difference of time in applying the baptismal rite, viz. whether in infancy, or adult age, this ought to be the result of a full conviction, from an honest, careful examination into the teachings of the sacred canon. Yet, in my humble opinion, this difference should not destroy that brotherly love which gives the spirit of all genuine Christians, nor suffer them to unchurch, or unchristianize one another. I freely own myself persuaded, that the infant children of all Christian parents, have a right to baptism: for "if the root be holy, so also should the branches be." And if either parent desires their child may be baptized, the other has no right to hinder. But though I am convinced of this being the New Testament, or apostolical doctrine of baptism, yet I would not sit in judgment, and condemn the anti-pædo-baptist, though I think him mistaken.

It is a matter of greater astonishment, that such vast numbers of Christian professors have thought very superficially, and with much indifference, about the nature, design, and end of baptism. How carelessly do many celebrate the ritual? and with what a fanciful and ridiculous formality do others? Nay, there are not a few who speak with an open contempt of the institution! We verily have a Sect among us, who, in many other respects, do appear a sensible, regular, orderly people, yet absolutely reject two of these institutions, though they are monuments of the facts of Christ's humiliation and exaltation: at the same time they celebrate the memorial of his resurrection. We  
should

should then carefully guard against all extremes, and preserve a religious regard to baptism.

III. We ought not to forget that the efficacious saving influence of baptism, is what follows the administration, viz. “the answer of a good conscience towards God”. So the original institution runs, “Go, disciple all nations, baptizing them, and then teaching them to observe all things I have commanded.” But although the saving efficacy is subsequent to baptism, yet this throws no insignificancy upon the rite; for if we have justly understood the New Testament doctrine of baptism, it must ever remain an appointment worthy our observance; and if we can credit church-history, it has been in universal practice ever since the age of apostles: for, as lord King has observed, in his Enquiry into the Constitution of the Primitive Church, “that not only Origen, Ireneus, and Cyprian make mention of the use Christians made of water-baptism”; but he also tells us, “that in an African synod held anno Dom. 254, whereat were present sixty-six bishops; the matter of debate concerning a scruple of bishop Fidus, was, whether infants might be baptized before the second or third day after their birth, or before the eighth?”\* So early a testimony as that of Justin Martyr’s in the middle of the second century, compared with this in the middle of the third, will incline one to conclude, that the practice of baptizing was, from the beginning, universally observed by Christians. Now we have no reason to think it would have been so, had they not clearly seen it was an institution of Jesus, intended for the observance of Christians in every age of the church.

How:

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\* An Enquiry, Part ii. p. 46.

However, we must own it is not the application of baptismal-water to a body, that has the saving effect; for it will not be sufficient, either that we ourselves have been so baptized, or that we have thus solemnly recognized the exaltation of Jesus, in applying the ritual to our children; but it is requisite that both we and they discover the answer of a good conscience towards God, by doing all those things, which Jesus has commanded. Thus it is that baptism saves by his resurrection from the dead, who is gone into heaven, and is at the right hand of God, angels, authorities, and powers, being made subject to him.

IV. We may pertinently observe, that all power in heaven and earth was not given to Jesus till after his resurrection, and his having a name given him above every name, was that recompence of reward set before him, by virtue of which he endured the cross, and despised the shame; or, as it is elsewhere expressed, it was given him because he had been obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; for therefore did God highly exalt him—and it was with this view, that every tongue should confess him Lord, to the praise and glory of God the Father. Surely such a capital view of the divine proceedings, as does crown the public ministrations of Jesus, should have some public monument, which shall recognize the great event of the man Christ Jesus being placed on the throne of an universal dominion!

Whichever way we contemplate the baptismal rite, we discern adorable wisdom, tenderness, and compassion in the appointment. There is an aptitude in it to keep alive, in the church of God, a reverence and veneration, which is ever due to that grace of God, which brings salvation to all men.

men. And as there is no other monument appointed to recognize that man's being raised to the summit of power, who died as a malefactor, by the consent of his nation, there would have been an apparent defect in the gospel system, had it not been provided with the baptismal institution.

That it is a rite of initiation is also evident, because there is no other; and that this is its intention, must appear from its admitting of no repetition. But because it initiates, it will be difficult to suppose it applicable to persons long trained and educated in the principles of the Christian religion. If, therefore, it be not so applicable to those who have been trained under gospel teachings, it, with me, appears to be with the greatest propriety applied to infants: for the reason, that I cannot conceive, how a rite of initiation should be applied to persons, who have long avowed the authority and rule of the one Lord. In the case of the first converts to Christianity, we are assured, they were entitled to baptism upon the very first conviction they had of the divine testimony.

V. They who object to a rite, which initiates into the Christian covenant, might as well object to a rite, which did initiate into the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenant: nay, the two other monuments, which recognize the death and resurrection of Christ, would admit of as forcible an objection. Many of these men affect to think and speak contemptibly of all instrumental religion; but however sublimated and refined, or however abstracted their ideas, however philosophic their conceptions, they ought to consider, the religion of Jesus is calculated for the whole of mankind, and that by far the greater part are of less elevated conceptions; but yet these are, by much, the best disposed to receive

receive truth, and to live upon it. Hence it is said, "that to the poor the gospel is preached." It is to the industrious part of mankind, that it makes the most efficacious address; and they, not being accustomed to abstract reasoning, stand in need of some sensible symbols, or expressive monuments, that may excite their attention, confirm their faith, and help their devotions.

Artful priests, perceiving this to be the natural tendency of these appointed monuments, for the purpose of exercising a dominion over the people, have presumed to devise a numerous pompous ritual, of a ceremonious complexion; and under a pretence of improving the divine monuments. To what unjustifiable lengths have churchmen gone, in disguising both baptism and the eucharist? But we have reason of admiration and praise, that we can celebrate these ordinances in their original simplicity, and free from the gaudy dress put upon them, discern their divine significance.

On the other hand, how very depraved, how deplorably deformed are those minds, who are wholly occupied in the formalities of an amusing, unmeaning profession; who live a lie, and are the deceivers both of themselves and others. Such do dreadfully dishonour that holy name, by which they are called; and, alas! must be upon the worst terms with the Lord of Life, the universal Judge, whose mission was to remove from his disciples the painful burthen of a devised system of carnal ordinances, and a superstitious ritual. Notwithstanding the Son has thus set men free from all sublunary authority, in the province of religion; yet such is the pride of life, where it becomes principle, as to use every artifice and stratagem, to decoy and cheat the professor.

feffor out of his liberty, and to render him an easy prey of priestly delusion.

Upon the whole, we might reasonably ask, whether the shocking impiety and debauchery, which is so prevalent in this kingdom, be not manifestly owing to a flagrant disregard to the lordship of Jesus, whom the great God has exalted to the seat of sovereignty, and made prince of the kings of the earth! and likewise to a deplorable neglect of parents, who are under an indispensable engagement to train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?

Of one truth, however, we may be well assured, that though we have the effrontery of daring to refuse the homage we owe the one Lord, we shall, every one of us, anon see him, and be witnesses of his majesty, who is gone into heaven, and is at the right hand of God, angels, authorities, and powers being made subject to him.

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*On the Reason and End of the Lord's Supper.*

**T**HE design and end of the following discourse is, to investigate the reason and end of that Christian institution, which is called the Eucharist, or Lord's supper.

The theme chosen for this purpose is, 1 Cor. xi. 26. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."

I have made choice of this passage, rather than of any one from the gospels, for the reason that St. Paul was, emphatically, "the apostle of the gentiles," and declares in this context, that he, in his apostolic mission, received the account that he gives of the memorial supper, immediately from the mouth of the ascended Jesus, which must have been, at least, twenty years after our Lord's resurrection. By the way, this compared with the evangelical history, will determine its being intended for the observance, not only of the Jewish, but also of the Gentile converts, and of all Christians, in every succeeding age of the church.

Should it here be asked, Why, in the order of these discourses, a monument, which recognizes a primary fact, should have the last consideration in our plan? I would answer, for this obvious reason,

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son, viz. because the celebration of the two other institutions are properly pre-requisites, or preparatory to the Christian's celebrating the memorials of his Lord's humiliation, or sufferings and death.

But to proceed ; our apostle remarks upon the abuses, which were made in the celebration of this rite by the church at Corinth, that they had changed the memorial supper into a revel—or they had paganized in the observance of this religious festival ; for it should seem, that the more opulent Corinthian Christians were wont to take an antepast, or an indulgent meal, before they took the memorial bread and wine ; and thereby did cast contempt on the poor, and gave them the blush, who could make no such provisions.—Hence, says St. Paul, “ What, have ye not houses to eat and to drink in ? “ or despise ye the church of God, and shame the “ poor among you ? ” Which reproof shews most evidently, that the antepast, or love-feast, was very mistakenly connected with the memorial supper\*, and at the same time proves, that that divine ritual, the eucharist, was intended for a public church service, and for a Christian fellowship and communion. They would act with far more decency and propriety, did they but celebrate the ritual agreeably to its original institution.

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\* For though the divine Jesus instituted this ritual, after the celebration of the passover ; yet it had no connection with, nor dependance on, that ritual ; but, in fact, appears to have abrogated the celebration of the passover, that having been a monument, commemorative only of the deliverance of a single nation or people from Egyptian slavery, and was an annual festival : whereas the eucharist is a monument, in commemoration of the deliverance of all mankind from spiritual slavery, and the dominion of death, and which had originally a weekly celebration.

In order to their having a more perfect knowledge of its reason, nature and end, he makes a report of the institution as he had received it of the Lord, and had aforetime delivered it unto the Corinthians. Nay, the more effectually to guard them against any irregularities in the celebration, he assures them, “that whoever shall eat this memorial bread, or drink this memorial cup unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord\* ;” or, in other words, shall be chargeable with prophaning and perverting the manifest design and end of the institution ; for, to riot upon, or over these memorials, would disgrace and dishonour the divine ordinance, and be a kind of guilt, of like malignity with that of spilling the life-blood of Jesus.

Without any further notice of the context, I shall proceed to enquire into the apostle’s meaning, when he says, “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew, or shew ye, the Lord’s death till he come.” This inference St. Paul draws immediately from the above report he has made of the institution, as he had received it from the mouth of the exalted Jesus ; and we may find in it great instruction.

Inasmuch as my professed business is to enter, as far as I am able, into the reason, nature, and end of this memorial rite, I would begin with observing, that the time of its original institution was, “the night in which Jesus was betrayed, when he took bread and brake it, after he had given thanks, and bid his disciples take and eat that symbol of his body, which was to be broken ;” and

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\* Comp. Heb. vi. 6.

“ and to take the cup, as what was to be the symbol of the New Testament in his blood, very soon to be shed, in order to seal the doctrine of remission of sin.”—We should here observe, our Lord speaks of his crucifixion, in the same manner as one would speak of a fact, which had already taken place; and would thus denote its absolute certainty. By the doctrine here given of what the ritual is to recognize, it surely cannot be an institution of small significance, or of little importance; since the blood, which it symbolically represents, is what seals, ratifies, or confirms that new covenant.

We may thus conceive of its being a divine appointment, viz. as the deformity and malignity of sin are represented in the sufferings and death of Christ, with all the possible aggravations of guilt and crime in those, who cruelly put him to the torture of a crucifixion! and because when risen from the dead, and exalted to the right hand of power, pardon and life were offered, in his name, to his murderers: thence it is, that the doctrine of divine mercy is rendered so very illustrious! His death was, no doubt, intended to convince mankind of the evil of sin and worldliness, since all the divine testimonies, which were so openly and amply given to his heavenly character and mission, were not of weight enough to secure him from the rage of mens lusts. For though he had most wonderfully appeared “in the form of God,” throughout his public ministry, with all the lustre and glory of divine wisdom and knowledge in his doctrinal teachings, and with all the majesty of divine power and goodness in his miracles; yet men would not reverence this well-beloved, this only begotten Son of God! Thus it is that his sufferings and death do make manifest the infatuating influence of

worldliness; and give demonstration of its fixed enmity to truth and righteousness. For this reason also it is, that apostles do lay so much emphasis on the death of Christ, because of its reflecting so strongly the opposition which there is between a love of the world and a love of God.

It was therefore the tendency which our Lord's death would have to convince mankind of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and to recover them to an abhorrence of all iniquity, that furnished a prepollent motive to the laying down of his life, or, to the giving himself a ransom for us, that he might deliver us from the evil of this present world, by condemning sin in the flesh. In this mirror we see the virulent, destructive, deadly poison which there is in all worldly lustings, that enslave the mind by depraving its faculties, and debasing its powers. Nor can we fail of the most efficacious conviction, if we are but at the pains to take a close, critical, and impartial survey of a character, the most divinely amiable and excellent that ever pen described, or human eye beheld! Say what men will, the gospel-history exhibits a character that is truly matchless, in all the written records of ages; a character drawn without any one signature of art; illustrious in all the spirit and temper, in all the air, mien, and life of action and address! a character that not only commands the admiration, the reverence and love, the delight and joy of man; but, with full evidence is declared, by the heavenly oracle, to be the well-beloved of the Father! which character, well examined, will throw before our eyes, the unheard of aggravation of guilt and crime, in the hands that wickedly conspired, and cruelly compassed, his sufferings and death.

The argument is thus urged home to every thinking mind that would reason to any good purpose on the astonishing event! How horrid the worldly spirit! how inexpressibly poisonous and deadly the influence of lust, that could despise, deride, mock, and insult the very brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image, or character, of his person! Mankind could never have once thought of treating with disrespect, much less with rude embittered rage and cruelty, the most venerable, amiable, and beneficent Son of man the earth ever bore; were it not that the lustings of worldliness had deplorably blinded their minds, and hardened their hearts. The devout contemplation of which, furnishes a divine reason for an appointment of the memorial rite; and, at the same time, proclaims the propriety, fitness, and usefulness of the celebration to every sincere professing Christian.

Thus the great doctrinal lines of the institution do open upon us.

And who can dispute the reasonableness of an appointment which has so graciously condescended, by external *sensible symbols*, to lead us to recollect and calculate the weight of deformity and malignity that there is in sin; which is, as it were, placed before our eyes in the memorial of our Lord's crucifixion.

My reader must, by this time, be persuaded, that the event of the death of Christ could be no other than of a very extraordinary nature; which indeed might be easily inferred from the teachings both of prophets and apostles, as well as from our Lord's own declarations concerning his sufferings and death; for he speaks "of giving his flesh for

“ the life of the world ; \*—and of laying down his  
 “ life for the sheep.” †—And moreover says, “ my  
 “ Father loveth me because I lay down my life,  
 “ that I might take it again.” § And St. John says,  
 “ herein perceive we the love of God, because  
 “ Jesus laid down his life for us.” ¶—Like-  
 wise St. Paul expresses himself with the utmost  
 force of language, when he speaks of the death of  
 Christ; for he tells the Corinthians, that in his  
 preaching to them, “ he was determined not to  
 “ know any thing among them, save Jesus Christ,  
 “ and him crucified.” † And to the Galatians he  
 thus writes, “ God forbid that I should glory, save  
 “ in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom  
 “ the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the  
 “ world.” ||

If, therefore, Jesus Christ and his apostles did understand the crucifixion to be of such vast importance, we are constrained to own, that the life, the real spiritual life of men, does absolutely depend upon the conformity which they express to its moral instruction; which in the express words of St. Paul, you see, is no other than, “ our being crucified unto the world, and the world unto us.” —This, I presume, gives the plain doctrinal meaning of the memorial rite.

What renders the institution yet further engaging, and so worthy of our religious observance, is, the appointed symbols are, in their own nature, so very expressive, as to be the ordinary-stated supports and refreshments of this temporary life of man; even bread and wine, provisions which the  
 bountiful

\* Joh. vi. 51.

† Ch. x. 15.

§ Ch. x. 17.

¶ 1 Ep. iii. 16. comp. ch. iv. 9.

‡ 1. Cor. ii. 2.

|| Gal. vi. 14.

bountiful hand of nature has furnished for our sustenance; and fitted to exhilarate and revive our spirits when depressed, or exhausted by any of the labours and fatigues, or sinking under the infirmities, of this bodily system. One cannot imagine more apt and familiar symbols of Christ's body broken, and his blood shed for us; when we are led thereby to recollect and recognize those advantages of information, conviction, and edification, which the doctrine of his death affords us—when the health and life of our souls do absolutely depend upon the right improvement we make of his sufferings and death, “who was wounded by the transgressions of men; bruised by their iniquities; when the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and when by this his stripe we are healed.”

Very fitly, it must be owned, is Jesus called both the light and the life of men.

To us he actually becomes the resurrection and the life, as we are prevailed upon, by his pathetic instruction, to be mortified to the world, to die to sin, and to rise to newness of life. And well did he express himself, and in language applicable to none else, when he said, “my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.” Such is the inestimable importance of the teachings of Jesus, that we are said to feed upon his labour and endurances\*, when we are thereby prevailed upon to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.

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\* Compare 1 Chron. xi. 18, 19.

We have abundant evidence that Jesus can be a Saviour to none but to those whom his teachings set free from their worldliness, and render holy and heavenly in all their desires and affections. He saves none *in* their sins, but *from* their sins; and because his own sufferings and death give the fullest demonstration of the deformity and malignity of sin; he, in compassion to mankind, under their deplorable depravity, instituted for the benefit of his church, this most apt and significant memorial rite.

As to the *times* of celebration, our blessed Lord has not expressly said how often we are to celebrate these memorials of his death; but he well knew, as he had not the Spirit by measure, or by limitation, as the prophets had, that his apostles who should settle and establish the rule of Christian worship, and the constitutions of his church and kingdom, would give all the needful instructions. And although St. Paul does not expressly say how often, yet it should seem to have been an essential part of the Christian public worship, on the first day of the week. I cannot but be of opinion, that, in the time between the resurrection and ascension, St. Luke's report of the first Christians, "that they continued stedfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, even in breaking of bread, and in prayer," Act. ii. 42. the eucharist must be there intended. Neither is it any objection, that at v. 46. they are said to break bread at their own houses, at a time they were not yet provided with other places of worship. This, probably, must have been the custom of converts during the infancy of Christianity, in any place. Compare ch. xii. 12. and xx. 7, 8. in which last place, this same historian also speaks of their public worship on the first day of the

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the week, under the discriminating action of breaking bread. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread."

I might here subjoin that known testimony of Pliny in the reign of Trajan, who informs the emperor, that the Christians "did reassemble on a stated day, to eat, in common, an harmless meal—after they had addressed themselves, in a form of prayer, to Christ, as to some God."—Doubtless Pliny means the Eucharist, by the *harmless meal*.

As to the *persons qualified* to celebrate the ritual.

I own, I am far from thinking that the administration of this ordinance was to all those who heard the scriptures read, joined the public prayers, and heard the solemn exhortation; and so far am I from justifying the practice, in a darker age, of giving the eucharist to infants, that I cannot even suppose catechumen, or young converts, qualified, till well informed of the nature, design, and end of the memorial rite; for our apostle lays down this express canon, "let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup."—Whence it is plain, that persons incapable of self-examination, are incapable of such celebration. And, methinks, Pliny's account of the Christians *REASSEMBLING to eat an harmless meal*, would lead one to conclude, that the young, and the less-informed, were first withdrawn from the more open parts of public worship, and then the ritual was solemnized.

We should next inquire, *how long* the obligation to celebrate the ritual is in force?

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This apostolic injunction “ shew the Lord’s “ death till he come” should denote the perpetuity of the obligation, and here we cannot suppose any coming of Christ can be meant, nearer than the death of the observer of this injunction. And therefore I thus argue, If it was fit for the Christian’s observance to the end of his natural life, in the first age of the church; the same fitness will continue throughout all succeeding ages of the church: and as it is a monument of the fact of Christ’s humiliation, the reason of the observance will increase, and not diminish, the greater distance there is between the time and age of the fact of the crucifixion, and the time and age of the celebration. And, forasmuch as a stigma of reproach was fixed upon Christ by his ignominious and cruel death, “ so that it actually became to the Jews a “ stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness;” it was therefore no less than a demonstration of divine wisdom to appoint a *thanksgiving* memorial rite, for the purpose of keeping alive the credibility of the crucifixion; because of the complete victory which this great minister of truth gained over the world, even on his cross.

“ Perhaps some may be inclined to think it was “ solely calculated for the observance of Christians, “ in an age of persecution.”

But, unless it could be shewn that a state of prosperity is less dangerous to the innocence and virtue of the human mind, than a state of adversity; this opinion cannot be supported. So long, therefore, as the Christian church shall have any existence in the running ages of the world, surrounded with temptation, so long Christians will be obliged to celebrate this ritual, since its divine tendency is to  
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balance the mind against the lures and terrors of the world, and to preserve it from the most malignant infection.

No one, surely, would wish the abolition of this ritual, who has ever found the benefit of so eating memorial bread, and so drinking memorial wine, as to discern the Lord's body, i. e. so as to experience its divine influence in regulating his own temper, spirit, and life. Assuredly, if we have a just idea of the reason, nature, design, and end of the ritual, we must be convinced it could neither be a temporary nor a local institution.

A yet more powerful motive than that of the propriety and fitness of the celebration, is, its grateful, pleasing, joyous effects on the mind of the Christian: for verily, the ritual excites and animates all the springs of gratitude, ingenuity, admiration, love, and praise in the breast of man: it does this by exemplifying the love of God, in the assurance which it gives of his pardoning mercy and saving grace to every convinced, penitent sinner. By the celebration, we also bring to our eyes the greatness of our Lord's behaviour under his sufferings; the compleat victory he had over all the powers of darkness; the security which we ourselves may have of becoming more than conquerors, through him who loved us, and thus gave himself for us. In truth, a crucified Jesus gives us proof that the greatest possible sufferings from the world's hatred, are every way consistent with the most exalted piety and extensive virtue: and thus it is we are reconciled to all the painful endurances of this probationary state, in the person of a crucified Jesus.

This will appear in a very convincing light, inasmuch as no reason can operate, that would justify my murmuring, or becoming impatient and fretful under any afflictive or painful visitation, when I call to mind, that the most excellent, most divine man, the well-beloved of God, underwent the greatest possible abuse, insult, and cruel usage from the world. Thus the wisdom, the justice, and equity, nay, the goodness of God too, become illustrious, in the palpable dark and gloomy dispensations of his providence; and we see enough in a crucified Jesus to quiet our breasts, under whatever painful endurances heaven allots us.

Such a full solution of every *arcanum* in the plan of divine providence, is an abundant reason of gratitude, and of the most animated thanksgiving and praise.

Farther, we can never enough admire the divine benevolence of the blessed Jesus, in thus voluntarily becoming a *sin-offering* for us, who himself knew no sin; \* that we might be made the righteousness of God in him!—And, who but he, holding the memorial cup in his hand, the symbol of his own blood, quickly to be spilt, or shed, for our remission, could have consecrated that very cup, by a thanksgiving to God, who had appointed him to bear the excruciating bloody testimony to his own truth and mercy! Should we enter into the reason and end of the memorial institution, it will excite and actuate all the powers of love and praise!

With the first Christians, under the merciless hand of persecution, we can, even at this distance,  
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\* N. B. A sin-offering under the law, was not only the sacrifice of an innocent creature, incapable of guilt, but of a most useful one. See Lev. iv. 3.

both see and feel its divine influence and manifest tendency to calm and compose their minds, to inspire with courage, fortitude, and resolution; nay more, give them joy, and enable them to rejoice under the fiery trial! But then, this would be in consequence of their quitting all views of worldliness, and becoming cordially devoted to the service of their heavenly Master and Lord. On this principle, the due celebration of the memorial rite will give, in any age of the church, a refined and exalted pleasure to the Christian, and fill him with such ideas of the love of God and Jesus, as are truly joyous and transporting.

Once more, the celebration is expressive of a realizing spiritual union with God and Jesus, and a fellowship and communion with the whole mystical body of Christ—which idea of the supper our apostle has suggested, when he says, “the cup of blessing, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not 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 bread.” In this idea of the ritual, we greatly felicitate ourselves, because of its being the earnest and foretaste of our blissful fruitions in the everlasting association of the spirits of just men made perfect, and who breathe nothing but pure, unadulterated, fervent love and praise.

Thus I have attempted to point out the reason and end of the memorial rite—and shall now make

## REFLECTIONS.

I. The measures of divine Providence, from the beginning, have graciously given man some sensible  
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sign or token of that mercy promised, or of God's gracious covenant. So the bowe in the cloud is a token of the original covenant, which God established between himself and all flesh, viz. that there shall no more be an universal deluge, Gen. ix. 14, 15. In like manner the seventh-day sabbath, whilst observed by Israel, was to be a sign between God and that people throughout their generations, Exod. xxxi. 14. And likewise, the passover-feast must be a memorial throughout their generations, ch. xii. 14. The preservation of their first-born is to be joyously recognized. And because the river Jordan did miraculously divide for them, when they went to possess the promised land, they are to raise twelve pillars, for a memorial for ever, unto the children of Israel, Josh. iv. 5 and 8, compared.

Mankind, in truth, were ever the same sensible, social creatures, who could not unite together, or agree in a religious acknowledgment of any past interposition of Providence, without some expressive, sensible symbol, that should be as an index to direct the recognition. We cannot therefore but see, that the three monuments appointed in the church of Christ, are in perfect harmony with the divine treatment of man under former dispensations.

Here I might pertinently observe, that there is no other ritual appointed under the gospel, no other sign, no other symbol, but these three monuments, by which three of the most significant facts or events, which concern the benefit of mankind, are recognized—whereas all other church-festivals are of no higher original, than that of mere human appointment, and serve no better purposes, than to countenance the vanity and pride of man.

IIIdly, We might now appeal to the modern deist, i. e. to the unbeliever in revelation, and defy his ability of confuting the three-fold testimony given to the divinity of the gospel-dispensation, since these monuments, within the church, have had their existence ever since the facts had place of our Lord's humiliation, resurrection, and exaltation. Jesus, the night in which he was betrayed, instituted the memorial of his crucifixion. When risen from the dead (after he had continued in *hades* the seventh-day sabbath) by his resurrection he consecrates the weekly festival of the first-day of the week-sabbath: a day universally observed by Christians, in abrogation of the Jewish sabbath. And because Deity has exalted him to the right hand of power, and made him head over all things to the church of God, he has instituted baptism to recognize his lordship, and to initiate into his kingdom; which monument remains in high preservation until this day.

Pray what sort of evidence will convince of the divinity of the gospel-system, if this will not? If these witnesses, which answer to the spirit, the water, and the blood, will not persuade, neither would miracle make the least impression on the infidel.

IIIIdly. No man who reads the gospel-history, under the idea of a divine revelation, but must own, that the teachings of Jesus do far excel all other informations mankind have ever had of the truth and grace of God.—His distinguished character, his divine office, his superior appointments, are what determine him to be the Saviour of the world. The testimony of both prophecy and miracle, conclude him to be the light and the life of men!

men! And we do very reasonably infer, the manifest propriety of these three instituted monuments, from their being an open, perpetual, standing evidence of the credibility of the facts, which they recognize! in all of which we are interested, as heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ of eternal life.

And however we may look upon the rest of mankind as made for happiness, and furnished with the adequate means of attainment; yet we are constrained to acknowledge, that God has “abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence” under the gospel-dispensation: for, by the teachings of Jesus, he has made the clearest and fullest manifestation of himself!—Hence it is, that apostles lay so much stress upon the weight of guilt, which men contract, who are found either to despise or neglect this great salvation. They ask, “How shall such escape”!

Neither should any one be astonished at finding, that the religion of Jesus is not the universal religion of mankind. He will not, if he once considers how very soon, and how very far, men have corrupted and perverted this heavenly institution.—Do but cast your eyes on the papal church, and tell me whether paganism had not a much better aspect?—At the same time, shed a tear over the protestant perversions! for even they have brought the world into an alliance with the church, and do greatly solace themselves in that very whimsical and wicked connection.

Where, O where, will you find the religion of Jesus in its native, pristine spirit and purity! If you now ask, “Where are the churches, which are edified in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort  
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“ of the holy Spirit, and are multiplying?” — who shall tell you? — If St. John was to visit our churches, would he say to us what he said to the elect lady? viz. “ I rejoice greatly to find thy children walking in the truth, as we received a commandment from the Father.” — Would he not rather say with St. Paul, “ I have found many walking in craftiness, and handling the word of God deceitfully, and that verily our gospel I see is hid; for the god of this world has blinded the minds of men.” None but the man, who rejects all revelation, can deny the excellence of the New Testament teachings; but he, indeed, who does, will laugh at all instrumental religion: nevertheless, we are not to forget, such is the present frail state of man, that he stands in need of some sensitive address.—For,

IVthly, If the view we have taken of the memorial rite be just, we can well account for its use and importance; assuredly, not any institution could have more consulted the weaknesses and wants, the frailties and infirmities, of the human mind, during its probation. The dangers, which arise from these sensitive scenes, do borrow their degree of malignant influence from a faulty love of the world. This is a capital evil, or it is “ the evil one,\*” which constantly addresses mankind. To be delivered from its hurtful influence, and to be raised to an heavenly disposition, is the great design of that grace of God, which bringeth salvation.

“ Do some say, they are enabled to arrive at this divine attainment, without making use of the eucharist? and therefore see no need they have of celebrating the memorials of Christ's death?”

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\* Τὸν πονηρὸν, Matt. vi. 13.

Not further to debate the matter with them, I would only ask, Do they profess themselves Christians? Are they persuaded, that Jesus Christ did institute this memorial rite for the use and benefit of his church in all ages? Admitting this, they convict themselves of neglect, in not celebrating the memorial rite, and they virtually presume to charge the Lord of God's church with a needless institution. I own, I am of opinion, the same reason that would infer the non-necessity of the institution, would dispute the reason, use, and end of the death of Christ. But then, is not this to be wiser than God? or than Jesus, his representative?

As to the evasive manner, in which the QUAKER declines the celebration, by making it "a merely mystical and spiritual communion and participation of the body and blood of Christ"—this has no support in any of the New-Testament teachings; for all these do expressly mention the actual eating of memorial bread, and drinking memorial wine, upon having first separated the elements by a solemn thanksgiving; and as an act of public, and not of private worship. — "What, have ye not houses to eat and drink in?" says our apostle. With him agrees the evangelical historians; and Pliny's early testimony corroborates the fact of a solemn celebration of the ritual among the first Christians.

It is not at all probable, that an event of so interesting a nature, and of so universal an importance to mankind, as is the death of Christ, could be unprovided with some monument, that should preserve the remembrance thereof, and put the credibility of the fact beyond all reasonable doubt. For I thus argue, either the event of Christ's death

does universally concern mankind, or else apostles are all of them mistaken in their representations; since a singular emphasis is laid upon it in the New Testament written records.

Vthly, No one can mistake the doctrine of the memorial rite, who sees it is calculated to expose the turpitude and malignity of worldliness; but if it is so evidently adapted to the correction and cure of the mind, to the preservation of it from all deadly pollutions, the wisdom and goodness of the institution must confessedly be illustrious.— At the same time, a clear discernment of this its divine tendency, will qualify any Christian professor for the celebration: forasmuch as it is evident, that no one can eat or drink *unworthily*, who, in this religious observance, inculcates upon his own spirit an abhorrence of all worldly lustings.

It is true, in the light we have viewed the eucharist, there manifestly is a great simplicity: the whole doctrine of it seems to center in unity. One single idea is what comprehends the reason and end of the institution. But then I ask, Is not this a sure mark of truth? — I know, indeed, it will militate much with all mystical representations of the Lord's supper: it will divest the artful priest of all his magic power; it will render extremely ridiculous all his great exploits, and wonderful achievements, with the consecrated wafer or bread! His pretence of transubstantiating the elements, by an *hocus pocus*, into the very body and blood of Christ, will appear extremely contemptible, and excite one's just indignation! Even the giving these elements to the sick and dying, as a passport to heaven, must heighten one's astonishment at the offensive, flagrant absurdity! A dying man, if

sensible, has enough to inform him, and stands in no need of this ritual, to enable him to see the turpitude and deformity of worldliness.

Vithly, Christians will not be justified in a neglect of the memorial rite, because they see many eat and drink at the Lord's table, who nevertheless do deplorably remain under the dominion of worldliness, and are the manifest slaves of lust. Neither is it a sufficient excuse, that many have loaded the observance with much superstition, and rendered an admission to the table, harsh, stupid, and offensive,—Or, because they see the ordinance brought into reproach, shockingly prophaned for the vile purpose of being made a civil test, or a qualification for places of profit, power, trust, or honour. This prostitution is an evil of so malignant a nature, that, from the enormity of its guilt, our land mourns! And anon Britain must feel the weight of his displeasure, who cannot but vindicate the honour of his own institutions. In a word, we are unable to conceive of a greater affront, or of a more flagrant contumacy, that could be offered to the one Lord, than such a senatorial outrage committed on the sacred memorials of his death, originally intended to convince men of the malignity of worldliness; but audaciously perverted to the purpose of being made a test of qualification for gratifying the worldly spirit.

Should the *infidel* object to the above discourses,  
 “ That however the first Christians might be led  
 “ to distinguish themselves from the Jews or Gen-  
 “ tiles, in their religious profession, by these dis-  
 “ criminating observances of the sabbath, baptism,  
 “ and the eucharist; yet they do not appear, con-  
 “ vincingly to him, to be the monuments of such  
 “ facts; nor does he understand that they have  
 “ been

“ been viewed in this light, generally, by the  
 “ Christians, in any age of the Christian church.”

To such I would reply, that the conclusiveness of their argument, so understood, does appear to me, to admit of no reasonable objection. For admitting they were, by the original written canon, to be so understood, it is no sort of proof of their inconclusiveness, that Christians soon disguised and corrupted, or perverted their original intention; for so truly they did pervert some of the plainest doctrinal truths in all the gospel teachings; and they must have had a divine origination, or else they could never have universally obtained, as we have sufficient historical evidence they did from the beginning.

For example, as to the change of the *sabbath* from the seventh to the first day of the week, the observance of the unbelieving Jews to this day, does every where demonstrate, that change so made by the Christians. And that it was in the apostolic age thus discriminating, is not only evident from the New Testament record, but from the earliest church history; for Ignatius “ bids the Magne-  
 “ sians not to *sabbatize* with the Jews, but to lead  
 “ a life agreeable to the Lord's day, on which our  
 “ life was raised from the dead. And Tertullian,  
 “ when he writes only to the Christians, commonly  
 “ useth the name of the Lord's day, and especially  
 “ when he would distinguish it from the Jewish  
 “ sabbath. And to the same purpose, Origen, to  
 “ distinguish the first-day sabbath from the Jewish,  
 “ says, that Manna was first rained down from  
 “ heaven on the Lord's day, and not on the sab-  
 “ bath.”\*—Herein figuratively referring to the  
 teachings of Christ and his ministrations being  
 “ that true bread which came down from heaven.”

From

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\* Bingham's *Antiq. of the Christian Church*, B. xx. ch. ii, p. 285, 286.

From these testimonies I reason thus: Had not the fact of the resurrection of Christ been notorious, and of vast consequence to mankind, no monument could ever have been erected as in perpetual evidence; neither could any rational account be given of this weekly festival, had it not been of divine institution; forasmuch as the first observers of this change of the sabbath, were such as had been educated in the religious observance of the Mosaic sabbath, and could only have been reconciled to this change, by an assurance that it was authorized by the fact of the Lord's resurrection; a fact which gives a ground of confidence of his being the very man whom God has ordained to judge the world in righteousness. It is not at all probable, that an event of so interesting a nature, as that of the resurrection of Christ, should be without some apt and expressive memorial. Neither is there the least reason to suppose, that such memorial could have been instituted or originated in any age after that of the apostles: forasmuch as no universal and perpetual agreement among Christians, could ever have taken place upon a merely human invention. I conclude, therefore, that no objection can possibly weaken the testimony given to the resurrection by this monument.

A like reasoning will hold with respect to the fact of Christ's exaltation to the right hand of power. It is not to be supposed, that baptismal water should ever have been applied in his name, as so exalted, and by which all the first converts were initiated into God's church and kingdom, had it been the contrivance or project of human invention; on the contrary, apostles must have been well assured, that so to baptize, did originate in the express order of their Lord and Master; thereby acknowledging or recognizing his sovereignty, who has all power given to him, both in heaven and in earth.—It will

will be of no weight for any to tell us, that the Christians soon perverted the plain doctrine, and entertained a thousand strange notions about the reason and end of baptism.

And as to the fact of our Lord's sufferings and death, we have the strongest reason to conclude, that because of the divine instruction which this gives mankind, as in the fullest possible manner it does make manifest the malignity that there is in worldliness; such a picturesque view of the *evil* there is in a love of the world, is what renders the memorial rite eucharistical. But to remove all possible objection to the divine original of this institution of the supper, for universal and perpetual observance, and to establish the celebration of this ritual upon an immovable foundation, we have assurance from the apostle of the Gentiles, that he personally received the most express instructions concerning it from the ascended Jesus.

Now this same apostle, in almost all his epistles, takes pains to convince the Christians that the whole of his instructions were truly of divine original, for that he had not the least ability of forming any one part of the gospel canon. Nor is he afraid of making his appeal to the reason and understanding of mankind, in all his apostolical addresses.—And when it is moreover considered, that these three observances have, from the beginning, been the discriminating marks of the Christian profession, and what render obvious its divine origination to every unprejudiced, impartial, judicious eye, we may take the utmost satisfaction in embracing the religion of Jesus.

Yet, after all, however plain, however full and determinate the divine evidence of its divinity, as it is found in the New Testament canon; yet neither  
our

our Lord nor his apostles did ever expect that a cordial reception should be given to the *Gospel-message* by any, but such only who religiously make its teachings a rule of life, from a firm persuasion that they shall be the rule of the final judgment. So that till the infidel has made this experiment of the divinity of gospel teachings, he may well look upon himself as an incompetent judge of its evidence.

To conclude, the general neglect of celebrating this ritual is a convincing proof, either of the little acquaintance Christians have with the teachings of Jesus, or else of their little reverence for his institutions. My worthy predecessor, Dr. JAMES FOSTER, I well remember, observed to me, with much concern, the general disregard shewn to the communion table! on which account he said, he looked upon his church, "but as a rope of sand"—his very expression.

Melancholy it is to find no more professing Christians do celebrate the memorial rite. In an age so full of temptation, what need have our YOUTH of such a divine balance against its poisonous, deadly influence? Would you, who are young, overcome the world? celebrate religiously the memorials of Christ's death. This is your Lord's advice: he assuredly had it in view when he instituted the supper.

Thus I have finished the survey I proposed of the three institutions, viz. Of the Christian sabbath; of baptism; and of the eucharist; and have, with integrity, and I hope with evidence, pleaded the cause of truth and religion. Do me the favour of an impartial, serious, and close re-consideration,—and do yourselves the justice of a faithful and efficacious application.