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SOCIAL RELIGION.



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SOCIAL RELIGION

EXEMPLIFIED IN AN ACCOUNT OF THE FIRST SETTLEMENT
OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE CITY OF CAERLUDD:

BY THE

REV. MATTHIAS MAURICE.

(BORN 1684.)

SEVENTH EDITION.

EDITED, WITH NOTES AND BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH, BY

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COLLEGE.



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PREFACE.

THIS venerable work has a value of its own, as affording a true reflection of much of the ecclesiastical life and religious faith, present as well as past, of the people of Wales.

The present edition is issued, not only at the urgent request of many who know the book, but also from the conviction that to allow it to sink into oblivion, would be a serious loss to the churches. The Editor's appreciation of it arises more from its deep and serious religious tone than from its dogmatic teaching. It has also some link of connexion with the memories of early days, when, next to the *Pilgrim's Progress*, "*Social Religion*" was the favourite book. Recent re-perusal, whatever changes time and thought have produced, has found the old book unchanged—the same genial companion—the same loving and faithful monitor. There is a clearness of conception, a simplicity and ease of phraseology, a strength of faith, and a fervour of piety, which make its pages at once entertaining, bracing, and profitable. The book is not a great one; but it is emphatically a good and wise one. It makes no pretension to artistic execution, nor to splendid pictorial feats of imagination; and yet it combines sufficient of art and fancy to sustain the story and quicken interest. Like all books that live, it is a real image of the author: homely, simple, earnest, positive—tender as a child, yet sturdy and resolute as a giant. Although the day may be said to have passed for some of its phases of opinion, and though some points of its church polity may be considered peculiar, and too elaborate and complex for practical working, its main substance is, without doubt, genuine as gold, imperishable as truth.

The present text is the result of the collation of the third, fourth, and sixth editions. The revision has been done with great care and labour. In many instances, terms that had grown obsolete—quaint, cumbrous and redundant expressions—have been removed, making the book, it is hoped, in its present form, free from anything very offensive to modern taste, while it still retains, in turns of phraseology and peculiarities of thought, sufficient marks of its remote origin.

The Notes by the Editor bear the initial N. One or two, introduced from the sixth edition, by Dr. Edward Williams of Rotherham, are marked W. The Index has been compiled for this edition.

The Editor cannot but hope that, by the Divine favour, those classes in our congregations he has had chiefly in view—the young, and those who are seeking information on church polity and church action, and wish to be quickened to the practice of the duties of “Social Religion,”—may be greatly benefited by this new issue. The aim of the book is to make church *fellowship* a reality and a blessing—to develope, more and more, the true primitive feeling of *brotherhood*—the “love of Christ,” and the “love of the brethren,” which will flow forth in a constant stream of mutual kindness and succour, each bearing the other’s burdens, and “so fulfilling the law of Christ.”

*Presbyterian College,
Carmarthen, January, 1860.*

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

THE REV. MATTHIAS MAURICE, the author of "Social Religion," was born in the year 1684, in the parish of Llanddewi Velfrey, Pembrokeshire. Having given indications of superior intellectual parts, and reliable evidences of true piety, he was in due time introduced to the Dissenting Academy at Carmarthen, at that time under the care of its first Tutor, the Rev. W. Evans.

It does not transpire in what year Maurice entered on his academic studies, nor how long he pursued them; but, from a comparison of dates, we judge he must have commenced his student-life not long after his twenty-fourth year; for after having spent some time in two different localities after quitting the Academy, he is found on probation at Rothwell (Rowell), Northamptonshire, in 1714; that is, in the thirtieth year of his age. He must, therefore, have entered Carmarthen when that Academy was yet in its early youth—its course having commenced with the settlement of Mr. Evans in that town, which took place at the close of the seventeenth century.

Nor are there any records at hand to throw light on his habits as a student for the ministry. From the complexion of following years alone can we judge. Taking these as our guide—and remembering the adage, "The child is father to the man," and which proves more incontestably true in the slightly varied form, "The student is father to the minister,"—we would say that Matthias Maurice was a grave, plodding, conscientious, and devout student, with real thirst for knowledge, judgment in the selection of his mental furniture, and right earnest love for what he deemed correct opinions and principles. Immediately on his beginning the life of a preacher of Christ's Gospel, he gave evidence that he had formed the habit of independent thinking, and was now ready to show a bold front in opposition to what he considered the ecclesiastical and theological errors of the day.

On leaving college, he settled for a time in the neighbourhood of Henllan, near his native place; and without being ordained minister, was employed in preaching, for some time, there and in the surrounding districts. Since, as we have seen, he ultimately settled in England at the age of thirty, it is evident he could not have remained long in these his native regions. But he was there long enough to make himself felt—to win friends, and to encounter enemies. He was branded as a heretic, and was eulogized as a reformer. We may just note that Calvinism in the Principality—since the seventeenth century—has passed through two great improving changes: out of Antinomianism into a severe “high” Calvinism, a copy almost of its early self, when it emanated from Calvin’s giant intellect; and out of that again into what is commonly termed, since the times of Fuller and Edward Williams, “modern” and “moderate” Calvinism, and in Wales, the “new system.” This last type of Calvinism holds the universality of the atonement, and a universal Gospel call, freedom of moral agency, and *natural* ability in man to believe the Gospel and live an obedient life.

Now, Mr. Maurice found in the church at Henllan, a very unsatisfactory state of things. Discipline was lax—doctrine corrupt.

In his last two dialogues in “Social Religion,” written probably more than twenty years later, we fancy he has an eye to the twofold “trials” he had witnessed there. Mr. Maurice was chief among several who uncompromisingly attacked at once the existing evils. He asserted “the duty of poor souls who hear the Gospel to believe it,” and lead a holy life, against the Antinomian; and that “a church according to Christ’s institution” was Congregational, against the Presbyterian order, which had hitherto prevailed there.

The Rev. Joshua Lewis, the present respected minister at Henllan, writes thus:—“The parties were divided on three points—doctrine, discipline, and church government. Mr. Maurice and his friends were strong Calvinists, severe disciplinarians, and pure Congregationalists.” The issue of the dissension was a rupture, and the formation of a new Congregational church at Rhydyceisiaid, of which one of the seceders, Mr. Lewis Thomas, was chosen pastor.

Mr. Maurice, ere long, removed from these parts to Olney, Bucks (by recommendation, tradition says, of Dr. Watts); and from thence, in 1714, he went to preach at Rothwell, on probation. The present zealous pastor of that ancient church, the Rev. E. Lewis, B.A., has very obligingly supplied us with several facts of much interest. Some of the church records concerning the settlement are curious, as throwing light upon a custom which apparently had gained some prevalence. In the church-book it is thus written:—“On the Lord’s-day, Nov. 21, 1714, in a church assembly, Mr. Maurice, after

he had related the dealings of God with his soul, in bringing of him into, and enabling him to close with Christ for, life and salvation, delivered his dismission from that church of which he stood a member, which was received, and he was actually taken into the fellowship and communion of the church." This is in literal harmony with a doctrine taught by Mr. Maurice himself in "Social Religion."—See p. 70.

But it would seem there had been a difficulty in this transfer of our author's membership. He was pastor of the church at Olney, which church had received him, in the "regular" way, as a "member" from the church in Wales; but now, Olney was not prepared to transfer him to Rothwell. He was going against their will, and they would punish him by a refusal of dismission. But minister of Rothwell he would not, on his part, become, unless he was first, by regular process, according to his ideas of proper church intercourse and call to the ministry, introduced as a *member* of the fraternity. It seems to be an axiom with him, that a pastor must first be a member of the church he ministers unto; and, also, that a church in need of a pastor must look to its own body to supply the lack. See "Social Religion," *passim*. What, then, must be done? In their distress, the Rothwell brotherhood must go as suppliants to the church in Wales. But the church in Wales had already granted dismission, and, therefore, could not now pretend to dismiss as a member a person who, in truth, was *not* a member. Here was another serious difficulty, involving cases of conscience, and much food for casuistry. However, a kind of compromise with stringent rules is effected. Rather than keep a good man long in this painful, dissevered condition, they decide to grant a conditional dismission, and after a long preface write thus:—

"We grant your desire, with this proviso, viz., that the dismission we have sent be sent back, or destroyed, and a short account from the people of Olney how it fell out as it is, with a letter from yourselves of his orderly admittance amongst you; and so we proceed:—We, the church of Christ assembling for public worship at Rhud-y-ceished, unanimously grant and give full dismission to our Brother Matth. Maurice, according to his godly desire, to be received of you; and carry ye yourselves towards him as a member of Christ. Fare ye well.

"LEWIS THOMAS, Pastor.

"HENRY PALMER AND WILLIAM JAMES.

"DAVID REES."

This, at all events, shows that they guarded the entrance into the ministry with double care. Possibly, the circumstances which led to

the separation from the church at Henllan had driven them to the extreme of punctiliousness in the matter, and, doubtless, the laxity of the times required vigilance. It would be interesting, as bearing upon Nonconformist antiquities, to know if this strict notion concerning membership as preceding pastorship had obtained widely among pure churches in those days. In modern practice, membership is understood as involved in the ministerial relation. The pastor is, doubtless, one of the fraternity amongst which he labours, *i.e.*, is a member of it; he is not a church in himself, nor is he dissociated from the church. But it is a question that never occurs to us, how and when he becomes a member. The account of the matter, doubtless, is, that he becomes a member when he becomes the pastor—becomes the inferior when he becomes the superior. If a pastor, much more a member; but the latter is lost in the former. *A potiori nomen fit.*

Mr. Maurice's life at Rothwell was one of activity and success. His pastorate extended over four-and-twenty years, and his useful life was brought to a close in 1738, in the fifty-fourth year of his age.

He was called, at Rothwell, to encounter the very same evils he had met with in his native country; for moving to England was not moving from amongst men, nor from amongst the all-pervading influences of the age. The church at Rothwell, at one time during his ministry, was divided in opinion,—and what will the reader suppose was the question in dispute? “Whether it was the duty of unconverted sinners, who heard the Gospel, to believe.” Mr. Maurice, true to, and dauntless in the defence of his early opinions, maintained the affirmative, and published a pamphlet to expound and establish the truth.

As an author, Mr. Maurice appeared frequently through the press. While in Wales, he had published several small productions, of which we cannot give accurate account. The following are the titles of works he published while at Rothwell:—“The Work of the Holy Spirit in Prayer, considered in a Discourse on Rom. viii. 26.”—1725. “Monuments of Mercy; or, Some of the Distinguishing Favours of Christ to His Congregational Church at Rowell,” &c., &c.,—1729. “The Tribes of the Lord appearing before Him; or, Families in Public Worship. A Sermon preached at the Opening of the New Meeting House at Rowell, Nov. 9, 1735, and considerably enlarged.—Ps. cxxii. 4.” “The Modern Question modestly stated, viz., That the eternal God does, by His Word, make it the Duty of poor unconverted Sinners, who hear the Gospel preached or published, to believe in Jesus Christ.”—1737.

The following were posthumous publications:—“Faith Working by Love; or, Four Sermons on 1 John. iii. 23.”—1739. The next was

the work contained in the present volume, the first edition of which came out in parts, in 1738-40, under the following somewhat long but characteristic title:—"Social Religion: Exemplified in several Dialogues, giving an account of the first settlement of Christianity in the City of Caerludd, and of the administration of the ordinances, and discipline of the Gospel in the Church there planted; with the remarkable success with which Christ blessed His own institutions, to the recovery of its backsliding members, the satisfaction of those who were under spiritual distresses, and the edification and comfort of the whole Society; in which many cases of conscience are judiciously answered."

Maurice was a contemporary of Watts and Doddridge, and was a fellow-labourer in the same county with the latter for the space of nine years. Dr. Watts survived him ten years, and Dr. Doddridge thirteen. Considering his near neighbourhood to Northampton, where Dr. Doddridge presided over a flourishing Dissenting Academy—afterwards Coward College—it seems strange he makes no reference to that most estimable man, and academic labours so rare as were his, when he refers (see p. 142) to the subject of ministerial education. This omission can scarcely be accounted for, except in one way. Dr. Doddridge was one of those balanced and catholic minds who can afford to exercise candour and charity towards men of theological sentiments different from their own. He was by divers hot-headed and bigoted parties accused of latitudinarianism in doctrine—what, in our own day, by brethren of the "straitest sect," would be necessarily allied with "German" tendencies—and with cherishing too great a laxity of opinion in his pupils. If this slander on one of the finest characters that ever graced the Congregational body had influenced Maurice, it is quite conceivable that a man of his uncompromising orthodoxy should look askance at the Northampton Academy, and consider the efforts referred to as then making in London—probably by the "King's Head Society"—as "a mercy of deliverance."—See pp. 142, 143.

In estimating Mr. Maurice's intellectual status it is enough to say that he was a man of keen and searching mind, of clear thought, and some literary culture. His line of study had been well-nigh entirely theological. Here and there, however, he displays an almost poetic love of nature, and not unfrequently an enlarged and lofty conception of the Divine benevolence, as illustrated in the order and happiness of creation. We may refer for examples to the opening of Dialogues IV., V., and VIII.

In "Social Religion" he has proved himself capable of producing a book, whose capabilities of entertainment and of instruction are

equally prominent. As a work of imagination, of course, it cannot be said to be of the highest order. His aim in this way has mainly been to create a simple framework, on which to suspend ecclesiastical and theological teaching; and in this he has succeeded. There is no complex "story," no "plot," but a plain series of events and personages is invented, which, without apparent effort, he so marshals as to develop the main points he wished to illustrate—"the matter, form, order, and discipline of a church according to Christ's institution." The *dramatis personæ* are few; only just so many as are necessary to sustain the undertaking. Epenetus is the sage, who has the whole history of Caerludd enveloped in the ample folds of his own breast. There must be a Neophytus to ask questions, and so to listen and appreciate as in himself to form a whole congregation. To expound knotty texts, and to pronounce upon linguistic and historic points, we have Philologus. Syllogisticus is the reasoner on matters of grave moment. Philalethes represents loyalty to truth. Christophilus takes the peculiarly Christian side; and Theophilus all sides that have a bearing upon the glory of God, the great Father of all, the fountain and end of all religion. Beyond this there are only a few elaborations of character, to the extent of representing the chief official functions of the Christian brotherhood, and their progress in the administration of affairs, and in mutual religious edification.

In laboured reproductions of the era in which the scene is laid, Mr. Maurice has not seriously tried his hand. He has been too negligent in this. His pictures of apostolic times have in them a considerable admixture of the Nonconformist ecclesiastical life of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Most happy is he, indeed, in depicting the simple grandeur of the self-governing, self-supporting, and sin-correcting Christian assembly. His church meetings have rather too much of the air of debate, but withal a gravity and seriousness behoving the work, and a true spiritual authority which contrasts favourably with the usurping pretensions of Conclaves and Councils.

The main defect in creative treatment, perhaps, is the one alluded to—his assimilating too much to the modern the ancient period he has partly undertaken to delineate; and this results evidently from a want of aim, rather than a want of inventive faculty. He was more intent on the substance than on the drapery it is enveloped in. Hence, as observed, we have more of the *vraisemblance* of Mr. Maurice's own age than of the first Christian age in Britain. True, the most important elements in all ages are identical, since Christianity and the human heart are always the same; but external conditions, social customs, and church usages are very different. So also as to style of thought and expression. And if our author had kept this more

steadily in view, the church-life of his precious book would be less that of Wales in the time in which he lived, and more that of Britain in the time of the Romans. He had clearly not bodied forth to his own apprehension, and therefore has not portrayed to the reader, the real British world of the first and second centuries. We have scarcely a glance at the state of the Cymry trodden under the hoof of the Roman, nor at the intellectual and moral condition resulting from the mystic and priestly religion of the Druids. To mould the story into a life-like image, how much could have been drawn hence! But we have only hints, and those few, and mainly in the early dialogues. In the later dialogues, the action settles down into the prevalent church-life of the early Welsh Independents; and this church-life, in its leading features, still subsists through the length and breadth of Wales. And need we say, that from the church-life of England it is separated by a very wide gulf; in some things, by almost the distance of primitive from modern times.

But the slight objection above noted is merely an artistic one, and in nowise affects the substantial value of the book. Mr. Maurice had a purpose, and to that he has adhered throughout, consistently and with triumphant effect. He has pictured a Christian church, gathered on Christian principles, and by simple Christian forces. He has presented it in *living action*, exercising all its high functions for its own government and support, and the world's conversion. He has thus spread out a spectacle at once beautiful and commanding—the Christian church, “fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army with banners.” With a minute exposition of polity, which no scholar and historian can despise, he has combined a discipline which, for severe purity, would not shame the ancient Cathari themselves, and which, for benignity and loving-kindness, is akin to the spirit of John, the beloved disciple and apostle. And “upon all,” to use his own favourite phrase, “there is a glory,” we may well devoutly pray all the churches, of every name and region, may be speedily crowned with.

On the whole, Matthias Maurice may be said to have displayed abilities of a superior order, a heart at once noble and enlarged, a burning zeal for truth, and a genuine attachment to Nonconformity. The country, therefore, that gave him birth, the college that gave him training, and the denomination that reaped the fruit of his active though not long life, may remember his name with satisfaction. Though dead, in “Social Religion” he yet speaketh, and therein we have reason to hope he will continue to speak for ages yet to come.

SOCIAL RELIGION.

DIALOGUE I.

THE FIRST CHURCHES IN BRITAIN—WHAT?—FIRST CONVERTS
FROM CAERLUDD.*

It is not a thing very difficult to a religious mind to form ideas of a certain village, much to be desired and delighted in, called therefore Potheina, where the eternal God, as the God of nature, has ordered every thing to the best advantage to a contemplative mind—the air serene, refreshing, and wholesome; enclosures and meadows, green and delightful; adorned and enriched with crystal springs, purling streams, agreeable walks, either in open space, or in shade among trees, low and fruitful, or lofty and majestic; and where also, as the God of all grace, He has reached the souls of the inhabitants, and has converted them to Himself, making them truly holy and humble. Such the place, far from the noise of the world, the pomp and grandeur of time; and such the inhabitants, strangers to the pride, luxury, ambition, and tyranny of the degenerate crowd, but not to Christ and themselves.

The custom of the inhabitants of Potheina was this: On every Lord's day they went, old and young, as many as possibly could go, or be carried, to the public worship of God, in a Christian congregation, at some distance from them, they belonged unto; at evening they met among themselves to pray, to repeat what they had heard that day, and declare what their souls had experienced; then sing a psalm, or a part of a psalm, and conclude in prayer. One week-day evening they fixedly kept also in prayer,

and conference upon some Divine text; and for the greater advantage of the neighbourhood, they kept it from house to house; and every family was glad when their turn came to enjoy it. And besides this, there was another evening in the week, which the principal inhabitants of Potheina generally kept for common and civil conversation, but always seasoned with a religious spirit and design, and often wholly took up on a religious subject; and, to add to the pleasure of this meeting, they often had it (indeed always, at proper seasons and weather,) under an ancient, well-spread oak, which stood at one end of the green, under which benches for the purpose were fixed, from whence they had a prospect of their several habitations, and where, upon any business, any of their families could readily find them.

Here their conversation was sometimes upon what did directly concern them as husbandmen; sometimes upon history, sometimes upon the works of creation, and the wonders of the Divine power and design in what fell under their notice; sometimes upon Providence, &c. But the particular conversation I have to give some account of, concerns the matter, form, order, and discipline of a church according to Christ's institution. The occasion of which conference take as follows:—

Some of the neighbours being come, on a certain time, to the spot, had no sooner seated themselves but another very useful neighbour, named Theophilus, takes his seat, and, with a smiling countenance, says, My friends and neighbours, I am heartily glad to see you here, and so well.

PHILALETES (one of the company) answered—And we are doubtless very glad to see you, and so cheerful; but though you are always pleasant, yet at this time there seems to be something more than common that touches your agreeable fancy. I know I may assume my wonted freedom, and ask you what it is?

THEOPHILUS.—I think it becomes us, who are saved by grace, to be always cheerful; though much laughter is often what a fool is known by, and we may say of it, "It is madness!" and of mirth, "What doeth it?" yet, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee," is an ancient instruction our Lord gave His people. But, to tell you the

whole truth, I could not at present help smiling, to think how much like the Druids^a among the Old Britons we appear.

PHILAL.—I have heard and read something of them, and how they were in great respect among the ancient Britons; but, if I remember well, they were instructors of youth, judges among the people, from all impositions and servitude exempt, a kind of barbarous bards and superstitious priests;—pray, wherein can we be like them?

THEOPH.—Really, you almost spoiled my fancy; for I had none of all this in view, but the vast affection they had to groves and oak trees, under which they loved to philosophize; and doubtless from thence were called Druids, because *derw* is the British word for an oak; and the very fancy of our sitting and conversing near, if not in, a pleasant grove, and under a spreading oak, with its delightful mistletoe,^b made me entertain the merry conceit that we were Druids. But, moreover, there were some things wherein they were really commendable: they believed and taught the immortality of the soul, and that there was but one God; observed, to the best of their knowledge, strict rules of justice; were, to the last degree, fervent in their devotions, the sight of which fervour struck the Roman

^a The word “druid” is by some derived from the Greek *δρῦς*, but by others, with greater probability, from the British *derw*, both alike signifying oak. The Welsh word *derwydd* (druid) would thus be naturally formed from *derw*, oak, and the termination *ydd*, as in *prydydd*, a poet; *barnydd*, a judge, &c. All authorities, whether British or classic, agree in connecting the name with the oak. The Druids had a great veneration for this tree. Pliny relates that they held nothing so sacred in nature as the oak *mistletoe*. Under the shade of the oak they instructed the people in religion, offered sacrifices to the Deity, and administered justice.—Plin. Hist. Nat., lib. xvi. The Druidical religion prevailed, as Cæsar informs us (Bell. Gall. lib. vi.), not in Britain alone, but in Gaul and Germany also, although Britain is said to have been its cradle. Its system of doctrine was not reduced to writing, but pupils received it from the Druids in the shape of verses, extending in number to many thousands. Their doctrine of metempsychosis seems to present a link of connexion between them and the ancient Pythagoreans. Their separateness, their sanctity, and their influence among the people, also bear a strong analogy with those of the Brahmins of India.—N.

^b Ad viscum Druidæ, Druidæ cantare solebant.—Ovid.

soldiers, who were never used to see anything like it, with such terror, that, as Tacitus says, they could neither fight nor flee:^c and, for their zeal, they were scoffed and derided by Lucan:^d and I could turn you to the place where they were called fanatics too, by such as wrote on the Roman side; but sincerity of soul, and zeal in their way, did belong to the ancient Britons.

PHILAL.—A very pleasant fancy, and capable of very good improvement; especially if one can, in a true light, but see himself such a Druid as our father Abraham was, who among the oaks of Mamre pitched his tent, made an altar, and worshipped;^e and some have thought the Druids, under ignorance, did derive their superstition from thence.

CHRISTOPHILUS (another of the company) said,—Then miserable followers of Abraham they! But no wonder, when even those who came out of Abraham's loins sacrificed unto idols upon the tops of the mountains, and burnt incense upon the hills, under oaks, and poplar, and elm, because the shadow thereof was good. But seeing cruel superstition reigned over the ancient Britons, notwithstanding their zeal and sincerity, it becomes us to admire grace, that ever the Gospel was sent into this island; and that under this oak we can, in some measure of faith, bless God, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.

PHILAL.—That's well observed; and, my dear neighbour Theophilus, I hope it might be attended with some usefulness in this small company, if you give some account of the amazing methods God did in providence take to convey His Gospel into Britain, and gather churches for His service and praise within this land.

THEOPH.—It is most certain that the Roman invasion was nothing but rank ambition, injustice and cruelty; the very history of it, at this distance, raises in every true Briton the

^c Druidæque circum preces diras sublati ad cælum manibus fundentes, novitate aspectus perculere milites, ut quasi hærentibus membris, immobile corpus vulneribus præberent.—Lib. xiv.

^d Druidæ . . . solis nosse Deos, et cæli sydera vobis, aut solis nescire datum.

^e Septuagint version, Gen. xiii. 13. Κατώκησε παρὰ τὴν δρῦν τὴν Μαμβρῆ.—N.

most just indignation; but, upon second thought, when a Christian considers that by this means God was pleased to convey His Gospel to the people who sat in darkness, and in the region of the shadow of death, his heart is melted down to thankfulness to the Lord for the Roman conquest: "out of the eater comes forth meat, and sweetness out of the strong." Not only much of the British wealth was transported to Rome, but great numbers of inhabitants, and many of them noble, were removed thither. They did not know for what end, but the eternal God, whose thoughts are higher than ours, as the heavens are higher than the earth, knew. There, in His own time, God met with many of them by His grace, and they found Him whom they had not sought. There was in Rome, in those days, a church of Christ, famous in faith; it was spoken of through the world,^g and Britain heard the sound. Paul was there, and with him, doubtless, many of the Britons conversed. He mentions one British lady, who was well known to the churches, and whose name was Claudia, and tells Timothy that she did salute him.^h A Christian she was, of very great eminency, as may be fairly gathered from the apostle Paul's naming her upon such an occasion; and as for her other endowments and accomplishments, Martial has made her immortal.ⁱ We have reason to think there were many more of her nation reached, by grace, at Rome, who doubtless, filled with zeal for the interest of their Redeemer, and with love and pity to their poor native country, would urge the Apostle Paul, and others, to come over and help. Who came first with the Gospel to Britain, is not certainly known: some say Joseph of Arimathea, sent by the evangelist Philip, from Gaul; others say Simon Zelotes; and some say the Apostle Paul himself.^k But by what means soever, hither, through grace, the Gospel in those early days was brought, and Christianity was in Britain, about the middle of the first century. Indeed, the first Christian

^g Rom. i. 8.

^h 2 Tim. iv. 21.

ⁱ Claudia Cæreuleis cum sit Ruffina Britannis

Edita, cur Latiae pectora plebis habet!

Quale decus formæ? Romanam credere matres

Italides possunt, Atthides esse suam.

^k Vide Usserii Britan. Eccles. Antiquit., cap. 1.

king in Britain, and the world, was Lucius, A.D. 190, who sent Elvan and Medwan to Eleutherius at Rome, for instructions and rules of government, who sent him word again, "That they had, by God's mercy, in Britain both the New and Old Testament; let the king, by the advice of his realm, take thence a law, and rule as God's vicar."¹ But Christianity was in the land above an hundred years before him, the Gospel in purity preached, many souls converted, and doubtless many churches gathered according to Christ's pure institution.

CHRISTOPH.—Oh! my heart is warmed! My soul is filled with holy astonishment and thankfulness, that Christ should visit this land; that Great Britain among the isles should wait for His law; that He should be exalted here, and that He should make the Roman cloud a chariot to bear Him—the Roman cruelty the path of His mercy; that He should upon that conquest go forth conquering and to conquer! Let us exalt His name together!

But one Neophytus (a young Christian in the company) said, that he had lately read the History of the Puritans, and that the author thereof says, that the first Presbyterian church in England was at Wandsworth, in Queen Elizabeth's time, 1572, and that the first Independent or Congregational church in England was gathered at London, in King James's time, 1616.^m I fancy he does not think the first churches in Britain were such as you imagine them to have been; for, according to him, though he himself is not of the established communion, yet he must judge the first churches to be of the same order with what is now called episcopal, and, consequently, must judge diocesan episcopacy, being first founded by apostles or apostolic men,

¹ Ussher places Lucius's conversion, and his first application to Eleutherius, by Elvan and Medwan, in 176; and a second, for instruction to govern, in 179. Archbishop Parker asserts that the Roman edict for abolishing the Druids in Britain was the means of turning his thoughts to the true religion; but the existence of such an edict is doubtful. Lucius was styled by the Britons, "*Lles Leurr Mawr*," *i.e.*, "Great Light," or the "Illustrious," because, in his time, and by his means, the glorious light of the Gospel was more generally spread among them.—W.

^m See Hanbury's Memorials, i. 292, 293.—N.

to be of Divine institution ; or else churches of primitive institution must be different from all these.

PHILAL.—The gentleman is alive, and doubtless able to give an account, when he pleases, of his judgment upon churches and church government. In the meantime, notwithstanding some things, we have reason to be thankful to him for the great pains he has taken, and the valuable collection of history he has published ; and I heartily wish all who love the name of Puritans had the History in their families, which I think they may read with great profit and advantage, without believing that the gentlemen in the parliament army were enthusiasts, or that the army in Naseby field did fight inspired with enthusiastic zeal. But pray, Theophilus, that our young friend, and each of us present, may receive further instruction, let us have the pleasure of hearing from your mouth some account of the first churches in Britain, if you can give us any.

THEOPH.—If you can give us some account what churches they are we can find in the New Testament ; and if our neighbour Philologus (here present), of whose ability and readiness to assist we have had some experience before now, will please to give some account what churches may be met with in earliest antiquity ; and if our kind and affable neighbour, Syllogisticus, will lead us a little into the reason of Divine institutions, then I can modestly venture to promise to tell you what sort of churches were first gathered and settled in Great Britain.

PHILAL.—With regard to the task you call me to, I cheerfully embrace it, and declare that our Lord's own account of a Gospel church, in Matt. xviii. 15-20, fixes and determines my judgment for ever. "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault, between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother ; but if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established ; and if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church ; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven ;

and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father, which is in heaven; for where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Such a church is intended here, we see, as can, and should, meet together for Divine worship; as comes to be a church by voluntary consent and agreement; as gives unto particular members a special relation unto itself, and unto each other; therefore it is not said, go tell a church, but tell *the* church; and if thy *brother* offend thee; yea, such a church is intended, to which a poor brother may have ready access, and which, as a church, is to reason, judge, and determine; and such a church is intended, whose determinations must be according to Christ's word, that He, as Lord of the kingdom of heaven, may set His seal to them.

Again, the churches we read of in Scripture had their ministering servants, who were not to lord it over them, but to serve them in the Lord, namely, bishops and deacons: ⁿ the first were overseers of the flock of Christ, ^o to feed with the pure Word of Truth, and minister appointed ordinances, and, in other words, were called pastors, teachers, and elders; the others, according to their primitive institution, were to serve tables.^p

Then the Scripture churches were made up of visible saints.^q They were living stones,^r sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and, by the Spirit of our God,^s were

ⁿ Phil. i. 1.

^o Acts xx. 17, 28.

^p We are commonly told that by "tables" is meant the table of the Lord, the table of the minister, and the table of the poor: an instance of how tradition will engraft itself upon Scripture. It is evident, from the history of the appointment in Acts vi., that the first deacons were set apart simply and solely to care for the *poor*, *i.e.*, to convey the charities of the Christian society to its poorer members. The "table of the Lord" was not yet provided for by separate funds, for to that sacred ordinance, as to the feast of love (*agapé*), each brought his own. Nor was there, as yet, any settled provision for the support of the ministry. That the deacons, in *modern practice*, have apportioned to them the duty of mediating between the flock and the pastor in secular things, is simply a matter of *convenience*. See more on this in the third Dialogue.—N.

^q Rom. i. 7.

^r 1 Peter ii. 5.

^s 1 Cor. vi. 11.

partakers of the Holy Spirit of Christ, as a spirit of faith and a spirit of prayer.^t

Also, the churches mentioned in the New Testament were several, or many, in one neighbourhood. So we read of the churches in Judea,^u which was but a small tract of land, and the churches in Galilee,^x yet smaller; and we read of the churches in Galatia,^y and of the churches in Macedonia,^z as distinct from that of Philippi, which was a town in that country; the church at Corinth, and the church at Cenchrea, which was a little town very near Corinth.

I must add, that it is expressly said of the New Testament churches, that they had each of them their assemblies of the whole church, for the enjoyment of privileges, and the discharge of duties. So the church at Jerusalem,^a so the church at Antioch,^b called the multitude.^c The whole church of Corinth did assemble together in one place, for the solemn worship of God, and the exercise of discipline.^d At present I shall add no more: Philologus, by his countenance, appears ready for his part.^e

PHILOLOGUS.—Not so ready; but I was very willing to attend to what you had further to say; but seeing you choose for the present to add no more, which puts me upon expectation to hear more from you at time convenient, I take liberty to observe, what others have often observed before me, that it is evident, from the primitive writers themselves, that the members of those churches were godly persons, acquainted with the life and power of religion, and by a heavenly conversation discovering themselves to be temples of the Holy Ghost. So Clemens of Rome, about the 70th year of Christ, according to some, but according to Helvicus, Talents, and many others, about the 90th, writes in the name of the church he was pastor of to the church of Corinth, and salutes them, "The called and sanctified through the will of God, by Jesus Christ our

^t Rom. viii. 9; 2 Cor. iv. 13; Rom. viii. 26.

^u Acts ix. 31.

^x Acts ix. 31.

^y Gal. i. 2.

^z 2 Cor. viii. 1.

^a Acts v. 11; vi. 1, 2; xv. 12, 22; xxi. 22.

^b Acts xiv. 27.

^c Acts xv. 30.

^d 1 Cor. xiv. 25, 26; xi. 17, 20; v. 4.

^e Philologus's part in these Dialogues is that of the critical linguist and historian.—N.

Lord ;” and that we may further learn what sort of persons they were, he observes that there was a plentiful effusion of the Holy Spirit upon them all, and that they were engaged in earnest prayers, for all the brotherhood, night and day.^f They were not poor prayerless creatures, unconcerned about the glory of God—unconcerned about the good of their brethren, but with fervour and constancy sought the face of God. Such were the members of the primitive churches. And Origen,^g about a hundred and fifty years after then, says, “We do all that lies in our power, that our congregations be composed of good and wise men.”^h Vain and ignorant men were not admitted; they must be made wise unto salvation at first, and when they offered themselves to communion, they were not rashly received, nor yet were they neglected, but visited by the servants of Christ, and instructed, as the same author informs us.

Tertullian,ⁱ about two hundred years after Christ, says, “We were not received church members that we might cease from sin, but because we have already ceased.”^k From thence that trite saying among them, “Holy things to holy persons.”

Again, those primitive churches had their officers as in the very days of the apostles, namely, bishops and deacons. Wherever the churches sojourned (to use a primitive expression), whether in towns or villages, there their bishops, their overseers, pastors, presbyters, or elders (for all those words in the primitive language intend but one and the same), and there their deacons were for their service. So the above-named Clemens, speaking of the apostles, says, “That

^f Κλητοῖς ἡγιασμένοις ἐν θεληματι Θεοῦ, &c., πληρῆς πνεύματος ἁγίου ἔκχυνσι ἐπὶ πάντας ἐγίνετο. Αἰῶν ἐν ὑμῖν ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτός ὑπὲρ πασῆς τῆς ἀδελφότητος.—Epist. ad Corinth. Caps. i. and ii.—N.

^g An illustrious Greek father of the Christian church, who flourished in the beginning of the third century. He was a sufferer in the persecution under Decius, and died at Tyre, in the reign of Gallus.

^h Contra Cels. lib. 3.—N.

ⁱ A celebrated Latin father of the Christian church, who flourished in the latter part of the second and beginning of the third century.

^k Non abluimur ut delinquere desinamus, sed quia desinivimus.—De Pœnit. 379.—N.

they preached the Word through regions and cities, and appointed the first fruits, or the first converts, after a spiritual trial of them, to be bishops and deacons." Their bishops or overseers in the Lord, and their deacons, were the *first fruits*, addicting themselves therefore to minister to the other saints, for their edification in faith, holiness, and comfort; also they were *their* first fruits, that is, from among themselves.

In the next place, those primitive churches had the power of choosing their own pastors. Those who were to serve Christ in that capacity, were to be set apart thereunto by the whole church, or congregation. Clemens tells us, that thus the first officers in the church were constituted by the apostle's direction; and thus it was to be afterwards—they are his express words—"with the consent of the whole church."¹ They might ask the advice and assistance of the neighbouring churches and ministers, but the work, in those early days of Christianity, was chiefly their own, and so it continued unto the days of Cyprian,^m A.D. 258, who expressly, as the president of a synod, praises two churches who had deposed their respective bishops, Martinalis and Basilides, and had chosen Felix and Sabinus bishops in their room, telling them they had not acted irregularly in what they had done, since the people had the chief power of choosing worthy bishops, as also of refusing those that were unworthy.ⁿ And Cyprian acknowledges that he was ordained *populi universi suffragio*.—Epist. 55.

Moreover, all things in those primitive churches were done by common consent—all the people had a voice in whatever was done by the church, as a church, nor were they esteemed church acts without this. Clemens, therefore, gives his advice unto the ringleaders of the disturbance at Corinth, that every one would subject himself unto the restored elder, and say, I will do the things appointed by

¹ Συνευδοκησᾶσης τῆς ἐκκλησίας πάσης.

^m Another eminent Latin father, who suffered martyrdom at Carthage, in 258.

ⁿ Propter quod plebs obsequens præceptis Dominicis, et Deum metuens, a peccatore preposito seperare se debet: quando ipsa maxime habeat potestatem vel eligendi dignos sacerdotes, vel indignos recusandi.—Cypr. Epist. 68.

the multitude.^o This method continued in the churches for some time, for Cyprian, about a hundred and fifty years after, says, that from the very first he was resolved he would do nothing without the knowledge and consent of his people.^p And so we find, that when persons in the church he belonged to had been guilty of a sinful conduct, he would not himself alone be judge of their crimes, but professes they ought to be tried by all the people,^q and says, that the persons who had offended should come and plead their cause before the elders, and before all the people.^r When some had returned from sinful ways wherein they had walked, and Cyprian was willing to receive them into fellowship, he complains, in his letter to Cornelius of Rome, of the great unwillingness of his people to admit them:—"O my dear brother," says he, "if you could be present with us when those perverse men return from their schism, you would see what pains I take to persuade our brethren to be patient, and give their consent to the healing and receiving those poor sick persons. I can scarce persuade; yea, I extort a grant from the people that such be admitted.^s So we see that when persons were received, the whole church admitted them; and when any persons were rejected, it was done by the divine suffrages of the people.^t All things were debated in common amongst them;^u and for church worship and church acts they always met in one place, which was frequently, therefore, called the church's house.^x

^o Ποῖω τὰ προστασσόμενα υπο τῶν πλῆθους.

^p A primordiis episcopatus mei statuerim nihil sine consensu plebis meæ privata sententia gerere.—Cypr. Epist. 6, S. 5.

^q Hæc singulorum tractanda sit et limanda plenius ratio cum plebe ipsa universa.—Epist. 28.

^r Acturi apud nos et apud plebem universam causam suam.—Epist. 10.

^s Videres quis mihi labor sit persuadere patientiam fratribus nostris, ut animi dolore sopito recipiendis malis curandisque consentiant; vix plebi persuadeo, imo extorqueo ut tales patiantur admitti.—Cypr. Epist. 55, S. 17.

^t Secundum vestra divina suffragia conjurati.—Epist. 40.

^u De iis quæ vel gesta sunt, vel gerenda sunt honor mutuus poscit in commune tractabimus.—Epist. 6.

^x In the third century, about the time of Diocletian, buildings for public worship were coming into vogue. The earlier practice of the Christians had been to meet in their own private dwellings, or some obscure halls. The places now erected specially for worship were

It follows, then, that those churches, where God in a special manner made His Word successful, must be somewhat numerous. And for two hundred years after Christ; in what province soever churches were gathered, they were called the *churches* in such a place. So Irenæus,^y of Lyons, about a hundred and eighty-four years after Christ, says, the churches in Germany, the churches in Spain, in France, Egypt, &c., which was the language, at least generally, of all others in his days, and earlier. The churches or congregations were many, and the bishops were as many, for every particular church had its bishop or pastor. Many of them might be small, and their outward appearance mean, but their real glory did lie in this, that God in Christ was the glory in the midst of them. From their meanness, indeed, the merry Mr. Fuller, a friend of modern episcopacy, takes occasion to spend a banter upon them. "At this time," says he, "bishops were set too thick for all to grow, and Palestine fed too many cathedral churches to have them generally fat. Lydda, Jamnia, and Joppa, three episcopal towns, were within four miles of one another; their bishops had high racks, but poor mangers." In that age, bishops had their sees in poor and contemptible villages.^z We read in Ussher's "Religion of the Irish," that even above five hundred years after Christ, there were in Ireland three hundred and sixty-five churches, and as many bishops; but their revenue so small, that some of those bishops, as Dr.

frequently called *Κυριακόν*, the Lord's, and *Κυρίου οἶκος*, the Lord's house. Hence, doubtless, the English word *Church*, the German *Kirche*, and the Scottish *Kirk*. They came also, as in Constantine's time, to be named *οἶκος ἐκκλησίας*, the house of the Congregation, and even *ἐκκλησία* itself. Hence, by a slight modification, the Welsh word *Eglwys*, as applied to the building, or to the believing congregation alike. We need cherish no prejudice, therefore, against the use of "Church," or "Eglwys," when referring to a *place* of worship. It has arisen from a natural law in the development of all languages, and has on its side the undoubted testimony of a high antiquity. How poor as compared with this is the authority for *Chapel*—a word of essentially Popish origin, derived from the sacred cap (*capella*) of St. Martin!—Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. vii. cap. 30; lib. ix. cap. 9. De Vit. Con. lib. iii. cap. 36.—N.

^y A Greek father, who flourished about the year 184, and was put to death in the persecution under Severus, at Lyons, in France.

^z Hist. Holy War, Book II., chap. ii., p. 45.

Heylin tells,^a had no more than the pasture of two milch beasts.

To what has been mentioned we may add, that those primitive churches were co-ordinate, and not dependent, some upon others, as to ecclesiastical power, and had mutual communion by letters, by messengers, or otherwise, for each other's edification in love. Each church, with its officers, acted as they thought most expedient, as those who were to give account only to the Lord.^b The earliest piece of antiquity we have, is that excellent letter sent from the church sojourning at Rome unto the church sojourning at Corinth, wherewith messengers were also sent—Claudius, Ephebus, Valerius, Bibo, and Fortunatus—from the church.^c As their letters were sent by the universal consent of one church, so they were read to all the brethren of the other,^d and they had either their stated meetings, or occasional synods, as they thought good, for each other's assistance in difficult cases. But I have taken up too much of your time.

SYLLOGISTICUS.—I am certain none of us think so; the little time you took, you filled to good purpose; for you have left me nothing to do,^e but to observe that the first churches, according to the account you both gave of them, are every way accommodated to answer the ends of a Divine institution; that Christ alone, as judge, lawgiver, and king of His church, may be exalted; His love, care, tenderness, and pity represented; His authority maintained, our obedience manifested, and our mutual edification promoted. Here's no fuel for the pride and ambition of the human mind, no foundation laid for worldly grandeur, nor any encouragement given to the cunning and crafty to form devices to ride over the rest of mankind; no door opened unto any

^a *Cosmog.* p. 342.

^b *Singulis pastoribus portio gregis sit adscripta quam regat unusquisque; et gubernat rationem sui actus Domino redditurus.*—*Cypr.* 72.

^c *Clem. Epist.* p. 73.

^d *Vicarias vero pro nobis ego et collegæ et fraternitas omnis has ad vos literas mittimus.*—*Cyp. Ep.* 58. *Sanctissimæ atque amplissimæ plebi legere te semper literas nostras.*—*Epist.* 55.

^e *Syllogisticus*, the reader observes, is the “reasoner” in these Dialogues. He marks the *principle* of a thing, and justifies or confutes an opinion according as it agrees or disagrees with that.—N.

vice; but holiness, humility, brotherly love, innocency established; and therefore it is highly reasonable. All this, and more, I shall be ready, I hope, to make good whenever called. Now pray, Theophilus, what sort of churches were first gathered and planted in this land?

THEOPH.—Upon all this I dare venture, without the least hesitation, to affirm that the first churches in Britain were strictly Congregational; for the account our kind brethren and neighbours gave of the apostolic and primitive churches can agree with nothing else; and their institution is so agreeable to all spiritual reason, that the Divine stamp plainly appears thereon. All levelled against the pride and corruption of man; all directed to the glory of Christ; all accommodated to the good of souls. What churches did the apostles and evangelists plant and water in Judea and Greece? Churches of the same order, most certainly, they planted and watered in Britain. Congregational they were there; it must follow, Congregational they were here. About the middle of the first century, when the Roman yoke was heavy upon the Britons, many of them, by the grace of God, took the yoke of Christ upon them, and found it easy.

CHRISTOPH.—Through grace we must say, His yoke is easy; He is precious to us, His yoke is so; we love our Master and His service; and I am glad to hear you, most excellent Theophilus, observe that Christ's yoke was easy to the Britons, when the Roman yoke was heavy upon the land. And here, I think, we may admire the tender compassion of our dear Redeemer towards His infant churches in Britain, the amazing methods he took to screen and protect them; for though the nation in general was pagan, and the rulers were so, and their enmity unto Christianity we know must be great, yet the repeated invasions of the Romans, the constant noise and din of war, battles, and bloodshed, kept them so employed that there was little or no time to persecute and torment the Christians,^f though it is said Simon Zelotes was crucified here. Had Providence thought fit to provide for us, and preserve to us, a plain, short history of those first Congregational churches in

^f Dorotheus relates that Simon Zelotes was crucified and buried in Britain.—Vide Usser. Brit. Eccles. Antiq. cap. 1.

Britain, or of any one of them, I should set a vast value upon it.

PHILAL.—God knows best what is best for us ; may we be helped to make the best improvement of what we have. But seeing we know those churches were Congregational, may we not take an innocent liberty to form an historic idea of one of them, in a dialogistic method, and observe how it must be gathered, formed, fed, and governed? For some reasons, especially that of its aptness to instruct the meanest capacity, I choose the proposed form ; and I am very certain that Truth itself, who gave us the account of the prodigal son, his turns of life, his father, his brother, and the feast, and who gave us the account of the rich man and Lazarus, will never condemn our design ; and therefore, in the name of the company, the neighbourhood, and myself, I earnestly desire you, our beloved Epenetus, our senior, and the first fruits of Potheina, to undertake this task.^g

EPEN.—You commit the work unto a person of a very mean fancy and invention : but seeing it is among my neighbours and friends, who are persons of capacity and candour, from whom I may expect kind assistance, wherever it may be thought needful, I shall not altogether decline what you are pleased to call me to. But I shall not here consider what may be said of Ynys-afalon, afterwards called Ynys Wydr,^h where they say the Gospel was first preached in this land, and therefore called “the first land of God ;” nor whether, though Joseph might build a cell there, he really gathered a church there ; nor how many churches he and others, the servants of God, sent into this land, might see gathered, before they themselves were gathered home. My principal acquaintance being with a city called in that day Caerludd,ⁱ I take leave thus to suppose it :—

That two trading, well-educated gentlemen, of that city,

^g This apologetic mode of requesting a picture drawn from the imagination marks the temper of the times. The same dread of the frowns of orthodox propriety seems to have, in a measure, troubled the mind of Bunyan.—N.

^h Glassenbury, now Glastonbury. “Called first ground of saints in England.”—Camden.—N.

ⁱ London.

in their travels providentially heard the Gospel preached by one Ffyddlon,^k a faithful servant of the Lord; and though curiosity led them, yet now something beyond expectation touched them. They went into the assembly smiling, and despising the thing in their hearts, but came out with tears in their eyes, and endeavoured by many ways to hide their concern; for neither of them knew how it was with the other. They durst not speak a word about what they had heard, nor where they had been; but, after unusual silence, one of them offered to say somewhat, but his words almost stifled him. The other answered him not; but after some time, with an inarticulate voice, and with much ado, asked the former whether he was well. He just answered, See that we are alone, and the doors safe.

CHRISTOPH.—O my dear Epenetus, you have so touched me, that I can hardly stand under the weight of affection; you put me in mind of the first visits of God upon my spirit. I was a poor wretch, neither expecting nor desiring any acquaintance with grace nor glory; I went without thought, nay worse, with madness in my heart against Him, who is now, I hope, precious to me; and I was surprised in such a manner as you have said. I have interrupted you; but excuse me, such passions as I now feel attend to no order.

EPEN.—Upon this, one of them, whose name was Yefan, said, Oh! my friend and fellow-traveller, how it is with you I cannot tell, and how it is with myself I cannot express; only I am under such a concern of mind as I never felt. I did hear of this sect, and despised them as ignorant and vain babblers; I did hear of Jesus Christ, whom they preach, and in whom it is said they believe, and trampled Him under foot. I was resolved never to be shaken in mind; I was resolved never to admit of the least esteem for such a Saviour. I went into the place armed with those resolutions; but there was something entered my heart when the preacher said that all the world was become guilty before God, even they that had not the written law. And he did not only prove it by substantial arguments, but there was some-

^k For the meaning of British names (which, to preserve the character of the work intact, we leave untranslated in the text), the reader is requested to refer to the glossary at the end.—N.

thing like a court called in my own conscience ; I was by some power more than human there indicted, proved guilty, and condemned ; and there now in chains I lie. I am ruined, I am undone, my sins are gone over mine head, the burden I cannot bear, and I now see plainly there is no creature can help me.

The other, whose name was Dewi, with tears heard him, and after some time made answer,—Oh ! what a journey is this ! what will be the end of it ? I went along with you into the assembly to please my fancy, and I am sure under the same resolutions ; bent not so much as to consider anything I should hear, unless I could catch at something to make sport of ;—but my sport is at an end for ever ; I am slain, I am slain ! Many things delivered so fastened upon me, that all the powers of nature can never shake them off. The sinful actions of my life were laid in order before me, and I could not help assenting to what I never heard before, that all those sinful actions did proceed from a corrupt fountain, a nature universally depraved and polluted ; and when the preacher said, No man can redeem his brother, nor give unto God a ransom for him, it entered my soul ; and under wounds which no human hand can heal I lie. We have heard we must be judged, and we have heard the Judge is of purer eyes than to look upon iniquity ; that the law can admit of no abatement, and that sinners shall not stand in the judgment ;—well may we now bemoan ourselves.

THEOPH.—Oh, poor hearts ! they wanted an interpreter, one among a thousand, that might now speak a word in season to their burdened souls. But our God, the object of our adoration and delight, being love itself, and full of compassion and pity, I hope did seasonably come, and command liberty to those captives, and the opening of the prison doors to those who were so bound, and give them beauty for ashes.

EPEN.—You shall hear. All that night they had no rest nor sleep, but some slumbers attended with astonishing terror. Death, judgment, and eternal destruction, was all they could see, and all they could hear ; and a terrible sound it was. It was a night, indeed, unto them ; but, as it is said in the Word, “ Weeping may endure for a night, but

joy cometh in the morning," so in some measure it was with them ; for, about break of day,

Dewi said, Do you not remember that the preacher said that " God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved ? "

Yefan.—I believe I do ; and another word, " There is salvation in no other." Now, my poor Dewi, who knows what may be in such words ? For my part, it is plain to me we are ruined and undone. But these words speak of salvation ; and though it is in no other but in Him whom we have so despised, yet it is in Him ; and who knows but He will save such wretches as you and I, seeing He saves sinners ? And with that they lifted up their voices and wept, and could speak no more for some time. Then said,

Dewi.—What must we do to be saved ? I could freely die the most cruel death ; or I could give the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul. Such sacrifices our Druids recommend ; but, alas ! I understand by what the preacher spoke yesterday, that the great God requireth no such sacrifices, accepteth them not, they were abominable to Him, and the persons that offer them do thereby make themselves still the greater sinners. For my part, I am at my wit's end, and don't know what to do !

Yefan.—My friend, there are two things come into my mind. Seeing that God, before whom we tremble, is infinitely great, He must be infinitely good ; let us try and pray to Him, and then let us seek out that servant of His that preached, and tell him our case, and beg his advice.

Dewi.—I like what you say, if we could come at it ; but both the things are, unto me, seemingly impossible. I don't know, for my life, how to pray to God, whose terror makes me afraid ; by reason of His greatness, I cannot endure. And then, as to the man, my heart sinks within me, at the very thought of seeing him, and speaking to him ; and if he should speak roughly to us, I look upon myself as slain.

Yefan.—But, as I said before, though I am in my own judgment as one already dead and damned, yet there are some things that encourage me. He that is infinitely great, I think, must be infinitely gracious ; and I think we may very justly conclude so, when we bring the case home to

ourselves. He might have destroyed us long ago; and He, being infinite, must be present here, and sees and hears us now, and yet does not strike us dead. I think there is grace in this. And then, as to the man, if he is the servant of the Most High God, as I doubt not but he is, then he is merciful and compassionate; and besides, he said in his discourse that every mouth was stopped, and all the world guilty before God—a word that touched you, and so it must touch himself, for he is one of the children of men, and must know what it is to be under guilt, and can therefore fellow-feel with us, and perhaps may tell us after what manner he was relieved.

Dewi.—I still think that what you say is rational enough, but I wonder you can say it. Sure I am in a worse condition by far than you apprehend; nevertheless, what you say is a little stay to me;—but do in both as you think fit, and as you can; let me be but with you.

Upon this, they threw themselves prostrate on the ground, and it was a considerable time before a word could be said, but sighing, sobbing, with their mouth in the dust; at last, Yefan said, O Lord God, the maker of all things, and the governor of the world, unto thee all power must belong, and therefore thou canst kill, and thou canst make alive. We are two poor heathen men, ruined and undone; we deserve eternal death and destruction, and 'tis owing only to thy sparing hand that we are alive. Thou canst in a moment crush us to death, and in just vengeance upon us, damn us for ever; but if thou pleasest, thou canst bring glory to thyself in the salvation of such wretches as we are. We understand that heathen men, as we are, have been turned to thee, and saved; for the sake of all thy goodness, and all that whereby thou makest it known, turn us, and save us. Amen. And still on the ground they did lie, crying and bemoaning themselves; but after a while, got up, called for some water, drank a little, and washed, and went in search of the preacher.

PHILAL.—We see persons in distress need not stay to have forms of prayer drawn up for them; their grief immediately turns into groans, and their pains teach them what petitions to put up. Their prayer makes me think of David's under some oppressing grief. "The sorrows of

death compassed me, and the pains of hell got hold of me : I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord : O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul."—Psalm cxvi. 3, 4.

CHRISTOPH.—Oh, my dear Philalethes, what made you interrupt ? I think every minute an hour till I hear how they were received, whether they found any relief, and whether Christ was made precious to them ? But, while I blame you for interrupting, I do but hinder the story myself.

EPEN.—I told you, in search of the preacher they went, and, upon inquiry, found out the house where he sojourned ; but when they knocked at the door, they knocked like persons afraid to be heard. The person who opened, asked them what their business was ? They asked him whether the preacher of Christianity lived there, and whether he was at home ? He answered, he was not at home ; upon which they withdrew, and he shut the door. Their legs could hardly carry them ; in the street they stood, looking at one another, and trembling. At last, says

Devi.—What a disappointment is this ! It makes the case look darker and darker to me. The great God knows our distress ; and, as He knows all things, He knew we would go after this servant of His for some instruction and relief ; and if it had been His pleasure we should have relief to our distressed minds, He would have kept him in the way for that work. It looks to me as if we were to be shut up in darkness for ever.

Yefan.—My disappointment is great, and the greater because I entertained some sort of encouragement from a prospect of some conversation with him. It was on my heart with some expectation ; and to my great distress, I am baulked. But your conclusions are so dark and dismal, they are like death unto me ; but still, who knows. Let us go back again, and ask when he is expected to be at home, for that we forgot.

So they returned to the door, and again knocked ; but the person observing them at earnest talk in the street, and knowing not what they said, was ready to think they were not upon a good design, and so was very backward to open the door. But says *Yefan*, Pray, when will the gentleman be at home ? Says he, from within, Pray, gentlemen,

what is your business with him? They replied, with a submissive voice, Pray be so kind as to open the door, and we will tell you. The door being opened, poor Dewi, with tears in his eyes, says to him, Pray, Sir, will you give us leave to come within your threshold? Upon leave they entered. Says Dewi, with a countenance discovering the greatest concern, and tears upon his cheeks overtaking one another, Sir, are you a Christian? He replied, Yes; and said, You make me take the freedom to ask you what you are? Says Dewi, The Lord knows; and could say no more. Upon this,

Yefan said,—We were born at Caerludd, and bred and brought up there in the religion of our ancestors; and, as we see now, have hitherto lived in ignorance and infidelity; but hearing the preacher of Christianity yesterday, have been under unspeakable trouble of mind ever since: and have come hither to tell him how it is with us as near as we can, and to attend to some instruction from him; but our disappointment adds greatly to our distress.

Says Tosturiol,—for that was the man's name,—I pity you both, and cannot at present put you in a better way, than to go and hear him preach to-day, at a neighbouring village; and though I have urgent business at home, yet apprehending this to be a service I owe to my dear Redeemer, and to my poor fellow-sinners, I will go along with you, and hope we may be there time enough. Take a refreshing morsel of what is plain and wholesome, for if I mistake not, though you are gentlemen, you stand in need of it, having not been kind enough to yourselves at your inn. They thanked him, accepted his kindness, took a little, and presently set out.

As they went along, Tosturiol ever and anon would be a dropping something that concerned the kingdom of heaven, the misery of poor sinners by nature, the glory of Christ as a Saviour, the work of the Holy Spirit in conversion, and the wonders of God's providence in sending the Gospel to poor sinners, or bringing them to it, without their forethought, contrivance, or design; and took notice how all this would turn to the honour of infinite grace another day.

Before they came to the Christian assembly, the worship was begun; and as they entered, the preacher *Ffyddlon*

was reading his text; for sometimes, in those days, they read a text, and sometimes they did not. But, as I said, he read his text, which was that in Isaiah xi. 10, "To it shall the Gentiles seek, and His rest shall be glorious." He knew nothing of them, nor their distress, nor their design, and that was a comfortable consideration to them afterwards; but he worked and God worked.

He observed that the Gentiles were the poor heathens, and among others, the Britons; he observed their natural state was deplorable, under the dominion of sin, like the troubled sea that could not rest, continually casting up mire and dirt; where, with special application, he insisted on the wretchedness of man by nature. He observed that Jesus Christ was the blessed ensign set up for the people, proved it, and insisted much upon His suitableness to save, and the completeness of His salvation; he observed the efficacy of grace, in quickening and drawing the sinner, upon which the heathen should seek to Him; and then observed how they should be graciously received, and should not miss of present rest in faith, faith that should infallibly reach to glory. He was a long while in his sermon; but had he continued his speech till midnight, they would not have been in the young man's case, who fell down from the third loft.

They had their eyes so fixed on him, as if their whole life was in every word he said; but were at times so overpowered with affection, that they hung their heads, cried, and wished they could have hid themselves within the hearing of him. A variety of passions discovered themselves in their countenances; sometimes the depth of grief, and sometimes something like surprising joy. And as for honest Tosturiol, who brought them thither, it was a feast to him, to think how the Spirit of God was working upon them; and blamed himself much that he should be so cruel as to ask them with a sort of a frown, what their business was with the preacher?

When worship was over, and the people dismissed, they went to the preacher and signified to him their deep, unfeigned respect; and knowing him to be much spent in his work, only desired leave to wait upon him the next morning at his lodgings. He, in the most affectionate manner, told

them he should be very glad to see them. They got to their inn in good time, and bespoke a little supper, their poor natures by this time being very much spent, and not very capable of much conversation; and while supper was getting, drank one small cup a-piece of *meth-y-glyn*,¹ and laid them down for some repose.

Being called to supper, and having taken their places, the landlord, who at that time was to sup with them, with uncovered head, and hands and eyes lifted up to heaven, implored the Divine blessing upon the food Providence had prepared for them, and desired their table might never be a snare to their souls, but that they might be helped by the Lord to consider the hand that always opened to their relief, and make the best use and improvement of all in the service and to the glory of God, through Jesus Christ. While they were refreshing themselves, said the landlord, whose name was Buddiol, a very useful man,—How bountiful is our God! how amazing his providence! what a collection of mercies is here, together with health and appetite to partake of them! Here is bread, which without our care grew, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear, under the kind influences of Heaven, ripened and reaped, gathered and ground, and by Providence all the while designed for this company at this time. And to say no more, here is a cup of *meth-y-glyn*, which, God willing, we shall presently drink of. But who can tell how many servants did our provident God employ, in order to bring this liquor to our table; how many bees; with what industry did they work; into what fields were their flights, where the mellifluous flowers grew for us; with what art was the honey gathered, brought home, and preserved; and all for us! Our God commands seas, rivers, and fields to serve us.^m How does it become us to be thankful and holy, and see that we neither drink of this, nor of any other liquor to excess, but that we may, with greater cheerfulness, honour our Redeemer. But, continued he, though all this is wonderful, what is it to redemption, whereby a poor sinner, who has ruined himself by his sins, is yet delivered

¹ Mead; a fermented liquor, made of honey and water.—N.

^m His own words were:—"O fôr, ac o fynydd, ac o fil o afonydd y denfydd Duw dda i ddedydd."

from wrath to come, the law of God fulfilled for him by the Messiah, his sins fully, freely, and for ever pardoned, his soul converted by grace, brought to believe on the Son of God for righteousness and acceptance for ever—brought to see himself among the children, and blessed with the bread of life, the hidden manna, and the refreshment peculiar thereunto! Enemies reconciled! strangers brought near! sinners saved! Oh, amazing grace!

THEOPH.—Oh, Epenetus, I shall think of this supper, I hope, at every meal while I live. What a supper was this, which refreshes one at a distance of almost seventeen hundred years! And what a landlord was he! I wish we had at least one such in every market-town I go to—a God-glorifying, Christ-exalting, soul-instructing landlord. But who can tell how it will be, when the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the seas? But I want to know how it was with the two gentlemen.

EPEN.—While he was discoursing of Providence, their eyes were so fixed on him, that they could hardly regard their trenchers, only catch up a bit and look; but when he came to speak of redemption, and the salvation of sinners, through Christ, they could look up no more. Oh, they were melted, hung down their heads, and did all they could to refrain; which, when he observed, he thought it prudence, for that time, to desist. Supper being ended, he, in the fear of God, returned thanks, and desired the gracious assistance of the Holy Spirit, so that under His sin-subduing, soul-sanctifying operations, they might serve the living God faithfully in the best use of all, through Jesus Christ.

After supper, he said unto them, Gentlemen, I am a Christian, and look upon it as my glory. I honour God as the God of the families of His people, and know that they should, as families, acknowledge and worship Him daily. I worship God in and with my family. I can command them. Strangers I never impose upon, and you are welcome either to join us, or to withdraw to your room. They said, if he pleased, they chose to stay. The 31st chapter of the prophecy of Jeremiah was read—the first chapter the two strangers ever heard read; and every part

of it seemed to them to be filled with glory and power, more than human. The master of the family spoke something briefly to the contents of the chapter, then the whole family sung the 87th Psalm, and the master spent a considerable time in a judicious and affectionate prayer, and prayed very particularly for the strangers that were there providentially present, and desired God would make a precious discovery of the glory of His Son unto them, and bless them with strong faith in Him, and evangelical holiness to Him, all their days.

But bed-time being come, and they now very willing to be by themselves, they very heartily thanked their landlord for his prayers for them, and wished him and the family a good night. They were dismissed with the good wishes of the family, and the young man who read the chapter did light them to their room, who at parting with them said, Gentlemen, *mercy and truth be with you*, and so withdrew. But one of them said, Pray, young man, what do you mean by mercy and truth? He answered, The mercy to Abraham, and the truth to Jacob, which God sware unto our fathers from the days of old; or, if you please, all the mercy of God in making, and his truth in fulfilling, promises. Then we suppose, said one of them, if they were your fathers, that you are by birth and nation a Jew. He answered, No, gentlemen; my ancestors were Britons, and I was born one; but, through grace, I am born again, and now believe in Jesus Christ, and therefore own myself to be Abraham's seed, and an heir according to the promise made to Abraham. Then said they, Young man, we wish you a good night.

CHRISTOPH.—Well, sure, such a day, from first to last, they never met with in their lives. What multiplied, repeated means of instruction did our dear Redeemer find out for them! What treasures of grace belong to Him! When I heard of their resolution to go and talk with the preacher, I never thought they were to meet with all this first: but our times are in our Lord's hands. Now I want to know how it was with them, when left by themselves.

EPEN.—For a while they sat astonished under the weight of crowded and crowding thoughts, which, in the greatest variety, worked in their breasts. At last, says

Yefan.—What an amazing day has this been! I have met with nothing but disappointments all the day! When I went expecting to speak with the preacher, I was disappointed; when I heard the rough reply of the man of the house, I expected nothing but unkindness, but I was disappointed; when I heard the preacher discourse of the sinfulness and misery of man by nature, I was laid open indeed, and my wounds were searched—I groaned under my misery, and expected no comfort, but I was disappointed in a very merciful manner; in an inn I expected no religion, but you see how we are disappointed. I hope your soul, my dear Dewi, has received this day some encouraging instruction and comfort; and, in this, I trust I shall not be disappointed.

Dewi.—I must own everything wonderful that concerns this journey of ours. When we left Caerludd,ⁿ we did not determine to go any farther than Caerbaddon,^o for the benefit of the Twym-ennaint;^p but then, finding ourselves cheerful and well, curiosity led us as far as Caerodor,^q and we fully determined from thence to visit Pencaer,^r Caer-Gwent,^s and Clawdd-hanton,^t and so return; but, unto ourselves unaccountable, we insensibly lost that resolution, and bore another way towards Caerloyw,^u and calling at this contemptible village, which from henceforth we will for ever call Hyfrydle,^x without any design to stay; but hearing of a meeting of Christians, had the curiosity to go to it, and blessed be God, my dear Yefan, blessed be God that ever we did. As you said, disappointments we have had, but all, I hope, to our greatest advantage. Our landlord told us of the wonders of Providence at supper; and we may indeed say, the wonders of Providence! When I heard the preacher this day preach Christ a suitable Saviour to the worst of sinners, and that He came to seek and to save that which was lost, it went to my very heart indeed; before I cried for anguish of soul, but then I thought my heart would have sunk within me, under the weight of a comfortable hope that He would save me. It melted me—it made me cry for joy, and made me willing to die, that I

ⁿ London.^o Bath.^p Bath Waters.^q Bristol.^r Exeter.^s Winchester.^t Southampton.^u Gloucester.^x Place of Pleasantness.

might go to Him that loved poor sinners, and died for them.

Yefan.—Oh, this is precious! For my part, if I had spoken to the preacher beforehand, and told him my case, I should have thought that he spoke to me on purpose, for everything was so levelled at me. But you know he had begun before we got there, and so I hope I look upon what he said to be provided for us by the gracious Lord, who knew your wants and mine, and therefore guided His servant to those things which were exceedingly suitable to us. Oh, that I had all his discourse in writing! But that's a thing impossible, seeing what he spoke, for read he did not; he cannot speak word for word again, nor can I remember, only, in the main, it was all very useful; and particularly that which he said, that a poor sinner, who is like the troubled sea that cannot rest, but is continually casting up mire and dirt, should, let him be never so unworthy, upon his believing in Jesus Christ, enter into rest. I knew I had been restless all my life-time, and was mighty glad to hear the preacher say that the weary and heavy-laden sinner should, under His yoke, find rest unto his soul. And now, my dear Dewi, do pray to God, and we will go to bed.

Upon this they both fell down upon the ground, as in the morning, worshipped the Most High God, desired Him to forgive all their sins, give them faith in His Son, give them understanding, holiness, and eternal happiness; thanked Him for the mercies of the day, and committed themselves unto Him for the night; not forgetting now their poor families at home; and all, with many tears.

Morning being come, they got up, worshipped God, both of them prayed, committed themselves to the Lord, and begged that day might be a special blessing to them. Some spiritual discourse they had, about what they experienced the day before, and some instructing, encouraging touches upon their fancies in the slumbers of the night; but they hastened to visit Ffyddlon the preacher, and the landlord being at leisure, they asked him to go along with them, which he said he would readily do, only he desired to worship God in and with his family first, for (said he) we may be detained there unto time inconvenient.

The family was called, the 68th Psalm read, whereupon

the master of the family observed in particular the ascension of Christ, and His receiving gifts for the rebellious, that God might dwell among them, and prayed that their visit to the servant of God, their bishop, as he called him, might be attended with a special blessing.

Worship being over, they quickly made their way to Tosturiol's house, where Ffyddlon the bishop sojourned, and found him ready expecting them; and after civil salutations, and seating themselves, Buddiol, the landlord, said to his bishop, for he was a member of the church he was pastor of,—Sir, these gentlemen, now they have entered the house, seem by their countenances to be under the power of some discouraging thought, and they, as I perceive, being backward to speak, I take this freedom, whether it becomes me or not. I know they are come to converse with you upon the great and weighty concern of religion.

Ffyddlon.—Gentlemen, you are heartily welcome. I look upon it as the business of my life to serve my Lord and Maker Christ, and to the utmost of my power, my poor fellow-sinners. But that it may be a sanctified opportunity to us together, let us seek the face of God in prayer. Accordingly with them, and for them, he prayed, and desired the eternal Spirit, who leads into all truth, would graciously guide thoughts and words to His glory, and to the instruction and edification of all present. And when prayer was over, said, Now, gentlemen, speak on.

Yefan.—Sir, being on our journey, we called at this village, and put up at a house that we shall never forget; and hearing of a meeting of Christians, our curiosity led us to go to it. We heeded no man, nor had any thought of God, despised the worship, and derided the Messiah you preached, but notwithstanding all this, which I tremble to relate, a power, more than can be natural, seized upon us; our sins were set in order before us, we saw ourselves lost and undone, but heard of a Saviour for the worst of sinners—And upon this, by reason of tears in abundance, could say no more. But Dewi took it up, and went through most part of the story I have related, with some omissions and some additions, of what they had experienced; and then broke off abruptly, with desiring his judgment upon their case, and the best advice he could give them.

Ffyddlon.—You have given me some account of the work of God upon your soul—observe me, I call it *the work of God*—and that you may compare spiritual things with spiritual, I will give you a short account of the work of God upon me.^y I was born of heathen ancestors, and bred a heathen; and as I grew up, given to most of the vices of the neighbourhood where I lived, which was at Tref-anrhaith.^z But as vice grew upon me, checks of conscience also grew, which much marred my comfort. I endeavoured to stifle those dark apprehensions that spoiled my pleasure, and used all the arts I was master of to do this, but never could thoroughly effect it. I found, though I had not the written law, nor never heard of it, that I was, in a sense, a law to myself; my conscience accusing or excusing. I took great delight in shooting, was glad to be esteemed a dexterous archer; and could draw a bow and take aim, as I thought, with any man; and one time, pursuing my game at Coedmawr, I saw a knot of people by the woodside, as in a ring, and one man advanced a little higher than the rest, and seemed to me to be speaking to the company. I drew near, and found I was not deceived, for speaking he was with great affection and earnestness, the people many of them in tears, and joy sat upon the countenances of others. I gave no attention to what was delivered, but wondered to see the people so took with it. Anon, says the preacher (Joseph, now among the blessed), That man (pointing to me) may think there is none armed here but himself;—let him know that there is. The glorious Redeemer, whom I preach, is in the midst of us, and is armed both with justice and mercy. And with that cried out with a loud voice, “Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O thou most mighty, and in thy majesty ride prosperously upon the word of truth, meekness, and righteousness.” “Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the King’s enemies.” Upon this he considered who the enemies were, and what was their case. I quickly found myself among them, and as a wretched, lost, undone creature, I

^y It would seem, from the examples given in this book, that Mr. Maurice was partial to the practice of relating experiences—one very prevalent in the *society* meetings of Wales.—N.

^z Abode of desolation.—N.

felt the arrows in my heart indeed. Every word he spoke pointed me out to be the man that must for ever lie under the avenging strokes of justice, and the only man there ; for, as I told you before, they all seemed by their countenances to be sincere lovers of this glorious Prince of whom he spoke. His words were like a two-edged sword in my heart ; I trembled, I hung down my head, but go away I durst not ; but being wounded in soul, and dispirited to the last degree, I dropped my bow and arrows to the ground, and never took them up.

After some time, he came to mercy, and insisted upon the word meekness, and the word truth. 'I saw, indeed, that what he spoke then was exceedingly suitable to a poor wretched sinner, such as I was ; but all that I attained to at that time was a desire to receive such tidings of grace. The people I judged happy, and wished myself among them ; but yet concluded myself miserable. The meeting being ended, several of the people accompanied the preacher, and conducted him some whither. There was but one of the company that I knew, whose name was Cywir ; he came to me, and took some notice of me, and desired I would go with him for that night ; or if I would not, he offered me his company, for my company he was resolved to have. I accepted of his invitation, for some reasons, and went with him. There was in his neighbourhood that evening a private meeting of a few Christians for prayer and conference. He, being a Christian, knew of it, and went, and made me go along with him. Here, after prayer, one of them asked me whether I was a Christian, and how it was with me in my soul ? His words did half slay me ; they entered my very heart. I trembled, and said I don't know what, nor nobody else could understand me. My poor acquaintance, Cywir, did pity me, and so they did all ; but said no more to me, only spoke their experiences in my hearing, and prayed for me. But the fright upon my wounded heart put me into such a condition that I could hardly consider or hear what they said. But they carried it kindly to me, and at parting one of them, with tears in his eyes, said, The Saviour of sinners have mercy on thee, and reveal himself to thee ! But my load was great.

That night, my friend Cywir took a great deal of pains with me, sometimes instructing me in the principles of

Christianity, sometimes reading some part of the Book of God to me; sometimes telling me his own experience, and how he had been as I was; and sometimes praying with me. I always pointed him to my sins, my wounds and bruises, and he pointed me to the wounds of Christ, and the blood of the everlasting covenant. Next day, Joseph preached in another place, and Cywir had me thither; and Joseph took that text, Isaiah xliii. 24, 25, "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." He opened all my disease, preached the glorious Physician who heals for His own name sake. God helped me to venture all upon Him; He received me, and I received Him through grace. Unto Him, as a perishing sinner, I came; and as a perishing and, in myself, lost and undone sinner, I come to Him still; for Christ says, "Him that cometh, I will in no wise cast out."

Yefan.—Sir, I am very thankful for this precious account you gave of the work of God upon your own soul; and I humbly think, upon the compare, there is something of the same kind in what I am under. But I think I am not to build all my hope upon a resemblance there may be between work and work, though that is encouraging, but upon such words as you mentioned last; I mean, Him who spoke the words, "him that cometh, I will in no wise cast out."

Dewi.—And I, Sir, return you many thanks also, and wish I could be as full of encouragement as my friend Yefan is. But I think there is such a dissimilitude between your account and what I feel, that makes me very much dissatisfied with myself; for you were the very next day helped to receive Christ, and to know that He received you; but as for me, I am not yet satisfied whether I have received Him, nor whether He has received me.

Ffyddlon.—You may remember what your friend said, that our hope is not to be built upon a resemblance between work and work; for if it was so, the work being attended with such variety of different circumstances in those who are yet real Christians, there would be very little hope found anywhere. The truth of the work lies in a turn of heart from self to Christ. Whoever is brought to see himself

lost and undone by sin, and desires to be found in Christ and His righteousness, is a converted man, a believer in the Lord, whether he be fully satisfied concerning his own faith or not; and then, in the darkest times, I would not forget, nor would I have any other Christian forget, the mentioned words of our dear Saviour, "Him that cometh, I will in no wise cast out." Faith is the same for kind in all converted, but as to the means and manner of God's working faith, there is a great variety. Your landlord is now called away, but at a time convenient, pray him to relate his experience.

And to make short of this work, the good servant of Christ kept them with him all that day, instructed them in the principles of the doctrine of Christ, and they being men of good natural parts, some degree of learning, and now men of grace, they quickly took in all the principal doctrines of Christianity; and after prayers and tears with them and for them, he asked them, before many witnesses, who hearing of that day's work desired leave to be present, whether they did now believe the truth of the Christian religion, and renounce whatever was inconsistent therewith? They answered, they did. He asked them, did they venture their souls upon Christ for all salvation, yielding themselves and all theirs up to Him, taking His yoke upon them, and resolving in His strength to obey and serve Him for ever? They answered, they did. Upon which he said, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized?" He ordered it, and they were baptized on the spot;^a and with fervent prayers and praises committed to God, and the word of His grace.

Being returned to their inn, their landlord saluted them, with a—Gentlemen, how do you do? They answered, they hoped well, and admired the wonders of Providence in bringing them thither, and the wonders of grace in working upon their souls. Oh, says he, gentlemen, God's ways are in the deep; but they are all mercy and truth. This last word brought the young man to their mind who did light them to bed the night afore; and said they, Pray, Sir, how is it with your chamberlain? He dropped a word last night, which not many days ago we should have taken

^a See page 36.

for a certain mark of distraction; only then we thought there were some mysteries belonging to the Christian religion which he understood, and we did not. He said, that through grace he was born again. Pray, what did he mean by it?

Gentlemen, says the landlord, it is a mystery, but one which, through grace, you also understand, though you are not acquainted with that term; and upon this he calls Alfred (for that was his name), and says to him, Pray tell these gentlemen what you meant by being born again through grace.

Alfred.—Gentlemen, says he, and bowed himself toward the earth, I was born a heathen, and cannot say that I was brought up in any thing, but left to myself, and proved a poor, idle, strolling boy; and as for my notions of this world or the next, I took them all, as my companions in vanity and wretchedness did. But, coming to this door to ask for something to satisfy my hunger, my dear master, for whom I shall bless God to all eternity, called me in, and told me that I was in the highway to eternal destruction—all misery here, and all misery hereafter; and told me it would be far better for me to be fixed in some sober family, and stick to some honest business. Said I, Sir, I fancy nobody will take me. Will you tarry with me, said he, and be faithful? I said I would. But, oh, the pains he took with me! He taught me to read; he was night and day instructing me; he told me how I was born in sin, and under the curse, and that I had by my repeated sins added much to my guilt; he told me that Jesus Christ was the only sacrifice for sin, the only Saviour of sinners, and that He was exceedingly gracious; he told me it was the work of the Holy Spirit to create a new heart, convert the soul, and sanctify it; always would he be speaking to me of Christ's love and grace, and praying for me, and putting me upon prayer alone, and telling me what great reason I had to bemoan myself. And, that I be not tedious, I must say that my poor soul was struck with convictions quickly; sometimes under great concern, at other times more at ease; then under horror, because I was so thoughtless and easy; then, a word my master did often repeat to me would ring in my

heart, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of heaven." Then, under amazing horror, for, thought I, what can I do towards such a work as that? But, one time, as I was in our barn, under great concern, pouring out my soul before God, with precious power in my heart, I felt that word, "of His own will begat He us with the word of truth." I found my soul melted down; I was willing to receive, and be saved by Christ; and with that "him that cometh I will in no wise cast out," encouraged my soul. This I meant by being born again.

Yefan.—Young man, we thank you, and now return what you wished might attend us, "mercy and truth be with you." Well, what amazing methods God takes to bring His own to Himself! This young man seemed to be a long while under a work that looks only like a preparatory one; and then when the work appeared to be of the right kind, it was not under hearing the Word; but still, so long as the work is but effected, blessed be God for it. But, landlord, the preacher desired we would ask you how you were reached by grace?

Landlord.—Gentlemen, said he, you see I am not an old man; I was born of Christian parents, who were both converted in hearing the blessed Simon Zelotes preach, not long before he suffered martyrdom for Christ.^b Ever since I remember, my father at proper seasons, and my mother almost always, would be instilling something about my sinful nature, the sinfulness of sin, Christ's love in dying for sinners, and salvation through His blood, into me; but small concern about all these things grew up with me. As to my morals, there was always a restraint upon me; but, under all, I found the workings of corruption, and saw that had I been left unto myself, I should have been vile as the vilest; and often, by reason of this, and considering the many advantages that attended me, the means used with me, and their effect upon me, I have groaned earnestly, under a sense of my being the greatest sinner in the whole world. Many Scriptures were made of use to me to show me my pollution by nature, that I was born in sin, that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelt no good thing; fully, from Scripture, convinced of the justice

^b See page 15.

of God, and the necessity of its being satisfied; entirely persuaded that Christ did fulfil all righteousness, and that there is salvation in no other; and also fully convinced of the necessity of a real change of nature by the Holy Spirit, or no going to glory, I find, through grace, I hate sin, I loath myself, I would have no righteousness to appear in before God but Christ's; I love Him, I love His service dearer than my life. And, through grace, at different times He does so fill me with the joys of His communion that my cup runs over. His love constrains me, I obey Him not as a slave, but in a filial spirit; I hope I shall in this spirit worship Him so long as I live, and wait for His glory. But what was the beginning of God's real work upon my heart, is what I do not know, nor do expect to know in this world. This is what I know—by nature I was blind, and through grace I now see.

At supper they had pleasant talk, and after family worship, wished each other good repose. Dewi and Yefan, in their own room, cheerfully blessed God for the day, committed themselves and theirs to His grace, and morning being come, prepared themselves for their journey. They went to take their leave of the Bishop Ffyddlon, who gave them a Greek Bible a-piece, several books of the Old and New Testament, of his own translation into the British tongue;^c and also a system of divinity of his own drawing up, together with his own experience at large, accompanied them to the inn, worshipped God with them there, told them their hands were upon the plough, encouraging them to go on in the strength of the Lord. They made him becoming returns of gratitude, and earnestly desired him to come and visit them as soon as possible, and told him where he might find them. Said he, I hope, if the Lord will, in less than two months' time to see you. And so, with many tears, and the most tender embraces, they parted, begging of each other a constant remembrance before the throne of grace.

NEOPH.—An amazing heart-affecting story all of it. But you told us they were baptized, and gave us no

^c There is no improbability in the supposition that versions of parts of Scripture in the British tongue existed in the first century. History, however, is silent; no traces of them now remain.—N.

account of their being received into church-fellowship: what, did not the bishop look upon baptism to be a church ordinance?

EPEN.—If he had, he must have received them into church-fellowship first, and must have baptized nowhere but in church assembly; but the examples of the eunuch, the jailor, and others, made this case plain beyond controversy; it may be called an ordinance pertaining to Christianity, but not strictly a church ordinance. But this company may, perhaps, find some occasion to consider this hereafter.

THEOPH.—Oh, Epenetus, how do I long to hear this story out. How was it with them by the way? How were they received at home? How did they lay themselves out in the service of their Lord and Master, when in their families, and among their acquaintance? What success did attend them? Was there a church speedily gathered? And how was it ordered?

EPEN.—I have been the longer upon this story because of the great use God made of the men afterwards. But, being mounted, they thought they had no business further; they had found what God had brought them from home for, and now they turn face towards Caerludd, are new men, have new fears, new joys, new designs, are seemingly in a new world, all things are become new; and though but earthen vessels, God had now put a treasure into them more valuable than the universe, and so homeward they move. Their wives and families, oh, their wives and families now lie near them! their relations, friends, and acquaintance, they now have a thousand thoughts about. And, after one day's journey, they blamed themselves much they did not urge the preacher to go home with them, thinking he might be of immediate use to their nearest ones at home, as yet in heathenism; they talked of returning for him, but seeing he had promised a visit in some short time, they thought they would wait for it; and, in the meantime, do what they could for Christ. But I see time will fail us, else I thought to have told you their struggles for Christ in their families, and among their acquaintance; and how God did speedily bless their endeavours, so that when Ffyddlon

came to see them, he found so many lively stones fit for the spiritual building, that he immediately put them upon entering into church-fellowship together; which, for *matter* and *form*, *officers* and *order*, I should also relate, together with some of their trials and their comforts—all which you may demand of me, if the Lord will, at a time convenient; but I think, for the present, I have sufficiently tired you.

CHRISTOPH.—Oh, my dear Epenetus, I could hear it till midnight, and so I judge of all here present; but, as time is elapsed, and other duties call, I heartily thank you, and hope next time we shall be all here a little sooner. Brethren and neighbours, the best of blessings surround and fill you!

DIALOGUE II.

THE ORIGIN OF THE CHURCH AT CAERLUDD, THROUGH THE
LABOURS OF THE FIRST CONVERTS.

CHRISTOPHILUS.—Providence favouring us with a second opportunity, our beloved Epenetus, we beg you would proceed in your story. You left the two gentlemen, and a great deal of our expectation along with them, on the road; now, I hope you will carry them and us forward to Caerludd.

EPEN.—I told you how they blamed themselves they did not take Ffyddlon, the preacher, along with them; but seeing he had promised them a visit, they would wait, and do what they could for Christ in the meantime. That night, on the road, they desired their landlord would sup with them, that they might have an opportunity of taking some work in hand for their Lord. Yefan stood up, and in a very solemn manner gave the eternal God thanks for His amazing mercies to them on their journey, leading them to look to Jesus Christ for the salvation of their souls, bringing them in safety so far, providing food for the refreshment of their bodies, and earnestly desired the blessing of Heaven upon every crumb and drop prepared for them; that the Spirit of the Lord would guide and bless their conversation, and enable them, while they had breath and being, cheerfully and faithfully, to serve their dear Redeemer. Having helped themselves, they discoursed both, in their turns, of the bounty of Providence, of the wonders of the Redeemer's love, the salvation of sinners through His blood, and asked their landlord what thoughts he had of religion, and how he relished the things they discoursed of?

Landlord.—Gentlemen, says the landlord, whose name

was Bydol, I never trouble my mind about religion, but take it as my ancestors delivered it to me; and as for the things you have been discoursing of, they are things I never heard before, nor do I now understand them, but hope I may be happy enough without any acquaintance with them. I understand you are of that new sect, which is everywhere spoken against; but, gentlemen, you are nevertheless welcome to me; I am a landlord, and, you know, I should carry it handsomely to everybody.

Dewi.—Oh, my poor fellow-sinner! with all my heart I pity your case. I was, not long since, as regardless of religion as you can be; but when God was pleased to convince me of His greatness, and my wretchedness, I was made to conclude that religion should be the greatest concern of my life; and that without it I could not enjoy true pleasure here, nor felicity hereafter. It would profit you nothing, if you could gain all Britain, and lose your own soul. And I earnestly beg you would receive—even what reason, if attended to, will suggest to you—that you are a sinner; that the eternal God must be perfect; that satisfaction, therefore, must be made to Divine justice, injured by your sin; that by your best obedience for time to come you can never make amends for offences past, for it is a debt you, on another account, owe to God; that no sacrifices nor oblations of any earthly kind can possibly satisfy the eternal God for the sin of man; that, therefore, it must be something that reason cannot reach that must take away your sin, and save your soul; which, according to the revelation of God, is the mediation of His own Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Bydol.—Gentlemen, all good nature commands me to be thankful for the pity you express to one you apprehend to be in misery; but I am not in such a case as you imagine, and assure you that your silence concerning such affairs will greatly oblige your humble servant. And so he withdrew.

THEOPH.—Poor hearts! at their very entrance into the work—upon the very first attempt, to be so repulsed! How discouraging! They aimed at his heart, and he turned away his ear; they aimed at his felicity, and he stubbornly embraced his misery. The deep degeneracy of man!

PHILAL.—Though this was unpleasant, it was instructing; they might take the greater occasion to praise and adore distinguishing grace to their own souls; for had they been left to themselves, when they went out of curiosity to hear Ffyddlon preach, they would have turned all into ridicule and reproach. Perhaps this trial might be of great use to them afterwards. But I want to know how the poor young soldiers bore it.

EPEN.—They were struck dumb, hung down their heads, quickly finished their supper, in a few words owned the goodness of God, the sinfulness of man, their own weakness and unworthiness, and desired God to have mercy on poor sinners who had destroyed themselves, and give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth. And now they thought fit to retire to their chamber, having another unexpected turn to converse upon; and doors being shut, said

Dewi.—Oh, Yefan! did our Lord call us to this work? Is it our duty to speak of His name? Why did He not own the attempt, who could have made it effectual? By what we have said the man is hardened, and by what appears I am deeply discouraged.

Yefan.—I own it is very shocking—I did not expect it; but this I am sure of, that it is our duty, who have found mercy, to recommend it to our fellow-sinners in misery. If they receive it, and rely upon it, then a soul is saved from death; and what a glorious deliverance is then by grace wrought! But if they reject it, we show what the grace of God puts us upon, and they discover the depravity of degenerate nature; where we may also learn what we have in our hearts, and what amazing, distinguishing grace has visited us.

Dewi.—But there is one thing that now fills me with dread. I have a wife at home I dearly love; her temper I know; her spirit is high, never conquered with anything. Her salvation I greatly desire, and I know there is salvation in none but Christ; and speak of Him to her I must, if I live. But though I long to be at home, yet I dread it, lest all my poor endeavours for her good shall meet with the most violent opposition, and the comfort of my life lost and gone.

Yefan.—I pity your case; but I have that to comfort me. My wife is as kind a creature as lives, always studies to oblige me, is never provoked with any rough carriage of mine, but immediately wins my heart with smiles and kindness; does advise with me in whatever she undertakes, and what I think most proper she always complies with; and as I shall look upon it my duty to spread salvation only in Christ before her, I make no great doubt but she will cheerfully receive the glad tidings of life, and immediately worship her Redeemer. I long to tell her all, that she and I may rejoice together in the Lord. And if your spouse should appear stubborn, I and mine, I hope, will do all we can to assist you in godly desires and endeavours for her eternal good.

They got up very early next morning, committed themselves and theirs to the Lord, begging that safety might attend them in their journey; that they might visit their habitations, and not sin; that their designs for the conversion of sinners, and especially their nearest relations, might be favoured with encouraging success. They presently got ready, and just as they were going to mount, a young man of the family fell at their feet, with his face on the ground, and aloud cried out Mercy, and could say no more, but cried and sobbed as if his heart would break, and with his hands had hold of Dewi's feet. Young man, says Dewi, what is the matter with you? What is the matter? After a little time he recovered himself, and lifting up one hand from the ground, said, Gentlemen, as ever you have obtained mercy, have mercy on me. They asked the landlord, who was there present, whether the young man was delirious. He answered that he had been with him now several months, and he never observed anything like it in him. Then said Yefan, Young man, what would you have? What can we do for you? He answered, Let me but go with you—to the meanest service you can put me to; if I can but wash the feet of your servants I shall think myself happy. Said Dewi, with tears in his eyes, What makes you desire this of us? Get up, and speak.

Edgar, for that was his name, answered, Gentlemen, last night, while you were at supper, I stood behind a door at some distance from you, and being desirous to hear strangers discourse, gave attention; and while you, Sir, were dis-

coursing of the sinful condition of the children of men, I found my heart sinking as guilty; but when you spoke of God as perfect, that evil should not dwell with Him, and that He was a consuming fire, and of purer eyes than to look upon iniquity, an arrow entered my heart, and there it sticks. Dear Sirs, I am undone; only you said there was a Saviour for sinners, which word has all this night filled me with the most earnest desires to know Him, and be saved by Him. I never had such a night in my life; but your word of a Saviour was some support to me, and I thought, Who can tell but He may be my Saviour?

Yefan.—Pray, landlord, is he a relation of yours, or a hired servant?

Landlord.—Neither, Sir; only some months ago he called here, and asked me to take him in, which I did; employed him in what he could do, and maintained him. He is neither bound to me, nor I to him, nor have I any demands upon him at all.

Yefan.—Pray, young man, are your parents living? Who, and where are they?

Edgar.—Sir, my father and mother bore arms under Boadicea,^d in her revenges upon the Romans; but when Suetonius defeated the Britons, my father and mother fell among the slain, and I was carried away among the captives, and made a present to an officer of note, named Flavius, in the second legion Augusta, at Caerusk. I quickly learnt the Roman tongue, and my master being a gentleman bred at Athens, and very kind to me, took great delight to instruct me in the Greek tongue, to which I am not altogether a stranger; but my master dying, I was turned up to my liberty, and not inclining the field, nor noise of arms, I wandered in pursuit of some honest, peaceable, rural employment, and have here served my master, in whatever I was put to, now for some time. I am, dear gentlemen, a poor fatherless, motherless, friendless lad; but if I could but hope that the Saviour you spoke of would save me from my sins, and make me happy with His friendship here, and glory with Him hereafter, I should not

^d Tacitus (Annal. xiv. 31, &c.) gives a circumstantial account of the rising against the Roman power under Boadicea, which took place about the middle of the first century.—N.

be very careful what circumstances of meanness and affliction I passed through in this world. Acquaintance with the Saviour I want. Here is nobody knows Him. You say He has graciously revealed Himself to you, and therefore, for His sake, if I may use such an expression, take me with you. For tears he could say no more.

Ay, gentlemen, says the landlord, with a scoff and a sneer, you may take him. The gentlemen were both greatly affected. At last says Yefan, We have never a horse for him to ride on. The youth hearing, said, Sir, trouble not yourself; with help from Heaven, and your leave, I hope to be at Caerludd, without a horse, perhaps as soon as you—only let me know where to find you. They informed him of that, and where they intended to bait that day, and put in his pocket what they thought necessary, and all set out.

CHRISTOPH.—Amazing wonders of grace! It may be well said of our Redeemer, that His ways are past finding out! What providential turns passed over this youth! To this place he must be brought, behind the door he must stand, attention he must give, and the word must enter his heart that was aimed at the heart of another. What sovereign, gracious, infallible power directed and applied it!

THEOPH.—And I am thinking how encouraging this must be to the two gentlemen who were so dejected the night before, who thought all their labour was in vain. Now God gave them an early token that His Word shall not return void, but prosper according to His purpose who sent it.

PHILAL.—And very instructing unto them for the future how to work for God, plant and water, and leave the increase to Him. But we have interrupted the story.

EPEN.—I told you they set out; and I must now say they set out rejoicing that God had blessed them, as they verily believed, for the conversion of one. They cast the net of the Gospel; they caught one. They hoped also this was an earnest to them of greater service, and the first fruits of a desirable harvest. The work of God was warm upon their hearts, and all the way, in some respect or other, their lips did show forth His praise. When they came to

the place where they designed to refresh themselves, they saw Edgar was got in before them, who with all the thankfulness a countenance could discover, or a heart contain, waited upon them. They ordered him into the dining-room, and while their dinner was a-getting,

Yefan said, O Edgar, what amazing grace has followed you in providences past, and especially now, in discovering to you your undone condition by reason of sin, and putting you upon inquiries after the Saviour. Know, then, that He is the Son of God, and yet made of a woman, and born of her—two distinct natures in one person. According to His Divine nature, He is the eternal God without beginning. According to His human nature, He was the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, the seed of David, but born of the Virgin Mary, not one hundred years since; gave many evident and infallible proofs that He was the promised Saviour, and, according as it was written of Him, was cut off, but not for Himself. He underwent the strokes of God's justice and man's indignation, that His blood might wash away the sins of His poor sinful people, and that His obedience, even unto death, might be reckoned unto them for righteousness. He was delivered for their offences, and rose from the dead for their justification. He ascended up to heaven in the sight of His disciples. He is at the Father's right hand; He makes intercession there for the transgressors; is able to save to the uttermost; encourages the vilest of sinners, and says, "Him that cometh I will in no wise cast out." Poor Edgar! this is our Beloved, this is our Friend!

Edgar.—Then, come life, come death, He shall be my Beloved, and my Friend. I venture my perishing soul upon Him, and desire I may trust Him with all my salvation so long as I live, and that all my life may be a life of holiness, thankfulness, and service. Blessed be God for the Saviour, and blessed be God for you both, and blessed be God that ever I was brought to see and hear you; and, I must add, blessed be God, who made your word reach my heart. With many tears those things were spoken and heard. But dinner comes. They owned the goodness of God, and begged His blessing on their food; refreshed themselves, and returned thanks; sat awhile after dinner,

and Edgar, having had no rest the night before, and having walked pretty many miles, fell asleep.

In the meantime comes a young man to their door, and humbly spoke as follows:—Gentlemen, excuse me; I am a young man willing to work, but am out of business at present, and make bold to offer my service to either of you that may please to employ me. They asked him what service he was capable of. He answered, anything of husbandry. They said they were citizens, and had no concern that way. But how came you to be out of service? It looks as if you were not a good servant, else surely you would not want a master. He replied that his last master never laid negligence nor unfaithfulness to his charge, and yet there was one thing for which he would not keep him. This made the gentlemen very desirous to know what that was, and the youth's backwardness made them more eager. At last he said, My master was afraid I was a Christian. And are you, then, a Christian? said they. He answered, I am afraid I am not. They asked, where were his parents? He said, they were slain in the wars. They asked whether he had brothers or sisters? He answered, he had only one brother, which he believed was slain also. They asked him his name, and what was his brother's name? He answered, that his brother's name was Edgar, and that his own name was Cradog. They quickly awoke their young man, and asked him, Had you ever a brother? He answered, that once he had one, whose name was Cradog, but he believed he was killed the same time as his parents were. Then said Dewi, Pray, young men, look one at another.

They immediately knew each other. They rejoiced, embraced, wept in each other's bosom, and did not know how nor when to end; upon which Yefan said, If natural affection is so powerful in poor sinners, what must the compassion, kindness, and love of our Lord be, who is the first-born among many brethren! When they had for some little time refrained, and with the greatest pleasure were looking on each other, each wishing in his heart the other was but a Christian, at last says Dewi, What a sight is here! Brethren met, and discovering the depth of fraternal love; well assured they are brethren, and yet doubtless wish they were brethren, but are both

afraid they are not brethren! Yefan replied, And what a saying is here! Pray, what do you mean? You seem to speak contradictions. They know not that they are brethren in Christianity, says Dewi. Upon this, new passions arose, tears of joy did flow, and the most tender embraces follow. What! my brother a Christian! one said, and the other said. When this passion was also a little over, Cradog says, Are these two gentlemen Christians? Yes, says Edgar, and the blessed means of my conversion to Christianity, and I am but new-born. And we, says Yefan, are not much older; but, Cradog, I pray, in a few words, tell us how the work of God began upon you.

Cradog.—Gentlemen, it was by means of a fellow-servant, who was a Christian. It began thus: One day, at plough, he holding and I driving, I was very merry, singing and whistling; says he to me, Cradog, you have no great cause to be so merry, if you knew all. Why, said I, what have I done, that I should not be merry? Says he, What good thing have you done? and if you knew yourself, what evil thing have you not done? Towards satisfying the injured justice of God, you can do nothing, nor can all the world help you; therefore I say you are undone. Every word went to my soul; I said nothing, but I had done singing for that day. He thought I was angry with him, and therefore towards evening said to me, that he would not have me be angry with him, for what he spoke was out of good will, and that he greatly desired my poor soul might be eternally happy. I told him I was not angry, but that if my case was such as he said, I was so undone that there was no room for desires after happiness. Then he told me there was a Saviour, who came to seek and to save that which was lost, and that even those who had destroyed themselves should find help in Him. I desired to know who He was. He told me it was Jesus Christ in whom he trusted, and whom he worshipped night and day. He took me with him, prayed for me, instructed me more particularly, and would be always speaking to me about Christ, the glory of His person, the wonders of His love, the fruits of His death, the efficacy of His grace, and the glory of His Gospel, though he said he knew but little. My master, upon observing how diligent he was to turn others

to Christianity, turned him off; and, after some time, because I would not renounce Jesus Christ, turned me off also.

The gentlemen heard him with a great deal of pleasure, and his brother with many tears. But, says Yefan, Come, let us go, for I long to be at home; and, young man, says he to Cradog, you may accompany your brother, and come both to my house, till we shall order your abode and service to our satisfaction and your best advantage; which made both the young men bow themselves towards the earth, and own they wanted words to express their thankfulness.

CHRISTOPH.—What surprising variety there is in the very same work of grace! Regeneration is the same in all, faith and evangelical hope the same for kind in all; but some are reached under a sermon, one under one part of it, another under another; some converted under the instructions of tender parents, they know not when or how; some under the kind endeavours of godly masters, and some by the talk of their fellow-servants; some behind the door, and some in the open field: but unto all that believe, Christ is precious. But I suppose now they are drawing towards home; I want to know how they were received, and especially how it fared with poor Dewi, who was not without dread about it.

EPEN.—And therefore, seeing I must now divide my story, I shall begin with him. They all got to town betimes; and at parting expressed a thousand wishes for each other's success in the great work of their Redeemer's kingdom; and as for Dewi, he entered his own house with joy and trembling, hands and eyes lifted up to heaven. His wife in the most tender manner welcomed him home, his servants made obeisance, and his little children flocked to him; and after heart-affecting tokens of his love and tenderness to his wife and children, he in the greatest earnestness, with eyes and hands to heaven, cried, Send now prosperity, O Lord!

His wife, whose name was Gweddus, under some astonishment, cried out, My dear, what is the matter with you? Are you not well, or have you not had a prosperous journey?

Dewi.—My dear, I never had such a journey in my life,

and I hope I can say, through grace, I never was so well in my life: I went out rich, I come home poor; I went out poor, I come home very rich; I went out alive, I come home dead; I went out dead, and come home alive, and shall live for ever.

Gweddus.—My dear, I am frightened; you are crazed; I am ruined, and your children too! Oh! let me know how it is!

Dewi.—My dear, be not frightened; I am well; and you shall find every part of what I said strictly true. I went out rich in my own esteem, reckoning my good deeds a valuable treasure, but I met with that abroad which effectually convinced me I never did one perfect good deed in my life, the best righteousness of mine being but as filthy rags, and so come home poor. I went from home really poor, and wretched, and naked, having never a good work to recommend me to God; and come home clothed with the righteousness of a glorious Redeemer, in whom all things are mine; for in Him the eternal God is my portion. I went out alive, thinking myself entitled to life eternal as much as anybody whatever; but that hope is slain, and I am dead to that law: I went out dead in sins and trespasses, but the eternal God has been pleased to quicken me, I have heard the voice of God, and shall live. And now, my dear, in the most fervent affection and love, earnestly desiring your poor soul may partake of the same happiness, I will tell you how this was effected.

And, upon this, he enters upon the story of his conversion at Hyfrydle. But long before he finished what he had to say, he saw how it was with his poor wife. First he saw her attention quickened, then cheeks glowing and tears flowing; and at last she cries out, And is there hope for such a one as I? Will that blessed Redeemer receive me? And will He receive these children? The servants also cried out, for they by their master's order were present all the while, What shall we do to be saved? Great was their cry under distress, and many were his tears of joy; he spoke comfortably to his wife, then spoke encouragingly to his servants. And being now greatly encouraged in his soul, he said, Come, let us worship the true God in the

glorious Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ, who came to seek and to save sinners. And thereupon he prayed with them all, and for them all, and the Spirit of God, he being in God's way, was greatly with him; and his wife and servants believed.

Gweddus.—My dear, what wonderful grace is this! Did I expect salvation? or did I at all desire it? Blessed be God to all eternity for this journey and the fruits of it! I here renounce all vain, heathenish customs. The word you said concerning this Redeemer's coming into the world to save, I fully receive; and that there is salvation in no other I do without hesitation conclude, and cast my poor perishing soul upon him. But what of these children, Dewi, what of these children?

Dewi.—I can never be thankful enough to the Lord for His grace to you. Many a distressful thought have I had by the way, especially since I saw how the landlord where we lodged last night rejected the tidings of life; but now, through mercy, I rejoice to see how the Lord has made you willing in this day of His power. And as for these dear children, they are the heritage of our Redeemer; He is our God, and He says He is the God of our seed. Now we are called by grace, the promise is unto us and to our children; for our blessed Redeemer says that "theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

They rejoiced together in God; and when the table was spread, Dewi blessed God, and desired His blessing on the food His providence had prepared; and desired now they might, all their time, in faith and filial fear, eat and drink to the glory of their gracious Saviour. This also was a new thing to his wife and servants; they could hardly eat for joy. Christ was all the subject of their discourse; on Him they fed. After refreshment, Dewi returned thanks to God for His unspeakable gift—His dear Son, and for all mercies of a spiritual and of a temporal nature through Him. And then he desired his wife, seeing it was not very late, to take a walk with him to see his dear friend Yefan; but while they were discoursing, who comes in but Yefan, with a countenance not very cheerful.

Dewi.—Brother, see what God has wrought! My wife and servants have received Christ, and we have been

worshipping Him together. I can never be thankful enough for this work of God to all eternity. How is it at home with you?

Yefan.—Ah, my dear friend, a new trial attends me, which I am afraid will be a trial to the end of my days. I found my wife and family, through mercy, well; and no person in the world could with greater joy and kindness receive a near relation upon a return from a journey than she received me. Oh, the tenderness and gladness expressed! Whereupon with cheerfulness I told her, that this was the best journey that ever I had in my life, for I had found a pearl of great price, more valuable than all the world; that I had heard the Gospel preached, and was made to believe in Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners, and now looked upon it my duty to mention the glory of my Redeemer to her, that she also might believe, and rejoice with me in the salvation of God. And are you then a Christian? said she. I answered that I was, by the grace of God, and by the same grace should remain so till death. Then she replied, that all her comfort was for ever at an end; and wished a thousand times I had never gone from home. Then, in the most tender manner, I prayed her to hear my experience of the work of God, how I was convinced, and how God was pleased to lead me to venture my poor perishing soul upon Christ, and what comfort and peace I have had since. She replied, Not I; I'll not hear of your cant; and as for peace and comfort, I shall have no share therein. Oh, unhappy woman! Oh, poor unhappy children! And, upon that, withdrew, and I suppose is shut up in her closet. And as for the two poor young men, they are come, and seem much dejected at our present distraction. The Father of Mercies have mercy upon me and mine!

Dewi.—Come, my dear Yefan, be not cast down. You know more of the things of God than I do; but I know that power belongs to Him, and mercy also. And is He not infinitely wise to know how and when to work? God has a mind to try your faith. He knew mine was too weak to bear a trial, therefore He favoured me wonderfully; but I hope He has as great things in reserve for you, and takes this way to make them the sweeter to you when they come. If you please, we will send for the two young men hither for

the present; my wife and family, through wonderful mercy, will be glad to see them.

They were sent for; the 53rd chapter of Isaiah was read; Dewi and Yefan both prayed—in thanksgiving the first abounded, and in earnest wrestlings with God the other—and then earnestly wished each other a good night.

THEOPH.—How does God disappoint the thoughts of the children of men! Yefan gave his wife a wonderful good word; but he was quickly taught that good temper and mildness will appear as averse to real religion as the most rough and surly tempers in the universe.^f There is nothing in the most engaging natural tempers that disposes the owners thereof towards faith; yea, nothing but what is ready on all occasions to make the strongest opposition to faith. Faith is the gift of God. But pray go on.

EPEN.—Next morning, after worship, Dewi and his wife made Yefan a visit, with a design to assist him under his present distress. Word was carried to Araf, for that was Yefan's wife's name, that there was a gentlewoman below that wanted to speak with her. When she came down, she was a little surprised to see Dewi, but in a handsome manner welcomed him home, spoke very kindly to his spouse, and entreated them both to take their seats. When they had so done, Gweddus says, Madam, this has been a wonderful journey to your spouse and mine; not only brought home safe, but converted to Christianity, the only religion of Divine appointment; and I own amazing grace in bringing me to venture the salvation of my soul upon Jesus the Christ; and my husband and I are come to wait upon you, to give you some account of the dealings of God with us; hoping it may be of use for your present and eternal good.

Araf.—Madam, I am very much obliged to you, and return you thanks; but beg you would not take it ill, that at present I refuse your assistance. If my husband has anything to say, at time convenient, I design to hear him

^f This is strong language. Theophilus, "lover of God," need not thus depreciate one class of God's gifts, in order to exalt another. "Engaging natural tempers" are as much gifts of His hand as faith. But theological phraseology has its exaggerations; the "virtues" of the unconverted have been called "splendid sins."—N.

with more patience than I did last night; but if he brings persons to assist him, I must take the liberty to say, that it is reasonable I should have whom I please to assist me. Therefore, at present, let me desire we may have no discourse about religion.

Upon this they took up a little time in common discourse, and parted; but when they were gone, Araf put herself in her husband's way, that he might take his opportunity if he would; which he accordingly did, and they both sat down, and he began:—My dear, I take it as a favour that you are willing to hear me give some account of the dealings of God with my soul. I went out of mere curiosity to hear the preacher of Christianity, fully resolved not only to reject, but to deride whatever I should hear; but ere I was aware, a power more than human took hold of my heart; I was convinced and cut down before it, and—— But here she interrupted, and said, My dear, excuse me, I beg you would not trouble me with anything you *felt* or *fancied*. If you have anything you can *rationaly* offer against your old religion, and for your new, let me hear it. You take upon you to be wiser than the greatest men in Britain, even our Flamins and Arch-Flamins;^g and instead of providing honourably for your family, you do, as I persuade myself, run the ready road to their ruin.

Yefan.—Then, my dear, observe. My old religion shut me up from the knowledge of the true God, but Christianity directs me to the knowledge of the true God. My old religion kept me from acquaintance with myself, but in the light of Christianity I see what I am. My old religion had only some perplexing inquiries after the chiefest good, but could never discover it; but in Christianity I see it, and enjoy it. My old religion perplexed me with the transmigration of souls, but in Christianity I see that happy souls pass immediately to Christ in heavenly glory, and shall, in due time, have their own bodies again. My old religion led to trifling or cruel sacrifices, which the eternal God, as reason tells me, could never accept as atonements for the

^g There seems a little confusion here. The Flamins were priests of ancient Rome, and not of Britain. Tradition says they were instituted by Numa Pompilius. The term is not properly applied to the druidical priesthood.—N.

sins of men ; but Christianity discovers unto me that sacrifice which God Himself did appoint, and has accepted, and wherein my soul finds rest. As to the Flamins and Arch-Flamins, whose religion is their great revenue, they are never like to receive and own the truth that must, in the end, destroy their beneficial trade ; and as for the things of this life, the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.

Araf.—If you can make good but the principal part of what you said, I promise you it will be no difficulty to make me a Christian ; and seeing you are so set upon my conversion, I give you leave to set upon the work as soon as you please.

Then said *Yefan*, Now, my dear ; and began upon the knowledge of the true God ; but it took up more days than one to go through the whole. However, at the conclusion of it, she said, Will you agree to a conference with my father, brothers, and some other acquaintance, upon these things ? Fix a day, and bring with you whom you please. Our great dining-room I think a place convenient, and there I hope to hear you out. *Yefan* answered, Agreed, my dear ; fix your day, procure your men.

SYLLOG.—I can't help admiring the grace of God, even in perplexing trials. What a glorious design runs through and appears upon all Providence ! The Father of Lights helped him to reason as he did, and by reasoning improved his rational powers for further and future usefulness. This hard study his wife put him upon proved to him, perhaps, as profitable as if he had reasoned daily in the schools.

THEOPH.—But seeing family worship is very precious to a believer, and his heart must be for worshipping the God of the families of Israel, pray how did he do ?

EPEN.—The second night he stood resolved upon it, and having sent for *Cradog*, and fixed him in his house and service, he baulked no part of God's worship. He called his family, and said, I own the eternal God my Redeemer. He makes it my duty, as a master in my family, to command my children and servants to attend Divine worship with me. Whereupon his wife, in a civil manner, took her leave of him, and withdrew. It went to his soul ; but he made her a bow, and sent up a sigh to heaven. Thus he

kept on worshipping God with his family night and morning, notwithstanding the discouragement that did lie hard upon him. But Cradog was of vast service; his master had the pleasure quickly to see all the servants converted.

Well, the fixed day drew on, and Dewi and Yefan spent the day before in fasting and prayer before the Lord, at Dewi's house, and Edgar and Cradog were with them. Dewi's family were also present. They offered up many strong cries and tears that day; but Yefan's wife, poor heart, thought they were together somewhere consulting what arguments to use, and how to defend them, but their business was with God.

The appointed time came. Araf's father and brothers were present, and pretty many acquaintance, and several others who had heard of it, and desired that they might be admitted, so that the large room was full. The Christians had prayed before they came thither, and Yefan stood up and spoke, and vast attention was given. Taking an open Bible in his hand, he said, "The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ, He is Lord of all. How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the Devil, for God was with Him. Whom the Jews slew, and hanged on a tree, Him God raised up the third day, and showed Him openly; not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before of God, who did eat and drink with Him after He arose from the dead. His servants are commanded to preach unto the people, and that it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name, whosoever believeth in Him, shall receive remission of sins."—Acts x. 36—43.

Men, brethren, and fathers, said *Yefan*, I was very lately of the number of those who despised, rejected, and derided this blessed Redeemer, and went to hear Him preached with a design to scoff; but the eternal God, having mercy upon me, was pleased to cause His Word to take hold of my heart; and I will now take the freedom to give you a faithful account of that gracious work: which he did in a particular manner.

But before he had half done, he observed a mighty attention, and many tears among the people, which added vigour unto his voice, and courage to his soul; and when he had done, he desired Dewi to testify what he knew of God and His work.

The old gentleman, Yefan's father-in-law, whose name was Didwyll, immediately stood up and said, My children, brethren, and friends. I came hither with a design to dispute, and to repel words with words; but now I must own the salvation of Jesus the Redeemer, adore and worship. I am convinced the words mentioned out of the Book are the words of the most High God. I never heard anything like them in my life; they came not as the words of men—they carry their own evidence with them.^h I could not have thought anything could have been so glorious and powerful; and blessed be the Lord that ever I heard them. I think it my duty now to confess Jesus Christ with my mouth, and I believe in my heart, and this faith came by hearing. I for ever cast off heathenism, root and branch.

The glory of this was so weighty upon Yefan's soul, that he cried out, "Hosanna to the Son of David! hosanna in the highest." And all that were there present, with a loud voice after him sang the same words, and he saw his poor wife aim at them too. He could hardly stand up under the comfort. He desired Dewi to go to prayer, which he did, abounding in petitions and praises to the eternal God, who had in so gracious a manner visited them all. Great was this day, nor could they tell how to part. But to relate how it was with Yefan's wife, when with thousands of tears she bewailed her unbelief, perhaps may be thought too affecting; as also the joy of her husband, when he heard her say, I desire I may be a believer in Christ.

CHRISTOPH.—Such seasons, I believe, were pretty frequent in the early days of Christianity; and yet greater seasons hasten, when Zion's children shall make haste, and shall fly as a cloud. But in your accounts, Yefan's wife seems

^h This, then, was all the evidence this Pagan required of the Divine *inspiration* of these words of Scripture. And was he not right? Can any other have such power?—N.

dejected; but her husband had great reason to admire the wisdom of Providence in overruling her unbelief to bring about such an opportunity of work and service. God had taken off his sackcloth, and girded him with gladness.

EPEN.—True; and his wife had great reason of joy too, for God had reached her by His grace. But the greatness of her unbelief did pierce her soul. She had discovered such aversion to Christ and Christianity, that she could not forgive herself; and under a sense of her own inability to believe, she with bitterness thought of what she told her husband,—“Make good what you said, and it will be no difficulty to make me a Christian.” In short, she entertained fears that she was too great a sinner to be saved, at least doubted much whether Jesus Christ would save her or no. So here was fresh work cut out for Yefan. But this also turned to a good account afterwards.

But I should have told you that the people were desirous to know what they must do. Dewi told them that Ffyddlon was expected very quickly, and of him they should more particularly inquire; in the meantime, desired them all to meet in the same room the next first day of the week; for, says he, it is the Lord’s day, that we may worship together as He will please to help us. Accordingly, they did meet; Dewi and Yefan prayed, read the Scriptures, and, according to the best of their ability, gave the sense. Several more came, and were reached by grace; they kept meetings also on week-days, and many gathered to them, and great was the success; so mightily grew the Word of God, and prevailed.

NEOPH.—But you say they read the Word, and gave the sense, which some look upon as a very ancient, and not disagreeable way of preaching. Pray, by what authority did they do this?

EPEN.—When there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem, they that were scattered went everywhere preaching the Word. It was by the same authority they did this. There was a certain Jew named Apollos,¹ who spake and taught diligently the things of the

¹ Quo jure quæso iste (Apollo) fungitur ministerio verbi? nisi illo generali et communi.—1 Cor. xiv. Si fidenti revelatum fuerit, prior taceat.—Luth. tom. iv. p. 399.

Lord, knowing only the baptism of John, though Aquila and Priscilla expounded to him the way of God more perfectly, neither they, nor yet the apostles, when they came to know of it, blamed him as one wanting authority. By the same authority with him they taught. And to answer more plainly, it was by the highest authority they did teach their poor fellow-sinners what they themselves knew of the way of salvation. "He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully."^k He who understands the word, and hath felt the saving power of it in the hands of the Holy Spirit, *hath it*—the word of reconciliation is committed to him; then, as every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God."^l Do I see a person perishing, and have I not a call from God to do all I can to save him? It is an eternal truth—let persons who value themselves upon ordaining and sending one another say what they please—that the person to whom God has given gifts and abilities to do good, has certainly a call from God to do it.^m

NEOPH.—But does not this destroy all gospel-order, so far as it concerns the mission of preachers, and open a door to any vain person to take upon him that sacred work, though never called to it?

EPEN.—Not at all; the work was necessary, though there was no church as yet to call them thereunto. It is God that calls to the work, and gives ability for it; the church can do nothing in it, but own God's call, and follow Him, as you will hear was done afterwards. But as for vain persons pretending to this work, the sin is theirs, but the church of Christ is safe. A stranger shall not the church follow; the converted shall hear and know the voice of Christ.

THEOPH.—My dear Neophytus, it is God that gives the ability and the authority to preach, and inclines the heart to desire the good work; a church of Christ, in sending any

^k Jeremiah xxiii. 28.

^l 1 Peter iv. 10, 11.

^m This, doubtless, is a doctrine very liable to abuse; but it is by no means easy to refute it. It is sustained by the practice of the first Christian age. But a distinct ministerial class, which both Scripture and prudence require, is not by this doctrine invalidated.—N.

person forth, does but acknowledge this already done. No church in the world can effect any part of it. The regular call of a church,ⁿ where it may be had, makes the whole, in and among churches, orderly and beautiful, and recommends the person to service and acceptance; but the authority must be from above; otherwise, God will say unto him, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes? Excuse us, beloved Epenetus, and proceed.

EPEN.—Sooner than was expected, though not sooner than was desired, Ffyddlon comes to town, and with him comes Tosturiol, in whose house the bishop lodged, and also the honest godly landlord Buddiol, and Alfred his man. They were received with the utmost respect and affection, for Christians were very dear to each other in those days. They worshipped God together at Yefan's house, Dewi and all his family being there. Dewi's wife, and Yefan's wife, and all theirs, were baptized straightway. Their servants also, together with Edgar and Cradog, confessing their faith in the Lord Jesus, were baptized. Their little meeting was concluded with prayer and praise, and now, it being late, they prepared for rest; and a servant was ordered to inform all the Christians that Ffyddlon was come, and was to preach in that room at a certain hour the next day.

NEOPH.—According to this, the children of the godly were baptized from the beginning of Christianity.

PHILAL.—Without doubt they were; so Lydia and her household;^o the jailor and all his, straightway;^p and Stephanus's household.^q

PHILOL.—Nor is it altogether to be despised that the Syriac version,^r of all the most ancient, says, that Lydia and the children of her house, and the jailor and the children of his house, were baptized.

NEOPH.—That might be an Hebraism; but though I don't speak as one that hesitates upon the point, yet I should

ⁿ The Great Head of the Church gives the mental and moral qualifications for the Christian ministry as such, and the call of a church leads to the exercise of that ministry in a particular place.—N.

^o Acts xvi. 15.

^p Acts xvi. 32.

^q 1 Cor. i. 16.

^r This seems to be an error on the part of Philologus. The Peshito Syriac does not carry out this assertion.—N.

be glad briefly to hear some one of those reasons upon which the primitive saints baptized their little children.

SYLLOG.—The reasons are many and conclusive. That I may not interrupt the story, I shall now mention but one of them:—Interest in the promise of the covenant of grace gives a right to baptism; the children of the godly are interested in that promise. When any were converted from Judaism, or heathenism, to Christianity, the voice of Christ to them was, “Be baptized every one of you for the promise is unto you and your children.”^s The promise gives a right to baptism; the children of all the called have a right to the promise. This argument alone is able to sustain the cause for ever.

NEOPH.—I must, indeed, own with the apostle, that Christ came to confirm the promises made to the fathers; and that this argument is sufficient to support infant baptism among the godly; but wherefore is it that any of the godly scruple the practice we speak of?

SYLLOG.—There is but one thing that makes them do so; that’s unbelief. If we could but overcome that unbelief for them, we should hear no more of that controversy.^t

NEOPH.—But I think our beloved Epenetus gave the intimation that they were baptized straightway in the room, which must be by application of water to them, or sprinkling it upon them.

PHILAL.—Aye, to be sure, there was no other way of baptizing in those days. Paul, who, in a sore condition of mind and body, did neither eat nor drink for three days, upon his receiving the Gospel was immediately baptized in the house of Judas, at Damascus; and then he received meat, and was strengthened.^u And Paul himself after then, when the newly-converted jailor had kindly washed his stripes, the same hour of the night baptized the jailor and all his straightway.^x

^s Acts ii. 38, 39.

^t This is rather severe towards our Christian brethren who baptize only adults. Are scriptural statements so clear and conclusive as to make the charge of “unbelief” on either side legitimate? Questions of *opinion* are open, and upon this question of baptism we can only arrive at an *opinion* drawn from a long induction of facts. But from this very source of slenderness of evidence rises dogmatism.—N.

^u Acts ix. 9—19.

^x Acts xvi. 33.

NEOPH.—But some of us are very sensible of abundance of noise made about some modes of expression, such as in Jordan, into the water, out of the water, buried in baptism, and John baptizing in Enon because there was much water there.

PHILAL.—And all meaning no more than *at* Jordan, *to* the water, *from* the water, with and in Christ in the baptism of His sufferings, and John choosing to preach in a country where the multitudes and their beasts might be refreshed.

NEOPH.—But one string is often struck, and some have had their ears filled with the din and noise of it, that *baptizo* (βαπτίζω) signifies nothing but dipping or plunging.

PHILOL.—There are *many* places in the New Testament where we are under an absolute necessity to understand *pouring* or *sprinkling* by it; and there is *never* a place in the Scripture where it does necessarily signify plunging or dipping.^y

NEOPH.—I desire father Epenetus to excuse me; I am very well satisfied.^z

^y Mark vii. 4; 1 Cor. x. 1, 2; Hebrews ix. 10.

^z For my own part, should any ask me why, as a Christian minister, I baptize an infant, I can truly answer that I have the very *same* reason for doing it that John the Baptist had for baptizing *penitent* sinners in *Jordan* and *Enon*; the *same* reason that *Jesus*, by the ministry of His disciples, had for baptizing a still greater multitude; and, finally, the *same* reason that our Baptist brethren have, or *ought* to have, and which they *profess* to have, in the general tenor of their *practice*, for baptizing adults. But this is not a place to enter into particulars. At present, I shall content myself with the following remarks :—

1. Whatever there may be in the ordinance of baptism of a *positive* consideration, there is nothing relative to the *subjects* of it so *merely* positive as to be independent on all *moral* grounds. Nay, further, whatever relates to the qualifications of the subjects is of a nature *entirely* moral, and to say otherwise must imply a *contradiction*. Baptism, therefore, is an ordinance of a *mixed* nature, partly positive, and partly moral.

2. As far as this, or any such ordinance, partakes of a *moral* nature, the *reason* and design of the law, or, if you please, the *spirit* of it, is our rule of duty; and *only* so far as it partakes of a *positive* nature, is the *letter* of the law our rule.

3. As what relates to the *qualifications* of the subjects is of *moral* consideration, we are necessitated to seek in them the *reason* and *intention* of the command; but infants partaking of the great *primary* qualification, which the *evident* design of the ordinance requires, *ought*

EPEN.—Sir, you are very welcome. But, perhaps, in the course of our story, things of this nature may fall into a more proper place. I told you that Ffyddlon was to preach, which he did the following day, at the hour appointed, to a crowded auditory. His text was Isa. lvi. 8, “The Lord God which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, yet will I gather others to Him besides those that are gathered unto Him.” And in the afternoon, (for he preached twice that day,) John vi. 37, “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.” And God did greatly own the word of His grace. The converted were in a manner on the mount all day long, and many more were turned to the Lord; and the Christians that came with Ffyddlon were made so glad with God’s work, that they cried out, Blessed be the glory of the Lord from this place! The next day Ffyddlon preached from Haggai ii. 4, “Be strong and work, for I am with you, saith the Lord,” where he put them upon, and directed them into, church-fellowship, whereupon the people desired more particular instructions.

CHRISTOPH.—I greatly desire to know what those instructions were, and how they were followed.

EPEN.—Having observed how God was worshipped by the patriarchs, and afterwards by the church of Israel, he told them how, upon the change of priesthood, there was of necessity also a change of the law; ^a explained that positive law of the Redeemer to them which regards His church, its *matter*, *form*, and *order*, and desired them to fix upon all they judged really godly as fit materials for the spiritual building.

to be baptized, and it must imply breach of duty in a minister to decline it.

To argue on this principle, “Baptism is a positive rite, and therefore ought to be express, full, and circumstantial,” is, on the principles, concessions and practice of Antipædobaptists, demonstrably *fallacious*; for the law of baptism is evidently, in *fact*, not circumstantial and determinate, and therefore is not, cannot be, an institution *entirely* positive. See Mr. Booth’s *Pædobaptism Examined*, p. 11, *et passim*, a work lately published, which discovers a considerable degree of *good temper*, ingenuity, labour, and erudition; but, if I mistake not, a great part, if not the whole fabric of which rests on the above *indefensible* hypothesis.—W.

^a Hebrews vii. 12.

NEOPH.—This very entrance seems to be a very hard task. How could they judge who was really godly?

THEOPH.—That this was absolutely necessary, how difficult soever it seems to be, appears in many ways. The church is built upon Christ, the Rock of Ages; and, pray, who is built upon Him who is not really godly? He is a living stone, and they who are built upon Him must be lively stones. There must be spiritual communion and fellowship; but what fellowship can light have with darkness, Christ with Belial, or the Temple of God with idols?^b But in their search after real godliness, they must desire God to direct them.

CHRISTOPH.—Want of faithfulness and care this way has brought desolation and ruin upon many churches. A little leaven will leaven the whole lump. When Saul, afterwards Paul, assayed to join himself to the disciples, they were afraid; nor did they receive him till they received satisfaction that he was a converted person.^c A church of Christ, according to the account we have in Scripture, is a society of persons justified and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.^d

NEOPH.—Though I am but young, yet to my grief I have seen several who were members of churches whose conversation discovered very little of real godliness, if any.

THEOPH.—Such persons either put on a form of religion, and a show of zeal at first, and deceived the church, or else have been prevailed upon by their own corruptions and Satan's temptations, and are led into captivity by the law of sin. But be it the one or the other, a church of Christ walking according to rule will not suffer such to stand long in church relation, to the dishonour of Zion's King, and the hurt of His sincere subjects.

NEOPH.—No doubt but a walk, wherein ungodliness discovers itself, is dishonourable and dangerous; but discouraging the other day with one, he told me it was a wrong thing to insist so upon the new birth, and faith, and real godliness. He thought that moral honesty was enough to be required of, or pretended to by, any church members.

CHRISTOPH.—But when you see him next, pray ask him

^b 2 Cor. vi. 14, 18.

^c Acts x.

^d 1 Cor. vi. 11.

what part hath a true believer in Christ with a moral infidel? Can they be said to be equally yoked? Are they suited to mourn together under a sense of the pollution of their natures and the sinfulness of sin? to rejoice together in the dear Redeemer, and earnestly pray together for the light of God's countenance? One says, in his heart, it is good for me to draw near to God, His face will I seek; the other says, in his heart, to God, depart from me; I desire not the knowledge of thy ways. Are they fit for the most intimate communion and fellowship? Can they strengthen the hands of each other in God?

NEOPH.—But it was said that Ffyddlon desired them to fix upon whom they judged really godly; was not he more capable of judging? Then why did he not judge for them?

EPEN.—So they would have had him do; but he told them it was their proper business to satisfy themselves with regard to each other's faith, experience; and conversation; that he was not to be a church member with them; but they were to walk in fellowship and communion.

THEOPH.—There are some in the world that take no care of this, but leave all with the preacher; and when we consider the corruption of nature inclining some to indolence, this is not strange. But Christian churches are for Christian communion, which, without acquaintance with each other's faith in Christ, and experience of the grace of God, can never be maintained. But, pray, what further instruction did Ffyddlon give them?

EPEN.—They being well satisfied in each other's godliness, and inclinations to follow the Lord in all His pure institutions, he advised them to fix a day of fasting and prayer, that they might, according to the will of God, publicly resign themselves and theirs unto their dear Redeemer in a church state; and he put them upon, and assisted them in, some things preparatory thereunto.

CHRISTOPH.—Pray what things were they?

EPEN.—A confession of faith, and a church covenant.

NEOPH.—Now, I want to hear them both.

EPEN.—You shall have the sum and substance of them presently. The fixed day came, and all the godly were there betimes; they looked upon it as the greatest day of

their lives, the day of their public espousals. Yefan began, and the rest in order followed, in public acknowledgments of sin and guilt, all their sins in heathenism, and their sinful resolutions to the last to oppose the Messiah of God, and His precious Gospel. They mourned, wept, loathed themselves, and admired the patience of God under so many provocations.

NEOPH.—This was looking to Him whom they had pierced, and mourning for Him, as one mourneth for an only son.

EPEN.—So it was, indeed; but, after some time, they, in the tenderest manner, owned the wonders of grace, in sending some of them forth to the Gospel, sending the Gospel home to others, and making the Word effectual to them all, for their conversion from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.

NEOPH.—Thus they declared His mighty acts, and uttered the memory of His great goodness.

EPEN.—Yes, and after some time they sang of His righteousness, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, appeared in the holy profession, the best robe wherein now they beautifully appeared; and old Didwyll spoke out aloud, “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God, for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.”

NEOPH.—Thus Jehovah was their strength and their song, having become their salvation.

EPEN.—True; and, in the next place, they owned before Him the great design of the day, that they were all there present to make a public surrender of themselves to the Lord, and begged He would receive them graciously, and in His strength they would render to Him the calves of their lips.

It was agreed that Yefan should go before them in the work of the day; and now he stands up and reads the confession of faith, which contained the principal heads of divinity: the one eternal God, in three persons; the Mediator God-man, two distinct natures in one person; the creation, providence, the fall of man, the covenant of grace,

the satisfaction of Christ, election, adoption, justification by imputed righteousness, the effectual work of the Holy Spirit in conversion, sanctification, and comfort, the holiness of God's law, the nature and necessity of obedience thereunto, Divine worship, perseverance, and glory ; much to the same purpose with what we call the *Assembly* and the *Savoy* confessions.^e

NEOPH.—Then the doctrine we call Calvinism is, I see, a great deal older than Calvin.

EPEN.—Aye, to be sure ; for he took it out of the Bible, and so did these. Yefan, having read it distinctly through, said to the people, If thus you believe with the heart, and if thus you are ready to confess with the mouth, stand up and signify it by lifting up the hand ; which they all did.

Then Yefan read the covenant, and told them that this was the only engagement they were now to enter into before the Lord, and having read it *to* them, he said he would now read and pronounce it *for* them and himself, and desired they would all stand up all the while, with their right hands lifted up towards heaven ; and at the conclusion, they all said, Amen. And Yefan, the company being sat down, said, “ But Christ as a son over His own house, whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. The house of God, the church of the living God ; no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth up an holy temple in the Lord, in whom we also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

They sang the 12th chapter of Isaiah, and Yefan concluded in prayer. Upon this, Ffyddlon says, Brethren, the church of Christ, to which I am pastor, knew nothing of this great work of God when I came from home, else we should have been sent as messengers to behold your faith and order ; and, approving of both, should have given you, in the name of the church sending us, the right hand of

^e The Westminster Assembly's Confession, 1648 ; and that of the Savoy Conference of Congregational Ministers, October 12, 1658.—N.

fellowship; but, blessed be the God of all grace, this is above and beyond our expectation; but as far as in us lies, as Christians, we own you a precious church of Jesus Christ. Then Yefan desired him to give them a word of exhortation, which with great affection he did, and the meeting concluded with prayer and praise.

NEOPH.—Well, great was such a day's work; but I humbly beg you would oblige me with at least an abstract of the covenant.

EPEN.—It ran thus: "We poor sinners having destroyed ourselves by sin, yet being brought through grace and everlasting love to look unto Him on whom our help is laid, under a sense of our exceeding sinfulness, mourn and repent before the Lord, and do here openly and without reserve resign ourselves and ours up wholly to Christ, the complete Saviour of sinners, in church-fellowship and communion, resolving and promising in His strength to believe His promises, live by faith on Him, in whom they are all yea and amen, obey His precepts, hearken to the voice of His providence, serve Him and each other according to all the laws, statutes, and ordinances of His house, taking the written Word for our rule, aiming in all at the glory of Christ, our Priest, Prophet, and King, each other's edification in the tenderest Christian love, the increase of Christ's kingdom, and the good of all mankind, under the special direction and assistance of the Spirit of the Lord."

Thus you have a plain account of the first church at Caerludd, matter and form. First they were converted by grace, and so fitted for a spiritual house; and then under this holy engagement they associated together, and became *formally* a church of Christ.

THEOPH.—Our beloved Epenetus, we are very much obliged to you for what you have gone through, which I hope has not been without pleasure to yourself, as well as to us. But I humbly apprehend you have a considerable work still before you. Here is a church indeed, and a precious one, built upon the true foundation, but not yet organized; there is never an officer in it. Now I hope you will please to give us some account of their choosing and ordaining their elders.

NEOPH.—But, with submission, I ask leave to be

informed further, before that is entered upon, concerning the covenant we have heard of, which appears to me to be of weight. Pray is it, then, absolutely necessary to the being of a church?

SYLLOG.—To be sure it is;^f for how “can two walk together except they be agreed?”^g When persons’ faces are turned Zion-ward, then shall they say, “Come, let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten.”^h Members of churches stand in a special visible relation to each other, and this relation is voluntary. By agreement, persons are received and persons are rejected; but without this covenant both would be equally impossible. In a church, persons are to be watched over, admonished, called upon not to forsake the assembling of themselves together. Unto the laws and statutes of Christ they are to submit, and if unto transgression they add obstinacy and impenitence, then the church is bound to put such away from among themselves; and if such things do not include and require a covenant and agreement, then words and things can never be understood.

NEOPH.—But is it necessary the covenant should be in the very words Epenetus gave us?

SYLLOG.—No. Other words may be used; and the covenant may be comprehended in fewer words or more, but all according to the tenor of the Gospel.

NEOPH.—Excuse me. Is it necessary it should be a written covenant?

SYLLOG.—Not absolutely necessary, though very convenient: the more explicit the better.

NEOPH.—Pray, what do you think of the universal visible church, that some people talk much of?

SYLLOG.—A *chimera*—a *chaos*; without form, and void, and darkness upon the face of it.

^f Mr. Maurice teaches very positively on this point. Churches, generally, do not seem to view the matter in this light. The writer knows two or three only which have a formal covenant. This, however, where the practice exists of always reading it on the admission of members, answers a high use in giving a solemn meaning to Christian profession, and reminding the brotherhood of their mutual obligations. But see the discussion at the beginning of next Dialogue.—N.

^g Amos iii. 3.

^h Jeremiah i. 5.

NEOPH.—But there are two or three Scriptures that, by the word church in the singular, seem to mean churches.

SYLLOG.—I grant it. But, perhaps, upon strict examination, it will be found they mean only the church at Jerusalem, which was a Congregational one, though very large, and which, for ought I know, may be considered before we have done.

NEOPH.—But in the covenant it was said they gave up themselves and theirs (whereby must be meant their children) wholly to Christ. Are the children of church members related to the church as members thereof?

SYLLOG.—Without doubt.¹ It was so in the church of the Jews; they and their children were branches in the olive tree. They, for the present, are cut off, and we are grafted in as they were, and the very same promises made to the fathers concerning their seed are confirmed to us; and it is expressly said, concerning New Testament churches, that their children should be as aforetime.

NEOPH.—Indeed, this seems to stand very fair. I never read of any of God's covenants with, or promises to, His people in my life but their children were included also. But what church privileges are the children of the church entitled to? The children of the Jews could all partake of the passover, when they were judged fit for it.

SYLLOG.—They are under the special inspection and care of the church; interested in the prayers thereof, should be called to every duty, and, when judged fit, admitted to the Lord's Supper.

NEOPH.—And, pray, are they, upon obstinacy in sinful ways, to pass under church censures?

SYLLOG.—Doubtless. The very nature of the thing requires it.

NEOPH.—But if the children are moral in their walk, yet backward to profess their faith in the salvation of Christ, what must the church do?

SYLLOG.—Continue their good offices of prayer for them; love, and watch over them, and wait.

NEOPH.—May all the churches flourish and shine in this

¹ The Welsh Calvinistic Methodists carry out this principle. We are not without an example in the early ages. The churches of North Africa introduced the *communion of infants*; and even those who were too young to eat *bread*, received the *wine*. Cyprian, *de Lapsis*.—N.

and every other duty and privilege ! But one thing more. Here is a church, and never an officer in it. Is the church then in being before its officers ?

SYLLOG.—Yes, and must be ; for they are to be chosen out of the church ; and if Providence should remove them all by death, the church still may subsist, and proceed to choose new ones.

NEOPH.—I humbly desire Father Epenetus to proceed, and acquaint us what officers they chose, and how they ordained them ?

EPEN.—Being very sensible they stood in need of a pastor, they desired Ffyddlon would remove and come to them.

CHRISTOPH.—Hey day ! How early did Caerludd enter upon that work ? and, pray, what answer did Ffyddlon give them ?

EPEN.—You shall have it in his own words.

Ffyddlon.—My brethren, I hope the Lord will give you a pastor after His own heart, that will feed you with knowledge and understanding ; but as for me, I stand in the relation of a pastor unto a church in the country. I was a member with them before I was pastor to them. They, after the solemn seeking of God, called me to the office and work ; and I, having in faith, and often in prayer, referred myself to the Divine direction, was led to comply with their call. I solemnly gave up myself to the service of Christ among them. I have been, and am, blessed there. I love them, they love me ; and I often think I have more respect than is my due, and want for nothing that is needful. God called me to work there, I am well satisfied ; and nothing but a thorough satisfaction that God calls me away shall ever remove me.^k

Yefan.—Then, Sir, pray be their bishop and ours.

Ffyddlon.—That I cannot be. I cannot be a member^l of two churches, much less their pastor. I am called to feed that flock of God to which the Holy Ghost hath made me overseer. *Flocks* He never committed to any *ordinary* officer.

^k Here is matter for reflection to both pastors and churches of modern times.—N.

^l The author consistently adhered to this peculiar notion in his own movements. He was transferred as a *member* to the church at Rothwell, and then elected as its pastor. See biographical sketch.—N.

Yefan.—But Paul says that he had the care of all the churches.

Ffyddlon.—And so had all the apostles and evangelists. They were all *extraordinary* officers. The infant state of Christ's kingdom required it; and successors, as apostles and evangelists, they have none.

Yefan.—Then pray, Sir, what must we do?

Ffyddlon.—Among yourselves you must find the proper person or persons; and that you may be directed aright, it will, in my judgment, be very expedient, if not necessary, you should keep a day of prayer as a church.

Yefan.—You say, person or persons. Must there be more than one, then?

Ffyddlon.—Among the ordinary officers, besides ruling elders and deacons, we read of pastors and teachers.

Yefan.—I hope you will stay and direct us in all this, for we know not how to go on.

Ffyddlon.—That I cannot do, but will in a little time return to the church I belong to; and if they send me as a messenger, as I suppose upon your request they will, I shall, if the Lord will, come and assist you in all I can. In the meantime, you would do well to meet as a church, and, after prayer, desire the church to nominate some person or persons that shall go before them on Lord's days in prayer and exhortation.

Accordingly they met, fixed upon Yefan and Dewi to go before them in God's worship; agreed to a letter to the church whereof Ffyddlon was pastor, desiring them to send their messengers up to their assistance, and to behold their order in setting apart proper officers; and then humbly desired Ffyddlon to stay as long as he could, and, if he pleased, to administer the Lord's Supper to them.

Says *Ffyddlon*, Stay some little time I will, and labour amongst you in the Word; but I cannot regularly administer the Lord's Supper to any church but to that whereof I am pastor.^m

Then said they, Can Yefan or Dewi administer it to us?

^m This again is a peculiar notion. We remember nothing to support such rigid exclusivism in the custom of the Early Church; and, certainly, modern practice is against it. See the author's argument in support of it in the next Dialogue.—N.

He answered, They could not in their present capacity regularly do it.

He stayed among them for some time, strengthened their hands in God, saw many converted and added to the church daily, where they were received upon the confession of the Christian faith, a relation of Gospel experience, and the testimony of a holy conversation.

THEOPH.—How beautiful the order of *Congregational* churches ! It answers the pattern in the mount—the blessed rule in the written Word. It is every way suited to promote edification, fixes a proper duty upon every member, and of all the forms of church government and order pleaded for in the world, this alone is fitted to subsist and flourish under persecution; and on these accounts, and many more, this discovers itself to be *alone* of Divine institution.

CHRISTOPH.—Blessed be God for any acquaintance with it ! But now I want to see this church organized, and the choice, ordination, and work of the officers related.

EPEN.—I hope, at time convenient, to gratify my dear neighbours therewith ; but, at present, time fails and other duties call. May all true consolation attend you all !

CHRISTOPH.—And may you and we be blessed with heart-refreshing views of this beauty of the Lord upon all the churches, His work appearing to His servants, and His glory to their children !

DIALOGUE III.

THE CHURCH COMPLETELY ORGANIZED—ITS BISHOPS AND
DEACONS—THE ORDINATION.

THEOPHILUS.—Our dear Neophytus is here, waiting. I doubt not but eagerness to hear the pleasing story of the ancient Britons forming themselves into evangelical societies, for the service of their Redeemer, brought him hither so soon.

NEOPH.—My dear neighbours, I am glad to see so many of you come. I must own I am eager to hear the story, and your profitable remarks upon it. My thoughts have been employed upon some things in our last conference, which, with submission, seeing our beloved Epenetus is not yet come, I shall take the liberty to mention. I was thinking that since the Bible is allowed to be the only rule of faith and practice, and a very sufficient one, what need was there of a confession of faith and church covenant? Why might not their declaring or subscribing to the Bible, as the only and complete rule, be every way enough to the purpose?

THEOPH.—Doubtless, in the very first churches there was a collection of what they called “The principles of the oracles of God,” longer or shorter, as they thought convenient. Some have thought that Matt. xxviii. 19,—“Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,” was the only confession of faith they had; but what is produced out of Athanasius, Austin, and some others, for the proof of this, will not support it. It is plain, they had a *form* of sound words which related to things believed and practised; and Paul desires Timothy to hold fast that form; and whoever rejected it,

though he pretended great esteem for the Scriptures, was to be rejected himself.^a

PHILAL.—Persons may, in general, subscribe to the Bible who, at the same time, will not believe what is contained therein. The Sadducees would have subscribed to the five first books of Moses, but would not believe the doctrine of the resurrection, which our Lord proves to be there. The Arians, at this day, will own the Bible, when, at the same time, they deny Him who is the sum and substance of it. A collection of the first principles of the oracles of God is of vast use to the godly, that they may at once behold what is certainly believed among them; and in the light of so many truths, try anything that offers; and in a ready subscription to such *prime principles* the Bible is owned; and whoever rejects them, let him prate against creeds never so much, should, by a church of Christ, be marked and avoided.

NEOPH.—But have not *all* men liberty alike to collect from the Scriptures what they apprehend principles of faith?

PHILAL.—Certainly they have; and the great outcry that some of us have often heard against creeds and imposition has been itself, and still is, one of the *greatest* impositions upon mankind. Let them declare freely what they believe; let them collect and publish principles of their faith, the more plain and open the better; and though some of them may be suffered to wrest the Scriptures, and form damnable heretical systems, and deny the Lord that bought them, all this will but quicken the godly to search into the truth and defend it.

NEOPH.—Upon thoughts I have had before now, and upon what you both have suggested, I do apprehend it very expedient, if not absolutely necessary, there should be systems of divinity, declarations and confessions of faith among the godly. Fundamental principles, collected in one consistent light, appear with stronger evidence, and make a deeper impression; a constellation gives a brighter light

^a Whatever may be the intent of the passages alluded to by Mr. Maurice, many learned men, like Neander, think they discover traces of *confessions* in the New Testament. They certainly existed in the next age after the apostolic, for the benefit especially of the *catechumens*. But no evidence exists that the apostles drew up a "Creed."—See Lord Chancellor King's Hist. of Apost. Creed.—N.

than scattered, dispersed stars ; and I am thankful I have been instructed by my godly parents and friends in a form of sound words, which, I trust, I shall be helped to hold fast. And I have thought it somewhat remarkable, that our late new opinionists, with all their refined reason, *can* give the world, *dare* give the world, no common confession of their infidelity.

SYLLOG.—How greatly does the wisdom of our God appear in all that concerns this ! The various heresies in the world make it necessary there should be a common confession of faith, that they which are approved may be made manifest ; and the Scriptures are sufficiently stored with materials for such a confession. As new heresies or errors arise, let the godly have recourse to the law and to the testimony, for principles of truth to oppose them ; there they may be *thoroughly furnished*. A confession of faith may be longer or shorter, as the case requires, but always derived from Divine revelation in the Scriptures, consistent every way with the truth and itself. No wonder, Neophytus, that a great many who agree to oppose the truth, can never agree what to set up in the room of it.

NEOPH.—My dear friends and neighbours, I return you thanks, and own myself, though weak and unworthy, ready to confess with the mouth and subscribe with my hand to the Lord, whenever called ; but your kindness encourages my freedom. I remember that Ffyddlon said, that he could not administer the Lord's Supper to the church at Caerludd, because he was not pastor of it. I should be glad to understand that matter a little better, for I see there are godly and learned ministers that do break bread to more congregations than one.

THEOPH.—When we say a pastor *cannot*, we mean he cannot *regularly* and *orderly* do it. To minister the Lord's Supper is an act of office-power ; a pastor is an officer nowhere but in his own church. The officers of one corporation cannot act as officers in another ; nor is it in the power of one corporation to choose officers for another. One church cannot ordain officers for another ; and though some ministers take the *liberty* to break bread to other churches, yet be well assured it is a liberty they *take* which Christ never *gave* ; and though, perhaps, they don't care to tell

you so much, yet they fancy themselves *universal* pastors, and derive that chimerical power, not from any church, but from one another; so that, when once they are ordained, though they remove to twenty different congregations, they are ordained no more.

NEOPH.—More and more amazed! I thought there had been but one who pretended to be universal bishop; and now I fancy I can find a thousand. I could not have thought all this was in it.

THEOPH.—Nor are they willing people should very particularly consider this; and, therefore, rather than bishop, or pastor, they choose to say minister, and with a manly courage and countenance will demand whether a minister is not a minister when he goes abroad, or rides out, as well as when he stays at home? Many hundreds there are who will return no other answer than “Yes, to be sure;” for he is the same man abroad as at home—not considering the ambiguity of the word minister—but every minister has not power from Christ to break bread to any particular church; but he who is pastor, or teaching elder in that church, who is bound to feed that flock of God, to which, according to the word of the Holy Ghost, he is made overseer, pastor, or bishop. It is an act of office-power, which Christ by that church gave him; nor can he exercise it in any other church, for one church never ordains officers for another, nor is he so much as a member anywhere else.

NEOPH.—But how can he preach anywhere else?^b

THEOPH.—As a minister, or servant of Christ, blessed with gifts, and a capacity to preach the Gospel, in season and out of season, apt to teach at home and abroad.

NEOPH.—But, bear with me, Why could not Yefan, or Dewi, minister the Lord’s Supper to the church, seeing they were members of it?

THEOPH.—For the reason already mentioned, because they were not ordained, nor called to any office necessary thereunto; nor has Christ given the church any power to

^b A question which clearly shatters the whole argument. To teach and preach the Gospel must be the highest function of the ambassador of Christ; and if he can exercise this among other churches, he can also administer the Lord’s Supper. The plea about “office-power,” however, is ingenious and plausible.—N.

call a brother, *pro tempore*, to minister the Lord's Supper unto them.

NEOPH.—Then what must a church do that is destitute of a pastor or teaching elder?

THEOPH.—The members may sit down *occasionally* with other churches in communion; and to make it easier to them, another church may appoint to meet as a church in their meeting-house.

NEOPH.—But this is still puzzling. Suppose I am an occasional communicant, in what capacity must I consider him that ministers? My pastor he is not; and you have said that none but the proper pastor can break bread to any church; it is an act, you said, of office-power, and unto me he is no officer.

THEOPH.—You must consider him as bishop in his own church, to which he now ministers the Lord's Supper, and consider yourself as a member of a church in communion, now by their consent partaking with them by virtue of the communion of churches. So Phœbe of Cenchrea was recommended to the church at Rome.

NEOPH.—But why may not pastors, by virtue of the communion of churches, break bread to other churches?

THEOPH.—The Divine institutions forbid it. They are to fulfil the ministry they have received; they are to feed the flock they have taken the oversight of. The angel of the church at Sardis is not the angel of the church at Philadelphia; they are *set in* the church, nor can reason admit that one church should communicate officers to another.

NEOPH.—I hope I am thankful that He, who determines the bounds of our habitations, has called me to sojourn at Potheina; and I thank you, my dear and valuable neighbours, for your kind endeavours for my instruction; but here's our beloved Epenetus, and our dear Christophilus, just at hand.

THEOPH.—Welcome, welcome, both of you; Epenetus may proceed in his story, its agreeableness to us discovering itself thus in our early attendance. We have seen the first Christian church gathered at Caerludd unorganized, and Ffyddlon and his companions ready to depart; now, we hope we shall, in the course of this story, see this

church furnished and adorned with proper officers, and the beauty of the Lord their God upon them.

EPEN.—My dear friends and brethren, I must then acquaint you that Ffyddlon, having with much success and comfort laboured among them, fixed the day of his departure, and desired them to grant him one request, which was to meet the day afore, that he might worship Christ with them once more, and take his leave of them. They complied; and he, in a very spiritual and affectionate manner, prayed with and for them; then took for his text, Matthew xvi. 18, "Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." He proved to them that Christ, the Son of the living God, was the Rock, that the church was His, that He was the builder of it, that the power and policy of hell should oppose it, but should never prevail against it. Upon all these he insisted, and concluded in prayer and praise; and all the while the most tender passions discovered themselves in the whole assembly. The thoughts of parting with him went very near them. When he had done, Buddiol, the godly landlord, prayed with an enlarged heart, and many tears; and, after him, Tosturiol prayed in a very evangelical spirit; and both went over many of the particulars of what they had seen from the beginning, admiring the riches of grace in the whole, so that all were swallowed up in the joys of heaven, and glory appeared upon all their tears.

CHRISTOPH.—You make me wish I had been one of them. Oh, there is a real glory upon Christianity, nor is there any comfort like that which is enjoyed under the precious gales of the eternal Spirit. May all the dust of time be removed, and formality for ever banished, and the primitive simplicity and glory restored and established! But, poor hearts, they had their trials too, and my heart, at this distance, seems to sink for them; they must part with Ffyddlon!

EPEN.—True; but they had this to comfort them: he could not say, as Paul did, "You shall see my face no more;" and besides, they got Alfred, with the consent of his master Buddiol, to stay among them. He was a godly young man, was of great use among young ones, understood

singing well, instructed others, and went before the congregation in singing psalms to the glory and praise of their Redeemer.

But I was going to tell you, only you were pleased to put in your useful observation, that Didwyll, Yefan's father-in-law, stood up and spoke to Ffyddlon and his friends, as follows:—

“Our very dear and much honoured brethren and friends, I am ordered by this church of Christ to return you thanks for your kind, useful visit. We can never be thankful enough to our dear Redeemer, who sent you hither. Your labours, your prayers, the manifold instructions, and the repeated exhortations you have given us, in the dearest and tenderest love, we hope we shall never forget. You have been gentle among us, even as a nurse cherisheth her children; in you we have seen the kindness of God. Grief at parting is what becomes us; but gladness of heart, in view of an eternal abode together with Christ above, should, at the same time, fill us. We are humbly thankful to the Lord that you have the tidings to carry home that there is a church of Christ at Caerludd; a number of poor creatures, who were in the depth of heathenism not many months ago, now brought to embrace the Redeemer and submit to His yoke; and we testify that we find it easy. We own your kind assistance in teaching us how, according to Christ's institution, to take this yoke upon us; and we hope further to follow your instructions in the choice and ordination of a pastor, a teacher, ruling elders, with other helps necessary to our edification. We beg the continuance of your prayers and advice, and hope we shall, at the time appointed for so solemn a work, see, and receive you, as messengers from the church of Christ you belong to. May the eternal God continually have you under His protection, and bless you with His communion, and may all prosperity attend the interest of our Redeemer.”

Then was sung the 67th Psalm, and the church for that time dismissed.

All the church was in tears at the thought of parting, for they all looked upon Ffyddlon as their bishop, and now looked upon themselves as sheep without a shepherd; but he spoke comfortably to them all, and prayed them to look

up to the great Shepherd and Bishop of their souls. They took their leave of him, and yet they could not take their leave of him; they would go and come again, and still do the same; and those who took their leave of him over night were there again in the morning. They every way acted like people willing never to part; but, part they must, and, at parting, tokens of love abounded on both sides, to the astonishment of many heathen beholders.

THEOPH.—Our Lord did inform His people that, by their love one to another, the world should know them to be His disciples. There is something in Christian love that is of a singular nature; he that dwells in it, dwells in God, and God in him. It hath everything desirable belonging to it, and lasteth for ever; and where among professors it appears not, call that place Ichabod; but where it shines, say the Spirit of God and of glory resteth here. This love among those who professed Christianity was very useful in the primitive times—often were persons converted in beholding it; and perhaps such fruit might follow the fervent love of those Christian Britons.

EPENETUS.—And, perhaps, you may hear something of that. As I said, part they did; but pretty many citizens went with them to a certain inn, about fifteen miles out of town, whither they had sent orders to prepare a dinner, and where they found everything prepared to their liking. They chose a large room, and when some dishes were brought in, Ffyddlon, in a very spiritual, affectionate manner, worshipped God, and blessed His name for what they had seen and heard at Caerludd, committed the dear Christians there to the tender care of their Redeemer, the Lord Jesus, begged the blessing of heaven on the present food prepared, and that God would, by His Spirit, guide and bless their conversation.

CHRISTOPH.—Now my heart begins to beat, expecting to hear something done for God there.

EPEN.—They being pretty many, most of the family were near to offer their attendance and service; but they were amazed to observe their ways. Their conversation was serious, yet cheerful, a precious vein of powerful religion running through the whole. They discoursed much of the tender providence of God in the table prepared for them;

and under holy elevations of soul discoursed of the eternal provision God made for them in Christ, and the wonders of grace, in bringing such poor sinners, who had destroyed themselves, into acquaintance with the bread of life that cometh down from heaven. Love and delight did sit in their countenances, their religious pleasure was great, and the attention of the family very singular; though they could not refuse, yet they thought much of the time lost in going for what was necessary. At last says the landlord, Gentlemen, forgive me; I never was so uncivil to any company in my house in my life, nor did I see my family carry it as they do now. I do not know how to blame them; I am in the fault myself. We are all of us as if we were listeners and liars in wait. But, gentlemen, forgive us. I am confounded! I know not what to do! Oh, my heart! And with that, he and his family burst out into tears in abundance.

PHILAL.—What a mercy was here! What a testimony the Lord bore to the word of His grace, as now in conversation delivered by His servants. May all the inns in Britain be frequented by such guests, and by such only. Oh! it is cutting to hear landlords, with a sneer and a scoff, say of some ranting, gaming, drinking companies,—Ha! these are some of our saints and believers. Come! if they do so, I hope we may without offence follow.—But, pray, go on.

EPEN.—When they had dined, Ffyddlon returned thanks to the Lord for their refreshment, and for what they had seen of His work in that place, and desired the blessing of heaven upon them all, that sinners might be converted, and the kingdom of the Redeemer by all means enlarged. They sat a while, had religious talk with the landlord, his wife, and servants; endeavoured to instruct them in some of the *main* principles of the Christian religion; and they all gave vast attention, and the landlord's concern seemed to exceed all the rest.

After a while they parted, some for the country, and some for Caerludd, and the great affection discovered in them all fastened conviction in the hearts of the beholders; they never had seen such love.

CHRISTOPH.—Now, I want to know how it went with this family as to religion.

EPEN.—The Christians that were to return to Caerludd, stayed as long as they could to cherish and encourage this new work ; and before they departed, gave them all the best advice they could, and recommended them to God and the word of His grace. After then, for some time, once or twice in a week, they would visit this family, to encourage the work and see how it did thrive. But, to make my story short, after a few months the landlord turned his back upon them, and would not see them ; his wife, it was hoped, might have some good thing in her towards the Lord God of Israel, but, being confined to such a house, led a dejected life all her time afterwards, yet not without some hope ; the servants, when their time was out, removed to Caerludd, into Christian families, and proved eminent Christians all their days.

NEOPH.—With submission, I want to follow the Bishop Ffyddlon home to his church, for he had a letter to read, and there were messengers to be sent. Pray how as to all that?

EPEN.—In a full church meeting, Ffyddlon informed the congregation that he had a letter to read to them, from a newly-gathered church of Christ in Caerludd ; gave them a short account of their faith and order, which with tears of joy they heard, and then he read as follows :—

“ The Church of Christ sojourning at Caerludd, unto the Church of Christ sojourning at Hyfrydle and the adjacent villages, grace and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ our Redeemer.

“ DEARLY BELOVED IN OUR LORD,

“ It is not long since we sate in the region and shadow of death, strangers to the covenants of promise, and without God in the world ; but we have found Him, whom we did not seek, and He is manifested unto us, though we asked not for Him. May the heavens for ever be filled with praises to God for this salvation ! We call upon you, and all the people of God, to be thankful to the Father of lights on our behalf. Our first fruits were met with in your assemblies, and God has greatly spread the blessing. We are a church of Christ, and we do with the greatest freedom profess that He is our Beloved and our Friend. He is precious to us ; we are precious to Him. Proper officers for His

service and our edification we are not yet furnished with ; but our ascended Lord, who giveth gifts unto men, encourages us to hope that we have those among ourselves He designs for service, and we trust He will direct our choice. We have, with submission to the over-ruling providence of our Redeemer, fixed upon the 8th and 9th days of the 7th month next ensuing for the setting them apart, by solemn ordination, to their proper work. We earnestly beg your prayers for us, and that you would please to send your messengers to behold our order, and to strengthen our hands.

“YOUR BRETHREN IN THE BEST BONDS.”

The church with vast attention, joy, and gladness heard this letter ; and the question being put, if they would send messengers to the church at Caerludd in answer to this request, to signify it by lifting up their hands, it was immediately and unanimously done. Then, after considering and consulting, it was thought proper that Ffyddlon, the pastor, and Cywir, a teacher in the church, who lived in a distant village, and Buddiol and Tosturiol, who had been there before, should be their messengers. They were asked whether they were willing to go upon that service, if the church would send them ? They said they were. Upon this it was put to the church whether they appointed the mentioned persons as their messengers to the church of Christ at Caerludd ; if they did, to signify it as before, which they unanimously did, and one was called to pray that God would graciously bless the design.

Prayer being ended, an affectionate brother in the church stood up, and moved that a day of thanksgiving to the Lord might be appointed, for that He had in such mercy entered the great city of Caerludd, and fixed the Redeemer's throne there.

THEOPH.—You have kindly answered Neophytus. Now, I say with submission, I want to follow the young Christians home to Caerludd, and hear what steps they took. As far as you please, I would be informed of the particulars.

EPEN.—While Ffyddlon was yet with them, he frequently desired they would call Yefan and Dewi to exercise the gifts they had, and the church did always comply with Ffyddlon's advice ; and Yefan and Dewi did always, in great serious-

ness and humility, comply with the call of the church. They used to read portions of Scripture, give the sense, compare spiritual things with spiritual, and infer what appeared to them profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. Ffyddlon observed wherein each of them seemed to excel, and gave some intimations of it, that the church might take the greater notice, and in any choice they might make walk after the Lord.

THEOPH.—Then I see they did not point out the men for Christ, run *before* Him, and fix not only the persons, but also their work, as too many do ; but they submitted to the choice of their Redeemer, and walked *after* Him. Brethren and friends, the beauty of the Lord our God was upon them ! Oh, when will He please to give us pastors, as at the first, and teachers as at the beginning !

EPEN.—As I told you, they heard them occasionally, while Ffyddlon was yet with them ; and now, having heard them two Lord's days, besides several days in the week, the church, as a church, appointed a solemn day of fasting and prayer before the Lord, that He would guide their minds, and determine their choice. Accordingly they kept the day, fasted, prayed, wept before the Lord. At last, Didwyll, who was chosen for that time to be the mouth of the church, said to Yefan and Dewi, You are both desired for a little time to withdraw. Then Didwyll said, Brethren, we are a church of Christ through grace, but have no bishops, only the Great Bishop of our souls in heaven. It is His will there should be overseers of the flock—under shepherds, that shall feed His sheep, that shall feed His lambs. He giveth gifts unto men, that some may be pastors, and some teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Many of us have thought that our brother Dewi is designed by our Great Shepherd for our pastor, and our brother Yefan for our teacher. Use all freedom, my dear brethren, and consider whether it is the will of our Lord Jesus we should call them to take this honourable work and service.

They all said they believed it was the will of Christ they should. The sisters also, by their silence, signified the same thing ; for women were not suffered to speak in the

church, but if any one thought she had something of importance to offer, she called a brother out, and prayed him to do it. Thus it was from the beginning.^c But here, as I said, they were all of a mind; and Yefan and Dewi being called in, Didwyll said unto the church, Brethren, if you do give brother Dewi a call to be your pastor, and brother Yefan a call to be your teaching elder, signify it by lifting up your hands,—which they unanimously did. Then said Didwyll, Brother Dewi and Yefan, you see how the hearts of your brethren are determined, and you hear their call. I humbly hope you'll think it is the call of Christ by them. In His name, and theirs, I desire your answer. They both answered that Christ was precious to them, that the church was unto them very dear, and that the service of Christ and the church was their delight; that they were willing, though weak, to draw under their Master's yoke until death, desired the prayers of the church for gifts, strength, and success from above, and that their separation unto office in the church might be according to due order; and that ruling elders and deacons might be nominated also, to assist them in the work and concerns of the Redeemer's kingdom. Upon this they were asked, whom did they think proper persons for ruling elders and deacons? They answered, that if the church thought fit, they should greatly like the brethren Didwyll and Diwyd for ruling elders, and the brethren Dyfal, Llawen, Tirion, and Haelionys for deacons. Without any more ado, it was immediately put to the church, whether they approved of the mentioned brethren for the mentioned offices, and called them thereunto. It went unanimously in the affirmative; and the brethren being desired to give in their answer, said they submitted themselves to Christ and the church, and earnestly desired prayers that they might be fitted for their work and service. Upon this, part of the 68th Psalm was sung, and the meeting concluded in prayer.

SYLLOG.—But there seems to be something preposterous in what they did; they had fixed their ordination days before they thus formally called the persons they designed for office!

EPEN.—True, it does seem so; but when we consider that

^c 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12; 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35.

this was but a *repetition*, with greater solemnity and form, of what they had done while Ffyddlon was yet with them, then there is only an additional power put into, and beauty upon, what they had before agreed to; and, besides, the ruling elders and deacons were not in any sense called, nor publicly nominated till now. And it was thought expedient they should, after solemn seeking of God, give all the persons they at that time designed for office, this more formal call, as *preparatory* to their ordination.

NEOPH.—But, bear with one born to be troublesome. The number of officers, their different denominations, and their distinct work and service, lead me into inextricable difficulties. Pray, before we come to their ordination, let me be favoured with some instructing account of those distinct offices, and their respective and peculiar ends and designs.

SYLLOG.—The officers of the church, in general, are bishops and deacons,^d and their work is prophecy and ministry.^e The bishops are either those that teach and rule, or those that rule only. The first sort are distinguished into pastors and teachers; but I pray my friends to speak of those in order.

PHILAL.—The name of a *pastor* or *shepherd* is metaphorical, suited unto his work, and seems very comprehensive of all the duties required of such a servant of Christ; so that whenever he thinks of his name, he may take a view of his great work, to *feed* the flock committed to his care. Of pastoral feeding there are two parts, that of instruction, and that of rule or discipline;^f and for such a work as this, there must be a competent measure of gifts and abilities, compassion and love to the flock, a continual watchfulness over them, zeal for God, and holiness before Him, the church, and the world.

PHILAL.—It is indeed promised that God would give unto His church pastors according to His own heart, which should feed them with knowledge and understanding,^g and this they must do by giving themselves wholly unto the word and prayer,^h and labouring in the word and doctrine; and unto this it is certain that spiritual wisdom and under-

^d Phil. i. 1.

^e Romans xii. 6, 7.

^f 1 Peter v. 2.

^g Jer. iii. 15.

^h 1 Tim. v. 17.

standing in the mysteries of the Gospel is required, and a real inward experience of the power of the truth, skill to divide the Word of Truth aright,ⁱ so as to give to each his proper portion in due season;^k an acquaintance with the state of the flock, and tender compassion for the souls of men, must be looked upon as absolutely necessary.

THEOPH.—By such qualifications as these are they fitted, in a great measure, for their business *with* the flock, but there lies upon their hands great business at the throne of grace *for* the flock. They must be men of prayer, and constantly engaged in supplications for those more immediately under their care, that the word of grace may be attended with great success; the church may be daily edified in faith, love, and holiness; that they may be sustained and supported under the many and various temptations that may attend them; that the sick and wounded may be healed, and that they may be helped to persevere to the end; and for the due performance of such supplications before the Lord, special acquaintance with the various circumstances and spiritual wants of the flock must be thought absolutely necessary.

PHILAL.—And, I must observe, that it is the pastor's spiritual duty, not only to *preach* the truth, as I observed before, but also to *defend* it against all opposition. The pastors must contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints; they must take heed to their doctrine, and every way oppose whatever is erroneous or profane. And because it is impossible men should guard and defend any truth they are ignorant of, it is necessary pastors should be men of a clear, sound knowledge of the entire doctrine of the Gospel, filled with love thereunto, having an aversion to *novel* opinions and bold conjectures; they should be men of learning and ability of mind, to appear in the defence and confirmation of the Gospel.^l

THEOPH.—True; and the administration of the Lord's Supper is committed to them, and they are to consider all the necessary circumstances belonging thereto, as to time, place, frequency, and order—to keep severely unto the institution of Christ, and take care that holy things should

ⁱ 1 Tim. ii. 15.

^k Matt. xxiv. 45.

^l Phil. i. 17.

be only to holy persons, and, being a church ordinance, observe that they administer it no where but in the church of Christ they belong to, and that when they are come together into one place.^m

NEOPH.—But our dear Theophilus does a little surprise me that he did not, along with the Lord's Supper, also mention *baptism* as another special part of the pastor's work.

SYLLOG.—You need not at all be surprised at that, for baptism is no *church ordinance*.ⁿ The Gospel is to be preached to the church and the world, the Lord's Supper to be administered only to a particular church; but baptism is not extended to all the world, nor yet confined to a particular church, but professors of the truth can, according to all that we find recorded in the Bible, lay claim thereto for themselves and their infant seed.

Though pastors baptize, they do it not as pastors. Paul said he was not sent to baptize. Nor does it appear that Peter baptized Cornelius and others at his house, only he commanded them to be baptized; and it is most probable the brethren that came with him from Joppa did it. Ananias, a certain disciple at Damascus, baptized Paul, not in a church, nor was he then received a church member; nor can anything be produced, from any part of the New Testament, that can make baptism a church ordinance, and the pastor's or bishop's *particular work*, as bishop.^o Of all the

^m 1 Cor. xi. 20.

ⁿ By baptism not being a *church ordinance*, the author means that it is not an ordinance authorised by the church, and confined in its administration to the church assembly. It is rather the initiatory rite whereby are designated, and so far qualified, the elements whereof the church is to be composed.—N.

^o The evidence, direct or indirect, given by Scripture is clear to the effect, that in the apostolic age others besides bishops or elders baptized. Coinciding with this is the evidence of Hilary of Rome (Ambrosiaster), fourth century:—"All, at first, taught, and all baptized, on whatever days or seasons there was opportunity. Philip did not inquire for a time or a day when he might baptize the eunuch," &c.—Ambrosii Opera, in Eph. iv. Mosheim is of opinion that, in the first century, whoever made a convert to the Christian faith had the right then and there to baptize him. In the second and third centuries, baptism, though not confined entirely in its administration to the presbyters (elders), was not complete in the estimation of the churches of the West until imposition of hands on

persons that we read of baptized by the apostles and evangelists, there were none baptized in a church, nor were they yet church members.

NEOPH.—But the apostles and evangelists were extraordinary officers.

SYLLOG.—True; but did they ever break bread, or administer the Lord's Supper to any one in an open field, or to one or two in a private house? If what they did in baptizing so, belonged to them *as* extraordinary officers, why did they not take an extraordinary step, as to the Lord's Supper? And why did they not leave some *rules* to direct persons in the *ordinary* administration of baptism, seeing *they* must not be followed? If what they did was not the rule in this for following ages, then are we left in perpetual darkness.

CHRISTOPH.—Unto what has been mentioned concerning the pastors' work, I take leave to add that they are also to take all the care they can of the poor, visit the sick and afflicted, show all manner of tenderness and love to any under distress of any kind; and also to have constant concern, and bear a principal part in the rule and govern-

the baptized had been performed by them. And this is the real origin of *confirmation*.—Cyprian, Ep. ad. Iubaj. But by this time baptism, whether in the case of infants or adults, had been elevated into unnatural and superstitious importance, as the *medium* of that supernatural blessing which properly it could only be the *symbol* of. As early as the end of the second century, in Africa, the rite, as described by Tertullian, was imposing and elaborate in the extreme.—Tertull. de Coron. Milit. cap. 3; De Bapt. cap. 7.

The office of *catechist* to prepare candidates for baptism (catechumens) was, in the second and third centuries, conferred, in the East, on any suitable member of the fraternity; but still the presbyters (elders) baptized, and that so much the more when baptism became an *exorcising* rite, because they were naturally looked upon as the depositaries of Divine power. The Western church (Rome) in the great controversy with Cyprian held baptism to be valid, wherever and by whomsoever administered, provided the formula instituted by Christ only was used; and the Roman church has continued consistently to hold valid lay-baptism. Tertullian, indeed, with his usual boldness, has asserted the right of the laity both to baptize (*tingere*) and to administer the Lord's Supper (*offere*), for the reasons that all Christians are priests of God, and that the distinction between clergy and laity is an invention of the church.—De Exhort. Cast. cap. 7. But he denies the right to *women*.—De Virgin. Vel. cap. 9.—N.

ment of the church ; and it is certainly their business to have much at heart the conversion of poor souls to Christ, and especially the conversion of the *seed* of the church, who, according to all that is revealed, are in a peculiar manner committed to their care.

NEOPH.—Upon the account you have given of a pastor and his work, there seems to be no room for any other officer but himself ; all the work seems to be his, or such as he is capable of performing.

CHRISTOPH.—And why could you not, my dear Neophytus, as well have inferred that, seeing his work was so great, it was highly necessary that he should have *helps* appointed for his comfort and encouragement, and for the edification of the church ?

NEOPH.—I grant your inference is more natural than mine ; but how great a work must it be ! Oh, pastors ! pastors ! your work is good, but very great. How does it call for prayer. Who is sufficient for such things !

CHRISTOPH.—There is nothing like love to put persons upon acts of service. There is nothing but love to Christ, and love to poor sinners, that can put them upon this, so great a work. “Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me ? Feed my sheep, feed my lambs.” What the motives are that hundreds have to take the name upon them is not our business to consider ; but whoever is not constrained to the office and work by the love of Christ, is a stranger to all that is really intended thereby.

NEOPH.—But I am a greater stranger unto the other officer’s name and the thing intended ; a *teacher* was mentioned, and pray, what is he ?

PHILAL.—It has been asserted, by persons of very great learning and worth, that διδάσκαλος is nowhere used in the New Testament but for a teacher with authority, and διδάσκειν does always signify to teach with authority and power, the peculiar work of those who are ordained, or set apart, publicly to teach others. But I humbly conceive that the word is of a larger extent, and may intend also, all the endeavours of private Christians to promote each other’s edification in knowledge, faith, and holiness ; so, Col. iii. 16, διδάσκοντες και νουθετοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς—“teaching and admonishing one another.” And the good instructions which

women, in their proper place, may give unto others, either by word or example, are delivered to us in the New Testament by this word; and they are denominated thereupon Καλοδιδασκάλοι—"teachers of good things."—Tit. ii. 3. However, this does not hinder, but the word may *chiefly* intend a public teacher, and I freely grant it does so. The officer now to be considered is ὁ διδάσκαλος, *the teacher*, whose very office, proper work, and business is to *teach*, to expound the Scriptures, defend them against all erroneous opinions, catechise and instruct all under his care, teaching every man, that he may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

PHILAL.—It is certainly very plain in the New Testament, that Christ does not only set in His church pastors, but teachers also.^p In the church at Antioch, there were prophets, that is, pastors; and there were teachers also;^q so Christ hath set in His church,—first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers.^r

NEOPH.—But perhaps it is nothing but another name for the same office; so that nothing is really intended thereby but a pastor, for a pastor certainly must be a teacher.

SYLLOG.—Where the apostle enumerates distinctly all the teaching officers of the church, he makes a difference between them. There is a difference between apostles and evangelists; so certainly there must be between pastors and teachers, which are mentioned in the same place. For, observe, the apostle doth not say pastors or teachers, but pastors *and* teachers. Moreover, this must contain either the addition of a new office, or it is an interpretation of the word that went before: the latter it could not be, because the word *pastor* was as well known as that of a *teacher*. Nor are they synonymous terms, for though all pastors are

^p Eph. iv. 11.

^q Acts xiii. 1.

^r 1 Cor. xii. 28. From the whole passage and its context it would seem that the apostle is detailing offices and gifts peculiar to the apostolic age, rather than those intended to be perpetual: so "miracles," "gifts of healings," "diversities of tongues." "Prophets" and "teachers" were thus, like apostles, possessors of extraordinary illumination and power, χαρισματα. See also the same chapter, ver. 4—11. To take a different ground, by maintaining that all these are ordinary gifts, always to continue in the church, is, at least, to give the better part of the argument to the "Latter-day Saints."—N.

teachers, yet all teachers are not pastors. No instance can be given of the same officer at the same time expressed under *various* names; though we know that by pastors, bishops, or presbyters, the same officers may, in different places of Scripture, be intended; but though we do in the same place read of bishops and deacons, as distinct officers, we nowhere read of bishops and presbyters in the church; and the reason is plain, because the office is one and the same. From what is revealed, we are under a necessity to understand by pastor and teacher two distinct officers set in the church.

THEOPH.—And I will take leave to observe, that as they differ in name, so in their work.—Rom. xii. 7, 8. Persons of different gifts and offices are to attend diligently to their proper work: “he that teacheth on teaching, or he that exhorteth on exhortation.”

NEOPH.—But, may be, no office at all is denoted by the word *teacher*, only a general appellation that did belong to all those who taught others, whether statedly or occasionally. All who had ability might teach, and, it is very probable, did teach in those primitive churches; so they might all prophesy one by one, 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25, and all who prophesied taught.

PHILAL.—It is true, that in the first churches every one as he had received the gift did minister the same to others; they looked upon themselves as stewards of the manifold grace of God, and they knew a steward must be faithful; but still, though all had that freedom, and doubtless many made use of it, yet from thence they were not denominated teachers. For teachers are numbered among the officers Christ had *set* in the church; they were not the whole church, but they were set in it; and were appointed for the work of the ministry, and for the perfecting of the saints.—1 Cor. xii. 28; Eph. iv. 11. Moreover, teachers are mentioned as those who, with other elders, did *preside* in the church, and join in the public ministration thereof.—Acts xiii. 1, 2. And I must observe, that this truth appears in the strongest light, in that they are charged to attend to the *work of teaching*.—Rom. xii. 7.

NEOPH.—Then I may humbly apprehend it was only an office of *teaching*, to which some were set apart in the

church ; but with the *rule* of the church, and with the administration of the Lord's Supper, they had no concern, otherwise than as private members.

THEOPH.—Perhaps such officers as you speak of, have been chosen unto very good ends and purposes in the churches of Christ ; and some have thought, that by “ him that teacheth,” in Gal. vi. 6, we are to understand such an one. But the teacher in Eph. iv. 11, is of another kind ; he is chosen for all that belongs to the work of the ministry, all that tends to the perfecting of the saints, and the edification of the body of Christ ; and, therefore, he is chosen to *rule*, and administer the Lord's Supper. Indeed, the name *teacher*, as such, does not necessarily extend to all this ; but he who is chosen to be a teacher may, at the same time, be chosen a *teaching elder*, and then he has all the power I mentioned, and which the text in Ephesians requires he should have.

NEOPH.—Upon what you have all said, I humbly desire to be informed wherein pastor and teacher do differ.

PHILAL.—“ Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all ; but the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man, to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom ; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit.”^s Our ascended Lord divides to every man severally, by His Spirit, as He will. Some excel in one gift, some in another, but no one man upon earth excels in them all ; some with abundance of *wisdom* open, explain, and urge all our evangelical duties ; and some with abundant *knowledge* explain the great doctrines of faith ; the churches of Christ should choose for their *pastor* him that abounds in preaching their duties to them *evangelically* ; and for their *teacher*, him that opens the great doctrines of the Gospel *practically* ; and then expect each to work according as they obtain help from God.

NEOPH.—I must own there appears a glory upon this ;

^s 1 Cor. xii. 4-8.

the edification of the churches seems to be provided for wonderfully, and the comfort of the officers themselves ; but why do not all the churches choose pastors and teachers ?

THEOPH.—It behoves the churches themselves to consider it ; but, according to what is revealed, concerning the provision Christ makes for the edification of the churches, a church is not completely organized without a *teaching elder* ; though many churches make a shift without such an officer, and may be every way the *poorer* for it.

CHRISTOPH.—But the glory of a Christian congregation, worshipping their Redeemer according to primitive simplicity and purity, attending to the joyful sound of him that exhorteth, and of him that teacheth, according to the analogy of faith, is very great. There the care and tenderness of Christ, as the Prince of shepherds, may, in a great measure, be seen in the love and labour of a faithful pastor ; and his wisdom and pity, as a teacher sent from God, in an encouraging manner to be observed, while the Scriptures are expounded, and the great doctrines thereof explained by a wise and able teaching elder. They both feed the flock with milk, or with strong meat, as is requisite.

NEOPH.—Well, may we live to see this primitive glory upon the churches of Christ ! But *ruling elders* were also mentioned ; pray favour me with some account of them.

THEOPH.—We must then observe, that in a church of Christ there is *rule* and *government*. The Redeemer is not the author of confusion ; He is a God of order. In a church of Christ, walking in the faith and order of the Gospel, there are persons who rule and govern. We read of them that *rule* well ; and of *governments*, where the abstract being used for the concrete, we must understand *governors* ; for Christ has appointed but one kind of government in His church. He that *ruleth* is commanded to rule with diligence ; and the rest are commanded to obey them who have the *rule* over them, and submit themselves.

CHRISTOPH.—And, with subjection of soul and comfort, do I always consider Christ as Zion's King, Law-giver, and Judge. The government is upon His shoulders ; and though there are in His church those who are called

rulers and governors, yet they are but His servants. Whatever power they have, it is but a *ministerial* one; if they despise or neglect the power He gives them, or omit the proper exercise thereof, they sin; and if they take a power He does not give, they usurp what is not their due.

PHILAL.—And it is with thankfulness of heart I often think of the honour Christ puts upon a Congregational church, in making it the seat of power and rule. A number of poor converted sinners have power to embody, and become a Congregational church, as our beloved Epenetus told us they did at Caerludd. Such a church has power to open its gates to receive members, and to shut out the unruly; such a church has power to call any of their number to a regular trial of their proper gifts, and approving of their gifts, has power to call and ordain them to the stated exercise of those gifts in a proper office; and then has power to call upon, and charge those officers, to see that they fulfil the ministry they have received.

NEOPH.—Then why cannot they do all themselves, without officers?

PHILAL.—Because Christ, the only King of the church, gave them no such power. There is rule and government, as was observed, in the church. It is Christ's; He makes the church the seat of it, and empowers the church to choose proper officers to execute it. But though they have power to organize themselves, they have no power to continue in an unorganized state; and though they have power to choose officers, they have no power to reject them at pleasure, without special cause; their power is altogether limited by the revealed will of their King, and so is the power of their officers.

THEOPH.—Right; and therefore it must be observed that the church is not the seat of *absolute* power and authority; nor is it the church that gives what power it pleases to this or the other officer, but it is Christ who empowers by the church. He has already revealed what officers there must be, and what is their proper power and authority; nothing must be added thereto, nor taken therefrom; and the church, after humble and earnest supplication, and serious consultation in His presence, is empowered to nominate and choose those officers, and then are obliged,

by the laws of their Lord and Redeemer, to submit themselves unto them.

CHRISTOPH.—Then those officers, in executing their trust, do not execute the laws of the church, but the laws of Christ; nor are they to abate thereof, nor add thereto; though they are rulers, they are yet servants. It is the execution of the authority of Christ in the church that is committed to the elders.

PHILAL.—The apostles were elders; Peter says he was one, and John calls himself an elder; all the rest were such, and therefore rulers and governors in the churches of Christ. According to the mind of Christ, none but elders must rule in a church; that character most directly points out their authority. They are some of them, on other accounts, called bishops, pastors, teachers, ministers, &c., but what belongs to them in point of rule they have as elders, and not otherwise. Paul sent for the elders of the church, and said, "Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers." So, under the Old Testament, the rulers of the church were constantly called its elders.

NEOPH.—I humbly desire to be informed what work it is that Christ, the King, requires from elders called to rule; for to *rule* and to *obey* are words wherewith some persons are not willing to be very familiar, though, to be sure, as given to us in the Gospel, nothing can be in them disagreeable to faith.

THEOPH.—No; for those who are called to rule are not lords over the faith of the people, but helpers of their joy; and the power they have is not for destruction, but for edification; for, as rulers, they are to watch diligently over the walk and conversation of all the members of the church, to see that they behave blamelessly, and shine in a holy course of life, as lights in the world; giving a good example unto all others in a fruitful, useful, inoffensive walk; that they make a due representation of the holiness of Christ, and the purity of His commands. And upon any observation they make in this care of theirs over the flock, to exhort, encourage, reprove, or admonish, as the case may require.

CHRISTOPH.—And seeing the design of our dear Lord's

great command, that His disciples should *dearly love* one another, and make themselves known to the world thereby, it is certainly the work of those elders to watch against all appearances of differences and divisions among the people under their care. Love may be soon and insensibly cooled, but not so soon kindled; and when it departs from a people, all is gone along with it, and, unless almighty grace causes the return of it, there is nothing can make up the loss. Wherefore, the rule of the church, in my poor judgment, doth principally consist in a strict observance of the law of love, in itself, and all that belongs to it.

SYLLOG.—And I think I may say that all reason, as well as revelation, makes it the duty of those rulers to stir up all the members of the church to the special duties that may lie upon them severally, according to their different talents. The rich, the poor, the old, the young, those in peace, or those in trouble, to see that every relation be filled up with the proper duties thereof; and that every spiritual gift be called unto, and put upon, its proper exercise.

THEOPH.—The being and order of a church may certainly be thought to depend very much upon the constant attendance of those belonging thereto, in the public assemblies. In all ages it has been the manner of some to *forsake* the assembling of themselves together. Churches have greatly suffered hereby; decays of love have sprung from remissness; therefore, the rulers should watch diligently, lest such a root spring up. First one may grow remiss, and then another; first to one degree, and then to another, until, as has been often observed, the whole lump be infected.

CHRISTOPH.—But, what do you think of the sick and afflicted? Is there any sick among you? Let him send for the elders; they are bound by the law and light of nature to show mercy; but the special relation by Divine institution they stand in, to the afflicted members of the church, lays them under an unavoidable obligation to *offer* all the service they are capable of; and many of the afflicted may, on several accounts, be exposed to more than ordinary trials in their sicknesses, which should be duly considered, and they pitied and assisted. “I was sick and

ye visited me, I was in prison and ye came unto me.”—Matt. xxvi. 36.

PHILAL.—And therefore it belongs unto them, as elders, to advise with, and give direction unto the deacons of the church, as to what concerns the making provision for, and distribution to the relief and succour of the poor of the church; and, if the poor be multiplied amongst them, and they unable to support them, and Providence brings unto them assistance from other churches, that relief is to be deposited with the elders, and disposed of with, and according unto, their advice. “Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea; which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.”—Acts xi. 29, 30.

THEOPH.—And it is certainly their duty to prepare every thing that is to be brought into the church and proposed there; that nothing crude and undigested, which may give occasion to vain janglings, may be introduced; but every thing decently and in order.

SYLLOG.—And now I will take the liberty to observe, that seeing what we have all said is far short of amounting to the whole of their work, and seeing pastors and teachers are obliged to give themselves to the preaching of the word and prayer, who is the person that dare say that a pastor alone is sufficient for all this work? Where is the church in the New Testament that had but one elder? The *angel* of the church at Ephesus, we know, must be a *collective* word, for Paul sent for the *elders* of that church, and they came; and unto the angel of the church at Smyrna the Lord says, “Fear none of those things thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison; ye shall have tribulation; be thou faithful.” There was never a church in those days with only one bishop, but elders were ordained in every church.—Acts xiv. 23. And where there is a pastor and a teaching elder in a church, who make it their business, as they should do, to know the state of the flock, and preach constantly the present truths the flock stand in need of, all reason, Neophytus, if there was no revelation for it, makes it necessary they should be assisted in the ruling part by

proper officers, who are not called to give themselves to the word and prayer.^t

^t The practice of Congregational churches is against the author's arguments. It appears useless, and only leading to utter confusion, to create a distinct office for every separate epithet applied to the word *πρεσβυτεροι*, "elders," or "presbyters," in the New Testament. Elders, whether presiding (ruling), or teaching, are the same in office, but under these different descriptions because engaged in different duties. The passage so much insisted on, 1 Tim. v. 17, "Let the elders who preside (rule) well be counted of double honour, especially those who labour in word and doctrine," cannot be fairly made a foundation for two distinct species of elderships. It teaches that elders who presided with wisdom were to be treated with very great honour; and that they were (*μαλιστα*) especially to be so treated when they exhibited a toilsome diligence in word and doctrine—in preaching and teaching. "Elder" is thus a term indicating *one* office, but *two* different lines of service:—presiding or taking the lead at the meetings of the church, and in the general management of the arrangements of the community; and preaching and teaching the truths of religion.

As to a *plurality* of elders, no doubt can remain as to its prevalence in primitive times. It might be more needed when the church was in process of being gathered from the heathen. And there was the less objection to it by reason of the simpler habits of the early ages. With us, life is more artificial, and the precincts of even the Christian church are not inviolable against the intrusions of conventional feelings. Hence, a certain pride of office, or something else, causes that a plurality of elders seldom works well. In the apostolic age, the distinction given by office only furnished a more prominent mark for persecution. Then, also, the question of emolument formed no difficulty. Plurality of elders naturally came in from the synagogue, and each had his duties assigned him according to the gifts he appeared to possess. *Teaching*, under the new religion, was at once found to be a more onerous duty than ever before; for Christianity, above all religions, ancient or modern, is remarkable for this—its earnest effort to reach, enlighten, and satisfy the understanding, and govern by convincing men. Hence, in no priesthood are there such "teaching" elders as in the Christian. The element of *teaching* in the Jewish religion was comparatively very deficient. So is it notoriously among the great religions still extant in the East. And the Romanist form of Christianity, by imitating the heathen systems, has nearly altogether—had entirely, prior to the Reformation—abandoned all attempts at popular instruction in preaching.

As to plurality of elders, and variety of elderships, it is at the same time to be confessed that the same arrangement did not in all places obtain in the apostolic age. The presbyters, in places where a Jewish synagogue was formed, or where the body of a church was made up of Jewish converts, might be more distinctively recognised as rulers, while some of them, better fitted by natural talent, would

NEOPH.—Indeed, according to the account I have heard of the work, I think so too; but I shall be very glad to hear it proved from Scripture that such an officer as a *ruling elder*—I mean one who is not obliged to preach, but to *rule* only—is of Divine institution. I am pretty well convinced such an officer is needful.

PHILAL.—Then, depend upon it, Christ has appointed such officers; for whatever is needful Christ has certainly favoured His church and servants with. But you may please to attend to what is written, Rom. xii. 6, 7, 8:—“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness.”

Here are the different officers and their different work plainly mentioned and fairly distinguished, all of them ordinary officers; for even those who prophesied must prophesy according to the analogy of Scripture; and if there was no place of Scripture but this, by “him that *ruleth*” I should understand a *ruling elder*, whose proper office and business is only to rule, and that with diligence.

SYLLOG.—The analytical account that must be given of the place requires it; for, first and more generally, the whole church-office-work and power is divided into that of prophecy and ministry. Then the first is more particularly divided into that of teaching and that of exhortation; then the latter is divided into that of rule,—“he that ruleth;” and into bounty and mercy, the proper work of the deacons.”

PHILAL.—And so is that in 1 Cor. xii. 28,—“And God be teachers *par eminence*. See Whately’s *Kingdom of Christ*, p. 84. On the other hand, the apostles, who were themselves styled presbyters (elders), were distinguished more by the exercises of teaching, preaching, prophesying.—N.

“There is no congruity between *ruling* and giving *bounty*, that they should be classified together under the generic word “ministry.” Besides, it was in order that the apostles might have more time for the “ministry” of the word and for prayer, that they gave over to the *deacons* the very different work of serving tables.—Acts vi.—N.

hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." No unprejudiced, impartial person, of any tolerable judgment, will ever question but by *helps* must be understood *deacons*, for that is the plain account we have of them at their first institution, that they might help the apostles in some of the external concerns of the church; and by *governments* we must understand *ruling elders*.

SYLLOG.—There is a necessity it should be so understood; by governments we must understand governors, the abstract for the concrete; as before, helps for helpers. And the pretence that by governments are meant gifts for governments, is altogether vain and frivolous, for those gifts must be ordinary or extraordinary; if ordinary, why numbered and placed among extraordinary ones?—if extraordinary, wherein did they differ from what was purely apostolical, the apostles being mentioned first? And moreover, if ordinary ones, they are to abide in the church, and so there are persons who have gifts for government, and consequently should be governors who are not teachers, but distinct from them.

PHILAL.—And I can give you another, 1 Tim. v. 17,—“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.” This, one of the greatest men that England ever saw, observes, is of *uncontrollable evidence*. Any person who does not come with a resolution to reject will, at first reading, see two sorts of elders here; elders whose *principal*^x business is to labour in the word and doctrine, and elders whose *proper* business is to rule, and whose duty it is to rule well. I must say of this text, that it makes what we assert as plain as the sun at noonday, even when no clouds interpose. The endeavours of men to raise a dust can never so darken this text but a mind void of prejudice will see what is asserted concerning ruling elders held forth in it in the strongest light.^y

^x It seems rather that the adverb *μαλιστα* qualifies the verb *αξιούσθωσαν* “be counted worthy.” Let those who *labour*, &c. *be especially counted worthy* of double honour. Let not the reader suppose that the author is translating Calvin here.—N.

^y Colligere autem hinc licet, duo fuisse tunc presbyterorum genera: quia non omnes ad docendum ordinabantur. Nam aperte verba

SYLLOG.—True, a preaching or teaching elder is bound to give himself to the word and prayer, to give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine—yea, to give himself wholly thereunto. And, pray, if he, who is thus in duty bound, does not labour in the word and doctrine, what double honour—yea, what single honour, can he lay claim to, though he minds the ruling part? It is plain, the text speaks of elders that rule well and are thereupon worthy of double honour, and yet labour not in the word and doctrine; their double honour, whereof they are worthy, supposes them in the discharge of all their proper duty. It is their duty to rule, but not to preach. The case is very plain; elders that rule well are worthy of double honour, though they labour not in the word and doctrine; preaching elders, if they labour not, are worthy of no honour.

PHILAL.—And therefore I must observe, that all the endeavours of men to cloud this testimony should be called fighting against God. They do not like it should be as this text directs, and therefore the text delivered by Divine inspiration must be opposed; and a downright denial of the whole text and its design would be much more honest. *Μαλιστα*, they say, does not distinguish, but describe, and is as much as to say, *seeing they also* labour; but it is never used in that sense in any place in the New Testament, nor does the context require it should be so took. But one sort of elders, they say, must be here understood, namely, the preachers or the ministers of the Gospel; and I say then, that thus the text must run:—Those who labour in the word and doctrine, that rule well, are worthy of double honour, especially if they labour in the word and doctrine. But, say they, the *word* signifies to labour with pains and diligence; and I say it is the duty of all to labour so, and those who do not, deserve no honour.

sonant, quosdam bene et honeste præfuisse; quibus tamen non erant commissæ docendi partes. Et sane ex populo deligebantur graves et probati homines, qui una cum pastoribus communi consilio et autoritate Ecclesiæ disciplinam administrarent, ac assent quasi censores moribus corrigendis. Hunc morem *Ambrosius* obsolevisse conqueritur doctorum ignavia vel potius *superbia*, dum soli volunt eminere.—The great, the learned, and the sincere Calvin, on 1 Tim. v. 17.

THEOPH.—I am abundantly satisfied that there should be a presbytery, an eldership, a competent number of elders² in every church. So we read that the apostles directed and assisted in the ordination of “elders in every church.”—Acts xiv. 23. As was before observed, there was no such thing from the beginning as churches with one elder a-piece; and I am well assured, that when the primitive glory is restored, the churches will have their elderships as at the beginning. Oh, how beautiful must it be to see a godly pastor, and a sound, able, teaching elder, strengthening the hands of each other, labouring in the word and doctrine, assisted in the ruling part, which requires great diligence, by able and faithful ruling elders. And if their temporal circumstances require, then assistance is their due, if they rule well, even to a double honour; for “thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.”

CHRISTOPH.—I think all should earnestly pray for the return of that primitive simplicity and glory. Christ is greatly honoured in the beautiful order of His house. Whenever human wisdom, not to say craft, has undertaken to make any alterations, it has been always for the worse. Conformity unto Christ's own appointments alone is beautiful. How beautiful a sight is a church of Christ, met in His presence, having their eyes to their King in the midst of them, and doing all things in obedience to Him! No sight so glorious upon earth! Upon the ruin of this Antichrist grew; and this is what the mother of harlots, and all the harlots her daughters must abhor. But let the children of the kingdom breathe after the glory.

THEOPH.—And may we be helped to bless God that we have churches of Christ, and godly pastors in them; and seeing, poor hearts, their work is very great to feed the

² It is observable that in this Dialogue the author uses the term *elder*, while in the first he calls Ffyddlon *bishop*. In this he conforms with Scripture usage. The same officers are called *πρέσβυτεροι*, “elders,” in those portions of the New Testament which were addressed to churches partly or principally composed of Jews, to whom the synagogue term “elders” was familiar; and *ἐπισκοποι* in those addressed to Gentiles, to whom this latter term would be better known as marking an office of state among the Athenians. Thus, Peter and James use only the former. Paul, however, with his usual liberty, introduces both interchangeably, even in the same passages.—Titus i. 5-7.—N.

flock, watch over the whole, old and young—for the lambs must be watched over too, and fed, they being of the flock—to exhort, teach, rule with diligence, search and inquire with great application into the state of the flock, and the frames and wants of each particular member, and to administer reproof, exhortation, comfort, instruction, or encouragement to each, as the case requires—to visit the sick and afflicted, and every way show forth the care and compassion of the Prince of shepherds. And seeing they have no fellow-elders to help them, may their respective flocks be helped constantly to pray for them, have compassion upon them, make their work as easy as possible, avoiding all occasions of grief and discouragement, teaching and admonishing one another in love, that the pastor must give himself to the word and prayer. That thoughtless person, whoever he is, who makes light of grieving, despising, and discouraging his pastor, knows not what he does. The eternal Spirit be the help and comfort of pastors and churches too!

NEOPH.—I don't know how to be thankful enough unto you, my dear fathers, brethren, friends, for answering my desire in so particular a manner; and I heartily join with you in breathing after such a glory as you mentioned, and earnestly desire that, in the meantime, all godly pastors may be greatly encouraged and blessed. Now, if you please, a few words about *deacons*, though I am not much at a loss concerning them.

THEOPH.—Unto the office of deacons belongs the actual exercise and application of the bounty of the church, unto the poor that are planted therein. Under the present dispensation, the church must have the poor always with them; and, according to the laws of Christ, and even the light of nature, it is a duty and a blessing to relieve them; and unto this the deacons are to excite and direct the members of the church, and they are to receive and faithfully distribute to the poor, as their various cases and circumstances may require. The care of this is also incumbent on the elders, but the deacons are helps unto them.

PHILAL.—Their qualifications are recorded, 1 Tim. iii. 8; care and prudence in the choice of them recommended, and they unto faithfulness and diligence encouraged. A great

degree of freedom shall by them, in such a discharge of their duty, be attained, and great trust in them reposed.

CHRISTOPH.—Our dear Redeemer has by many ways discovered His love to, and care of, the *poor of the flock*. That they might not be discouraged, here is not only the care of them incumbent on pastors, teachers, and elders, but here is an office instituted on very purpose for them; and, doubtless, the deacons should look upon it as a special part of their glory that they are called to represent and show forth the care, love, tenderness, and compassion of Christ.

SYLLOG.—And therefore they should acquaint themselves, as much as possibly they can, with the circumstances of the poor, acquaint the church with their necessity, stir up the particular members to a free contribution, according as God has prospered them, reprove the negligent, and if they persist in a neglect of their duty, then acquaint the elders, seek and take their advice, and in everything they receive, or distribute, stand always in readiness to be accountable.

NEOPH.—But deacons have generally other work upon their hands, besides the care of the poor; as, what concerns the Lord's table, and the maintenance of the ministry.

PHILAL.—And that work is looked upon as theirs, because their proper business is to *serve tables*; therefore, to the table of the poor, persons have added the table of the Lord, and the minister's table; and, for ought I know, justly enough.

NEOPH.—I shall at present move no more questions about them. All my friends that spoke I thank for their labour, and you, father Epenetus, for your patience.

EPEN.—Patience! It has been a pleasure to me. I see my dear friends have read their Bibles with profit, and, by all that they have said, own that our Congregational fathers in Old and New England did so; unto the writings of whom I see they are not strangers, but with the great Owen it appears they have been very conversant, all which I take the liberty to recommend to your serious perusal, my dear Neophytus. And now proceed with my story.

I told you what persons they nominated at Caerludd for their officers, and I was going to tell you that, quickly after then, Dewi found in himself a strong inclination to visit Hyfrydle, the place of his spiritual birth; and upon his mentioning it, two of the persons nominated for deacons offered

to bear him company. They all set out together, and, arriving at Hyfrydle, were received with the greatest demonstrations of Christian joy. Buddiol, the gracious landlord's house, was presently filled, the conversation and the attention very singular, and the affection strong. At supper, Dewi put the landlord in mind of the feast they had when they supped there once together before; whereupon Ffyddlon, the bishop, discoursed with great enlargement and affection. After supper, the 133rd Psalm was read, explained, and sung; and Ffyddlon prayed, took his leave in the tenderest love, and told them he hoped they should both see and hear his dear brother Cywir, the teacher, next day.

THEOPH.—Then I suppose the next day was the Lord's day?

EPEN.—It was so. But, oh! how glad was Cywir to see any of those Christians of Caerludd, of whom he had heard so much. He embraced them, and with a countenance that discovered greater love, pleasure, and delight than could be put into words, with tears of joy encouraged them in the Lord. And unspeakably glad were they to see another of the preaching servants of the Lord; and the more, because they thought by his name that he was the person who encouraged and helped Ffyddlon so, at his first conversion. They asked Ffyddlon if it was not the same man? He answered, Yes; and, said he, we contracted such a friendship then, we were resolved to strengthen the hands of each other, in Christ and His work, till death.

In the forenoon, Cywir preached from Psalm lxxii. 16,—“There shall be an handful of corn in the earth, upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon, and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.” The great design of his discourse was to show the wonders of Divine grace and power, in planting and strengthening the kingdom of the Redeemer, in the country, and in the great city. He insisted much upon the promises of mighty increase from small beginnings; and in hearing, Dewi and his brethren were filled with joy. And so they were in the afternoon, when Ffyddlon preached from Eph. v. 1,—“Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.” In the evening there was a meeting for prayer, and when one brother or two had prayed, Dewi was desired to give some

account of the then present state of Christ's cause in Caerludd, which he did, and began from that very spot where God began with Yefan and himself; but it would affect a person so much as to think how the assembly heard him. What tears of joy! Even children present were amazed, and many of them converted, and many years after, to their children and their children's children, could relate the story of it.

CHRISTOPH.—Oh! what precious days can our Lord cause His children to see! My soul longs for such warming seasons! Well, the residue of the Spirit is with Him; He can make our cup to run over. Excuse me.

EPEN.—There they stayed all that week, entertained with some work that concerned the kingdom of Christ and His worship. Cywir was with them most part of the time, and a meeting being that week at the village where he lived, they went thither also. The following Lord's day, the teacher preached; and the pastor, in the afternoon, administered the Lord's Supper. Dewi and his two friends were invited to partake with them, and the love of the Lamb of God in the midst of the throne was unto them exceeding precious. They were greatly edified and strengthened; and in the evening of that day, the godly, with many prayers and tears, committed Dewi and his companions to the grace of God; and also their own messengers, who were now to accompany them to the city, for the fixed days were at hand.

NEOPH.—Now, dear Epenetus, I long to have a particular account of the ordination, and how it was managed.

EPEN.—You may depend upon it, Neophytus, that in primitive ordinations there was nothing pompous or frivolous; everything then answered the simplicity and power of the Gospel. They set out for Caerludd together, and comfortable was their journey; some encouraging occurrences by the way I omit; at Caerludd they arrived, no sooner than exceeding welcome. The Christians flocked about them, and they worshipped God together. Cywir that very evening preached from Acts xviii. 10,—“I have much people in this city.” The 72nd Psalm was sung, and the people dismissed; their hearts were all filled with joy; God made them glad through His work. Yefan rejoiced greatly, and his poor

wife was helped in a good measure to shake off her heavy fetters, and her steps were enlarged. Cywir lodged at their house, and Ffyddlon at Dewi's; the other messengers in different families. They would not suffer them to be two in a house; they wished there had been more of them, that they might have one a-piece; they all coveted them,^a and prevailed upon them sometimes to change lodgings; love was great, and an eager desire to profit was urgent and sometimes prevalent.

THEOPH.—You said the time fixed for ordination was at hand; pray, how did they employ themselves in the meanwhile?

EPEN.—Why, really, they had but one day, and that was taken up in prayer and advice; things preparatory were fixed, that they might proceed in plain and good order the following day.

The church met betimes, and after several brethren had prayed that their ascended Redeemer would guide them in their great work, and fill the day with His presence, and make it a blessing to late posterity, they chose a godly brother of good understanding, one Diffuant, to speak for them. The messengers from Hyfrydle had a seat by themselves; and Ffyddlon stands up and says, Dear brethren, upon your request, we are messengers^b from the church of Christ at Hyfrydle, whose dear love and tender affection we were desired to deliver to you, together with this letter, which we desire your delegate, Diffuant, to read. He took it and read as follows:—

“The Church of Christ sojourning at Hyfrydle, to the Church of Christ sojourning at Caerludd, wishing all grace and peace.

“DEAR AND BELOVED BRETHREN,

“It is impossible to express with what joy your letter was read and heard amongst us; for you we have blessed our God

^a Can we say that modern Christians are thus “given to hospitality?” If they are found so anywhere, certainly it is amongst the descendants of the early inhabitants of Caerludd.—N.

^b The author probably founds this his opinion as to the intercourse of churches by means of “messengers,” more on the authority of Clement of Rome than of that of the apostles.—See Epist. ad Corinth. Compare, however, 2 Cor. viii. 23, Phil. ii. 25.—N.

and Father; for you we continually seek His face, that He would fix amongst you elders of eminent abilities and service, that you may daily have, clearly know, and greatly triumph in the joyful sound; that your faith in Christ—the faith that worketh by love—may eminently flourish; that your love may be fervent and constant to each other; that when you have officers you may in the Lord obey them; that your children may all speedily appear to be the Lord's; that your increase may be great; and that many evangelical churches may spring forth from you; and then many others from them. 'Let the people praise thee, O Lord! let all the people praise thee!'

"According to your request, we have sent our messengers, our much honoured and beloved bishops, Ffyddlon and Cywir, and our dear brethren, Buddiol and Tosturiol. Receive them in the Lord. All grace and peace be with you.

Ordered at our church meeting, &c."

Diffuant.—Fathers and brethren, I do, in the name of this church of Christ, thankfully acknowledge the tender love and regard of the church at Hyfrydle, and in the most sincere affection and joy receive you as messengers from thence; and hope we shall always look upon "the messengers of the churches as the glory of Christ."

CHRISTOPH.—Really, this entrance seems beautiful, and upon it there appears greater solemnity than upon all the pomp and grandeur man's fruitful wit can invent.

EPEN.—Then Diffuant, with an audible voice, distinctly read their confession of faith, the church standing all the while; and then their covenant; at the conclusion of which they lift up their right hands to heaven—their zeal, without being asked, putting them thereupon—and so sat down. Then their delegated brother spoke to them as follows:—

Diffuant.—Brethren, we are, through amazing grace, a church of Christ, though we so lately wandered in the darkness of heathenism, with our minds filled with enmity against God. It is the Lord's work that we are here a worshipping church, and it is marvellous in our eyes. The ascended Saviour, the great Shepherd, hath us under His care as His flock; He feeds us, and gathers our lambs in His arms. Gifts unto our first fruits He has been pleased

to give, the great usefulness whereof we have plentifully experienced, and know they are designed for the perfecting of the saints. He empowers us to choose in His name, from among ourselves, those who, upon seeking His face, we judge fitted by Himself to feed His sheep, and to feed His lambs. We have, as a church, in the presence of the great Bishop of our souls, nominated and called our beloved brethren, Dewi and Yefan, to become our overseers in the Lord. And now, brethren, if you do, as a church of Christ, renew your call to our dear and much honoured brother Dewi to be your pastor, to perform all the duties and labour of such an office, as held forth in the laws of our Lord; and if, upon his willingness to comply with your call, you promise all Christian love, respect, and obedience to him in the Lord, signify it by lifting up your hands; which they unanimously did.

Then, turning to Dewi, he said:—Our beloved brother, you see that, with submission to our Redeemer, the eyes of the church are upon you, and they do unanimously call you to take the pastoral care of them, and upon your compliance with their call, think to proceed immediately to your ordination. Dear Sir, we only wait for your answer.

Dewi.—I am the Lord's; I am yours; and whatever gifts I have they are yours. I am ready and willing to employ them in your service till death. I know I am insufficient; but, through grace, I have some knowledge of the great Pastor, in whom all fulness dwells. Casting myself at His feet who has said, "My grace is sufficient for thee, my strength is made perfect in weakness," I accept of your call, and shall in the strength of the Lord apply myself to my work, upon your setting me apart thereunto; but earnestly beg your constant and fervent petitions to God for me.

Whereupon the whole church bowed their heads with tears of joy; and Diffuant said, Brethren, if you do, as a church of Christ, and in the name of Christ, now solemnly and actually set apart and ordain our beloved brother Dewi to the work and office of a pastor, signify it by lifting up your hands; which they unanimously did. Upon this, Dewi said, "Send now prosperity, O Lord!"

Then said Diffuant to the church:—Brethren, our Lord Jesus is our great Pastor and Teacher. None teacheth like

Him; He has declared His Father's name unto us, and will declare it, that the love wherewith He was loved may be in us, and He in us. Great are the mysteries of love and grace! Some part we have seen, and great things, we trust, are still to be revealed to us. The labours of our dear brother Yefan upon the great doctrines of God's everlasting love, the person of Christ, the covenant of grace, justification through Christ, and in Him, sanctification, perseverance, and glory, have been precious to us. We have esteemed him a sincere, affectionate, and tender teacher of babes. Wherefore, brethren, if you do now renew your call to our beloved brother Yefan statedly to explain the great doctrines of the Gospel to you, in the office of a teaching elder,^c and if, upon his compliance with your call, and actual separation to his office and work, you promise all Christian regard to him, and submission in the Lord,—then signify it by lifting up your hands; which they unanimously did.

Then turning to Yefan, he said, Our beloved brother, you see how, with submission to their great Prophet, the church unanimously call you to be their teacher, to explain the Scriptures to them, and with their newly chosen pastor take the oversight of them in the Lord. Dear Sir, in order to ordination, your answer is desired.

Yefan.—I stand in need of instruction, but whatever understanding is given, or may be given to me, I am willing to make use thereof amongst you to the honour of Christ, and our mutual advantage; and upon your setting me apart thereunto, shall look thereupon as my special office and work. Pray also for me.

Whereupon the whole church bowed their heads as before; and Diffuant said, Brethren, if you do as a church of Christ, and in the name of Christ, now solemnly set apart and ordain our beloved brother Yefan to the office and work of a teaching elder, promising, in the strength of Christ, all tender regard and due submission to him in the Lord,

^c How clear is it, from Diffuant's own description of the work belonging to the "pastor" and to the "teaching elder," that the offices are one and the same; for how can the "sheep" and the "lambs" be fed, and the saints perfected—the work assigned to the former, except as "the great doctrines of the Gospel" are explained—the work to be done by the latter?—N.

signify it by lifting up your hands, which they unanimously did.

Upon this, Yefan said, "Uphold me with thy free Spirit; then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted to thee."

Then Diffuant read the 23rd Psalm, and the whole congregation sang it with a loud voice on high, for God had made them very glad. Then Diffuant prayed, and with many thanksgivings offered up requests to God with great affection, suitable unto the occasion, and then spoke unto the church with a cheerful countenance :—Brethren, God has graciously given us a pastor after His own heart, and our eyes see our teacher. The eternal God, in His three glorious persons, be with them and with us together.

Then stands up Cwyir, one of the messengers, and says, Brethren, your faith we own to be the faith of Christ, and your order the order of the Gospel. We shall, if the Lord will, carry the account of both to the church we belong to. And now, as their messengers, and in their name, we wish you abundant success in the work and worship of Christ, and give you the right hand of fellowship. The newly-ordained pastor and teacher^d being in the next seat to them, received that plain Christian token of communion in the most loving manner.

Efyddlon immediately prayed, and then preached from Acts xx. 28, "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood." After him Cywir prayed, and then preached from 1 Thess. v. 12, 13, "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake; and be at peace among yourselves." Then was sung the 87th Psalm, and Dewi concluded that day's public work and worship in prayer.

^d "Ordination," then, according to the author's views, is effected simply by the act of the church calling approved brethren into office, and by their act in accepting of the call. Thus the "pastor and teacher" are already "ordained." The subsequent solemnities are appropriate, but enter not into the essence of "ordination."—N.

THEOPH.—Our beloved Epenetus, we thank you for this brief account of a beautiful work. Unto us all, I believe, it is refreshing and instructing. May we see this glory upon all the churches!

NEOPH.—But, pray, was not imposition of hands wanting here? Paul and Barnabas, when they were separated for some special service, had hands laid on them.

THEOPH.—Right. Extraordinary officers sent upon an extraordinary errand, and to receive renewed extraordinary gifts and abilities for it.

NEOPH.—But Timothy had the hands of a presbytery laid on him.

THEOPH.—True; an extraordinary presbytery, for Paul was one of them. And Timothy had extraordinary gifts becoming an evangelist communicated to him thereby.

NEOPH.—But Paul says to Timothy, “Lay hands suddenly on no man.”

THEOPH.—And the meaning is this:—At first, the saints enjoyed frequently the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands; but, by that time, there were many thousands of Christians for whom such blessings were not designed. Some of the servants of God had too suddenly laid on hands, and the expected extraordinary gifts, it is very probable, did not follow. Therefore the apostle advises Timothy that he be not too sudden and rash. A fuller text against the ordinary imposition of hands cannot be found in the Bible.

NEOPH.—But the first deacons had hands laid on them.

THEOPH.—The hands of extraordinary officers, and for extraordinary ends, as quickly appeared in Stephen and Philip.

NEOPH.—But, pray, with submission, what is meant by the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands?

THEOPH.—The Gospel; held forth in the divers baptisms, washings, or sprinklings under the Old Testament, and in the laying on of hands on the head of the sacrifice.

NEOPH.—Pray, how did they ordain ordinary officers in the first churches to preach and rule?

THEOPH.—Only by lifting up of hands were ordinary elders ordained in every church.—Acts xiv. 23.^e

^e The word used is *χειροτονήσαντες*, holding up, or stretching out the hand, as in voting, i.e., constituting or ordaining by vote. So Suidas.

NEOPH.—Then I wish they were only ordained so still. Excuse me, dear Epenetus, and proceed to the next day's work.

EPEH.—The next day the church met betimes, blessed God for what they had seen, and begged His presence that day in the great work yet before them; and after several had prayed, Dewi, the pastor, speaks to the church, for now there was no need of a delegated brother to speak:—Brethren, the whole work of watching over the flock is very great, as you heard very particularly yesterday. We know we are insufficient for such a work, nor can we think ourselves equal to any part of it. Brother Yefan and myself are bound to give ourselves to the word and prayer, and labour therein, giving ourselves wholly thereunto, not excluding what we may possibly perform in the ruling and governing part. But we have to be very thankful that our Lord and King has appointed in His churches servants of His, whose proper business is to rule, to rule well, to rule with diligence; for such governments, as the Holy Ghost calls them, all pastors and teachers have great reason to be thankful, for so we can give ourselves with greater alacrity and cheerfulness to our more special and constant labour in the word. We have already, as a church, fixed upon brother Didwyll and brother Diwyd, as proper persons to take the office of ruling elders. We gave them a solemn call. Their answer was such as we desired. And now, brethren, if you do, as a church, renew your call to brother Didwyll and brother Diwyd to take the care of you, and watch over you in the Lord, each in the office and work of ruling elder, and if, upon their compliance with your call, and upon their being ordained by you to the mentioned office and work, you promise all Christian regard and submission to them in the Lord, signify it by lifting up your hands,—which they unanimously did.

Then said Dewi to Didwyll and Diwyd, Brethren, you see the church are willing to be ruled and governed accord-

Doddridge, in his paraphrase, uses "constituted," and says in his note (in loc.), "It seemed to me that the word *constitute* would properly express the apostles' presiding in that previous choice, which probably the people signified by χειροτονια, the "stretching out their hands." See the whole note, which is very valuable.—N.

ing to the laws of Christ. His yoke they have taken upon them, and they earnestly desire you to become their ruling elders. Your answer is desired. They both stood up, and answered, That they were willing, according to the best of their capacity, to serve Christ and His interest in that church; and though they apprehended the work of ruling elders to be great and weighty, yet, in submission to Christ, and the call of the church, they would not refuse whenever set apart thereto.

Dewi.—Brethren, if you do as a church of Christ, and in the name of Christ, now solemnly set apart brother Didwyll and brother Diwyd to the office and work of ruling elders amongst you, and promise all Christian respect and submission in the Lord, signify it by lifting up your hands,—which they unanimously did.

Then said Didwyll, Brethren, pray for us. The government is upon the shoulders of our Redeemer, and of the increase of His peace, and of His government, there shall be no end. Therefore, in His strength, we willingly undertake the work. And Dewi, with great affection, said, My heart is towards the governors of Israel, that offered themselves willingly among the people. Bless ye the Lord.

Then Yefan stood up and spoke to the church:—Brethren, the compassions of our Redeemer are very great; we have found them so. He did always arise for the poor and the needy. He has established an office in the church on purpose for them, and He raises up persons of bowels and pity to execute such an office. In the law of the Lord we read, that the poor should never cease out of the land; “Therefore I command thee, saying, thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy.” The poor are evangelized, and the church is in a special manner bound to regard and assist them. The deacons are the officers in the church whose proper business it is to promote their relief. You have, as a church of Christ, solemnly called brother Dyfal, Llawen, Tirion, and Haelionus to be your deacons; and if you do now, as a church of Christ, renew that call, signify it by lifting up your hands,—which they unanimously did. Then he desired the several brethren to give in their answer, that they might proceed to

ordination. They each one said they were willing to serve Christ, to serve the church, to serve the poor in the office of deacons, if the church thought fit to set them apart thereunto.

Yefan.—Brethren, if ye do as a church of Christ, and in the name of Christ, now solemnly and actually set apart and ordain the brethren Dyfal, Llawen, Tirion, and Haelionus,^f each to the office of deacon, and promise due respect and Christian regard unto them, signify it by lifting up your hands—which they unanimously did; and the deacons earnestly desired prayers that they might discharge their trust with the greatest faithfulness and compassion. Then the 146th Psalm was sung, and Yefan, with great tenderness, judgment, and affection, prayed; and Cywir preached from 1 Tim. v. 17, “The elders that rule well count worthy of double honour.” Then Ffyddlon prayed, and preached from Rom. xii. 7, 8. The 26th Psalm was sung, and Yefan concluded the public worship of that day in prayer. Great was the joy of the church, and great grace was upon them all.

CHRISTOPH.—Thus we see the first Christian church in Caerludd was organized, and great was their beauty. Now, dear Epenetus, let us hear how they went on, what success and comforts they had, how churches sprang from them, and how the keys of the kingdom of heaven were used.

EPEN.—Surely Christophilus forgets himself. Is it not too late? It is true, great comforts and success did attend them, and with trials also were they exercised. But, at present, our respective families want us, the worship of God there calls; and may His precious fellowship be with us.

NEOPH.—I take the freedom, for the whole company and myself, to return many thanks to our dear Epenetus; and for myself in particular I would say, thanks to our ascended Prince, and thanks to you all.

^f Suitable names for the diaconate! See glossary at the end.—N.

DIALOGUE IV.

THE CHURCH GROWING—MEMBERS ADMITTED—THE SCHOOL—
NEW CHURCH FORMED.

THEOPHILUS.—Dear Christophilus, how many teachers and instructors continually attend us! It may be well said, indeed, that our God hath not left Himself without a witness. "The heavens declare His glory, the firmament shows forth His handywork; day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge." The sun rejoiceth as a strong man to run his race, and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. The moon and the stars which our Lord has ordained, Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, proclaim His greatness; for the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that Indians and Pagans are left without excuse.

CHRISTOPH.—Not only do the heavens declare His wonders, but our teachers come to our very doors. Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee, and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee; or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee; and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. The stone out of the wall speaks, and the beam out of the timber answers it; not a flower in garden or field but preaches Divine power and wisdom, and every spire of grass stands up for its Maker, as well as the lofty cedars in Lebanon. There is not a dust, there is not an atom, but powerfully pleads for God.

THEOPH.—If we attend unto instruction, our grove and spreading oak will furnish us with humbling thoughts. Do not we hear the singing of birds and the voice of the turtle? Is not their portion very small; yet do not they,

in their way, praise Him that formed and fed them? But here is our dear Epenetus and Neophytus, and I hope the pleasing story will cause our hearts yet to burn.

NEOPH.—So, worthy friends and neighbours, your eagerness to hear the story brought you hither soon; nor do I doubt but you have been already preparing our way into some orderly entrance thereupon.

THEOPH.—We were only taking notice of the bounty of our heavenly Father, in providing for us so many means and methods of instruction, and how our little teachers that sing among the branches chide our backwardness to praise our Redeemer.

NEOPH.—And, if a young man may speak, not an unsuitable introduction; for I do expect that we are now entering upon a soul-comforting account of the singing of birds, even the birds of Paradise. Our last conference concluded with the ordination of the officers.

EPEN.—The very next day after the ordination of elders and deacons was the Christian Sabbath, or the Lord's day; and because Ffyddlon and Cywir had preached two days successively already, Yefan and Dewi undertook the principal work of this. Yefan preached in the forenoon, from Eph. iii. 8,—“Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.” Dewi preached in the afternoon, from 2 Cor. iv. 5,—“For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.” God was greatly with them both, and with the whole church, and by His Spirit made their cup to run over. Ffyddlon, who was most acquainted with them, and therefore was very free, told them it was upon his heart to preach that evening. They were glad to hear it, for the Gospel was more precious to them than their necessary food. Accordingly they met, and he preached unto them from Acts viii. 8,—“And there was great joy in that city.”

NEOPH.—I thought we should hear of the singing of birds. The inhabitants of the rock should sing; God hath done great things for them, whereof they were glad;—but I have hindered you.

EPEN.—The following Lord's day was to be the day for

the church to partake of the Lord's Supper; and they had fixed upon the fifth day of the week they were now entered upon as a solemn day of prayer before God, that He would graciously prepare and dispose their hearts to an evangelical attendance upon Him in that precious ordinance; some also, who had been propounded for some time, were then to give in the account of their faith and experiences; and some stood ready for baptism.

THEOPH.—Then to propound in order to fellowship is an ancient custom?

EPEN.—Yes, to be sure, and great was the care of the primitive churches this way; they used great caution, and often persons stood a long time in the state of *catechumens*, in order to an entrance into the church. And now this young church began to consider it as very expedient they should act with deliberation, with the person who offered himself to fellowship; that whenever he was received, he might have an abundant entrance into Christ's kingdom, the church being satisfied that his faith was unfeigned. Though it was a sore trial to them to see that landlord turn his back upon them and the truth, yet it proved of great use to them afterwards.

CHRISTOPH.—And, pray, what were those cautious steps they took in order to preserve themselves pure?

EPEN.—In general, it was thus:—The person who offered himself was examined by the elders; and, if they saw encouragement, they informed the church that such a person desired communion with them in the Lord's institutions and ordinances as a church member. The church then deputed two or three persons in their name to visit him, discourse closely with him, upon what he knew, what he believed, and what he experienced; pray with him, instruct and encourage him, as they thought fit and needful; make all the inquiry they could about his conversation and behaviour, and make report of all to the church.

THEOPH.—I should be glad if you please to favour us with an instance, that we may familiarly understand after what manner they received members.

NEOPH.—I hope, if I appear rude, my dear Theophilus and all my kind neighbours will excuse me. Epenetus having told us of some that were ready for baptism, I

humbly desire we may be first favoured with an example or two in what concerns that ordinance.

EPEN.—It has been, I think, more than once already observed, that though baptism is an ordinance that pertains to Christianity, yet it is no church ordinance, and therefore the persons principally concerned in that work are the teachers, who are to administer it,—“Go, teach all nations, baptizing them,” &c.—and provided the subjects were proper, they were under no restriction as to time or place; in the church assemblies or out of them, in open fields or in private houses, they baptized. And I must observe, that the very next day after Yefan and Dewi preached, there came a person to Yefan’s house, whose name was Credadyn, and humbly asked for Yefan, and, with tears, spoke to him as follows:—Being accidentally to hear you yesterday, what you said entered my heart; and though I did not come to receive anything but to satisfy a vain, curious mind, the great God, as I verily believe, opened my heart, and made me willing to receive. While you were speaking of the unsearchable riches of grace to the chief of sinners, I hope I saw my wound and my relief. Destroyed I am, but in Christ is my help.

Yefan.—It is not very long since I met with the same mercy, and glad I am to see the same grace touch and reach the souls of others; and I am humbly thankful that the God of all grace has been pleased to own my poor ministry, and that He does already lead you to hope.

Credadyn.—I am very sensible that I was without hope. My danger was exceeding great, and my concern should have been in proportion; but, I am ashamed and confounded to think on it, I neither knew nor desired a deliverer.

Yefan.—Do you think you know and desire Him now?

Credadyn.—I hope I do; no relation nor friend can save me, nor can the whole world relieve me; but there is One greater, who, as you said, came from above, and is above all; He can save to the uttermost, and at His feet I cast myself for salvation. I do believe that there is salvation in none but in Jesus Christ.

Yefan.—And what makes you believe it is in Him?

Credadyn.—The Divine almighty power makes me believe it; and that power does so in opening my understanding to

see that Christ, in person and office, is a fit Saviour for such as I am. He persuades me, I think, by His Spirit to do it, and I hope I am persuaded.

Yefan.—But what would you have me do for you?

Credadyn.—I renounce heathenism, and profess myself a Christian, and desire to be baptized. I believe in Jesus Christ.

Upon this Yefan ordered water, prayed with great affection, and then observed to what company were present, the wonders of grace in visiting the poor Gentiles; and also observed, that this was the gracious performance of faithful promises, and particularly that in Isaiah lii. 15,—“So shall he sprinkle many nations,” which, he said, our Lord directly referred to in Matt. xxviii. 19,—“Go teach all nations, baptizing them,” &c.; and then took water and sprinkled or poured it on his face, saying, “Credadyn, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit;” and concluded in prayer, that the blessing of Heaven might attend the ordinance they had been concerned in, and, particularly, that the newly baptized person might be enabled all his days to walk worthy of the profession he now made, and of that blessed name in which he was now baptized. Then he encouraged and directed him to follow the Lord fully.

NEOPH.—Were none baptized but those who desired it?

EPEN.—Only such, and their children. The infants of the godly were then baptized; and the same day will furnish us with an instance of that kind. One Graslawn, baptized by Ffyddlon, when he was there before, being a married man, by this time had a child. He comes to Dewi, now his pastor, and desires him to come to his house to baptize his child. Dewi immediately went, and some friends went with him. Dewi ordered some water to be ready, and then went to prayer, desiring the blessing of Heaven upon them, ascribing praise to God for His unalterable promises to the godly and their seed. Then he gave his small auditory a short, yet sweet discourse, from Jer. xxx. 20,—“Their children also shall be as aforetime.” And when he had done, he turned to the father of the child, and said,

Brother, all our duty, we hope, is precious to us, and

the more so because we lay hold of it in faith. Pray, what is that in God's revealed will your faith fixes upon with regard to your child?

Graslawn.—Sir, the covenant of God with Abraham (Gen. xvii. 7), where God promises, in an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto him, and to his seed after him, which promises were renewed unto, and pleaded by many of the godly after then.

Dewi.—But do you think, that though there is a change of the dispensation, these promises remain established and confirmed?

Graslawn.—Yes, I do; for the text you read does most plainly assert it; and I read in Romans xv., that Christ himself confirmed the promises made to the fathers, which must be the promises that related to their children.

Dewi.—But you know we are Gentiles, and not the natural seed of Abraham.

Graslawn.—Sir, I do know that, and know also, through grace, that even among the Gentiles, as many as are Christ's by faith are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Dewi.—But can you find that this promise entitles you and yours to baptism?

Graslawn.—Yes; Acts ii. 38, 39,—“Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the promise is unto you and to your children.” I think it is very plain from this, that interest in the promise gives a right to baptism; and that all the called and their children have an interest in the promise; and, by the grace of God, I put in my claim for myself and my child.

Dewi.—Then I hope you will bring up your child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; give him the best instruction and example, plead with God for him in constant and fervent prayer, and, in due time, plead with him for God.

Graslawn.—In the strength of Christ I promise this.

Dewi.—What is your child's name?

Graslawn.—His name is Nathanael.

Dewi.—This child, named Nathanael, I baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And while he spoke the words, he poured the water on the child's face, then gave the child unto the father, and prayed

that the glorious Prince, that stands up for the children of His people, would graciously bless the child, and that he might, even in his childhood, appear to be the gift of God indeed; that the parents and the church of God might have very early comfort in him; blessed God for His covenant, which He had commanded to a thousand generations; and then expressed thankfulness for tender mercies to both the parents respectively, and earnestly desired that the God of the families of Israel would make His constant abode with them.

NEOPH.—Unto me there appears a great deal of glory upon this. God's covenant established, His people comforted in an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure, containing all their salvation and all their desire, and their children not rejected. The ancient olive tree stands, and though some of the Jewish branches are broken off, yet we poor Gentiles are grafted in amongst the branches, and it is the same olive tree still.—Rom. xi. 17. And the same rule eternally stands; if the root be holy, so are the branches. Oh! it grieves me that any of the churches of Christ should lose any part of this glory.

THEOPH.—But I hope that none of the inhabitants of Potheina shall be left, or suffered to straiten the covenant of grace. I hope the very God of peace and truth will make His abode with us; and I earnestly desire He will show us His covenant still in greater glory. And now, my Neophytus, shall we be favoured with an account how they received church members?

EPEN.—I told you before, that they had appointed the fifth day of the week for a solemn day of prayer before God, to seek His face, hear His word, and attend to the work of His kingdom.

The church met betimes that day, and several brethren prayed with great affection, humility, and thankfulness, before the Lord; then Cywir was desired to preach, which he did, taking for his text, Psalm xlv. 4, "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God; the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High;" and while he preached, the whole church experimentally understood the truth of the text; they were made glad indeed. After sermon they sang the 46th Psalm, and then called those

who stood propounded to give an account severally of their faith and experience.^a The first they called was one Uniawn, and he was directed to a place where he might conveniently be heard of all ; and unto him Dewi spoke as follows :—

Dewi.—You are called now unto the greatest honour next unto martyrdom ; to confess Christ with your mouth in the midst of a church of His. This honour all the saints of God may lay claim to. Our city is strong, salvation is its walls, and the gates are open for all who keep the truth. We are encouraged to hope that you know the grace of God in truth ; an account of the work of God upon you is what we now, as a church, desire.

Uniawn.—I am, indeed, of the mind that to confess Christ is really a greater honour than any earthly dignity. Whosoever confesseth Christ before men, shall be confessed by Him before His Father ; and I would in all humility confess Him here, in the assembly of His saints, where He is greatly to be feared. I hope I am brought to adore and fear Him, and I am to tell you how that work was begun upon me, and how hitherto carried on. The very time that your honoured teacher, Yefan, declared what God had done for his soul, my brother Cyfiawn was present, and reached by grace at that time ; and entered into church-fellowship with

^a As to any specific rule or precedent in this matter of publicly relating one's faith and experience, Scripture is entirely silent. And it is evident that no rigid uniform rule ought to be adopted, if it were only for the reason that no such rule is capable of universal application. What would suit persons of age and maturity of self-knowledge, would not suit the young. Many persons can relate experience with facility by rote, while others with finer moral sensibilities can scarcely utter a word in circumstances so novel and solemn. The wisdom of the pastor and the church can generally be trusted in determining what particular method to adopt in particular cases.

In apostolic times the qualification for baptism and church membership was a simple declaration of faith in Jesus Christ. Early in the post-apostolic age all candidates were subjected to a long course of preparatory instruction, and were compelled to make a public declaration of their faith at baptism, solemnly renouncing sin and the world ; and this, as some think, was looked upon as the oath of the *miles Christi*, the soldier of Christ, in imitation of the military oath (*συμβολον*). This was the custom in the second century, in Africa especially. Tertullian says that this declaration was made twice—before, and at, the time of baptism. De Cor. Milit. cap. 3.—N.

you. It was not long before I heard of his conversion to Christianity, and I immediately entered into the strictest observation upon his walk and conduct; and there I found nothing but what I admired. So much meekness, tenderness, and love; so much hatred to what he apprehended sinful, and so much zeal for what he owned as his duty! I began to think there must be something real in what he knew and professed. One evening I resolved to stay at his house till he had performed family prayer, if he would give me leave, which he cheerfully did. The 16th chapter of John was read, and in it, it is said of the Holy Spirit that He should reprove the world of sin, because they believed not in Christ. It struck me to the very soul; and I could hardly hear any thing afterwards that was read; my brother prayed, confessed, and mourned much before the Lord. I thought he had no more reason to mourn than I had: yea, my heart smote me, and told me I had much more reason to mourn than he; so I burst out into some tears, and my dear brother, thinking I was under some concern, with an enlarged heart, sent up strong cries to heaven on my behalf. When he had done he took me by the hand; but neither of us could speak a word. I took my leave; and next morning I came again, and told him I had a mind to go to the Christian assembly along with him. He said, he was glad of it; and in family prayer that morning mentioned me very particularly, that the God of all grace would that day visit me. My concern was great, and when I came to the assembly, and the assembly engaged in worship, I began to think what it might be to be *visited* by the God of all grace, and for some time I was in expectation of it. But somehow my expectation dropped; and while I was in that indolent way, he who is now your honoured pastor said, with a loud voice, "Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness; I bring near my righteousness, it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry." The words entered my soul; I owned I was far from righteousness, and yet so foolish as to be stout-hearted. I was made to loath myself in my own sight; but when he came to speak of the Lord's bringing His righteousness near, even to them that were too stout to go to it, and that God's salvation should not tarry, I was led to have hope that the

Messiah would be even my Saviour. I went home with my brother, and told him how it had been with me; and asked him, was that what he meant by God's *visiting* me? He said, Yes. Then said I, Brother, God has answered your prayer; and has *visited* me with His salvation. In the afternoon I heard your honoured teacher; and in his discourse he mentioned the tenderness of Christ, as a Shepherd, towards the feeblest in the flock; and said, that where He had but begun the good work He would certainly finish it; it greatly encouraged me. I went home, shut myself up in a room, and tried to pour out my soul before God, and with great brokenness I did it; but a word that I heard, "He despiseth not the prayer of the poor," was very encouraging to me. Ever since, I have endeavoured to follow the Lord, and I am thoroughly persuaded that church-fellowship is of Divine appointment, and desire to follow Him in that so long as I live in this world.

Dewi.—You said that you were led to hope the Messiah would be your Saviour; who is that Messiah?

Uniawn.—Jesus, the Son of God, and the Son of the Virgin; God-man in two distinct natures, but only one person: ordained to save sinners.

Dewi.—And what do you think He saves you from?

Uniawn.—From my sins, the curse of the law, and wrath to come.

Dewi.—Have you no sin, now that He is your Saviour?

Uniawn.—Yes, I have innumerable evils, and under a sense of them I daily mourn before the Lord; yet they are not imputed to me.

Dewi.—What, then, becomes of them?

Uniawn.—They were all imputed to Christ; He bore them in His own body on the tree. He who knew no sin, was made sin for me, that I might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

Dewi.—Who imputed your sins to Christ?

Uniawn.—The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Dewi.—How could this be a deliverance to you?

Uniawn.—Because it was so settled in covenant, that Christ being God-man, Mediator, should by His mediation save to the uttermost. He represented His people; their sins being imputed to Him, He by sufferings satisfied the

justice of God ; and His obedience being imputed to us, we become righteous before God ; and in His righteousness I desire to be found.

Dewi.—But does not God require you to live righteously ?

Uniawn.—Yes ; and I find an earnest desire to be found in all my duty towards God and man ; but no part of this is my justifying righteousness before God.

Dewi.—What is the rule of your duty ?

Uniawn.—The eternal law of God, which faith establishes.

Dewi.—What thoughts have you of the Son, as the Son of God ?

Uniawn.—He is every way above my thoughts ; I submit to what is revealed concerning Him ; that He is the infinite and eternal God, the same in essence and nature with the Father and Holy Spirit. God is one, can be but one ; but in the eternal Godhead three persons subsist, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one.

Dewi.—How did he, the eternal Son of God, become man ?

Uniawn.—By assuming, not a human person, but a human nature into personal union with Himself.

Dewi.—But, in confessing this glorious Messiah, you must expect tribulation ; and how do you expect to go through ?

Uniawn.—Only in the strength of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, the spirit of faith, of love, and a sound mind.

Dewi.—Brethren, if you have any thing else to ask our friend, I beg you would use freedom.—But nothing being asked, he was desired to withdraw. Whereupon Dewi desired the brethren, that had been deputed to acquaint themselves with his faith and experience, to give a brief account of what they knew. They answered, that all the things he mentioned in the church, he had more than once declared to them, and other things of weight : that they had prayed with him ; and had prevailed upon him to pray with them, they thought in a humble, judicious manner. Whereupon Dewi said to the church :—Brethren, if upon what you have heard of Uniawn's faith and experience, you judge

him a converted person, a believer in Christ, signify it by lifting up your hands:—which they unanimously did. Then said Dewi to the deputed persons: Pray, brethren, what account can you give the church of his walk and conversation?—They answered, that they had made diligent inquiry, and could find nothing but what was agreeable to the profession he made; but, said they, his own brother Cyfiawn is present, if you please to ask him. Then said Dewi,—Brother Cyfiawn, you are desired to give the church your thoughts upon his conversation. Cyfiawn answered, that he knew nothing since God began to work upon him, but what was agreeable to that work.

Upon this, Dewi said to the church, Brethren, if upon what you have heard of Uniawn's faith, experience, and conversation, you do, as a church of Christ, judge it your present duty to receive him into fellowship, signify it by lifting up your hands:—which they did.

He was called in, and Dewi said,—This church of Christ have considered the account you gave of God's work upon your soul, and the account given of your conversation, and have judged it our duty to testify our love to you in the Lord, and receive you into fellowship with us. Wherefore, if you solemnly give yourself to God in Christ as your God, receive Christ as your Priest, Prophet and King, and give yourself to us as a church, promising in the strength of the Lord to walk with us, in the performance of all duties incumbent on a church member, signify it by lifting up your right hand:—which he did. Then, said Dewi, We also as a church of Christ (the church standing while he spoke) promise in the same strength of our Lord to perform all duties towards you as a member; and so in the name of this church of Christ I do receive you, and give you the right hand of fellowship: and may this entrance of yours into the visible kingdom be attended with a mighty blessing. Amen.

PHILAL.—His experience was of the right kind; but what precious things did the questions draw out of him!

CHRISTOPH.—Aye, precious indeed! But did he speak his experience, or did he read it?

EPEN.—There was no reading of experiences in those days; though I look upon reading lawful, and in some

cases very expedient: but plain questions upon faith and experience are very necessary.

PHILO.—In the primitive times, those who offered themselves to church-fellowship, and were waiting to be received, were called *catechumens*, from their being examined and instructed in such a familiar manner.

THEOPH.—And I know the country where those who wait for entrance into Congregational churches are always, till they are received, said to be under examination.^b But pray, Epenetus, proceed to the rest.

EPEN.—The next that was called was one Jonathan Ben-Israel, by birth a Jew. He was desired to stand as the former had done, and give an account of the work of God upon his soul. He spoke as follows:—

I was born at Bethany, within two miles of Jerusalem. Oh, that I could say, the Jerusalem that now is! My father, Israel Ben-Joseph, was at Jerusalem when Jesus was crucified; and, for aught I know, was one of those who consented to His death. When a boy, I often heard him speak of Him with scorn and derision, saying he had seen that Messiah hang upon the tree. I was brought up in great prejudice against Jesus of Nazareth; and I thought it was impossible He should be the Messiah, and particularly because, as I was often told, he was a mean man, despised and rejected of men, utterly unable to deliver our nation from Roman servitude, much more unable to make Jerusalem the praise of the whole earth. And this prejudice was greatly strengthened in me, for, first, we knew from whence Jesus came; and then, I was taught to believe that whenever the Messiah came, He should abide for ever. So I must now to my very great shame own, that I was an *obstinate Jew*. But the miseries foretold by the blessed Jesus growing heavy upon the nation, and not knowing how soon the city of Jerusalem would fall, and thinking that though the great Titus was kind, his armies might prove very cruel; and having an inclination to see some other part of the world, I travelled through the lesser Asia into Europe; and having heard the fame of Britain, my curiosity led me to visit Caerludd, the chief city thereof, where I have now for more than three years resided. With that humility of

^b The allusion is to a custom prevalent in Wales.—N.

mind which becomes a saved sinner, I profess myself to be a Christian. About two months ago, passing near this place, I saw several people enter, and thoughtlessly enough I entered along with them. In a little time I understood what the assembly was engaged in, and I was resolved to see it out. Yefan, your present honoured teacher, took for his text, Luke xxiv. 25, 26,—“O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?” The text seemed to pierce me in the heart; and I quickly found that the very reasons why I rejected Jesus were, indeed, strong reasons why I should receive Him. I saw that the true Messiah must be such an one as Jesus was; that He must be despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; that He was to be numbered amongst the transgressors; and that His hands and feet must be pierced, and that on His vesture they should cast lots. Nothing like this did I ever feel. It was power that evidenced itself to be of God. I quickly returned to my lodgings, retired to my chamber, and desired the God of truth now to guide me, and left my heart with Him. I took the law and the prophets, which I had by me, and read and considered. I found the sceptre had departed from Judah, and the lawgiver from between his feet, and therefore that Shiloh the Messiah was certainly come. I found that Messiah, the Desire of all nations, should come into the second temple, which is now destroyed by the Romans; therefore the Messiah is come, or, into that temple He can never enter. And what put the matter out of all doubt, I found in Daniel that, after threescore and two weeks, the Messiah should be cut off, but not for Himself; and the manner and reason of His being cut off I found more at large, in Psalm xxii. and Isaiah liii. Then was I made to look unto Him whom I had pierced, and I mourned, and was in bitterness. But in a little time I saw that thus my salvation was wrought, and thus the salvation of Israel was effectually provided for. And since God has enabled me to receive His Son, Jesus my Saviour, I have been greatly refreshed in your assemblies. Oh, it pleases me, my brethren—give me leave to call you so—it pleases me to see Abraham’s everlasting covenant unaltered. I am a Jew still, and yet a Christian,

and in Abraham's covenant for myself and mine as much as any of the godly ever were; and now I see that those who are not Christians in truth, are not Jews indeed. I lay hold on Abraham's covenant now by faith, and profess myself, through grace, a believer in Jesus of Nazareth as the very Messiah of God; and I hope I am helped to admire the wisdom of grace and providence in bringing me to Britain; and here with you I desire to serve the Lord Jesus Christ in all His evangelical appointments.

Yefan.—Were you ever in a Christian assembly before the time you mentioned?

J. B. Israel.—No, and had I known that to have been one, it is like enough I had not gone in; for I always thought they worshipped one who was not the eternal God, and rejected Abraham's covenant, which I knew was never to be broken.

Yefan.—Then you thought the Messiah must be God?

J. B. Israel.—Yes, yes! “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.” The Prince of Peace must be the mighty God—Emmanuel, God with us—and Jehovah our righteousness, in whose days Judah shall be saved, and Israel should dwell safely; and because we thought this was not fulfilled in the days of Jesus, we thought we had reason sufficient to reject Him.

Yefan.—And how do you find this difficulty removed?

J. B. Israel.—His people are really saved by Him now, and they always dwell safely, under the care of their great God and Saviour. And as He was to suffer, and then enter into His glory, He is gone to receive unto Himself a kingdom, and to return; for “the Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool.”

Yefan.—Then you are satisfied now, that all Divine worship is due to Jesus, though His appearance was once so mean?

J. B. Israel.—I am; and I hope I can say to Him, as the once unbelieving disciple did, “My Lord and my God.”

Yefan.—Then the mean condition He appeared in once, is no stumbling-block to you now?

J. B. Israel.—No; I see there was a necessity for that

humiliation, even unto death ; for, if it had not been so, He could not have been the Messiah of God.

Yefan.—What thoughts have you now of the law of Moses ?

J. B. Israel.—Honourable thoughts ; I delight therein after the inner man. The moral law is my perpetual rule ; and the law of ceremonies was the shadow of good things to come, and of the whole Jesus is the sum.

Yefan.—What think you of your natural state ?

J. B. Israel.—A state of sin and wrath. I was shapen in iniquity ; I have lived in sin, especially in unbelief.

Yefan.—The ancient Jews had their atonements for sin ; what course do you take ?

J. B. Israel.—Only by faith ; flee to Him who finished transgression and made an end of sacrifice, and by once offering up Himself has for ever perfected them that are sanctified.

Yefan.—How were you satisfied upon the other difficulty as to Abraham's covenant ?

J. B. Israel.—You said the covenant was now extended to the Gentiles, and proved it from Isaiah xlii.,—"I will give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light to the Gentiles ;" and you made it plain that God never disannulled that covenant—that the law, that was 430 years after it, disannulled it not—that everlasting covenant of God, to be a God to His people and to their seed, which promise Jesus confirmed ; and the believing Gentiles are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to that promise.

Yefan.—Then you look upon yourself to be in the same covenant still with the ancient Jews ?

J. B. Israel.—I do, through grace ; God never was the God of any but in that covenant. He is my God in that covenant, and in the faith thereof I here solemnly give up myself and mine to Him for ever.

Some more questions were asked, and the same method used with that I mentioned before, and he was received into fellowship. Three more spoke at the same time ; one of them was received, and the other two encouraged and continued as *catechumens*, for farther satisfaction ; and Yefan concluded the day in prayer.

THEOPH.—And a good day too ! May the eternal God do such great things for all the churches, and make them

glad! Now, my dear Neophytus, propose what you please.

NEOPH.—Gently again, O Theophilus; though I have been instructed and refreshed, I have not yet so far recovered myself.

SYLLOG.—Then I humbly think that all order calls upon our dear Epenetus to give us some account of their breaking-bread day, which, I understand, was just at hand.

EPEN.—Only I must first observe, that what was done this day was entered in a book, called “A book of remembrance, written before the Lord, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name.”

CHRISTOPH.—Well, what might be in Paul’s parchments, whether epistles, paraphrases, translations, short sentences taken out of heathen authors, his authentic and original right to the Roman freedom, or some short account of the state of the churches, especially so far as he was more immediately concerned, or either of these, or neither of these, I believe, does not much concern us to know; but I am amazed to see such a clear account of a church-book out of Scripture!

SYLLOG.—If there was nothing of it in Scripture, the very reason of the thing requires it; and all Congregational churches abundantly experience the usefulness of it; especially where all things of moment, and only things of moment, are wisely and orderly entered. But, dear Epenetus, proceed.

EPEN.—On Lord’s day, in the forenoon, Yefan preached from John i. 29—“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” And in the afternoon, Dewi, who had seen the order of the church of Christ at Hyfrydle, after desiring the messengers to take their seats and partake with the church, sent up petitions to the God of all grace that He would graciously fill their souls with faith and love, and make Himself known to them in this their breaking of bread, that they might receive from the Lord spiritual strength thereby. Then took that text, Rev. v. 6,—“And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood the Lamb, as it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth.” With great affection he read the words, and

observed, the pleasant surprise the poor children of God often meet with. Persons who have entertained heart-terrifying apprehensions of Christ, whenever they see Him indeed, see a Lamb, meek and lowly. Then he observed, the dignity of a Congregational church of Christ; a *throne*, living things, and elders. Next, what made them indeed glorious, the Lamb in the *midst* of them; and then he desired them to observe His posture, *standing* ready to receive them, to defend them, and to be seen and observed by them; and then he prayed them to take a melting, humbling view of Him, a Lamb as it had been *slain*. On this he insisted much, the causes and consequences of His death, and why there must be in the midst of the church a constant remembrance thereof; and, lastly, for their great encouragement, he observed to the church, that the Lamb was omnipotent, He had seven horns; that He was omniscient, He had seven eyes; and that He was omnipresent, having the seven Spirits of God present in all the earth. The church, with tender affections, heard all that he said, and found themselves in the kingdom of heaven.

NEOPH.—But, may I speak? Was all this essential to the ordinance of the Lord's Supper; or was it only what the ministers chose, as decent and expedient?

EPEN.—The latter, to be sure; Yefan thought, seeing they had time, he would not make indecent haste, but fill it up with becoming solemnity.

CHRISTOPH.—Truly I am of that mind, that churches should not make this blessed work a hurry; and therefore better omit the sermon than come with a tired nature to so solemn a feast.

EPEN.—After Dewi had finished his discourse, he takes the bread prepared upon the table and reads, 1 Cor. xi. 23, "For I received of the Lord that which also I have delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread." He explained the words unto them briefly, with some proper instructions how in their meditations to make present improvement of them; and then said, In the name of the Lord Jesus, and according to His example, I take this bread, and in His name, and according to His blessed example, shall give thanks.

Whereupon he prayed that God would greatly bless the bread for the designed use, and that the dear church of God might be enabled to discern the Lord's body, and by faith feeding upon the Bread of life, might together partake of this feast to their growth in grace; returned thanks for the wonderful provision made in Christ for them; blessed God for this institution and appointment, and desired they might be helped in faithfulness, holiness, and cheerfulness, to attend upon their dear Lord therein till He comes the second time.

Then Dewi read the next verse: "And when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of me." He explained the words, assisted their meditations in remarks pertinent to the present purpose: then said, In the name, and according to the example of our dear Lord, I break this bread; in remembrance of His spotless and sinless body, that was bruised for our iniquities. And he said, Take, eat: this is the Lord's body, which is broken for you.

Dewi read on,—“After the same manner also he took the cup,” and (a cup of wine being before him) said, In the name, and according to the example of Jesus, our Redeemer, I take this cup, and after the same manner return thanks. This he did; adoring the wonders of Divine grace, justice, and wisdom, as seen in the blood of the everlasting covenant, the blood that cleanseth from all sin; desired God to bless that cup, and make it a cup of blessing indeed, the communion of the blood of Christ, that they might be helped by faith to drink of the wine of the kingdom; and that in the strength thereof they might greatly rejoice in their Lord, as those whose cup runneth over.

Then he said, “This cup is the New Testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me;” and delivered it to the next brother, having himself drank thereof, and so through the church it went, who, as the pardoned ones of God, thankfully received it.

Then he prayed at large, for the blessing of heaven on what they had been concerned in; and the church made from seat to seat a collection for the poor; then they sang a part of the 22nd Psalm, and concluded.

NEOPH.—But, dear Epenetus, and you, my kind friends, bear with me still:—I shall not trouble you about the transubstantiation and consubstantiation, that bid defiance to all principles of revelation, reason, and sense; but I wish I could thoroughly understand the verses that follow: “Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup; for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.” I need not tell you how terrible those words to the minds of some.

EPEEN.—I grant it, dear Neophytus, and I desire my friends here present would endeavour your satisfaction.

PHILAL.—A great deal of this terror arises from the inaptitude of one language to express the true meaning of another. “Damnation,” by reason of use with us, seems to intend nothing but eternal destruction. But the word so rendered, frequently signified no more than damage or disadvantage. So it is said of widows, who did not abide in a capacity of discharging the trust some churches might have reposed in them, that they procured unto themselves “damnation,” forsaking their first faith. That is, they procured to themselves the disesteem of the churches, and were losers thereby. So we read of persons who scruple the eating of some particular food, that if they eat they are “damned;” that is, they lose their peace of conscience in doing so: and I am, for my part, fully persuaded that no other damnation than present loss and disadvantage is meant by the word in the texts you mentioned.

SYLLOG.—Most certainly; for the apostle speaks to them who were sanctified in Christ Jesus, and called to be saints. It was a damnation that might attend them, who were beloved of God, and should be eternally saved. It was a damnation that self-examination was to prevent. Coming in a rash, thoughtless, unbecoming spirit to the Lord’s table, as unto common food, not discerning the body of the Lord as sacramentally signified by the bread, procured it; and when they were judged or chastened by the Lord, the very thing intended by “damnation,” it was that they might not be condemned with the world.

PHILAL.—Thus it stands : whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, only as common bread and wine, is guilty of an abuse of the sacrament of our Lord's body and blood. Therefore let a person examine himself, and consider the design of the institution, that the whole is a sacred commemoration of the love and sufferings of the Son of God ; for he that eateth and drinketh of the same as common bread and wine, not discerning the Lord's body, signified thereby, eateth and drinketh to his loss and disadvantage ; and is in the way to procure chastisements from the Lord. For this cause some were sick and weak among them.

NEOPH.—My dear friends, I thank you, I am abundantly satisfied. That word I often think of, “Then opened He their understandings.”

EPEN.—I was going to tell you that there was a meeting that Lord's-day evening, when Ffyddlon, greatly affected by the conversion of the Jew, preached from Rom. xi. 26, 27, “And so all Israel shall be saved ; as it is written, there shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob ; for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.” The third day of that week the church met ; Ffyddlon and Cywir both prayed with them and for them, and each in a short but sweet discourse took their leave of them, in the most tender love and affection, commending them to God and the word of his grace. Dewi and Yefan also both prayed for the beloved messengers, the church of Christ where they were planted, and the whole interest of the dear Redeemer. And early the next morning the messengers departed, carrying with them, among other tokens of love and gratitude, a letter to the church at Hyfrydle, which when they came home in a full meeting was read, and the church rejoiced, sang the praises of God, and gave Him glory.

CHRISTOPH.—The faith, the love, the zeal, and simplicity of those primitive Christians ! Well, whatever they had, they received, nor did they deserve any part of it ; the grace of Christ is still the same, nor is His Spirit straitened.

THEOPH.—Now, dear Epenetus, what steps did they further take at Caerludd to build themselves up in their most holy faith ?

EPEN.—Why, all the ordinary means of praying, preaching, and other duties revelation and reason required of them. But in order to strengthen the hands of their pastor and teacher, and to encourage them in the Lord's work, they met, without their minister's knowledge, and after one brother had prayed, Haelionus, one of the deacons, spoke as follows:—

Brethren,—It is by the amazing grace of God we are what we are. Not long since in heathenism, and now a church of Christ! It has pleased our exalted Prince and Saviour, the great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, to raise up, from amongst ourselves, persons eminently blessed with abilities for service in the work of the ministry; they were made use of for the conversion of most of us, and for the edification of us all. God has inclined their hearts, and made them willing to take the oversight of us, and our ordained bishops now they are. The love of Christ appears to be the spring of what they have done. The proof of them we know. They give themselves to the word and prayer, they serve the Lord, they serve us. But though they never undertook this service amongst us from worldly views, we shall be the most ungrateful people if we consider them not. Entangle themselves with the affairs of this life they must not; they have undertaken to give themselves wholly up to our service in the Lord. They are persons capable of hard study and great improvement—let us not discourage them; let us not hinder ourselves. They sow unto us spiritual things; they should reap of our temporal things. The ox that treads out the corn must not be muzzled; and though Providence has entitled them and theirs to a considerable measure of worldly substance, they for our sakes put themselves out of the way of improving it; and our Lord Jesus, the great lawgiver of the church, says, that they who preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel; wherefore, brethren, I humbly move for a present token of our duty to them, and subscriptions for the time to come.

Diwyd, one of the ruling elders, said, What our brother has moved for, appears a duty in the strongest light—well established upon revelation and reason; nor shall I add anything to what he has said, only this, that as pretty

many of us are persons blessed with a considerable substance, so I hope by a cheerful contribution we shall make it appear that our substance is a blessing to us. And for my part, I offer this—and shall subscribe more; and do now in the name of Christ, whom I also, though unworthy in office, amongst you serve, call you every one, as God has prospered you, to this duty.

Whereupon a large collection was made; and immediately a very encouraging subscription. What they collected was divided, and by the deacons unto the pastor, and teacher, their several parts were delivered; who owned the love of the church, and the love of others not yet members, in what was done, and were glad that their love to Christ, to His Gospel, and to them as servants of Christ in the work of His kingdom, did, in so many instances, discover itself.

THEOPH.—Beautiful, altogether! Their ministers bargained not with them: love to Christ, and to the work of His kingdom, put them upon their duty, and the same love put the people upon theirs; and it was an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable and well pleasing to God, Phil. iv. 17, 18. Even so hath the Lord ordained, 1 Cor. ix. 14. Now, dear Epenetus, let us hear what steps they further took to strengthen and enlarge the interest of their Redeemer.

EPEN.—I shall not detain you with an account of their close and strict attendance upon work and worship on the Lord's days, and on their monthly church-meeting days, fixed the fifth day of the week before the Lord's Supper day, nor with an account of the many occasional opportunities of preaching, their ministers with great zeal, fervour of spirit, and success made use of; but I must observe, that their love to, and care for the children of the church was very great. The parents, indeed, knew they were to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; the precepts of Christ obliged them to this; and the everlasting covenant of Abraham, confirmed by Christ, greatly encouraged them thereunto. But the church, as a church, looked upon them as standing in a special relation to them; and therefore looked upon themselves under a special obligation to take care of their education. And therefore, after solemn seeking of God, they resolved upon a *Christian school*.

CHRISTOPH.—Bravely done ! but could they find masters ?

EPEN.—God is never at a loss how to prosper the good purposes He puts into the hearts of His people. You remember I told you of one Edgar, converted by grace at an inn, when Dewi and Yefan were returning from Hyfrydle. This young man, as you were then informed, understood the Roman tongue well, and was a considerable proficient in the Greek language. While he was in the Roman army, God was preparing him for usefulness in a Christian church. As soon as he had settled at Caerludd, next unto religion, books and learning seemed to be the business of his life. This young man, being eminently religious, and a very improving scholar, they fixed upon as a master ; his brother Cradog, and Alfred, who had wonderfully improved in writing, and in several parts of the mathematics, they fixed upon as proper assistants, being also very godly.

CHRISTOPH.—The wonders of Providence are such, that a believing adoration is always our duty. But how did they proceed ?

EPEN.—They appointed a day of fasting, they met betimes, and prayed. Their children were dear to them ; they pleaded before the Lord, and committed their dear children to Him, who was not ashamed to be called their God, begging their seed might serve the Lord, and be accounted to Him for a generation. When prayer was over, Yefan spoke to the church, as follows :—

Yefan.—Brethren,—It is the will of our heavenly Father, that we should use all the means He puts into our power, to bring up our children in the knowledge and the fear of the Lord. We know that by nature they are children of wrath ; but we know who hath said, “ I will save thy children.” All His promises encourage our duty, and in His name and strength we enter upon the use of all means that tend to their instruction and conversion. Our ascended Redeemer, who giveth gifts unto men, has been pleased to qualify some amongst us to be teachers of babes. Of brother Edgar’s capacity to catechise the young, and to explain the great doctrines of the Gospel, you have had some knowledge. We have some reason to think that the apostle, by a catechist or a teacher, in Gal. vi. 6, means a person whose only business was to catechise and teach. We have reason

to believe, upon proof and experience, that our brother Edgar is qualified for such a service, besides his capacity of teaching the languages; wherefore, if you do, as a church of Christ, call our brother Edgar to the office of a catechist occasionally in the church, and more statedly in the school, signify it by lifting up your hands:—which they unanimously did.

Yefan.—You see, brother Edgar, the place God has given you in the esteem and affections of the church. We are for committing to your care, under God, the dearest and most valuable treasure we have upon earth, our dear children, to be catechised and taught in the solid and substantial principles of our most holy faith; and as you see occasion, and as opportunity serves, to inform the church of your success or discouragement therein. Are you willing to undertake this work, as a teacher in our Israel? Your answer is desired.

Edgar.—I am very weak; but I am willing, according to the utmost of my capacity, to serve the church and the children thereof, if set apart thereunto. But prayers I beg:—I am a child, I cannot speak.

Yefan.—Brethren, if you do, as a church of Christ, ordain and set apart our beloved Edgar to the office and work of a teacher and catechist, promising all due encouragement and regard unto him in the Lord, signify it by lifting up your hands:—which they did, as before.

Then Dewi prayed that God, the God of all grace, would smile upon this design and greatly bless it; that God would greatly strengthen His servant, and others who were designed for his assistance, though not called into office; and that God would make that Christian school^c a

^c Here, in addition to the literary element, all the ends of the modern Sunday school are clearly proposed. But after this was written more than fifty years had to elapse before Robert Raikes inaugurated that great institution at Gloucester (1782). Hitherto, a too ceremonial view of Sunday had proved a barrier to the converting of its hours to purposes of education. The word “school” had a secular sound, and therefore, as a matter of course, it was excluded from the Sunday programme. The Sunday school was at last achieved by the happy conception, that no time is more suitable for *religious* instruction than the time divinely appointed thereto; and that the Sunday is appointed thereto, whether the instruction be imparted to a class in a school, or to a congregation in a church.

It is worthy of note, that a time of true religious vitality is always a

séminary of learning and eminent piety. Then was sung the 127th Psalm, and the day concluded in a large subscription towards the support of the design, in which subscription Dewi and Yefan gave a generous example. And thankful they were that God had found out a way for their little ones.

THEOPH.—For Christian schools of learning, I would always have a becoming value and esteem. The Jewish church had its schools of learning, out of which, generally, the Lord called forth His prophets, and the Holy Spirit mentions the learning of Moses as a desirable accomplishment; without it, the Scriptures could not have been translated, nor can a great part thereof without it be explained. Many are the words, phrases, and expressions, in the original languages of Scripture, vastly comprehensive and emphatical, which, without learning, can never be discovered, nor made use of for designed edification; and unto the defence and confirmation of the Gospel, all that know anything must know that learning is absolutely necessary; and the more of it the better. Persons who despise it, know not what they do.

CHRISTOPH.—We have great reason to be thankful to the Father of lights, from whom comes every good and perfect gift, for putting it into the hearts of so many of the godly in and about the capital city of Britain, even now in our days, to form themselves into a Society for the advancement of learning in the churches. I hope it will prove an eminent blessing unto the churches of Christ, and their contributions will be a fruit that will turn to their account, in this world and in that to come. They desire to see the churches filled with godly and learned ministers, and I hope that desire of the righteous shall be granted. May all encouragement

time for the promotion of the education of the young. The age of the Reformation set on foot a great school movement. The Puritanic period in England is similarly distinguished. The Pilgrim Fathers no sooner settled on the New England shores than they opened a school—a true “Christian school.” In Wales, the dawn of the great Second Reformation—that of Methodism, and the revival of the great Nonconforming sects, was marked by the same feature; witness the schools of Mr. Jones, Llanddowror. The *church* must necessarily have its auxiliary in the *school*.

Of course, from our author's idea of an *ordained* school-teacher most people will dissent.—N.

attend them!^d But how did they go on at Caerludd; and how did Edgar enter upon his work?

EPEN.—Why, truly, under much fear and sense of weakness. He desired the elders of the church to come and open the school in prayer, that there might be a sanctified entrance upon the great design. When they had done, they said unto him, “Go in the strength of the Lord God, and make mention of His righteousness, even of His only.” This encouraged him; but the presence of the Lord upon his soul, and eminent success in his work, quickly encouraged him more; for in a little time learning did so flourish, and early piety did so shine in the school, that the church thought it their duty to set apart a day of thanksgiving to God on that account.

^d This is, perhaps, in reference to the formation of a Society of London gentlemen, under the name of the “King’s Head Society,” for the promotion of ministerial education, A. D. 1730. This was merged in Homerton College, which of late again, along with Coward and Highbury, has been merged in New College, London. It was during Mr. Maurice’s residence at Rothwell, moreover, that Dr. Doddridge’s academy at Northampton obtained prominence, enjoying the patronage of Dr. Watts, Mr. Nath. Neal, and other London gentlemen.

To show that the Independents about this time were not indifferent to the education of their ministers, we may mention other seminaries set on foot about the same period; such as that at Clerkenwell, 1731, taught by Samuel Parsons and Dr. Walker; at Deptford, 1736, taught by Dr. Taylor; at Bridgnorth, 1726, Richard Fleming; at Haverfordwest, 1741, Peregrine Phillips; at Hinckley, 1722, John Jennings; at Kendal, 1730, Dr. Rotherham; at Mile-end, 1754, Dr. Walker, Dr. Conder, &c.; at Moorfields, 1708, Dr. Chauncey, Dr. Ridgley, &c.; at Marlborough and at Painswick, 1783–1789, Cornelius Winter; at Stratford-on-Avon, 1730, John Alexander; at Stepney, 1740, J. Hubbard; Wellclose-square, 1744, Dr. Jennings. As well as those of earlier date, at Bedworth, 1680; Bridgewater, 1680; Tewkesbury, 1680 (afterwards incorporated with Carmarthen); Taunton, 1665; Stourbridge, 1665; Nottingham, 1680; Newington Green, 1665; Manchester, 1672; Islington, 1672; Highgate, 1680; Hoxton-square, 1691; Gloucester, 1696; Coventry, 1663; Attercliffe, 1698; Brynllwarch, in Wales, 1668; and Carmarthen, about 1690, or probably earlier. It is worthy of remark, that of these academies, each of which was mainly conducted by one minister, and under his own roof, seven were established in the year 1680, and not less than sixteen between the years 1663–1672. That at Brynllwarch, conducted by the Rev. Samuel Jones, M.A., one of the ejected of 1662, was the first in Wales for ministerial education among Nonconformists.—N.

NEOPH.—If I mistake not, Edgar bore a double capacity or character, which was that of a schoolmaster and that of a catechist, a teacher of the principles of divinity. Did his ordination comprehend both these characters, or only the latter?

PHILAL.—Only the latter, to be sure; religion was the foundation of the design, and a religious education and instruction was what they had principally in view; and whatever acquaintance with languages he could offer, it was all in subordination to Christianity, as you might have observed in the account given us.

NEOPH.—But I find he could not carry them any farther than the Greek language, so he could instruct them only in that of the New Testament.

EPEN.—But this defect was quickly made up. I told you of the conversion of Jonathan Ben-Israel, the Jew. He had two or three Bibles by him, and understood the Hebrew tongue well, and the Chaldee also, especially so far as it is made use of in the Old Testament. Dewi and Yefan could not rest but they must learn, and to their houses they took him, each every other week, and learn they did. And do you think that Edgar also, having such an opportunity, would not improve it? He did, and to a brave purpose; and as many appeared desirous to have good acquaintance with Hebrew, Jonathan Ben-Israel was preferred, if you please to take it in that term, to a Hebrew professorship in that first and famous Christian school in Caerludd.

NEOPH.—I wish I could be favoured with some account of the rules of that school and the methods of education.

EPEN.—The methods of education are, since then, much improved. All that I think consistent with the design of my story is to observe, that religion was the chief design of the school. They diligently attended to the methods they thought best; but twice a day they never missed of proper attempts upon religious improvement. The hours they strictly kept, and solemn prayer to God always begun and concluded the day.

THEOPH.—May all Christian schools begin and conclude in the same way! But, pray, what other methods did the church take to establish and enlarge itself?

EPEN.—Most of the church were persons who lived by industry; but yet many were persons of leisure, and they met together to consult how to improve their time most to the honour of their Saviour. They sought the face of the Most High, in whose hands their times were. To spend their spare time in taverns they knew could be attended with nothing but bad consequences for time and eternity; they therefore desired God to direct them how to redeem their time. After consultation, they disposed of the church, as it then dispersedly stood, into several divisions; and they judged it expedient that every division should have a private meeting, three evenings in a week; and it was agreed that the first should be upon the meaning of some portion of Scripture, the second upon some head of divinity, and the third upon the experience of what their souls had lately felt or found. In those meetings one person chosen monthly was to preside, and the most suitable person was to be the scribe. The minutes of those meetings were to be brought to a general monthly meeting, where sometimes the pastor, and sometimes the teacher, was to preside; and whatever was thought very pertinent and useful was then entered, laid up, and kept; what seemed empty and frivolous, laid aside; and whatever seemed unsound, marked, reproved, and opposed.

NEOPH.—But our meetings here at Potheina are not ordered thus: pray, what rule had they for what they did?

EPEN.—The same with us; the general rule, to do all to edification; to exhort one another daily, to speak often one to another, and to see that the word of Christ dwelt in them richly in all wisdom.

NEOPH.—Now you are speaking of the use they were to make of Christ's word: How did they do for Bibles?

EPEN.—Why, truly, that was a great difficulty; but their diligence will sorely condemn the indolence and sloth of this generation, who trifle away their time in a land of Bibles.^e I told you of Cradog and Alfred, the under-masters in the school; and I told you that they had wonderfully improved in writing, and quickly taught and im-

^e Surely, England could, at that time, only in a very qualified sense be termed the "land of Bibles." This was nearly a century before the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society (1804).—N.

proved others. Besides, many that were added to the church could write well before they were converted, and now here was business for them all. Some transcribing one part of the Bible, and some another; and many a poor heart thought himself happy if he could borrow one of the Gospels, or one of Paul's Epistles, to transcribe the same for his use; and work at it night and day, for another wanted it. Some scores were employed, and after some years' close and diligent attendance to this work, they were pretty well stored. The young Christians, who improved well under Edgar, in the languages, spent a considerable part of their time in transcribing Greek Testaments, and some would venture upon the Septuagint. As for Jonathan Ben-Israel, much of his time was taken up in transcribing the law and the prophets; and Dewi and Yefan, having attained great acquaintance with the Hebrew, strictly examined and compared every paragraph, sentence, word, letter, and point.

THEOPH.—I think those meetings of conference were of great use.

EPEN.—Of very great use indeed. They were themselves religiously employed. Besides, it was of vast advantage unto their bishops, who, as I said before, monthly received and considered the minutes of those private meetings. They from thence could judge the state of the flock, how they improved in knowledge and faith; and oftentimes were they even taught and refreshed themselves in looking over the tender dealings of God with the church.

NEOPH.—How glad should I be to see some of the minutes of those meetings, the method they used in explaining portions of Scripture, or treating a head of divinity, or in declaring their experiences; but perhaps you can give us some particular account of each?

EPEN.—I do not see that the design of my story will carry me into that; but this in general I must observe, that in the first they carefully considered the scope and design of the context, the phrases and words of the portion to be explained, what light other Scripture might cast thereupon, and always inferred what tended to strengthen faith, and promote holiness; in the second, they always kept close to the analogy of faith; and in the third, to sincerity and truth.

CHRISTOPH.—Great was their glory, and my soul loves

to hear of them ; but, in the use of such means, they must in time grow very numerous. Pray, what methods did they take to maintain the beauty of order ?

EPEN.—The ruling elders desired there might be more chosen. Therefore there were two more, whose names were Gryffydd and Addfwyn, ordained in the same solemn manner as they were at the first ; only, no messengers were called from any other church.

NEOPH.—But then was not the ordination deficient ?

EPEN.—Not at all ; messengers from other churches are not necessary, though in many cases it is very expedient to call them ; their advice in some cases may be helpful, and their presence adds to the solemnity of the work, and testifies love and communion ; but the sole and whole power of ordination is in the church itself.

THEOPH.—But seeing their success and increase was great, they wanted, not only more elders, but more places of worship ; pray how did they do ?

EPEN.—The elders agreed to propose, in a full church meeting, what appeared to them most convenient for the glory of Christ, and the comfort of the people ; and the day being come, and many having prayed, Dewi the pastor spoke to the church as follows :—

Dewi.—Brethren,—In the regions of the shadow of death, light has sprung up, and we who were sometimes darkness, are now light in the Lord. Where it was said, “Ye are not my people,” it is now said, “Ye are the sons of the living God.” And this was yet a small thing in the sight of the Lord God ; He has multiplied us, and we are not few ; He has glorified us, and we are not small. God has been pleased not only to give us His word and ordinances, but has greatly blessed all for the enlargement of His kingdom ; and in our thronged assemblies they seem to say to us, Give place that we may dwell. We have thought that we should now divide ourselves into several distinct churches, yet abiding in fervent love and Christian communion ; and have thought this might greatly tend to the spreading and strengthening the interest of our dear Redeemer. Thus your elders, retaining the dearest affection to you all, have judged, and now before you, as a church of Christ, our thoughts are laid.

CHRISTOPH.—Poor hearts! how did they receive this?

EPEN.—Universal silence for some time filled the assembly; they all hung down the head and wept; and the elders themselves could not refrain. At last, one of the members, whose name was Serchol, stood up, and in a submissive manner said, Will our honoured elders give me leave to say a few words? Leave being granted, he spoke as follows:—

Serchol.—Our very dear and much honoured elders, perhaps it may appear disorderly in me, a private member, to speak without being called; but I humbly beg you to excuse me. If I can measure others by myself, we are all under a surprise. Under your ministry we were born, and now for a long time have been fed and cherished; with submission be it spoken, to us you owe love and care, and to you we owe love and duty. We have given up ourselves to God, and to each other, according to His will; and in the best and most sacred bonds are we related to each other. What you have proposed must *separate* us, at least many of us, from you, our overseers in the Lord, and must separate us one from another. Many of us with joy have passed through the frowns of parents, and brethren and sisters, for the sake of Christ. We were made willing to suffer the loss of all things for Christ; and, in communion with one another, we were resolved, and have engaged, to live and die: and must we now be separated? Must we now be separated from our spiritual fathers, who break the bread of life to us, and watch over us in the Lord? And with that he lifted up his voice and wept; and the whole church, without being asked, lifted up their hands, under many tears, to what he said.

CHRISTOPH.—How did the elders do to stand this?

EPEN.—Why, truly, stand it they could not; only with tears they testified their love to the whole church, and dismissed the assembly; but there was nothing but sobbing and tokens of grief upon them all.

THEOPH.—How many ways love has to discover itself!

EPEN.—Ways! it is impossible to relate all the turns and workings of affection seen that day. Some could not speak a word, but only give their elders such a look as signified a thousand things; some weeping and ready to fall at their

feet; others hastened home to pour out their souls before God; and even some went with the elders home, and there stood or sat as many hours as Job's friends did days.

NEOPH.—Sure the elders never moved it any more?

EPEN.—You shall hear. When the hurry of feeling was over, and things began to settle in their minds, they met again as elders, and then called the church to a solemn day of fasting and prayer before the Lord.

The day came, and solemnly it was kept. Yefan, the teacher, spoke as follows:—Dearly beloved Brethren,—Your love and our duty we value above life. We plainly see that you are taught of God to love one another, and we thankfully own that your love to us abounds; and we hope we shall be helped to make becoming returns of love, and serve you so long as we live. We have seen, through grace, the kingdom of Christ increase, and it is upon our hearts to see it increase more and more. In order to this, seeing our assemblies are large and numerous, we have thought it expedient that upon three Lord's days in a month we should set up *two* worshipping assemblies among our friends in some distant parts of the town. You see that God has blessed us with some able-gifted teaching brethren; in those assemblies they shall take their turns, and brother Dewi and myself will take our turns also. Every month shall be still our church meeting for worship and discipline, as usual, and the following Lord's day our breaking of bread, when there shall be no meeting in the forementioned places. This, we humbly think, continues us a church entirely one, and yet spreads the interest and gives a precious opportunity to our teaching brethren to work for the Lord and His people.—And then, observing a serenity and satisfaction in their countenances, he said, If you do, as a church of Christ, appoint this order, signify it by lifting up your hands:—which they unanimously did. Then they cheerfully sang the 87th Psalm, and concluded.

NEOPH.—Well, this was a blessed turn; but who were those teaching brethren, and how were they ordained?

EPEN.—Edgar was one of them. His brother Cradog

and Alfred, being very godly and gifted, and having attained good acquaintance with the languages, were called and ordained as he was ; and, moreover, by that time, some other godly young men were nursed up in the school to some degree of eminency, and appeared as trees of righteousness of the Lord's planting.

THEOPH.—If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God ; but how did things reach the desired end ?

EPEN.—They quickly prepared two large and convenient places of worship. The first was opened by Dewi, and the other by Yefan, and each had a very large audience, and was blessed with good success in the conversion of many heathen, whose curiosity led them to see and hear.

CHRISTOPH.—Though they went forth at first with weeping, yet they bore precious seed, and they quickly are made to rejoice, bringing their sheaves with them.

NEOPH.—Then, doubtless, the elders quickly moved again for them to become distinct churches.

EPEN.—They made no great haste for that ; they saw all things working that way, and they gladly let them take their course. The young preachers were received more and more into the affections and esteem of the godly ; their sermons were affectionate, their conversation spiritual, their prayers, where they visited, fervent and evangelical, and their whole conduct holy and blameless. Besides, God blessed their ministry for the conversion of many. After some time, therefore, in one of those new meetings, they had a consultation about becoming a separate church.

NEOPH.—Seeing they inclined it, the business did not require much consultation ?

EPEN.—You are mistaken ; they were afraid so much as to mention it, lest they should give occasion to the church and elders to question their love and duty ; but the elders, who partly knew their inclination, and approved of it, fixed upon a brother elder, and prayed him to put himself in such a way among them as was most likely to draw it out of them, which he did. When it was in some measure mentioned, they entreated it might not be looked upon as proceeding from the least want of affection and esteem for the church or elders, whom they loved as their life, but that it was upon their hearts to attempt the enlargement of the

kingdom of their Redeemer, and should act therein only according to the judgment and advice of the church and its elders. He advised them to signify their desire unto the church in a letter, which, if the elders approved, might be read in a church assembly. Accordingly, they wrote as follows :—

“To the beloved church of Christ, whereof we whose names are underwritten are members ; and to our much honoured elders, who have the care of us in the Lord.

“HONOURED AND BELOVED,

“We hope we shall always adore the God of all grace, who hath given unto us a name within His house. Of our love and tenderest regard, we hope we shall never give you occasion to doubt ; and of your fervent love to us we have always had the most convincing tokens. It is our desire to attempt the greatest service we can for our Redeemer. Our honoured elders, sometime past, moved that the church might put itself, for the enlargement of Christ’s kingdom, into several distinct churches. Having not duly weighed the wisdom and importance of that motion, we then opposed it ; but, we have seen great reason since then to judge that the design must be of God. We humbly think that it may be very consistent with our duty to God and man, that we whose names are underwritten should engage as a particular church to enlarge the interest of our Lord and Saviour ; and it is our earnest and humble desire, if you think fit, that you would dismiss us to, and assist us in, the work so much laid upon the hearts of

“Your very affectionate brethren, &c.”

The elders approved of this letter, and the very first opportunity, in a full church meeting, it was read ; and though they were affectionately desirous of each other’s communion, the church judged it expedient their desire should be complied with. Upon this, Yefan read a dismissal, as follows :—

“We, the church of Christ at Caerludd, having, under the precious smiles of Heaven, been blessed with success, that we must say the Lord hath made our cup to run over ; and

having received a request from our dear and beloved brethren and sisters (*naming them*), that we would dismiss them to, and assist them in, the work and service of our dear Redeemer, as a separate particular church; and having considered the reasonableness of such a religious request, do now, in thankfulness to our Lord, who has so increased us, and in love and affection to them, give them up unto the Lord as holy and beloved, and unto each other according to His will; hereby declaring that whenever they do, in the presence of Christ, solemnly covenant and agree to walk together as a church of Christ, in the faith and order of the Gospel, then their membership here ceases, and they are become our sister-church, in full and affectionate communion in the Lord; and to them we ever wish all peace and prosperity."

Yefan.—If you do as a church of Christ pass this as your act in our dear Lord's name, signify it by lifting up your hands:—which they unanimously did, though many with tears; and in the church it was signed by the elders, and many of the brethren.

THEOPH.—How singular for the ministers to move first in this.

EPEN.—True, but they did not seek their own, but that which was Jesus Christ's. Well, in a very little time, the other branch did follow their example, and were dismissed in a like manner, and formally entered into covenant as separate churches. But to make their solemnities yet more solemn, they sent for messengers from Hyfrydle, who rejoiced greatly to see the increase, and helped them much in the Lord. They quickly had also their pastors, teachers, ruling elders, and deacons, whose ordination was the same with that of those already mentioned.

CHRISTOPH.—It may be said of them, indeed, that God did comfort them, as one is comforted of his mother, and that He made them rejoice with a great joy. But, doubtless, seeing they had imperfections, and were as yet in the world, they had their trials and afflictions; and it may be of use to hear what some of their trials were, and how they were helped under them; but I suppose you will say again that our time fails us.

EPEN.—Indeed, it does so, else I could tell you that trials they had, and heavy ones too, and that they endeavoured to observe all the laws of their dearest Lord under them; and you know that in keeping His commands there is a great reward.

PHILAL.—So there is, dear Epenetus, and upon a church of Christ striving against sin there is a glory; and with the account of it I hope we shall be entertained next opportunity. May all the blessings of the new covenant attend you, attend yours, attend us and ours, and all the Israel of God.

DIALOGUE V.

PASTORAL VISITATION—INSTANCES OF HOW THE WORK WAS
DONE.

THEOPH.—What admirable beauty there is in variety! What variety in worlds above us! How are the heavens stretched forth, garnished with lights of different magnitude! How does our God make small drops of rain, and, at times, order us the great rain of His strength, when often, at the same time, the God of glory thundereth, and His voice upon many waters divideth the flames of fire!

CHRISTOPH.—And what variety in this world, wherein for our appointed time we dwell! The great globe, how wonderful! The great waters and dry land—the mountains and the plains in great variety, how entertaining! The monsters of the deep, with the creeping things innumerable, and all upon the face of the earth, from the mightiest animal unto the minutest insect, give pleasure to a contemplative mind; and, to say no more, Potheina's green, Potheina's groves, not to mention Potheina's gardens, will afford such variety and such beauty that, had we capacity, might be improved to perpetual profit and instruction.

PHILAL.—I will take leave to add that, in the dispensations of Providence, in the government of the world, the greatest variety may be seen, and yet the greatest beauty. If we view the several monarchies in Daniel, their rise and their ruin; if we consider the spring and downfall of inferior dominions; if we look upon the variety of revolutions, the many different circumstances of the children of men, from prince to beggar, from tender infancy, through health or sickness, strength or weakness, down to the years of trouble and sorrow, we shall be surrounded with amazing

wonders. And what must still make the whole thing more wonderful is this,—that it is a possible thing for persons under widely differing circumstances to be equally happy. Oh! how beautiful will Providence appear at last, when, for aught I know, we shall be enabled to take a view of the whole piece, filled with nothing but harmony and consent. Happy the person who, in his proper place, in prosperity or adversity, rests in possession of the chiefest good.

NEOPH.—You make me think of a poem upon Providence I have somewhere seen, the conclusion of which I will take the liberty to repeat:—

“ Cease, then, nor order imperfection name ;
 Our proper bliss depends on what we blame.
 Submit—in this or any other sphere,
 Secure to be as blest as thou canst bear.
 All nature is but art unknown to thee ;
 All chance, direction which thou canst not see ;
 All discord, harmony not understood ;
 All partial evil, universal good ;
 And, spite of pride, in erring reason’s spite,
 One truth is clear, whatever *is*, is *right*.^a

THEOPH.—Well sung, Neophytus ! I am glad to find your soul so well tuned ; but what is all this an introduction to ?

NEOPH.—To satisfy me, that though you are persons of years and understanding, and I a raw, troublesome, inquisitive youth, yet there is a beauty upon this diversity.

THEOPH.—No, my dear Neophytus, we had nothing of this in view. My attainments are but mean, and, without flattery, I must own that you are blessed with bright and useful gifts ; and may they be greatly improved to the comfort of Potheina. But you remember that, in the close of our last conference, we heard of comforts and trials which attended the church at Caerludd. And I would humbly desire our beloved Epenetus to give us some instances of the officers in the church discharging their duty in particular families, and towards particular persons, with the success that attended their service ; which, if I mistake not, will offer to our view much of the work, comforts, and trials .

^a Pope. The teaching of the “ Essay on Man,” however, is widely at variance, taken throughout, with the theology of Mr. Maurice, though here it seems to harmonise with his notions of predestination. The above words are the conclusion of the “ First Epistle.”—N.

which belong to *social religion*, in that variety wherein beauty shall appear and instruction follow.

EPEN.—If variety constitutes a beauty, I must own it may be seen upon a church of Christ in this world. Fathers, young men, and children; the feeble in the faith, and the strong; praises and prayers; work and worship; rejoicing and mourning; reproving, exhorting, and forbearing one another in love; diversities of gifts and differences of administrations; many members, one body, God having set the members every one of them in the body as it hath pleased Him;—all in subserviency to the glory of Christ and each other's happiness, in the greatest variety.

THEOPH.—I do not intend an account of their *public* worship, nor do I desire an instance upon every work or duty they might be called to in their more *private* service, for that would be impossible; but as the preaching elders had some time for Christian visits among the flock, and the ruling elders had more, I should be glad if you favour us with some instances of their service and work at such seasons.

EPEN.—I did design something of that, for I could not fairly come at what I meant by their trials without it. I would have you then observe, that one day in the week, which being fixed was very well known, the preaching elders always kept at home to receive the Christian visits of any church members who had a desire to speak with them; and one day in the week they spent in visiting the members where they thought most needful.

CHRISTOPH.—Pray, dear Epenetus, give some account of the former; why was it fixed, and how was it ordinarily spent?

EPEN.—It was fixed that any of the members might know when to have open access to either pastor or teacher. It was spent thus:—Family duties being over, at ten o'clock there was an open door for whatever person came under any concern of soul, solemn prayer was made to the Most High, that He would graciously bless the day, that special direction might be given and instruction sealed according to the respective wants of the poor children of God; then questions and cases were stated and considered, till nearly three o'clock in the afternoon, when the whole was concluded

with prayer. Particular cases were especially prayed over, and thanksgivings made to the great Shepherd of Israel; and then the poor who were present were always welcome to a plain refreshment, with their pastor or teacher, which the church considered and provided for, that their hospitality might in no sense be hurtful.

NEOPH.—Now I long to have one instance: I know, cases might be many and various; but pray, Epenetus, give us one.

EPEEN.—Observe, then, that one day, several having come to Dewi's house, and he having in a very affectionate manner committed them and himself to God in prayer, he spoke unto them as follows:—

Dewi.—My dear brethren and sisters in the Lord,—what a wonderful mercy it is, that we are way-faring men, seekers of another country, that is, an heavenly one! And though we have no continuing city here, yet God is not ashamed to be called our God, because He has prepared for us a city of habitations. He is the Builder and Maker. We are through grace upon the road towards the celestial city, and being strangers and sojourners, as all our fathers were, must expect by the way, darkness and rough places; but you know who has promised to make darkness light, and rough places plain. I desire now you would be free, and tell me how does the Eternal Spirit, our gracious Guide and Comforter, deal with your souls?

A brother, whose name was Crefyddol, said, My dear pastor, I have for some time been under discouragement of soul. It is said in the word, that "Those who are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in His courts." When I compare present times with those past, and present enjoyments with former ones, I cannot see that I grow at all. It is written, "They that dwell under His shadow shall return, they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine;" but I seem to make no progress in religion; and this consideration, night and day, draws a cloud over all my comforts.

Dewi.—My dear brother, to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ is what God has promised to all His people. You are called to live by faith upon His word, when thousands of discouragements from what you do feel,

or from what you do not feel, may fly in your face. David had fainted if he had not believed to see. True growth in grace can be found out only in the light of faith; and faith looks only to Christ. As often as I have consulted my frames for encouragement have I been confounded; and yet unto nothing am I more prone. But, dear brother, the Lord increase your faith!

Crefyddol.—Yes, dear Sir; but I see the increase of nothing.

Dewi.—But what if I tell you that your growth appears to others, though not to yourself? Another day will discover that mourning under a sense of backwardness is to go forward, and that bemoaning one's self for want of growth is growing in grace.

Crefyddol.—Perhaps I might think so of another: quick-sets grow; but I am like a dry stick set in the ground, that never can take root. But I cannot tell you my case, though I came with that design.

Dewi.—My dear brother, so far as I know any thing of the Christian religion, you are now under the kind influences of heaven, growing up into Christ. To grow in grace is to become a little child; and Christ told His dear disciples, that in order to be truly great they must become little children. To grow in grace, is to grow out of self into Christ; and so become strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Be not cast down; God has dealt bountifully with you. It is wonderful grace, that you and I are not left utterly unconcerned about godliness and growth, and all things pertaining thereto. Abound in prayer; abound in praises; abundant reason you have for both. The more thankful you are, the more reason still you'll find for thankfulness.

Crefyddol.—I return you thanks, I shall no longer hinder others, but humbly beg your prayers that the Lord would give me spiritual growth in Christ.

NEOPH.—Well, by what I see in this account, it is possible a person may grow in grace and not know it; grow in grace and decay in gifts; for it is growing little in one's own sight; so growing out of self into Christ.

CHRISTOPH.—That's right, my dear Neophytus, and it is a truth you may live to be very glad of. Memory will decay, invention will fail, capacity will grow weak, and

vigorous fancy feeble; all bodily organs, either with affliction or age, will grow more and more unfit for the service of the immortal part; but the believer, as a believer, shall grow, and in old age be flourishing: and the church of God has not been without many instances of believers who have lived to be mere children in everything but faith.

NEOPH.—May I receive and retain this for the time to come. But, dear Epenetus, will you favour us with another instance in the service of that day?

EPEN.—Yes; perhaps more than one for substance. While Dewi was reasoning with Crefyddol, a sister present, whose name was Tyner, seemed by her countenance and her tears to be under some more than common depression of spirit; wherefore Dewi said, Come, sister Tyner, how is it with you? “Woman, why weepest thou?”

Tyner.—Ah, my dear pastor, I could almost answer as she did, “They have taken away my Lord, and I don’t know where He is.” My sins have separated between Him and me. If there be such a thing as falling from grace, I am afraid that is my case. The brother that spoke, complained for want of growth; but I think I am dead. Heretofore I thought I had freedom before God in prayer; but now I am like a child, if I am a child, shut out of doors. At the Lord’s Supper I used to be entertained with the children’s bread, as I thought; but of late I am as one that has no acquaintance with the Bread of life, nor any desire after it. Under the word, when I see it falls like the dew upon all around me, I alone seemingly am like Gideon’s fleece. And as for my daily thoughts, they are barren, confused, and uncomfortable. She broke off abruptly under many tears, nor was there a dry eye in all the company.

Dewi.—You say your sins have separated between you and the Lord, and it is a great truth that sin is of a separating nature, and I must say that it would separate eternally, only the merciful and faithful God will not suffer His people so to sin, nor will He suffer sin to have dominion over them: but what sin do you apprehend it was that led you into such a distance from the Lord?

Tyner.—Through mercy I have been always kept from what persons call gross immoralities; none of my acquaintance have anything to charge me with; but yet I have a

great deal to charge myself withal. I was pleased with what I esteemed spiritual enjoyments; I thought other persons valued me, and thereupon overvalued myself; and at that very door my present calamity entered; and with that, an indifference to all the means of true improvement. Upon these things I have been often ready to conclude, that I was never among the children; however, the presence of the Father of lights I have not, for I walk in darkness that may be felt.

Dewi.—I sympathise with you; for I am often like a child shut out of doors; and my soul is greatly concerned for you: but your relief lies in this, that you have a Pastor in heaven that feels for you, and will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able. Trust in His name, though you walk in darkness; among the children He has fixed you, and you shall dwell in the house for ever.

Tyner.—Dear Sir, I have tried to say to myself, Come, be contented, all will be safe at last: but I cannot be so satisfied; there is something which I want and have not; and I cannot help lamenting after the Lord.

Dewi.—You make me think of the church who sought her Beloved, but found Him not; you make me think on Job, who sought Him on all hands, but could not find Him; you make me think of David in the deeps, and his soul cast down within him; and you make me think of Heman, who looked upon himself as free among the dead. But all these were holy, beloved, and safe, and so are you; and like one who said, "When He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold," you shall lose nothing but the dross.

Tyner.—Sir, I hope God will make me very willing to lose that. The instances you mentioned, some of them I have thought of; and some little stay I have found in the thought, *may be* I am among the children, and shall be there for ever: but, as I said before, my present condition I am neither willing nor able to bear.

Dewi.—God does not require any person to be willing to dwell at a distance from Him: to be willing to be without God, is a very great sin against God. But the best advice I can offer, while your great deliverance tarries, take:—Consider yourself as every way insufficient, and exceedingly sinful. Consider Christ as infinitely great and good,

able to save to the uttermost. Begin at the door at which you say your calamity entered, and set apart some solemn time to humble yourself under a sense of that pride and unbelief that seized your heart. Then look unto your Father's name, and try if you can read it; that in Exodus xxxiv. 6, 7, and that in Jer. xxiii. 6, "Gracious and merciful, abundant in goodness, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; His name is Jehovah our righteousness." "Though you walk in darkness, and have no light, trust in that name of the Lord,"—Isaiah l. 10. And if you are so put to it as to question the truth of all the work passed upon your soul, come as a perishing sinner to Christ, who says, "Him that cometh I will in no wise cast out," John vi. 37, a course my soul has often found useful. Then wait on the Lord still in all His institutions; "and though weeping may endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning."

Tyner.—Sir, I hope I shall endeavour to take your tender advice; but to wait upon the Lord at His table in such a frame as mine seems to be attended with many difficulties.

Dewi.—If that ordinance was to be attended to by ministers and people only when they are in good frames, how often, think you, would the churches in the world commemorate their Lord's death, according to His command? When the ministers are in good and desirable frames, the people may not be so; when the people are in a good frame, it may be otherwise with the ministers. Christ never cramped His people's duty to a certain frame of their minds; therefore, dear sister, omit no duty.

Tyner.—I know you are a tender servant of the compassionate Redeemer; and I hope He will help you to pray, and hear your prayers on my behalf, that I may be delivered in a right way, may comply with every part of your counsel, and be for ever disposed to every duty. But, oh, may the sun shine, if it be the Lord's will!

NEOPH.—Our dear Epenetus did tell us of trials, and now I see some of them. I am glad it was thus with some of the saints in times past, for I find here some things I have in a measure wrestled with, and could mention to nobody, but am now refreshed, and shall wait still for more refreshment.

EPEN.—The next that spoke was one Llon, at this time, at least, a cheerful brother. Says he to his pastor, Dear Sir, I have met, in my short course in Christianity, with a variety of circumstances, frames, and trials; but I must set up my Ebenezer, and say, hitherto I am helped. Last Lord's day, in your discourse to the church, you mentioned that text, Heb. vii. 24, "But this man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood;" every word of it refreshed me, and I am still refreshed and taught. The consideration of His being *man* as well as the mighty God, was of great use to me. The children being partakers of flesh and blood, He Himself took part of the same; and is not ashamed to call them brethren. And then His continuing ever, when all relations die, and all enjoyments and endowments wither and vanish, when the most desirable frames vary and alter, and a thousand deaths may attend our most earnest expectations—this blessed man continueth ever! He is in the highest office for us; having offered up a perfect sacrifice here, He ever lives to make intercession for us above. Oh, I can never express the joys of faith upon those blessed truths! I had gone through some dry, discouraging days; but thus the Lord seasonably stepped in to my relief. And I thought myself bound to tell you what God had done for my soul.

Dewi.—It refreshes me to hear it, and to the God of all grace I would be thankful; and who knows but this may be of greater use to our dear dejected friends here than anything I have said. But, dear brother, such comforts as yours are always attended with other fruits of the Holy Spirit; how do you find it?

Llon.—Sir, through grace my soul is led to God as my chiefest good; and I humbly hope whatever leads to Him comes from Him. I am made to admire grace that ever I should know anything of Christ as my salvation; I am taught to love every duty Christ calls me to, dearly to love the kingdom of Christ, the children of God, and earnestly to desire the good of all my poor fellow-sinners.

Dewi.—My dear brother, all this is right, and all the comfort that leads to this is true comfort; and may your soul and mine be brought into more abundant acquaintance therewith. Make it the great business of your life to express

your thankfulness to God in a holy, humble, close, and useful walk with Him, in every relation, or in any circumstance you may pass through.

NEOPH.—The love and labour of this pastor lead me to think of the apostle's expression, "We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children;" but how great must the tenderness and love of the *great* Pastor be! But, pray, Epenetus, what further account can you give?

EPEPH.—The next that spoke was a certain woman whose name was Tawel, who came in order to be propounded for communion, and, in the presence of them all, she said,—

Sir, I come upon a business of great importance. I think myself bound to take the yoke of Christ upon me, believing His word that I shall find it *easy*. I desire, while I live, to bear my testimony for Christ, as my Saviour and my Lord; and I think I cannot do that as His word requires without being in church-fellowship; and it is my desire, if the Lord will, and if the church think fit, to be admitted a member.

Dewi.—Are you a believer in Jesus Christ?

Tawel.—Sir, I hope, through grace, that I am.

Dewi.—What do you apprehend faith in Christ to be?

Tawel.—Sir, I don't know whether I can answer you right; but I think it is to trust Him with all that concerns my salvation.

Dewi.—What is it that puts you upon that trust?

Tawel.—Truly, Sir, I have had many discouragements, and, at last, did drop all hope and expectation; but ere I was aware I found my heart carried forth to trust in Christ.

Dewi.—What were those discouragements you met with?

Tawel.—I thought I was such a vile, unworthy sinner that He would have nothing to do with me.

Dewi.—What made your sins appear so great to you?

Tawel.—While I was yet in heathenism, I did many things which my conscience told me I should not do; and when I heard of Christ, I despised Him; then my evils appeared innumerable, and what added to my horror was, all those evils did proceed from a nature universally defiled.

Dewi.—And what do you think of it now?

Tawel.—Oh! I think worse and worse of it; I am vile and sinful throughout.

Dewi.—Then, if the greatness of your sins discouraged you from believing, how dare you believe or trust at all?

Tawel.—It is not a month since I heard you preach from a text which I hope I shall never forget:—"It is a true saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief;" and you many ways made it plain that Christ did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance, and that He came to seek and to save that which was lost.

Dewi.—What makes you think He is a fit person to be trusted for salvation by the chief of sinners?

Tawel.—Because He is the mighty God, and has everlasting strength; and because He made satisfaction for sin.

Dewi.—But what encourages *you* to trust Him?

Tawel.—Whosoever cometh He will in no wise cast out.

Dewi.—But what will you do for a righteousness to appear before God, for He is of purer eyes than to look upon iniquity?

Tawel.—I can do nothing; I must trust Christ wholly for that.

Dewi.—Does this trust then lead you to a neglect of any duty that God requires in His word?

Tawel.—No, dear Sir, this trust puts me upon all duty to God and man; and it is that trust that puts me upon an earnest desire to be found in my duty as a church member.

Dewi.—Whose work do you think this is upon you?

Tawel.—The work of the Spirit of Christ. Had I been left to myself I should have been a heathen to this hour.

Dewi.—And how did the first concern begin?

Tawel.—In hearing, accidentally, two Christians talk about salvation through Christ Jesus; one of whom said that all the world was undone, and help nowhere else but in Christ. So I thought I would go and hear the Christian teachers; and in hearing it was made plain to me that I was undone by nature and practice too. I tried, in my poor way, to pray for help and salvation; but my difficulties increased, till I heard you preach the Gospel from the text I mentioned; then God was pleased to open my heart to receive the things delivered. And here I renounce heathenism, and before you, Sir, and this company, profess myself, through grace, a believer in Christ Jesus.

Dewi.—Can any man forbid water that she should not be baptized, who has, through grace, forsook heathenism, and is a believer in Christ?

She was straightway baptized, in the same manner as Credadyn was. Upon this, a sister of the church, whose name was Astud, spoke to her pastor as follows:—

Astud.—Sir, with a thankful heart, I own the mercy unto Abraham, and the truth unto Jacob, which God swore unto our fathers from the days of old. He is a God that keepeth covenant and mercy, and my soul rejoiceth in His salvation; for it has not only powerfully entered my heart, but graciously entered my house. Here is my dear boy Ufudd, not yet twelve years old, who is come with an earnest desire to be admitted to the Lord's table.

Dewi.—My dear child, this is not the first time I have had talk with you. What thoughts have you of Jesus Christ?

Ufudd.—Sir, He is always in my thoughts. I think He is almighty, and my all-sufficient Saviour.

Dewi.—How came you to know that you stood in need of a Saviour?

Ufudd.—My mother, Sir, always used to tell me I was a sinner, that I was born in sin; and my father, in family duty, did mourn over his children, as children of wrath by nature, even as others. His words often went to my heart, though I quickly forgot what he said, and regarded nothing but what was vain.

Dewi.—But how is it with you now?

Ufudd.—Sir, one time my mother took me into her chamber. I thought she was going to chastise me for some fault; but she said unto me,—My poor child, thou art ruined and undone by sin, thou art gone astray, and hast destroyed thyself. I, thy tender mother, cannot save thee. Thou art under sin, and art guilty before God; except thou art born again, thou canst not see the kingdom of heaven;—and with that burst out into cries and tears, and I thought it would have broken my heart. But after awhile she directed me to all the places of Scripture she had mentioned, went to prayer with me, with many tears begged a blessing on what she had said, and went out and left me.

Dewi.—And how was it with you when you were left?

Ufudd.—I trembled much, and did endeavour to look upon the Scriptures that she left with me; but I could not have any distinct thoughts upon them, only they seemed all to lie hard upon me; and my sins were so set before my face, that I could see nothing else. I had despised prayer, I had neglected reading, and did stifle good thoughts when they did come; and in the public assemblies I never used to mind the worship of God; and now I saw that all these evils proceeded from a very corrupt nature, and made my nature more corrupt, and still more inclined to evil. I saw that what my mother said was very true.

Dewi.—And what did you do then?

Ufudd.—Sir, I thought I would pray to the Lord, that He would turn me and save me. And though I did say something like prayers often before, yet I never was *afraid* to pray till then. I thought I was too great a sinner, and thought God would strike me dead if I offered to speak to Him; but into my mind came what I had heard and read of the man that smote upon his breast, durst not look up, but said, “God be merciful to me a sinner!” So I threw myself on the ground, and cried and prayed in great distress.

Dewi.—And how was your distress removed?

Ufudd.—I kept in the chamber all that afternoon, but the load upon my soul was heavy. My mother came frequently to me, and spoke to me what she thought best. In the evening, family being called together, my father said,—What is the matter with this boy; is he not well? My mother answered,—I hope he is under some concern about his soul.—But I can never tell you how it was with my father that evening in prayer. He did so plead Abraham’s covenant, that God would be the God of his seed; that God had promised that the children of His servants should continue, and their seed should be established before Him. He prayed in a very particular manner for me; and while he was at prayer I found my heart made willing to receive Christ as my Saviour, and to choose God as my God in everlasting covenant. After prayer, my father said,—Come, my poor child, how is it with thee?—I could make no reply; but after some time I said, Dear father, I am willing to be saved by Christ, I am willing to serve Christ.

Dewi.—And I suppose you are in the same mind still ?

Ufudd.—Yes, Sir, through grace, and have been ever since.

Dewi.—Have you met with no discouragements ?

Ufudd.—Yes, Sir, many ; from my own wretched, sinful heart, and once was sorely tried about *election*.

Dewi.—Pray, how was that ?

Ufudd.—I had often heard of election in public sermons, sometimes in the school, and I had read of it in the Scriptures ; but a dark thought passed through my mind, What if I am not elected ?

Dewi.—Then it made no long stay, only passed through ?

Ufudd.—But truly, Sir, it was, I thought, a long while a passing ; but one Lord's day, lately, you touched upon my very case, as if I had told it to you. You observed, that it is a poor sinner's immediate business to make his calling sure ; begin at the foot of Jacob's ladder, and not at the top ; and that, finding himself among the called, he might then fairly infer himself among the elected. And, through grace, I was helped to take your advice, and do find it answers the end you mentioned it for.

Dewi.—And you desire to be admitted to the Lord's table ?

Ufudd.—He bids His people show forth His death so. I hope I am willing to serve Christ ; but serve Him I cannot, without keeping His commandments. And besides, I do think there is, by what I have observed, some near communion in love there between Christ and His church.

Dewi.—You have been baptized in your infancy in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Ufudd.—I humbly bless God for it ; I adore the name of the eternal God in His three glorious persons.

Dewi.—My dear child, the Lord, I hope, will cause you to flourish in His courts. I shall propound you to the church.

NEOPH.—Well, I am convinced there is an amazing variety in the work of the kingdom of Christ ; but here are very few questions asked upon their doctrinal acquaintance with the principles of religion.

EPEN.—That is not because Dewi neglected them, but be cause I designedly omitted them, lest I should burden

you with repetition. The substance of their faith you have had; their examination as to doctrinal knowledge was always according thereunto; and those who could not give a satisfactory account were never received. Three things, in receiving of members in those primitive days, were very strictly examined into, and considered: sound knowledge of and assent unto the doctrine; faith unfeigned in the blessed Redeemer; and a holy conversation answerable to that doctrine and faith.

Thus I have given you a brief account of that day's work, which Dewi concluded in prayer to the Lord for a blessing.

CHRISTOPH.—And, I think, a great day's work; it does me good to hear of it. But I cannot help observing, how necessary it is that those who preach the Gospel should be godly persons themselves? What could an unbelieving preacher, notwithstanding his acquaintance with systems of divinity, have done with these? Oh! it makes me send up my earnest desires to the Father of lights, for a mighty blessing upon our generous and honourable Society, the glory of London.^a But, pray, Epenetus, had not the teacher his days and concern in like manner?

EPEN.—He had; the very same day in the week, on the same hours of the day; and in the evening, Dewi and Yefan always met, to impart to each other the sum of the work they had been concerned in. Thus were they brought into acquaintance with the state of the flock; the usefulness whereof I choose to express in the words of godly Mr. Walter Cradock,^b who was himself a Briton. "We that are ministers should, in all our ministerial works, propose some solid spiritual scope, or end, to our ministry, and to every part of it."

Beloved, I have known in my observation many learned, godly ministers, who took much pains, and yet in the end reaped little fruit from all their labour; some of them confessing, in their old age, they knew not a soul that ever was

^a Probably the "King's Head Society" is meant. See note on Ministerial Seminaries, p. 143.—N.

^b The Rev. Walter Cradock, at first a minister of the national church, was a zealous evangelizer of Wales, about the middle of the 17th century—the true birth-time of Welsh Nonconformity.—N.

brought home to Christ by their ministry. And this, to my apprehension, seemed to be the chief reason—they never proposed any particular *end*, or distinct *scope*, to their work; and this, indeed, they could not well do, having no spiritual acquaintance with the states and conditions of their auditors. He that would convert sinners, or edify saints, ought to study souls, as well as books. I have also always thought that the mere preaching two sermons a week, as it doth not reach the practice of the apostles, Acts xx. 20, so is it not one half the work of a Gospel minister. As our frequent, familiar, spiritual converse with our hearers doth furnish us with more skill to deal with the souls of others, so it conduces much to the quickening of our own (Rom. i. 11, 12), without which, we are as expert smiths, that make *curious* keys, and never consult with the wards of the lock; whereas a rude, ill-shaped key, that is fitted to the lock, is of much use. Neither is it sufficient for us to say, when God's work doth not prosper in our hands, that yet our "judgment is with the Lord," &c. (Isaiah xlix. 4), unless we have in all things done the work of a minister, which, as I said before, is not half done till we have attained to some complete measure of acquaintance with the souls of our people. It was once a speech of a reverend minister,^c who, because of the multitude of his hearers, was often necessitated to preach in the churchyard, "That there was not one person in that congregation whose spiritual estate he did not fully know;" and the success of his work was exceeding great and glorious. "Neither, said he, "is there any sermon I preach, wherein I teach them not at least one lesson more than any one of them all knew before; and yet I learn from them throughout the week as much, or more, than they do of me on the Lord's day." Thus far he. But of the teacher's work:—Some company having come, and prayer to God being made, Yefan spoke as follows,—

Dear brethren and sisters in our Lord,—He is faithful who has said, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord." We

^c Mr. Wroth, "that blessed apostle of South Wales." Yet earlier than Walter Cradock—indeed, was the means of bringing him to the knowledge of religious truth. Wroth commenced preaching about 1600; was persecuted out of the national church by Laud; and immediately formed, from the crowds of his converts, a church of the Congregational order.—N.

and our children stand in need of instruction, and such is our state, that we can receive nothing unless it be given us from above. How great honour has our God conferred upon us, that He has numbered us among His disciples; put us among the children; given us the sure word of prophecy, as a light shining in a dark place; and the promise of His Spirit to lead us into all truth! Unto this, one present replied, whose name was—

Gofalus.—And, dear Sir, what a mercy that the Spirit of God has appointed such means as conference upon the things of God for our instruction! For my part, I am amazed at Divine wisdom and mercy, in appointing unto us teachers formed also out of the clay, whose terror shall not make us afraid. Upon the doctrine of the covenant of grace, I am slow to receive and retain what I hear. Pray, Sir, what may I strictly call a covenant?

Yefan.—An agreement between two parties, equally free.

Gofalus.—What is the covenant of grace?

Yefan.—An agreement between God the Father and Christ, upon the great concern of our salvation.

Gofalus.—And pray, Sir, how am I to consider the parties in this covenant?

Yefan.—God the Father, as offended on the account of sin, yet graciously proposing to His own Son, in the same nature and essence, yet now considered Mediator for man, terms, on the accomplishment whereof, the elect should be saved; and God the Son, as second Adam, and head of the elect, accepting the proposed terms, and undertaking the mighty work.

Gofalus.—And how can I conceive of Christ, complying with what was proposed and promised?

Yefan.—“When He cometh into the world He saith, sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me. Then said I, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.”—Heb. x. 5, 6, 7. “I lay down my life; no man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.”—John x. 17, 18.

Gofalus.—And how did our dear Lord fulfil the part He undertook?

Yefan.—"I have glorified thee on earth ; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do ; and now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."—John xvii. 4, 5. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."—Matt. xvii. 5.

Gofalus.—How am I to consider Christ, as receiving reward ?

Yefan.—"We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour."—Heb. ii. 9. "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me ; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."—John xvii. 24.

Gofalus.—This looks exactly like a covenant of works !

Yefan.—So it is unto Christ a covenant of works, in the strictest sense ; and our Lord's obedience unto death was meritorious in the highest sense, not only by virtue of the wonderful contract, but the ineffable value of His performance. Yet, with regard to us poor saved sinners, it is a covenant of rich grace and mercy altogether.

Gofalus.—God promises to make an everlasting covenant with us ; and you said a covenant is an agreement between two parties, equally free.

Yefan.—Such is a covenant in its strict acceptation, but God's covenant with us is a mere promise of absolute grace.

Gofalus.—Will you please to give me some instances where the covenant of God must be taken in this last sense ?

Yefan.—"But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel : after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts ; and will be their God, and they shall be my people."—Jer. xxxi. 33 ; also, Heb. viii. 10, 11, 12, and Heb. x. 16, 17, where we see that by covenant we must understand a free, absolute promise. And thus it was given to our father Abraham, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their

generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee."—Gen. xvii. 7.

Gofalus.—Blessed be the Lord, I hope I do, in some measure, see how it is all grace freely given, the law written on the heart, and the sinner brought to lay hold on God's covenant. But, pray, why are such promises called the covenant of God?

Yefan.—Because they are unalterable, and contain the great things intended in and by His everlasting covenant. God's unalterable purposes, with regard to things of an inferior nature, are called His covenant with such things. So His covenant with all creatures upon earth, after the flood, Gen. ix. 10; and His covenant with the day and with the night. Jer. xxxiii. 25. Unto both these the covenant of grace is compared, because, in a like manner, it is an absolute, unalterable purpose.

Gofalus.—Pray, what was the covenant in the wilderness?

Yefan.—A veiled dispensation of this covenant of grace.

Gofalus.—Are all God's people, under all the variety of circumstances and frames attending them, still in this covenant?

Yefan.—Yes, it stands fast; it cannot be broken.

Gofalus.—Does it still take in the godly and their seed?

Yefan.—Yes; Christ confirmed the promises that were made to the fathers. All the godly are heirs, according to the promise to Abraham.—Isa lix. 21.

Gofalus.—But how if sore discouragements from the sinful ways of children are upon the expectations of godly parents?

Yefan.—"Although my house be not so with God, yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure; for this is all my salvation and all my desire."—2 Sam. xxiii. 5. Some will not believe, except they see; but David said he had fainted if he had not believed to see.—Psalm xxvii. "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."—John xx. 29.

Gofalus.—We read, indeed, "That the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant." I return you thanks, dear Sir, for your condescending labour of love. It has been refreshing, and,

I hope, will be establishing to my soul ; and for this I beg your prayers.

NEOPH.—What a concise, comfortable account is this of the covenant of grace made with Christ as head of the elect ! He performed the conditions, and rendered all the promises *yea* and *amen* ! What encouragement is here to enter upon every duty, and what support is here under every trial ! How has my poor mind been perplexed in reading large, confused, inconsistent treatises upon the covenant ! Some making it a downright covenant of works, and some a mixed one, and some as many distinct covenants as there are believers in the whole world.

PHILAL.—The Holy Spirit, who knows best the meaning of His own words, expresses God's covenant of grace by a word, which is a testamentary disposition ; no bargaining terms, but free bequeathments. Amazing it is, that any of the godly should ever fix upon faith and repentance as the conditions of a proper covenant between us and God, and call that a covenant of grace.

SYLLOG.—And I must say, that amazing it is that any man of sense should do it. An unconverted man hates God, and hates faith, and therefore will not agree to any such terms. A converted man believes already ; and where is the good sense of proposing a covenant with him, upon condition that he will believe ?

NEOPH.—But why does the Lord say, "I will make a covenant with you," seeing it is a covenant already made ?

PHILAL.—You will, upon reading the several texts, quickly observe that the Lord owns Himself wholly the maker of it, and therefore always calls it *His* covenant. It is not a covenant that does not subsist till we enter upon treaty with God, but as the venerable Assembly of Divines have excellently observed, "The covenant of grace was made with Christ as second Adam, and head of the elect, and with all the elect in Him, as His seed ;" therefore, when the Lord says, "I will make with you an everlasting covenant" (Isa. lv. 3), no more is intended than that He would show them His covenant (Psalm xxv. 14), and lead them to take hold of it (Isa. lvi. 4). When the Father of lights is pleased to say, "I will make," we are often to understand *making manifest*. So, by making straight the way of

the Lord, is meant a declaring of it to be so. It is in the covenant of grace alone that God promises eternal life; and it is said of Him, that He promised it before the world began.—Tit. i. 2. And in the same manner it is said, that there was grace given us in Christ before the world began.—2 Tim. i. 9. Both the texts must intend the everlasting covenant, which God in due time makes manifest, fulfils the promises of it in our souls in regeneration and faith, so leads us to yield up ourselves, without reserve, to Him in that perpetual covenant that shall not be broken.

THEOPH.—This covenant contains all my salvation, and all my desire. Let my God smile, or let Him frown; let Him shine upon me, or call darkness to pass over me; let Him renew my youth like the eagle's, or with strong pains afflict me, still I am within His covenant, and everything that attends me must be a blessing thereof, for no curse enters there. This God is my God for ever and ever, and will be my guide even until death.

CHRISTOPH.—And, dear Theophilus, I must add, the God of *mine*. Even when the greatest discouragements most sensibly touch me, and my house is not with God as I would have it, yet the God of the families of Israel is our God still. I know it is my business to believe, and plead the promise confirmed to me and my children.

EPEN.—God is ever mindful of His covenant. I now pass on to another brother, whose name was Egwan, who spoke to his teacher as follows:—

Sir, I was the other day thinking how weak and feeble my faith was. Lord, increase my faith. That text came into my mind, "They that know thy name will put their trust in thee;" and I saw the ready way to more faith was to get more acquaintance with the Lord's name; and meditating upon some of the blessed names He takes to Himself in the Scriptures, I came to that name in Jer. xxiii. 6, "And this is His name whereby He shall be called, Jehovah our righteousness." Dear Sir, please to help me to understand that name.

Yefan.—It is, dear brother, the name of Christ the Messiah, as is evident from the foregoing verse, and in it you have two things for the support of your faith; first, what Christ is in Himself; secondly, what He is to us. In

Himself He is Jehovah ; unto us He is a glorious righteousness. Jehovah is a name that signifies *Being*, because Christ always was, is, and is to come. As the eternal God, He is Being itself, and has given a dependent being to the whole creation, "for without Him was nothing made that was made." The name Jehovah is God's peculiar name: it would be the greatest blasphemy to call any mere creature Jehovah ; but Christ has the name, and the eternal nature intended by it. Our Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth, shall He be called. He is mighty to save, because He is the Almighty ; His obedience of infinite value, because, through the eternal Spirit, He offered Himself ; and He is a fit object of trust and worship, because He is the Lord our God. "Trust in the Lord for ever, because in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."

Egwan.—Dear Sir, though I am a poor weak soul, yet I would say of Him, "My Lord and my God." Let Him be never so great, if He was not the great and the eternal God, I durst not trust Him.

Yefan.—As the infinite greatness of Jehovah the Saviour is a fair foundation for our faith and trust, so is His infinite goodness. "Abundant in goodness," is also His name (Exodus xxxiv. 6, 7), and with that goodness our souls are at present satisfied, and shall be for ever.

Egwan.—Through grace I hope I can say, that in heaven I have none but the eternal God the Saviour, and upon earth I desire none besides Him. What you have said greatly refreshes me. Glad I am we have so great a Saviour.

Yefan.—And still it must add to your comfort and mine, that He is a just God and a Saviour: He is our righteousness. "He who knew no sin, was made to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." We were children of disobedience; our sins He bore Himself in His own body on the tree; the Lord laid upon Him the iniquity of us all. He obeyed perfectly, and that as our representative, and His obedience is imputed to us for righteousness. "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not sin." Though the best of our righteousnesses must be esteemed filthy rags; yet surely shall one say, "In

the Lord have I righteousness and strength." The blessed Paul desired to be found in Him, and in His righteousness. Under a sense of all weakness and wretchedness here is a blessed name indeed, to which we may have constant recourse, "Jehovah our righteousness!"

Egwan.—Dear Sir, I thank you; I will go in the strength of the Lord God, and will make mention of His righteousness, even of His only.

NEOPH.—Do they trust in the name of Christ, who do not believe Him to be the almighty and eternal God?

THEOPH.—No, not one soul of them; how can they?

NEOPH.—O, my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united!

EPEN.—Then a sister present, whose name was Cariadus, told Yefan with many tears that her husband Duwiol was from day to day under great heaviness of mind, and desired Yefan to come the first opportunity to visit him; which he said he would.

CHRISTOPH.—Our beloved Epenetus, I return you many thanks for the account of visits they received at home; and now I humbly request some account of their visits abroad.

EPEN.—Most willingly, my dear Christophilus; you may remember I told you before, that one day in the week they made use of in visiting the flock. I shall begin, as I did before, with Dewi; some part of his work, on one of his visiting days, you may take as follows:—

Entering the house of Cyfiawn, of whom you have heard something before, he says, My dear brother Cyfiawn, how do you do?

Cyfiawn.—Oh, my dear pastor, I am glad to see you here. I look upon you as sent by the great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls; therefore I am the more refreshed; for I see not only your kindness, care, and love, but as the spring of all, the tender love, care and compassions of my dear Redeemer! Who am I, that God and man should be thus mindful of me?

Dewi.—And I must say, who am I, that I should be honoured with any service among the saints? I might have been justly cast out, as a vessel wherein is no pleasure; but through grace I am in the vineyard, with my hand upon the plough of the kingdom, and I esteem it dearer than my

life; and I am greatly refreshed to find you in so evangelical a spirit, so that I need not ask, how do you do in your soul?

Cyfiawn.—Through grace, God deals bountifully with me: I find “His ways are pleasantness, and His paths are peace.” He is pleased to strengthen me with strength in my soul; He makes all my duties a delight unto me. Though it is not always alike with me, yet I find He never leaves me; in all prayer He is pleased to draw me in measure near to Himself; when alone, He helps me to tell Him all, and often speaks comfortably to me. In the face of all my sinfulness, under which I daily mourn, I have been helped to appeal to His mercy. In family duty He makes Himself precious to me; and in the public ordinances gives down, through abundant grace, foretastes of a future rest to my soul. And, last Lord’s day, while in prayer you mentioned that Scripture, “Enter into thy rest, O my soul,” I thought I knew something of heaven in myself. Heaven was opened, my soul entered, and of joys unspeakable I tasted; and though it is not with me now as it was then, yet something of the savour remains, and the remembrance is sweet.

Dewi.—My dear brother, our God is rich in mercy; I am refreshed to hear you speak thus of Him. God sheds abroad His love in our hearts, attracts our hearts thereby to Himself; into communion with the chiefest good, through Christ, we are carried, and there partake of those joys strangers intermeddle not with. Oh! the mercy that “We are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God!” How is it with your family, the little church under your care?

Cyfiawn.—Sir, my dear wife is afflicted in body and mind, and I hope the Lord has sent you seasonably hither for her instruction and comfort; pray, Sir, walk with me into the next room.

Dewi.—My dear sister Rhinweddol (for that was her name), how do you do?

Rhinweddol.—Dear Sir, I cannot say but I am glad to see you; but I am afflicted in body, and pains have attended me now for some time. But the greatest pain of all is in my mind; for I think God is angry with me, else He would not afflict me thus.

Dewi.—You have often heard that the people of God, while in this life, may be a poor and afflicted people, who nevertheless trust in His name. And I hope the Spirit of Christ will help you to trust in the Lord, under all your pains. As dear Job said, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.”

Rhinweddol.—Sir, distrust it is that makes my affliction heavy: for I am tempted almost to think, that were I an afflicted child I should not distrust.

Dewi.—Distrust is the affliction of children; there is never an enemy afflicted with it. He to whom distrust is a real affliction is a child; “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief.”

Rhinweddol.—Oh! my dear pastor, I feel what you say, and do find that it tends to my relief; but, nevertheless, God has a controversy with me, and for my sins He afflicts me; and before His frowns and displeasure I cannot stand.

Dewi.—It is certain, that when we get to our Lord, where sin enters not, we shall be afflicted no more; but at present, though afflictions may be called the frowns of God, especially when He also withdraws the light of His countenance, yet they are the frowns of a Father, and they come not in vindictive justice and vengeance upon us: and He Himself says, that this is to take away our sin; and I hope you are willing to lose that.

Rhinweddol.—Yes, I hope I am; but I have not that zeal against it, as I should have against God’s enemy, and that adds to my affliction also.

Dewi.—Your dear Father, who does in love afflict, will not contend for ever, lest the spirit should fail before Him, and the soul that He has made. In wise love He afflicts, and in wise love He will relieve.

Rhinweddol.—But can the hidings of His face be in love?

Dewi.—Yes: else many of us should be often under wrath. The church sought her Beloved, but could not find Him; and when He knocked, she being sinfully dilatory, He withdrew Himself.

Rhinweddol.—Oh, may I but hope that all is in love, and that all will end well!

Dewi.—He assures you in His word it is so, and as His poor servant I assure you it is so: “As many as I love

I chasten and rebuke:" be zealous, therefore, and repent. He does not afflict willingly, nor grieve you; in all your afflictions He is afflicted: but be of good cheer, submit and trust you shall come forth as gold.

Rhinweddol.—Though my soul is cast down in me, yet I would not refuse to be comforted: I would thankfully own, that what you say tends greatly to support me, and encourage my soul to draw near to God; and I humbly think, that whatever tends to bring me to Him, cometh from Him. Dear Sir, pray for me, that I may glorify the name of my Saviour under the present dispensation, that I may neither think dishonourably, nor speak disrespectfully of Him, but in all becoming patience attend and go through His pleasure. I thank you for your kind visit, and all that you have said.

Dewi.—Then it was the Lord that spoke it, and unto Him I would have you be thankful; and hope, through His mercy, in a little time, to see your comforts abound in restored health. In the meanwhile, may the eternal Spirit, our gracious Comforter, greatly support you. Pray, where are your children?

Cyfiawn.—Children, come in.

Dewi.—Oh! my dear little boy, are you a good boy?

Prydferth.—No, Sir; I am naught all over.

Dewi.—Who told you so, Prydferth?

Prydferth.—My father and mother, Sir, and have often proved it to me from God's word, Sir.

Dewi.—Do you remember the words?

Prydferth.—Yes, Sir, some of them. "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. Every mouth stopped, and all the world became guilty before God."

Dewi.—How do you think to be saved from this dreadful condition, Prydferth?

Prydferth.—Sir, Christ died for sinners; and they shall be born again, that they may be holy and go to heaven.

Dewi.—What do you say to God in prayer, Prydferth?

Prydferth.—"Turn thou me, and I shall be turned," is one part of it, Sir.

Dewi.—The Lord answer it speedily, my dear!

Then he said to Cyfiawn's daughter (whose name was

Synwyrol, and some years older than her brother), Come, my dear, what is God?

Synwyrol.—"God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

Dewi.—There are many spirits; are they to be worshipped?

Synwyrol.—God is an eternal, infinite Spirit, Sir, and He alone must be worshipped. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

Dewi.—And is our Lord Jesus Christ to be worshipped?

Synwyrol.—Yes, Sir. To the church it is said, "He is thy Lord, worship thou Him: and let all the angels of God worship Him."

Dewi.—Then is He that infinite Spirit who alone must be worshipped?

Synwyrol.—Yes, Sir, according to His Divine nature; for He offered Himself through the eternal Spirit; and I heard you, Sir, say, that by the eternal Spirit there is meant the Divine nature of Christ.

Dewi.—What other nature has He besides the Divine?

Synwyrol.—A real human nature, which He assumed, Sir. Because the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself took part of the same. "There is one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus."

Dewi.—And is He to be worshipped like the Father?

Synwyrol.—Sir, I think that there can be but one kind of Divine worship, and that is due only unto the eternal God; but Christ says, "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father."

Dewi.—But does not this make more Gods than one?

Synwyrol.—No, Sir; there is but one infinite God, one Divine nature, one Divine essence; for though there are Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, yet these Three are One.

Dewi.—But why did the infinite God, in His second person, assume human nature?

Synwyrol.—That He might suffer and die for sinners.

Dewi.—And how are we to conceive of Him with regard to equality or inequality with the Father?

Synwyrol.—Being in the form of God, He thinks it no robbery to be equal with God; but as Man and Mediator,

He is said to be the Father's servant; and He says, "My Father is greater than I."

Dewi.—And what, as Mediator and the Father's servant, did He go through for sinners?

Synwyrol.—He became obedient unto death, was delivered for their offences, and was raised again for their justification.

Dewi.—Why was it necessary He should go through all this?

Synwyrol.—That God might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

Dewi.—Where is the Mediator now?

Synwyrol.—Highly exalted at the Father's right hand, ever living to make intercession for the transgressors.

Dewi.—You said that He was raised again for their justification; pray, what is that righteousness wherein they are reckoned just before God?

Synwyrol.—Only the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and not any work of theirs; no, not their own faith.

Dewi.—What does the Holy Spirit do in and for sinners?

Synwyrol.—More than I can tell you, Sir. He creates in them a new heart, makes His abode there, gives faith, works repentance, leads the person to seek God, to choose Him as His chiefest good, to breathe after His fellowship, to yield obedience to His precepts, to submit unto His righteousness, and to wait for His glory.

Dewi.—And what do you find of this work in your soul?

Synwyrol.—Very little, Sir; but I am not without hope.

Dewi.—What is the foundation of your hope?

Synwyrol.—The risen Redeemer. Other foundation can no man lay.

Dewi.—And what does this hope put you upon?

Synwyrol.—I would fain purify myself as He is pure; but, alas! I am vile, and in everything I sin. As a poor perishing sinner, I lie at the feet of Christ, who is a merciful and compassionate High Priest, who saves the chief of sinners, and whose blood cleanseth from all sin.

Dewi.—After what manner did God bring you to this?

Synwyrol.—I must say His ways are past finding out; but the repeated instructions of my parents, my father's pleading the covenant of God in family duty on my behalf, and hearing the Gospel of grace publicly preached, have

been of great use to me. And particularly one very remarkable time of late, as our honoured teacher Yefan was opening that text in the 107th Psalm,—“The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee.” I thought I was before God, indeed, and desired to be established before Him for ever. The remembrance of it melts me, and makes me desire to wait upon the Lord in all the ways where I may expect more of it.

Dewi.—I judge it certainly your duty, though young, to declare in the church what our dear Lord has done for you, that you may be admitted to the Lord’s table, and wait for your Redeemer’s love and presence there. Do not you think so?

Synwryol.—I am under many fears, yet willing, if my parents and you think fit.

Rheinweddol.—Oh! my dear child, I am greatly affected, though in measure afflicted. God shines upon my family, and I cannot say but a beam of light visits my heart at present. What! my poor child converted, and, seemingly, got beyond her poor mother! Blessed be the God of all grace! Go on, my child, go on!

Cyfiawn.—Sir, I own the truth of God in His new covenant-promises, and the grace of God in answering poor prayers, and, with pleasure I cannot express, desire she may be propounded.

NEOPH.—Well, I must own this was a Christian visit, and such as became a servant of Christ to make; and this was a Christian family, I see, where such visits were very welcome.

EPEN.—I was going to tell you, that the servants were then called in, who were Christians and church members, and unto them some close and pertinent questions were put with regard to faith, prayer, their growth in grace, and their cheerful performance of all duty to God and man; and the whole family appeared beautiful under the yoke of their Redeemer. Whereupon Dewi solemnly prayed with them, and prayer being over, in the tenderest affection and love he took his leave of them, wishing the presence of their dear Redeemer might abide with them.

CHRISTOPH.—Oh! it must be a pleasure to him to look

back upon a day thus spent; but barren visits have proved very burdensome: in laughter the heart has been sorrowful; and the end of that mirth, heaviness.

EPEN.—But though this visit was over, the day was not spent; he had other visits to make, and into the house of a brother he entered, whose name was Gobeithiol; and after Christian salutations, asked him how he did, for he seemed by his countenance to be under some trouble of mind.

Gobeithiol.—Sir, so I am, and have been for some time; but it is not a trouble you are quite a stranger to. Christ is precious to me, He is all my salvation, and I am helped to lean upon Him as my beloved; and He is pleased not only always to support and sustain me, but at times to speak very comfortably to me, makes me glad through His work, and gives me some times of refreshing from His presence. In providence, also, He deals bountifully with me. But there is a trial upon us—oh, it is a trial! My son grows more and more perverse, seems to have no sense of God or a future state upon him, despises the teacher Edgar and all his instructions, often turns his back upon family worship, nor can I always get him to the public assemblies. His mother is now under concern of mind, talking to him in another room; for he is but just come in from one of his foolish and sinful rambles. I know not how, dear Sir, to bear up under the trial.

Dewi.—My dear brother, I earnestly desire you may be graciously supported under your trial, and mercifully surprised with a speedy and saving turn upon your son's heart. If you please we will go into the room where they are.

Upon their entrance, the young man, whose name was Cyndyn, arose to go away; but Dewi said, Young man, I have something to say to you.

Young man, by you the affectionate prayers of a loving father, and the repeated cries and tears of a tender mother, are despised; by you, Christ, the only Saviour of sinners, is despised, His glorious Gospel set at nought, and the blood of the everlasting covenant disregarded; and by you the ungodly have been chosen as your bosom companions, and their counsel and example followed. The language of all revelation is against you, the voice of all reason is against you, the secret whispers of your own conscience

are against you, all the world is against you; and those you esteem your bosom friends, though they encourage your wickedness, in their own hearts judge you a fool. While you are pursuing your pleasures, you are a stranger to the best of comforts. Now, young man, let me call you to repentance; God commands all men every where to repent, He calls you to repent. Consider your ways, and think what will you do in the end thereof. Despise not your birth-right, remember the everlasting covenant, in a humble manner plead the promises of it; and though you have done wickedly, yet you shall not be rejected. Think over the blessed name in which you have been baptized, and there you may see abundant grace to the chief of sinners.

Cyndyn.—Sir, I am not inclined to spend any thoughts upon what you say, nor can I bear your discourse; I am your humble servant. So, in a violent manner, went away, and left his father and mother, and Dewi also, in tears.

Dewi.—My dear brother and sister, though this is a heavy case, it is what many of the godly, in all ages, have more or less experienced. The law you remember, and instances I shall not repeat; advice and comfort you want. As to the former, keep close with God in all practical religion; let not your son observe you remiss in any one duty towards God or man; and study to be found in all your duty towards him, and leave the event to God. I understand the elders have taken pains with him already, and I hope they will do so still; and if he will not hear, the church must take public notice of it. As to the latter, your comfort lies in the covenant of God still. Your faith is not built upon what you see, or what you do not see in him. Trust God, who hath promised you shall never be disappointed. Though it tarry, wait for it. Please to call what family you have, and let us worship God together.

The family having come in, he asked every one of them some pertinent questions upon the great concern of faith and holiness, and then prayed with them all; and was very particular in prayer for the stubborn, rebellious young man, and for the poor, grieved parents, that they might, by the Spirit of God, be greatly supported; that God

would strengthen their faith in the covenant of grace, direct all their duties, and sustain their expectation.

THEOPH.—Unto godly affectionate parents such trials are heavy beyond all expression. Their faith in the covenant is tried, and they are called to plead the promises thereof in fervent prayer; nor are they to desist while they live. Variety of circumstances attending such trials may doubtless call for variety of duties; but, if any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, still in faith, for the covenant is everlasting, and nothing shall make the faith of God of none effect.

EPEN.—His next visit that day was to a poor brother and sister, both in years, who rejoiced greatly to see him. He asked them how they did—were they fat and flourishing in their old age? They answered, that they were but babes yet, and could not find that growth they desired; but they were led to see the emptiness of their own performances, and the fulness of Christ more than ever, and hoped they were helped to worship Him and lean upon Him alone, and at times long to be with Him, that they might worship Him without sin, and see His glory. Dewi, with great affection, told them that this was increasing with the increase of God, for it was a growing up into Christ. He asked them, how they did as to outward things? They said they had all things, and did abound; the care of Providence was precious to them; and God, in the kindness of His people, was to be adored; and His people they humbly and heartily thanked. He went to prayer with them, and earnestly begged that the God of all grace would greatly support and comfort them, and fill them with the foretastes of an approaching rest.

Then he spoke comfortably to them, and said, Pray accept of my love and this—. And so took his leave of them in the dearest Christian affection.

CHRISTOPH.—To accompany a servant of Christ through such visits as these I should esteem a privilege; but pray, dear Epenetus, let us take a little turn with Yefan, the teacher, through one of his visits.

EPEN.—You remember I told you of one Cariadus, who desired Yefan to come the first opportunity to visit her husband, Duwiol, who was under some trouble of mind.

In a little time he went, and finding the good woman, asked her how her husband did, and where he was. She answered, that he was above, but, to her grief, very desolate.

Yefan.—Before we call him, let me know how it is with you?

Cariadus.—Through the grace of God I am helped in measure to look unto the risen Redeemer. In Him I have righteousness and strength; my life is in Him; in Him I have a pleasant portion, and I hope in Him I am complete. While you were, last Lord's day, mentioning the reason wherefore Christ is precious to a believer, I was filled with joy, and could say with the Psalmist, "In heaven I have none but thee, and upon earth I desire none besides thee." And when you said that Christ is all in all, I thought with comfort of the apostle's words, "All things are yours, and you are Christ's." The distress of mind my husband labours under is a trial to me, but I hope the Comforter which our Lord promised will relieve him; and I earnestly desire your visit may by that Holy Spirit be blessed.

Yefan.—How is it with your husband as to family duty?

Cariadus.—He never omits it, but I observe he sometimes seems much straitened; and at other times cries and pleads, and pleads and cries, as if his heart would break; and when he gets up, often cries out, "Now I have added to my transgression; this prayer, I feel, is an abomination." Dear Sir, I cannot tell you——. And my eldest poor boy, on whom I never observed any concern about religion till now, observing his father's distress, seems himself greatly distressed, and often prays alone; and once I heard him say, "O Father of mercies, have mercy on my dear father in his distress, and comfort him, and convert me!"

Yefan.—Ay, Father of mercies, indeed, that by means of your husband's grief leads your child to the throne of grace! What blessed fruit may you still find! To sow in tears, and to reap in joy! They who go forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them. But how is it with your husband as to private prayer?

Cariadus.—Oh, more than ever! He seems, indeed, to be praying always.

Yefan.—What was his entrance into this distress?

Cariadus.—I cannot tell; I never observed any thing in all his conduct but what was very agreeable to our holy profession; and yet he complains bitterly of the greatness of his sins, that he is the greatest of sinners in the whole world, and has the worst heart of all men living.

Yefan.—If you please, call him down. He comes.

Duwiol.—Ah, dear Sir, are you come to see me? It would have been my place and duty to come to you; but I neither perform duty nor know it.

Yefan.—Come, dear brother Duwiol, how do you do? The Gospel is good news still.

Duwiol.—Sir, I cannot readily tell you how I am. I am under very dark apprehensions concerning myself; I am certain I am a very great sinner; but I am not certain how God will deal with me. But His terror makes me afraid; yet His Gospel, which I own to be good news still, as you say, does by some means keep me from dark and horrid despair; though sometimes I am upon the brink of it.

Yefan.—Pray, dear brother, what is it that carries you to the borders of such darkness?

Duwiol.—Sir, when I consider God's law, how spiritual it is, and how carnal I am; how it requires the greatest purity, not only of life and conversation, but of all the inclinations and meditations of the mind; yet how base, vile, and confused all my thoughts are, with every imagination of my heart evil, and that continually; my spirit sinks under the load; "my sins are gone over mine head as a heavy burden, too heavy for me to bear."

Yefan.—You know what errand Christ came upon; suppose you are the greatest of sinners upon earth, yet "it is a true saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ came into the world to save the chief of sinners."

Duwiol.—Ay, Sir, the chief indeed, if ever He saves me. But I read in His word of sins not to be pardoned, and by reason of some circumstances attending my indwelling corruptions, and my deceitful heart, I fear my sins look like such; they are so against knowledge and resolution, and, if I mistake not, with too much liking and approbation.

Yefan.—You can expect no other but the corrupt part in any man will approve of sin and corruption; we can never be totally delivered from what approves of sin, till we are totally delivered from all sin. As for knowledge, it is what every believer sins more or less against; and as for resolution against sin, it discovers itself, though conquered and trampled under foot, to be yet from above, and therefore shall overcome at last. But as for sins unpardonable, you know our Lord says, that “all manner of sins and blasphemies should be forgiven to the children of men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.”

Duwiol.—Sir, that is it. I am often ready, though unwilling, to conclude myself guilty of that blasphemy which is not to be pardoned. Could I but with satisfaction see myself out of the reach of that, it would be a wonderful relief unto me.

Yefan.—Whatever that sin was, you must own that all manner of sins but that shall be pardoned.

Duwiol.—Yes, Sir, that I must own, or deny His words who cannot lie.

Yefan.—Then, as our nearest way, let us in the Lord’s name go in search of that sin, and consider what it was in the Jews, and see whether you can fairly be cleared of it. In Matt. xii. 24, we read that the Pharisees said, “This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.” This was their sin. Now, dear brother, let me ask you—Did you ever see Jesus Christ cast out devils? Did you ever hear all the people around Him, upon such a work, cry out, “Is not this the Son of David?” Did you thereupon, in envy and indignation, disdain Him; and, in the presence of an amazed, almost convinced, company, say that the spirit whereby Christ cast out devils was Beelzebub, the prince of devils?

Duwiol.—No, Sir; nothing of any part of this.

Yefan.—Dear brother, nothing less than all this must be considered in that unpardonable blasphemy. Our Lord says that all manner of sin and blasphemy but that should be pardoned.

Duwiol.—Then, Sir, if the Pharisees had not seen Christ do such works before their eyes, they could not have sinned so?

Yefan.—Certainly not. Our Lord Himself tells us so. “If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.”—John xv. 24.

Duwiol.—My dear and honoured teacher, blessed be God, there is a vast load sensibly removed from my soul! It is an amazing comfort, by faith, to see my sins pardonable. But what is the meaning of Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6; of Heb. x. 26; of Heb. xii. 17; and of 1 John v. 16?

Yefan.—The first calls upon us to be watchful and diligent, for it is possible for Christians of the highest enjoyments to fall; but though great Christians, it is impossible they should renew themselves to repentance, flee by faith to a crucified Redeemer, and make a public example of evangelical sorrow after a godly sort. God indeed can, and will, raise them up. The second tells the Jews that whatever their sins were, there remained no more sacrifice—no, not at Jerusalem and the temple—but fiery indignation, which accordingly came to pass. The third tells us that Esau could not make his father Isaac repent, and take the blessing from Jacob and give it him. And the fourth tells us that there are sins unto temporal death, which must be the meaning of the place; for any sin persisted in, is unto eternal death.

Duwiol.—Through the mercy of God I have received instruction and relief. May I never forget the goodness of the Most High! And may I, as the chief of sinners, cast all that concerns me for time and eternity upon the all-sufficient Saviour.

Yefan.—Oh, my dear brother, what has God wrought! It is He that proclaims liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison-doors to them that are bound; and unto you He has given beauty for ashes. I hope we shall exalt His name together. But, Cariadus, pray where is your young lad, which you said has of late been under some concern about his soul?

Cariadus.—Sir, I will call him. Here he comes.

Yefan.—Come, Hyddysg, for I know your name. What are you under concern about—your eternal state?

Hyddysg.—I never was in my life as I am now, Sir.

Yefan.—How are you now ?

Hyddysg.—I can't tell ; only I am troubled and uneasy.

Yefan.—What makes you troubled and uneasy ?

Hyddysg.—My father's great distress, Sir ; and I thought if he was in danger, I was in much more.

Yefan.—And what did you do in your danger ?

Hyddysg.—As my father did—cry to God to save me.

Yefan.—And how do you think to be saved ?

Hyddysg.—I don't know, Sir ; but I think He that can save me knows how. My parents always told me I was undone, and it is so ; and they always talked of Jesus Christ the Saviour, and I desire He would save me.

Yefan.—Who is Jesus Christ ?

Hyddysg.—I don't know, Sir ; only I know He is the Saviour ; for I have heard you often say, and my master Edgar, and my parents also, that there is salvation in no other.

Cariadus.—Sir, he has been a poor naughty boy, and never would regard anything till this distress came upon his father ; and what his master and we made him learn by rote of the principles of religion. He never would incline to understand ; but may his poor heart now be thoroughly bent for God.

Yefan.—My dear youth, remember that you are a great sinner, by nature and practice utterly undone ; that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, according to His divine nature the eternal God, but took our nature into personal union with Himself ; and so is God and man in one person for ever. He died for sinners, because death was the wages of sin ; but the bonds of death could not detain Him ; therefore He arose from the dead, and ascended to heaven, and sends His Holy Spirit down to convert and sanctify poor sinners, and to help them to pray to God, and walk with Him. He makes use of means to instruct the souls of men, and He can instruct the minds of children. I hope you will not neglect those means, but desire God to help you to make the best improvement of them.

Then others of the family were called, and to each he spoke in the Lord's name ; and then in a solemn manner with them all prayed, giving praises to the Father of lights for that special relief given to His distressed

servant; so in the tenderest Christian love took His leave of them all.

NEOPH.—Well, what treasures Christian teachers should be furnished with, that they may bring forth things new and old, to fathers, young men, and children! Something in this account you gave I have picked up, through mercy, for my profit. The unpardonable blasphemy, and the several texts, I have seen to the same purpose opened and considered at large in Maurice's "Faith Encouraged."^c Blessed be God for His covenant of free grace! Now, how did the ruling elders visit?

EPEN.—The teacher made several visits more that day, among some of the godly poor, strengthening their hands, and worshipping God with them. In one or two places he visited, some notions inconsistent with the Gospel were springing up, of which I shall not at present give account. I have tired you sufficiently for this time; evening is upon us, and our families want us. My dear brethren and neighbours, the presence of Zion's King be with us all.

^c I have not succeeded in discovering any work under this title among the writings of Mr. Matthias Maurice.—N.

DIALOGUE VI.

DISCIPLINE—RULING ELDERS' VISITATION—OFFENCES PRIVATELY
REPROVED, AND PUBLICLY ADMONISHED.

PHILALETHES.—Neighbours and brethren, I am glad to see you all so cheerful, and the time so well observed. On the same minute we all meet under this delightful tree, which in part grew for our sake, that in the shade thereof our conversation might be attended with the greater pleasure. But our Neophytus, such is his zeal, got the start of us, and, I am afraid, thought us long.

NEOPH.—I have not been here many minutes, but am glad you are all come. Of a question of mine, mentioned at the close of the last opportunity, no notice was taken; so I was resolved to be here time enough, that I might repeat it before anything else offers. Pray, dear Epenetus, how did the ruling elders visit?

EPEH.—They had not their fixed days to receive visits, as the preaching elders had, but every day to them was alike; if they were not found at home one day, the persons who sought them might come another, or leave a request that they would please to visit them. The doors were always open for any that came upon the concern of Christ's kingdom. Many, under the first work of God upon their hearts, did choose to use freedom with them; complaints and grievances were generally brought to them; and were very often by their endeavours so removed, that the preaching elders never heard of them. Didwyll, being a person in years, was generally at home, and was prudent and wise, capable of giving the best advice. As for Diwyd and Dyfal there was no end of their labour abroad, from family to family, from person to person, diligently discharging their trust and duty. Gruffydd, being a person of strong faith,

was of great use to them all; and they were all men of prayer, and capable of giving a good account of any case in practical religion; and had their proper times of communicating to each other on their common concern, which generally was done with prayer.

NEOPH.—The cases wherein they were concerned were doubtless very many; but I should be very thankful if you would please to favour us with an instance or two.

EPEN.—You must observe, then, that Dyfal one day in his visits entered the house of one Diwall, a person thought to be too *negligent* in several religious duties, but received the elder very kindly, as did also the family. After a very little time in common discourse, says the elder Dyfal,

Come, brother Diwall, let us redeem our time unto some religious purpose, and see how the work of God flourishes. You have been planted in the house of the Lord now some time, and how do you flourish in His courts?

Diwall.—I hope, well; I know more than I did, and have good words and good thoughts; so I hope I flourish. I love to hear both our bishops at all times; and I was greatly pleased, of late, to hear our pastor say, that he who did not provide for his own family had denied the faith, and was worse than an infidel; and, indeed, I think so too.

Elder.—It is a certain truth, that persons careless of their families are great strangers to the work of faith; and, generally speaking, persons who neglect the duties of their particular callings, live in the neglect of the duties of their calling as Christians. Those who are slothful in business are never truly fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. But there are two sorts of duties persons owe to their families—each very necessary, and, in their proper place, very beautiful.

Diwall.—Yes, Sir, and I hope I know, and am found in both, as I have time, and as the case requires.

Elder.—I mean, a wise, moderate, well-tempered care to provide the necessaries of life for them, and that in such a way and manner as may convince them that this world is not our portion; and a holy, diligent, and zealous attendance upon the duties of religion; and that in such a way and manner as may convince them that we seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness in the first and principal place. He that does not thus, does not provide for his own family.

Diwall.—True, I often tell them so; that religion is the principal thing, and they must die ere long and leave this world.

Elder.—But upon this I should use freedom with you; Zion's King makes it my duty, and therefore in His name let me ask you,—Do you constantly and orderly worship God with your family? Do you instruct your children and servants? Do you put them upon their proper duties to God, and allow them time convenient?

Diwall.—Sir, I think I do, as well as I can; all people cannot do alike, and I cannot always do as I would. My wife knows I endeavour to discharge all my duty.

Elder.—Sister Isel (for that was her name), how is it with you in your soul, and how prospers religion in your family?

Isel.—I am but very low, like a silly dove without a heart, and am often discouraged, but, through mercy, not left; for, at times, I am refreshed in hearing the Gospel preached, and the public worship of God is made precious to me, though, by some means or other, my comfort is like the morning cloud, and my religious resolutions are too much like the early dew. And as to religion in our family, my soul desires to see more of it. I am afraid our house is not with God as it ought to be.

Diwall.—Why, wife, you know I pray in the family, and often read; and speak of good things, too, as well as I can.

Isel.—We do not always pray; and when we do, it is seldom in a seasonable hour, and I am afraid never in such a spirit as becomes the duty.

Elder.—Ah, brother Diwall! I am sorry to hear this account. The God of the families of Israel have mercy on you.

Diwall.—Sir, business calls me out, it may be in the morning, and sometimes keeps me out late; and you know that must be minded.

Elder.—Ah, brother! if your heart was thoroughly bent for prayer, you would follow the apostle's rule,—“Watching thereunto with all perseverance.” You would get your family together betimes; you would make all haste home, that as seasonably as possible you might worship God with them; and think their times of worship should be as punc-

tually kept as their meal-times. But how do you do at meals? God should, in a holy manner, be worshipped before we eat, and when we have done, and are refreshed. Is that part of duty regularly kept up?

Diwall.—Yes, Sir, when I am with them.

Elder.—Pray, sister Isel, how is it with you as to that God-glorifying duty when your husband is not with you?

Isel.—Truly, very indifferent; I am but a poor woman, and generally low in heart; and I often tell my son Anianol he should own God in the refreshment we have, but he never does.

Elder.—Hark ye, Anianol, don't you think it is your duty to crave a blessing on your food, and return thanks when you are refreshed? You are not a child; you have often heard your duty in public sermons; and I know your master Edgar gave you the best instructions. I hope you are convinced it is the Lord that gives you your daily bread, and can make your table a blessing.

Anianol.—I do not know, Sir.

Elder.—No! did you not hear our honoured pastor, last Lord's day, say that everything is sanctified to us by the word of God and prayer, therefore we should pray for a blessing on our food?

Anianol.—I was not there.

Elder.—Seeing I can ask with your parents' leave—and if without it, I should even think it my duty—pray, where were you?

Anianol.—Taking a harmless walk in the fields, Sir.

Elder.—And can you say it is a harmless thing to neglect the worship of God, and profane the Lord's day?

Anianol.—Sir, there are great numbers that take that liberty, but I know of no harm that we did.

Elder.—Can you think that sin is no harm?

Anianol.—Sir, people cannot kill, nor steal, and be harmless; but we did neither, so I think we sinned not.

Elder.—Pray, young man, tell me what is sin?

Anianol.—Such wickedness I never did, never shall.

Elder.—Then you want no Saviour to save you from sin?

Anianol.—I am no greater sinner than others, that I know.

Elder.—Our preaching elders have had talk with you; do you remember anything they said?

Anianol.—They said I was a sinner, and undone without a Saviour; but I cannot see much into it.

Elder.—How can you tell, then, but the blindness of your mind may be your sin and misery also?

Anianol.—I do not know for that.

Elder.—Then, poor youth, let me tell you it is so. Sin has brought that blindness upon you, and by sin you run yourself more and more into darkness. It is a very awful account the Scripture gives us of persons in your case,—“Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.” I do also, *Anianol*, tell you that you are a sinner by nature and by practice; and that there is salvation in none but Christ, and that all He saves He converts and sanctifies; and therefore, as an elder in the church of Christ that has care over you, I reprove you for your profaning the Lord’s day, omitting your proper duty while you partake of Heaven’s bounty, and call you to consider your ways and repent. Despise not your birthright, as profane Esau did. Remember the covenant of God, and the precious contents thereof, and think how great must be your folly, in regarding lying vanities, and forsaking your own mercy. If in such methods you persist, the church must take notice of your case, and as a church call you to repentance; which, if you despise, may be the last means God will please to use with you while you live. Therefore, in the bowels of the beloved Redeemer, who came to seek and to save that which was lost, I again call upon you to repent.

Then, speaking to the maid-servant, he said, Come, *Prudd* (for that was her name), how is it with you in your place and service? I hope the yoke of Christ in His evangelical institutions is easy to you.

Prudd.—I hope I am thankful I have a name in His house, and within His walls; and I am glad it is an everlasting one, that shall not be cut off. Though it is not always alike with me, as to sensible enjoyments of the Redeemer’s presence, yet I am helped to believe He is always with me, according to His word; and I earnestly beg I may always live and walk as a person that believes it. As to the dispensations of Providence, I know

my Lord does nothing amiss, and that my condition is the best for me. He says, "Art thou called being a servant? care not for it." I desire I may, wherein I am called, there walk with God. I thank you for taking notice of me, and beg your prayers.

Elder.—I must speak a word to your apprentice. Come, Moesol, you are the child of godly parents; how is it with you as to the great concern of religion?

Moesol.—I cannot tell you, Sir. Many thoughts pass through my heart, but they do not take much hold of me, nor I of them.

Elder.—But are you not under trouble of mind at those uncertainties? God says, "My son, give me thy heart."

Moesol.—I think sometimes I am. My parents used to tell me that I should seek first the kingdom of God, but things appear now as if I was to make this world my principal concern, for I am to learn of my master, Sir, and do as he bids me.

Elder.—But I hope your master bids you read and pray, worships God with you, and instructs you in religion.

Moesol.—Sir, my master is present, and can tell you what he does; but as for proper times, I don't know when nor where to find them, for I am up always very early and late, and if I am inclined to read a little before I go to bed, I am allowed no candle. Every Lord's day, indeed, I call at my father's, and there I am made to read a chapter or two.

Diwall.—Sir, in keeping him close to work I do but my duty. I never knew work hurt anybody. As for candle, I think to allow him one late in the night is wasteful and dangerous. I bid him be a good boy, and serve God, which he may do without a candle.

Elder.—Ah, my friend, things are not with you as they seemed to promise once; your very expressions discover a distance from the chiefest good. In your family you do not keep up the worship of God as you ought. Your wife, though she does not tell me so, I know is much grieved; and your son, I see, is awfully hardened. Your poor servant seems to be a slave; you seem to make him serve with rigour. Poor fellow, he is willing to serve you, nor is he averse to the service of God; but as you seem to deal with him, God must have no part of his time. Be it known to

you, that your Master also is in heaven ; neither is there respect of persons with Him ; and though your servant does not want food, yet seeing you allow him no time for God's worship, you do not give unto him what is just and equal. I charge him here before you to serve you in singleness of heart, fearing God ; and I charge you here before him, and the rest of your family, to continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving. You will take all this well, I hope, at my hands ; it is but a part of my duty which I owe to the Lord and to you. I wish I could perform it better, but I hope the Lord will help me to remember you all before the throne of grace ; and may you be helped to pray for me, who am so insufficient for my work, and often so discouraged in it.

Diwall.—I hope, Sir, you will go to prayer with us. I take your visit and faithfulness as a kindness. I wish we may receive advantage thereby.

Elder.—I thank you for accepting my service, and for calling me to seek God with and for you.

When he had done prayer, he gave the best advice to each in particular, and cautioned Diwall against excessive love to this world, and, in tender love and concern, took his leave of them all.

NEOPH.—What an encouraging mercy it must be to pastors and teachers to have such elders to assist them. While they are giving attendance to reading, exhortation, and doctrine, they may be satisfied that another part of the work of Christ's kingdom is attended to by able and faithful helpers.

THEOPH.—Right. It must deliver them from much uneasiness of heart, to know that the flock of God is under the care and inspection of faithful watchmen. They may then, as the apostle says, with abundant pleasure and satisfaction, meditate on the blessed truths they are to carry to others, and give themselves wholly to them.

PHILAL.—And what a comfort it must be to a church, to see itself under the care of so many faithful overseers, for the honour of Christ and their own spiritual advantage. It is a promised privilege. "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace, day nor night."—Isaiah lxii. 6.

CHRISTOPH.—Then I must say, what reason we have to bless the name of our dear Redeemer, who giveth gifts unto men, that He should signify His care in such a manner towards His dear churches, appoint them such officers, make willing, and qualify His servants for the discharge of their work and duty!

SYLLOG.—And I will take leave to observe how reasonable it is the churches should, in humble and earnest prayer, look unto Christ for them, and see that they do, in a Gospel spirit, submit themselves unto them!

NEOPH.—But in this visit of the ruling elder we discovered a stubborn, ignorant young man, and a father, who was too negligent in the concerns of the kingdom of Christ; and, indeed, had I been in the elder's place, I could not have cleared him of covetousness and cruelty. Was there no more notice taken of father and son?

EPEX.—Upon their persisting in their sinful ways, you may, in the course of this story, hear of some more public concern the church had with them both; but I mentioned only the visit of a ruling elder.

Dyfal, the elder, being that afternoon at leisure, visited some more families before he returned home, for the ruling elders some days had more time before them, and sometimes had less. As I said, he was at liberty that afternoon, and, turning in to a brother's house, whose name was Ysrydol, much pleasant talk he had with the family on the meaning of some Divine texts, and upon each other's experimental acquaintance with their dear Redeemer's love and friendship. But before he went to prayer with them, Ysrydol said, Sir, if you please, will you hear a small concern that lies between us and our servant here present? She is godly, we doubt not; has been, you know, a member with us for some time, with great affection speaks of Christ, and with great zeal and delight attends family worship, speaks well to the poor children, and, I believe, really is of use to them, and in all the ways of her duty I would give her all encouragement; but there are some things which, in some measure grieve me, nor can I prevail upon her to reform them. If I could, you should not have heard of them. She does not do our service in our absence as if we were present, and makes some of her acquaintance too

welcome with the best things in our house, without our leave.

Dyfal said to her,—Hawddgar (for that was her name), I am sorry there should be any uneasiness in any Christian family, and it will be to the honour of those who have any hand therein immediately to reform. Here are two things laid to your charge. Pray, how do you improve your time when your master and mistress are absent?

Hawddgar.—Not vainly, Sir; I should be under guilt if I did; but I am bound to redeem all the time I can for reading and prayer, and I cannot so well do it when they are in the way.

Elder.—What, is your place very hard, and do they allow you no time for religious duties?

Hawddgar.—I cannot say that my place is hard; I am neither up very early nor late. To do my place justice, that is not required of me; but still I want more time than I have, and I think no time so proper as when I am most alone.

Elder.—You grant you are not without convenient opportunities for private worship, a privilege some would be glad of. You say you want more time; but you have sold your time unto your master and mistress, and they pay you for it, and can you imagine that God calls you to do them injustice? You doubtless remember the rule, “Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ: not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good-will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.”—Eph. vi. 5–8. You see, it is not the Lord’s will you should do as you have done; you may expect more of His presence in a diligent improvement of your time in your proper service. But you also take unjust freedom with things that are not your own. Pray, what do you say to that?

Hawddgar.—Why, Sir, I live with a brother in Christianity, and thought I could be more free there than if I lived with heathen men, who would reproach religion for it;

and then, if I gave some of the best things, it was but to entertain some dear religious persons, unto whom, sure, my master and mistress do owe love and respect, as well as I myself.

Elder.—"Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and His doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather do them service."—1 Tim. vi. 1, 2. Then, as to your master's victuals or drink, you have no right to anything but your necessary food, nor should you give anything away, without order or leave. "Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things: not answering again. Not purloining, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." Purloining is giving away without their leave anything that is theirs. So you may plainly see that your practice is condemned by the written word of God. And as for those who come to see you when they think you are alone, under pretence of Christian conversation to be entertained, they are no better than plunderers. Wherefore, when you see those dear religious persons again, pray reprove them for their sin in tempting you to do as you have done; or, at least, in receiving from you what they should not have received. I call you to repentance, and desire you would show it.

Hawddgar.—Sir, I did not think it had been thus; but what you say lays me under conviction; I am sorry I have acted so. I have done my master and mistress wrong, and how to make them amends I cannot tell. I desire God would keep me from all appearance of such evils any more.

Ysrydol.—That is amends enough to us, Hawddgar; we desire no other; and whatever time we can spare any day for the edification of your soul, it shall be granted you; and if a Christian friend comes to see you, and stands in need of any refreshment, upon your request it shall be granted.

Hawddgar.—Sir, for your Christian tenderness, I return thanks; and so I do thankfully own the kindness and faithfulness of our honoured elder in taking this trouble with me, and humbly beg his prayers and yours.

And upon this he prayed with and for them all, and then, in tender Christian love, took his leave. Then he visited one poor Christian family or two, strengthened their hands in God, and returned to his own house.

NEOPH.—How glorious the purity, the equity, and the spirituality of the Christian religion! Our God is glorious in holiness; and where the children of men do not appear clothed with holiness, let them talk until their tongues are tired, we must say, Ichabod, where is the glory? But pray, dear Epenetus, will you give an instance of the other ruling elders in Christian visits, and some short account of the deacons in any part of their work towards the poor?

EPEN.—Whatever belonged unto the walk and conversation of the people fell directly under the care and inspection of the ruling elders. The omission of duties of any kind they, in all faithfulness, reprovèd; the weak and the weary they strengthened, and the young and feeble they encouraged; all the flock, and the lambs in the flock, they watched over to the utmost of their ability; and, under the blessing of Heaven, their endeavours were so prospered for peace and the continuance of love, that Dewi and Yefan, the pastor and teacher, knew very little of what might be disagreeable; nor were there many offenders, though there were some, of which you may have some account, dealt with in the public assemblies of the church. But as it is impossible to go over the whole of their work, so I think it is not needful to instance the visits of the other elders, who ruled and visited as the ruling elders did. But as for the deacons, if my neighbours desire it, I shall give a short account of them.

THEOPH.—By all means, dear Epenetus.

EPEN.—The charitable collections of the church and assembly being made, and the distributions thereof to the several poor fixed, by the common consent of elders and deacons, as they thought most requisite, the deacons always took what was allowed their respective divisions, and to every particular person, with speed and cheerfulness, delivered his part.

NEOPH.—Divisions! I thought they were all of them deacons unto the whole church?

EPEN.—So they were; but, for expediency's sake, each deacon had under his more special care the poor most convenient for him; but those divisions were only discretionary

ones among themselves, and might be altered by them at pleasure.

NEOPH.—I humbly beg you to excuse my impertinence.

THEOPH.—Nay, we are all greatly obliged to you, my dear Neophytus. It is owing to your kind assistance that, in the course of our conference, a great many profitable things have been introduced.

NEOPH.—Gently again, Theophilus ! In what light must I take this ? Is it sarcasm, or excess of candour ? But we hinder the story.

EPEN.—One day, Tirion, one of the deacons, went to visit some of the poor, and took with him their respective portions ; and entering the mean habitation of one Gwastad, a very poor man, yet very constant under his Redeemer's yoke, said, Brother, how do you and your aged yoke-fellow do ?

Gwastad.—Brother Tirion ! are you come to visit us ? What kindness is this in God and man ! We are, through mercy, as well as can be expected under our prevailing infirmities ; our houses of clay decay apace.

Deacon.—How is it with the immortal part, that cannot decay ? for the house of clay, though fearfully and wonderfully made, is but a tabernacle for the more noble spirit.

Gwastad.—Truly, it is to us as if both decayed. Our memory fails us much ; and though we were never very ready at taking in the blessed doctrine, yet we decay in capacity, and can neither receive nor retain as heretofore.

Deacon.—When the most skilful hand falls to work with decayed instruments, his work will not appear much to his praise. The immortal spirit, making use of feeble, decayed organs, must appear as if decayed too ; but an amazing mercy it is that our Redeemer will not suffer our faith to fail, though the acts thereof be disturbed and interrupted.

Gwastad.—Ay, a mercy indeed. Christ is the author and the finisher of faith ; and though sometimes I have thought my faith grew weaker, because sensible enjoyments seemed to withdraw, yet I am taught to know that faith's great concern is with Christ, who "is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." And this is very precious to us both, and of it we converse with pleasure under sensible decays.

Deacon.—Then I hope you are very comfortable in mind.

Gwastad.—Through grace, we are cheerful, and, at times, exceeding joyful. My poor wife is favoured with more of the foretastes of heaven than I am. The other day, all on a sudden, she cries out, I see Him! I see Him!—Says I, Who?—She replied, The King, the King in His beauty! He is crowned with glory and honour! Oh, I long to be with Him! Come, wife, can you tell our dear friend here how it was with you then?

Siriol (for that was her name) answered,—No, truly, husband, that I cannot; though it is not gone from me, like that great king's dream—what was his name?—for, through mercy, I remember it, and something of the savour of it remains; but as I cannot work myself up into such a sensible enjoyment of my Redeemer's presence, so I cannot put into words what I felt then; and I think it was something greater than any words. But though I am not, as then, in the mount, yet I can say, through grace, that Jesus Christ is very precious to me. He is my wisdom, He is my righteousness, He is my strength, He is my portion, He is my heaven, He is my all. Oh! "the lines are fallen to me in pleasant places, and I have a goodly heritage!" I have all things and abound. Blessed be the Lord, blessed be the Lord for ever!

Deacon.—The church give their love to you and this—

Gwastad.—What constant reason have we to admire the care of our Redeemer! That He should put into the hearts of His dear servants to send to us before we want! How great is His goodness which He lays up for us! What great things has He laid up and laid out for both worlds! We are thankful to the church and elders for their bounty, and are thankful to the Lord for honouring them with capacity and inclination for such service, and that poor unworthy *we* should be regarded.

Deacon.—I am thankful that I find you rich in faith and the comforts thereof. God deals bountifully with you; indeed, it refreshes my spirit; I carry more away than I brought. The presence of the Lord be with you.

Gwastad.—Nay, dear brother; if your time permit, I humbly beg you would spend some time in prayer with us before you depart.

Upon this he worshipped God with them, committed them and all the Israel of God to never-failing compassions.

CHRISTOPH.—Well, I see it is possible a person may be very poor, and yet very happy. What a palace was this! what royal inhabitants! Here the King of Glory made His abode! Here was the best furniture; here the brightest robes; here the greatest beauty; here the most delicious refreshments—"Wine upon the lees well refined, and fat things full of marrow!" They had heaven in themselves; they were heirs of the kingdom, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. It is impossible to take an inventory of what such do enjoy. But pray, Epenetus, proceed. I hope you have not done with the deacon yet.

EPEN.—No. He called upon another poor man, whose name was Galarus, who, in answer to his inquiries, said, I thank you, we are but sorrowful; yet I must own it is a mercy it is no worse with us. I am under pains of body that much affect my mind; my wife always feeble and much indisposed, and our child here with us, though grown into years, yet, by reason of weakness, not able to get his bread. We are poor and afflicted.

Deacon.—Well, dear brother, that is what the Lord promises in one place. "I will leave in the midst of thee a poor and afflicted people, and in the name of the Lord shall they trust." I am just come from brother Gwastad and his wife, and they are as poor as you can be, yet are as merry as birds of day. Come, you have the same reason, through grace, to triumph. Your portion is great, and the afflictions of your present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in you.

Galarus.—That is some support, indeed, that we have some hope our afflictions are not always to last; but God gives us leave to groan under them while they are upon us.

Deacon.—True, he would have us be sensible of our trials, but it is a very easy thing to exceed in complaints. There are two extremes to be avoided: to despise the chastenings of the Lord, and to faint when rebuked of Him. I hope the Lord will bear you up.

Galarus.—When we think of some years past, and take a view of our present circumstances, our hearts sink, and we wonder wherefore we are continued in this world.

Deacon.—Ah, dear brother, the time past of your life was not the most honourable part of it. You might then appear

in greater activity and vigour in the work of the kingdom, but now you are called to suffer the will of your glorious Lord, and to magnify His name in the exercise of patience. This is the most glorious part of your life, only see that you go through it honourably. The Lord calls afflictions to pass over you both, and commands us to speak comfortably to you under your trials, and see that you want for nothing. Christ is your Lord, and we are your servants, and I hope He will help us to be found in our duty.

Galarus.—Do you hear, wife? I did not think we had any honour belonging to us, but our kind brother here says we are raised to I don't know what dignity, and have I don't know how many servants. Do you think so, wife?

Trist (for that was her name) answered, Really I don't know. There are many mysteries belonging to the Christian religion, and perhaps this is one of them. I often thought that if we suffered the will of the Lord aright, we should not be destitute of comfort. I remember He says, "They that honour me I will honour." For my own part, I wish I could get over my sorrow and sing, for I hope I am an inhabitant of the rock still. I am very willing to be poor, and admire the care of God, and the kindness of His people; but the weakness of my child grieves me more than anything.

Deacon.—Christ said to one of His disciples, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." There are many things in providence that the most penetrating mind upon earth cannot unfold; but there is one truth very plain, if you and I can but believe it, that whatever God does is the very best thing to be done. Everything worketh for good. It would be a greater grief to you to see your son abusing a state of health and strength among the frothy and the profane. By this means I am fully persuaded the Lord does his soul good. Don't you hope so yourself, young man?

Cystuddiol (for so he was called) answered, Truly, Sir, I am not without hope about it. God is wise and good. I wish I knew more of Him and of His salvation. I know I am a poor sinner, and that there is no way to heaven and glory but Christ. These things I think over a little; and who knows how it would have been with me, if I had

always enjoyed health and strength. I hope I am willing to leave all with Him who is from above, and is above all, as the honoured teacher advised me when he was here last.

Deacon.—Well said, my dear young man. Christ and any condition. I must say it again—Christ and any condition. Come, brother Galarus, you see the tender Redeemer regards you all. How can you be unhappy? He has given you Himself, and how can you be poor? Don't dwell too much on things of sense. God has given you the eye of faith that enters into heaven, and can view the glories within the veil. Make use of it constantly. The church and elders ordered their love to be remembered to you and this —; and pray make your wants known, and tell me how it is with you.

Galarus.—I bless God, and thank the church, elders, and yourself. Your care is constant, and your kindness great. I cannot say that we are in want, for there is the kindness of God and the godly. My constant desire is, that all grace may abound to the whole church of God.

Deacon.—Come; at present, hurry of business calls me not. I have a little time before me; let us worship God together.

Trist.—Oh, I thank you, dear Sir. I remember, last time you were here, you could not stay to go to prayer.

Upon this he worshipped God with them; in a very particular manner prayed over their trials and wants, blessed the Lord it was so well with them as it was, and then in Christian tenderness took his leave.^a

^a It is to be regretted our author has not supplemented this beautiful account of the deacons' labours with another concerning those of "deaconesses." Strange, also, is it that one who contends so earnestly for so many elderships, in literal accordance with the Scripture epithets, "preaching," "teaching," "ruling," has not introduced into his list of ecclesiastical offices that of the deaconesses, which is at least as distinctly intimated as existing in apostolic times, *ex. gr.*, in Rom. xvi. 1, Phebe is clearly described by Paul as deaconess of the church at Cenchrea, οὔσαν διάκονον τῆς ἐκκλησίας. Tryphena, Tryphosa, and Persis (v. 12), who "laboured in the Lord" in the church at Rome, are supposed by many to be likewise deaconesses; as also the "widows" mentioned in 1 Tim. v. 9-15. Of these last, however, Neander is of opinion that they were simply widows supported by the bounty of the church, and made use of, without the distinction of office, in Christian labour and example among their own sex.

Be this as it may, the text respecting Phebe is clear and indubitable.

THEOPH.—Many thanks, dear Epenetus, for complying so readily with my request, and giving so distinct a relation of *social religion*, in the visits received or made by the officers of the church. Some things they met with which might, in a measure, distress their minds, but you told us that perhaps they might be considered after a more public manner; so I see that what we have been upon is a fair introduction unto some account of their public trials and

Here she is described by Paul himself as *διάκονος* of the church. But it is to be noted that she was a servant of one among the Gentiles; and that the greater seclusion of females among the Greeks making the ministrations of deacons among them more difficult, called for the expedient of an office held by some of their own sex. Hence Grotius says, "There (in Judea) the access to females was more free than in Greece. . . . Therefore, in Greece, it was found necessary that the church should be supplied with the additional help of females."—Grot. in Rom. xvi. 1. And it must also be allowed, as argued by Dr. Davidson, that if deaconesses were appointed in all the apostolic churches, we might expect more frequent mention of them, and clearer directions concerning their appointment.—Eccles. Polity, pp. 180, 181. Probably Maurice would agree with Hooker, who says that since women neither "did nor could receive ordination, to make them ecclesiastical persons were absurd."—Eccles. Polity, Book V.

It is, however, a matter of fact, that all communions have virtually appointed "deaconesses," though in modern times they generally deny them the official designation. In all countries and ages, whatever the variety of social custom, it has been found that there is a certain department of work which can be best performed by women, and this more especially in services of sympathy, bounty, and instruction towards her own sex. Indeed, in name and form also, this office existed in the Eastern Church for twelve hundred years; and though the Western Church began early to disregard it, still it did not finally abolish it till the tenth century; and the modern "Sisters of Mercy," and other female orders, have more than effected its re-establishment.

And where is the Christian congregation where it is not found that a goodly part of the deacons' service is performed by pious and charitable women? "Dorcas Societies," "District Visiting Societies," &c., and the unrecorded private attentions bestowed upon sick and poor, outcast and felon, can testify. Many a minister finds the whole that is for good of his diaconate in the persons of the "unordained" benevolent and prudent ladies of his charge.

The office sustained by Phebe, then, may be looked upon as having its foundation not so much in the social conventionalism of the East as in the benevolence of Christianity, and in the superior aptitudes of woman for works of gentleness and compassion. And possibly it is quite as well that this service should be performed without the name of office.—N.

afflictions, which I hope now, in what order you think most convenient, you'll please to favour us with.

NEOPH.—But, with submission, I may suppose that they had trials among them which never came under public consideration, but between brother and brother. Pray, if Epenetus pleases, and with the good leave of the company, may I not first desire a brief account of them?

THEOPH.—Did not I tell you, my Neophytus, that your usefulness was great in this conference, for many profitable things would have escaped us else?

NEOPH.—Or introduced in a more orderly manner, and to more advantage, most excellent Theophilus.

EPEN.—I shall then, in the first place, gratify my young friend. Upon a certain time, in some discourse which Egwan and one Hyderus had, wherein they seemed to be of different sentiments, the latter told the former that he was an insignificant fellow, whose thoughts were not to be regarded. Egwan said, in answer, that he took it very ill of him. The other replied, You may take it as you please. So their conversation ended in a cloud. But Egwan had but little rest that night. Is it so, then, says he to himself, and yet did Christ redeem me? Did the Spirit of the Lord visit my heart? Did the church of Christ receive me; and must I, though I am weak and feeble, be called insignificant? Tossed and tumbled through the night under much uneasiness, he got up, and, as was always his way, committed himself, in the first place, to God; and while he was at prayer, those words came into his mind, "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone." He quickly saw that it was not his immediate business to divulge it to anybody, but to go directly to the brother who gave him the offence. Accordingly, he desired God to give him meekness of wisdom, and bless his design, and after some time went, found Hyderus, and spoke to him as follows:—

Egwan.—Brother, I have had a very uneasy night; you spoke, I think, very unadvisedly; you have grieved me much, and I think you have sinned against God. I have judged it my duty to come and have some talk with you about it; I have mentioned it to none but the Lord. You know, in derision and disdain you called me an insignificant

fellow. Pray, what do you think of the expression, and of the spirit you were in?

Hyderus.—Indeed, I think it was not worth your while to come to me about it. And though I charge you not with pride, yet pray does it not look very much that way, that you should make it your business to come hither to prove yourself valuable and significant?

Egwan.—I came with no such design, but to tell you that I am grieved; for if I am such a person as you described me, then am I not regarded by the Redeemer of sinners; I have no portion in Him, nor does His Spirit dwell in me. Why did the church of Christ receive me? I think you have censured the whole church and its elders in a like manner with myself. Worse words I could have borne from heathen men; but to be disdained and derided by you, a brother, goes very near me.

Hyderus.—I don't pretend to justify what I said, but you might as well have been easy without taking any notice of it.

Egwan.—And suffer the sin to lie upon you, and so bring a sin also upon myself? Brother, it is nothing but repentance for sinning against God that I desire. I am willing, I hope, to think meanly of myself; but I think I should not be willing to see anything that belongs to the kingdom of our dear Redeemer disdained.

Hyderus.—Dear brother, I disdain you not. I am sorry I so sinned against God and you, and desire that brotherly love and respect may continue.

Egwan.—Amen. I am satisfied, dear brother.

CHRISTOPH.—What a speedy, happy end! Oh, what endless strife of tongues, evil surmisings, animosities, prevail, for want of observing such a method as this! What wise and righteous rules has our dear Redeemer given His churches! Where they are observed, peace and love must flourish.

THEOPH.—And where they are not observed, there must be much disorder; and to the poor elders, who watch over such a people, there must be distress enough!

PHILAL.—I happened to be of late in a certain place, where there was a person greatly blamed for acquainting the elders immediately with what he apprehended sinful in

another, who, as every body judged, was overtaken in liquor, and the case was undeniably plain; but he insisted upon it that the person who informed against him was a greater transgressor than he, because he did not observe this rule, to deal with him privately first; and there were several of his mind.

THEOPH.—I hope none of the elders were. Lovers of strong liquors will always endeavour to extenuate the crime. But, vain man as he was, what had he to do with that rule? He who gave offence to all the world, so far as he was known, must have nothing said to him but in a private way! Ah, dear Philalethes, by what I can learn, such persons are the very canker-worms and caterpillars of the Christian profession. I greatly desire the churches may be delivered from such devourers. He who in the face of the sun prefers his bottle, notwithstanding his prating about religion, who defrauds his family of what is justly their due, who destroys a constitution made for better service, hardens his heart, and sinfully wastes precious time in gratifying a vitiated appetite, and in noise, bluster, and nonsense, which should be employed in the service and worship of the Lord, or in the duties of his calling, cannot be too publicly censured.

CHRISTOPH.—Oh, I love this indignation of yours! May all the churches of Christ be filled with it, and may they be delivered for ever from lovers of strong liquor! To receive and retain such within their walls, will be the same with what they of old did, who received the Trojan horse.

NEOPH.—And I say, may the camp of the saints, and the beloved city, be for ever delivered from them, and from all other immoral persons. But I am thinking of Egwan; what if he had gone to the elder first, as he had once thought to do?

EPEN.—Why, then he would have reproved him for taking such a wrong step, and would have informed him better, and sent him about his business.

NEOPH.—But what if Hyderus had justified himself?

EPEN.—Then Egwan must have desired a brother or two to go along with him, that they might use their joint endeavours to bring the offender to repentance.

NEOPH.—Favour us with an instance of that nature.

EPEN.—A servant of Cyfiawn, of whom you have had some account before, went to one Byrbwyll for something he wanted, and desired him to use him kindly, because he was a poor apprentice. Byrbwyll replied, that apprentices may live as well as their masters, if they please. The young man made no reply, but when he came home, thoughtlessly repeated this part of the story. Cyfiawn hearing it, said, What did he mean by saying that apprentices, if they pleased, might live as well as their masters? The young man answered, Indeed, Sir, I don't know; for he did not explain himself. The master answered, The words don't need much explaining; I hope you are very easy in your place, and resolve to be very honest in it. The servant replied, Yes, Sir, and I hope shall have reason to bless the Lord that ever I came to a place, and a master, where I am taught not only an honest calling, but the fear of the Lord also.

Upon this, after seeking God's face about it alone, Cyfiawn goes directly to Byrbwyll, and says to him, Brother, I am in measure grieved and offended, and have thought it my duty to come and tell you so: you told my servant that apprentices may live if they please as well as their masters.

Byrbwyll.—And you may think it your duty to return again as wise as you came: I gave you no just cause of offence.

Cyfiawn.—Your words now are very rash and provoking; but I desire I may be helped to exercise that patience which becomes the Gospel. I do apprehend that you have sinned against God, the young man, and me; and if you have done so, you may very well bear with a brother that comes only to call you to repentance.

Byrbwyll.—May I never be guilty of greater sin against God or man! Pray, wherein does my sin appear?

Cyfiawn.—I charge your expression with a very sinful and direct tendency to make my servant unfaithful and unjust. As a servant he wants for nothing; but a master he is not.

Byrbwyll.—Then if he wants for nothing, he may be said to live as well as his master; and, pray, where is the sin of calling him then to be pleased with his condition?

Cyfiawn.—This fig-leaf you would draw over it does but make the case worse to me. My servant said that he would have you be favourable to him, because he was a poor apprentice. Pray, what was your answer to this? That he might live as well as I did, if he pleased; which must intend a making too free with things that were not his own.

Byrbwyll.—I did not say that your apprentice might live if he pleased as well as you do, but that apprentices might live as well as their masters if they pleased.

Cyfiawn.—And pray, seeing you spoke this to my apprentice, did you not as good as tell him, 'twas he himself you meant? And I do say it was no less, in effect, than putting him upon robbing his master; and the injustice done me, if the young man should comply with your insinuation, would be the least part of the evil belonging to such a deed.

Byrbwyll.—But, perhaps, if you did not think it the greatest part, you would not have come to me upon such an errand.

Cyfiawn.—No, my loss would not have been my sin; but what must such a fact be to the servant, who thereby violates the holy precepts of God, abuses the trust reposed in him, exposes himself to punishment in this life, and in the next; and what must the man be thought of, who by base insinuations put him upon this?

Byrbwyll.—Indeed, I must tell you that your words are very provoking, and were it not for regard to religion, I should discover my resentment in another manner than I do. What, can't a man be free with his customers, in an innocent jest, but he must be treated after this manner? Suppose I sinned, yet I think you are the greater sinner to use me thus. I'll hear no more of your talk: I've had enough.

Cyfiawn.—And I've had nothing of what I came for, but too much of what adds to my grief; I earnestly desire you may have repentance graciously given you.

And so they parted, both under uneasiness of mind, you must think. *Byrbwyll* was vexed with himself, that he should be such a fool as rashly to speak such a word as made him look like a rogue; and how to get off with the reputation of a man, not to say a Christian, he could not tell. He

knew it appeared in that light wherein Cyfiawn took it; but to own so much, and confess sorrow, he could not tell. Cyfiawn went home grieved under his non-success in so good a design: could not rest in his mind about it; prayed the Lord to forgive any imprudences that might have attended him in the step he had taken, and guide and bless the next: and it was not long before he took two brethren with him, whose names were Doeth and Ystyriol, and to Byrbwyll they went. Cyfiawn said:—

Brother, I cannot let things remain thus between you and me; I still apprehend myself to be a grieved person; you sinned in speaking to my servant as you did; and though God, I hope, will keep him from what your expression tends to, yet your sin is the same, nor should I suffer it to lie upon you; wherefore, after seeking God about it, I have brought these brethren with me, according to our Lord's rule; I desire nothing but your repentance.

Byrbwyll.—If you, or either of these brethren, can make it plain that I sinned against God, yourself, or your servant, I hope I shall be willing to repent; but I think your dealing with me the last time was somewhat harsh; for I had no design to put apprentices upon plundering their masters.

Cyfiawn.—The designs of the heart are too deep to be discerned by other men; to search these is what belongs to the Infinite Mind only; my business is only with your expression; the whole account of it I faithfully gave to these brethren, and now commit it chiefly to their management.

Doeth.—The account, as I received it, is thus: That upon brother Cyfiawn's servant's praying you to be favourable, and use him kindly, because he was a poor apprentice, you replied, that apprentices might live as their masters if they pleased; and was it just thus?

Byrbwyll.—Yes, I believe it was much to that effect.

Doeth.—Whenever a poor servant came to consider the import of such an expression, what do you think he could make of it? How could he fairly furnish himself with things as good and costly as his master if he pleased? Neither goods nor money can he produce; pray, which way then must he turn his hand?

Byrbwyll.—Nay, I do not know; let him turn it as he will. I am very sorry that you give yourselves and me such trouble.

Ystyriol.—Consider, brother; we desire nothing but your repentance, and I hope you shall never hear more of this story. And, seeing you have dropped such a word, which perhaps has more evil in it than you designed, let us entreat you to be sorry before God and man.

Byrbwyll.—I own it was rash; but it was more in jest than any thing else. I am sorry it is so insisted upon.

Ystyriol.—You know that foolish jesting is sinful, and if it is no more than that, the word of Christ calls you to repent; moreover, if you put the case to yourself, you would have taken it ill if any man had expressed himself after that manner to your servant.

Doeth.—Ah, brother, our speech should be always so seasoned as to administer grace unto the hearers. We can never be too cautious and wise. It is very easy to make poor servants think their state a hardship, under which they may, at the expense of what is not their own, help themselves. I desire I never may, by any insinuation, in jest or earnest, put a servant upon any thing that tends to an indiscreet, much less an unrighteous thought, word, or work. What looks with that tendency in your expression is what, in our dear Lord's name, we call you to repentance for.

Byrbwyll.—Well, I shall not justify myself in it; it was spoken foolishly, and I am very sorry I so sinned against God, the young man, and his master; and I desire the young man may be sent for, that I may at present tell him so; or, I desire you, brethren, to do it for me. Pray for me; and, dear brother Cyfiawn, forgive me; I hope I shall never be suffered to transgress so any more.

Cyfiawn.—I bless God, I am entirely satisfied; and, if you please, let us in prayer worship God together.

NEOPH.—I must, and I hope shall for ever own, that the beauty of the Lord our God shines upon all His blessed institutions. Here was proper work for every grace in the offender and the offended. Faith, prayer, wisdom, patience, compassion, confession, pardon, and peace, and every thing else almost that belongs to Christianity. And as they acted

in those instances, so I suppose they would in any other personal offence that might be suffered to attend them.

EPEN.—Yes, yes, the same rule always; and if at any time they turned out of it, into ways of their own devising, they always met with proper reproof.

THEOPH.—But all offences were not thus ended?

EPEN.—No; some were brought into the church. You may take one as follows:—A brother, whose name was Gwirion, tried to cheapen a garment in the shop of one Cyfrwys; they could not agree about the price, and Gwirion went his way. He being gone, that garment was removed, and another, not so good, put in its place—whether by accident or contrivance must be left; however, the man comes and takes a turn again into the shop, lays his hand upon the garment, and says, Stay, is this the garment? Ay, ay, says Cyfrwys, that is the garment. Well, said he, will you take the money for it? Yes, replied the other, but more than you offered, I hope. Then, said Gwirion, I will give but so much more, or leave it. Said Cyfrwys, I will not turn you away, because you are a friend; take it. When he came home, and more narrowly examined what he had bought, he saw plainly that he was deceived. He carried it back, and told Cyfrwys that was not the garment; but he replied, it was what he had sold. But, says Gwirion, you told me that this was the garment. I did so, said the other, and say so still, and this is the garment, and that is the garment, and so is that yonder. But surely, said Gwirion, there is a sort of falsehood in what you say; and I desire you to repent of it, and give me the right garment or my money. I am no liar, says Cyfrwys, you have the garment you bought; and so, pray, trouble me no longer. The next day he takes with him two brethren more, but he was proof against all, and would not hear them.

Upon this they all returned to Gwirion's house, and there they mourned before the Lord, not for the loss sustained, but because a *Christian* should deceive, and justify himself in iniquity. Now, Gwirion thought, that according to the laws of the great King, it was his duty to tell the church, and the brethren with him thought so too. Accordingly, in a very little time, he went to Didwyll, one of the ruling elders, and told him all the story.

NEOPH.—But you said that he thought it his duty to tell the church, and he tells only one of the ruling elders.

EPEN.—And for a good reason, because all things were brought before the church by the elders. They could never have done things decently and in order without that. Things frivolous or unseasonable, destructive of the peace of the church, would otherwise frequently have been brought in among them. But one elder being informed, he consulted the rest, that every thing might be brought under public consideration in the best season and order. In this case one of the elders was informed, and he consulted his brethren; they could not see but the aggrieved person had done his duty, and that the offence was such as called now for public notice. They ordered a brother to acquaint Cyfrywys that if God continued his life and health, he must not fail being at the next church meeting; and, indeed, in those early days of Christianity, the members seldom missed being present. After a considerable time spent in the worship of God, and the work of His house, Didwyll spoke as follows:—

Brethren, our Lord is upright, and there is no unrighteousness with Him; he loveth justice, and hateth iniquity; and all those who love Him should hate evil. Some who were members of the church of Corinth are reprov'd by Paul for doing wrong to, and defrauding their brethren. To our grief we have something among us of the same nature. And here he goes particularly over the whole matter between Gwirion and Cyfrwys, and then told the church that it was the will of Christ they should now as a church consider the case.

Yefan.—Brother Cyfrwys, you are here present, can you think that there is any just exception to be made against this representation or account of the case? You have your liberty to make the affair as plain as you can, that the church may, with all the advantage possible, judge of it.

Cyfrwys.—The account in the main is right, he did cheapen the garment, and departed; but as I can dispose of my own goods into what part of my shop I please, I removed that garment for my pleasure, and hung another in its place. He returned, and said, Is this the garment? and I said, it was the garment; and every body that sees it

must own that it is the garment, as much as this I wear is the garment, or that you wear is the garment. I hope the church will clear me, and call him to repentance for giving me this trouble, and doing injury to my name as a fair trader.

Dewi.—Can any mortal think that this satisfies your conscience! When he asked whether that was the garment, you knew he meant the garment he had cheapened before; and you deceived him, and against your very conscience told him it was. In a way that discovers very little sincerity, you would have us think you told him no falsehood; whereas, it is plain to a demonstration you did; for though that was a garment which you put in the place of the former, yet it was not *the* garment, and you knew it was not. He that speaks with a design to deceive another, tells a falsehood; you most certainly did so. All who name the name of Christ are under the strongest obligations to depart from all unrighteousness. Your case is plain; you are a transgressor against God and man; you have distressed us, you have grieved us. Are you a Christian? Did your heavenly Father, then, when He ordered forth for you the best robe, serve you as you served your brother? Would you be willing any man living should serve you in such a manner? Could you, in the presence of your family, some of whom at least knew what you had done, worship God in the evening of that day, and desire Him to bless the work of your hands, and establish it? Or, could you go to God at all, with whom no unrighteousness shall dwell? Brethren, church of the living God, if you do, as a church, charge Cyfrywys with the sin of fraud, admonish him, and call him to show immediate and sincere repentance, signify it by lifting up your hands:—which they unanimously did.

Upon this, turning to Cyfrywys, who was at that time in tears, You see the church's indignation against your sin, and their compassion towards you. Your iniquity they hate, your real repentance they greatly desire, and I pray you now to give us some account how it is with you.

Cyfrywys.—I am sinful, base, and self-condemned. I have dishonoured Christ, I have wronged my brother, I have grieved the church, I have given occasion to the

enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, I have brought a bad reproach upon the most righteous interest of the holy Redeemer. I cannot tell you how it is with me, only in the dust I lie and loath myself; yet, endeavouring to look to Him with whom there is forgiveness, I thank you for your care over me, and your kind endeavours to bring me to repentance; and may it appear to be repentance, indeed, so long as I live in this world! Amends to my wronged brother I can never make in every sense, but I hope I shall endeavour it: and as to the stain and scandal I have brought upon your holy profession, my heart is grieved and broke under a sense of it; do with me as seemeth good unto you.

With many tears truly he spoke these things, and with many tears the assembly heard them; and Yefan spoke for his instruction and encouragement, and to the church he said, Brethren, if you judge him a sincere penitent, receive his repentance, call him to a close walk with God, and testify your love, signify it by lifting up your hands. This was again unanimously done; and in affectionate prayer and praise the meeting was concluded. And poor Gwirion went to Cwfrwys immediately, and showed him all tokens of peace and love.

THEOPH.—Here we may see how the Lord did shine upon His own appointments! And this offers an invincible reason why all church members should be real believers in Christ; for what regard would a worldly person, likely to suffer nothing in what he valued most, have shown to such spiritual weapons as these?

SYLLOG.—And, therefore, when carnal persons came to lay claim to the name of a Christian church, the carnal governors thereof, in their carnal wisdom, found out carnal weapons, as most fit for their business; but among them that believe, spiritual weapons are mighty through God.

CHRISTOPH.—And I am thinking, what a mighty honour our dear Lord has conferred upon His poor churches, in that they are thus to watch over the members, and blessed in the use of means for establishing the weak, and healing the sick and wounded.

NEOPH.—By sick and wounded I suppose you mean backsliders in heart and life; but some of them are never

healed, but hardened, separated from church-fellowship, and some have died unrestored and unconcerned.

THEOPH.—You make my flesh tremble; and I wish I could say that what you have mentioned seldom or never occurs. But I can say, that where the discipline of the church is duly administered, it never does occur but among lovers of ale, who drink themselves into a spirit they esteem big and brave, and harden themselves even against God Himself; which, notwithstanding the noise they may make about religion, I look upon to be nothing but a daring degree of atheism.

PHILAL.—Yes; I suppose also among *heretics* it has been observed, who, because they received not the love of the truth, were given up to strong delusions that they should believe a lie.

NEOPH.—But pray, Epenetus, will you favour us with a story that will carry us a little farther into acquaintance with that church discipline which the rules of the word require, and *social religion* calls for?

EPEN.—I told you before of one Diwall, visited and reproved by one of the ruling elders. That man was no great honour to religion. He hardened many a heathen, and grieved the brotherhood; and for disagreeable things, whereof they were informed, they had regularly and constantly to deal with him. Whatever they charged him with, he always would say, Prove it, prove it; and sometimes he would do all he could to invalidate what evidence they had; and when a fact was proved plain, he would say, I am sorry; what would you have me say more? Thus he continually distressed them; and always when he thought he was caught, would repent, and evermore have that word at his fingers' ends, "If he says he repents, thou shalt forgive him." But there is a time for the iniquity of the Amorites to be full; and you shall briefly hear how it fell out with him.

One day a poor brother, whose name was Diniwed, bought of him a piece of goods, paid, and went home. There came accidentally into his house an acquaintance, who, seeing this new piece of goods, asked him what he gave for it: he told him so much. I hope, says the acquaintance, you will not take it ill, if I say you don't

understand such things. Diniwed replied, No, nor of any body else; yea, I told the person of whom I bought it, that I did not understand it, and desired him to deal only fairly by me, which he said he would. The acquaintance replied, I wish you had bought yours of the person I bought mine of; for I have the very same with this, for very little above half your money. Says Diniwed, Pray, whom did you buy yours of? He answered, Of Diwall. And, says Diniwed, I bought mine of the very same person. Says the other, I'll fetch mine this minute. And so he did; and, upon the compare, they were exactly the same.

Upon this, poor Diniwed was struck with confusion. What, did I refer myself to him, to be buyer and seller himself, to be thus served? Well, I must go and tell him his fault, and shall be glad if you'll please to go with me. No, no, replied the other, "Go tell him his fault between thee and him alone." And accordingly Diniwed went himself, after taking some time to consider the matter over, and refer himself and the whole to the Lord; greatly desiring to be kept in it from self-seeking and passion. He came, found Diwall at home, and spoke to him as follows:—

Diniwed.—Sir, I hope I am in all things willing to live honestly, and I used to think that all the servants of Christ were of that mind; but either I was mistaken in that, or mistaken in you; not in *that*, I'm well assured. You have deceived me! You told me you would use me fairly, and you knew in your conscience, if I can properly use such a word, that you made me pay almost double what the thing was worth.

Diwall.—Then the more fool you; and still the greater fool to come here with such a story. Pray, go about your business, and if you know how, make the best of what you have bought.

Diniwed.—Had I lost so much money out of my pocket, or had a professed heathen robbed me, it would have grieved me little; but for you, a professed Christian, to do as you did, goes to my very heart. You have sinned against God, you have acted with great injustice towards me, and I think it my duty to call you to repentance.

Diwall.—You call me to repentance! Pray you go home and repent, and mind your duty there.—And so he with-

drew in a passion. The poor man went home, and desired direction what to do further in it, that he might discharge his duty, and glorify the Redeemer. It was not long before he took two brethren with him, one of them the very person who had bought the very same goods a great deal cheaper. To Diwall they came, and endeavoured to fasten a conviction upon him of his sin; the person especially who had bought of him the same goods, for very little more than half the price, urged it hard, for he thought he had very good advantage of his side. But said

Diwall,—Thank you, master; you reward me well for my kindness. But I am sorry you give me this trouble, and in a word I must tell you, my *friends*, if I can call you so, that I sell, and shall sell, as people have wisdom to buy; and other answer you shall have none from your humble servant.—And so withdrew.

THEOPH.—Oh fie! what a base, unrighteous disposition did this man discover! And pray, what did poor Diniwed do then?

EPEN.—Why, he and his companions went directly to the elder, Didwyll, and told him all punctually. He received them kindly, talked with affection and judgment, and told them he would take what care he could of this affair.

Didwyll, upon this, quickly goes to his son-in-law Yefan's house, and the other elders were sent for. He gave them the whole account, very distinctly; one of them went to prayer, and then, in the best manner they could, they considered their duty. They unanimously judged it was the pleasure of their King and Lawgiver that Diwall should be, the very next church meeting, publicly dealt with for injustice and covetousness; and a brother was ordered to tell him so.

At the church meeting, Yefan spoke to the church in substance as follows:—

Dear brethren, unto all those who are lovers of the Lord, and we hope through grace we are of the number, it is given as a special charge that they should hate evil. All sin is exceeding sinful; but there are some sins which may be called *great evils*. And whatever persons may imagine, I here declare that *covetousness*, however it may be cloaked,

is one of the *greatest* of evils. In Scripture it is nothing less than downright idolatry, and a sin that should not be so much as named among Christians. For the iniquity of it God was wroth, and the covetous person the Lord abhorreth; I grant it is a sin not very easily discovered, and therefore the more dangerous, and to be guarded against with the more care. If it enters the heart, it is turned away from God; if it enters a church, and is encouraged there, it will be the ruin of it; for the covetous cannot inherit the kingdom of God; and therefore I may justly take up our dear Lord's words, "Take heed and beware of covetousness." I look upon all injustice to be covetousness, and all covetousness to be injustice; and therefore in a present work that lies before us, which distress and duty lead us to, though either of these two words may be used, the same sin is intended—a greedy desire, and a crafty pursuit after what is not one's own; and this sin, horrid as it is, I charge a member of ours, Diwall, here present with; and call him either to justify himself, if sincerely he can, or to signify unfeigned and evangelical repentance.

Diwall.—Sir, I think it my duty to justify myself, and trust it will be no difficult task, before persons of judgment and impartiality. But, until I hear more said, it is enough for me to reply, that I am *not guilty*.

Didwyll.—I am very willing that Diwall should be justified, provided it can be done according to the rules of the word. Brethren, he is charged with injustice and covetousness, which is the same with making this present evil world his ultimate end. This, awful as it is, we are ready to prove. He that withholdeth more than is meet, he that oppresses the poor, he who does not act justly in buying or selling, he who makes the things of another world give way to the things of this, must be deemed a covetous person; we are ready to prove that Diwall walks in them all.

Diwall.—The first I cannot be guilty of, for I give to the poor; and with regard to myself, I am not like those narrow souls that dare not enter a public-house; as to the second, I appeal to the poor I am concerned with; in the third, my customers will clear me; and in the fourth, my own conscience.

Dyfal.—Brethren, what he gives to the poor is known only to himself, and, I suppose, not to anybody else; our deacons know that, at public collections, he gives nothing. And as to his kindness to himself in public-houses, it is well known that some persons have been possessed with more evil spirits than one; he may be a lover of strong liquors, though covetous; but there is this remarkable in it, that he never loves to keep company with any in those public-houses but those who are in some respect or other under him. The company of gentlemen of sense, who have no dependence on him, he ever avoids. As to the second, let those come forth to whom he lends a little money, as he pretends, without interest, and tell us what slavery they go through for him. Let them tell us for what low wages they must work, or be turned off, and pay him immediately some little sums that lie in their hands. “Let them take care to keep themselves honest, and he will take care to keep them poor.” With regard to the third, we have a very recent instance of his justice. [Here the whole story of Diniwed was mentioned, and how he said he would sell as people had wit to buy.] And as to the fourth, I know family duty is not kept up, neither constantly nor seasonably; and I, myself, also know, that his poor apprentice is allowed neither time nor candle for anything that looks like religion.

Diwyd, another of the ruling elders, said,—Brethren, it is our principle to walk in righteousness and mercy towards all, and therefore God forbid that we should discover any injustice towards Diwall. Therefore, we shall call forth proper evidences to everything he is charged with. As to his withholding more than is meet, the deacons, we hope, are evidences sufficient.

The deacons unanimously said,—He seldom or never gives anything to our public collections for the poor; and as to his duty to our honoured preaching elders, who by all the church, except himself, are esteemed worthy of double honour, when we consider his worldly substance, we are ashamed to mention it; and what he gives, comes with such sour faces and reluctance, as if he never received any good by their ministry, and awkwardly insinuates that they may live without any help, and that when they want charity it is time enough to come then.

Diwall.—I was under no obligation to give anything, so here I hope I have done no injustice.

Diwyd.—Whatever part of your substance God calls for, it is injustice to withhold, and that you shall know when you appear before a greater tribunal. But, brethren, as to oppression, the second thing he is charged with, we have many witnesses: pray, brother Anghenus, in a few words tell the church what you know.

Anghenus.—Glad to be employed by persons that could pay me, I for some time worked under him, and if he thought it difficult for me to be employed anywhere else, he would always make me work for low wages; and then, in paying, he would always make me take a great part of the little due to me in goods, which, though I did not want, yet I must take, or be turned off.

Diwyd.—Brother Diddrwg, tell the church what you know.

Diddrwg.—In my want, I borrowed a little sum of money of him, and he seemed very ready to lend it, and said he would have no interest for it, for he said it might lie in my way to serve him. This seemed kind; but I must say, I never went through such slavery: I worked and toiled for him, yet seldom could so much as hope that I pleased him. In short, he did ride over me as a tyrant; and when I paid him, it was like a deliverance to me from Egyptian bondage, and I blessed God.

Diwall.—Here the church again may see how well I am rewarded for my kindnesses; however, I promise, if it may pass for repentance, that I will offend these friends of mine no more so.

Diwyd.—As to injustice in selling, we have had the story of it already in Diniwed's case; and as for his way of buying, you shall have it, brethren, in a very late instance, wherein brother Anghenog was concerned.

Anghenog.—I was of late in great need of money, and had a piece of goods which I took and offered to sell it to Diwall. He would not look on it, but told me he wanted none, and turned away. I called after him, and prayed him to look on it, for it was very good; I desired him to buy it, for I stood in present need. He told me, No, he did not care for it, it was not so good as I talked of. I

again told him it would be a kindness to me if he took it, and I should be very much obliged to him. He then said, You must take such a part of the value of it in goods. I told him, that would by no means suit me, I must have all in money. Then said he—If I must do so, you shall have but so much for it, which was not near what it was worth between man and man; but my necessity was great, and I complied. But, says he—What, must you have ready money? I told him my need was such that it must be so. Then, said he, If you will not abate so much, I will not have your piece, carry it where you please. And so, under pinching poverty and want, I was forced to undersell my goods.

Diwall.—I will stand to it, that I must provide for my family; the word of God makes it my duty, and I must buy and sell as I can.

Diwyd.—And then, brethren, as to his preferring the things of this world to the great concerns of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the glory to come, brother Dyfal has already made that very plain and evident. When have any of our private religious meetings been honoured with his company? How is God worshipped in his family? Which of the neighbours have ever gone in and found him engaged earnestly in the worship of God? I am very sorry he appears to be such a person, yet wearing the Christian name; and I must say, I am sorry that yet, before God and man, he should say that he is *not guilty*.

Gruffydd, another of the elders, said—In this we may see the dreadful nature of sin, the sin of covetousness. All sin is blind and daring, and in it persons will proceed, if not restrained, till they are past feeling. When any will not retain God in their knowledge, but fall in love with this present world, he who is called "the god of this world" immediately blinds their eyes, whereupon they think themselves the best and most valuable of men. They are, to a man, despisers of others, and justifiers of themselves. "He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hands, he loveth to oppress. And Ephraim said, Yet I am become rich, I have found me out substance; in all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me that were sin."—Hosea xii. 7, 8. So it is not at all strange unto me, nor to this

church of Christ, that a covetous oppressor should justify himself. But I trust that the eternal God, whom we serve and fear, will guide the church in judgment.

Dewi.—Dear brethren, you have heard, in some measure, the nature of the sin of covetousness opened, and one, who as yet stands member with you, charged with it. You have heard him say that he is not guilty of it. What proof has been produced, you have doubtless attended unto, and therefore I need not repeat. If any person had been any ways inclined to speak anything in his vindication, you know that upon leave asked there is always liberty granted; and as for himself, all liberty of speech has been allowed him. Now, I must say, if you do, as a church of the living God, judge that he has sufficiently justified himself from such a charge, signify it by lifting up your hands. But not one of them did. Then he says again, If you do, as a church of Christ, judge Diwall guilty of the sin of covetousness, admonish him for it, and call him to unfeigned repentance, signify it by lifting up your hands. This they unanimously did.

Whereupon Dewi said to him,—Christ, by this grieved church of His, calls you to repentance for all your sinful ways, and particularly for your covetousness and oppression. They then earnestly in prayer desired the blessing of Heaven, and so the meeting concluded.

THEOPH.—Well, a church acting in such order and spirit may well be said to be Christ's throne of judgment on earth, the thought whereof strikes my heart with reverential awe.

NEOPH.—Indeed, so it does mine. But, pray, what became of the admonished man?

EPEN.—The next church meeting he appeared to be the same man, rather more hardened; seemed very angry with the church, especially its officers; told them he was sensible he was not without his imperfections no more than they, and hoped he should be pardoned as well as they, and said it was well his happiness did not depend upon them. Whereupon Yefan put it to the church, and they unanimously admonished him a second time, and called him to repentance.

CHRISTOPH.—Thus they showed forth the lenity and forbearance of Christ. And what did they do then?

EPEN.—To the third church meeting, though he was sent

for, he would not come. The elders, with grief and sorrow of heart, declared what rules Christ had left for His churches to walk by, and what means should be used in order to bring offenders to repentance, and what was the last duty proposed by Zion's King; and that their hearts even trembled to enter upon that which appeared now to be their immediate duty, but all appointed means to maintain the honour of Christ, the real dignity and purity of His house, must be used. Wherefore, says Dewi, brethren, if you do, as a church of Christ, judge it your duty to separate Diwall from your communion as a church, and do now actually, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, put him away from among yourselves, signify it by the lifting up your hands. This they unanimously did; and thereupon Dewi declared him actually cut off, and prayed, with many tears, for a blessing upon that awful ordinance Christ had called them to go through, greatly desiring of God that it might be for the subduing his sin who was so cut off, that his spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

NEOPH.—Very awful, truly. But why was he not delivered to Satan?

EPEN.—Because Christ has not committed that power to any church. Nor does that expression, where it is used in Scripture, denote excommunication only, but something extraordinary, perhaps not known since that day.

NEOPH.—Were all who were excommunicated dealt with just after this manner?

EPEN.—No; but this was the ordinary way. In dealing with drunkards, rebellious children grown up, and heretics, they varied from this method in some things.

NEOPH.—I wish you would favour us with the account of them.

EPEN.—Perhaps at another opportunity, if God will. You see at present our time fails us. May we be helped to adore grace, and all our life be to His praise.

CHRISTOPH.—Amen, dear Epenetus; and may the refreshing presence of our Redeemer be with us to the very end!

THEOPH.—And I heartily wish the eternal Spirit would sanctify us throughout, in soul, and body, and spirit, and guide all our walk, that we may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

DIALOGUE VII.

DISCIPLINE CONTINUED—INSTANCES OF RESTORATION TO THE FOLD.

CHRISTOPHILUS.—Welcome, my dear neighbours. I began to think you long; but, now you are come, I am refreshed. Thus it is said of Paul, that when he saw the brethren he thanked God and took courage.

PHILAL.—There is a pleasure enjoyed in the mere presence of our godly brethren, and Christian conversation adds much thereunto; but, doubtless, while alone, your thoughts were profitably employed on some important subject.

CHRISTOPH.—My thoughts are generally a disorderly multitude, and when I endeavour to gather them to some fruitful meditation, either they avoid the subject, or jostle and crowd in such a manner as to disappoint often my very best designs. But what my mind was principally engaged in, while here in waiting, was the sermon I heard last Lord's day upon those words, "And be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit." Many excellent things then delivered I have forgot, but I remember how, with grief of soul, the minister observed what an empty generation of professors of Christianity our day abounds with. Full of confidence, said he, they may be, and full of noise, and full of wine; but where are the persons that appear filled with the Spirit of God?

NEOPH.—Truly, I did not see you at our place. Come, something more of the contents of the sermon.

CHRISTOPH.—Why, truly, I was not prepared to write it, but I gave all the attention I could; but my being eager to receive and retain, I think, was rather an hindrance to me. However, I found the man, in the main, to be in an excellent

spirit ; he was full for the grace of God, that teaches persons to deny ungodliness. He insisted much upon the bounty of God in giving His free Spirit to His people, the glory of His habitation, and His operations where He so dwelt. He observed how contrary to all that is revealed, and even to reason itself, it must be to imagine that a person full of wine should be filled with all the fulness of God, or "filled with the Spirit." He appealed to the Gospel, to the church, to wives and children starving in a spiritual, and half starved in a temporal sense ; yea, he appealed to their own consciences, and was very particular and affectionate upon each of these, and told them that the prating profession of a tippler did but draw a cloud over the grace of God, and aggravate his own guilt.

NEOPH.—And how was it with the auditory ?

CHRISTOPH.—Why, really, some of them were in tears, and discovered a very great concern ; and some of them looked about them, and took snuff, and seemed to care for none of those things ; and there were some who had uneasiness and indignation in their countenances, and, with a sneer, would look towards one another.

NEOPH.—Good, now. What part of England were you in ; a great way off of Potheina, to be sure ?

CHRISTOPH.—Ay, so I was. You have heard of the staple trade of England—the wool business ; and, among other places, you have heard of a certain market-town in Wiltshire, where, upon a little flow of trade in the woollen way, there was spent seven thousand pounds in one year, about four or five years ago, in strong beer. Their brethren, the weavers and woolcombers, are generally of their mind all over the nation. Among such a people I happened to be—the scum of the land, worse than the plague in the parishes where they are planted. One man of them shall drink as much as should satisfy ten, and then stagger, reel, and rave, and curse the trade, and blame all the world but himself. If it was possible to find out fit persons to inspect their manners, with full power to reform them or restrain them, it might prove an universal mercy to the land, and of vast advantage to the woollen manufacture.

THEOPH.—But, sure, none of those pretend to religion.

CHRISTOPH.—That they do ; and many of them abound

in confidence, are very great casuists, and, while they are drinking a dozen of ale, will examine and determine I do not know how many controversies.

THEOPH.—But I hope none of them are church members!

CHRISTOPH.—As I told you before, there are some of that infamous business, as now with grief it must be called, who are as firebrands plucked out of the burning, godly persons, who adorn the doctrine they profess; but they are few, and rather than lie continually under the banter and sneers of a disagreeable crew, choose, if possible, to follow their callings in some little retired places by themselves; they are a comfort to the churches whereof they are members; but there are too many who put on seriousness and tenderness of conscience for a little while, and get in; and, by little and little, get too well acquainted with the pot and the pitcher, and sore trials they have often proved, I understand, to the godly.

NEOPH.—Then you have had some particular account of characters who are generally such great strangers to Potheina: pray, will you favour us with a brief relation of what you have heard?

CHRISTOPH.—Why, really, Sir, the story is not a very pleasant one, therefore it is with reluctance—a thing not very common between you and me—I comply with your request; and, if I am very brief, I hope you will excuse me. By a serious aged Christian, a mourner in Zion, I was informed that before the wool business entered among them, for he remembered the time, they were a sober, solid people; but upon the entrance of that business, and the planting of masters among them, who coveted to multiply hands, things began to take a different turn, and pleasant banter took place of serious religion; and the promoting a drinking life seemed to be a very great, if not the principal, end of their life. For this, says he, they have their fixed hours daily, if not more than once in a day, of sending for ale, and each man is to be the messenger in his turn. They have also their private pitcher-laws and forfeitures: upon the visit of a straggler there must be ale extraordinary; upon entrance into business there must be a treat, and the same at parting; a solemn observation of feasts they carefully attended to; and put other trades upon the same

sinful course as to their peculiar days, wherein themselves are sure to bear a principal part; and even in our town, says he, where the parish *idol* feast was forgot, they used means to recover the memory of the day, entered upon games, and renewed the vanity. Evening clubs they frequently have, and to make it the more honourable, generally in some private house, where the master may excel in stories, laughter, and banter. There are also frequent invitations to new ale *fats*, which they never refuse, and thither they carry their children with them, who, if they drink well, are praised as father's *noun* boys; in this way of death they teach them, and thus the infection spreads from parents to children, and from neighbour to neighbour, till (says he), to our great grief, we have lived to see idleness, drunkenness, poverty, confidence, and pride come in upon us like a flood. Oh, when will the Spirit of the Lord "lift up His standard!"^b

NEOPH.—Well, the Lord be with His preaching servants in such places! Surely they have enough, without ex-

^b This description is no longer applicable to the clothing districts of Wiltshire and the west of England. So far from being peculiarly subject to the vices of dissipation, they may at present, among the manufacturing towns, lay claim to an advantageous comparison. What would Mr. Maurice say, if he witnessed the demoralisation and squalor, caused by the "drinking system" of modern times, in the great towns which have been created by the mighty enterprise of our age in the cotton, coal, and iron districts!—the system which fills our gaols, workhouses, and asylums; which brings in its train such appalling results to the working classes, in penury, brutality, and shame; and which, to the great disgrace of our country, pursues its fearful mission under the fostering sanction of legislative enactments. One step lower, and we shall be on an equality with our Gallic neighbours. The beer-shop legislation of our country surely displays no far-seeing sagacity; for it has only invented for the production of revenue—its only ostensible justification—a system which, in its turn, like a mill which consumes its own grist, swallows up that revenue by the cost incurred in the suppression of the nuisances and crime it originates, and impoverishes and degrades the people to boot. Opening beer-houses which produce revenue and drunkenness, and then supporting a costly police which consumes the former in taking care of the latter! Opening a source of crime in the tavern, and taxing the nation to support its counteractive in the school-room and the reformatory! A policy so iniquitous in its results, so inconsistent, and so gratuitously offensive to the virtue of the country, cannot surely long continue.—N.

traordinary support, to break their hearts. Now, I do not wonder you were backward to relate the story; may I never hear such another.

THEOPH.—Then, my dear Neophytus, I will relate one of a different nature, which perhaps you have heard something of before now, though the thing fell out a little before your time. There has not been, in the memory of any man living, an alehouse at Potheina; but some of us remember a net spread in our sight. Not far from us, at the side of a bye-road, there was an alehouse set up, with the sign of the “Dragon;” the fellow used all the methods he was master of to ensnare us, our children, and servants. He would buy of us, made a supper also, and invited our families; but never a parent or child, master or servant, went. He sent of his dainties, and desired us to accept of a taste; we all refused. One day, complaining to an acquaintance of his how unkind the inhabitants of Potheina were, who never would suffer any who belonged to them to enter within his doors, and how his strong beer was spoiled, and he half ruined, his acquaintance, waggishly disposed, told him that he had the wrong sign, for the inhabitants of Potheina were, to a man and a child, resolved to oppose the “Dragon,” but professed themselves followers of the Lamb. The fellow accordingly set up the sign of the “Lamb,” and, one day, meeting a servant of mine, said, I am very sorry I offended the good inhabitants of Potheina by a disagreeable sign over my door; but my humble service to them, and let them know that I have parted with it, and have now the sign of the “Lamb.” My servant answered, I fancy our people will think that he speaks like a *dragon*, and will not come near him. No more did we; and so after two or three brewings, which his friends from a great distance helped him to drink out, he left the place, and we never had an alehouse near us since.

NEOPH.—A pleasant story this; I thank you, most excellent Theophilus. I wish that unto late posterity an alehouse may never be seen at or near Potheina.

THEOPH.—I remember we thought it our duty to pray to our God against that house, and that He would keep us and our families, and confound the man and his measures; and God graciously heard us.

NEOPH.—What awful business must that be, that the godly can pray against! But are not public-houses lawful?

THEOPH.—Ay, to be sure, and expedient too, for the convenience of travellers, provided there be no more than what are necessary for that purpose, and provided the laws of Christ are there duly regarded; and what those laws be, perhaps we may quickly hear something of, for here is our beloved Epenetus just come.

EPEN.—My dear brethren and friends, excuse me, a particularly urgent business detained me; I find your company always profitable and pleasant, therefore it is not usual with me to be the last.

PHILAL.—Dear Epenetus, I am heartily glad you are come; my heart is sunk within me in hearing Christophilus relate what himself has very lately seen and heard abroad. The many thousands employed in the woollen manufacture are, according to him, some few excepted, a plague unto the nation, the very shame of England, and the distress of churches; for they are sots and drunkards to a proverb. They ensnare and defile wherever they come, and by them the infection spreads to the temporal ruin and the eternal danger of many thousands of families. Oh, Britons, happy times before such a generation was heard of!

EPEN.—It must be granted that they have brought a blast upon their name and business, and perhaps such a one as can never be removed; but though they have added much to the shame and poverty of the nation, yet I am inclined to think that Britain never saw times so happy as to have never a drunkard within its borders. The account which Mr. Hugh Peters gave of New England, in his sermon before the parliament, is very singular; that, for the seven years he had been there, he did not see a beggar, hear an oath, or behold a drunkard. Such was the beauty of the Congregational churches following Christ in the wilderness! But trials in measure have always attended the churches; nor was the first church at Caerludd without them; for though the Britons in general were a brave people, given to industry and action, nevertheless there were some among them who might be called the epicures of that day, the blemishes of Britain; and even a few too much inclined to strong liquors crept into the first church at Caerludd.

NEOPH.—Really, I thought so, by what you said in the conclusion of our last conference; for you intimated their way of dealing with drunkards. Now, I hope you will favour us with a more particular account.

EPEN.—They did not look upon drunkenness as an offence that required private previous dealing, first by one, and then by two, and then, if the person would not repent, tell it the church; but the offence being of a public nature, the offender must be brought immediately to public repentance. Not but they might use their liberty, in brotherly love, with him in a private way; but his sin being a public reproach upon the Redeemer's kingdom, private repentance could never be thought a sufficient vindication of the holiness of Christ's laws and interest. Those who sinned before all, were rebuked before all, that others might fear.

SYLLOG.—Nothing can be more reasonable; the wound such a person gives is a public wound, and he must make a public example in open repentance. And whoever loves Christ will desire it; whoever has pity upon grieved believers and hardened sinners will be forward to do it, for he can never tell how many he has done harm to; and I always think, that when any appear backward thus to profess repentance for public crimes, they do not repent at all.

PHILAL.—We find that when Peter gave public offence, and others, following his example, dissembled likewise, Paul withstood him to the face, and reproved him before them all.—Gal. ii. 11–14. Nor did the apostle John think it his duty to stay and deal privately with Diotrephes, who had so publicly sinned against the brethren.—3 John 9, 10. And unto the Corinthians the apostle gives no instructions for their private dealing with that notorious public offender. But, with my dear Neophytus, I desire some particular account of what they went through in the first church at Caerludd in their dealing with public offenders.

EPEN.—There was among them a person whose name was Meddwyn, who gave them a great deal of trouble, and was like a root of bitterness to defile many. Upon his first profession, and for a considerable time after, he behaved well; but after some years he began to discover too much love to strong liquors, and as that inclination appeared, the brethren and officers of the church gave him all seasonable

caution and advice; which he sometimes seemed to take kindly, but, at other times, it appeared by his countenance that cautions were not very acceptable to him. However, upon a time he drank of *meth-y-glyn* to that excess, that all the symptoms of drunkenness were upon him, and he was led home. Honest Didwyll and Diwyd, the elders, hearing of it, went immediately to him, observed to him the many aggravating circumstances attending his sin, and desired he would, the very next church meeting, in the presence of all, profess public repentance. He told them he would consider of it, but thought a more private way of dealing with him would bring less reproach upon Christianity.

Didwyll.—What your concern may be for the reproach of Christianity, we cannot tell; and how far Christianity is already reproached on your account, you cannot tell. Thousands in your neighbourhood would gladly take up anything they can make use of to the reproach of your religion. Your sin already is taken up in the lips of talkers. If they had but the account of your public repentance to report also, it would in some measure, even in their own consciences, justify the laws of our dear Redeemer, and vindicate the church in their holy profession. Christ is injured in His name and interest, the haters of godliness are hardened, and their mouths are opened to speak evil of the things they know not; your own conscience must be under guilt, and unfeigned public repentance appears to be your immediate duty on all accounts.

Meddwyn.—So I do repent; I tell you so, and I am willing you should tell the church so, and any persons in the world also; and this, I hope, will be thought public repentance.

Didwyll.—No! whether it is repentance or not, may be a question; but whether it is public or private, is out of question; for we know it is only a private one, and must be so called. We can only say that you did tell us, in a private way, that you did repent; but the church of Christ must, according to the laws of their King, judge of these things.

Meddwyn.—As I said before, I will consider what you say.

Diwyd.—I wish you truly may; and consider, when you

have the cup in hand again, whether it is lawful and expedient to drink it.

NEOPH.—A good advice; consideration might have a good influence. There are very close questions proposed for consideration, which relate to this affair:—"Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine."—Prov. xxiii. 29-30.

Drink not the third glass, which thou canst not tame
When once it is within thee; but before
Mayst rule it as thou list: and pour the shame
Which it will pour on thee, upon the floor.
It is most just to throw that on the ground
Which would throw me there, if I kept the round.

HERBERT.

THEOPH.—Right, my dear Neophytus; may young and old, through the land, but duly consider their ways, and thousands of well-fed landlords will be put to consider what business they had best take up next. Excuse us both, good Epenetus, and proceed.

EPEN.—Though he would not promise them, yet, at the next church meeting, he was present; and, after prayer and exhortation, Dewi spoke to the church as follows:—

Dear brethren, through the rich grace of God, we have given up ourselves in church-fellowship to our Redeemer, to walk in all His statutes and ordinances blamelessly; and the more we conform to this our holy resolution and engagement, the more our Redeemer is glorified. All sin tends to drive us to a distance from the refreshing presence of our Father; but there are some sins that at once lay our glory in the dust, under which we may say, "The crown is fallen from our heads, and woe to us that we have sinned!" Among sins of this kind do I reckon *drunkenness*; and because very few of you do so much as know what it is, you will please to take the following account of it from one who, through the mercy of God, never was drunk in all his life. According to all I can learn of it, the sin stands in drinking liquors of strength to an excessive degree. And though the depraved mind of man may look upon this as a matter of small moment, yet it is a sin that directly tends

to destroy the workmanship of God ; for by Him are our bodies fearfully and wonderfully made, and this sin tends to their destruction ; and it clouds and fetters the rational powers of the more noble soul ; it is the most horrid abuse of the bounties of Heaven, it is denying the eternal God, and setting up another God against Him ; and I doubt not but it was of such the apostle wrote, weeping, " Who were enemies to the cross of Christ, whose God was their belly, and who gloried in their shame." Dear brethren, though this sin is a most fearful evil, there is present a member who is guilty of it. The Spirit of God says, " Be not deceived drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God." It is, indeed, supposed that one who is called a brother may be a drunkard, but then, with him, it is said, we must not eat. Meddwyn, you are charged with this sin ; you must consider what way is left you to glorify an offended God, and comfort a grieved church. You are desired to speak.

Meddwyn.—My business leads me into company and many snares, and I stand in need, now and then, of a supporting, refreshing draught ; how often, I humbly hope I may be thought the most competent judge. Though I own I have sinned, and have been sorry for it ever since, I can hardly think my crime such an aggravated one as you have expressed. I do not like making the worst of things so ; nevertheless, a sin it was ; but it is said, " The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin," and so, I hope, I have reason to be easy. I hope I shall take more care for the time to come. I am sure I should watch ; for there are many that watch for my halting, though not blameless themselves.

Yefan.—It must be granted that drunkenness is a very great sin ; and that Meddwyn is guilty of it wants no proof. His inclination has been observed before now, and he has often been cautioned ; and his breaking through solemn engagements must signify that the vicious, depraved appetite in him is very strong. But though the sin discovers the greatest folly and depravity of mind, yet our God calls for and encourages repentance. And I am glad to hear Meddwyn say, that he has been sorry for it ever since ; and I heartily wish this sorrow may manifest itself to be of a godly sort. But he lays some fault upon his business and

calling, which, by consequence, lays it at the door of Providence; much like our first parent,—“the woman thou gavest me.” Then, he is not willing to grant that his sin is so great as our dear brother Dewi declared it to be; and he mentions the blood of Christ as cleansing from all sin, whereupon he says he has reason to be easy; but this is the promise, “They shall look unto Him whom they have pierced, and shall mourn.” And, lastly, he seems to lay his promised watchfulness for the future upon too narrow a foundation, namely, that of others watching for his halting, who themselves are not blameless; which things, though I am glad to hear him profess his sorrow, throw me under discouraging thoughts. But that the church may see things in a clearer light, I desire my brethren and fellow-elders to speak their thoughts.

Diwyd.—I must own myself greatly pleased with that gentleness and mildness our honoured teacher always discovers; but I humbly conceive that the sin of *drunkenness* deserves to be treated with some degree of warmth and indignation. I do not mean indignation against any man's person, but against his crime; and that we may approve ourselves clear in this matter, I think a becoming zeal should be discovered. A drunkard wrongs himself, wrongs others, provides not for his family, makes himself worse than an infidel. A drunkard fights against God, spreads infection and destruction wherever he goes. A sin this, for which tender parents were to deliver up their child to deserved death, themselves being evidences against him. Drunkards were esteemed children of Belial. Drunkenness is a work of the flesh, it is one of the works of darkness, and upon those whose hearts are overcharged therewith, the great day shall come unawares. And as for this member of ours, I do not see that his repentance bears any proportion to his crime. He says he is sorry, but how it is with him as to true repentance for his sin, as so great a sin against God, I must confess myself an incompetent judge; I hope our King whom we serve will guide His church in judgment. I am not against receiving the true repentance of any person, but as I cannot see it in Meddwyn, I know of no step more proper for us to take than immediately, in the name of Christ, to separate him from us.

Gruffydd, another of the elders, said—Dear brethren, I cannot sufficiently admire the grace of God to our dear brother Diwyd, in filling him with such zeal against sin; certainly, those who love the Lord should hate evil. Sin is the abominable thing that God hateth, and all who profess Christianity should be followers of God as dear children. And is it possible to do so, without fervent love to every duty? I bless God for our brother, I bless God for his zeal. But, with submission, I think that in following the Lamb, there are also other virtues of Christ that we are to show forth. We must see that we discover towards all men that pity and compassion which will always be attended with long-suffering and unwearied endeavours to recover and restore a backslider. Without this we can never make a due representation of the compassions of our merciful and faithful High Priest; yea, without this we can never convince others that we consider how it is, and how it may be with ourselves. “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” Has the brother sinned? It is granted that he has greatly sinned; but in the spirit of meekness let us attempt his recovery. Does he seem far short of a true sense of his crime? Let us endeavour to make him truly sensible. Does there anything like repentance appear in him? Let us bless God for that, and encourage it. If any person who has sinned, appears impenitent, let us use the appointed means to bring him to repentance. If, after waiting in the diligent use of all means, the person appears obstinate, we must, though with becoming reluctance, use the last remedy to preserve ourselves pure. If the person repents, who are we, to reject whom God receives? But immediate separation I think not advisable.

Addfwyn, another ruling elder, spoke as follows:—Brethren, I most readily grant, that with regard unto sins and offences in general, there is a great deal in what our beloved brother Gruffydd, in a few words, delivered to us. But, as in most cases, so in this, exceptions attend general rules. The Lord Himself, in the dispensations of His providence, does not treat all offenders alike. And though churches, as well as particular Christians, should appear

very compassionate, yet in all they must act with *discretion*, according to an express rule,—“And of some have compassion, making a difference.” In some cases, persons must be dealt with privately, first by one, then by one or two more, before the affair be brought to the church; but we are sure that some offences require an immediate public consideration. The man that is an *heretic*, indeed, should, after the first and second admonition, be rejected; but where is it said, The man that is a drunkard, after the first and second admonition, reject? We are sure it is said, that with such an one we should not eat; which, if it intends we should not be free with him in common food, then it must hold much stronger that we should not eat with him at the Lord’s table; and if we must not eat with him at the Lord’s table, then I humbly conceive he must be no church member; for, I suppose, all church members have a right to that ordinance, and it cannot be denied them. I do not see that in case of gross immoralities—and I look upon drunkenness to be a sin that deserves that name—we have any rules given us to proceed gradually by admonition. The Corinthians were not directed to use any such methods with the incestuous person, but immediately *put him away* from among themselves; and the same rule they are to observe towards any man who is called a brother, and is a drunkard. And I think it is impossible to vindicate the honour of Christ our King, maintain the reputation of His holy institutions, preserve our communion pure, and deliver ourselves and posterity from dangerous infection, without this.

Didwyll.—Dear brethren, I hope I shall never once open my mouth in vindication of sin; and drunkenness I look upon as a very great one. So far as it enters and prevails, Christianity is defiled and departs. And, indeed, there is no matter what religion drunkards may be of, for their God is their belly. But with regard to the case under consideration, granting unto our brethren that drunkards should be immediately separated from a church of Christ, I cannot see, as yet, that he of whom we speak, who is called a brother with us, is proved to be a drunkard. That he has been guilty of drunkenness, we own, nor does he deny it; but must he, therefore, be denominated a

drunkard? Can one single transient act fix the description of a man's general character? If a man is overtaken with a fault, must he for ever after be denominated thereby? Was Noah a drunkard? Was Jacob a liar? Was Peter a dissembler? God forbid! Not but that their sins were very great sins, and the greater because they were the sins of such persons; but yet they were not to be denominated from those sinful acts of theirs. If they were, pray what name must we give to Abraham, the father of the faithful? Let this man refuse to reform before we fix his character. The sorrow he has expressed perhaps may not be satisfactory; but how can we honour Christ, or serve our poor fellow-sinner in a better way, than use proper means to bring him to that repentance not to be repented of? Shall we not thereby glorify our King, maintain the purity of His laws, testify against sin, deliver ourselves from defilement, show pity to him who gave the offence, and testify to all the world that our Lord is holy and gracious, and that we are followers of Him? The judgment of our honoured pastor and teacher upon this I humbly desire.

Dewi.—It is most certainly the duty of a church of Christ to stand up for Christ, their King, and for the holiness and purity of His laws and institutions to the uttermost, against all sin, and all appearance of it. But this must be according to His revealed pleasure, and not after any private fancies of their own; otherwise, while they are engaged against one sin, they are insensibly entering into another. I cannot learn that church-dealings with offenders are properly of a punishing vindictive nature, but corrective and instructive: the sole end whereof being the repentance and recovery of the offender. And, certainly, according to all that is written, by such a repentance Christ is more glorified than by any sudden rejection of the offender. To reject a penitent, would be to oppose Christ who receives him, and publicly declare in Christ's name what is not in Christ's heart. But if, upon examination and the use of means, repentance cannot be discovered, the church must separate such from among themselves, either with greater speed, or in the exercise of more patience, as after seeking God's face, and due consultation, they may think necessary.

Yefan.—I am in the same mind with my dear brother Dewi, being thoroughly persuaded that nothing is to be sought after by a church of Christ so much as the glory of Christ. True repentance, with reformation, glorifies Christ, preserves the church pure, and maintains the wisdom, equity, and holiness of Christ's institutions before all the world of angels and men. But whether the church is to seek such repentance, in all cases, by a first and by a second formal admonition, I determine not; only I think it is a safe path to walk in, when we can come at it, because in one case it is expressly given us, and forbidden in none; and, therefore, Meddwyn, if you can give us some further account of your repentance, I pray you now to do it.

Meddwyn.—Why, Sir, I said that I am sorry, and I am very sorry, and I think that is repentance; and I desire I may do so no more. This has been much trouble of mind to me.

Dewi.—Now, dear brethren, I must put it to you as a church of Christ. Here are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David. If you do, as a church of Christ, judge Meddwyn's repentance to be evangelical and satisfactory, signify it by lifting up your hands:—which no person did.

Then said Dewi, You that think it our duty to proceed immediately to cut him off, signify it by lifting up your hands. This two of the elders and several more did.

Dewi.—You that think it our duty to admonish him, and call him to due and unfeigned repentance for his great evil, signify it by lifting up your hands. This was done by the pastor, the teacher, the other two ruling elders, together with a great majority of the church.

Then said Dewi to the church, You see, brethren, how the Lord Jesus determines the minds of the majority. This we take to be His mind; and as in all cases, so in this, the cheerful concurrence of the minority is now their duty and their glory; wherefore, if you do, as a church of Christ, admonish Meddwyn, and call him to evangelical repentance for the great sin of drunkenness whereof he has been guilty, and to a reformation and close walk with God for the future, signify it by lifting up your hands. They unanimously did so.

Then said Dewi unto Meddwyn, You hear the voice of the church, yea, the voice of Christ by the church. Though you say you are sorry, and repent, your repentance meets with no acceptance. We are all afraid it is not with you as it should be; but I hope we shall pray for you, and wait to see you bring forth fruit meet for repentance; desire earnestly of God to fill you with His Spirit, and watch and pray that you enter not into temptation. This is what we have to say to you at this time.

Upon this, a godly brother of the church stands up, and submissively asks leave to speak a few words, which being granted by the elders, he spoke as follows:—

I desire, with submission, to know how I am to carry it towards this admonished person; and perhaps several more may want to know this as well as I. He is yet a member with us. Our honoured elder Addfwyn said that every member has a right to the Lord's Supper—an undeniable right; and I think, if it is so, he has a right to our nearest and most intimate fellowship, and we shall do him wrong if we withdraw from him in the least. We must be as free and as pleasant with him as ever, for he that has a right to the greatest and the nearest instance of fellowship, surely has a right to all the rest. But, as the case stands, I cannot find freedom for this: I humbly desire instruction.

Yefan.—What our dear brother Addfwyn said holds true in general, but there may be some exceptions. We know that our children are church members with us in their non-age, but unto the Lord's Supper they are not admitted till, in an orderly way, they confess their faith in Christ. And though Meddwyn's case is not exactly the same with theirs, yet certainly it is of that nature that, according to general and discretionary rules, such as, "Let all things be done to edification," and "All things decently and in order," he should not, for the present, be admitted to the Lord's table. And, besides, there are some particular rules that seem to touch his case. He has not, in the judgment of the church, cleared himself from being a drunkard. They could not receive his repentance as full and unfeigned, and, therefore, seeing he is yet called a brother, it is expressly said that with him we must not eat. And, again, we are commanded to withdraw ourselves from every brother that walks dis-

orderly, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed; still not counting him as an enemy, but admonishing him as a brother—which, I am certain, must suppose that admonished members are not to be admitted to the highest communion, for they are hardly to be admitted to the lowest; and therefore I declare to Meddwyn, that until the church has received satisfaction in his repentance, to the Lord's table he must not come. In the meantime, you are all to pray for him, and have no fellowship with him but what calls him to repentance.

Addfwyn.—My honoured teacher, I thank you for this, and I thank the brother that put the case to you. This has informed my judgment, and took a very great burden off my mind. Then was the meeting concluded in prayer.

CHRISTOPH.—I thank you, dear Epenetus, for this account. I see, though the church met with a trial, they were helped under it to manifest the virtues of their Redeemer. Their love to Christ, their obedience to His laws, their hatred against sin, their compassion towards the sinner, their love to each other, and the cheerful concurrence of the minority, made the whole beautiful. What a sight was this! the elders in all gravity and wisdom going before the flock, liberty unto any brother upon leave and in order to deliver his thoughts, and whatever so delivered, tenderly regarded, the laws of their Redeemer observed in all, and His blessing desired upon all. I should esteem this the most glorious sight this side heaven.

NEOPH.—Indeed, I think so too; but in some church meetings I have seen the minority hang the head, and look surly and displeased; and I have seen some go away with indignation in their countenances, which they always called *grief*. Such things have greatly clouded the glory of church assemblies.

THEOPH.—Most of the churches in our day are attended with such clouds, but they proceed not from Him that calleth them. God is not the author of confusion. According to the wisdom of our blessed Redeemer, in His laws there is provision made for the constant peace and tranquillity of the churches, under the variety of sentiments and attainments which, in their imperfect state, must attend them. There is but one great enemy which, under

many names and forms, deceives and distresses them, and that is *self*.

SYLLOG.—Christ has promised His presence to a church meeting in His name. All the members of a Congregational church profess this. Christ guides this church in wisdom according to His word. All reason tells us the majority must be the church, and then all reason in the world that the minority should cheerfully concur.

NEOPH.—But there was something which I should be glad to understand a little better. There were among them some, of whom two were elders, who were for cutting off the offender immediately, without endeavours to bring him to repentance. Pray, is it necessary or lawful to cut off any so?

PHILAL.—Surely it is neither lawful nor expedient to serve a true penitent so, whatever his crime has been. The Lord Jesus Christ, by His Spirit of grace, steps in between the person and such a censure. He is led, by the Spirit of Christ, to look to Christ, whom he has pierced. He is made to mourn in bitterness before Him; and as his offence may be public, he desires his acknowledgment may be so; to the glory of Christ, his own shame, and the instruction of others. Christ receives him graciously, and says that He will in no wise cast him out. Pray, what has any church to do to reject him? And if they bind him, how can they once think that such a person is bound in heaven? No; let him profess his repentance, and let them follow their Lord. But if the person does not appear unto them fully restored, let them use all the means they can to restore him in the spirit of meekness. I grant there may be some cases wherein expulsion may be thought expedient, without the mentioned previous endeavours.

NEOPH.—I hope one of my dear friends present will favour me with some account of them.

SYLLOG.—When a church is well satisfied that a member is guilty of immoralities, the crimes and the evidence being of such sort that a public examination is rendered inexpedient, and the guilty person wiping the mouth as one that had not sinned, common discretion will there call for immediate procedure.

Also, when persons charged with sin withdraw, or put

themselves out of the way of admonitions, they must needs know the church must proceed against them immediately.

And also where no true repentance does immediately evidence itself, there may be some uncommon circumstances attending some enormous crimes which may justly incline a church to excommunication. Though, in granting such a thing as this, *inconveniences* have occurred, where persons of conceit have assumed a disagreeable power of dictating whose sins were to be treated thus, and whose were not, as the persons stood in or out of their favour. And therefore, if it be possible, the ordinary path, by previous admonitions, is the safest.

NEOPH.—I am thankful to you, my dear friends; if the freedom wherewith you indulge me, makes me over troublesome, I hope my worthy friend Theophilus will, as he knows how, reprove my imprudences.

THEOPH.—Hey-day, my Neophytus, is this sarcastically spoken, or a pleasant juvenile fancy? or do you in earnest choose me for your guardian? But be it what it will, perhaps I may take occasion to make use of the freedom wherewith you are pleased to indulge me, Sir.

CHRISTOPH.—How pleasant and merry, neighbours! But I desire Epenetus would proceed in the story.

EPEX.—Many things spoken in the church meeting stuck very close to Meddwyn; he thought his sin might be greater than he imagined, but was willing to hope it was not so heinous as the elders described. When he thought that his sin might be truly great, he seemed to think the church was in their duty. When he thought his sins were not so very great, then he slighted the church and its elders, as persons prejudiced against him. Hence he was now careless in his walk, and now more careful and with some inclination to duty. He was visited by some of the elders and brethren, who endeavoured to fasten upon him a becoming sense of the greatness of his sin, the reproach he brought upon the Gospel, and the grief which the godly on his account were under; they prayed with him, and for him; and prevailed upon him to think that all their concern sprang from love to him, and earnest desire to see him not only healed and restored in his soul, but established in a brighter and a more useful walk than ever.

CHRISTOPH.—Well, he could not say that no man cared for his soul; they have certainly their lines fallen in pleasant places, who are planted in churches carefully walking in the order and rule of the Gospel; where the members exhort one another daily, lest any among them be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Blessed be God for church-fellowship, notwithstanding some trials wherewith the churches in their militant state must be attended. But, pray, how did the man go on?

EPEN.—This seemed to have a very good effect upon him; he kept out of the way of temptation, and appeared mighty thankful unto his friends for their care and love; went to visit them, prayed with them, and mourned much with tears, under a sense of his evil; and the brethren were greatly pleased with him; and ere he was aware, he began to be too much pleased with himself, and by little and little dropped his watchfulness, and a day or two before the next church meeting, in some measure, fell into the same sin again.

THEOPH.—Oh, the very thought grieves me! What a precious prospect there was of the man's recovery! Our blessed Lord's advice is always seasonable, "What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch;" and, "watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation." But the church meeting?

EPEN.—Why, truly, his legs would hardly carry him thither; it could not be said that his heart did fear and was enlarged; it was slavishly disposed and straitened, ready to hide itself from God and man too; and the man had not those truly mean thoughts of himself he once seemed to have. To the church meeting, however, he came; and after prayer and exhortation, and hearing some relations of God's convincing and converting work, Yefan spoke to him as follows:—

Brother, I am glad to see you here, and am glad to hope that this day in Zion you will give glory to the Redeemer. It is with a great deal of pleasure I have heard several of the brethren relate the merciful dealings of God with your soul, and thankful I have been to our God for owning our poor endeavours for your spiritual advantage. Though backslidings from God are evil and bitter, they are not

things unknown in Israel; it was complained of a professing people, formerly, that they were bent to backslide. We can never be thankful enough, brother, for the grace of God held forth in that promise. "I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely." It was upon experience of the power of that grace that David sang the praises of the Lord his shepherd, who restored his soul; and though no affliction can seem joyous, he said it was good for him that he was afflicted, for before he was afflicted he went astray. I doubt not, by all that I have heard, but now you set a value upon the means of your recovery, and bless the Redeemer for them. For whatever means He makes use of, it is He that worketh in us both to will and to perform of His own good pleasure. Our sins proceed from ourselves; we fall by our iniquity, but our recovery is wholly from God. He is Jehovah that healeth us, and may we for ever bless His name who forgiveth all our iniquities, and healeth all our diseases. Now you are desired to bear your public testimony against your sin, and for the grace of God, to His glory and our comfort.

Meddiwyn.—I don't know what to say; I am at a great loss; I do not justify myself; I have sinned, without doubt, and as I said before, I am sorry for it. I know that in many things we offend all, some more one way, some more another; and perhaps in this way I may sin more than some others, but I do confess it, and do repent for it; and God forgiveth iniquity, transgression, and sin, and I hope He forgiveth my sin, and this is all I think I can say.

Yefan.—I am amazed! What is the matter? Did not you, brother Gruffydd, tell me of brokenness, of tears, and of self-loathing? Did not you tell me how he bemoaned himself, how he abhorred the sin, and hated the snares, and admired the grace of God in dealing so mercifully with his soul? Sure this is not all you meant thereby?

Gruffydd.—No, Sir; nor hardly any part of it. What I told you was to the best of my knowledge strictly true; and there are others who were witnesses of the same encouraging tokens of unfeigned repentance; but what is the matter now, I am as great a stranger to as yourself. If any brother present can give any account of it, he is desired to stand up and declare what he knows; unless

Meddwyn himself pleases to give us some further account of his case.

Meddwyn.—No, I shall say no more. I do repent; and Christ says, If he says *I repent*, thou shalt forgive him.

Upon this, a brother stands up and says, Upon the call of our honoured elder, I think it my duty to declare what I heard as I came along to the meeting this day; a person who is a well-wisher to us, told me that he saw Meddwyn drunk very lately.

Dewi.—I desire you would, Meddwyn, tell us the very truth.

Meddwyn.—I don't think I was drunk, though perhaps I drank more than did me good. I knew what I said and did, well enough.

Dewi.—Dear brethren, our endeavours are blasted, our expectations are disappointed! Perhaps, in times past, we have not carried it towards this member as we ought to have done; and, as he has put us in mind, in many things we offend all; let this be for our humiliation before God. We see that he that standeth should take heed lest he fall; for the very entrance of sin is like the breaking forth of waters, where a small stream prepares the way for a flood. Some few years ago, this member would not have believed that the time was a-coming when he should, to the great grief of the church, thus appear bound with the cords of his own sins, if the wisest and dearest of his friends had told him so; and perhaps a week or two ago he would not have believed that another fall was so near at hand. But it is dangerous to drop Christian watchfulness; dangerous to be pleased with ourselves, and trust our own hearts. Oh, pity and pray for your poor fellow-member, who stands ensnared, entangled, and bound! His deliverance is what we earnestly desire. You have as a church of Christ admonished him once, and if you do now in the name of Christ your King admonish him the second time, and call him to repentance and reformation, signify it by lifting up your hands: which they unanimously did. And Dewi desired Meddwyn to take notice of it, and desired the brethren to take that notice of him which was most consistent with their duty.

Yefan.—Brethren, there is one thing I must notice. Our

admonished brother mentioned that word of Christ, "If he says, I repent, thou shalt forgive him;" implying that what he said should be looked upon by the church as sufficient. But I must observe, that a public notorious immorality is vastly different from a private personal offence, which our Lord there treats of. Besides, the words were not fairly repeated; our Lord says, *if he repent*; and then, *if he turn to thee*; which expressions denote a true, hearty repentance. And there is nobody in the world that does really repent, who will abuse the words and meaning of our Saviour, and deridingly say, I am sorry, what would you have me say more?

Then, some time being spent in prayer, bemoaning and begging the blessing of God on this second admonition, and any private endeavours that might yet be used, the meeting concluded.

CHRISTOPH.—They bemoan themselves who had but one trial of this kind. What must we think of those poor enfeebled churches and servants of Christ in our day, where trials of this nature abound! Where the *hell-houses* multiply, and those who are masters of them are clothed in fine linen, and fare deliciously every day, and many of those on whom they *wait*, as they call it, have hardly decent rags to cover them; their debts abroad unpaid, with glaring eyes, glowing cheeks, heavy eye-lids, and falling jaws, calling for the t'other pot, as plain as they can speak, and "what's to pay?" they then stumble home, and chide their half-starved families. A person I knew, heard a young fellow say that he worked in a shop where nobody's true acquaintance with religion must be so much as questioned, where he was obliged continually every day to spend his three farthings an hour all day long, which in a twelvemonth's time is very near twelve pounds. But such as could better afford, though it be at last upon other people's cost, must have their extraordinary draughts in the day, and the refreshing club at night besides, to fit them for bed. The good people of Caerludd never thought that Britain would prove a stage for such people to act such an inglorious part upon. Now it is high time for the churches to mourn, for the land to mourn, for such locusts, caterpillars, and canker-worms are very likely, unless amazing grace prevents, to render all desolate.

NEOPH.—Oh, Christophilus, you do so sink my spirit, that I have hardly life left in me! Oh, for something more refreshing! Pray, Epenetus, go on with your story, and may I forget this.

EPEN.—The admonished person seemed very much displeased with the church, nor was he well pleased with himself. He could think but of one way to make himself easy, and that was to forget all; and there was but one way to forget all, and that was to make himself drunk, and keep himself so. A desperate temptation, which he was just entering into; but, as he was going out upon this dreadful design, an honest godly brother of the church came to visit him, and told him he was afraid he came at an unseasonable time, for he apprehended he was going out. Ay, says the other, so I was; but my business is not so urgent but I can stay, and will stay, now you are come. Upon this, said that brother, whose name was

Porthwyl,—Some hours before I came hither, I was thinking of the several parables spoken by our great Shepherd; that of the woman searching for the lost piece of money, and rejoicing when she found it; that of the man leaving his ninety-nine sheep in the wilderness, and going after the one that went astray till he found it, then carrying it home with joy; and of the prodigal's return, and when his father saw him afar off, ran to meet him, fell upon his neck and kissed him, and his joy was very great. Upon that I thought of you, and I found love and pity towards you, and earnest desires after your recovery out of the snares of the tempter, and to aim at some service that way. But I thought I was weak, and utterly insufficient for any work of that kind; and I thought if I attempted it, I should only by an unseasonable and unwise attempt offend you, and put you more out of the way of repentance. But, still I could not rest, desired direction of God, and several gracious words of Scripture encouraged me; and among others, that we should exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day, lest any of us be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. I saw that, though I was no minister, I was called to exhort my fellow-member, where I thought exhortation was wanting; I saw it must be done without delay, and done as the case required, every

day; so I sent up my desires to God for success, and hither I am come; and before we proceed any further, will you give me leave to go to prayer with you?

Meddwyn.—Yes, with all my heart; but let us go into a convenient room.

Upon this, having entered the room, and made the door safe, they both fell down before the Lord, and *Porthwyol* prayed under a more than ordinary gale of the spirit of prayer. He mourned, confessed, pleaded, with many tears, and his mouth was filled with arguments. The recovery, oh, the recovery of his poor fellow-member, bound with the cords of his own sins, and led captive, he earnestly sought, and unto mercy he appealed.

THEOPH.—Ay, this is like primitive Christianity, indeed! this is following the Lamb, showing the compassions of a merciful Redeemer, and discharging the duty which necessarily belongs to brotherly love. Come, Neophytus, I hope you shall hear something quickly of a reviving nature.

EPEN.—Prayer being over, they got up; and, after some time, *Porthwyol* said, Come, my poor, tempted, ensnared friend and brother, I hope that according to our Lord's will I came this day to seek after you; and as I came along, I was hoping the hand of our Redeemer was in it; let me know, if you can, how it is with you.

Meddwyn.—If you had stayed but a little longer, you had found me in the way of death and darkness; nobody can tell how it has been with me. I heard of temptation many a time, but I never knew what it was to lie under it till now, with my *will*, which I thought had been thorough for God, alienated from Him, and inclined to the ways that lead unavoidably to destruction. And into those ways I was actually going to seek for rest when you came; for I thought I could never be easy without forgetting myself and everybody else; and I thought nothing could bring that about but *drunkenness*, upon which I was resolved. But blessed be God that ever you came! I look upon you as a messenger mercifully sent from God. I take it as His mercy, and it melts me; and I take it as your kindness, and love you. When you entered my door it struck me; I knew the design I was upon, and immediately I thought God knew it, and was now in His providence going to

disappoint me. Your speaking of the lost sheep entered my heart, and the prodigal's reception in measure stuck to my soul; but when in prayer you mentioned Christ's loosing the person bound by Satan, and that He came to preach liberty to the captives in every sense, and the opening the prison doors to them that are bound, I thought I felt my cords breaking, and my soul in measure relieved. I am amazed that I am here mourning before the God of pardons. I am amazed at this mercy. Blessed be God for salvation! Blessed be God for the church, and their dealing with me! And blessed be God for you, brother, and for this day's work!

NEOPH.—One man could not stay at home, the tempter drove him; the other man could not stay at home, God sent him to disappoint the devices of Satan! What a deliverance was here! and what honour was this God put upon a poor servant of His! He was tempted to stay at home as the other was to go abroad; but God helped him to overcome, and blessed him with success. Come, dear Epenetus, let us have more of it.

EPEN.—Upon this, Meddwyn went to prayer, and mourned much before the Lord, owned his original corruption, his actual transgressions, and in a very particular manner confessed and bewailed his late aggravated provocations; earnestly desired unfeigned repentance, not to be repented of; and that he might be kept for ever from sin and snares, and be enabled in faith and holiness to walk with the Lord and with His people to the very last. He, also, with great affection and many tears, blessed God, that prevented the purpose he had formed that day, abounded in thankfulness for Christ, the redemption through His blood, and for the Holy Spirit and His gracious operations, and earnestly desired he might yet partake of His consolations.

After this, they spent some hours together in Christian conversation, and could not tell well how to part; but at last, in the dearest love, they took leave of each other, and Meddwyn promised to visit Porthwyol the next day at such an hour.

Porthwyol could not go home without acquainting one of the elders, and several of the brethren, and told them that

the admonished brother would be at his house next day, at such an hour. And so he was, and there were they to meet him; and when they heard him speak of what God had done for him, it was like receiving him from the dead. They prayed, wept, mourned, rejoiced together; it was an instructing, reviving time to them all. They all longed for the church-meeting day, and so did the admonished brother, especially. In the meantime Christian visits were frequent, and the work of God continued bright.

THEOPH.—So, when God gave repentance, he was not backward to own it. But, pray, give us some account of the next church meeting.

EPEN.—The day came, and God's face being sought, and some necessary work gone through, Dewi spoke as follows:—

Dear brethren, a great part of our business, while on our pilgrimage towards glory, is to give thanks to our God and Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son. But we have not yet got beyond all adversities. We wrestle not only with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers; and the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual and mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. Precious the armour, glorious the cause, sure the victory, for the shout of a King is amongst us. But let not the saints sleep as others do. Let us be sober and vigilant, for our adversary the devil goeth up and down like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. He broke in upon us, and carried into captivity one of our brethren, but, in the name and strength of Him who led captivity captive, we have endeavoured to recover him out of the snare. We have been repulsed, but we hope our Captain of Salvation has prevailed; and our poor ensnared brother is here amongst us this day, to give some account of what he has passed through. Brother, you are desired to speak.

Meddwyn. — My honoured and beloved fathers and brethren; it is no honour to you to be so called by such a person as I am, therefore forgive me that I should take such words in my mouth. I have reason, indeed, to say to the Lord, "Forgive mine iniquity, for it is great;" and to smite on my breast with the poor publican, and say, "God be merciful unto me a sinner." I have sinned against light and knowledge, and against innumerable mercies; have dishonoured God, have grieved the godly, have hindered the work of the kingdom, turned aside after Satan, hardened my own heart, and trampled upon and despised the means of my recovery. Oh, dear children of God, have pity upon me! It is wonderful grace that I am here this day to tell you something how it has been, and how it is with me. The entrance of this sin upon me was by little and little; I began to be general and cold in prayer, and had very little heart for it at all; I began to withdraw in my affection from the godly, and especially the most serious, and began to take pleasure in the *drier* sort; and, I must say, the company of a brother present has been some sort of a snare unto me—not that I have anything to charge brother Cadarn with, for I never saw him drunk in my life; yet, somehow or other, through my fault, his company has been a snare unto me. But, alas, I had my snares within me wherever I went, till at last I was a lawful captive in the hands of the mighty. In tender love you endeavoured my recovery. And, indeed, there was a great change without, and a great change within; and I, like a fool, trusted my own heart, was vastly pleased with myself, and my conquest over my corruption; and carelessness entered my heart, and I turned like a dog to his vomit, and the washed sow to her wallowing in the mire. Upon your second admonition, I was filled and possessed with something of so disagreeable a nature that my flesh trembles to think of it. Displeased with God and with you, displeased with myself and with all the world, I was resolved to get myself drunk, and keep myself so, that I might forget everything that was a burden to me; and as I was going to put this horrid resolution into practice, God sent a brother of the church to keep me back. He talked to me of the lost sheep, and of the prodigal; he

prayed over my bonds, and earnestly desired the Redeemer, who came to preach liberty to the captives, to set me free; and I thought I felt my cords dissolving, I found love to Christ and His church reviving, and I began to be filled with hatred to my sin and loathed myself. Blessed be the Lord that I can now say, "Come, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what He has done for my soul." He has delivered my soul from death, and I earnestly desire He would keep my feet from falling, that I may walk before the Lord in the light of the living. I am under wounds, I have in a manifold sense destroyed myself, but it is supporting to me to hear Him say, "In me is thy help." Under a sense of the greatest unworthiness, I lay myself, I hope, at His feet, and at yours, as a church of His; I am the chief of sinners, but would be within a church of Christ, though but at the threshold. *But for tears he could speak no more.*

NEOPH.—Oh, the difference between this and his former acknowledgments! Certainly, this pleased all the church.

THEOPH.—I am waiting for the account of that.

NEOPH.—Good Theophilus, I understand you.

EPEN.—The whole church heard him with many tears, and it was some time before the elders themselves could speak one word. At last, says Dewi, without asking any more questions,—My dear brethren, you have, as a church of Christ, heard this account given of the restoring grace of God, and the present frame of soul our brother is in as to repentance and resolution; if you are, as a church of Christ, satisfied therein, and testify your dear love to him, and his freedom to your most intimate fellowship in the Lord, signify it by lifting up your hands:—which they unanimously did. And Meddwyn bowed his head toward the earth, and wept; then thanked them all, and begged their prayers. Yefan then gave the church a short yet sweet discourse from these words, "He restoreth my soul;" and after prayer, with abundant thanksgivings, the 23rd Psalm was sung; and so their mourning, in this particular, ended. They sowed in tears, and reaped in joy.

NEOPH.—I rejoice the affair ended so well; it is a pleasant, reviving story. God can heal backslidings.

EPEN.—Indeed, great was the glory of that work; for by

this means God fixed him in such an aversion to the sin of drunkenness that he abhorred all the ways that led to it ever after, and was of great use unto the church so long as he lived. God made him afterwards an eminent instrument to fortify all his brethren against all appearance of evil.

CHRISTOPH.—This was very precious. Oh, my heart sinks under the stories I have heard abroad! When shall any out of the dark drinking tribes be raised up for service among their fellows! Now, they drink away all tenderness of conscience, trample upon the precepts of Scripture, laugh at and deride a faithful ministry, and glory that they are not priest-ridden, as they call it, and boast that they have been at the ale-house (*hell-house*, to use great Bolton's word), and, in the face of the sun, glory in their shame. I say again, Oh, when will the Lord, according to His word, make strong drink bitter to such people!

NEOPH.—And I say, Christophilus, when will you have done with those disagreeable things you have heard of abroad? I could wish you had never been near such a people; the very account of them makes my flesh tremble.

THEOPH.—Well shot, again, Neophytus. But you remember something spoken about one Cadarn, who was a snare to his brother; and though that was not, directly, an information lodged against him, yet, being accidentally brought into the church, you may depend upon it that the faithful elders, in those primitive times, would not let it drop and lie as a stumbling-block in the church, without a public consideration of it. Therefore, I hope Epenetus will give us some particular account of that man.

EPEN.—That man was a person of considerable sense, and of a strong constitution; was generally very good tempered, and his company entertaining and pleasant; could drink hard, and not appear in the least concerned; his company was coveted by many, nor was any denied it who desired it; was a church member, and in the main appeared religious. He had often been talked to by the elders upon some things which appeared to them not expedient; and he was of such a temper that he received everything in the kindest and most affable manner. But this occasion offering itself to take some notice of him in a public way, Dewi spoke to Meddwyn as follows:—

Dear brother, now restored by grace, in taking notice of the several ways whereby your temptations gradually prevailed upon you, you observed that the company of brother Cadarn, here present, was in some sense a snare to you. I desire you would favour us with a more particular account of that.

Meddwyn.—Sir, I have little reason to accuse any body. I am very sorry I mentioned it; but seeing I must speak, I may say the agreeableness of his company did vastly please me; and his example taught and encouraged me to drink; but, as I said before, I don't know the man that saw him drunk.

Dewi.—Brother Cadarn, I hope, if any poor brother of this church had said of you, that under temptations your company was useful for the restoring his soul, and your example encouraging to him to cleave to the Lord and walk in his duty, it would have been much more agreeable to you than to hear such a story as this. How can you hear it and not mourn in the dust before the Lord? Did you not sin? Did you not encourage the sins of others? And are they not, therefore, to be considered, in a sense, as your sins; and don't you think they will be considered so in the day of judgment? Brother, consider your ways, abstain from company keeping, and avoid drinking to excess. You are desired to speak.

Cadarn.—Sir, I am very well satisfied that humanity itself, not to say Christianity, powerfully pleads for public usefulness; nor do I desire to live a day longer than I may be profitable to others. In all company where I am cast, I consider what may be most useful for conversation at that time and place; and if I fall short of attaining proposed usefulness, it is owing to imprudence, or something that might suddenly occur, for which I was not sufficiently prepared, and not from any depraved design. So I hope I partake not of other men's sins; and as for drinking to excess, the brother that spoke, I think, justified me; nor am I conscious to myself, nor averse to appeal to all the world.

Dewi.—Then, seeing you say you are not conscious that at any time you drink to excess, give me leave, brother, to ask you whether at any time you drink more than nature and religion say is enough?

Cadarn.—Sir, I never drink to drunkenness. I keep within the perfect use of limb, reason, and sense; nor did any person in this world, I believe, say of me, There goes a drunkard.

Dewi.—We read that Benhadad, king of Syria, was drinking himself *drunk* in his pavilions, yet had the perfect use of limb, reason, and sense, and mounted a horse, and made his escape from the conquering tribes.—1 Kings, xx. Nor are they, God Himself being judge, a happy people that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink. Their condition is as woeful, with regard of the sinfulness of it, as theirs is who before all the world discover the most evident marks of drunkenness. And though, perhaps, it has not been said of you, There goes a drunkard; yet it has been said, There goes a person that can drink, and does drink, as much as will make two or three men drunk, and carries off all clean and unconcerned.

Cadarn.—And thus, Sir, I am no reproach to the cause I profess, and no man can call me a drunkard.

Dewi.—To be *filled* with wine, or any strong drink wherein is excess, is a reproach to the cause you profess; and between calling you a drunkard, and calling you a drinking man, the difference is not great, and the sin is the same in drinking more than is meet.

Cadarn.—Perhaps I am not so great a drinker as some men would make me. While others drink to excess and discover it, my keeping myself sober evidences me to be upon my guard.

Dewi.—To tarry long at the wine stands condemned in God's word; and that business that requires it, is either unlawful in itself, or sinfully and unlawfully managed. If the former, reject it; if the latter, reform it.

Cadarn.—It is lawful, in a moderate way, to pursue business, and provide for families; and I know that, very often, if I had not stayed so long as I did, I should have missed considerable advantage.

Dewi.—But a little in the way of righteousness hath a glory upon it, while great revenues out of the way of duty stand under a dark and dreadful cloud. Besides, how can you tell but Providence would have thrown more into your

lap had you been absent, attending your special duty towards Him whose blessing alone maketh rich? However, you would have obtained it, or retained it, in a way more agreeable to your family and to yourself, in soul and body.

Cadarn.—I never knew my family suffer by anything I did, nor do I apprehend myself the worse in soul or body for any freedom I use.

Dewi.—If you do not worship God with your family before they go to bed, or if you do not worship God with them before it is late, they must be esteemed great sufferers; and so they must be, though you worship in season, if you are full of liquor, though not what persons may call drunk. So, then, your own soul must be the leaner for it, not being able to draw near to God in the spirit of prayer, and enjoy fellowship with Him in His love. And then, as to your body, though you are blessed with a brave constitution, and a thousand pities it should not always be used for the noblest ends, this practice insensibly lays the foundation of afflictions to be felt hereafter.

Cadarn.—As I said at first, I aim at usefulness; and I hope I shall never live to be hurtful to myself or others.

Dewi.—And as I said before, hurtful to yourself and family to be sure you are, whether you are sensible of it or not; and, besides, could not that which you spend needlessly be laid out to better purpose in your family? And do not you think that you give your children an example, which they are very likely to follow to their hurt, and the hurt of their children; and of their children's children, for aught you know? Are you favoured with leisure, health, and plenty for such ends as these? You say you aim at usefulness; and I say, is not sin deceitful? Or, suppose you are not deceived, is that, according to the written word, the way to usefulness?

Cadarn.—Sir, I have stopped the mouths of many, and in companies where I am known, they dare not blaspheme our Redeemer; and many of them have had favourable thoughts of our religion, and have owned that my company and conversation convinced them that we were not such a narrow-souled, severe society as they had been informed; and they have often said they had a mind to come and hear Christianity preached. But among them I never drink to

excess, and therefore am capable of reasoning with them, when, perhaps, many of them are not very capable of resisting any argument I produce.

Dewi.—And here, by your own confession, you may see the hurt you do. They had been informed that we were strict in our morals, bent against all appearance of evil, and fixed in dependance upon, and conformity to, Christ; and by you they are convinced that we are not such a people, and so they begin to have favourable thoughts of us. Pray, brother, is this doing them good? You say, you never drink to excess. Pray, is not a bottle or two of wine a drinking to excess at one time? Did the apostle mean such a quantity, when he said to Timothy, "Use a little wine?" Or, suppose you can *minge* strong drink, that is, drink measure after measure, and not be concerned, is there not a *woe* unto men of that strength and practice? And what, though you are not drunk, pray what does our Lord say of them that eat and drink *with* the drunken? And if something had not impaired your own reason, you would never have mentioned *that* as a fit time to reason with persons, when they themselves are not capable of receiving what reason may offer. And, besides, to borrow the prophet's expression, I must say, you "are as one of them," and do harden them, and grieve the godly.

Cadarn.—But I have several of the godly sometimes in company with me, and I am more pleased with theirs than any.

Dewi.—You godly souls, observe it and beware! They, by being there, harden you, and either you grieve or harden them.

Cadarn.—What you have said, Sir, lays me under some concern; I thank you for it. I begin to think that many sins and much hurt may attend a course of moderate drinking, as some persons may call it.

Yefan.—Brother, I am glad to hear you say so. Sins and hurt! no tongue can express how much. That drinking which, upon strict examination, cannot be called a drinking to the glory of God, is sinful drinking. That which wastes precious time, hinders meditation, promotes babbling or impertinent talk, inflames the blood, indisposes for the most serious devotion, is sinful drinking. Again, that drinking

which indisposes persons for the most spiritual attendance upon God in family worship, or throws it late and out of season; which prevents or renders the mind unfit for a private close examination, in the evening, of our thoughts, words, and actions through the day, and humble, fervent, closet supplications before God, is sinful drinking. That drinking which gives unto others a wrong idea of the strictness and holiness of the Christian religion, as if it could allow of the least abuse of the mercies of the God of heaven, which grieves the godly, ensnares the unwary, and hardens the wicked, is sinful drinking. In short, that which conforms the professors of Christianity unto the world, and confirms the world in its vain and sinful courses, is downright opposition unto God, and the great designs of the Gospel; though persons may at the same time keep themselves from being drunk all their days. And therefore I do, in the name of Christ, and as an elder in this church, call upon you for ever to abstain from and abhor all drinking, but that which God does make your duty, and nature renders necessary; and upon that you can with all spiritual freedom beg the blessing of God.

Cadarn.—My honoured pastor and teacher, I do with all thankfulness acknowledge your faithfulness to Christ and to me. I am thankful this reproof was so public, for the benefit of others whom I have done harm to, and beg your prayers, that where I have done iniquity, I may do so no more.

And upon this, with thanksgivings their requests were made known to God, and the meeting concluded.

NEOPH.—A precious meeting! The glory of the Lord was among the people, and His fear was before their eyes, and the holy discipline of His house was attended with becoming dread upon their minds; and with the success which followed their loving and regular endeavours for each other's good, I am vastly pleased.

CHRISTOPH.—And so am I, dear Neophytus; but when with former glory I compare the present posture of things, which I was informed of abroad, my heart sinks within me. Where drinking fellows despise and dare the discipline of the churches, and with hearts full of what I must call atheism, and with looks full of indignation and disdain, say to the

elders, *Cut me off, cut me off*. And when they are cut off, with looks they think big and brave, scoff and rave against all churches as abounding with *priest-craft*: and if any of their fellows are, by some stings of conscience, kept back from such a pitch of confidence, they are laughed at and despised as feeble, yea, many of the wretches have made a tender conscience their sport. But "God will come to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."

NEOPH.—Well, I must say again, Christophilus, what an unhappy thing it was that you went abroad! These things once you did not know; and I must say, indeed, that he that increaseth the knowledge of them, increaseth sorrow. I pray, dear Epenetus, give me something more agreeable.

EPEN.—Then take it thus:—Cadarn never fell into such a course any more, religiously abstained from all occasions leading thereto, and reaping in his own soul the great advantage of a close walk with God and with His saints, that day twelvemonth, in a church meeting, he stood up and desired the elders would give him leave to speak something that was upon his mind. And upon leave he spoke as follows:—

Honoured and beloved in the Lord, you may remember, most of you, how I was reasoned with and reproved, about a year ago, in the church. I am here this day to bless God for that day's reproof and instruction. From my sin, as now I can call it, I was helped to abstain, and the precious fruits of a walk more agreeable I have ever since enjoyed. As I then foolishly pleaded, I never was drunk, but now I know I was not as I should have been; but was too well acquainted with what some people esteem greatness of mind; but, indeed, too great a stranger to the joys of God's nation, and the gladness of His heritage. But the Lord in mercy has restored my soul; I know it, and my family know it, and I thought it my duty to let you know it as a church. I have nearness to God, the meditation of Him is sweet to me; I have fellowship with Him, through grace, in family worship; and I see a blessed change in my family, and they see a change in me. I think, if it was put to my

choice, I would not for all Caerludd be deprived of my present comforts and fall into my former way. But may free grace keep me, and for ever deliver me from trusting in an arm of flesh. Now I have a precious experience of the happiness of the man who only eats and drinks for the service of God; His table is no snare, and in a sense every cup is a cup of salvation. This day I bless God, here publicly, for the precious use He made of that reproof to my soul; and I earnestly desire your prayers for me, that I may be for ever guided, kept, sanctified, and comforted.

NEOPH.—A good story, that makes me bless the God of all grace too: my dear Epenetus, it refreshes me. May we always hear stories of the conquering grace of God; and I hope you are ready with more of them.

EPEN.—My dear friends and neighbours, our duties to God and our families now call upon us; and I wish we may, in evening attendance on our heavenly Father, enjoy much of His presence, and foretastes of future glory.

DIALOGUE VIII.

CHURCH DUTIES—THE CHURCH AND THE CHILDREN.

THEOPHILUS.—Here is our Neophytus hastening through the grove; though some things in our last conference distressed him, he is still eager to hear the story.

CHRISTOPH.—It was only some of that part which I bore in it that distressed him; but though I was under heaviness and anguish of mind myself, on account of what I had seen and heard abroad, I mentioned no part of it with a design to distress others, but to raise up in our hearts together just and holy resentment and indignation; and to put us upon all prayer against that prevailing iniquity, in city and country, which will, unless the Spirit of the Lord is pleased eminently to work against it, wash away all the power and appearance of religion.

THEOPH.—I earnestly desire that all who love the Lord may with earnestness and zeal bear their testimony against all evil. So, my Neophytus, I hope you bring us good tidings. Come, what is the best news?

NEOPH.—The Gospel, the Gospel, most excellent Theophilus, the Gospel is the best news for ever. But what gave cheerfulness to my countenance, if any appears there, was the consideration of that innocent mirth which universal nature at this time seems to discover.

THEOPH.—But we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

NEOPH.—Ay, ay, it is true, there is nothing we have ever seen that comes up to the glory and beauty of Paradise; but there is a promise that our wilderness shall be as Eden, and our desert as the garden of the Lord. In the meanwhile I think it is wonderful, that, though death must attend

everything that is beautiful, there is a time to rejoice. Theophilus, had you been with me this day in my walks, you would have said that God had made Tabor and Hermon rejoice. Oh! it refreshed me to see our pastures clothed with flocks, and our valleys covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing; and though I know that every man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward, yet God made me glad through His work; and the singing of birds around me did strongly persuade me to sing too; and because they could not praise God with design, I thought they bid me do it for them.

Beasts fain would sing; birds ditty to their notes;
Trees would be tuning on their native lute
To thy renown; but all their hands and throats
Are brought to man, while they are lame and mute.

Man is the world's high-priest; he doth present
The sacrifice for all; while they below
Unto the service mutter an assent,
Such as springs use that fall, and winds that blow.

He that to praise and laud thee doth refrain,
Doth not refrain unto himself alone,
But robs a thousand who would praise thee fain;
And doth commit a world of sin in one.—HERBERT.

THEOPH.—Indeed, did we but duly observe the wonders of providence, not to mention those of redeeming love, which appear infinitely above all blessing and praise, we should see ourselves constantly called upon to give thanks and sing. But pray, Neophytus, what did you sing?

NEOPH.—The mercies of Jehovah sing for evermore will I;
I'll with my mouth thy truth make known to all posterity;
For I have said that mercy shall for ever be up built;
Establish in the very heavens thy faithfulness thou wilt.
With Him that is my chosen one, a covenant made I have;
And to my servant David, I by oath this promise gave,
To perpetuity thy seed establish sure I will;
Likewise to generations all thy throne I'll build up still.
Also the heavens thy wonders, Lord, they shall with praise confess,
Within the assembly of the saints, likewise thy faithfulness.

PSALM LXXXIX. 1—5.

CHRISTOPH.—A precious song! what majesty! how does God magnify His word! and who knows but this may be a proper text, if I may properly say so, to our present

conference. Here is mercy that shall be built up for ever ; here is truth and faithfulness to perform all the designs of it ; here is an established covenant, and in it a seed for ever to be continued, and the faithfulness of God in the assembly of the saints to be confessed.

THEOPH.—With the Lord there is mercy, and in it doth He delight ; He taketh pleasure in those who trust in His mercy.

PHILAL.—A blessed subject for those who have made themselves miserable to meditate upon ; His mercy shall be built up for ever ; His mercy is above the heavens.

NEOPH.—And with pleasure I observe, that as His mercy is great to the heavens, so the earth is full of His mercy. Who can fully lay open the multitude of His tender mercies ? His mercy endureth for ever ; is from everlasting to everlasting. Oh ! my heart is refreshed with that soul-supporting, instructing text, “The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works.”

SYLLOG.—Why, really, when I have considered, according to my poor measure, the wise and tender providence of God towards every moving, living thing, the provision He makes for the innumerable nations, the inhabitants of the several elements, the pleasures they enjoy according to their several capacities and dispositions (for what He gives them they gather), my heart is thankful on their behalf. Everything attending them all is beautiful, except what our sin hath procured. But there is one gift of the God of nature to most, if not all of them, that I have often been greatly affected with ; and that is their pity, good will, and care towards their young. A sheep, to defend its lamb, will threaten a mastiff ; and a timorous hen will, in defence of her young, fly at an eagle. I have thought what a merciful provision this for the safety of the feeble, that cannot defend themselves ; and with true pleasure I hope I have at times encouraged a contemplation of infinite mercies and pity in the eternal spring of life.

THEOPH.—Your following the several streams of pity and affection in animal life, up to the Fountain from whence they flow, is certainly a desirable part of that wisdom the Father of lights bestows on the rational part of the creation. In man, who has more noble and rational powers of mind,

natural affection must exceed whatever may be seen anywhere else; or again, under the dominion of degeneracy, where the best things are turned to be the worst of all, he will discover the basest of dispositions. What greater demonstration of the Divine pity and goodness in providence, than the sincere affections of tender parents? and what can be more sordid and base than a heart destitute thereof?

CHRISTOPH.—Well, my dear Theophilus, you have touched me. It is now many years ago since God was pleased to reach my soul by His grace, and I was made, I hope with pleasure and profit, to search the Scriptures; in several places whereof He condescends to express His love and pity to His people, by that natural affection tender parents feel and discover. And though I was not a parent, yet I understood such expressions, to my great comfort; but since God has graciously given me children, I understand them in another manner. The pain I have felt in the afflictions of my child, and the pleasure I have enjoyed in its prosperity, the tender love, and the careful attention without weariness to the use of all means before God and man for its good, have given me more intimate acquaintance with the grace and love of God in such kind expressions, than ever I had or could come at before. “Like as a father pitieth His children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him; for He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust. Thou shalt call me, My Father; and shalt not turn away from me. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; a mother may forget, yet will I not forget thee.” Many more Scriptures of the like kind are very precious to me. For I reflect, if my love, who am but a sinful parent, has so many ways of discovering itself, what must the love and compassion of my heavenly Father be? He bids me show this love; He works in me this love and pity, and therefore in Him it must be infinite unto me and my poor children too.

PHILAL.—Justly observed, my dear Christophilus, and may we be helped to improve our mercies thus to the glory of the Father of our mercies! Natural affection is a mercy, to us and to our children; and it is a very great mercy that God gives unto us so many encouragements to hope

that He will do for our children, in a way of mercy, greater things than our strongest natural affections can stretch forth themselves unto. The foundation for this mercy has been gloriously laid; and according to dear Neophytus's blessed song, it shall be built up for ever.

THEOPH.—My dear Philaethes, you fill me with expectation; my children are near and dear unto me; come, let us have some account of those encouragements.

PHILAL.—The covenant of God to Abraham abides for our perpetual encouragement, as to the salvation of our seed, Gen. xvii. 7. There God promises to be a God unto Abraham, and to his seed after him. "This God is our God for ever and ever." Blessed are the people whose God is the Lord; the Lord is our God, and the God of our seed.

NEOPH.—But did that promise to Abraham intend everlasting happiness, or only the land of Canaan?

PHILAL.—The first, to be sure; for the promise of Canaan is in the verse following:—"And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger."

NEOPH.—But does the first great promise then really reach to and intend the godly among the Gentiles and their seed?

PHILAL.—The Holy Spirit in the New Testament says, "That if we be Christ's (that is, brought to give up ourselves to Jesus Christ by faith), then are we Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." The promise was, that God would be Abraham's God, and the God of his seed; every believing Gentile is an heir according to that promise; has as great a right to it as ever Abraham had for himself and his seed.

NEOPH.—If the covenant is but free and absolute, as I fully believe it is, a great deal of comfort must thence flow to tender-hearted, believing parents.

PHILOL.—Free and absolute! how can it be otherwise? Though it was strictly conditional to Christ, the very form of expression wherein it is delivered does signify its being altogether absolute to us. So to Abraham, Gen. xvii. 2, "I will give my covenant;" according to the Hebrew. So to David, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5, "He hath put me to an ever-

lasting covenant ;" as the Hebrew hath it. So Jer. xxxi. 33, "This is the covenant I will cut to the house of Israel ;" and evident it is that it should be so rendered, for the Holy Spirit gives it so to us in the New Testament, Heb. viii. 10, "For this is the testament I will dispose to the house of Israel." And, indeed, the whole design of the Gospel requires that all should be absolute and free ; and the present condition of ourselves and children makes it necessary it should be so.

NEOPH.—I remember that in Yefan's discourse with a church member about the covenant of grace, it was said that it was made with Christ as head of the elect, and their representative ; pray, were all the children of the godly in that covenant representatively ?

PHILAL.—In the concern that we have with them in our day, we have great reason to believe so concerning them, as well as concerning their parents, till it appears to the contrary.

NEOPH.—But when will that appear ?

PHILAL.—Nobody in the world can tell.

NEOPH.—But, if in covenant, are they regenerated ?

PHILAL.—All the elect were in the covenant before regeneration, and all the unconverted elect are in the covenant of grace, or they are in no sense in Christ. But we cannot tell how early regeneration may be ; it may be long before it discovers itself ; and, after hopeful discoveries, it may be again clouded.

NEOPH.—What if a godly man has many children, has he the same reason to believe concerning all of them ?

PHILAL.—Yes, every one ; for the promise is to you and to your children ; and the promises made to the godly fathers of old concerning their children, Christ came to confirm, as the Spirit of God informs us, Rom. xv. 8, 9, 10, "That the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy ; as it is written, for this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. And again He saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people."

NEOPH.—Then I see that what is called a covenant to us, and what we call the covenant wherein all the godly and their seed are interested, is a mere promise.

PHILAL.—Yes, the covenants of promise.

NEOPH.—Then, pray, what do some people mean and intend when they talk of baptismal vows, and children's entering into covenant, and their being received into some *federal* state wherein they were not before.

SYLLOG.—Nothing at all; or what is worse than nothing.

NEOPH.—But they say, what! are the reins thrown upon our necks? are we under no engagements to repent and believe? does not our baptismal covenant lay us under obligations?

SYLLOG.—And you may ask them, whether they were not under obligations to obey and become religious previous to what they call a covenant? Was the law of God imperfect till then? And you may tell them that in the covenant of grace there is provision made for faith, repentance, and every grace; for according to the exceeding great and precious promises given to us, we do and shall partake of the Divine nature, and escape the corruption that is in the world through lust.

NEOPH.—But when no godliness appears upon the seed of believers, what can we say?

PHILAL.—Let God be true. Their unbelief shall not make the faith of God of none effect. Of believers we are not infallible judges. It is the promise of God, and not the profession of man, that we depend upon. Who must go, or is gone, to eternal darkness, we determine not. God can do great things for a great sinner in a moment; and that, perhaps, when he is past giving any account of it to any that may be about him. To the free promise of God we flee, and we are sure He will not chide us for it. No; God forbid any such thought should attempt an entrance into our hearts! We are sure we are heirs according to the promise made to Abraham, and we are sure that promise was, "I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed." And what though our faith be tried? the promise stands, and shall not be overturned.

SYLLOG.—But, through grace, our faith is not tried in this matter, as some weak people imagine. We can see many, many thousands, to each of which we can speak in the apostle's words to Timothy, "When we call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother and thy mother, and we are persuaded that

in thee also." Though the promise in the 45th Psalm, doubtless, may comprehend more, yet in this sense we have seen it, and do see it daily fulfilled, "Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children." Nor would we for the world give way to a few carnal objections against the eternal truth and faithfulness of Him that speaketh from heaven.

CHRISTOPH.—I hope I shall always own the grace and truth of the covenant of our God. It is ordered *in all things*; it contains all my desire; and, I am sure, if my children had been left out, *all my desire* had not been in it. It is God that hath given us natural affection, and we are sure that under the influences of new-creation grace, those natural affections are enlarged and improved, and in proportion our earnest desires after some firm foundation of hope concerning the salvation of our children; and I fear not to say that God is the Author of those earnest desires. And why does He fill us with them? What, to distress us, and disappoint us! God forbid. He says, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." All spiritual breathings and desires have their most suitable encouragements; but whoever disputes against the covenant and promise of salvation to our children, does all that he can to destroy the foundation of our hope concerning them.

THEOPH.—I have found the covenant of God precious to me in the dying hours of some of my children; have been helped to plead it with God for them, and have seen it as a chariot to carry them safe to glory, and, by faith in the promises of the Lord, have seen them therein. For my living children I plead it, and am thankful to see any of them, though with a feeble hand, take hold of it. God has made abundant provision for our comfort. In the everlasting covenant, He gave Himself to us and to our seed; and in all subservient covenants He always included the seed of the godly with their parents. No instance can be given wherein they were left out. Blessed be God for the ancient charter of the church that shall never be revoked. Here we can with pleasure stand and see many other encouraging scriptural considerations. Pray, dear Philalethes, give us some of them.

PHILAL.—Why, really, most excellent Theophilus, it is with a great deal of pleasure I have sometimes considered

the claim the Lord lays to the children of the godly as His children. "Lo! children are an heritage of the Lord; and the fruit of the womb is His reward,"—Psalm cxxvii. 3, which must intend something more than the common right He has to all the creation. They are God's special heritage; the children of His beloved, as He calls the parents of them in the foregoing verse. The Lord's portion is His people, Jacob is the lot of His inheritance. Though the whole creation is in His hands as the clay in the hands of the potter, His sheep and lambs are in His hands for eternal life. "You shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people, for all the earth is mine. And you shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." Were the children left out here? or were they excluded by the Spirit of God in the New Testament when He takes up these words, and says, "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people?" A chosen generation, but their infants shut out? God forbid! "Because He loved thy fathers, therefore He chose their seed after them." And when sore degeneracy prevailed upon the visible church, the Lord says, "Moreover thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast borne unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured: Is this of thy whoredoms a small matter, that thou hast slain my children?"

CHRISTOPH.—With thankfulness of heart have I looked upon my children as the Lord's. I have, indeed, given them to Him; but of His own have I given to Him. This child is the Lord's, and that child is the Lord's; and He seems to say to me, as the Egyptian princess said to Moses's mother, "Take this child and nurse it for me;" and with joy I apply myself unto the work.

PHILAL.—And the Lord's committing the children heretofore in a special manner to the care of the church, gives unto us special encouragement to look upon them as peculiarly the Lord's. How did the Lord approve of that care in Abraham?—"For I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord." And how did He recommend it unto the tribes?—"And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them

diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” —Deut. vi. 6-7. Is not the special love of our God unto, and His care over our children seen in this?

NEOPH.—If they were members of the church, as everybody must grant they were, subject unto the instituted government they must be thereof; which should also be looked upon as a great privilege, denoting the gracious design of God for their good, through time and to eternity. And I remember that several weeks ago it was observed among us, that the children of church members are themselves members of the church their parents belong to, and are under the care and inspection thereof.

PHILAL.—Doubtless; the revealed will of God, under both the Old and New Testament, makes the truth thereof very evident. Is it not said of Christ, that a seed should serve Him that should be counted to the Lord for a generation? And is it not said in another place, where the change of the Old Testament dispensation into that of the New is very particularly foretold, “But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end. The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed be established before thee?” What can establishment before the Lord include less than church-membership? and in what sense may the children be said to be *continued*, if not in that? And does not the prophet Jeremiah, when expressly prophesying of Gospel days, tell us of the New Testament saints, that their children should be as aforetime?

NEOPH.—Yes, truly, the case seems to be very plain; and, unless to serve some turn or other, nobody would deny it.

PHILAL.—True; especially if we consider what is further said of it in the New Testament, where our Lord tells us, in plain words, concerning little children, “That of such is the kingdom of heaven.” And the Spirit of God says, that if either of the parents be a believer, then the children are holy; if the root be holy, so likewise are the branches.

THEOPH.—All this makes me, with holy pleasure, think of that blessed promise, “I will save thy children,” and of the wonderful day that is coming, when this glory shall be attended with greater brightness; for they are the seed of

the blessed of the Lord, the saints and their offspring with them. In the meantime, blessed be God for His covenant!

PHILOL.—How comfortable unto a tender, godly parent, and how encouraging is that special notice the apostle John takes of little children. 1 John ii. 12, 13,—“I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name’s sake. I write unto you, little children, because you have known the Father.” By little children, he must intend what we commonly understand by that word.^a I grant that in the epistle it is several times understood of all the Christians to whom he wrote; but here it cannot be so taken, because the little children are more than once distinguished from young men and fathers. Again, though in our translation, as I have repeated the words, we have *little children* twice, yet, in the original, the apostle makes a difference, though in both words he discovers a great deal of tender affection, and love to a great degree of fondness. I write to you, my dear little youths, though young in years, you have received some instruction, and have known the Father. Christ, the Prince of Shepherds, feeds His flock, and gathers His lambs with His arms, and carries them in His bosom; when He gave His apostles charge to feed His sheep, He expressly charged them to feed His lambs also. And here we see the beloved disciple in a very faithful manner discharging his trust. But let affectionate, pious parents for ever admire the grace of God! Their little ones are among the pardoned! Nothing but unbelief will reject this. And let them be encouraged to bring them up “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”

SYLLOG.—Amazing grace, indeed! and from what you mentioned last, upon nurture and admonition, I must observe that there appears abundance of the love and grace of God to our children, in the commands He lays upon us to bring them up in that way of the Lord; or, as the Spirit of the Lord expresses Himself elsewhere, “Train up a child in the way.” Surely the many repeated precepts of God concerning their education are plain demonstrations

^a Of Mr. Maurice’s interpretation of these and other passages the reader must judge for himself. The general principle contended for may be equally worthy of attention, without pressing into service all the texts cited in this Dialogue.—N.

of His covenant regard, and unspeakable encouragements to us concerning them.

NEOPH.—Our honoured Epenetus, upon hearing what our dear and valuable neighbours have observed to the great comfort of all godly parents, give me leave to put one thing to you: In the Scriptures we see that the children of the godly are to be considered in the same covenant promises of grace with their parents; that they are the Lord's children; that the promise made to the fathers is in Christ confirmed, who with His own mouth declared, concerning little children, that the kingdom of heaven is theirs;—upon all this, I pray you to tell me, what did our Lord mean, when, after His resurrection, He left it in charge with His disciples to feed His *lambs*?

EPEN.—Upon the evidence briefly from Scripture given, I do maintain that Christ, by feeding His lambs, meant, that godly tender care and love towards all the children of the church which revelation requires and reason renders necessary. What did our Lord intend by feeding His sheep? The very same He must mean by feeding His lambs; which must intend a faithful distribution of their respective portions unto each in due season. The children of the church are not only the care of their parents, but of the church and its officers also; to be instructed, encouraged, or reproved, as the case may require, more privately or more publicly. And though, at present, duties of this kind are much neglected, yet from the beginning it was not so.^b

NEOPH.—I hope now in the course of your story you will favour us with an instance or two upon this.

EPEN.—You may remember that, not long since, I mentioned a visit of one of the bishops of the first church in Caerludd to one Gobeithiol, and Mwynedd, his wife, both very eminent Christians, but under great distress of mind, on account of a stubborn and perverse son of theirs, whose name was Cyndyn. A very brief account of that youth you may take thus:—

^b A valuable paper, "On the Relation of Baptized Children to the Church," was read by the Rev. Dr. Halley, at the Congregational Union Autumnal Meeting, 1859, wherein the duties of modern churches are illustrated and enforced by learned and copious reference to the practice of the early church. The paper has been since printed.—N.

When he was yet but a young child there appeared some uncommon tokens of perverseness and ill-nature. There were some things in him again, which for his years gave, especially as his parents might think, uncommon discoveries of wit, contrivance, and design; and though always appearing in some selfish or naughty instances, yet a foundation was laid, in the parents' expectation, that such parts in time would be fitted up and ripened for some uncommon service: accordingly, he had in their affections a place that might be called an unusual degree of fondness.

But, as he grew up, a perverse nature grew faster than he—particularly a vast aversion to prayer; he never was willing to get up in the morning till the worship of God in the family was over; and at night, either he was asleep, or there must be one to keep him awake, or his head would ache and he must go to bed. In the public worship, he would be staring about him for his diversion, or at some foolish trifling play with hands or feet, or asleep; and upon examination, when he came home, what he remembered (for his parents charged him to observe what he heard, and bring home as much as he could), he would either say that his head did ache, or that something fell out by the way which made him forget what he did remember; or that he remembered something he was sure, only he could not say the very words. Reading he always abhorred, and it was a torment to him to hear others read; and though his parents always told him of his natural state, and the only way of salvation, and how by prayer he should cry to God, and never partake of his food without thankful thoughts sent up to God, and words of prayer for a blessing; yet prayer he abhorred, and to his food he always felt like a swine.

The means of instruction the parents used were many; they catechised, made him learn portions of Scripture by heart, would over and over tell him the meaning of them, would reason with him, reprove him, pray with him, chastise him, call others to reason with him, especially the elders, and Edgar; and now and then would fasten seemingly some conviction upon him, and obtain some promises, but all to very little purpose. However, any little thing the poor parents were very thankful for; and at last, to their great joy, a sudden reformation appeared upon him;

he would constantly join in family worship, would talk about religion, keep company with religious youths, would pray with them, and would pray alone; now were his parents pleased—now they wept for joy.

But after a little while their tears took another turn, and their trial became almost intolerable; I told you there appeared a change *upon* him, now it appeared there was no change *in* him. He threw away that external religion he took up, left off reading, was weary of family worship, forsook the company of youth who were for God, and would pray no more; his former prayers were generally loud, but now that noise was laid. His parents could hardly get him to the public worship, and when there he behaved like a stupid, obstinate sinner. He chose the worst of company, and in many things quickly became their principal. Now prayers, now reproofs, now promises were used, but all to no purpose; he hated instruction, and was in love with the ways of death.

One time, having been out on his wicked rambles, his father being able enough to deal with him, sent up a sigh to heaven, and gave him a severe chastisement, and cried sorely as he did it; for being a tender father, he felt the blows himself more than did his son. However, to bed the young man immediately went, and the father into his closet, to pour his soul out before God, and the poor tender mother retired also to mourn and pray alone. The father was afraid he had chastised too rashly, had not only hurt his poor child's body, but hardened his heart, making him think hard of religion. The mother was not without such thoughts also. They each of them apart mourned under this, and when they met they could not speak to one another for some time. At last,

Mwynedd said—My dear, my heart is under the greatest concern. Will he not think Christianity cruel? Our child, to our great grief, is very rebellious; but, pray, what do you think you have been at?

Gobeithiol.—My dear, do not you add to my grief; it is almost greater than I can bear. I have not chastised willingly. It was my strange work; I desire I never may do it more. I am afraid I have exceeded, but I aimed at my duty, designing his true advantage. Many a time

before now I chastised him. If he persists much longer, I suppose I shall have done with it; for why should he be stricken, if thereupon he revolts more and more?

Mwynedd.—I do believe that to chastise him is your duty. I would not have you fall under a reproof that was given to a very great man of God, because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not, or reproved them, perhaps, with too much gentleness—"Why do ye such things? Nay, my sons, for it is no good report that I hear." I own that you should do all you can to restrain him; but all the powers and passions of my soul are at present so exercised, that I cannot determine what is convenient for you to do, nor him to suffer. Excuse me, I am his mother—

Gobeithiol.—And, my dear, I am his father; and unto me the Lord says, "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying." And you know who hath said, "He that spareth his rod, hateth his son; but he that loveth him, chasteneth him betimes." I hope I have done nothing inconsistent with my duty to God, nor love to my child.

Mwynedd.—But, with submission, I think you fell upon him too soon, and, perhaps, too severely; not but that his sins deserve more. It is not what measure he deserves you should consider, but what measure is most likely to do him good.

Gobeithiol.—Moderate chastisements, you know, I have often given to no purpose. I hope you cannot blame me for thinking a more severe chastisement necessary. I trust I have not laid upon him now more than he can bear.

Mwynedd.—On many accounts I am not a capable judge of that; time will discover it. But had you taken him into a room, reasoned with him first upon the greatness of his sin, the sincerity of your love, and the necessity of your duty, and, in his hearing, sent up a few words to God for a blessing upon what you were going to do, I think it would have been better. What you did, you seemingly did in wrath, and you know the wrath of man doth not fulfil the righteousness of God.

Gobeithiol.—My dear, I did send up a sigh to God; and though my son did not perceive it, I hope God heard, and

will, in His own time, answer it. Nevertheless, I believe I have been too sudden and rash. My second thoughts are cooler than my first. I find the bowels and the pity of a father, and am glad I do, though, in some respects, they add to my distress.

Mwynedd.—I think sometimes your distress is not to be compared to mine. I have brought forth for trouble; my child is the son of my sorrow. Oh, my child, my dear child, of whom I still travail in birth! Shall I ever see Christ formed in him? He was born unto us while we were yet in heathenism, before we were born again. Does the covenant of grace belong unto him?

Gobeithiol.—Yes, my dear, it does, notwithstanding his stubbornness. God is our God, and unto Him, in that covenant, we have given our child, and it was He that encouraged us to do so; and we shall yet see, sooner or later, it was not in vain. But our faith must be tried, and it shall stand the trial, and, in the end, triumph in the enjoyment of its highest expectations. The vision is for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie.

Mwynedd.—Then, my dear, go to the throne of grace for a blessing on this correction, that it may be for the present and eternal good of our poor child, and let me join you.

Upon this they threw themselves down before the Lord. They prayed, mourned, humbled themselves under a sense of the sore trial upon them, and, with many tears, committed their child to God, begging the blessing of Heaven upon all correction, example, and advice. But still that night their son had more rest than they had. Nobody can tell how it is with tender parents but tender parents themselves, as our beloved Christophilus observed.

CHRISTOPH.—Dear Epenetus, in this story you have touched me to the quick—not that I have a prospect of any such children, but natural affections I am acquainted with; and, in hearing this relation, I cannot help putting myself into the place of those tender, tried parents, and I wonder how they did to live. The pains of such parents no words can reach. But how did they find it with their son the following day?

EPEN.—Poor hearts, they were glad and thankful to see

him so well. He was present at family worship, when his father, with great affection, sent up strong cries, with many tears, on his behalf. Many great and precious promises were pleaded, the rich and glorious grace of God to the chief of sinners was owned, and that the glory of all might quickly arise and shine upon their dear child earnestly desired. The poor mother was very glad to observe how the Giver and Hearer of prayer opened her husband's heart, but much grieved to observe all the while her son's heart shut up, for nothing could she discover but a sullen, uneasy countenance.

NEOPH.—Sure, upon that young man there seemed to be marks of reprobation, his case was desperate. I should think it the duty of parents so tried and distressed to trouble neither heart nor head more about such a rebellious son. The parents, under the law, were to harden themselves against the rebellious son, deliver him to the magistrates, and witness against him, that he might die.

THEOPH.—All this is rash and severe, my Neophytus; you are no father. The marks of reprobation are not known, nor can any man living tell whose case is desperate. Christ says, that "all manner of sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven;" and therefore I will say, Why not this? And if it should grow still more heinous, I will say again, Why not that? It is well that God's thoughts are higher than yours, as the heavens are higher than the earth. As to the parents and their rebellious son under the law, did you ever read our dear Ainsworth upon it; and his large account of the Jewish tenderness upon that concern? Epenetus, excuse us.

EPEN.—His father set him to his proper business, which he refused not. He kept in for some weeks, and generally attended family worship, though it appeared to be his burden; but never carried it as if he believed that his parents were his best friends; so after a while he fell again into his old courses, with seemingly greater greediness than ever.

THEOPH.—And what did his poor parents do then?

EPEN.—They prayed for him, reproved him, reasoned with him from time to time; and it was upon one of those times that one of their elders paid them a visit, and sharply

reproved the youth, of which, a few weeks ago, I gave you the account. But quickly after that, all the elders, and a few of the brethren, came to spend a day in prayer at Gobeithiol's house; and the son, according to the strict charge of both father and mother, was present all the while.

NEOPH.—I earnestly desire some account of that day.

EPEN.—The principal part of their time was spent in prayer. Yefan began, and with an enlarged heart and warmth of affection earnestly desired the presence of the God of all grace, and that the good and desirable fruit of that day might appear for the glory of God and their comfort and instruction; but the desirable fruit he absolutely prayed for, nor did he express himself like one that in the least doubted whether the prayer should be answered.

NEOPH.—How could this be? he did not know the event. Should not he have prayed with submission to the Divine will?

THEOPH.—In all things of a temporal nature, and as to many things spiritual and eternal, we are doubtless to pray so; but as to the salvation of the soul, where have we a precept for it, an example in any of the saints, or how can the nature of the thing admit of it? Suppose I was to pray thus, Save my soul from hell and everlasting damnation, if it be thy will. If this does not imply a submission to the Divine will, though the request be not granted, then the petition in this form is a contradiction in terms. But seeing it must imply that, then here is a man willing to be damned, willing to be hated of God, and willing to hate God for ever. I must say, is it not against all that is revealed? If, then, I am to pray absolutely for my own salvation, why not for the salvation of my child? Have I no encouraging promises? And though I do not see my house so with God as I could wish, yet is not the "covenant ordered in all things and sure?" Does it not contain all my salvation and all my desire? And do I not desire the salvation of my child? Does any thing in God's word require that I should be willing that God should hate my child; or that my child should hate God for ever? Could I submit to that, and yet be a sincere lover of God, and a lover of my child? No; God does not call for such

a submission ; nor does it become the *mouth* of a believer to say, O Lord, save my child if it be thy will ; nor his *heart* to go on to what must follow. If not, I submit, and am willing he should hate thee, and be lost. No ; absolute prayers here glorify God, and become the saints ; and they who annex to petitions upon things of such weight, “ If it be thy will,” know not what they say. God requires it not at their hands. “ I will not let thee go, except thou bless me,” is a language that becomes an Israelite indeed. “ Let the people praise thee, O God, let all the people praise thee.”

NEOPH.—I see it is not in vain, most excellent Theophilus, that I have referred myself to your correction. Beloved Epenetus, proceed.

† EPH.—After Yefan, two ruling elders prayed in the same spirit, and much to the same purpose ; and then Dewi read Eph. vi. 1, “ Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.” And from that text gave that small assembly a very sweet discourse, aiming especially at the instruction and support of the parents, and at the conviction and conversion of their son. He observed, how the Holy Spirit, in writing to the churches, the saints, and the faithful, included the *children*, and often directly speaks to them. He observed, that God entrusts parents to teach, instruct, and *command* their children in His name. He observed, that it is the special duty of children to *obey* their parents. He observed, that parents should require nothing but what the Lord requires, so that children in obeying should in the first place obey the Lord, and then their parents, as authorised by Him, and commanding in His name. He observed, therefore, that it was the special duty both of parents and children to *search* much into the mind and revealed will of the Lord, and conform themselves thereunto ; or else, [neither the commands of the one, nor the obedience of the other, could be said to “ be in the Lord.” And then in a fervent prayer begged the Divine blessing thereon, and the Divine guidance in what yet did lie before them.

CHRISTOPH.—I wish each godly family had a scriptural, evangelical discourse upon that text. But, pray, what was there more to be done ?

EPEN.—The next thing they judged necessary was to put some close questions to the young man, as follows:—

Yefan.—I will take leave, Cyndyn, to ask you one question, which may open the way to more. Pray, whose are you?

Cyndyn.—Nobody's, unless I am my father's.

Yefan.—Brother Gobeithiol, whose are you?

Gobeithiol.—I am the Lord's.

Yefan.—I will put it to you again. Cyndyn, whose are you?

Cyndyn.—I did not think of what father said; but if he is the Lord's, I am; besides, all things are the Lord's.

Yefan.—Is your father the Lord's, think you, in no other sense but as all things else are?

Cyndyn.—Yes, I believe he is the Lord's in a sense different from what some other things are; for there are many persons who never gave themselves unto the Lord, and there are many things that cannot; but I have heard my father give himself many a time to the Lord.

Yefan.—You say, if you are anybody's, you are your father's; and did not you hear him give you to the Lord?

Cyndyn.—Yes, I believe I did.

Yefan.—Pray, brother Gobeithiol, what made you do so?

Gobeithiol.—Sir, it was of His own that I gave Him; I was helped to lay hold on the promise for myself and my child; for the Lord says, "I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee;" and upon that I concluded that I and my children were His. And besides, the Lord says in His word that my child was His *heritage*, so I thought it my duty and glory to give my child to Him.

Yefan.—Do you think your father did well in this?

Cyndyn.—Yes, I believe he did.

Yefan.—Then you must think that you are the Lord's in a different sense from many other persons and things.

Cyndyn.—Yes, it is like enough I am.

Yefan.—Then, pray why do you not give him what is his own?

Cyndyn.—Sir, I keep nothing from him that I know of.

Yefan.—"Son, give me thy heart;" you do not give him that.

Cyndyn.—Sir, you cannot see what I do with that.

Yefan.—That's your mistake; for "the tree is known by his fruit;" and if you gave your heart to the Lord, you would also "yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness."

Cyndyn.—Well, I hope I shall in due time give all to Him.

Yefan.—Now is the due time; and you have sorely sinned not to yield up all to God long before now.

Cyndyn.—Surely a young man may enjoy the innocent pleasures of life a little.

Yefan.—Self is Christ's enemy; and in seeking yourself, you deceive your own soul, and deprive yourself of the best pleasures.

Cyndyn.—I know of no pleasures better than those I enjoy, if I could but enjoy them quietly; and what I do not know, I envy nobody.

Yefan.—Enjoy them quietly you cannot; whatever face you put upon it, something of conscience will fly in your face. "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." How will you stand in the judgment, for you see you shall be brought there?

Cyndyn.—I do not think always to live thus; as I said before, I hope in due time to repent and reform.

Yefan.—And, as I said before, the due time is now; and the further you go on in sin, the harder you will grow, and the more indisposed to repent. The Lord calls you now to repentance, and, in His name, I do so—"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon."

Cyndyn.—That is well; and I hope so I shall find it.

Yefan.—But this hope of yours is a "hope that maketh ashamed." Your godly parents are ashamed of it; we are all ashamed of it.

Cyndyn.—It does not become me to say that you should be ashamed to beat a poor creature out of his hope, and into despair; but, Sir, is not that your work?

Yefan.—There is a twofold hope—one that shall perish ; and this is the vain expectation of the disobedient, and from this hope I would drive you, if I could. But there is a hope of glory, which all persons by nature are without, and which stands in casting all upon, and expecting all from Christ in His way and under His yoke: to this hope I desire you may be led.

Cyndyn.—But, till I have this, the other is very useful.

Yefan.—Only to drive you farther off from this.

Cyndyn.—I am only averse to the word *now* ; I oppose nothing else you say.

Yefan.—And in opposing that, you oppose all.

Cyndyn.—Sir, I oppose nothing at all but the present time : I am willing all that you desire should be hereafter.

Yefan.—But that's your great mistake ; you are not willing it should be at all, otherwise you would not stand out a moment longer. He that is willing is already turned.

Cyndyn.—Well, willing I am not ; and I desire you would let me alone, that I may enjoy as much pleasure as I can.

Yefan.—To let you alone, so long as we can do anything, would be downright cruelty. We know you are miserable, and we know that our gracious Saviour calls upon us to show mercy to those in misery, and use all the means we can to relieve them ; and we know that you are in a special manner committed to our faithful inspection and tender care ; and if we neglect you, to our Lord we shall be undutiful, and to you barbarous.

Cyndyn.—I thought I was under the care of none but my parents, or those to whose care they might commit me ; but I think unto your care I never was committed.

Yefan.—Your godly parents, when they visibly took the yoke of Christ upon them in church-membership, gave up themselves and theirs to God. They which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham, and they are heirs according to the promise given him ; God promised to be his God and the God of his seed, which must include church-membership ; and our Lord says that the children of His people belong to the kingdom of heaven, that is, to a Gospel church ; therefore you need not wonder that I should say you are committed to our tender care. Our Lord

Himself has charged us to feed His lambs, and we have hitherto considered you as such a one, and you know how we have endeavoured to discharge our duty towards you.

Cyndyn.—I think still that you have nothing to do with me.

Yefan.—As much as ever the church of the Jews had to do with those born therein; and as our dispensation is brighter than theirs, by so much the more our love, tenderness, diligence, and zeal should appear in the discharge of our duty towards the children of the church; and towards you, through mercy, we have not been wanting.

Cyndyn.—I shall be very thankful if you let me alone.

Yefan.—That time, though a very awful one, may be at hand. His condition was dreadful of whom the Lord says, "He is joined to idols, let him alone."

Cyndyn.—But I want to be so happy.

Yefan.—Poor soul! my flesh trembles to hear you, and my heart is greatly distressed to see the tears of your tender parents; and to think that their cries and entreaties should make no impression upon you, is very shocking. And still it is more so to think that the tender mercies of God, the love of Christ, and the blood of the everlasting covenant, should by you be trampled upon and despised. I again mention the immense treasures of love and grace in the Gospel, in and through Jesus Christ, unto the chief of sinners; as a poor perishing sinner cast all thereupon, and receive all for present happiness and eternal glory.

Cyndyn.—And I say again, be so kind as to let me alone.

Yefan.—I think I have made it plain to you, that you stand, as yet, in a relation to the church; and the church must, as a church, be acquainted with your obstinacy in a way of sin; and if you come not to repentance, they must doubtless judge that you are in the same case with him of old who despised his *birthright*, and as a rejector of Abraham's covenant, will deprive you of all church privileges which belonged to you, and cast you out.

Cyndyn.—They may do what they will; I shall lose nothing by that. I should be glad if my parents would give me leave now to withdraw.

NEOPH.—Well, let my much-respected Theophilus say

what he will, this young man seemed to be such a one as God would have nothing to do with.

THEOPH.—You would do as well to slack your pace a little ; you run before God and man too.

EPEN.—Upon this Dewi read that text, “ My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.” And in a sweet, tender discourse, with many tears, gave unto Cyndyn the best advice, put him upon every duty, called him to avoid every sin, and desired him to be at the next church meeting, for they must take his case into consideration ; then spoke encouragingly to the poor parents, and bid them hope to the end ; but the heaviness of heart the parents were under cannot be expressed. So the work of that day concluded, without any appearance of the desired, the much-desired fruit.

CHRISTOPH.—However, upon the work itself there seemed to be a very great beauty. Such love, such care, such tenderness, such diligence in the use of means, discovered the sincerity of their souls, and the glory of religion. But I perceive they had not done with him. God’s people must make a representation of His patience and long-suffering also ; pray, how did they go on ?

EPEN.—As they had opportunity, they did all they could to pluck him as a brand out of the fire. His parents, you must think, were always at their work ; but to the church meeting, when it came, they could not get him ; but away he stole to company more agreeable to him.

The day came ; and after prayer, and opening some portions of Scripture, Dewi said,—Dear brethren, our glorious Shepherd feeds His flock, and gathers His lambs with His arms. His love is wonderful ; and among many other great and eminent instances thereof, it shines much in the charge. He has given us to watch over each other in the Lord, and to exhort one another daily ; and the charge He has given us concerning our children, is an evident and eminent token of His love to them. In church-membership, walk, and worship we are to acknowledge God, and to train up our children. They are the Lord’s, and therefore in His nurture and admonition we are to bring them up ; and Christ bids us *feed* them, which must include the doctrine of His word and the discipline of His house. They are in the kingdom of heaven, and therefore must enjoy the privileges, and be

under the laws thereof, to the utmost of what they may be thought capable. That we are found in any measure in our duty towards them is a mercy to us and to them. Many precious fruits of this we have seen, through the grace of God ; and though some trials in the discharge of our duty may attend us, let us not hang the wing and be discouraged. There is a trial, indeed, upon us now : Cyndyn, the son of our beloved Gobeithiol, makes awful advances in the ways of sin and obstinacy. His sins are known to many of us ; a particular account of them is neither necessary nor agreeable. All possible means, in a more private way, have been used to reclaim him, but he revolts more and more, despises the church of God, says we have nothing to do with him, and desires he may be let alone to enjoy his own pleasures. My flesh trembles so much as to think of the wicked expressions which proceeded from him at his father's house, when we were reasoning with him for his good. All the elders, and some of the brethren, were ear-witnesses thereof. The God of all grace have mercy upon him, upon his dear grieved parents, and upon us, and guide us in our further duty towards him ; and this is what, as a church of Christ, you are desired now to consider.

Yefan.—We should have been very glad if he had been here. Perhaps the presence of a praying church, deeply concerned for him, might have made some impression upon his heart. Pray, brother Gobeithiol, why is he not here ?

Gobeithiol.—Sir, we could by no means prevail upon him to come ; and he is gone I do not know whither.

Yefan.—Dear brethren, what our beloved brother Dewi delivered concerning Cyndyn is not a report that stands in need of confirmation ; it is known to all of us, and we have, to reclaim him from his sinful ways, used all private means possible. The case is now before you as a church of Christ, and it is evident that your grief is great. It is now my place to ask and receive your judgment upon your present duty towards him ; and, therefore, if you do, as a church of Christ, think it your duty to admonish Cyndyn for his great sin, and disobedience to his parents, and for despising the church of Christ, and call him to unfeigned repentance and reformation, signify it by lifting up your hands :—which they unanimously did.

Yefan.—We thought it convenient to have an admonition drawn up in writing, which, upon your approbation and order, shall be sent. It is thus:—

“The Church of Christ unto Cyndyn-ap^c-Gobeithiol, yet under our care.

“The apostle, in writing, sent word to a Christian lady that he rejoiced greatly that he found her children walking in truth; but we, by this writing, must tell you that we are all greatly grieved that you, a child of godly parents belonging to us, should walk in ways of sin and wickedness, obstinately persist in those ways, and despise and reject all Christian entreaties, advice, and reproof. Oh! the many prayers put up, and the many tears poured out for you! Surely, the many precious promises given in the word, relied upon by the church, and very often pleaded by your godly parents, shall be performed! We humbly expect it; for “the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever.” But, at present, our trial is great. Your sins are uncommon. The everlasting covenant of God you have rejected, your birthright despised, the easy yoke of the Redeemer refused, God’s worship neglected, your godly parents grieved, and the way that leads to all destruction is your stubborn and obstinate choice. Poor youth! what will you do in the end thereof? Oh! were you but sensible of the privileges you trample upon, and the pleasures you forsake! Were you but acquainted with the Redeemer’s love, grace, peace, and pardon, how would you look to Him whom you have pierced and mourn! We pray for this, and shall continue to do so. But prayer is not the only means for your good; reproof and admonition must have their proper place; and, as a church of Christ, we have judged it our duty, in our Lord’s name, to admonish you of all your evil ways, and call you to unfeigned reformation and repentance. Greatly desiring the blessing of Heaven may attend this for your good, we remain, your best though grieved friends.

“Ordered at our church meeting, &c.”

^c *Ap* is the Welsh for “son of,” frequently found coalescing with the paternal name, as in Parry, from ap Harry; Price, from ap Rhys; so also in Penry, Powell, &c.

Yefan.—Brethren, if you do approve of this, signify it by lifting up your hands :—which they unanimously did ; and after some time spent in prayer for a blessing thereon, the meeting concluded. The admonition being signed by the elders, was delivered to his father to give him.

CHRISTOPH.—Poor creature ! how did he receive it ?

EPEN.—His father, fixing upon the best opportunity he could to give it to him, with tears in his eyes, said,—Son, you have heard of the Roman senate ; here is a letter to you from a greater assembly. The young man took it, and read it ; it shocked him. He went into a private room ; he read it again, then stood still for a time with the letter in his hand ; then, weeping, read it a third time, and put it in his pocket. When he came out, he said nothing, nor could his parents say anything.

NEOPH.—Now, I begin to think that some good and great work followed upon this. There is hope dawning. Pray, beloved Epenetus, go on.

EPEN.—Cyndyn's thoughtfulness continued for some time, but gradually wore off ; and, before another church meeting, he had sinned himself into greater hardness and boldness in iniquity than ever. And upon his parents' earnest entreaties that he would go to the church meeting, he answered, with a disdainful sneer, No, no ! they may send me another epistle.

NEOPH.—Well, still disappointed am I ! What will the end of this poor young man be ? But, pray, go on.

EPEN.—At the church meeting, his case and condition, with much concern, was talked and prayed over, and a second admonition was ordered ; and it was to be delivered to him, by word of mouth, by Didwyll and Diwyd, two ruling elders, who, accordingly, having found him, did their work faithfully ; and being men of judgment and zeal, talked to him, after one of them had prayed, so closely upon the great concern before them, that he wept much ; but still they were afraid that his tears were not tears of repentance, but of vexation, for his countenance appeared very sullen and unthankful.

NEOPH.—How did the grace of God appear in them, and the corruption of nature discover itself in him !

EPEN.—Alas ! though the corruption of nature was

suffered to break out awfully, yet you must think that even he was under some restraints. One unrestrained sinner may destroy a country and then destroy himself; the depth of corruption is past finding out. But though he was under restraints, his wickedness appeared more and more flagrant. He derided his father and mother, despised and reproached the church, and proceeded into very awful and amazing degrees of boldness in sinning. The next church meeting, the church and elders took no further notice of him than to pray for him with much concern, and under many tears; but before another meeting, the parents themselves desired the church might with all expedition proceed, for, as the case stood now, he only grew worse and worse. But Yefan and his master Edgar went to visit him once more; they prayed with him, exhorted, entreated; but it is very shocking to think with what a stiff, unthankful countenance he carried it toward them. And when he was told that the church must, next opportunity, consider their duty towards him, he replied, So shall I consider mine to them, when I think I owe them any.

However, the church meeting came, but Cyndyn would not come near them. They prayed, they wept before the Lord, and showed a great reluctance to go to the separating work; it seemed to be their strange work. At last said Dewi,—Dear brethren, what a sore trial this is upon us! my heart sinks under the weight of it. Cyndyn is obstinate to the last degree, our endeavours are all lost, our expectations are slain; still, who knows what the God of all grace will bring about? We are now fully convinced that further delays can but harden him, and give him, in some sense, a greater opportunity of corrupting and hardening others; and this, to our grief, in some degree, we have already seen upon poor Anianol, of whom, I believe, we must also take public notice quickly. Our gracious Lord has given us laws, in the observation whereof we may keep ourselves pure. The measures and methods required you, through mercy, understand, and you know that towards him we have gone through all but the last; and if any person present does think that we should not now proceed to that, freedom of speech is granted.—Upon your silence I then say, if you do, as a church of Christ, judge it your present duty to separate

Cyndyn from that visible relation he has stood in to us hitherto; and if you do, accordingly, now actually, in the name of Christ, cut him off, and put him away from among yourselves into the same case with heathen men and publicans, signify it by lifting up your hands:—which they unanimously did, though with many tears.

Then Yefan prayed for a blessing; and Diwyd was appointed to inform the youth.

NEOPH.—Really, there was awful solemnity on what they did; and, indeed, I think there is nothing so solemn as a church acting in simplicity and plainness, according to the laws of their King, without any of the pompous inventions of men. But shall any of us live to see the churches take this care of their children, and thus discharge their duty towards them?

THEOPH.—Of any present, you are the most likely.

NEOPH.—But when shall it be?

PHILAL.—When all the cruel clouds of unnatural objections, raised by those who appear to be too much without natural affections, are dispersed by the Spirit of the Lord, and the church is brought to own infants as standing in a special church relation. “Thus saith the Lord, Behold I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people; and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.”—Isaiah xlix. 22. “And thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side.”—Isaiah lx. 4. And the nearer any church comes to this, the greater is its glory.

SYLLOG.—Indeed, sons in arms, daughters upon shoulders, can be interpreted fairly of none but of children; and we see God Himself declares their special relation to the church; and in a time to come, in spite of all the present carnal and cruel objections of those who look with an evil eye upon the gracious privileges Christ bestows upon the children of His churches, this shall be thankfully and cheerfully owned by all the saints.

NEOPH.—But, dear Epenetus, the account you gave of the young man has sunk my soul, and if you have anything of an encouraging kind to relate concerning him, pray let us have it.

EPEN.—When Diwyd informed him, he reasoned very

closely with him, and prayed him to consider his case, and told him that their prayers should yet be to God for him. Cyndyn, with a countenance discovering indignation, heard him, but said nothing. His sinful companions which he chose, now in a ranting, bantering way welcomed him into their number, saying—Dewi, who made your father a Christian, made you a heathen; such power the vain man assumes! But your father is as much a heathen as ever, and you are as much a Christian as ever; let them and their whims perish together. Come, Cyndyn, forgive them and forget them—they have done you no hurt; you know we are in the way of true pleasure—never dream of anything to come—enjoy the present.

He made a shift to laugh along with them, but his heart was something sad. He endeavoured to make himself easy and merry—but he never could come at the same pitch of mirth with his companions. When his laughter was loud, and his countenance brave, they clapped him on the back as a lad of heart; but when a cloud hung upon him, they would banter him as a weak soul, inclining to be religious again. So among them he had no great comfort, and at home he had none, for his mind was averse to religion. Nor had his parents any comfort in him; ever and anon he would threaten to leave them, and they were not very averse to let him go, though they said nothing—but send him away they would not. They locked up nothing from him that was his, and also put something more in his way, that at any time when he pleased to depart he might take with him what he thought fit.

One night he takes his opportunity and away he goes. It was some little time before his parents knew that he was gone in earnest; but when they knew, nobody can tell what distress they were in; but they went both to prayer, and you must think with what emotions committed him to God, wherever he was. They got the elders and some friends to come to their house, and keep a day of prayer as before; but their distress was great. Sometimes they thought to search all Britain for him. But they had committed him to God, and God knew where he was, and how to bring him home again. They were in a thousand thoughts daily about him; and for many weeks, yea, for

many months, the sight of anything that did belong to him would make them cry ready to break their hearts.

CHRISTOPH.—O Epenetus! I have children of my own, you almost break my heart! Pray, what became of him?

EPEN.—Poor creature, he wandered up and down for some time, and, at last, providentially fixed at a town called in that day Llettyrdwr;^d called so, because of houses of entertainment by the water-side, and from thence now called Bedford. There he fell into some little business, but very often lived upon the quick, which made him think he must not live too fast, and kept him out of many a snare. He was very backward to inform any from whence he came, but his carriage distinguished him from the vulgar, and some of the inhabitants guessed that he had come from Caerludd. However, as I said, he was under a necessity of being sober—for he had not much to spend; and courteous—that some of the inhabitants might employ him in some little business.

THEOPH.—Well, had his poor parents but known this, it would have been a great comfort to them.

EPEN.—There was one thing they pleased themselves withal; in examining they found there was a Bible gone, which they hoped he had taken with him; and upon the most diligent search they could not find the written admonition which the church sent him; upon this their hopes and their fears suggested many things to them, and drew many prayers from them.

NEOPH.—Oh dear! you raise my expectation. May I not be disappointed!

EPEN.—Well, one day, walking near the town, in one of the meadows, many thoughts crowding his now bewildered breast—distressed by most of them, and relieved by none—he burst out into tears, and cried out,—O! most miserable creature, what and where am I? I would none of God's counsel, and despised all His reproof; and I now eat of the fruit of mine own way, and am filled with mine own devices. I despised the church of God, and I am cast out of it. I dishonoured my father and mother, and I forsook them; they worship God, and, unless grief over an un-

^d Lodging-place by the waters.

dutiful son hinders them, may be now singing His praises, and I have cast myself out of all the way of worship and instruction. They may think that I am dead and gone, and indeed I may well wonder I am alive; but here I am, the greatest sinner in the whole world, and yet live, for what end God knows, who only knows my distress. I am a greater sinner than any in hell; none there ever sinned as I have done. What shall I do? whither shall I go?—And he did cry and sob for a long while.

Upon this, he takes out of his pocket the *admonition*, and read it very deliberately, and with many tears; and then cried out,—O their love and care! O my rebellion!—Then takes his Bible (for he had it with him) and reads, “Hast thou not procured this unto thyself, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, when He led thee by the way? And now what hast thou to do in the way of Egypt, to drink the waters of Sihor? or what hast thou to do in the way of Assyria, to drink the waters of the river? Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee. Know, therefore, and see it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of Hosts.” Under the power of this he fell as one slain, and on the ground did lie in very great distress, for every part of what he had read bound him down, nor was he able to look up.

NEOPH.—O poor creature, now he wanted Dewi and Yefan.

EPEN.—Yes, yes! father or mother, or any friend; but here he was alone, and his mind filled with the most dismal apprehensions, but of returning to Caerludd he durst not entertain a thought.

NEOPH.—Did he not pray in this distress?

EPEN.—He durst not do that; he thought that if he spoke a word he should be struck to hell at once. His heart was ready to break, and he had groans that could not be uttered.

NEOPH.—But what course did he take?

EPEN.—He went home in the evening to his lodgings, neither ate nor drank, and had no sleep; the next day his great distress of mind fell under the notice of his acquaintance, who kindly asked him how he did? He answered,

he did not know. He was asked whether he had the perfect use of his senses? He said, No, nor ever had. They told him they thought he was under trouble of mind. He answered, Not half enough. One, who seemed to be a more particular acquaintance than all the rest, whose name was Ymgais, desired him to take a walk with him, and said, Pray be free with me, and tell me, what is the matter with you?

Cyndyn.—My concern is deeper than words can reach.

Ymgais.—Then I suppose you think you have sinned in something; but I have two things to tell you for your comfort. Your sin cannot be great, I am sure, and I know a Druid who can procure your peace.

Cyndyn.—And, distressed as I am, I have two things to tell you. Though you are not so sinful as I am, yet you are a great sinner; and all the Druids in the world cannot help you.

Ymgais.—Your sins, indeed, you know best; but none of my neighbours, who have known me from a child, will say I am a great sinner. But, pray, what makes you think so of me?

Cyndyn.—Nay, I know it is true; you all know better things than you do, and so you do not only sin, but sin against knowledge; and of persons in your state it is said, that when they knew God they glorified Him not as God—liked not to retain God in their knowledge. And though you know the great God must be an Infinite Spirit, yet you become vain in your imaginations, and change His glory into an image^e made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things; and sinfully think, that to torment and sacrifice some of those creatures will satisfy the Eternal Majesty for your sins.

Ymgais.—I am amazed! Pray, where did you learn this?

Cyndyn.—The eternal God has revealed His pleasure in word and writing unto the children of men; and though I am a very great sinner, He has favoured me with that

^e Mr. Maurice may well be supposed to be mistaken if he means by this, that the druidical religion was an *idolatrous* polytheism. It was rather a metaphysical monotheism.—N.

book. I have it in my pocket, and I will read it to you. And so he read the sermon of Christ upon the Mount, and Paul's discourse to the Athenians.

Ymgais.—O, strange! what knowledge you have! I wish I knew the book. Will you teach me to know something of it? I have a private place, where you and I may be together all day, without being disturbed, and you shall want for nothing. Will you, please?

Cyndyn.—Yes. Whatever comes of me, I will do all that I can for your good. So they spent many days together. Cyndyn had a small catechism, which he had made use of under Edgar, and was now of great service to him; and though the heaviness of his mind was very great, yet this work Providence had cast upon him was not only of great use to his new acquaintance, but to himself also.

CHRISTOPH.—Poor creature, he discovered a principle of love and pity to poor sinners, and worked for their spiritual advantage, though he himself was under such distress and darkness. But pray go on, for my heart begins to rejoice.

EPEN.—His heart for a long while was heavy, but his labours were constant. He had much business to inform himself, that he might inform others; for now he had not only Ymgais, but his family, and two or three more of their acquaintance, under his daily instruction. He himself was no great proficient in divinity; he had neglected it too much; so now his labour was great to recover what he had lost, and to inform himself of other things. And besides, his earnest desires after relief and hope of mercy were constantly with him, and being well satisfied that his endeavours with those poor heathen men could be of no use without the blessing of God, he thought he would, though under his load, pray with them, and for them; and thought within himself that God might hear his poor prayers for them, and hoped also to convince them that prayer was a duty owing to God, and to teach them after what manner it was to be performed. But his heart did so upbraid and condemn him, that he had much ado to bring himself to it; and though to pray alone was his greatest and sorest task, yet God did bring him to pour out his heart before Him, with tears innumerable, and groans unutterable.

NEOPH.—Well, then, his deliverance was at hand!

EPEN.—But God was pleased to exercise him yet with distance and distress. It is not God's usual way to bring such people at once into comfort. But now he seemed to be always at prayer, but always afraid his prayers should be heard by any mortal.

THEOPH.—Ay, I remember you told us that when he seemed religious before, he used to pray aloud. Now he prayed like one under a real work, but such a teacher of divinity I never heard of before. But how did he go on?

EPEN.—You know, God does not despise the day of small things. His way was to read chapter after chapter to them, and ever and anon they would say, What is that? Sometimes he would tell them what he thought, and sometimes would say, I don't know; I wish some people I know were here to tell you, and me too. This was the morning's work, but in the afternoon their business was with the catechism, and explain it to them in his way he did, and then put some questions to them as to their faith and experience; and in a little time they told him that they renounced heathenism for ever, and with the mouth confessed Christ, the Son of God, yet the Son of man, God-man in one person, as their only Saviour from sin. But there was one of them that told him that he believed he was too great a sinner to be saved, and, with many tears, cried out, I am undone! Poor Cyndyn went to speak comfortably to him, and mentioned that text, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." But as he mentioned the word to comfort another, beyond his own expectation his own soul was relieved; his fetters fell off, his steps were enlarged, and his lips were opened to show forth the praises of his Redeemer. Oh, how did he speak of His love and blood! He lifted up his voice and wept, and bid them not be cast down, for his tears were tears of joy; he never had felt such joy and such mourning in his life, and they, with him, shed tears in abundance. It was a very endearing, instructing opportunity to them, which they never afterwards forgot.

NEOPH.—Oh, Epenetus, now you touch me! What, is this the young man I gave up for a reprobate? Is this the rebellious child? Well, let me never wholly give up any

of the seed of the godly any more. Whenever I see the children of the godly, I hope I shall think of our dear Lord's words concerning them, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones. It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish."—Matt. xviii. It is evident He speaks of little children, because the words were spoken upon the occasion of His taking a little child, and setting him in the midst of His disciples.

THEOPH.—Well said, Neophytus! Epenetus, proceed.

EPEN.—Now, he went about his work more cheerfully, and, as he sojourned now in Ymgais's house, he told him that family worship, night and morning, was the duty of all Christian families, and that all Christian families in Caerludd did so worship in the beauties of holiness; and that his dear parents, of whom he could not speak now without emotion, fervently and constantly attended thereunto. He was desired then to go before them in family worship, which he did, and several of the neighbours were generally there, which made the house like a little church; and, with them all, Cyndyn was free in the things of God, and with precious success his poor endeavours were attended. But Ymgais himself was his bosom friend, who eminently profited in the Christian religion, and was a great blessing to his neighbourhood.

CHRISTOPH.—But did not Cyndyn greatly want to return to Caerludd?

EPEN.—He did; and was always talking, on every opportunity, of Caerludd, of the blessed church of Christ there, of his father and mother, and other friends; but though he greatly desired it, yet he could never bring up his heart to a resolution of returning; the thought of his being cast out of the church as a vessel wherein was no pleasure, his forsaking such tender, pious parents would so fly in his face. Sometimes he would think of the prodigal's words, "I will arise, and go to my father;" but then he thought if his father frowned upon him, it would kill him, and if he received him kindly, it would break his heart.

However, Ymgais having informed himself of Cyndyn's father's name, and that the Christian assembly Cyndyn talked so much of, met for worship somewhere near Dwr-

borth,^f now called Dwrgate, or Dowgate, one day said to his wife,—I am going a journey. Be kind to Cyndyn. I shall not be many days before I return. It was not long before he got to Caerludd. Next day being the first day of the week, he inquired the way towards Dwrborh. When he came near, he inquired where the Christian assembly used to meet; and having found the place, sat down, expecting to see what he never saw in his life—a Christian church worshipping their Redeemer.

Anon the place began to fill with persons, all of whom had gravity and seriousness in their countenances; but when the church began their worship in singing—for in those days they entered the courts of God with praise—Ymgais was so filled with holy amazement and heavenly pleasure that he could hardly stand. It made him wonder where he was, whether in the body or out of the body, and whether he had already got to heaven or not. When singing was over, Yefan prayed with wonderful judgment and affection, and then preached; upon all of which there was, as the stranger thought, very great glory. And when worship was over, Ymgais said to one that was near him, Pray, Sir, is there one Gobeithiol in this assembly? Said the other, My name is so; I am the man. Sir, I am a Christian, said Ymgais, and live in the country, and should be very glad of some acquaintance with you. Gobeithiol answered, Pray, Sir, go home to dinner with me and my wife here. This he did, and many thoughts of heart he had how to tell them the story that was upon his mind. Having entered the house, and sat down,

Mwynedd said, Pray, Sir, how do they do at and about Hyfrydle, for I suppose you came from thence? And how is Ffyddlon and Cywir, and all our dear brethren and friends?

Ymgais.—Madam, I do not come from thence; I come from Llettyrdwr.

Gobeithiol.—Oh dear; what! and a Christian! You make my heart rejoice. I never heard of any Christians there.

Ymgais.—We are but few, very lately converted.

Gobeithiol.—How is it with you as to faith and comfort?

^f Water-gate.

Ymgais.—Ah! dear Sir, my faith is very weak, my comfort but low, and everything answerable thereto. But this day——

Gobeithiol.—Well, a very great mercy it is to have that great work begun. We are confident it shall be finished to the day of Christ. Not very many years ago I had none of that work in my soul.

Ymgais.—And not very many months ago I had none of it, and yet I think God began upon me the *first* in our place.

Mwynedd.—Pray, Sir, by what means?

Ymgais.—Madam, by means of a young man that came to our neighbourhood, and fixed providentially among us.

But upon his mentioning the word *young man*, they both withdrew for some time, and when they returned he could see how it had been with them. Afterwards, their words were few, but what talk they had, both at dinner and after, was savoury and useful; and when they went to the afternoon worship, they desired he would sit with them. In the afternoon, Dewi preached, and every part of the worship, to poor Ymgais, was attended with exceeding glory. When worship was over, Gobeithiol said to Dewi, Pray, Sir, step into our house as you go by; which he accordingly did.

Gobeithiol.—Sir, this gentleman is a stranger, but a Christian. He knows nothing of Hyfrydle, but comes from Llettyrdwr, and I thought it desirable you should have a little conversation with him before he left town.

Dewi.—My dear brother, I thank you; and to you, my dear Christian brother, though a stranger to me, I do with pleasure testify unfeigned love, and am heartily glad to see you. Pray, how long have you been a Christian?

Ymgais.—It is now several months since I was convinced of the vanity of heathenism; and it was some time after then, before I had doctrinal acquaintance, in any good measure, with the design of Christ's coming into the world, and the work He went through for sinners; and when I saw my lost condition, it was some time still before I could say that I believed in Jesus Christ; and I bless the Lord for this day—I never had such a day in my life.

Dewi.—I never heard of Christians at Llettyrdwr; I rejoice now to see one. What number may you be?

Ymgais.—About five or six, I hope, love the Lord Christ.

Dewi.—Pray, how did Christianity enter among you? Who was that preacher of the Gospel God made use of at Llettyrdwr?

Ymgais.—Really, Sir, I never saw or heard a preacher of the Gospel before this day; but God in His providence sent a person amongst us, who, after some time, proved of great use to us; and for him we shall bless God to all eternity.

Dewi.—*After some time*; what, did he not fall to his work as soon as ever he came?

Ymgais.—No, Sir; not till after several months.

Dewi.—You make me very eager to hear this story more particularly; pray, how was it?

Ymgais.—Why, Sir, a young man came to our town, and took a mean lodging not far from my house; he kept no company, but in a quiet manner would do any little business people would employ him in; often took solitary walks in our fields and meadows, with a countenance generally much dejected, which made some of us think he was melancholy. But, upon one very extraordinary time of distress upon him, I asked him to take a walk with me, which he did; and I told him if, as I thought, his mind was distressed about some sin, I had two things to mention for his comfort; first, that he was a young man, and could not be a great sinner; and secondly, that I was acquainted with a Druid that could procure his peace. He replied, Distressed as I am, I have two things to tell you; though you are not so sinful as I am, yet you are a great sinner, and all the Druids in the world cannot help you. Thus our discourse began, and thus the work of God began at Llettyrdwr.

Dewi.—Now, because this was a young man, sister Mwynedd, the thought of what you have gone through renews your grief; but I am ready to say to you, “Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears; there is hope in thine end, and thy child shall return again to his own border.” And who knows but this may be your son?

Mwynedd.—My dear pastor, do not raise any such hope.

Dewi.—Why, really, I myself am afraid to ask any thing further; but I must. Pray, Sir, what was his name?

Ymgais.—Sir, his name is Cyndyn.

Mwynedd.—Oh, Cyndyn! Cyndyn! not my Cyndyn, sure! too much, too much.

Gobeithiol, weeping, takes her up, and after some time says, Come, my dear, you do not know what may be in this story; let us examine into it more particularly; and in all be still, and know who is God.

Mwynedd.—Oh, you dear Christian stranger, do not deceive me. Is he my son?

Ymgais.—Madam, I really think so.

CHRISTOPH.—Oh, my dear Epenetus, this story comes a little too close to a tender parent!

EPEN.—Well, then, let tender parents guess at the rest of it; and I shall only say, that many of the godly in Caerludd rejoiced greatly that evening; the poor parents, for joy, had not a wink of sleep all night. Messengers were sent the very next day for Cyndyn, and with them a godly-gifted young man, to stay with, preach to, and assist the few Christians at Llettyrdwr. With all expedition possible, Cyndyn came, fell down at his parent's feet, who wept on his neck, spoke comfortably to him, blessed God, called the godly elders and many brethren together to worship God and give praise, ordered fresh apparel for him, and they began to be merry.

The very next Lord's day it was thought fit he should give some public account of the dealings of God with him, and it was a very great day unto them all. He was then, according to his own desire, proposed for fellowship. Poor Anianol, another rebellious son, and now under public admonition, was present; and in hearing Cyndyn was melted and converted, and spoke briefly of the grace of God to him, and humbly desired the elders would propose him also. And, accordingly, the next church-meeting day was a very full one; they both spoke their experiences of the work of God, and, to the great joy of the church, were received.

Cyndyn lived an eminent blessing to his parents and to

the church ; and Anianol carried it so in a close walk with God, at home and abroad, that his humble, holy conversation did, in the hands of the Spirit of the Lord, effect a great change in his father, who had been cast out of the church ; and, after a while, gave the elders an account of the grace of God to him, and humbly desired to be proposed for fellowship, and was in due time re-admitted ; and there was great joy before the Lord on account of this also.

THEOPH.—So we see their trials, though bitter, were overruled to bring about sweet and precious comforts to them ; and so it shall be yet with the saints. Dear Epenetus, we thank you ; but I think that, some few weeks ago, you mentioned some trials they met with, or were likely to meet with, from persons stiffly maintaining some dangerous opinions. Pray, do you remember that ?

EPEN.—Yes, yes, there were two sorts of them springing up ; such as denied the glory of Christ's person and work, and such as thrust out the law of God, and denied the necessity of obedience thereto ; and with both they had a great deal of trouble, but by the mercy of God they kept them under. The first sort did lie smothering under restraints until Morgan's time, called Pelagius, and then was suffered to spread itself far and wide ; the second has been all along, to most churches, like a scabby, scorbutic distemper.

THEOPH.—And shall we, God willing, next opportunity, be favoured with some account of the church guarding itself against such opinions, and dealing with the authors and abettors of them ?

EPEN.—If the Lord will, and if something that may be thought more convenient does not offer itself. So, dear brethren, neighbours, and friends, may all true comforts attend us and ours.

DIALOGUE IX.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE—THE DEFENCE OF THE TRUE DOCTRINE
AGAINST “LEGALIST.”

CHRISTOPHILUS.—Welcome, my brethren and friends; though I have been here but a few minutes, I began to think them long without your company.

PHILAL.—Why, truly, we might have been here a little sooner; only, calling upon our neighbour Syllogisticus for his company, there was our Neophytus, and three or four more, engaged in an enticing debate upon the sagacity of birds, beasts, reptiles, and insects; and if I had not put them in mind of our time, and of our yet unfinished business, you must have stayed longer without them.

NEOPH.—My dear Christophilus, from observations I made this day upon some of the feathered kind, I told my friends that there appeared a great deal of wisdom and sagacity upon them; some of my neighbours here said, that my words implied that they were all rational creatures, and consequently must have immortal souls; and in some state or other must always live. Now, I said nothing of all this, nor did I say there was wisdom and sagacity *in* them; but that a great deal thereof appeared *upon* them. And this can only imply that there is a supreme, all-governing Mind, that concerns Himself in their affairs, and without whom not a sparrow falls to the ground.

THEOPH.—Well, well, at present let us pursue this no further; we have another business to attend to; you see our Epenetus is present, and you may remember what was purposed and promised the last time.

NEOPH.—True, so I do; and it was the remembrance of that brought up this. It grieved me to think that the children of men, with all their rational powers, should be

wandering stars, when all other creatures about us, with what appears amazing discretion, choose and keep that which is the very best for them. Each particular kind of creature seems fixed upon that which is the very best for itself, and acts now in all the steps it takes just as its ancestors did, a thousand years ago. But man, we must say, indeed, *fallen* man, is unstable as water; so many men so many minds; and often of the same man it may be said, so many months in so many minds; his unsteadiness may be as amazing as the steadfastness of the other creatures put under his feet. And this is not confined to the low affairs of time, but extends itself to the great concerns of religion, faith, and worship. Ross's "View of all Religions" I have read; did that man, trow, do the world justice?

THEOPH.—He is long since gone to see whether he did or not; but you run to some excess, which may afford you another instance of the weakness of the human mind. There are many thousands of the children of men that appear discreet in choosing, and steady in pursuing, things just and honourable; and as for all the converted ones in the world, whatever weaknesses may attend them, God's fear shall be so fixed in their hearts that they shall not turn away from Him.

NEOPH.—In all that you have spoken the grace of God should be thankfully owned; and in what I have said, a humbling consideration offers itself to fallen man, which the godly, who appear most established in the truth, may improve to a good purpose. It is the God of all grace that does establish, strengthen, and settle all who appear "steadfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." But oh, fallen man, how mean and uncertain! every wind of doctrine carries him about.

PHILAL.—Right, my dear Neophytus, and I have often thought that judicious, established Christians are, by the grace of God, sent as very great blessings unto the churches; but uncertain minds, who are ready to be weary of old established truths, and greedy of *novelties*, are great trials to the churches, wherever they ramble.

SYLLOG.—But God has wise ends in suffering them, and will overrule all into refreshing mercies, unto those churches that are found in the way of their duty. By such trials

have they prospered. Pray, Epenetus, how was it formerly?

EPEN.—I remember how we concluded last time; and now you expect some account of trials in the church at Caerludd, arising from persons not sound in the faith?

NEOPH.—True; our beloved Epenetus, we do so.

EPEN.—It is now a considerable while since I told you that there were several private meetings of conference upon the things of God, set up in places most convenient. There were two men, Deddfol (legalist), and Digyfraith (antinomian), who generally attended one of those meetings. They were two very differently minded, and being both forward talkers, they used to take up a great deal of time to very little purpose; instead of short, useful observations upon the revealed will of God, or a brief account of experience, they chose confused and vain jangling, to the grief of several solid Christians present; and being much conceited of their own abilities, would give place to none.

NEOPH.—But you said there was a person chosen monthly to preside in those meetings; could not he command order?

EPEN.—Haughty tempers are not very forward to submit; they thought they knew what to speak and when to speak, and judged that others should patiently hear them.

NEOPH.—Surely that meeting could not subsist long.

EPEN.—Several serious Christians for a time forsook it; but there were others, given to curiosity, who constantly attended, so that the meeting was fuller than ever; and to keep them within the bounds of sobriety, and make some just observations, Diwyd, one of the ruling elders, was constantly there; and, out of civility, was frequently chosen to preside. The pastor and teacher desired he would always be present, and do all the good he could.

NEOPH.—And, pray, what did he do?

EPEN.—It was his place very frequently to pray, either first or last; and in prayer he would always mourn under a sense of their present confusions, desired God to give them the wisdom which is from above, pure and peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated; and by His gracious Spirit promote love, and lead into all truth. In their heat of talk he would always interpose, cool any passions appearing,

endeavour to reconcile them to the truth and to each other ; tried to make them believe the difference was more in words than things, being very willing to hope the best concerning them both. At times he would flatter himself that everything disagreeable was at an end, and would tell his pastor or teacher so ; at other times, things would appear threatening, and then he would entreat pastor and teacher to take their turns, which they also did, sometimes with greater, sometimes with lesser prospect of success.

NEOPH.—It is much they did not stop the meeting.

EPEN.—That could be of no good consequence ; whatever looked like lording it over the heritage, they knew could be of no real service ; and besides, they could disturb either or all the other private meetings, which without them enjoyed tranquillity and edification : wherefore they advised Diwyd still diligently to attend, and do all the service he could to the interest of the Redeemer.

NEOPH.—What methods did he take besides those you have mentioned already ?

EPEN.—He often repeated those methods, and often in a solemn manner would speak to them as he thought the case required. What under much concern he said on one occasion was as follows :—

Brethren, it is known what pleasure and comfort we have many a time enjoyed in this place. Here we have melted and mourned at our Redeemer's feet, and rejoiced and triumphed in His salvation. Under His shadow have we sat with delight, and His fruit has been sweet to our taste. While Scriptures were opened, some principle of divinity considered, and experiences related, how have we been strengthened and revived, and longed for the return of the like opportunities ! But our glory is now in the dust ; the enemy has come in like a flood upon us, nor do I as yet see the standard of the Spirit so lifted up against him, as to chase him away. Love begins to cool, and we may be very sure iniquity abounds. In all our contentions about truth, the Spirit of truth does not appear. It becomes us to mourn and repent ; I'll endeavour to bear my part with you in that work, and let us agree that the next meeting here shall be a meeting *only* of prayer, for that very end. Who knows what our God will please to do for us ?

The time came, and was kept in prayer with much sorrow before the Lord; but neither Deddfol nor Digyfraith was there. There was a young man present whose name was Hygar, a very amiable Christian, and very inquisitive after every truth; with him they both in their turns had been tampering, in order to make a proselyte of him, and he, seeing them both despising the time of prayer, and humiliation before God, said:—

Fathers and brethren, I am thankful for this opportunity; God is amongst us of a truth; and I own before you that I am bound to bless His name, who has kept my feet from falling, that I might walk before the Lord in the light of the living. Those two noisy persons, by despising prayer, discover what acquaintance they have with that God who gives it and hears it. I am but a poor youth, but I humbly think that it is no part of our duty to hear them wrangle any more. They have both in their turns spread the net for me, to bring me over to their thoughts, but the Lord has mercifully kept me. I have a letter from each of them in my pocket, which our honoured elder Diwyd may please to read in the hearing of you all.

Accordingly, the letters were read, and abhorred by all present; and it was resolved, in the strength of the Lord, to guard against both these men as persons of pernicious, though different principles, and of designs base and dishonourable.

NEOPH.—I humbly desire the contents of the letters.

EPEN.—Deddfol wrote thus:—"My dear and very much beloved Hygar, it is with a great deal of pleasure I consider your uncommon attainments; your close and profitable application, your diligent inquiry after truth, the great zeal you discover for virtue, and how all your practice is a pattern of everything honourable. You raise my expectations, and I trust you will never disappoint them. You are well acquainted with the nature and necessity of moral actions, commonly called good works, and you know that virtue is a reward to itself. If virtue was not to be rewarded with glory hereafter, yet every wise man would pursue it here; how much more, then, seeing we are sure, if we hold out to the end, we shall for it have an abundant entrance into eternal happiness—'Well done, thou good

and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord.' Persons who despise good works are surely strangers to true pleasure at present; and unless they have good works to produce at last, shall be dismissed to eternal darkness. 'I was sick and you visited me not.' 'All must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, where they shall receive according to the things done in the body.' It is true, we are said to be justified by faith, and so we are to take faith for a work and a virtue, and so the Scriptures tell us that Abraham was justified by works; and our Lord Himself tells us that by our words we shall be condemned or justified. I am for giving unto Christ His rectoral glory; He is a person great above all angels and men, has done great things for us, has laid a good example before us, and has given a very equitable law unto us; and I am for ascribing grace unto Him, who accepts the sincere obedience of faith, according to His mild and gracious law, for righteousness, and crowns our virtue with glory. Oh, what grace is this! What proportion is there between our obedience and the reward! This is grace that secures and establishes all that can belong to the glory of God, our present and eternal good. I have many things to impart to you at time convenient, but by what I have briefly written you will know what judgment to form of the teacher's preaching in general, and of some particular things the pastor delivers. Press on and improve. Your reason is not to be despised; consult it, comply with it, and you will honour Him that gave you such an eminent share of it, and secure esteem from the wise and virtuous, and upon your perseverance, eternal felicity. Yours in true affection," &c.

NEOPH.—Well, what an ensnaring thing! It pleads for all virtue, is for giving glory and ascribing grace to Christ, owning that He has done great things for us. A Christian, truly, had need watch and pray.

THEOPH.—My dear Neophytus, that's right, for there are many that lie in wait to deceive. A Christian should always keep on the whole armour of God, that he may be able to stand in the evil day, praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit. There are many things in the letter very much like truth, and yet, upon thorough examination, there is not one part of it but what

is against the truth as it is in Jesus. And even in our day, we have a great deal to the same purpose from the pulpit and the press, and all the more pernicious because dressed up in a manner agreeable to the polite taste of the age. But, pray, Epenetus, give us the other man's letter.

EPEN.—Digyfraith wrote as follows:—"Dear Hygar,—The great attention you seem to give to what I deliver at the conference encourages me to pay my respects to you in such a manner as this. From my very first acquaintance with you, I have thought the grace of God was your delight. I must say it is mine, and I love to hear of nothing else; and, indeed, it is not needful we should hear of anything else, for by grace we are saved. It is unfeigned, fervent love puts me upon writing to you, lest you should, by any means, be entangled with the yoke of bondage. What persons call our sins were long ago satisfied for and washed away. There is no iniquity nor perverseness seen in us nor upon us; nothing of that kind is in any sense reckoned to us. Christ finished the transgressions and made an end of sins; and, according to God's covenant, they are remembered no more. He has, by once offering up Himself, for ever perfected all that are sanctified or set apart for Him. Our liberty is complete, and in it we shall stand fast. How can it become us to cry, and mourn, and confess our sins, when we have none that can be truly called ours? They were reckoned to Christ, and they became His, and are no more ours. And whatever those acts or defects, as some people may call them, may be, they have not in them the malignant nature of sin; for they work for our good, for all things together do so. I know I used to be in bonds and trouble heretofore; but it was because I knew no better. I am now at perfect rest, night and day, whatever I do, and whatever I omit. Everything is best as it is; then why should I be concerned? I am thankful in everything, and if, at any time, a thought passes through my heart that I am not thankful enough, I am also thankful for that, and for the occasion of it; for all is best. I do not know any law I am under, nor can I then be justly esteemed a transgressor. Love is all my law, and he that feareth is not perfected in love. Perfect love casteth out fear; but God's love to me is perfect love; why, then, should I fear? I

pity poor, weak, whining people, who yet would be called Christians. Our teacher delivers many things very well; but, really, the pastor often grieves me. Oh, that he did but see things in the same light as I do! But by what I mentioned you may know how to judge of them both, and receive what you like best. But I hope at another opportunity to let you know more of my mind; for, filled with earnest desires after your peace, I am yours," &c.

NEOPH.—Well, if a young man may speak, this was a base, insinuating letter, but surely could not ensnare so readily as the other; for here all virtue is neglected, and repentance is trampled upon; a serious person was in no danger to be caught with this.

THEOPH.—But this, for all your haste, had very plausible pretensions. Christ bearing our sins; the Lord well-pleased for His righteousness' sake; the law magnified and made honourable; complete satisfaction made; a complete discharge thereupon; and such like things of great importance. The good men who heard both letters, however, might well abhor their contents; for though they were like Samson's foxes, tail to tail, yet, having different views, they both had fire-brands fixed to them. But how did Diwyd conclude that little opportunity?

EPEN.—He gave Hygar the best advice he could, and, with leave, put both the letters in his pocket.

NEOPH.—Now, what advice did he give?

EPEN.—After some short remarks upon the letters, he said:—My dear Hygar,—God has made me very glad through His work. It is owing to His grace that you have been delivered from these destructive principles. I think it will not prove a difficult task to make it plain, that the authors of these letters deny the Lord that bought them. I hope the Spirit of the Lord will abundantly help you to search the Scriptures, and to compare spiritual things with spiritual. He is also the Spirit of prayer, and will help you to pray without ceasing for all guidance and establishment, and will lead you forth by the footsteps of the flock. By-paths may seem inviting, but as you would avoid the hook, beware of the bait. How agreeable soever a new thing may appear, bring it to a thorough trial by the law and the testimony. If not according to that word, it belongs to the

kingdom of darkness. And in this work always consult aged Christians, of an honourable character, the elders of the church, especially the pastor and teacher, before ever you do so much as mention it to anybody else ; and desire them, according to the knowledge they may have in the Scriptures of truth, to give you their judgment thereupon. See that you be always clothed with true humility, filled with earnest desire to do the will of God ; for God giveth grace unto the humble, and if any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God ; and we are very sure that “the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant.”

THEOPH.—If all who profess religion were to take this advice, what peaceable, flourishing churches should we have ! But there are too many who covet to be remarkable, and at that they cannot come without being singular ; and seeing they cannot, in the trodden path, appear singularly eminent, they strike out into by-paths, where they are pretty sure, such is the wretched condition of fallen man, to have some admirers. Many pitiful pretenders to knowledge and wisdom have complacently stroked themselves when their followers have cried them up as the *Gnostics*^a of

^a The Gnostics were speculative Christians of the first centuries of our era. Gnosticism is a generic term, including a great variety of opinions and sects, all of which, however, agreed in this one particular—the assumption of superior knowledge in Divine things ; *γινωσκω*—hence Gnostic. The pervading principle of Gnosticism was the result of the union of Platonism and the philosophy of Persia. This principle was applied to Christianity, and was relied upon as a safe guide by the initiated, to the exclusion of the letter, proper sense, and even authority of Scripture. The Gnostic thought he had a power of knowledge which was independent of the documents left by inspired men, and referred to as of conclusive authority by Christians ; and a mongrel harmony of Christianity and Oriental philosophy was hence effected, for the sake of the preservation of both, by such men as Basilides and Valentinus in Egypt, Saturninus and Marcion in Syria. The great question which called into full exercise the Gnostic ingenuity was the “origin of evil.” To solve this, the Parsic dualism was called in aid, and evil was said to be inherent in “matter ;” and this matter was created, not by the highest God, revealed by Christ, but by an inferior deity, the Demiurgos (*δημιουργός*), the God of the Jews, from whom also proceeded Judaism, while heathenism properly belonged to the evil principle, or matter. Then came divers speculations on the position and dignity of Christ and the Holy

their day; and, in return, they have admired their followers, and complimented them with the same character; and the solid Christian, who steadily walks in the paths of judgment, is derided and despised as a person of mean taste.

CHRISTOPH.—With a daring mind to bid at things singular and out of the way is, with them, true greatness of soul. What is common affords their minds no entertainment. Our first reformers and even our martyrs, some of them will grant, might be honest men, but of little acquaintance with true freedom of thought, and the dictates of reason. But oh, dear brethren, may we see that blessed spirit appear upon the professors of the day, which shone with eminent brightness upon them! Persons are seldom very great who imagine themselves so; and yet a great deal of the greatness of the present age stands therein.

NEOPH.—But, from what Theophilus said, they who turn out to by-paths must know they forsake the right; and what comfort, then, can they take in being admired?

PHILAL.—The secret springs of such turns upon the minds of men may be many and various; but when once they do with pleasure converse therewith, they will not receive the love of the truth, and are left to believe a lie. But those poor souls who are deceived by them may, in their simplicity, acquiesce in what they receive as true; and greater charity is to be extended to the ensnared, than to those who spread the net and catch with guile.

SYLLOG.—It is foretold that men should arise speaking perverse things, to draw disciples after them; but the heresies that spring up shall be so overruled, that the solid Christian shall under greater brightness be made manifest. How did the grace of God shine in the preservation of that young man our beloved Epenetus mentioned!

Spirit. From the general principle at the basis of Gnosticism proceeded, also, the allegorical mode of Scripture interpretation so rife at Alexandria, especially under Origen; and which is still, even in our own times, to be noticed in that style of popular exposition customarily termed "spiritualizing." By means of this, the Book of Solomon's Songs, *e.g.*, is frequently made to be the most evangelical part of Scripture. In fact, whenever we have an unnatural sense forced upon a passage of Holy Writ, even though it be in the interest of highest truth, we witness a display of the pure Gnostic spirit—a putting into the "flesh sense," to use the formula of Origen, the "spirit" meaning.—N.

NEOPH.—I must own it is a comfort to me to hear it. I am young myself, and very weak; but, through grace, I desire to say to my Redeemer, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel." I would be thankful for the very sure word of prophecy, for the promise and operation of the Spirit of truth; and, also, I bless the Lord that I sojourn at Potheina. But, pray, let me hear what method they took with those two men at Caerludd?

EPEN.—I told you that Diwyd, with Hygar's leave, put the letters in his pocket. Next day he showed them to the pastor and teacher, who immediately sent for the elders, desired the Divine direction, and consulted what to do; and, after consultation, they agreed to meet as elders, not forbidding any of the church that might desire to be present, and reason with Deddfol upon his principles.

The day being come, and Deddfol present, Yefan in prayer mourned before the Lord under a sense of deep deficiencies attending them in the work of the ministry, which might in a sense be the occasion of their present troubles; but earnestly desired the mistaken brother then present might be convinced and recovered, and that they might be guided in all meekness of wisdom, to reason with him, and that God would graciously look upon them, and by His almighty power work effectually by them for that end.

Prayer being ended, Dewi said—Brethren, the enemy of our peace has many deep devices to interrupt the blessed work of our Redeemer's kingdom; and we wrestle, not only against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high things; wherefore great need we have of the whole armour of God. Our gracious Father has given us a blessed *rule*, whereby we are to try every spirit, and in His greatest wisdom He has made it our special duty to search the Scriptures; and our Lord Himself has given us an example how to repel the enemy—"It is written." Some trials from persons guilty of an unholy walk we have had, and through grace have been helped to be found in our duty. We little thought ourselves in any danger from tenets opposed to the truth, and therefore, perhaps, on that side were not carefully guarded; but now we are awakened and called to defend the ever-

lasting Gospel. And I trust, that according to our poor petitions put up to God, we shall be graciously answered, guided, and blessed. We need not be detained upon an inquiry what the things are we have to charge our brother Deddfol, here present, with. The principles now maintained by him, into which he also endeavours to draw others, you shall have under his own hand. (Reads his letter.) The contents of this letter we shall endeavour to consider. Brother Deddfol, do you own this to be your letter, and is it according to your present judgment?

Deddfol.—Yes, the letter is mine, though I do not think it very fair it should be made thus public; I declare that it is also according to my present judgment.

Dewi.—There is nothing in the letter which forbids the making of it public; and if there had been, it would have been the duty of him who received it, to ask advice and make it public. We apprehend the things contained in it to be very erroneous, and things which we are all to a man bound to oppose; and therefore it was Hygar's duty to let us know them, and it is your duty to renounce them.

Deddfol.—When I am convinced of them as errors, then it will be my duty to renounce them; but so long as I apprehend them to be truths, I shall think myself a transgressor to let them go.

Dewi.—When you gave yourself visibly to the Lord, and unto us in church-fellowship, you did before many witnesses own and profess your lost condition by nature and practice; that you could by no means do anything towards fulfilling the broken law of God, or satisfying offended justice for sin; that Christ Himself was the complete Saviour, that the Spirit had made you willing to receive Christ by faith, and live to Him alone in all evangelical holiness, and all according to the richest grace of God; but in this letter all this seems to be cast off.

Deddfol.—You say, I seem to cast off all this, but everything is not always as it seems at first view; if you consider, again, all the things you mentioned, perhaps they may seem capable of a rational and favourable interpretation. But, whatever comports not with reason in what I formerly said, I should without delay depart from, and show myself a man; I heard others talk after that rate, and if,

without examination, I fell into the common road, it is what others besides me have done; but it is high time, both for them and me, to choose the path of judgment.

Dewi.—Whether you have chosen or forsook the path of judgment, I hope we shall freely and impartially consider. The Scripture tells us that we are justified freely by grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ; but you say we are justified by works, therefore I think it is plain you have forsook the path of judgment.

Deddfol.—When I say we are justified by works, I do not mean works in every respect perfect, answerable unto a severe law that will make no manner of abatement; for I am sensible that so no flesh living can be justified.

Dewi.—You have all liberty to explain yourself.

Deddfol.—Then I say that we are justified freely by grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ; that we are justified by faith; and yet, according to the Scriptures, I see how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

Dewi.—You only put us off with expressions of Scripture unexplained; tell us what you mean by each of these.

Deddfol.—I mean neither more nor less than that we are justified in the same manner as Abraham was, of whom it is said that he was justified by works; his faith, which is a work, being reckoned to him for righteousness; and it was freely by grace, through Christ, that the rigour of the law was relaxed, and such obedience as Abraham could perform, most graciously accepted.

Dewi.—What did Christ obtain for fallen man?

Deddfol.—Mild and gracious terms of life and glory.

Dewi.—What did Christ do in order to obtain those mild and gracious terms?

Deddfol.—He did whatever God the Father required, and thereby became our gracious Lord and Lawgiver. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him."

Dewi.—Pray, what are those mild and gracious terms?

Deddfol.—Faith, repentance, obedience, perseverance.

Dewi.—What is the law that requires them?

Deddfol.—The Gospel.

Dewi.—What is faith?

Deddfol.—Sincere assent to the truth concerning Christ.

Dewi.—And how does faith justify?

Deddfol.—As an act of ours in obedience to a Gospel precept which requires it, and all other concomitant graces.

Dewi.—Whence come faith and the other graces?

Deddfol.—Christ graciously procured room for faith; assists and works upon our rational powers in a persuasive, merciful way; and in receiving and improving His kind assistance we make way for more; and so far what is properly called our faith, is His gift. The other concomitant graces are produced in the same manner.

Dewi.—Have all people those gracious assistances?

Deddfol.—All in a sufficient manner and measure to make them happy, if they thankfully receive and improve them.

Dewi.—And have they all sufficient power to receive and improve those assistances?

Deddfol.—Yes, if they are but willing to exert it.

Dewi.—Pray, are you a justified person?

Deddfol.—So far and so long as I fulfil the terms which Christ does require, I am; but complete justification is not till the day of judgment.

Dewi.—And how do you expect to be justified then?

Deddfol.—In the same manner as now, with the additional fulfilment of the term of perseverance, or continuance in well doing; for you know I must expect to receive then according to things done in the body, whether they be good or bad.

Dewi.—And, pray, what is your present state?

Deddfol.—A state of trial; I am a probationer, and as I quit myself in this state, and persevere, so it shall go with me at last.

Dewi.—Are you not under fear of miscarrying at last?

Deddfol.—No; for while I have the free use of reason, I shall fulfil the terms required.

Dewi.—At present I shall ask you no more questions; but, upon what you have already answered, I must in the first place, as your pastor, charge you with perverting and abusing the Scriptures. You have said, that according to the Scriptures, Abraham was justified by works; and though the Scriptures say that he was justified by faith, yet

you say that is the same thing, for his faith was a work. You know very well that we are not at present considering what that is which justifies us, but how are we justified before God. The design of the Holy Spirit by Paul, was to show how Abraham our father was justified *before God*; "For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also described the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works."—Romans iv. 3, 4, 5, 6. But the same Holy Spirit, by James, tells us how Abraham was justified *before men*, and that was by his works, whereby he evinced his faith to be unfeigned; for there were some professors, in James's days, who boasted of faith and despised good works, which made the apostle say, "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness."—James ii. 20, 21, 22, 23.

Deddfol.—This establishes what I say, that he was justified by works; his faith being reckoned for righteousness.

Dewi.—That is impossible; for, in the first place, the Spirit of God makes it plain, that Abraham was not justified by works, but by faith. By faith there, must be meant something that may be opposed to any work of ours, or it can never be understood; and then, in the next place, the very same thing that was imputed to Abraham, is imputed to all believers, for it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed if we believe; but his act of faith can never be imputed to us, neither was it to him, but that which his faith fixed upon.—Romans iv. 23, 24.

Deddfol.—But James having asserted that Abraham was justified by works, says, that so the Scripture was fulfilled,

which says, that "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness."

Dewi.—No, he does not say that so it was fulfilled, but says, that notwithstanding, what he had asserted concerning Abraham's being justified by works was very true in the sense he intended it. The account of his justification by faith before God was also true; and that work of his in offering up Isaac was an evident testimony to it, and token of it. What you call your complete justification by works at the great day, is no more than an open acknowledgment and acceptance of the good works done *in faith*. All who worked in faith will be found in Christ, not having their own righteousness; and all who worked in unbelief shall meet with such a reward as they and their works deserve.

Didwyll.—It is very plain that our open acquitment shall be according to the richest grace; and it is evident that Abraham was justified long before he offered up his son Isaac. But, honoured pastor, with your leave, I charge Deddfol with downright enmity against the holy and blessed law of God. He says, the law of God is relaxed, which, I think, borders upon blasphemy; and he asserts that we are under a sort of law which does not require perfect obedience, which, I think, is no less than establishing iniquity by a law. I am persuaded we cannot easily dive into the depth of darkness belonging to this pernicious principle. Brethren, the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good—a *transcript* of the Divine breast, where men may see what God is, and what they ought to be. The holy, perfect law of God makes a just representation of the essential righteousness and holiness of the Divine nature; but a relaxed law can never do so. Such laws, where they are found, manifest the weakness, imprudence, and instability of their contrivers; but to charge the eternal God with either of these must be shocking to any rational mind. It is certain that, without a righteousness every way adequate to the eternal moral law of God, there is no going to heaven; and it is certain that such a righteousness we have in Christ. It is certain that no transgressor of that law can be saved, without satisfaction made to law and justice; and it is certain that all the children of men are transgressors, and not a man of them can satisfy for the sins of

his brethren, nor for his own. Full satisfaction is made by Christ for all His people, and they shall have an abundant entrance to glory through Him, who is already entered as their forerunner. It is certain that it is the duty of sinners, who hear of Christ, to believe in Him, and it is certain that the perfect law of God demands this. It makes my flesh tremble to hear persons making void the good law of God. Deddfol, I here charge you with a horrid design of overturning both law and Gospel.

Deddfol.—Sir, I have no such design; but I must be of the apostle's mind, that where there is a change of the priesthood, there must be also of necessity a change of the law.

Didwyll.—You were charged with perverting Scripture before, and with it I charge you again. Pray, what priesthood belonged to the eternal moral law of God as such? The angels of light are under that law; and who is their priest? God, under a former dispensation of His covenant, delivered unto His church various statutes, which belonged unto the external part of the worship of that day, and to disobey Him in those Levitical institutions would have been a breach of the moral law of God. When that priesthood vanished, according to the appointed pleasure of God, and Christ, an High Priest for ever, having an unchangeable priesthood, is preached unto us under the present and clearer dispensation of the same covenant, it was necessary that God's present institutions respecting His worship should take place, and our observance thereof is a duty we owe to the eternal moral law of God.

Deddfol.—Pray, Sir, where does the moral law command faith and repentance?

Didwyll.—Give me leave to ask you, which is the great commandment in that law?

Deddfol.—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength. This is the first and great commandment."

Didwyll.—Well, then, if I am bound to love Him so, I am bound to believe in Him; and if I am bound to love Him so, I am bound to repent if I sin against Him.

Deddfol.—I should have told you that the second commandment is like unto it, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

Didwyll.—And if I am bound to love my neighbour as myself, I am bound to love myself; and if to love myself, I am bound to lay hold on everything that can be for my real good. Then, when I hear that Christ is the Saviour of sinners, I am bound to lay hold on Him.

Deddfol.—But though unto you those things seem included in the moral law, yet such is the present state of man, that he stands in need of another law, and a very mild one, too; and, doubtless, the Gospel is that law.

Didwyll.—Then Paul could never have said that by the Gospel the law was established. He must have said, that by the Gospel the law was disannulled; that there is another law given that can give life, and that righteousness is by that law; but he positively says the contrary.—Gal. iii. 21. And besides, the law which you imagine, is a mere contradiction in terms, and destroys itself; for it permits and suffers imperfect obedience, wherein must be disobedience. And, pray, what a lawgiver must he be, who is the author of it. He must be the author of sin; but that Jesus Christ our Redeemer cannot be; therefore, He cannot be the author of this law.

Yefan.—Pray, Deddfol, please to favour us with some of those reasons leading you to think the Gospel to be properly a law.

Deddfol.—Sir, it is often so called in Scripture. We read that the isles should wait for Christ's law; and we are commanded to fulfil the law of Christ. And, pray, what can be meant by the law of faith, and the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus? Do not we read of those who obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus? Is not justification a judicial act, and must, therefore, be by a law? And, in a word, will it not be a rule of judgment at last, and, therefore, must be a law?

Yefan.—Law is a word of various acceptations. By the law of God we are sometimes to understand precepts and injunctions binding to obedience, with threatened penalty. This is strictly a law. But often by the word *law* we must understand *doctrine* or *instruction*; and so it is intended where it is said, the isles should wait for His law, that is, for His doctrine. So “the law shall go forth out of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” You see that

the Spirit of the Lord tells us, that by law is meant the word of the Lord; and in this sense the Gospel may be called a law, but not a body of precepts, prohibitions, and threatenings. But to wait for Christ's law, or doctrine, is the same as to sit at His feet and receive of His words. We own that we are under the law to Christ, for the law is in His hands, and may be justly called the law of Christ; but by bearing one another's burdens, and so fulfilling the law of Christ, nothing can be intended but our tender and loving carriage towards each other, in imitation of Christ, who bore our burdens. The law of faith is the *doctrine* of faith, and the law of the Spirit of life is the power and efficacy of the Holy Spirit subduing the law or the power of sin. Disobedience to the Gospel is a despising the doctrine wherein it is contained; refusing to submit to the moral commandment, which requires love to Christ out of a pure heart, and faith unfeigned. That justification is a judicial act is not denied, grace imputing unto us a righteousness that answers the demands of the violated law of God; and God is just in justifying all found in Christ. The rule of judgment at last will be the eternal moral law of God: the various degrees of *revelation*, wherewith persons were favoured or followed, impartially and perfectly considered. And the apostle says, that according to his Gospel, that is, his doctrine, it should be so.

Deddfol.—Then, taking the law in the sense you understand it, there will be no possibility to stand in the judgment, for “in many things we offend all.” This renders a mild law absolutely necessary, and, doubtless, the Gospel is that law.

Yefan.—All found in Christ at the day of judgment will have a righteousness adequate to all the demands of the law, without any abatement; therefore, there is no necessity there should be a new and mild law. He that believeth in Christ hath a complete righteousness to answer the old one, and he that believeth not shall be condemned, even by your law, mild as it is.

Dewi.—There are reasons, many and sufficient, why the Gospel can be no new law, with sanction, for law and Gospel are, and must be, specifically distinct. If the Gospel is properly a law, how come sins against it to be pardoned, and the sinners relieved? Was Christ under that law to deliver

them that are under it? Or do they satisfy justice themselves for their own sins against it?

NEOPH.—Dear Epenetus, you surprise me! This man was a Neonomian! I could not have thought Neonomianism had been so old.

EPEN.—And truly you surprise me! What, did you never read of the Pharisees? It is evident they did not place their righteousness in perfect obedience, but in what they esteemed sincere. Were they not sensible that their own righteousness was weak? Did they not endeavour to establish it? And did not our Lord tell His disciples, that except their righteousness exceeded that of the Pharisees, they could not enter into the kingdom? Was not Paul's doctrine charged with licentiousness? And who laid that to its charge but the Neonomians of that day?

PHILOL.—There was a rabble abroad under many names, who, if for any law, were for a new one. They appeared very early, and, under many shapes, continue to this day. But though, as Epenetus tells us, this error caused some disturbance to the first church at Caerludd, yet he who in Britain was first suffered to spread it was Morgan, otherwise called Pelagius. He appeared upon that work of darkness about the year of Christ, 410; and turning the Gospel into a new law is charged upon him as one of his grand heresies.^b

^b That Pelagius was a Welshman is pretty generally agreed upon; and the tradition is confirmed by the fact that he has been known among the Welsh from the beginning by the name Morgan (sea-born), of which Pelagius is but a literal translation—*πτελαγιος*. Some, however, doubt whether he was not a native of Brittany (Bretagne) in France.

Pelagius was a monk, and a person of parts and virtue. Driven from his native country by political troubles, he made his way to Rome, and there, in company with Celestius, an Irish monk, obtained reputation for piety and learning. Pelagius published his heretical opinions on original sin, free-will, and grace, about A.D. 405. Having left Rome for Africa, where his friend and companion in error, Celestius, remained, he visited Egypt, and thence proceeded to Palestine, still continuing to contend for the original purity of human nature, the freedom of the will, the power of man by the aid of "external" grace to obey, &c. He was cited, in 417, before the Council of Diospolis, and acquitted, but was soon condemned as a heretic by that of Carthage; and the Emperor Honorius demanded

EPEN.—It is certainly a very old error, as is evident from the epistles to the Romans and Galatians. But I was going to tell you, that Dewi having said, Do they satisfy justice themselves for their own sins against this new law? elder Diwyd said, With your leave, my honoured pastor, I must observe that Deddfol is not for satisfaction to Divine justice for any sin. This is evident from this letter, where he owns that Christ has done great things for us, and declares that he meant thereby that Christ gave us a good example, and an equitable law. I have had opportunity of knowing him, and I have often heard him slight the very word *satisfaction*; saying it was beneath the Divine goodness to insist upon it, and impossible for Christ to make it for others.

Yefan.—I am afraid it is so; errors generally go in clusters. When one enters, seven more attend it. To deny satisfaction for sin, is to rob us of the great distinction between the Christian religion and all others in the world. The thing intended by the word is the scope and design of all Divine revelation. There we find that man, who was made upright, sinned against God, and “by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation.” All sinned in him, their natural and federal head, and derive from him a depraved and polluted nature; so that they are shapen in iniquity, and conceived in sin. And there we find that poor wretched sinners choose to continue sinning against God. There, also, we find that God is so just and holy, that evil shall not dwell with Him; of purer eyes than to behold evil; that He, as a righteous God, will by no means clear the guilty. “Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all the words of the law to do them; he

the expulsion of him and his followers from Rome. His great opponent in controversy was Augustine, who had already in his favour the general sentiment of the church, and was now made complete victor through the aid of ecclesiastical and imperial edicts. Obeying a law of imperfect humanity, which is but too often seen in operation, Augustine, in combating one extreme of opinion, retired for effective weapons too far towards another extreme—an extreme scarcely in harmony with his fine philosophy, and his deep-toned and scriptural piety. Of Pelagius we hear nothing further, so that his end is wholly unknown. The chief of his writings descended to modern times are the “Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul,” now found as part of the works of Jerome.—N.

shall surely die." But there we find the amazing love of God, because God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. "God commendeth His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins, even Jesus, which delivereth us from the wrath to come." And there we find after what manner this amazing deliverance was effected. "He was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. He redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for what the law could not do because it was weak in the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us. For Christ also hath once suffered for us, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us unto God. He loved us, and gave Himself for us. He gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. He was delivered for our offences, and God spared not His own Son, and by His death we were reconciled to God; for if one died for all, then were all dead." And in Divine revelation we find, that upon this the righteousness of God is declared for the remission of sins. Reconciliation being made for the sins of the people, and all who believe, receive the atonement. "For being justified by faith, we have peace with God," who says, concerning Christ, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

What, Deddfol, deny all this, and call yourself a Christian? Let us hear plainly how it is with you.

Deddfol.—I have, I think, duly considered the doctrine of *satisfaction*, and I must own that, for several reasons, I cannot come to it. I always think, that whatever clouds the grace and love of God, should be rejected. The Scriptures insist much upon the love of God to the penitent, and upon His grace in forgiving their sins; but, if He must receive satisfaction, where is the grace?

Yefan.—The Divine perfections must not be injured. God is infinitely just, as well as infinitely gracious; and

God will be just in justifying, or will never justify. What then? Is it impossible He should be gracious also? Is it impossible for mercy and truth to meet together, and righteousness and peace to kiss each other? Does not the Spirit tell us that we are justified freely by His grace, and yet that it is through the redemption that is in Christ? We have done nothing to procure our pardon; and is it not amazing grace that it was in God's heart, when our hearts were shut against it? Did we think of a Saviour? Was it not infinite grace that found out the way of our salvation in Christ; gave Him to undergo what we deserved, and accepted of Him in our room? Herein is love indeed!

Deddfol.—It is certain that with God there is nothing impossible. Power belongs unto Him; and may we never think meanly of the Almighty. We justly esteem those persons truly great who generously pass by offences without demanding satisfaction; and the Scripture says, it is their glory to pass by a fault. And can they do what God cannot do? If it is true greatness in them to forgive freely, what is it in God to insist upon satisfaction?

Yefan.—When did He insist upon satisfaction, which He Himself in grace and love did not find out and accept? God cannot lie, and therefore He cannot pardon sin to the injury of His own righteousness and veracity. God is infinitely perfect, and cannot change. It is true greatness in God to proclaim Himself "The High and Lofty One;" but it is true greatness in man to say, "I am less than the least of all the saints." God is the Judge of all the earth, and will do nothing but what is right; and however private and personal offences may be passed by among men, pray what sort of a judge must he be who dispenses with all law and justice?

Deddfol.—But I am resolved for ever to keep at the greatest distance from an opinion that charges God with cruelty. He delighteth in mercy; and is it possible that He should so insist upon satisfaction for the sins of a poor worm? And still more, is it possible that the God of compassions should be so cruel as to inflict punishment upon the innocent?

Yefan.—All the world cannot make Him satisfaction for one sin. Lebanon is not sufficient to burn before Him, nor

all the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering. We do not say that He comes to a poor sinful worm and insists upon satisfaction; but in the Gospel He proclaims the glory of His wisdom, love, and justice, in requiring, providing, and accepting a sacrifice for sin, which all the world of men and angels could neither offer nor find out—His own beloved Son, on whom He laid the iniquity of us all. Say not that this was cruelty; it was our Redeemer's free and voluntary offer—"Lo, I come to do thy will; a body hast thou prepared for me." I am grieved to hear you abuse the doctrine of the Gospel, and insinuate that we affirm that God insists upon satisfaction from a poor worm, when we say that He has provided a sacrifice, and is satisfied. But He insists upon your submission thereunto; and in His name, and as His servant, I tell you so.

Deddfol.—Submission to God is what I am for; and that is one thing that makes me displeased with the doctrine of *satisfaction*, for I can't help reasoning thus—that if my sins are satisfied for, then I need take no care how I live. I need not trouble my head about faith or repentance; all disobedience is already cancelled. I must say, so long as I love obedience, I must hate such a doctrine.

Yefan.—According to what you say, you don't love obedience at all; for if you thought that you were safe from punishment, you would not think obedience necessary. You think your sins are not satisfied for, therefore you will obey, and by your obedience satisfy for your own sins; ascribing that to your own wretched performances, which you deny the Redeemer, who became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Of Him it is said, that He gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity; and you say, if you were redeemed, you would wallow in all iniquity. The holy designs of redemption you oppose, and in effect deny Him who is God over all, blessed for ever. But if the design of Christ's death was not to satisfy justice for the sins of the people, pray what was the design of it?

Deddfol.—He died as a glorious martyr for the truth of His doctrine, and to give His followers an example how they must do.

Yefan.—And was the agony of His soul for this? Did

any of His followers that have yet suffered martyrdom cry out, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death?" Would it be the glory of any one of them to cry out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Was it the pleasure of the Lord to bruise Him for this? And could this be the meaning of our Lord's giving Himself a ransom for others? Is this all that is meant by His redeeming us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us? And is this all that is intended by His washing us from our sins by His own blood? Can you think it the duty of any, or do you think it possible for any to suffer as He did, have the same ends in suffering as He had, be as *passive* as He was, having it in their power to cast their enemies in a moment to the ground? He said, He laid down His life when no man did or could take it from Him; must we do so? We as elders are called to feed the church of God which He has *purchased* with His own blood; and again, as His servant, I call you to submit your soul to Him, which I think is the properest food I can at present offer you.

Addfwyn.—With your leave, my honoured teacher, I have one thing to observe of great importance. You have now twice mentioned the *Deity* of our Lord Jesus, but Deddfol, I think, believes it not. He denies the Lord that bought him, and the Spirit of the Lord calls that a damnable heresy. In his letter he says that Christ is a person great above angels and men; which, as it stands in that letter, I am confident implies a denial of His eternal Deity. He is here present, and I humbly move he be called to speak to that important article.

Dewi.—An important article, indeed! Take away Christ's Divine nature, and our faith is left without a foundation; for we dare trust in none but the Lord Jehovah, in whom is everlasting strength. In the Scriptures, the Divine nature of our Redeemer is plainly and plentifully asserted. Unto the Son He saith, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." Of Christ it is said, when He ascended on high, "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels; Jehovah is among them;" and upon His entrance into heaven, "The Lord saith unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory." These things said

Esaius, when he saw His glory and spake of Him. We are called to sanctify the Lord of Hosts Himself, who should be for a sanctuary to some, and a stone of stumbling to others; by the Holy Spirit directly applied to Christ, "The mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, Jehovah our righteousness; the Son of the living God. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God; and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father;" who said, "Before Abraham was, I am. I and my Father are one." It was unto Him the disciple in faith said, "My Lord and my God." And it is said that God purchased the church with His own blood. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us. All shall stand before the judgment-seat of Christ; as it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." So, then, every one of us shall give an account of himself to God. "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh:" the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us. "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made; He that built all things is God; God over all, blessed for ever. The true God and eternal life. The Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."

As my dear brother Yefan said upon another head, I will say upon this: What, Deddfol, deny all this, and call yourself a Christian? Let us hear plainly how it is with you upon this important concern.

Deddfol.—Sir, I am very well persuaded that Christ is truly great and glorious, beyond anything that I can express. None among the sons of the mighty can be compared to Him. Angels and principalities are under His feet. Whatever is potent or glorious in this world, must be looked upon as the small drop of a bucket, or the small dust of a balance, in comparison of Him. And if it is possible that the shining worlds above us, of magnitude immense, should be filled and furnished with inhabitants of superior glory, as for aught I know they may, Christ is still unspeakably above them. And if we could further

imagine many millions of worlds, a thousand times more magnificent than anything that has yet entered our thoughts, they must not only be in subjection to Him, but be reckoned as nothing compared with Him. It is true, the angels of light must be creatures glorious and potent, but none among those morning stars is like the Sun of righteousness. "He maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire." His nature, whatever it is, is *superangelic*; and as He is above them, so He was before them all; and unto Him we may grant any glory, but that of an infinite, eternal, underived, and independent being. It is impossible that of such there should be more than one. How great soever, and how glorious soever Christ is, yet He and His glory must have a beginning; and I am sure I can never honour Him more, than by giving unto Him just what is His due.

Yefan.—This is plain, but very shocking. You say, that great as He is, a beginning He must have; and by the eternal underived Being He must be made and brought into being.

Deddfol.—I do say so; for seeing He is not that One underived Being, who, He says, is greater than He, He must have been made, and His being must have had a beginning.

Yefan.—Then, I pray, how can you receive what is said of Him, "That all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made?" Whatever was made, He made it; and, therefore, if you believe the Scriptures, you must believe that He had a being before all created beings.

Deddfol.—Reason is an eternal rule that all Scripture must be interpreted by, and where it accords not with my reason, I pass it by. And my reason tells me, and so must yours, that there can be but one underived Being.

Yefan.—And so does revelation. But this infinite, eternal, underived Being, who knows Himself, tells us, that in that One Essence or Being there are Three—the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these Three are One. Three persons, in one infinite, eternal, underived, independent Being. Is it not highly reasonable you should believe the account God gives of Himself?

Deddfol.—But there can be but one God.

Yefan.—Readily granted ; and Christ is that one God.

Deddfol.—Then the Father is not the eternal God.

Yefan.—Christ says, I and the Father are one.

Deddfol.—I grant Christ to be exceeding high and glorious ; but He cannot be the one eternal God.

Yefan.—He is very often in Scripture called so ; the essential name Jehovah, never given to any mere creature, is given to Him ; all the Divine properties, omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, eternity, equality with God, we find ascribed to Him ; Divine efficiency in creation and providence is His ; and He is the proper object of faith and worship, and, therefore, He must be the eternal God.

Deddfol.—But He is called the Father's servant, and is sent and upheld by Him ; and He says, "My Father is greater than I."

Yefan.—As mediator, in our nature, it is even so ; but, according to His Divine nature, there can be no inequality.

Deddfol.—Why, how many natures must He have ?

Yefan.—Two distinct natures, the Divine and human.

Deddfol.—Then He is two persons.

Yefan.—No ; He assumed not a human person, but a human nature, which never subsisted separately from the Divine.

Deddfol.—These things are all mysteries above my reason.

Yefan.—And so they should be : "For without controversy great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh."

Deddfol.—But reason is the gift of God ; and while I have it, I shall look upon what is unreasonable as incredible.

Yefan.—Many things above our reason may yet be very reasonable ; and nothing can be more unreasonable than to reject Divine revelation. We are sure this Divine testimony cannot deceive : "The just shall live by faith."

Gruffydd.—With your leave, my honoured teacher, it is indeed said, that "The just shall live by faith," and God is true, therefore every just person in the world shall live so ; but from all that Deddfol hath said it seems evident to me, that he is a very great stranger to that life ; therefore, how just he is it behoves him to consider. Does the man who

asserts justification by works live by faith? Does the man who denies the satisfaction of Christ live by faith? Does the man who denies the Divine nature of our Redeemer live by faith? Of the nature of faith he has given a very odd account; he told us, that faith was a sincere assent unto the truth of all that is recorded concerning Christ. And what if he did grant that everything recorded in Scripture must be true? Do not the devils believe so, and tremble? Who can live by faith and not believe in Christ? And who can believe in Christ, who does not believe Him to be the eternal God? It is granted, faith comprehends a sincere assent to the Gospel; but in a special manner stands in the *consent* of the soul to the blessed design of it, embracing Christ as its chiefest good, and trusting in Him as mighty to save. I humbly think it is our immediate duty to reprove Deddfol of sin, because he believeth not in Christ.

Dewi.—Indeed, brother, I think so too. Deddfol, you stand related to us in visible church-membership; and I hope we shall be helped to discharge that duty which we owe to our Lord, to you, and to ourselves. You did, in the confession you made upon admission, own yourself lost and undone under sin—you did confess Christ as a complete Saviour—and you professed the effectual grace of the Holy Spirit, leading to believe in Jesus Christ. You then renounced all dependence upon works, and betook yourself to the mercy of God, and the righteousness of Christ only, who was then owned by you as the great God and your Saviour. And for a considerable time we know you were wont to express abundant satisfaction in the doctrine you heard, and seemingly admired grace, that you were fixed in fellowship with the saints. Where now is that blessedness you spoke of? Where is that faith in Christ which you professed? Where is that love to the church and to its peace? And where is that respect which you used to say was due to its elders? Not that we desire the respect and regard of men; we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; only we think that to slight us, endeavour to bring any of those under our care to have mean thoughts of us, must, we being in the way of our duty, appear inconsistent with your duty to our gracious Redeemer, and

your solemn covenant with the church and its officers. What a base insinuation was that against my dear brother and fellow-labourer, who should have been esteemed your honoured teacher, where you tell Hygar, that in observing what you had written, he would be able to form a judgment of the teacher's preaching in general. I am your grieved pastor, and do here, with my fellow-elders, charge you with pernicious errors, inconsistent with real Christianity, and call you to repentance and to believe in Christ. If ever you had any real acquaintance with Him, I am certain you have deeply revolted from Him, and I earnestly desire you may not dishonour Him, and distress His church any longer.

CHRISTOPH.—Well, I must say, that though their trial was great, there was a real glory upon them in their faithful dealing with a very erroneous person ! It was certainly their duty to do all they could to recover him from the error of his way, and save his soul from death ; and it was their duty, to the utmost of their power, to prevent the spreading of such pernicious errors, for his words might eat as a canker ; and in the discharge of their duty, whatever fruit might follow, they were in the way to glorify Christ, and enjoy true peace and comfort themselves.

EPEN.—You must look upon the account I gave only as the sum and substance of what passed. They were very particular and close, and a very establishing day it was unto all the godly that were present. When their reasonings with Deddfol were over, Dewi, with much feeling, concluded the opportunity in prayer, earnestly desiring their endeavours might be greatly blessed to the reformed person, and that they might all be blessed with great comfort and establishment in the truth, and all the days of their life adorn the doctrine of their Redeemer.

NEOPH.—The errors of this man were many ; and, I see, they did not reason with him at that time upon them all. He certainly denied the effectual operations of the Holy Spirit in conversion, and asserted that God grants power and assistance to all to save themselves ; which assistance he seems to confine unto that of a persuasive or a dissuasive kind, afforded to all. But choice of any unto glory, and to all grace in order thereto, can never consist with what he

confessed. It is very strange that persons who read the Scriptures, and believe them to be of Divine inspiration, should ever embrace the pernicious principles maintained by Deddfol. Is it possible for a good man to be left to deny Christ and grace in such a manner?

THEOPH.—A good man, for the trial of his faith, may be much entangled and perplexed; but our Lord says, that his faith shall not fail. But if it was with this man's heart as he confessed with the mouth, he had no faith in Christ. Nor is it possible for any one who does not believe His Divine nature, to have any faith in Him. Who dare trust his soul with a mere creature?

SYLLOG.—God, that cannot lie, has promised to put His fear in the hearts of the godly, and has said they should not depart from Him. Though they may depart from some truths not fundamental, yet from Christ they shall not depart; they shall not deny His Godhead. If the foundation be destroyed, what can the righteous do?

PHILAL.—The seed of God shall remain and abide; and we are confident of this very thing, that He who hath begun the good work will finish it until the day of Christ. The work of His hands He will not forsake; the godly are His workmanship, nor shall they be left to forsake His mercy in His Son, and trust their own works.

NEOPH.—But our dear Theophilus just now said that nobody dare trust his soul with a mere creature. There are not many that trust in Christ, pray what do the rest trust in?

PHILOL.—Trust in! they would fain trust in themselves, but finding self shaking under them, they will use all methods to establish it, search after all propping considerations, and flatter themselves they may thereby be recommended unto as much mercy as they may want; so that, in the whole, they trust in nothing, as may be plainly gathered from that prayer which Morgan the Briton taught the widow, objected to in the Diospolitan Synod, about the year of Christ 414:^b—“Thou knowest, O Lord, how holy,

^b Tu nosti, Domine, quam sanctæ, quam innocentes, quam puræ ab omni fraude et rapina quas ad te expando Manus; quam justa, quam immaculata labia et ab omni mendacio libera, quibus tibi ut mihi miserearis preces fundo.

how innocent, how pure from all deceit and violence the hands are that I stretch forth to thee; how just, how unspotted, how free from lying are those lips wherewith I pour forth prayers unto thee, that thou wouldest have mercy on me." She must not wholly trust her own *purity*, nor wholly trust *mercy*; but plead the former as the condition of her obtaining the latter.

NEOPH.—Well, I never heard such a prayer in all my life!

CHRISTOPH.—But I know the man that has heard some prayers very much like it.

THEOPH.—Pray, Epenetus, let us hear what steps they took, and how they dealt further with Deddfol, and how did it end.

EPEN.—The very next week they, upon a like solemn day, dealt in a like manner with Digyfraith, and their endeavours with him were also attended with very little success; whereupon they thought it expedient to acquaint the church, and after earnest prayers to God, the church, with the elders, resolved to send letters to sister churches, containing a brief account of their trials, and desiring them to send their messengers on such a day, that upon prayer, consultation, and advice, they might the better know what to do in concerns of this nature.

NEOPH.—O, dear Epenetus, of all this I want a particular account.

EPEN.—That you may have, if the Lord will, the next opportunity. You see, our time is gone; duties at home call for us.

PHILAL.—When we hear of persons forsaking the truth, and falling from the doctrine of grace, what reason have we, who through grace stand, to take heed lest we fall, and be led away with the error of the wicked, and what abundant cause have we to bless our God who establishes us in the truth! And how are we bound to cry continually to Him, "Send forth thy light and thy truth, let them lead us, let them bring us unto thy holy hill." Dear brethren, let us always to God and the word of His grace commit each other, and all the Israel of God.

DIALOGUE X.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE—THE DEFENCE OF THE TRUE DOCTRINE
AGAINST “ANTINOMIAN”—EXPULSION FOR HERESY—TRANS-
FERENCE OF MEMBERS—THE DEATH OF A “SAINT.”

NEOPH.—Come, beloved Epenetus, I hope we shall now hear some account of that other troublesome man; I think you called him Digyfraith.

EPEN.—I told you that on a solemn day, the very following week, they dealt with him; a short account thereof I shall now give. The elders and several brethren having come together, Dewi, in an affectionate manner, begged a blessing on what they had been concerned in with Deddfol, and desired they might be enabled now to witness for God and His law, to the honour of His name, the recovery of the mistaken brother, and the edification and establishment of the godly in their most holy faith. Then spoke Yefan as follows:—

Yefan.—My dear brethren,—It is an unspeakable mercy to us that we have the written word to have recourse to at all times; it is, indeed, a light that shines in a dark place, whereunto we do well to take heed. We did not expect our life would prove a warfare. There is no part of our armour superfluous, nor is there a necessary piece unproved; for our backs we must never turn. Blessed be God for the helmet and the breast-plate, the sword and the shield, and all the rest; and blessed be God that hitherto we have been helped to stand in an evil day. The Captain of our salvation is with us, and will still deliver us. Awful was Satan's attempt by Deddfol, and no less awful, if duly considered, is the attempt he makes by Digyfraith here present. His letter to an honest young Christian contains dangerous

errors, which I shall now distinctly read, that you may make your just observations thereupon (*reads it*). It is really very shocking to see so many weighty and important truths abused, and so many pernicious principles crowded together in so few lines. Digyfraith, I must ask you, does this letter contain your present judgment?

Digyfraith.—Sir, it contains my present judgment; and I wonder that you, who so often exalt the grace of God, should say that it contains pernicious errors. My letter is nothing but a consistent testimony for free grace.

Yefan.—How consistent a testimony for free grace it is may be considered before we have done. I charge you most solemnly with opposition to all the grace of Christ, though you seem to make your boast thereof.

Digyfraith.—Sir, I wonder this should be charged upon me as a crime, seeing we are saved by grace!

Yefan.—But that grace of God which bringeth salvation, teaches persons to “deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;” and so makes it necessary that ministers should explain what ungodliness and worldly lusts are, that they may be avoided; and sobriety, righteousness, and godliness, that they may be practised; therefore, they that love to hear of the grace of God, must love to hear of all these.

Digyfraith.—I love to hear of grace; all my happiness is of grace; and if of grace, it is no more of works. Duties are works, and, to tell you the truth, I do not love to hear of them. Oh! it is the sound of grace that refreshes me, and I love nothing else.

Yefan.—What sort of refreshment yours is, I know not. I look upon every duty as a special mercy from God unto my soul; and the more I am acquainted with God, as the God of all grace, the more I am led to delight in every duty towards God, to delight in His law after the inner man, and find that in keeping His commandments there is great reward. A glorious connexion there is between grace and duties in the consistent doctrine of the everlasting Gospel.

CHRISTOPH.—You bring to my mind my hearing a certain person once preach from that text, “For by grace are ye saved;” and the word grace, I suppose, occurred above a

hundred times in his sermon. He told us that it was grace that put Father and Son upon entering into a covenant of redemption ; that it was wonderful grace in God to relax the rigour of His law ; grace altogether amazing that God should freely offer to enter into covenant with man ; and grace, indeed, that the terms thereof should be so mild and moderate, to be fulfilled, also, by His gracious help. Behold, said he, the grace of all this ! Well, an honest Christian, that seemed to be greatly affected with the discourse, walking from thence along with me, said, This is free grace, indeed : I was greatly pleased to hear this joyful sound. I told him how and why I was greatly displeased with the discourse.

THEOPH.—And once I heard a minister preach from those words, “ Created in Christ Jesus unto good works,” words just by the text you mentioned. He insisted much on the true nature of good works, from whence they sprung, and whither they tended ; insisted pretty much upon their necessity and use, and greatly pleased and refreshed I was to hear him ; but an honest acquaintance of mine seemed to hear with uneasiness, and told me that he believed the man was for free-will and justification by works.

PHILAL.—Poor Christians, under weakness, are greatly to be pitied. I am afraid the person of whom Epenetus speaks, however, was more wicked than weak.

EPEN.—Upon Yefan’s saying that he seemed to separate what God had put together, and please himself only with the word *grace*, he replied,—And with submission be it spoken, you seem to put together what God has for ever separated, grace and works, the believer and sin.

Yefan.—When you can show me a person truly acquainted with the grace of God, averse to good works, or a believer who has no sin belonging to him, what you say shall be considered.

Digyfraith.—Sir, I hope you see your humble servant. I am a believer, but have no sin belonging to me ; God Himself, who cannot otherwise than see everything, says that He sees none.

Yefan.—It is very strange that God can see no sin in you, when I, a poor worm, that can see but little, can see it both in you and in myself.

Digyfraith.—You see through a false medium, which de-

ceives your sight. The Scripture says, "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel."

Yefan.—Iniquity and perverseness, idolatry and wickedness, reigned over the Moabites, but God was Israel's King, and His law was unto the tribes a rule of walk and worship. They were God's holy nation and peculiar people, when compared with the idolatrous nations; nor was any iniquity or perverseness tolerated by their laws, or embraced by the church in the wilderness.

Digyfraith.—But the sins of believers are blotted out.

Yefan.—And, according to the Scriptures, they are seen, too. The man after God's own heart said, "Against thee have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." I grant there is a sense wherein it may be said that God does not see the sins of His people. It is sometimes mentioned in the sacred Scriptures, but such an expression should be explained in the manner most agreeable to all the Divine perfections. The iniquity that is forgiven is not marked or seen; that is, God will not enter into judgment with that person; so that with the eye of His justice He does not see such a person's iniquity, and in that sense it shall be remembered no more; but to His eye all things are open and naked, and He can as well cease to be God, as properly to forget any one of our innumerable evils.

Digyfraith.—Well, this is language I like not.

Yefan.—You must either have dishonourable thoughts of God, or a secret aversion to the doctrine of the Divine omniscience; and would fain hide yourself from the all-seeing eye of God. I fear that you see some things in yourself you are not willing God should see; and that a guilty heart lies close at the bottom of this principle of yours, else you would with gladness embrace the truth. God knows all things, and therefore He must know your sins.

Digyfraith.—But He knows all things, and therefore must know I have no sins, for there are no sins that can be called mine. Whatever might be called by that name, was laid on Christ, became His, and ceased to be mine.

Yefan.—I look upon the doctrine of imputation of sin to Christ, and the imputation of His righteousness to His

people, as the glory of my life and work. The judgment of God is always according to truth; and therefore He must know that Christ never sinned, though our sins were imputed to Him; and God must know that sins are daily committed by us, though God does not impute our trespasses unto us. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; but though He did not impute them, they are nevertheless their trespasses. Though Christ bore our sins in His own body on the tree, they were *our* sins, and we are daily to confess them as *our* sins, and mourn over them before the Lord.

Upon this Dywyd said—My honoured teacher, give me leave to observe, that in our private meetings Digyfraith was frequently called to pray; and though I gave all possible attention, I never heard him confess sin, nor mourn over it before the Lord. He had, indeed, in his prayers many good expressions, but for the most part it was a long round-about ramble, more like preaching than praying—speaking to the people rather than speaking to God^a—wherein he would show sometimes great indignation against thoughts different from his own; but I never heard him confess corruption or repentance, in all my acquaintance with him. Who ever saw him shed tears, in mourning over sin before God? I can produce the man who saw him sneer at a tender confession of sin, and heard him deride a weeping Christian as a weak soul, blessed with a moist brain.

Digyfraith.—I do not know with what view I am thus accused, nor do I much care. I remember when I was so weak as to think I must confess and mourn, but then I knew no better; and I pity poor creatures that know no better yet, but seem to take pleasure in complaining and confessing, as if there was a great deal of Christianity in it.

^a A “preaching” style in prayer, as if “speaking to the people more than to God,” is by no means confined to persons of Antinomian tendencies. Though adopted from mere habit, or as a supposed method of usefulness, more than from the absence of feelings proper to worship, confession, petition, and thanksgiving—the main elements entering into the idea of prayer—yet it is highly offensive to a devout mind, and approaches very nearly to profanity. It is entering the holy of holies for the commoner purposes of the sanctuary.—N.

It is something odd, that a Christian of my growth should be called to account by those of a low stature, who cannot see as I do. I bear with you as well as I can, but you, like fretful children, cannot bear with me, who would fain bring you on towards manhood in religion.

Yefan.—I think, if you were to measure yourself by the sacred word, you would not have those high thoughts. The rule is, that we should esteem others better than ourselves; and the apostle Paul, who was, I suppose, a taller Christian than you, says that he was less than the least of all the saints. We cannot help thinking, that if you had such great acquaintance with the law of faith as you boast of, your boasting would be excluded. Let the standing rule given us by the beloved disciple suffice: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." How differently-minded from you was the apostle? You say you have no sin; he says, "That if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." You say that confession of sin is needless; he says it is necessary. You say you have not sinned; he says, "That you thereby make God a liar, and His word is not in you."

NEOPH.—Well, but was not this a little too tart?

THEOPH.—No, truly, my dear friend; you are not much acquainted with persons of those principles. Speak respectfully to them and their attainments, and they will quickly boast that it is upon a full conviction of their excellence that you do so. They all should be reproved sharply, as persons vainly puffed up in their fleshly mind.

EPEN.—He having been numbered, as I told you, among the offenders, cries out, in the name of astonishment and wonder, whom and what do I offend? I assure you I offend not my own conscience. If you say I offend God, you will find yourselves greatly mistaken; for as He says I am all fair, and have no spot, I hope I give Him no offence. Besides, what you call offences have no malignity in them. They work together for our good, and, therefore, must themselves be good.

Yefan.—I tremble to hear you say that you offend not your own conscience. If your conscience was not a stifled or a seared one, it would fly in your face upon every

expression you delivered. You have, indeed, offended us, and you have given us trouble; and though we know this trouble shall be turned to our good, are therefore your vile opinions harmless? As for God saying unto His church, "Thou art all fair, without a spot," it is to be hoped, when the time intended comes, you will understand it better. At present, I do assure you, it intends you not. But how base is your insinuation, that what we call sin has no malignity in its nature!

Digyfraith.—Why, Sir, is not the sting of death gone? Is not the curse of the law gone? And, pray, are we any more under the law? And was not the law the strength of sin? And if the strength of sin is gone, is not the malignity thereof removed? And, besides, how can there be any malignity in that which is for our sakes; for all things are for our sakes, and, therefore, this? And how can any malignity remain in what worketh for our good? for all things work together for our good, and therefore this which you call sin. But, for my part, I am willing to believe that He who gave us the victory over the law, made an end of sin.

Didwyll.—Oh, my dear brethren, what language is this! Is it possible for a Christian to hear it, without trembling and astonishment! This is the man of light, of growth, of high stature! What, no malignity in sin! It is against the holy nature of God, and yet no harm in it! O monstrous! The Holy Spirit of God called sinful lusts, *hurtful*; but, according to this man, they are harmless. By what spirit must he speak? The Lord says, "Do not that abominable thing which my soul hateth;" but this man says, that it is a good thing, and worketh for good. But yet to me he seems to be condemned of himself; for though he says that sin works for good, he, in the same breath, says, there is no sin. It is, indeed, said, that all things do work together for good to them that love the Lord; but I am sure he has abused the text, and I desire a true account may be given of it, and let all present hear what the things are that work together for good.

Yefan.—It is most evident that sin is not intended. It has no good in its nature, and therefore it is impossible it should work for good. Sin tends to nothing but

sin. God can, indeed, overrule sin, and bring about, by His wisdom, goodness, and power, what is really good to the sinner, but out of sin He never brings any good. The fall of Adam was, by almighty grace, overruled for good ; but out of that fall our salvation did not spring. But, by all things working for our good, the apostle intends all the dispensations of Providence, and all the afflictions which, in Providence, may attend us ; which also is meant in that other portion of Scripture where He says that all things are for our sakes.

Difyfraith.—When I say sin works for good, I use the word *sin* in conformity to the language of the times, and I understand thereby those actions you term sinful. But if things were strictly considered, among us believers there can be no sin, for we are not under the law. Now, it is evident that where there is no law there can be no transgression. Christ redeemed us from under the law, and we are dead to it.

Yefan.—It is certain that we are, through grace, delivered from the law as a covenant of works, and Christ has removed the curse of it from His people ; but by this grace the law is not made void, but established as a rule of life. Therefore the apostle says, that he was not without the law to God, but under the law to Christ. And the same apostle says, that circumcision is nothing, but that real religion lies in keeping the commandments of God. It is very awful to hear you say that you are under no commandments, nor can you, therefore, transgress. The Spirit of God gave this command to a Gospel minister, “Those who sin rebuke before all ;” and I do, in His name, here rebuke you as a notorious sinner, a wilful and a deliberate one. A wretched state, truly, wherein you are forced to oppose God’s holy law, in order to procure and possess a poor, pitiful peace. You would be under no yoke. Turning from the holy commandment delivered to you, you discover nothing but the carnal mind that is enmity against God, and is not subject to His law.

NEOPH.—Well, how could he stand under rebukes and reproofs so sharp and close !

CHRISTOPH.—Alas ! my dear Neophytus, such people are proof against all. Darts are counted to them as stubble,

and they laugh at the shaking of a spear. When once they work themselves to this, that the law of God says nothing to them, what rebukes, what reproofs can reach them?

EPEN.—Upon the close reproof which was given, Digyfraith said,—Sir, though I am delivered from the commanding power of any Divine law whatever, yet by a law which you are under, as you say, you must be esteemed a transgressor. Why judgest thou thy brother? or why settest thou at nought thy brother? I think you judge and condemn me.

Gruffydd.—That is your mistake. Our honoured teacher (to whom, I think, you should have shown more respect) did neither condemn nor judge you. He knows you must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. God is Judge Himself. But you were told that you appear very much like a servant of corruption; and this is very true. With your state he meddled not, but with your corrupt, pernicious principles; and base and corrupt they are. For if Deddfol, who gives us also a great deal of trouble, denies our God and Saviour, I can truly say that you deny the Lord that bought you. You will not allow Him to be your Lord; you are under no commands, and you can neither obey nor disobey; you can neither be virtuous nor vicious. Even faith itself, which the law of God requires, is no duty of yours; and if principles of more dreadful consequences can be gathered out of the dunghills of darkness, I am greatly mistaken.

Addfwyn.—I think it is our duty and glory to show tenderness and meekness towards all men; but there appears so much ungodliness in the principles which Digyfraith does profess to maintain, that I humbly think it impossible for a church of Christ, zealously concerned for His glory, to bear with them. Is it possible for a Christian to despise and deride those duties the word of Christ calls for? Can he be a Christian, who, in this imperfect state, sees no sin in himself?—who is against acknowledging his transgressions and mourning for his sin? Can this, and much more to the same purpose, be the language of a believer in the holy Redeemer? For my part, I think it our immediate duty to call him to unfeigned repentance.

Dewi.—Trials of this nature we did not, indeed, expect.

Though it is so written, yet we did not expect that from among our own selves should men arise, speaking *perverse* things. Digyfraith, I here charge you with hatred against God. You do not love the Divine perfections. If you had only in humility of soul acknowledged that though your sins are many, yet that God in His vindictive justice does not see or mark your iniquity against you, we should have looked upon it as an evangelical confession. For believers thankfully to say that their sins are covered, and shall be remembered no more, is what we shall never militate against ; but for you to say that you cannot abide to hear it said that God sees your sin in any sense, is most abominable. Ah ! poor creature, He knows your folly, and your sin is not hid from Him. I here charge you, also, with impenitency and hardness of heart. You are puffed up, as the apostle says, and have not rather *mourned*. But, alas ! you are against all mourning for sin. Him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, who trembleth at God's word, you set no value upon. I call you to mourn and repent, for I apprehend your case to be very dangerous. I here, in a like manner, charge you with love to iniquity and sin, for you say that sin has no malignity in it, but works for our good. You are an advocate for the evil of evils, out of which no good can come. And lastly, I here charge you with being too much like a child of Belial, without a yoke, without a law. You are not under the law of God. This I look upon as the mother of all other abominations : for, grant that the law of God commands you nothing, and it must be granted that you have no sin to repent for, or mourn over. I am as yet your pastor, and in the Lord's name, whom I serve, and under whose law I own myself to be, do call you to sincere repentance.

Upon this, Yefan prayed with great humility and affection ; owned they had not taken that heed to themselves and to their ministry which they ought to have taken, and that he was afraid that while they were asleep the enemy sowed such tares. With great enlargedness he desired the blessing of Heaven on the work they had been concerned in, for the establishment of every one that stood in the truth, and for the recovery of him whom they had endeavoured to convince. So that meeting concluded.

NEOPH.—Well, I am persuaded this man was an Antinomian. I thought the first churches knew nothing of such principles; for I read that they sprang up in Germany, in Luther's time, one John Agricola being their chief.

PHILAL.—What, did you never read the Epistle of St. James? Do not you find him contending with such people? They boasted they were believers, and James tells them that the faith whereof they boasted was a dead faith. Have you never read the second epistle of Peter? Does he not tell the Christians that there were among them persons who were spots and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings? And though they spoke great swelling words of vanity, and promised liberty, yet they did not cease from sin, but were the servants of corruption? And, pray, have you not read the epistle of Jude? Does he not speak of clouds without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, twice dead, plucked up by the roots, and yet their mouth speaking great swelling words? I do assure you they were the Antinomians of that day.

NEOPH.—My dear Philalethes, I return you thanks. May I for ever be delivered from such persons!

THEOPH.—And I say, Amen, my dear Neophytus. And if at any time you think it expedient for your safety to prove any person upon this, bring him to the law of God contained in the ten commandments, and ask him, does he look upon that law of God as the rule of his life? If he denies it, avoid him. If he says that it is a good rule, but he is not under the commanding power of it, turn away from him. But if he says, that he sincerely takes it as God's revealed will, owns the authority thereof over his conscience and conversation, I humbly hope you may take him for a friend and a companion. "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

CHRISTOPH.—It is certainly very awful to hear a man give the law a good word with a design to destroy it; but some of us have known that done. He that says that we are not under the commanding power of the law of God, let him screen himself under twenty flattering distinctions, is a destroyer of God's law. When I see persons weary of the

good old plain distinction between the law as a covenant and the law as a rule, and that Christ has delivered us from under the law as a covenant, but has established it as a rule,—I say, I always suspect them.

SYLLOG.—Most certainly, that law which commands me nothing, I cannot transgress; and, therefore, no wonder those people who fancy they are not under God's law should have nothing to confess. I have heard some of them confess and complain; but, then, it was never against themselves, but against some other people who did not please them.

NEOPH.—My dear friends, I return you all many thanks; but how did they further deal with those men at Caerludd?

EPEN.—You must look upon the account I gave as very short and imperfect. The very next church meeting, the sum and substance of all was laid before the church. They mourned much under the weight of this trial, and, upon deliberate consultation, came to this resolution,—to write letters to all the churches within their acquaintance, earnestly desiring they would send their messengers on such a day, to consult with them before the Lord, and give their advice.

NEOPH.—But would it not have been as well for the elders only to have sent to other ministers, without sending from the church to the churches? Persons of ability, we know, would have been capable of giving good advice without being messengers.

THEOPH.—How many things, Neophytus, think you, in seventeen hundred years have crept in at that door? "This may be as well as that—this is more prudent—this is more decent," &c. All the antichristian trumpery and tyranny entered thus. It is certain that the messengers of the churches are the glory of Christ. You ask, would it not have been as well; and I ask you, if Christ loses any part of His glory, what can be an equivalent for it?

PHILAL.—In the days of the apostles, certain men came to Antioch, and there delivered a dangerous doctrine, which produced no small dissension and disputation. Whereupon the church there determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain others of them, should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about the question. And when those

messengers were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, who came together to consider of this matter. Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch, with a letter also, which, when the multitude was gathered together, was delivered. —Acts xv. The church at Antioch sent messengers unto the church at Jerusalem; and by the church at Jerusalem they were received. The whole church at Jerusalem sent messengers again back to them; and to the brethren they sent an epistle, which, when the multitude of them came together, was delivered. Behold a standing pattern for this part of the communion of churches; and that it might be so, the question was not decided by extraordinary apostolic power only.

CHRISTOPH.—How often have I seen and heard this place produced for the support of arbitrary synods, where the churches had neither messengers nor business! It concerns me to see the glory of Christ so lost among the churches!

NEOPH.—But I still think that a wise man is as capable of giving advice when he is not a messenger as when he is; for his being sent cannot add unto his abilities.

SYLLOG.—You do not know that; have you never read that when people's worship is taught by the precepts of men, the wisdom of their wise men should perish, and the understanding of the prudent should be hid? You think, because they are the same men, let them follow the primitive pattern and order or not, they are equally capable of giving good advice; but when they have rejected the word of the Lord, pray, what wisdom is in them?

NEOPH.—But may there not be ministers' meetings, which some people call synods, and may they not meet without being sent as messengers from the churches?

THEOPH.—Yes, doubtless; and to a very good purpose, *if well improved*. Christian acquaintance, love, and usefulness, may thereby be promoted; only, such meetings must be looked upon as discretionary, and not of Divine appointment, nor must they assume power to impose anything upon the churches.^b

^b How pointedly may this be applied to certain ambitious tendencies of ecclesiastical confederations of modern times! Those who cherish

NEOPH.—But, when they are met together, may not the churches ask their advice in any difficult cases?

THEOPH.—Doubtless they may; but those cases must be stated in the churches, messengers named and formally appointed in and by the church or churches, or it is impossible for them as churches to ask the advice. And, then, in what capacity must the ministers be considered; for you suppose they are not messengers of the churches? And if the church does not state the case, nor formally send its messengers, then it must be looked upon only as a private friendly consultation, which also may not be without its good consequences.

SYLLOG.—Without all doubt. After prayer in a church of Christ, where He has promised His presence and assistance, the case is stated; and in His presence the messengers are appointed, and with prayer to God for His special direction and His blessing upon their message, they are sent; and so are they the glory of Christ. When they deliver their message, it is not in a private way, but *to and in a church of Christ*, where they may be very sure of the abiding presence of Christ, according to His promise, and where other churches, also, may be present by their messengers. There, where the presence of Christ in His church and churches may be, in faith, pleaded, which perhaps in an arbitrary synod cannot be done, the case is considered, and their best advice given. This answers the primitive simplicity and purity, and, as Christ's gracious institution, must have the preference.

NEOPH.—But is the advice so given of a binding nature?

THEOPH.—The church to which the advice is given should be thankful to the Redeemer for the love and communion of His churches, and earnestly beg that He would now direct their hearts in all that concerns the given advice, that they may sincerely submit unto all of His will that appears therein. But if anything therein appears contrary the liberty and untrammelled action of the churches have still to watch and protest. Church history throughout is a demonstration that men who covet ruling in a religious community, if allowed *direction*, will assume *dictatorship*; and once having grasped the official reins will, in the next place, and speedily, show their fondness for driving. The next step leads to the last and crowning one—that of making the clerical order alone to be the church proper; and the "laity" to be mere material to be used.—N.

to the revealed will of their Lord, they are not bound to submit thereto, but peaceably dissent from the thoughts of their brethren.^c

NEOPH.—Then, to what purpose is it to advise them at all?

THEOPH.—Why, truly, my young friend, in a multitude of counsellors there is safety; and many of God's servants, in God's way, may discover some part of the Divine pleasure out of the Scriptures, which a few could not see; but the binding authority stands only in "thus saith the Lord." All must be tried and examined by the Scriptures. But by what you have said, you may easily see how readily authority over brethren grows in the soil of corrupt nature! It is a vile weed that fills the world, and it is a great pity it should be suffered to grow in gardens.

NEOPH.—My excellent Theophilus,—I hope you will excuse my putting the question for information,—but authority there is still in churches.

THEOPH.—Only the authority of Christ, for edification.

NEOPH.—All synods and councils pretend thereto.

THEOPH.—But a Congregational church of Christ can show its commission, and produce the rules it has to act by.

NEOPH.—Dear Epenetus, with the consent of my seniors, I beg we may be favoured with the contents of one of the letters sent for messengers.

EPEN.—I gave you some account not long since of the grace of God in reaching the inhabitants of Llettyrdwr, now called Bedford. I must just tell you that the work of the Redeemer's kingdom quickly prospered there into a flourishing church; to which church, among others, a letter was sent as follows:—

"The Church of Christ, meeting near Dwrborh, in Caerludd, to the Church of Christ at Llettyrdwr, wishing all grace and peace.

"DEARLY BELOVED IN THE LORD,—How can we sufficiently admire the wisdom of our Redeemer, in the methods He

^c This is an ideal which in no part of Christendom has yet been realized. Such a combination of liberty and authority can exist only in an almost perfect state of the church. But who will say that our good old author, trusting only to the light of Scripture and his own sanctified good sense, is not right?—N.

took to gather us to Himself! We bless the Lord who brought us out of darkness into light, and who hath translated you into the kingdom of His dear Son. Our earnest desire is, dearly beloved, that you may be very strong in the grace that is in Christ, that your love to the truth as it is in Jesus and to each other may abound, that your walk with the Lord may be very humble and holy, that all your testimony for Christ may be consistent and successful, and that in every sense you may increase with the increase of God. We do hereby acquaint you that uncommon trials are at present upon us: for of two persons, who are members, one denies the Godhead and grace of Christ; the other denies the law of God, the Redeemer's dominion, and man's duty. We have faithfully endeavoured their recovery, but, to our great grief, they are still the same. We have great reason of thankfulness that the infection spreads not; and think it still our duty to use all means possible to continue that mercy. After supplication and consultation, we have resolved to call other churches to assist us by their messengers, that in the presence of our Redeemer we may act for His glory according to the best advice. For this most solemn work we have fixed upon the tenth day of the third month, and the following day, if need be; and do hereby desire you, dearly beloved, to send your messengers to meet the messengers of other churches for our assistance; and we hope the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ shall attend us, for the special advantage and establishment both of you and your affectionate brethren.

“At our church meeting,” &c.

Letters to the same purpose were sent to other churches, and poor Cyndyn, of whom you have heard, desired he might be the messenger to carry this.

CHRISTOPH.—Ah, poor heart! he wanted to see his dear friends, to whom he was made so useful in the day of his distress.

NEOPH.—Pray suffer Epenetus to proceed.

EPEN.—The time came, and all the country messengers were there a day or two beforehand, and among them honest Ffyddlon, now very far in years, and appearing ripe for heaven. He had not for several years been at Caerludd, but he was received with tears of joy, respect, and affection.

CHRISTOPH.—Oh, this was affecting, to see Ffyddlon, who was their father in Christ, once again ! I wish I could particularly hear what conversation he had with them. How pleasant must it be to relate and hear over again the story of the precious work at Hyfrydle, and the wonders of grace at first in Caerludd.

NEOPH.—Pray, dear Christophilus, allow Epenetus to proceed with the story of the messengers' meeting.

CHRISTOPH.—Well, well, so I will ; but, for all your haste, there are no stories to be compared unto free and faithful relations of the work of grace, and the variety of wonders which attend it.

EPEN.—Dewi, the pastor, began in prayer, and with great tenderness, judgment, and affection, sent up strong cries to God that the beauty of the Lord their God might be upon them, and for the comfort and establishment of all the godly.

Prayer being ended, the messengers of the several churches took their seats, and unanimously chose the beloved Ffyddlon moderator ; a proper person to read the minutes of things passed ; and two scribes to take down the speeches and resolutions of this Christian synod.

Upon this, Yefan read that text in Acts xv., " And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter." And after taking notice of the wisdom and goodness of our Redeemer in appointing the use of Christian consultation in cases of difficulty, gave a brief account of the questions they were to consider, and wished them the special assistance of the spirit of Christ, that they might be helped with clearness to keep close to the written word.

Then, Deddfol being present, his letter was read, and also the minutes of their conference with him ; and he was asked whether the letter was his, and whether the account was just. He answered, that the letter was his, and that he had nothing to object against the account.

Upon this each article was distinctly considered—every messenger giving his thoughts ; nor did any one interrupt nor speak twice to the same thing without leave obtained. Deddfol, also, never was denied leave to reply to anything spoken by any of the messengers, or by any of the elders of that church. The moderator always spoke last. Then

immediately a new article was called, which was in like manner considered; and in that order they went through the whole that concerned Deddfol, and which took up the whole of that day. Yefan concluded in prayer, and they were dismissed with notice to meet next day.

NEOPH.—Well, I should be glad to hear what every one spoke, and what advice they gave the church.

EPEN.—The first I do not think consistent with the design of my story; but as to the advice, they all agreed that Deddfol was a stubborn and perverse heretic, and believed it to be the duty of the church to admonish him, and upon non-repentance to cut him off.

NEOPH.—And how did they deal with the other man?

EPEN.—In the very same manner; and then dear Ffyddlon, the moderator, preached from 1 Cor. xi. 19,—“For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.” Upon this, in the presence of the messengers, Deddfol and Digyfraith were both admonished; and the meeting, after according public thanks to the messengers, concluded with praise and prayer.

NEOPH.—And, pray, how did this affair end?

EPEN.—I told you there were ready-writers appointed to take down the whole faithfully; the sum and substance whereof was transcribed into several copies for the messengers to carry home and read to their respective churches, and lodge the account with the elders, for a time of need. As for the two erroneous persons, after a second admonition, they were rejected as heretics.

NEOPH.—But seeing they were moral in their walk, what need was there of excommunication?

PHILAL.—The church could never observe the laws of Christ without it; for the command is very plain and express, that such should be rejected after a first and second admonition:—“If any man consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railing, evil surmising, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds,—from such withdraw thyself.”

SYLLOG.—A church of Christ is bound by revelation and reason to use all means to preserve itself pure; and how is it possible to do so without taking heed lest a root of bitterness spring up and defile many? You speak of heretics being moral in their walk! Do you consider what you say? There is not a heretic upon earth that is a moral man.^d Could you judge that man moral, that denies the proper divinity of Christ, and says that God has relaxed the moral law? Or, could you judge that man moral, who says that he is not under the commanding power of the moral law? Their doctrine is the doctrine of devils; and to suffer them to dwell in a church of Christ is to give place to the devil.

NEOPH.—Indeed, after all that I have read about heresy, I question whether I know what a heretic is.

THEOPH.—Truly, my Neophytus, if you had only read 2 Peter ii. 1, you might have known what a heretic was. You would see there that he is one who denies the Lord that bought him; denies the Divine nature of Christ; denies the human nature of Christ; denies the unity of both natures in one person; denies the grace of Christ, or denies the laws of Christ.

PHILOL.—According to the meaning of the word, a heretic takes delight in a religion of his own choosing.^e

NEOPH.—But I am at a loss how to understand what the

^d We fear Mr. Maurice, if in Spain, would prove a severe inquisitor! We prefer the tone of those higher words, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God."—John vii. 17.—N.

^e Heretic is from *ἄρῆω*, to take, hold. In Scripture and early times, "heresy" was applied to any sect, party, or what we would now call "denomination," and with no greater intention to convey reproach than we have in the use of that term. A heresy was a *chosen* way of life, or, in the free exercise of thought, a set of opinions *held* or *adopted*. In modern usage the word "school" is of similar meaning—employed, now in a good, now in a bad, sense. The "sect" of the Pharisees was called, not by way of reproach, a "heresy," *αἵρέσις*.—Acts xv. 5. So was that of the Sadducees.—Acts v. 17. Paul says, that "after the straitest heresy, *αἵρέσις*, of their religion, he lived a Pharisee."—Acts xxvi. 5. Christianity itself was, certainly not without some tinge of disrespect, spoken of by the Roman Jews as a *heresy*, *αἵρέσις*.—Acts xxviii. 22. "This heresy (sect), everywhere spoken against." The word is used in a bad sense in 1 Cor. xi. 19, Gal. v. 20, and 1 Peter ii. 1.

In Christian theology, since Holy Scripture is the test of doctrine,

apostle offers as a reason why a heretic should be rejected, for he says that such a man is subverted and sinneth, being condemned of himself. Pray, what is there in this peculiar to a heretic?

THEOPH.—Nothing at all; nor is it mentioned under any such view. But to show that though a heretic may in other respects behave among men in a harmless manner, or perhaps may seem to abound in good works, yet he is as vile a transgressor as any other, and therefore to be rejected. He is as much subverted, and sinneth as much as if he was a murderer or an adulterer, and therefore is to be cast out of the communion of the faithful.

NEOPH.—I thank you, my dear Theophilus. Far and wide have I rambled to seek satisfaction in this, and all the while it was near unto me, but I did not see it. I have one favour more to ask. We have heard of a messengers' meeting; but, pray, are there not some other things which the communion of churches may comprehend?

THEOPH.—Yes, yes; such as the transient communion of members, either upon letters of recommendation, or, if they are well known, without, and the dismissal of members,^f and the reception of them in full communion, and the giving

any opinions clearly and confessedly repugnant to this, are of the character of heresy. But, whoever holds Scripture as the basis and authority of his doctrine, has an equal right with his opponent to apply the term. When upon a particular *interpretation* of Scripture, however, or upon mere human, secular, or ecclesiastical authority, the right is assumed to the whole of true doctrine, and to the opprobrious designation of all others as "heresies," there is clearly an unreasonable and offensive usurpation practised, which itself is the highest form of heresy. The cry of "heresy" is purely appropriate, in the modern sense, only on the lips of infallible Rome.—N.

^f The invariable practice of modern Congregational churches is to furnish letters of dismissal and recommendation. A printed form for this purpose is sometimes kept, with blanks for names and dates. But this looks cold and formal, and many pastors prefer the labour of writing a special letter for each case, wherein they can specify particular excellences, &c., of the member dismissed, and invoke particular attentions and sympathies from the church addressed, according to the requirements of the case. The intercourse of churches should display, surely, not only mere formal order, but the warmth of Christian affection.

It is customary for those who are recognized ministers in the body, wherever they may happen to sojourn, to be freely invited as occa-

and receiving aid and assistance of a temporal nature, and many other things.

NEOPH.—A letter of recommendation for transient communion must be a testimony from one church unto the other that such a person is a church member, and walks agreeably to his profession. But what is a dismission?

EPEN.—You may remember of one Alfred, a young man that belonged to the church at Hyfrydle, and went up with Ffyddlon to Caerludd, and stayed there. This young man, after some little time, desired his dismission, which was granted as follows:—

“The Church of Christ sojourning at Hyfrydle, to the Church of Christ sojourning at Caerludd, with their bishops and deacons, wishing all grace and peace.

“DEARLY BELOVED,—It has been the good pleasure of God to remove from hence to your neighbourhood our beloved brother Alfred, who now desires to be dismissed from our fellowship to yours. Seeing the all-wise God, who determineth the bounds of our habitations, has thus disposed of him, and affords unto him a pleasant prospect of spiritual profit and advantage in your fellowship, we think his request reasonable. Wherefore we do, as a church of Christ, now recommend, and actually dismiss, our dear brother Alfred (whose conversation while with us was very honourable) to your fellowship in the Lord, declaring that when you receive him, his membership here ceaseth. We wish you and him abundance of the presence of Christ, and the unspeakable refreshing joys belonging thereunto, and in the most tender Christian affection and love remain,

“Your brethren in the best bonds.

“Ordered at our church meeting,” &c.

sional communicants, and when preaching, if requisite, to administer the Lord's Supper, &c., everything being done in fraternal confidence, and for mutual edification.

It is impossible to over-estimate the importance of *immediate* transfer of membership in the case of younger members who become residents in large towns, or in the metropolis. Constancy of fellowship for such is always of great use in maintaining the vigour of religious feeling, and is, of course, essential to the delight and profit of *social religion*.—N.

NEOPH.—And how was he received? Was he propounded? Did they depute persons to visit him; and was he called to speak his experience?

EPEH.—No, nothing of this. The letter was read, and thereupon the church received him into fellowship.

NEOPH.—Communion of churches to be sure there is, and should be. But is there any such thing as the excommunication of a church or churches?

THEOPH.—No; there is no rule for that. Churches are co-ordinate, and those holding the Head must be considered as true churches, and therefore in fellowship. If any be under disorder, prudent endeavours may be used to remove that disorder; but when all is done, the church must not be unchurched, but left to the compassion and care of the Great Pastor.

NEOPH.—But what if any churches should turn Arian, or any other way deny the Lord that bought them, or sink into profaneness and immorality?

THEOPH.—Then are they no churches of Christ.

NEOPH.—What if any church receive members cut off from other churches, or who have irregularly withdrawn from other churches?

THEOPH.—The aggrieved church should, with prudence, protest against such disorderly practices, and thereby clear themselves, but still own the church that gave the offence as a church in communion.

NEOPH.—But then the person they had cut off may come and sit down with them at the Lord's table, as if he never had been cut off.

THEOPH.—Nobody can sit down with a church he does not belong to, without their leave. If they give him leave, who has power to hinder it?

CHRISTOPH.—Our beloved Epenetus, your edifying story seems to contain the account of things done in the course of a pretty many years. In the first great work of God, at Caerludd, I remember you mentioned Didwyll as one of the eminent converts, who must then be a person in years, for you said that he was Yefan's wife's father; and in their concern with the two persons who had fallen into error, I find he acted with the other elders. Surely, by that time he must be a very old man.

EPEN.—He was so, but upon his grey hairs there was a glory. God blessed him with great abilities and faithfulness to the very last. But, quickly after that messengers' meeting, that holy man was ripened, and removed to his eternal rest.

NEOPH.—A perfect story of all the first church at Caerludd was concerned with, was not the design we entered upon; but, for my part, I should be glad to hear how it was with that great man under the arrests of death.

EPEN.—The end of that man was peace. When he found nature hastening at a great pace to dissolution, in a full church meeting, from an advanced seat where he usually sat, he spoke to the church as follows :—

My dear brethren,—It is now with a great deal of pleasure I look back to that room where I was reached by grace. Thither I came with a design to oppose Christianity. But I can never be thankful enough to all eternity. Christ did not suffer me there to speak one word against Him. I saw that which flesh and blood could not have revealed to me,—the sinfulness of sin in me, and the fulness of God's salvation in Christ. A power, evidencing itself to be almighty, sweetly conquered my soul, and made me willing. Among you I have taken Christ's yoke upon me, and now it becomes me to testify that all along I have found it easy and delightful. You were pleased, as a church, to call me to serve Christ and you as a ruling elder; in the discharge of which trust many infirmities have always attended me, but through grace, the service, so far as I could perform it, was my delight; and I would now humbly bless God for any help afforded, and for your love, obedience, and regard. The ordinances of Christ in His church have not been dry breasts unto me; while worshipping with you, I have tasted the joys of another world. And now, my dear brethren, I take my leave of you; for, if I understand the meaning of some things, I feel I am to come to this place no more. Here Christ often visited me; and now He sends for me to come to Him, and I apprehend that my departure is at hand. Keep on your whole armour; I am just going to put mine off. You are in the wilderness. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." All errors in judgment or practice avoid, keep a tender conscience, guard against all

appearance of evil, and everything that tends to cool your love to Christ and each other. Through grace, I am resigned to God, and death is welcome to me. My sins, that are many, are forgiven, and the righteousness of Christ is my robe and wedding garment, and with His love am I filled. Though we part now, yet you and I shall meet, ere long, in heaven, with our dear Lord, never to part any more; for we shall be ever with Him, and like Him, for "we shall see Him as He is." And unto Him, this once more, I shall in prayer commit myself and you.

And upon this, with wondrous judgment and affection, and with praise, he did cast the church and himself upon the rich and sovereign grace of God in Christ, the whole church being in tears.

CHRISTOPH.—In tears! Ay, well they might, to hear and see their honoured, faithful, and useful elder taking his leave of them in such a manner. But what next?

EPEN.—Why, then he lifted up his voice and said, The eternal God be your refuge, and underneath let there be the everlasting arms; and bowed himself, and said no more.

THEOPH.—What a blessed parting was this!

EPEN.—His servant led him home. Then he worshipped God, and was helped into his bed. Having enjoyed a little rest, he looked about him, and saw Yefan and his wife in the room, and said, What, Yefan, my son and my father, art thou here? Blessed be God that ever I saw thee! And blessed be God that ever my dear daughter saw thee! Oh, my dear Araf, never forget the amazing providence and the all-conquering grace of God! My soul was reached at once, and for a season thou wast detained in bonds; but He that preaches liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound, gave thee beauty for ashes, and the oil of joy for mourning. I am going to Him, my dear children; I am going! His salvation is precious to me, and in His love I live. I long to be with Him; and I bless His name. He is with me in this valley. Here is nothing terrible nor troublesome to me. The dissolving of my earthly house of this tabernacle is delightful to my faith, nor is it in any sense very distressful. I have a building of God, eternal in the heavens! Dear Yefan, pray with me, and then go home and take your rest. Let

me, if I live, see you again to-morrow, with my dear pastor Dewi, and my brethren the elders and deacons.—Yefan prayed, and took his leave, but Araf, his wife, would stay all night with her father; and a pleasant, soul-refreshing night it was, notwithstanding what tender natural affection might endure.

The next day, all his children and grand-children came to visit him, and to every one he recommended a very close walk with God; and told them how precious Christ, as the only way to the Father, was to him; that the everlasting covenant of grace was now an unspeakable comfort to him, and that, according to the promises thereof, he fully believed he should see them all in heaven; desired them to remember it, for, said he, God is always mindful of it; and what I am quickly to pass through is unto me one of the blessings of it.

NEOPH.—All this is very affecting! What a blessed song is that prepared for a poor believer—"O death, where is thy sting?" But you said the elders were to come.

EPEN.—Yes, and so they did; and Didwyll desired Dewi to go to prayer, and then sat up in his bed and said—

My dear brethren, great is the honour your dear Redeemer has conferred upon you, and great is the trust He has committed to you—to feed the church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood. Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock! Feed the sheep, feed the lambs; the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers of both. I greatly desire that you never may sink into a sinful neglect of your proper duty towards the *children* of the church. I am afraid churches in ages to come will cast off that concern. Keep together in the strictest bonds of love and unity, appear against all appearance of immorality, and watch lest error should break in upon the church of God. Always have an eye upon them that seem weary of the old truths and trodden paths of Christianity, affecting novelties in religion, and betimes, as the case requires, reprove them, that they may be sound in the faith. And let the discipline Christ has appointed in His house be diligently, faithfully, and impartially administered. You will excuse me, that I, in my departing hours, take this

freedom; it is, through grace, love to Christ, to His church, and to you, that puts me upon it.

Dewi.—Our dear and honoured brother, we bless the God of all grace for your comfort, which you now in view of death enjoy, and for the precious advice you give. Your usefulness amongst us has been very great; your fellowship in the Gospel, from the first until now, exceeding precious; and your walk and works through grace exemplary; your advantage and our loss will be very great.

Didwyll.—Nay, my honoured pastor, in Christianity have I been poor and fruitless; nor have I, in the place Christ by His church put me in, discharged but a very small part of duty; nor does the comfort which at present I enjoy, arise from the consideration of the least degree of perfection in any performance of mine; I have good reason to reckon all as loss, and I hope I do so, and rely on the righteousness of Christ alone. O! it is His love that is my present life. Justification by imputed righteousness, in view of death, I find pleasant; and so through grace in my life I found it, ever since my conversion. An advantage, indeed, it will be to me, to be with Christ. Through grace I am well persuaded that to die will be my gain; but the reason of that is, because Christ is my life. But with regard to your loss, if there be any, Christ will abundantly make it up; wait on Him and walk with Him.

Haelionus.—Oh, my dear, honoured elder, are you going to leave us? Great is my grief; I do not know how to bear it.

Didwyll.—What, one of our dear deacons! Be not grieved at that; Christ will never leave you, and the poor you will have always with you. God has called you and your brethren to a very honourable work, to make a representation of His mercy, that precious attribute wherein He delighteth. I do not know but you, in some sense, may have the advantage of us all, in that you are conversant so much and so often with duties that lead your thoughts perpetually afresh to the mercies and compassions of God. I love those more peculiarly under your care, and when I am gone you will see what I leave for you with impartiality to distribute among them. Be very tender, cheerful, and faithful in your service. What I leave for the support of our precious Christian school shall be duly taken care of

by those whom I leave in trust. And may the Redeemer's kingdom flourish!

Yefan.—My dear father, how is it with you?

Didwyll.—The outward man decays, and the inward man is renewed. Christ gives into my soul enlarged tastes of His glory. I am full of joy. Tell my dear brethren, the church, that I die, but God will surely visit them. And if their afflictions may seemingly increase, and their trials enlarge, even to persecution and martyrdom, let them not fear—through the fiery trials and the swelling floods God will be with them; only let them not in the least deny Christ before men. And while you live, my dear son, preach the grace of God, that teaches persons to deny all ungodliness, and together with my dear pastor, declare the whole counsel of God.

Diwyd.—O what a trial is this now threatens us!

Didwyll.—A trial! God has satisfied me with length of days, and hath showed me His salvation! If this is a trial unto you, what must it be when God calls away your *pastor* and *teacher*? That surely will be like the overflowings of Jordan. Well, they are not to live for ever; but the Great Bishop abides, and He will provide, I hope, for you, persons of great grace, of great abilities, steadfast in the faith, and zealous in the work of their Lord. But, as elders, may your Lord be with you, guide and direct all your steps among the flock! Mind your business with diligence, and rule well. And tell the elders of sister churches, that their dying friend finds in his heart the dearest love to them and the churches, and the warmest desires for their true prosperity.

THEOPH.—What a brave spirit was this!

EPEN.—An excellent one. But more talk they had upon the concerns of Christ's kingdom here, and the glory of His saints above; and the abundant peace Zion shall most certainly enjoy in this world, and especially that which the dear departing saint enjoyed. Thereupon one or two went to prayer, and Didwyll desired they would sing the 116th Psalm, which they endeavoured to do, and with sad hearts parted for that night.

NEOPH.—Pray, Epenetus, go on, let us have the last.

EPEN.—Next day, Dewi and Yefan were there betimes.

They found him weak, but his faith very strong. When prayer was over, with a low voice he said,—He loved me with an everlasting love, and therefore with loving-kindness did He draw me. I am almost at home; He makes my cup to run over. To thy rest, to thy rest, O my soul! for thy God has dealt bountifully with thee. His last words were—“Let Zion flourish; my dear Redeemer, I come.” And so that eminent Christian fell asleep in the Lord; and Dewi and Yefan closed his eyes.

NEOPH.—Well, precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints! Christ did say, “Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.” But, pray, how was it with Dewi and Yefan in their last hours?

EPEN.—Wonderfully great did grace and glory there shine; and especially upon one of them. But, I humbly conceive, it is not expedient to go through the story of that; for thereby we shall leave the church without pastor and teacher, or be carried unavoidably into a new story in the ordination of others. “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions’ sakes I will now say, Peace be within thee. Because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good.” Amen.

CHRISTOPH.—I do for myself, and all my dear friends and brethren, return you most hearty thanks, my dear Epenetus, for this edifying account: and I thank you all, my dear friends, for your company and assistance. The eternal Spirit fill us, fill our families, fill the churches, and hasten the time to fill the earth with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. Amen.

GLOSSARY.

I. PERSONS WHO CONDUCT THE DIALOGUES.

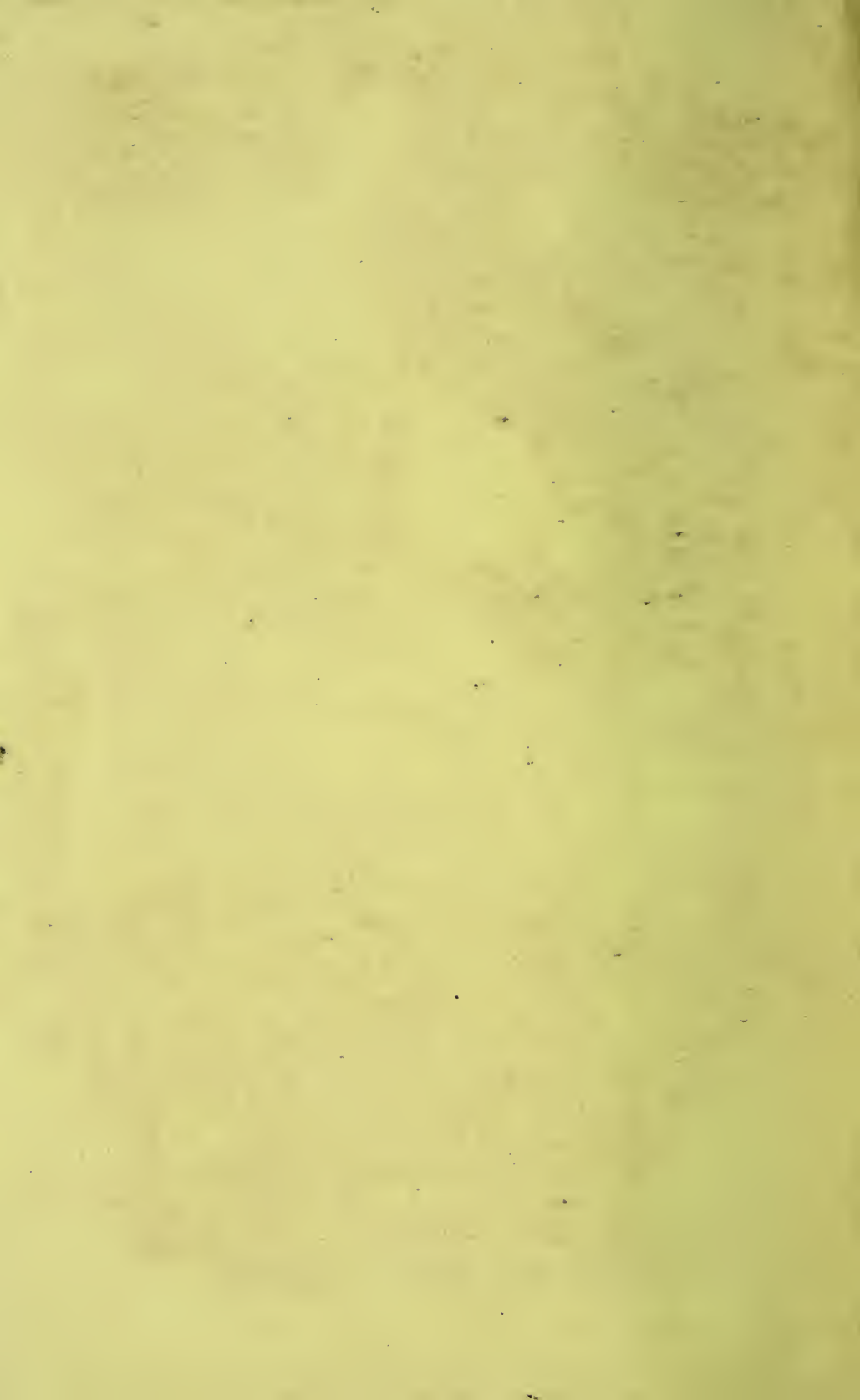
EPENETUS, (Rom. xvi. 5)	One who gives praise.
NEOPHYTUS,	A novice, a learner.
PHILALETHES,	One who loves truth.
PHILOLOGUS,	A man of letters.
SYLLOGISTICUS,	A reasoner.
THEOPHILUS,	One who loves God.
CHRISTOPHILUS,	One who loves Christ.

II. PERSONS MENTIONED IN THE DIALOGUES AS RELONGING TO THE EARLY BRITISH CHURCH.

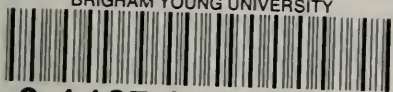
<i>Anghenog,</i>	Needy.	<i>Cyndyn,</i>	Perverse.
<i>Addfwyn,</i>	Gentle.	<i>Cystuddiol,</i>	Afflicted.
<i>Alfred,</i>	(Proper name)	<i>Cywir,</i>	True.
<i>Anghenus,</i>	Poor.	<i>Deallus,</i>	Intelligent.
<i>Anianol,</i>	Natural.	<i>Deddfol,</i>	Legalist.
<i>Araf,</i>	Quiet.	<i>Dewi,</i>	Beloved.
<i>Astud,</i>	Attentive.	<i>Didwyll,</i>	Guileless.
<i>Buddiol,</i>	Useful. [ed.	<i>Diddrwg,</i>	Innocent.
<i>Bydol,</i>	Worldly-mind-	<i>Digyfraith,</i>	Antinomian.
<i>Byrbwyll,</i>	Hasty.	<i>Diniwed,</i>	Harmless.
<i>Cadarn,</i>	Powerful.	<i>Diwall,</i>	Careful.
<i>Cariadus,</i>	Loving.	<i>Diwyd,</i>	Diligent.
<i>Cradog,</i>	(Proper name)	<i>Doeth,</i>	Wise.
<i>Credadyn,</i>	Believer.	<i>Duwiol,</i>	Pious.
<i>Crefyddol,</i>	Religious.	<i>Dyfal,</i>	Industrious.
<i>Cyfiawn,</i>	Righteous.	<i>Edgar,</i>	(Proper name)
<i>Cyfrwys,</i>	Crafty.	<i>Egwan,</i>	Feeble.

<i>Ffyddlon,</i>	Faithful.	<i>Moesol,</i>	Moral.
<i>Galarus,</i>	Sorrowful.	<i>Mwynedd,</i>	Tender.
<i>Gobeithiol,</i>	Hopeful.	<i>Porthwyol,</i>	Helpful.
<i>Gofalus,</i>	Watchful.	<i>Prudd,</i>	Serious, sad.
<i>Graslawn,</i>	Full of grace.	<i>Prydferth,</i>	Comely.
<i>Gruffydd,</i>	Strong in faith.	<i>Rhinweddol,</i>	Virtuous.
<i>Gwastad,</i>	Consistent.	<i>Siriol,</i>	Cheerful.
<i>Gweddus,</i>	Becoming.	<i>Synwyrol,</i>	Sensible.
<i>Gwirion,</i>	Harmless.	<i>Tawel,</i>	Serene.
<i>Haelionus,</i>	Bountiful.	<i>Tirion,</i>	Gentle, soft.
<i>Hawddgar,</i>	Amiable.	<i>Tosturiol,</i>	Pitiful.
<i>Hyderus,</i>	Confident.	<i>Trist,</i>	Heavy-hearted.
<i>Hyddysg,</i>	Docile.	<i>Tyner,</i>	Tender-hearted.
<i>Hygar,</i>	Lovely.	<i>Uniawn,</i>	Upright.
<i>Isel,</i>	Dejected.	<i>Ufydd,</i>	Obedient.
<i>Llawen,</i>	Joyful.	<i>Yefan,</i>	Gift of grace.
<i>Llon,</i>	Cheerful.	<i>Ymgais,</i>	Effort.
<i>Meddwyn,</i>	A tippler.	<i>Ystyriol,</i>	Considerate.





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