

1808

Some Account of the Convincement and Religious Progress of John Spalding, Late of Reading. With his Reasons for Leaving the National Established Mode of Worship.

John Spalding

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SOME
ACCOUNT
OF
THE CONVINCEMENT,
AND
RELIGIOUS PROGRESS,
OF
JOHN SPALDING,
LATE
OF
READING.

WITH HIS REASONS FOR LEAVING THE NATIONAL
ESTABLISHED MODE OF WORSHIP.

New-York :

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1808.

ADDRESS.

THE following brief memorial, of the experience of a deeply devoted mind, is deemed worthy of public notice, as an additional testimony to "the cloud of witnesses," we are already favoured with, to the internal efficacy of the power and principle of truth. The writer was a valuable example of Solomon's observation, "Honourable age is not that which standeth in length of time; nor that is measured by number of years: but wisdom is grey hairs unto men; and an unspotted life is old age:" being remarkably distinguished by a steady, uniform devotion, and dedication of heart to the pure cause of truth and righteousness on the earth; which he believed himself called to maintain, and to endeavour to promote by example and precept. His memory is therefore very precious; in particular to some who had an intimate acquaintance with him. To these more emphatically, "he being dead yet speaketh," in the remembrance of his solid, wise deportment, his fewness of words, and those seasoned with grace; and his steady firmness towards opposers of principles and testimonies, which

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he had not taken upon trust, but deeply examined their foundation, nature, and tendency ; and being baptized under a living concern to support them, as before observed, he dared not flinch in the day of battle, but both in that society of which he became a member, and also among others, he was deeply and awfully engaged to stand his ground in the divine ability afforded, and to exhibit an example of ancient simplicity and uprightness ; as he observed to a friend in one of his letters, some months before his decease. After pointing out his great concern in observing the declensions amongst a highly professing and eminently favoured people, and making various remarks on the importance of preserving as a wall of defence, the religious discipline established among them, and not giving way to weakness, in order to maintain a specious, merely external unity, and by being indifferent towards those noble testimonies which his soul loved, and was uncommonly bound to ; he firmly, yet humbly, added, “ O my friend, excuse my freedom ; the cause of truth I have to believe, though with a due proportion of fear I would express it, is so deeply impressed upon my mind, that neither the fear nor the love of any created being or thing, can be permitted to obstruct or divert me from what may appear to be required of me.” In a great degree in this firmness he lived, bearing much opposition, and the cross, as re-

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lated in the following memorial; and yet more particularly known to some who were acquainted with him; and thus firmly he died in great stability and peace; having little to say, but that little was truly much in a small compass, expressed at different times to a few friends who visited him near his end: some of whom were also with him just at the solemn period: and though in the midst of mourning, were joyful witnesses and partakers of that solemnity and peace, which proved as a seal to the deep concern, exercise, and happy close of the dear deceased. He was ill about three weeks of a fever; and in the forepart of his illness expressed to a friend who visited him, "that there was no cause of discouragement to the right minded." Being asked at another time if he had any thing in particular to express to friends, he replied, "No; only my love: all is well: nothing stands in my way." And thus he peacefully laid down his life, in the 30th year of his age, the 30th of the 1st month, 1795.

Some Account of the

SOME
ACCOUNT, &c.

I SHALL pass over the early part of my life, only observing I had been educated in a religious way. I mention this, as at times, when I lived in London, where I served an apprenticeship, in the midst of my dissipation, I frequently felt the reproofs of the Lord in mine heart, but which were soon smothered in the vortex of pleasure. After I had served my apprenticeship, I returned into the country to assist my father in his business of a farrier, at Reading, in the year 1786. A little time afterwards, as I attended the parish church so called, where a celebrated preacher officiated, I found an awakening power, which produced not a little alteration in me. I more constantly attended the services, public and pri-

vate ; joined the more particular professors, and went on for several years as one of them. I also abstained from vain company and conversation which I had before been addicted to, so that I was one of the chief professors ; but I found a gradual wearing off of the force of the impressions I had received ; less dislike to worldly company ; and the power of sin gaining the ascendancy ; that I at times felt much uneasiness ; particularly as, on serious reflection, I felt the strength of my lusts and passions, and the evil propensities of my nature unsubdued ; notwithstanding my knowledge of the truths of the gospel, and the profession I made : and observing and conversing with my fellow professors, I found the same great anxiety of mind, and breathings to the Lord, that he would make me indeed what I professed to be ; and what I was persuaded by the scriptures of truth, a true christian might be : that is, free from the power, as well as the guilt of sin. Thus I went on till about the year 1792, often feeling the

dominion of sin, and desiring deliverance from it; when I was led to consider the people called quakers, and was soon satisfied there was a manifest difference between them and others, even in outward appearance; which, when I considered, I was convinced was more conformable to christianity than any others I had known; most of whom followed all the fashions of the world, particularly in dress; an inconsistency I frequently observed with much concern. I then sought the conversation of some of them, and still found more simplicity, more like the precepts and practices of Christ and his apostles, that I desired to know the principles from which such superior practices resulted, and inquired for some of their writings. The first book I think that I read, was W. Penn's "No Cross, No Crown," which much tendered my spirit, and removed some unfavourable opinions which I had received respecting friends. I then, in some measure, saw how far what I had known before fell short of what that work

directed to; yet I continued attending at the parish place of worship; having the most favourable opinion of the minister there, and a particular esteem for him, as a man who also frequently professed a particular affection towards me. Once I remember, when I had so far deviated from my profession, as to go to a horse-race, he sent for me, and kindly admonished me as a friend and overseer. I mention this, as afterwards, when it pleased the Lord to enlighten my mind more clearly, and convince me of the necessity of leaving the form of worship I had been accustomed to, it was a sore trial to me to leave him, in a manner that I apprehended he would feel not a little concerned about. The next book I read, I think, was "Barclay's Apology," which opened many things so clearly to me, that I could not but consent to them; nevertheless, there were some things that at first reading I could not assent to, particularly respecting public worship. I thought it needful there should be a time appointed,

and somebody ready to officiate, that the ignorant might be instructed : and that a man, taught as I apprehended, of the Lord, and properly qualified, might at any time exhort or preach to the people. I still attended the old place, going occasionally to friends' meetings on any particular occasions, when some strangers were expected ; whose testimonies, though I could not but approve of them, yet were not able to draw me from my former society ; but I found the work of the Lord going on by degrees.

At first, I think, I considered the ordinance of the Lord's supper, as it is called, and was sensible I had never found any profit in it, from the beginning of my partaking of it ; and though I had often heard others speak very highly of it, as finding particular and extraordinary comfort and benefit in it ; and I often at the time earnestly desired to find the benefit of it as well as others ; yet it still remained a dead, unprofitable service : I therefore declined it entirely. The next thing I think I observed, was the public singing.

I began to see a great inconsistency in that practice, particularly after sermon. I could feel it had in myself as well as in others, a manifest tendency to lightness of spirit, and removing any serious impressions which might have been received from the foregoing discourse; that I soon left the place, immediately after sermon was ended. It was not long, however, before I saw a gross inconsistency in the practice altogether, when I weightily considered the matter contained in what was sung, how impossible it was for a congregation of different kinds of people to join in singing whatever might be given out, whether suitable to their conditions or not; much of which, I was persuaded, could not be said by any, without uttering gross falsehoods; which I could not believe could be acceptable in the sight of the Lord. I was in consequence constrained to give forth some observations on the subject in writing, addressed to the professors of religion, attending the place called St. Giles' church.

“ A few observations concerning the custom of singing in public meetings of worship ; by one, who has long been convinced of the inconsistency of it, and now calls upon every one who professes to be a follower of the meek and lowly Jesus, to lay aside prejudice, and seriously consider the following remarks, which are offered in the fear of the Lord.

“ First, It ought ever to be considered, that God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. In other words, it is the language of the heart which he regards, not words, however excellent of themselves. Now I appeal to the witness of God in every heart, considering the variety of conditions, the different subjects of praise, adoration, confession, petitioning, &c. contained in every collection, whether in the fear of the Lord any one, in whatever state or condition he may be at the time, can with propriety be ready to sing whatever may be given out. It appears to me impossible that a whole congre-

gation (even if we except the ignorant) can be in the same frame of mind, considering the various dispensations of the Lord's providence towards his people ; consequently, if that is not the case, it follows, of course, that if all sing, some must utter words with the mouth contrary to the language of the heart, which so far from being acceptable to the Lord, I am persuaded is hypocrisy, and an abomination in his sight.

“ Again, it appears to me inconsistent also with regard to the other parts of worship ; for if the language of the heart is spoken in prayer, which often precedes singing, and which implies a sense of our wants, doth it not shew an indifference whether our prayers are heard and answered or not to begin singing immediately, perhaps very different in matter as well as in manner, to what has been prayed for ?

“ Again, after preaching, if the Lord's power is known and felt under the word, is it not more likely to profit, if the mind is occupied in serious meditation, than sing-

ing, which from my own experience, I can say, has a tendency to divert the mind from solemn, serious reflection? I am now speaking more particularly concerning those, who have attained to a measure of the grace of God. Ask yourselves seriously, Is outward singing intended or calculated to please the carnal ears of men, or a holy God? Why such anxiety about tunes, voices, and music? Is the Lord to be pleased with such poor things? Oh! no; you cannot suppose it. Consider from what root it springs, from the old man or the new; and remember the axe is laid to the root, to destroy all that is of the earth, of our fleshly nature. I have considered those passages in the New Testament, where the subject is mentioned, and am confirmed by them in my opinion, of the inconsistency of public singing. The apostle speaks of singing with grace in the heart; of making melody in the heart to the Lord; not making a noise with the tongue unless that proceeds from the heart; which how

seldom it does in public singing I appeal to every considerate mind.

“ I am convinced in my own mind, considering our situation here, the power and devices of the enemy, our own inbred corruptions, that it is more seasonable to watch and pray, to be ever on our guard, and waiting to feel the light and power of Christ, to discover and subdue the hidden things of darkness ; that as children of the light we may walk in the light, and find the blood of Jesus Christ, his spirit and power, cleansing us from all sin ; than evidencing that trifling, careless spirit, too commonly, if not always, attending outward singing.

“ I could say much more against it, but would not be tedious, particularly respecting those that are without. How seldom can such people, living in open and avowed opposition to God, join in singing without uttering gross, abominable lies : and are we not accessory thereto ? Is it not expected when a psalm or hymn is given out, all present who are capable will join ? Then let it

not be said, how can we help the abuse of it. Ought we not rather to set them an example of truth and righteousness, and not countenance any practice that has a tendency to promote lightness and irreverence? Oh! my friends, this cannot be acceptable to the Lord, who requireth truth in the inward parts. I recommend to your serious consideration, what the Lord says in the 1st of Isaiah respecting the ordinances, of his own appointing, when not done in a proper spirit. I perceive every day more and more, an evident departure from the simplicity of Christ. Where is the daily cross borne? Observe the appearance of professors. What difference is there from the world? Sure, my friends, these things ought not to be. Bear with me, I beseech you. I am much concerned for the honour of our profession. If the cross is truly borne, all self-seeking and self-pleasing will be done away, and the fruits of the spirit more evidenced; which I am persuaded will not be in the present practice of public outward singing, often of words, as

to the matter, scarce within the bounds of probability: and I am convinced if people would seriously consider the manner, it would appear very inconsistent with the gravity and solemnity of the true christian profession.

“ May the Lord set these things home upon every heart, that there may be a concern to offer unto him acceptable sacrifice ; which more than once is said to be a broken and contrite spirit.

“ *Blessed are ye that mourn,*” says Christ, (not ye that sing) “ *for ye shall rejoice ;*” which rejoicing, if it may be applied to the present state of the church here, I conceive to be a grateful sense of the Lord’s mercies ; and showing forth his praises not only with our lips but in our lives. To conclude, my friends, turn into your own hearts : behold, says Christ, the kingdom of God is within you ; look not without for what I am persuaded is only to be found within. It is not much hearing or much speaking, that brings true peace to the soul ; the ear is never satisfied with hearing. As a proof of that,

do not we see professors running hither and thither, as though the more they heard, the better they should be ; encompassing themselves about with sparks of their own kindling, but what saith the Lord ? *"Ye shall lie down in sorrow."* I am fully convinced it is for want of this looking in, and waiting to feel the power of the Lord there, judging and subduing sin, that there is so much talk, so much outward parade, and so little spirituality in the lives and conversation of the people.

" J. SPALDING."

This I sent to the clerk, at the same time I sent some reasons for the apparent change in me, as absenting from the sacrament, so called ; and which I desired him to lay before the minister and others, at a prayer meeting : which he seemed to object to, supposing me in an error, and having a very unfavourable opinion of friends' principles. I soon after had some conversation with him on the subject ; which rather confirmed me

in my opinion than otherwise, his arguments appeared so weak against friends. Thus I went on some little time longer, still attending mornings and evenings; but attending friends' meetings in the afternoon. About this time I read "Sewel's History of the Quakers," which I think removed every objection, and confirmed me in my opinion of the truth of their principles. Their severe sufferings, their patience under them, and honest boldness before kings and rulers, convinced me, that nothing but a divine power could have supported them. I sought the company of some faithful friends, as I could discover in some I had been with, little more than the form. I desired to know the power in myself, and to be truly taught of the Lord, that I might not do any thing by imitation, or because others did so; but retired often alone, to be instructed of the Lord, what to do and what to leave; and, glory to his name, he was found of me, and made those retirements precious and profitable to me, revealing his will unto me by degrees,

as I was able to bear it. I now became acquainted with some solid friends, and was occasionally in company with them, which excited the attention of my friends and neighbours; so that there was much talk about me, and various reports were propagated respecting it, most people thinking it very strange I should turn quaker.

About this time I met with a considerable trial, the death of my father whom I dearly loved. I had long been persuaded in some measure of the vanity and inconsistency of wearing black clothes on such occasions, knowing it to be only a worldly custom; and had often said to myself during my father's illness, I would not put it on for any one except him; but there appeared so many reasons why I should conform on his account, that it was not till a little time before his death, that it pleased the Lord to remove my scruples respecting it, and strengthen me to bear such a public testimony, as of necessity that event occasioned. And indeed much opposition I met with on account of it, but the

Lord supported me through all. I then constantly attended friends' meetings.

About this time also I was concerned to write an address to some who usually met on first days, from different parts of the neighbouring country, to hear the minister, at a private house ; where I had occasionally attended, with other professors of the town. I also wrote to the clerk, and sent him " No Cross, No Crown ;" soon after " Barclay's Apology ;" and to another intimate friend, who was very zealous, I wrote and sent, " Beavan's Primitive Christianity Restored." And though I desired in what I wrote to individuals, as well as the society, that it might be put about for the perusal of any ; I found little notice taken by any, I thought they seemed rather to avoid me. One steady experienced man, in a little conversation, observing, he hoped I did not look for that in myself, which was only to be found in Christ, I was concerned to write to him some little time after on the subject ; and sent him at the same time,

“No Cross, No Crown.” While I was exercised towards the society I had left, I met with some more trials from other quarters; my relations complained of my silence, putting unfavourable constructions upon it. Indeed I had so much upon my mind, that I had little desire to speak much: for being often in my way of business with people of consequence in the neighbourhood, most of whom had always shewn me much attention and favour, now observing such a change, though only in dress at first, they began to look rather strangely upon me. The enemy of souls was not unmindful of my situation, and raised many difficulties in my way; as the loss of their favours, and, of course, my business; the great offence my conforming to other things not yet done would give them: such as the ceremony of the hat, the language, and their titles so highly valued; these seemed indeed so great discouragements, that my mind was at times sorely distressed.

I had some time felt an uneasiness respecting the performing some part of my business, such as nicking and cropping horses &c. punishing them for the sake of appearance, to please the fancies of men. When I began to mention my scruples, much opposition was made, as the consequence must of course be the loss of much business. I know not whether I was not too hasty in this matter, beginning in mine own strength, and not waiting the due time; for I found when I was required to do it, I gave way, which brought trouble upon me; till at last I was enabled to refuse several, among whom was one for whom I did much business; who, on my objecting and telling him my reasons, seemed very angry and reproached me for changing my religion, &c. He asked me to recommend some one to do it, but I told him I could not recommend another to do what I thought not right to do myself.

This event occasioned some uneasiness; I was blamed highly on the supposition that I

should soon lose my business; but I answered in the words of our Lord, "*Except a man forsake all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.*" I saw, more and more, how people could follow the ways, customs, and fashions of the world, and use means not always the most honest to get its riches: so true is our Lord's saying, "*Where your treasure is there will your hearts be also.*" Oh! how few really deny themselves and take up the cross.

About this time came the quarterly meeting of a society I helped to establish, called "The Sick Man's Visitor," to relieve the wants of those in distress, conducted by the chief and most serious of the professors, a committee of whom met every week to transact the business of it, and to hold a prayer meeting as they called it, at the same time singing, reading, &c. Being the time I used to serve on the committee, I took the opportunity to write to them, giving my reasons why I could not join in the services performed at those times; also something

more respecting the principles, &c. of friends, with what was upon my mind besides ; observing if any were desirous of more information on the subject, or had any objections to propose respecting friends' principles, I was willing to receive them.

Hitherto there had not been any material alteration in my dress, except what I wore on first days ; I still wearing a modern hat ; but now I found it required of me to make an alteration there ; which, as it was more conspicuous than any I had made, I found very trying ; nature being unwilling to bear the cross ; but it pleased the Lord to strengthen me ; and indeed it caused much gazing, admiration, and ridicule, as I could perceive and hear, though little was said directly to me, but the Lord preserved me, and I thought I found rather a kindness of behaviour among the more considerable of my neighbours when I attended in the course of my business, particularly from the chief justice Eyre, where I had apprehended not a little dis-

couragement, but I found through the mercy of my God, a very favourable intercourse. And here I may observe respecting these things, I felt a little at a time required of me; and as I was willing to give up, the Lord was pleased to afford me strength to be faithful to him. Now I am aware these things, respecting dress, &c. are, in the eyes of man's wisdom despised, and thought of no consequence: indeed of themselves, I am persuaded they are of no consequence, or if done from a wrong motive may be rather injurious than otherwise; yet when the Lord commands, it becomes his creatures to obey, and not reason about it, whether it is of consequence or not. When I felt a desire to reason about it, the example of Naaman, the Syrian, was brought to my remembrance. When the prophet ordered him to wash seven times in Jordan, his pride and wisdom were offended; he wanted some great thing done, somewhat pompous, and agreeable to the ideas of his worldly mind; and had not his servants been

wiser than their master, he might have continued in his disease ; but the event proved, how despicable soever the means appeared, it fully answered all he could wish ; therefore it is good for any one who feels occasionally the judgment of the Lord, against any thing however trifling it may appear, not to consult with flesh and blood, not to reason about it, but give up in simplicity of mind ; and then I am persuaded it will be found of more consequence than was apprehended ; for if we are not faithful in the little, how can we expect the greater will be committed to us. And, indeed, in this matter I have been mentioning, I found not a little advantage ; for before, when my appearance was not very different from the world, my acquaintance would enter into familiar converse with me ; which too often had a tendency to divert my mind from that seriousness I wished to preserve, and leave unpleasant reflections afterwards ; but when they saw (in their eyes) my uncouth appearance, it operated as a kind of check to lightness,

and preserved me from the snare of unnecessary worldly conversation ; so that I had the advantage of more retirement, which I trust I can say I have found the most profitable seasons. The apostle saith not in vain, “ *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*” And a follower of Christ will not be conformed to the world, nor uphold whatever is of it, either in himself or others ; not merely because it is witnessed against in the scriptures, but being influenced by the same spirit, which was in them, he is taught by it to testify against the same the disciples of old did in their day.

It was a great grief and concern to me to consider, that as it was a day of so great profession, many walking miles to hear what they supposed the gospel preached, our steeple house being generally crowded by people from the other parishes ; I say it grieved me, that my leaving the fashions of the world which they all professed to deny, should cause such amazement as it appeared to do even in professors ; which helped to

confirm me in my opinion, that how much soever they could talk about religion, very little of the power thereof was known: indeed, had I not felt a want of the power of godlines, I should not have left them, as there were many ties which held me both to the priest and people. But it was that divine power I longed for; and nothing short of it could satisfy me, and sure nothing but that could have supported me in the different trials I soon had to encounter; but the battle was the Lord's and his was the victory over every appearance of mine adversary, and to him be all the glory.

For several months my mind was much exercised on various occasions, the enemy assaulting me continually with reproaches from without and fears within. My business seemed to decline, and I was reproved for over acting my part, and informed that some of the society had said so. It was great grief to me to observe some friends, for whom I entertained great esteem, not so faithful against worldly titles, as Esq. — ;

Sir such a one ; Mr.——, &c. as I believed was required and practised by ancient friends. It gave the enemies much occasion against me.

About this time peoples' minds were much agitated on political subjects, the French having overturned all orders and distinctions, which gave great offence to people in general ; they called their days, &c. as do friends, instead of the old names. I mention this because the adversary assailed me with the suggestion that I should be deemed of their spirit. I could expect little favour, though politics was a subject I thought little about, and spoke less ; believing as our blessed Lord said, "*My kingdom is not of this world ;*" every true disciple being influenced by the same spirit, the attention as well as the affections will be engaged in things above, not of this world, more than needful ; and it had been some time before a concern to me, to observe some of the society of friends meddling with such matters, more warmly than I thought consistent with their profession.

I was at times so sorely pressed, so burdened in spirit, that I seemed as though my strength was broken, and was ready to cry out, "*The children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth;*" but still my desires were to the Lord, who had hitherto supported me, that I might still experience him a God near at hand, and not afar off; for I felt how unable I was to move a step without his divine assistance. So low was I reduced, that though I received several reviling letters, which were clearly against the truth, I had not power to answer them; being taught to leave the cause to the Almighty, and not be anxious to justify myself before men, but which may be an encouragement to any who may experience similar trials, I felt a secret upholding, a consoling assurance, that the Lord would plead his own cause, and in his own time bring forth judgment unto victory; and I desired that his hand might not spare, neither his eye pity, till his work was accomplished to his own glory, however it might be with me.

Thus I continued some time, till it pleased the Lord to revive me ; when, though I had little business in comparison to what I had heretofore, yet I was abundantly satisfied with an enlivening sense of the Lord's presence ; which infinitely surpassed all worldly goods, so that in measure I knew the truth of our dear Lord's promise, that whoever may be enabled to leave any thing for his name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold even in this life, either in kind or in kindness ; and sure the comfortable sense of the approbation of the Most High, is of infinitely greater value than any thing this world can afford. O ! that the people, particularly the Lord's professing people, may be encouraged to be willing to part with every thing, however near and dear to flesh and blood, that stands in the way, which obstructs that divine communion with him we are taught to expect ; for true it is, except a man forsake all that he hath, he cannot be Christ's disciple ; and he is not a hard master, doth not require any thing to be parted with, but what would really be in-

jurious to our spiritual welfare ; though to man's carnal apprehension it may seem in some cases in a different light. Man naturally loves ease. The cross of Christ is not pleasant to flesh and blood : but, my friends, if ever we know the truth of what Paul declares, that " they who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts ;" and the more readily we submit to the yoke, I am persuaded we shall the sooner experience that subdued, which dislikes the cross : then we shall know what our Lord said, that his yoke is easy and his burden light.

A fear had arisen in my mind, lest I should be beholding the mote in my brother's eye, and not attending sufficiently to that power, which could alone remove the beam out of my own ; and though my spirit was frequently grieved on hearing vain conversation, and often seemed to feel a desire to reprove, yet I was afraid to cast a stone, feeling myself not without sin, and I had to remember and to desire to practise what is

recorded : to study to be quiet and mind my own business ; and I think I can truly say, that in stillness and retiredness I experienced a degree of peace, and I trust a growth in grace : and I must acknowledge with humble thankfulness, the condescending kindness of my heavenly Father, in favouring me with much opportunity of retirement ; having comparatively but little worldly business, for I sorrowfully found in those lawful engagements, a very great difficulty of keeping in that straight line of duty, which I believed was marked out for me. In the course of conversation words would occasionally drop, which, afterwards, on reflection, brought distress on my mind, and I desired to be thankful that I was enabled not to desire much of this world's goods, but rather the reverse, and to be content with food and raiment. It was a concern to me to observe among friends, on a young man's beginning business for himself a conformity in some things with the world, I thought to gain their favour and custom ; it appeared to me paying

very dear for their assistance ; and I believed I could prefer working hard as a servant, to the most profitable situation on such terms ; and fervent desires would frequently arise in my mind, that all who profess to be followers of Christ, particularly friends, who profess more than most, would be concerned to practise our blessed Lord's advice, to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness ; yea, and seek nothing else till they had found it ; then I believed, by attending to that, they would be divinely directed in temporal concerns ; and, preferring it above all things, would be preserved from the too prevailing snare of flattering the world for their support. I have thought that people are often led to such practices, by engaging in concerns which bring extraordinary expense upon them ; which, requiring more of the things of this world, a greater difficulty is experienced in bearing a faithful testimony against what they may be convinced is evil. These considerations, through divine assistance, induced me to be

careful of confining my expenses in as narrow a compass as I believed consistent with my situation ; and though for many years I had strong inclinations to enter into the marriage state, I now experienced a check to every desire of the kind : believing it was my duty to keep myself as much as possible from the cumbers of this world, and as a faithful soldier to be ready for whatever my great Lord and Master should require of me.

Near the close of the year 1793, I wrote to the friends of the monthly meeting, to be admitted a member of society ; which friends in due season expressed their unity and compliance with : and here I would observe, that from my first acquaintance with friends, I could not but approve their caution, in not hastily admitting any into membership ; differing from most societies, who, I have perceived, evince a kind of exulting eagerness in adding to their numbers. And I can say that I did not feel an anxiety to be received into membership ; but rather to know that power which first gathered friends into a

society; to experience an union of spirit with the faithful, than any name or outward relationship: and though a little before I wrote to the monthly meeting, I had some apprehension of being drawn for the militia, which would probably have exposed me to some severe trial, not being of the society; yet convinced of the necessity of bearing my testimony against wars and fightings, I was mercifully enabled to be still, and leave the event, whatever it might be, to the Lord, who had hitherto supported me, and not apply for admission any sooner on that account.

The first meeting for discipline I sat in, I felt a powerful concern to speak on a particular subject, but considering my state of childhood in the society, and a fear lest I should appear forward, I endeavoured to get rid of it, and avoid speaking; yet it seemed rather to increase than diminish, till just at the close, I expressed a few sentences, and found in a little time the burden relieved, at least in a degree.

I was often sorrowfully concerned to observe in the nomination of friends to quarterly and yearly meetings, a disposition to make excuses ; believing those meetings were established under the influence and power of divine wisdom, I thought if there was a proper attention to the guidance of the same, friends would be directed in their nomination ; that the great Lord of the harvest would choose whom he pleased to employ in any particular service ; and I thought there might be danger in lightly and hastily making excuses, lest it should be a disobeying the call of the Most High. It appeared to me, that worldly concerns had too much influence ; that it was considered whether it would be convenient or not. Now I knew from my own experience, that if an ear was open to listen to excuses, enough would be presented against many services or duties, as attending week day meetings, and others, in times of business. But I saw or felt it was safer and better to have a single eye, to have only one object in view, what the Lord re-

quired of me ; than to look on temporal concerns, whether it was convenient or not, but simply give up and leave the consequence ; and I can with humble thankfulness and gratitude acknowledge the inconveniencies, or losses I might have apprehended would be the consequence, were changed into a comfortable sense of divine approbation, and an abundant reward of peace.

The 28th of the 2d month, 1794, being appointed by government to be observed as a general fast and humiliation before Almighty God, and the mayor of Reading sending out a bill, desiring all sects and parties to observe it as required : I felt a concern to write a few reasons, &c. why we, the religious society called quakers, could not observe it as required ; which were copied and handed about in manuscript. One copy I lent to the clerk of the parish, desiring him to lay it before their ministers, and as many of the people as might be,

“ A few reasons why the religious society called quakers, cannot observe, as required, the day appointed for a general fast and humiliation (so called) before Almighty God.

“ That the magistrates and people may know it is not from any contempt of authority, nor in rebellion against government, but that they may preserve a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man :”

“ First, Because we believe that the Lord alone hath a right and authority to enact and require how and when he will be worshipped. That all worship whatsoever performed in the will of man, and which the spirit of Christ doth not lead into, is not acceptable unto the Lord, who hath declared, that “ in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men ;” and that “ the true worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth.” “ Therefore, we believe, that it doth not belong to man to impose modes and forms of worship, and if, in compliance with the will of men, any

should conform to such pretended worship, the conscience not being clear, nor the heart rightly engaged in the service, it would be hypocrisy in the sight of God, and sin to the person so complying :” for “ *whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.*”

“ Secondly, Because we believe, it is not the fast which the Lord hath chosen, or will approve of, according to what he hath declared by the prophet Isaiah, and elsewhere, as for man to afflict his soul for a day, and to bow down his head as a bulrush. And our Lord called those hypocrites, who desired to appear unto men to fast; and commanded his disciples to anoint their heads, and wash their faces, that they might not appear unto men to fast, but unto him who seeth in secret; who doth not look on the outward appearance, but upon the heart, and who requireth truth in the inward parts. And by the prophet he declared, that the fast which he had chosen, was to loose the bands of wickedness, to feed the poor, clothe the naked, &c. that then he would accept their prayers.

“ Thirdly, Because it is required to implore the blessing of Almighty God for the success of our arms, which we believe is repugnant to the spirit of christianity ; as Christ is the Prince of Peace, who did not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them ; and commanded his disciples not to resist evil, but to love their enemies, and to do good to them that hate them. Therefore, in obedience to these commands, through the influence and assistance of the spirit of Christ, we cannot willingly think or do evil to any, whatever they may intend to do unto us ; but are enabled to commit ourselves to divine protection, without the use of any carnal weapons, assuredly believing the Lord will preserve all those who faithfully confide in, and obey him.

“ For these reasons, and not from obstinacy, or perverseness, or any disrespect to those in authority, we cannot keep our shops shut, or in any manner directly or indirectly, uphold or countenance such a custom.

" It is believed by a remnant, who are secretly mourning for the abominations of the land, and travailing in spirit, that truth and righteousness may abound, that there is great cause for fasting and humiliation before Almighty God ; for the transgressions of the people are multiplied against him, so that there is reason to expect that the Lord will visit with his rod even this highly favoured country ; and it is their secret desire that as the judgments of the Lord are in the earth, the inhabitants thereof may learn righteousness. But, friends, your pretended humiliation for a day, with your lips confessing your sins, and again returning to your old course, is only mocking God, who will not hear, though you make many prayers, and cause your voice to be heard on high, while your hands are full of blood, while you are desiring the destruction of your fellow creatures ; for that spirit is not of God, for God is love, and whoever are led by the spirit of God, will love their fellow creatures, and not desire their harm. Therefore,

friends, consider what spirit you are of, before you presume to draw near to the Most High, who is not to be honoured with the lips, while the heart is far from him, which it is and ever must be, while defiled with the pollution of sin; but seek for that new heart and new spirit which God hath promised; and remember a language of old, to those who pretend to honour him with their lips, while their hearts are far from him: —
“Wash ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well.” Then (and not till then, though you make never so many prayers, and afflict yourselves never so much) the Lord will hear your prayers and regard your petitions.”

A few months after I also wrote a few reasons why we could not illuminate our houses on any occasion; as friends, in some places, had suffered considerably on that account.

“Whereas we, the religious society of people called quakers, are accused by some

of being disaffected to government, because we do not illuminate our houses, as our neighbours do, on particular occasions ; this is for the information of any who may be desirous of knowing why we thus differ : that it is not from any political motives, nor to express any disapprobation of those who are in authority ; but as christians, professing to walk in the fear of the Lord, in a holy life and conversation, we believe such superficial demonstrations of joy inconsistent with this our profession, on any occasion whatever ; but as it sometimes happens that such customs are in consequence of a supposed advantage gained in war, we cannot believe as christians uninfluenced by any political considerations, that there can be any real cause of rejoicing, but rather of mourning, for the destruction of our fellow creatures, and to lament the prevalence of those "*lusts, from whence,*" as the apostle says, "*come wars and fightings.*" Professing also to be followers of Christ, who is the Prince of Peace, of whose kingdom it

was prophesied, "*that they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, that nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more,*" we believe, wherever this kingdom is established in the heart of any individual, the warring, fighting nature will be subjected by the peaceable righteous sceptre of Christ; who enjoined his followers not to resist evil, but to love even their enemies: therefore we cannot, without subjecting ourselves to the displeasure of the Most High, conform to any custom, which countenances or upholds such practices."

"But though we differ from the rest of our countrymen, we are not enemies to our country: but our prayers are to the God of the spirits of all flesh, that he "*may please to break the bow, and snap the spear in sunder, to cause wars to cease to the ends of the earth;*" that the people may turn every one from the evil of their ways, and serve him alone from whom every blessing is received: then would righteousness and peace meet

together, and abound in the earth to his praise, and to our present and eternal felicity."

I had for some months, at different times, as I apprehended the concern revive, wrote an address to the professors of religion, particularly those who attended the place I had left. Feeling a concern to have it printed, I waited from time to time to feel it clearly, as appearing in public in any manner of such a nature, was to me a most weighty consideration; I was fearful of moving in mine own will, but at length I apprehended the time come for its publicly appearing, and submitted it to the inspection of several friends of our meeting, for their approbation of its being laid before the morning meeting in London; being unwilling to move without the full concurrence of friends. It met with their approbation and consent, and it was going to be sent to London, when a member of that meeting happened to come to our town. Friends advised it to be shewn to him, who expressed a fear, that as

I was so lately come among friends, if it was not quite approved of, it might be a discouragement to me, and recommended, if I was easy, to let it rest a little longer. I seemed willing to find an excuse, and to get rid of the burden without its publicly appearing; and laid it by, not feeling the concern again revive with sufficient power: but I had at times to fear whether I had not too hastily got rid of it, and let the right time pass by. May the great Master not impute rebellion to me, but have in this matter, as I have at other times experienced, a gracious condescending regard to my weakness; for I have desired to be made willing to be completely given up to his service, and follow him wheresoever and howsoever he may require; the frequent breathing of my spirit is, that the inward ear may be so opened that I may be able to distinguish between the Master's voice and every appearance of the adversary, and all willings and runnings of the creature.

In the year 1794, I was at the yearly meeting in London, which held, I think, nine days, and notwithstanding the nature of my business, I was made willing to give up the time, and have with thankfulness to acknowledge I found no loss, but the invaluable reward of peace. Surely the Lord is not a hard master, but whatever is given up under a sense of his requiring, is abundantly restored, yea as an hundred fold.

A little time after being at an appointed meeting where no regular one is held, under an apprehension of duty, I spoke a few words. And here I would observe, I had long a sense as though I should have to appear in this service, and often felt a word arise in meetings, but was fearful of moving in my own will, of running before I was sent; remembering the command of old, "*He that hath my word let him speak my word faithfully; what is the chaff to the wheat?*" I desired that there might be no mixture, nothing of the creature, but that the master might prepare the of-

fering wholly; yet I often found a similar testimony to what I felt arise, delivered by another friend. I would willingly have been excused the service, the prospect being far from pleasant, at least to that which would prefer ease, yet I was desirous that I might be willing and able to give up to whatever the master required; I seemed only to wish to know quite clearly, beyond the least doubt when and what to speak. Perhaps I expected a clearer evidence than was met, or made it an excuse to refrain, till after one first day meeting, not giving up to speak a word, I felt the reproofs of the Most High so sharply, till next meeting, that though very unwillingly, and after much inward wrestling against it, I found it safest to give up, and was in a degree sensible, that it is better to appear as a fool unto men, than bear the indignation of the Lord.

Some little time after I felt the concern of publishing the little piece before mentioned revive with increased weight: and after a time I believed it my duty to send it up to

the morning meeting of friends in London, for their inspection and judgment respecting printing it ; which I did, under the title of “ Reasons for leaving the national established mode of worship ; more particularly addressed to those who attend at the place called St. Giles’ Church, Reading : ” accompanied with a few lines to the meeting, from friends of our own, which the meeting with a few alterations approved of, and left me at liberty to print it. As soon as I received the pamphlets I sent one to the priest, with the following letter : I also sent one to each of the principal professors with whom I had been acquainted.

To * * * * *

Respected Friend,

“ The little piece which this accompanieth, I think I can truly say, I wrote under an apprehension of duty, uninfluenced by any personal motives whatever. I submit it

to thy candid perusal, and can assure thee, that notwithstanding the apparent difference, I still retain an affectionate regard, and a real respect for thee: nor can I suppose thou wilt impute to a want thereof my omitting thy usual titles, being persuaded thou art sensible that true honour and respect do not consist in words, or any superficial expressions. I was constrained to drop them, from a belief of the inconsistency thereof with the simplicity of true christianity, and of the unlawfulness of feeding the vain mind in man, by giving him flattering titles. I have desired to follow nothing by imitation, but from conviction, and I hope these desires have been mercifully answered.

I remain, respectfully,

Thy Friend,

JOHN SPALDING."

Reading, 11 Mo. 1794.

Postscript,

“ There is a little matter I have for some time felt a desire to call thy serious attention to. Not long since, part of the goods of some of thy peaceable neighbours were taken away by force, for the repairing, I apprehend, the place where thy congregation meet to worship. I have been led to consider the inconsistency of this practice with the spirit of the gospel, of which thou art esteemed a minister. I have examined the scriptures of truth, and do not find that either Christ or his apostles ever used, or taught such a practice, to oblige those to support them, or their places of worship, who did not receive them. “ *As you would that men should do unto you,*” said our Lord, “ *do ye even so unto them,*” for this “ *is the law and the prophets.*” Now I am much inclined to think, if thou wilt calmly and weightily consider this matter, a deviation from this important injunction will appear. If this people had the powers of the

earth on their side (as thou hast in these matters) and insisted upon thy helping to support their place of worship, where thou hadst a conscientious objection to go, wouldst not thou think it unreasonable ; and rather that every society should support its own ministers and places of worship ? And truly there are those who from a real conscientious scruple, cannot willingly uphold those called parish churches. I have felt it myself, and expect I can if thou require it, advance some weighty reasons for so doing ; at present my regard for thee induces me to press a serious examination of this matter ; and I feel a desire that customs originating in the times of ignorance and superstition, and the more powerful motive of interest itself, may not induce thee to condemn the simple, yet I hope sincere, representations of the mean and despised.

“ Now this I do not write from any desire to avoid suffering, for praised be the Lord, there is a remnant at this day, who are enabled to take joyfully the spoiling of their

goods for a good conscience sake, in supporting their testimonies against what they believe to be repugnant to the spirit of the gospel dispensation.”

X This I sent with one of my pamphlets before-mentioned ; the next evening I received the following.

Mr. Spalding,

“ As I am willing to hope that your pamphlet and letter were well meant, I thank you for them ; but as they are replete with most wicked errors, and as the author of them is a schismatic and heretic, I must reject both you and them. As you once gave hope that you might walk in the ordinances of the Lord blameless, and continue with us in a church which God is still filling with his glory, I cannot but feel a regard for you, and pity you the more for your departure and apostacy from the faith. I would advise you to search God’s word, and your own heart, with prayer, for the teaching of his spirit, that you may discover the sound

doctrine of the one, and the sore plague of the other. Peradventure God will give you repentance to the acknowledging the truth, and you may be restored to a sound and sober mind, out of the snare of the devil, by whom you are now taken captive at his will. Should an event so desirable to yourself and your family ever take place, I shall rejoice to salute and embrace you in Christ Jesus, but till then I must beg to decline all correspondence with you.

I am,
your sincere friend
and well-wisher."

Reading, Nov. 28, 1794.

A little while after he desired my brother to tell me to send in his account, and also to know if he should stop his tithes out of it, which amounted to three pounds. I in consequence wrote his account, and sent it in the following letter, with a little piece, called "Reasons why the People called Quakers do not pay Tithes."

“Respected Friend,

I should not at this time thus communicate with thee, but for thy inquiring of my brother somewhat respecting my paying tithes. It appears to me thereby, that thou art unacquainted with our reasons for not paying tithes, &c. yet, as I suppose from thy letter, thou may not be willing to receive my reasons on that subject, I will only observe, that it is not from any personal disregard to thee, nor in imitation of others, that I refuse to pay them, but from a full conviction of the inconsistency thereof with the dispensation of the gospel ; and that if I did in any manner contribute to support such a practice, it would be a denying that Christ is come, who by his coming put an end to, and totally abrogated or disannulled, that law or dispensation to which tithes belonged. I send thee a small piece on this subject. Shouldst thou be disposed to be more fully informed respecting it, I have other authors who have confuted every argument in favour of tithes,

&c. in this last and more glorious dispensation,

I remain, respectfully,

Thy Friend,

JOHN SPALDING."

Reading, 12 mo. 23d. 1794.

" P. S. As thou desired, I send thy account; and here it may be proper to remark, that I cannot suffer thy demand to be paid thereby. Thou, perhaps, wilt think me troublesome and impertinent, but the Lord knoweth my heart in this matter, that it is from a persuasion of duty towards him, and not from a perverseness of disposition, as men may suppose it is."

I found a spirit generally prevail among them, both preachers and hearers, confident in their own opinion, and condemning without hearing the sentiments of others. Oh! how doth my spirit mourn for them, under a sense of the danger of their situation, and a persuasion of the applicableness of an ancient language, " The prophets prophesy falsely,

the priests bear rule by their means, and the people love to have it so ; but what will they do in the end thereof !”

Being appointed by the parish, overseer this year, I had frequent opportunities of observing the difficulties many of the poor laboured under, and was favoured to sympathize with them therein ; and I had often to consider the manner of living among those in superior situations as to outward things, and it appeared to me inconsistent with the gracious designs of our heavenly Father, that some should live luxuriously, and expend much upon superfluities, while so many fellow creatures were in want of the comforts and necessities of life. It seemed to me a great evil, and my spirit was often bowed in consideration thereof ; for I thought that the oppression of the poor, and the extravagant living of others, was one cause of the judgments of the Most High being at this time so awfully executed in the neighbouring kingdoms. And it was often the secret breathing of my spirit, that the people of this land

instead of applying to carnal weapons, which was now pretty general throughout the kingdom, and trusting to the multitude of their hosts, might endeavour to avert the threatened indignation before it came home, by turning every one from the evil of their ways, to serve the Lord with their whole hearts, to relieve the distresses of the poor, and content themselves with a moderate way of living, as becomes the followers of him, who said, "*My kingdom is not of this world.*"

A few serious queries and observations, addressed to the high professors of religion in this day, by one who was long in the profession, but knew not the power, till it pleased the Lord, by the ministry and writings of the people called quakers, to direct him where alone the power is to be known, within.

What is a true Christian ?

Is it one who assents to and believes certain facts, as recorded in holy writ, and forms certain principles and opinions thereupon ; producing perhaps a partial reformation, an abstaining from the grosser pollutions of sin, but denying the possibility of a total cleansing and freedom from sin in this world ? Or is it one who knows not in word only, but in deed and in truth, a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness ; a being born again, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of man, but of God ?

“*For,*” says our blessed Lord, “*except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*” A man may know with Nicodemus, and confess, that Christ is a teacher sent from God, he may be able to talk much about the doctrines of the gospel, and fancy himself secure by imputation, but what has this to do with the new birth so essentially necessary? What can all his wisdom and understanding teach him. Nay, he cannot come into the new birth till all is parted with. The very nature of the thing implies a beginning again, a life as different from his former, as light from darkness. “*Ye were sometimes darkness,*” says Paul, “*but now are ye light in the Lord.*” Now he who knows this new birth, not a change of opinion, not a comprehending the truths of the gospel in his understanding, or joining this or that society, but who knows the thing itself; not the name, not the imaginations concerning it, but the nature, the life, the essence; will such a man be like what he was before?

The forerunner of our Lord expressly told his hearers, when preparing them for the gospel dispensation, "*The axe is laid to the root of the trees, and every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.*" What tree and what root is there meant? Is it outward or inward? Who can answer that, but he who hath felt the axe, and the destruction, in a measure of the corrupt tree? "*His fan is in his hand,*" he adds, "*and he will thoroughly purge his floor;*" (mark "*thoroughly,*") what will remain then? Oh! that professors were concerned to know, and willing to part with all that stands in the way, that they may know indeed what it is to be thoroughly purged, instead of denying the possibility of it; for it is a dreadful thing to oppose or deny the power of Christ.

Christ said, "*Blessed are the pure in heart;*" but modern christians, as they would be thought, say, there is no purity of heart, but it is and must remain deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.

Again it said, "*who brings a clean thing out of an unclean?*" That the heart is naturally unclean is allowed, but hath not the Lord promised to cleanse his people from all their uncleanness? mark, all; what uncleanness will then remain? Some attempt to excuse themselves by what Paul once experienced; "*The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; a law in the members warring against the law of the mind.*" That Paul once felt that is allowed, but did he not afterwards say, "*There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit;*" and did he not say, "*The law of the spirit of life had made him free from the law of sin; and how could they who were dead unto sin live any longer therein?*" Doth he not again say, "*I am dead with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, (not natural sinful self), but Christ liveth in me?*" "*I will dwell in them, and walk in them saith the Lord;*" and will the Lord dwell in an unholy place? As soon would

light dwell with darkness. Satan can indeed transform himself into an angel of light, yea, he, "*as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.*" The imagining part in man is sure to be deceived, and worship the appearance instead of the reality, for the world by wisdom, man by his natural or humanly acquired abilities, knew not, nor ever can know God. "*If any man,*" says Paul, "*will be wise, let him first become a fool,*" that his old eye may be closed, and the new eye, which alone can discern the things of God, may be opened.

Again, Christ saith, "*Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*" But modern christians, as they call themselves, say there is no such thing as perfection. Oh! that they would consider whom they oppose by so saying.

Doth not Paul desire those he was writing to, to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord; and pray that others may be perfect and complete in all the will of

God? What does such plain express language mean? Oh! the subtilty of that serpent, who can reason and argue the true meaning away; and Oh! the lamentable estate of those that are so deceived by him, who are sitting down at ease, with the vain imagination that what Christ hath done, as they suppose for them, will be sufficient; without experiencing the work in them; who having eyes, see not, and ears, hear not, in the true spiritual sense.

Again, Christ saith, "*Swear not at all;*" but modern christians say, We may swear in some cases. We will reason about Christ's words, and judge ourselves what they mean; how far they are to be obeyed or not. Though James says, "*Above all things, my brethren, swear not.*" Yet ye say, We may swear such and such oaths. O poor christendom, how is thy gold become dim!

Again, Christ saith, "*Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple;*" but now christians can keep all; their own wisdom, their own

wills, the favour of the world, its riches and friendships, its fashions and customs; tho' our Lord saith, "*Whoever is the friend of the world, is the enemy of God;*" and Paul says, "*If I yet please them, I am not the servant of Christ.*"

A

FEW REASONS,

For leaving the National Established Mode of Worship, addressed principally to those who attend at the place called St Giles' Church,
Reading.

"Prove all things, hold fast that which is good."

1 THESS. V. 21.

FRIENDS,

MY mind hath been much exercised at times, since I separated from your communion, with desires for your real advancement in the spirit and power of that religion you make profession of; and being persuaded there are those among you who do really desire to know the truth, I feel a renewed concern to salute these, in a degree

I hope of true gospel love ; and to offer to your serious consideration, the reasons which induced me to separate from your society. And truly, friends, there were many ties, which nearly united me to you ; and very unwilling I was for a considerable time, to believe that those things I had been engaged in, and so highly esteemed, were not what they had appeared to be ; but, as I earnestly desired to know the truth, whatever it might cost me, I felt the axe laid to the root of the tree, and the fine buildings and plausible appearances were shaken. I became sensible, that the tree must first be made good, before the fruit could be good ; a doctrine essentially different from what I had heard of men ; even of men highly esteemed ; by whom I was taught, that deliverance from sin is not to be expected in this life ; and was hearing day after day, the uniform acknowledgement of ‘ being miserable sinners, having no health,’ &c. which I found, by the manifestations of that spirit which “ *is given to every man to profit with*”

al," 1 Cor. xii. 7, and which discovers the secret things of darkness, to be not agreeable, but contrary, to the scriptures of truth; which expressly declare, that the great Author of the gospel dispensation "*came to save his people from their sins,*" Mat. 1. xxi. and not in them: a very essential difference. This I believed must be experimentally known, feeling sin to be the great disease of the soul, the alone cause of separation from the Most High, in whom alone true happiness is found. I was sensible that while sin remained, the separation must continue, there being "*no communion between light and darkness, righteousness and unrighteousness;*" 2 Cor. vi. 14, nor could that gracious promise be fulfilled, "*I will dwell in them, and walk in them, I will be their God, and they shall be my people;*" 2 Cor. vi. 16, for the apostle says, "*ye are the temple of God, and the temple of God is holy.*" 1 Cor. iii. 17.

Further, John the Baptist, who was sent to prepare the way of the Lord, describing

the nature and effects of his master's kingdom, says, "*Now (mark, now) is the axe laid to the root of the tree; every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire.*" Mat. iii. 10. This is a language surely implying a complete, effectual cleansing from all the pollutions of sin, even now in this life. Our Lord himself, uniformly, in all his discourses, inculcated this doctrine. In that most excellent sermon on the Mount, Mat. v. 6, 7, he insists on the necessity of a righteousness superior to that of the law; for, says he, "*except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*" What language can be plainer? And that he did not mean an imaginary, merely imputed righteousness, as I fear, many vainly suppose, is evident from the conclusion; where he draws the comparison between those who hear, and do his sayings, and them who hear and do them not; thereby fully establishing the possibility of doing them. And if due attention is

paid to every part of that discourse, I think it must be obvious, that they who are of the happy number, who not only hear, but do those sayings, and whom our Lord likens to a building upon a rock, on which they are able to withstand all opposition, will not be miserable sinners, doing what they ought not to do, having no health in them, &c. but will know a righteousness wrought in them far superior to that of the law. For, as the law, the outward law, written on tables of stone, took cognizance of outward actions; the law of Christ, written as the apostle says, in the fleshly tables of the heart, reaches to the root, and source of action: for, whereas the law said, "*thou shalt not kill*," Christ forbids being angry without cause. Again, the law said, "*Thou shalt not commit adultery*;" Christ forbids lust, thus striking at the root. The cause being removed, the consequence or effect must unavoidably be done away. Once more, the law said, "*Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy; an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth*." Christ

says, "*Resist not evil, love your enemies, do good to them that hate you;*" with much more of like import, which many who profess to follow him, seem to pay very little attention to; as though it was an indifferent matter, whether they do them or not. But it may be well for such to consider whether our Lord would have said, "*Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,*" if he did not mean they should be so; and whether they who do as he there exhorts, will not be perfect. I cannot conceive how it is possible to deduce any other inference without grossly wresting the scripture. "*Ye are my friends,*" said he, at another time, "*if ye do whatsoever I have commanded you.*" John xv. 14. "*He that loveth me keepeth my commandments.*" John xiv. 21. "*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, (that call me Master, and honour me with their lips), shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*" Mat. vii. 21. "*If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.*" John xiii.

17. For, if the simple belief of Christ's sufferings, resurrection, &c. be sufficient to save ; to what purpose was all his discourses, wherein he repeatedly insists upon the necessity of regeneration, a being born again ; which certainly implies something more than a change of opinion, a persuasion of the judgment, and a partial reformation. For, as he said to Nicodemus, "*That which is born of the flesh, is flesh ; and that which is born of the spirit, is spirit.*" John iii. 6, it obviously follows, that they who are really born of the spirit, will be of the same nature as the spirit. Old things will be passed away, and all things become new, and all of God. "*A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.*" Luke xiii. 21. "*New wine must be put into new bottles.*" Mark ii. 22 ; with many other similitudes, plainly implying the necessity of a total, effectual change. Again, to confirm this great and necessary truth of freedom from sin, he says to his disciples, "*if ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free,*" and, to reprove

their carnal ideas of a temporal outward freedom, he adds, "*He that committeth sin, is the servant of sin, and if the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*" John viii. 31, &c. That this freedom from sin, even from the power, as well as the guilt, is to be known in this life, is certified again, by his saying of those who die in their sins, "*Whither I go, ye cannot come.*" John viii. 21. Now, if deliverance from sin is not known in this life, we must of necessity die in our sins. Therefore it matters not what knowledge a man hath, what is his faith, or what profession he hath made, if he hath not known deliverance from sin. This is a point so important, and a mistake therein liable to such baneful consequences, that I am induced to dwell upon it, knowing from my own experience, how prevailing is the contrary opinion. Nor is it strange, that people should prefer and indulge the notion of the possibility of deliverance from the guilt and punishment of sin, without the power thereof being subdued. We natural-

ly love ease, an ease which the cross of Christ is decidedly against. So close does it apply, that it is, in our Lord's own words, as cutting off a right hand, and plucking out a right eye. Mat. vi. 29, 30. "*Whosoever,*" says he, again and again, "*doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.*" Luke xiv. 27. The apostle bears testimony to this important truth, where he says, "*They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts.*" Gal. v. 24. Surely, if lusts and affections, the very root and seed of sin, are slain, what can remain thereof? In another place he says, "*How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*" Rom. vi. 2. Another apostle says, "*Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*" 1 John iii. 9.

I have produced a few plain passages of scripture, to shew the ground or cause of my separation; that deliverance from sin, a being cleansed from all defilement there-

of in this life, is not only possible, but indispensably necessary; and that the contrary doctrine is fundamentally erroneous; as it sets up the shadow instead of the substance, an imaginary instead of a real holiness. I may probably make some more observations on this most important point, as I proceed. I shall now offer a few remarks on some of the services usually performed; comparing them also with the scriptures of truth, which most professors acknowledge to be the standard or rule; from which comparison they clearly appear to me, not to be what many call them, ‘means of grace and ordinances of God; but the mere inventions of man, set up in his own fallen wisdom, as a substitute for the life and power, which were lost in a long dark night of apostacy: not the true worship of God, but such bodily exercise as the apostle says, “*profiteth little.*” 1 Tim. iv. 8. For be it remembered, the great Author of the gospel dispensation, expressly declared, “*that the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.*” John iv. 23. And the apostle

confirms it, by saying, "*We know not what we should pray for, as we ought; but the spirit helpeth our infirmities, and maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*" Rom. vii. 26. Therefore, as this necessary assistance is not at our command, for people to pretend to worship the Most High in a prescribed form, or in the studied or extempore productions of their own natural or acquired abilities, in their own wills, and their own time, without waiting to feel the influence and movings of the Holy Spirit, in and through which alone true worship can be performed, appears to me nothing better, whatever it may be called, than will-worship. The scriptures also repeatedly mention a growing in grace, 2 Pet. iii. 18. a going on unto perfection, Heb. vi. 1. How inconsistent then is the repeated uniform acknowledgment, "*We are miserable sinners, doing what we ought not to do, having no health in us?*" &c. Doth it not obviously confess, if the truth is spoken, that no benefit hath been received, notwithstanding the

frequent (as it is pretended) waiting upon the Lord? But if it is true, as the scriptures declare, that Christ came to 'save his people from their sins;' they who make that confession, acknowledge they are not of that number; for if they are miserable sinners, they certainly are not saved from their sins, however they may attempt to reconcile so plain a contradiction. This is a language not confined to a particular part of the service; the inconsistency of the whole appears equally obvious; as at one time confessing their sins and wickednesses; then called upon to address the Most High, with pure, humble, penitent, and obedient hearts; one while returning thanks for creation, preservation, and redemption; again acknowledging having erred and strayed like lost sheep, desiring to shew forth his praise not only with their lips, but in their lives, by giving themselves up to his service, and walking before him in holiness and righteousness all their days; but still miserable sinners, doing what they ought not to do,

&c. Can this running backwards and forwards, one time saying one thing, another time quite the contrary, be acceptable service to that God, who searcheth the heart, trieth the reins, and requireth truth in the inward parts? Again, in repeating the experiences of the royal Psalmist, how is it possible but many gross falsehoods must be expressed? For if the words of the mouth do not express the real experimental language of the heart, however excellent they may be, yet they are to those who utter them, not the language of truth but of falsehood. I should hope a little serious consideration will convince of this.

Again, respecting the custom or practice of singing, I have a few observations to make. How inconsistent it is, that they who have just before been confessing their misery and wretchedness, should appear so quickly and easily to forget all, and begin singing. Surely it seems evidently to declare, they were not sincere in their acknowledgments, or that they think it of very little consequence

whether their prayers are answered or not. Besides, not only the manner to me appears absurd and inconsistent, but the matter in many quite contrary to truth, and to what has been just before openly avowed. I could specify many instances in every collection I have seen, but I wish people to search for themselves. Surely this is trifling with serious things. I am fully persuaded that the common practice of singing is only calculated to amuse the creature, to please the outward ear; whatever may be pretended of its warming the heart, and kindling devotion. And if those who practise it would be honest and candid, I am of opinion they would be constrained to acknowledge that amusement is the chief object: or why so pleased with tunes and music? Can it for a moment be supposed, that the Almighty is to be pleased with such superficial conduct? Surely not. And with respect to its kindling devotion, it may be well to remember what is said of those, *“who kindle a fire, and encompass themselves about with sparks; they may walk in the*

light thereof, but they shall lie down in sorrow." Isa. l. 11. I readily admit what is advanced to defend this custom, that our Lord and his disciples, the night before he suffered, sang a hymn, but what or how we are not informed ; no doubt the matter and manner were both proper and seasonable ; and that Paul and Silas, in prison, " sang praises to the Lord," I believe ; but I cannot conceive what argument can be deduced from thence for the present custom of singing whatever may be given out, suitable or not, whether praise, profession, acknowledgment, or petition. I fully believe this outward inconsiderate singing is very different from that recommended by the apostle, "*Singing with the spirit, and with the understanding.*" 1 Cor. xiv. 15. "*Singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord.*" Eph. v. 19. And I also believe, that the true source of praise, even a grateful sense of the Lord's mercies can be more consistently expressed than in outward jingle and sound.

Indeed, my friends, I fear you are, many of you, agreeably to your own confession, in a miserable condition. Suffer me to prevail upon you to consider, whether your continuing year after year miserable sinners, is not the consequence of your prayers not being heard: and let a concern arise to inquire, whether you have been seeking aright or not: for our Lord promised plainly and expressly, "*that they who seek shall find.*" Mat. vii. 5. Now, what have they found, who continue, as they acknowledge, 'miserable sinners, having no health in them?' &c. Do they not rather confess that the means they have used are insufficient to cleanse and heal them; that they have not rightly applied to the great physician, to the balm of Gilead, "to that tree, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations; but have been spending their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which satisfieth not; instead of hearkening diligently unto the Lord, and eating that which is good;" Isa. lv. 2. that true bread of life,

which our Lord said, "he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever." *John* vi. 58. It may be well to have recourse to these means before the possibility of cure is denied; lest they thereby deny the power of God, that he is not able to "cast out the strong man armed, who keepeth his palace and his goods in peace." *Luke* xi. 21. I think I need not add, who is there meant by the strong man armed, where is his palace, and what are his goods. The apostle speaks of some, "who had a form of godliness, but denied the power thereof." *2 Tim.* iii. 5. Now, it may be well to consider, in what can the power of godliness be known, but in dominion over its adversary which is sin. And do not they who deny the possibility of sin's being subdued, deny the power of godliness? A serious consideration may not be unprofitable. I have often admired, that those who plead for sin, pretend highly to value the scriptures, and say, 'the scriptures are the rule;' whereas the scriptures uniformly insist upon the necessity of holiness; not an

imaginary holiness, but a real purity of heart and of life. "Without holiness," said the apostle, "no man shall see the Lord." *Heb. xii. 14.* "Be ye holy in all manner of conversation, because it is written, be ye holy for I am holy." *1 Pet. i. 15.* "Present your bodies, (mark, your bodies) a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." *Rom. xii. 1.* They talk much of the blood of Christ; it is a subject often in the mouth, but what of the nature and effects of it is known, let their own acknowledgments testify. The apostle declares it "cleanseth from all sin." *1 John i. 7.* Now how those who continue 'miserable sinners, doing what they ought not to do,' &c. can be cleansed from all sin, let the considerate judge.

It is with me now, to answer some objections to this important truth; and to remark on some passages of scripture, which those who deny the possibility of sin being subdued, endeavour to cover themselves with. First, that 'The heart of man is deceitful

above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?" *Jer.* xvii. 9. That the heart of every man, of every natural unregenerate man, is truly so, I firmly believe: but be it remembered, that the Lord promised to give his people a new heart and a new spirit. *Ezek.* xxxvi. 26. And dare any one say, that heart is deceitful and wicked? Oh! beware of depreciating the gift of God. "Blessed are the pure in heart," saith our Lord, "for they shall see God." *Mat.* v. 8. "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." *Mark* vii. 18. "The seed on the good ground are they who in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience." *Luke* viii. 15. For now, in the gospel dispensation, the axe is laid to the root of the tree, *Mat.* iii. 10. What is the root of the tree there alluded to but the heart, from whence words and actions have their birth? "Thou blind Pharisee," said Christ, "cleanse first that which is within the cup and the platter, that the

outside may be clean also," *Mat.* xxiii. 26. And do they not in the stated form, pray that God 'would cleanse the thoughts of their hearts, by the inspiration of his holy Spirit;' a most excellent petition; but what is it in those who use it, and yet deny the possibility of its being answered, but a solemn mockery? For if the thoughts of the heart are really cleansed, there can be no sin; for sin defiles and pollutes the heart.

Another objection, is the language of the apostle, where he speaks of "a law in his members warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin, and that in his flesh dwelt no good thing." *Rom.* vii. That the apostle once was in that state, I think, is beyond a doubt; and that every real christian experiences a similar, till the strong man armed is cast out, and the old leaven purged away. But that he was so at the time of writing it, to me appears by no means credible, from what he has written just before and after; or he must grossly contradict himself, which will

hardly be allowed ; but rather that he was describing the effects of the law upon the carnal unregenerate mind : for he says, “ The law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.” Now can it be supposed that the apostle was then carnal ? &c. Surely not, For just after, he says, ‘ The carnal mind is enmity against God,’ and ‘ to be carnally minded is death,’ chap. viii. 6, 7. and that “ they who are in the flesh cannot please God ;” but he adds, “ Ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if the spirit of God dwell in you ; and if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” It consequently follows, that if the apostle was then in a carnal state, he was none of Christ’s, but at enmity against God. A little before, he says, “ Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin : for he that is dead is freed from sin,” chap. vi. 6, 7. And in the 2nd verse “ How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein.” And in the 22nd

verse, "Being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

Now let this plain language, both before and after, written no doubt at the same time, determine whether the apostle was then in a carnal, unregenerate state or not. And though he elsewhere says, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect." *Phil.* iii. 10. I think it in no respect favours the construction many put upon it, that the apostle was then in a sinful state; but rather makes against them, as it plainly condemns the notion, of being perfectly and for ever justified by mere imputation, and evinces the danger of sitting down at ease, resting satisfied with an imaginary justification. For in another place, speaking of the christian progress, he says, though he did not run as uncertainly, or fight as one that beateth the air, yet he found it necessary to keep under his body, and bring it into subjection, or there was a danger, notwithstanding he had preached to others, of his be-

ing still a cast away. 1 *Cor.* ix. 26, 27. Another objection is, that same apostle says, "By grace ye are saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast." *Eph.* ii. 8, 9. In answer to which, I believe it is very necessary to distinguish between the works of man, which he does in his own will and strength, and those works which are wrought of God. Perhaps it is not rightly knowing this distinction that people cry out against works, as though they were all self-righteousness. The works of man, of the unrenewed carnal mind, yea the best of them, are as filthy rags; but I think there should be a great care not to join the works of God (those which he worketh in his people) with man's own works; for in the next verse the apostle says, "Ye are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them." That it is by grace, I believe, no real christian will deny, but will, with humble gratitude in all

his progress, acknowledge with the apostle, "by the grace of God I am what I am." 1 *Cor.* xv. 10. This grace the same apostle declared, hath appeared to all men, (mark that, not to any particular part) and teaches, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world. He does not say (it teaches) we must continue in sin. "What," says he in another place, "shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound, God forbid." *Rom.* vi. 1. That it is also through faith, who will deny? for "without faith it is impossible to please God." *Heb.* xi. 6. But the apostle speaks of a dead faith, *James* ii. 17. of a faith the devils have, verse 19. The true faith, he says, worketh by love, *Gal.* v. 6. purifieth the heart, *Acts* xv. 9. and overcometh the world, 1 *John* v. 4. Now what faith have those, who say, they are 'tied and bound with the chain of their sins, that they are miserable sinners having no health in them,' &c. The tree is known by its fruit.

Again, the words of our Lord, when upon the earth in the days of his flesh, to those whom he had healed of their diseases, are pleaded in excuse for continuing in sin as "Thy faith hath saved thee, thy faith hath made thee whole," &c. But be it remembered, that those to whom he said so were completely cured, received 'perfect soundness;' and I believe, there is a remnant at this day, who witness the same works, spiritually accomplished by the powerful operation of the same word in the heart, even a being made whole, a being healed of the great disease of sin, prefigured by the various cures performed on the bodies of the people.

Once more another argument adduced is where the apostle says, "If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us," 1 *John* i. 8. But a due attention to what follows, I think will clearly explain that the apostle does not favour the idea that he was then in that state; for he adds, "if we say we have not sinned," plainly alluding to

time past, and continues, "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness;" and as all unrighteousness is sin, chap. v. 17. they who are cleansed from all, surely can have none remaining. It is the sincere desire of my mind, that the people would consider for themselves, and not take things of such importance upon trust, but attend to the advice of the apostle, "Let every man prove his own work, then shall he have rejoicing in himself, and not in another, for every man shall bear his own burden." *Gal. vi. 4, 5.* "Be not deceived," he adds just after, "God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he reap," whatever be his opinion, knowledge or faith. And in another place he says, though he had all knowledge, could understand all mysteries, though he had all faith, even to remove mountains, yet he might be as nothing, *1 Cor. xiii. 2.* Therefore it might be well to have a care of talking so highly of the scriptures, while the life and conversa-

tion is not agreeable thereto ; and remember the words of our Lord to some of old, " Search the scriptures for in them ye think ye have eternal life ; and they are they which testify of me, and ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." *John* v. 39, 40. From which it appears, and is worthy of the most serious attention, that those who had the scriptures and valued them, as to think they had eternal life in them, yet they would not come unto Christ, of whom they testified ; and " who was and is alone the life as well as the light of men." *John* i. 4. Therefore it may be well to take care of putting the letter, the testimony, the declaration ; concerning an object, for the object itself ; for our Lord did not say the scriptures are the way ; but " I am the way, the truth and the life, and no man cometh unto the Father but by me." *John* xiv. 6. And learn the difference between the letter, the outward word, and the word that was in the beginning, *John* i. 1. before the scriptures, " the word nigh in the mouth, and in the heart ; *Rom.* x. 8.

“ which is quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, dividing asunder soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, before whom all things are naked and open.” *Heb. iv. 12.* and of whom, as I before observed, the scriptures testify; and without whose all-powerful aid they remain a dead letter, a sealed book. The apostle declared, the things of God can only be known by the Spirit of God, *1 Cor. ii. 11.* They are foolishness to the natural man. Therefore I think we should be careful how we attempt to comprehend the truths, which are contained in the scriptures by our own understandings; but rather be willing, as the apostle recommends, to become fools, that we may be truly wise, *1 Cor. iii. 18.*

I would now offer a few remarks on those two ordinances or ceremonies, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, as they are called.

With respect to the first, as practised by those I more particularly address myself to, little need be said; as sprinkling infants is

not even an imitation of true baptism, has no relation to it whatever, nor do I believe there can be found a single precept or example for it in any of the scriptures of truth. I am well persuaded it is, like many other things of the kind, a mere popish invention, in the times of darkness and apostacy, as a substitute for the reality; not in any one respect calculated to answer any good purpose whatever. It may be well seriously to consider a language used at that ceremony, "that this child is regenerate, and grafted into the body of Christ's church;" and in the catechism respecting it, that "he is therein made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven." Now let every considerate person solemnly ask himself, whether he really believes such effects are really produced by it. If it is possible that any one can think so, his ideas of regeneration, and Christ's church also, differ very widely from mine.

Let it be considered also, what people are taught to promise at this ceremony: "To renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh; to keep God's holy will and commandments, and to walk in the same all the days of their lives." Are they not here required to promise what is believed and confessed to be impossible to perform? for surely if it was performed, they would not be "miserable sinners, doing what they ought not to do," &c.

That baptism is necessary, absolutely necessary, for every member of Christ's church, I fully believe; but I believe, no application of water, even when rightly imitated, is the one true baptism. It is not the putting away the filth of the flesh, which is all outward elementary water can do, but "the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire," *Mat. iii. 11*, even a being baptised in the name, that is nature, of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; thereby experiencing the consuming of the earthly

part in themselves, and a being cleansed and purified from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord ; for the apostle says, " As many as are baptised into Christ have put on Christ," *Gal. iii. 27.* not imaginarily, but really ; and being buried with him, by this spiritual baptism into death, even a death unto sin : that " like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so they also will walk in the newness of life." *Rom. vi. 4.* And again, If any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things are passed away, all things become new, and all of God." *2 Cor. v. 17.* and if all of God, there can be no sin, " for sin is of the devil, and not of God." *1 John iii. 8.*

With respect to that other ceremony, called the Lord's Supper, notwithstanding I am sensible of the deep rooted prejudice in favour of it, I feel no discouragement ; under a belief that a glorious day is dawning, when clouds and shadows, signs and appearances, shall give place to reality, to the pure essen-

tial substance. I am perfectly satisfied in mine own mind respecting it, and will endeavour to give my reasons, why I believe it is not of that consequence or obligation many fix upon it.

That our Lord, the night before he suffered took bread and brake it, and gave to his disciples, as also the cup, I believe; and that he said, this do in remembrance of me; but that he enjoined it to be an ordinance I cannot find. I presume it will be allowed to be a part of the feast of the Jewish passover, as our Lord said, "With desire, I have desired to eat this passover with you, before I suffer," *Luke xxii. 16.* and which was a remarkable type or figure of Christ, who was the very Paschal Lamb, the substance or antitype itself. That the bread and wine, as a part of the passover, represented the body and blood of Christ, to be broken and shed for the remission of sins, I presume will also be allowed. Now as there is certainly a very essential difference between the sign and the thing signified, let us consider a lit-

tle, which is of most consequence, or whether both are of obligation. I expect none to whom I address myself will deny, that Christ was and is really the substance and antitype of every type and figure, under the Mosaic ceremonial dispensation. This then being one of those figures representing the death of Christ; the substance being come, the type fulfilled, what need of the shadow; why not give place, as others are acknowledged to do? The apostle, writing to some, remarks, "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death, till he come." 1 *Cor.* xi. 26. But this I think, by no means implies that it was an enjoined ordinance, but rather, that those to whom he was writing, continued in the use or observance of the Jewish passover. This I think, cannot appear improbable, when it is considered, that for a time it was taught by some of the disciples, that "it was needful to be circumcised, and to keep the law of Moses," *Acts* xv. 5. of course this among the rest. Therefore it appears to

me, that they, as yet, knew not, in a spiritual sense, the coming of Christ; that is, his spiritual appearance in their hearts; an inference which seems to be confirmed by what is recorded of some, who had been baptised with John's baptism, that is of water, yet had not so much as heard whether there were an Holy Ghost, *Acts* xix. 2. the promised mode of his coming again, *John* xvi. 7. Again, the apostle says, speaking unto wise men, no doubt spiritually wise, "The cup of blessing we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" *1 Cor.* x. 15, 16. Can it be supposed that he here alludes to outward bread and wine? for if he did, all who partake of that ceremony, let them be who they may, or what they may, have communion with Christ. Surely that would be joining light and darkness, Christ and Belial, righteousness and unrighteousness together, in direct opposition to the same apostle's plain declaration to the same people. *2 Cor.* vi. 15. He says again, "Ye cannot drink of the cup of the Lord, and

the cup of devils ; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and the table of devils," 1 *Cor.* x. 20. Now it is very obvious, that any can partake of the outward bread and wine, therefore that cannot be the cup and table of the Lord. Again, what is recorded of the disciples breaking bread from house to house, *Acts* ii. 24. I think by no means implies such a ceremony, but rather a social way of living among themselves ; as it is said, they had all things common, verse 44, and, from what immediately follows, " did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart," verse 46, plainly alluding to their common meals. It is also I think, very observable, that when the apostles were assembled at Jerusalem, to consider what was necessary to be enjoined to the believing Gentiles, this ceremony was not even mentioned : which had it been necessary, would sure not have been omitted, considering the things which were then enjoined ; most of which have since been laid aside, *Acts* xv. 20. But our Lord's own words appear to me decidedly to discountenance the outward sign ; as where

he emphatically calls himself the “Bread of Life.” “That his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed, and that whosoever ate and drank it had eternal life.” *John* vi. 46, &c. And to reprove their carnal ideas of outward eating and drinking, verse 52, and to direct their minds to the spiritual allusion, he adds, “What, and if you shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before,” verse 62, how will ye eat him then? not in outward bread and wine, “it is the spirit that quickeneth : the flesh (or outward food) profiteth nothing.”

I believe there are among those whom I address myself to, such as are sensible of the necessity of this spiritual communion, and are truly desirous to partake thereof. Far be it from me to wound any of these. I do tenderly salute them, and feel a degree of unity with the least appearance of the true seed of the kingdom : I would not hurt the least plant of the Lord’s own right hand planting. However, some little differences may appear, yet let me say to these in a

spirit of love and unity, as this is acknowledged to be but a sign or token, why is this continued, when others of equal authority and obligation are dispensed with? For instance, that of circumcision, which our Lord submitted to, *Luke ii. 21*; and which for a time, even after his ascension, was enjoined by his disciples, as I before quoted; Why this laid aside? It may perhaps be answered, this sign according to the apostle's definition of it, represented the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, *Col. ii. 11*. I fully believe it did, and as it is equally true, that bread and wine is also a sign, there appears to me not a shadow of a reason, why the one should be continued in preference to the other: the thing signified by both being of equal obligation.

Again, it was worthy of observation, that the beloved disciple John, in his relation, makes not the least mention of this ceremony; but is very particular in giving an account of our Lord's washing his disciples

feet. Why is not this ceremony observed, as it appears to be more particularly enjoined than the other? For, says Christ, "Ye call me Master, and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am; if I then, your Lord and Master have washed, your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet, for I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done unto you." *John* xiii. 13. Now, where can there be found so strong an injunction for the other, that of bread and wine? If it is answered, that was a sign or figure to teach humility and love to each other, which I readily admit it was, I think it is necessary to prove the other to be somewhat more than a sign to support its continuance in preference, which I expect will hardly be attempted. That it was not practised or observed as an ordinance by the apostles, I think evidently appears, from the whole tenor of their writings. Paul reproves some for being subject to ordinances. "Touch not, taste not, handle not," says he, "which all are to perish with the using." *Col.* ii. 20. and doth not outward bread and

wine perish with the using? The apostle well knew the true living bread was not of a perishable nature. Again, he says, "Let no man judge you in meat and in drink, or in respect to the holy day, new moon, or the sabbath, which" he adds, "are a shadow of things to come, but the body, (the substance) is of Christ," *verse 16*. In another place he says, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." *Rom. xiv. 17*. And to some others he said "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed on you labour in vain;" because after they had known God, had tasted somewhat of the substance, they turned again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto they desired again to be in bondage. *Gal. iv. 9*. "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years," *verse 10*, said he, which he had declared to be but shadows of good things; and I fear the same language is too applicable to many who make a very high profession in this day.

From what I have observed on this subject, I think, to an unprejudiced mind, it

must appear that the true supper of the Lord is an inward, spiritual communion. "Behold," says Christ, "I stand at the door, and knock : if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." *Rev.* iii. 20 ; and that the outward bread and wine, was nothing more than a part of the Jewish ceremonial dispensation ; neither commanded to, nor practised generally by, the Gentiles, in the apostle's days. For, I would just add, if it is a necessary ordinance ; if in other words, it is what by many it is asserted to be, the effects of it would be evident ; for our Lord said, " Whosoever ate his flesh and drank his blood, had eternal life." Now, I presume no one to whom I now address myself will impute such an effect to outward bread and wine ; therefore it cannot be the Lord's supper. We nowhere read of two suppers. The difference between the sign and thing signified, the shadow and the substance, I believe many are in a degree sensible of ; and as the sub-

stance, the reality is to be partaken of, yea, absolutely necessary; (for, said our Lord, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you;" *John vi. 53.*) and, as I before observed, we read of but one supper of the Lord; surely it is of consequence rightly to know which is indeed the true supper.

I have no doubt but there are those who in sincerity and uprightness of heart continue in the use of the sign; far be it from me to judge these. I have only a caution to give in love, that where these signs are regarded, it may be as to the Lord, and not unto men. See *Rom. xiv. 6.* I fully believe religion doth not consist in observing, or not observing outward ceremonies. For as the apostle says, "In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision avail-eth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." *Gal. vi. 15.* It is not a name, a profession, or any outward observance; but I am not without a fear that many regard them as to men, and are in

bondage unto them, and so settled down at ease in them, that they will hardly hear the least objection to them. Such perhaps must be left for a time : however, I have given some of my reasons for absenting myself from your communion, and why I believe the worship there performed, is not the worship which the Lord requireth ; that it is not agreeable, but contrary to the scriptures ; that it is not ‘ the means of grace, and ordinance of God,’ but the invention and imagination of man ; that it is wrong in principle and in practice ; in *principle*, because you are taught that you must not expect deliverance froms in in this life, whereas the scriptures testify the contrary ; in *practice*, because you worship in your own wills, and teach for doctrines the commandments of men, which our Lord testified against, *Mark* vii. 7. yea, in an unregenerate state, according to your own confession, for a sinner is not regenerate. Therefore, what I have heard among you, that your best services are polluted, is strictly true ; for while you yourselves are in the

polluted state, all your performances are polluted also. "For who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." *Job* xiv.

4. But it may be well to remember, it stands an unchangeable truth, "That the sacrifices of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord," *Prov.* xxi. 27. and though we

may amuse ourselves with the vain idea that all is well, I do assuredly believe, that to offer any acceptable sacrifice or service, we must know, experimentally know, a being washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God. *1 Cor.* vi. 11. Therefore remember a language of old to some who had no health in them, but were unsound from head to foot, as many confess they now are. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices?"

Isa. i. 11. "Bring no more vain oblations, incense is abomination to me, the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies I cannot away with, it is iniquity even the solemn meeting. When you spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes, yea, when ye

make many prayers, I will not hear." ver. 13, 14. And consider the exhortation to them, "Wash ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes: cease to do evil, learn to do well," &c. ver. 16. Then it is added, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." ver. 18. Oh, how awful is this denunciation now fulfilling around us! It is the fervent breathing of my spirit, that this highly professing, much favoured nation, who have been calling abundantly upon the Lord with their mouths, and honouring him with their lips, may avert the impending stroke, by truly humbling themselves before him; and as his judgments are in the earth may indeed learn righteousness, *Isa.* xxvi. 9.

I know, friends, from a degree of experience, that there are many and various appearances, signs, and shadows, set up among professing christians ; some of which I have pointed out. I now wish to direct, according to the ability I am at present favoured with, to the reality or substance itself ; and this inestimable treasure which I had long in vain sought for without, among the various appearances, I at last found to be within. I can anticipate the surprise, and perhaps the indignation, the word *within* may excite in some minds, who may be ready to exclaim, can there be any good thing in man ? Yes, friends, the sovereign good, the only good, is to be found there ; and I desire your patient attention while I endeavour to remove that unjust, delusive, yea too destructive idea, that nothing good is to be found in man. I believe it is the grand artifice, the most successful insinuation of the great adversary of mankind, to divert the attention from that which is alone able effectually to destroy his kingdom or rule in the

heart, and draw it to objects without, to similitudes and appearances. (Mystery Babylon.) This good then, though in man, is not of man, it is not natural to him ; but a free, spontaneous, unmerited gift. This good is, with reverence be it spoken, even God himself : a truth, I believe of the utmost importance to be experimentally known by every individual ; and a truth abundantly testified to in the sacred writing ; as the ground work, the substance, the foundation of real religion ; a language also repeatedly expressed by the professors of christianity ; though the truth, the reality of it, appears so little known, as by many even to be denied. Do not you frequently read, “ I will dwell in them, and walk in them ; I will be their God, and they shall be my people,” 2 *Cor.* vi. 16. “ If a man love me,” said our Lord, “ he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” *John* xiv. 23. “ The Comforter, even the Spirit of Truth,” proceeding from the Father, said

e, "dwelleth with you, and shall be in you," ver. 17. "Know ye not," said the apostle, "that Jesus Christ is in you except ye be reprobates?" 2 *Cor.* xiii. 5, and that your bodies are the temples of the living God? 1 *Cor.* vi. 19. I could multiply quotations of scriptures, to prove this great important truth, but am sensible that those to whom I address myself are well acquainted with the words. You are frequently reading "of Christ within, the hope of glory, *Col.* i. 27, under various similitudes; but what is the reason, he is not known there? It is an important question. What is the reason, I again repeat it, that Christ so often read of in the scriptures as within notwithstanding so much talk and imaginations about him, is not known there in reality? I believe, friends, I can tell you the reason why he, the one great foundation, is not known, where alone he is truly to be known. Because he is not sought for there; but in something without, some appearance or representation of him, a knowledge gathered from men or

books, from the history or outward letter which, however highly it may be valued, I believe is merely notional. The real experimental knowledge is only known by his internal appearance, his second coming, without sin, unto salvation; *Heb. ix. 28.* and the operation and effects thereby produced. See *Mal. iii. 3.* "The kingdom of God," said our Lord, "cometh not by observation:" man, with all his wisdom, is unable to comprehend it, neither shall they say, "Lo! here is Christ; or, lo! there," not in any outward appearance, "for, behold the kingdom of God is within you." *Luke xvii. 20, 21.* "Say not in thine heart," said the apostle, "who shall ascend into heaven that is to bring Christ down from above, or who shall descend into the deep, that is to bring Christ again from the dead:" He is not at a distance, but "the word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart," *Rom. x. 6, 7, 8.* Our Lord represented this great truth by various objects or similitudes, to convey spiritual instruction to his disciples; as a

treasure hid in a field ; *Mat.* xiii. 44, seed sown in the ground ; *Mark* iv. 26, a grain of mustard seed ; *Mat.* xiii. 31, a little leaven hid in meal ; ver. 33, plainly alluding to this inestimable treasure as hid in the heart, the earthly part of man. There were some of whom our Lord said, having ears they heard not ; they could not understand the spiritual meaning of his parables ; but to some he said, " Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God." *Mark* iv. 11. Now, friends, it is of consequence to know of which number we are, whether these are still to us as parables, or whether we know *that* which unfolds their true meaning : " I am the light of the world," said Christ : " he that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." *John* viii. 12.

The apostle says there is no communion between light and darkness. *2 Cor.* vi. 14. If we have not light, we must of necessity be in darkness. There is a spiritual light, as well as a natural. This great apostle to the

gentiles, declaring his commission to preach the gospel, said it was to turn people from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God. *Acts* xxvi. 18. Of what consequence then is it to be acquainted with this light, by which alone we can discern between good and evil. "All things," said the apostle, "that are reproved, are made manifest by the light; for whatsoever doth make manifest is light." *Eph.* v. 13. That we may know what this light is the scriptures abundantly declare, John the Baptist was sent to bear witness of this light, which is the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. *John* i. 8, 9. In him, i. e. Christ, was life, and the life was the light of men, ver. 4. This light shineth in darkness, even the dark heart of man; though the darkness comprehended it not. ver. 5. This is the light of the glorious gospel; therefore, friends, I caution you to beware of calling it a natural light, or a new light as many have done. For, I believe the same light, if attended to, and its

discoveries obeyed, will effect the same works spiritually in the heart, or inner man, as it formerly did on the bodies of the people. Therefore I believe there is great danger of speaking evil of the light, for whoever do, confess they are strangers to it, and of course are walking in darkness, for there is but one true spiritual light. And, "If we say we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." 1 *John* i. 6, 7.

Our Lord himself plainly declared, that "Every one that doeth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd; but he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." *John* iii. 20, 21. Therefore, it is not strange that those who plead for sin, which is evil, should speak against this light, and call it a natural light; or any

thing to excuse themselves ; because it cannot but condemn them. Those things which the light, if attended to, would manifest to be evil, are too dearly loved to be parted with, while they can persuade themselves they are secure in retaining them. I speak from experience, and do earnestly recommend a turning to this light within, from all the '*Lo heres,*' and '*Lo theres,*' the various appearances, signs, and shadows, set up by the will and wisdom of men, in the times of darkness and apostacy ; even to *Christ within*, the hope of glory, the true foundation, 1 *Cor.* iii. 11 ; the rock against which as it is faithfully abode in, even the gates of hell shall not prevail, *Mat.* xvi, 18 ; nor all the opposition of men. This I believe is the substance of every shadow, the reality of every appearance, the word nigh in the mouth and in the heart ; the true anointing, which is truth and no lie, and which teacheth all things without need of man's teaching. 1 *John* ii. 27. This is the new covenant, graciously promised by

the Most High. "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people ; and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord."

Jer. xxxi. 33, 34.

Behold, said our Lord, the kingdom of God is within you. *Luke* xvii. 21. The seed of the kingdom which is sown in the heart, though too small for the eye of man's wisdom to discover, though it is still to the high professing Jew a stumbling block, and to the worldly wise Greek, foolishness ; yet it is to those who hear its call and obey it, Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God. *1 Cor.* i. 23, 24. This I believe is the new birth, without which our Lord declared no one even could see the kingdom of God. *John* iii. 3. The birth which is not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God,

John i. 13. For that which is born of the flesh, however high and specious its appearance, is still flesh; and that which is born of the spirit, however mean and contemptible in the eye of man's wisdom, is spirit. The gospel is a spiritual dispensation. The spirit of truth inwardly manifested, our Lord promised should guide into all truth. *John* xvi. 13. The apostles were not to leave Jerusalem till they had received it, *Acts* i. 4, and then we are informed, "They spake as the spirit gave them utterance." *Acts* ii. 4. We have no reason to suppose they used any form of words, neither that they spake when or where they chose; but we are frequently informed of their going or forbearing, as by the spirit they were directed, *Acts* viii. 29. xix. 7, &c. neither are we to suppose that this influence and direction of the spirit was confined to any period of time; for, says our Lord, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." *Mat.* xxviii. 20. What a departure from their example and

precepts is lamentably conspicuous among most professing christians; who have invented various images, forms, and modes of worship, which they can perform when they please; evidently acknowledging that they think the influence and assistance of the spirit unnecessary; at least that they will begin at a venture, whether it may come or not! Surely it may be well to consider, whether it is not offering strange fire before the Lord. *Lev. x. 1.* The only true worship under the gospel dispensation, is, agreeably to our Lord's express declaration, that which is in spirit and in truth, *John iv. 24,* and as the influences and movings of the spirit, (although so absolutely necessary, as that no acceptable worship can be performed without them) are not at our command; how proper, yea, how needful then, is an humble, silent, dependent waiting upon Him, who alone can administer this assistance; that thereby the true preparation of the heart may be experienced, to receive whatever He, who searcheth the heart, and who alone

knoweth what is good for those who wait upon him, may be pleased to administer: whether immediately, by his still small voice in the secret of the heart: or instrumentally, by whomsoever he may please to appoint !

“They that wait upon the Lord,” said the prophet, “shall renew their strength.” *Isa. xl. 31.* It is the professed object of most assemblies for religious worship, to wait upon the Lord. Now, whether those who in solemn humble silence, wait to feel the influences of the spirit, to instruct and enable, when and what to offer, or what immediately to receive from the fountain of good, are such as that promise applies to; or those who are always ready to begin, either in a prescribed form, or in the exercise of their own natural or acquired abilities, whether they may have the assistance so necessary or not; I think a little serious consideration may determine. Indeed the plain express meaning of the term, *Waiting*, appears to me to be a silent, attentive expectation of

something ; and if it is weightily considered, that, at such times, we more particularly profess to approach the sacred presence of Him, “ who searcheth the heart, trieth the reins, and requireth truth in the inward parts ;” who cannot possibly be deceived or amused by the most plausible expressions, or the most eloquent language ; who has decidedly condemned the practice of drawing near to him with the mouth, and honouring him with the lips, whilst the heart is far from him ; *Isa. xxix. 13*, surely it is needful at such times to wait, silently wait, for the reception of spiritual power, lest we should be like those who offer the sacrifice of fools. *Eccles. v. 1*. “ Let not thine heart,” said the wise man, “ be hasty to utter any thing before God, for God is in heaven and thou upon earth ; therefore let thy words be few, verse 2. “ Without me,” said our blessed Lord, “ ye can do nothing.” *John xv. 5*. Yet the practice of many who profess to follow him evidently declares that they think they can do without him, for they are, as to

words and outward performances, always ready. The apostle plainly declared, that "we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but it is the spirit that helpeth our infirmities." *Rom. viii. 26.* Then what are all the arts of composition, and the powers of human eloquence, without this assistance, but as "sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal?" "When ye pray," said our Lord, "use not vain repetitions as the heathen do; for they think they shall be heard, for their much speaking:" *Mat. vi. 7.* A language too applicable, I fear, not only to the prescribed formal prayers, but to the more private extempore productions, as though prayer consisted in outward expression; an idea repeatedly condemned in the scriptures of Truth.

The apostle, after saying we know not what to pray for, adds, "The spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered." And Christ called them hypocrites who prayed to be seen of men; *Mat. vi. 5,* and directed his disciples to pray in secret to the Father who seeth in

secret. ver. 6. The apostle also recommends a praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance. *Eph. vi. 18.* He does not recommend to begin singing as soon as they conclude a prayer. In another place, he exhorts to a "continuing instant in prayer;" *Rom. xii. 12.* again, "Pray without ceasing;" *1 Thes. v. 17.* from all which I think it must appear that *there may be true prayer without words, and that there may also be words without prayer.* I believe there are those possessed of considerable abilities, a ready flow of words, and a pleasing eloquent delivery, who can at any time when they please, deliver what I have heard called an excellent prayer; without waiting to feel that influence, which can alone enable to "pray with the spirit, and with true understanding:" but though such exercises may produce a temporary warmth, both in speaker and hearer, I believe, it will be found to be only a fire of their own kindling, a mere appearance, and not the effects of the

live coal from the true altar. *Isa. vi. 6.* The same observations are equally applicable to every other external performance of worship, public or private : for, however it may affect the outward ear, yea, and kindle sparks, as it were producing a temporary warmth ; if it does not proceed from the immediate sensible movings of the spirit of truth, I much fear the appellation of will-worship is too applicable to it.

I have also had a fear, that a language of old, respecting some of whom it was said, “ they limited the Holy One of Israel,” *Psa. lxxviii. 41.* is applicable to most professing religious societies, where any particular man or set of men, assume to themselves the exclusive right of teaching or preaching : a practice I believe totally repugnant to the gospel dispensation, and the uniform example and precepts of Christ and his apostles. For I fully believe that *no human authority, call, qualification, or ordination, can make a minister of Christ. That is the prerogative of Christ himself.* It is absolutely necessary

that every individual christian should be born of the spirit ; *John* iii. 5. and surely it must also be necessary that the ministers of Christ should, in an especial manner, be so too. Paul said he was made an apostle, " Not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father." *Gal.* i. 1. And, as I before observed, the dispensation of the gospel being a " dispensation of the spirit," the ministers thereof are ministers of the spirit, and not of the letter : not ministers of the word only, though scripture words themselves ; but of the " word of eternal life," even of the " word which was in the beginning, which liveth and abideth forever." *1 Pet.* i. 23. That word which is quick and powerful, discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart," *Heb.* iv. 12. Words may have, and no doubt have, their service, as the spirit brings to remembrance, and giveth utterance ; but to steal the words of scripture, see *Jer.* xxiii. 30, 31, and put them in a premeditated form, however eloquently they may

be delivered, I believe is not preaching the gospel. But, I believe, that they who are particularly called, qualified, and sent by Christ himself, as I believe every true minister is, will not presume to preach or pray, when, where, or what they please; but as they are immediately moved and directed by the spirit of Christ, inwardly revealed; see *Gal. i. 16.* who can alone know what is needful to be administered, and these as they freely receive, they will, agreeably to our Lord's command, *Freely give*, *Mat. x. 8,* &c. "without any view to temporal interest whatever." And as they are not their own, they cannot dispose of their time or talents, according to their own wills; but as He who hath called them is pleased to direct.

To conclude: the few observations I have now offered, may, perhaps, to unprejudiced minds, be sufficient to evince the inward spiritual nature of the gospel dispensation; and that "signs and figures, all external ceremonial performances, are totally abolished

from that worship, which can only be performed in spirit and in truth." *John* iv. 23, 24.

They may also evince that the only necessary qualification for true worship, is the influence and direction of the spirit of truth inwardly revealed: that this necessary assistance is not confined to time or place, nor to any particular man or set of men. For, as the apostle declared, "The manifestation of the spirit is given to every man, to profit withal," 1 *Cor.* xii. 7. I believe there are no individuals arrived to the years of discretion, but who are favoured with a sufficient portion thereof, if properly attended to, to direct them into the paths of true judgment. The word, even the word of eternal life, is nigh to all, nor need any look to men for instruction; but this same anointing, if the mind is simply and unreservedly directed to it, teacheth all things, and is truth. 1 *John* ii. 27. Who is there, who has not felt its secret reproofs for evil, and its approbation for good? To this true teacher,

of whose all-sufficient aid I have thankfully to acknowledge a degree of experience, I do earnestly recommend the particular, unwearied, faithful, attention of every individual.

JOHN SPALDING.

Reading, 30th of the 7th Month, 1794,

FINIS.