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AN

EARNEST APPEAL

TO

MEN OF REASON AND RELIGION.

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*Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth!*

John vii. 51.

## EARNEST APPEAL

### TO MEN OF REASON AND RELIGION.

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1. **ALTHOUGH** it is with us a "very small thing to be judged of you or of man's judgment," seeing we know God will "make our innocency as clear as the light, and our just dealing as the noon-day;" yet are we ready to give any that are willing to hear a plain account, both of our principles and actions; as having "renounced the hidden things of shame," and desiring nothing more, "than by manifestation of the truth to commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

2. We see (and who does not?) the numberless follies and miseries of our fellow-creatures. We see, on every side, either men of no religion at all, or men of a lifeless, formal religion. We are grieved at the sight; and should greatly rejoice, if by any means we might convince some that there is a better religion to be attained,—a religion worthy of God that gave it. And this we conceive to be no other than love; the love of God and of all mankind; the loving God with all our heart, and soul, and strength, as having first loved *us*, as the fountain of all the good we have received, and of all we ever hope to enjoy; and the loving every soul which God hath made, every man on earth, as our own soul.

3. This love we believe to be the medicine of life, the never-failing remedy for all the evils of a disordered world, for all the miseries and vices of men. Wherever this is, there are virtue and happiness going hand in hand. There is humbleness of mind, gentleness, long-suffering, the whole image of God; and at the same time a peace that passeth all understanding, and joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind;  
Each prayer accepted, and each wish resign'd;  
Desires composed, affections ever even,  
Tears that delight, and sighs that waft to heaven.

4. This religion we long to see established in the world, a religion of love, and joy, and peace, having its seat in the

inmost soul, but ever showing itself by its fruits, continually springing forth, not only in all innocence, (for love worketh no ill to his neighbour,) but likewise in every kind of beneficence, spreading virtue and happiness all around it.

5. This religion have we been following after for many years, as many know, if they would testify: But all this time, seeking wisdom, we found it not; we were spending our strength in vain. And being now under full conviction of this, we declare it to all mankind; for we desire not that others should wander out of the way as we have done before them: But rather that they may profit by our loss, that they may go (though we did not, having then no man to guide us) the straight way to the religion of love, even by faith.

6. Now, faith (supposing the Scripture to be of God) is *πραγματων ελεγχος ου βλεπομενων*, "the demonstrative evidence of things unseen," the supernatural evidence of things invisible, not perceivable by eyes of flesh, or by any of our natural senses or faculties. Faith is that divine evidence whereby the spiritual man discerneth God, and the things of God. It is with regard to the spiritual world, what sense is with regard to the natural. It is the spiritual sensation of every soul that is born of God.

7. Perhaps you have not considered it in this view. I will, then, explain it a little further.

Faith, according to the scriptural account, is the eye of the new-born soul. Hereby every true believer in God "seeth him who is invisible." Hereby (in a more particular manner, since life and immortality have been brought to light by the gospel) he "seeth the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ;" and "beholdeth what manner of love it is which the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we," who are born of the Spirit, "should be called the sons of God."

It is the ear of the soul, whereby a sinner "hears the voice of the Son of God, and lives;" even that voice which alone wakes the dead, "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee."

It is (if I may be allowed the expression) the palate of the soul; for hereby a believer "tastes the good word, and the powers of the world to come;" and "hereby he both tastes and sees that God is gracious," yea, "and merciful to him a sinner."

It is the feeling of the soul, whereby a believer perceives, through the "power of the Highest overshadowing him," both the existence and the presence of Him in whom "he lives,

moves, and has his being ;” and indeed the whole invisible world, the entire system of things eternal. And hereby, in particular, he feels “ the love of God shed abroad in his heart.”

8. By this faith we are saved from all uneasiness of mind, from the anguish of a wounded spirit, from discontent, from fear and sorrow of heart, and from that inexpressible listlessness and weariness, both of the world and of ourselves, which we had so helplessly laboured under for many years ; especially when we were out of the hurry of the world, and sunk into calm reflection. In this we find that love of God, and of all mankind, which we had elsewhere sought in vain. This we know and feel, and therefore cannot but declare, saves every one that partakes of it, both from sin and misery, from every unhappy and every unholy temper.

Soft peace she brings, wherever she arrives ;  
She builds our quiet, as she forms our lives ;  
Lays the rough paths of peevish nature even,  
And opens in each breast a little heaven.

9. If you ask, “ Why then have not all men this faith ? all, at least, who conceive it to be so happy a thing ? Why do they not believe immediately ? ”

We answer, (on the Scripture hypothesis,) “ It is the gift of God.” No man is able to work it in himself. It is a work of omnipotence. It requires no less power thus to quicken a dead soul, than to raise a body that lies in the grave. It is a new creation ; and none can create a soul anew, but He who at first created the heavens and the earth.

10. May not your own experience teach you this ? Can you give yourself this faith ? Is it now in your power to see, or hear, or taste, or feel God ? Have you already, or can you raise in yourself, any perception of God, or of an invisible world ? I suppose you do not deny that there is an invisible world ; you will not charge it in poor old Hesiod to Christian prejudice of education, when he says, in those well-known words,

“ Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth  
Unseen, whether we wake, or if we sleep.”

Now, is there any power in your soul whereby you discern either these, or Him that created them ? Or, can all your wisdom and strength open an intercourse between yourself and the world of spirits ? Is it in your power to burst the veil that is

on your heart, and let in the light of eternity? You know it is not. You not only do not, but cannot, by your own strength, thus believe. The more you labour so to do, the more you will be convinced "it is the gift of God."

11. It is the free gift of God, which he bestows, not on those who are worthy of his favour, not on such as are previously holy, and so fit to be crowned with all the blessings of his goodness; but on the ungodly and unholy; on those who till that hour were fit only for everlasting destruction; those in whom was no good thing, and whose only plea was, "God be merciful to me, a sinner!" No merit, no goodness in man precedes the forgiving love of God. His pardoning mercy supposes nothing in us but a sense of mere sin and misery; and to all who see, and feel, and own their wants, and their utter inability to remove them, God freely gives faith, for the sake of Him in whom he is always "well pleased."

12. This is a short, rude sketch of the doctrine we teach. These are our fundamental principles; and we spend our lives in confirming others herein, and in a behaviour suitable to them.

Now, if you are a reasonable man, although you do not believe the Christian system to be of God, lay your hand upon your breast, and calmly consider what it is that you can here condemn? What evil have we done to *you*, that you should join the common cry against us? Why should *you* say, "Away with such fellows from the earth; it is not fit that they should live?"

13. It is true, your judgment does not fall in with ours. We believe the Scripture to be of God. This you do not believe. And how do you defend yourselves against them who urge you with the guilt of unbelief? Do you not say, "Every man *must* judge according to the light he has," and that "if he be true to this, he ought not to be condemned?" Keep then to this, and turn the tables. *Must* not *we* also judge according to the light we have? You can in nowise condemn us without involving yourselves in the same condemnation. According to the light *we* have, we cannot but believe the Scripture is of God; and while we believe this, we dare not turn aside from it, to the right hand or to the left.

14. Let us consider this point a little farther. You yourself believe there is a God. You have the witness of this in your own breast. Perhaps sometimes you tremble before him. You believe there is such a thing as right and wrong; that there is

a difference between moral good and evil. Of consequence you must allow, there is such a thing as conscience : I mean, that every person, capable of reflection, is conscious to himself, when he looks back on anything he has done, whether it be good or evil. You must likewise allow, that every man is to be guided by his own conscience, not another's. Thus far, doubtless, you may go, without any danger of being a volunteer in faith.

15. Now then, be consistent with yourself. If there be a God, who, being just and good, (attributes inseparable from the very idea of God,) is "a rewarder of them that diligently seek him," ought we not to do whatever we believe will be acceptable to so good a Master? Observe : If we believe, if we are fully persuaded of this in our mind, ought we not thus to seek him, and that with all diligence? Else, how should we expect any reward at his hands?

16. Again : Ought we not to do what we believe is morally good, and to abstain from what we judge is evil? By good I mean, conducive to the good of mankind, tending to advance peace and good-will among men, promotive of the happiness of our fellow-creatures ; and by evil, what is contrary thereto. Then surely you cannot condemn our endeavouring, after our power, to make mankind happy ; (I now speak only with regard to the present world ;) our striving, as we can, to lessen their sorrows, and to teach them, in whatsoever state they are, therewith to be content.

17. Yet again : are we to be guided by our own conscience, or by that of other men? You surely will not say that any man's conscience can preclude mine. You, at least, will not plead for robbing us of what you so strongly claim for yourselves : I mean, the right of private judgment, which is indeed unalienable from reasonable creatures. You well know, that, unless we faithfully follow the dictates of our own mind, we cannot have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man.

18. Upon your own principles, therefore, you must allow us to be, at least, innocent. Do you find any difficulty in this? You speak much of prepossession and prejudice ; beware you are not entangled therein yourselves ! Are you not prejudiced against us, because we believe and strenuously defend that system of doctrines which you oppose? Are you not enemies to us, because you take it for granted we are so to

you? Nay, God forbid! I once saw one, who, from a plentiful fortune, was reduced to the lowest extremity. He was lying on a sick bed, in violent pain, without even convenient food, or one friend to comfort him: So that when his merciful landlord, to complete all, sent one to take his bed from under him, I was not surprised at his attempt to put an end to so miserable a life. Now, when I saw that poor man weltering in his blood, could I be angry at him? Surely, no. No more can I at you. I can no more hate than I can envy you. I can only lift up my heart to God for you, (as I did then for him,) and, with silent tears, beseech the Father of Mercies, that he would look on you in your blood, and say unto you, "Live."

19. "Sir," said that unhappy man, at my first interview with him, "I scorn to deceive you or any man. You must not tell me of your Bible; for I do not believe one word of it. I know there is a God; and believe he is all in all, the *Anima mundi*,\* the

*Totam*

*Mens agitans molem, et magno se corpore miscens.*†

But farther than this I believe not: All is dark; my thought is lost. But I hear," added he, "you preach to a great number of people every night and morning. Pray, what would you do with them? Whither would you lead them? What religion do you preach? What is it good for?" I replied, "I do preach to as many as desire to hear, every night and morning. You ask, what I would do with them: I would make them virtuous and happy, easy in themselves, and useful to others. Whither would I lead them? To heaven; to God the Judge, the lover of all, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant. What religion do I preach? The religion of love; the law of kindness brought to light by the gospel. What is this good for? To make all who receive it enjoy God and themselves: To make them like God; lovers of all; contented in their lives; and crying out at their death, in calm assurance, 'O grave, where is thy victory! Thanks be unto God, who giveth me the victory, through my Lord Jesus Christ.'"

20. Will you object to such a religion as this, that it is not reasonable? Is it not reasonable then to love God? Hath he not given you life, and breath, and all things? Does he

\* The soul of the world.

† The all-informing soul,

Which spreads through the vast mass, and moves the whole.

not continue his love to you, filling your heart with food and gladness? What have you which you have not received of him? And does not love demand a return of love? Whether, therefore, you do love God or no, you cannot but own it is reasonable so to do; nay, seeing he is the Parent of all good, to love him with all your heart.

21. Is it not reasonable also to love our neighbour, every man whom God hath made? Are we not brethren, the children of one Father? Ought we not, then, to love one another? And should we only love them that love us? Is that acting like our Father which is in heaven? He causeth his sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. And can there be a more equitable rule than this: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself?" You will plead for the reasonableness of this; as also for that golden rule, (the only adequate measure of brotherly love, in all our words and actions,) "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do unto them?"

22. Is it not reasonable, then, that, as we have opportunity, we should do good unto all men; not only friends, but enemies; not only to the deserving, but likewise to the evil and unthankful? Is it not right that all our life should be one continued labour of love? If a day passes without doing good, may one not well say, with Titus, *Amici, diem perdididi!*\* And is it enough, to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to visit those who are sick or in prison? Should we have no pity for those

Who sigh beneath guilt's horrid stain,  
The worst confinement, and the heaviest chain?

Should we shut up our compassion toward those who are of all men most miserable, because they are miserable by their own fault? If we have found a medicine to heal even that sickness, should we not, as we have freely received it, freely give? Should we not pluck them as brands out of the fire? the fire of lust, anger, malice, revenge? Your inmost soul answers, "It should be done; it is reasonable in the highest degree."

Well, this is the sum of our preaching, and of our lives, our enemies themselves being the judges. If therefore you allow, that it is reasonable to love God, to love mankind, and to do good to all men, you cannot but allow that religion which we preach and live to be agreeable to the highest reason.

\* My friends, I have lost a day.

23. Perhaps, all this you can bear. It is tolerable enough; and if we spoke only of being saved by love, you should have no great objection: But you do not comprehend what we say of being saved by faith. I know you do not. You do not in any degree comprehend what we mean by that expression: Have patience then, and I will tell you yet again. By those words, "We are saved by faith," we mean, that the moment a man receives that faith which is above described, he is saved from doubt and fear, and sorrow of heart, by a peace that passes all understanding; from the heaviness of a wounded spirit, by joy unspeakable; and from his sins, of whatsoever kind they were, from his vicious desires, as well as words and actions, by the love of God, and of all mankind, then shed abroad in his heart.

24. We grant, nothing is more unreasonable, than to imagine that such mighty effects as these can be wrought by that poor, empty, insignificant thing, which the world calls faith, and you among them. But supposing there be such a faith on the earth as that which the Apostle speaks of, such an intercourse between God and the soul, what is too hard for such a faith? You yourselves may conceive that "all things are possible to him that" thus "believeth;" to him that thus "walks with God," that is now a citizen of heaven, an inhabitant of eternity. If therefore you will contend with us, you must change the ground of your attack. You must flatly deny there is any faith upon earth: But perhaps this you might think too large a step. You cannot do this without a secret condemnation in your own breast. O that you would at length cry to God for that heavenly gift! whereby alone this truly reasonable religion, this beneficent love of God and man, can be planted in your heart.

25. If you say, "But those that profess this faith are the most unreasonable of all men;" I ask, Who are those that profess this faith? Perhaps you do not personally know such a man in the world. Who are they that so much as profess to have this "evidence of things not seen?" that profess to "see Him that is invisible," to hear the voice of God, and to have his Spirit ever "witnessing with their spirits, that they are the children of God?" I fear you will find few that even profess this faith, among the large numbers of those who are called believers.

26. "However, there are enough that profess themselves Christians." Yea, too many, God knoweth; too many that

confute their vain professions by the whole tenor of their lives. I will allow all you can say on this head, and perhaps more than all. It is now some years since I was engaged unawares in a conversation with a strong reasoner, who at first urged the wickedness of the American Indians, as a bar to our hope of converting them to Christianity. But when I mentioned their temperance, justice, and veracity, (according to the accounts I had then received,) it was asked, "Why, if those Heathens are such men as these, what will they gain by being made Christians? What would they gain by being such Christians as we see everywhere round about us?" I could not deny they would lose, not gain, by such a Christianity as this. Upon which she added, "Why, what else do you mean by Christianity?" My plain answer was, "What do you apprehend to be more valuable than good sense, good nature, and good manners? All these are contained, and that in the highest degree, in what I mean by Christianity. Good sense (so called) is but a poor, dim shadow of what Christians call faith. Good nature is only a faint, distant resemblance of Christian charity. And good manners, if of the most finished kind that nature, assisted by art, can attain to, is but a dead picture of that holiness of conversation which is the image of God visibly expressed. All these, put together by the art of God, I call Christianity." "Sir, if this be Christianity," said my opponent in amaze, "I never saw a Christian in my life."

27. Perhaps it is the same case with *you*. If so, I am grieved for you, and can only wish, till you do see a living proof of this, that you would not say you see a Christian. For this is scriptural Christianity, and this alone. Whenever, therefore, you see an unreasonable man, you see one who perhaps calls himself by that name, but is no more a Christian than he is an angel. So far as he departs from true, genuine reason, so far he departs from Christianity. Do not say, "This is only asserted, not proved." It is undeniably proved by the original charter of Christianity. We appeal to this, to the written word. If any man's temper, or words, or actions, are contradictory to right reason, it is evident to a demonstration, they are contradictory to this. Produce any possible or conceivable instance, and you will find the fact is so. The lives, therefore, of those who are *called* Christians, is no just objection to Christianity.

28. We join with you then in desiring a religion founded on

reason, and every way agreeable thereto. But one question still remains to be asked, What do you mean by *reason*? I suppose you mean the eternal reason, or the nature of things; the nature of God, and the nature of man, with the relations necessarily subsisting between them. Why, this is the very religion *we* preach; a religion evidently founded on, and every way agreeable to, eternal reason, to the essential nature of things. Its foundation stands on the nature of God and the nature of man, together with their mutual relations. And it is every way suitable thereto; to the nature of God; for it begins in knowing him: And where, but in the true knowledge of God, can you conceive true religion to begin? It goes on in loving him and all mankind; for you cannot but imitate whom you love: It ends in serving him; in doing his will; in obeying him whom we know and love.

29. It is every way suited to the nature of man; for it begins in a man's knowing himself; knowing himself to be what he really is,—foolish, vicious, miserable. It goes on to point out the remedy for this, to make him truly wise, virtuous, and happy; as every thinking mind (perhaps from some implicit remembrance of what it originally was) longs to be.

It finishes all, by restoring the due relations between God and man; by uniting for ever the tender Father, and the grateful, obedient son; the great Lord of all, and the faithful servant; doing not his own will, but the will of Him that sent him.

30. But perhaps by reason you mean the faculty of reasoning, of inferring one thing from another.

There are many, it is confessed, (particularly those who are styled Mystic Divines,) that utterly decry the use of reason, thus understood, in religion; nay, that condemn all reasoning concerning the things of God, as utterly destructive of true religion.

But we can in nowise agree with this. We find no authority for it in holy writ. So far from it, that we find there both our Lord and his Apostles continually reasoning with their opposers. Neither do we know, in all the productions of ancient and modern times, such a chain of reasoning or argumentation, so close, so solid, so regularly connected, as the Epistle to the Hebrews. And the strongest reasoner whom we have ever observed (excepting only Jesus of Nazareth) was that Paul of Tarsus; the same who has left that plain direction for all Chris-

tians: "In malice," or wickedness, "be ye children; but in understanding," or reason, "be ye men."

31. We therefore not only allow, but earnestly exhort, all who seek after true religion, to use all the reason which God hath given them, in searching out the things of God. But your reasoning justly, not only on this, but on any subject whatsoever, pre-supposes true judgments already formed, whereon to ground your argumentation. Else, you know, you will stumble at every step; because *ex falso non sequitur verum*, "it is impossible, if your premises are false, to infer from them true conclusions."

32. You know, likewise, that before it is possible for you to form a true judgment of them, it is absolutely necessary that you have a clear apprehension of the things of God, and that your ideas thereof be all fixed, distinct, and determinate. And seeing our ideas are not innate, but must all originally come from our senses, it is certainly necessary that you have senses capable of discerning objects of this kind: Not those only which are called natural senses, which in this respect profit nothing, as being altogether incapable of discerning objects of a spiritual kind; but spiritual senses, exercised to discern spiritual good and evil. It is necessary that you have *the hearing ear*, and the *seeing eye*, emphatically so called; that you have a new class of senses opened in your soul, not depending on organs of flesh and blood, to be "the evidence of things not seen," as your bodily senses are of visible things; to be the avenues to the invisible world, to discern spiritual objects, and to furnish you with ideas of what the outward "eye hath not seen, neither the ear heard."

33. And till you have these internal senses, till the eyes of your understanding are opened, you can have no apprehension of divine things, no idea of them at all. Nor, consequently, till then, can you either judge truly, or reason justly, concerning them; seeing your reason has no ground whereon to stand, no materials to work upon.

34. To use the trite instance: As you cannot reason concerning colours, if you have no natural sight, because all the ideas received by your other senses are of a different kind; so that neither your hearing, nor any other sense, can supply your want of sight, or furnish your reason in this respect with matter to work upon: So you cannot reason concerning spiritual things,

if you have no spiritual sight ; because all your ideas received by your outward senses are of a different kind ; yea, far more different from those received by faith or internal sensation, than the idea of colour from that of sound. These are only different species of one genus, namely, sensible ideas, received by external sensation ; whereas the ideas of faith differ *toto genere* from those of external sensation. So that it is not conceivable, that external sensation should supply the want of internal senses ; or furnish your reason in this respect with matter to work upon.

35. What then will your reason do here ? How will it pass from things natural to spiritual ; from the things that are seen to those that are not seen ; from the visible to the invisible world ? What a gulf is here ! By what art will reason get over the immense chasm ? This cannot be till the Almighty come in to your succour, and give you that faith you have hitherto despised. Then upborne, as it were, on eagles' wings, you shall soar away into the regions of eternity ; and your enlightened reason shall explore even "the deep things of God ;" God himself "revealing them to you by his Spirit."

36. I expected to have received much light on this head, from a treatise lately published, and earnestly recommended to me ; I mean, "Christianity not founded on Argument." But on a careful perusal of that piece, notwithstanding my prejudice in its favour, I could not but perceive, that the great design uniformly pursued throughout the work was, to render the whole of the Christian Institution both odious and contemptible. In order to this, the author gleans up, with great care and diligence, the most plausible of those many objections that have been raised against it by late writers, and proposes them with the utmost strength of which he was capable. To do this with the more effect, he personates a Christian : He makes a show of defending an avowed doctrine of Christianity, namely, the supernatural influence of the Spirit of God ; and often, for several sentences together, (indeed, in the beginning of almost every paragraph,) speaks so like a Christian, that not a few have received him according to his wish. Meanwhile, with all possible art and show of reason, and in the most laboured language, he pursues his point throughout, which is to prove, that "Christianity is contrary to reason ;" or, that "no man acting according to the principles of reason can possibly be a Christian."

37. It is a wonderful proof of the power that smooth words

may have even on serious minds, that so many have mistook such a writer as this for a friend of Christianity; since almost every page of his tract is filled with gross falsehood and broad blasphemy; and these supported by such exploded fallacies, and common-place sophistry, that a person of two or three years' standing in the university might give them a sufficient answer, and make the author appear as irrational and contemptible as he labours to make Christ and his Apostles.

38. I have hitherto spoken to those chiefly, who do not receive the Christian system as of God. I would add a few words to another sort of men;—though not so much with regard to our principles or practice, as with regard to their own: To you who do receive it, who believe the Scripture, but yet do not take upon you the character of religious men. I am therefore obliged to address myself to you likewise under the character of men of reason.

39. I would only ask, Are you such indeed? Do you answer the character under which you appear? If so, you are consistent with yourselves; your principles and practice agree together.

Let us try whether this is so or not. Do you not take the name of God in vain? Do you remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy? Do you not speak evil of the ruler of your people? Are you not a drunkard, or a glutton, faring as sumptuously as you can every day; making a god of your belly? Do you not avenge yourself? Are you not a whoremonger or adulterer? Answer plainly to your own heart, before God the Judge of all.

Why then do you say you believe the Scripture? If the Scripture is true, you are lost. You are in the broad way that leadeth to destruction. Your damnation slumbereth not. You are heaping up to yourself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. Doubtless, if the Scripture is true, and you remain thus, it had been good for you if you had never been born.

40. How is it that you call yourselves men of reason? Is reason inconsistent with itself? You are the farthest of all men under the sun from any pretence to that character. A common swearer, a Sabbath-breaker, a whoremonger, a drunkard, who says he believes the Scripture is of God, is a monster upon earth, the greatest contradiction to his own, as well as to the reason of all mankind. In the name of God, (that worthy name whereby you are called, and which you daily cause to be blasphemed,)

turn either to the right hand or to the left. Either profess you are an infidel, or be a Christian. Halt no longer thus between two opinions. Either cast off the Bible, or your sins. And, in the mean time, if you have any spark of your boasted reason left, do not "count us your enemies," (as I fear you have done hitherto, and as thousands do wherever we have declared, "They who do such things shall not inherit eternal life,") "because we tell you the truth;" seeing these are not our words, but the words of Him that sent us; yea, though, in doing this, we use "great plainness of speech," as becomes the ministry we have received. "For we are not as many who corrupt" (cauponize, soften, and thereby adulterate, "the word of God. But as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ."

41. But, it may be, you are none of these. You abstain from all such things. You have an unspotted reputation. You are a man of honour, or a woman of virtue. You scorn to do an unhandsome thing, and are of an unblamable life and conversation. You are harmless (if I understand you right) and useless from morning to night. You do no hurt,—and no good to any one, no more than a straw floating upon the water. Your life glides smoothly on from year to year; and from one season to another, having no occasion to work,

You waste away  
In gentle inactivity the day.

42. I will not now shock the easiness of your temper by talking about a future state; but suffer me to ask you a question about present things: Are you now happy?

I have seen a large company of reasonable creatures, called Indians, sitting in a row on the side of a river, looking sometimes at one another, sometimes at the sky, and sometimes at the bubbles on the water. And so they sat, (unless in the time of war,) for a great part of the year, from morning to night.

These were, doubtless, much at ease. But can you think they were happy? And how little happier are you than they?

43. You eat, and drink, and sleep, and dress, and dance, and sit down to play. You are carried abroad. You are at the masquerade, the theatre, the opera-house, the park, the levee, the drawing-room. What do you do there? Why, sometimes you talk; sometimes you look at one another. And what are

you to do to-morrow, the next day, the next week, the next year? You are to eat, and drink, and sleep, and dance, and dress, and play again. And you are to be carried abroad again, that you may again look at one another! And is this all? Alas, how little more happiness have you in this, than the Indians in looking at the sky or water!

Ah, poor, dull round! I do not wonder that Colonel M.— (or any man of reflection) should prefer death itself, even in the midst of his years, to such a life as this; and should frankly declare that he chose to go out of the world, because he found nothing in it worth living for.

44. Yet it is certain there is business to be done: And many we find in all places (not to speak of the vulgar, the drudges of the earth) who are continually employed therein. Are you of that number? Are you engaged in trade, or some other reputable employment? I suppose, profitable too; for you would not spend your time and labour and thought for nothing. You are then making your fortune; you are getting money. True; but money is not your ultimate end. The treasuring up gold and silver, for its own sake, all men own, is as foolish and absurd, as grossly unreasonable, as the treasuring up spiders, or the wings of butterflies. You consider this but as a means to some farther end. And what is that? Why, the enjoying yourself, the being at ease, the taking your pleasure, the living like a gentleman; that is, plainly, either the whole or some part of the happiness above described.

Supposing then your end to be actually attained; suppose you have your wish before you drop into eternity: Go and sit down with Thleeanowhee and his companions on the river side.—After you have toiled for fifty years, you are just as happy as they.

45. Are you, can you, or any reasonable man, be satisfied with this? You are not. It is not possible you should. But what else can you do? You would have something better to employ your time; but you know not where to find it upon earth.

And, indeed, it is obvious that the earth, as it is now constituted, even with the help of all European arts, does not afford sufficient employment to take up half the waking hours of half its inhabitants.

What then can you do? How can you employ the time

that lies so heavy upon your hands? This very thing which you seek declare we unto you. The thing you want is the religion we preach. That alone leaves no time upon our hands. It fills up all the blank spaces of life. It exactly takes up all the time we have to spare, be it more or less; so that "he that hath much hath nothing over; and he that has little has no lack."

46. Once more: Can you, or any man of reason, think you was made for the life you now lead? You cannot possibly think so; at least, not till you tread the Bible under foot. The oracles of God bear thee witness in every page, (and thine own heart agreeth thereto,) that thou wast made in the image of God, an incorruptible picture of the God of glory. And what art thou, even in thy present state? An everlasting spirit, going to God. For what end then did he create thee, but to dwell with him, above this perishable world, to know him, to love him, to do his will, to enjoy him for ever and ever? O look more deeply into thyself! and into that Scripture, which thou professest to receive as the word of God, as "right concerning all things." There thou wilt find a nobler, happier state described, than it ever yet entered into thy heart to conceive. But God hath now revealed it to all those who "rejoice evermore, and pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks," and do his "will on earth as it is done in heaven." For this thou wast made. Hereunto also thou art called. O be not disobedient to the heavenly calling! At least be not angry with those who would fain bring thee to be a living witness of that religion, "whose ways are" indeed "ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace."

47. Do you say in your heart?—"I know all this already. I am not barely a man of reason. I am a religious man; for I not only avoid evil and do good, but use all the means of grace. I am constantly at church, and at the sacrament too. I say my prayers every day. I read many good books. I fast—every thirtieth of January, and Good-Friday." Do you indeed? Do you do all this? This you may do, you may go thus far, and yet have no religion at all; no such religion as avails before God: Nay, much farther than this; than you have ever gone yet, or so much as thought of going. For you may "give all your goods to feed the poor," yea, "your body to be burned," and yet very possibly, if St. Paul be a judge, "have no charity," no true religion.

48. This religion, which alone is of value before God, is the

very thing you want. You want (and in wanting this, you want all) the religion of love. You do not love your neighbour as yourself, no more than you love God with all your heart. Ask your own heart now if it be not so. It is plain you do not love God. If you did, you would be happy in him. But you know you are not happy. Your formal religion no more makes you happy, than your neighbour's gay religion does him. O how much have you suffered for want of plain dealing! Can you now bear to hear the naked truth? You have "the form of godliness, but not the power." You are a mere whited wall. Before the Lord your God, I ask you, Are you not? Too sure; for your "inward parts are very wickedness." You love "the creature more than the Creator." You are "a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God." *A lover of God!* You do not love God at all, no more than you love a stone. You love the world; therefore the love of the Father is not in you.

49. You are on the brink of the pit, ready to be plunged into everlasting perdition. Indeed you have a zeal for God; but not according to knowledge. O how terribly have you been deceived! posting to hell, and fancying it was heaven. See, at length, that outward religion, without inward, is nothing; is far worse than nothing, being, indeed, no other than a solemn mockery of God. And inward religion you have not. You have not the faith "that worketh by love." Your faith (so called) is no living, saving principle. It is not the Apostle's faith, "the substance," or subsistence, "of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." So far from it, that this faith is the very thing which you call enthusiasm. You are not content with being without it, unless you blaspheme it too. You even revile that "life which is hid with Christ in God;" all seeing, tasting, hearing, feeling God. These things are foolishness unto you. No marvel; "for they are spiritually discerned."

50. O no longer shut your eyes against the light! Know, you have a name that you live, but are dead. Your soul is utterly dead in sin; dead in pride, in vanity, in self-will, in sensuality, in love of the world. You are utterly dead to God. There is no intercourse between your soul and God. "You have neither seen him," (by faith, as our Lord witnessed against them of old time,) "nor heard his voice at any time." You have no spiritual "senses exercised to discern spiritual good and evil." You are angry at infidels, and are all the while as mere an infidel

before God as they. You have "eyes that see not, and ears that hear not." You have a callous, unfeeling heart.

51. Bear with me a little longer: My soul is distressed for you. "The god of this world hath blinded your eyes," and you are "seeking death in the error of your life." Because you do not commit gross sin, because you give alms, and go to the church and sacrament, you imagine that you are serving God: Yet, in very deed, you are serving the devil; for you are doing still your own will, not the will of God your Saviour. You are pleasing yourself in all you do. Pride, vanity, and self-will (the genuine fruits of an earthly, sensual, devilish heart) pollute all your words and actions. You are in darkness, in the shadow of death. O that God would say to you in thunder, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light!"

52. But, blessed be God, he hath not yet left himself without witness:

All are not lost! There be, who faith prefer,  
Though few, and piety to God!

who know the power of faith, and are no strangers to that inward, vital religion, "the mind that was in Christ; righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Of you who "have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come," I would be glad to learn if we have "erred from the faith," or walked contrary to "the truth as it is in Jesus." "Let the righteous smite me friendly, and reprove me;" if haply that which is amiss may be done away, and what is wanting supplied, till we all come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

53. Perhaps the first thing that now occurs to your mind relates to the doctrine which we teach. You have heard that we say, "Men may live without sin." And have you not heard that the Scripture says the same;—we mean, without committing sin? Does not St. Paul say plainly, that those who believe "do not continue in sin," that they cannot "live any longer therein?" (Rom. vi. 1, 2.) Does not St. Peter say, "He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live to the desires of men, but to the will of God?" (1 Peter iv. 1, 2.) And does not St. John say expressly, "He that committeth sin is of the devil? For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

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. 8, &c.) And again : " We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not." (v. 18.)

54. You see then it is not we that say this, but the Lord. These are not our words, but his. And who is he that replieth against God ? Who is able to make God a liar ? Surely he will be justified in his saying, and clear when he is judged ! Can you deny it ? Have you not often felt a secret check when you was contradicting this great truth ? And how often have you wished for what you was taught to deny ? Nay, can you help wishing for it this moment ? Do you not now earnestly desire to cease from sin ? to commit it no more ? Does not your soul pant after this glorious liberty of the sons of God ? And what strong reason have you to expect it ! Have you not had a foretaste of it already ? Do you not remember the time when God first lifted up the light of his countenance upon you ? Can it ever be forgotten ? the day when the candle of the Lord first shone upon your head ?

Butter and honey did you eat ;  
 And, lifted up on high,  
 You saw the clouds beneath your feet,  
 And rode upon the sky.  
 Far, far above all earthly things  
 Triumphantly you rode ;  
 You soar'd to heaven on eagles' wings,  
 And found, and talk'd with God.

You then had power not to commit sin. You found the Apostle's words strictly true, " He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." But those whom you took to be experienced Christians telling you, this was only the time of your espousals, this could not last always, you must come down from the mount, and the like, shook your faith. You looked at men more than God, and so became weak, and like another man. Whereas, had you then had any to guide you according to the truth of God, had you then heard the doctrine which now you blame, you had never fallen from your steadfastness ; but had found, that, in this sense also, " the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

55. Have you not another objection nearly allied to this, namely, that we preach perfection ? True ; but what perfection ? The term you cannot object to ; because it is scriptural.

All the difficulty is, to fix the meaning of it according to the word of God. And this we have done again and again, declaring to all the world, that Christian perfection does not imply an exemption from ignorance, or mistake, or infirmities, or temptations; but that it does imply the being so crucified with Christ, as to be able to testify, "I live not, but Christ liveth in me," (Gal. ii. 20,) and hath "purified my heart by faith." (Acts xv. 9.) It does imply "the casting down every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." It does imply "the being holy, as he that hath called us is holy, in all manner of conversation;" (2 Cor. x. 5; 1 Peter i. 15;) and, in a word, "the loving the Lord our God with all our heart, and serving him with all our strength."

56. Now, is it possible for any who believe the Scripture to deny one tittle of this? You cannot. You dare not. You would not for the world. You know it is the pure word of God. And this is the whole of what we preach; this is the height and depth of what we (with St. Paul) call perfection;—a state of soul devoutly to be wished by all who have tasted of the love of God. O pray for it without ceasing! It is the one thing you want. Come with boldness to the throne of grace; and be assured that when you ask this of God, you shall have the petition you ask of him. We know indeed that to man, to the natural man, this is impossible. But we know also, that as no word is impossible with God, so "all things are possible to him that believeth."

57. For "we are saved by faith." But have you not heard this urged as another objection against us, that we preach salvation by faith alone? And does not St. Paul do the same thing? "By grace," saith he, "ye are saved through faith." Can any words be more express? And elsewhere, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved." (Acts xvi. 31.)

What we mean by this (if it has not been sufficiently explained already) is, that we are saved from our sins, only by a confidence in the love of God. As soon as we "behold what manner of love it is which the Father hath bestowed upon us, we love him," (as the Apostle observes,) "because he first loved us." And then is that commandment written in our heart, "That he who loveth God love his brother also;" from which love of God and man, meekness, humbleness of mind, and all holy tempers, spring.

Now, these are the very essence of salvation, of Christian salvation, salvation from sin; and from these outward salvation flows, that is, holiness of life and conversation. Well, and are not these things so? If you know in whom you have believed, you need no further witnesses.

58. But perhaps you doubt whether that faith whereby we are thus saved implies such a trust and confidence in God as we describe. You cannot think faith implies assurance; an assurance of the love of God to our souls, of his being now reconciled to us, and having forgiven all our sins. And this we freely confess, that, if number of voices is to decide the question, we must give it up at once: For you have on your side, not only some who desire to be Christians indeed; but all nominal Christians in every place; and the Romish Church, one and all. Nay, these last are so vehement in your defence, that, in the famed Council of Trent, they have decreed, "If any man hold (*fiduciam*) trust, confidence, or assurance of pardon, to be essential to faith, let him be accursed."

59. Thus does that Council anathematize the Church of England; for she is convicted hereof by her own confession. The very words in the Homily on Salvation are, "Even the devils believe that Christ was born of a virgin; that he wrought all kind of miracles, declaring himself very God; that for our sakes he suffered a most painful death, to redeem us from death everlasting. These articles of our faith the devils believe; and so they believe all that is written in the Old and New Testament. And yet, for all this faith, they be but devils. They remain still in their damnable estate, lacking the very true, Christian faith.

"The right and true Christian faith is, not only to believe the Holy Scriptures, and the articles of our faith, are true; but also to have a sure trust and confidence, to be saved from everlasting damnation through Christ." Or, (as it is expressed a little after,) "a sure trust and confidence which a man hath in God, that by the merits of Christ his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favour of God."

60. Indeed, the Bishop of Rome saith, "If any man hold this, let him be an Anathema Maranatha." But it is to be hoped, Papal anathemas do not move *you*. You are a member of the Church of England. Are you? Then the controversy is at an end. Then hear the Church: "Faith is a sure trust which a man hath in God, that his sins are forgiven." Or, if you are not,

whether you hear our Church or no, at least hear the Scriptures. Hear believing Job, declaring his faith, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." Hear Thomas (when having seen, he believed) crying out, "My Lord and my God!" Hear St. Paul clearly describing the nature of his faith, "The life I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Hear (to mention no more) all the believers who were with Paul when he wrote to the Colossians, bearing witness, "We give thanks unto the Father, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son; in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." (i. 12, 13, 14.)

61. But what need have we of distant witnesses? You have a witness in your own breast. For am I not speaking to one that loves God? How came you then to love him at first? Was it not because you knew that he loved you? Did you, could you, love God at all, till you tasted and saw that he was gracious; that he was merciful to you a sinner? What avails then controversy, or strife of words? Out of thy own mouth! You own you had no love to God till you was sensible of his love to you. And whatever expressions any sinner who loves God uses, to denote God's love to him, you will always upon examination find, that they directly or indirectly imply forgiveness. Pardoning love is still at the root of all. He who was offended is now reconciled. The new song which God puts in every mouth is always to that effect: "O Lord, I will praise thee; though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away. Behold, God is my salvation. I will trust, and not be afraid: For the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he is also become my salvation." (Isaiah xii. 1, 2.)

62. A confidence then in a pardoning God is essential to saving faith. The forgiveness of sins is one of the first of those unseen things whereof faith is the evidence. And if you are sensible of this, will you quarrel with us concerning an indifferent circumstance of it? Will you think it an important objection, that we assert that this faith is usually given in a moment? First, let me entreat you to read over that authentic account of God's dealings with men, the Acts of the Apostles. In this treatise you will find how he wrought from the beginning on those who received remission of sins by faith. And can you find one of these (except, perhaps, St. Paul) who did not receive

it in a moment? But abundance you find of those who did, besides Cornelius and the three thousand. (Acts ii. 41.) And to this also agrees the experience of those who now receive the heavenly gift. Three or four exceptions only have I found in the course of several years;—perhaps you yourself may be added to that number, and one or two more whom you have known. But all the rest of those who from time to time among us have believed in the Lord Jesus were in a moment brought from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

63. And why should it seem a thing incredible to you, who have known the power of God unto salvation, (whether he hath wrought thus in your soul or no; “for there are diversities of operations, but the same Spirit,”) that “the dead should hear the voice of the Son of God,” and in that moment live? Thus he useth to act, to show that when he willeth, to do is present with him. “Let there be light,” said God; “and there was light. He spake the word, and it was done. Thus the heavens and the earth were created, and all the hosts of them.” And this manner of acting in the present case highly suits both his power and love. There is therefore no hinderance on God’s part; since “as his majesty is, so is his mercy.” And whatever hinderance there is on the part of man, when God speaketh, it is not. Only ask then, O sinner, “and it shall be given thee,” even the faith that brings salvation: And that without any merit or good work of thine; for “it is not of works, lest any man should boast.” No; it is of grace, of grace alone. For “unto him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted to him for righteousness.”

64. “But by talking thus you encourage sinners.” I do encourage them—to repent; and do not you? Do not you know how many heap sin upon sin, purely for want of such encouragement; because they think they can never be forgiven, there is no place for repentance left? Does not your heart also bleed for them? What would you think too dear to part with? What would you not do, what would you not suffer, to bring one such sinner to repentance? Could not your love “endure all things” for them? Yes,—if you believed it would do them good; if you had any hope that they would be better. Why do you not believe it would do them good? Why have you not a hope that they will be better? Plainly, because you do not love them enough; because you have not that charity which

not only endureth, but at the same time believeth and hopeth, all things.

65. But that you may see the whole strength of this objection, I will show you, without any disguise or reserve, how I encourage the chief of sinners. My usual language to them runs thus:—

O ye that deny the Lord that bought you, yet hear the word of the Lord! You seek rest, but find none. Even in laughter your heart is in heaviness. How long spend ye your labour for that which is not bread, and your strength for that which satisfieth not? You know your soul is not satisfied. It is still an aching void. Sometimes you find, in spite of your principles, a sense of guilt, an awakened conscience. That grisly phantom, religion, (so you describe her,) will now and then haunt you still. Righteousness looking down from heaven is indeed to us no unpleasing sight. But how does it appear to you?

*Horribili super aspectu mortalibus instans?\**

How often are you in fear of the very things you deny? How often in racking suspense? What, if there be an hereafter, a judgment to come, an unhappy eternity? Do you not start at the thought? Can you be content to be always thus? Shall it be said of you also?—

“Here lies a dicer, long in doubt  
If death could kill the soul, or not:  
Here ends his doubtfulness; at last  
Convinced: But, O, the die is cast!”

Or, are you already convinced there is no hereafter? What a poor state then are you in now? taking a few more dull turns upon earth, and then dropping into nothing! What kind of spirit must you be of, if you can sustain yourself under the thought! under the expectation of being in a few moments swept away by the stream of time, and then for ever

swallow'd up, and lost  
In the wide womb of uncreated night!

But neither indeed are you certain of this; nor of anything else. It may be so; it may not. A vast scene is behind:

\* The following is Dr. Mason Good's translation of this quotation from Lucretius, and of the lines connected with it:—

“Them long the tyrant power  
Of SUPERSTITION sway'd, uplifting proud  
Her head to heaven, and with horrific limbs  
Brooding o'er earth's.”—EDIT.

But clouds and darkness rest upon it. All is doubt and uncertainty. You are continually tossed to and fro, and have no firm ground for the sole of your foot. O let not the poor wisdom of man any longer exalt itself against the wisdom of God! You have fled from him long enough; at length, suffer your eyes to be opened by Him that made them. You want rest to your soul. Ask it of Him who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not! You are now a mere riddle to yourself, and your condition full of darkness and perplexity. You are one among many restless inhabitants of a miserable, disordered world, "walking in a vain shadow, and disquieting yourself in vain." But the light of God will speedily disperse the anxiety of your vain conjectures. By adding heaven to earth, and eternity to time, it will open such a glorious view of things as will lead you, even in the present world, to a peace which passeth all understanding.

66. O ye gross, vile, scandalous sinners, hear ye the word of the Lord. "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn and live." O make haste; delay not the time! "Come, and let us reason together: Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red as crimson, they shall be as wool. Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments, red in his apparel?" It is He on whom the Lord "hath laid the iniquities of us all!" Behold, behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away thy sins! See the only-begotten Son of the Father, "full of grace and truth!" He loveth thee. He gave himself for thee. Now his bowels of compassion yearn over thee! O believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved! "Go in peace, sin no more!"

67. Now, cannot you join in all this? Is it not the very language of your heart? O when will you take knowledge, that our whole concern, our constant labour, is, to bring all the world to the religion which you feel; to solid, inward, vital religion! What power is it then that keeps us asunder? "Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart? If it be, give me thy hand. Come with me, and see," and rejoice in, "my zeal for the Lord." No difference between us (if thou art a child of God) can be so considerable as our agreement is. If we differ in smaller things, we agree in that which is greatest of all. How

is it possible then that you should be induced to think or speak evil of us? How could it ever come into your mind to oppose us, or weaken our hands? How long shall we complain of the wounds which we receive in the house of our friends? Surely the children of this world are still "wiser in their generation than the children of light." Satan is not divided against himself: Why are they who are on the Lord's side? How is it that wisdom is not justified of her own children?

68. Is it because you have heard that we only make religion a cloak for covetousness; and because you have heard abundance of particulars alleged in support of that general charge? It is probable you may also have heard how much we have gained by preaching already; and, to crown all, that we are only Papists in disguise, who are undermining and destroying the Church.

69. You have heard this. Well; and can you believe it? Have you then never heard the fifth chapter of St. Matthew? I would to God you could believe it. What is written there? How readest thou? "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for myname's sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: For great is your reward in heaven: For so persecuted they the Prophets that were before you;" namely, by "reviling them, and saying all manner of evil of them falsely." Do not you know that this, as well as all other scriptures, must needs be fulfilled? If so, take knowledge that this day also it is fulfilled in your ears. For our Lord's sake, and for the sake of his gospel which we preach, "men do revile us and persecute us, and" (blessed be God, who giveth us to rejoice therein) "say all manner of evil of us falsely." And how can it be otherwise? "The disciple is not above his Master. It is enough for the disciple, that he be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord. If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?"

70. This only we confess, that we preach inward salvation, now attainable by faith. And for preaching this (for no other crime was then so much as pretended) we were forbid to preach any more in those churches, where, till then, we were gladly received. This is a notorious fact. Being thus hindered from preaching in the places we should first have chosen, we now declare the "grace of God which bringeth salvation," in all

places of his dominion ; as well knowing, that God dwelleth not only in temples made with hands. This is the real, and it is the only real, ground of complaint against us. And this we avow before all mankind, we do preach this salvation by faith. And not being suffered to preach it in the usual places, we declare it wherever a door is opened, either on a mountain, or a plain, or by a river side, (for all which we conceive we have sufficient precedent,) or in prison, or, as it were, in the house of Justus, or the school of one Tyrannus. Nor dare we refrain. "A dispensation of the gospel is committed to me ; and woe is me, if I preach not the gospel."

71. Here we allow the fact, but deny the guilt. But in every other point alleged, we deny the fact, and call upon the world to prove it, if they can. More especially, we call upon those who for many years saw our manner of life at Oxford. These well know that "after the straitest sect of our religion we lived Pharisees ;" and that the grand objection to us for all those years was, the being righteous overmuch ; the reading, fasting, praying, denying ourselves,—the going to church, and to the Lord's table,—the relieving the poor, visiting those that were sick and in prison, instructing the ignorant, and labouring to reclaim the wicked,—more than was necessary for salvation. These were our open, flagrant crimes, from the year 1729 to the year 1737 ; touching which our Lord shall judge in that day.

72. But, waving the things that are past, which of you now convinceth us of sin ? Which of you (I here more especially appeal to my brethren, the Clergy) can personally convict us of any ungodliness or unholiness of conversation ? Ye know in your own hearts, (all that are candid men, all that are not utterly blinded with prejudice,) that we "labour to have a conscience void of offence both toward God and toward man." Brethren, I would to God that in this ye were even as we. But indeed (with grief I speak it) ye are not. There are among yourselves ungodly and unholy men ; openly, undeniably such ; drunkards, gluttons, returners of evil for evil, liars, swearers, profaners of the day of the Lord. Proof hereof is not wanting, if ye require it. Where then is your zeal against these ? A Clergyman, so drunk he can scarce stand or speak, may, in the presence of a thousand people,\* set upon another Clergyman of the same

\* At Epworth, in Lincolnshire.

Church, both with abusive words and open violence. And what follows? Why, the one is still allowed to dispense the sacred signs of the body and blood of Christ: But the other is not allowed to receive them,—because he is a field Preacher.

73. O ye pillars and fathers of the Church, are these things well-pleasing to Him who hath made you Overseers over that flock which he hath purchased with his own blood? O that ye would suffer me to boast myself a little! Is there not a cause? Have ye not compelled me? Which of your Clergy are more unspotted in their lives, which more unwearied in their labours, than those whose “names ye cast out as evil,” whom ye count “as the filth and off-scouring of the world?” Which of them is more zealous to spend and be spent, for the lost sheep of the house of Israel? Or who among them is more ready to be offered up for their flock “upon the sacrifice and service of their faith?”

74. Will ye say, (as the historian of Catiline,) *Si sic pro patriâ!* “If this were done in defence of the Church, and not in order to undermine and destroy it!” That is the very proposition I undertake to prove,—that we are now defending the Church, even the Church of England, in opposition to all those who either secretly undermine or more openly attempt to destroy it.

75. That we are Papists, (we who are daily and hourly preaching that very doctrine which is so solemnly anathematized by the whole Church of Rome,) is such a charge that I dare not waste my time in industriously confuting it. Let any man of common sense only look on the title-pages of the sermons we have lately preached at Oxford, and he will need nothing more to show him the weight of this senseless, shameless accusation;—unless he can suppose the Governors both of Christ Church and Lincoln College, nay, and all the University, to be Papists too.

76. You yourself can easily acquit us of this; but not of the other part of the charge. You still think we are secretly undermining, if not openly destroying, the Church.

What do you mean by the Church? A visible Church (as our article defines it) is a company of faithful or believing people;—*cætus credentium*. This is the essence of a Church; and the properties thereof are, (as they are described in the words that follow,) “among whom the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered.” Now then, (according

to this authentic account,) what is the Church of England? What is it indeed, but the faithful people, the true believers in England? It is true, if these are scattered abroad, they come under another consideration: But when they are visibly joined, by assembling together to hear the pure word of God preached, and to eat of one bread, and drink of one cup, they are then properly the visible Church of England.

77. It were well if this were a little more considered by those who so vehemently cry out, "The Church! the Church!" (as those of old, "The temple of the Lord! the temple of the Lord!") not knowing what they speak, nor whereof they affirm. A provincial or national Church, according to our article, is the true believers of that province or nation. If these are dispersed up and down, they are only a part of the invisible Church of Christ. But if they are visibly joined by assembling together to hear his word and partake of his supper, they are then a visible Church, such as the Church of England, France, or any other.

78. This being premised, I ask, How do we undermine or destroy the Church,—the provincial, visible Church of England? The article mentions three things as essential to a visible Church. First: Living faith; without which, indeed, there can be no Church at all, neither visible nor invisible. Secondly: Preaching, and consequently hearing, the pure word of God, else that faith would languish and die. And, Thirdly, a due administration of the sacraments,—the ordinary means whereby God increaseth faith. Now come close to the question: In which of these points do we undermine or destroy the Church?

Do we shut the door of faith? Do we lessen the number of believing people in England? Only remember what faith is, according to our Homilies, viz., "a sure trust and confidence in God, that through the merits of Christ my sins are forgiven, and I reconciled to the favour of God." And we appeal to all mankind, Do we destroy this faith, which is the life and soul of the Church? Is there, in fact, less of this faith in England, than there was before we went forth? I think this is an assertion which the father of lies himself will scarce dare to utter or maintain.

With regard then to this First point, it is undeniable we neither undermine nor destroy the Church. The Second thing is the preaching and hearing the pure word of God. And do we hinder this? Do we hinder any Minister from preaching the

pure word of God? If any preach not at all, or not the pure word of God, is the hinderance in us, or in themselves? or do we lessen the number of those that hear the pure word of God? Are then the hearers thereof (whether read or preached) fewer than they were in times past? Are the usual places of public worship less frequented by means of our preaching? Wheresoever our lot has been cast for any time, are the churches emptier than they were before? Surely, none that has any regard left either for truth or modesty will say that in this point we are enemies to, or destroyers of, the Church.

The Third thing requisite (if not to the being, at least) to the well-being of a Church, is the due administration of the sacraments, particularly that of the Lord's supper. And are we, in this respect, underminers or destroyers of the Church? Do we, either by our example or advice, draw men away from the Lord's table? Where we have laboured most, are there the fewest communicants? How does the fact stand in London, Bristol, Newcastle? O that you would no longer shut your eyes against the broad light which encompasses you on every side!

79. I believe you are sensible, by this time, not only how weak this objection is, but likewise how easy it would be terribly to retort every branch of it upon most of those that make it; whether we speak of true living faith, of preaching the pure word of God, or of the due administration of the sacraments, both of baptism and the Lord's supper. But I spare you. It sufficeth that our God knoweth, and will make manifest in that day, whether it be by reason of us or you that "men abhor the offering of the Lord."

80. Others object that we do not observe the laws of the Church, and thereby undermine it. What laws? the Rubrics or Canons? In every parish where I have been Curate yet, I have observed the Rubrics with a scrupulous exactness, not for wrath, but for conscience' sake. And this, so far as belongs to an unbeneficed Minister, or to a private member of the Church, I do now. I will just mention a few of them, and leave you to consider which of us has observed, or does observe, them most.

- (1.) Days of fasting or abstinence to be observed:
- The forty days of Lent;
  - The Ember days at the four seasons;
  - The three Rogation days;
  - All Fridays in the year, except Christmas-day.

(2.) "So many as intend to be partakers of the holy communion shall signify their names to the Curate, at least some time the day before :

"And if any of these be an open and notorious evil liver, the Curate shall advertise him, that in anywise he presume not to come to the Lord's table, until he hath openly declared himself to have truly repented.

(3.) "Then (after the Nicene Creed) the Curate shall declare unto the people what holidays or *fasting-days* are in the week following to be observed.

(4.) "The Minister shall first receive the communion in both kinds himself, and *then proceed to deliver the same to the Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, in like manner, if any be present, and after that, to the people.*

(5.) "In cathedral and collegiate churches, and colleges, where there are many Priests and Deacons, they shall *all receive the communion with the Priest every Sunday at the least.*

(6.) "The children to be baptized must be ready at the font *immediately after the last Lesson.*

(7.) "The Curates of every parish shall warn the people, that without great necessity they procure not their children to be baptized *at home in their houses.*

(8.) "The Curate of every parish shall diligently *upon Sundays and holidays, after the Second Lesson at Evening Prayer, openly in the church,* instruct and examine so many children as he shall think convenient, in some part of the Catechism.

(9.) "Whensoever the Bishop shall give notice for children to be brought unto him for their confirmation, the Curate of every parish shall either bring or *send in writing, with his hand subscribed thereunto, the names of all such persons* within his parish, as he shall think fit to be presented to the Bishop."

81. Now, the question is not whether these Rubrics ought to be observed, (you take this for granted in making the objection,) but whether in fact they have been observed by you, or me, most. Many can witness I have observed them punctually, yea, sometimes at the hazard of my life ; and as many, I fear, that you have not observed them at all, and that several of them you never pretended to observe. And is it you that are accusing me for not observing the Rubrics of the Church ? What grimace is this ! "O tell it not in Gath ! Publish it not in the streets of Askelon !"

82. With regard to the Canons, I would, in the first place, desire you to consider two or three plain questions :

First. Have you ever read them over ?

Secondly. How can these be called the Canons of the Church of England, seeing they were never legally established by the Church, never regularly confirmed in any full Convocation ?

Thirdly. By what right am I required to observe such Canons as were never legally established ?

And then I will join issue with you on one question more, viz., Whether you or I have observed them most.

To instance only in a few :

“Canon 29.—No person shall be admitted godfather or godmother to any child, before the said person hath received the holy communion.

“Can. 59.—Every Parson, Vicar, or Curate, upon *every* Sunday and holiday, before Evening Prayer, shall, for half an hour, or more, examine and instruct the youth and ignorant persons of his parish.

“Can. 64.—Every Parson, Vicar, or Curate, shall declare to the people every Sunday, whether there be any holidays or *fasting-days* the week following.

“Can. 68.—No Minister shall *refuse* or *delay* to christen any child that is brought to the church to him upon Sundays or holidays to be christened, or to bury any corpse that is brought to the church or church-yard.”

(N.B. Inability to pay fees does not alter the case.)

“Can. 75.—No ecclesiastical persons shall spend their time idly, by day or by night, playing at *dice*, *cards*, or *tables*.”

Now, let the Clergyman who has observed only these five Canons for one year last past, and who has read over all the Canons in his congregation ; (as the King's ratification straitly enjoins him to do once every year ;) let him, I say, cast the first stone at us, for not observing the Canons (so called) of the Church of England.

83. “However, we cannot be,” it is said, “friends to the Church, because we do not obey the Governors of it, and submit ourselves (as at our ordination we promised to do) to all their godly admonitions and injunctions.”\* I answer, In every indi-

\* The author of a tract just published at Newcastle, entitled, “The Notions of the Methodists fully disproved, in a Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley,” much insists upon this objection. I have read, and believe it quite needless to take any

vidual point of an indifferent nature, we do and will, by the grace of God, obey the Governors of the Church. But the testifying the gospel of the grace of God is not a point of an indifferent nature. "The ministry which we have received of the Lord Jesus," we are at all hazards to fulfil. It is the burden of the Lord which is laid upon us here; and we are "to obey God rather than man." Nor yet do we in any ways violate the promise which each of us made, when it was said unto him, "Take thou authority to preach the word of God, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy ghost." We then promised to *submit* (mark the words) *to the Godly admonitions and injunctions of our Ordinary*. But we did not, could not, promise to obey such injunctions as we know are contrary to the word of God.

84. "But why then," say some, "do you leave the Church?" *Leave the Church!* What can you mean? Do we leave so much as the Church walls? Your own eyes tell you we do not. Do we leave the ordinances of the Church? You daily see and know the contrary. Do we leave the fundamental doctrine of the Church, namely, salvation by faith? It is our constant theme, in public, in private, in writing, in conversation. Do we leave the practice of the Church, the standard whereof are the ten commandments? which are so essentially in-wrought in her constitution, (as little as you may apprehend it,) that whosoever breaks one of the least of these is no member of the Church of England. I believe you do not care to put the cause on this issue. Neither do you mean this by leaving the Church. In truth, I cannot conceive what you mean. I doubt you cannot conceive yourself. You have retailed a sentence from somebody else, which you no more understand than he. And no marvel; for it is a true observation,

Nonsense is never to be understood.

85. Nearly related to this is that other objection, that we divide the Church. Remember, the Church is the faithful people, or true believers. Now, how do we divide these? "Why, by our societies." Very good. Now the case is plain. "We

further notice of, this performance; the writer being so utterly unacquainted with the merits of the cause; and showing himself so perfectly a stranger, both to my life, preaching, and writing, and to the word of God, and to the Articles and Homilies of the Church of England.

divide them," you say, "by uniting them together." Truly, a very uncommon way of dividing. "O, but we divide those who are thus united with each other, from the rest of the Church!" By no means. Many of them were before joined to all their brethren of the Church of England (and many were not, until they knew us) by "assembling themselves together," to hear the word of God, and to eat of one bread, and drink of one cup. And do they now forsake that assembling themselves together? You cannot, you dare not, say it. You know they are more diligent therein than ever; it being one of the fixed rules of our societies, that every member attend the ordinances of God; that is, do not divide from the Church. And if any member of the Church does thus divide from or leave it, he hath no more place among us.

86. I have considered this objection the more at large, because it is of most weight with sincere minds. And to all these, if they have fairly and impartially weighed the answer as well as the objection, I believe it clearly appears, that we are neither undermining nor destroying, neither dividing nor leaving, the Church. So far from it, that we have great heaviness on her account, yea, continual sorrow in our hearts. And our prayer to God is, that he would repair the breaches of Zion, and build the walls of Jerusalem; that this our desolate Church may flourish again, and be the praise of the whole earth.

87. But perhaps you have heard that we in truth regard no Church at all; that gain is the true spring of all our actions; that I, in particular, am well paid for my work, having thirteen hundred pounds a year (as a reverend author accurately computes it) at the Foundery alone, over and above what I receive from Bristol, Kingswood, Newcastle, and other places; and that whoever survives me will see I have made good use of my time; for I shall not die a beggar.

88. I freely own this is one of the best-devised objections which has ever yet been made; because it not only puts us upon proving a negative, (which is seldom an easy task,) but also one of such a kind as scarce admits of any demonstrative proof at all. But for such proof as the nature of the thing allows, I appeal to my manner of life which hath been from the beginning. Ye who have seen it (and not with a friendly eye) for these twelve or fourteen years last past, or for any part of that time, have ye ever seen anything like the love of gain therein?

Did I not continually remember the words of the Lord Jesus, "It is more blessed to give than to receive?" Ye of Oxford, do ye not know these things are so? What gain did I seek among you? Of whom did I take anything? From whom did I covet silver, or gold, or apparel? To whom did I deny anything which I had, even to the hour that I departed from you? Ye of Epworth and Wroote, among whom I ministered for nearly the space of three years, what gain did I seek among you? Or of whom did I take or covet anything? Ye of Savannah and Frederica, among whom God afterwards proved me, and showed me what was in my heart, what gain did I seek among you? Of whom did I take anything? Or whose food or apparel did I covet, (for silver or gold had ye none, no more than I myself for many months,) even when I was in hunger and nakedness? Ye yourselves, and the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, know that I lie not.

89. "But," it is said, "things are fairly altered now. Now I cannot complain of wanting anything; having the yearly income of a Bishop of London, over and above what I gain at other places." At what other places, my friend? Inform yourself a little better, and you will find that both at Newcastle, Bristol, and Kingswood, and all other places, where any collection is made, the money collected is both received and expended by the stewards of those several societies, and never comes into my hands at all,—neither first nor last. And you, or any who desire it, shall read over the accounts kept by any of those stewards, and see with your own eyes, that by all these societies I gain just as much as you do.

90. The case in London stands thus:—In November, 1739, two gentlemen, then unknown to me, (Mr. Ball and Mr. Watkins,) came and desired me, once and again, to preach in a place called the Foundery, near Moorfields. With much reluctance I at length complied. I was soon after pressed to take that place into my own hands. Those who were most earnest therein lent me the purchase-money, which was one hundred and fifteen pounds. Mr. Watkins and Mr. Ball then delivered me the names of several subscribers, who offered to pay, some four or six, some ten shillings a year towards the repayment of the purchase-money, and the putting the buildings into repair. This amounted one year to near two hundred pounds, the second to about one hundred and forty pounds, and so the last.

91. The united society began a little after, whose weekly contribution for the poor is received and expended by the stewards, and comes not into my hands at all. But there is also a quarterly subscription of many of the society, which is nearly equal to that above mentioned.

92. The uses to which these subscriptions have been hitherto applied, are, First, the payment of that one hundred and fifteen pounds: Secondly, the repairing (I might almost say, rebuilding) that vast, uncouth heap of ruins, the Foundery: Thirdly, the building galleries both for men and women: Fourthly, the enlarging the society-room to near thrice its first bigness. All taxes and occasional expenses are likewise defrayed out of this fund. And it has been hitherto so far from yielding any overplus, that it has never sufficed for these purposes. So far from it, that I am still in debt, on these accounts, near three hundred pounds. So much have I hitherto gained by preaching the gospel! besides a debt of one hundred and fifty pounds, still remaining on account of the school built at Bristol; and another of above two hundred pounds, on account of that now building at Newcastle. I desire any reasonable man would now sit down and lay these things together, and let him see, whether, allowing me a grain of common sense, if not of common honesty, he can possibly conceive, that a view of *gain* would induce me to act in this manner.

93. You can never reconcile it with any degree of common sense, that a man who wants nothing, who has already all the necessaries, all the conveniences, nay, and many of the superfluities, of life, and these not only independent on any one, but less liable to contingencies than even a gentleman's freehold estate; that such an one should calmly and deliberately throw up his ease, most of his friends, his reputation, and that way of life which of all others is most agreeable both to his natural temper and education; that he should toil day and night, spend all his time and strength, knowingly destroy a firm constitution, and hasten into weakness, pain, diseases, death,—to gain a debt of six or seven hundred pounds!

94. But suppose the balance on the other side, let me ask you one plain question: For what gain (setting conscience aside) will *you* be obliged to act thus? to live exactly as I do? For what price will you preach (and that with all your might, not in an easy, indolent, fashionable way) eighteen or nineteen times

every week ; and this throughout the year ? What shall I give you to travel seven or eight hundred miles, in all weathers, every two or three months ? For what salary will you abstain from all other diversions, than the doing good, and the praising God ? I am mistaken if you would not prefer strangling to such a life, even with thousands of gold and silver.

95. And what is the comfort you have found out for me in these circumstances ? Why, that I shall not die a beggar. So now I am supposed to be heaping up riches, that I may leave them behind me. *Leave them behind me!* For whom ? my wife and children ? Who are they ? They are yet unborn. Unless thou meanest the children of faith whom God hath given me. But my heavenly Father feedeth them. Indeed, if I lay up riches at all, it must be to leave behind me ; seeing my Fellowship is a provision for life. But I cannot understand this. What comfort would it be to my soul, now launched into eternity, that I had left behind me gold as the dust, and silver as the sand of the sea ? Will it follow me over the great gulf ? or can I go back to it ? Thou that liftest up thy eyes in hell, what do thy riches profit thee now ? Will all thou once hadst under the sun gain thee a drop of water to cool thy tongue ? O the comfort of riches left behind to one who is tormented in that flame ! You put me in mind of those celebrated lines, (which I once exceedingly admired,) addressed by way of consolation to the soul of a poor self-murderer :—

Yet shall thy grave with rising flowers be dress'd,  
 And the green turf lie light upon thy breast !  
 Here shall the year its earliest beauties show :  
 Here the first roses of the spring shall blow :  
 While angels with their silver wings o'er shade  
 The place now sacred by thy relics made.

96. I will now simply tell you my sense of these matters, whether you will hear, or whether you will forbear. Food and raiment I have ; such food as I choose to eat, and such raiment as I choose to put on. I have a place where to lay my head. I have what is needful for life and godliness. And I apprehend this is all the world can afford. The kings of the earth can give me no more. For as to gold and silver, I count it dung and dross ; I trample it under my feet. I (yet not I, but the grace of God that is in me) esteem it just as the mire in the streets. I desire it not ; I seek it not ; I only fear lest

any of it should cleave to me, and I should not be able to shake it off before my spirit returns to God. It must indeed pass through my hands; but I will take care (God being my helper) that the mammon of unrighteousness shall only pass through; it shall not rest there. None of the accursed thing shall be found in my tents when the Lord calleth me hence. And hear ye this, all you who have discovered the treasures which I am to leave behind me: If I leave behind me ten pounds, (above my debts, and my books, or what may happen to be due on account of them,) you and all mankind bear witness against me, that I lived and died a thief and a robber.

97. Before I conclude, I cannot but entreat you who know God to review the whole matter from the foundation. Call to mind what the state of religion was in our nation a few years since. In whom did you find the holy tempers that were in Christ? bowels of mercies, lowliness, meekness, gentleness, contempt of the world, patience, temperance, long-suffering? a burning love to God, rejoicing evermore, and in everything giving thanks; and a tender love to all mankind, covering, believing, hoping, enduring all things? Perhaps you did not know one such man in the world. But how many that had all unholy tempers? What vanity and pride, what stubbornness and self-will, what anger, fretfulness, discontent, what suspicion and resentment, what inordinate affections, what irregular passions, what foolish and hurtful desires, might you find in those who were called the *best* of men, in those who made the strictest profession of religion? And how few did you know who went so far as the profession of religion, who had even the "form of godliness!" Did you not frequently bewail, wherever your lot was cast, the general want of even outward religion? How few were seen at the public worship of God! how much fewer at the Lord's table! And was even this little flock zealous of good works, careful, as they had time, to do good to all men? On the other hand, did you not with grief observe outward irreligion in every place? Where could you be for one week without being an eye or an ear witness of cursing, swearing, or profaneness, of sabbath-breaking or drunkenness, of quarrelling or brawling, of revenge or obscenity? Were these things done in a corner? Did not gross iniquity of all kinds overspread our land as a flood? yea, and daily increase, in spite of all the opposition which the children of God did or could make against it?

98. If you had been then told that the jealous God would soon arise and maintain his own cause; that he would pour down his Spirit from on high, and renew the face of the earth; that he would shed abroad his love in the hearts of the outcasts of men, producing all holy and heavenly tempers, expelling anger, and pride, and evil desire, and all unholy and earthly tempers; causing outward religion, the work of faith, the patience of hope, the labour of love, to flourish and abound; and, wherever it spread, abolishing outward irreligion, destroying all the works of the devil: If you had been told that this living knowledge of the Lord would in a short space of time overspread our land; yea, and daily increase, in spite of all the opposition which the devil and his children did or could make against it; would you not have vehemently desired to see that day, that you might bless God and rejoice therein?

99. Behold, the day of the Lord is come! He is again visiting and redeeming his people. Having eyes, see ye not? Having ears, do ye not hear, neither understand with your hearts? At this hour the Lord is rolling away our reproach. Already his standard is set up. His Spirit is poured forth on the outcasts of men, and his love shed abroad in their hearts. Love of all mankind, meekness, gentleness, humbleness of mind, holy and heavenly affections, do take place of hate, anger, pride, revenge, and vile or vain affections. Hence, wherever the power of the Lord spreads, springs outward religion in all its forms. The houses of God are filled; the table of the Lord is thronged on every side. And those who thus show their love of God, show they love their neighbour also, by being careful to maintain good works, by doing all manner of good, as they have time, to all men. They are likewise careful to abstain from all evil. Cursing, sabbath-breaking, drunkenness, with all other (however fashionable) works of the devil, are not once named among them. All this is plain, demonstrable fact. For this also is not done in a corner. Now, do you acknowledge the day of your visitation? Do you bless God and rejoice therein?

100. What hinders? Is it this,—that men say all manner of evil of those whom God is pleased to use as instruments in his work? O ye fools, did ye suppose the devil was dead? or that he would not fight for his kingdom? And what weapons shall he fight with, if not with lies? Is he not a liar, and the father of it? Suffer ye then thus far. Let the devil and his

children say all manner of evil of us. And let them go on deceiving each other, and being deceived. But ye need not be deceived also; or if you are, if you will believe all they say, be it so,—that we are weak, silly, wicked men; without sense, without learning, without even a desire or design of doing good; yet I insist upon the fact: Christ is preached, and sinners are converted to God. This none but a madman can deny. We are ready to prove it by a cloud of witnesses. Neither, therefore, can the inference be denied, that God is now visiting his people. O that all men may know, in this their day, the things that make for their peace!

101. Upon the whole, to men of the world I would still recommend the known advice of Gamaliel: "Refrain from these men, and let them alone: For if this work be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God." But unto you whom God hath chosen out of the world, I say, Ye are our brethren, and of our father's house; it behoveth you, in whatsoever manner ye are able, "to strengthen our hands in God." And this ye are all able to do; to wish us good luck in the name of the Lord, and to pray continually that none of "these things may move us," and that "we may not count our lives dear unto ourselves, so that we may finish our course with joy, and the ministry which we have received of the Lord Jesus!"

Written in the year 1744.

## PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY.

---

HAPPY the souls who first believed,  
To Jesus and each other cleaved,  
Join'd by the unction from above,  
In mystic fellowship of love!

Meek, simple followers of the Lamb,  
They lived and spake and thought the same;  
Broke the commemorative bread,  
And drank the Spirit of their Head.

On God they cast their every care:  
Wrestling with God in mighty prayer,  
They claim'd the grace, through Jesus given;  
By prayer they shut and open'd heaven.

To Jesus they perform'd their vows:  
A little Church in every house,  
They joyfully conspired to raise  
Their ceaseless sacrifice of praise.

Propriety was there unknown,  
None call'd what he possess'd his own;  
Where all the common blessings share,  
No selfish happiness was there.

With grace abundantly endued,  
A pure, believing multitude!  
They all were of one heart and soul,  
And only love inspired the whole.

O what an age of golden days!  
O what a choice, peculiar race!  
Wash'd in the Lamb's all-cleansing blood,  
Anointed kings and priests to God.

Where shall I wander now to find  
The successors they left behind?  
The faithful whom I seek in vain,  
Are 'minished from the sons of men.

Ye different sects, who all declare,  
"Lo, here is Christ!" or, "Christ is there!"  
Your stronger proofs divinely give,  
And show me where the Christians live.

Your claim, alas! ye cannot prove,  
 Ye want the genuine mark of love :  
 Thou only, Lord, thine own canst show ;  
 For sure thou hast a Church below.

The gates of hell cannot prevail,  
 The Church on earth can never fail :  
 Ah! join me to thy secret ones !  
 Ah! gather all thy living stones !

Scatter'd o'er all the earth they lie,  
 Till thou collect them with thine eye,  
 Draw by the music of thy name,  
 And charm into a beauteous frame.

For this the pleading Spirit groans,  
 And cries in all thy banish'd ones :  
 Greatest of gifts, thy love, impart,  
 And make us of one mind and heart !

Join every soul that looks to thee  
 In bonds of perfect charity :  
 Now, Lord, the glorious fulness give.  
 And all in all for ever live !

## PART II.

JESUS, from whom all blessings flow,  
 Great Builder of thy Church below,  
 If now thy Spirit moves my breast,  
 Hear, and fulfil thy own request !

The few that truly call thee Lord,  
 And wait thy sanctifying word,  
 And thee their utmost Saviour own,  
 Unite, and perfect them in one.

Gather them in on every side,  
 And in thy tabernacle hide ;  
 Give them a resting-place to find,  
 A covert from the storm and wind.

O find them out some calm recess,  
 Some unfrequented wilderness !  
 Thou, Lord, the secret place prepare,  
 And hide and feed " the woman " there

Thither collect thy little flock,  
 Under the shadow of their Rock :  
 The holy seed, the royal race,  
 The standing monuments of thy ~~grace~~

O let them all thy mind express,  
Stand forth thy chosen witnesses !  
Thy power unto salvation show,  
And perfect holiness below :

The fulness of thy grace receive,  
And simply to thy glory live ;  
Strongly reflect the light divine,  
And in a land of darkness shine.

In them let all mankind behold  
How Christians lived in days of old ;  
Mighty their envious foes to move,  
A proverb of reproach—and love.

O make them of one soul and heart,  
The all-conforming mind impart ;  
Spirit of peace and unity,  
The sinless mind that was in thee.

Call them into thy wondrous light,  
Worthy to walk with thee in white ;  
Make up thy jewels, Lord, and show  
The glorious, spotless Church below.

From every sinful wrinkle free,  
Redeem'd from all iniquity ;  
The fellowship of saints make known ;  
And O, my God, might I be one !

O might my lot be cast with these,  
The least of Jesu's witnesses !  
O that my Lord would count me meet  
To wash his dear disciples' feet !

This only thing do I require,  
Thou know'st 'tis all my heart's desire,  
Freely what I receive to give,  
The servant of thy Church to live :

After my lowly Lord to go,  
And wait upon the saints below ;  
Enjoy the grace to angels given,  
And serve the royal heirs of heaven.

Lord, if I now thy drawings feel,  
And ask according to thy will,  
Confirm the prayer, the seal impart,  
And speak the answer to my heart !

Tell me, or thou shalt never go,  
" Thy prayer is heard, it shall be so : "  
The word hath passed thy lips,—and I  
Shall with thy people live and die.