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A  
S E R M O N,  
ON THE  
DOCTRINE AND DUTY  
OF  
S A C R I F I C I N G,  
FIRST DELIVERED AT AN ORDINATION IN  
NEW-PROVIDENCE, MECKLINBURG COUNTY,  
NORTH-CAROLINA, Feb. 2, 1792.

AND AFTERWARDS, WITH SOME  
*ADDITIONS AND ALTERATIONS,*  
AT SALIM, ON NOLICHUCKY,  
AT THE OPENING OF A COMMISSION OF THE SYNOD OF THE  
CAROLINAS, SEPT. 3d. 1792.

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SALISBURY, IN ROWAN COUNTY,  
NORTH-CAROLINA.

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P H I L A D E L P H I A :

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## P R E F A C E.

**I**T is known that I have declined the repeated solicitations of friends, to publish a sermon on education, which I preached about nine years ago. This I have done partly through diffidence, and partly to gain time to read and think more on the important subject. To my friends, however, it will appear strange that I should now send another sermon to the printer, without any solicitations at all; at least without any until I had previously resolved to send it.

The truth is, I was constrained to resolve, from a regard both to my own character and to what I believe to be the truth; and constrained to continue my resolution, from an additional motive—the request of friends.—Constrained was I to resolve at a critical moment, when objections against this sermon and criticisms upon it, were poured upon me in such thick succession that I had scarcely time to answer one before another came; nor to answer any, but in a kind of hasty and extempore manner, neither fully to my own satisfaction nor probably to the full satisfaction of those that heard me.

I have since taken time deliberately to consider the whole subject, and the following sermon and notes are the result of my mature deliberations.

These are now published, not to revive a debate that has been happily settled, and settled after my announced resolution to publish—a resolution from which I have never receded, because it has always appeared necessary to lay before the public what I believe to be the truth, and to do justice to my own character with that part of the public who may only have heard of the transactions at Salim, by the vague  
voice



voice of fame; and who may at the same time be better acquainted with the objectors, than with myself. They will naturally conclude that there must be some *damnable doctrines* in the following sermon, when two or three preachers of the Gospel were reduced to the necessity of opposing it in public.

To repeat the transactions at Salim, is to me a painful task; they shall therefore be repeated no farther than is absolutely necessary to give eclaiircisement to the following sermon and notes; and in the doing of this, facts shall be most religiously regarded, with as few observations as possible upon them.

It is a fact, then, that a commission of the Synod of the Carolinas, of which I was chosen moderator, met at Salim on the 3d of September, 1792; that the commission met to call before them, on business immaterial to be mentioned, the Presbytery of Abington; and that the following sermon was delivered at the above place, on the above day, by me as moderator of the commission.

It is also a fact, that the Rev. Mr. Doke, pastor of the church at Salim, and member of Abington presbytery, followed by two other members of said presbytery, the Rev. Mr. Balch, sen. and jun. did, on his first entrance the next morning, in the presence of some members of his own congregation, and of other congregations, and without the least previous notice to me given, publicly declare that he was not willing to proceed any farther on business with the commission, until he would know what *notice the commission* intended to take of the sermon preached yesterday.

As I believed that there was nothing in the sermon that I could not defend, and assured that nothing in it could be *noticeable before a judicature*, even supposing it to be error, I immediately demanded that the insinuated and implied charge should be specified. When the objector waved this, I pronounced with some indignation (not more I believe than was

proper) that I would have that redress which I knew I could obtain. This had its effect.

On the first recess, the objections were specified and exhibited in writing, accompanied with a request, that he, Mr Doke, might be permitted to inform his own people—the people of Salim—that he held no such doctrines as I did. For that the people, (I understood all) were displeased with my sermon, and would be displeased with him, should he be silent on the occasion. This, said Mr Doke, is all I wish for.

As this was a retreating from the ground he had first occupied, respecting public notice to be taken by the commission, I also receded from the resolution I had formed to obtain judicial redress; and the objections being specified in publick, were publickly canvassed and debated, without change of sentiment on either side, and without any other effect than a few verbal explications and concessions, as will be seen in the notes.

On additional information from Mr Balch sen. that the people, (I understood, generally) “were up in arms” against the sermon; on some new objections being started in public, and on reflecting how my character would appear at a distance—I formed and announced my resolution, to publish the sermon, and let it speak for itself. This appeared the only measure left, and this is the first and true cause of its appearance in the world; otherwise it would never have entered into my thoughts to have published at all.

With respect to my reasons for preparing and preaching this sermon, they are no other than my reasons for preparing and preaching any other. It originated from no prejudice nor pique at either Mr Doke or his people; to them all I was almost entirely a stranger; and I do utterly deny that any thing in the sermon or defence was *personally* pointed. I used at Salina, the same, and no other liberty, of free enquiry and investigation, than that to which I have constantly accustomed both myself and my people. I have

ever aimed at the avoiding of two extremes ; one is the yielding of a blind implicit assent to the opinions and phrases of antiquity ; and the other is an ambition to be ever walking in the untrodden paths of novelty. It is neither antiquity nor novelty, but truth that I seek for.

I know that there are truths which people may not be prepared to receive. Nay subjects there are which they may not be *prepared* even to *investigate*. “ I have many things to tell you, says Christ to his disciples, but hitherto ye have not been able to bear them, neither yet now are ye able.” I may here be charged with imprudence in coming forward so freely on the subject of the terms of communion, which was both directly and indirectly the principal subject of discussion and debate. I acknowledge that I treated this subject very freely at Salim both in the sermon and defence ; for I not only declared the sentiments that may be read in the sermon, but in my public defence, I said that, with the consent of my people, I had invited both a Baptist, and Methodist to preach to them, because the preachers appeared to be men of education, good sense, and piety, with whom I hoped to have communion in heaven. With this public declaration Mr Doke, and I believe some of his people, were offended.

The defence I now make to the public, for this declaration at Salim, is, that Mr. Doke has published a similar declaration to all the churches under the care of the synod of the Carolinas, otherwise I would have acted with more circumspection and care.

On the terms of communion Mr. Doke has taught my people, and his own, these two sentiments.

First, That in matters of opinion, nothing should be pushed forward publicly into the face of any judicature whatsoever, unless it be a matter *essential* to the very existence of the christian religion.

Secondly, That all christians of every denomination, that is, all who appear, by their lives and con-



versations, to be followers of Jesus, may have communion with one another. These two noble, generous, catholic sentiments he has inculcated on my people at Thyatira and Salisbury.

I beg leave to cite his own identical words. He has publicly declared to them, "That no one thing  
"be proposed as a term of communion, unless in  
"doctrine, it be essential, and in practice, contrary  
"to some express command." And again,

"That they who shall at last commune together  
"for ever in heaven, may very justly hold communi-  
"on with each other on earth."

Mr. Doke will be at no loss to understand my meaning, when he shall have read the pastoral letter, page 14, of which, the above is a quotation. This letter was prepared by a committee of the synod of the Carolinas, read over, paragraph by paragraph, in a full meeting of the said synod, Mr. Doke being present, and by him and the whole synod approved, and thus directed to all the churches under their care.

Was it imprudent then?—I appeal to the public—was it imprudent to teach at Salim as he had done every where else? For I have only attempted to mark those doctrines that are *essential*, and to distinguish them from those that are not—I have merely pleaded, that *the communion of the body of Christ* should be the communion, not of *sects*, but of *saints*. How these things materially differ from Mr. Doke's *printed* opinion on these subjects, I cannot understand.

Was it strange then, if, on the terms of communion, I advanced his own public avowed sentiments to his own people! Was it strange that I was astonished—I say nothing about the feelings, and faces of the commission, when the charge was thundered in! Was it strange that I was astonished, when told the next day, first by Mr. Doke, that his people, I understood all, were offended; and afterwards, by

Mr. Balch, sen. that the people, I again understood all, were up in arms against the sermon.

The truth is, and justice requires me to say, that the sense of the people was not, and could not have been then known. The opinions of a few individuals had been mistaken for the sense of the congregation at large. This mistake I did not then know; and it gave my mind all that pain which pity mixt with other passions, could, in such a situation, make a mind feel. For the people I had compassion, as for a people maddened into a blind intemperate rage, and for myself, as a stranger almost without a friend.

The true state of the people of Salim, and of those who attended from the contiguous societies, was this. A few individuals did approve both of Mr. Doke's sentiments, and conduct in bring matters publicly before the commission. Another few, perhaps as many, did approve of the sentiments in the following sermon, and judged that the diffusion of these sentiments, especially on the terms of communion, might be peculiarly useful to the churches in that country.\* Another number, *then* greater than either, or perhaps, both the former, approved of Mr. Doke's sentiments, but not of his conduct: on the whole, a violent flame was raised; and the rash man found that his public opposition had created to himself as much disturbance as to me; and that he was likely to be, in the end, in a worse situation than myself.

As soon as I knew the true state of the congregation of Salim, I determined to sacrifice every thing that was *personal* and possible for its peace, as far as truth would admit. Both in public and in private I pursued the most lenient measures with the people,

\* I am confirmed in the opinion that this number was not then very few, from a request made before I left that country, that I would not recede from my resolution to publish the sermon; and also, from authentic information since had, that 200 copies may be vended in Salim and the vicinity; and that more might be distributed with a little time and pains through the Western country.

and attempted to lose sight of myself. I flattered myself, that though my character might be injured *for the present*, yet that the world would do me justice *at last*. I hoped, that could the flame then be extinguished, the people most prejudiced would be prepared, by time and reflection, to read the sermon with coolness and candour. I attempted to view the whole matter, not on a small scale on which all seemed wrong; but on a large one, on which all appeared right. I have then, and often viewed the world as a huge overgrown individual, slow of understanding, slow of apprehension, but of passions quick and strong; sometimes rash and wrong *for the present*, but always right *in the end*, in judging both of men and things. I have finally observed that though peace and charity may suffer in collision of sentiment, or investigation of truth; yet that truth itself will never suffer in the end, by any investigation whatever.

Indeed, it pleased the God of peace to restore it to the people much sooner than the most sanguine person, who saw the height of the flame, could have expected. The sudden and unexpected return of this peace, so earnestly desired and sought for, had, after a scene of inexpressibly disagreeable sensations, almost overcome me.—What shall I say on this subject? May I not be permitted to say, that I attempted, and that heaven succeed the attempt, to reconcile the people to each other, and to their pastor. May I not be permitted to say, that I enjoyed the exquisite pleasure—shall I say triumph?—of being personally concerned in joining the hands of Mr. Doke and some of his offended people together?

So far my reasons and motives for preaching and printing this sermon. Would it not have been thought an extraordinary fondness for publishing, I would have sent it along, without assigning any reasons at all: But these, however disagreeable to relate, are the true reasons, and I cannot conceal them. A revision of the whole subject, and some avoca-



tions, have prevented me from publishing sooner. Besides, I did not feel myself disposed to be in any great haste about the matter. I have felt myself, through the whole series of this affair, standing on firm ground. I have found myself, both at Salim and elsewhere, supported by the candid and judicious; and have been assured, that my character has not any where laboured as much as I once apprehended.

With respect to Mr. Doke's sentiments, he has a right to enjoy and defend them, but none to make them terms of communion. I once thought of omitting some of the objections, but on farther thought, I have inserted them all; for though some of them, to me appear frivolous, far-fetched, and pressed into the service, yet, to other men, they may appear otherwise. I have inserted all, lest it should be thought that I omitted those which I could not answer. Some of them are little more than criticisms on words.

If I knew Mr. Doke's motives, I would candidly explain them; but, I verily believe, that he did not know them himself. I believe this, because it is possible for a man to be in such a predicament; and probable, that in that predicament he really was. All that can cast one glimmering ray on the subject, is his own words, that "huge prejudices at first existed on both sides," speaking of the commission and presbytery. Surely, some prejudice, I believe not *personal*, must have beclouded his native good sense, in attempting publicly to interrupt the proceedings of a *judicature*, and call them off from the business they were sent on, to a business, of which, neither they, nor the *judicature* that sent them had any cognizance at all. The reader, who may not understand the constitution of the Presbyterian church, must here be informed, that all judicial decisions on doctrines and terms of communion, are referred to the general assembly of that church. Something must have strangely bewildered his mind,

in occupying ground, which, as to terms of communion and church-censure, could only have been tenable in the days of Popish ignorance and persecution. For, the candid reader being judge—any judicature in this age being judge—the cool and unprejudiced Mr. Doke himself, in a full synod of the Carolinas, being judge—is there one thing debated in the following sermon, or one thing done by me at Salim, which is, “*in doctrine essential, or in practice contrary to any express command.*”

Prejudices there might be: How far they appeared in any part of my conduct, I appeal to the people at Salim.

In transcribing for the press I have altered some things that were not debated. The subjects debated, have been seen by three members of the commission, who have authorized me to say, that they are fairly stated.

That the “*partial evil*” attending this debate may issue in “*universal good*,” and that the publication which the debate has occasioned, may promote peace and truth among all denominations of Christians, is the prayer of

THE AUTHOR.

P. S. SHOULD the sermon be thought to be too long for one reading, the sense is made distinct, and the reader may rest at each general division.

The sermon on education before mentioned, will be published as soon as convenient, should this meet with a favourable reception.



The first part of the chapter discusses the importance of understanding the historical context of the text. It is essential to recognize that the language and concepts used in the text are often rooted in a specific time and place. This understanding allows the reader to interpret the text more accurately and to appreciate the author's intent. The second part of the chapter focuses on the methodology used in the study. It describes the various techniques and tools employed to analyze the text, including close reading, textual analysis, and the use of digital tools. The third part of the chapter presents the findings of the study. It discusses the various themes and motifs identified in the text and how they relate to the author's overall message. The fourth part of the chapter concludes the study and offers some final thoughts on the importance of the research.



A

# S E R M O N, &c.

FROM LEVITICUS IX. ver. 7.

*And Moses said unto Aaron, Go unto the altar and offer thy sin-offering, and thy burnt-offering, and make an atonement for thyself and for the people : and offer the offering of the people ; as the Lord commanded.*

**B**Y these words is Aaron introduced into the full execution of his sacerdotal office. This was not effected without a long and deliberate preparation. He had been nominated before, and now he is solemnly inaugurated by a series of sacrifice and ceremony, which continued for the space of eight days. On the eighth day, both priest and people are called to bring their respective offerings, and as God commonly annexeth a promise to a command, so, in this case, he promises to shew them his glory,--a visible or mental view of his divine perfections.

\* We have come here this day, my brethren, both preachers and people, to bring our respective offerings to God ; and now, what and where are they ? Or do you believe that there are offerings, demanded from us under the gospel, analagous to those under the law ? In answering this question, I propose,

I. To take a view of the offerings which God has demanded in all ages.

\*At the ordination, the words were these, We have come here this day, my brethren, to ordain a preacher for you, that he may go to the altar, and offer for himself and you ; and now where, &c.

II. The names, qualifications, and duties of those who have been called to offer them.

III. The qualifications and duties of those for whom they have been offered.

Then attempt such an improvement, as the subject and occasion may demand. I have proposed,

I. To take a view of the offerings which God has demanded in all ages. I use the word offering rather than sacrifice, because it is a word of more general import. A sacrifice was commonly a slaughtered beast. An offering might be of the fruits of the earth. I do not know that this distinction is critically observed; but in general it is true, that every sacrifice was an offering; but every offering was not a sacrifice.

In taking a view of the offerings and sacrifices, I shall mark their origins, kinds, and designs.

First, Their origin. This is a subject both important and perplexed.

Some, who deny the reality of a divine revelation, and believe, that man now is as he was first formed, have said that sacrifice and offering are not of heaven, but of men; that a pure spirit would never demand such carnal rites; that they were first offered by men, not as atonements, but gifts, or acknowledgement of sovereignty, as of subjects to a prince; or, as a festival of friends, partaking at the altar as at a common table; the fire, emblem of Deity, taking his part; and the offerer, his own.

Others there are, who admit the truth of a divine revelation, yet think, that sacrifices first obtained among men, and were afterwards enjoined by heaven; that they were not designed to *pacify* the Deity already benevolent; but to *sanctify* those who offered them, by filling their minds with reverence and respect for God.

For my own part, I believe, that the institution of sacrificing is originally from God. This I believe, because he is too jealous of his own worship, ever to suffer uncommanded rites to be introduced. Witness

Nahab, Abihu and Uzza. I believe that Abel's offering was by command, else not by faith, Heb. xi. 4. I believe that sacrifices were too well adapted to a rude untaught age, more easily struck with a visible than a pure mental worship, to have originated from men. I believe that they were too great a tax on men's property, whose wealth chiefly consisted in their herds and flocks—too much the support of a good government, of which men, in the first ages, were not fond,—too rational in their principles,—too universal in their practice,—and, with respect to the different periods and progress of society, too much a wise and well-connected plan, ever to have originated from men, in any age, much less the most rude and savage.

Secondly. With respect to their kinds, it appears, that they were various, and instituted in various periods of society, founded perhaps, on the various increasing relations between God and man, from the origin of the individual or family, to the birth of the organized church or nation.

I will not say that any kind of offering was instituted in Eden; but, I believe, that one kind might probably, and with propriety, have been introduced there; and I assert, that two kinds came forwards in the patriarchal age, one of which, possibly originated in innocence. To these, two more were added under the Jewish dispensation. These will be found to be expressive of all the relations that have ever existed between God and man, in any age or state of society; and consequently, expressive of the sins and duties of these relations.

The first relation existed between a Creator beneficent and holy, and a creature happy and innocent. From this creature is demanded, the pure and mental sacrifice of thanks and praise; and why might not this sacrifice have been expressed in paradise by a peace-offering of the choice and various fruits of the earth? Sensible objects are known to have their



influence on the mind in its purest acts of devotion on earth.

Cain, who was probably an infidel, viewing himself as in the innocent state, came to the altar with such an offering. "Abel by faith offered a more excellent sacrifice"; because it better corresponded with his lapsed state. The peace-offerings, or thank-offerings under the law, were mostly of first fruits; they had respect to innocence, rather than guilt; the atonement was supposed to be made by a previous sacrifice, on which, or after which, they were offered; and they were offered by the the Nazarite, whose whiteness and purity, See Sam. iv. 7. was supposed by the Jews, to be emblematic of innocence, as the pollution of the leper was of sin.

Be this as it may, there were but two kinds in the patriarchal age, the burnt-offering, and the offering of thanks or peace. The burnt-offering was appointed immediately after the fall; and the peace-offering re-appointed, if it was first introduced in the innocent state.

The principles of these sacrifices probably were, that two relations, between God and man, instantly took place on the fall; first, the relation of an angry judge and a condemned criminal, and then, that of a reconciled judge and a renewed or a new creature; whose restoration to the innocent state was begun; or at least, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself; not imputing their trespasses unto them. The first of those relations was expressed by the burnt-offering, the last, by the peace-offering.

After the first sin, God seems to speak thus, "Hitherto, O man, have I demanded only the offerings of peace; but now there is no peace, for you have violated my law. The earth and fruits are all accursed. Go take a victim from thy flock; lay thy hand on its head, confess over it thy desert, lay it on my altar, and burn it to ashes; but take not a particle to thyself, for thou art utterly unworthy."



Here, by the way, the first opinion we mentioned about the origin of sacrifice, must fall to the ground; for there is no mark of friendship in any rite of the burnt-offering; nothing but tokens of divine vengeance—distance, groans, blood, death, and burning after death.

The rites of the peace-offering were different; for tho', in some cases, it was a victim, yet this was to shew that peace came by blood. It was commonly of corn or wine, and then laid either on the top of the burnt-offering, or after it, on the altar, See Lev. iii 5, to shew that atonement was the foundation of peace.

This circumstance does not coincide with another notion of sacrifice; I mean that which excludes altogether the idea of atonement, and supposes that sacrifice was only intended to sanctify.

The burnt and peace-offerings were frequently offered in the days of the patriarchs. They were not confined to the Hebrews, but common to mankind. They continued among the heathens after the constitution of the Israelitish church; and burnt-offerings, in particular, says Philo, were offered at Jerusalem in behalf, and at the expence of Augustus Cæsar. See Jennings Heb: Antiq.

Thus far we have viewed man as an *individual*, or in a state that differs but little from it. For Adam and Eve were one flesh. "Their name was Adam"; and their children were themselves. A family is the society of nature, rather than of compact. It is a kind of transition from the solitary to the social state. The individual, as Abel, may sacrifice for himself; and the parent may, like Job, rise early and offer burnt-offerings for each one of his children.

Hence no new class of sacrifices,\* nor offerers were appointed until the erection of a nation and church in Israel.

\* Here comes the first objection. "This supposes, that there was no church before that in Israel, consequently, no ordinances

When the Israelitish nation and church were organized at Sinai, two new relations took place. God now becomes their first magistrate or king, claims the right of giving laws, proclaiming war, concluding peace, protecting, rewarding, and punishing. He nominates the great officers of church and state, levies a tax to support them, and becomes their high-priest as well as king.

Hence to the patriarchal sacrifices were subjoined two new kinds, unknown to the Gentiles, and peculiar to Israel. I mean the sin-offering and the trespass-offering. Most perplexing have been the distinctions commonly made between these two kinds of sacrifices. Will not this principle explain the whole? Two new relations then began to exist between God and that people, expressed by these two classes of sacrifice, which were offered, the one, for sins committed by the people as *a church*, the other, for *national* or *political* crimes. Read with these distinctions in view, the 4th 5th and 6th chapters of this book Leviticus.

On reading these chapters you will find that tho' the outlines of *civil* and *ecclesiastic* be distinct; yet the interior lines, as might be expected, lie together. Sometimes the cases are blended, ceremonial uncleanness, for example, deprived of society both civil and

in the patriarchal ages; all which will be favourable to those who deny infant baptism". I reply, that in all my researches I ask, not what is favourable to any sect, but what is truth? If I did not believe that infant baptism could be supported on patriarchal principles, I would instantly give it up. To me it does not follow from the premises, that there was no patriarchal church; but that it was not *Jewish* nor *Christian*. It was a sojourning patriarch building here and there an altar, and offering sacrifice with his family. Circumcision was instituted in the patriarchal age, for the same reason that baptism was instituted in the Jewish dispensation; to mark the future members of the Jewish and christian churches, and to be an easy transition for the church passing from one state to the other. Though in the wandering shepherd state, there could be little congregational worship, yet there was a church with statutes, laws, &c. See Gen. xxvi. 5.

religious. Lest it should be doubtful whether a trespass or sin-offering were demanded on this occasion ; or lest it should be imagined, that both were required—the offering, chap. v. 6, might be, and be called either a trespass or a sin-offering.

Four classes now comprehend the whole. Those are the burnt-offering, the peace-offering, the trespass-offering, and the sin-offering. All the rest named in the law, were not offerings ; but *circumstances* or materials of these four kinds. Sometimes, these kinds were voluntary ; hence called free-will offerings. Sometimes they—(particularly the peace-offerings) were waved towards the four corners of the earth ; sometimes heaved up towards heaven. Hence called wave and heave-offerings. They were also called meat or drink-offerings, as the materials were of flour, frankincense, wine, or oil.

The meat-offering that was alone, chap. ii. was a species of the peace-offering ; and indicated that spiritual nourishment which arises from peace with God ; and the jealousy offering, see Num. v. 12, was a species of the trespass-offering. For marriage, though generally celebrated, under the auspices of religion, is, notwithstanding, a *civil* contract ; and the breach of its laws is a breach of the laws of *civil* society.

In general the burnt-offering, and those allied to it—the sin, the trespass, and the jealousy-offering, all had respect to the kinds and consequences of sin : while the peace-offering, and those allied to it, the separate meat-offering, chap. ii, and the thank-offering, all had respect to the kinds and consequences of that peace which followed pardon. But of this more when we come to the designs of the sacrifices.

These were the Jewish sacrifices and offerings, and these, *perhaps*, the principles on which they were founded.

The offerings of christians are not altogether the same ; yet they are analogous to the Jewish, and they are founded on principles perfectly the same. For



as individuals, we are *related* to God, either as an *offended judge*, or as a *reconciled Father*; and with regard to society, he is king of *nations*, and king of *saints*.

Our sacrifices are *spiritual*, though represented by Ezekiel, chap xi, to the end, as Jewish and corporeal. Ye also, says Peter, 1 Epist. ii, 5, are built up a spiritual house, to offer *spiritual* sacrifices, acceptable unto God by Jesus Christ. Who, Ephes. v, 2, hath given himself an offering, and a sacrifice unto God, for a sweet smelling savour.

Here is an allusion to the Jewish burnt-offering. Christ hath given himself as such an offering or sacrifice unto God; and as such an offering or sacrifice must we *by faith* offer him to God as the foundation of our peace and reconciliation with him.

By him we must offer ourselves and our services to God.

Hence the exhortation, Rom xii, 1, present your bodies a living sacrifice; *living*, in opposition to the dead sacrifices under the law; and *presented*, either entirely devoted as the burnt-offering was, or rather as the peace-offering, presented as a gift or expression of gratitude to God, for the sacrifice of his Son, by whom we have received the atonement.

By him, therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, see Heb xiii. 15, that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name; ver. 16, but to do good and to communicate, forget not, for with such *sacrifices* God is well pleased.

Christians, as well as Jews, are members of society. Jesus is so called because he takes away the sins of *his people*. God hath made him to be *sin*, that is, a *sin-offering* for us, 2 Cor. v. 21. He also suffered without the gate, Heb. xiii. 12, as the sin-offering was burnt without the camp, ver 11. This was done to denote that the *church* would not always be confined to the Jewish nation; and it also denoted, that as Christ had been a sin-offering for the sins of the Jew-

ish, so also, would he be the same for the sins of the Gentile church.

I do not know that there is in the New Testament any allusion to the trespass-offering. Perhaps the reason is that God has taken down the theocracy. He is not king of the christian nations in the very same sense in which he was king of the Jewish nation: but he has allowed his people, in all ages, to be governed by laws civil and ecclesiastick, by those laws which vice has rendered necessary; *for the necessity of all government is founded on vice.*† Hence it appears to be the will of heaven, that now as well as in former ages, a tax be levied to support that government, which is rendered thus necessary by the crimes of men, his own people not excepted. And hence the continued necessity of offering our trespass and our sin offering, or as it is excellently expressed, 2 Kings xii. 16—our *trespass-money*, and our *sin-money* to support civil government and religion. With respect to religion, indeed these offerings are now become free-will-offerings; but they do not therefore cease to be just.

3dly, The next particular, is the design of the sacrifices. According to the preceding view of them, the first design was to express a sense of gratitude. This was intended by the peace-offering in all its

† *The necessity of all government is founded on vice.* Thus it was written; but the words spoken at Salem were, *all government is founded on vice*; for I did not read the sermon, and had not memorized it verbatim. The specified objection, as I noted it from a written copy, was, “this supposes all rulers to be vitious or wicked men.” When this objection was answered in public; another was publickly and verbally mentioned, by Mr. Balch, sen, as the real objection; that is that “there is a government in Heaven not founded on vice or wickedness.”

To the first I reply, by saying, that it is the vices of men that have rendered government necessary.

To the second, I answer, that the word *all* is no better restricted in many places in the Bible; that is no otherwise than by the nature of the subject. I was neither speaking nor thinking of government in heaven; but of civil and ecclesiastick government on earth, among men.



names and forms, whether we originate it in paradise, or after the burnt-offering, and after the fall. It is never, I believe, any where said to make atonement. It is said with the burnt-offering, Ezek. xlv. 17, to make reconciliation; but this refers to both offerings, and expresses atonement as well as peace. It seldom required the shedding of blood, and then it shewed that mercy, since the fall was procured by blood; but it was probably the first of all sacrifices, not *expiatory*, but *eucharistic*; and while the burnt-offering was emphatically called *the sacrifice*, this was, with no less emphasis, called *the gift*. See Num. xvii. 11, 29. Mat. v. 23. Heb. v. 2.

Here I observe, that with respect to the peace-offerings, the Deistical notion of sacrifice is right. They were considered as gifts, and used at festivals of friends: but of all the sacrifices this is by no means true; and here lies the mistake of these men.

For another design was to exhibit the atonement. This was the design of the burnt-offering, and of all that were allied to it, the sin and trespass-offerings. All, except the sin-offering, in one case, See Lev. v. 11—13, were marked with blood, without shedding of which there is no remission; and the very exception aforesaid was expiatory; for it is expressly said, ver. 13. to make atonement.

The atonement appears to have had respect to the first sin, that was committed by the first man, and also to sin now personal and actual. The burnt-offering, say the Jews, was for sins in thought. These, we know, are *personal*; and the sin-offering and trespass-offering had respect to actual sins. And it appears from the case of the leper after cleansing, and the mother, after child-birth, that they were designed to remind the offerer of that sin by which pain and death has passed on all, Rom. v. 12, why else should these offerings be brought on the occasions that have been mentioned? was it actually, or in itself, a sin to be sick, or to bear a child, in the laws of wedlock?

for what then, in these cases were the sacrifices and the atonement?

When the nation was viewed as an *individual*, sometimes the burnt-offering was offered for the sin of the nation : not so the trespass-offering, which was mostly offered for the sin of *one* member of *civil* society, against *another*. The sin-offering, as before observed, had respect to the *church*, and therefore was mostly offered for sins of ignorance. The reason is, that men are frequently more ignorant, and therefore more apt to err, in ecclesiastical matters, than in matters civil or natural. On this principle, God has been far more particular and extensive in giving the ceremonial than civil or judicial laws ; and on the same principle, the description of the tabernacle, See Exod xxv—to the end of the book, is ten times as particular and extensive as the account, Gen. i, of the creation of the universe. See Jen : Heb : Antiq.

I am sensible that some have objected to the atonement, confined the design of sacrifice to sanctification, and adduced a train of reasoning to establish their belief.

I shall not enter into their objections or arguments ; but only observe, that the different rites used in the sacrifices, the different kinds of the sacrifices, and the different words which express the different effects, all, in my view, prove the atonement.

Had the sacrifices respect to holiness alone, and not guilt, why were some of fruits and some of slaughtered beasts ? why place the offerer's hand on the head of the victim ? And why kill and burn it to ashes ? If all this indicated the *justice* of so treating the offerer, in order to *humble* him, it indicated the *injustice* of letting him escape. For the law certainly demanded his death.

Again, had the sacrifices respect to holiness alone, and not guilt, why different words to express the different effects of the sacrifices ? It would appear too much like pedantry to lead you through a train

of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin words on this subject. Suffice it to say that there are, in all these languages, two classes of words which refer to the sacrifices, and which are equivalent to the English words justification and sanctification, holiness and pardon, remission of sin and purgation or cleansing from it. See Tit. ii. 14. 1 John i 9.

And let it be farther observed, that these different classes of sacrifices, different rites, and different words have all induced an early and a general belief of the expiatory and vicarious nature of sacrifice. The language of a Gentile with respect to his victim was "Anima pro anima," life for life. The life of the beast in the room of the man. The Jews had the same idea of their sacrifices. The Apostle to the Hebrews has surely communicated the same idea, otherwise I confess that I cannot understand his meaning at all.

A third design of sacrifice was sanctification. A sight of the victim groaning in death, and weltering in blood, the solemn act of laying the hand on its head, in one case forbidden to touch, in another, invited to partake—all these, and all the other rites, tended to fill the mind with an holy religious awe, and a humble devoted love to God. Idleness is the parent of many a crime. The sacrifices tended to promote the honest acquisition of property; and, at the same time, to check the inordinate love of it. "I must be industrious," would the Israelite say, "to procure the first and free-will offerings; and with a willing mind without grudging, must I offer them. And if I try to know and do my duty, I can retain to myself both my sin-offering for ignorance, and my trespass-offering. For these will not be demanded unless I trespass."

Granting the motive to be none of the best, this was making the best that could be made of it; and indeed a motive more refined would not, generally speaking, so well have suited that rude age. Disinterest-



edness was not excluded ; while interest and avarice were pressed into the service of religion.

The last design of sacrifice was to support civil government ; for the Levites were officers and judges, See 1 Chron xxiii 4. The Israelites paid no tax but their tithes and offerings. Except the burnt-offering, all the rest were directed to this object ; and even of the burnt-offering, the skin was the priest's. The tithes were taken first for the Levites, and of that tithe, another for the priests ; a third, or poor tithe, was for strangers, widows, and fatherless. The tithe of two years was by the Levites eaten at Jerusalem. The tithe of a third year was eaten by the Levite, fatherless, widow, and stranger at home.

Some have said that the half shekel enjoined by Moses, Exod. xxx. 13, and demanded from Christ, Matt. xvii. 24. was, till the time of the Maccabees, only an occasional tax : and that David, by ordering the people to be numbered, intended to bring it forward. If this be so, his crime was complicated—avarice as well as ambition.

Be this as it may, no civil tax was paid till the days of the kings. Their militia, and judges, who were not Levites, all supported themselves.

Some, on this principle, have vindicated Paul, See Acts xxi, for offering the sacrifices at Jerusalem, which, in other places, he had preached down. The *typical* design of these sacrifices, say they, had been gained by the coming of Christ ; the *political* design was not gained. The sacrifices supported that government which God had not yet taken down ; and therefore, there was no more impropriety in offering, at that time, a sacrifice at Jerusalem, than in paying a civil tax at Athens or Rome.\*

II. The second general division of the subject, was to shew the names, qualifications, and duties of those called to offer the sacrifices.

\* Justice requires me to own myself indebted to the Rev. David Ker, of Fayetteville in this state, for some of the thoughts, especially in the two last particulars, on sacrifice.

They have been called patriarchs, kings, priests, Levites, scribes, lawyers, or rather doctors of the law, apostles, evangelists, deacons, elders, &c. In the first ages, the holy office was continued by lineal succession; in the later ages, it has been open to any qualified to execute it.

The names express qualifications and duties, and the whole is governed by that all-governing circumstance, the *progress of society*, or, if you would rather, say the providence of God.

For suppose, that there be but one man on the face of the earth, that man is, not of men, but of God, ordained a priest to offer the sacrifice of thanks and praise. No need of creeds, or formulas or consecrations, at his ordination.

Suppose again, that an Eve be taken from his side, still they are but one flesh? “ ‘Their name is Adam.’ ” Another thank-offering is demanded; and, on the birth of a Cain, another from the *patriarch*, or father of the family.

Because men are more fond of power than religion, therefore, petty kingdoms arose before organized churches, and the rise of these kingdoms would naturally produce a change in the priesthood. For suppose, that a patriarch by conquest, or otherwise, formed a few families into a kingdom; here exists a new relation, and hence the sins of sovereign and subject. Now who shall offer sacrifice for these sins? Doubtless, the man who is at the head of the nation. On this very principle kings were every where the first priests for the public; and the same word, *cohen*, is rendered either priest or prince, because the prince either directed or offered the sacrifices of the people.

On this same principle, Moses, who was king in Jeshurun, that is, in Israel, or the nation of the just, Deut. xxxiii. 5. directed the public sacrifices of Sinai, and offered all that were offered for seven days, at the consecration of Aaron.



Suppose now, that a church be erected, or organized, and that national affairs *engross* the attention of the prince. What is to be done at this stage of society? Why Moses shall say unto Aaron, "Go unto the altar, and offer thy sin-offering, and thy burnt-offering, and make an atonement for thyself and the people; and offer the offering of the people, as the Lord commanded." Something like this, has, at a certain stage of society, been done in almost all nations; and this is the first account of any formal ordination, and a class of men entirely devoted to the altar.

This class among the Israelites, were called priests and Levites, and their qualifications and duties were couched in the ceremonies by which they were ordained. They were hereditary as kings; and their service confined to the temple at Jerusalem. This was to shut the flood-gates of idolatry, which would have burst open, in that early age, had the priesthood, like Jeroboam's, been open to all, and sacrifice offered in every corner of the land.

Indeed, all these precautions were insufficient. Idolatry prevailed, and God corrected it by a captivity of 70 years. This introduced a new order of clergy, of the ceremonies of whose ordination we are not informed. They were called scribes and lawyers, or doctors of the law, because they were employed in writing and explaining the law of God to the people. This became necessary, because the people had learned to speak the Chaldee, and the scriptures were in Hebrew, another language, or rather, another dialect. These scribes were not hereditary, as the priests. They offered the offerings of the understanding and heart; and were, throughout the nation, the *teaching* clergy, as the priests were still the *sacrificing* clergy at Jerusalem.

I know, that a parallel between the Jewish and Christian churches, has been injurious to the latter,

\* See Mosheim, middle of 2d century.

and yet, in some particulars, there may be a paralel. I will take of them, for priests and for Levites, unto me, saith the Lord, Is. lxvi. 21. This is a prophecy of the Christian church, and perhaps, that in it there should be two classes, similar to those of the Jewish. If so, we may probably find them in the bishop and deacon, Phil. i. 1. and in 1 Tim. iii, both invested by prayer, and imposition of hands.

On this subject, I will not be positive. It has appeared the easiest way to understand the office of the ruling elder, for it is only to suppose that the business of governing has been added to the distribution of the charities of the church : as the business of "officers and judges," in the Levites, was added to their first business, of helping the priests at the altar. Indeed, there is some likeness in their ordination and names, if both were called elders, and perhaps, in their assisting to govern.

And though the Levite was hereditary, and could never become the priest, yet the deacon, who was elective, see Acts vi. might obtain the *kalon bathmon*, the good degree, 1 Tim. iii. 13, and become the preacher or elder, by a new ordination, and so labour in doctrine. See 1 Tim. v. 17.

This subject is disputed and doubtful ; but be it as it may, we suppose, on the whole, that first the individual, then patriarch and king, then priest and Levite, then scribe and teacher of the law ; and now bishop and deacon, or, perhaps, elder, have been the more stated officers at the altar : and, that prophets and wise men, or men who had not the spirit of prophecy, apostles, evangelists, exhorters, and perhaps the rest, see Rom. xii. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 28. Eph. iv. 11. were men less stated, and more extraordinary, called forth as the state and exigency of society demanded.

2d. The second particular is, the qualifications of those called to the altar.

The qualifications are said to be natural and religious.

It is common to begin with natural qualifications, arising from capacity and temper. But, except in case of some natural impediment, idiotism, or insanity, is not this absurd? How improper to speak of natural qualifications, when the priesthood was *hereditary*, and bodily blemishes only precluded from the altar, not priesthood? Is it much less absurd now? For my own part, I have always observed, that a moderate share of natural ability, united with any temper whatever, when early and religiously cultivated, will form the *useful* minister of religion; otherwise, the most superlative powers have been attended with those eccentric flights, that render them useless or worse than useless in the church.

You have often heard that temper described which is supposed to besit a preacher of the gospel. For my own part, I believe, that all tempers, however diverse from each other, are, nevertheless, in two respects, nearly equal. They are so, as to *personal happiness*, and *usefulness to society*, as far the capacity extends; for this equality does not necessarily suppose an equality of capacity. The happiness may be equal, where the capacity is unequal; and the service done to society may be said to be equal, when each one alike, fills up the circle in which providence has placed him, whether that circle be great or small.

The truth is, each temper has its own *advantage*, and its own *defect*. And the rash and daring spirit is as necessary, on a large scale, in the church, as the cautious and timid. Peter is as necessary as John, and Luther as Melancton.

Instead, therefore, of asking what is the natural capacity or disposition, I would enquire, Have *early religion and early education* come forward to enlarge the capacity, and supply the defects of the natural disposition?

The qualifications may be reduced to these two things—early religion—and early education.

1. Early religion. Religion is necessary to the ministry, and early religion is desirable. Religion is more than the study of divinity. It is not *doctrine* alone, but *sentiment* and *practice*. Like friendship,\* it is only to be understood where it is felt. It is the proper knowledge of God impressed on the heart, and expressed in a corresponding walk with him.

Religion has always been required in the priesthood. By faith Abel offered his offering. To be justified and sanctified is the whole of religion, and both are here required in Aaron. The character of Ezra is excellently drawn, and plainly includes religion, see chap. vii. 10, That he had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel. The apostle Paul, confirms the same truth, 2 Cor. iv. 6, " God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts—the hearts of us, the apostles—to give the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

It is true, that the priests of Israel were hereditary, but still religion was demanded ; and it is also true, that Judas, a bad man, was among the apostles ; but this will not prove, that he ought to have been among them.

The knowledge of both God and man is necessary in the preacher. A bad man cannot have the right knowledge of either. He can only know his own part of mankind. He cannot conceive how far religion will form the good man's heart ; how much Job will bear and not *curse* God. Of this, Satan either was, or pretended to be ignorant. The good man can know it all. In his own breast are the materials, both of the evil and the good ; and from these he can derive the knowledge of all.

I say not, that bad men are always ignorant of the world ; or that good men always know it : but I say, that, capacity and opportunities being equal, the good man may know the most.

\* To Fordyce I acknowledge myself indebted for this excellent thought.



Religion may also assist in the knowledge of books. That spirit that illuminated the mind of Bezaleel, see Exod. xxxi. may aid a pious youth to surpass, in human knowledge, his impious or less pious companion. Religion may, therefore, subserve education ; which is the

Second thing necessary, and has respect to books and men. Religion is the same in all ages. Education varies as the state of society. Abel had but one imperfect language, few prophecies, a short system of divinity, and a shorter system of science.

Aaron, and his sons, possessed more materials of knowledge than Abel, or the patriarchs. When the temple was erected at Jerusalem, music became a part of the business of the Levites ; as it was before, and still continued to be the business of the sons of the prophets. In addition to music, was the study of history as far as the respective times, the receiving and study of prophecies, the study of divinity, or the law and gospel, and, after the captivity, the study of the Hebrew and Chaldee.

The knowledge of divinity included the knowledge of the civil or judicial and ceremonial laws, which, in that state of society, were added as appendages to the moral law.

The teachers in the schools, were Samuel, Elijah, Gamaliel, Hillel, Samai, &c. see Prideaux Connect. and at Jerusalem, probably the aged Levites, who after their 50th year retired from the labour and fatigue of the altar.

Here we may remark, that the business of both the teachers and taught, was encreasing in every stage of society. Ezra had ten times as much to know as Aaron. Happy was it for the scribes and doctors of the law, that they were exempted from the laborious and mechanical exercises of sacrificing daily at the national altar.

It was necessary, that the apostles, in their stage of society, should be possessed of more knowledge and wisdom than could be obtained in the common way.

They were to be sent to many different and distant nations, to be brought before kings, and to preach new doctrines to all. Hence the gift of tongues, extraordinary wisdom and courage, miracles and gifts of healing.

These extraordinary gifts have ceased with the occasion that called for them : but the common qualifications are now more extensive than ever. Besides other things, \* christianity contains the history of religious opinions, customs, and institutions which are not now as easily understood as formerly. The history of the canon of the scriptures is a subject of considerable extent, and should be well understood by every preacher. For whoever undertakes to preach the doctrines of the scriptures, ought certainly to be able to defend them.

The preacher ought to possess some degree of the knowledge of three or four languages, in order perfectly to understand his own. He ought also, to possess a general knowledge of the sciences, for they are all connected, and no one can be fully understood apart. He ought to be particularly acquainted with the principles of moral philosophy, and, above all things, else he should well understand his Bible. Happy, thrice happy we, that we are not, as the scribes were, employed in the mechanical work of transcribing it. Let us bless our God, that this is the reading and reasoning age of the world.

Great indeed, should now be the powers and piety of that man, in whom we would dispense with any part of the common qualifications, which are requisite in this enlightened æra of mankind.

When we consider the vast extent of knowledge, human and divine, we shall see the necessity of both early religion and early education ; one, for the obtaining of divine, and both for the acquisition of human knowledge.

\* See more on this subject, in Paley's Moral Philosophy.

Early religion is necessary to enlarge the capacity, give orthodoxy of sentiment, govern the temper, and check the pride either of having a good education, or of being able to harangue without it.

Early education is necessary to prevent enthusiasm or superstition in religious things; and to give a habit of reasoning, and a facility of expressing our sentiments or any subject whatever.

When religion or education come late, the habit of study is commonly wanting; the passions and appetites have gotten the start of reason and religion; and when old temptations and companions meet, they sometimes produce a line of conduct which greatly disgraces, not the ministry, but minister of the gospel. I except, from this remark, some who have not previously contracted habits of vice; or those on whose hearts hath been wrought an extraordinary work of divine grace. Otherwise, *the man who was intemperate before may be intemperate again, after both his conversion to God and consecration to the altar.*†

† Here came forward another objection. Instead of the above written sentence, it was said at Salim—the man who was a drunkard before may be &c.—The objection was, that drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God, and such were some of you; but ye are washed; but ye are sanctified, &c. See 1 Cor. vi. 11.

The word drunkard was not in the written sermon, and on a moment's reflection, it was given up. Not because it does not express habit, for it involves that idea; but because it commonly expresses the habit of a *bad man*, but it will not thence follow that a good man cannot have bad habits, or *sin habitually*; call it what you will. This is the matter in debate. As the words are not *Scriptural*, I shall investigate them without ceremony.

They who understand language know that the word *habitually* is an adverb, and expresses the *manner of action*. To sin habitually then, is to sin after the *manner of a habit*, or from a habit, as a motive or principle of action.

Now what is a habit? It is not an *act*; but a *state*, into which the mind has been brought by *previous acts*. No man has a habit on the *first act*, he may on the second, and so forward, the habit will encrease, that is, there will be a greater facility of acting, and a greater difficulty in ceasing to act.

From these plain principles, it will follow, that a bad man, that



An early and religious attention to the ministry, unconstrained by parents or friends, who sometimes use an undue influence to persuade; and an early at-

is, a man without religion, who is now drunken, for the *first time*, is not drunken from habit, and is no *drunkard*. He can no more be called a *drunkard* than the woman who is deluded for the first time, can be called a whore, or a *harlot*: but the man who was several times intoxicated before he became a good man, may be several times intoxicated afterwards; and all this may be in consequence of a habit contracted *before*. He therefore sins *after the manner of a habit*, that is, he *sins habitually*.

It may be denied, that a good man will repeat the same crime. I reply, if Abraham was a good man, a good man may twice deny his wife. If David was a good man, a good man may *many a time* utter a falsehood. And if Peter was a good man, a good man may *three times* deny his Lord.

It may be said, "This will encourage bad men when they repeat their crimes."

I answer, by asking, Why will not the other opinion bring good men to despair, when they repeat them?

The truth is, and truth will do no harm, that a good man may more than once commit the same crime, and may do this from habit: but he will not sin as *easily*, as *frequently*, as *presumptuously*, nor as *boastfully*, as the irreligious man.

Who does not know that a drunkard shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven? But who does not know that they who have been drunkards have been sanctified, and do *now* inherit that kingdom.

And such *were* some of you; but ye are *sanctified*.

What is sanctification? It is a *dying* unto sin, not a *death* while in the body. Sin, before sanctification begins, is like a stream: that is continually *rising*; and it is ever afterwards, till death, the self-same stream gradually *sinking down*.

Habit signifies not only a *state*, but a principle of action, as opposed to instinct. See Beattie's Elem. In this sense, a good man may *sin habitually*, or willingly; for habit considered as a motive, implies will or desire to act.

I know that it has been denied that *a good man can sin willingly*. The evil that I would not that I do, See Rom. vii. 19. Does Paul mean the same *identical* moment? Can any thing *at once* be and not be! How quick and contrary the exertions of the will? How extensive the ideas of the present? We say the present hour, day, year, century. See Harris's Hermes. Time enough in a moment for a change of volition. It may change before there is time to act. The evil I *would not* that I *do*. But I *will* it the moment I *do it*: else it is no sin. For if sin be not in the *will* it is no where. Even sins of ignorance, suppose a previous *unwillingness*.



tention to such an education as the ministry requires, are most desirable. While the other tribes were numbered from twenty years old, the Levites were numbered from a month old, and early committed to the instruction of the aged Levites. And there is an encomium on Timothy not properly noticed that from a child he was acquainted with the scriptures.

3dly, The third particular is the duties of those called to the altar.

1st. They should see that they be regularly called, whether teacher or deacon. The first men, both in the Jewish and Christian churches, had an extraordinary call; instead of this, we are now to judge by our views, our inclinations, and qualifications for the work; and by our own motives, as far as we can know them.

The business at the altar may be learned from the several commissions of those who have, at different times, been sent there to officiate. Aaron's commission you have in the text. Jeremiah runs thus, See Chap. i. 7. 10. Thou shalt go to all whom I send thee, and whatsoever I command thee, thou shalt speak. Ezekial's is to the same effect, See chap. ii. 3. and again repeated chap. xl. 4. The Apostles you have in the tenth chapters of Matthew and Luke.

The duty of teachers is to teach all men in all the stations and conditions in life. It is their duty, not to preach themselves, but Christ Jesus, their Lord. They are to preach the gospel, the sum of which is, That Christ died for our sins, and rose again for our justification, according to the scriptures.

“ Christ and his cross is all our theme.”

When the preacher is at the cross he is at the centre of the system. When he sees the great sacrifice offered by the great High Priest, he can see how we are justified by the blood and sanctified by the Spirit

to be instructed. How have such old phrases gained such *sanctity*, that it is dangerous to call them in question!

of Christ, and made willing to do and to suffer God's will. He can see the nature, necessity, and connection of doctrine, experience, and practice in religion.

He will see the necessity of sometimes explaining and defending the doctrines of the gospel, and entering on a train of investigation, reasoning, and argument.

He will again see, the necessity of drawing the characters, and describing the experiences of God's people; their views and hatred of sin, and their love of holiness; their views of this world and another; the preciousness of the great sacrifice to them; and the earnest breathings of their souls after God.\*

\* It was not only mentioned by Mr. Balch sen. as an objection, but as a reason why God's people, as it was said, were permitted to break loose in such a torrent of criticism and objections, because the sermon was not on religious experiences, and did not describe them.

For my own part, I am wholly at a loss to conceive how a sermon, on the doctrine of sacrifice, and the duty of priest and people, could, at the same moment, be directly a sermon on religious experiences; and I think, that God's people, whoever they be, ought to have more good sense and more good nature.

I now beg leave to say, that this sermon is on the *doctrine* and *duty* of sacrificing, that this is a part of the *whole council of God*; that the great excellence of preaching consists in bringing forward *doctrine, experience, and practice*, each in their proper place, and in their proper proportion; that the preacher who preaches nothing but doctrine or practice, discovers a want of religion; that he who preaches nothing but experiences, discovers a want of sense, of study, or of education; that though I may not have rightly proportioned these things, yet I have been attempting to do it, according to occasion and place; and that were I again to preach, at Salim, I would preach on the *doctrine* and *duty* of *charity*.

The above objection was made in private, and it is here inserted to prevent such an objection again. The following objection was specified in writing, and brought forward into public view.

To say that good works are *as necessary*, &c. See above—is to exclude infants from salvation, and such men, as the thief on the cross, who were either incapable of doing good works, or had no time to do them.

I no more thought of such objections in delivering the sermon, than the Apostle Paul did when he wrote to the Thessalonians, 2 Epist. iii. 10, that if any would not work neither should he eat.

He will also see the necessity of preaching good works. For religion consists in what we are *to do for God and men*; as well as in what *God does in us and for us*. Good works are *as necessary in their proper order and place, as is the righteousness which is by faith in its place and order*. The same Scriptures which say that “there is no other name given under heaven among men”—do also say that “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.”

I know that there are some who do not like to preach, and therefore some who do not like to hear of the necessity of good works. “It is legal” say they, “it is legal.” This I think to be a mistake, unless we be urged to *depend* upon the merit of such works. This mistake is apt to lead to a sour, censorious disposition, and sometimes to downright enthusiasm. For when good works are depreciated or disproportioned in preaching, frames and feelings will be substituted in their place.

Happy, thrice happy, the preacher who is at the centre of the system, and whose soul, like Solomon’s, is as the sand on the sea-shore for largeness, to comprehend the whole. Happy the people who have such a preacher.

It is in the christian system as in the solar. The whole can be rightly seen only from the centre, and from the centre it demands an extensive view. From any other point, or by narrow views from this one, we may be deceived by appearances. How glorious is an extensive and well connected view of all the doctrines and precepts of Christ; and all the experiences and duties of his children.

The *manner* of preaching is extensive. In some respects it is the same, in others, different, in different ages.

The criticism might as well have been made on Paul, for he has neither excepted decried old men nor infants.

Quere, can it be proved, that the thief on the cross, was not a believer before he was brought there?



The gospel should, at all times, be preached with plainness, not adorned with the trappings of human wisdom; but in *demonstration* of the Spirit, 1 Cor. ii. 4. They who come to the altar should, like the Psalmist, Ps. liv. 6, come *freely*; and they who preach the gospel should, like the Apostle, be constrained by love, See 2 Cor. v. 12. This happy constraint is opposed to that reluctance with which we either enter into the holy office or execute the functions of it.

Again, the gospel should be preached with diligence and fidelity. Who is the faithful and wise steward, Luke 12. 43. He considers his master's character, the terms on which he is commissioned, and the miserable state of perishing souls. He guards against the love of ease, and of the world, and against the fear of men, and the desire of popular applause.

Once more,—The truths of the Gospel should at all times be preached in their beautiful order and proportion. The first thing which calls our attention in the Scriptures, is the works of God. From these works, and particularly from man, we are led up to the nature of God, for that which may be known of God is manifest in them. See Rom. i. 19, 20. When we ascend to a view of the whole divine character, justice and mercy, greatness and grace, we see what we are and ought to be, that we are, by nature, children of disobedience and wrath, that our recovery must be effected by the Spirit and blood of Christ, and that we must, by a course of holy obedience and patient suffering, be made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

There is also a proportion in which the truths of the Gospel are to be preached. There is a scale, both of doctrine and precept, which may direct in preaching and practice, and prevent infidelity, enthusiasm, and superstition. The first and great commandment is, not as superstitious Jews imagined, the law of the burnt-offering. It is, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart. The second is like



it, not so great in object or degree. It is, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Below these on the scale, are marked all the positive institutions. God did not *first* speak to Israel concerning burnt-offering and sacrifices, Jer. vii. 22. Even in the age of sacrifice, He declared that "To obey, is better than sacrifice, and to hearken, than the fat of rams." 1 Sam. xii. 22.

I observed before, that the manner of preaching has been different in different ages. Men were first taught by patriarch or priest, at home or at the temple, over the body of a slaughtered beast. By the prophet, they were instructed by parables, actions, emblems, walking bare-footed and naked, or without the outer garment. These instructions were communicated in high-sounding figurative language, and with a mighty vehemence of voice and gesture, smiting with the hand and stamping with the foot.

The first ages were the ages of the passions, and of that bold metaphoric language which the passions produce. The novelty of objects, and scantiness of words were the causes of these effects. Hence all those passionate desultory harangues, which have in later ages given place to discourses less passionate and more correct in method and style.

Every age has its own mode of instruction, and this mode is as the progress of society; for we now see that in the dark corners of our country, where society has made little progress, the mode of instruction is as in the primitive ages. Tell me the age of the world, and unless the natural progress of society be interrupted by war or other cause, I would venture to conjecture the mode of instruction.

Wise teachers will accommodate themselves to the condition of their hearers, at the same time they will lead them gradually along to improvement. Moses and the prophets, Christ and his apostles, have all adapted their instructions to their own respective times. And had any of them lived through every period, they would have varied the manner of teach-

ing according to the progressive state of society in each period.†

Another duty of those who stand at the altar, is to exercise good government; to admit those who ought to be admitted, and to exclude from the altar those who ought to be excluded.

Christ has in each period made the terms of communion that suited the stage of society in that period; for the making of terms is a matter of too much magnitude to be left to men. What bloodshed and persecution would have been prevented, had men only studied to find and execute the terms which Christ has made!

I shall pass over the terms in the patriarchal and Jewish dispensations. Suffice it to say, that, like the dispensations themselves, they were rather preceptive and ceremonial; in the present dispensation they are more doctrinal and moral.

The doctrinal terms or truths are many, they cannot be denied, consistent with salvation, they are marked with an uncommon emphasis in the Scriptures, they are *general simple* truths; they were early introduced to anticipate error, and they are all summed up in one truth, emphatically called, THE TRUTH.‡

On a subject imperfectly understood, I shall not pretend to a perfect enumeration. All own, that some truths are essential. None have pretended to find them altogether. Like other truths, they are dispersed through the Scriptures; and to me, they

† This observation might have spared the infidel many an unmeaning criticism on the Scriptures. He will readily admit the change in political society. He will grant that Cicero or Demosthenes would not, were they now living, speak in the Congress of America as themselves once did at Athens and Rome.

‡ For this last and excellent thought, I own myself indebted to the author and owner of Theological Disquisitions. The Author is Dr. Erskine, of Edinburgh. The owner is a kind stranger in the Western Territory, who in a very friendly manner, presented me with the volume at Salim, to assist me on this subject, after I had declared my resolution to publish this sermon.

have appeared in the following number and arrangement.

1. A belief of the being and providence of God. For " he that cometh unto God, *must believe* that he is, and that he is a *rewarder* of them that diligently seek him. See Heb. xi. 6.

2. That the scriptures are the word of God. Though we or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel, let him be *accursed*, Gal. i. 8. He that believeth not, hath made God a liar, because he believeth not the *record* that God hath given of his Son.

3. That there is a Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. He that denieth me before men, shall be *denied* before the angels of God. Unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven, Luke xii. 10. This last clause may respect *practice*, words, or actions, of which hereafter, but it implies *faith, belief or doctrine*. Again, if any man have not the *Spirit* of Christ, he is *none of his*. Who is a *liar* but he that *denieth* that Jesus is the Christ. He is antichrist that *denieth* the Father and the Son. See 1 John ii. 22.

4. That Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is a *necessary* and *sufficient* Saviour. Neither is there salvation *in any other name*, for there is none other name given under heaven among men, by which we *must* be saved. Acts iv. 10. And again, *other foundation* can no man lay than that is laid, which is *Christ Jesus*. 1 Cor. iii. 11.

5. That the agency of the Holy Ghost is *necessary* and *sufficient* to recover men from sin. No man can say, that Jesus Christ is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. 1 Cor. xii. 3. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, *if so be*, that the Spirit of God dwell in you, Rom. viii. 9.

6. That all have sinned and are sinners. If we say that we have *no sin*, we deceive ourselves, and THE TRUTH is not in us. If we say that we have

*not sinned*, we make him a *liar*, and his word is not in us. 1 John i. 8, 10.

7. We must be born again. *Except* a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. John iii. 3.

8. That the soul is immortal, and

9. That the body will be raised by Christ, and united with it. If the dead *rise not* then is Christ not risen, and if Christ be not risen your *faith is vain*—then they also, that are fallen asleep in Christ are *perished*. 1 Cor. xv. 16—18. Compare also, 1 Tim. i. 19, 20, with 2 Tim. ii. 18, 19.

10. That by Christ there will be a future judgment. This indeed, seems implied in the resurrection, for *therefore* are they raised. The scriptures, however, mention it as *necessary*. We *must* all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive—See 2 Cor. v. 10. Again, he that denieth me before men, shall be *denied* before the angels of God. Luke xii. 9. This refers to the judgment.

11. That there is a heaven, or place of rewards, and

12. A hell, or place of punishment.

I declare unto you the gospel, 1 Cor. xv. 1. 4. Go preach the gospel to every creature, he that *believeth* and is baptized, shall be *saved*; but he that *believeth not* shall be *damned*. Baptism is here mentioned, and in John iii. 5, as *necessary*; but here it respects *precepts*, not *doctrines*, and will be considered hereafter.

Here I beg leave to make a few remarks.

1. These are, *perhaps*, all the fundamental truths of the gospel. They all appear essential to the belief of the Christian religion, and of salvation, on the terms of it. For, suppose any one of them to be denied, can the rest be consistently believed? Ought not he who denies, to be rejected as an heretic? Knowing, that he who is such, is subverted and sinneth, being condemned of himself, by furnishing the



materials of his own condemnation. See Doddridge, on Tit. iii. 10, 11.

*Other texts, on other subjects or doctrines*, are, I believe, no where so emphatically expressed. Errors, respecting them, are not, therefore, inconsistent with the communion of saints. The disciples were admitted to the communion of the body of Christ, on the belief, that Christ was to be a temporal prince; for long after, they ask, Wilt thou, at this time, restore the kingdom? See Acts i. 6. A proof this, among many others, that on the true foundation, may be raised wood, hay, and stubble. 1 Cor. iii. 12.

2. The doctrines aforesaid, are, as fundamentals ought to be, *general*, and not *particular* articles of belief. All christians, for example, agree, that there is an absolute necessity for Jesus, as a Saviour; that is, that *without him*, they could never have been saved; but some suppose that necessity to consist in *restoring freewill*, and enabling us *to walk*: Others, that it consists in *holding us up every step* of the way, and thus *carrying us along*. This remark might be illustrated in all the doctrines that have been named. There are *particular* opinions under every *general* article of belief, which can never be made terms. For, if ever we go down to these particulars, and turn them into terms, they are *without end*. No two men can sit down together at the same communion-table.

3. The doctrines aforesaid, are prepared as terms for every age and every error in the christian dispensation. Christ has prepared the terms necessary for every dispensation, at the beginning of it. This might be inferred, from the foreseeing care of both himself and his apostles; particularly, at the beginning of the christian dispensation. "There shall arise many false Christs," Matt. xxiv. 24. He, the Spirit, will guide you, the apostles, into all truth, that is, unto all THE TRUTH, John xvi. 13. The Spirit expressly saith, "that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith. 1 Tim. iv. 1. Now the

apostles time was the last time, 1 John ii. 18. See also, 2 Pet. ii. 5. and iii. 3. and Jude v. 4.

That the doctrines above are prepared as terms for all ages, and errors, will farther appear from the perfection of the Scriptures, that form of sound words, 2 Tim. i. 13, that divine \* deposit, ver. 14, and chap. ii. 2. Read on to chap. iii, and you must see that the Apostle in that chapter, after pointing out several characters to be *avoided*, at last, directs to the Scriptures which, says he, ver. 16, is profitable for *doctrine*,—ver. 17, that the man of God may be perfect, that is complete, if other things, certainly *terms* are included.

Again, it was necessary that terms should have been early *completed*, to counter-act early error. Perhaps every capital truth was denied in the Apostolic age. The mystery of iniquity doth already work, 2 Thess. ii. 7,—*even now* there are many antichrists, 1 John. iv. 1, 2—many deceivers, 2 John, ver. 7. See also Jude, ver. 4.

Certainly every essential truth was denied in denying the Lord Jesus Christ, and this was done in Peter's days, See 2 Epist. ii. 1. This *denial*, though but *one* heresy is yet called heresies in the plural number, because it comprehends all heresies; and it is called *damnable heresies*, because it is opposed to all *the truth* or truths which are *necessary* to be believed in order to *salvation*. This leads to a

4th remark, just hinted before, that all the doctrines aforesaid are wound up, for greater convenience, in one short comprehensive expression, called with an emphasis *the truth*, *the word*, the faith, and the *common salvation*; but most frequently, *the truth*. It ought to have been so rendered in pilate's question, John xviii. 38. Not what is truth? but what is *the*

\* The Jews said that God had two dispositions. One was the lamp or law without us, alluded to above: the other was the soul or lamp within us, alluded to "2 Tim. chap. i. 5. 12," and "1 Pet. iv. 19." See Whitby's Annot: on the places above.

*truth*? what is that truth which you came to witness, See ver. 37.

This *truth* was summed up in answer to a *Scriptural* question, on the terms of communion, What doth hinder me to be baptized? and so brought into the *communion* of the christian church? the answer then was, See Acts viii, and, in spite of creeds and creed-makers, in spite of, bigotry and bigots—the answer *now is*, that *if thou believest, with all thine heart, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, thou mayest.*

This necessarily comprehends all the *general* doctrines that have been enumerated; but does not necessarily involve *particular* opinions. It supposes that there is a God, for it asserts, that Jesus Christ is the son of God. It was acknowledged before baptism, which was administered in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It comprehended the *record* that God gave of his Son, this is *my beloved Son*, in whom I am well pleased. See Matt. iii. 17, and xvii. 5. He was called Jesus, because he saves his people from their sins, Matt. i. 21; and Christ, the “*anointed*,” with the holy Ghost, and with power, Acts x. 38. He is therefore a necessary, and sufficient saviour. I shall leave you to trace the subject along at your leisure, and only observe farther, that the Apostles constantly gave, and demanded this as the acknowledgment of faith; and constantly opposed it to every error that excluded from the church, to the damnable heresies of the Gnostic philosophers, and to all other heresiarchs. See Matt. xvi. 16. Acts viii. 37, and ix. 20. 22. 2 Pet. ii. 1. 1 John, iv. 3, and 2 John, ver. 7,† and 9.

† The Gnostics were oriental philosophers, whose philosophic opinions, See Mosheim’s ecclesiast. Hist: led them to deny that Jesus was Christ, or that he was come in the flesh. Now, who is a liar says John, 1 Epist. ii. 22, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ.—Many deceivers are entered into the world who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, 2 John, ver. 7. This is not abiding in the *doctrine of Christ*, ver. 9; that is, (for the context is the best interpreter,) in that doctrine that Jesus Christ was come in the flesh. Or that he was the holy thing called the *son*



I know, that there are *particular* opinions about every part of this compound of terms—*particular* opinions about faith—*particular* opinions about the sense of that emphatic clause, “with all the heart,” and *particular* opinions about the sonship of our Saviour. I shall not wait to enumerate these opinions; but only observe, that, for that very reason, that is, because they are *particular*, they ought not to be made terms. Nor are they in practice, made terms by our church. Different opinions have been published on all the particulars aforesaid—and published by those who now have communion with each other, because they do unite in the *general* belief, that there is *no other name given under heaven among men by which we must be saved*: or because *they do believe, with all their heart, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and “the very Christ.”*||

of God, and born of the virgin. See Luke, i. 35. If there come any unto you and bring not *this doctrine*, receive him not:—what ignorance or bigotry in those who bring this doctrine thus to treat one another!

|| The specified objection here was, “your terms are too lax.” And an objection, afterwards mentioned in public, was, “Any infidel can say, I believe——that Jesus Christ is the son of God.”

Quere, How can an infidel assert that truth, the denial of which is the very thing and the only thing that constitutes infidelity?

“But he tells you a lie.” Quere. Can you *prove this*? If you can do this, exclude the *liar* on the principle of *immorality*; but this will lead you from *doctrinal* to *preceptive* terms, which is a going away to other ground, and of which hereafter.

The objection was publicly made just as it is marked, and the very emphatic clause “*With all the heart*” was entirely omitted. The omission to me appeared uncandid, and the reason afterwards assigned was, that it was not material for taking it altogether, it is not easy to see any thing that will be error. This was said after the *doctrinal* terms had been twice enumerated by me as above.

Whether the omission was candid or not, the insertion of the clause would not have given force to the objection. For if an infidel could say, *I believe with all my heart*, &c—he could say any thing else that Mr. Doke could propose to him as a term—he could run over all the chapters in the confession, and all the answers in both catechisms.



How wise and gracious is heaven, to place the terms in general and essential truths, to give them early to the Christian church, and to wind up all in one, which all the councils and creed-makers on earth have never mended, and can never mend.

Happy was the church, while she abode by this term. This she did for about three centuries. During that period, disputes were between *Christians* and *heretics*, since that time---between *Christians* and *Christians*, because then began, and since have continued the reign and the rage of making terms§.

It may be said, Will you admit the profane, the idolator, or liar; or the men who worship angels, adore the elements, or deny the use of sacraments in whole or part, yet make this profession?

I reply, that this leads to *commands*, *precepts*, and *practice*, which are very different from *doctrines* or *mere matters of faith*.

Commands are of two kinds, either moral or positive, and in the practice of both there may be communion. There may be communion in praise and prayer, as well as in baptism and the eucharist.

In moral precepts indeed there is *no exclusion*; the Jews were not cast out of the temple but synagogue only, and men are not now excluded from prayer and praise. The reason is that to preclude men from duties social and moral, is to preclude them from the means of reforming; with positive social duties it is not so. The very exclusion is intended to reform.

1. The moral precepts respect the worship of God and reverence for his name. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, Matt. iv. 10. Follow holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. These commands are moral, essential to the christian character, founded on the first table of the law, and demand 2 all times the service of the heart.

2. They respect the mode of that worship and reverence. Of the tree in the midst of the garden thou

§ See Mosheim on the fourth century and forward.

shalt not eat. Go unto the altar and offer thy burnt-offering. Take, eat, this is my body. Go teach all nations, baptizing &c.—These are ceremonial or ritual commands, yielding in importance to the moral, and appended to the first table.

3. The precepts have respect to justice and charity to men—to the acquiring, defending, exchanging and distributing of property--and to the anticipating or removing or alleviating of prejudice and wretchedness, whether the objects become wretched by the oppression of men, by the immediate hand of God, or by their own crimes. These embrace the second table.

4. The precepts respect the mode of exercising justice and charity. Eye for eye and tooth for tooth. Five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep. Resist not evil. If any man smite thee on the one cheek turn to him the other also. Go not to law about the lesser matters. These are derived from and appended to the second table; and are the judicial or civil laws of the land, or the peculiar laws of christianity.

Now should any man worship a false God, rob, or defraud, or oppress, deny the sacraments, or adore the elements; the questions would be, 1st, What says the precept? 2d, What says the fact? Is there a law, and has that law been broken?

If both appear to the church, he ought to be deprived of communion. For every the least precept, unless when it interferes with a greater, as in the case of Hezekiah and his people, See 2 Chron. xxx. 19. should be made a term. For he that saith, I know him and keepeth not his *commandments* is a liar, and the *Truth* is not in him, 1 John ii. 4.

It has been commonly observed, that *duties* are plainer than *doctrines*; and yet I find more difficulty with regard to *preceptive* than *doctrinal* terms.

For though there be no line to draw between precepts or laws that are, or are not to be made terms; yet there may be disputes about the *existence*, *continuation*, or *sense* of precepts or laws, and there may be

disputes about the *degrees* of punishment when the law and the fact, have been both ascertained and acknowledged.

Exists there a law, or any thing tantamount, with respect to the practice of dancing? This is a question that has long divided and agitated the church, and is not yet decided.

When the *precept* is acknowledged, the *continuation* has been disputed. This is true of positive institutions--the eucharist and baptism, which some have supposed to be but for a time now past.

When the continuation has been acknowledged, the sense has been disputed. Do *this* in remembrance of me. *This* is my *body*.

When the law has been ascertained, the fact or motive have been *doubtful*, when both have been ascertained, the *degree* of punishment has been disputed. Shall antenuptial fornication, for example, be punished in the same *public* manner as that which is not followed by marriage?\*

Now though there be no question about communion in the observance of moral precepts: yet a difficulty still remains; for the violation of any precept moral or positive, should exclude from communion in *positive* institutions. See Num. xiv. 12. Josh. v. 6. Matt. iii. 7. 1 Cor. v. 11.

In solving the difficulty I observe, that it has no existence with reference to those who deny that any should be *excluded*, by admitting all to communion in the positive institutions: or with reference to those who deny that any should be *admitted*, by denying these positive institutions altogether.

I do not say that any of them is in the right; but I say that they can have no *difficulty* about communion.

If *the existence* of a moral precept, or law, should be affirmed or denied by those who believe that any

\* See more on a similar subject in Paley's Mor. Phil. In answer to this question, If the maxims of justice be so simple, why are suits so complex?



should be excluded ; and if it *appear* a matter of magnitude, a different line of conduct will follow, and a *schism must take place* until something respecting the law be more clearly understood.

If not the existence, but *sense* of a precept be disputed: such as, This do---this is my body, &c. and if the different senses should appear too inconsistent with the character of a disciple of Jesus, *a schism must take place*, until the sense of the precept be better understood.

I conclude with observing, that though there be some difference in preceptive and doctrinal terms ; yet there is some similarity.

As some doctrines are so plain and emphatic, that a denial of them appears inconsistent with the existence of the Christian religion ; or salvation on its terms : so some precepts are so plain and emphatic, that a constant neglect or violation of them appears utterly inconsistent with the character or conduct of a Christian.

All the laws of God are founded on these two principles, first, that the Creator be worshipped by the creature with his whole heart ; and in the next place, that He be worshipped in *what external mode* he pleases. The first is the principle of all *moral*, the second—of all *positive* laws. The first is commonly the most plain, and always the most important.

Again, as the most important doctrines are general and plain : so also are the precepts. No dispute about the duty of worshipping God with our hearts, but in what verse and even with what tunes has been disputed. Ought these disputes to be made terms ? Can the precepts be extended to all the minute and numerous, or only to the general and important acts of public worship, or of common life ?

Once more, as the plain, general, and important doctrines are all summed up in one short comprehensive truth : so are all the general, plain, and important precepts summed up in one short comprehensive precept given by Christ himself. This is “ *Fellow*



me." For he that saith he *abideth* in him, ought himself also *so to walk* even as he walked, 1 John ii. 6.

From the practice of Christ then a precept may be *inferred*; but there is no other case in which we should suppose a precept by consequence or construction.

Would to God that one half of that zeal which has been aimed at *supposed* error, or at practice contrary to *supposed* precepts, had been levelled at *known acknowledged* vice. Let us be severe with the profane swearer, the sabbath breaker, the disobedient to parents, the fornicator, the fraudulent, the slanderer, &c. but let us spare the opinions of men, when these opinions are not followed by these vices. I know that some have said "Error is worse than vice." What! Is an error about infant-baptism or church-government, worse than drunkenness, adultery, malice, or murder! What can lead men to such amazing madness?

Let us, my brethren, search for the doctrines and precepts, and pray for the Spirit, of Christ; that on this, as well as on all other subjects, we may be guided unto The Truth.

I have been tedious, and therefore shall sum up the remaining duties. The next I shall mention is, the antient and important duty of Catechising.† Many

† Here I beg leave briefly to suggest to my brethren, the plan of catechising from the Scriptures as the platform, or ground of a catechism. I have proceeded from Gen. to Job, and through part of the four Evangelists; and design, if God permits, to proceed on to the end, asking those questions that lead to reading and reflection. I have found it profitable to myself and my people, and can venture to say, that as far as I have proceeded, there is not a congregation on the continent, as well acquainted with the Scriptures.

The Congregation I have divided into a number of divisions of fifteen or sixteen families each, assigning to each division a sett of written questions, from one, part of one, or two books, as they may be, long or short, in each Testament; catechising in the morning from the Old, in the afternoon from the New Testament;

things might be said on this subject, but I forbear with only observing, that it may have its influence on both sermons and sacraments, by preparing the mind to be profited by them.

Another duty is the *faithful* and *frequent* administration of the sacraments. This has a more immediate regard to the preachers of the Gospel, who are therefore called pastors; but it has also a respect to the eldership, in whom is required *fidelity* in admission. The principal matter here is to understand, and apply the terms of communion.

It is *for a lamentation* that the *frequent* administration of the Lord's *Supper* is incompatible with the usual number of preachers, sermons, and other exercises required on the occasion. When prejudice on this subject, will admit of a remedy, is more than I can determine.†

In the last place, it is the duty of those called to the altar, to visit families and schools.

and closing all by calling on the youth, to repeat the Shorter Catechism.

This set of scriptural questions thus examined on, pass to the next division of the Congregation, who often attend as spectators, knowing that they are next to be examined on the same questions. Thus in rotation, every individual will be examined on every part of the Bible.

† I have compendized the arguments for the *weekly* or frequent administration from Erskine's Theological Disquisitions.

The time of the passover was fixt, why not the time of the eucharist?

The practice of Christ and his Apostles is equivalent to a precept for the change of the sabbath. Why not in this case for the weekly administration?

In Luke xxiv. 30, compared with chap. xxii. 19, is supposed to be an account of the Eucharist. It is true, that bread only is mentioned; but it is supposed to be an emblem of the whole feast.

In Acts ii. 42,—they *continued in breaking of bread* as well as in doctrine, *καὶ οἶνον* in the house, See chap. v. 4, in the temple, and *καὶ οἶνον* in the house where Christ first communicated.

In Acts xx. 7,—the first day of the week was the time when *usual* the disciples came together to break bread. The primitive Christians called the Lord's day, *the day of bread*.

I do not know that either of these is expressed in the Scripture ; but they are practices that have obtained in the church, and are to be regarded as duties of *human* institution, which may be useful to the young rising generation.||

It is also the duty of the preacher or elder, or both, to visit families when any of their members are afflicted with sickness or other calamity.

III. The last general division of the subject is to consider the qualifications, and duties of those for whom the sacrifices are to be offered.

|| The above paragraph is not exactly as it was spoken at Salem ; but it is immaterial, since the objection only was, " Family-visitation treated too lightly." The objection arose from a resolution from which I receded, and a sentiment which I maintained and still maintain.

The resolution was, in these words, that " Were I again to take a parochial charge, I would only engage to visit the families already formed once in the ministerial way, and the young rising families as they might be formed." From this resolution I receded, for the reasons that will be mentioned.

The sentiment was, that family-visiting is, like a fast-day previous to the communion, a duty of *human* institution. Mr. Doke said, and I suppose still says, *divine*. This was the last subject of debate.

Mr. Doke's reasoning appeared to be from things that *now are* to things that formerly *were not*. This and vice versa are fruitful sources of deception, nay persecution and death. Idolatry under the theocracy was treason ; not so now ; yet the ignorance of this, has shed oceans of human blood.

How absurd to speak of Moses, See Acts vii. 23, *visiting* his brethren, as if Moses had been a member of Abington presbytery, ordained to serve a congregation, riding about with his elder to exhort, catechise, and pray for the family, who are all at perfect *liberty* and leisure to attend to the instruction !

The fact, when investigated, turns out to be, that Moses was then *no minister* at all, that the people his brethren were near half a million in number, that they were scattered over the land of Egypt, and had no leisure from their task-masters to attend to any thing but their tasks. The whole matter is, Moses took a tour through the land to see how his brethren were treated by their Egyptian masters. This tour is expressed by a *word* that suits a purpose, and behold we are amused with a *sound* !

" But wo to the pastors that *visit* not my flocks." See Jer. xxiii. How ridiculous for men, who ought to *investigate things*, to



After all that has been said, a few things on this subject may suffice.

The first thing required is religion. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, Deut. vi. 4. and thy neighbour as thyself, Lev. xix. 18. This was required in the Jewish and in all other dispensations. See Ps. l. 5—16. Matt. v. 23. Tit. ii. 11, 12. 1 Pet. ii. 19.

be deceived with *sound*s. Who were those pastors! neither priest nor prophet, these are not named till the 11th verse; but Zedekiah and his court, says the judicious Pool, and perhaps Nehemiah in the 4th verse.

The prophets resided in their schools, and the priests in their forty-eight cities assigned them by Joshua; and neither the one nor the other had, as we now have, particular parochial charges to reside in. The priests went up in their turn to, and returned again from, the national altar.

“But Paul visited the brethren, and taught from house to house.” See Acts xv. 36, and xx. 20.

I reply, there is a difference between *visiting churches*, and *families in a church*. Paul’s visit began, chap. xiii. from Antioch to Seleucia, from Seleucia to Salamis, from Salamis to Paphos, from Paphos to Perga, from Perga to Antioch in Pisidia, and so along to many another place, until his return to the other Antioch, from which he departed. This was Paul’s visit.

“But he resided three years at Ephesus, and taught from house to house.”

I reply Ephesus was a large city, including a large neighbouring district: See all the commentators, Whitby in particular.

The original words are *καθ' ἑμῆραν*, *in or according to houses*; *κατ' ἡμέραν* is *in or according to the day*. The words plainly express the *manner* of teaching in private houses, for the Christians did not worship in heathen temples, and they had not every where erected churches for themselves. This not only corresponds with the original, but with the state of society at that time.

There is no dispute about the *duty*, but *origin* of the duty. I practise it, because it is a *custom* that has obtained in the churches, a custom that may be useful, and the omission of which would give offence.

The Apostle has acted on these principles, with respect to meat offered to idols, but at the same time he has told the truth, about that meat. I would wish to unite such *honesty* and such *charity* in all the cases that may require them to be united.

This closes the objections, as far as I know them. To me they have appeared of little consequence, except those that regard terms of communion. On that difficult subject, I have secured to



In admitting to the altar, it has been asked, Who is the judge of this qualification? I answer, both the man who stands at the altar to receive the gift, and the man who brings it. What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man, which is in him? The fruits can be known by all. See Matt. iii. 8.

Of these fruits, he who stands at the altar can judge, and they are

1. Knowledge, in opposition to ignorance. The necessity of this, was supposed by the sin-offering for ignorance under the law, and in all ages, the more refined and moral sacrifices of prayer and praise, required knowledge. See Ps. xlvii. 7. 1 Cor. xiv. 15. This knowledge ought to be extensive, because

myself a safe retreat, should the ground be untenable. For in that case, either the terms enumerated are *more* or *less* than they should be. *I have not pretended to a perfect enumeration.* Should any man *convince* me, that a term is to be added, I will add it. Should any *convince* me, that a term is to be stricken out, it shall be stricken out.

That the terms are already made, to me appears demonstrable. For either Christ has made them, or left them for men to make.

If Christ has made them, all is easy, we have only to *find* and *execute* them.

If men are to *make* them, all is confusion, either *all* opinions must be made terms, or *no* opinions must be made terms; or every church and individual must *draw the line* where they please.

Mr. Doke will never admit *all* opinions to be made terms, *his own* must be excepted.

He will not admit, that *no* opinions be made terms, for he would be willing that *mine* were excepted.

He will not admit me to draw *the line* where I please; though it seems that he would be glad to have that liberty to himself.

The truth I believe is this, that neither he nor I, have any thing to do with fabricating terms. I believe that Christ has saved us the trouble, by making them himself; and that our business is, to *search* and *find* them, and *execute* them. For in the Scriptures, these terms are, and in the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, are they expressed. And before many years shall this subject be perfectly understood. God grant that we may be lead to that knowledge, which will so much tend to promote brotherly love among the children of God, whether of the same, or of different denominations. Amen.

doctrines are connected, and no one can be understood apart.

2. Another qualification is truth, as opposed to error. Here we recur to doctrinal terms.

3. Another is morality or holiness, in opposition to vice: God always required his people to be holy. Here we recur to *preceptive* terms.\*

Should any say that these terms reach not men's hearts, I ask, What man knoweth the things of a man? Were I to exclude the man who might think *doubtfully* of himself, and who was walking and willing to walk in the commandments, I would found the exclusion, not on his keeping the commandments, but on his opinion of himself.

4. Your duties, brethren, viewed through the medium of the text, are—to present your offerings—to declare your faith—to promise or vow obedience—and daily to be performing your vows. See Psa. lxi. ult. . . . You are,

1. To present your offerings. These are yourselves, your children, and your substance. Present your bodies, and souls too, with all their powers, a living sacrifice.—This sacrifice you are to present on the Holy Day, with praise and prayer. Without this, you cannot gain knowledge, nor fulfil your vows to wait at wisdom's gates. Without this, your teachers will attend the altar in vain.

You are again to present your little ones. These you are to offer, not in blood to Molech, but to God

\* Some have supposed different qualifications in the patriarchal, or rather, Jewish and Christian churches; that two covenants were made with Israel, the first spiritual, see Gen. xvii. and Deut. xxix, the second temporal, of which, see Exod. xxxv. 7. Deut. v. 2, 3. Of these the first is supposed to be continued, see Jer. xxxi. 31. Heb. viii. 8; and of this, hypocrites are supposed to be *no members*. See more on this subject, in Erskine's Theological Disquisitions.

It is true, that hypocrites receive not the spiritual blessings: but with respect to the terms of admission to the external privileges, the question still returns. What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?

in baptism; to that God to whom your parents devoted you. In his name offer them, who said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not."

Once more, you are to offer your substance to God. This is at once, to worship him and support the altar, for God has ordained, that they who serve at the altar, shall live by the altar, and that they who preach the gospel shall live of the gospel.

This is a reasonable service, founded on the principles of justice and equity, and on the practice of the Jews, who gave to God, some think, a fifth part of their property. How much lighter is the burden now? All are at liberty. Some give not at all, and none need offer a *fiftieth* part of their possessions to give teachers a decent support. Again,

You are, with your offerings, to make a declaration of your faith, and a vow of obedience. I name these together, because they are connected. Some have said, that these things ought not to be demanded; because it subjects the offerer to vow, he knows not what, in the extempore words of him, who, at the altar, demands them. Who, say they, would take a civil oath in the unforeknown and extempore words of a magistrate?

For my own part, I think, with the church, that they ought to be demanded; but in words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, and words previously known, and then the objection would lose all its force.

To me this appears, from the nature of a covenant which is made by sacrifice, see Psa. l. 5. In all covenants, are parties, *promises*, conditions, and penalties. The conditions have always been expressed or implied. In the first covenant the woman *expressly* says, Gen. iii. 3. "Of the tree in the midst of the garden, God hath said, ye shall not eat." When the book of the covenant was read at Sinai, the people *expressly* say, "All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient." Exod. xxiv. 7. See also



Deut. xxvi. And in a prophecy of the days of the gospel, it is expressly said, see Isai. xlv. 4. " I will pour water on him that is thirsty—and then it follows, verse 5, " One shall say, I am the Lord's—and another shall *subscribe* with his hand unto the Lord." Surely this expresses a *promise*. We have already seen, that an express declaration of faith was required of the eunuch, Acts viii. " If thou believest with all thine heart, &c." This may include a promise of obedience, for *with the heart* man believeth *unto righteousness*,—to the attainment of righteousness, Rom. x. 10, whether it be the righteousness which is of faith, verse 6, or the righteousness of him that doeth righteousness, 1 John 11. 29. To such a declaration and promise is the answer of a good conscience, 1 Pet. iii. 2. supposed to refer; the apostle is speaking of baptism, in which an answer is expected from the person admitted, to a question, proposed by him who admits him. The best answer, in this case, is that which is dictated by a good conscience, in sincerity declaring our faith, and in sincerity resolving to obey.

Now baptism is considered as the seal of a *covenant*, and as it is the first seal, the initiating ordinance, it is proper that the promise or vow be taken at baptism; and for the same reason, it is not necessary that it be afterwards made at the eucharist; because though it also be a sacrament of the New Testament, yet it is not a sacrament that introduces into the church. It supposes that we have been introduced already.

On these principles the church has a scriptural right to demand of parents, who present their children, or of adults, who present themselves, that " they profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him." But the profession and promise ought to be in words *previously* known, and, if possible, in words which the Holy Ghost teacheth.\* Why should we

\* Quere, Why has not this been attempted in the ordination vows, in the Directory for Ordination?



trifle with the consciences of men, when the remedy is so easy? “Do you believe with all your heart, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God? Or that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh?” Do you promise for yourselves, that you seek the “answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ?—that you no longer should live the rest of your time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God?” “That being buried with Christ by baptism unto death, you also should walk in newness of life? And for your children, that you will try to “bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” And “train them up in the way they should go?” See Acts viii. 37. 1 Pet. iii. 21, iv. 3. Rom. vi. 3, 4. Eph. vi. 4, Prov. xxii. 6.

Such an oath, or rather, such a vow might be explained by the preacher; as a *civil* oath might be explained by the magistrate at the time of administering; but the words of the oath, and not of the explanation, are necessary to be previously known, and finally uttered before God.

Thus “having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water, let us hold fast the *profession of our faith*, without wavering.” And having made our vows to God, let us not defer to pay; but daily perform the same.

This is the last, but not least extensive particular of our duty. It extends to all the duties of future life, and it extends, with only some changes or modifications, to these duties for ever. For the service of God here is a *figure* or *pattern* of his service hereafter, and is intended to prepare for and introduce to it. See Heb. ix.

## THE I M P R O V E M E N T.

WHO can reflect on the various kinds of sacrifices, the various classes of men to offer them, and the

Quere. Why are not the words of the profession and promise, i. e. of the vow, expressed in the Directory for Baptism?

various ages in which they have been introduced, and no cry out, "O! the wisdom and knowledge of God!" Can you, my brethren, forbear to make this holy exclamation?

Human wisdom scarcely gains a single object by a thousand means. Divine wisdom can gain a thousand objects by one single mean.

Who would have thought it possible, with only two or three species of animals and vegetables, to exhibit almost every known attribute in the divine nature, and each attribute in every possible attitude or view?

Who would have thought it possible, with the one burnt-offering, to have exhibited justice denouncing, condemning, consuming, substituting, sparing, pardoning, and acquitting?

Who would have thought it possible, by the one peace-offering, to shew mercy, founded on the atonement, procured by blood, *daily experienced* or enjoyed, bestowed sometimes in an *extraordinary* manner, and, by prayer *expected* for time to come. For this offering was sometimes a victim, it was stated or daily, and it was free or voluntary, that is, on extraordinary occasions; and it was eucharistic and votive, or offered with thanksgiving and prayer. See Lev. vii.

Laws are not made for the righteous, but transgressors. How wise and just is that law which taxes the sinner to support the government which his crimes make necessary, and thus obliges him to pay better men for punishing his crimes.

Because all were, in some degree, sinners, therefore, *stated* offerings were demanded of all; but except the man who would not know, nor do his duty, none need bring a *trespass*-offering, or a sin-offering for *ignorance*. These operated as a *direct tax* on the transgressor, whether he transgressed by neglecting instruction, or sinning against knowledge. May I be permitted to ask, whether a present law, so much ex-

claimed against, be not founded on this excellent principle?\*

Again, Who does not see wisdom in accommodating every thing to the progressive state of society? This might be illustrated in many a particular. I select but one. The sacrifices were, at first, the means of worship; when society required, they became also an engine of government, and continued to serve both purposes as long as, and no longer than, was necessary. For how improper, how inconvenient, were such sacrifices at this age, either for the worship of God, or the support of government? It was otherwise, when men's wealth consisted in their flocks, and when the Great Sacrifice was yet to be offered.

2. Are the qualifications of those who stand at the altar so extensive and encreasing? Are the duties so numerous and important? Then let us labour to attain the one, and execute the other. And let us see that they be attained and executed by those to whom we say, "*Go unto the altar.*"

Let us not dare to rest contented with the attainments that might have sufficed for Abel, Aaron, or even Ezra. Let us remember, that we live in another age of the world—an age, in which far higher qualifications are requisite.

Let us *take heed to ourselves*,—to our hearts and lives. Though external qualifications differ, as the state and stages of society, yet *the religion of the heart* is the same in all ages. And in no age are the ministers of religion free from the danger of mistaking its nature and neglecting its duties.

Let us then, while explaining and recommending religion to others, frequently view it with reference to ourselves. And let us, ourselves, beware of the mistakes or omissions we point out to others. When we happen to be hearers, which in the present state of our country is seldom, let us be *hearers*. Let our hearts be rather employed in applying the truths to

\* The question above alludes to the tax on spirituous liquors, laid on by congress.



ourselves, than in considering how we afterwards apply them to others. Let us be at least *hearers* as well as preachers.

And while we are charging others to realize the omnipresence of the Deity, while we are guarding them against indolence in their callings, against the inordinate love of the world, the fear of man, that bringeth a snare, or the love of popular applause, we ought always to set the example, and begin with ourselves.

Let us also *take heed to our doctrines*, both in matter and manner.

Let the matter of our sermons be Christ, and him crucified. Every subject may be pointed at this one. Are we explaining the prophecies or promises? *Christ is the spirit of prophecy*, and in *him are all the promises, yea, and Amen.* Are we preaching the law? Christ is the end of the law. Are we preaching the Gospel. The Gospel is, that Christ died and rose again. And are we explaining the sacrifices? Christ is the great sacrifice.

Again, let us aim at preaching these truths with plainness, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth; but which the Holy Ghost teacheth. Not by constraint, but willingly. True, necessity is laid on us; but it ought to be the necessity of being willing. This will produce diligence and fidelity, and if all be directed by a proper knowledge, the doctrines will be preached in their proper order and proportion.

This is a subject of importance;—let not our *constant* hearers be continually flying after us from one unconnected subject to another; but let us give them a view of the doctrines in their connection, still reserving the liberty of introducing an occasional discourse, as the state and exigency of our people may require.

Let us again, attend to the proportion as well as order of the doctrines. On some subjects, as on some musical notes, we must dwell much longer than on others. Who would dwell as long in explaining



the innocent as the fallen state! The scriptures have not done it, and they are on this subject, as well as all others, our best and surest guide.

In the exercise of discipline, let us try to understand that very difficult and disputed doctrine respecting terms of communion. Let us attempt to divest ourselves of prejudice, and to keep our minds open to a fair and candid discussion, and let us resolve to follow the truth, wherever it may lead, in theory or practice. And let us be so honest as to have the terms executed, when we find them without partiality, without hypocrisy, without doing any thing with a view to the fear or the favour of men.

Let us also be the men of mercy. Social duties are divided into two classes, those of justice and charity. The minister of state is placed in the centre of the duties of justice, *there* is he more immediately to serve society. The minister of religion stands in the centre of the duties of mercy, and *there* is he called more immediately to act. Let us remember that without being exempted from the duties of justice, we are bound to "*show mercy, and to show mercy with cheerfulness.*"

In the introduction of others into the ministry, let us beware of "heaping" to ourselves "teachers." Let us rather call for more qualifications, than dispense with any already demanded. Let us rather think of enlarging than lessening the time for acquiring them. The progress of society always rises in demanding qualifications in exact proportion to the means it affords for obtaining them. Hitherto, neither demand nor means have been very extensive. It will soon be otherwise. In the Northern churches it is otherwise already, and they have accordingly demanded, "more time, higher qualifications.\*" We

\* This alludes to a motion made by Dr. Witherpoon, in the General assembly, at Carlisle, May 1792, requiring that our young men should spend three years in the study of Divinity, previously to licensure. I will heartily concur with this measure on the licensure of the first man who shall have finished his education at the young rising University in North Carolina.

hope they will wait on us a few years, we hope they will consider how many in literature and age they are before us. But we must beg but a few; our own interest, and, we hope, the state of literature among us, will ask no more.

Let us, my brethren in the ministry; let us leave it to others to multiply teachers and depreciate human knowledge. Far more is lost, in the opinion of the judicious, by the *quality* of such preachers, than can possibly be gained by their *quantity* or number. Let others tell the world that learning is injurious to religion. We know that this is not true; and we hope that it will not be much longer believed by the most stupid person among us.†

As religion is the grand qualification, and as early religion is so very desirable, let us encourage early piety wherever we may find it. Let us stretch out the hand of charity to the poor pious youth who shews a taste for knowledge, human and divine; and let us endeavour, as far as we can, to unite early piety with an early and well conducted education. In the preacher religion and learning, or knowledge human and divine should ever be united.

† I have often been surprized that it should be said that Christ and his Apostles were *unlearned* men, and that this should be brought as a proof of the truth and divinity of the Scriptures, when the original only conveys the idea that they were *private men*, and not *learned* by their enemies. See "John vii. 15." "Acts v. 13."

What is *learning*? It is the *useful* knowledge of the times or age we live in, whatever that be.

What was the *Jewish learning*? It was the knowledge of two dialects Hebrew and Chaldee. It was the knowledge of the Jewish music, history, laws, miracles, and prophecy. Nothing more. In which of these were they *less learned* than the Scribes? Geography, Astronomy, Mathematics, Surveying, Navigation, Natural and Moral Philosophy, and Logic were unknown or little known in the Jewish Academies.

"But they—the Apostles, have spoken against learning as making men proud." I reply, May not men be as proud of wanting, as of having it? Were Moses, Solomon, Isaiah, or Paul prouder than the other sacred writers; and they had ten times as much learning. It is only by ignorance and pride that learning is despised.

3d. In the last place, think of your qualifications and duties, ye that come to the altar with your sacrifice. If the demands be rising in every age on the preachers, it is rising on the people. Have you, my friends, thought on this? Can you imagine that all the qualifications and duties are on the part of him who stands at the altar, and none on his part who brings the gift? Can you assign one reason why the man of fourscore should not be superior to the young preacher of twenty? I do not mean in the knowledge of words, or in the habit of writing or speaking, but I mean in the knowledge of doctrine, and progress of true religion on the heart.

Ye aged and young men, consider the qualifications of those who come to the altar. Seek first the kingdom of God. Be truly religious. Seek for knowledge. Lift up your voice for understanding. Search for the knowledge of the truth, as it is in Jesus. Avoid error and prejudice. Follow the truth wherever it may lead you, and make use of our ministry in order to obtain it; but always think for yourselves. Search the Scriptures to see whether what we tell you be so. Encrease our necessity to search them, by following hard after us and forcing us to keep before you. This is your advantage, that it is easier to weigh the force of arguments already found, than to find arrange and cloth them with words.

My friends, you have more to know and to do than any people ever had before you. Cease to do evil. Learn to do well. Be a holy people. Let your knowledge be in order to holiness. Holiness will encrease knowledge. Then shall you know, if you follow on to know the Lord.

Consider your duties as well as qualifications. Present your bodies a living sacrifice. Present yourselves before God, on the Holy day. Meet with your teachers at the gates of wisdom, and hear from them the word of God. Present your children to God on the earliest occasion, and so live that there may be no obstacles in your way to baptism. Honour God with

your substance. Offer your sin-money, and trespass-money when it is justly demanded. This is a reasonable service, and, as far as it has respect to religion, it is now a voluntary free-will-offering.

With these your offerings, come into his courts, worship him in the beauty of holiness, witness a good profession, and vow obedience to the Lord of all. When you come with your offering you cannot say with the Israelite, "A Syrian ready to perish was my father;" but with him, you can say, "By one man sin entered into the world." You can come confessing your sins, and declaring your faith in the Son of God. You can make your vows to God before all his people, and having made your vows, each day be performing the same.

This, my brethren, is a summary of your duty, both preachers and people. I close the whole, in the words of our Lord, which though short are full of spirit and matter. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." God enable us all to know and do his will for Christ's sake. Amen.

END OF THE SERMON.



## P O S T S C R I P T

*Anticipating the objections to the foregoing Sermon.*

THE following objections will certainly be made, and therefore I judge it proper to anticipate them,

It will be asked, why have you omitted, as terms of communion, the doctrine of the divine decrees, original sin, free will, perseverance of the saints &c. &c. &c.

For omitting these and all other doctrines not enumerated in the preceding Sermon, I add the following, to the reasons already offered, namely, I believe that good men have been bewildered in the labyrinths of these doctrines, and have found themselves at last on opposite sides of the question. Not so with respect to those doctrines that have been enumerated. Were I permitted to say any thing on this subject with respect to myself it would be this ; that I have long, perhaps too long, perplexed myself with the investigation of these doctrines, that I have industriously collected, and candidly weighed the arguments on both sides, and that I now am a Calvinist, because I see a few and only a few, more difficulties on the Arminian side, and I dare not now positively assert, because I am not positively assured, that this preponderance has not arisen from early education. But with respect to the doctrines enumerated I am positive and peremptory, and conceive it my duty to *contend earnestly for them.*

It will be farther objected, that I have adopted the confession of faith which contains the doctrines of Decrees &c. &c. &c. as the confession of my faith, *the system of doctrine contained in the scriptures.* Why

not then make these doctrines terms of communion.

To this I beg leave to reply, that as to myself I have adopted the confession with a good conscience because *in the general* I believe the *system of doctrine* it expresses, and *in particular* I believe these doctrines aforesaid : but with reference to other men I do not believe that this confession obliges my conscience to make every tittle in it a term of communion to exclude them ; nor do I believe that it obliges me to believe every tittle it contains without daring to examine it to the end of my life ; nor do I believe that it necessarily obliges the consciences of my brethren in the ministry to exclude me from their communion should I even differ with them about the meaning of some things contained in this Confession,—things which I believe they could not make terms on Scriptural ground.

My reasons for all this are as follow :

1. I do not know that the confession itself enjoins us to make every thing in it a term. It is not the *law and the testimony*, but an explication of them, and therefore, it wisely asserts, “ that all synods and councils, since the Apostles days, may err, and that many have erred.”

2. I would not make every tittle in the confession a term, because every tittle in the law and the testimony has not been made terms. For, in this law and testimony it is held forth, that Christ’s kingdom was not of this world, and yet, we have seen, that the disciples were admitted to communion, notwithstanding their belief that it was to be of this world.

3. I would not make every tittle in this confession a term, because I do heartily approve of the conduct of the church to which I belong, in refusing to do it. I mean in the two articles of toleration, or rather intolerance, and the power of the magistrate in matters of religion. Were every tittle to be made a term, it would follow, that were our ancestors

present, who 150 years ago compiled our Confession, they must excommunicate us, or we must excommunicate them. For we have publicly, and I think, justly declared our dissent from them, on the two articles aforeseid.

I do also, heartily heartily approve of the conduct of our church in holding a friendly communion and intercourse with our brethren of the Independent church in the Eastern States, though they differ from us in the form of church-government; and I would be happy, that we had a greater intercourse with the Baptist church, though differing from us on the subject of infant-baptism,—a subject held out in our Confession.

In the last place, I could not make every article which may be in the confession a term, because there is one, which, on investigation, I cannot subscribe. It is not a *systematick* question; and it is of no more, perhaps, not of as much, consequence as the questions about toleration, and the magistrates power. It is a question about the meaning of *the light of nature*.

By this light of nature, I understand, all the natural knowledge, whatever that be, which was necessary to be immediately impressed on the mind of the first man, and which was necessary to be transmitted to, and possessed by all men, at mature age, such as, that there is an invisible being. See Rom. i. 19, 20, ii. 14,—aided by all those lights of a *traditionary* revelation, of which, no nation on earth seems totally destitute—and all enforced by our own reasoning and the reasoning of others.

All this I would call the light of nature, and all this, I would suppose a sufficient foundation on which the Spirit of God might operate the conviction, conversion, and sanctification of a heathen-sinner, who was without the written law, had never read the scriptures, nor heard of the letters or syllables that compose the words or sentences. “There is



salvation in no other name but the name of Jesus of Nazareth."

For is there, I ask, is there magic in the letters or syllables that compose these words? Is it the *name* or the substance, the sacrifice, the atonement, the seed of the woman, the prophet whom the Lord God raised—that effects the salvation? How know we that Adam or Moses ever heard the words, Jesus of Nazareth? How know we, that the doctrinal terms of admission to the altar were not in the patriarchal and Jewish ages? "Do you believe that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head, or that the Lord thy God will raise up unto you a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren? See Gen. iii. 15.

Is it the mere word, Jehovah, Jove, or Lord: or is it the eternal mind we adore?

Father of all, in every age,  
In every clime adored,  
By faint, by savage, and by sage,  
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord.

The light of nature, in my view of the subject, does not exclude revelation, but only supposes, that it is not written, nor read. Nor do reading and writing seem essential, though they may be necessary, to revelation. How many of our fathers who could not write nor read. Were they without a revelation?

The light of nature, thus understood, comprehends among other things, an unwritten revelation, and among the heathen, it has *suggested* what a written revelation has *declared*;—that there is some dark and deep malignity in guilt, and some fearful looking for judgement, which mere sorrow cannot remove,—it has dictated that *suffering* is the proper atonement for sin, for the heathens, as well as Jews and Christians have *punished offenders*, it has dictated that some atonement has been, or might be, made by suffering, for all nations under heaven have of-



ferred *suffering* slaughtered beasts on their altars—and finally, it has dictated, that the *benefits*, not guilt, of suffering may be *transferred*; for the language of the heathen was,

*Anima pro animâ, corpus pro corpore penam.*

Life for life, body for body do I lay on the altar. See Blair's sermon on the power of conscience.

Who can say, whether, on these principles, the prayers and alms of Cornelius did not ascend as a memorial up to God, before Peter came to tell him of Jesus of Nazareth? And who can say, that, on the same principles, the prayers and alms of a Western savage may not go up as a memorial before God!

Certainly Peter has told Cornelius, and his words are not against us, that, In every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness, is accepted of God.

Still it will be asked, What are we to do with creeds and confessions, or standards, as they are called by some? I answer, by asking, what are we to do with the Scriptures? Let confessions be governed by the Scriptures, not the Scriptures by Confessions.

Respecting creeds and confessions, the following are my sentiments in the words of another,

The grand desideratum in confessions, now is, a line of distinction between those opinions that *ought*, and that *ought not* to be made terms. Our church has already dared to begin to draw this line, and they have begun where they ought to begin—by first searching the Scriptures. For this line should be first marked on then.

“ Though some purposes of order and tranquillity, may be gained by the establishment of creeds and confessions, yet they are, at all times, attended with serious inconveniences. They check enquiry. They violate liberty. They ensnare the consciences of the clergy, by holding out temptations to prevaricate. However, they may express the persuasion, or be accommodated to the controversies or the fears of the

age in which they are composed, in process of time, and by the reason of the changes that are wont to take place among mankind, on religious subjects ;” changes, by the way, which they have never prevented, “ they come at length, to contradict the actual opinions of the church, whose doctrines they profess to contain.”

It may not follow, from these objections, that creeds and confessions ought to be abolished ; but it follows, that they ought to be made as *simple*—I would have said, as *general*—“ as possible ;” and, perhaps, this would have prevented the necessity of what is added, “ that they be adapted, from time to time, to the varying sentiments and circumstances of the church, and that they should, at no time, advance one step farther than some subsisting necessity requires.” *Paley's Moral Philosophy.*

I repeat it again, the grand desideratum now wanted, is a line of distinction between doctrines that ought, and that ought not to be made terms. It is a matter of great moment to the peace of the church. It has been begun. Some wrong steps, perhaps, have been taken, and more wrong steps may yet be taken, and much time spent, before the line be completely drawn ; but it will be done at last.

When these doctrines shall be ascertained, they will be the first principles of an American book of church discipline. A book much wanted, and for the compilation of which, I beg leave humbly to suggest the following plan :—

That the general assembly appoint a standing committee to receive reports from synods, presbyteries, or church-sessions, of all the important questions or trials that may come before them ; with a brief statement of the reasoning on both sides, and of the judgment had thereon.

That when these materials, so collected, be sufficient to form one volume, it be laid before the general assembly, and by them, revised and published, for

the use of the church judicatures, who may, in similar cases, apply to such book of reports (as the judge or attorney, to similar reports, in civil cases,) for argument and decision.

I have only time to suggest the outlines of this plan, and shall only subjoin a request of some members of the synod of the Carolinas, to publish the following queries on a subject that has been agitated since the sessions of said synod, in October, 1792, being excited by a case that occurred at that time, and which, by means of *non-liquets*, was decided by a very small minority of said synod.

The queries are these :

1. Whether the admitting of non-liquets in church judicatures, be not inconsistent with the very principles of all republican government, that is, that a majority of the judges shall decide?

2. Whether it may not destroy all government?—For if *one* judge may decline to give judgment, why not *all*?

3. Whether the *non-liquet* does not act inconsistently with himself, for he comes into judicature as a *judge*, sits down as a *judge*, deliberates as a *judge*, and after all declines to act a *judge*?

4. Whether the *non-liquet* does not act inconsistently with himself, in another view, for in cases of trial, his sentiments plainly are, that the case is *doubtful*, that is, that the person charged, may be innocent. In this case charity or mercy says, he ought to *acquit*, and yet he may actually or effectively condemn. For suppose that of the judges three are *for*, four against, and two non-liquet; the non-liquets do, in this case, *condemn* the man whom they ought to *acquit*, and whom they, could have *acquitted*.

5. Whether to admit *non-liquets* in church judicatures, be not to indulge indolence, and a dastardly spirit, especially in cases of trial.—Indolence, or inattention to the subject in question. It is well known, that there is fatigue and pain in forcing up the mind, to take in all the circumstances, and after the com-



bination of the circumstances of a trial, in order to a judgment. None of this would be evaded, were there no subterfuge; but it may all be evaded, where there is the subterfuge of being a non-liquet on the question?—Again, whether it be not the indulgence of a dastardly disposition, for the non-liquet may wish to evade the resentment of both parties, by pleading that he gave no judgment at all?

In the last place, whether it be not, therefore, doing injustice to those who give a decisive vote, by rolling over the whole odium, whatever it be, on them?

These are the queries, to which I subjoin, that, in cases of delicacy, a judge may be excused; but in that case, he ought to be excused by the judicature, and excused from *sitting* and *deliberating* as well as *judging*.

A friend has advised me to add the following, which are the words written and spoken at Salim, on the subject of family visiting.

It may be thought strange that I have not named family-visitation among the duties of the minister of the Gospel. The reason is, I have not found this to be a duty from the Scriptures, nor have I been able to find at what age it began. I practise it, because I promised to do so at my ordination, before I had investigated this subject: but were I——

Here followed the resolution mentioned before in the note on the subject, to which the reader is referred.

The reason why I did not insert this before, is, that I did not think it material. And the reason of inserting it now is, lest it should be said, that I had been evasive or uncandid in representing any part of the subject in debate.



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*S E R M O N,*

INTRODUCTORY TO HIS

*MINISTRY IN WORCESTER.*





