

S K E T C H  
OF  
THE HISTORY  
OF  
DISSENTING CHURGHES.

ORIGIN OF

THE DISSENTING CHURCHES AT CAMBRIDGE. &c.

*Drawn up by the late Rev. ROBERT ROBINSON.*

**T**HE first Protestant Dissenting Churches in Cambridgeshire were formed by the Rev. Francis Holcroft, M. A. fellow of Clare-Hall, Cambridge. This gentleman was son of Sir ——— Holcroft, of Westham, near London. He was educated at Clare-Hall. Mr. David Clarkson was his tutor, and (the afterward famous archbishop) Tillotson was his chamber and bedfellow. During his residence at college, he embraced the Calvinistic doctrines, and, approving of the Nonconformist discipline, was a communicant with the Rev. Mr. Jephcot, of Swaffham Prior. While he was prosecuting his studies at college, his chamber being over the college gate, he often observed a horse waiting a long time, on a Lord's day morning, for one of the fellows to go and preach at Littlington, and often returning without the preacher, who, perhaps, was drunk at the time, or not recovered from the last night's debauch. Touched with compassion for the souls of the poor neglected country people, and ashamed of continuing idle in college when preaching was so much wanted, he offered to supply that parish. The offer was accepted; and his ministry very much succeeded there, to the conversion and edification of many souls.

Some time about the year 1655, Mr. Holcroft accepted of the living of Bassingbourne, where he laboured *in season and out of season*; not only preaching on Lord's days, but on holidays also—multitudes following him.

While Mr. Holcroft was minister at Bassingbourne, he formed a *congregational church*, consisting of many people of other parishes as well as of his own, beside several of both town and gown from Cambridge. The first members of this church were embodied, and all others afterward admitted on a profession of *repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*; and the following co-

venant was read and subscribed by all—the members all standing :

“ We do, in the presence of the Lord Jesus, the awful crowned King of Sion, and in the presence of his holy angels and people, and all beside here present, solemnly give up ourselves to the Lord, and to one another, by the will of God ; solemnly promising and engaging, in the aforesaid presence, to walk with the Lord, and with one another, in the observation of all Gospel ordinances, and the discharge of all relative duties in this church of God, and elsewhere, as the Lord shall enlighten and enable us.” Subscribed by A, B, C, D, &c. Thus the church was first embodied. When a member was afterwards received, the pastor used to say—“ Brother (or sister) if you now, in the presence of the Lord Jesus, the awful crowned King of Sion, &c. do now solemnly give up yourself, &c. (*mutatis mutandis*) signify it by lifting up your right hand to the Lord.”

And then, on the part of the church, the person admitting, lifting up his right hand, said—“ We, likewise, in the aforesaid awful presence, do receive you into our communion, solemnly promising and engaging to carry it toward you as becomes a church of Christ ; watching over you in the Lord as he shall enable us, and in testimony thereof do give you the right hand of fellowship.” Over these people Mr. Holcroft was settled pastor by the Rev. Mr. Staloms and others.

The cruel act of uniformity, which ejected 6 masters of colleges, 40 fellows and students, from the university, and 20 incumbents from their livings in the county, expelled Mr. Holcroft also from Bassingbourne. However, as he considered himself the lawful pastor of his people, he was determined to execute his office as well and as long as he could : and as his people could not all assemble now at one place, as they had done before, he resolved on preaching, praying, and administering the Lord’s supper to them in separate societies. One of these met at Thurlow’s house, at Cambridge, another at Barrington, another at Clopton, one at Eversden, one at Guyhorne, one at Waterbeach, &c. &c. But as this was too much for one man to go through, immediately after his ejection in 1662 he called as general a meeting as the times would admit of, at Eversden, and informed the church of his design, desiring them to choose four (of their number) elders, to

to assist him. Accordingly, they chose the Rev. Joseph Oddy, M. A. lately ejected from his fellowship of Trinity College, and from his vicarage of Meldreth; the Rev. Messrs. Corbin, Waite, and Bard, for elders of their church.

The pastor and elders divided their circuit, and laboured among the people till the next year, 1663, when Mr. Holcroft was imprisoned in Cambridge Castle, by Sir Thomas Chichley, for preaching at Great Eversden; Mr. Oddy for preaching at Meldreth; Messrs. Corbin and Waite shared the same fate; and Mr. Bard escaped it only by flight.

While the pastor and elders were thus separated from their flock, the people continued to meet for religious worship, in their several separate societies. Sometimes they spent their time in fasting, reading the holy Scriptures, and in social prayer; at other times some ejected minister preached privately to them; and now and then the jailer allowed Mr. Holcroft to go out in the night to preach, and to administer the Lord's supper to them; besides all this, the people had frequent letters from their pastor in prison; one of which, entitled "*A Word to the Saints from the Watch-tower,*" was published by Mr. Holcroft in 1668.

Persecution operated now as at all other times: it multiplied the people, they had regular meetings, many additions, and, their pastor being absent, they exercised discipline among themselves, and cut off two of their members—Elders Waite and Bard. The first was, soon after, admitted a member at Bedford; and the last was received into the church of Olney, Bucks. They were charged with forsaking the congregation after their release.

After five years' imprisonment, Mr. Oddy was set at liberty; as, after nine years, Mr. Holcroft was; but both were soon imprisoned again for preaching as before. Mr. Holcroft's last imprisonment was for three years.

After their enlargement, which was first in 1672 and last in 1675, they prosecuted their plan with greater vigour than ever; preaching at Cambridge in spite of a drum which the gowmsmen beat in the meeting, to interrupt their worship; and all over the county, travelling quite through the fen-towns, and being followed by such multitudes that they were often forced to preach abroad. Mr. Oddy continued an itinerant in this county till his death, which happened on May 3d, 1687. He was

buried at Oakington, near Cambridge, in a small burying-ground adjoining the church-yard, and given by Mr. Holcroft, for that purpose, to his church, in the hands of trustees.

The tomb erected for Mr. Oddy, in Oakington burying-ground, has the following inscription upon it :

HERE LYETH BVRYED  
THE BODY OF Mr. IOSEPH  
ODDEY MINISTER OF  
THE GOSPELL DECEASED,  
THE THIRD OF MAY,

1687.

MARK THE PERFCT  
MAN AND BEHOVLD  
THE VPRIGHT FOR  
THE END OF THAT  
MAN IS PEACE.

Close to the side of which is another tomb, with the following inscription on it:

THEY SHALL ENTER INTO PEACE.  
THEY SHALL REST IN THEIR BEDS  
EACH ONE WALNIG IN HIS  
VPRIGHTNESSE.  
ESTHER ODDEY.

But who Esther Oddey was, whether wife, sister, or daughter, I know not : some old people say his wife.

Hitherto Mr. Holcroft had been considered as pastor of all the congregations in the county ; but, about two years after Mr. Oddey's decease, that is, in 1689, two events fell out which occasioned these congregations to become separate churches.—One was Mr. Holcroft's illness ; for, while he was in prison, great numbers of people visited him, to whom he preached ; and, as the excessive heat of the place was too much for him, he often preached in his waistcoat, and thereby caught such colds as destroyed his health. After his release, his prodigious zeal for the salvation of precious souls, struggled with and surmounted his illness for some years ; but at length a weakness of nerves enfeebled his whole frame, and he fell into a melancholy, which rendered him useless to his people as a preacher. At the same time, the act of toleration gave the Non-conformists their liberty. And these two events contributed to settle our churches.

Mr. Holcroft's people were a mixture of four sorts.—The largest part were for *Independent* church government, of which there were many at Cambridge. These licensed their

their meeting-house on *Hog-Hill*, July 17, 1689; and, having embodied themselves, chose for their pastor the Rev. Joseph Hufsey.

A second sort were for *Presbyteriän* government. These were not numerous, but they were very rich; and, having licensed their house at *Green-Street*, became a separate body, and chose for their pastor the Rev. Joseph Taylor, who had been ejected from St. Edmund's Bury in 1662.

These two meetings were certified to the justices at the quarter-sessions, at the same time, and in one certificate; and also six private houses in Cambridge, for the purpose of private meetings of prayer, &c.; and the certificate of their registry is dated August 3d, 1689, signed William Baron, town-clerk.

A third sort of his people were *Baptists*. These, at Cambridge, were mixed with the Independents till 1726, when they, also, formed a separate church.

There was a fourth sort, under the direction of a Mr. Davis, a Welshman, who met separately, at Cambridge, but where I cannot learn, nor what became of them. I rather think they afterward joined with Mr. Hufsey's people. I have a letter of Mr. Waites to Mr. Hufsey's church, dated 1692, in which he endeavours to guard them against Mr. Davis's antinomianism (as he calls his doctrine) and names his meeting a pest-house. The three first differed from each other only in *discipline*, but the last differed from all the rest in *doctrine*: in discipline they were Independents.

Mr. Holcroft continued to decline till 1692, when, on January 6th, he died; his tomb-stone says in his 59th year; his funeral-sermon says in his 63d. His courage and spirits returned before his death; and he departed with great joy, uttering these words:—"For I know, if my earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, I have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." 2 Cor. v. 1.

Mr. Holcroft seems to have been one of those extraordinary men, in whom the excellencies of several men centered. His learning was enough to have gained him an ample reputation; but his comprehensive knowledge of the Gospel of Christ was astonishing. His preaching was less methodical than that of his cotemporaries; but then it was more useful. "It appeared to me (says Mr. Milway, in his funeral-sermon) "truly apostolical, pri-

mitive, and divine." His works were sharp arrows in the people's hearts; they had a quick penetrating power and efficacy, so that his converts were very numerous. He was so indefatigable in his labours, that he preached perpetually: there is scarcely a village hereabouts, but some old person can shew you the barn where Holcroft preached. He had a lion-like courage, tempered with the most winning affability in his whole deportment. His doctrines were moderate Calvinism, and he had a great zeal for Nonconformity, though a greater still for true piety, which he revered even in his enemies—if, indeed, any could be enemies to so good a man. During the twelve years of his imprisonment in Cambridge castle, he was of the most cheerful disposition; and though, in the latter part of his life, his spirits failed, yet all his conversation was heavenly and useful. He died at Triplow; his funeral-sermon was preached at Cambridge, by Mr. Milway, of Bury, from Zech. i. 5, 6, and was afterwards printed, with a preface, by Messrs. Taylor and Hufsey, and with two copies of verses on his death; and also an epitaph by William Haworth,

The following is the inscription on Mr. Holcroft's tomb:

HERE LYETH THE BODY  
OF M<sup>r</sup>. FRANCIS HOLCROFT  
MINISTE<sup>r</sup> OF THE GOSPEL  
WHOE DIED IANUARY  
6<sup>th</sup>. 169 $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  
AND IN THE 50 NINTH  
YEAR OF HIS AGE.  
DANIL 12<sup>th</sup> U<sup>r</sup>. 3 AND THEY  
THAT BE WISE SHALL SHINE  
AS THE BRIGHTNES<sup>s</sup>,  
OF THE FIRMEMENT  
AND THEY THAT  
TURN MANY TO  
RIGHTEOUSNES AS THE  
STARES FOR EVER AND  
EVER.

Several of Mr. Holcroft's congregations, who did not choose to embody separately during his life, thought themselves now called in providence to imitate their brethren, and to form themselves also into churches, especially as several ejected ministers had lately died, and others were too far advanced in years to supply them much longer. Mr. Bradshaw (who had been ejected from Willingham,

ingham, and from his senior fellowship in Trinity college, and who had since preached at Childerley, Willingham, Cottenham, &c.) died at St. Ives, 1690, *æt.* 71. Scanderet was advancing towards 70; Taylor was near 70; and others were, also, hastening home. Accordingly, in the year 1692, the Baptist congregation at Wisbeach built a meeting, and settled a minister. In 1694, the Independents at Cottenham and Willingham embodied themselves, and settled young Mr. Osland; and, in the same year, the congregation at Croyden (since at Grandson) settled; as did, also, Chishill and Melbourne, Needingworth, Guy-horne, &c. &c. Several of these churches subsist still, and some of them are dissolved, or united to other churches. But almost all contend for the honour of having an Holcroft for their first pastor. In fact, he was pastor of all, and exercised that office over all, till the Toleration Act took place, and over many till his death.

But, notwithstanding Holcroft is reckoned the father of Nonconformity in the *town and county*, he was not so in the *university*, for, in 1565, the university petitioned Queen Elizabeth against the habits. The famous Cartwright was their Margaret Professor; Arthur Hilderham, fellow of Christ's; Dod, fellow of Jesus; Dr. Hill, master of Trinity; Dr. Tuckney, regius professor; Dr. Arrowsmith, master of St. John's; Dr. Goodwin, master of Magdalen; Dr. Bolton, master of Christ's; Matthew Pool, Cornwall, fellows of Emanuel; with a great number more, who held offices in the university; had diffused the principles of Nonconformity thoroughly in the university—and, by their preaching in the parish churches, in a great measure, in the town, long before, and down to, Mr. Holcroft's time.

## EXTRACTS

FROM

## THE MANUSCRIPT JOURNAL

OF

THE REV. MR. JOHN SERJEANT,

*Missionary to the Stockbridge Indians in the Vicinity of Onondaga,  
from the Society for propagating Christian Knowledge.*

NOVEMBER 10, 1790.

Mr. Serjeant having returned from visiting his family at Stockbridge, Massachusetts, to his Indian friends at New

Stockbridge, and having informed them of the encouragement given by the Corporation of Harvard College towards their school, (50 dollars per year) and also that the society in Scotland had agreed to support two school-masters among their brethren to the westward, &c. to this information one of their Chiefs made the following reply :

“ Father, we are very glad to see you this evening, to smoke a pipe of friendship together.

“ We greatly rejoice to hear your voice again, and to be informed that you have been well ever since you left us—that you had a prosperous journey—that your family is well—that through the merciful care of our God you have been carried through so long a path. Father, we now thank you for what you have done for us.

“ We desire to express our gratitude to the Chiefs at Boston who take care of poor Indians ;—that they have granted us some further assistance towards the support of our schools. We kindly accept the advice from them sent by you, that we faithfully do our part in helping the school-master in his worldly business, so that he may be enabled to keep constantly in his school ; and also that we supply the school with wood to keep the house warm.

“ We greatly rejoice to hear the good news you have just told us, that the good people over the water have in their great kindness engaged to send and support two school-masters, to instruct the children of some of our western brethren. We hope to hear before another year that these instructors are gone, and the good work begun.”

JANUARY 1, 1791.

*An Account of a New Year's Visit.*

This being the first day of the year, an elderly woman invited all the members of the church, who were in town, to dine at her house. After we were all collected, she addressed us in the following manner :

“ My christian friends, I am now old. I do not expect to live but a little while longer. Considering my age, and often infirmities, I had no reason to expect to see this new year. But since we are all alive this day, I was desirous to see you all together, that we might pray together, brighten our chain of friendship, and talk a few moments about the affairs of Christ's kingdom, and

“ the



“ the bounties of divine providence. I now feel happy  
 “ to see you.”

“ After dinner (said Mr. Sergeant) we parted in love,  
 “ exhorting all to be more and more engaged in the service  
 “ of our Lord and Master.”

What a happy new year's visit ! What an excellent ex-  
 ample for white christians to imitate !

DECEMBER 9, 1791.

*The Observations of a Woman at Mr. Sergeant's house.*

This evening (saith he) a woman who had lately lost  
 her husband, made me a visit, and said to me as follows :—  
 “ I have been a poor lost sinner. I have done many things  
 “ I ought not to have done, and left undone those things  
 “ I ought to have done. I have often deceived myself in  
 “ the things of religion. I find nothing but the power of  
 “ God able to overcome the pride of my heart. Lately,  
 “ when in the wood, my mind was wholly taken up with  
 “ the concerns of eternity. Many things appeared new  
 “ and strange to me. I see the great evil of sin,—the va-  
 “ nity of all things of this world,—the plague of my own  
 “ natural heart. I was led to put my entire trust in the  
 “ sovereign mercy of God, through Jesus Christ. 'Tis  
 “ my earnest desire that all my friends and neighbours  
 “ would reprove me whenever I get out of the way.”

SEPTEMBER 8, 1792.

*Observations of a Pagan Tuskarora Chief.*

Mr. Sergeant had been urging the necessity of a civi-  
 lized life ; and concluded with saying, “ They must now  
 “ set out in a new path, or they would be a ruined people.”  
 The Pagan, being a very sensible observing man, said,  
 “ I see the necessity of it ; I feel I am a poor, weak crea-  
 “ ture. When I am in my hunting walks, I often cry  
 “ to the great SPIRIT for his protection. Also  
 “ when I am called to make a public speech, I look to the  
 “ same Spirit for wisdom. I see our hunting is almost  
 “ gone ; we must try to follow the path of white people,  
 “ whom GOD manifestly blesses. We are like children,  
 “ as to getting our living by labor. I hope if white peo-  
 “ ple love us, they will help us, and teach us how to  
 “ live.”

FEBRUARY 1, 1793.

*Solemn Reflections on the Duty of Parents to Children.*

This evening, at a conference meeting, a man who had lately lost a child, by a long and lingering sickness, near the close of the meeting addressed us in the following manner :—“ My friends, I have heretofore supposed myself to be converted, and become a friend to Christ ; but, on strict examination, had given up my hope. Lately I have sensibly felt the displeasure of my Maker, in the death of my late dear little son. I have now clear views of God’s almighty power ; the right he has to deprive me of all my comforts, whenever he sees fit. I have lately viewed God every where present, the sole proprietor of the world, and all things in it. My sins came clearly into my view. I saw I was a poor, dependant sinner. The neglect of duty towards my children came particularly into my view. I thought if my departed child should be lost, and, at the great day of judgment, should say, ‘ My father, or my mother, you never warned me of sin ; neither taught me the right way.’—If this should be the case, my mouth would be stopped ; I should have nothing to say. My friends, I wish you all to pray for me, that I may be preserved from sin, and kept in the right way.”

DECEMBER 27, 1793.

*At a Conference Meeting, held this Day,*

A young man spoke and said, “ My friends, I feel my most wretched situation. I once thought it my duty to profess religion, but by my repeated falls into sin, I fear I never had the true knowledge of Christ. But still, I bless GOD I am continued to this time, and that it has pleased GOD to lay open my heart to me again, and renew my conviction.”

JANUARY 24, 1794.

*Confession of a Female at a Church Meeting, for the Sin of Intemperance.*

“ Brethren, (said she) I went last fall to Albany, with my sick daughter ; not allowing myself to taste a drop of liquor all the way, nor had I tasted any spirits for several years. But falling into company with some of my kindred, they urged me to drink with them. I drank, as I suppose, about a gill, which overset me. When I came to myself, I thought much on my sin and fall

“ fall. It happened on the Lord's Day, I thought I had  
 “ committed an unpardonable sin. I immediately asked  
 “ the forgiveness of my companions :—have never tasted  
 “ any more from that time to this. I have frequently  
 “ humbled myself before the Lord for this my great sin  
 “ and fall. Now I come to ask your forgiveness ; and, if  
 “ you think me worthy, that you would again receive me  
 “ into your charity.”

FEBRUARY 17, 1794.

*Confession of an aged Woman.*

This morning an old woman came to see me, and said,  
 “ I have thought much of what I have heard from you of  
 “ late. I have long been a perfect *Heathen* in my heart :  
 “ —never believed in the religion of Christ. I find my  
 “ nature is decaying. I shall soon appear before my  
 “ Judge. I greatly fear and tremble. I never made a  
 “ prayer till about a week past. I have had a long strug-  
 “ gle with my wicked heart. Now I think I love to  
 “ pray. I am a poor miserable creature, not worthy of  
 “ any favor.”

*Declaration of a Tuskarora Woman under Conviction.*

Mr. Sargeant asked her how she now viewed the things  
 of religion,—the all-important concerns of her soul ?

“ I view them (said she) after the same manner I have  
 “ heretofore done. I consider myself like a dog, depen-  
 “ dant on his master for support. If GOD shows me any  
 “ mercy, I shall rejoice ; if not, it is right I should be de-  
 “ nied. But I will wait in the way of humility.”

SEPTEMBER 26, 1794.

*Sentimental Remark of an aged Man.*

This evening attended a Conference Meeting. An old  
 man, one of the professors said, “ I feel by my old age I  
 “ must soon die. I think I feel the importance of being  
 “ prepared ; and, in order for that important change, I  
 “ know I must be humble. I think I often feel like a lit-  
 “ tle child, and often humble myself before my Saviour.”  
 —*Blessed temper ! Who so humbleth himself shall be exalted.*

JANUARY 5, 1795.

*Observations made by a young Man at a Conference Meeting.*

“ My friends, it is now seven years since I was first  
 “ awakened, and thought myself converted. But by fre-  
 “ quently

“ quently falling into sin, I find myself still a stranger to  
 “ true religion, and have continued in a stupid, forlorn  
 “ condition. Of late my mind has been affected with my  
 “ awful condition. The calls and invitations of the Gos-  
 “ pel appear to me to be persuasive and pressing. I find  
 “ myself without excuse. I am a wretched, undone sin-  
 “ ner. Pray for me, my dear friends. I find I can make  
 “ no other prayer than what was made by the publican,  
 “ *God be merciful to me, a sinner.*”

JUNE 19, 1795.

*Declaration of a Female, in order to join the Church.*

At a Church Meeting, at which the wife of Ceusick, a  
 Tuskarora woman, was examined at her desire to join our  
 church; she being requested to manifest her mind, said,  
 “ I have long been attentive to religion. Some years  
 “ since I thought I was converted, but soon found my  
 “ soul in darkness. But, through the mercy of God, my  
 “ mind of late has been delivered, and the difficulties re-  
 “ moved. I now feel it my indispensable duty to take  
 “ upon me the public profession of religion; and hope, by  
 “ the grace of God, to be able to live agreeably to this  
 “ holy profession.”

JULY 15, 1796.

*Immortality of the Soul.*

A conference meeting.—Question, “ What evidence  
 can we bring to convince a Heathen of the doctrine of the  
 immortality of the soul?” One answered, “ The best  
 “ evidence was from God’s word, which plainly declared  
 “ it.” Another answered, “ That in this life the mind of  
 “ man can never find complete satisfaction.”

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## ORDINATION.

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REV. MR. BENJAMIN COXHEAD, LONDON.

ON Thursday, Oct. 30, 1800, Mr. BENJAMIN COX-  
 HEAD, (called to the work of the ministry by Dr. RIPPON’S  
 Church, and for several years a student at Bristol under Dr.  
 RYLAND,) was ordained at Wild-street, Lincoln’s Inn Fields,  
 over the Baptist Church late under the pastoral care of the  
 Rev. SAMUEL STENNETT, D. D. deceased.

The

The Service commenced with reading and prayer, by the Rev. Mr. Smith.

Mr. Thomas Thomas delivered the introductory discourse, asked the usual questions, and received Mr. Coxhead's confession of faith.

Mr. Booth prayed the ordination prayer, laying on of hands; in which he was accompanied by Dr. Rippon, Mr. Smith, Dr. Jenkins, and Mr. Jarman.

Dr. Rippon gave the charge—Mr. Button prayed—Dr. Jenkins preached the sermon to the church—and Mr. Dore concluded in prayer.

The congregation sang at proper intervals—and the account of the proceedings of the church in this business, delivered by Mr. Pitt, was perfectly satisfactory.

The introductory discourse (by Mr. Thomas) consisted of—Reflections on the *value* and *importance* of the Gospel—The *gradual discoveries* of Evangelical Truth, from the earliest period to the time of Christ and the Apostles—The *means* which God has been pleased to appoint and sanction for the spread of the Gospel in the world, and for the effectual application of it to the salvation of sinners; the chief of which, he observed, was *preaching*—This led to a concluding reflection on the *nature and constitution* of Christian Societies, gathered by the preaching, and formed by the authority of the Apostles; together with the *mode* of ordaining pastors or elders in those churches, which (he said) appears to have been by prayer, fasting, and imposition of hands.

#### MR. COXHEAD'S CONFESSION OF FAITH.

As divine truth is certainly an object of the first importance, it ought to interest the diligent attention and inquiry of every rational creature. It is surely of great consequence, that those who profess to teach others should themselves be found in the faith. Although, I conceive, no man is accountable to another for his sentiments of religion, yet it is proper and necessary, in consideration of our connections with one another, as well as upon account of the excellence of truth itself, openly to avow the principles we espouse. It appears peculiarly fit that this should be done by me upon the present solemn occasion, for the full satisfaction of the church which meets in this place, and of the ministers, and others who are present. I am therefore willing, most plainly, to state, as in the presence of God who searches the heart, and before this assembly, what I conceive to be religious truth.

I begin by declaring my firm belief of the grand and fundamental article, that there is a God. The existence of a Supreme Being, I conceive to be evident from the general constitution and frame of the universe, and from the order, fitness, and

and beauty of every part. But though the heavens, and the earth declare the being, and glory of God, yet I believe, for creatures in our condition, some farther revelation is absolutely necessary, in order that we may know aright, what God is, what we are, what are our duty and our interest, and how we are to perform what is incumbent upon us. This revelation I believe God has given us.

The books of the Old and New Testament I receive as the infallible word of Jehovah, believing them to contain, all that it is necessary for us to know, and to do. Embracing therefore the scriptures as divinely inspired, I become so acquainted with the nature and will of God, as would have been impossible with every other means of information without them.

On the ground of scripture testimony, I believe, that there is one only living and true God, possessed of all possible perfection: that he is eternal, unchangeable, omnipotent, and omnipresent; infinitely wise, holy, and gracious; the only proper object of religious worship and adoration.

I believe moreover, that, in the unity of the godhead, there exist three distinct, and equally glorious persons: the father, the son, and the spirit.

I believe that God is the infinite first cause: that he upholds all things by his almighty power, and is the only rightful, and supreme governor of the universe: that all creatures and all things are under his control, and subject to his will, which is ever in perfect harmony with his infinite wisdom and goodness.

I believe also, that the Supreme Being has not only a perfect knowledge of every occurrence and event; but that he has foreappointed every thing that has, or that ever will, come to pass; yet so, as that while he is the author and source of all good, the moral evil that takes place is not caused, but permitted only by him, and its natural tendency overruled for the accomplishment of the noblest designs. I believe, that God created every being, and every thing, perfectly good: that all his rational creatures were made completely holy and happy, yet that as finite beings they were all capable of change: that God gave his creatures a law, which was perfectly reasonable and good; and which they had sufficient power to obey; but being left to their native freedom, a part of the Angelic Hosts, and our first parents also, voluntarily sinned against God, and lost his image and favour.

I also believe, that Adam was as well the federal as the natural head of all his posterity, and that all his offspring sinned in him, and entirely lost their original righteousness. The natural consequence of Adam's sin, I believe, is complete and everlasting destruction to himself and to all his posterity: yet that God, foreseeing the fall of man, and the dreadful consequences that must naturally result, did, from all eternity, of his own free and unspeakable grace and compassion, determine to save

save completely a large proportion of miserable sinners of the human race, who were equally undeserving with the rest.

I believe, that there was an eternal compact between the glorious persons in the Trinity, wherein each engaged to take an essential and illustrious part in the deliverance and eternal salvation of those who were the objects of sovereign mercy and love: the divine father agreeing to give his eternal son to be their saviour; the son to undertake the arduous work of redemption; and the blessed spirit, to prepare them for the everlasting enjoyment of God in Heaven: and that thus, of the free favour of God, a great number of mankind were chosen in Christ, and predestinated to the certain enjoyment of all the blessings of grace and glory.

I believe also, that in consequence of his own voluntary engagement, the eternal, and equal son of the father, at the time when he was to appear in our world, assumed both the parts of our nature, a human soul, and a human body, and neither the one nor the other before.

I believe, that the Saviour's conception was miraculous; that he was born immaculately pure and holy; and that the divine and human nature, were necessarily united in the wonderful and glorious mediatorial person of Christ, to constitute him fit to accomplish the work of man's redemption.

I believe that Christ in his mediatorial person, made a proper and full atonement for all the sins of the elect, with the express design that they all should be delivered from the curse of the law, and constituted just in the sight of God: also that having, as the substitute of his people, become obedient even unto death, he was laid in the grave; on the morn of the third day arose from the dead, and soon after ascended to Heaven; where, as mediator, he appears in the presence of God, and is invested with the fullest authority, and the greatest glory.

I believe, that all men are born in a state of total depravity, entirely destitute of the least degree of true holiness; and that there is not the smallest hope, that any one will ever truly turn to God of his own accord: that it is as really impossible, for those who, from an internal corrupt principle, are accustomed to do evil, to learn to do well, as it is for the Ethiopian to change his skin, or the leopard his spots. I nevertheless believe, that man is criminal upon account of all that is amiss in his heart, and in his life; and that the blame of his sin is to be laid upon himself alone.

I believe, that regeneration is entirely the work of the divine spirit, and that the soul turns to God only under his special influence: yet I conceive, that the spirit so operates upon the minds of those who are regenerate; that they are as really willing in the service of God, as they were before in the service of sin.

I believe, that grace in the heart is accompanied with the fruits

fruits of righteousness, or with a conduct conformable to the will of God; that all the fruitfulness of Christians, is in virtue of their union to Christ: that all the grace they have is communicated to them by the holy spirit, and that his influences are absolutely necessary to their performance of any thing that is spiritually good.

I believe, that the moral law is the eternal standard of duty to all rational creatures, and that nothing can free them from its obligation and authority: so that, although the saints are delivered from the curse it denounces against sin, it is still the rule of their conduct, and that obedience to it is enforced by additional motives from the Gospel.

I believe, that the work of grace, once begun, will never be relinquished by its great author, or left incomplete; but that grace in every instance shall issue in glory.

I believe, moreover, that the public ministry of the word, is a standing ordinance of Christ, and is designed as the honoured mean of calling in the elect, and of building up those who have believed through grace. I am also assured, that the various means of grace which God has appointed, are designed, and necessary for the special advantage of all the saints, and that it is only in an attendance on them, they are warranted to expect the presence and blessing of God.

I believe, that the glad tidings of salvation through Christ are to be proclaimed to every creature, and that all who hear the Gospel are by it called to repent of sin, and to believe on the son of God.

I believe, that the visible church is to be composed of those, who, in a judgment of charity, are born again of the spirit of God; that Christ is the head of the church, and that no man whatever, has a right to disannull what he has enjoined, to make the least alteration in it, or to exact any new laws or regulations.

I believe, that Christ has instituted in his church two positive ordinances—baptism, and the Lord's supper: that these are incumbent on every christian, and are to follow a profession of repentance and faith. The ordinance of baptism, I conceive to be truly administered only by immersion of the whole body in water, in the name, and to the honour of the father, the son, and the holy spirit; and that those alone who have been baptized after the example, and agreeable to the command of Jesus Christ, have a right to the ordinance of the Lord's supper, wherein the dying love of Christ is celebrated by the church, in partaking the elements of bread and wine.

I believe, that the communion of saints is especially promoted, by their walking together according to the order of the Gospel, as fellow members of a particular church of Christ; and that it is also incumbent on all the saints to cultivate to the utmost



utmost of their power, a spirit of union and love with all the people of God, of every denomination.

I believe, that the souls of the saints, at death, go immediately to the full enjoyment of God in heaven; and that the misery of the souls of the wicked is immediately consequent upon their dissolution.

I also believe, that God will in every instance assert the rights of his law and government; and that this will be done particularly by a general judgment at the last day; at which period, God the Redeemer, and Saviour of the church, will appear in his mediatorial glory, the bodies of the dead will be raised, and re-united to their souls, and each one will receive from the mouth of Christ, a just, and final sentence. Then, I believe, a complete separation will be made between the righteous and the wicked, that the finally impenitent will be consigned to everlasting torments, and that the saints will all be admitted to the heavenly state; where, perfected in holiness and in bliss, they will spend eternity in praising God and the lamb.

These are the articles of my steadfast faith, and which I fully intend, by divine assistance, to state, maintain, and defend, in the course of my future ministry. Sensible however, of my great liability to mistake, I desire to be continually favoured with the teachings of the blessed Spirit, that I may be led into all truth. And may our united requests now ascend to the divine throne, that grace may be given to me, and to all the ministers of Christ, to speak the truth boldly, and affectionately, as we ought to speak! that the best effects may be produced by our endeavours; and that, being kept faithful unto death, we may each receive a crown of life, from the hands of Him, whose we are, and whom we serve.

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## NECESSITIES

OF

## TWO POOR DISSENTING MINISTERS.

TO DR. RIPPON.

DEAR SIR,

FINDING there is to be a collection next Lord's day for the poor Baptist Ministers in England and Wales, permit me to transmit you an account of a poor Welsh minister, to whose distressed situation I was an eye-witness a short time since.

Being on a visit in the lower part of Pembroke-shire, and riding out one morning with a friend, as we passed along the road, he pointed to the house of a poor Baptist minister, and informed me that the pious inhabitant, who was in his 85th

JAN. 1801.]

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year,

year, was expected hourly to bid adieu to every thing here below. I requested my friend to ride slowly on, while I called in to see the good old man:—but how shall I describe the poverty and distress of this miserable habitation! it had but one apartment; the floor was the sod; there was neither ceiling nor chimney, so that the smoke dispersed through a hole in the shattered roof, and partly out at the door: the only provisions in the house were a little barley bread and oat-meal; a few potatoes were deemed a luxury—the poor old man lying on a bed of straw, and the only covering he had was a miserable rug.

Upon my appearing much shocked at his uncomfortable situation, he pointed upwards with his finger, and said “*Heaven!*” “*Heaven!*”——The only attendant and companion he had was a daughter, upwards of sixty years of age, with whom I left a trifle,—and which I only mention, in order to add, that the gratitude of both father and daughter can be more easily conceived than described.

I left them overwhelmed with tears of thankfulness, and was afterwards informed that the dear good man, in about three days, left his miserable cottage to inherit a building of God—a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

I am, &c.

November 22, 1800.

R. B.

*Extract of a Letter to Mr. T. S. in London, from a Minister of the Independent Denomination.*

As to the case of our people, they are most of them day-labourers, many children, and upon the parish. The subscribers are all dead and in glory, but two, and they can give but a trifle; but as honest sincere people as any between my house and yours; glory to God for his free grace and power. May he preserve and keep them! Poor things, I have been with them almost fifteen years, and never had one hour's uneasiness amongst them; that is my comfort; the Lord increase their number. Amen. My income from them is twelve pounds per year, your exhibitions included; and four pounds per annum go for coals for fire, and two pounds per year for house and garden, and the rest we have to live upon: blessed be the Lord for that! I have a poor good sickly wife, who has been bad for twelve years; and I have three children at home, who have been ill since the last May, but the heavenly physician supports them. I have a little school brings in five pounds per annum: but, as Lord H. has sold his manor, three estates, as this is his gift, I suppose it will be lost, and if not, as I am in the 74th year of my age, I fear I cannot occupy it any longer than this summer, and such a high mountain to go over; I have occupied it going on of nine years: but the Lord is all-sufficient!

And

And now I shall inform you of our manner of living, though sometimes it varies, but not a great deal; yet blessed be God for what we have! Wherefore should a living man complain?—a man for the punishment of his sins! We are often complaining of hard times, but not of hard hearts. Our living in the spring and summer is mostly of cresses, and salt, and bread; cabbage, salt, and bread and butter, if we can have it; garden-beans and salt, carrots and salt, and bread; meat we can have but little; and in winter potatoes and salt, as I told you before. Here we find that word true, namely, “A dinner of herbs, where the love of God is, is better than a stalled ox and hatred and strife therewith.” Oh, blessed be God, for this! As for butcher’s meat, we have had none for many months; but the Paschal lamb sweetens all, though eaten with bitter herbs. As for drink, we have had none these five or six years; but thanks be to God, as my poor wife says, we have good water,—and the water of life. A little whey we sometimes get in the summer, sometimes a little milk, yet it is but seldom; and as to our linen, it can be but poor, both for our backs and beds:—but it is well to be clothed with the clean linen, the righteousness of the saints. We keep our children clean as possibly we can.

Come, my friend, we have seen the dark side, now let us view what faith can see in the work: Rom. viii. 18; 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18; Isaiah xliii; Psalm xxxiv. xlvi. l. 15. xcii. ciii; Isaiah xii; Psalm xxxii. xxxvii. 4, and two last verses; Zecha. xiii. 9; Matt. vi. 26, 34; Lament. iii. 25, 26. This is sufficient to show that I do not live on bread alone, but on the word and promises of God; and if the hairs of my head are all numbered, I am sure all my troubles, sorrows, and afflictions are; and my dear Jesus has promised to supply them. Thus I am taught to live by faith. I know it is well for a minister to live above the smiles and frowns of the world; but, if it cannot be had, we must stoop to Providence, and beg to be useful to God’s glory,

I hope to be free from all wants soon—Oh, pray for us!

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### FRENCH PRISONERS AT LIVERPOOL.

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THE friends of humanity and of religion will be pleased to hear that the Societies in London are extending their influence even to foreigners and prisons.

Our friend from the north informs us of the following circumstances.

The Rev. Mr. P——, who was sent to Liverpool by the Society in the latter end of November last, to distribute religious tracts among the French Prisoners, met with a good

reception. Lieutenant F. walked with him to the prison, and ordered him to be admitted whenever he came. The physician also was pleased to find that the Society had noticed these miserable and pitiable creatures; he politely informed the better sort of persons among them of the intention of this stranger, desiring them to regard what he had to say.

Rev. Mr. D. one of the ministers of the town, accompanied Mr. P. They went all over the prison, and, in several apartments, good attention was given. A few tracts were distributed among the prisoners, of which they approved. Two of them said they were Protestants, of the sentiments contained in these pieces, and were glad to see any person on such an errand. He then appointed to meet them, and others, the next day at eleven o'clock; Mr. Lieutenant F. ordered a room for them to meet in, which he says shall be Mr. P's chapel.

Mr. P. now visits the prison every day. It is a filthy place. The greater part of the prisoners are dirty and miserable, yet many are of a decent appearance and look well. His *protestant* hearers, are, most of them, as clean as their situation will admit of, they were about *twenty-four* of that profession, and seem very desirous of instruction—and this they as much need as some of our *English* Protestants; for three or four came into the room one day, and asked Mr. P. to make them christians, agreeing that the Tracts were good, but that they could not understand them.

As Mr. P. found that the propounding and answering questions, met their approbation more than any other method, with the assistance of another minister, who understands French, he is making out a Catechism, for the printing of which, the Liverpool friends, who very much approve of the plan, will cheerfully pay. The prisoners are pleased in prospect of it, and intend to answer a few questions every day. What the issue of this infant scheme may be, it is not for us to predict. But the good people, on the spot, of different congregations, say that appearances are desirable. It is pleasing to add, that there is a young man, an inferior officer, among the prisoners, who speaks *English* pretty well, is a Protestant, and always accompanies Mr. P. and interprets whenever it is needful. Mr. P. wishes himself better qualified for this great work, and would, no doubt, be glad of an interest in the prayers of his christian friends.



*Anecdote given as a Note in Dr. Ryland's Sermon on  
Gen. iii. 4. entitled*

“THE FIRST LIE REPUTED.”

NOT many months ago, a very respectable friend related to me the circumstances of a young man's death, who was killed  
in

in a duel. I omit naming the person or the place; though I could mention both, for they were inserted in the public papers just after the event; and my friend was on a visit at the time, in the neighbourhood. The two combatants were expected soon to have been closely allied, by the marriage of the one to the other's sister. But a quarrel taking place, a challenge was given, and this unhappy youth was carried home mortally wounded. When his medical attendant intimated his persuasion, that the consequences would be undoubtedly fatal, instead of any repentance for thus throwing away his life, and presuming to rush unbidden into the presence of his Judge, the dying sinner rejoined, *Well I don't mind it, I would stand to be shot at again.* He consented, however, at the instance of the surgeon, to send for a clergyman, and began himself brokenly to repeat the Lord's prayer. [How must the fifth petition fit the lips of a duellist!] His father being informed that his son was near his end, came into the room, to take his leave of him, and attempted to comfort him in the following manner:—"Well, Son! I find you must die, I am sorry for it. But I would not have you to be too much cast down: you are a very young man, and cannot have committed any great sins.— Besides, you know Christ died for us all; and we all stand the same chance." If possible, it is more awful still, that this miserable address should have been mentioned with approbation by one who heard it. "Old \*\*\*\*\* talked well to his son, I did not think the old man had had so much religion in him."

*RURAL SOLITUDE,*  
A POEM ON MUSWELL HILL,  
(The place of his Residence,)

BY THE LATE REV. SAMUEL STENNETT, D.D.

TIR'D of the world's incessant noise,  
And sick of all its flattering joys,  
I hail the day—I bless the hour—  
That brings me to my rural bow'r.  
In sweet reflection, here I sit;  
And here enjoy the soft retreat;  
Ascend my little flow'ry mount,  
And there life's weary steps recount;  
Then cast my cheerful eye around,  
O'er distant hills and mossy ground;

O'er

O'er fields, attir'd with vernal green,  
 Enraptur'd with the pleasing scene.  
 The fleecy sheep, the harmless lambs,  
 That sportive play about their dams ;  
 The vi'lets, flow'rs, and shrubs that rise,  
 And taller trees that tempt the skies ;  
 All strive to make me happy here—  
 Happy, without an anxious care ;  
 Strive to divert my thoughtful breast,  
 And calm my passions into rest.

Thus sooth'd by Nature's silent voice,  
 And charm'd with these her artless joys,  
 I feel my soul prepar'd to hear  
 What Heav'n shall whisper in my ear.

'Twas in the ev'ning of the day,  
 When the bright Sun's declining ray  
 Darted his light thro' Eden's trees,  
 Waving their tops with gentle breeze ;  
 'Twas then the God that dwells on high  
 Deign'd to descend from yonder sky,  
 And, in a form divinely sweet,  
 To own and bless that fair retreat.  
 There he was us'd to walk, and there  
 To entertain the happy pair,  
 With new discov'ries of his will,  
 And joys that none but angels feel.

Oh ! would he deign to visit me,  
 In mercy mix'd with majesty ;—  
 Deign, when I walk in ev'ning shade,  
 Amidst these bow'rs his hands have made,  
 To whisper softly in my ear  
 The gentle word I long to hear—  
 " Thy many sins are all forgiv'n ;  
 " Thy worthless name is writ in heav'n :"  
 The rapt'rous news I'd spread around,  
 The words should echo back the sound,  
 I'd write his name on ev'ry tree,  
 And tell the world his love to me :  
 This soft—this sweet enchanting spot  
 Should never, never, be forgot ;—  
 My friends, my neighbours, all shou'd know  
 There is A PARADISE below !

THE  
PROTESTANT DISSENTERS' REGISTER.  
&c. &c. &c.

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*PRESENT STATE*  
OF  
THE LAWS RESPECTING NON-CONFORMISTS.\*

**B**Y a succession of statutes from the reign of Elizabeth down to the Revolution, Papists and others, not conforming to the worship of the Church of England, were subjected to a great variety of pains, penalties, and disabilities, which it is needless here to detail, though but few of these laws were directly levelled against Protestant Dissenters; yet, as Non-conformists, they were always included, and therefore for their relief the Act of the 1st of William and Mary, commonly called the Toleration Act, was passed. The sentiments of those times on religious liberty, being, however, limited within very narrow bounds, Dissenting-Ministers and school-masters were left under the obligation of declaring their unfeigned assent to the truth of the doctrinal articles of the Church of England, which being disbelieved by many, and the right of the magistrate to impose them as terms of toleration being denied by all, several applications were made for farther relief. After repeated solicitations, an Act was passed in the 19th of his present Majesty, by which they were freed from this burthen, on condition of subscribing a declaration instead thereof.†

The situation then of Protestant Dissenters, under the existing laws, may be briefly stated under the following heads.

First, With respect to the laity :

Secondly, The clergy : and

Thirdly, Their places of worship.

First.—Dissenting laymen, to avail themselves of the Toleration-Act, if they do not scruple an oath, must take those

\* No notice is here taken of the alteration which was made in the situation of the Catholics, by the 20 of the present King, as Protestant Dissenters were not affected by any of the provisions of that Act.

† " I, A. B. do solemnly declare, in the presence of Almighty God, that I am a Christian and a Protestant, and as such that I believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, as commonly received among Protestant churches, do contain the revealed will of God, and that I do receive the same as the rule of my doctrine and practice."

those of allegiance\* and supremacy, and subscribe the declaration against Popery†; those who have that scruple must subscribe the same declaration; and, instead of taking the oaths, two other declarations specified in the act.‡ But, though by a compliance with these requisitions, they are exempted from all positive penalties, on account of non-conformity, and are not compellable to take on them any offices of burthen to which the sacramental test is annexed,§ yet they still remain excluded from all places of trust, profit, or emolument, under the crown, and, in common with other persons, are forbidden to disseminate such opinions as are deemed heretical, especially concerning the Trinity.

Secondly.—Ministers, besides the oaths and declarations in common with Laymen, are obliged also to subscribe the declaration before-mentioned of the 19th of George III. instead of the Articles of Faith. This is to be performed at a General or Quarter Session, where the magistrates are enjoined to administer the oaths, &c. and the clerk to enter the transaction on record; which being done, the person is authorized to exercise his profession, and the Minister is exempted from serving in the militia, on juries, or in any other parochial office.¶ But, on removal

\* Oaths of allegiance and supremacy. “ I, A. B. do sincerely promise and swear, that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty King George III. so help, &c.”—“ I, A. B. do swear, that I do from my heart abhor, detest, and abjure, as impious and heretical, that damnable doctrine and position that Princes excommunicated or deprived by the Pope, or any authority of the See of Rome, may be deposed or murdered by their subjects, or any other whatsoever. And I do declare that no foreign Prince, person, prelate, state, or potentate, hath, or ought to have, any power, jurisdiction, superiority, pre-eminence, or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual, within this realm.”

† This declaration, which is very long, is against “ Transubstantiation as false, and the invocation or adoration of the Virgin Mary, or of any other Saint, and the sacrifice of the Mass, as superstitious and idolatrous.”

‡ Those among the Dissenters, for whose use this extract is intended, who entertain the scruple in question being very few; these declarations are omitted.

§ Such, for instance, as sheriffs; and may serve parochial offices, requiring the test by deputy.

¶ It should seem that a person cannot properly qualify till of age, and therefore that he would not be entitled to these benefits and exemptions of the Act, if he should officiate sooner; but it has generally been usual to extend them by courtesy to young men under age, who were *bona fide* engaged in a course of education for the ministry; and it is to be observed, that persons, under prosecution for any offence to which these Acts of Toleration extend, may, at any time before conviction, take the benefit of them, by complying with the terms required. The fee to the clerk for reading the taking the oaths is 6*d.* and 6*d.* farther for delivering a certificate.



moval into another county, is obliged, on requisition, to produce a certificate of his having thus qualified. It is a matter of doubt, whether those, who have thus complied with all that the law requires, are not legally warranted, by a liberal construction of the 19th Geo. III. to preach any opinion, consistent with the declaration therein specified, however otherwise heretical; (that is) differing from the Thirty-nine Articles.

Thirdly.—As to places of worship. Here the law makes no distinction as to denomination or description of non-conformist, or as to the place where the worship is to be performed, whether a chapel erected on purpose, or a common dwelling. All that it requires is, that the place or building shall be *certified*, (that is) that notice shall be given of the intention to perform divine service therein,\* either to the bishop of the diocese, or to the archdeacon of the archdeaconry in his Court, or to the justices of the peace at the Quarter-Session for the county, city, or place, in which it is situated; and that it shall be registered in the Bishop's or Archdeacon's Court, or recorded at the Quarter-Session, before any persons, assembling there for religious worship, shall be entitled to the benefits of the Toleration-Act. Sixpence only can be demanded as a fee for the register or record, and the law has been repeatedly and uniformly decided to be compulsory on the different persons, to either of whom the notice is directed to be tendered to accept it. The remedy, in case of refusal, is by application to the Court of King's Bench for a mandamus, which, on the case being made out, is always granted. But if they do take on them to refuse, though it be illegal, and at their peril, no service must be performed; for, unless the place be *actually* certified, and *registered* or *recorded*, neither preacher nor hearers are entitled to the benefits of the Toleration-Act; nor, in case of disturbance of worship, or injury done to the building, can any prosecution on that ground be maintained against offenders.

N. B. The Act also expressly requires, that the doors of every such place of worship be neither barred, locked, nor bolted, during the time of service.

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ANCIENT

\* A proper and sufficient form for this purpose is as follows: "We, whose names are underwritten, (any two or three of the parties concerned) do hereby certify, that a certain building situate (so and so) in —, is intended to be used for religious worship, under and by virtue of the statute of the 1st of King William and Queen Mary, entitled, An Act for exempting their Majesties Protestant subjects dissenting from the Church of England from the penalties of certain laws, &c." (Signed) A. B. & C. D.

ANCIENT MANUSCRIPT PAPERS.

Letter from the Rev. Mr. HERBERT PALMER.

One of the Puritan Ministers.

*Grace, mercy, and peace, be multiplied unto you, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, and from the Holy Ghost the Comforter.*

MOST NOBLE AND VERTUOUS COUSIN,

SAY what you will or can of yourselfe, I must (and you should) beleeve and apply that to you which belongs to you. Beleeve our Saviour's words—"Blessed are the poore in spirit. Blessed are they that mourne. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousnesse," &c. So, while I pittie your feelings, I ought to rejoyce for your graces, and for the assured happinesse that remains to you. It is not much that I am worth: but, with my whole hart, I wish I had altogether nothing in worldly respects; but were to begin the world, as they say, altogether anew, so that all (or even some few—3 or 4) of my kindred that I would name, were not only almost, but even altogether, such as you are in spirituall respects, even take in your bodily affliction too. God would not that I should have any long or pertinent discourse to your case, at my last seeing you. He is wise and gracious ever; he was and is in that too, though we could have wished it otherwise. After I parted from you, my hart was in some commotion, and I was more than 20 tymes coming backe, only I wanted an arrand; which I had then found, when word came you were gone. I foresaw it all the day, yet had not the hart to doe what I would, and should, in advises to you. But I saw God had overruled it, and so I laboured to stoope to his will, That Friday I spent in writing to my lady; and made bold, next morning, to present it to my lord's hands. We stayed in London till Wednesday noon, to see some friends; and Thursday night (blessed be God) came home safe, and continue in perfect health. I had no letter from Yorkshire; but they are all well, only your sifter was somewhat indisposed when my cousin Wendy came away. But I runne too farre from you. If our Saviour say true in those sentences, Have not such persons faith? None, doubtlesse, are blessed without faith: none have the kingdome of heaven, which yet is theirs who are poore in spirit. Why doe you not, then, examine yourself, whether you are in the faith or not. Examine your faith by these signes of it, and by other fruits of faith which might, and would, by the grace of God, shewe you you have faithe, and make way for that comfort and assurance you long for. Yet let me tell you, you are in an error, and a hurtful one to your quiet and peace, to say that if you know you have true faith, you know you shall be saved

and so there is that assurance you long for. Our faith pitching itself upon Christ, first lookes upon forgiveness of sins past, and after upon salvation. It is true these two goe together inseparably. Once forgiven, infallibly saved; but we are subject to temptations, and it is a further and higher degree of grace to be assured of salvation than of forgiveness. Besides, we may know they have faith, and yet want present comfort through violence of present temptations and suggestions to doubts &c. Shall I here unbowell my hart to you upon the particular? (which more at large I am setting downe in a preparation for the sacrament which I am meditating for you according to your desire.) Judge of me what you will, or can for it, only I pray God it may help you to judge of yourself aright. I dare not but say in St. Paul's phrase, I knowe whom I have beleev'd, I knowe I doe beleev'e in the sonne of God, and the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the sonne of God, who hath loved me, and given himself for me. Yet I cannot but say I am at tymes assaulted with many doubtings, and fear sometyme that I shall fall into such sensible perplexities as I see in others. I have strong reasonings in my hart.—Can such and such things stand with faith? Doth God and Christ own such? Yet then I remember God's commandment to beleev'e, and my covenant to beleev'e, whereby I have given up my selfe to Christ, which I againe renewe. I knowe I ment it truly, I knowe I doe meane truly to be his wholly, to be sav'd by none but him, and to leane upon him everlastingly for salvation, and to be held wholly and only by him, to live in him, and to him and for him, by his strength, according to his word, to his glory; and so I cry againe and againe, I am thine, Lord save me.

The issue of this is, my soule growes calme and quiet againe, and thus I live from day to day. Sometymes sinne prevails upon me, and after that, sadnesse and dulnesse of spirit, and sometymes I recover courage and strength. In a word, while I am enabled to keepe my thoughts upon Christ, I am cheery and vigorous, and can doe all things, and when I looke into my selfe there is nothing in my flesh but sinne and imperfection, and discomfort; and I misse sometymes the doing of what I should, with thinking that I have omitted or neglected it or a like duty. And till I can come neare againe to Christ, and cast my soule againe upon him, I am faint and untoward; yet thro his grace I am enabled to write, and preach, and discourse, and ride, and my fits are neither long nor violent, nor are my comforts, nor ever were, like to those ravishings I have heard some speake of; and I know, because the word mentions them, christians may have them. I live by faith, not sight nor sense. My hart is at the best, quiet, and if this can be called security, I venter my salvation upon it that it is spiri-

tuall, for as you say (and I can looke for no saluation, if a soule truly saying *that* perishes,) if I perish I will perish in Christ armes. He shall refuse me in this word, casting my selfe upon him wholly, which I know he never did to any, never will to me, nor to you neither. If, after this, you aske, Whether I knowe I shall be saved, my best answer is, I should knowe it, I doe knowe it a little sometimes, I shall, I hope, knowe it better hereafter; it is that which the Apostle prayed for the Ephef. i, 18. that they might knowe what is the hope of God's calling, that is, how certainly grounded their hope of saluation is. Christians may in this want the eyes of their mind enlightened often. I doe, and you doe too. The Lord give us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him to this purpose. If I have say'd true in these things, faith may be, and may be acknowledged, and yet no assurance. Doubts may turmoile still. Apply this to your case, and make use of it.

Your most affectionate and faithful kinsman,  
and servant in the worke of your faith,

August 14, 1632.

HERBERT PALMER\*.

\* This, with other papers, in Mr. Herbert Palmer's own hand writing, are in the possession of Dr. Rippon—but it does not appear to whom the letters were addressed.

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LETTER BY WHICH THE GREAT ASSEMBLY, OF 1689,  
WAS CONVENED IN LONDON.

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London, July 22d, 1689.

To the Church of Christ in LUPPITT†, kind Salutations.

WE the elders and ministring brethren of the churches, in and about the city of London, being several times assembled together, to consider of the present state of the Baptized Congregations, not only in this city, but also in the country, cannot but, first of all, adore the Divine Wisdom and Goodness of Almighty God, in respect of his late most gracious providence, for our deliverance from that dismal dispensation, which threatened us, from the continual and unwearied attempts and designs of the enemy of our sacred religion and civil liberties; by which means, our sinking and drooping spirits are again revived, and our earnest hopes and long expectations raised, and afresh

\* Luppitt was the former place of worship where the present church at Upottery, in Devon. met; and this original paper was communicated to Dr. Rippon by his late dear and honoured father, who departed this life December 24, 1800, aged 70 years,

quicken'd;

quicken'd, in respect of the more full and perfect deliverance of the church of God, and his more glorious appearance for the accomplishing of those gracious promises and prophecies contained in the holy Scripture, relating to the latter days.

But, in the second place, we cannot but bewail the present condition our churches seem to be in; fearing that much of that former strength, life, and vigour, which attended us, is much gone; and, in many places, the interest of Jesus Christ seems to be much neglected, which is in our hands, and the congregations to languish, and our beauty to fade away (which thing we have some ground to judge, you cannot but be sensible of, as well as we); and from hence we have been put upon most mature and serious considerations of such things that may be the cause thereof; and, amongst others, are come to this result:—That the great neglect of the present ministry is one thing; together with that unconcernedness there generally seems to be, of giving fit and proper encouragement for the raising up an able and honourable ministry, for the time to come; with many other things (which we hope we are not left wholly in the dark about) which we find we are not in a capacity to prevent and cure (as instruments in the hand of God, and his blessing attending our Christian endeavours), unless we can obtain a general meeting here in London, of two principal brethren (of every church of the same faith with us) in every county respectively. We do, therefore, humbly intreat and beseech you, that you would be pleased to appoint two of your brethren—one of the ministry, and one principal brother of your congregation with him—as your messengers; and send them up to meet with the rest of the elders and brethren of the churches in London, on the 3d of September next; and then we hope we shall have that before us, and be also helped to consider of such things, that may much tend to the honour of God, and further the peace, well-being, establishment, and present, as also the future comfort of the churches. We hope you will readily, notwithstanding the charge, comply with our pious and Christian desire herein; and, in the mean time, to signify your intentions forthwith, in a letter; which we would have you to direct to our reverend and well-beloved brethren Mr. H. KNOWLES, or Mr. W. KIFFIN. This is all at present from us, your brethren and labourers in God's vineyard, who greet you well in our Lord Jesus Christ, and subscribe our selves your servants in the Gospel.

*Bro. Kiffin lives in Whites-Alley,  
in Little Moorefields.*

WILLIAM KIFFIN,  
HAN. KNOLLIS,  
JOHN HARRIS,  
GEO. BARRETT,  
BENJ. KEACH,  
EDWARD MAN,  
RICH. ADAMS.

## AMERICA

The last Baptist PHILADELPHIA ASSOCIATION was held at Philadelphia October 7—9, 1800. Dr. Samuel Jones preached the Introductory Sermon, from Acts xx. 23 : *I kept back nothing that was profitable to you.* The association letter registers 35 churches, containing 2626 members. Some of these have been favored with large additions in the course of the year. Thus :

|               |                  |           |        |
|---------------|------------------|-----------|--------|
| Hopewell,     | James Ewing,*    | Baptized  | . 30   |
| Montgomery,   | Joshua Jones,    | Ditto     | . . 30 |
| Hights Town,  | Peter Wilson,†   | Ditto     | . . 19 |
| Philadelphia, | Thomas Ustick,‡  | Ditto     | . . 15 |
| —————         | William Rogers,  | By letter | . 12   |
| New Britain,  | William White,§  | Baptized  | . 40   |
| New Mills,    | Alex. M'Gowan,   | Ditto     | . . 15 |
| Amwell,       | —————,           | Ditto     | . . 16 |
| Hill Town,    | Jas. M'Laughlin, | Ditto     | . . 39 |

The interposing providence of God having preserved the city of Philadelphia, during the present season, from the malignant fever, and caused the earth to bring forth fruits *more abundantly* than for some years past, the Association set apart and recommended Thursday, the 13th of November, to be observed as a day of thanksgiving, by all the churches in their connexion.

Apprehensive of the advantages likely to result from a GENERAL CONFERENCE, composed of one member, or more, from each Association, to be held every *one, two, or three* years, as might seem most subservient to the general interests of Christ's kingdom, this Association, in 1799, respectfully invited the different Associations in the United States to favor them with their views on the subject. At *this* meeting, having received approving resolutions from three of their sister Associations, they recommended that next year a committee be appointed to digest a plan, which may tend to accelerate this *beneficial design.*||

This Association think also, that it would be adviseable to invite the general committee of Virginia, and different associations on the Continent, to unite with their own body, in forming a Missionary Society, and for employing Missionaries among the natives on the American Continent.

\* In 1799, Mr. E. baptized 55.

† In 1799, 38 were baptized by Mr. W.

‡ Lost but two by death this year—though in former years so afflicted and bereaved by the yellow fever.

§ Twenty-one were baptized in this church in 1799.

|| A similar object in England has, year after year, been matter of conversation among the ministers in London; but no specific plan is yet laid, and perhaps cannot be without previous communications between some of the brethren in town, and in different parts of the country.—EDITOR.

The committee appointed to prepare a map of the situation of the churches, in this association, presented it, and steps are taking to get it engraved.

Their circular letter on **THE PROOFS OF THE DIVINE ORIGIN OF THE GOSPEL**,\* was drawn up by Mr. *William Staughton*: and the next Association is appointed to meet on the first Tuesday in October, 1801, at two o'clock P. M. at Philadelphia; but, in case of the return of the fever there, to be held at Hopewell.

GEORGIA, SAVANNAH, MAY 23, 1800.

With much pleasure I inform Dr. Rippon, that the cause of our common Lord is seriously regarded by many, of different denominations here, as of the highest importance. The poor blacks, for whom you have manifested so benevolent a concern, are still under their old minister, Andrew Bryan,† increasing in number, and, I trust, in knowledge and virtue. He has lately baptized twelve. Their present number is about 700 members. We contemplate the constitution of a second church of them; and especially since several friends to religion and humanity, in this place, have lately conferred the noble gift of freedom on Henry Francis, a man of colour, who has for many years served Colonel Hammond, and has handsome ministerial abilities.

DUBLIN.

I wish I could give you a pleasing account of the state of religion among us. As to my own situation, things are disheartening,—congregation small,—people lukewarm, and slack in their attendance on divine worship. The Baptist interest, through Ireland, continues low, very low. Among the Dissenters in general, in Dublin, there is a great falling off to the church. Fashion bears the sway, even in religious concerns. You need not be informed of the dissipated habits of the professors of religion among us: habits that strikingly militate against pure and undefiled religion. However, I hope that there is some dawning of better days. Several prayer meetings have been lately instituted in this city, and are well attended. We have formed an Evangelical, or Missionary Society, for the service of Ireland, than which no remote heathen country can stand in greater need of being evangelized. Small as our fund is, it is greater than we can expend, for want of persons to employ. We have applied to England, and to Scotland, for Missionaries, to no purpose. We are now looking at home. We are not destitute of a hope, though it be a trembling one! A similar society is formed in Ulster, God grant that these may prove to be the rising beams of an approaching Gospel day among us!

\* If our limits permit, it is desired that this letter may appear in our next number.

† A christian negroe—his people are of the same description.

## LIST OF PUBLICATIONS.

## ANONYMOUS.

*Christian Liberty*: a Sermon on the History and Principles of the Nonconformists; preached at a Monthly Meeting of the Independents, in London; with Remarks on Mr. Daubeny's Guide to the Church. Text;—Gall. v. i. 12mo. pp. 30. price 6d.

Sold by Conder, London.

REV. RICHARD FURMAN, A.M. Charleston.

*Humble Submission to Divine Sovereignty the Duty of a bereaved Nation*; a Sermon, occasioned by the Death of his Excellency General George Washington, late Commander in Chief of the Armies, and formerly President, of the United States of America. Preached in the Baptist Church, in Charleston, South Carolina, on the 22d of February, 1800, before the American Revolution Society, the State Society of the Cincinnati, and a numerous Assemblage of Citizens. Originally delivered, and now published, at the joint Request of the two Societies. Text;—Psalm xxxix. 9. 8vo. pp. 28.

REV. WILLIAM STAUGHTON, Principal of Bordenton, now of Burlington Academy.

*Missionary Encouragement*: a Discourse, delivered on Wednesday Evening, the 16th of May, 1798, before the Philadelphia Missionary Society, and the Congregation of the Baptist Meeting House, Philadelphia. Text:—Isaiah lv. 12. 8vo. pp. 44.

REV. ROBERT WINTER, London.

*Reflections on the present State of Popery compared with its former State*: a Sermon in Commemoration of the great Deliverances of Britain, in 1605 and 1688; preached at **SALTERS' HALL**, November 2, 1800, to the Supporters of the Lord's Day Evening Lecture, at that Place, and published at their Request. Text;—Revelations xv. 3, 4. 8vo. pp. 31.

Sold by Conder and Button, London.

## BENEVOLENT SOCIETY.

A benevolent society, was instituted October 21, 1800, in the county of Norfolk, for the relief of the necessitous widows and orphans of Protestant Dissenting Ministers, and such Ministers as through age or infirmity may be incapacitated for public service. Among the patrons and supporters of this institution, we find the names of the Rev. Samuel Newton, Rev. Pendlebury Houghton, Rev. Mark Wilks, Rev. Joseph Kinghorn, Rev. David Phillips, Rev. Job Hupton, Rev. J. F. Beard, Rev. John Hooke, Rev. Thomas Colborne, Rev. Thomas Bocking, Rev. John Carter, Rev. William Walford, Rev. — Green, and Rev. — Cooper, and other very respectable gentlemen.



THE  
**PARTICULAR BAPTIST FUND,**  
 1798 & 1799.

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THE Churches, in London and Southwark, which at present make annual collections for the Particular Baptist Fund, and whose Pastors and Messengers manage its affairs, are

|                                |                     |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| <i>Carter Lane</i> .....       | John Rippon         |
| <i>Dean Street</i> .....       | William Button      |
| <i>Devonshire Square</i> ...   | Timothy Thomas      |
| <i>Goodman's Fields</i> .....  | Abraham Booth       |
| <i>Maze Pond</i> .....         | James Dore          |
| <i>Red Cross Street</i> *..... | John Wilson         |
| <i>Unicorn Yard</i> .....      | Thomas Hutehings    |
| <i>Wild Street</i> .....       | Benjamin Coxhead. † |

The Collections of these Churches, made about the end of the year 1798, amounted to £. 611 19 s. 1 d. which with a donation of £. 50 from the Rev. Josiah Thompson, of Clapham; a donation of £. 20 from the Rev. Mr. Thomas Moses, of Abercairne; a collection of £. 21 7 s. 6 d. by the Rev. Mr. Kinghorne's Church, at Norwich; dividends on a 1000 £. Three per Cent. Consols. the donation of William Fuller, Esq.; together with dividends on the Fund Capital, enabled the Fundees, early in 1799, to regard the churches, pastors, and students under their care, as usual. The disbursements of the year were £. 1,345 12 s. 6 d.

In 1799, Mr. Fuller made the Fund a second donation of 1000 £. Three Per Cent. Consolidated Annuities, and also a further donation of £. 60. Mrs. Anne Miller's legacy was received of £. 100; and Miss Elizabeth Hillier's of £. 50; and a donation from the Rev. Mr. T. Moses, of £. 25. Norwich collection was £. 9 15 s. The London Annual Collections, this year, including £. 18 16 s. 9 d. from the Rev. Mr. Newman's church at Old Ford, amounted to £. 588 19 s. The distributions were made nearly as in the preceding year, except an

\* This church met at Cripplegate, till the lease of their place of worship expired.

† Mr. Coxhead was ordained October 30, 1800.

additional donation of one guinea each to 74 ministers.—The whole disbursements for this year 1799, made in the spring of 1800, amounted to £. 1,495 3s. 4d.

Some of the Fund Churches have just been making their collections for the approaching distribution in 1801; and, distressing as the season is, we are happy to find that they are not less productive than they were in Dec. 1799.—Applications have also been made by the London Fund to several very respectable Baptist Churches, in different parts of England, for assistance in this good work, by a collection, if they see it proper; that so the managers of the institution may enlarge the benefactions in this time of general distress,—at least such as are to be made to their most necessitous brethren.

*Cases of Baptist Meeting Houses, which, having been duly presented to the Committee, were patronized in London, from October 15, 1798, to the end of the year 1800.*

| CHURCH AT             | PRESENTED     | RECOMMENDED                         | WANTED     | COLLECTED |
|-----------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Bolton-le-moor        | March 7, 1794 | Oct. 5, 1798                        | £ 207 19 4 | £ 116 3 0 |
| Downton               | May 2, —      | { Withdrawn, }<br>{ Jan. 4, 1799. } | 300 0 0    | supplied. |
| Barnoldswick          | Oct. 3, —     | Feb. 1, —                           | 100 0 0    | 100 1 6   |
| Gilderfome            | June 5, 1795  | May 3, —                            | 190 0 0    | 142 17 6  |
| Ipswich               | Aug. 7, —     | Aug. 2, —                           | 150 0 0    | 150 0 0   |
| Rushden               | July 1, 1796  | Nov. 1, —                           | 240 0 0    | 121 9 6   |
| Braunston             | May 5, 1797   | Feb. 7, 1800                        | 324 0 0    | 207 0 0   |
| Aberystwith           | July 7, —     | May 2, —                            | 140 0 0    | 106 19 0  |
| Newcastle on-<br>Tyne | } Aug. 4, —   | Aug. 1, —                           | 300 0 0    | 116 7 6   |
| Reading               |               | April 6, 1798                       | Nov. 7, —  | 110 0 0   |

Note.—This list is continued from the Register, No. XV. page 60.

Mr. JAMES UPTON, formerly member of the Baptist church, at Waltham Abbey, was ordained, June 27, 1786, pastor of the church, which meets in Green Walk, now called Church-Street, Black Friars. The members, when he entered on his situation, were only 12, and the congregation very small. But through the divine blessing attending his ministry, the number of members is increased to about 290. For more than two years past the church has laboured under very great inconvenience, as the meeting-house has been too small to contain the congregation desirous of attending; nor has there been sufficient room below for the members comfortably to sit down at the Lord's table. Hence, they have purchased the adjoining

premises to the meeting-house, the greater part of which they purpose to pull down, and have contracted that the whole shall be completed for 955l. They have subscribed and collected in the church and congregation, between 6 and 700 hundred pounds, and are now soliciting the benevolent assistance of their christian friends in London, with a good prospect of soon paying off the whole sum.

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The Rev. WILLIAM STAUGHTON, whom we mentioned not long since, as at Bordenton, near Philadelphia, is now principal of an academy, at Burlington, consisting of about eighty young gentlemen. He expects that his removal will be more friendly to his temporal interests and ministerial usefulness. He has a new brick meeting-house, and a thronged assembly. "The intelligent, pious, benevolent, amiable, zealous PEARCE," he says, "I learn, is no more. I join most sincerely the long train of his mourners. He was on earth, a star of uncommon magnitude, and is now, I doubt not, shining as a sun in our father's kingdom!"

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The *great storm* which happened on Friday and Saturday, November 26, and 27th, 1703, has been annually commemorated in a very devout manner, by the church in Wild-Street—over which, the late excellent Dr. Samuel Stennett was pastor. Several of the annual sermons have been published—Mr. Benjamin Stinton's, in 1713, on Jer. li. 15, 16. This passed through three additions. Dr. Gifford's, in 1733, on John iii. 8. Dr. Joseph Stennett's, in 1737, on Amos iv. 12. This obtained a second edition. Dr. Samuel Stennett's, in 1788, on Psa. lxxvii. 11. Mr. Robert Winter's, in 1798, on Mark iv. 41. These are all that we recollect to have seen. Mr. Coxhead, who succeeds Dr. Stennett in the pastoral office, preached his first annual sermon on the storm, not on November 27, the usual day for the service, as that time was fixed for Mr. Thorpe's settlement at Carey-Street; but on November 30, 1800, from Amos iii. 6. *Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?* He stated the calamities with which nations are sometimes exercised—The efficient cause of such events—and the design of the Most High in these dispensations. The discourse was animated by just historical sketches of the original storm in 1703, and by a well-timed reference to the tempest which so *lately* raged. The sermon is not printed, but being preached on the Lord's day evening, it was heard by a larger congregation than has attended this service for many years. The house was full. And we understand that our young brother, according to *pointed advice* given him at his ordination, has begun the work of catechizing the children of his congregation—a work *now* much neglected, but from which the genuine Protestant Dissenters have derived *peculiar* advantages in better times.

## OBITUARY.

**D**IED, on Lord's day, the 26th of August, 1798, in the 49th year of his age, the Rev. *Ben. Foster*, D. D. pastor of the Baptist church assembling in Gold-Street, New-York, after a short but painful illness (the yellow fever,) which he bore with a patience and resignation becoming the Christian and divine. His strenuous attachment to the liberties of man, his exemplary life and Christian deportment towards persons of every description; the doctrine he preached; his indefatigable labours of love, in season and out of season; and the blessings that attended his ministry to the said church, for near ten years; together with his last dying words, which he uttered to a ministering brother, a few hours before his dissolution, in which he manifested the most unshaken confidence in the mercy of God, through a Mediator, without an apparent intervening cloud, exhorting him, at the same time, to hold up the importance and reality of Christian religion as the only ground and comfort to a dying person---cannot but induce all who love our Lord Jesus Christ, and the bereaved church, to have him in grateful remembrance; and while they lament their unspeakable loss, conclude, that death to him was great gain; and, perhaps, had the infidels of the day, and the scoffers of the age, been present, to have beheld the calmness and firmness with which he expressed his prospects of eternal glory, they would have been constrained each one to say, "Let me die the death of the righteous; and let my last end be like his."

Rev. Mr. *Joseph Rodway*, of Wotton-under-edge, Gloucestershire, assistant minister to Mr. W. Hitchman, of Hillsley, and fa-

ther of Mr. Rodway, late a Missionary at Sierra Leone; after a short illness, finished his course, in the cheerful hope of a happy immortality, May 26, 1799, in the 57th year of his age. He was called to the ministry, April 10, 1791, after having been a deacon nineteen years. Remarkably steady in his deportment, and faithful in his ministry; his character is ornamental to his profession in the view of all his acquaintance, and his death greatly lamented.

January 6th, 1800, died Mr. *Joel Northam*, in his 82d year, after having been a member of the Baptist church, in Eagle-Street, London, 63—and a valuable deacon 53—years. He had, also, occasionally preached in his connexions.—The remains of this venerable man were interred in the burying ground at Bunhill Fields, 113, 114, East and West, 27 North and South.\*

October, 1800, in Hatton-Street, London, aged 81, Mrs. *Ursula Maitland*, relict of the late Robert M. Esq. an eminent merchant, in King's-arms-yard, Coleman-street; and sister to Mr. Goreham, of King's-road, surveyor.—She was buried in Bunhill Fields, 41 east and west 70 north and south.

October, 1800, at Leicester, aged 78, Mrs. *Worthington*, relict of the late Rev. Hugh W. By her removal, society in general, and the poor in particular, have sustained a serious loss. She was a memorable instance of an infirm constitution attaining to a multitude of years, through the blessing of God, on the strictest

\* The burying-ground in Bunhill Fields is divided into inter-sections, which are numbered and marked on the walls all around.

prudence; and of the tendency of genuine religion to inspire not only patience, but eminent cheerfulness, under all the pains and trials of life.

Oct. 16, 1800. In Broad-street Buildings London, aged 57, Mrs. *Mary Mullett*, wife of Mr. Thomas Mullett. She was the eldest surviving daughter of the Rev. Hugh Evans, M. A. and sister of the Rev. Caleb Evans, D.D. successive pastors of the Baptist congregation of Protestant Dissenters in Broad Mead, Bristol, and Presidents of a very respectable establishment in that city for the education of candidates for the Christian ministry.—She was an affectionate wife, a tender mother, a kind sister, and a generous steady friend. Her benevolence extended to the utmost bound of her capacity, in relieving virtue in distress; and, in various instances, she has been the disconsolate widow's aid, and the orphan's protection and support. Piety, humility and charity, were her characteristics; and, by the faith, hope, resignation, and confidence of a christian, her life was uniformly and happily regulated. Recovering from the effects of several paralytic attacks, her family and friends were indulging the hope of her perfect restoration, and of enjoying her society for some years. On the day of her death, she was in more than usual health and cheerfulness, and in full vigour of mind; when, at dinner, she suddenly exclaimed,—“*Oh, my head!*” fell on her husband's arm, and spoke no more.—To her family, her death is an irreparable loss; but to her, an instant translation to that state of felicity, which had been her frequent and most delightful contemplation. Her memory will be ever held in esteem and veneration by her numerous friends, nor least of all by him who copies this article for *The Baptist Register*.—This amiable woman lies interred in

Bunhill Fields, 64, 65 east and west, 45 north and south.

Mrs. *Ann Rance*, wife of the Rev. Mr. R. of Hackney, died November 18, 1800. She had been afflicted with the gout about three months before her death. On November 7, she apprehended that she was struck with death; but said, that she was able to give up her husband, herself, and every thing else, into the hands of a covenant God. She desired to have the 51st Psalm read, which had been made useful to her some years before. She then sang Dr. Watts's Hymn, “How condescending and how kind,” &c. About two hours before her dissolution, she gave pleasing evidence of her faith in Christ, and of her dependence on the promises. Being desired to lift up her hand, if she had a cheerful expectation of meeting her dear husband, and other Christian friends, before the throne, she waved it twice. They then joined in prayer and praise; and she presently took her flight to the Saviour's bosom. She was buried Nov 25, at Bunhill-fields, 24, 25 east and west, 49, 50 north and south; and the following Lord's day evening, Mr. Upton, her former pastor, preached the funeral discourse, at Hackney, on John xiv. 3.

December 6, Mrs. *Elizabeth Fletcher*, of Old Gravel-Lane, Ratcliffe, aged 87 (her maiden name was *Hetts*). She had been a member of Dr. Rippon's church, in Southwark, ever since 1746. She was buried in the family grave, St. John's, Wapping.

December 16, 1800, Mrs. *Ann Burditt*, wife of Mr. Joseph B. She was formerly a member of Mr. Fuller's church, at Kettering, and since of Mr. Booth's in London!—a modest, godly woman. She was interred in the burying-ground adjoining to Mr. Dan Taylor's meeting-house, in Church-lane; Whitechapel.

**A LIST**  
 OF  
**THE MINISTERS TO BE ENGAGED**  
 AND OF  
**THE SUBJECTS TO BE DISCUSSED**  
 IN  
**THE MONTHLY EXERCISES OF THE CONGREGATIONAL BRETHERN;**  
*Carried on the Thursday after the first Lord's day in every Month.*  
 Divine Service to begin at 11 o'Clock precisely.

From August to December, 1800.

| TIME. | PLACE.           | SUBJECTS.                                                                                       | PREACHERS.    | MINISTERS TO PRAY.              |
|-------|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|
| Aug.  | Mr. Ford's       | <i>The Nature and Importance of contending earnestly for the Faith.</i>                         | Mr. Kello.    | Mr. Wall<br>Mr. Reynolds        |
| Sept. | Mr. Barker's     | <i>Original Sin</i>                                                                             | Mr. Ford.     | Mr. Brooksbank<br>Mr. Humphreys |
| Oct.  | Mr. Jennings's   | <i>Regeneration</i>                                                                             | Mr. Reynolds. | Mr. Clayton<br>Mr. Barber       |
| Nov.  | Mr. Brooksbank's | <i>The Importance and Necessity of being wholly sanctified</i>                                  | Mr. Maurice.  | Mr. Knight<br>Mr. Towle         |
| Dec.  | Mr. Humphreys's  | <i>On what Ground has a Person Warrant to conclude he is in a State of Acceptance with God?</i> | Mr. Jennings. | Mr. Reynolds<br>Mr. Ford        |

From January to October, 1801.

| TIME.  | PLACE.                   | SUBJECTS.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | PREACHERS.     | MINISTERS TO PRAY.           |
|--------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|
| Jan.   | Mr. Maurice's            | <i>Self-deception in Religious Concerns</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Mr. Goode      | Mr. Jennings<br>Mr. Wall     |
| Feb.   | Messrs. Towle and Barber | <i>How shall we distinguish between Christian Experience and its Counterfeit? - - -</i>                                                                                                                                                             | Mr. Barker     | Mr. Goode<br>Mr. Knight      |
| March  | Mr. Clayton's            | <i>The Nature of a Gospel Church, and the Duties of its Members. - - - - -</i>                                                                                                                                                                      | Mr. Barber     | Mr. Humphreys<br>Mr. Kello   |
| April  | late Dr. Stafford's      | <i>Ministerial Fidelity. - - - - -</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Mr. Brooksbank | Mr. Maurice<br>Mr. Barker    |
| May    | Mr. Goode's              | <i>On what Grounds should a Christian discountenance Theatrical Amusements? - - -</i>                                                                                                                                                               | Mr. Clayton    | Mr. Ford<br>Mr. Jennings     |
| June   | Mr. Reynolds's           | <i>What is the Import of that Passage of Scripture, "Nevertheless the Foundation of God standeth sure, having this Seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his; and, Let every one that nameth the Name of Christ depart from Iniquity? - - - - -"</i> | Mr. Humphrey's | Mr. Barber<br>Mr. Goode      |
| July   | Mr. Wall's               | <i>What is the Scripture Idea, of our being crucified to the World and the World to us?</i>                                                                                                                                                         | Mr. Knight     | Mr. Towle<br>Mr. Maurice     |
| August | Mr. Kello's              | <i>Union in the Fundamentals, and Charity in the Circumstantials, of Religion. - - - -</i>                                                                                                                                                          | Mr. Wall       | Mr. Barker<br>Mr. Brooksbank |
| Sept.  | Mr. Knight's             | <i>The Parable of the Talents - - - - -</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Mr. Towle      | Mr. Kello<br>Mr. Clayton     |
| Oct.   | Mr. Thorpe's             | <i>What are the best means to obtain a retentive Memory in spiritual Things? - - - -</i>                                                                                                                                                            |                |                              |

A LIST OF THE BAPTIST MONTHLY MEETINGS, FOR THE YEAR 1801.

| PLACE.            | TIME.    | TO BEGIN.       | TO PREACH.           | BEATITUDES.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | TO PRAY.        |
|-------------------|----------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Dr. Rippon's      | Jan. 22  | Mr. Coxhead     | Dr. Jenkins - - - -  | THE BLESSEDNESS OF THOSE WHO<br><i>see and hear what prophets and righteous men desired to see and hear. Matt. xii. 16, 17</i><br><i>hear the word of God and keep it. Luke xi. 28</i><br><i>are poor in spirit. - - - - Matt. v. 3</i><br><i>mourn. - - - - - - - - - - 4.</i><br><i>are meek - - - - - - - - - - 5.</i><br><i>hunger and thirst after righteousness - 6.</i><br><i>are merciful - - - - - - - - - 7.</i><br><i>are pure in heart. - - - - - - - 8.</i><br><i>are peace-makers - - - - - - - 9.</i><br><i>are persecuted for righteousness' sake. 10, 11.</i><br><i>are not offended in Christ. - Matt. xi. 6.</i><br><i>shall be found watching when Christ comes - - - - - Luke xii. 37.</i> | Mr. Ovington    |
| Mr. Tim. Thomas's | Feb. 19  | Dr. Jenkins     | Mr. Newman - - - -   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Dr. Rippon      |
| Mr. Coxhead's     | March 19 | Mr. Newman      | Mr. Button - - - -   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Mr. Dore        |
| Mr. Burnside's    | April 23 | Mr. Button      | Mr. Hutchings - - -  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Mr. Booth       |
| Mr. Ovington's    | May 21   | Mr. Hutchings   | Mr. Booth - - - - -  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Mr. Coxhead     |
| Dr. Jenkins's     | June 25  | Mr. Booth       | Mr. Coxhead - - - -  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Mr. Hutchings   |
| Mr. Newman's      | July 23  | Mr. Coxhead     | Mr. Tim. Thomas      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Mr. Th. Thomas  |
| Mr. Hutchings's   | Aug. 20  | Mr. Tim. Thomas | Mr. Burnside - - - - |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Mr. Newman      |
| Mr. Booth's       | Sept. 24 | Mr. Burnside    | Mr. Th. Thomas       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Dr. Jenkins     |
| Mr. Dore's        | Oct. 22  | Mr. Th. Thomas  | Dr. Rippon - - - -   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Mr. Button      |
| Mr. Th. Thomas's* | Nov. 19  | Dr. Rippon      | Mr. Dore - - - - -   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Mr. Burnside    |
| Mr. Button's      | Dec. 17  | Mr. Dore        | Mr. Ovington - - - - |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Mr. Tim. Thomas |

\* The Meeting will be held at Devonshire Square.

SERVICE TO BEGIN PRECISELY AT ELEVEN O'CLOCK.—THE MINISTER OF THE PLACE CONCLUDES.



## SKETCH

OF

## THE HISTORY OF DISSENTING CHURCHES.

## HISTORY OF THE BAPTIST CHURCH AT PLYMOUTH.

**U**NDER the reign of JAMES THE FIRST, a Treatise, originally written in Dutch, it is said,\* was translated and published by the Baptists in England, entitled “*A very plain and well-grounded Treatise on Baptism,*” in which they likewise avowed their friendly disposition towards the civil Government. This piece gained them many friends and followers, though it did not abate the spirit of persecution against them. However, from this time, they began to separate themselves into distinct churches; though many of them, unable to support a stated ministry, continued to unite with the pious Puritans from about the year 1603 until 1633, when they more effectually separated. In the country where the number of the inhabitants were small, and the preachers few, many of the residents in little villages united together for the maintenance of the Gospel and its preachers. It is under these circumstances we find Looe, Penryn, Falmouth, and Holdsworthy, connected with the history of the church before us: its original formation we have no authentic records of;—our papers, however, lead us back to the year 1648.

## CHAPTER I.

Containing a general account of the Church at Plymouth, from the calling of Rev. Abraham Cheare in 1648, to the calling of Rev. Philip Gibbs, in 1748.

This faithful servant of Jesus Christ, Mr. Abraham Cheare, appears to have been a native of Plymouth, born of believing parents, who were Fullers, and brought up their son to the same business: judging, however, by certain Greek criticisms in a posthumous publication of his sermons, entitled *Words in Season*, and by several Ms. letters, it seems that he acquired a good education, which, united with an early delight in and study of the sacred writings, qualified him nobly to defend the cause he espoused. It is not clear how

\* The Editor has not seen it.

long he preached the Gospel : the church records say, he certainly was in the ministry before he was convinced of the ordinance of believer's baptism, to which he had not submitted till the year he received the churches call.— He was ordained pastor of this church in 1648. Who was his predecessor we know not, nor is there any account by whom he was ordained. The church, at the time of their calling him to take charge of them in the Lord, must have been in a flourishing state, as his call is said to have been signed by 150 members; but where they then met for worship does not appear on record.

In the year 1651, the church purchased the land in Pig-market, and appropriated a house for divine worship. In 1658, we find Mr. Abraham Cheare at the Western Association held at Dorchester : and in the year 1661, the comfort of the church was marred, by his being committed to Exon gaol for encouraging religious assemblies, from whence he was liberated in about three months.

In the next year, on the 26th of the fourth month, which was June (the year *then* beginning with March,) he thus writes :—“ As for my part, my father graciously indulges me, and the lambs here, giving us an undeserved covert, even where Satan's seat is, while other flocks are dispersed and scattered. Some from our neighbouring parts are sent to that place of ancient experience, where they have a stock of prayers and presence to begin upon; they begin on straw, as learning to endure hardness as good soldiers. The Lord make that word good to them which *often* hath been, in *that* place, sweet to *me*, Exod. xxiii. 25; and at length, Eccles. iv. 14. I expect daily the same lot.”

His apprehensions were not unfounded, for the blessing of liberty was soon snatched from him, his people, and thousands of others, by the Act of Uniformity, in 1662; and he was committed to the aforesaid prison again, for holding unlawful conventicles, and not conforming to the established church. Several of the letters he wrote from this place are in good preservation\*; and one of them is here subjoined. It is addressed to Mr. William Punchard, London; bearing date the 17th of the seventh month (September,) 1662.

\* In possession of the EDITOR—and they shall be given as opportunity presents itself.

*The beautie of the Father's ornament sett in majesty  
upon you!*

MY DEARE.

I received yours of the 11th of the seventh month ; and in it a testimonie of teaching and supporting grace and presence continued to you abrode, which he is pleased not to denie his poore wormes heer, in these holes of the earth, where violence hath thrust us as in so many slaughter-houses of men ; but overruling grace makes them as the presence chambers of the great King, where he brings and feasts his ffavourites with the best things, and proclaimes among them, “ Thus shall it be don “ to them whome the King delightes to honour.” This honor have not all that yet are saints, much lesse have any this mercy, who ether through the feare or formalitie of their unconverted soules are enforced shamefully to putt off that profession which hypocritically they did put on in a day of promising prosperity ; not but that these walls, as a draw-nett, may and do enclose good and bad : but at length a discovery is made more manifest, he chooseth in this furnace of affliction ; a week, in a *prison*, giving plainer discoverie of a man's spirit, than a month in a *church*. Of these experiments I no way doubt but you have obtained a good degree by the long excersises you have gon under this way,\* and have not only taken out lessons for yourself, but wherewithall to teach, warne, and support others, with the same that you have obtained from the Lord : whereunto I pray you may make your advances beyond others, who, having faced tryalls a great while, are at length perswaded to give way, to the staine of their former standing, and staggering of such as have learned no farther yett to behold the power of the Lord to support, than only as it is ether manifested or clouded in creatures like themselves ; meanwhile neglecting that inspection they ought to have therein directly and immediately through the promises, that are of power to supply those that waite on the Lord with renewed strength,—even then, when youths faint and are wearie, and young men utterlie faile.

This afternoone, there is to be committed to the earth the dust of our sister FIRKLE, whose spirit was yesterday commended to heaven, after she had sustained a long conflict betwixt the two inmates, her better part breathing after that state for which she hath been long preparing. We are left to bewaile that losse, of which few are truly apprehensive, according to her worth ; and to learne some living lessons from her dying dispensations, who hath left divers lively testimonies of her fixed faithfullnesse :—one is this ; she desired that, if the reader approached to compliment her into the womb of her

\* This letter was written, it seems, to a person who had been imprisoned for righteousness sake.—EDITOR.

mother earth, they that attend her should leave her bones \* (as Syons are scattered) at the grave's mouth, Psa. cxli. 7.—The poor lambs that I left have been visited by the constables again and again at their meetings, summoned before the Mayor, fined for not coming to church—yet have a little strength left to meet in the same place, expose their goods to be spoiled, &c. rather than consent to promote that which their soule is grieved at. Those with you are as formerly. Your old persecutor is come home, but hath hitherto done nothing.—Br. Ston. who I hope is by this time with you, well escaped him. Clem<sup>t</sup>. J. † was yesterday here with me, with whom I have been refreshed. Our Bishaop, WARD, came to this citty last week and was received with great state, but hath been ever since ill, its said, in the black jaundice. The Deputy Lieuts. are most of them sitting, and ('tis said) we shall be brought before them, but to what end is not known. Two or three troops are in town, and going forth this morning; of their designe we know nothing, but its reported to be to take up the non-conforming parsons—perhaps, to give security. They at Dalwood †† have a very larg and increasing meeting, where the Lord is present as a covert to them: at Loo †, they are also, hitherto, quietly and comfortably kept. Fear and fury disperseth others hear about. St. § is here at present, to give us a visit; they there are yet preserved. The Lieuts. are now gone to castle, ¶ and we expect a call, so that I have not time to enlarge; but I desire to be remembered to all that love and fear our Lord Jesus; to your yoakfellow in particular, and to dear D. when you see him; he sayeth you have sent somewhat, which I expect, beside what you sent by Blag: which I have sent for. All heer are well, and salute you; not else breaks off

Yours, lovingly, &c.

After remaining in this confinement, at Exon, three years, he obtained his freedom, with leave to visit Plymouth, if he chose. But here he was again seized, and committed to the prison under the Guildhall. He "would not, however, have come from Exon, nor have stayed in Plymouth after he had preached once—nor would he have come to this place \* after his time of suffering

\* It must be recollected how the ministers of THAT DAY had persecuted these poor creatures.

† Probably Clement Jackson, then pastor at East Looe, in Cornwall.

†† The church of Dalwood and Loughwood is well known in Devon and Dorset.

¶ In Cornwall.

§ Probably Mr. Stead, of Bovey.

¶ The castle, at Exon is the place where the county prisoners are tried.

\* By this place—perhaps he means the island of St. Nicholas.

was out in the town-hall of Plymouth—if he might have had his own will” in every view; but he acted thus to gratify his sister; and it was the occasion of his being banished to the island of St. Nicholas, in the sound. During his imprisonments, he wrote several little tracts, and also some hymns and verses that were afterwards printed in 1672. One of these pieces, originally written on the wall of his prison, in Plymouth, is selected, as containing a brief history of his sufferings, and as displaying the fortitude and resignation of his mind.

Verses affixed to the wall of the prison, at the Guildhall, in Plymouth, where A. C. was detained a month, and thence sent to the island, the 27th September, 1665.

NICH four years since, sent out from hence  
 To Exon gaol was I  
 But special grace, in three month space,  
 Wrought out my liberty.  
 Till Bartholomew, in sixty-two,  
 That freedom did remain;  
 When, without bail, to Exon gaol  
 I hurried was again.  
 Where having lain, as do the slain,  
 'Mong dead men wholly free,  
 Full three years' space, my native place  
 By leave I came to see.  
 And thought not then I here again  
 A month's restraint should find;  
 Since, to my den, cast out from men,  
 I'm during life design'd.  
 But since my lines the Lord assigns  
 In such a lot to be,  
 I kiss the rod, confess my God  
 Deals faithfully with me.  
 My charged crime, in his due time  
 He fully will decide,  
 And until then, forgiving men,  
 In peace with him I bide.

In this isle of Plymouth, where he was prisoner under military guards, a violent sickness, in a few days, seized him, by which he kept his chamber three quarters of a year; but recovering in some measure, he wrote a little poem of grateful acknowledgment to his Saviour's praise, and dedicated it thus:—

To his truly sacred Majesty, the High and Mighty Potentate,  
King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, Prince of Life and  
Peace, Heir of all things, and Head over all to the  
Church.

The humble prostration and thankful acknowledgment of  
a poor prisoner of hope, whose life, upon all accounts, hath  
been marvellously preserved, and delivered with a great salva-  
tion from the pit of corruption.

Most glorious Sov'reign! to thy feet is brought  
The trembling offspring of a contrite thought ;  
By a poor captive, who attempts to raise  
An *Ebenezer* to his Saviour's praise—  
A lasting pillar, as in conscience bound,  
In due remembrance of choice favours found ;  
With grace to succour, in a needful hour,  
From death's dominion and the tempter's pow'r.  
But, when thy worm reflects, what can it bring,  
Comporting with the grandeur of a king,  
Of such bright majesty as angels must  
Their faces veil before, shall sinful dust  
Have bold access, and kind acceptance meet  
For self and service at thy burning feet ?  
May hair, a badger's skin, a widow's mite,  
From willing minds, find favour in thy sight ;—  
A pair of pigeons, or a turtle dove,  
Find kind construction from the God of love ?  
Is there more over-laid by the supply,  
To help such weakness in infirmity ?  
A costly cov'ring doth thy grace provide,  
Their blemishes to veil, their spots to hide,  
Who, from their sense of need and duty, bring  
Their lowly homage to their lofty King ?  
On such encouragements here trembling stands  
A contrite waiter, though with empty hands ;  
Whose bag and basket speak him to become  
More like a beggar than a bringer-home :  
Who, though he aims and longs, in this address,  
His utmost obligations to express,  
To charge his conscience, and discharge his vow,  
Abandon other lords, to Jesus bow ;  
Yet finds in all, that, void of royal aid,  
Nought worthy of thee can be thought or said.  
Apart from Christ, the best attempts, alas !  
Are tinkling cymbals, and as sounding brass ;  
Such stately structures prove but wood and hay  
I'th' test and contest of that burning day ;

These dear experiments, so often tried,  
 All boasting confidence from flesh must hide  
 Of self-sufficiency, in best attire,  
 To form that work, or breathe but that desire,  
 Or think that thought, that can, in justice, claim  
 One heavenly aspect on its act or aim.  
 What, then, remains?—thy worm must prostrate fall,  
 While sentence from thy presence past on all  
 Which self hath gloried in or flesh hath gain'd,  
 With whatso'er to *Adam* appertain'd :  
 His wisdom, will, his power, delight, desire,  
 Or what his art, or industry acquire ;  
 His noblest faculties, accutest parts,  
 His liberal sciences, or rarest arts :  
 Nay, his best righteousness, his all in all  
 Must be resign'd, surrender'd, left to fall,  
 Be sentenc'd, crucify'd, despoil'd, disgrac'd,  
 And at the feet of conquering *JESUS* plac'd ;  
 That, on its ruins, Gospel grace may rear  
 A living pillar, thy new name to bear !

If any inquire what occasioned such severity as to detain this good man so many years—and till death—a prisoner, it may suffice to insert the state of his case, left under his own hand ; and which we copy from the last leaf of his posthumous book, “*Words in Season,*” printed at London, in 1668.

“ He was born at Plymouth, of mean yet honest parentage ; is not, by kindred or any alliance, related to any person or family of any note at all ; was not bred up to learning at any university, or sent any where to travel for education or experience ; but, contrarywise, brought up, and kept diligently by his parents to work, in the poor, yet honest, trade of a fuller ; never lived out of that town a month together all his life, except in a journey, some weeks, on occasion, about sixteen years since, to London ; besides what he underwent, by constraint, in prison. Never, in the former wars, was enlisted in any troop or company under pay ; and in the trained bands of the town where he served, never was accounted worthy of promotion to so much as a corporal ; nor in the corporation whereof he was a member, ever advanced so high as a constable. Never bettered his estate one farthing by all the propitious advantages that might have given him opportunity of so doing ; nor is conscious to himself of the least desire of adding to what he hath by any present or future

ture advantage, that any favourable overtures of the times may tempt him with. Never was advanced to, or improved in, any place or office of trust or profit, civil, military, or ecclesiastical; save only, for some few weeks, unknown to him, and against his will, he was mustered a chaplain to the fort; but quickly got himself discharged of that again. Never was concerned in, nor truly charged with, any plot, mutiny, or tumult, giving the least disturbance, or occasion of fear or jealousy. This one thing, then, only can remain to give colour to such proceedings; that, about eighteen years since, he being convinced of his duty to his Lord, by evidence of Scripture light, joined himself in an holy covenant, to walk in all the ordinances of the Lord, blameless, to the best of his light and power, in fellowship with a poor and despised people."

The support with which his heavenly master indulged him was not small, as will appear by the following sections, which are given in his own words :

#### CONCERN FOR HIS PEOPLE.

"He said, he had oft, since his sickness on his bed, begged that the God of the spirits of all flesh would set a man over that Church, to go in and out before them, to feed them, that so the Lord's poor flock be not utterly scattered by those who carry or keep them captive," Numb. xxvii. Adding, "that he had laboured and designed to serve the Lord among them, and to gather souls to Christ; and had now the witness of a good conscience, that he had not wilfully omitted, or dealt negligently in, that work, in the main of it, as opportunity presented; and blest the Lord, that, since his imprisonment, he had heard of six or seven of that Church that had gone triumphing to heaven before him."

#### SUFFERINGS.

This is a quotation he makes:—"To suffer for Christ is honourable. God will not put this honour upon every one; he puts this honour upon the vessels of honour. He gives grace to a man, forming him into a vessel of silver or gold, and then throws him into the fire, to melt and suffer for his name. The metal of that Christian must be *silver* or *gold* that can suffer for Christ:—a vessel of *wood*, throw it into the fire, its hoops will fly off, it will break asunder,



afunder, and never hold out. The three children that were cast into the fiery furnace, what glorious mould and metal were they made of!"

#### HIS FRAME OF MIND IN IMPRISONMENT.

"I could at large acquaint you, that *By the grace of God I am what I am*. Wonderful loving kindness hath helped hitherto, so as after five years' imprisonment in more than five prisons, and, in this last year, above nine months' sickness, with divers trials of faith and patience, I have never yet seen the least reason (and I praise Christ my Lord) never been under an hour's temptation to relinquish or repent of my testimony, in word or deed, to any one persecuted truth of Christ, for which I suffer. And though my lot be in a place where the salt sharp air is manifestly ruinous to my health, exposing me (more than I ever was in my life) to daily distempers, and under a sentence of premunire, and in a readiness, on all occasions, for threatened transportation, besides other threatening and straitening circumstances, yet, under all, is Christ as precious to my soul as ever, and so are his cause, work, and institutions, and faithful children, and he is every way as worthy of my all as I professed him to be in the greatest fullness or plenty of all things. Neither durst I, for my life, balk the least truth of Jesus which is to be witnessed unto, for the obtaining any wealth, liberty, or other accommodations whatever. Nor can I express the constant satisfaction, and sometimes consolation, that my soul is made to enjoy in following God, especially when in my greatest sickness, about this time twelve-month, and at other seasons, when I have been ready to step into eternity,—thoughts and pen cannot set forth the peace, passing understanding, wherewith my soul was possessed, in respect of the present truths of Christ, and his heart love to me therein, which do to this day abide in their excellency and obligation, engaging my soul to love and praise the Lord for his unspeakable gifts of grace to me herein, who have as fearful, cowardly, unbelieving, slothful, self-saving, a poor heart, as I think any poor Christian alive is pestered withal."

#### HIS LAST AFFLICTIONS.

Being asked by a friend, "Is all well within;"—he answered, "All is well there, blessed be God, my God, the high rock of my salvation. My soul hath trusted in him and shall not be ashamed."

“Blessed be God that brought me here, and blessed me here with desirable company and mercies, concerning which we have had occasion and reason to speak well of God together.”

“The testimony I have borne to Christ in my day, is a quieting, comforting consideration, through the blood of Christ; though not the *bottoming* consideration on which my peace is built, yet 'tis of great use, in a secondary sort, at such a season.” Afterwards—

“The Lord has brought me under cloudings and trials, sometimes; though they have been day, not night, clouds through which he hath shined.”

He addressed all in the family with him, one after another, in a very solemn affectionate manner. After this, feeling his heart evidently failing, he said, “Blessed be God for Christ's grace and eternal glory.” Three hours before his dissolution, a friend perceiving him under great pressure, softly said to him, “They looked unto the Lord and were lightened; a right look will bring down relief under all difficulties.” “Yea,” replied he, “*and their faces were not ashamed.*” These were his last words. He yielded up his spirit the 5th of the first month (March) 1668.

During the time of their pastor's sufferings, the Church was continually vexed with persecutions; and in the year of his death it broke out with double fury. Two years after, the enemies of Christ obtained the revival of the Conventicle Act, under which the members of this society were harassed with every species of cruelty, in body and estate, till King James's declaration of liberty of conscience.

Once more at liberty publicly to meet for the worship of God, after nineteen years' cruel persecution, during which period their numbers were reduced to 66, they gave their unanimous call to the Rev. Robert Brown, a minister of the Pædobaptist persuasion, then preaching at Worcester. The letter is dated the 30th of the 11th month, 1687. Mr. Brown accepted the call; but the happiness the Church promised themselves from his piety and talents was of short duration; for, after enjoying them about three months, this good and great man fell asleep in the arms of his Redeemer, on the 22d of February, 1688. As a tribute of regard, the Church erected a monument in their meeting, to perpetuate his memory.

Ah!

“ Ah! cruel Death, to separate so soon  
 The lovely pastor and his pious charge;  
 Their brightning day to overcloud at noon,  
 Thine own despotic empire to enlarge.  
 But soon the Saviour will avenge their cause,  
 And thou, dread tyrant, shalt his voice obey;  
 Rescu'd with pow'r from thy devouring jaws,  
 They'll meet again in realms of endless day.”

Deprived of their pastor, in the month of April they enjoyed the labours of a Mr. Warner, of London, for two Lord's days; they proposed to him the pastoral charge, and a salary of £.40 per annum. This Mr. Warner at first accepted of; but he went back to town, and afterwards changed his mind, and did not go.

In August following, they sent a letter of invitation to a Mr. Holderby, in Ireland; which he accepted, and came over in the first vessel; and soon received a call from the Church, to be their pastor, which he accepted by word and writing; but finding some of the members particular, his engagements became uneasy to him; he therefore requested permission to leave them; and, at length, “ the Church agreed to leave Mr. Holderby to his desires.”

The first mention that is made of Mr. Samuel Buttall is, as the messenger of the Church to the great association in London, in the year 1689. In the beginning of the month of September, 1690, the *Sisters* held a meeting, and agreed among themselves to recommend to the brethren of the Church their brother Samuel Buttall, for the office of an elder in the house of God, to administer in all ordinances. Their letter was signed by 42 sisters. On the 19th of the same month, the *whole Church* met, and 52 persons signed the call, which Mr. Buttall accepted.

In 1691, there was a branch of this Church at Holdsworth, under the more immediate direction of Mr. Double. Mr. James Hitt was a gifted brother in the Church, called to administer the ordinance of baptism in Mr. Buttall's absence. In 1692, Mr. Bass, of the Plymouth Church, was given up to the Falmouth Church, to be their minister. A Mr. Flute assisted Mr. Buttall, together with Mr. James Murch, who had also preached at Dalwood and Lyme. In 1693, he requested his dismissal to Dalwood; but the Church, which had so many gifts, seems to have distrusted their great and glorious Head,

Head, and did not give him up till the 14th of the 10th month, 1698, when he and his wife were dismissed to the Church at Dalwood.

The Church at Plymouth was now reduced to low circumstances. The labours of Mr. Buttall and Mr. Flute were become only occasional, Mr. Hitt was removed, and Mr. Murch was given up. In this state, they gave their call to Mr. Nathaniel Hodges, of London, signed by 49 members, the 21st of the 10th month, 1698. Mr. Hodges came, and continued at Plymouth till the 21st of the 10th month, 1701; "when, succeeding to earthly honours," as the written records express it, "he quitted this Church and resided at London." But, by occasional supplies, reading, and prayer, they kept together to the year 1707. Mr. Buttall was now removed to Topsham, and they were deprived of every assistance for the pulpit from among themselves.

In these circumstances, they sent an invitation to Mr. Caleb Jope, then, it seems, a student at Trowbridge, who was "under obligations of divers kinds" to them; but he declining it, *at that time*, they applied to a Mr. Bryant, in October, 1707. He became their pastor; but not till June 7, 1710. He was then ordained, and two persons were introduced into the deacons' office, by laying on of the hands of the elders present. The service began at eight in the morning, and was concluded at four in the afternoon. From the time of Mr. Bryant's coming, to his ordination, the increase of members appears to have been more than 30; for, at his ordination they are said to have amounted to 80; and, in the same year, Mrs. Elizabeth Bryant was received, by letter of dismissal, from the Church at Croscombe.

From this period we are destitute of information, till March 30, 1718, when we find Mr. Bennick (who, in 1707, removed from Plymouth Church, to supply a branch of it at Newton) the pastor of the Church. November 19th of this year, the Church began to sing in divine service.

Mr. Bennick left his situation about August 1720; but, before he went, they renewed their call to Mr. Jope, who preached his first sermon August 14, 1720, and served the Church two years, eight months, and a week, for which labours he received £. 108 16 8.

They then applied to Mr. Elkanah Widgery, then at Newberry, but who was a member of the Church at  
Bampton,





*Ridley sc*

REV<sup>D</sup> PHILIP GIBBS

*late Pastor of the Baptist Church at Plymouth.*

Bampton. He preached his first sermon June 23, 1723. During his stay, the Lord's supper was administered by Mr. Jackson, of Looe, and Mr. Courtice, of Kingbridge. Mr. Widgery left the Church on February 19, 1725; the Church at Bampton, probably, requiring his services.

October 28, 1726, Mr. John Ridley was solemnly ordained, by the imposition of the hands of Mr. Joseph Stennett, of Exon, and Mr. Hann, of Loughwood. He was very much esteemed among his people, and was an affectionate preacher. He was dismissed to Mr. Townsend's Church in London, in 1730.

From hence people were destitute of a stated ministry till 1737, when they gave their call to Mr. Abraham Didget Hoare. It does not appear how long he continued with them. His successor was a Mr. Binnick; he served the Church, with little success, for several years; left them, but on an invitation returned again, and continued with them till 1747. They were now in a poor afflicted state, not more than 15 members in number\*. But God had appointed better days for them. Their light was to break forth as the morning; and Mr. Philip Gibbs was the destined honoured instrument, in the hands of the Lord, for building up this distinguished part of Zion. Of this holy and eminent minister our next chapter treats.

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#### CHAPTER II.

Containing an account of the Rev. Mr. Gibbs to the time of his ordination, as pastor of the Church at Plymouth.

MR. GIBBS, when he was about a year and a half old, lost his father, his mother, and an uncle, in the small-pox, and his nurse supposing him to be dead in that disorder, was about to give orders for a coffin to bury him; but he recovered, and we are prepared to give the early part of his history in his own words, taken from his lips, in a parlour conversation, and therefore must be destitute of the embellishments of composition.

“ I can perfectly remember that my nurse was very tender of me, but one day refusing what I asked, I said in a spirit of revenge, ‘ I will cry myself to death.’ I began, and continued, till one of the most tremendous

\* Another account says but nine members, and from about twenty to thirty hearers.

storms of thunder and lightning I ever remember filled me with fear, attended with guilt; and I certainly then began to discover the sinfulness of my heart. I recollect also, that, in reading the Psalter, I was much affected with the goodness and mercy of God, and wanted to tell all my schoolfellows of it. After this I went on sinning and repenting till I left school; yet could not live without prayer. But I was cast down by that text—*The Sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord*; and I was encouraged by that Scripture—*When the wicked turneth away from his wickedness, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive*. I was at that time on the bottom of doing for life; and yet, strange as it may seem, I felt a persuasion that I could not be saved by doing. About this time several dreams much impressed my mind, particularly one concerning the world as at an end. I saw the Heavens open, multitudes gathering together on the earth, and the dead raised, and an intimate acquaintance of mine at the left hand. This roused me from the security which I too generally felt. I had now no idea of Dissenters, and attended worship only in the Church of England. At this time Mr. Whitfield came to Kingsbridge (Mr. Cennick had been there before), and a Mother in Israel, a Member of the Baptist Church, said to me, ‘Here’s a Minister of the Establishment come to town—you will certainly hear *him*.’ I went to hear him preach in a field near Kingsbridge, and, being then little of stature, got up, not into a sycamore, but into an elm tree, as I well remember. His text was—*Dost thou believe on the Son of God?* I was filled with astonishment at the man, and with a clearer sense of sin, of the evil of sin, than I had ever known before. But when he came to preach faith in the Son of God, to shew who the Son of God was, and what his errand was into the world, what it was to believe in him, and then called upon the *greatest* sinners present, though greater than Manasseh or Saul, as welcome to come to Christ—the way of salvation was opened to me; and in that single Sermon I saw both my disease and remedy. I threw myself, as a poor sinner, upon the Son of God, for mercy and salvation. I spent a great deal of that night in prayer, with a mixture of heart-felt joy and sorrow. I now began to read the Scriptures *diligently*, and to read them *with prayer*; and our Lord’s discourse with Nicodemus, concerning the New Birth, exceedingly affected me. At this time I was about thirteen years and a half old.



“Then Mr. Cennick came to our town again. I thought no one was superior to him, but Mr. Whitfield. But I received abundant consolation under Mr. Cennick’s ministry; particularly from a Sermon that I think I never can forget, on the GOOD SAMARITAN pouring in the oil and wine. O! it was a most delightful and humbling discourse to me; and as the comfort was attended with brokenness of heart for sin, I thought it was of God. I began to see now more of my unworthiness, and so to feel the corruptions of my heart as to think that I was not worthy to touch the hem of Mr. Cennick’s garment. Mr. Cennick was peculiarly affectionate and condescending; being introduced into his company, and joining with him in prayer, he was much endeared to me. When he left us I was exceedingly distressed, and thought that the Gospel was gone with him, as I did not know that any one in the neighbourhood certainly preached it. But one day I met the same old Lady, mentioned before; and, conversing together, she said, “Though Mr. Whitfield and Mr. Cennick are gone, the Gospel is not gone; it is preached at our Meeting: why don’t you come and hear?”—“Who preaches it?” said I.—She replied, “Mr. Crispin Curtis, our Pastor: there is a great difference between his public gifts and their’s, yet you’ll hear the same Gospel.”—I went, one day; and the love which I saw among the people won my heart much more than Mr. Curtis’s preaching. I was now perplexed, not seeing how the corruptions of my heart could be consistent with a state of grace; but, after conversing with several of the aged Christians, I understood more distinctly the difference between nature and grace, and in what the work of God’s spirit upon the human soul consisted. I now read Luther’s exposition on the Galatians with much edification: in it he says somewhat like this—That grace takes nothing out of a man\*, but puts something into him; and that it is better to feel a warfare in the soul between flesh and spirit, than it is to have an Angel come from Heaven to tell a man that his name

\* That *Grace takes nothing out of a man* has been often declared,—probably sometimes without consideration. In the lips of the holy and excellent Mr. Gibbs, whose memory we revere, it meant no harm. But God has said to his people, *I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh*. If so, grace not only puts some good thing into the heart towards the Lord God of Israel, but in a most important sense takes something out of a man. This is experienced when the dominion of sin is taken away in regeneration, and as the power of it is crucified in progressive sanctification.—EDITOR.

is written in the Lamb's book of life; for Satan knows how to transform himself into an Angel of Light.

“By the Scriptures I was convinced of believers baptism, and that it was my duty to be baptized, though I had never seen the ordinance administered to any one. I related my experience to Mr. Curtis, and then to the Church, and a time was appointed for baptism. In the interim, I hesitated on the great question, *Dest thou believe on the Son of God?* However, I felt determined to cast myself upon Christ, as the foundation of a sinner's hope; and resolved, whether I had the evidence in my own soul or not, of my personal interest, I would give myself up to the Lord, in this ordinance, from a sense of duty. I did so, and remember that it was a very comfortable day to me. Mr Curtis baptized me. After this I was exercised with greater temptations than before, about the reality of the work of God upon my heart; and opening my case to one of the Members of the Church, was encouraged by the case of our Lord, after *his* baptism.—Matt. iv. 1.

“About three months after I became a Member, the Church called upon me to exercise my gifts. I did so in a large room of Mr. Curtis's, where they used to meet for prayer: it was on a Lord's day, between the two services. I had thought on the portion of Scripture seriously before, but entered on the work with trembling, and kept the people till it was full time to go to Meeting in the afternoon. It was a text that remarkably affected me—*For what the Law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the,* &c. So I was employed one Lord's day after another.—The Church then had a day of prayer. They approved of my call, by lifting up of their hands, which I think was unanimous. Mr. Curtis, without much form, then said, “Brother Gibbs, the Church calls you to exercise your gifts among us: go and do what you can for Jesus Christ.”—I thought it right so to act, and the next Lord's day preached with extraordinary liberty in our Meeting; and afterwards, as opportunity presented itself, I went into country parishes around, and preached at Chivellstone, Ford, Portlemouth, where I was most known, and among my acquaintance. This created a great stir in the neighbourhood. Several persons were wrought on, and joined the Church.—Thus I continued, I suppose, about twelve months, when Mr. Howel Harris came to Kingsbridge, and he was published to preach at the Baptist Meeting. He was taken poorly, and did not

preach, Mr. Curtis desired me to fill the pulpit:—Mr. Harris was able to be present, and, hearing me, afterwards desired that I might take a preaching journey with him. Mr. Curtis said, ‘He is to go next ~~went~~ week to the Bristol Academy.’—It was at length however, agreed for me to go with him. We first went to Bristol, to the Association of the Methodist Ministers, about seventeen of them, who met that time at Smith’s Hall. Minutes were taken, after the Lecture, of the circuit each was to go. I went into Wiltshire and Gloucestershire, and was to come back to Bath, and then to return to the West, and visit Plymouth Tabernacle, just then covered in. In this tour, Mr. Curtis sent me a letter, requesting I would be present at the Baptist Association held that year at Exeter, as the Church at Kingsbridge had appointed me a Messenger to that Assembly. I attended, and heard Mr. Burford, a Deacon of Plymouth Church, say, that Mr. Binnick, their Minister, had left them. Mr. Hugh Evans wishing that he might return, informed the Messenger, that he had no Student to fill the place. Mr. Burford now desired Mr. Curtis, my Pastor, to go over to Plymouth, and assist the Church. He found it inconvenient; but said, ‘My child,’ for so he used to call me, ‘is coming over to preach in the Tabernacle; and as his health is pretty much recovered, no doubt he will give you a Sermon, as there is no preaching in the Tabernacle but morning and evening.’ This was at seven in the morning, and at six in the evening; there was no preaching then at ten and two. The meetings were purposed at the time when others worshipped. But they had preaching at first *every night*\* in the week.—Before the Tabernacle was erected in Plymouth, the Methodists used to worship in the Meeting-house belonging to the Baptists, who were cheerful in their subscriptions towards the building of that place.—Mr. Howel Harris, finding my health would not permit me to preach so often, sent down good Mr. Thomas Adams; and as he came somewhat unexpected, I was at liberty to supply the Baptists all the day. I preached to them in the forenoon, on this text—*For our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but, &c.* 1 Thess. i. 5.—As soon as I came down from the pulpit, my brother Adams, who was present, said, ‘You’ll settle in this place.’ I preached again in the afternoon, and for three or four

\* Afterwards two Lectures on the week days.

Lord's days, when they invited me to stay with them a year. I deliberated; and though they were reduced exceedingly low, yet I found much affection from them; the word evidently blessed, and the congregation so enlarged as to cause the galleries to be propped, lest they should break down. Hence I consented, on condition that I might have liberty to preach in the neighbouring villages and towns where I might be invited. They agreed; and before the year was up proposed my ordination.

“It was on September 20, 1749. Mr. Day, of Wellington, then a young man, Mr. Jones, of Exeter, and Mr. Isaac Hann, were the principal persons engaged in this service. Mr. Hann prayed the ordination prayer, and all three laid on hands. There was a thronged house. My confession took twenty-five minutes. The solemnity of the day drank up my spirits; but it was a delightful time to myself and others.”

(To be continued.)

## ON THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

### A LETTER,

BY THE LATE REV. SAMUEL STENNETT, D. D.

DEAR SIR,

**I**T were much to be wished that in reasoning about the blessed God, as well as in acts of devotion directed immediately to him, our minds were deeply impressed with a sense of his infinite grandeur and peerless excellence. Immense is the distance, did I say, between him and us? I should rather say, between him and the brightest—the tallest seraph that ventures to bow at his feet. 'Tis wise, therefore, in man, whose faculties are limited, and by sin enfeebled, to answer with modest and humble reverence the voice which asks, *Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?* His nature, I mean his essence and mode of subsistence, must of necessity be immensely different from that of a finite creature. To reason, therefore, from the latter to the former, or to conclude that what may be justly charged with absurdity,

lurdity, when affirmed of a finite being, must be alike absurd and contradictory when applied to a being who is infinite, and whose mode of subsistence the human intellect cannot possibly comprehend—no, nor that of Gabriel himself—is wrong. Indeed it is a kind of reasoning that is not only inconclusive, but also chargeable with temerity and indecency: The fact, therefore, which God directly and plainly affirms of himself, reason and piety oblige me to admit, though I cannot explain the modus of that fact.

Now, sir, the blessed God tells me, that Jesus Christ is his own son,—that he is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person,—that he is God,—the true God, and the eternal life;—that he is God over all, blessed for ever;—that he was before Abraham, before the world began, in the beginning, from eternity; that he is Almighty;—that then when he was on earth he was in heaven; that he is omniscient,—and that he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;—that he made all things, and that without him was not any thing made that was made; that by him were all things created that are in heaven, and in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; that all things were created by him, and for him;—that he is before all things; and by him all things consist;—that he is the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world;—that he is the Saviour of the world, the resurrection, and the life, and the final judge of all mankind;—that all the host of heaven are required to worship him,—and that all men are commanded to honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.

Now, sir, if Jesus Christ (of whom it is likewise true that he was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and that as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same;) if, I say, Jesus Christ is, after all, no more than a man, and had no existence before he appeared on earth, I ask how the language I have just taken from my bible can be made to consist with common sense? And by what rules of interpretation we are to be guided in our common discourses with each other? I ask, if invention and ingenuity are to be put on the rack to make the passages just quoted any way bend to the new and strange creed; and if, after days and nights having been spent to distort their natural meaning, we are to be boastfully told

that superior wisdom, aided by a ray from heaven, has made the discovery, I ask how it can be said that the bible is a plain book, and that the way-faringman, though a fool, is in no danger of mistaking its sacred import? I ask, if Christ be a mere man, and knowing himself to be such, yet used this strong language, how can he be justified from the charge of blasphemy, and consequently of imposture? I ask all who will not allow us to take the several propositions cited, in their plain, natural, obvious sense, how they can resist the charge of infidels who tell them that Christ and his Apostles evidently temporised, and, with a craft usual among designing men, adapted themselves to the prejudices of the multitude,—I ask, how they can vindicate the bible from the imputation thus cast upon it, of want of precision, simplicity, and sincerity? How, having admitted such vague, uncertain interpretation, they can secure any one doctrine or precept of the bible from the artful management of those who have an end to answer, by corrupting it? I ask, once more, how Christ and his Apostles, if they were honest men, and possessed common sense, could suppose (amidst all their declamations against idolatry) that the accounts they had given of Christ would not naturally and unavoidably precipitate men into the grossest idolatry—the worshipping a mere man—the worshipping a mere creature?

Till these plain questions are satisfactorily answered, I think myself obliged to subscribe to the plain unequivocal testimony of God,—firmly believing that there is, there can be, no absurdity in what God has thus positively declared of his own infinite essence, and of the mode of his existence; to the investigation of which I have not, and perhaps shall not ever have faculties any way competent; satisfied too, at the same time, that there were purposes the most important, of a moral, religious, and practical nature to be answered by these, and an immense number besides of direct and collateral attestations in the Bible to the true and proper divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I have, Sir,

The honour to be, &c.

S. STENNETT.

January 13, 1795.