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CAMPBELLISM,

ITS RISE, PROGRESS, CHARACTER,
AND INFLUENCE.

BY THE

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PHILADELPHIA:
PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION,
No. 265 CHESTNUT STREET.





CAMPBELLISM.

THE ORIGIN OF CAMPBELLISM — ITS PRETENSIONS, AND CAUSES OF ITS EARLY SUCCESS.

IN the year of our Lord 1823, Alexander Campbell, of Bethany, Virginia, announced himself to the world as a Reformer. He may have appeared in this character earlier than the time we mention; but in that year he commenced the publication of *The Christian Baptist*, in which he developed the principles and doctrines of his new Reformation. It was no ordinary work which he and his friends proposed to themselves; it was a *radical reformation* of the church throughout the world. He could not admit the claims of any of the existing churches to be true churches of Christ. In the preface to the first edition of the *Christian Baptist*, he said, "Besides, to convert the heathen to the popular Christianity of these times would be an object of no great consequence, as the popular Christians themselves, for the most part, require to be converted to the Christianity of the New Testament." And in vol. i. p. 23, we find the following declaration, "The worshipping establishments now in operation throughout Christendom, increased and cemented by their respective voluminous confessions of faith, and their ecclesiastical constitutions, are not churches of Jesus Christ, but the legitimate daughters of that mother of harlots, the Church of Rome." In the *Millennial Harbinger*, vol. iii. p. 362, we find the following question and answer: Q. "And what of the apostasy?—do you place all the sects in the apostasy? A. Yes; all religious sects who have any human

bond of union, all who rally under any articles of confederation other than the apostles' doctrine, and who refuse to yield all homage to the ancient order of things."

This was a bold position. Christ and his apostles effected a radical reformation in the church; but it was when *tradition* had been substituted for the Bible. Luther, Calvin, and their co-labourers effected a glorious reformation; but it was when both clergy and people had long been ignorant of the Bible, and oral tradition, expounded by pretended infallibility, was their rule of faith. In both these reformations the morals of the people were as corrupt as their faith; and the former was the indubitable evidence of the latter. But Mr. Campbell undertook a radical reformation amongst those who took the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice; who were in the constant habit of reading and studying the sacred volume; who were zealously engaged in circulating it without note or comment amongst the people; and whose morals, to say the least, were quite as good as his own! Who ever before heard of a radical defection from the truth, without a corresponding deterioration of morals? or of a true reformation in faith, without a corresponding improvement in morals? If Mr. Campbell's reformation is genuine, where are its fruits? Does his sect exhibit a purer morality, or a more expansive and active benevolence than "the sects" he sought to reform? "By their fruits ye shall know them."

The success of this movement was, for a number of years, remarkably rapid. Crowds flocked to the standard of the new reformation; and a numerous sect, filled with admiration for their leader, was speedily formed. It may be well to mention some of the principal causes of this success.

1. Mr. Campbell's zealous advocacy of *immersion* as the only valid baptism, and his opposition to infant baptism, gave him great fame amongst the Baptists. He is a man of popular talents; and, having been educated amongst Presbyterians, had acquired much more learning than Baptist ministers gene-

rally possessed. Being regarded as a Baptist, and editing *The Christian Baptist*, he found little difficulty in diffusing his opinions extensively amongst the Baptist churches, especially in the West. The consequence was, that very large numbers united in forming his new sect.

2. The apparent zeal of Mr. Campbell for the union of all Christians, misled many well-meaning people. He rejected *creeds* as the prolific cause of the unhappy divisions of the church, and with some plausibility insisted, that if all would unite on the Bible alone, and agree to use Bible words in speaking of Bible truths, all divisions would be healed, and unity and harmony restored to the church of Christ. "The principle," says he, "which was inscribed upon our banners when we withdrew from the ranks of the sects, was, Faith in Jesus as the true Messiah, and obedience to him as our Saviour and King, the only test of Christian character, and the only bond of Christian union, communion, and co-operation, irrespective of all creeds, opinions, commandments, and traditions of men."—*Pref. to Chris. Sys.* p. 8. To many minds this platform seemed just the thing needed. The end sought was confessedly most desirable; and the means proposed appeared simple and obvious.

3. Many were drawn into this movement by the extremely simple and easy way of becoming a Christian, proposed by Mr. Campbell. All men feel, more or less sensibly, the need of religion; and if they could be suited, few would hesitate to become religious. Mr. Campbell laughed at "experimental religion," rejected the distinction between mere intellectual belief and saving faith, and required, in order to baptism, the belief of *one single proposition* on the best evidence. Said he, "But the grandeur, sublimity and beauty of the foundation of hope, and of ecclesiastical or social union, established by the author and founder of Christianity, consisted in this, that the belief of one fact, and that upon the best evidence in the world, is all that is requisite, as far as faith goes, to

salvation. The belief of this one fact, and submission to one institution expressive of it, is all that is required of heaven to admission into the church. * * * The one fact is expressed in a single proposition — *that Jesus, the Nazarene, is the Messiah.* The evidence upon which it is to be believed, is the testimony of twelve men, confirmed by prophecy, miracles, and spiritual gifts. The one institution is baptism into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Every such person is a disciple in the fullest sense of the word, the moment he has believed this one fact, upon the above evidence, and has submitted to the above-mentioned institution.”—*Chris. Sys.* pp. 126, 127. How plain the way, and how easy to become a Christian! Multitudes who never imagined that they were near the kingdom, certainly believed the one fact; and why should they not be immersed, and thus secure eternal life?

4. The popularity of this reformation was greatly increased amongst a large class of men by the zeal with which Mr. Campbell assailed the clergy, and denounced all the benevolent enterprises of the age. The clergy of all denominations he represented as corrupt men, influenced wholly by ambition and the love of money. “Every member,” said he, “of this kingdom of priests is aiming for one and the same object; and though in other provinces [than the Methodists] the ranks may be fewer, and the honours less, the desires, and aims, and pursuits of the priesthood are specifically the same.” Again, “Indeed money is of vital consequence in the kingdom of the clergy. * * * Money is the bond of union, the associating principle in all popular establishments. * * * Money, I think, may be considered not merely as the bond of union in popular establishments, but it is really the rock on which the popular churches are built.”—*Chris. Bap.* vol. i. pp. 19, 42, 43. Sabbath-schools, Bible Societies, Missionary Boards were all set down as part and parcel of the plans of the clergy to fill their pockets with the people’s money. The

love of money is very strong in the human heart; and appeals to it never fail of producing effect. Covetous men learned with delight from Mr. Campbell, that they were under no obligations to support those who devoted themselves to the preaching of the gospel, as Paul had led them to suppose, (1 Cor. ix. 14), or to give to the Bible and Missionary enterprises. Nay, it was even sinful to do so. It became, therefore, a part of their religion to keep their money in their pockets. Mr. Campbell had discovered not only a very *easy*, but a *very cheap* religion. Why should he not have the thanks of money-loving men? Why should they not be willing to pay him a trifle annually for the Christian Baptist or the Millennial Harbinger, when he so greatly relieved their consciences? Why should they not embrace this cheap religion? The effects of such appeals were soon manifest. One of his admirers wrote him, "Your paper has well nigh stopped missionary operations in this State."—*Chris. Bap.* p. 144. Another correspondent, however, writes just what we would expect, "As I informed you when here, I repeat again, your opposition to a preached gospel, to the preachers and Bible Societies, secures to you the concurrence of the covetous, the ignorant, the prayerless and Christless Christians. Should they have had any religion, they cease to enjoy it as soon as they embrace your views; at the same time you wound the hearts of the zealous and devout Christians."—*Ibid.* vol. i. p. 70. Singular effects these to be produced by the writings of a great *reformer!*

5. This reformation gained popularity, too, because it made every immersed person, however ignorant, a *preacher*, and every little church wholly independent of all others. "A Christian," says Mr. Campbell, "is by profession a preacher of truth and righteousness, both by precept and example. *He may of right preach, baptize, and dispense the supper, as well as pray for all men, when circumstances demand it.*"—*Chris. Sys.* p. 85. Again, "I am taught

from the record itself to describe a church of Christ in the following words:—It is a society of disciples professing to believe the one grand fact, voluntarily submitting to his authority and guidance, having all of them in their baptism expressed their faith in him and allegiance to him, and statedly meeting together in one place, to walk in all his commandments and ordinances. This society, with its bishop or bishops, and deacon or deacons, as the case may require, is perfectly independent of any tribunal on earth called ecclesiastical. It knows nothing of superior or inferior church judicatories, and acknowledges no laws, no canons, nor government, other than that of the Monarch of the universe and his laws. This church, having now committed to it the oracles of God, is adequate to all the purposes of illumination and reformation which entered into the design of its founder. * * *

But to be more explicit in expressing my views of the means which the church is to use for the salvation of the world, I would remark, that having the record, or testimony of God in it, and every member professing it, it becomes the duty and high privilege of every member of it to be a preacher of the gospel, in the only sense in which any person can now be called a preacher.”—*Chris. Bap.* p. 70. What an attraction is here presented to that numerous class of persons who are “wise in their own conceit!” They have but to profess to believe *one fact*, and to be immersed; and without previous study, literary or theological, whether able to read intelligibly or not, they at once become teachers of religion—a work in view of which the wisest and best men have trembled! And those who possess some smartness and fluency, may hope to be chosen by the little independent church to the high and important office of *bishop*! Is it wonderful that great numbers of ambitious persons, who could become distinguished in no other church, should hasten to this? Paul’s directions to Timothy and Titus concerning the character and qualifications of a bishop, seem not to have stood in Mr. Campbell’s

way for a moment. Every little church of a dozen members or fewer, is to judge whether those they may choose, are "blameless," "holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience," "apt to teach." Nay, every "novice," though "lifted up with pride," is "a preacher of the gospel in the only sense in which any person can now be called a preacher!"

Such were the leading features of this reformation of the nineteenth century. Did it require the convincing power of truth to insure it success, at least for a number of years? Who that knows anything of human nature, would not have predicted for this sect a rapid increase, under the leadership of a man of popular talents, and of great pretensions to learning?

THE MAIN PRINCIPLES OF CAMPBELLISM AFFORD ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE WORST HERESIES.

Let us now approach this new church a little more closely, and examine the principles which lie at its foundation. We propose to say nothing concerning the mode and subjects of baptism, points on which the Campbellite body and the Baptists agree. We confine our remarks to what is fundamental to the faith and to the organization of the Christian Church.

The Campbellite sect was organized, if it can be said to have an organization, upon the two following principles:

1. The rejection of creeds, and union upon the Bible alone.
2. Asking but one question of candidates for baptism, whether they believed Jesus Christ to be the Messiah.

Regarding creeds, Mr. Campbell says, "Our opposition to creeds arose from a conviction, that whether the opinions in them were true or false, they were hostile to the union, peace, harmony, purity, and joy of Christians; and adverse to the conversion of the world to Jesus Christ."—*Chris. Sys.* p. 90.

In the Lexington Debate he contended, that "human creeds, as bonds of union and communion, are necessarily heretical and schismatical." The ecclesiastical platform thus adopted is exceedingly broad, sufficiently so to admit persons holding the grossest errors. Let us look at some of the unhappy results :

The body possesses no unity of faith, but errors of every shade find a home in it. It is impossible to know anything definitely concerning the faith of an individual from his professing to take the Bible alone as his rule of faith and practice, and from his professing to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. This uncertainty does not arise from any obscurity in the Bible, or from any imperfection in its teaching, but from the many perversions of its language by errorists. The Swedenborgian professes to receive the Bible, but adopts principles of interpretation which utterly pervert its meaning. The Unitarian professes to believe the Bible, and readily declares his belief, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Messiah, but he so interprets the language of the Bible as to make him a super-angelic creature or a mere man, and his atonement nothing more than the death of a martyr. The Universalist professedly receives the Bible, but he not only rejects its plain teaching in regard to the character and work of Christ and the Holy Spirit, but maintains that the conduct of men in this life has no effect whatever upon their future prospects. Indeed all errorists, bearing the Christian name, profess to believe the Bible, and that Jesus Christ is the Messiah. All, therefore, from the purest orthodoxy to the lowest grade of error, are invited into this no-creed church. They are all to use the same language, though they attach to it meanings infinitely variant. Can anything present a more striking idea of Babel than such a church? Mr. Campbell seems to have found a triumphant answer to the question of the prophet, "How can two walk together except they be

agreed?" (Amos iii. 3), and to the question of Paul, "What communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Cor. vi. 14.)

We would not misrepresent Mr. Campbell or his church. Let facts and his own declarations constitute the evidence by which our judgment shall be formed. In the beginning of the present century, there arose a sect called New-Lights, headed by Barton W. Stone. They denied the Divinity of Christ and his vicarious atonement, and embraced the Arian heresy. In the article published in the *Christian Baptist*, (vol. v. p. 379), Mr. Stone contended earnestly, "that the Word (*di' hou*) by whom all things were made, was not the only true God, but a person that existed with the only true God before creation began; not from eternity, else he must be the only true God, but long before the reign of Augustus Cæsar." The Word, the Son of God, he insists, did not exist from eternity. There was consequently a period when he did not exist, and a period when he was brought into existence; and since he could not create himself, he was a creature of God, as truly as are angels or men. Holding such views of Christ, Mr. Stone and his followers, of course, rejected the doctrine of vicarious atonement. Mr. Stone held, that the death of Christ was simply a manifestation of God's love to men for the purpose of leading them to repentance.* In a written controversy between Messrs. Campbell and Stone on the doctrine of atonement, Mr. Campbell said, "*Brother Stone, we are discussing the greatest question in the world—For what did the Messiah die?*"—*Ibid.* p. 253. These two reformers differed infinitely on two of the most important doctrines of Christianity—the Divinity and the Atonement of Christ—doctrines which constitute the very foundation of the Christian's hope, and on which the church of Christ is built. They necessarily differed as widely concerning the personality, the Divinity and the work of the Holy Spirit. Indeed the gospel preached by Mr. Campbell was fundamentally different from

* *Millennial Harbinger*, New Series, vol. v. pp. 63, 64.

the gospel preached by Mr. Stone; and yet Mr. Stone and his followers, large numbers of them, were admitted into Mr. Campbell's church, without professing any change of faith! When pressed with this fact in the Lexington Debate, Mr. Campbell said, "I cheerfully say, I do not approve of all that Barton W. Stone has written and said, yet I believe our society has been, and is pursuing a most salutary and redeeming policy."—p. 865. A redeeming policy by receiving as Christian brethren and Christian ministers those who robbed Christ of his glory, and his cross of its power to save sinners! To the day of his death, Mr. Stone, so far as we have learned, never professed any change in his faith.

With equal consistency, A. Raines, a preacher of Universalism, was cordially received into Mr. Campbell's church, still avowing Universalist sentiments. Universalists are generally Socinians, regarding Jesus Christ as a mere man, and wholly rejecting the doctrine of a vicarious atonement. They indeed reject every distinguishing doctrine of the gospel, holding, that the conduct of men in this life can have no effect upon their future prospects; that every individual suffers all that his sins deserve, and that all, whether receiving or rejecting Christ, will be eternally happy. Universalism is nothing more nor less than a degrading infidelity wearing the Christian name.

But this preacher of Universalism desired to become a member of the reformation church. He professed to take the Bible as his rule of faith, and to believe *the one fact*, that Jesus Christ is the Messiah; and how could he be rejected? Most inconsistently, Mr. Campbell and his friends catechized him about his Universalist notions. Mr. Campbell says, "Whether he held these views as matters of faith, or as pure matters of opinion, was then propounded to him. He vowed them to be, in his judgment, matters of opinion, and not matters of faith; and, in reply to another question, averred that he would not teach them, believing them to be matters

of opinion, and not the gospel of Jesus Christ."—*Millen. Harb.* vol. i. p. 147. Here is a most singular proceeding. Mr. Campbell professes to believe, that the Bible teaches the doctrine of the eternal happiness of the righteous, and the doctrine of the eternal punishment of the wicked. Mr. Raines *had* believed, as matter of faith, that it teaches the eternal salvation of all men. He now agreed to hold this view as an *opinion*. That is, his *opinion* was, that Mr. Campbell's *faith* on this subject was not true! He agreed not to preach his *opinion*; but how was he to preach the opposite doctrine, as every true minister of Christ must? Could he preach, as a matter of *faith*, that those dying in sin will be eternally punished, whilst holding as a matter of *opinion*, that they will be saved? But this *opinion* could not stand by itself. A reasonable man would have some grounds for so important an opinion. He must have believed, with other Universalists, that every man makes satisfaction to Divine justice for his own sins, or that men will be pardoned without repentance or faith. He must have believed, with other Universalists, that those dying in sin will be made holy after death. These beliefs, whether held as *opinions* or as *faith*, directly contradict the leading doctrines of the gospel. How, then, could Mr. Raines hold and preach those doctrines whilst holding such opinions? Shall we say, his *opinion* was, that his *faith* was false. And how could he consider his Universalist opinions as no part of the gospel, when he must have gotten them in the gospel, if anywhere?

These remarks are equally applicable to Unitarians. The doctrine of the gospel is, that Christ is truly God, and that he atoned for the sins of his people on the cross. Suppose, then, Mr. Stone and his followers had agreed to hold their views as matters of *opinion*; how could they hold and preach that Christ is God, when their *opinion* was, that he is not? or that sinners are justified by faith in him as their great High Priest, when they *in opinion* rejected his sacrifice?

But Mr. Campbell deliberately prepared the way for the reception of Unitarians and Universalists. Said he, if the words used by the Unitarian, are "Bible words, we cannot object to them; if they are not, we will not hear them, or, what is the same thing, will not discuss them at all. If he will ascribe to Jesus all Bible attributes, names, works, and worship, we will not fight with him about scholastic words. But if he will not ascribe to him everything that the first Christians ascribed, and worship and adore him as the first Christians did, we will reject him; not because of his private opinions, but because he refuses to honour Jesus as the first converts did, and withholds from him the titles and honours which God and his apostles have bestowed upon him."—*Chris. Restored*, pp. 122, 123. Now, if this means anything, it means—that so long as Unitarians do not object to using the language of the Bible in reference to Christ—a thing which they are not likely to do—Mr. Campbell and his church will make no difficulty about the interpretation they put upon that language. But is not language the vehicle of ideas? and is even the language of the Bible of any worth, except as it conveys to the mind the truths the Holy Spirit designed to teach? Men are sanctified through "*the truth*," not through words misunderstood. It is *the truth* that makes us free, not words so interpreted as to teach error. True piety is obedience to *the truth*, not to words misinterpreted. How absurd, then, to insist that men shall use *the words* of the Bible, and yet allow them, at least as matter of *opinion*, to assign to them a false meaning. Of what use is it for one to call Jesus Christ GOD, when he regards him as a *creature*? Of what avail is it, that men profess to believe that Christ was "once offered to bear the sins of many," when by *bearing sin* they understand, with Barton W. Stone, *bearing it away*? What is gained by Universalists uttering the words, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment," when they understand everlasting punishment to mean that which

is endured *in this life*, and hold to the salvation of all the wicked? It is like caring for the husks, and throwing away the grain. Yet Mr. Campbell says, let the Universalist have "his private opinion," though that opinion is in direct contradiction of the gospel, and is of demoralizing tendency.

This new reformation has a very broad mantle of charity for errorists. It has no difficulty in receiving those who deny the immateriality and immortality of the soul. A Dr. Thomas, formerly of Virginia, published *The Gospel Advocate*, in which he contended, that man is composed of body, blood, and *breath*; that the word *soul*, in the Scriptures, means *breath*; that the righteous sleep in their graves till the resurrection; that pagans, infants, and idiots are annihilated. Mr. Campbell's displeasure was incurred by this heretical teacher, and he most inconsistently entered into a public debate with him. He failed to convince the Doctor, who, however, still professed his belief of *the one fact*, and held to *immersion*. What was to be done? He could not exclude him from the body without palpable violation of his fundamental principles. Certain brethren who sought to be peace-makers, considering that the views of Dr. Thomas had given offence, were likely to cause division, and were of no practical benefit, "recommended to brother Thomas to discontinue the discussion of the same, unless in his defence, when misrepresented." — *Lexington Debate*, p. 856. To this Dr. Thomas agreed, and "all difficulties were adjusted, and perfect harmony and co-operation mutually agreed upon between them," [Thomas and Campbell]. Mr. Campbell charged Thomas with violating this agreement; but he continued a member and a preacher in that church, having the same rights as Mr. Campbell himself!

Thus we see, that so exceedingly comprehensive are the fundamental principles of this organization, that the grossest errorists might not only be members in good standing, but *public teachers of religion*! Such were Stone, Raines,

Thomas, and others. How could it be otherwise? Every one who professed to believe that Christ is the Messiah, had the right to be immersed and become a member of the church; and every such member was "by profession a preacher of truth and righteousness, both by precept and example," and might "of right preach, baptize, and dispense the supper, as well as pray for all men, when circumstances demand it." And every church, small or large, intelligent or ignorant, had the right to choose from among its members bishops, elders, and deacons. No standard of intellectual attainment was agreed on, nor any doctrines which those selected should profess to believe, nor any preparatory theological study. If churches selected the most ignorant or the most erroneous preachers, no one had the right to interfere or object. If those most unqualified, and most conceited undertook to preach the gospel and to baptize, they were but exercising the rights of every disciple!

SOME OF THE ACKNOWLEDGED EVILS OF THE SYSTEM.

What would any reasonable man anticipate in a church founded on such principles, but "confusion worse confounded?" The facts correspond with such anticipations. We call not an enemy to testify concerning the state of this reformation within a few years of its birth. We appeal to the testimony of Mr. Campbell himself. There is no danger that he will give the picture one shade too dark. His partiality and his regard for his own honour will induce him to take the most favourable view. He writes in the following strain: ¶ "How few public preachers and teachers at this day are there, that need not be ashamed of their aptitude to discriminate and apply the holy oracles. Ought not many to blush, who presume to speak by a divine call, specially to them addressed, for their ignorance of all the laws of language, the force of words, the logical point in an argument,

the meaning of the sacred style, and their inaptitude to expound and apply the word of truth! How many ought to blush for their irreverent manner of speaking in the Divine presence, their rapid and most irreligious way of pronouncing the Divine names and attributes, their profanation of the privilege of prayer, in the most undevout style of addressing God, and of speaking to him merely for the sake of speaking to men, correcting what they deem popular errors, and eulogizing kindred spirits, while addressing the awful throne of God! The times are sadly out of joint in all these respects. Public prayers are sometimes mere sermons preached to God, &c. For all this insolence to heaven, and for all these lamentable defects, we have neither jurisdiction nor tribunal. We certainly have not, if any individual may send himself and authorize his own acts; or if a small, weak, irresponsible community may send out whom it pleases into the world. The cause of reformation would ere now have overrun the whole community, but for two causes. One is, the great masses of neglected new converts who are not taught the Christian religion in scriptural churches, and who consequently lose confidence in themselves, return to the world, or remain dry and barren branches on the mystic vine. The other is, a class of unsent, unaccomplished, uneducated advocates who plead it; amongst whom, too, have been found a number of persons of immoral character, who have assumed the profession as a cloak of covetousness — as means of imposing themselves on the unsuspecting and benevolent. * * * We have bled at every pore through the lacerations of many such. And had not our cause possessed more than mortal strength, had it not been of celestial origion and divine power, it had long since been prostrate through traitors, pretenders, incompetent disciplinarians, and impotent administrators.”

Again, “But we have not yet laid open the great defects of our evangelical ministry. There are the belligerent theorists, whose special care it is, in every sermon, or on all

public occasions, to disinter the remains of some fallen or decayed system, exhibit its bones and putrid remains, and then to bury it again with all the honours of an ecclesiastic war; and, in contrast with it, to unfold the charms of a wiser and better theory. Alas! what pranks are played on earth, in the presence of mourning angels, by those whose undertaking it is to persuade sinners to turn to God and live for ever.

“Another portion of our more gifted and ingenious cohorts have addicted themselves to the enviable task of public censors of the senior theologians. Boys in their *teens*, or youths who, for years to come, would not have been permitted to lay a shoulder of mutton on God’s ancient altar, are now gravely and learnedly exposing the errors of Luther, Calvin, Wesley, the Synods of Dort, Westminster, and Trent, *cum multis aliis*, with as much self-approbation and secret relish as the most exquisite sensualist devours a favourite dish when his appetite is stimulated with the pickles of Mæcenas and a fast of full twelve hours. These are the wild beasts of our Ephesus, with whom it is more difficult to conflict than with those with whom Paul fought at the capital of Asia. Yet these are workmen who are never ashamed, but always glory in their success in what they call preaching the gospel of peace. Of these profanations of the evangelical office, and of these flagrant aberrations from good sense, good taste, and approved models, the more intelligent and pious communities are always complaining; but without perceiving that they have the power of preventing the evil.”

Once more — after a life-like picture of these preachers of reformation, Mr. Campbell says, “The cause of reformation has suffered more from this portion of its pretended friends than from all its enemies put together. This state of things is indeed generally attendant on the incipency of all public and social institutions. But we have had a very large portion of this unhappy and mischievous influence to contend

with. Every sort of doctrine has been proclaimed by almost all sorts of preachers, under the broad banners and with the supposed sanction of the begun reformation."

What a picture of the reformation of the nineteenth century! Overrun with ignorant, self-conceited, profane, disputatious preachers, proclaiming every sort of doctrine, and of course every species of ruinous error! This young church, the light of the world, bleeding at every pore through the lacerations of its preachers! If such is the character of the preachers, what must be the character and condition of the churches by which they are sent, or which are formed through their preaching!

But, worst of all, Mr. Campbell confesses that his church has "neither jurisdiction nor tribunal" by which these dreadful evils can be prevented. Well, why has it not? Has the Saviour left his church thus exposed to be overrun by wicked men and errorists? or did Mr. Campbell and his co-labourers establish their church on false principles? Undoubtedly the latter is true. The overwhelming evils and corruptions of which Mr. Campbell so bitterly complains, are manifestly the legitimate and necessary consequences of the principles so long and so earnestly advocated by himself. He would ask candidates for baptism but one question, a question which the grossest errorists would readily answer; and when baptized, each individual had the right to preach, baptize, and administer the Lord's Supper; and each church had the right to choose and ordain its own preachers. What was there, then, to prevent all sorts of men from preaching all sorts of doctrines? Whilst Mr. Campbell thus deplored the dreadful state of his church, and severely censured others, he might well have confessed, with deep penitence, the grievous errors into which he had fallen, and into which he had led multitudes of his fellow-men, and the irreparable injury he had done to the church of Christ.

Mr. Campbell has sought in vain to rectify some of his

errors. After having contended successfully, so far as his own church was concerned, against all ecclesiastical councils, and in favour of the entire independence of each church, he became alarmed at the confusion and heresies which were disgracing it, and wrote in favour of *organization*. He prepared the outline of a *constitution* embracing *six articles*, and said, "The above outline is offered to the examination of the brethren, as embracing much, if not everything that, in our judgment, is wanting to complete and perfect organization." —*Lexington Debate*, pp. 827, 828. But the "mixed multitude" he had collected, and the turbulent preachers by whom the church was afflicted, would not accept Mr. Campbell's constitution; and so the body remains to this day an unorganized, confused multitude. They saw that his efforts at organization were in flat contradiction of the leading principles of his reformation.

Look at Mr. Campbell's church, as described by himself, and say whether it can be called "the pillar and ground of the truth." In favour of what doctrine does it bear its testimony? Does it not uphold Unitarianism, and Universalism, and Materialism quite as effectively as the opposite truths? Nay, by admitting those who hold such errors into fellowship, has it not endorsed the errors as, at least, harmless? and has it not afforded great facilities for the propagation of them? The very best that can be said for this church is, that its faith cannot be known; or rather that, as a body, it has no faith. How can a church be said to have any faith, when every kind of doctrine is preached by all sorts of men under its broad banner? Does not such a church by its very position before the world, declare truth and error with respect to the doctrines of the cross to be equally good? Would you call such a church "the light of the world?" God's revealed truth is light; but this church, as a body, cannot be said to hold any particular doctrine or doctrines. If you say its faith is Trinitarian, you misrepresent many of its members

and preachers. If you call it Unitarian, you misrepresent others. Indeed, as the body, (if a multitude of independent churches can be called a body), has not told the world what doctrines it understands the Bible to teach; as it has in its communion men who preach "every sort of doctrine," we have no difficulty in deciding, that it cannot be "the light of the world." It strikingly resembles old Ovid's description of the original Chaos — *rudis indigestaque moles — congestaque eodem non bene junctarum discordia semina rerum*. "A rude and confused pile — the discordant seeds of things badly united, thrown together."

Can there be efficiency for good in such a body? If there be truth in the saying, *united we stand, divided we fall*, there cannot. What one would build up, another pulls down. The truth is the sword of the Spirit; but this church, as such, holds not the truth, wields not the sword. It is made up of individuals that hold every shade of belief. What can such a body do to evangelize the world?

Would you enter such a church in the hope of receiving edification, of growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? Would you fraternize with "every sort of doctrine," and "almost all sorts of men," acknowledging them as the faithful servants of Christ? Would you throw your Christian influence with such a body? Would you place your children under such teachers? You would not have them eat at a table where every sort of food would be given them to eat.

We are not surprised to find in churches gathered on such a platform a great falling away. Now and then one of Mr. Campbell's preachers speaks out on this subject, giving us a glimpse of the real state of things. Some years since, one of them wrote to Mr. Campbell in the following strain:

"I could instance churches, within a few years, which have had scores of converts added to them that are now scarcely alive, that have very few active members, other than

those who were such previous to excitements which resulted in such large accessions to their numbers." In reply Mr. Campbell said, "I am aware that there is much ground for complaint on account of the errors alluded to by brother Gates. He is not the only complainant on such accounts." — *Millen. Harb.* vol. vi. pp. 325, 327. Still more recently another correspondent of a Campbellite paper, says —

‡ "I am rejoiced that you are attentively considering the state of our cause, and are striking at the root of all our disasters, a want of piety. That our denomination, in some parts of our country, is in chaos, is a fact too obvious for concealment, and we fear if some vigorous measures are not adopted, some whole regions of our churches will become annihilated. We have travelled over hundreds of miles where there was not to be found an evangelist, and no teachers except those miserable drivellers who wield the hammer and the lapstone all the week, and 'spound' on Sunday."

Another says, "The stakes are fixed, and there will be no reform worth a groat without a division, or remodelling the form of things; and this cannot now be done. The church has gone 'whoring after strange gods.'"

After all, however, this church has a creed to which it adheres with as great tenacity as if it were written. It is a creed, too, which excludes from its communion multitudes of the wisest and most faithful of the followers of Christ. This creed has at least two leading articles. The first is, that *immersion* is the only Christian baptism; and the second is, that infants are not scriptural subjects of baptism. On these points there seems to be entire unity in Mr. Campbell's church; but there is glaring inconsistency. They set out on the principle of being guided only by the Bible, and having no creed. And yet they decide, that no one can be admitted into that church, unless he agree with them about the *mode* and subjects of baptism. Men may hold any opinions they choose, concerning the character and the work of Christ and

of the Holy Spirit; but as to the mode of applying the water in baptism, they will tolerate no difference; nor as to the *subjects* of baptism. This is, indeed, "tithing mint, anise and cummin," and disregarding "the weightier matters of the law." How great the folly of attaching so great importance to an outward ordinance, and so little to the fundamental doctrines of the cross, and how glaring the inconsistency! What right have Mr. Campbell and his coadjutors to determine, after repudiating creeds, what men desiring membership in the church shall believe respecting baptism? Why may they not just as well determine what they must believe on other points? And why not have a *written* creed, as well as an *unwritten* one, which is made just as binding as if written and adopted?

THE SYSTEM EXAMINED AND ITS ERRORS EXPOSED.

Mr. Campbell, we have said, is the father of this reformation church. He has published more concerning its principles than any other. His writings have been more generally read, and been received with greater favour. It is fair to conclude, therefore, that his views prevail more extensively than those of any other man. It is worth while, therefore, to examine the prominent points in his creed. They are the following:

Baptismal justification.—The new birth, the necessity of which our Saviour urged upon Nicodemus, is not, according to Mr. Campbell, *a change of heart*, but *a change of state*. It is not passing from spiritual death to spiritual life, but from condemnation to justification. *Immersion*, which Mr. Campbell regards as the new birth, introduces persons into "the kingdom of heaven," securing to them remission of sins and all the blessings of the kingdom. "So in religion," says Mr. Campbell, "a man may change his views of Jesus, and his heart may also be changed toward him; but unless

a change of state ensues, he is still unpardoned, unjustified, unsanctified, unreconciled, unadopted, and lost to all Christian life and enjoyment. * * * Some *act*, then, constitutional, by stipulation proposed, sensible and manifest, must be performed by one or both the parties, before such a change can be accomplished. * * * Whatever the act of faith may be, it necessarily becomes the line of discrimination between the two states before described. On this side, and on that, mankind are in quite different states. On the one side they are pardoned, justified, sanctified, reconciled, adopted, and saved; on the other they are in a state of condemnation. This act is sometimes called immersion, regeneration, conversion," &c. Again, "Immersion for the forgiveness of sins, was the *command* addressed to these believers, to these penitents in answer to the most earnest question; and by one of the most sincere, candid, and honest speakers ever heard. This act of faith was presented as that act by which a change in their state could be effected; or, in other words, by which alone they could be pardoned." — *Chris. Sys.* pp. 200, 201, 203. The obvious meaning of all this is, that whatever may be the state of the minds of men, however truly penitent, and however sincere their faith in Christ, and their disposition to obey him; they are unpardoned and liable to perish until they have the *act of immersion* performed for them! In the Christian Baptist Mr. Campbell makes, concerning the converts on the day of Pentecost, the following assertion: "I am bold, therefore, to affirm, that every one of these who, in the belief of what the apostle spoke, was immersed, did, on the very instant in which he was put under water, receive the forgiveness of his sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. If so, then, who will not concur with me in saying, that Christian immersion is the gospel in water?"—pp. 416, 417. Against this doctrine we enter our solemn protest, for the following reasons:

1. To assert that any external ordinance is essential to re-

mission of sins and to salvation, is to contradict the whole spirit and teaching of the Bible. In every part of it right dispositions and affections are placed above ordinances, and the favour of God is promised to the former, and not to the latter. The old dispensation was remarkable for the number of ordinances, and for the prominence given to them. Circumcision, as the seal of the covenant, was perhaps the most important of them all; and yet during the journey in the wilderness, for forty years, it was omitted. And Paul teaches plainly, that the circumcision of the heart, inward purification, is of greater value than the circumcision of the flesh.* David teaches the same doctrine with regard to sacrifices; and our Saviour, in regard to tithing mint, anise and cummin.† The great end at which our Heavenly Father aims, is to have men holy in heart and life. Ordinances are part of the means through which ordinarily this end is gained. But to say, that if the end be gained by only *part* of the means, the soul, loving and trusting Christ, is still condemned, is to magnify the means above the end, to make an outward observance more valuable than holiness.

2. The doctrine we are opposing makes the salvation of men dependent upon acts they cannot, if they would, perform for themselves. It is not pretended, that individuals can administer baptism to themselves; and it cannot be denied, that multitudes are placed in circumstances in which they cannot secure an administrator. A man well instructed in the principles of Christianity, may sicken and die amongst pagans. He may become a penitent believer; but he cannot obtain Christian baptism. A thousand other cases may be supposed, such as do constantly occur, in which the heart is right; but *immersion* cannot be had. Besides, there are great multitudes whose conduct demonstrates the sincerity of their faith in Christ and of their love to him, who have

* Rom. ii. 25 - 29.

† Psa. li. 16, 17; and Matt. xxiii. 23.

been baptized in infancy, or, at least, by sprinkling; and who are fully persuaded that they have obeyed the command to be baptized. All such, according to Mr. Campbell's doctrine, are "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise." The one class must perish, though penitent believers, simply because it was impossible for them to receive an outward ordinance; and the other, though truly pious, because of an intellectual mistake. Does Mr. Campbell shrink from these results of his doctrine? Hear him, "There are three births, three kingdoms, and three salvations. One from the womb of our first mother, one from the water, and one from the grave. We enter a new world on, and not before, each birth. The present animal life, at the first birth; the spiritual, or the life of God in our souls, at the second birth; and the life eternal in the presence of God, at the third birth. And he who dreams of entering the second kingdom, or coming under the dominion of Jesus, without the second birth, may, to complete his error, dream of entering the kingdom of glory without a resurrection from the dead. * * * Infants, idiots, deaf and dumb persons, innocent pagans wherever they can be found, with all the pious Pædo-Baptists, we commend to the mercy of God. * * * But one thing we do know, that none can *rationaly*, and with *certainty* enjoy the peace of God, and the hope of heaven, but they who intelligently, and in full faith are born of water, or immersed for the remission of their sins."—*Chris. Sys.* pp. 243, 244. And as in the Lexington Debate he fully endorsed what he had published on this subject in the *Christian System*, we must understand him as still occupying this ground. Yet at times, under the promptings of better feelings, he has flatly contradicted this absurd doctrine. In the *Millennial Harbinger*, vol. iii. p. 304, he says, "*I do admit that a person who believes the gospel, and cannot be immersed, may obtain remission.*" Now, suppose I believe the gospel to-day, but cannot be im-

mersed till to-morrow or next week, am I in a state of condemnation till to-morrow or next week?

But Mr. Campbell goes further in his admissions. In reply to one of his followers who found fault with him for admitting that there are some Christians among "the sects," he said, "But who is a Christian? I answer, every one that believes in his heart, that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the Son of God; repents of his sins, and obeys him in all things according to his measure of knowledge of his will. * * * I cannot, therefore, make any one duty the standard of Christian state or character, not even immersion into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and in my heart regard all that have been sprinkled in infancy without their own knowledge and consent, as aliens from Christ and the well-grounded hope of heaven. * * * Should I find a Pædo-Baptist more intelligent in the Christian Scriptures, more spiritually-minded and more devoted to the Lord than a Baptist, or one immersed on a profession of the ancient faith, I could not hesitate a moment in giving the preference of my heart to him that loveth most. Did I act otherwise, I should be a pure sectarian, a Pharisee among Christians. * * * With me mistakes of the understanding, and errors of the affections, are not to be confounded. They are as distant as the poles. An angel may mistake the meaning of a commandment, but he will obey it in the sense in which he understands it. John Bunyan and John Newton were very different persons, and had very different views of baptism, and of some other things; yet they were both disposed to obey, and to the extent of their knowledge did they obey the Lord in everything."—*New Series*, vol. i. pp. 411, 412, 413. Here we have the acknowledgment, that remission of sins and Christian hopes depend, not on baptism or any outward ordinance, but on *the state of the heart*. This is true doctrine, but is flatly contradictory of that so much urged by Mr. Campbell in several of his publications.

3. The doctrine, that baptism is necessary to the remission of sins, is flatly contradictory of some of the plainest declarations of the New Testament. Our Saviour declared every *believer* to be justified. "He that believeth on him is not condemned." John iii. 18. But if the believer is not condemned, he is certainly pardoned and justified. Now since every adult must believe in Christ before he is a fit subject of baptism, every believer must be justified before he can be baptized. Moreover, since multitudes of believers are never immersed, and Mr. Campbell will admit nothing short of immersion to be baptism, they must be justified without ever receiving what he calls baptism.

Again, our Saviour said, "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life." John iii. 36. He does not say, he that believeth, *and hath been baptized*; nor he that believeth *shall have* everlasting life, *if he receive baptism*. But the believer *now has* that life which shall endure for ever. Of course, then, every believer, so soon as he becomes such, is justified; and consequently baptism is not necessary to the remission of sins. In the Lexington Debate, Mr. Campbell sought to evade the force of this clear Scripture declaration, by interpreting the word *hath* to mean, "He has these in grant, in right, according to the will of God."—p. 457. But if only immersion introduces men into the kingdom of Christ, and gives them a title to its blessings, then the unimmersed believer has *not* these blessings in grant or in right. If, as Mr. Campbell has taught, "God forgives men's sins in the act of immersion;" if Peter, in his preaching, "made repentance, or reformation, and immersion, equally necessary to forgiveness;" then it would be as true to say, that the impenitent man hath everlasting life, as to say, that the immersed man hath it.—(See *Chris Bap.* pp. 416, 417.)

Paul the apostle, in the Epistle to the Romans, discusses the great question of the sinner's justification before God, and he comes to this conclusion: "Therefore we conclude

that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Rom. iii. 28. In this whole discussion, in which he declares, that the righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ, is "unto and upon all them that believe" he does not mention or even allude to baptism, until he comes to answer, in the sixth chapter, a Jewish objection; and he then mentions it only to prove, that justification by faith does not encourage sin.

But Mr. Campbell admits, that every one *who is born of God*, enjoys remission of sins and a title to heaven. Now it is one of the clearest truths, that the new birth is a change of heart from sinfulness to holiness, and has no necessary connection with baptism. Turn to the conversation between our Saviour and Nicodemus, and note the reason given by the Saviour, why men must be born again, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Now turn to the Epistle to the Galatians, and see what the Holy Spirit means by *flesh* and *spirit*. Gal. v. 19-23. Then compare Rom. viii. 1-13. Is it not clear that *flesh* signifies *depravity*, and *spirit* signifies *holiness*? Did not our Lord, then, say in substance, "They who are born of depraved parents, are themselves depraved; and they who are born of the Holy Spirit, are holy?" Why, then, must men be born again? Because they are *depraved*. Then *the being born again* is the removal of that depravity, a change from sinfulness to holiness. This is further proved by 1 John iii. 9, 10. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God," &c. The new birth causes men to cease from sin and to work righteousness. It is, therefore, a *moral change*, and not a change of *state* from condemnation to justification. But Mr. Campbell does not pretend, that immersion or baptism changes the *heart*, therefore it cannot be the new birth. In illustrating the new birth to a Jewish teacher, our Lord did use the phrase,

“born of water and of the Spirit;” but he no more meant to teach, that baptism is the new birth, than David meant to intimate, that hyssop could purify him from sin (Psa. li. 7), or than Ezekiel meant to teach, that the sprinkling of clean water would effect the same result (chap. xxxvi. 25–27). It was the habit of inspired men to connect the *sign* and the *thing signified*, the former explaining the nature of the latter. Water, under both dispensations, is the emblem of purification. This Nicodemus understood. The Saviour, therefore, sought to teach him the nature of the new birth by connecting with it the emblem of holiness. Precisely so has Paul done in the Epistles to the Ephesians (chap. v. 26, 27), and to Titus (chap. iii. 5, 6). Since, then, the new birth is a change of heart, which, at least in multitudes of cases, takes place before baptism; and since all who have been born again, do confessedly enjoy remission of sins, it follows, that remissions of sins may be, and most frequently is enjoyed before baptism.

But did not Peter, on the day of Pentecost, command the inquiring Jews to be baptized for the remission of sins? No, he did not. He said, “**REPENT, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.**” Acts ii. 38. Now, the question is, whether Peter intended to make repentance and baptism equally necessary to the remission of sins; or whether, in accordance with Scripture usage, he simply connected the sign and seal with the thing signified. It is certain, that in other passages repentance, the change of mind, is alone connected with remission. Luke xxiv. 46, 47; Acts v. 31; xi. 18. It is, moreover, certain, that in answering the same inquiry on other occasions, both Peter and Paul omitted to mention baptism. Thus in Acts iii. 19: “**Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.**” Why is not baptism mentioned here? Mr. Campbell saw the difficulty, and therefore undertook the hopeless task of proving, that the word *conversion*,

as used by Peter, signifies *immersion*!—*Chris. Sys.* pp. 200, 201. No two words in the Bible have meanings more widely differing, as any reader can satisfy himself by taking a concordance, and turning to the places where they occur. Mr. Campbell's failure to make them identical in meaning, is fatal to his doctrine, that baptism is necessary to the remission of sins.

In answer to the same important inquiry, Paul said to the jailer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Acts xvi. 31. Here salvation (and, of course, remission of sins,) is promised to *faith*; but baptism is not mentioned. It may be objected, that Paul does not mention either repentance or conversion; and yet both are admitted to be essential to salvation. We answer, faith, repentance, and conversion are inseparably connected; and therefore the mention of one implies the others. Can there be in any mind repentance, a change of heart, without conversion, or turning from sin to God? And can these exist without faith, or faith without these? But no one will pretend, that repentance, or conversion, or faith is essentially connected with baptism, especially with *immersion*. It is, therefore, evident, that God has promised remission of sins to *right affections*, not to the reception of ordinances, the administration of which depends upon others, and is often impossible.

But suppose we admit, that in Peter's discourse baptism is the thing connected with the remission of sins; still the passage will not sustain Mr. Campbell's doctrine. The language is, "Be baptized (*eis*) into the remission of sins," &c. The meaning of the passage, then, turns upon the word *eis, into*. Does it mean *in order to* remission? That it sometimes has this meaning, is admitted; but it also has other meanings. Indeed *prepositions* in all languages have many meanings, according to the connection in which they occur. Happily we have a precisely similar expression in Matt. iii. 11, which may throw light on Peter's language: "I indeed baptize you

with water *into (eis)* repentance." Now, no one pretends that John baptized men *in order* that they might repent. If, then, baptized *into repentance*, does not mean baptized *in order to* repentance, how does it appear, that baptism *into remission of sins*, signifies *in order to* remission of sins? The late learned Professor Stuart, of Andover, whom Mr. Campbell has lauded as one of the first critics of the age, explains the two passages on the same principle, as follows: "A person may be baptized into a thing, (doctrine). So in Matt. iii. 11: 'I baptize you with water into (*eis*) repentance;' *i. e.*, into the profession and belief of the reality and necessity of repentance, involving the idea, that themselves professed to be the subjects of it. So in Acts ii. 38: 'Baptized on account of Jesus Christ into (*eis*) the remission of sins;' that is, into the belief and reception of this doctrine," &c.—*Millen. Harb.* vol. iii. pp. 301, 302.

The doctrine of baptism in order to remission causes injury to two classes of persons. It injures the pious who have not the opportunity to be baptized, by causing them seriously to doubt, if not to despair of salvation. Indeed how can they hope for salvation, if they believe Mr. Campbell's declaration, that Peter made repentance and immersion *equally necessary* to remission of sins? How can they hope for salvation, if they believe, with Mr. Campbell, that the new birth, without which our Lord has said none can see the kingdom of God, is baptism? It injures others by inspiring them with a false confidence that their sins were remitted in the act of being immersed. It dishonours God by representing him as placing *an ordinance* above purity of heart, or at least on a perfect equality with it.

The only other doctrine of Mr. Campbell, which lays particular attention, is his denial of the influence of the Holy Spirit in regeneration and sanctification. He holds, that the Holy Spirit dictated the Scriptures, and confirmed them by miracles and other evidences; and now men must be con-

verted and sanctified by the inspired word. His doctrine is set forth in his *Christianity Restored*, pp. 350, 351, in language too plain to be misunderstood. He says —

*“As the spirit of man puts forth all its moral power in the words which it fills with its ideas, so the Spirit of God puts forth all its converting and sanctifying power in the words which it fills with its ideas. * * * If the Spirit of God has spoken all its arguments; or, if the New and Old Testaments contain all the arguments which can be offered to reconcile men to God, and to purify them who are reconciled, then all the power of the Holy Spirit which can operate on the human mind is spent; and he that is not sanctified and saved by these, cannot be saved by angels or spirits, human or divine.”* Again, *“We plead that all the converting power of the Holy Spirit is exhibited in the Divine Record.”*

What strikes us most forcibly, on reading such declarations as these, is the boldness of assertion on a subject of infinite importance, where proof is impossible. That men must become perfectly holy, before they can enter heaven, will not be denied. The question, then, whether they are to subdue all their evil dispositions and affections, and to perfect holiness by their own efforts, in view of the motives and arguments contained in the Scriptures, is of eternal moment. Ninety-nine hundredths of the readers and students of the Bible, in all ages, have understood it to teach, that the Holy Spirit does exert upon the human mind a sanctifying influence, in addition to the influence of the inspired word; have prayed for such influence for themselves and others; and have rejoiced in the assured belief, that they had experienced its happy effects in themselves, and witnessed them in their fellow-men. But Mr. Campbell comes forward with the bold assertion, that the Holy Spirit, like the human spirit, is limited in his power over finite spirits to words and arguments; and that with the use of these his power is spent! What right has he thus to limit the Holy One? Does the

Bible anywhere say, that the Holy Spirit "puts forth all its converting power in the words which it fills with its ideas?" It does not. How, then, dares any man make the assertion? Happy would it have been for Mr. Campbell and his followers, if, on this momentous subject, he had regarded his own rule "to speak of Bible things by Bible words."

Happily, on this subject the language of the Bible is very clear, and the evidence most abundant. We can now adduce only a small part of it.

1. The influence which God has exerted on the minds of wicked men, in the course of his providence, refutes the assertion, that "all the moral power which can be exerted on human beings, is, and must of necessity be, in the arguments addressed to them."—*Chris. Restored*, p. 349. . When Ezra went from Babylon to Jerusalem, he sought and obtained from the king a decree in favour of the rebuilding of the temple; and in reference to this, he said, "Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers, which hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the Lord, which is in Jerusalem; and hath extended mercy unto me before the king and his counsellors, and before all the king's mighty princes." Ezra viii. 27, 28. Now, it is certain, that the Lord did not influence the hearts of the king and his counsellors by *words* and *arguments*; and yet he did exert a controlling influence over their moral conduct. And when Nehemiah desired to go and rebuild the city of Jerusalem, he prayed thus, "O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name; and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man." Neh. i. 11. Did Nehemiah pray that God would influence the king simply by arguments? This will not be pretended. Nehemiah believed that God could exert a different kind of influence, which would be effective; and he believed that his prayer was answered; for he said,

"The king granted me according to the good hand of my God upon me." Solomon teaches, that God can exert a controlling influence over the minds of men; for he says, "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; as the rivers of water, he turneth it whithersoever he will." Prov. xxi. 1. Much more evidence might be adduced; but it is unnecessary. It is certain that God has exerted, and does exert, on the minds of men a controlling influence, *not* by words and arguments.

2. The Scriptures teach, in language the most unequivocal, that there is a sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit distinct from words and arguments. God said to the Jews, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. Would any one understand by such language, simply that God would, by his prophets, reason with them, and exhort them to a right course? The doctrine of a special divine influence is taught by Paul, "According to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." Titus iii. 5, 6. Would any one think of interpreting such language as meaning nothing more than that men are persuaded by the inspired word to turn to God and serve him? When it is said, "the Holy Ghost *fell on*" Cornelius and his family, all admit an influence different from that of words. Why should not the Holy Spirit "*shed on us*," mean something more than words?

This doctrine is most unequivocally taught by Paul in Eph. ii. 10. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." There is no stronger word than *create*. If, then, a divine influence in addition to the word is not expressed, when men are said to be *created anew* by

God; what language would express the idea? The Bible abounds in similar passages; but these are sufficient.

3. The prayers recorded in the Scriptures teach, that in regeneration and sanctification there is an influence of the Holy Spirit in addition to the word. What did David mean when he offered the following prayer, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." *Psa. li. 10.* Did he pray, that God would make known to him some new arguments and reasons for living a holy life? Is it not clear beyond contradiction, that he prayed for a sanctifying influence in addition to the word? What did he mean, when he prayed, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wonderful things out of thy law?" *Psa. cxix. 18.* He knew the truths of God's word were glorious; but in consequence of his depravity his spiritual vision was dim. He, therefore, prayed for a divine influence to sanctify and enlighten his mind; that he might see the excellency and feel the power of those truths. Paul prayed for the Ephesian Christians, "that he (God) would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith," &c. *Eph. iii. 16, 17.* Did he pray that they might be strengthened by words and arguments, or by the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit? Such prayers are absolutely without meaning or propriety, if it be true, that "the Spirit of God puts forth all its converting and sanctifying power in the words which it fills with its ideas."

Indeed, if the doctrine of Mr. Campbell be true, prayers for the conversion of sinners and for the sanctification of believers, are wholly unavailing and useless. Are they not a solemn mockery? This difficulty occurred to many of Mr. Campbell's followers; and one of them addresses a letter to him on this subject. He says —

"Without any further preface or apology, I will come at once to the object I had in addressing you at this time, and

that is, to ask your opinion whether it be lawful, according to the will of God as revealed to us, to pray for our unconverted friends, that is, to ask God to convert them to the Christian religion? If it be true, as you affirm (and which I am not prepared to controvert), that the righteousness of a Christian is a righteousness by faith in Jesus as the Messiah; that that faith comes alone by hearing or reading the testimony concerning Jesus; and that we have no right to expect any influence superinducing the mind to faith, or even causing the sinner to examine this testimony, or place himself in circumstances for the light of divine truth to shine upon his mind; I say, upon the supposition that these things are so, what right has any one to expect that God will answer his prayers in the behalf of his unconverted friends? * * * When we pray, we are told to pray in faith; and in order that we may pray in faith, as I understand, we should pray for such things as our Heavenly Father has authorized us to expect at his hands, and no other. Now if the Divine Being exercises no other influence over the minds of men than that influence which is derived to them through the words he has spoken to men, and we cannot prevail upon wicked men to give attention to those words, the question is, are we authorized to expect that God will answer our requests in the behalf of such an one? Here is my difficulty, and it has long been a difficulty with me; and I find it is no less so with many of my friends and your friends."—*Millen. Harb.* vol. ii. p. 469.

In his reply Mr. Campbell did not intimate that the writer, and others to whom he refers, had misunderstood his doctrine; nor does he give any satisfactory answer. In the Lexington Debate this unanswerable argument was repeatedly pressed upon him; and he attempted no answer. He could not say, it is not right to pray for the conversion of sinners; for he would thus condemn the apostle Paul, who said, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." Rom. x. 1. Again, "I exhort,

therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men." 1 Tim. ii. 8. He could not say, that prayers for the conversion of sinners will be answered; for then he would admit what he so boldly denies, a divine influence distinct from the inspired word. He must, therefore, teach men to pray to God to do what, according to his doctrine, God has said, he cannot consistently do!

4. The doctrine, that the Holy Spirit renews and sanctifies human beings only by his revealed word, involves the *damnation of infants and idiots*. That infants are depraved, Mr. Campbell distinctly admits. He teaches correctly, "that Adam was not only the common father, but the actual representative of all his children," and then adds, "There is, therefore, a sin of our nature as well as personal transgression. * * * True, indeed, it is, our nature was corrupted by the fall of Adam before it was transmitted to us; and hence that hereditary imbecility to do good, and that proneness to do evil, so universally apparent in all human beings. Let no man open his mouth against the transmission of a moral distemper, until he satisfactorily explain the fact, that the special characteristic vices of parents appear in their children, as much as the colour of their skin, their hair, or the contour of their faces. A disease in the moral constitution of man is as clearly transmissible as any physical taint, if there be any truth in history, biography, or human observation."—*Chris. Sys.* p. 29. Now, since infants are thus depraved, what becomes of those that die in infancy? Without holiness it is certain they cannot enter heaven. It is certain they cannot be sanctified by means of the inspired word. If, then, it be true, as Mr. Campbell contends, that "in conversion and sanctification, the Spirit of God operates on persons only through the word;" they cannot be sanctified at all. They must, therefore, be lost. The only way to escape the fearful conclusion, would be to deny that infants are depraved;

but this Mr. Campbell admits, and the Bible, as well as daily observation, demonstrates.

5. The doctrine of Mr. Campbell renders the salvation of *believers* perfectly uncertain. It will be admitted, that very few, if any, of them, are perfectly holy. It is certain, that most of them are far from perfection. Now, when any of these are called to die suddenly, if there is no sanctifying influence but that of the truth, and individuals must make themselves perfect under its appeals, what certainty can there be, that they will be prepared for heaven? Most certainly, unless entirely freed from sin, they cannot enter that holy place. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." What assurance has any believer that he will be able to attain, before death, to that perfect holiness, without which he must be excluded from heaven? We turn to God's word, and joyfully adopt the language of the inspired Paul: "Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Phil. i. 4-6. With confidence can we exhort Christians, as he did, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Phil. ii. 12, 13. With triumph we may say, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." Phil. iv. 11.

6. Finally, the denial of the regenerating and sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, arises from unscriptural views of the depravity of men. The Bible is perfect. We need no new revelation. It is easily understood, as to all that is essential to salvation. But men are depraved, deeply depraved; therefore they are blind to "the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ." They love sin, and cannot be persuaded to repent, and turn to God. Our Saviour tells us

why men must be renewed by the Holy Spirit, when he says, "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." John iii. 19. God's word is light; but men love error and sin. Their hearts must be changed, or they will continue to love darkness. "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh;" and "the works of the flesh" are only evil. Gal. v. 19-21. Men are "dead in trespasses and sins;" and God only can quicken them. Eph. ii. 1-5. Christ crucified is "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, the power of God and the wisdom of God." 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. There must be a divine *call* in addition to the inspired word.

The rejection of the renewing and sanctifying agency of the Holy Spirit, is a fatal error. It leaves the hearts of men in all their impurity. The end must be eternal death.

CONCLUSIONS FROM THE FOREGOING DISCUSSION.

The preceding discussion, necessarily very brief, authorizes the following conclusions:

1. Mr. Campbell's reformation commenced by assailing *truth and righteousness*, and by favouring and inculcating *destructive error*. It bitterly attacked the ministers of Christ, and heaped upon them multiplied slanders. If any fact is susceptible of demonstration, it is, that Protestant ministers of evangelical denominations, except those supported by civil government, have endured more self-denial than any other class of men, and have preached the gospel for a stinted support; when they might have promoted both ambitious and pecuniary interests far more successfully in other callings. And yet the great reformer of the nineteenth century, whilst growing rich by his reformation, laboured for years to convince the people that they are a venal set of men, actuated

by the most sordid motives! If any truth is clear beyond cavil, it is that Bible Societies and Missionary Societies, and similar institutions, have proved an incalculable blessing to the world. Even Mr. Campbell has, of late, favoured the Baptist Bible Society; and one missionary from his church has gone to Jerusalem! Yet for years, he did more than any other man to cripple those institutions, and to make the impression, that they were unchristian and injurious. If any thing is indisputable, it is, that those who agree to walk together in Christian fellowship, must understand each others' views, both of Scripture doctrine and of church order. Such understanding can be had only by a written statement of views, to which all at least of the officers of the church must solemnly subscribe; and such a statement is a creed.

2. The Campbellite body is "a mixed multitude," whose faith cannot be ascertained, or rather which has no particular faith; without organization or order; overrun with every sort of doctrine, preached by almost all sorts of men; without any tribunal or ecclesiastical authority by which it could be purged of error. In such a body there may be found truly pious people; but when the leading man denies the operation of the Holy Spirit on the human heart, and preaches baptismal justification, it is not to be expected that many such will find either edification or pleasant associations. Certainly, evangelical Christians and churches cannot acknowledge such a body as a church of Jesus Christ. Of this the members of that body cannot complain; since they began their reformation by denouncing the existing churches as daughters of the mother of harlots, and by seeking to overthrow them. When Ishmael's hand is against every man, he cannot complain if the hand of every man is against him. Not in a spirit of retaliation, however, but from a supreme regard for the truth and its glorious Author, would we refuse to fraternize with a body which has no declared faith, which embraces errorists

of all grades, and possesses no means of relieving itself from such evils.

The Presbyterian Church has stated, in her creed, the leading truths which she understands the Bible to teach. Her faith and her testimony have long been before the world. Those who desire to determine whether they shall enter her pale, and those of other denominations who desire to know how far they can fraternize with her, have the means of satisfactory information within their reach. The same may be said of several other churches. But this church without a creed, without unity of faith, without discipline, without purity, whose *father* has rejected fundamental doctrines of Christianity, can have no claims to confidence. Whatever may have been the motives of its founders, they evidently undertook a work to which they were not called of God, and for which they were not qualified, a work of fearful responsibility. The reformation church has now had time to produce its legitimate fruits; and they are not "the fruits of the Spirit." It has all the marks of the weakness and folly of men, "wise in their own conceit." Let those who would not aid in corrupting the faith of the gospel, seek a purer church.

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A VAIN ASSUMPTION.

It is pleasing to the pious mind to reflect, how the good and great, in every age and land, who have made the Scriptures their study and guide, have harmonized in their views of the essential facts, doctrines, and duties of Christianity. Divided they have been concerning ordinances, church polity, and various speculations, but united in all that pertains to the vital principles—the soul-saving truths—of the system. That any man should imagine, after so many gifted minds had carefully, laboriously, and with much prayer, studied the Bible, that *he* should be the *first*, in many generations, to discern its hidden import, and open it, in all its beauty, fulness and glory, to the admiring gaze of mankind, savours more of vanity than of a sound judgment—resembles more the hallucination of a dis-tempered mind, than the dictate of sound Christian philosophy. The system of faith, held by evangelical Christians, is impregnable. It has withstood, and it is destined to withstand, the assaults of the most powerful, and the machinations of the most subtle, minds. All hope of any new and important discoveries in the system is visionary. Christianity does not belong to the progressive sciences. Its primary facts, principles, and duties were plainly revealed, and fully confirmed in the beginning; and could be understood just as easily and clearly before the first number of the “Christian Baptist” appeared, as they can be now. It would be difficult for the most devoted admirer of Mr. Campbell to point to a single essential principle or duty of the Christian system, which he has disinterred, or on which he has shed any fresh light. If all his criticisms, arguments, illustrations, and declamations were struck from existence, there would not be one particle less of religious light in the world. The Bible would shine with undiminished lustre.—“*Campbellism Examined,*” by the Rev. J. B. Jeter.