ABS. 1. 76. 28

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SCOTLAND

On Steel by J. & J. Johnstone

See Page 26

CHRIST IS THE ONLY FOUNDATION.

Edinburgh Pub.d by W. Oliphant, 22 South Bridge 1823

CONVENTICLE OF ROLLE:

BY

A WITNESS WORTHY OF CREDIT.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

CESAR MALAN,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL, GENEVA.

And when Peter had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary, where many were gathered together praying.—*Acts* xii. 12.

EDINBURGH:

PUBLISHED BY WILLIAM OLIPHANT, 22, SOUTH BRIDGE STREET; AND SOLD BY M. OGLE, AND CHALMERS & COLLINS, GLASGOW; J. FINLAY, NEWCASTLE; BEILBY & KNOTTS, BIRMINGHAM; J. HATCHARD & SON, HAMILTON, ADAMS & CO. J. NISBET, J. DUNCAN, F. WESTLEY, AND B. J. HOLDSWORTH, LONDON; AND R. M. TIMS, AND W. CURRY, JUN. & CO. DUBLIN.

1825.

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SCOTLAND
B
27 JUN 1975

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE word *Conventicle* has of late been frequently employed to designate the meetings of Christians. As it is of importance to determine the preeise meaning of this new term, it will not be improper to give a faithful account of what took place at a Conventicle held at Rolle, of which mention has been made in the publie papers, as well as elsewhere.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE following account of what took place at the Conventicle of Rolle, (a small town between Geneva and Lausanne,) was occasioned by two pamphlets, published in 1821, by M. Curtat, the leading pastor at Lausanne, entitled "Observations on the Establishment of Conventicles in the Pays de Vaud." In these pamphlets the doctrines contained in all the Confessions of Faith by the Reformed Churches, are termed "novel," and their introduction is attributed to the influence of English travellers, and the tracts which they circulate. The

Author particularly animadverts on the Commentary referred to in the hundred and tenth page.

This little Volume, which appears for the first time in English, is published without any alteration. The reader will at once perceive that the Minister of Geneva, whose conversation occupies the principal part, is M. Malan. The opposition to which he has been exposed, in consequence of embracing the gospel, is well known; but even his enemies acknowledge his disinterested zeal and the consistency of his conduct.

Should any profits arise from this translation they will be remitted to M. Malan.

CONVENTICLE OF ROLLE.

THE Meeting was not numerous, but select. About twenty persons in different stations were assembled in the house of one of the most noble families in the country. All had the same object,—that of conversing about our most holy religion; all had the same desire,—that of listening to the exhortations of a minister belonging to the Church of Geneva, who was paying them a visit.

After the usual salutations the conversation became general. The blessing which God bestows on a nation, in raising up faithful ministers of the word, was the topic on which they conversed. One town in Switzerland was particularly mentioned, which appeared in this respect to be eminently distinguished by the Lord. "Do you not think," said one of the company to the Genevese minister, "that it possesses several Christian ministers?"

The Genevese Minister. "I am of opinion, my dear friends, that we ought to be very cautious in judging of another's faith. You are aware that it is the prerogative of Him who searches the heart, to be fully acquainted with what passes within; and in no part of Scripture do we find this privilege transferred to man. I therefore feel some hesitation in answering the question. I sincerely trust, that every where, and

particularly in Switzerland, there are many faithful ministers."

—— "However, Sir, it is easy to know the tree by its fruits, and it is thus that the Lord teaches us to distinguish between true and false prophets."

Gen. Min. "I grant that we ought to try the spirits, that we may not be led away by falsehood; and I cannot but condemn, I should rather say, lament, the credulity of those who, neglecting to bring to the standard of the Word of God what they hear from the pulpit, suppose they have listened to this Word, because they have heard a *sermon.* But observe, that to make such an examination, deliberately and charitably, for one's-self, in order to follow our own conviction, is widely different from attempting to do it for another; and we ought not to denounce a minister, because we are not altogether satisfied with his preaching, or because his conduct

is not adorned by that sanctity which is so essential."

—— "Certainly, Sir; but if a Minister advances in the pulpit doctrine which is at variance with the truth of the gospel, ought we to hesitate in viewing him as a worldly man, and not a minister of CHRIST?"

Gen. Min. "The HOLY SPIRIT has decided this question, when it declared by the mouth of St Paul:—If any one preach another gospel, meaning false doctrine under the name of the gospel, were it St Paul himself, or an angel from heaven, let him be accursed; that is to say, let him be looked on as a liar exposed to the divine displeasure. In regard to this, there cannot be a doubt. What is not the gospel is falsehood; and he who preaches not the former, must incur the penalty of propagating the latter, in whatever manner he does it, whether simply as a preacher, or as professor or principal of an academy.

But I intreat you, mark the difference between not preaching the gospel, and doing so in a weak, confused, and doubtful manner. The same measure of faith is not given to all; all are not equally initiated into the mysteries of the faith; and unfortunately many, although truly sincere, have not an extensive knowledge of the Word of Life, because they do not study it with attention. It is not uncommon to meet with ministers and pastors, whose private conversation is extremely pious and edifying, and whose domestic life is adorned with the fruits of righteousness, whilst their public discourses are obscure, ambiguous, and so deficient in spiritual unction, that one would be disposed to regard them as the flimsy declamations of an orator, rather than the sermons of a minister of CHRIST addressed to persons on the brink of destruction."

—— "Then, Sir, what is to be done?

Ought we to sacrifice the soul by feeding it with this unwholesome food, or the minister by removing him from his pulpit?"

Gen. Min. "In such circumstances, I would advise you to seek edification in the private conversation of this Christian, who is prevented from fully preaching the gospel, either by imperfect and erroneous views which perhaps you may correct, or by timidity arising from the fear of man, or the trammels of custom; but beware of denying him the name of a Christian, because he does not possess the energy of St Peter or the unction of St John. Consider, my dear friends, that our Master has bestowed different gifts, nor does he always give the same gift in an equal degree. A man's talents may be adapted for exhortation, whilst he is not qualified for prophesying, or, in other words, for preaching. Although he does not possess the brightness of the eye, or the beauty of the mouth, yet, if he be-

longs to the foot, is he not equally a member of the body? Would it not be wrong to assert, that the soldier who guards the baggage, does not form a part of the army, because he is not found amongst the foremost ranks? In like manner the servant of CHRIST, who is employed in a remote corner of the farm, in the meanest occupations, belongs to the number of the Heavenly Father's workmen, and performs services as important, although he is not engaged, like some of his more robust and active fellow-labourers, in holding the plough, or in keeping watch by night, and protecting the flock from the wolves."

——"But, Sir, you are said to be bigoted."

Gen. Min. "God forbid that I should act so contrary to his will, and that I should thus deprive myself of the pleasure of labouring along with my fellow-servants, whether strong or weak,—in the same field,—in the blessed church of our

LORD. Besides, should I not thus expose myself to deserved retaliation, and draw upon my own ministry the same censure which I had cast on that of others?"

——"You must, however, set some bounds to this forbearance; you cannot extend it indiscriminately to all who receive the appellation of ministers?"

Gen. Min. "The only limits which I prescribe, are those with which the apostle surrounds the churches of Galatia, Ephesus, and Crete. I endeavour to ascertain the solidity of the foundation which a minister lays. If it is CHRIST, and CHRIST crucified for guilty sinners, I recognise the operation of the Spirit of Truth in his mind, and hold out to him the right hand of fellowship. If I afterwards see him build, upon this foundation, hay or stubble, I pray the master to strengthen, to instruct his servant; and I endeavour to be useful to him so far as I am able. If, on the

other hand, the minister lays a different foundation; if he teaches that man can be justified by his own works, or that it is necessary to render one's-self worthy to be received by CHRIST,—I have then no hesitation in regarding him as a minister of the world, a liar, a true Jewish teacher who wishes to introduce circumcision, and all the other works of the law. In such a man I repose no confidence; I separate myself from him in conformity to the express injunction of the apostle, and call upon others to shun him with greater care than they would the most contagious disease. But I must previously have heard him avow his heresy. I should be most careful not to judge by appearances, or merely by inference. In such a case, I again repeat, one cannot be too cautious."

One of the ladies asked a question, respecting the forbearance which should be extended towards all men. She inquired

whether a believer can give the name of Christians to all those who assume the appellation; if it is not necessary habitually to keep up the distinction between the world and the children of God.

Gen. Min. "It appears to me, Madam, that this distinction is indispensable, in the mind of the believer, because it is the result of this truth, 'That if a man is not born again by the Spirit of God, he is still of the world, and does not belong to the church of Christ.' But, in the application of this distinction to the different members of the visible church, I cannot sufficiently enforce charity on every one who, feeling in his own experience, that faith respects God and not man, also knows that it may continue long in the ground without producing a plant strong enough to overtop the weeds and thorns of our former sinful habits. When we wish to speak of Christians, in the proper sense of the word, I think we ought to de-

fine the term; thus we should say, for instance,—the number of faithful Christians, of the children of God, increases in the midst of us. But when we are called upon to express our sentiments in regard to the character of an individual, we should remember that GOD will render to every one what is his due, and content ourselves with giving a very modest decision, in such terms as these:—I trust that such a person is a child of GOD; or, I fear he does not yet know CHRIST as he ought to be known."

—— "You are then of opinion, Sir, that we ought not to limit our religious connections to those friends who hold the same sentiments, and exclude others who do not see things in the same light?"

Gen. Min. "Beware of falling into so dangerous an error. By allowing yourself to be so narrow-minded, you would very soon become a schismatic, if I may use the

expression, or a sectarian; and if you thus permit yourself to be wedded to your own opinion, you will not be long of forming a church, exclusively for yourself; unite yourself closely to as many persons as possible, who fear God, make them acquainted with your faith and your obedience to the Saviour; endeavour to enlighten, to strengthen them, if they are ignorant or weak; and do not separate from them, or rather do not give up seeing them, until they no longer wish for your visits or your company. Follow the footsteps of our Saviour; he was rejected. The 'Friend of sinners,' was not the first to turn away from them."

A Minister of the Pays de Vaud. "I am delighted with your advice, dear brother: What consolation it affords! How it destroys all those party and acrimonious feelings which the devil endeavours to make us entertain towards one another. Yes, I

plainly see that we must cordially receive our poor brethren, without inquiring what livery they wear; and if they refuse to accept of our friendship, we must pray for them in secret."

Gen. Min. "Such are my sentiments, my dear brother; and it is on this account that I experience so much peace, so great joy upon the present occasion. I am convinced, that were we, by the blessing of God, both in public and private, successfully to enforce this excellent doctrine of Christian love and forbearance, we should gain over to the LORD a number of souls. Satan cannot be more completely baffled, than when, instead of taking his advice, which would lead us to hate a person on account of his errors, we reply: "Well, I will go to him and endeavour to convince him, by arguments of love." The prince of this world can employ neither force nor cunning against the tears of love. Let us, my

dear friends, love souls; let us love them as creatures formed for eternity, and then we shall hesitate before pronouncing upon them the sentence of death. We shall rather present to them the promises of the gospel ten times, nay, a hundred times, than give way, in a solitary instance, to carnal pride and iritation at their rejection of the Truth."

Upon this, one of the ministers of the Pays de Vaud rose and embraced the minister of Geneva. This feeling demonstration of love seemed to affect the whole company.

Gen. Min. "Dear brother, blessed be the LORD who permits us to be united in his love. My friends, we have a token that his Spirit is in the midst of us, since our hearts are filled with charity. Judge for yourselves: Behold what peace, what true happiness, are produced by sentiments of long-suffering and forbearance towards our fellow-

pilgrims. This is the blessedness of the communion of saints, the delightful foretaste of the felicity of that kingdom where we shall for ever enjoy the society of our gracious God and Saviour."

The same Lady who before asked a question. "Will you, Sir, favour us with your sentiments upon the communion of saints, of which you have just spoken. How ought we to view it, amongst the variety of opinions which divide Christians of different churches?"

Gen. Min. "If you will permit me, madam, I will answer you by relating an anecdote which refers to this subject. I happened to be at Colchester, under the roof of a most eminent minister of God. He requested my opinion in regard to true forbearance, and as I was unable to reply in English so fluently as I could wish, I asked for a pencil, and represented my thoughts upon the sub-

ject, by an emblem of which I shall give you a description:

'In the midst of a vast desert of sand, I drew a large and towering rock, upon which I inscribed the following motto, '*The rock which is* CHRIST.' Upon the top of the rock I sketched the foundation of a temple, and wrote '*CHRIST is the only foundation which can be laid.*' I put steps upon the foundation, and upon these steps the bases of pillars, which were placed all round the edifice. The shafts of some of these pillars were of precious stones, others of gold, others of silver, some of wood, hay, stubble, and they had inscribed upon them the names of the different divisions of the external church, such as the Moravians, Catholics, Lutherans, Episcopalians, Calvinists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Quakers, &c. &c. Upon all the columns, I placed the entablature, and upon the front of the temple, I wrote '*He who has* CHRIST *has life.*' I

then proceeded to erect the cupola, so as to rest upon the whole extent of the temple, and I inscribed around it, these words, '*The communion of Saints.*' Upon the ball which was placed on the summit of the cupola, I laid the Holy Bible, with an inscription that, from this height alone, one can judge of the symmetry of the edifice; and as the place is elevated, and the wind of temptation constantly violent, I there planted the cross of the Saviour, to which we must cling if we would maintain a firm footing. To this cross I attached the banner of salvation, with the following motto, '*One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism.*'

"The edifice was now completed; but I had only spoken of real Christians, of believers whose foundation is the rock. Beyond the rock on the sand, and in the shade, (for those of whom I am about to speak, shun the rays of the Sun of Righte-

ousness,) I represented a brilliant and lofty column, conspicuous at a distance, and admired by the people, but possessing no solid foundation, and which, when one endeavours to lean upon it, shakes and vanishes. Upon this column I inscribed, '*Salvation by Works*;' and, to prevent it from falling, I surrounded it with those props which the world can afford, such as crumbling pillars, with which Satan has attempted to erect a temple, and which are composed of dust and ashes, and bear the names of Socinians, Arians, Pelagians, Deists, Rationalists, &c. These columns were united by the cement of pride and of ignorance. And, with a view of making it more evident that their solidity is only apparent, I placed behind the rock, in the quarter most exposed to the sun, an abundant spring called '*Truth*,' whose waters, pursuing a gentle but steady course, undermined the sand around these

mutilated pillars, and hastened their approaching fall.

"After I had finished my sketch, the worthy servant of God, on whose account I had drawn it, sighed whilst he pointed to the pillars in the desert; I understood his meaning, and wrote—'GOD *is all powerful to inscribe on these melancholy ruins a new name, and to make them pillars in his everlasting Temple: Let us pray that this may be the case.*'"

"Oh yes!" exclaimed the amiable lady, whose question the Genevese Minister had now answered,—"Yes, we will pray for our poor friends, our poor brethren, who are not aware of the quicksand on which they tread. We will endeavour to instruct them, and will assist them in ascending with us this rock of Israel, where we ourselves have found repose."

Gen. Min. "This, Madam, is our bounden duty, and it shall be our object to do so to-day, as we have all the same desire,

that of advancing the kingdom of the Saviour, and of leading many souls to the enjoyment of salvation."

—— "God grant," said an aged man, who had listened most attentively to the conversation, "that we may always engage in this work in a cordial manner, and that others may be encouraged to do the same."

Gen. Min. "It appears to me that the time in which we live is peculiarly favourable for the gospel; for, although it is despised and rejected by a few ignorant Scribes and Pharisees, in common with the uneducated rabble, yet our rulers view it in a totally different light; they are sensible that the sincere piety of real Christians, their writings, their conventicles, and their general conduct, have a direct and most powerful tendency to render the people in general submissive to the laws, and to make individuals peaceable and valuable citizens."

The Aged Man. "But, Sir, what line of

conduct ought we to pursue, should our meetings be prohibited by the civil power?"

Gen. Min. "All that we could do, Sir, would be to glorify God, who rules princes and governors, and to receive the order as proceeding from God himself, as a trial, or as a punishment."

Aged Man. "What, Sir, would you submit your conscience to the authority of the world?"

Gen. Min. "I make a distinction, Sir. If the order of my superior was intended to prevent me from preaching the gospel, or from worshipping God according to my conscience, I should disregard such a prohibition, because it could not proceed from God, and I would rather lose my life in this world, than consent to honour man in preference to God. But if this order only required, on my part, a sacrifice, not of my faith, but of the manner in which I exercise it, I would prefer following the

example of the faithful at Babylon, and, like them, hang my harp upon the willows, and no longer sing the songs of Zion, to a carnal rebellion, which would occasion an evil of much greater magnitude than the deprivation to which I had refused to submit."

One of the Ministers of the Pays de Vaud. "We learn that the faithful have always acted in this manner. They never endeavoured to urge doctrines of secondary importance: they sacrificed all for the gospel; and, when found in the path of duty, were neither dismayed at the sight of the stake, nor intimidated by torture, but waited till God himself was pleased to grant them tranquillity."

Gen. Min. "They acted like a sheep which is held to prevent it from going forward: it makes some feeble efforts to escape, it sees with regret the rest of the flock at a distance. Although it bleats piteously, still it does not bite nor push with its horns.

It patiently waits till the person who holds it gives it liberty and allows it to escape; and then a few bounds soon replace it in the midst of its companions, and even at their head."

The Minister of the Pays de Vaud. "Then, dear brother, let us act like sheep who are desirous of regaining their flock which is before them: Let us be mild, but persevering,—and let us leave to the chief Shepherd the care of protecting us. His crook and his angels are always at hand, and Satan will very soon lie prostrate at our feet."

"But, Sir," exclaimed some young people, "he is a roaring lion, who is ever on the alert to seize and devour us."

Gen. Min. "You know how our Saviour resisted and vanquished him: It was by the Word, which is the sword of the Spirit, and the weapon of our warfare. It is written, that it is mighty through God

to the pulling down of strong holds, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God,—by it the Lord perfects his strength in our weakness. The more then, dear friends, we abound in sound doctrine, in the truth as it is in Jesus, the more we shall be clothed both with charity and energy, and thus be enabled to bear affliction, till we obtain relief."

This was regarded as an invitation to meditate on the word of God. All desired to listen to it, and most cordially acceded to the proposal, that the minister of Geneva should read a chapter and make some reflections. He approached a table; all rose, and, in a short prayer, he asked the Lord to bless what they were about to read, both to his friends and to himself.

He read the third chapter of the epistle of St Paul to the Galatians, and took occasion to make the following remarks :

Gen. Min. "Truly, dear friends, the most

important knowledge we can possess, is to know whether or not we are reconciled to God, our Creator, our Preserver, into whose presence our soul is very shortly to enter.

"It is not a trivial question whether we possess the love of God, or are exposed to his wrath; for in his favour is life, and his anger is the dreadful second death. And as there can be no intermediate state, it is of paramount importance for us to know, with certainty, whether we are pardoned by God, received into a state of grace, and in possession of salvation. What we ought most ardently to desire, is to be able to say with confidence that we are saved, that our salvation is accomplished, and that our transition from this present life into eternity will only introduce us to a state of glory; in which we shall for ever dwell in the bosom of our Father.

"Those who do not possess faith, but

endeavour, by their good works, to merit the pardon of their sins, as well as all who are ignorant of the Saviour's expiatory sacrifice,—do not believe that a Christian can enjoy the assurance of salvation, and accuse believers of arrogance, who, confidently reposing upon the grace and promises of the SON OF GOD, maintain, in simplicity of heart, that they have obtained salvation gratuitously by the merits of the SAVIOUR, and that their confidence is founded on the immutability of God, with whom there is no variableness or shadow of turning.

"Notwithstanding these cavils, my friends, this assurance which believers possess is perfectly lawful, and perhaps GOD will enable me to convince you of its truth, whilst I on the one hand prove,—that a man may possess and enjoy this assurance of salvation, if he seeks it where alone it can be found; and on the other, that, so far from its arguing a presumptu-

ous spirit, and encouraging indolence, it is on the contrary the most fruitful source of all good works.

"This is what I shall endeavour to illustrate under the two following heads:—

1. *No works in order to Salvation.*
2. *No Salvation without works.*

1*st.* "We read that Abraham's believing in God was imputed unto him for righteousness; and that his justification took place more than four centuries before the publication of the law of the ten commandments at Mount Sinai. We also read, that those who believe, are blessed with faithful Abraham, and, like him, are heirs according to the promise. Well, my friends, let us transport ourselves to the time in which this righteous man, or rather, this justified sinner, lived. We are now in the plains of Mamre, assembled in

a tent. We are told that JEHOVAH has this day appeared to Abraham, and has promised him great blessings. The event interests us, and we express a desire to receive a similar favour from GOD. At this moment, in the midst of our conversation, the Patriarch enters. His countenance is solemn, but serene; we see in it the expression of intense and devout joy, 'Blessed be the Lord!' he exclaims, 'for his unspeakable love; his compassion is altogether incomprehensible.' He relates that JEHOVAH has appeared to him, and informs us of the promise of GOD, and the righteousness with which the LORD has invested him. In what manner, we eagerly inquire? What have you done to merit so great a blessing? 'Ah!' he replies, 'can man have any merit in the presence of the most HOLY GOD? It is the LORD, it is the LORD who has had compassion on me, and made me a partaker of his grace.' But what has he re-

quired of you?—Is not the LORD truth? What he has promised to me, who am but dust, shall he not perform? Shall not faithfulness mark the dealings of the Almighty? And is he not powerful, yes, all-powerful to fulfil what he has promised?

"Such, we may suppose, would have been the language of Abraham; and in it we see the grateful acknowledgments of a soul who has tasted that the LORD is gracious. The thought would never have crossed his mind, that his virtues, his own worthiness, or his obedience, could procure his pardon. He believed God: and it was this alone which inspired him with joy; this which afforded him tranquillity. Faith comprehends all peace and confidence, since GOD himself has declared, that he pardons all offences, and that his love is free.

"In addressing you, therefore, my friends, and speaking to you in the person of the God of compassion, who appeared to our

fellow-creature, to our brother Abraham, I ask, 'Do you wish to have the joy which Abraham possessed, and, like him, to be assured that you are beloved, yes, beloved of God? Believe in God, as Abraham believed.'

"But what does God say to you? What does Jehovah promise you? God, who is love, addressing you as sinners, says, 'I have loved you with an everlasting, an incomprehensible love. I was not willing that you should perish; and, to remove the weight of my wrath, I have substituted my Son, upon whom, in your place, I have poured my anger. He has borne your sins upon the cross; he has been wounded for your transgressions, and bruised for your iniquities; he has endured the punishment which you had incurred: and thus your peace is procured. Believe me then, when I assure you, that I have given you eternal life, and that this life is in my Son.'

"This is the manner in which God addresses you, dear friends; these are the words of the Holy Spirit. Who amongst you believes the promise of God? But, observe,—believes and applies it to himself; acknowledges and declares that it is to him that it is addressed; that it refers to himself, and that its truth is unquestionable, since it is God who has promised?—Say, whoever amongst you believes, not only that God is true in general, that this promise has been addressed to sinners; but that God is faithful in addressing this promise to you? Who amongst you appropriates it, and says, I am then saved; for God, who declares it, is truth?"

"It is indispensably requisite, that you should examine yourselves, and be assured that you really believe that this promise refers to you, and that your salvation has been obtained by the Son of God. You may acknowledge and believe that all the

Bible is true, and that there is no salvation but in the faith of the promise of grace made in Christ; and, notwithstanding this conviction, you may be destitute of saving faith.—You may be orthodox; that is to say, you may admit, you may defend, you may maintain, even at the peril of your life, the whole truths of the Christian Religion, and, nevertheless, remain strangers to the covenant, and consequently to the assurance of your salvation, to the peace of God. Your situation may resemble that of a sick man, who, in the paroxysm of a fever, may know, and confidently believe, that such a root is the only antidote; he might even be assured, that it is to be found in a particular spot, and might be indignant were any one to dispute the fact,—while, at the same time he might neglect, or refuse, to make use of the remedy, and, notwithstanding all his right

sentiments upon the subject, might fall a victim to the fever.

"I believe, that the reason of our meeting with so few persons, in the present day, truly assured of their salvation, is, that many form a false idea of faith, mistaking for it a mere speculation of the mind, a cold orthodoxy. Our views of faith are very complicated. We mingle together its consequences, its fruits, its effects; and, as these cannot be found in a soul where the source from which they spring,—that is to say, pure faith,—does not exist, we labour, we torment ourselves, we despond and entertain a hope of being one day saved, although this hope is vague, yields us no peace, and too often gives place to gloomy apprehensions. Possessed of such views, instead of saying, 'Jesus has saved me on his cross!—it is finished!—all is accomplished!' we exclaim, 'When shall I possess a faith sufficiently lively, sufficiently holy to induce Jesus to

welcome me, and to give me grace?' We figure to ourselves the Saviour placed at the extremity of an extensive plain, intersected with deep ditches and hedges, which we must leap over before we reach HIM. Whilst, if we believed the testimony which God has given of his Son, when he says that he has saved sinners on his cross, we should come to him, we should contemplate with the eye of faith, this omnipotent REDEEMER accursed in the sinner's place more than eighteen centuries ago, and we should no longer be solicitous about rendering ourselves worthy of a SAVIOUR, who has not waited to receive us till we had merited his love, since he has admitted us to a state of grace whilst we were without strength,—whilst we had our existence only in the determination of God, and before we could do any thing to entitle us to the compassion of the ALMIGHTY.

"That species of faith which justifies,

is clearly exhibited in the example of Abraham, since he lived long before the law; and, therefore, the Patriarch could not suppose that he had merited any thing at the hands of God by obedience to a law which was not yet promulgated.

"But you will inquire, of what avail is the law? The apostle answers, 'That it was given on account of transgressions.' Observe, dear friends, that the law has nothing to do with a man's salvation. It is not to take away sin that a law is promulgated, but in order to prevent it, or, if it has been committed, to make it manifest, and to condemn it. Hence the study of this holy, just, and rigorous law; and all our endeavours to obey it, can no more take away sin than attentively looking at ourselves in a glass, after carefully cleaning it, can remove the spots from our face."

"It is a most fatal error to imagine that

the law has the same efficacy, the same object as the promise, and that it can give absolution to the sinner; for it is quite the contrary. The power of the law over the soul is to convince it of sin, that is to say, that it is cursed; for it is written, Cursed is the man who transgresses the law: and sin is the transgression of the law. The law is then exhibited to convince you, in the most unequivocal manner, that, so far from having merited what God promises, you have, on the contrary, by means of it, been rendered unworthy; and, so far as it is concerned, have for ever forfeited his favour. Consequently, if you wish to obtain the promise, renouncing all expectations from the law, you must receive it gratuitously, without money and without price; simply and implicitly believing HIM, who has said, 'I have promised you, and I have given you salvation in my SON.'

"I shall endeavour to illustrate my meaning by a comparison. I say this evening, "My Friends, I will give each of you, who returns in eight days, a very valuable Bible." My promise is made. Some of you rely on it, and already, in hope, possess this Bible, from the perusal of which they anticipate great pleasure and instruction. On the day which I have fixed they are in readiness. Some do not believe, and refuse to come at the appointed time. Others who believe me, and intend coming, persuade themselves that they have merited the gift; and that I only intimate my intention of giving them a reward. I am aware of this presumptuous error. On the appointed day, I write upon the door, the following words:—"To have merited the Bible you must have no sin." They accordingly come. Those who simply relied on my promise, enter, saying, after they read the inscription, "Certainly it is not merit-

ed, it is a free gift." Others who trusted in their own worthiness, being dismayed, and convinced of sin, dare not present themselves, until a friend explains that this inscription has not in the least changed my promise, and that I have only written it to make all understand that the Bible is a present, a favour, an obligation, and by no means a reward: That they have only to believe me, without disquieting themselves about their merits or demerits, to enter boldly, and to claim fulfilment of my promise.

"Such, my dear Friends, is the nature of the law. You see that it in no way annuls a promise made by the LORD four hundred and thirty years before its promulgation; it has no other object than that of making the pardon contained in the promise more acceptable.

"It is thus, by the dispensation of a favour altogether unmerited, and obtained by faith, by the simple act of belief, that GOD, in

his wisdom, annihilates the pride and vain pretensions of man. There is here no ground for boasting. I shall suppose that one of you has entered the room this evening, with the idea that you will one day obtain salvation by your virtues, by amending your life; and that your own righteousness will in some measure procure for your soul the favour of the LORD. You discover, however, that you labour under a delusion; that your soul was received by the SON of GOD when he suffered in its place and was forsaken by his FATHER. You have believed this truth, this fact of which GOD assures you, and you now feel yourself relieved from a burden: your sins, which you have reason to trust have been removed by JESUS and washed away in his blood, are no longer arrayed against you, and you are inspired with unwonted confidence; you enjoy a peace of mind to which you were hitherto a stranger; you have in yourself the wit-

ness that you are justified before God; that He is your Father, and that you are his son. Such are the effects of faith; you have believed God, and your soul has been enriched with every blessing. What merit can you claim, in believing a simple fact, in receiving the testimony of God? Would you not have reason to be ashamed, were you to withhold conviction from the declaration of the Almighty? Can you take credit to yourself for possessing a faith, the absence of which would argue the height of folly, or rather the most absurd, the most unpardonable pride?

"On the other hand, what have you done to procure this righteousness, this pardon, this welcome, which you are sensible is offered you by God? All this work of love has been accomplished, terminated, and perfected before you were called into existence. You, who have believed, are sensible that

you have been saved long before you could be aware that there was a sin which God curses, or a salvation which he bestows; and, in his application of it to you, who have this day been favoured to believe his word spoken by the mouth of a poor fellow-sinner, his servant, what merit can you boast? Lazarus is in the tomb; he has now lain four days,—he is become putrid. The voice of God is heard; it says, "Lazarus, come forth!" The summons is obeyed, and Lazarus rises. Who will maintain that the dead man anticipated this summons? He was dead. Will Lazarus, after his resurrection, begin to boast? will he say with self-complacency, I have acted in such a manner as to induce God to raise me from the dead? or, "There was still within me a spark of life, which God has only rekindled?" He was dead; and when we are dead, can we possess any remains of life?

"Which of you, dear friends, will boast, because, when dead in trespasses and sins, the compassion, the matchless love, the everlasting love of God, has given him new life in Christ, the Lamb of God, sacrificed before the creation of the world, for souls elected in him before the creation of the world? Yes, if you wish to glory, do so; it is your duty, but glory in your Saviour, in his finished work, in the righteousness with which he has invested you, in the grace which he has shown to your unworthiness! Fear not to believe; it is the commandment of God and your bounden duty. Be not afraid boldly to say, "Christ has redeemed me when I was ruined." It is a fact; and you must not hesitate to repeat a fact which God assures you is true. Act like the pardoned criminal; rejoice, sing, and leap for joy. Truly you have reason to rejoice. It is not a small comfort to have

no longer the fear of hell. The certain inheritance of heaven is no trifling acquisition. Glory then in God, O believer, and declare,—for it is true, and it is to the glory of the compassion of the Lord, that you are, that you have been saved,—that salvation is a blessing conferred on you, a blessing eternal as its author, to whom alone the honour and merit is due.

"This sweet, this glorious and all divine truth displeases the world. It is a stumbling block and an offence. Why? Because it humbles man; because it reduces the child of this vain world to his proper level; because it discards, with pity and contempt, that righteousness, and those works, which man prefers to the loving kindness and tender mercies of his God, of his sovereign Benefactor. Ah! how is the heart of man estranged from God! His enmity towards his King is only equalled by that of a rebellious subject filled with malignity, when

he learns that his sovereign has granted him a pardon. 'Pardon!' he repeats with indignation, 'as if I stood in need of pity, —as if I could not support myself!'

"The wise and learned of this world, wishing to flatter and please the world, studiously avoid calling on it to imitate Abraham in believing the promise of mercy, and like him to be made an heir of the righteousness which is by faith. They studiously discard the idea that rebels against God, ought most thankfully to accept a free pardon. They obstinately reject, as a lie, the declaration of God himself, 'That man is dead, yes, dead in trespasses and sins; that in this state he is a child of wrath, and that, in order to become a child of God, he must be born again.' They pretend to effect in man a change sufficient to unite him to his Creator; but what is the result of all their efforts, all their reformations, all their improvements? They take

a piece of iron, which they file and polish. It possesses some splendour, it is true, but has it become gold in being made brilliant? And is it not gold which GOD requires for heaven? When will they understand that all the polish which the morality of the world, which the strictest obedience to the law can produce on man's external deportment, does not in the least effect a change on the man himself, does not reach his heart? When will they acknowledge that it is only the ALMIGHTY, the CREATOR, who is able to convert iron into gold, and who in like manner creates man anew; or, in other words, makes him a Christian? For it is written, "that he who is in CHRIST is a new creature." The iron has become gold, it is no longer polished iron.

"Such was the change which took place on Abraham. Before his justification, he was a sinner amongst the children of men; a child of wrath even as others,—iron, my

friends, impure iron. After he was justified he became a child of God, a blessed heir of the promise; gold, and the finest gold of the sanctuary. Thus was he born again,—thus did he receive a nature which he did not possess before,—even the divine nature. He was a new creature; a spiritual creature, and no longer carnal; a denizen of heaven, not of the earth and of its vanity. The Spirit of God was imparted to him, and it dwelt in him as in its temple; and what befel him,—what the Lord did for him, was written for an example to us, and as an encouragement to souls, wearied of sin, apprehensive of its dreadful consequences, and desirous of fleeing from the wrath to come; to partake of the grace of God, to be made heirs of his everlasting glory.

"I conclude, then, dear friends, by intreating you also to believe Him,—to receive for yourselves what God declares he did for you, when he inflicted the vengeance

due to your aggravated guilt on the Holy and Just One, your substitute and representative.

"If you believe God; if you set to your seal, that he is true in what he promises, you will immediately experience unspeakable peace. It would be a contradiction to admit that God has saved you in Christ; that your sins, your own sins, have been already punished in the person of your Saviour,—and at the same time to consider yourself under the curse, and still exposed to the wrath to which Jesus himself has submitted in your place. It will be in this manner, by this faith, imputed to you for righteousness, as it was to Abraham, that you will obtain the assurance of your salvation; not indeed a haughty assurance, as if you were entitled to salvation by your own works, but a humble though firm assurance,—that of the criminal, who, after having confessed that he merits the gibbet, re-

poses confidence in the clemency of his sovereign, who pardons his crime. You will then, acknowledge, you do acknowledge, you have already acknowledged,—you who believe the testimony of God, in regard to his Son, that salvation is entirely in the finished work of Jesus; that He, the Son of God, has accomplished it; that you are, by grace, invested with it, through faith,—and that there is no truth more deserving of credit, than the one with which I set out,—'*No works in order to salvation.*'

"But, my friends, the heart is deceitful above all things; who can know it? Satan is subtle, and employs falsehood, seduction, and flattery, to deprive the child of God of peace, to prevent the sinner from being united to Jesus. One of the stratagems of this father of lies, this enemy of God, is, to foster a presumptuous security, by leading men to rest satisfied with a specu-

lative faith, with a faith without obedience, which is the life of love. And, as this is the objection urged by the world, in every age, against the ministers of God, and which, in the present day, is reiterated on every side,—which we continually hear,—'That the evangelical party require no good works; that their religion is admirably suited for sinners, who have only to say,—I believe, I have faith, I am saved; and then fearlessly to follow the dictates of their evil passions;'—as this calumny is by no means uncommon, it will not be unprofitable to refute it, and, at the same time, to put you on your guard against a carnal security, a fatal indolence, by now proceeding to prove, dear friends, that, although good works are not necessary in order to salvation, *there is no salvation without works.*

II. *No Salvation without Works.**

"To maintain that true faith, for I speak only of true faith, of the faith of Abraham,—of a heart-felt faith which saves, and not of the vain opinion of those who say,—'I believe in JESUS,' but who would speak more correctly if they said,—'I believe that JESUS has saved sinners but not me;' to assert, I say, that Christian faith acts in the believer as a license to sin, as an antidote against the stings of conscience, and is consequently a source of iniquity; is to aver, that the life which JESUS bestowed on Lazarus, promoted the cor-

* The observations under the second head were made the day following. We here connect them in order to avoid unnecessary repetition, and for the sake of uniformity. For the same reasons, we have also given at once the substance of what took place at two conventicles. This remark will be satisfactory to those who disapprove of long meetings.

ruption of his body, and was an inducement to remain in the tomb.

"We are astonished that so ridiculous an assertion can be advanced by a person of sound sense. And, notwithstanding, how many books, how many pamphlets contain this absurdity! From hearing their authors declaim against the evangelical party, and the doctrine of faith, one would be led to suppose, that preachers of faith carry on a traffic in indulgences, and that CHRIST is the minister of sin; that it is only requisite to entice a soul to the cross of JESUS, to unite it with ten-fold power to Satan and his abominations. According to such persons, the assurance of having been saved by the love of our faithful REDEEMER; of thus being reconciled to GOD; of being sealed with his holy Spirit, and animated with a lively hope of the glory of heaven; this confidence, this adoption, this seal, this hope, in the mind of believers, are equi-

valent to hatred of their SAVIOUR, to contempt of their heavenly FATHER, to a compact with sin, to the hope of being with the devil and his angels. Truly this reasoning is incomprehensible; and it requires to be repeated as often as it really is, and that too by persons of the same gravity as those who assert it, to make us believe that it is really urged.

"What is the origin of their error? Does it not proceed from mistaking orthodoxy for faith? from confounding a vague opinion with belief? probably from never having themselves believed? Being satisfied with an intellectual speculation on those truths which are the objects of faith, they are unable to comprehend the gospel plan of salvation. Having never applied to their own soul, to their own heart, the blood of the SON of GOD; having never said to the SAVIOUR, 'It is for me, for myself, that it was shed; I have been washed

in this fountain,'—they have not yet experienced its sanctifying influence. They are satisfied with contemplating, with admiring, the structure, the beautiful symmetry of the palace; but they have not yet entered, and are indignant at those who, from the windows of the edifice, declare how well they are lodged; that the interior far exceeds the outside, that it were better to seek for shelter, than expose themselves, by their delay and their trifling, to be overtaken by the night and the approaching storm. You are sensible that it would be altogether unpardonable to reply to so gracious an invitation, by such reproaches as these: 'Is it not from pride that you thus separate yourselves from us? Have we not reason to fear that you insult the LORD, now that you are in his palace?'

"But let us leave this unfounded accusation, and endeavour to obtain edification; as methinks I hear some of you, dear

friends, exclaim 'Works, works! Has the Christian none?' "Yes, my friends, the Christian performs works, and those much better than before he was a Christian. His faith is a living faith; it is not what is termed dead faith. Abraham, after having believed God, after having obtained peace with GOD, devoted himself to the LORD, and withheld not his only begotten Son. The believer, the child of Abraham, is also inspired with similar feelings, and follows the steps of his Spiritual Father: the first use he makes of the liberty which he has received by free grace, is to throw himself at the feet of his KING, of his SAVIOUR, to bind himself to obedience by the offering of his heart, and by the oath of his love.

"Do not imagine that it can be otherwise,—that there can be any union between CHRIST and Belial. There is none. You are followers of the one, or of the other. Who-

ever belongs to Belial, that is to say, to the world, has no part with CHRIST; his portion is in the world. In the same way also, he who belongs to CHRIST, is not of the world; he is CHRIST'S. To the Christian, old things are passed away; all things, I repeat it, dear friends, all things are become new. To pretend then to belong to CHRIST, and to continue to possess our old ideas, our old habits, our old inclinations, our old hopes, in a word our old heart, is to belie the word of GOD; it is to arrogate the possession of a secret to which GOD himself is a stranger,—that of blending light with darkness, sin with grace.

"The nature of the gospel covenant has been defined by the LORD himself, when he says by his prophets, and particularly by Jeremiah and Ezekiel, 'That, in justifying man, he will remove his heart of stone and give him a heart of flesh, a new heart, in which he will write his law.' This char-

acteristic of the Christian has not been changed by the lapse of ages. It is the same in the church of CHRIST in the nineteenth century, as it was two thousand four hundred years ago, or in the days when Jesus dwelt in the midst of us. The SPIRIT of GOD does not produce effects different from those which it did when the LORD said to Nicodemus; 'that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit,' or when he declared by the mouth of St. Paul, that the fruits of the SPIRIT are all the Christian virtues, that is to say, all GOOD WORKS. The union which the most HOLY God has established between his SPIRIT and holiness is as indissoluble as it is necessary. In like manner, faith produced by this SPIRIT, the faith by which we are justified, is also as inseparable from good works as life in Lazarus was from his resurrection. So also, faith is the resurrection of the soul; it is the life of works, of good works.

"You have then great reason to inquire, Have I faith? Have I ever believed in the Saviour? You who find nothing new in your hearts; nothing different from what you have always experienced. You who pursue the same path which you have all along followed; with this trifling change, —that you impose better on others,—that you are perhaps ashamed of your conduct before Christians, because it excites their contempt and detestation,—you who continue to possess the same selfishness, love of repose, desire of esteem, of the respect, of the approbation of those around you,—the same wilfulness, bad temper, discontent, murmurs, chagrin, when any thing crosses you, when your interests are affected, when circumstances occur to derange your plans, when God arrests you in your career, by sickness, or some other trial,—you who still feel the same want of confidence in the Saviour, the

same secret infidelity; the same apprehensions about the future, the same anxiety about your domestic concerns,—what shall we eat? what shall we drink? what shall we put on? and particularly, the same fear of death, the same anguish, when the words, "you must depart," sound in your ears; the same discouragement in your own difficulties; the same insensibility to those of your neighbour; the same indifference about the salvation of souls; the same inattention to the advancement of the kingdom of Jesus; the same neglect of the things of God,—of prayer, of meditation, of reading the Bible; the same distaste for heaven, and for the hope of glory.

"Truly the man who finds himself in this situation does not possess life, and he has reason to entertain doubts whether he be partaker of a salvation, which is never associated with the love of sin, which he has refused to accept from his grace, who, in offering it,

also offers his crown of thorns, his nails and his cross. Ah! it is not a treaty with sin that the GLORIOUS SAVIOUR effects, in a soul where he takes up his abode by faith. It is war, interminable war against the flesh and its lusts; against the world and all that the world contains. It is a renunciation which he requires, a renunciation, my friends, I again repeat, of every thing but GOD. The absolute demand which he makes is your heart; that heart which is the source of life; your whole heart, with its affections, thoughts, desires, inclinations, and adoration. He exacts a sacrifice, similar to that which he required from Abraham; the victim which he chooses is your best beloved, that is to say,—yourself; dear friend, yourself.

"This is the covenant which JESUS makes with his children: 'He gave himself for them;' he has for ever redeemed them, it is true, but he has also purchased them

as his property; they belong exclusively to Him; they are his peculiar people, zealous of good works. He gave himself for his church, that he might purify it. Whosoever is a member of it is holy; he loves holiness; he follows after it; he seeks it; it is his life, his joy, his consolation, his only object!

"The gospel includes this holiness in two precepts; the one that of performing good works, the other of being the foremost to perform them.

"Good works, my friends, that is to say, delight in God's law, happiness in fulfilling what it enjoins, are represented as the road that leads from earth to heaven, and which terminates at the gate of the city of God. This is the sacred road, the path of the Lord, the way of light and peace, the narrow road which few follow. This image is peculiarly calculated to make us understand the place which sanctifica-

tion holds in the Christian life. I shall endeavour to illustrate it by a comparison: I have received the right of citizenship in a foreign town; I am desirous of visiting my new fellow-citizens. I follow the road which leads to this city; my certificates are in my pocket. So long as I continue in this road I approach the town, and my anxiety to arrive at the end of my journey proportionally increases. Those who meet me on the road, say with certainty,—he is on the way to the town of which he is a citizen. But the idea never crosses their mind, that it is the road which has built the town, fixed its gates, and, especially, which has conferred upon me the freedom of the city. They know that I am indebted for this privilege to the munificence of the magistrates; that they have given me the patent, and that the gates will at once fly open, which would be shut against me, if I could not produce this title. Thus the

road possesses no other quality, is of no other use than that of connecting the place where I was, and where I received the patent, with the city whither I am bound, and where my rights are to be for ever confirmed. To pursue this road has no other effect than to assure both myself and those whom I meet, that I am on the way to this town, whose towers glitter in the distance, and whose arms I bear. But it is so indispensably necessary that I should pursue the right road, and have my steps directed towards the city, that if I followed a different path, or if I turned back and ran in an opposite direction, every one would have reason to say, that I was not going thither, and I should be obliged to acknowledge it myself.

"Thus, if the road has any merit, it cannot be that of dispensing the favours of the magistrates, and still less of bestowing the right of citizenship. It may justly boast in-

deed that the citizen's travelling upon it is necessary, as a proof that he is on his way to the town. It may boast, that if any one is not upon it, he will never reach the city; but this is all, and when he arrives at the gates he has no more use for the road.

"Such are the good works of the believer. The path of holiness may boast that it is the only road which leads from earth to heaven. It may thus address mankind: "My travellers, rejoice: take courage, I conduct you with certainty to the mansions of bliss." We, who see you persevere in following it, are filled with holy joy on your account; we say, with thanksgivings to the LORD, "These are citizens of Heaven; see with what confidence they approach the new Jerusalem. The gospel is in their hands; they have the mark of the Saints; a new name; they have received the white stone. Oh! what happiness!

The SAVIOUR is glorified in them." We would entertain the well-founded hope, that you will reach the gates and enter through them: to this conclusion, both the road and ourselves arrive as the consequence of a fact; I mean, of your diligently pursuing the road which leads to the Heavenly city.

"But if, on the other hand, we see you following the broad road, and, at every step descending with the multitude towards hell, in vain will you arrogantly exclaim, That you are citizens of heaven, Christians, children of the kingdom; in vain will you point to the gospel, and repeat it upon the road; in vain will you tax with folly, misrepresentation, with fanaticism, with party spirit, those who, from the middle of the sacred path, intreat you with tears to return, to come up to them: all your boasting will not deceive them; and all your hypocrisy, in calling yourselves Christians,

will be of no avail in weakening the occular demonstration which they possess—that you are not pursuing the same path as themselves. Whilst you are descending towards impenetrable darkness, they are ascending to the mansions of light. And if they did not tell you so, the very stones would speak; for those on which you tread are polluted with the abominations of the world.

"In order to a person's being assured that he is on the way to Heaven, that he belongs to CHRIST, he must be found upon the sacred road, in the path of sanctification. This is the track which Christ followed. Christ is to be found in none other; by it alone the Good Shepherd leads his flock. No one without sanctification, no, although he had been forty years a guide and a teacher; although he may understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; no one without sanctification shall enter

the abodes of bliss, the kingdom of holiness.

"Make up your mind then, you who believe in JESUS, to follow him in the path of light. You will find on it a cross which you must carry; a cross which is heavy, stained with blood, the cross which your SAVIOUR bore. Take up your cross and proceed. Proceed without apprehension: this is the path; see, JESUS is before you. By his side are all who have professed that they seek a CITY not built by man; a heavenly country. These are your brethren; they all bear their cross; and the renunciation of the world and its vanities is engraved upon their hearts. Join this heavenly company; walk along with them; be amongst the foremost of those who surround you; set them an example. This is the commandment of CHRIST, your SAVIOUR, your glorious KING.

"It is my wish, he says by St Paul, it

is my wish that they, who have believed, be careful to maintain good works. As if he had said, "It is their duty, who are called by my new name, whom I have rescued from Babylon, and who bear the vessels of the LORD, to be the first to separate themselves from all that is defiled. It is the duty of the children of light to make their light to shine before men; it becomes those whom I have chosen, to be unblameable in love; by their brotherly affection to set an example that may encourage and strengthen their companions, who are still in bondage, who are weak, or fearful.

"And, indeed, who shall be an example to the world but the children of God? Who shall testify their hatred of sin but sinners, who have been washed in the blood of The LAMB? Who shall live a new life but those who are risen with CHRIST? Who shall show, by their demeanour, that

the honours of the world are despicable, and that the things which are unseen are alone entitled to a place in our affections, but those who, by their lively hope, are already enthroned in Heaven with the saints and the angels? In whom shall love, love which is the seal of CHRIST and the glory of wisdom, shine with unsullied purity, if not in those who, by love, have been ransomed from death and are clothed with life?

"Say, dear friends, to whom does it belong, or rather to whom has GOD committed the charge of restoring in the midst of our nation, along with the purity of faith, the fidelity of obedience, if not to us, who have obtained this faith at so high a price, and tasted how gracious the LORD is, how easy his yoke, how light his burden, and how delightful are his commandments! From whom are virtues, the loftiest and most arduous, to be expected? To whom shall we look for sincere and consistent piety,—for a bold

and open confession of the name of JESUS,—for the public and private worship of GOD,—for the avowed preference of heaven to earth? To whom shall we look for obedience to laws,—reverence to magistrates and those in authority,—for love of order,—scrupulous attention to the encouragement and protection of morality,—strict observance of oaths,—sanctification of the LORD's Day? To whom shall we look for justice,—equity,—fidelity in business,—abhorrence of all contention,—of all disputes,—of all hatred,—of all quarrels? To whom shall we look for love to our enemies,—for blessings on those who curse us,—for kindness to those who hate us,—for prayers on behalf of those who persecute us,—yes, my brethren, for prayers on behalf of those who, on account of righteousness and the kingdom of GOD, as well as for the glorious name by which we are called, injure, calumniate, and load us with op-

probrious epithets? In a word, who shall imitate our FATHER which is in heaven, in doing good to all men,—in promoting peace,—in submitting to labour, grief, privations, and sacrifices,—in not esteeming our lives dear, if even by such means we may be enabled to enlighten, to awaken, to lead souls to CHRIST? From whom are these good works to be chiefly expected? Who are to abound most in them, if not those who have felt and believed that this is the example which their SAVIOUR has left them to imitate; and who know that the day is at hand in which glory, honour, and immortality will be conferred by GOD on those who, adding to faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge temperance, to temperance patience, to patience godliness, to godliness brotherly love, to brotherly love kindness, charity,—shall enjoy, in thus making their calling and election sure, an abundant

entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST?

"Christians! be in the foremost ranks: this is the word of command. Let no one get before you in the path of sanctification. You are children of GOD; show it by your conduct. Will the LORD grant you his presence behind the ranks of sinners? You are free—released from sin;—show then, by the alertness, the energy, the quickness of your movements, that truly your feet are no longer shackled—that your neck is not bowed beneath the yoke of pollution. You are the children of Abraham, and, with him, by faith, inherit the promise. Act like Abraham. He departed from Ur, in the land of the idolatrous Chaldeans; he was a pilgrim and stranger. Depart, believers, depart from the idolatry of the world; and, being the foremost in directing your steps towards Mount Moriah, convince all who see you ascend,

that the command of the LORD is dearer to the children of the promise, than all the seductions, all the hopes, all the fears of the earth—that the kingdom of God and his righteousness is the sole, the constant object of your fondest affections; and that, although you have received your salvation gratuitously, although you have not obtained it by works, now, that you have received it, your life consists in performing works to the glory of God, your SAVIOUR; so that every one may rest assured, that, in your case, '*there is no salvation without works.*'

"Happy Christians, who are thus the salt of the earth, and the glory of your Master! Happy inhabitants of this lower orb, who, as you travel through it, experience and diffuse around you, joys and blessings the most delightful and most lasting! Happy mortals, who, after suffering for a few moments the con-

tradiction of a world which has not known you, because it does not know the FATHER, shall be unspeakably blessed during the endless ages of eternity, in the approbation of JESUS; the anticipation of which you already experience in the path of duty,—in waiting for his coming! Ah! be not apprehensive that he will suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able. You are dependent on him; and he is faithful. If you are weak, he can strengthen you; if you turn to the right or to the left, he will call you back, he will stretch out to you his hand; if you should fall, be not afraid that he will forsake you. He came from heaven to recover you from your first fall: do you imagine that, after claiming you as his own, he will ever leave his beloved; "those for whom he intercedes with the FATHER?"

"No, my friends, the Christian cannot cease to be a Christian: the gifts of GOD

are without repentance. The blood of CHRIST was not shed for a sinner, that he might be washed only for a few hours. The sacrifice which he offered is eternal as well as complete. He who has part in it, will never be deprived of this good part. 'It shall not be taken from him,' saith the LORD.

"How consoling is this truth! yet how seldom is it admitted! How many people regard it as dangerous. Beware, say they, of preaching such doctrine: it would very soon engender crimes. Gracious GOD! pardon their blasphemy. They know not that the assurance of thy love is very different from hatred towards thee. They are not aware that the greater the certainty we possess of being with THEE, LORD, in Heaven, the more we shall dread being separated from THEE, even for a few hours. Ah! what child of GOD would willingly commit sin, seeing it is sin

which exposes him to the displeasure of his Father?

"No, be not afraid, you who have believed like Abraham, be not afraid to repose all your confidence in God. He will finish the work which he has begun. He has said it; he is faithful. You have not chosen him; but he has chosen you. It is his powerful arm which upholds you; and who is able to pluck you out of his hand? Is he not stronger than all? He is the All-Mighty: And, since none can separate you from Him, since you are united to Him by Faith, it must be He who lets you go; that is to say, who ceases to hold you; that is to say, to love you; that is to say, to be faithful; that is to say, to be immutable. A downright absurdity!

"Be assured then that you belong to the Saviour, because you believe, as Abraham believed. Be confirmed in this assurance,

by the sincerity of your obedience, by the abundance of your good works. But so soon as you have received CHRIST, or rather, have been received by him,—have, through faith in him, been introduced into this grace, hold fast your profession; and rejoice in the hope of the glory of GOD, in the power by which you are kept unto salvation—ready to be revealed in the last times, when you shall be put in possession of an inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, which cannot fade away, and which is reserved in heaven for you who believe.

"But, perhaps, my dear friends, this very natural objection will occur to one of you—'May not the Christian experience so deplorable a fall, that the bond of love which unites him to GOD may be broken, and thus the sinner be deprived of grace?' The HOLY SPIRIT has already answered, 'That neither death, nor life, (and it is in the

Christian's life that the fault in question is found,) nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, (and this fault would belong to things present,) nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord:' And yet, they will say, had David died before his return to God, and Peter during his denial?—But did they die in such circumstances? That is the question: 'Did God permit them to die? God, He who has said, I will not leave thee or forsake thee; did he forsake them?' And, further to explain this subject, as well as to relieve your attention, and comfort your minds, I will illustrate this doctrine by the following allegory:—

Allegory.

"A traveller, after a fatiguing journey,

arrives, at the close of day, in an extensive desert. No road, no path presents itself to his weary eye. All is silent and solitary. The wind, which announces the approach of night, already begins to agitate the heath. The unfortunate wanderer stops,—his heart is overwhelmed,—his strength is exhausted,—a few tears of grief slowly trickle down his pale cheeks, and his mouth is only opened to pronounce these words: 'Then I am lost.'

"The night has set in—he is involved in darkness. The forlorn traveller prepares to take some repose; he wraps himself in his cloak; he endeavours to sleep: But, suddenly, a drawn sword, held by an invisible hand, approaches to pierce him. The traveller, horror-struck, darts across the heath, till his strength fails, and he sinks, exhausted: But the sword continues to pursue him; it appears more flaming, sharper than before. It whistles in the

air, and the unhappy victim summons fresh vigour to escape its stroke. Oh! who can depict the anguish of his soul! There is no help, no support, no hope. Had he but a friend—some one to share his flight and apprehensions! But he is alone, and he has lost all presence of mind. Wishing for death, he throws himself on his knees. The idea of God comes across his mind—'My God,' he exclaims, 'my God, have pity on me.'

"Scarce has this petition escaped his lips, when his eyes, which had been hitherto closed, are opened, and he sees, at a little distance, a stately edifice, refulgent with light. 'Knock,' says a voice from within, 'and it shall be opened to you.' The traveller believes. He stretches out his hand; he knocks, and the door is immediately opened; an irresistible power hurries the wretched fugitive into the interior of the edifice, and the door, which

is of brass, is shut; he leans against it, to take a little breath; to assure himself that he is beyond the reach of the frightful sword,—that it has disappeared. Oh! who can tell the joy of his soul? Who can paint the new feelings which animate his heart? He is no longer a wanderer. The desert? he has left it. He is not alone or forsaken. A voice said to him, 'knock;' a mighty power laid hold of him; brought him into the asylum. The sword, above all, the sword does not menace him any longer. The brazen door is between him and the world, and all its united efforts to open it are vain.

"Peace to the traveller! he has entered his FATHER's house, the abode of peace, in which is the assembly of his brethren, and along with them their elder brother, whose presence inspires them with unmingled joy. Peace to the traveller! He has for ever ceased to wander in the barren

desert; he is for ever removed from the terrors without. Peace: yes, peace to the traveller who has entered! for peace shall be multiplied to him, in the way which he shall follow.

"Such is the harmonious anthem which rises in the upper part of this glorious abode. These are songs of joy,—of devout and solemn joy. They melt the heart; they deeply affect the traveller; his cheeks are bedewed with the tears of gratitude. He wishes to join this melodious chorus; but it is silent, and a voice exclaims, 'Ascend, my son.' 'In what manner, LORD?' the traveller eagerly replies, 'all is dark around me.' Upon this, the sword which had caused such apprehensions, appears in the porch; but it is no longer the same dreadful weapon; it has become a lamp to his feet, a light to his paths; and, going before, it guides him towards a large staircase, at the top of which is a cross, on

which he is directed constantly to fix his eyes.

"Be not apprehensive of his falling, so long as he faithfully follows the lamp, and contemplates the cross. But, alas! who is acquainted with the fickleness of the human heart; with all its foolishness, all its ingratitude? Seduced, I know not by what object, by what recollection, by what caprice, the traveller for a moment withdraws his eyes; he stumbles, and, after receiving many bruises, falls to the bottom of the stair-case, even to the door, against which the unfortunate individual is precipitated.

"Unhappy man! What would have become of thee, had not this been the door against which the gates of hell shall not prevail?—had thy Father not said, 'That no one openeth what he has shut?' Were he not omnipotent; were he not faithful,—where, I ask thee, wouldst thou now have

been? But, be of good cheer, it is in his house that thy fall has happened; thy fall in no degree diminishes the security of thy asylum. Thou hast stumbled against the rock; but this is the rock on which thou leanest. Be not dismayed, thou child of HIM who is Faithful; his compassion is as eternal as HIMSELF. Rise: Is he not all-powerful to put thee again in the right way; to heal thy wounds; to render thee more vigilant and more stedfast?

"The traveller, reanimated and strengthened by these consoling words which proceed from the cross, regains his feet. He feels that there is some one by his side who supports and comforts him. 'It is thy Friend,' a voice exclaims, 'thy Faithful Friend; lean on my arm; be not afraid; thou canst not weary me; I am all-mighty.' He recognizes the voice of the Friend of Sinners. Encouraged by these soothing admonitions, and ashamed of his first fall,

he hastens forward with increasing alacrity, eager to approach his Father, as well as to unite with his brethren and participate in their joys. He carefully watches every step, repels every distracting thought, —every vain imagination; and, fixing his eyes upon the cross, towards which he gradually ascends, he every moment enjoys a happiness more unmingled, and, at the same time, feels himself invigorated for new efforts, as well as inspired with a longing desire to reach the top of the staircase, and to be admitted into the presence of his FATHER.

"You are aware, dear friends, you have felt that, whilst under the curse of the law, —whilst exposed to the vengeance of its sword, we are saved by all-powerful grace; and so soon as we are admitted into the church of JESUS, which is the house of GOD, our sanctification immediately commences; and, however great, however de-

plorable are the falls of the believer, they only happen, my brethren, within the house under his Father's roof.

"Trust then in God with your whole heart. Cleave to Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith. Rise then, believers rise, conducted by the law, which is your unerring guide. Embrace your Saviour's cross, and let no one deprive you of your crown."

The discourse being concluded, the whole Conventicle rose, and the Genevese minister prayed nearly as follows:—

Prayer.

"It is thou alone, Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom belong dominion and glory, for ever and ever: it is Thou alone who canst strengthen thy children, give them the victory, and enable them to obtain the prize.

Accept of our most humble thanksgivings for the blessing thou has granted us, in revealing thyself as our FATHER; and in teaching us that we are thy ransomed people,—that JESUS, thy well beloved SON, has given himself for us, and that we are for ever united to him. Oh! enable us to glorify Thee! May we rejoice in GOD our SAVIOUR, for thou hast remembered the low estate of thy servants, and thou hast unloosed the bonds with which we were bound, and hast conferred on us the liberty of thy chosen people. What, O Lord, what shall we render unto Thee? Thou art ever loading us with thy mercies. We are the monuments of thy goodness. It is of thy boundless love that we are preserved. Thou hast this day afforded us another proof of thy kindness. What a privilege have we enjoyed, in being permitted to assemble in thy name! Thou hast been with us, LORD JESUS, according to thy promise. Thy Holy

Spirit has revealed to us the truth contained in thy word. Oh graciously bless to each of us the doctrine of Salvation, which we have heard. May we be rooted and grounded in thy SON, O GOD our FATHER, so that we may live in THEE; and, while we are here below, may our conduct be that of citizens of heaven.

"May these blessings, O thou Preserver of Men, be diffused around us; may they rest upon our brethren of every tribe and language. We thank Thee that our heart is enlarged; that our love extends to all thy church; that all thy children are brethren. May we grow in love, gracious SAVIOUR, that all may know that we are thy disciples. Do not permit Satan to have dominion over us; may he never implant in our souls the seed of hatred or of division. Wilt thou therefore, all-bountiful LORD GOD, who never refusest to listen to us, answer the prayers we offer up for those

who know not thy SON, who are still in darkness and in the shadow of death. Have compassion on those lands where idolatry prevails, and where Satan rules. Thou, Lord, seest the abundance of the harvest and how few are the reapers. Wilt thou, wilt thou increase the number of thy pastors, thy ministers, thy evangelists, thy missionaries. Open their mouth, and prepare their path, that they may go forth in thy name, and that their voice may be heard even at the ends of the earth. May the Gospel also be preached in the midst of ourselves, and especially, LORD, to those misguided persons who rage against Thee, and against thy anointed; and who, on account of thy name, rise up against us, miserable sinners, whom thou hast saved. LORD, punish them not for their anger or threatenings. They know not what they do. We supplicate thee, in an especial manner, to enlighten, to touch the heart of him who

has just written against us and our meetings: O God! How has thy church received this blow from him who ought to have been its defender? How much have Christians to lament the opposition of one of their brethren, whom they most highly honoured! LORD, is it possible? Oh, take pity on his soul! for the sake of thy compassion, convince him of his error. GOD of love inspire him with love.

"As to ourselves, O our GOD and FATHER, our highest wish is to submit to thee and to thy authority. Render us obedient to thee,—enable us to honour our magistrates,—on whose persons and counsels we intreat thee to pour forth thy good SPIRIT. LORD, grant them this grace, to consecrate the authority thou hast reposed in them, to the protection of the gospel, and of those by whom it is openly professed, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life.

"Receive us in thy love, gracious Father. Pardon, Oh pardon thy children, and mantle us anew in the garment of salvation, in the robe of CHRIST's righteousness; to whom, with the FATHER, and HOLY SPIRIT, be glory, dominion, and adoration, for ever and ever. *Amen.*"

This prayer appeared to make a lively impression on all present. There prevailed throughout the whole Conventicle a feeling of profound joy and peace; such as the believer experiences when he approaches his GOD, or when he offers up sacrifices of praise, of obedience, and love.

One of the Ministers of the Pays de Vaud. "How much are we refreshed! What an agreeable evening! How short and delightful has it appeared!"

One of the Ladies. "Oh! the impression made upon my mind will never be effaced. I cannot sufficiently bless and thank GOD for what he has permitted me to hear this

evening. I trust that it will produce in my soul everlasting fruit."

An Old Lady. "For my part, I confess, in all simplicity, that I never, before this evening, fully understood all that my gracious SAVIOUR has done for me. I trust that I have embraced him: or, I should rather say, I feel that he, yes, he himself has visited my soul. Oh! how is my joy increased."

An Officer. "Never, till to-day, have I heard the Gospel. This evening, and I will avow it before the whole canton, I have learned that I have a Saviour!"

Gen. Min. "Notwithstanding, Sir, your canton is more fortunate than others, in possessing many evangelical ministers as well as faithful and enlightened pastors."

Officer. "I agree with you, Sir, but I have never understood them. I never before was acquainted with my SAVIOUR; I knew him and yet was ignorant of him.

God be praised! I shall henceforward study the Bible!"

Another Minister of the Pays de Vaud. "How gracious are the dealings of God! He sends us one of his servants, whose preaching he blesses, that those who are profited by it, may do in private what we do in the pulpit. It is thus that the labourers belong to the same master, and assist one another in the same harvest."

The Lady of the House. "Let us increase our joy by singing a few hymns. Will some one play on the piano, and we will sing in concert; making melody in our hearts."

One of the ministers approached the instrument; a collection of hymns was distributed, and several of those were sung, which appeared most in harmony with the pious emotions of the company.

The music attracted the children, who had not been present at the Conventicle, as

it would have required greater attention than could be expected from their years. The Genevese Minister entered into conversation with two little girls, about the age of ten or twelve, who were modestly seated in a corner of the drawing-room, and spoke to them in the following words:

Gen. Min. "You have not heard, dear children, what I said of the love of our GRACIOUS SAVIOUR towards us; it would have required too great attention, although perhaps you would have been glad to listen to my discourse."

Eldest. "Mamma has promised, Sir, to tell us, this evening, all that you said."

Min. "Your good Mamma, then, is in the habit of speaking to you of our SAVIOUR? You are very fortunate in having an opportunity of hearing of him; but much more so if you love him, as I trust is the case."

Eldest. "At least, Sir, we endeavour to do so; but we are only children."

Min. "Dear children, a child's heart is as susceptible of GOD'S love as that of a grown-up person."

Youngest. "But, Sir, we know so little."

Min. "Do you know, my dear, that you have a SAVIOUR?"

Youngest. "Oh yes, Sir, I know that well."

Min. "And do you believe him?"

Youngest. "I trust I do."

Min. "You believe then that you are saved?"

Youngest. "With regard to that I do not know; I dare not say so."

Min. "And you, my dear, do you believe that you are saved?"

Eldest. "No, Sir, not yet; because I am not good enough."

Min. "Tell me, dear child, if it were possible that I could take the burden of all the sins you ever committed, would it still lie upon you?"

Eldest. "Certainly not, Sir; you would be answerable for them, and not I."

Min. "And if, after I had taken upon me all your sins,—but observe, my dears, that I say all,—without excepting a single one, if God were to punish these sins according to their deserts, who would undergo the punishment?"

Eldest. "Undoubtedly you, Sir, as you took upon you all my sins."

Min. "And, my dear child, would you be punished, that is to say, a second time, for the same sins?"

Eldest. "Unquestionably not, Sir."

Min. "You are right; for we cannot be twice punished for only one fault. Would you then be pardoned?"

Eldest. "Certainly, Sir, since you were so good as to suffer in my place."

Min. "Well, my dear child, think of the goodness of the SAVIOUR JESUS, in taking upon him your sins, and in suffering the punishment, all the punishment, which was due on account of them. He has endured, in your place, the curse of GOD, which ought to have fallen on you."

Youngest. "That is exactly what Mademoiselle tells us."

Min. "Who is Mademoiselle?"

Youngest. "She is our governess; she makes us read the Bible every day."

Min. "And do you believe what is contained in the Bible?"

Youngest. "Certainly, Sir, for it is the word of GOD."

Min. "Well! have you not read in the Bible, that God has so loved us, that he has laid the burden of all our sins upon his

SON, and has put to death, in our room, his only begotten and well beloved SON?"

Eldest. "Is it not in this passage, Sir: God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, CHRIST died for us?"

Min. "You are perfectly correct: it is in the fifth of the Romans. Well! my dears, do you believe GOD? Do you believe what he says in this passage, that CHRIST died for you, that is to say, that he has been punished by GOD in your place?"

The Children. "Yes, Sir, we believe."

Min. "Well, dear children, if you really believe, you possess faith, and this faith unites you to your SAVIOUR. You may then ask for the HOLY SPIRIT, and he will give it you, to sanctify your heart, to remove all that is bad, and to make you good. You must ask, my dears, for the HOLY SPIRIT."

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SCOTLAND

Eldest. "We will do so, Sir, if it please God."

Min. "And what return will you make your gracious Saviour?"

Youngest. "We will love him with all our heart."

Min. "How do you convince your Mamma, or your governess, that you love them?"

Youngest. "By being obedient, and by doing what they wish."

Min. "Act in the same manner, my children, towards God; be obedient to him, and do what he requires. You will then experience true happiness. Adieu, dear girls: may God grant you his peace!"

The children thanked the Minister. The meeting began to disperse, and each individual testified the joy which he experienced.

The three ministers of the *Pays de Vaud*

then addressed the minister of Geneva as follows:

The First. "Dear brother, let us converse a little together; for we must acknowledge that this has been a most agreeable evening."

Gen. Min. "I cannot, my excellent and beloved friends, express the holy joy which is diffused over my soul. I am persuaded that the LORD, our gracious GOD, has been in the midst of us this evening, and that the *Conventicle* (added he smiling,) which we have held will be accompanied with a peculiar blessing."

The Second. "Alas! dear brother, perhaps it will be the lot of him, who now mistakes us, and who, I am persuaded, without intending it, blames and despises us, to be placed in the same situation as myself. For I must acknowledge, like the Friend in the Poor Watch-Maker,* "I have

* A Tract by M. Malan.

now seen and heard them; I desire to see and hear more from them, and to make a public confession of the grief which I feel at having taken up stones to throw at those whom I ought to honour as the children of God."

Gen. Min. "Have you ever, my good friend, taken up stones to throw at us?"

The Second. "Too often, particularly against you. I sincerely regret it. Give me your hand, and forgive your penitent brother."

Gen. Min. "Let us embrace each other, and rejoice that compassion has been shown to us both; for I also, dear brother, was found by the LORD on the road to Damascus."

The Third. "Is it possible! You too! Pray when?"

Gen. Min. "Not many years ago I also despised and calumniated the conventicles of a few persecuted believers in my

country. I would have looked upon it as a disgrace, as a mark of weakness, to have associated with them; and now they are my most delightful companions."

The First. "How were you brought to the knowledge of the truth?"

Gen. Min. "Different ministers, and particularly two brethren from Berlin, one of whom is at present chaplain to the King, and the other Professor in the University of Bonn, began to make a serious impression on my mind. At the same time a pious and learned Doctor from New York, who visited Geneva, accompanied by a faithful young minister, made me desirous of hearing about the SAVIOUR. Never shall I forget the last words which the venerable Doctor addressed to me at parting. With tears in his eyes, he said, "Adieu, my young friend. You are beginning the fight; it will be tedious: but be of good cheer, strength will be given

you. Recollect that he who trusts in the LORD will never be confounded. Be not afraid so long as you follow JESUS: he has overcome the world. Adieu; I shall not see you again till we meet before the judgment seat. Look forward to that period. Your MASTER will ask an account of your Ministry."

"How often have I been strengthened and supported by these words. The LORD has rendered them a blessing to my soul."

The Third. "Were you at this time fully converted?"

Gen. Min. "No; not yet. My views had hitherto been erroneous; I had now, so far as I recollect, become orthodox; but my soul had not yet been awakened. I had not yet laid hold of my salvation, as it is in our SAVIOUR."

The Third. "Who was it that led you to the knowledge of the truth?"

Gen. Min. "It was the respectable

Robert Haldane of Scotland. This excellent man, profoundly versed in the Holy Scriptures, came to reside some months at Geneva, about the time that the friends, of whom I have just spoken, passed through. I met him at their lodgings, and I visited him first; for he was a man of retired and unassuming habits, and not forward to make himself known or listened to. You cannot form too high an idea of the mildness and prudent reserve which characterized all his actions, all his words. His countenance was tranquil and serene. His looks bespoke a charity so profound, that it was impossible in his presence to condemn or judge any one. I was young and animated with youthful zeal, almost always imprudent and severe. I spoke with acrimony of certain persons opposed to the gospel. "Leave these persons, my friend," said my father in the faith, "they are under the judgment of

God, and not under yours; speak only of their errors that you may avoid them, both for your own benefit and for that of others." How often have I seen him deplore the enmity which was appearing against the word of God! He said to me, in language similar to that which had been employed by the Reverend Dr Mason of New York, "If it were necessary to shed our blood to bring back those who rise in opposition to the gospel, we ought to do so. But," added he, "it is not the blood of man which is required, but that of God shed upon the cross."

The First. "What method did he follow in instructing you and leading you to receive the truth?"

Gen. Min. "You know, dear brother, that it was the Spirit of God which implanted it in my heart; but this is the manner by which my wise counsellor instructed me: He generally waited till I

asked a question; and I went to his house for no other purpose than to listen to his answers. Frequently he made me repeat my question to be certain that he fully understood my meaning. "What is your view on the subject?" he inquired. I stated to him my opinion. He then desired me to confirm it by Scripture. In this manner he convinced me of ignorance or of weakness; and when he saw me at a stand through want of acquaintance with the Bible, he began to establish the truth in question, by passages so clear, so appropriate, that it was impossible to withhold my conviction. If one of these passages appeared to me inconclusive, or if I attached to it a false meaning, he immediately produced four or five others, which supported or explained the first, and put the true interpretation beyond a doubt. In all this discussion he used but few words. It was his finger which spoke; for, as his

Bible, literally worn by being read again and again, opened here or there, he immediately pointed to the passage; and whilst I read it, he fixed his eyes upon me as if he wished to mark the impression made upon my soul by the sword of the Spirit."

The Third. "But was he not what is termed a Separatist?"

Gen. Min. "Never did he advance a single opinion that could lead me to suppose so. He justly testified great abhorrence of heresy; but I never observed any thing that bespoke ideas which were narrow or peculiar. Besides, we do not meet with any such sentiments in his two works which we possess. The one an Exposition of the Evidences of the Divine Origin of Christianity,—the other, at which he laboured at Geneva, a Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. This last work contains an admirable course of the

purest theology. We find in it, mingled with the fervour of a mind devoted to JESUS, a profound acquaintance with the plan of salvation, accompanied with sound judgment, and the discriminating *tact* of one whose long experience qualified him to detect the subterfuges and deceitful workings of the human heart. I strongly recommend you, my brethren, to make this Commentary your serious study. I am persuaded that every minister who will read it as in the presence of God, comparing with the Bible all the quotations which it contains, will be well qualified to unravel and resist the errors of the present day—that religion of words and fine phrases with which so many amuse themselves, and profess to instruct others."

The Third. "Yes; this is what vexes me; to see people oppose the gospel, and the meetings of Christians, as if believers amused themselves with riddles, and as-

sembled to witness a pantomime. And these people, so far from setting an example of greater wisdom, usefulness, and holiness, content themselves with exclaiming, 'Look at these fools, these hypocrites, who meet together at night to read the Bible, and to pray, as if that were a proper time;'—while they themselves spend these same hours, both Sundays and week-days indifferently, in playing at cards, and ridiculing those who are probably at the same moment engaged in prayer for their persecutors. Truly this is vexatious."

Gen. Min. "No more of this: JEHOVAH, who reigns in heaven, and whose name is the LORD of HOSTS, sees and hears them; and knowing that he supports and preserves these deluded persons, let us restrain our censures and indignation. The simple and infallible means of leading them to substitute the Bible for their cards, is to shew

them the happiness, the joy, the peace, and the patience which abound in the hearts and lives of those who love the Bible. Let them contrast, for a moment, the holy and heavenly serenity of believers, with the languor, the secret dissatisfaction and discontent, which spring from their vain speculations, and they will soon feel the necessity of exchanging a shadow for a substance, even at the expense of embracing the gospel.

The Second. "We have already gained ground. The opposition which we meet with arises from a secret conviction of weakness: this is proved by the insults we experience; our opponents are compelled to employ force.

Gen. Min. "Your observation is most just. Besides, thanks to our Master, we are no longer only one or two. In our canton there are now a considerable number of believers, and conventicles increase even amongst ladies of rank, as at Thessalonica, in

the days of St Paul. In your canton, dear friends, there are from twenty to twenty-five young ministers or pastors in favour of the free preaching of the Gospel, exclusive of all the older pastors who support the truth, and who are ready, I am sure, to defend it, if necessary. The circumstances of the neighbouring cantons are also similar. The WORD of GOD is respected; meetings for prayer, for reading the Bible, for mutual edification, although held in private houses, or after sun-set, in imitation of the disciples at Jerusalem, and of St Paul at Troas, are no longer treated with obloquy and derision. It is true that Eutychus is a sufferer; but why sleep when St Paul preaches, and, above all, at a window!"

The Third. "Unquestionably. I trust that our friends will not act in this manner. One thing is obvious, that we did not sleep this evening."

Gen. Min. "We find, dear friends, that our attention is always deeply excited when we speak of what immediately concerns ourselves and our own interests; and no interest can be put in competition with that of the soul. Had we this evening analyzed some intricate moral question, apart from the principle on which it is founded, and which alone gives it reality, you would very soon have seen the greater part of the meeting fatigued, and paying comparatively little attention. But, on the other hand, converse with an individual of serious habits, on his lost and ruined condition; unfold to him the love of God,—his omnipotence,—the faithfulness of Jesus; prove to him in particular, that his salvation is gratuitous, and that the chief of sinners, so far from being excluded, is invited to approach with boldness, and lay hold of eternal life, through the medium of unfeigned faith; you will at

once command attention,—and, if your discourse is simple and affectionate, you may add to these primary and fundamental truths all their practical results, the whole Christian morality, as it is termed, without being afraid of fatiguing your audience, or of incurring the charge of encroaching upon their time."

The First. "Such are, indeed, the duties which belong to our blessed and glorious ministry. How true is it that this is a good work! What a happiness, what a noble privilege, to act as the ambassadors of CHRIST, to intreat sinners, both in season and out of season, to be reconciled to GOD! What office is so distinguished as that of the Herald of Righteousness? of the messenger of glad tidings? of the comforter of souls oppressed with the load of sin? Truly, my heart glows with gratitude towards GOD, who has called me to so high a vocation,—who has graciously given me

salvation through his SON, and led me to his cross, whom I formerly called the SAVIOUR, but to whose love, and power, and fidelity, I was a total stranger. I am now HIS, and my life is consecrated to JESUS; —may he employ it in his service!"

Gen. Min. "Be not impatient, dear brother; he will give us work. Our harvest is not yet ended; it is scarcely begun. The days in which we live are days of festivity but also of labour for the ministers of CHRIST. The Sun of Righteousness is appearing above the horizon, and is at present illuminating the beautiful mountains of Switzerland; he carries healing on his wings, and the nation, which had relapsed into a state of darkness, is about to exult in the plenitude of light. You are aware that this is the expectation of all the faithful churches, both in our own and other nations: yes; I believe that we are on the eve of a period remarkable for the progress of

the gospel in the world. I should not be at all surprised, were a struggle, similar to that which took place three hundred years ago, shortly to ensue between the doctrine of the truth, as it is in CHRIST, and the wisdom of the world."

The Second. "Well, may the LORD inspire us with strength and love."

Gen. Min. "Yes, with love; for I am of opinion, that, probably, the great difference between the revival of light in our days, and that which the LORD brought about at the Reformation, is, that a variety of questions, merely of a political and external nature, were then agitated, which have no share in the present awakening. There is now more charity, perhaps more forbearance, more liberality of sentiment. The nature of the universal church, I mean the communion of saints, is better understood. The object is not to make men Papists or Protestants. What avails it to be

iron or copper, if we are not gold? The LORD seeks and calls those only who are Christians. For my own part, I openly avow, that I belong neither to Paul, nor Apollos, nor Cephas; that I neither hold the tenets of Luther, Fenelon, or Calvin; and when a Catholic, as he calls himself, comes to ask me to change my religion, as frequently happens, the first question I put to him is, 'Are you a Turk?' and when he replies that he is a Catholic, I say to him, 'Beware of changing your religion;' but first inquire are you a Christian. And if this individual comes to CHRIST, and embraces the free salvation which faith receives from the merits of the SAVIOUR alone, he quietly lays aside a thousand clogs, a thousand childish practices or errors, from which he is very happy to be freed."

The First. "Blessed is the man who leads a soul to the knowledge of the truth. His pilgrimage has not been in vain. Will not

this soul be his crown during eternity? Oh! how should we be animated by so glorious a hope?"

Gen. Min. "Dear brother, it is agreeable and edifying to listen to you. I esteem myself happy in having met with you this evening. I trust, my friends, the LORD will bless our mutual friendship; and that, since he has chosen us to proclaim his mercy, he will enable us to pray for each other, and to proceed with vigour in this glorious work; that, after having ploughed and sowed together, we may also together bring home the harvest; and, you know, it is written, "that he who has sown in tears shall shout for joy, when he returns loaded with sheaves."

The Ministers of the Pays de Vaud. "Amen! The Lord grant that his kingdom may be established in the midst of us."

Upon this, their conversation terminated.

They separated like brethren united in the closest ties. And indeed, what union is like that which is cemented by Christian love!

Such are the particulars of the Conventicle of Rolle. As this narrative is written from memory, and a considerable time after the meeting took place, possibly all the circumstances may not be recounted with the same accuracy as if they had been noted down on the day they happened. But at that period we were not aware that this explanation would be requisite.

The account, however, is correct.—Those who were present at the two meetings, held on Wednesday and Thursday, will be able to vouch for its fidelity: and God, in defence of whose truth this pamphlet is published, knows that we have con-

cealed nothing. The doctrine is given in nearly the same language in which it was delivered, and the conversations, both in public and private, attributed to the Genevese minister, are those which really took place.

Such are the facts which I certify, in all sincerity, whilst it is my earnest prayer to the LORD, who, in his own time, will bring to light the secrets of the heart, that he may render these pages useful in leading THOSE WHO ARE SERIOUS, AND DESIROUS OF KNOWING THE TRUTH, to attend to the definition they give to the term *CONVENTICLE*.

C. MALAN.

November, 1821.

THE END.

EDINBURGH:
Arch. Allardice and Co. Printers,
Gosford's Close.

The following Works are Published and Sold by

WILLIAM OLIPHANT,

22, SOUTH BRIDGE STREET,

EDINBURGH.

ALLAN, (JESSY) THE LAME GIRL; by the Author of "The Decision," *Fourth edition;* 18mo, stit. 1s.

ANDREW CAMPBELL'S VISIT TO HIS IRISH COUSINS; by the Author of "The Decision," with a frontispiece. *Second Edition,* 18mo. stit. 1s.

ARCHIE AND MARY GRAHAM, by the Author of the "Military Blacksmith," 18mo. stit. 9d.

BROWN'S (Rev. Dr. John of Langton) Exercises in Religion; containing Brief Views of the Leading Doctrines of Christianity; 18mo, bds. 2s. 6d.

BURN'S (General A.) Memoirs, with Portrait, 18mo, bds. 2s.

CLARK (Memoir of Alexander) late of Broughton, Edinburgh, 18mo, 10d.

DUNALLAN; or KNOW WHAT YOU JUDGE. By the Author of "The Decision," 3 vols. 12mo. bds. 18s.

EARLY IMPRESSIONS; OR THE HISTORY OF ALLAN STEWART AND COLIN GRAY; 18mo, bds. 2s.

GRANT, (MARY) OR THE SECRET FAULT. By the Author of "Harriet and her Cousin," with a frontispiece. 18mo, stit. per doz. 9s.

HUTCHISON, (Life of Colonel) with portrait, 18mo, bds. 2s. 6d.

INCENSE (THE) OF YOUTH; or Prayers intended to Excite and Direct the Devotions of the Young in various situations, 18mo, bds. 2s. 6d.

LUTHER, (Life of Martin) 18mo, bds. 2s. 6d.

MELVILLE, (Life of Andrew) with portrait, 18mo, bds. 1s. 6d.

MARY AND JULIA; OR PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY ILLUSTRATED IN THE HISTORY OF TWO FRIENDS, 18mo, bds. 3s. 6d.

OBITUARIES; OR AUTHENTIC SKETCHES OF DYING SCENES, with frontispiece, 18mo, bds. 2s. 6d.

RELIGION IN HUMBLE LIFE; OR A SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF ROBIN RUTHERFORD, THE PIOUS PEDLAR, 18mo, bds. 1s. 6d.

SHAW, (THOMAS) OR THE BABY'S BAPTISM, by the Author of the "Military Blacksmith," &c. *just published*, 18mo, stit. 10d.

THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER, by the Author of "Harriet and her Cousin," 18mo, stit. 1s.

THE FAITHFUL SERVANT, 18mo, bds. 2s.

THE CHRISTIAN'S MORNING COMPANION; OR MEDITATIONS SELECTED FROM VARIOUS AUTHORS, 18mo, with a fine engraving, bds. 6s.

WALLARD, (Life of William) *Second Edition*, 18mo, bds. 2s.

Cat. 275

£16

RJ2L