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Thomson, John, of New York.

Letters Addressed to the Rev. John Mason.

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LETTERS

ADDRESSED TO THE

Rev. JOHN MASON, A. M.

OF NEW-YORK,

IN ANSWER TO HIS

Letters on frequent Communion.

BY THE REV. JOHN THOMSON,
RESIDING IN GLASGOW (SCOTLAND.)

E tua pharetra non venit ista sagitta.

The child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient.

WITH AN
APPENDIX,
IN AN
ADDRESS TO SECEDERS.

TROY:

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1891.

TO THE PUBLIC.

THE author's age and incapacity of using the pen, and his difficulty of obtaining a regular *Amanuensis*, must apologize for any inaccuracies which may be noticed in these letters.

He also takes notice that it is difficult to trace Mr. Mason through his flowery descants of flowing eloquence, instead of argument: Of this the author has given some specimens or extracts, and might have given many more; but these may suffice to shew the general train of Mr. Mason's reasoning.

LETTERS

TO THE

REV. JOHN MASON, A. M.

OF NEW-YORK.

LETTER I.

REVEREND SIR,

I HAVE perused your Letters, and think, indeed, they claim my notice. This, Sir, is an age of novelty : We have novations in politics and novations in religion, and none more striking than these which take place in the Secession. I suppose, Sir, that your reverend and worthy father was once connected with that society ; whether you are so or not, I do not know. As I am informed you had your education in Scotland, and probably some of your relations connected with that body, I cannot suppose that you are ignorant of the strange things which have taken place in the Secession, in both its branches.

Those principles which constituted its distinguished character, are deserted and opposed. As you seem to be animated with a very fervent zeal for the revival of religion, I would have judged it a subject worthy of your flowing eloquence, of which, if I had the same capacity, I would display the evils of a deceitful apostacy ; of violating the most

solemn engagements; of impeaching our renowned ancestors, our valuable Confession of Faith, and our National Covenants, by the most illiberal and ungrateful aspersions. But, Sir, while you pass by all these, you take notice of some ministers of that body, who have begun a reformation respecting the Lord's supper, agreeable to your sentiments.

It happens indeed somewhat unfortunately, that these ministers are ringleaders in the apostacy from our principles and their own ordination vows; which, I suppose, will not recommend their reform, in dispensing the Lord's supper, with a great many, especially the people of God in the Secession; and such as I know, in the Secession, who have begun that reform, have carried it on in a very unbecoming and despotic manner, in opposition to a considerable number, both of their eldership and people. I think, Sir, that when such a change is to be introduced, it claims a high degree of prudence, and ought to be sanctioned by the authority and wisdom of the courts of Christ's house, that there might be uniformity among ministers and Christian congregations. The neglect of this, Sir, has produced considerable confusion in the Secession, and especially in these reforming congregations.

You likewise mention, that some ministers, connected with the establishment, have begun this reform. I suppose, Sir, that this takes place principally, if not only, in chapels of ease, and that in populous cities. These ministers have not any settled congregations, and move in an inferior sphere, having no standing in the seat of judgment, the courts of the church of Christ; so that it is nothing strange that "the legs of the lame are not equal;" however, Sir, these things which have been noticed, do not touch the merits of the cause which you support. These shall not be neglected in the course of our correspondence. I think, Sir, that God has given you talents, which, if suitably exercised, might be a blessing to the church. Whether or not your Letters to the public are such, is problematical: Your language is correct and elegant, I would add nervous, did I not think that it is affected with spasms. If you were not well known,

Sir, some might be tempted to think you had borrowed the expressions of some popish devotee in an enthusiastic rapture. Page 25. "While the blood of expiation flows, and fire
 " from above consumes the sacrifice, a cloud of incense, a-
 " rising up from the altar, announces, at the throne of God,
 " an offering of a sweet-smelling savour." Are these the words of truth and soberness, Sir? Is the New Testament sacrament of the Lord's supper become a real sacrifice? This approaches the Romish mass, and you and they agree in its frequency, not only daily, but many times in a day. You say that our Lord's supper cannot be too often commemorated, and they agree with you that this sacrifice cannot be too often repeated.

Page 65, your nerves seem to experience another spasm. "It is vain to contend with prejudices impenetrable to every thing but Omnipotence." Your arrogance, Sir, breaks through all bounds. You first take it for granted, that those upon whom you would impose your sentiments, are under the influence of most rooted prejudice; and, in the next place, that your representations and arguments are so powerful, as to approach the very verge of Omnipotence. Do such expressions become any man? Do they not much less become a youth, especially when applied to ministers and Christians, at whose feet it would not be a shame for you, Sir, to sit and learn? These, Sir, are only a specimen of your nervous disorder, and of that vanity which swells your youthful mind, and disgraces your elegant language and flowing style. I cannot, indeed, resist a suspicion, that you are only a tool, used by those in this country who have not the courage to publish such things, or to use such language as you have done.

By your address in the front of your Letters, you are designed "Pastor of the Scots Presbyterian Church in the
 " city of New-York." I suppose, Sir, it was thought you were not liable to feel the effects of any offence which your publication might give to the people of God in this country. And if this was the case, it was criminal weakness and presumptuous vanity in you, to be caught by such a bait; but

still more criminal and mean in those cowards who imposed upon your youthful weakness. I am not well acquainted with the state of religion at New-York ; but I apprehend that, even there, some serious people may be offended, justly offended, at least at your arrogant and unbecoming manner. I know, indeed, that our novelists in this country claim unlimited forbearance, while they are altogether unwilling to grant the smallest degree of mutual forbearance to those who differ from them, in sentiment or conduct. Whether or not you stand in need of, or claimed any forbearance, in your manner of dispensing the Lord's supper, I do not know ; but you manifest a very unmannerly, yea unchristian opposition to those who differ from you. You rank them with idolatrous Papists, and impeach them with the most stubborn prejudice ; you would certainly cast them out of your Scots Presbyterian church at New-York. You must certainly allow, Sir, that thousands, yea ten thousands, whom you reprobate in the most unbecoming manner, are now at the communion table above, while you are passing the most cruel sentence against them upon earth. Perhaps, Sir, their ignorance of these matters was invincible, and so far excusable.

It was, therefore, a great pity that you, Sir, were so long in coming into the world, and into the church, to display your talents in such a manner as might have enlightened their minds, eradicated their prejudice, and reformed their practice. Surely, Sir, your towering zeal and Christian feelings must fill you with grief on this account.

In the former part of your introductory letter, you very elegantly, and with great propriety, display the important duty of searching the sacred writings, and of cleaving steadfastly to them, in principle and practice, and of reforming every deviation from them.

Now, Sir, could you find no other object for your reforming zeal, but the impious superstition of days of congregational humiliation and thanksgiving, or some extra-ordinary sermons ?

I have already mentioned some things which, in my opi-

nion, claimed the exercise of your zeal. Do I need to inform you, Sir, that Arminian, Socinian, and even Deistical sentiments abound in this country; and that, even among Seceders, not only lukewarmness and indifference about those principles which distinguished the secession, but even Scepticism, and the decay of all settled principle, seems to prevail: and every distinction respecting church communion is buried or swallowed up in the indiscriminate principle of a catholic communion in the church; so that, provided we can secure our own salvation, we are under no obligation to maintain the honour of a redeeming God, by cleaving to, and defending the precious truths, graciously revealed in the divine oracles; or to testify against those who contemn and despise them, because they do not reckon them essentially necessary to salvation. Surely, Sir, you cannot be such a stranger in our Israel, our country, as to be ignorant of these abounding evils. These, Sir, may well be called the weightier matters of the law, which you have neglected and passed by, while you have exerted all the powers of eloquence in declaiming against sacramental fasts and thanksgivings, and extra-ordinary preaching of the gospel, as corruptions and perversions of the divine ordinance and institution of the Lord's supper. Look at these things, I pray you, Sir, and see if, upon serious reflection, you can be satisfied with your own conduct. You and some others, Sir, justly expose the evil and danger of resting our faith and practice upon the example of our ancestors: But I am of opinion that at present we are in as much danger of exploding the principles and practice of our ancestors; because they are old-fashioned, we would supersede them as obsolete. You, indeed, Sir, give well merited praise to our reforming, worthy ancestors; but I think you retract your just encomiums, while you represent them as ignorant, or wanting capacity to know, what appears to you so easily demonstrable, by the dying command of our blessed Lord; or so indifferent about commemorating his all-important death, and exerting the most powerful efforts in exciting their peo-

ple to the most diligent and intense preparation for this solemn ordinance.

I cannot avoid giving a short specimen of your sophistical eloquence upon this matter, Page 50 and 51. "It cannot but be a favourite with those who, *having the form of Godliness without the power*, find it useful in palliating their inattention to a duty which they secretly hate, and from which they would gladly be exempted. Miserable men! they need preparation indeed; but such as they will never acquire by the farce of *hanging down their heads like a bull-rush*, and assuming once in six months, or once in twelve, the austerity of a monk, and the precision of a Pharisee; while, during the rest of the year, they sacrifice at the shrine of mammon or of lust." Is this reasoning, Sir, or do you intend to burlesque reason? I shall simply attempt to turn your own cannon upon you, or to give you a specimen of your own reasoning.

Miserable men! do they imagine that by communicating once a week, or perhaps once a day, that they atone for intervals of dissipation and gratification of the lusts of the flesh? Do they imagine that this frequency, will compensate the neglect of every other duty of Christianity? Do they thus prostitute that invaluable and delightful divine ordinance, and use it as the Israelites anciently used the brazen serpent, by turning it into an idol? This, Sir, is to burlesque reason. Such reasoning, whether by you or myself, I think to be shameful. Thus, you take it for granted, Sir, that all preparation for the Lord's supper results from ignorance or superstition; a sentiment which our renowned ancestors reprobated, both in preaching and practice; a sentiment which the experience of many living saints will view with indignation. I indeed think, Sir, that the frequency of communicating seems to swallow up or supersede all other excellencies in this divine ordinance. You see no reason for solemn preparation for it, more than for any other duty; you even jeer at the idea of any superior degree of sanctity or solemnity being connected with, or requisite to its right performance.

Pages 51 and 52. It is said that "we therein make a

“ nearer approach to God than in other duties, and therefore need more cautious and thorough preparation.”

“ This mode of reasoning is common : but is it just ? Is it scriptural ? Let us examine it. Briefly, it amounts to this, that the Lord requires more holiness from us in sacramental than in other services ; *i. e.* allows us to be less holy in the latter than in the former. I might excuse myself from saying another word about it ; a simple statement is a refutation. But to sift it a little more—Is God more holy on sacramental than on other occasions ? Is an irreverent mind, or a polluted heart, less offensive to him on these, than on those ? Does communicating possess either more inherent or more accidental sanctity, than any other act of spiritual worship ? Let the living God plead his own cause. He hath said, *I will be sanctified in them that COME NIGH me.* Again ; *Having boldness, faith his apostle, to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus—let us DRAW NIGH.* It will not be disputed that these embrace every act of worship. God has, therefore, imprinted the *same* character upon them *all* ; and as *he* has not discriminated between them, on account of their greater or less degree of sacredness, let us beware how *we* do it. He is as jealous of his honour in prayer, in praise, &c. as in communicating. Were we rightly affected, as deep solemnity would rest on our spirits, in asking a blessing at our meals, as in breaking the sacrament bread. And it betrays either ignorance, or much carnality, if a communion season fills us with awe, while the other offices of piety find us and leave us cold or unconcerned,” &c.

P. 54. “ The last two objections lead to consequences as forbidding as they are natural. If frequency of communion breeds irreverence, then reverence is befriended by unfrequent communion. If the former deprives us of leisure for preparation, then the latter must be highly favourable to it. The conclusion on the whole is, *the seldomer we communicate, the better* ; and we would be far more reverentially impressed, and might be far better prepared, if, instead of twice in one year, the Lord’s death were celebrated only once in two years, or once in

" ten. We should then have abundance of time for every
 " pre-requisite. We might have tenfold the present em-
 " ployment, and tenfold the pomp : If a week were too
 " little, we could afford a month ; and the Lord's supper
 " would be immensely honoured. Hither the plea which I
 " have been considering conducts us at last. But, O thou
 " that lovest a crucified Saviour, avoid its snare. This
 " smiling vizard conceals a fiend. Beneath this garb of
 " piety lurks a dagger for thy life ; and, ere thou art a-
 " ware, it will stab thee to the heart, and put thy Redeem-
 " er to an open shame."

The world must judge, Sir, of your manner of reasoning
 in this long extract, which is designed as a specimen of your
 manner of writing. I would ask you, Sir, whether God re-
 quires us to observe the Sabbath in a more holy manner
 than the six days of the week ; and if so, whether it is a na-
 tive consequence, that he " allows us to be less holy in these
 " than in those."—But to sift it a little more—is God more
 holy on the Sabbath than on other days ? Is an irreverent
 mind or a polluted heart less offensive to him on these than
 on this ? You introduce Lev. x. 3, " I will be sanctified in
 " them that come nigh me." I suppose, Sir, this is said in
 allusion to Nadab and Abihu, who offered strange fire,
 when employed in a distinguished act of divine worship.
 And I think, Sir, that this divine declaration would be much
 better applied, as an awful warning to communicants to
 guard them against rash approaches to God in that solemn
 ordinance. For, I indeed think, Sir, that your self-devised
 plan of FREQUENCY, has a native tendency to weaken and
 even to obliterate that exalted reverence, which becomes
 communicants, when they DRAW NIGH to God, in this so-
 lemn ordinance. I might ask you, Sir, if the annual com-
 memoration in the passover, was insufficient to keep up the
 remembrance of their deliverance from worse than Egyptian
 bondage, by the future death of that Saviour, whose actual
 death we commemorate in the Lord's supper. Then, cer-
 tainly, you impeach the divine institutor of that ordinance.
 I might likewise invert your attention, and say, Were we
 rightly affected, as little solemnity would rest on our spirits

in breaking of the sacramental bread as in asking a blessing at our common meals.

“I might,” with you, Sir, “excuse myself from saying another word about it; a simple statement is a refutation.” It seems, Sir, as if you designed, by flashes of extravagant eloquence and sophistical representations, to blind our intellect, that you might pervert our judgment: And if this will not do, you give us up to Omnipotence for conviction. One remarkable thing, Sir, you seem to take no notice of, viz. the divine denunciation, doubled and appended to this sacred institution, 1 Cor. xi. 27. “Wherefore, whoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.” Ver. 29. “For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.” Do you really think, Sir, that these awful denunciations do not constitute any difference between this and other divine ordinances? Do you think, Sir, that a Christian can face these awful denunciations with no more concern, with no more fear, with no more preparation, than when he craves a blessing to a common meal? When the Israelites, at mount Sinai, heard the thunders, &c. did they not fear and tremble? And shall the Christian outface these dreadful thunders, without trembling? We are called upon to prepare to meet our God; Amos iv. 12. and shall our preparation for this distinguished ordinance be charged with superstition and will-worship? You, indeed, Sir, use this precious ordinance as you do our reforming ancestors; I mean, you exalt or degrade it at your pleasure. You sometimes concentrate the whole of religion in it, at other times you reduce it to the level of a common or daily meal.

Your Letters, Sir, are a mass of inconsistencies, a fountain which sends forth sweet water and bitter; many parts of them, if detached from your design, claim approbation of the matter and admiration of the manner: But, alas! Sir, these are only introductory of a bad design; I may say, they are prostituted to the defamation of congregational humiliation and thanksgiving, and preaching the gospel, when

you think out of season ; not like the apostle, 2 Tim. iv. 2. " Preach the word : be instant in season and out of season." The approved parts of your letters, are like the gilding of a noxious pill. Thus the arch enemy of God and man, wrapped up his temptation, in one of the most delightful expressions of revealed grace, " He shall give his angels " charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall " bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against " a stone." Mat. iv. 6. And thus Satan still transforms himself into an angel of light ; and the arrow designed to wound religion, must be fledged with a feather from its own wing. I know, indeed, Sir, that these ordinances which you reprobate, and which have been many times delightful to the Lord's people, have always had many enemies, to whom it was a weariness to serve the Lord, and who trusted at them : but never did any that I know of attack them, in the same daring manner that you have done : or under the mask of such flaming zeal for the interests of religion. You even have the effrontery to attribute the withdrawal of the divine presence, from the ordinances of Christ, and the people of God, to their observation of days of humiliation, preparation and thanksgiving ; because these stand in the way of your favourite topic. Reflect upon these things, Sir, and take shame to yourself. Let not your youthful vanity harden your heart against convictions. I do indeed, Sir, pity your youth, and my design in this severity is not to injure your person or character ; but, first, to reclaim you from the error of your way : and I pray the apostle's expressions may be realized in you ; " No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous ; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness," Heb. xii. 11. Secondly, My design is to expose those who have excited you to this conduct, that they might shelter their own cowardly persons, and promote their own designs : and, Thirdly, That I might open the eyes of some who may be in danger of being deluded by your specious eloquence.

I could not help being astonished, Sir, when I was informed that one of our ministers, in this place, introduced your Letters, for sale, at a meeting of his session ; and warm-

ly recommended them. O Seceders! how are you fallen! For shame! throw off the mask; disclaim the name which proclaims you, *treacherous dealers*.

Your Publication, Sir, is a course of deceit and sophistry. You misrepresent your supposed adversaries, and impose upon them what they neither mean or ever said. You assume points as granted or proven, without either a shadow of argument or real proof. You draw conclusions from premises which exist only in your own ideas; and from them you deduce consequences suitable to your own design; and then, Sir, you triumph in your imagined victory, and display your want of Christian temper, meekness, candour, and even the celebrated grace of forbearance. You have shot beyond your mark, Sir; you have overdone your subject. It is an established maxim, "He that proves too much, does not prove any thing." You have attempted to prove what will disgust many, even of those who were somewhat tinged with your own sentiments; and have thereby injured the cause which you intended to promote. I have, I hope, as exalted thoughts of the delightful ordinance of the Lord's supper, as you have, and I must enter a caveat; that none are to entertain any apprehension, that what I write in opposition to your Letters or sentiments, is in the least to degrade or lessen the esteem of that delightful ordinance. You have, Sir, a most animated descant upon its excellency, in pages 18 to 31, if you did not, as I shall afterwards shew, apply them all to your favourite point. And had you, Sir, even in this, wrote with any tolerable degree of humble modesty, you might have evited my strictures. But, indeed, Sir, you rather dictate than reason. You write with an arrogance which is insupportable; as if your opponents were destitute of common sense, and were fixed under such rooted prejudices, as even religion, accompanied with conviction, could not overcome.

I have only hitherto made some slight attacks upon your out-works; but I shall, in my next, assault the body of the place, your main fortrefs. I am indeed, Sir, an old man, who has been trained up in the military art: my motto was,

" I am set for the defence of the gospel : " Yet I have, even after I thought I had got a *quietus*, and been entitled to the character *emeritus*, been, in the dispensations of an holy and wise Providence, for a course of years, called out to the field of battle, in defence of those principles which I always espoused ; not because I was brought up and educated in them, but because, upon mature deliberation, I found them to be sanctioned by divine authority, in the sacred scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and therefore have such rooted prejudice in their favour as are proof against your elegant language, your strong assertions, and empty shew of reasoning. I only in this take further notice, that as I never did affect a splendid eloquence, you are not to expect a competition with you in this respect ; being not only incapable of speaking, but also of writing, and obliged to depend upon the accidental, voluntary assistance of a borrowed pen. I shall now proceed, Sir, to my promised task, and conclude this introductory letter, wishing you all grace.

I am, Reverend Sir,

The Church's Servant in the Lord,

JOHN THOMSON.

L E T T E R II.

REVEREND SIR,

YOU superscribe your second Letter, " Frequent Communion an indispensable duty." In this, Sir, I heartily concur ; yet it will appear that your ideas of this frequency very much differ from mine, and, I believe, from those of many others who have a just claim to the character of friends to the Lord Jesus, and to this distinguished and delightful ordinance.

I think, Sir, your idea of the word frequent extremely vague ; and likewise, that you play upon the word like a child. You ridicule, Sir, the application of *frequency* to communicating once or twice a year. Though I would by

no means approve of the Christian's conduct, who, without a solid reason, should rest satisfied with such a performance of the duty, or enjoyment of the happiness of this delightful ordinance: Yet, Sir, it is applied in cases much more distant. If one should say that "earthquakes or hurricanes" are frequent in the West Indies," would you, Sir, hold him up to ridicule, because there is often an interval of several years between these dreadful phenomena? Or, if one should say that "the ancient Jewish nation were frequently subjected to bondage by their enemies," would it be ridiculous because there was frequently intervals of liberty for a great number of years? Now, Sir, upon this ambiguity a great part of your reasoning, and of your whole fabric depends; while, at the same time, you create an adversary which you denominate "*once or twice a year.*" I have been more than sixty years well acquainted with the practice of Christians in Scotland; and never heard any one say, that they thought "*once or twice a year* sufficient, either to satisfy their conscience or desires, in their participation of that solemn ordinance." Those who have indeed a just sense of its importance, have an opportunity of approaching the Lord's table many times, I may say eight, ten, or twelve times in a year, without any excess of toil or trouble. Yea, Sir, I have in my younger years accompanied Christians in their travels on foot, to enjoy that solemn ordinance more than forty miles distance. By this it appears, that those, at least many of them, whom, upon the footing of your vague frequency, you treat so injuriously, have a just claim upon you to revise and retract your unjust, condemnatory expressions. However, Sir, we shall proceed to the point, and engage *caminus*, hand to hand; and shall, with you, try the matter by the balances of God's sanctuary, the true standard of evangelical antiquity.

You, with great propriety, present us with the divine institution of this ordinance by our Lord and Master, as handed down to us for our warrant and example. You justly observe, "that, being drawn up with some latitude, it does not ascertain precisely how often the Lord's supper is to be

" celebrated, and that something is, no doubt, committed to
 " Christian prudence." At the same time you throw in a ca-
 veat which I highly approve: that " it would be a strange
 inference from the words of the apostle, and a profligate
 abuse of gospel liberty, to conclude, that as the Lord hath
 prescribed no *stated times* of communicating, we may inno-
 cently abstain as long and as often as we please." You add,
 " some, indeed, appear to act upon this notion — The
 " real disciple who loves his Master will not permit himself
 " to thistle; he will candidly confess, that the very phrase-
 " ology of the text implies frequency. The words, *as often*,
 " occurring twice in two lines, can signify nothing less, if
 " it signify any thing at all." Then, Sir, you give us a con-
 clusion: " Whence it follows, that frequent communicating
 " is positively enjoined; and, consequently, that infrequent
 " communicating is a violation of the commandment which
 " the Saviour delivered with his departing breath." Here,
 Sir, you have said a great deal to little purpose. Your pre-
 mises are unmeaning, and your conclusions perfectly agree-
 able to them. We are left to judge, from what follows af-
 terwards, the extent of that frequency which you assert to
 be positively enjoined in the divine institution of this ordi-
 nance. Is this reasoning, Sir? Is it like a scholar, or a mi-
 nister, or an honest man? Did you really imagine, Sir, that
 you were writing for fools? However, I shall ask you one
 question: Is there no medium between that criminal neglect
 which you justly condemn, and that extravagance which
 you would palm upon us? Will you not allow with the po-
 et, "*Est modus in rebus, sunt certi denique fines, quos ultra,
 citraque nequit consistere rectum.*" That is, Is there no gol-
 den mean between these extremes? The divine institutor
 of this ordinance (as you justly acknowledge) did not deter-
 mine this frequency: Yet you, Sir, arrogantly determine
 it to a most extravagant extent, not only to fifty-two times
 a year; but even, in an insinuating manner, to three hun-
 dred and sixty-five times a year, or perhaps oftener. And
 by the same illogical reasoning, you palm your sentiments
 upon apostolic authority and example. Of this afterward.

You say, Sir, that "It cannot be disputed that the very words of institution require frequent communion: Yet their emphasis is mostly overlooked." An emphasis they certainly have, Sir, and frequency they do demand; but that frequency which you would palm upon them, exists only in your own imagination. After apostrophizing at some length, you measure the believer's love solely by the frequency of these commemorations; and seem to restrict the evidences and effects of love to the Saviour only to this frequency. Your letters, Sir, are indeed a dissertation upon *frequency*. You neglect entirely those graces and exercises which appear more clearly to be necessary for the divine acceptance of this work. As you supercede and despise all preparation for it, so you bury in oblivion those dispositions and exercises of soul which have always justly been deemed the very essence of communicating. We have indeed the word *love* repeated again and again; but this *love* is wholly swallowed up in the *frequency* of the act of communicating.

— You illustrate, Sir, and pretend to prove your view of the Redeemer's precept ~~from~~ ^{by} delineation of the principal features of the Supper. These, Sir, you delineate in a beautiful descant, which I indeed admire; the colours are glowing, and the painting, for the most part, very just; but to what end, Sir? merely to gild the pill of your imaginary *frequency*. This is that idol of your own fancy, which, by your eloquent delineation, you would obtrude upon us. I would observe, Sir, that all those features which you so eloquently delineate, apply equally to the preached gospel. In vain, Sir, would we give a practical testimony to the cross in the Lord's supper, unless we first had the divine testimony concerning a crucified Saviour in the gospel, and give a practical testimony to the cross, by receiving upon this testimony a crucified Saviour. The principal fault which I find, then, with your descant, is, that it exalts the Lord's supper at the expence of the preached gospel. All the features, Sir, which you so beautifully delineate, apply to the gospel as well as to the Lord's supper. The gospel, Sir, is the power of God unto salvation, and opens that door by which

alone we can pass to a communion table with safety and comfort. It is the daily bread of the Christian, by which he is nourished unto eternal life; and will by no means give place in the Christian life to the Lord's supper.

You introduce your third Letter, Sir, with another bravado. "The duty of frequent communion is so undeniable, and the argument by which it is enforced appeals with such power to every gracious principle, that there seems no room for objection." The argument for what, Sir? Is it for your imaginary frequency? Three hundred and sixty-five times, or even for your fifty-two times? Beware, Sir, you are in danger of incurring the awful denunciation, expressed, Rev. xxii. 18, 19, for adding to the words of the sacred book. I am certain at least that you add to the meaning, as far as I can judge. You now proceed, Sir, to state those objections which you say are made, and, "First, it is said, that the measure proposed would innovate upon the established order of the church." To this I reply, that if, indeed, an innovation; and if, as hath been proved, it is nevertheless our duty; then it is high time the innovation were made, and the habits of old transgression removed." You say, Sir, "as hath been proved;" what hath been proved? You say it is our duty." You have attempted to prove nothing but "frequency." Frequency is allowed, Sir; but have you, Sir, proved your fifty-two times in a year? This specific frequency has not yet been introduced for proof; so that you are giving Jedburgh justice, by condemning your supposed opponents, before you have attempted a proof of what constitutes their crime. You enter upon an enquiry, "How did Christ ordain? how did his apostles conduct? how did they leave the church?" In answering these questions, Sir, you supersede the glorious head of the church. This you seem to acknowledge, when you say, "To begin with the apostles." I maintain, Sir, that Jesus is the Alpha and Omega of this distinguished institution. I suppose, Sir, that you are somewhat conscious that his words in the institution are not a sufficient foundation for your hay and stubble building, or "frequen-

"cy;" yet at the same time will cheerfully submit to, and receive the testimony of his apostles, because in their ministry, they were under the unerring guidance of his Spirit. "Lo! I am with you always." You produce Acts xx. and 7. "On the first day of the week—the disciples came together to break bread." And add, "hence it is evident, not only that Christians assembled on the Lord's day, for public worship, but that they did not part without commemorating his death." The first of these assertions we cheerfully approve, but we demand your proof of the second, which you do not pretend to offer. We are not at present disputing the fact, but demanding your proof of the fact. But instead of this, Sir, you, at considerable length, explain what needs no explanation; that by breaking of bread is meant the communion of the supper; and to confirm this, you add, "Most assuredly his people did not assemble on his day for any common or carnal purposes." You afterwards, indeed, correct this absurd assertion; otherwise we might have suspected it to have included the preaching of the word, &c. as common or carnal purposes. You say afterwards, "Nay, it is intimated that sacramental communion was a principal, if not *the* principal object of their meeting." That it was a special and a principal object of their meeting upon sacramental occasions, none, I believe, ever denied: But what is the consequence? If one should say, Sir, that on such a first day of the week all the congregations in Glasgow assembled to break bread or to communicate in the Lord's supper; would this be a shadow of a proof, that they did so every Sabbath on which they assembled for religious worship? I think, Sir, that you are the most loose reasoner that I did ever encounter. But you proceed. "The argument must be decisive with all those who alledge this place to prove that the apostolic churches sanctified the first instead of the seventh day of the week. —Indeed the strength of the argument drawn from this passage, to prove the change of the Sabbath, lies in the supposition, that this "breaking of bread" signifies the sacrament of the supper." Do not you, Sir, admit of

erwards that they communicated upon other days besides the first day of the week : now, if this was the case, whence is your argument from the expression, " breaking of bread," for the change of the Sabbath ? You add, " From which we gather that the meeting of the disciples " was a stated one, and for religious ends." I know not, Sir, where you gather that it was a stated one, but whether it was a stated one or an occasional one, it was certainly for religious ends. But would it not have been for " religi- " ends," though the sacrament of the supper had not been at that time dispensed ?

After some further ridiculous reasoning, or perversion of reason upon this point, where common sense is violated, you proceed to another evidence, from 1 Cor. xi. 20. " When " ye come together therefore into one place *this is not to* " eat the Lord's supper." Here, Sir, you draw a conclu- sion without premises, " The apostle tells us, that their irre- " gularities happened, *when they came together in the church,* " and that the scene of them was the *table of the Lord.* " Whence it follows, ~~that~~ the celebration of the supper was " a regular concomitant of their stated meetings for public " worship ; and these, we know, were held at least *every* " *Lord's day.*" Here, Sir, I find, that their irregularities happened when ~~they~~ they came together in the church, and that the scene of them was the table of the Lord. You reason, " whence it follows that the celebration of the supper was a " regular concomitant of their stated meetings for public " worship." Now, Sir, their irregularities could not take place but when they came together in the church. But does the apostle say, that these irregularities took place eve- ry time they came together in the church. The apostle's language would have the same propriety, though we should suppose that they dispensed that solemn ordinance only once or twice a year ; which I, upon no other account, suppose, than to shew your absurd reasoning and false conclusion, viz. That the Lord's supper was dispensed at least ~~every~~ every Lord's day. " This conclusion," you say, " results necessarily " from the tenor of the apostle's argument, which evident-

“ly supposes, that whenever they assembled together, they
“came to eat the Lord’s supper; for otherwise their com-
“ing together so as not to eat the Lord’s supper, would be
“no proof that their coming together was for the worse.”
Let any one, Sir, apply the rules of reasoning, and they will
readily conclude, that your premises exist only in your own
perverted mind; and that you had formed your conclusion
before you went to the scriptures to seek your premises, and
was thus obliged to force them into your service, to support
your imaginary conclusions.

Here, Sir, you close your evidence, given by our divine
Lord and his apostles. These are the standards, the primi-
tive and only standards; the sacred scriptures, the law and
the testimony. And I do appeal to every sensible reader of
our correspondence, whether you have given any solid proof
for your extravagant frequency, from the sacred scriptures.
Your primary argument, is the imaginary idea which you
have fixed to the word *frequency*; and this frequency is on-
ly a deduction from our Saviour’s words in the institution.
Yet you, Sir, arrogantly and repeatedly call it a positive com-
mand, the command of a dying Saviour. None of the com-
mands of the moral law are expressed in this vague manner.
Our Saviour’s expressions, “as often as,” though repeated,
are quite indeterminate, as to frequency: and certainly,
you assume too much in determining to the most extrava-
gant extent, what the Supreme Lord and lawgiver has not
determined. Yet I agree with you, that it would be “a
“profligate use of gospel liberty, to conclude, that, as the
“Lord hath prescribed no *stated times* of communicating,
“we may innocently abstain as often and as long as we
“please.” You add, “Some indeed appear to act upon
“the notion.” And I think you no less criminal; for as
they despise, so I think you degrade this solemn and delight-
ful ordinance. The golden mean, Sir, lies betwixt you,
in medio stantibus ibis. There are right hand extremes as well
as left hand defections.

I shall, Sir, let you know what my mind suggests upon
this matter. The infant church of Christ, Sir, was (during

the apostolic age) exposed to severe persecutions by, and conflicts with various enemies. The words of our divine Lord, Mat. ix. 15. were fulfilled, "And Jesus said unto them, " can the children of the bride-chamber mourn, as long as " the Bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, " when the Bridegroom will be taken from them, and then " shall they fast." I do not in the least question, but that the poor Christians might seek comfort in the enjoyment of this heart-cheering ordinance, and that their situation demanded an extraordinary frequency. And when they could enjoy the privilege of a public assembly for preaching the gospel, they also improved the opportunity for commemorating their Lord's death. They had also a general and strong impression that his second coming was at hand; which might still more excite them to frequency. This is all, Sir, which can be supposed, and even this does not admit of a positive and clear proof from the sacred oracle. But you, Sir, have violated the ancient and just proverb, *ne quid nimis*, i. e. too much of one thing serves for nothing. It gives reason to suspect that a cause is bad, when the proof brought to support it is weak and inconclusive, especially when the champion puts on his harness with high words and vain boasting.

You proceed, Sir, to bring forward what you call evidence, to prove that " weekly communion did not die with the apostles," and here, Sir, you assure us that, " it was even " common to communicate three and four times a week, " and in some places every day." I suppose, Sir, you mean three or four times a week. Well, Sir, here is your three hundred and sixty-five communions in the year; and I must own, that a public day of solemn humiliation before, and a day of thanksgiving after each communion, especially if these exercises were congregational, would be impracticable, or morally impossible.

I will not follow you, Sir, into the thorny copse of antiquity, and therefore shall not examine your cloud of witnesses. You and I have both appealed our cause to our blessed Lord and his apostles; and by these let us stand or

fall. You tell us frequently of primitive love and primitive purity; yet you have acknowledged that there were corruptions of a very gross nature, which not only found entrance into, but even prevailed in, at least, some of the apostolic churches; and which required the personal authority of an apostle to correct them. To this I may add our Lord's epistles to the seven churches of the lesser Asia; and the premonitions given both by our Lord and his apostles, not only of the dangers, but prevailing evils to which the church was to be exposed. And have we reason, Sir, to expect a more permanent purity after the apostles were gone? and yet, Sir, you set them up in the place of, or with Christ and his apostles as our example in frequent communions. Your own assertion of their having fifty-two or three hundred and sixty-five communions in a year, and year after year, without any mark of disapprobation, is a sufficient evidence that neither you nor they are proper examples or leaders in this, and probably many other matters. We have already noticed, Sir, the disorders of the Corinthian church and of the seven churches of the lesser Asia, whose disorders are recorded by divine authority in the book of Revelation, where you clearly see exceptions to their primitive love and scriptural simplicity; and as to the subsequent ages, those who are acquaint with their history could easily point out strong objections to their primitive purity and scriptural simplicity, even your quotation from the celebrated Chrysostom is an evidence of this: "The eloquent Chrysostom complains, *In vain we stand at the altar; none come to receive.*" Did our blessed Lord, Sir, stand at an altar when he instituted this ordinance, or his apostles when they dispensed it? Yet these ages you celebrate as the standard of purity and fervent love; and indeed if their love was to be measured by the frequency of their communions, we dare not pretend to vie with them. The church of Rome, Sir, lays mighty stress in many particulars upon your celebrated antiquity; and with them you might find your "blood of expiation flowing, and fire from above consuming the sacrifice, and a cloud of incense rising up from the altar, and an-

“ ascending at the throne of God, an offering of a sweet-smelling savour.” The papacy itself traces the Pope’s pretensions through the thorny copse of antiquity, even to our Lord’s constitution of it, in the person of the apostle Peter: and Diocesan Episcopacy, has travelled through the same road, by the guidance of some keen advocates of the church of England. And I would only ask you, Sir, whether you can be willing to follow these ages of purity in all these things which can be clearly proved to have existed in them, besides the church of Corinth and the seven churches of Asia, to whom, by divine inspiration, the book of Revelation was addressed.

And now, Sir, I request that you either adduce better evidence, that your felt deviled frequency is marked by divine authority in the sacred scriptures, or that, like an honest man, you ingenuously give up your bad cause; which, indeed, is scarcely to be expected from a clergyman.

Your second objection, Sir, is, “that by rendering the duty too common, it would deaden affection, destroy solemnity, banish reverence, and thus be injurious to the religion which it is designed to aid.” In answer to this, Sir, you expatiate in a very long and sophistical declamation; wherein you stigmatize the objector as a formalist, &c. and express your astonishment that it should ever be proposed by a living Christian. It is a task too great for me, Sir, to follow you thro’ your rapid exclamations and flashes of wasted eloquence, without argument; wherein you only display your capacity of perverting truth, reason and common sense, instead of treating your subject, and refuting your opponents with calm reason and words of soberness. In answer to your supposed objection, I would notice, that in objective representations, which strongly affect our senses, the frequent repetition of them greatly weakens, and has a native tendency to destroy or annihilate their effects. Now, Sir, as the sacrament of the supper is a sensible representation divinely instituted, as an aid and excitement to the exercise of faith in a crucified Saviour; your extravagant frequency is inconsistent with its nature and design.

I shall here present you with a plan of my sentiments, and if you shall judge it inconsistent with scripture, or reason and good sense, I shall lie open to conviction, from your eloquent pen.

It hath pleased the divine Sovereign and head of the church, to institute a most beautiful as well as useful variety of ordinances, for the salvation of sinners, and edification and comfort of his elect people or saints : and in each of these he calls for our subjection or obedience, according to their several natures and ends. Now, Sir, I observe, that in each of these various divine ordinances and services, the meritorious death and atonement, made by the Lord Jesus Christ, has not only a principal place, but is indeed the sum and substance of them all. We are not, therefore, to imagine, that Christians confine their remembrances of the death and dying love of our blessed Lord ; nor their love to him, to the particular commemoration of him in the sacramental communion. Some of these divine ordinances and institutions are designed for the conversion of sinners, and to be the daily food of the children of God ; and are the proper spiritual business of every day ; so that if Christians were properly prepared, and suitably exercised, they might be said to commemorate the Lord's death habitually and practically every day : and in this sense, Sir, I should heartily approve of your more than three hundred and sixty five commemorations of his death, in the course of the year.

Others of these divine ordinances belong more properly, though not exclusively, to the Christian Sabbath, and to the preaching of the gospel, which is a stated feast, and wherein the divine head of the church makes unto all people, saints and sinners, a feast of fat things and wines on the lees, &c. Now you know, Sir, that to preach the gospel is to preach a crucified Christ. In this respect, believers do, every Sabbath, commemorate the blood of atonement, and love of a dying Saviour, who is here represented as dying for our sins, and risen again for our justification. These, Sir, answer to the ordinary or daily religious services of the Jewish church, under the Old Testament dispensation ; and in all these

Jewish institutions, whether more public or private, the faith of the people of God was then exercised in a believing contemplation and remembrance of that Saviour who was to come, and of that meritorious death, or atoning blood, which we, in the sacrament of the supper, are in a distinguished manner, called to commemorate, as already fully completed; when Jesus said upon the cross, "It is finished."

There were other institutions of the same general nature, subservient to the same glorious design, viz. to exhibit to the faith of the Jews, that Saviour who was to come, and was by his meritorious obedience, to finish transgression, make an end of sin, and bring in an everlasting righteousness. These extraordinary ordinances or institutions were, by far, less frequent than the others. They were in general only annual, their seasons were indeed precisely fixed and settled by divine sovereignty. Of these, two in particular are allowed to correspond with the New Testament sacraments, viz. Baptism and the Lord's supper. The first of these, viz. Circumcision, was indeed the more ancient institution, yet we have not any account of solemnity attached to this sacramental institution; its performance was not even an appendage of the priestly office; only, in general, it was commanded to be done at the highest peril. The other Jewish sacrament, viz. the Passover, was, by the divine institution, to be attended with much more solemnity, and many particular appendages: the sacramental lamb must be separated from the flock, four days before it was to be slain, &c. It was to be eaten with bitter herbs; unleavened bread must be purged out from the custody or dwelling of all the Israelites; it was to be roasted with fire, and entirely eaten, without breaking a bone, even the smallest.

You reproach us, Sir, with making a difference between the two New Testament sacraments, as sacraments equally of divine institution; and by an unaccountable inadvertency, condemn those solemnities which we think are, in the nature of things, as well as by the sacred word, suitable to the dispensation of the Lord's supper, though not to the sacrament of baptism. The passover, Sir, was a typical representation

of the same glorious objects which are symbolically represented to us, though in a different manner, in the Lord's supper. I do not indeed suppose, Sir, that you are so much a New Testamentarian, as to reject instructions in the New Testament sacrament, from the divine institution of the passover. You will find, Sir, four days which may be called preparatory to the killing the paschal lamb. Do you think, Sir, that these days were not typical of something of a like nature, with respect to our New Testament passover; or had the Jewish passover more need of preparatory days and exercises than the New Testament passover? Certainly, Sir, these preparatory days necessarily called for religious exercises not common to other days. Again, Sir, the passover was to be eaten with bitter herbs; shall we receive no instruction from this part of the divine institution? Do you think, Sir, it is unnatural, or foreign to the subject, to say, that these preparatory days were partly designed for gathering the bitter herbs; and that their eating the passover with bitter herbs was typical of that painful contrition and anguish of spirit which New Testament believers experience, while they look upon him in the gospel passover, according to the prophecy, Zech. xii. 10. *And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication, and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him.* Again, Sir, were there not six feast days subsequent to the principal feast day? Does not this warrant, at least, somewhat of a like nature, subsequent to our Christian passover? Again, Sir, the Jewish passover, though fixed with divine authority, to a determinate day, and none of the Israelites can be supposed to be ignorant of it, was yet to be proclaimed by sound of trumpet. What was the design of this, Sir? if not to intimate the necessity of suitable preparation for this solemn ordinance. I hope, Sir, you will no longer judge it criminal to point out these distinctions between two sacraments equally of divine institution; nor reprobate, in your unbecoming manner, the difference which marks our conduct with the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper. Nev-

er were there stronger evidences of a rooted prejudice than what appears in your Letters. If you were one, Sir, who might be supposed to be endowed with slender intellects, or a very limited capacity, it might extenuate, though not excuse you, especially in the self-confident manner in which you express yourself and treat your subject. You seem, Sir, to take little or no notice of the awful denunciation expressed by the apostle, against unworthy communicating; and the important exhortation, deducted from, or consequent to it, "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup." I think, Sir, that these are not suited to your extravagant frequency, and ridicule of preparation. Nothing seems to attract your attention but an *idol* which you call *frequency*, and vainly pretend to have proved from the divine institution and apostolic example; wherein, I think, you have not proved any thing but your own weakness, real or designed, and the strength of your favourite prejudice. Even frequency itself is but a deduction, yet you arrogantly and repeatedly call it the positive command of our dying Saviour; and from this deduction you form another, of three hundred and sixty-five communions, in the course of a year.

The sacrament of the supper, Sir, is a divinely instituted *feast*; yea, the only instituted feast under the gospel. This character is diametrically opposite to that frequency which you would impose upon us, as the positive command of our dying Saviour. A feast, Sir, is a character which distinguishes the day wherein it is made, from other or common days; and distinguishes the entertainment from common meals. To extend the frequency of a feast to the extent of our common meals, is contrary to its nature, and destructive of its specific idea: and one of its distinguished characters, is, that it is a feast for friends, or what you call *separate*: and in this you allow that it is different from all the other public ordinances. In the gospel, Sir, Christ covers a table for all people, and his invitation is, "To you, O men, I call," but in the Lord's supper, his address is, "Eat, O friends," or in the words of the sacred institution, "Take, eat, this is my

“ body broken *for you.*” And shall there be no more solemnity in, or preparation for such a feast, than for a common meal? The Jews, Sir, distinguished even the sixth day of the week, as a preparation for the Sabbath; and shall we be calumniated as superstitious devotees, for aiming at preparation for our most distinguished Sabbath, or feast days? Your plan in this matter, Sir, is most unsuitable to the condition of the saints of God in this their imperfect state; they are constantly engaged in a spiritual war within, and exposed to temptations without. Besides, Sir, they are immersed in the toils and cares of human life, and their minds often embarrassed and distracted from spiritual things; and therefore we who are in the bodily tabernacle, do groan, being burdened.

One would be almost tempted to think, Sir, that you were burlesquing the distressed state of the people of God, in your not only making light of their preparations for this solemn ordinance, but even ridiculing them: and this, Sir, you build upon your mistaken and undefined idea of *frequency*. Perhaps, Sir, you and some of your associates, may have attained such eminent degree of spiritual perfection, in the Christian life, as to feel little need of preparation for the most solemn exercises of religion: But, methinks, you should have some more sympathy with, and compassion of your poor suffering brethren, who come so far short of your great attainments. The apostle of the Gentiles gives them other sort of treatment; “ For we have not an High Priest “ which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are; yet “ without sin.” Heb. iv: 15. He does not, Sir, as you do, reprobate them on account of their infirmities, nor tread with his foot the smoking flax, because it did not blaze like his own. I shall here make a pause, by saying, that,

I am, Reverend Sir,

The Servant of Christ and his

Church, in the defence of the

Gospel and all its Ordinances,

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LETTER III.

REVEREND SIR,

I SHALL now consider, briefly, your treatment of days of humiliation and thanksgiving, as observed by us, in connection with the dispensation of the Lord's supper. Only, Sir, I shall premise some things for obviating your mistakes about this matter; if we might indeed suppose that your mistakes were real, and proceeded only from ignorance.

You grossly err, Sir, in asserting repeatedly, that your opponents believe that days of humiliation or thanksgiving, or extra-ordinary preaching, are essential to the solemn ordinance of communicating. This you could not but know. These exercises were seldom used by any of the communicants, but such as were members of the congregation where the solemn ordinance of the supper was dispensed; and even in these congregations I have known several members, who, on account of some connections or circumstances in their worldly callings, did not observe these days, even the fast days. Yet this, Sir, was no objection to their communicating: and hence it is evident, that these days were not reckoned essential to communicating in the Lord's supper. You maintain, Sir, that because they are not of divine institution, they are therefore superstitious or will-worship; and are even perverting the sacred ordinance, instituted by our Lord. It is true, indeed, that these days are not specifically mentioned in the New Testament: but this, Sir, is but a negative proof or rather disproof of them. I hope you will acknowledge that the Jews were as much restricted to the divine institution as we are. Now, Sir, if you are not one of our New Testamentarian novelists, you will please to accept of a remarkable exemplary instance, from the Old Testament. I need not tell you, Sir, that in the divine institution of the passover, seven days only were appointed, or set apart to accompany it, besides the four preparatory days, which I already took notice of. Yet in that remarkable passover, observed

by the godly Hezekiah and his kingdom, you will find in 2 Chron. xxv. 13. that the whole assembly took counsel to keep other seven days; and they kept other seven days "with gladness." Now, Sir, do you think that this was a perversion of the divine institution of the passover, or an encroachment on its simplicity and purity; or that it met with a repulie from that God who hath said "that obedience is "better than sacrifice?" Though the righteous and holy Sovereign did not, yet by your treatment of us, you would have confounded them with the silencing question, "Who "hath required this at your hands?" You find, however, that it has every evidence of divine approbation. You will find also, Sir, another instance, which, according to your way of writing, you will stigmatize as will-worship, in 2 Chron. vii. 8. 9. 10. "Also at the same time Solomon kept "the feast seven days, and all Israel with him, a very great "congregation, from the entering in of Hamath, unto the "river of Egypt. And in the eighth day they made a so- "lemn assembly: for they kept the dedication of the altar "seven days, and the feast seven days. And on the three "and twentieth day of the seventh month, he sent the peo- "ple away into their tents, glad and merry in heart for the "goodness that the Lord had shewn unto David, and to So- "lomon, and to Israel his people." You will certainly allow, Sir, that this was a piece of divine worship not in- stituted. I might advance some others of a like nature, but all these you will class with the supereries and superstitions of the Romish Antichrist. As you pretend to condemn and stigmatize days of humiliation, thanksgiving, and extra- preaching, only in so far as they are connected with the New Testament sacrament of the supper: I shall endeavour to point out their suitableness to that solemn ordinance, which you divest of every idea of solemnity, and degrade to the level of a common meal: Though perhaps we may in vain plead for the fashionable favour of toleration and forbearance in our sentiments, differing so widely from yours.

I have already noted, that the passover was to be eaten with bitter herbs, and that these typified humble contrition,

or, if I may call it, *fasting*. If this exercise was specially instituted, as an essential appendage of the Jewish passover, can we suppose it unsuitable to our New Testament passover? Or, Sir, can we view your fine piece of painting, though expressed by you rather in the Romish stile, without mourning, while by faith we look on him whom we have pierced? Perhaps, Sir, you may restrict this humiliating contrition, to the very act of communicating: this we think inconsistent with that exercise, and in the Jews', inconsistent with their having the Paschal lamb set apart, for several days, and their bitter herbs gathered prior to their communicating, in this sacrament. Can you possibly imagine, Sir, that while they had these symbols, or types among their hands, that their humble contrition must be under lock and key, till the very instant of communicating? Indeed, Sir, your notions of spiritual exercises, are so entirely swallowed up by your idol "*frequency*," that it is possible you may even digest this absurdity; but the people of God do not find it so easy to get their souls brought suitably to this exercise, and will be ready to say with our Lord, in another case, "This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." And now, Sir, we may sing with the Psalmist these plaintive notes, Psal. lxxix. 10.

*" My tears, and fasts, t' afflict my soul;
 We're turned to my shame,
 When sackcloth I did wear, to them
 A proverb I became."*

The question then, Sir, is not whether these exercises of humiliation and thanksgiving are essential to the Lord's supper: but whether they are suitable employments for those who are engaged in this solemn ordinance? And as the dispensation of this sacrament is determined by that radical Presbyterian court of Christ's house, the congregational session; these determine the propriety of the time when, and other circumstances attached to, or accompanying that solemn ordinance. The fast and thanksgiving, then, which you so strongly reprobate, are appointed by a court of Christ's house at that time, as suitable to the edification and comfort of that branch of the church of Christ; nor can there be any employment so suitable to the solemn work.

You insist at great length, Sir, against our fasts, as being inconsistent with the nature of that duty, as you justly say fasts are only occasional. Your whole reasoning upon this point is founded upon a material error, viz. that communicating is a stated duty; which you always take for granted, but never have proved. Give up with this error, Sir; allow communicating to be what our Saviour has indeed left it, viz. an occasional duty; and then, Sir, fasting will be an exercise, occasionally suited to that occasional duty, and whenever you prove your stated or periodical times of communicating, sanctioned by the authority of our Lord or his apostles, in the sacred oracles, your reasoning on this matter will have some consistency; but till this is done, your vain show of reasoning is like water spilt on the ground.

You present us, Sir, with what you would impose upon us for argument, from the principles of all the reformed churches, of which you express a large group, no less than nine; the sum of which you give us from the Belgick confession. "Nay the Belgick confession asserts roundly" "all the abuses and accursed inventions which men have added to the sacraments, and mingled with them, we justly reject as a real profanation; and affirm, that all the godly are to be contented with that order, and those rites alone, which Christ and his apostles have left us:" "So that, in the view of these bold witnesses for truth, every thing added, as a necessary appendage to the manner which Christ and his apostles have delivered to us of celebrating the sacraments, is an abuse, a profanation, an accursed invention."

Now, Sir, do you really think that these eminent reformers did intend, or would apply such thundering condemnations against the precious exercise of spiritual fasting, or humiliation and mourning, as a preparative for the precious and important duty of communicating in the Lord's supper? Do you not blush, Sir, at your impeaching and slandering them with such sentiments? This you appear to be conscious of; for after you have, as you say, brought the matter nearer home, and asserted, "that our numerous services about the holy supper are diametrically opposed to the current of

public sentiment in the church of Scotland, and to her solemn repeated enactments, from the commencement of the reformation, down to the establishment of the Westminster confession of faith ;” after all these quotations from the several periods of the reformed church of Scotland, which are indeed the same with the Belgick confession already recited, you add, “ It is very true that these acts are levelled immediately against corruptions which have taken place in the manner of distributing and receiving the sacramental elements.”

Here it appears, Sir, that you have applied their sentiments contrary to their own design and intention. You first, by a rule of your own making, conclude, that our days of humiliation, &c. connected with communicating, are superstitious additions to, and corruptions of the divine ordinances ; and in this view you pervert the sentiments of these eminent reformers, against those who are indeed of the same principles with themselves.

You allow, Sir, the propriety of the apostle’s exhortation, “ But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat.” Is it possible, that a believer in Christ can reflect upon the past, or inspect the present state of his own heart ? can he penetrate into its secret chambers ? can he say with the apostle, “ I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members ? ” Rom. vii. 23. I say, Sir, can he be thus exercised, without being penetrated with most intense sorrow, while, at the same time, he, by faith, contemplates the wounded Saviour, pierced by his sins. It is impossible, Sir, but that his grief must be pungent, and in this condition the divine exhortation is presented to him, 1 Pet. v. 6, “ Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.” And indeed, Sir, I have found in my long ministerial experience, that those who were most deeply plunged in humble contrition, and severe anguish of spirit, upon the approach of this solemn ordinance, have also therein enjoyed the most striking and manifest manifestations of the divine presence, and most

abundant consolations of Christ, while they commemorated his death and love, by eating and drinking the symbolical bread and wine; and are thereby prepared, yea, animated, for songs of praise and thanksgiving, and made to conclude the solemnity with the Psalmist, in that beautiful fortieth Psalm :

“ *He took me from a fearful pit,*
 “ *and from the miry clay,*
 “ *And on a rock he set my feet,*
 “ *establishing my way :*
 “ *He put a new song in my mouth,*
 “ *our God to magnify.”*

You say, Sir, “ Will it be pretended, that the days in question are helpful to devotion ? ” and you answer, “ this very pretext is urged in behalf of Christmas and Good-Friday, and Whit Sunday and Lent, ” &c. (page 108.)— Certainly, Sir, your nerves here do undergo another spasm. This manner of reasoning you seem to have learned from the Socinians and Pelagians, who would stigmatize the Protestant divinely revealed doctrines of original imputed guilt and imputed righteousness, by ranking them, as you do, with Popish trumpery, &c.

Thus you stigmatize solemn humiliation, and its concomitant exercises, by enlisting them under the same Romish banner, with all the rest of the ungodly, superstitious and idolatrous trumpery.

I have shewed, Sir, that as these exercises are, in themselves, duties of divine appointment ; so they are suited to prepare and assist the Lord’s people in the solemn work of communicating. You even reprobate the extent of preaching the gospel upon these solemn occasions ; yet you admit of a justification of your Friday evening sermon, before the communion, as a preparative, I suppose, for that solemn ordinance.

This justification, Sir, will equally apply, according to the old maxim, “ *Majus et Minus non variant in specie.* ” It is as really criminal, Sir, by the divine law, to steal a horn-spoon, as to steal a horned cow.

Now, Sir, you should inform us if it is lawful to seek, or use any means for promoting devotion, in our observing the Saviour's dying command, or what these means are which you would be pleased to approve; since you so strongly reprobate humiliation, with its concomitant exercises, and even the abundant preaching of the gospel of our blessed Lord.

Do you really think, Sir, that your idol, "*frequency*," which you have formed in your own imagination, and have beaten out with hammer and line, like the old idol-makers, into three hundred and sixty-five communions in the year, will fully compensate, and more than compensate, the neglect of these important exercises? and therefore, Sir, they must be devoted as a sacrifice, yea, an holocaust, to this idol: for it is evident, that your quarrel with these is, on account of their inconsistency, or incompatibility, with the very existence of this your *idol*.

I have already said, Sir, that I approve of frequency of this communion, although I maintain that this frequency is not a positive or expressed command of its divine institution. I yet think it a proper deduction from the divine institution; so that you are arrogant in imposing frequency upon us, as by a positive command. Much less ought you, Sir, to impose your extravagant frequency under your forgery of a divine command.

I have shewed that humiliation and thanksgiving are proper concomitants of this ordinance, and suited to its nature; and are proper means for promoting these spiritual exercises and distinguishing graces, wherein the divine acceptance, and spiritual consolations and benefits, in communicating, consist. And you and I, Sir, must undergo the decision of the supreme Judge, upon our different sentiments and publications; and therefore it is a matter of inferior importance that we should undergo the decision of our Christian brethren, to whom you address your eloquent letters.

You take notice, Sir, that Messrs. Blair and Livingstone, whose congregations were adjacent to each other, so managed the matter, that their people could enjoy the opportunity of communicating eight times in the year; and I have point-

ed out that in those places of Scotland which are populous, there are few people who have not the opportunity of communicating at least eight times in the year; and many might enjoy it more frequently, without any excess of toil or expence.

You know, Sir, that, three times in the year, every male among the Jews was, by divine appointment, or, as you speak, by a *positive command*, obliged to be present at Jerusalem, at their three great feasts; and, besides their toil, travel, and expence of travelling, they were obliged to remain there six or seven days at each feast.

These feasts, Sir, were Old Testament communions, where the Lord's people enjoyed communion with him, and with each other; and this most extensive communion appears to me to be the principal reason of this universal meeting.

I think, Sir, your novel plan is a confining, or restricting our sacramental communion of saints, to a particular congregation; whereas our established custom extends this communion very widely, even to an indefinite extent, and introduces a reciprocal knowledge of the saints to each other, and a mutual intercourse with each other, by which spiritual intimacy and friendship does often commence, and is promoted, to their mutual comfort and advantage.

This I speak from my personal knowledge: Besides, Sir, the variety of gifts and graces in the variety of ordinances, upon these occasions, natively tends to the edification of the children of God; and as the gospel net is cast among a multitude of fishes, and, as you yourself notice, did at one time, upon a sacramental thanksgiving, inclose about five hundred: And if there is joy in heaven upon the conversion of one sinner, what joy must there have been upon this reprobated day of thanksgiving? And, although there has but seldom, in these latter days, been such a draught; yet these reprobated days have many times effected, by the divine blessing, encreased and multiplied enjoyments of communion with God, in the various ordinances dispensed. So that you need not be surpris'd, Sir, that those who have experienced, and been witness'es of these things, are not willing to part with

them, having, from their knowledge and experience, contracted such prejudices, as are indeed proof against your blathing eloquence, your unfounded assertions and false reasoning. And I think, Sir, it would be impious in you to degrade Omnipotence, by requesting or expecting its exertions for convicting them. I shall give my reader time to breathe a little, before I proceed to conclude our correspondence; and, wishing you all grace,

I am, Reverend Sir,

The Church's Servant,

In defence of the Gospel.

L E T T E R I V.

REVEREND SIR,

I HAVE taken notice of every thing in your Letters which appeared to me to claim attention, or which had the appearance of argument: You have many excentric descants, wherein, supposing your sentiments or principles to be proved or granted, you make an application, or form deductions agreeable to them; and, in proof of these deductions, you prostrate your splended eloquence. Many precious truths, and pious expressions, which, in your application of them, are not supported by reason or common sense, I shall instance. Your last letter, which is entitled, "*Benefits of scriptural Communion*:" Now, Sir, if your plan is not peculiarly scriptural, your whole fabric of these accumulated benefits falls to the ground; and I think I have made it evident, that you have failed in your proof of your darling "*frequency*," from the divine oracles, or from *apostolic* authority and example: It is, therefore, an imposition, Sir, to inscribe your plan "*scriptural communion*." Your plea from antiquity, I have already noticed; and you, Sir, have formally given it up, by saying, in page 106th, "Antiquity is a wretched standard of truth; the abominations of Popery are more ancient than they by several centuries;" meaning

sacramental fasts, &c. Let us then, Sir, be restricted to scriptural antiquity, in the frequency of communion, and then your principal objections to fasts and thanksgivings will be removed, and you will be freed from a temptation to slander and malign these important exercises, as superstitious will-worship, perverting the precious ordinance of the Lord's supper, &c.

I cannot help being surpris'd, Sir, at your making a man of straw, and having dress'd it up, you inscribe it "*either for or duty*;" and upon this creature of your own fancy, you exhaust your whole quiver of shadows. The apostle, Sir, comprehends the whole dispute in these few words, 1 Cor. vi. 12. "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient," &c. You certainly know, Sir, that very many moral duties have their dependance on a vast variety of circumstances; so that, what in one case would be an important duty, would, in another case, be a criminal violation of duty: Of this we have a striking example, Exodus xiv. 15. "And the Lord said unto Moses, wherefore criest thou unto me," &c.

I am out-wearied, Sir, in tracing you through your prolix declamations, where it is impossible to follow you, *cata-podos*, or foot for foot, without swelling my writing to an enormous length, and re-publishing the greater part of yours. You frequently reflect upon your supposed opponents for begging the question, or allowing the disputed point: Yet, there are few pages in your letters free of this; and indeed your eloquence is exhausted by, and your imagined arguments are entirely founded upon, this master-piece of conduct.

I request, Sir, that if you shall continue in the same sentiments, and shall again publish in defence of them, that you will write more like a scholar, like a Christian, and like an honest man; and I think the whole of your subject may be comprehended in one sheet of paper: and I request that you may not apply either the sacred word, or the expressions of our now glorified reformers, either beyond or against their native intention, or well known principles.

You have a quotation, or somewhat like a quotation, at second hand, from "The Trust, a sermon, by Mr. Wilson, of Perth." I never heard, Sir, of such a sermon, and know not, indeed, for what purpose your quotation is. There is a most noted sermon in print, by the Rev. Gabriel Wilson, of Maxton, called the *Trust*, upon which you have blundered. Had you, Sir, the piety, the solidity and temper of these two eminent Wilsons, it would have saved us both the trouble of these prolix and shameful discussions.

You produce, Sir, several respectable characters, who have been of your sentiments. You will certainly allow, Sir, that a greater number of respectable ministers have, without making any objection, adhered to our mode of dispensing the Lord's supper; and, though you are pleased to enroll them among Popish devotees, it will not be readily granted by those who enjoyed their precious ministry. Dr. Erskine, Sir, is a valuable minister of Christ; and Mr. Ebenezer Erskine was equally so. But, Sir, none of those ministers whom you adduce as patronizing your sentiments, would have had the audacity to treat the subject as you have done. No, Sir, they had more modesty and good sense.

Some have objected to our manner; the irregularities which they think are occasioned by our numerous and long continued assemblies; and you yourself alledge that many are outwearied, and pay little attention to the divine ordinances; but let each read the account given in the evangelists, of the numerous assemblies who were collected by the ministry of John the Baptist, even all Judea and Jerusalem; and the numerous assemblies, and their long attendance upon the ministry of our blessed Lord. I believe, indeed, Sir, that many more would object, if with decency they could. Malachi i. 13. "Ye said also, behold what a weariness it is; and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts!" I have even heard some calculating the public loss resulting from a national fast or thanksgiving.

If a Berean, or Annabaptist, or Independent, or Classite, had published such things as you have done, they should have passed without any notice from me. But when they

are published by one who, I suppose, has some connection with Secession, though perhaps remote, and perceive the contagion of its evil sentiments, it puts me in mind of the spurious brood, of Mangrel Marriages, mentioned in Nehemiah, who spoke partly in the language of Athdod, and partly in the language of Canaan.

May God bless you, Sir, with repentance, and forgiveness of your folly; and may he mercifully convince those who are more criminal, and more inexcusable, in exciting you to such a business. May God make you a polished instrument, if it is his will, for doing good in his church, by leading others in the way of truth and duty.

I am, Reverend Sir,

The Servant of Christ and his Church.

A D D R E S S

T O

S E C E D E R S.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

AND fellow-witnesses for the covenanted reformation and established principles of the church of Scotland, to which we stand bound by the Divine law in the sacred oracles; by the most solemn covenant engagements, voluntarily undertaken by our fathers, in a national capacity; solemnly recognized by our fathers in the Secession, and established by them as the terms of ministerial and church communion in that society, and frequently recognized by us personally, when admitted to the enjoyment of church privileges in the Secession. When I consider these things, and look back to the happy days which the Secession enjoyed in cleaving to these principles, and enjoyed divine ordi-

nances upon that footing; and when I contrast them with the melancholy state of Secession at present, I cannot help crying out with Job, "Oh! that it were with us as in months past, when the candle of the Lord shined upon our tabernacle." But alas! my dear friends, the Secession has departed from the covenanted God of our fathers, like the Israelites who survived Joshua, and the generation who had seen the wonderful works of God. There has arisen another generation, which know not the Lord, nor yet the works which he has done for our Israel, in Scotland. See Judges, chap. iii. And alas! my friends, as the Lord's priests anciently were first in the transgression, so our leaders, at this day, have caused us to err from the ways of the Lord.

For these things, may not our eyes run down with tears, like the church in the days of Jeremiah? May we not, like them, cry out, *how is the gold become dim! how is the fine gold changed, &c.* The poor remnant of Seceders which are left like sheep scattered without a shepherd. Their ministers have not only deserted their principles, but their apostacy is aggravated by their violation of the most sacred engagements; by solemn oaths and vows; and these things carried on clandestinely, in a most treacherous manner; by which multitudes of their people have been artfully drawn to accompany them in their apostacy.

By these means they have got possession of our meeting-houses, which were built for the maintenance of our principles; and having gained, by deceitful artifices, a majority in our church courts, they claim a legal title to all these emoluments, which in equity belong only to those ministers who retain the original principles of the Secession.

And having now got possession of the seat of judgment, their authority is exercised in condemning as *schismatics*, all who will not submit to their usurped authority, and accompany them in their apostacy. Like the Jewish council of old, they have agreed that all who will acknowledge Christ, in his truths and ways, according to the original principles of the Secession, shall be cast out of their synagogue. They have already excommunicated several congregations in this

manner, and not only deprived many individuals of the privileges of Christians, but are threatening with church censures, those ministers who, retaining our original principles, receive into communion those whose consciences will not allow them to submit to their treacherous apostatizing ministers.

Did we, my friends, leave the ministry of the established church, on account of these and such like evils? and can we consistently adhere to the ministry of those, whose apostacy from our principles is aggravated by treachery and the violation of the most solemn vows?

I shall present you, my friends, with some extracts from the writings of a very eminent minister, in the established church, published upwards of forty years ago, where you will find my seeming severity, upon the like deceitful conduct of ministers in their subscriptions, or ordination engagements: he says, that his severity “turns not so much
 “ on the truth or importance of these doctrines, as the gross
 “ absurdity of men’s subscribing what they do not believe.
 “ However firm a persuasion,” he says, “I may have of a-
 “ ny system of opinions, the right of private judgment and
 “ freedom of enquiry, I would wish to remain sacred and
 “ inviolable. Those who use this liberty with courage and
 “ with candour, ought to be held in the highest esteem by
 “ every one who differs from them. But for men, at their
 “ entrance on the sacred office, solemnly to subscribe to the
 “ truth of what, all their lives after, they endeavour to un-
 “ dermine and destroy, is at once so criminal and so absurd,
 “ that no reproof given to it can possibly exceed in point
 “ of severity. I take the liberty here,” says he, “of trans-
 “ cribing a passage from a printed sermon, preached at the
 “ opening of a Synod in Scotland: where speaking of these
 “ subscriptions, the author says, “This is so direct a viola-
 “ tion of sincerity, that it is astonishing to think how men
 “ can set their minds at ease in the prospect, or keep them
 “ in peace after the deliberate commission of it. The very
 “ excuses and evasions that are offered in defence of it, are
 “ a disgrace to reason, as well as a scandal to religion.”

" What success can be expected from that man's ministry,
 " who begins it with an act of so complicated guilt? How
 " can he take upon him to reprove others for sin, or to train
 " them up, in virtue and true godliness, while himself is
 " chargeable with direct, premeditated and perpetual perjury?
 " I know nothing so nearly resembling it, as those cases in
 " trade, in which men make false entries, and at once screen
 " and aggragate their fraud, by swearing, or causing others
 " to swear contrary to truth. This is justly reputed scanda-
 " lous, even in the world; and yet I know no circumstance
 " in which they differ, that does not tend to shew it to be
 " less criminal than the other." There may be some of the
 " laity who have themselves an inward aversion to the sys-
 " tem of doctrine, contained in our Confession and Cate-
 " chisms, and who, for that reason, are pleased with such
 " clergy as preach in a different strain: but sure I am, who-
 " ever will reflect upon the circumstance of their having all
 " subscribed to it, can never have a high opinion of their
 " conduct, upon the whole, but must condemn the insincer-
 " ity, let the propositions subscribed be in themselves either
 " true or false.—For my own part, I am grieved to see so
 " little learning among the generality of the ministers of this
 " church, which is probably owing to their poverty. But
 " I am in a good measure comforted with this reflection, that
 " the weakest commonly do as much service as the wisest;
 " because, though they were never so willing, they are not
 " able to fill the audience with any admiration of them-
 " selves, and therefore their attention must be fixed upon
 " the truths delivered, and not the parts and manner of the
 " speaker.—Many a clergyman will not yield the one
 " half of those things to be sins, that were admitted to be so
 " a century ago; nor do they see the one half of the evil of
 " sin, either in clergy or laity, that was once taken for grant-
 " ed. Those who have not the same ideas of morality, can
 " never be supposed to have an equal impression of the in-
 " sufficiency of the same degree of it.—Now, it seems very
 " reasonable to believe, that as human things are never at a
 " stand, a church and nation, in a quiet and peaceable state.

“ is always growing insensibly worse, till it be either so
 “ corrupt, as to deserve and procure exterminating judg-
 “ ments, or in the infinite mercy of God, by some great
 “ shock or revolution, is brought back to simplicity and pu-
 “ rity, and reduced, as it were, to its first principles.”* Ap-
 ply these things, my dear friends, to the present state of
 Secession.

You will see in the preceding letters, what are my senti-
 ments, as to the new mode of dispensing the Lord's supper.
 I never had an objection against dispensing, or communi-
 cating, in that precious ordinance; but I cannot acquiesce,
 either in Mr. Mason's sentiments, or manner of writing, nor
 in the manner in which you are treated by our novelist mi-
 nisters, and their partizans. I do indeed think that the mode
 hitherto practised is as agreeable to the scriptural authority,
 and more suitable to the nature of that sacred institution. I
 could, indeed, wish that Christians were more animated by
 that spirit, which excited them to frequency of communion,
 in the early days of the Secession, when religion possessed
 the vigour of youth, but which, alas! bears, at present, the
 melancholy signals of old age. This is no new thing in
 the churches of Christ, as you see in the seven churches
 of Asia, and in the whole sacred history of the Jewish
 church. I nevertheless hope, that the Secession will experi-
 ence the accomplishment of that divine promise, Psal. cii.
 13. “ Thou shalt arise and have mercy on Zion; for the
 “ time to favour her; yea, the set time is come. For thy
 “ servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust
 “ thereof.” And let us remember, that “ the Lord is not
 “ slack concerning his promise, as some men count slack-
 “ neis.” 2 Pet. iii. 9. Let us not, then, my dear friends,
 give way to unbelieving despondency; let not our hearts
 wax faint, and our hands feeble. Let me address you in
 the words of David's General, 1 Chron. xix. 13. “ Be of
 “ good courage, and let us behave ourselves valiantly for the
 “ cities of our God, and let the Lord do that which is good

* *Dr. Wallington's Apology for the Characteristics.*

“ in his sight.” Cleave to your principles, and remember what God hath wrought for his church, for the church of Scotland; for our principles and covenants, and for the Secession. Though, alas! she has now, Jeshurun-like, waxen fat and kicked. Call to mind the conduct of our renowned ancestors, in wrestling to attain and hand down these principles. Remember how they fought, how they suffered: and shall we, coward like, suffer them to be deceitfully wrested from us? and be justly reproached that we are not valiant for the truth; and let not posterity have reason to execrate us for losing that fair inheritance, purchased for us by our fathers, at the price of every worldly enjoyment, even life itself. Study well our principles, my dear friends; try them by the divine standard.

Pray much; yea, wrestle with God, and give him no rest, till he make Jerusalem a quiet habitation.

Be strong in the faith, and the greater the difficulties are which you have to encounter, the more will you glorify God by believing. Say with the Psalmist, “ I will go in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of thy righteousness; even of thine only.” Psal. lxxi. 16.

Study to maintain union and harmony among yourselves, and to maintain a Christian temper and conduct with respect to the adversaries of our principles; and let the whole of your conversation and conduct in the world be such as becomes the gospel of Christ, and a testimony for the truths and ways of the Lord.

I have frequently thought that I was concluding my public work, but have been again and again excited by a concern for the cause of religion, in the Secession, to appear in public. And I cannot help entering a caveat against any surmises after my death, “ that I have in any manner or degree changed my principles.”

Finally, my Brethren, farewell: Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

FORM OF A LIBEL.

WHEREAS by the law of God, by the laws of every civil state, and by the determination of the church of Christ, Perjury is a crime of the most atrocious nature, not only punishable by the injured Sovereign of heaven, and by every civil state, but particularly calls for the highest censures of the church of Christ.

Nevertheless, of verity it is, that you the Rev. A. B.—— C. D. and your confociates, having cast off the fear of God, and regard to every law, human and divine, have traiterously violated the most solemn oaths and vows, made in the most public manner, in the face of the courts of Christ and his church ; and have proceeded in a habitual course of this sinful conduct, though often called upon to desist and repent.

Some particulars of these violated oaths and vows are here inserted.

Formula. Quest. 1. Do you believe the scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the word of God and only rule of faith and manners.

Quest. 2. Do you sincerely own and believe the *whole doctrine* contained in the Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms, compiled by the Assembly of Divines that met at Westminster, with commissioners from the church of Scotland, as the said Confession and Catechisms were received and approven by the acts of the General Assembly 1647 and 1648, to be founded on the word of God ? And do you acknowledge that said Confession and Catechisms are the confession of your faith ; and that you resolve, thro' divine grace, firmly and constantly to adhere to the doctrine contained in said Confession and Catechisms, and to assert, maintain and defend it, to the utmost of your power, against all errors and opinions contrary to it ?

Quest. 3. Do you acknowledge the perpetual obligation of the national covenant of Scotland, * * * * * and of the solemn league and covenant ? And do you acknow-

ledge that public covenanting is a moral duty, under the *New Testament* dispensation, to be performed when God, in his providence, calls to it?

Quest. 5. Do you approve of the act, declaration, and testimony, published by the Associate Presbytery, and maintained by the Associate Synod, * * * * *? And do you, through grace, resolve to prosecute the ends of said testimony, by maintaining and defending the truths of God therein asserted, in opposition to every contrary error and corruption?

Quest. 11. And all these things you promise and engage unto, through grace, as you shall be answerable at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, with all his saints, and as you would desire to be found among that happy company, at his glorious appearing?

Which oath and vow you having perseveringly and obstinately violated, in the face of the church of Christ and the courts of his house: You ought to underly the highest censures of the church of Christ, and the courts of his house; viz. to be deposed from the sacred ministry, and cast out of the visible church.

If this Libel should not have the benefit of a judicial hearing, in any court, yet it will certainly have the cognizance of the Supreme Judge, when he comes with all his saints.

REVEREND SIRS,

Mr. A. B. and C. D. &c. It is expected that you will produce Answers to the above Libel, and either plead guilty, or make what exculpatory defences you can, in the same public manner that you are charged with these evils; and remember, *that he that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whose confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have mercy.*—
Prov. xxviii. 13.

F I N I S.