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AN

ACCOUNT OF THE PEOPLE

*racin* CALLED *Lanes B.*

SHAKERS:

THEIR

FAITH, DOCTRINES, AND PRACTICE,

EXEMPLIFIED IN THE

LIFE, CONVERSATIONS, AND EXPERIENCE OF THE AUTHOR  
DURING THE TIME HE BELONGED TO THE SOCIETY.

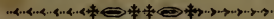
TO WHICH IS AFFIXED A

HISTORY OF THEIR RISE AND PROGRESS  
TO THE PRESENT DAY.



BY THOMAS BROWN,

Of Cornwall, Orange County, State of New-York.



Prove all things, hold fast to that which is good. *Apostle Paul.*  
An historian should not dare to tell a falsehood, or leave a  
truth untold. *Cicero.*

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1812.

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DISTRICT OF NEW-YORK, ss.

BE IT REMEMBERED, that on the third day of February, in the thirty-sixth year of the Independence of the United States of America, THOMAS BROWN, of the said District, hath deposited in this office the title of a Book, the right whereof he claims as author, in the words following, to wit:

“An account of the People called Shakers: their Faith, Doctrines, and Practice, exemplified in the Life, Conversations, and experience of the author, during the time he belonged to the society. To which is affixed a History of their Rise and Progress to the present day. BY THOMAS BROWN, of Cornwall, Orange County, State of New-York. Prove all things, hold fast to that which is good—*Apostle Paul*. An historian should not dare to tell a falsehood, or leave a truth untold—*Cicero*.”

In conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, entitled “An Act for the Encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the time therein mentioned.” And also to an Act, entitled “An Act, supplementary to an Act, entitled an Act for the Encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints.”

CHARLES CLINTON,

Clerk of the District of New-York.

T. R.  
BEEIAC

REVIEW

*Of this work, by the Editors of the Port Folio, (a valuable Literary Work Published in Philadelphia,) for October, 1812, Vol. 8.*

“ Among the variety of religious sects with which our country abounds, none appears more worthy of investigation than the society which is the subject of the volume before us, on account of their peculiar opinions, and extraordinary mode of worship. It was from motives of literary curiosity, that we sought after the history of Mr. Brown, and the very curious information which it contains, will exempt it from the neglect and inattention with which we are disposed to regard every species of religious controversy.

“ We should do injustice to the author if we did not say, that no marks of intemperance or passion are visible in his narration. He seems, on the contrary, to inquire anxiously after truth, to use all possible means of enlightening himself on the important subjects of his doubts, and even after his secession from the society, though he cannot adopt their principles, he renders justice to the good order and decency of their conduct, their exemplary charity, and the kind treatment which he experienced from the body of their community. These circumstances strongly recommend his narrative.

“ The author’s own experience is related with great accuracy, and furnishes an excellent proof into what whimsies a heated imagination may lead the most sensible and sober men.

“ Totally ignorant as we are of the author, we do not hesitate to say, that he writes and acts like a very sober good sort of a man. There is even an interesting simplicity displayed in his endeavors to learn the doctrine of the sect, and leaves nothing untried, no solitary meditation, no painful conferences to reconcile them to his ideas of reason.

“ We have been liberal in our quotations from this volume, because its contents are of a nature to excite a lively interest with regard to so extraordinary a sect.”

82482

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## PREFACE.

AS a full and impartial account of the people called Shakers, has never yet been presented to the publick, although the attention and inquiry of a large portion of the community, has been excited to an unusual degree, by their novel appearance and unexpected increase, the author of the following work, has been prevailed upon to give the world the result of his experience and investigation among them. He is confident, that their rise, tenets, and practices are more singular (the present state of the world, and general information of mankind being taken into consideration) than those of any religious sect which has taken its rise in the christian world since the first promulgation of the gospel.

The following correspondence which took place between the author and the church, when the ensuing publication was nearly finished, will, I doubt not, be accepted as being properly adapted for a prefatory introduction.

*To the Church called Shakers.*

FRIENDS,

I think proper to give you the following information, viz. since I withdrew from your society, I have written for publication, and have now nearly finished, an account of my life and experience among you; in which I have given a statement of the many conversations we have had respecting your faith, doctrines, and practices, with the most authentick account of the rise of the church that can be obtained.

I feel not, and therefore write not as an enemy; but merely give an impartial statement according to the best of my ability and knowledge; which knowledge, I have spared no pains nor expence to obtain from every credible source of information. I wish to publish nothing but what is strictly the truth; and I have studiously avoided using one word that would have a tendency to misrepresent, or convey a wrong idea.

Notwithstanding, that there may be no room left for undue animadversions, I hereby make you the offer, if you please to accept it, of examining the work, in manuscript, previous to

publication; and if it can be clearly pointed out to me, wherein I have not given a correct account, I shall be willing to alter and correct, as it is only my intention to act the part of a faithful historian.

Having once had a privilege among you, and being now what you term a backslider, you may therefore consider me as an individual beneath attention; but you will pay some deference to mankind in general, and as what I offer for your examination is of a publick nature, I conclude you may think it worthy your attention.

Deference to you as a religious society, together with the advice of some of your members, and several other people, has induced me to make you this offer: if it should meet with your approbation, I will thank you to let me know it in due season.

I shall at present add no more, but that I remain, with sentiments of esteem, Your Friend,

THOMAS BROWN.

LUCY WRIGHT and ABIATHAR BABBOT,

First in the Ministrations.

Cornwall, November, 1808.

A short time after, I received from the Church, the following answer:

*To Thomas Brown.*

“PROFESSED FRIEND,

“A letter with thy subscription, has been put into my hands, directed to “Abiathar Babbot,” purporting, that thou art about publishing thy Life, Experience, &c. with a full account of our Faith, Doctrines, &c. proposing to offer the manuscript for our examination, previous to publication. So far from wishing to offend thee with a reply incongruous with thy feelings, it is with much regret that we have any thing to say or do in the matter; but since we are called upon in a circumstance like this, we deem it expedient to reply, That we have no desire to examine thy writings. It is sufficient that we know thee, Thomas; and be thy opinion whatever it may concerning thy own abilities, we must candidly tell thee, that we are far from considering thee competent to the task thou



\*

"hast undertaken relative to the subject of *our faith*, either as  
 "it respects thy knowledge of the work of God among us, or  
 "thy understanding of our doctrines; and we think we may  
 "add with propriety and candour, that thy letter presents no  
 "very favourable specimen of literary talents; therefore, we  
 "explicitly declare our disapprobation of thy undertaking: yet  
 "be assured, that this declaration is not made from any apprehension  
 "of harm that may accrue to us from thy publication; but a regard  
 "to truth, and respect to the world of mankind, who are unacquainted  
 "with us or thee, and who are liable to be led into error by ignorant  
 "pretenders to a knowledge of our doctrines, urge us to withhold our  
 "sanction from publications of that description emanating from such authors.

"We hope these plain reasons will be sufficient to induce thee  
 "to relinquish thy design without any further trouble; for we don't  
 "wish to be urged to the disagreeable necessity of exposing this  
 "correspondence to the publick, in order to prevent serious inquirers  
 "from being imposed upon by such like publications.

"Respecting the publication of thy own life, abstractedly considered,  
 "we have nothing to do. In that thou hast an undoubted right to act  
 "thy pleasure; charity, however, induces us to suggest to thee, as  
 "our candid opinion, that it would be much more to thy credit to lay  
 "aside thy pen, and turn thy attention to some better employment  
 "than to expose thy life to the world by thy writings.

"We hope the plainness of this reply to the subject of thy letter,  
 "will not be imputed to any desire in us to give offence; but to  
 "the privilege we claim of expressing our sentiments freely on that  
 "subject.

"In behalf of the Church, Signed,

"DAVID OSBORN.

"*Water-vollet*, December 21, 1808."

#### ANSWER.

RESPECTED FRIENDS,

Your letter of December 21, 1808, purporting to be an answer to mine  
 of November last, was lately received; and had you barely expressed  
 in your reply, that you had "no

“desire to examine my writings,” you would probably have heard no more from me in this way; but you have chosen, it seems, to sit in judgment on me and my abilities, and to dictate for me. It was my wish that you might see the work I had written, before you would undertake to condemn it. If you had seen it, you would then have been able to judge whether I was competent to the task or not, and you would have had it in your power to point out to me any errors it might contain; but no, you wait not for that, but at once, and in terms not altogether pleasing, say, “*That be my opinion whatever it may of my own abilities, you must candidly tell me, that you are far from considering me competent to the task I have undertaken.*” You likewise preface this with an expression, which, by its ambiguity and vulgar use, is an insinuation either of immorality in my conduct, insincerity in my heart, or ignorance in my head. To which of these, or whether to all, you have not thought fit to confine yourselves. Your expression is—“*We have no desire to examine thy writings: it is sufficient that we know thee, Thomas.*” It obviously appears by this expression (as I intimated above) that you mean to imply something prejudicial to my character, something too bad to mention, as there is no evil conduct but what is implied in that expression. And from the opinion I entertained of your civility, I could not have believed you would have so imitated the vulgar part of mankind; and that when they are displeased, as it is then common for them to say, “Ah, I know you; I know what you have done.” Why, my friends, what do you know of me? Speak out, for such sarcasms and dark implications are unkind and ungenerous, and do not belong to a people making the profession which you do, of mildness and plainness of speech. But you know in truth, you cannot alledge any thing prejudicial to my character; and therefore you would imply every thing bad in a laconic, sarcastical sentence. And I could not have believed you would have treated me thus for the kindness of my offer.

You observe, that “*my letter presents no very favourable specimen of literary talents.*” I confess it does not: I have no pretensions to such talents. But though I boast not of literary talents, nor



of splendid abilities, I still trust I am capable of relating in writing such matters of fact as my eyes have seen and my ears have heard. You have also blended my want of literary talents, with inability as to the subject of your faith, "*understanding your doctrines, or having any knowledge of the work of God among you.*" This is what I did not expect, in as much as I hoped that a sacred regard to truth would have been adhered to in all your correspondence. As to the work of God among you, I shall leave the reader to judge for himself.

You explicitly declare your disapprobation of my work even before you have examined it. This mode of destroying the authenticity of a book, will be accepted by those only who pin their faith on your sleeves: and I trust you cannot have the boldness to publish to the world, that it is impossible for a man to obtain a knowledge of your faith and doctrines, who has been a member of your Church upwards of six years, and who has spent much of his time in discourses with the Elders and others who had an understanding of the faith, in order to procure that knowledge. But I perceive you have not written particularly for me, but hereafter for the publick, in order to rebut or invalidate my publication whenever it may make its appearance; and therefore you wish to make people believe, I have not an *understanding of your faith and doctrines*, and am not *competent to the task I have undertaken*; but the understanding reader will then see, that I have a thorough knowledge thereof: likewise, a competent knowledge of the History of the Church from the earliest time to the period in which my work ends, and will be able to judge whether or not I have written with candour.

As to the world of mankind being ignorant of me, as you mention, it concerns me little: where I am known, however, I have the satisfaction to think I shall be believed.

I shall adhere strictly to truth in my representations of you, your faith and practice; and I am conscious to myself of having conducted this undertaking with upright intentions. And though you, in part of your letter, seem apprehensive that my "*writings may impose on serious inquirers,*" yet in another part you assure me "*there is no apprehension of harm to you from my publica-*"

"*tion.*" If you are of God, and led by him as you profess to be, my publication cannot hurt you, but will (agreeable to the scriptures) work for your good.

Towards the close of your letter, you allow that "*I have an undoubted right to publish an account of my own life, and with that abstractedly considered, you say you have nothing to do.*" These expressions are so vague that I am at a loss to know what you really intend by them. If you mean to say, that in the publication of my life, I have no right to treat of my experience and connection with you, of your faith, &c. I candidly think you are mistaken. Almost all authors, whose lives I have read, have given the religious opinions, &c. of the sect or sects they have been connected with, and I presume it will not be thought arrogance in me to follow their steps. I would further observe, that the proposition I made to you to examine my book, was in order that you might have an opportunity to point out to me your objections, and seasonably testify against whatever might be found amiss; and likewise, that you might have less plausibility to censure me in future of speaking untruths, as you have others who have separated from your society.

I still remain, with sentiments of respect,

Your Friend,

THOMAS BROWN.

Cornwall, May 12, 1809.

To this letter I received no reply. A few observations will conclude this prefatory introduction.

In relating the conversations I had with the Elders and others of the society, and the discourses I heard both in public and private, I have given them in their own words, except where their remarks were short, or not sufficiently explicit: to give the reader a just idea of their meaning I have enlarged, and wherein they were too prolix, I have abridged them; in every particular taking the utmost care not to misrepresent their real sentiments. If the reader should find any seeming contradictions in the several discourses and explanations of their doctrines and faith, given in the ensuing publication, I am not chargeable with them, having only scrupulously related matters of fact.

In the History annexed to this work, to avoid repetitions, I have omitted several things which are inserted in the narration of my life; and I have been careful not to record any thing but what has been procured from authentick sources, and the truth of which has been well substantiated. Though this society may deem several of the transactions related, prejudicial to their cause, and on this account will condemn both the work and its author, yet this, however, has not in the least deterred me from my undertaking, and particularly from keeping close to well authenticated facts, exclusive of every other consideration; and I feel persuaded that the unprejudiced reader will observe that candour pervades the whole. I am far from thinking I have made no mistakes, notwithstanding I have used all the care and precaution that I could. If any such be pointed out to me, I shall be thankful for the intimation, especially if there should be a demand for a second edition. I might add more, but nothing more is necessary to enable those to judge of this work, who judge with understanding, impartiality, and candour. I therefore conclude by expressing my gratitude to God for his continued kindness and mercy through every period of my life, and for his gracious aid and benediction in enabling me to bring this arduous undertaking to a close.

## ERRATA.

N. B. (b) signifies from the bottom of the page.

Page 61, line 3, for *we*, read *I*—p. 71 l. 6 (b) f. Matt. r. *Luke*—page 99, line 22, for *cannot*, read *can*—p. 134, l. 10 (b) f. in, r. *into*—p. 139, l. 7 (b) f. mortal, r. *immortal*—p. 140, l. 4 (b) f. thou, r. *though*—p. 158, l. 20 f. and, r. *that is*—p. 169, l. 8 (b) f. 1803, r. 1802—p. 230, l. 2 (b) f. pales, r. *pale*—p. 257, l. 9, f. March, r. *January*—p. 266, l. 7 (b) f. hat, r. *that*—p. 319, l. 2, f. companions, r. *companion*—p. 345, l. 9, dele *that*—p. 346, l. 18 (b) f. that, r. *his*—p. 347, l. 13 (b) f. barked, r. *acted*—p. 347, l. 14, f. lie, r. *lay* p. 347, l. 17 (b) r. *with* after accompanied, and *by* after succeeded.

For *Neskauna*, wherever it occurs, read *Niskeuna*.

There are several other typographical errors, but not of sufficient importance to be noted here.

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N. B. The names of many subscribers in several of the above mentioned and other places have not yet come to hand; but as in printing the work it has amounted to above forty pages more than was expected, the deficiency in this list of subscribers, it is presumed, will be readily excused.

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AN  
ACCOUNT, &c.

PART I.

*From the time of the Author's acquaintance with the people called Shakers, and joining their Society, until he began to doubt ; and more minutely examine into the propriety of their Faith, Doctrines, and Practice.*

A FEW sketches of my life, previously to my becoming acquainted with the people who are the subject of this *history*, may, perhaps, be acceptable to my readers.

I was born the 26th day of May, 1766, of reputable parents, who then resided in the city of New-York. Soon after my father joined the Society of the people called *Quakers* ; and with an acquaintance and some connection with this people I was brought up. In my juvenile years, I was much disposed to serious inquiry and reflection ; and thought if I lived to be a man, I would not be wicked as I saw many were. But when I attained the age of fourteen years, I became immoral and wicked, and continued so until my eighteenth year.— Then I became *thoughtful* and *serious*, which produced a reformation in my life and practice ; and at length I was brought to experience what I had been an utter stranger to before, and which was what is believed by Christians in general to be that conversion which entitles the soul to the kingdom of heaven. But losing a feeling sense of what I had enjoyed, I again had my trials, as I could not rest in any thing short of true peace of mind. About three years after I had become seriously disposed, it was

impressed on my mind as a duty, to appoint meetings, and to speak by way of exhortation to those who assembled to hear me. In the year 1787, I joined the people called Quakers, and was admitted as a member of their society: with them I continued about three years, and spoke several times in their meetings. Then I left that society, so far as related to particular membership; but still continued to hold meetings occasionally in a separate standing, and often preached among the Methodists. In the year 1793, I was received a member of that society. Soon after they gave me a certificate to officiate in public, by way of exhortation. Accordingly I travelled, in connection with that society, about two years; in which time I became so much reduced in my circumstances, that I was necessitated to engage in some business to support my family. Notwithstanding, I did not wholly neglect that which I conceived to be my duty in the ministerial line.

For about two years previously to my joining the people who are the subject of the ensuing publication, I was not, in a strict sense, a member of any sect, and thought I would never again join any, unless I could find a society whose practices, in my view, were more conformable with the precepts of Christianity. In short, for the space of a year before I became acquainted with the people called Shakers, I entertained an opinion, that the millennium was near at hand, and that I should live to see it: and I wished to find a people prepared, according to the scripture account, to meet Christ at his second coming.

I had often heard of the people called Shakers, by verbal accounts, as a strange people; but on the 13th of April, 1798, (on a journey to Philadelphia) I saw a small pamphlet, written by V. Rathbone, which gave an account of them, which surpassed every thing I had heard or read before respecting any people professing religion. I thought it not possible, that any sect in this enlightened age of the world, especially in this country, could answer that description. I thought that they might be very different from what they were represented, as truly religious people have always been misrepresented. I had understood they held to some doctrines, which ap-



peared to me more pure than professed by others. I was therefore determined, (if God pleased) to go and see them, and examine for myself. Accordingly, some time in August, (the same year) I was at *Albany*, and the first Sabbath after I arrived in the city, I went to see them; a number of whom resided at *Watervliet*, commonly called *Neskauna*, (eight miles north-west from *Albany*.) I attended their meeting: they sat silent a few minutes, then arose and stood in their order, and sung a tune without words; after which, four or five sung a more lively tune, to which the others *danced*. After dancing about half an hour, they all kneeled in silence a few minutes; as soon as they arose, their leader spoke of an intermission. During which, they retired to a dwelling-house on the other side of the road, opposite to the meeting-house, and left me ruminating what kind of a people and religion this could be; for they appeared to me very solemn, and I thought they were a sincere people. At the conclusion of the afternoon meeting, I wished to converse with some of them; as I began, from their solemn appearance, to conceive a favourable opinion of them. But as no one spoke to me, I hardly knew how to introduce myself. However, I was determined not to leave them, without farther information respecting their faith, &c. I saw I was losing an opportunity to speak to them, (as they were silently returning to their places of abode.) I therefore immediately spoke to a young man, and said, I have often heard of these people, and believe I have heard many things which are *false*; I have now come some distance to see them, and cannot feel satisfied to return without having some conversation, in order to a better understanding of their religious principles, than I have hitherto had from hearsay and flying reports, and I would thank you to inform me where, and of whom I may gain this information? He pleasantly replied, "Your request can be granted: go with me to my *father's*, and he will give you whatever information you desire."

I gladly accepted of his invitation, and went home with him. I was kindly received, and soon invited to dine. After which, I had an agreeable conversation

with the young man's father, (Benjamin Youngs.) Towards evening he invited me to tarry all night. I did so; and we conversed till two o'clock in the morning, on various points of their faith; of which, for the sake of brevity, I think best to give now only the substance, as these subjects will be treated of hereafter. I shall state our discourses by way of questions (for many I asked) and answers, which may serve as the contents of all that follows to be treated of in the course of this work, respecting their doctrines; for he possessed as much information as any one I ever conversed with among them, and was as able to communicate his ideas. And I the more willingly insert the substance of our discourses here, as the account I received from him, corresponded with what I heard from the *Elders*, and others in their faith, for near two years afterwards. At which time, they began to hold forth to me the real doctrines and practice of the church; which appeared to me (and will hereafter to the reader) somewhat different, particularly from those passages which I have, for this reason, inclosed in brackets—thus, [ ].

### THE SUBSTANCE OF MY ADDRESS.

I have come to see you, and to have a little conversation (if agreeable) concerning your faith and religious profession; as I sincerely desire to know the way of life and salvation. To prove all things; hold fast that which is good—1 *Thess. v. 21*.

The reply was, "To those who come sincerely to inquire of us respecting our faith, we are willing, according to our ability, to give all the information they desire."

1. *What is your fundamental principle?*

"We believe it is *sin* which has separated all souls from God, his favour, and true happiness. Therefore our fundamental principle is, to *confess and forsake all sin*, and live an holy, upright, just life. Believing that this is the only way we can return to God, be heard by him, have his favour, and enjoy true happiness."

2. *As this is the fundamental principle of all religious people, wherein do you materially differ from others?*

“ We materially differ from others in not only confessing our sins, but in receiving power to *forsake them*. “ We have experienced the second coming of Christ, and “ are in (what is called) the millennium\* ; a time that “ has been prophesied of, in which Satan shall be bound † ; “ and a dispensation of greater power and grace given “ than ever hath been before. It being now the time “ the Lord is searching † Jerusalem (i. e. the church) as “ with candles. † Therefore, no hypocrite can abide in “ this church, continuing in hypocrisy, or in the com- “ mission of any private sin whatever, as such may in “ other churches.”

He gave me all the information he could respecting the first revelation, and preaching of the gospel of the second coming of Christ. He also discoursed of the chosen witnesses and servants of God, (*Ann Lee, Wm. Lee, and James Whittaker*) who received the first gifts of the gospel. In the next place he gave a history of their coming from England in the year 1774, to America, and settling here in the wilderness. Then he recited the poverty, difficulties, trials, labours, and persecutions, they passed through ; and mentioned a variety of miracles wrought in support of their mission, and the gospel they preached, (a more particular account of the whole of which will be seen hereafter.) He mentioned many scripture prophecies that spake of this day and work : and I thought he gave many good reasons for all he advanced.

3. *What reasons, or rather proof, have you, to believe that Christ has made his second appearance, and that you are in a superior dispensation to all others?*

He answered—“ We have abundant proof, both external and internal. Outwardly we know by the fruit ; “ as Christ said, *By their fruits ye shall know them*—(Math. “ vii. 16.) Also, *by this shall all men know that ye are my*

\* *This was what I did not expect to hear. Glorious news, indeed! thought I, if true. I was almost in transports.*

† *Rev. xx. 2.* ‡ *Zeph. i. 12.*

“disciples, if ye have love one to another—(John xiii. 35.)  
 “And further, all the apostolic gifts are in the church,  
 “as the gifts of miracles, &c. According to the prom-  
 “ise, *These signs shall follow them that believe; in my name*  
 “*they shall cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues.*  
 “Matt. xvi. 17. (This being a proof with us, that oth-  
 “er churches are not the churches of Christ; these signs  
 “follow not; miracles are all ceased among them.)—  
 “And inwardly we have greater evidence. By *confes-*  
 “*sing our sins*, according to to the *gift* of God, we receive  
 “power to forsake and to feel forgiveness of all our sins.  
 “In consequence of which, in our spiritual travail we  
 “know the promise is fulfilled, *I will cleanse them from all*  
 “*unrighteousness.*” 1 John, i 9.

4. *How and on what condition are persons received as members?*

“By making an honest confession of all their sins in  
 “thought, word, and deed, which they can at the time  
 “remember to have ever committed. The confession is  
 “made to one or two of the Elders—[and they tell no  
 “person what has been told them, but endeavour to bu-  
 “ry all in oblivion.] This was the gift of God to the  
 “church in the first opening of the gospel, or dawning  
 “of this dispensation, and likewise the practice of the an-  
 “cient people of God, as we read in Josh. vii. 19. Prov.  
 “xxii. 13. James v. 16.”

5. *What is done if sins are committed after confession, and what is your order of excommunication?*

“Such among us who fall into sin, confess the same,  
 “and are laboured with by the Elders accordingly.—  
 “But they cannot hold any in union, who, contrary to  
 “their own faith, and counsel of the Elders, continue to  
 “live in the practice of any known sin, [on any other  
 “accounts they disown none.] We believe it is as ne-  
 “cessary to forsake as to confess.”

6. *What is your method of church government?*

“By a ministrations, according to the Mosaic dis-  
 “pensation. God spake to Moses, and he delivered the  
 “words he received to the people. So in this church,  
 “Christ is the head; his second coming is spiritual in his  
 “people. The first in the ministrations is, (her we call)



“ the Mother of the church. She, immediately receiv-  
 “ ing the revelation of the mind and will of God, com-  
 “ municates the same to the Elders, whom, in this gift,  
 “ she has appointed to preside over, or to have the care  
 “ of the church and families, in the several places where  
 “ they are settled. Those Elders are obedient to her ;  
 “ those they have the care of, are obedient to them.  
 “ [ Though all have the privilege to act their own faith,  
 “ as the gospel don’t bind creatures any farther than to  
 “ forsake all sin, and every practice each individual feels  
 “ condemned for. As to civil, immaterial, or non-essen-  
 “ tial matters, we let all think, and act for themselves ;  
 “ and do not differ with, and excommunicate for senti-  
 “ ments or conduct, that does not immediately concern  
 “ our salvation. The Elders do not usurp authority  
 “ over any, only advise, and leave them to act their own  
 “ faith without censure ] We are to do what we are  
 “ conscious is right, and refrain from what we are con-  
 “ scious is wrong ?”

7. *What is your faith concerning worship ? I see you dif-  
 fer from all others in praying and singing ; and what  
 scripture or reasons have you for dancing ?*

“ True and acceptable worship is performed by those  
 “ only who keep the commandments of God : accord-  
 “ ing to the words of Christ, *If ye love me, keep my com-  
 “ mandments*—(John xiv. 15.) Prayer is the sincere de-  
 “ sire and breathing of the soul ; therefore, we seldom  
 “ pray vocally ; as, God knows the language and desires  
 “ of our hearts, a composition of words, expressive there-  
 “ of, is, to him (who knows best what we stand in need  
 “ of,) not necessary. As to singing, though we sing  
 “ vocally, we seldom sing hymns, or a composition of  
 “ words. Every soul praises God according to its state,  
 “ and travail. Our singing is that which St. John  
 “ heard, (Rev. xiv. 3, 4.) that no man could learn, (or  
 “ understand) but those who were redeemed from the  
 “ earth, and not defiled with women, or rather (accord-  
 “ ing to our travail) the song of redemption and com-  
 “ plete salvation. Vocal prayer, and singing a compo-  
 “ sition of words, are accepted when done in the gift of

“ God ;\* and at some future time we may be so led to  
 “ pray and praise. Dancing is the gift of God to the  
 “ church, or the way in which it has been led. In this  
 “ exercise we receive that strength, and consolation, to  
 “ which the world are total strangers. This is reason  
 “ sufficient for us, if we could produce no other. But  
 “ it may be clearly proved that it was a worship among  
 “ the ancient people of God ; and prophesied of, that it  
 “ should be again restored to the people of God ; partic-  
 “ ularly by Jeremiah, xxxi. 13.”

8. *I have understood you forbid marriage, and that you separate man and wife; what is your faith and conduct herein?*

“ We forbid no one ; we say, *It is better to marry than  
 “ to burn ;* that is, it is better to marry than to do worse.  
 “ *All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it  
 “ is given.* Christ says farther, *He that is able to receive  
 “ it, let him receive it—*(Matt. xix. 11, 12.) It is given  
 “ unto us, and we are able. We have come out of the  
 “ order of natural generation, to travail in regeneration.  
 “ *In the resurrection, they neither marry, nor are given in mar-  
 “ riage—*(Matt. xxii. 30.) This second coming of Christ,  
 “ and last dispensation, is that resurrection.

“ And as to separating man and wife, they are not  
 “ separated against their feelings and faith ; [but are  
 “ left to act their own faith, and live together if they  
 “ choose, or think best so to do.] You have proof of  
 “ this before your eyes ; it is now seven years since I  
 “ joined this people ; I still live with my wife and fam-  
 “ ily, and transact business for myself. The gospel  
 “ does not bind creatures ; the Elders usurp author-  
 “ ity over no one, but the church can hold no husband  
 “ and wife in union, who live together after the course  
 “ of the world. We believe the gospel requires us, not  
 “ only to forsake all the vain pomps and vanities of the  
 “ world, but likewise all the carnal desires, and incli-  
 “ nations of the flesh.”

In order that I might have a clear understanding of the doctrine respecting marriage, he gave me an account,

\* *At this time I little knew what they meant by the gift of God.*

according to their faith, of the increasing work of God, in order for man's complete salvation and redemption, in the different dispensations of God's grace, from the fall of our first parents to the present day; particularly represented, or signified in Ezekiel's vision of the holy waters—chap. iv. 7. Also an increasing purity in heart and practice, being required in a succeeding and superior dispensation, which was not required in an antecedent, and inferior.

As these are the principal subjects on which we conversed at that time, I shall proceed with my narrative until our next conference. I parted with this kind family in the morning, the father of which, earnestly invited me to come and see them again. I told him, I thought I should. I returned to *Albany*, and first went to see my friend *Wm. Carter*; I told him I had been to see the people called *Shakers*. He invited me into a private room, and desired me to inform him what I thought of them.

I told him I had a more favourable opinion of them, than I had before I saw them. I gave him an account of the meeting, my kind reception, and principal part of the conversation with *B. Youngs*, with the reasons he advanced for their faith; and concluded by saying, I am surprised you should live many years, so nigh such good people, and never once go to see them: I wish you now to go, and you will hear such preaching, and doctrine, and see such practice as you never heard, nor saw before; and afterwards you will be glad you went.

He said, "I will go." I bid him farewell, and in a few days arrived at home. But the *Shakers*, and the millennium doctrine, my friend *B. Youngs* had preached to me, was daily in my thoughts; for I had already caught some of their spirit, and could not be easy without seeing them again.

I left home on the 14th of November, and walked to *Albany*, (one hundred miles,) where I arrived the 19th: I first went to see my friend *John Taylor*; he soon told me "I must go to *Wm. Carter's*, and make a confession, for I had ruined the family." I told him I knew not what he meant. He said, "Try and recollect" I replied, I am not conscious of doing any wrong, so I shall

make myself easy. He did not keep me in suspense long, but informed me, that "in consequence of my preaching to *Carter* about the Shakers, he had been up to see them, confessed his sins, and joined them; on account of which, his wife and children were very much dissatisfied."

Next morning I went to see him; as soon as I entered his house, his wife was all in a rage; she ordered me out of the house, got the horse whip, shook it over my head, round and about me with many threats, and ordered one of her children to go and tell her eldest son, (who was in town,) to come home, and he would do so and so. In short, she abused me, and used very harsh expressions. I tried to moderate her anger with mild words, and to reason with her, but she was quite outrageous, and *Carter* sat silent, not daring, apparently, to speak a word. I told her, I hoped she would see her error, and left her with a consciousness that I had done no wrong, having only complied with the earnest request of her husband. Afterwards their eldest son threatened to shoot me, or some way take my life. I wrote to him on the consequences of such threats, informing him if I heard the least whisper more of the like kind, I would proceed as the law directed.

I left *Albany* 21st of November, 3 o'clock, P. M. in order to pay *B. Youngs* another visit. Here I may observe that at that time, there was not a house on the road from the suburbs of the city, to the Shaker settlement; and by reason of a deep snow, which fell the preceding evening, I got lost in the woods, and froze both my feet, and did not get to my destined place till 3 o'clock in the morning, when I was quite exhausted, and on the point of perishing. The family received me with tenderness, and administered to my necessities. But notwithstanding every attention which was paid to me, it was eight or nine days before I was able to walk. I tarried ten days, during which time, and for seven years afterwards, their kindness to me, was such as to cause me to remember them with gratitude and affection.

*B. Youngs* being a man of a friendly, sociable turn, we had much conversation on the faith, as professed by



him and his brethren ; to all which I made no objections, except wherein it was necessary. to gain a clear understanding of any subject or point, on which he was treating. Indeed I did not go to see them to object and dispute, but to ask questions, and gain information. I shall treat the subjects respecting the doctrines of the church, as in the first conference.

Previously to our entering on particular subjects, respecting their faith and practice, I observed to him that having considered the subject of our former discourse, and having thereby been enabled to think favourably of the people with whom he was in union, I had come to have some farther conversation, and if he was in a superior dispensation of light and grace, I hoped I might become convinced thereof, and then I should be willing to take up my cross and follow Christ in the way that he professed.

He replied, “ I am happy to see you, and am willing to give you all the satisfaction in my power ; and hope your labour and suffering, in coming to see us, and our conversation, will not be in vain, but wish you may be richly rewarded ”

9. *I have understood there are some among you, who have all temporal things in common, somewhat like unto the primitive christians ?*

“ The principal motive, desire, and labour, of the children of this world, is to gain a temporal interest, to accumulate wealth for themselves and posterity, to consume it, as the apostle expresses it, *upon their lusts*—(James iv. 3.) But the principal motive, desire, and labour, of the people of God, and true followers of Christ, is to *lay up a treasure in heaven*, and to labour for the support of the gospel, and those who are obedient thereto ; become willing when taught, or required, by the gift of God, to give up their temporal interest, and join in a united one ; or, in other words, to support a joint interest, and gather into family and church order, having all things common.

“ The church is made up of many families, (though in spirit and practice, all are one ) The number in each family, is according to the convenience of houses,

“ and circumstances. A deacon in each family, trans-  
 “ acts the temporal business: others have no worldly  
 “ concern, as food, raiment, and all things necessary,  
 “ are by him provided; and what each family has to  
 “ spare, is carried to the office, and deposited in the care  
 “ of the deacon of the church, to be by him given for  
 “ charitable purposes, to those who are in want, and for  
 “ the support of the gospel. Thus it is among us, (i. e.  
 “ those who are brought into family, or church order, as  
 “ before mentioned,) according as it was under the  
 “ power of the gospel formerly: *all that believed, were*  
 “ *together, and had all things common.*”—Acts ii. 44.

10. *Is it particularly required of all to come into this joint interest, and give up their property? and are persons who have no property, as willingly received, and made equal sharers?*

“ [None are required contrary to their feelings and  
 “ faith; each one acts his own faith, particularly in  
 “ all civil things, that do not obstruct the growth, or in-  
 “ crease of the soul’s salvation; and those who are poor,  
 “ are as willingly received as the rich.]”

11. *If those who have deposited interest in common stock, and laboured faithfully for a longer, or shorter time, and finally lose their faith, or for some cause, choose to go away, is what they deposited, returned?*

“ The church do what is just, and right, in all cases.  
 “ I have known instances of it being returned, and  
 “ compensation made for their labours.”

12. *What do you believe, particularly, concerning the scriptures?*

“ We believe they are a true record of the work of  
 “ God in past dispensations, written by inspiration, and  
 “ profitable to those to whom they were directed, and  
 “ to those under the dispensation in which they were  
 “ written; and that they end under the dispensation of  
 “ the first coming of Christ. Nevertheless, we believe  
 “ them fraught with prophecies, from beginning to end,  
 “ of a further, and final display of God’s grace in a fu-  
 “ ture day, when the *man of sin* would be revealed, and  
 “ a full, complete, and finished salvation obtained.”

13. *What do you believe concerning (what some professors call) universal and saving light?*

“ We believe Christ has *enlightened every man that cometh into the world*—(John 49,) and that a talent, or talents, is *given to every man to improve*—(Matt. 25,) and all who live according to their light, and improve the talents that God has given, have found justification, and acceptance with God. For as the scriptures express it, a manifestation of the spirit, is given to every man to profit withal—(1 Cor. xii. 7,) and disobedience thereto, is the cause of condemnation.”

14. *What is your faith concerning justification?*

“ We believe all those have found justification, who have been obedient to their light, and knowledge; and as we are obedient to the gospel of the second coming of Christ, we find justification, and sanctification.”

15. *Then do you believe in perfection, or a state of freedom from sin, attainable in this life?*

“ Such who are obedient to the gospel of the second coming of Christ, and abiding in the travail of regeneration, overcome all evil, so as not to sin in thought, word, or deed, and the wicked one toucheth them not.”—1 John xv. 18.

16. *What do you believe concerning perseverance, and falling from grace?*

“ We believe creatures may receive the grace of God, and experience a good degree of the power of the gospel; nevertheless fall away, and become darker in their minds than ever they were before. Though we believe a state attainable, from whence there will be no more going out.”—Rev. iii. 12.

17. *What is your faith respecting the condition of man in the fall?*

“ Mankind in a state of nature, (or before they hear the gospel, and yield obedience to it,) are spiritually dead, lost and sunk far from God; and of their own nature, inclined to evil continually. But as the natural sun shineth on the world, giving warmth and life, so doth the sun of righteousness shine on the hearts of all; and according to the light and warmth received, they have power to improve; and when they hear the gospel in the gift of God, they have power given to choose or refuse. The gospel, according to the dispensation

“ of it, is the power of God unto salvation, raising such  
 “ out of the fall as believe, receive, and obey it.”

18 *What do you believe concerning the doctrine of election and reprobation?*

“ We believe in election. Christ is the elect of God,  
 “ and all men in him are elect. He is the head of every  
 “ man. They are not created machines, but have a  
 “ will and power given to choose or refuse; and when  
 “ they believe in, and receive the gospel, particularly of  
 “ Christ’s second coming, they are benefitted by this  
 “ election. We deny that God ever decreed to shut  
 “ any soul eternally from his mercy and favour.”

19. *It appears to me you believe in the final restoration?*

“ We believe the gospel in the power of it, will be  
 “ offered to every soul, if not in time, in eternity, and  
 “ finally will prevail, and conquer, and bring all crea-  
 “ tures back from whence they are fallen; and every knee  
 “ shall bow, and every tongue confess Christ to the glory of  
 “ God.”

20. *What is your faith concerning the divinity of Christ and his sufferings?*

*Do you believe he was co-equal and co-eternal with the Father?*

“ We believe him to have been what the scriptures  
 “ testify of him; that is, the *second Adam*, like unto the  
 “ first, before he sinned; and by Christ the second Adam,  
 “ was in a measure restored, (and now is fully restored  
 “ in the true sense, by Christ’s second coming,) that gift  
 “ of God, and revelation, which, by disobedience, the  
 “ first Adam lost. And by the revelation of the power  
 “ and spirit of God to the man Christ, he was enabled  
 “ to keep out of all sin, *though in all points tempted as we*  
 “ *are*—(Heb. vii. 15) because he took upon him our  
 “ fallen nature. Hence we believe Christ was like other  
 “ men, sin excepted: but he being endowed with the  
 “ spirit and power of God, according to the apostle;  
 “ *God giveth not the spirit by measure unto him*—(John iii. 34)  
 “ that is, God, by his spirit, dwelt in the man Christ Je-  
 “ sus, and in this respect he was God and man.

“ As to his being co-eternal, and co-equal with the  
 “ Father, as man he was not so; but the spirit of God



" that was in him, (as before mentioned,) and by which  
 " he was actuated, was so. Therefore, in the begin-  
 " ning, was what St. John calls the *Word*; and this  
 " word that dwelt in the man Christ, *was Gsd*; and by  
 " this all-powerful word, *all things were made, and without*  
 " *it, was not any thing made, that was made.* And in this  
 " *word was life*, and by Christ's abiding in this life, he  
 " deitroyed the sinful, or fallen nature, which he took  
 " upon him; and he then became the first born in the  
 " new creation, the light of the world, and an example  
 " to all men.

" Now as by this *word*, all things were made, so by  
 " the same, did Christ perform all the miracles of which  
 " we read. This *word* or spirit was the same that ap-  
 " peared to the patriarchs, and by which the prophets  
 " spake. And though Christ was, as hath been repre-  
 " sented, nevertheless, he passed through heavy trials, and  
 " deep sufferings. For example, his being tempted of  
 " the devil, or the evil nature, the flesh, the old man of  
 " sin; which after his trials and sufferings in resisting  
 " the same in all its cravings, *angels came and ministered*  
 " *unto him.* Like unto other men, he was dependent on  
 " God, and prayed to him. Of himself he had no abil-  
 " ity to work miracles; *But the Father*, saith he, *that*  
 " *dwelleth in me, he doth the works*—(John xx. 10.) As a  
 " man, when he was on earth, he knew not, and now he  
 " is in heaven, he knows not the secrets of the Father,  
 " (Matt. xxvii. 36,) any farther than they are commu-  
 " nicated unto him. Wherefore we have that expression  
 " in the Revelations: *The revelation of Jesus Christ, which*  
 " *God gave unto him*—Rev. i. 1.

" As a man, he wept over Jerusalem. As a man, he  
 " was in an agony and prayed. As a man, on the cross  
 " he cries, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*  
 " Here we see clearly no part of the deity, or divine  
 " nature suffered. If God had forsaken him, how then  
 " could he be God in any other sense than I have al-  
 " ready described.

" We do not believe as Dr. Watts expresses it, that,  
 " *God the mighty maker died,*  
 " *For man the creature's sin.*

“ He opened a way for all to follow him, in that line of obedience to his Father, by a daily cross, even to the death of the cross—(Phil. ii. 8.) In consequence of which he was accepted of the Father, and became the first born among many brethren.—Rom. viii. 29.

“ God cannot, nor ever will be known any further than he manifests himself. Christ was the greatest manifestation, or revelation of God, that had ever been made. According to his own words, *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.* That is, his wisdom, power, holiness, forbearance, kindness, benevolence, compassion, and love. In short, he is our example; and in every respect, whereunto we are called, we must follow him in that path which he has marked out for us; and even to become, according to the apostle, *partakers of his sufferings*, and in order to reign with him, we must suffer with him—(1 Peter vii. 13. 2 Tim. ii. 12.) We do not believe in imputed righteousness, the doctrine of atonement, nor Christ’s making satisfaction for sin.”

21. *What is your faith respecting what is called the sacrament of bread and wine?*

“ We believe it may be right for all such as are under the dispensation of the first coming of Christ, or have not heard the gospel of his second coming, to partake of it, if they do it conscientiously and in sincerity.—For we read, *As often as ye eat of this bread, and drink of this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come*—(1 Cor. xi. 26. And we know he has come; and we drink with him of that new wine, which he promised to give when he should come in his Father’s kingdom.”

22. *What do you believe concerning war?*

“ It belongs to those who are of the spirit of this world, to fight. *Christ’s kingdom is not of this world*; (John xviii. 36) therefore his servants cannot fight. And the apostle James says, *Wars and fighting come from your lusts, that war in your members.*—iv. 1.

23. *What is your faith and practice concerning swearing before the civil magistrate?*

“ Our faith and practice is according to the precept of Christ, *Not to swear at all*, neither by one thing nor

“ the other ; but to let our communication be *yea, yea ;*  
 “ *and nay, nay : for whatsoever is more than these, cometh of*  
 “ *evil.*—(Matt. v. 34 ) And when called upon, we af-  
 “ firm ; and speak the truth on all occasions.”

24. *What is your faith respecting the ministry, or in what manner are persons qualified and authorized to preach ?*

“ We believe no one can preach the gospel, who has  
 “ it not. That no one can administer that to others,  
 “ to profit, which he has not known and experienced  
 “ himself. Likewise, none are true gospel ministers, ex-  
 “ cept they be qualified and sent of God, according to  
 “ Romans x. 15. And any persons, whose conduct and  
 “ conversation becometh the gospel, and feeling it im-  
 “ pressed on their minds, and believing it to be their du-  
 “ ty, or what is required of them, and have the gift and  
 “ and ability to administer the gospel ; and the church  
 “ feeling union with them therein, they are then allowed  
 “ to act accordingly.”

25. *What do you believe concerning the resurrection ?*

“ We believe, that, *By man came death ; by man (Christ)*  
 “ *came also the resurrection from the dead,* ( 1 Cor. xv. 21 )  
 “ viz. a resurrection from a death in sin, i. e. out of the  
 “ evil nature, to a life of righteousness. It is the soul  
 “ of man in the fall, in a state of sin, and lost from God,  
 “ that is the subject of the resurrection, and not these  
 “ vile corruptible bodies. According to the apostle,  
 “ *It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.* If  
 “ fallen, lost creatures, while they are talking and deter-  
 “ mining, in their carnal imaginations, with respect to  
 “ the resurrection, were careful to forsake their sins, and  
 “ know a resurrection from a state of sin to a state of  
 “ righteousness, they would then be more able to judge  
 “ concerning it. Now, though we thus endeavour to  
 “ give honest, inquiring minds a *reason of the hope that is*  
 “ *in us,* ( 1 Pet. iii. 15 ) and of our faith, doctrines, and  
 “ practice, nevertheless, they are all such as we have  
 “ been led into by the *gift of God :* In which gift we ex-  
 “ perience that redemption and salvation, peace and con-  
 “ solation, we cannot communicate unto those who have  
 “ never had faith. Which is sufficiently convincing, and

“ much more satisfactory to us, than all outward arguments and reasons that can possibly be produced.”

Thus I have thrown together a summary of their doctrines, faith, and practice ; and in giving the account, I have scrupulously retained their dialect, and shall endeavour to do it, where necessary, throughout this work.

This man appeared very desirous to gain me to the faith. He had sacrificed considerable of his interest and friendship for the sake of it. Therefore he was zealous to gain me to that, for which he had *counted all things but as dross.*—(Phil. iii. 7.) It appeared to be his delight to expatiate on the blessings and privileges of this glorious gospel, (as he often called it) the glorious rising of the sun of righteousness, for the complete salvation and redemption of fallen man. He appeared to be exceedingly happy in the contemplation of his having lived to see the day which has been the subject of prophecy and prayer.

He recommended the Shakers as a *peculiar people, zealous of good works*—(Titus ii. 4) labouring after holiness; *heavenly in all their conversation* ; (Phil. iii. 20) exemplary in all their conduct. He often insisted on the following portions of scripture, as a rule to judge who are the people of God ; viz. “ By their fruits ye shall know them. And by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

He invited me to stay two or three weeks, and go among them and see for myself, till I was fully satisfied. He wished me to become acquainted with some of the large families, who were brought into family and church order, that I might see what union, love, peace, and quietness, prevailed among them ; and how different they were from the people and professors of the world. He asserted, that “ all those reports that had circulated about them were false ; and what I had read in V. Rathbone’s pamphlet, were misrepresentations ; all which “ was no more than what Christ foretold, that *They should “ say all manner of evil, against his followers, falsely for his “ sake.* But he told them to *rejoice and be exceeding glad, “ for great should be their reward in heaven.*” Matt. v. 11.



According to his advice, I went to see some of the large families, or those who had all things in common, or supported a joint interest. I conversed with divers persons concerning the faith.

I returned to B. Youngs' family. He asked me what hindered me from joining them. I told him, they held to some doctrines with which I could not fully unite. He said, "That is of little consequence; we do not differ with one another because we cannot believe alike in every respect; neither shall we with you. And those things you cannot see into, leave them, and embrace or unite with what you do believe is right."

I considered of all I had heard and seen; I thought assuredly I saw that order, peace, and union, I never saw before. I felt a love towards the people for the love and kindness they had manifested to me. I thought if they were what they professed to be, they were just such a Christian people as I long had wanted to find. Therefore, in order to be initiated as a member of the church, I saw no impropriety in telling one or two persons in the church, all the sins I had committed; and thought of a precept in the epistle of St. James: "Confess your faults one to another;" and of several other passages of scripture on this subject. Finally, the evening before I left them, I came to a conclusion; and spake to one of the brethren, who stood in the appointment to hear openings, (as they call it) and we retired into a private room. Before I began to confess, I kneeled, (seeing me do so, he did the same) with silent desires and breathing to God, that I might be enabled to confess in a right spirit, and that he would bless me in my undertaking. And in as much sincerity as ever I did any thing in my life, I opened every sin and every thing wherein I believed I had done wrong, that I could remember.

Now nearly all who had heard of these people, believed them to be very enthusiastic, and their religion unscriptural; therefore I expected to be counted a fool for joining them; but this I did not regard; as religion and the salvation of my soul I regarded (and do still) above all things in this world. Therefore I was willing to take up any cross, and make trial, with them, of that

power over all sin, and a continual peace and sense of the love of God, of which they testified. This is what I long had desired and prayed for. Therefore I felt willing to forsake the world, to live with a people who enjoyed this Christian privilege. And as there was no other way thoroughly to know what these people were in their faith and practice, but by becoming one of them; and to prove the truth of what they professed, I made a beginning, and entered in by faith and confession.

Now if the reader proceeds regularly, from page to page, he will see an exact statement of all matters as they happened, and how I came out at last.

On the 30th of November, I left this kind family, and on the 8th of December arrived at home.

After my return, I spent two or three weeks in writing, as a memorandum, what I received from B. Youngs and others, concerning the rise of this church, their doctrines, faith, and practice.

I was not yet myself a full believer. I had many doubts and reasonings within myself, as some things looked very dark; but I imputed it to my want of light; for they had said, "The things of God were a mystery to the natural man; and that I could not understand the gospel and way of salvation, any further than I travailed therein, and obtained a victory over sin." Also, "it was sin which had blinded the mind, and stupified the senses of all the human race."

Now, in order that the reader may have a right and thorough understanding respecting the faith, and to represent it in as true a light as possible, I think best to insert a short treatise, which contains the ground-work of their faith, written by their esteemed Elder, Joseph Meacham. A copy of which I obtained from a manuscript, by the favour of B. Youngs, while I resided at his house. This, with a letter annexed, written by their Elder, James Whittaker, are the only writings respecting their faith I ever found among them. I often inquired why they did not publish their faith and practice in general, as other churches had done, that the world might have an authentick account thereof; and that the fallacy of many reports that had gone abroad respecting their

faith and practice might be contradicted. The answer I always received was, "There has never been any gift fo  
 " to do ; and that the true church and people of God,  
 " in all their proceedings, were different from the pro-  
 " fessors and anti-christian churches of the world."

The following I give verbatim as I received it.

" A concise statement of the principles of the only  
 " true church, according to the gospel of the present ap-  
 " pearance of Christ ; as held to, and practised upon, by  
 " the true followers of the living Saviour, at New-Leb-  
 " anon and a number of other places. Likewise, a let-  
 " ter annexed, written by James Whittaker, minister of  
 " the gospel in this day of Christ's second appearing, to  
 " his natural relations in England, dated October 9, 1785.  
 " A short information of what we believe of the dispen-  
 " sation of God's grace to fallen man : and in what  
 " manner they have found acceptance with God, and  
 " salvation from sin in former dispensations : with par-  
 " ticular references to the present display of God's grace  
 " unto us ; and in what manner we find acceptance with  
 " God, and hopes of eternal life, through our Lord Je-  
 " sus Christ, in obedience to the gospel of his present ap-  
 " pearance."

### *A CONCISE STATEMENT, &c.*

" 1st. We believe that the first light of salvation was  
 " given or made known to the Patriarchs by promise ;  
 " and they that believed in the promise of Christ, and  
 " were obedient to the command of God made known  
 " unto them, were the people of God ; and were accept-  
 " ed by him as righteous, or perfect in their generation,  
 " according to the measure of light and truth manifest-  
 " ed unto them ; which were as waters to the ankles ;  
 " signified by Ezekiel's vision of the holy waters, chap.  
 " xlvii. And although they could not receive regene-  
 " ration, or the fulness of salvation, from the fleshly or  
 " fallen nature in this life ; because the fulness of time  
 " was not yet come that they should receive the baptism  
 " of the Holy Ghost and fire, for the destruction of the

" body of sin, and purification of the soul. But Abraham  
 " being called and chosen of God, as the father of the  
 " faithful, was received into covenant relation with God  
 " by promise; that in him, and his seed, all the fami-  
 " lies of the earth should be blessed. And the earth-  
 " ly blessings, which were promised to Abraham, were  
 " a shadow of gospel or spiritual blessings to come.  
 " And circumcision, or outward cutting of the foreskin  
 " of the flesh, did not cleanse the man from sin, but was  
 " a sign of the spiritual baptism of the Holy Ghost and  
 " fire. Which is by the power of God manifested in  
 " divers operations and gifts of the spirit, as in the days  
 " of the apostles, which does indeed destroy the body of  
 " sin or fleshly nature, and purify the man from all sin,  
 " both soul and body. So that Abraham, though in  
 " the full faith of the promise, yet as he did not receive  
 " the substance of the thing promised, his hopes of eter-  
 " nal salvation was in Christ, by the gospel to be attain-  
 " ed in the resurrection from the dead."

" 2d. The second dispensation was the law that was  
 " given of God to Israel, by the hand of Moses; which  
 " was a farther manifestation of that salvation, which  
 " was promised through Christ by the gospel, both in  
 " the order and ordinances which was instituted and giv-  
 " en to Israel, as the church and people of God, accord-  
 " ing to that dispensation which was as *waters to the*  
 " *knees*—(Ezek. xlvii. 4) by which they were distinguish-  
 " ed from all the families of the earth. For while they  
 " were faithful and strictly obedient to all the com-  
 " mands, ordinances, and statutes that God gave; ap-  
 " proved of God according to the promise for life,  
 " and blessing promised unto them in the line of obedi-  
 " ence; cursing and death in disobedience—(Deut. xxviii.  
 " 2, 15.) For God, who is ever jealous for the honor  
 " and glory of his own great name, always dealt with  
 " them according to his word. For while they were o-  
 " bedient to the commands of God, and purged out sin  
 " from among them, God was with them, according to  
 " his promise. But when they disobeyed the commands  
 " of God, and committed sin, and became like other  
 " people, the hand of the Lord was turned against them;



“ and those evils came upon them which God had  
 “ threatened. So we see that they that were wholly o-  
 “ bedient to the will of God, made known in that dis-  
 “ pensation were accepted as just or righteous. Yet as  
 “ that dispensation was short, they did not attain that  
 “ salvation which was promised in the gospel; so that,  
 “ as it respected the new birth, or real purification of the  
 “ man from all sin, the *law made nothing perfect*—(Heb.  
 “ vii. 19) *but was a shadow of good things to come*—(1 Cor.  
 “ ii. 17. Heb. x. 1.) Their only hope of eternal re-  
 “ demption was in the promise of Christ by the gospel,  
 “ to be attained in the resurrection from the dead.

“ 3d. The third dispensation was the gospel of Christ’s  
 “ first appearance in the flesh, which was as *waters to the*  
 “ *loins*—(Ezek. xlvi. 4) and that salvation which took  
 “ place in consequence of his life, death, resurrection,  
 “ and ascension to the right hand of the Father, being  
 “ accepted in his obedience, as the *first born among many*  
 “ *brethren*—(Rom. viii. 29) he received power and au-  
 “ thority to administer the power of the resurrection and  
 “ eternal judgment to all the children of men. So that  
 “ he has become the *author of eternal salvation unto all that*  
 “ *obey him*—(Heb. iv. 9.) And as Christ had this power  
 “ in himself, he did administer power and authority to  
 “ his church at the day of Pentecost, as his body, with  
 “ all the gifts that he had promised them; which was  
 “ the first gifts of the Holy Ghost, as an in-dwelling com-  
 “ forter, to abide with them for ever; and by which they  
 “ were *baptized into Christ’s death*; death to all sin: and  
 “ were in the hope of the resurrection from the dead,  
 “ through the operation of the power of God, which  
 “ wrought in them. And as they had received the sub-  
 “ stance of the promise of Christ’s coming in the flesh,  
 “ by the gift and power of the Holy Ghost, they had  
 “ power to preach the gospel, in Christ’s name, to *every*  
 “ *creature*; and to administer the power of God to as  
 “ many as believed, and were obedient to the gospel  
 “ which they preached; and to remit and retain  
 “ sins in the power and authority of Christ on earth.  
 “ So that they that believed in the gospel, and were obe-  
 “ dient to that form of doctrine which was taught them,



“ by denying all ungodliness and worldly lust, and became  
 “ entirely dead to the law, by the body of Christ, or  
 “ power of the Holy Ghost, were in the travail of the  
 “ resurrection from the dead, or the *redemption of the*  
 “ *body*—(Rom. viii. 23.) So that they who took up  
 “ a full cross against the world, flesh, and devil, and who  
 “ forsook all for Christ’s sake, and followed him in the  
 “ regeneration, by persevering in that line of obedience  
 “ to the end, found the resurrection from the dead, and  
 “ eternal salvation in that dispensation. But as the na-  
 “ ture of that dispensation was only as water to the loins,  
 “ (Ezek. 47) the mystery of God was not finished, but  
 “ there was another day prophesied of, called the sec-  
 “ ond appearance of Christ, or final and last display of  
 “ God’s grace to a lost world, in which the *mystery of*  
 “ *God should be finished*, (Rev. x. 7) as he has spoken by  
 “ his prophets, *since the world began*—(Luke i. 70) :  
 “ which day could not come, except there was a falling  
 “ away from that faith and power that the Church then  
 “ stood in—(2 Thess. ii. 3. 2 Tim. iv. 3. Dan. xi. 36,  
 “ to 38. See Dan. chap. xii.) In which Anti-Christ  
 “ was to have his reign, whom Christ should destroy with  
 “ the spirit of his mouth, and brightness of his appear-  
 “ ance—(2 Thess. ii. 8.) Which falling away, began  
 “ soon after the apostles, and gradually increased in the  
 “ Church, until about 457 years, (or thereabouts) ; at  
 “ which time the power of the holy people, or church of  
 “ Christ was scattered or lost, by reason of transgression,  
 “ (Dan. xii. 7. viii. 12.) ; and Anti-Christ, or false reli-  
 “ gion, got to be established. Since that time, the wit-  
 “ nesses of Christ have prophesied in sackcloth, or under  
 “ darkness—(Rev. xi. 3.) And although many have  
 “ been faithful to testify against sin, even to the laying  
 “ down of their lives for the testimony which they held,  
 “ so that God accepted them in their obedience, which  
 “ they were faithful and just to live, or walk up to the  
 “ measure of light and truth of God, revealed or made  
 “ known unto them. But as it is written, that all they  
 “ that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecu-  
 “ tion ; and so it has been : and those faithful witnesses  
 “ lost their lives by those falsely called the church of

“ Christ, which is anti-christ. For the true church of  
 “ Christ never persecuted any; but were inoffensive,  
 “ harmless, separate from sin. For the true church of  
 “ Christ, taking up their cross against the world, flesh,  
 “ and devil, and all sin; living in obedience to God,  
 “ they earnestly contend for the same. Therefore, it  
 “ may be plainly seen and known where the true church  
 “ is. But as it is written anti-christ, or false churches,  
 “ should prevail against the saints, and overcome them,  
 “ before Christ’s second appearance—(2 Theff. ii. 3.)  
 “ *Let no man deceive you by any means, for that day shall not*  
 “ *come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of*  
 “ *sin be revealed, the son of perdition* And it was given  
 “ unto him to overcome all kindreds, tongues, and nations—  
 “ (Rev. 13, 7.) And this is the state Christ prophesied  
 “ the world of mankind should be in, at his second ap-  
 “ pearance. (See Luke xvii. 22, to end of the chap.)  
 “ *And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days*  
 “ *of the Son of man, (ver. 30.)* Even so shall it be in the  
 “ days when the Son of Man is revealed: Plainly referring  
 “ to his second appearing, to consume and destroy anti-  
 “ christ, and make a final end of sin, and establish his  
 “ kingdom upon earth—(Isa. lxxv. 25. Jer. xxxi. 33, 34.  
 “ Dan. ii. 44, and vii. 18, 27, and ix. 24. Oba. 21. Rev.  
 “ xi. 15, &c.) But as the revelation of Christ is spiritu-  
 “ al, consequently must be in his people, whom he had  
 “ chosen to be his body, to give testimony of him, and  
 “ to preach his gospel to a lost world.

“ 4th. The fourth dispensation is the second appear-  
 “ ance of Christ, or final and last display of God’s grace  
 “ to a lost world; in which the mystery of God will be  
 “ finished, and a decisive work, to the final salvation or  
 “ damnation of all the children of men: which accord-  
 “ ing to the prophecies, rightly calculated and truly un-  
 “ derstood, began in the year of our Saviour 1747, (see  
 “ Daniel and the Revelations) in the manner following:  
 “ To a number, in the manifestation of great light, and  
 “ mighty trembling, by the invisible power of God, and  
 “ visions, revelations, miracles, and prophecies. Which  
 “ has progressively increased with administrations of all  
 “ those spiritual gifts that was administered to the apoc-

" tles at the day of pentecost : which is the comforter  
 " that has led us into all truth ; and which was prom-  
 " ised to abide with the true church of Christ unto the  
 " end of the world. And by which we find *baptism into*  
 " *Christ's death*—(Rom. vi. 4) death to all sin : become  
 " alive to God, by the power of Christ's resurrection,  
 " which worketh in us mightily. By which a dispensa-  
 " tion of the gospel is committed unto us, and woe be  
 " unto us if we preach not the gospel of Christ ; for in  
 " sending so great a salvation and deliverance from the  
 " law of sin and death, in believing and obeying this  
 " gospel, which is the gospel of Christ ; in confessing and  
 " forsaking all sin, and denying ourselves, and bearing  
 " the cross of Christ against the world, flesh, and devil,  
 " we have found *forgiveness* of all our sins, and are made  
 " partakers of the grace of God, wherein we now stand.  
 " Which all others, in believing and obeying, have ac-  
 " ceptance with God, and find salvation from their sins  
 " as well as we. God being no respecter of persons, but  
 " willing that all men should come to the knowledge of  
 " the truth and be saved.

" Thus we have given a short information of what we  
 " believe of the dispensations of God's grace to mankind,  
 " both past and present ; and in what manner the people  
 " of God have found justification, or acceptance with  
 " God. Which was, and is still, in believing and obey-  
 " ing the light and truth of God revealed or made known  
 " in the day or dispensation in which they live. *For as*  
 " *the wrath of God is revealed from heaven, against all un-*  
 " *godliness, worldly lusts, and unrighteousness of men, who*  
 " *hold the truth in unrighteousness*—(Rom. i. 18) or live in  
 " any known sin against him : so his mercy and grace  
 " is towards all them who truly love and fear him, and  
 " turn from all their sins by repentance, *confessing, and*  
 " *forsaking* : which is the way and manner in which all  
 " have, and must find forgiveness of their sins, and ac-  
 " ceptance with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ ;  
 " or finally fail of the grace of God, and that salvation  
 " brought to light by the gospel. But to conclude, in  
 " short ; as we believe and do testify, that the present  
 " gospel of God's grace unto us, is the day which in the

“ scriptures is spoken or prophesied of, as the second ap-  
 “ pearing of Christ to consume, or destroy anti-christ, or  
 “ false religion; and to make an end of the reigning  
 “ power of sin over the children of men; and to estab-  
 “ lish his kingdom, and that righteousness that will stand  
 “ forever; and that the present display of the work and  
 “ power of God, will increase until it is manifested to  
 “ all; which it must be in due time. For every eye  
 “ shall see him, and he will reward every man accord-  
 “ ing to his deeds—(Rev. i. 7. Matt. xvi. 27. Rom.  
 “ ii. 6) and none can stand in sin, or unrighteousness;  
 “ but in that righteousness which is pure and holy, even  
 “ without fault before the throne of God—(Rev. xiv. 5)  
 “ which is obtained by grace, through faith, in obedi-  
 “ ence to the truth of the everlasting gospel of our Lord  
 “ Jesus Christ; in denying all ungodliness and worldly  
 “ lusts, by confessing all sin, and taking up the cross of  
 “ Christ against the world, flesh, and devil. We desire,  
 “ therefore, that the children of men would believe the  
 “ testimony of truth, and turn from their sins by repent-  
 “ ance, that they may obtain the mercy of God, and  
 “ salvation from sin, before it be too late.”

## A LETTER

WRITTEN BY JAMES WHITTAKER.

“ I have written to you a letter, in answer to one you  
 “ wrote me last winter. I have signified my mind part-  
 “ ly to you, heretofore; it remains now that I declare  
 “ unto you my whole heart, which I cannot tell at pres-  
 “ ent; but it will be a final close between you and me,  
 “ through time and eternity.

“ Flattering titles I am not about to use towards you,  
 “ or to sooth you with lies; but with the truth will I  
 “ come forth, whether you will hear or forbear. Be not  
 “ so unwise as the scribes and pharisees, who said to  
 “ Christ, *Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not*  
 “ *true*; when I testify unto you what God has done  
 “ for my soul. Blessed be God for evermore, who has  
 “ separated me from the world, and made me a minister



“ of the gospel in the day of Christ’s second appearance.  
 “ All earthly profits and pleasures, all earthly generation,  
 “ and propagation, which are the delights of all men  
 “ in their natural state : all these, I say, have I forsaken  
 “ for Christ’s sake ; and I have already received an hundred  
 “ fold, in this present time, according as the holy  
 “ Son of God promised in the day of his first appearance,  
 “ and much more abundantly. A death to the  
 “ man of sin have I found ; a total spoiling of the strong  
 “ man’s goods ; and redemption from the bondage of  
 “ corruption ; which is that sordid propensity to, or ardent  
 “ desire of copulation with woman ; which has not  
 “ been understood in that sense many ages, but now is  
 “ made manifest in this dispensation, to all them that  
 “ believe and obey the gospel of Christ’s second appearance,  
 “ which God has committed to my trust. *I daily feel a fountain of love, life, joy, and heavenly glory, flowing in my soul, like a river of living water, pure and clean.*  
 “ *My soul is constantly replenished with rich supplies from the heavenly glory ; and my heart constantly flows with charity and benevolence to all mankind.* *With a broken heart, God has blessed me ; and the image of the Lord of Glory is formed in my soul. Plenty of the dew of heaven is distilled in my soul from day to day ; and the divine nature doth infold me, like a delightful sea of pleasant waters, full of glory.* What think ye ; if I were to seek friends in  
 “ this world, should I not cleave to my own blood ;  
 “ should I not make you the objects of my first pursuit ?  
 “ But I am weaned from all terrestrial connections, and  
 “ in lieu thereof, I have joined the host of heaven ; with  
 “ open vision do I behold the angelic company of the  
 “ spiritual world, and join the melodious songs of the  
 “ new Jerufalem.

“ Why tell ye me of your increasing and multiplying  
 “ after the flesh ? Your vessels are *marred in the potters*  
 “ *hands*—(Jer xviii. 4.) and they must be made over again  
 “ by regeneration, or go down to the pit. Say ye,  
 “ it is a command to *increase and multiply* ; but I say it  
 “ never was a command to corrupt the earth, and fill it  
 “ with a double condemnation, and then plead the commands  
 “ of God to *increase and multiply*, as though you



" had been doing his will ; when you are conscious to  
 " yourselves, or know in your own hearts, that you never  
 " had any other will but your own in so doing ; a will  
 " proceeding from the lusts of the flesh. God has given  
 " me the power to increa<sup>e</sup> and multiply in its true mys-  
 " tical, typical, and evangelical sense ; which I go forth  
 " to do. I have begotten many thousands of children,  
 " and replenished them with many good things. I hate  
 " your fleshly lives, and your fleshly generations, as I  
 " hate the smoke of the bottomless pit ; and your plead-  
 " ing the commands of God to *increase and multiply*, to  
 " cover your beastly conduct and doleful corruption,  
 " and inverting the order of heaven. Think ye that I  
 " will look toward you, while you live after the flesh,  
 " defiling yourselves with effeminate desires, and profan-  
 " ing the commands of God for a cover ? It is in my  
 " power, indeed, to help you greatly, in a temporal sense,  
 " and many others who live as corrupt lives as you do  
 " this day ; as much without God in the world. But  
 " be it known unto you, and all men, that I will not do  
 " it, except you forsake your wicked lives, and serve the  
 " living and true God. Which I have no expectation  
 " you will do, if I should nourish and cherish you, as a  
 " tender father does his children. Stay in England, till  
 " you go down into your graves—as long as you are for-  
 " following natural generation, and the course of this  
 " world I know that your greatest oppression is your  
 " living after the flesh ; which is your own choosing, and  
 " is the very reason I will not help you, though I have  
 " it in my power. Away with your looking towards  
 " me for help, since you are sunk in my soul for your  
 " disobedience to God, and your lying hopes, that you  
 " are in favour with God, while you corrupt the law  
 " and trample the pure gospel under foot. Were it so  
 " indeed, that you had it in your hearts to turn to God,  
 " and obey the gospel, I would look towards you with  
 " charity and compassion ; and would take care of you,  
 " soul and body, as much as lay in my power. But that  
 " is far from you ; and it is in your hearts to enlarge  
 " your liberty after the flesh, and to provide living for  
 " yourselves and posterity ; therefore you are but a stink

“ in my necessities ; instead of your having a pardon for  
 “ your sins, you are deceived, and I feel that you are  
 “ powerfully alienated from the life of God, and become  
 “ carnal, sensual, and unwise ; therefore, as you have  
 “ chosen your own ways, see what the God you serve  
 “ will do for you ; and your false hopes, what they will  
 “ bring you to. All we that are of that community who  
 “ worship God in spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, be-  
 “ ing separated from all effeminate desires, and sensual  
 “ pleasures, are in possession of the only true hope of e-  
 “ ternal life. My God has delivered me, redeemed my  
 “ soul, filled it with heavenly joy, and the power of an  
 “ endless life, as well as made me able to help many in  
 “ a temporal sense ; and you might have been sharers  
 “ with me in all this unmerited munificence, had you  
 “ obeyed the gospel with me.\* As, therefore, you have  
 “ forsaken God, I also have forsaken you ; and will nev-  
 “ er give you any encouragement to come into this land,  
 “ till once for all you resolve to turn to God, and obey  
 “ the gospel. I feel the compassion of God to warn you  
 “ of what you are losing in this great day of the second  
 “ appearance of the Son of Man. You are losing no  
 “ less than the only means of salvation that ever will be  
 “ offered again in this world. The power of the gospel  
 “ does prosper in my soul, in bowels and compassion, for  
 “ the poor lost children of men. And I desire that you  
 “ would be warned by a faithful friend, not to outstand  
 “ the great day of God’s final visitation, for the sake of  
 “ your false hopes, which will leave your soul desolate  
 “ and barren, or for the fading things of this life, which  
 “ are but vanity and vexation of spirit. Oh that you  
 “ would hearken ! for then there is the same door for  
 “ your escape, as for the rest of the children of men.  
 “ At which door if you enter, I feel to receive you with  
 “ charity. And the severity of this letter is the charity  
 “ of God to your souls, and his abhorrence of your false  
 “ hopes.

JAMES WHITTAKER.”

\* Those whom he wrote to, had heard this gospel, but would not be obedient to it ; and likewise come with those who came to America.

February, 1799. Having no companions in the faith, in Cornwall, the place where I resided, I wished to gain some profelytes. Accordingly I visited a neighbour of mine, Ralph Hodgson, by name, an honest man, with whom I had been, for some time, intimately acquainted. He was a member of the society of the people called Quakers, and a man who was much esteemed and respected. I had often conversed with him respecting the prevailing vices of the times, and the carelessness and indifference of religious professors. I now began to open to him new subjects of religion. I preached the millenium; and told him I had found a people who were in it; and represented them as the most religious and exemplary of any that had ever been before. He was all attention; and, in two hours, concluded to make a journey with me to Neskauna, and see for himself.

Accordingly, on the 20th of the month, we entered on our journey, and three days afterwards arrived at Neskauna. In the evening, said Hodgson conversed with B. Youngs, concerning the faith; and the next day we went to see those in church order, i. e. the old believers. He began to think he had got into the millennium indeed; and in a few days confessed his sins; on account of which, I was glad I had a brother companion with whom I could converse respecting the blessed faith (as we called it) when we again got home. Before I parted with the Elders at this time, it was requested of me to confess my sins again; which I did to Elder Hezekiah and John Scott. These Elders were appointed, because there appeared to be then an ingathering, as they called it, or another opening of the gospel; for, they said, the church had been shut up, as but few had joined it for years before that time.

Here it may be observed, that the first time I ever saw John Scott, he spake to me in a very imprudent and abrupt manner; which was the first instance of their conduct I disliked. Sitting in company with Hodgson and a few brethren, he came into the room and abruptly asked me, in very uncouth and indecorous language, if I had not been in the commission of sin since I was there

last. This abrupt, indecent question, from a man I had never seen before, I thought bore no mark of the gentleness and decency of the gospel. I therefore said—Friend, you have a zeal, but not according to knowledge: look to your own sins; I answer no such questions. It may be expected that I shall open my mind, as soon as I have an opportunity, according to order. You are out of order, in thus questioning me before company. He made no reply; and immediately retired. Afterwards I asked Elder Hezekiah the man's name, by whom I was thus imprudently questioned. He told me his name, and said, his zeal was such against sin, that he sometimes spake when he should not; and that I must take no offence, for he meant no harm.

When we were about to part, Elder Hezekiah told me, if at any time hereafter I felt desirous to open my mind again, I might have the privilege to do it.

From hence we went to what was called the elderly family, consisting of about twenty in number. Thither I frequently resorted, till there was a family of young believers gathered. There I had considerable conversation with the old believers; the most of whom had belonged to the church ever since their first settlement in America. We conversed, chiefly, on the rise of the church, the first ministers, the gifts, various operations, and miracles, that had been wrought, (as they said,) in the church from time to time. These were not altogether what they had heard, but what they said they had seen and experienced; some of the miracles being wrought upon their own bodies. One man, in particular, told me, that "he had been a cripple, and that he was instantly healed by the power of God, through the instrumentality of one of his brethren."

I was informed there was a woman\* in this family, who came with the first Elders from England; and wishing to have the account respecting their rise and proceedings in former times, as correct as possible, I spake to him who was the head of the family, requesting of

\* Mary Hocknell, born July the 9th, 1759, and was fifteen years old when she came to America.



him her company, if agreeable, giving my reasons. He went and informed her; she soon came into our room, accompanied by two aged women, and they took their seats; the substance of our discourse was as follows:

I addressed her thus—I have understood thou hast\* been in the faith from thy youth; and, as Paul said to Timothy, from a child hast thou known the holy scriptures, or in other words, the faith; and that thou camest from England with the first Elders and brethren. Now, though I have heard something of the rise of the church, yet wishing to have further and more correct information, I have made free to request thy company, which I take kindly of thee in granting; and will thank thee, if thou wilt inform me of what thou knowest, or hast seen and heard concerning the faith and people in the first opening of the gospel; as there have been many reports circulated, and much said, pro and con. respecting the people when they first settled here; and of Ann Lee, and some others, being in the practice of using spirituous liquors to excess. Now if these and some other reports are false, I wish to be able, from correct information and good authority, to contradict them; especially when they are brought forward to invalidate my faith in the gospel, as professed by these people.

She answered—“ I am very willing to give you what information I am able. As to my knowledge of mother Ann Lee, I was very intimate with her from the time I was eight or ten years old, till she died. I was her companion by day, and her bed-fellow by night; and if there were any truth in the assertion of her using liquor to excess, surely I should have seen something of it. I never knew that she made any more use of it, than women in general. At all times it appeared to be her greatest labour and delight to serve God, and promote the good of mankind. She was a great enemy to, and hater of sin; and at all opportunities

\* The reader will observe, that in some places in this work, the singular language is used, and in other places the plural. This has been done in order that the conversations might be written exactly as they were spoken.



" testified against it. She had the first and greatest gifts  
 " of God of any in her day ; and I believe Christ was  
 " in, and with her of a truth. As to particulars in Eng-  
 " land, I was too young then to give now much account.  
 " But this I well remember ; that they were much a-  
 " bused and persecuted, Mother in particular. At one  
 " time, the worldly authority held a trial respecting her ;  
 " when she was so endued with the spirit and power of  
 " God, that she spake before the court and a large con-  
 " course of people, in twelve different languages, to the  
 " astonishment of many present ; particularly some of  
 " the learned, who understood her, when she spake in  
 " French, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin : also some being  
 " present who understood other languages. Thus it was  
 " a time like unto the day of Pentecost, when every man  
 " heard the apostles speak in his own language—(Acts  
 " ii. 6.) Concerning her so speaking there was much  
 " talk and wondering for some time.

" About this time, she was confined two or three  
 " months in prison ; most of the time she had no other  
 " subsistence than milk, which I conveyed to her by  
 " means of a quill through the key-hole ; for they would  
 " not open the door to let any of her friends see her.  
 " They said she was a witch, and I know not what all.  
 " These things I well remember, being then twelve years  
 " old. Shortly after this time, Mother said, it was the  
 " gift of God, for all who had faith to prepare for to  
 " go to America. Accordingly, twelve of us came ;  
 " three or four of which were but children, and settled  
 " here in the wilderness, twenty-three or twenty-four  
 " years ago.

" When I look back and see our poverty, (living at  
 " first in a small log-house, and several of the brethren  
 " under the necessity of going among the people of the  
 " world to work) persecutions, and various trials we  
 " passed through, and compare our condition then with  
 " the church at present, I am filled with admiration at  
 " the goodness of God, and the blessings and prosperity  
 " that have attended us."

I replied, it is admirable ; and the hand of God ap-  
 pears so conspicuous, that it is needless to regard any

reports to invalidate it. But that I may be able to satisfy honest, inquiring minds, who may have heard false reports, not knowing but what they were true, and be able to contradict them, or represent things in a true light, from good authority, and information received from eye, and ear witnesses, I make free to ask thee a question concerning a report which has been, and still is asserted to be a fact by many who have been among the people, and have left them; which is, that these people, in Mother's day, by her gift, or by order of some of the other Elders, were repeatedly in the practice of dancing naked, men and women together, in their meetings.

She answered, "I am sure Mother was a very modest woman; and if there had been any such conduct, I should have seen, or known it, which I never did. There were many operations by the power of God, and wonderful gifts; as speaking in unknown tongues, trembling, groaning, and sometimes turning round; on account of which, people would report we were drunk, as they did formerly about the apostles, who had similar gifts and operations—(Acts, chap. ii.) And because the brethren pulled off their coats, or outside garments, to labour, or as the world call it, dancing; and in warm weather the sisters being lightly clothed, they would report we danced naked. And you know how apt the ignorant and vulgar part of mankind, are to misrepresent what they see. If one told they danced part naked, or with but few clothes on, another in telling the story, would leave out the part, or few, and so it was reported we danced naked."

I replied, It is very probable; and wicked people often wilfully and intentionally, misrepresent what they see, especially of religious people. They reported of George Fox, the first Quaker, that he got drunk, and carried a bottle of rum with him, which made the people follow him; and many other foolish, ridiculous stories. Similar stories have been reported of many other religious societies, when they first arose; and it would be singular if this society should escape false reports. For my part, I am satisfied, and thank you for the present conference.

An aged woman and old man, head of the family, who were in company with us, informed me of more of their proceedings, preaching, gifts, operations, and miracles, that had been in the church. One miracle in particular, the old man related; which was, "A few years after they settled here, there was an opening of the gospel, and the people flocked from all parts to see them; they entertained all as well as they could; Mother often told the brethren and sisters not to be uneasy, for God would provide. At a certain time, when about fifty of them sat at the table to eat, they had not provision enough for five; but by a miracle, similar to that in Matt. xiv. 20, *they did all eat, and were filled; and they took up of the fragments that remained*, more than all they put upon the table." Any further I think best not to relate at present.

The next day, two aged women favoured me with their company, and brought with them a large bible, and read several prophecies, which they said, "pointed to, and meant first Mother: viz. Psal. xlv. 9, to 17. Jer. xxxiii. 16. Rev. chap. 12; and that Solomon also spake of her in the Canticles." They also pointed out many other prophecies concerning the church; particularly, "Jer. xxxi. 12, 13. Dan. ii. 45. and vii. 22 to 27. Rev. xii. 10 and xx. 6. and xxi. and xxii. chap. and of those passages speaking of the gospel work in this day; which are, Isa. xxviii. 18, 20, 21. Habak. i. 5." Some of these quotations were feeding me with very strong meat, which I had not faith enough yet, to believe they were all properly applied. They believe that the fulfilment of most of the prophecies, centres in the first and this second coming of Christ.

I should not mention these things, if they were only the faith, or opinions of a few individuals; for this would not be giving a correct account of the rise, faith and doctrines of a church, unless we know such an individual account accorded with what is given by the church in general, or by the heads, or leaders of it. As it would not be right to charge a church with the conduct of, and with what a few (perhaps ignorant) members might assert as truth. Therefore, I relate nothing in this work

of the conduct, faith, opinions, or speeches of individuals, unless it is what I know they have been taught by the leaders of the church, except I mention the heads of the church had no unity therewith, or what is not according to the faith.

I tarried at this time, four or five days with this and other families, all of whom I found exceedingly kind and friendly: I left them with regret, and by the last of the month, arrived at home. Hodgson was so zealous, he preached the faith to almost every one he met; and it now became known among my acquaintance, that I had joined the Shakers. After I returned home (in travelling to Pennsylvania and Wilmington) I was much exercised respecting this faith, and had many arguments in my own mind, concerning the truth of it, and the doctrines professed. Nevertheless, I was satisfied with what I had done. I thought at least, since they made such a profession, and were so circumspect in their conduct, they deserved a trial, and it was no more than right and reasonable to prove whether they were the people they professed to be. About the first of September, I left home again, in company with Hodgson. In the evening of the third day, we arrived at B. Youngs', and next day we went to the church. After two or three days visiting among the brethren and sisters, who all appeared glad to see us increasing in our faith; by seeing (as then appeared to us) their sober, and in every respect, christ-like deportment.

My companion going a journey near Canada, I accompanied him ten or twelve miles, to see an uncle of mine, and his family. After I had been here a few hours, I felt desirous to hold a meeting in the neighbourhood, as I had been in the practice of so doing some years past; and I knew of nothing contrary to the faith or order of the church, of which I was now a member, to hinder me. I opened my feelings to a few serious neighbours, to which they willingly agreed; and accordingly gave notice to their neighbours for an evening meeting: to which came near two hundred people; to whom I spake about an hour and half. All appeared to be attentive and solemn. I said nothing about a new



dispensation, the faith, or people, I had joined; but preached the good old gospel. After I had concluded and sat down, I arose again, not wishing to deceive the people, or act the part of a hypocrite, thinking they might conclude I was, what I was not.

I informed them, in few words, concerning my faith, and the society I belonged to; and concluded by saying, they are not the people you conceive them to be; neither are they such as you have heard from report. Some said afterwards, my telling I belonged to the Shakers, and recommending them as a good people, destroyed all the good I had done.

I returned back in three days to the church, called on the Elders, and informed them I had held a meeting in my absence, which I had no thoughts of before I went. Had my mind been impressed with the idea previously to my departure, I should have mentioned it, to know their mind, as I wished to act in union; and desired to know if they had unity with what I had done; and whether they would have union with my continuing to appoint meetings, at convenient opportunities: if not, I would desist. They retired, I suppose, to know the mind of the superior Elder, or to consult what reply they should make. In about half an hour, one of them, viz. Elder Hezekiah, returned.

Now I shall be particular in relating the substance of this discourse that followed; because, on it much depends respecting the representation of the faith hereafter; and I shall have to make frequent references to it in the course of this history.

He said—"Thomas, we have union with what you  
 " have done respecting the meeting, and feel willing you  
 " should hold meetings, for the time to come, at con-  
 " venient opportunities, when and where you feel dis-  
 " posed; for the gospel does not bind creatures, but  
 " gives liberty to all religious acts; as preaching, pray-  
 " ing, singing, &c. whenever we feel disposed. We  
 " cannot direct or tell you what you must do, or not do,  
 " in every respect. All we desire and teach is for crea-  
 " tures to act according to the dictates of conscience,  
 " and not violate it in any respect; but do what they



“ feel and believe to be their duty. Above all, we  
 “ counsel creatures not to violate their consciences in  
 “ committing sin; neither to do any thing they believe  
 “ to be wrong; but to do what they have faith in.  
 “ Each one should act according to his own faith. If you  
 “ have faith in, and believe it your duty to appoint  
 “ meetings, and speak to the people, what right have  
 “ we to forbid you? We dare not, we do not set up to  
 “ be judges of other men’s consciences. And according  
 “ to the apostle John, *If our heart, or consciences condemn*  
 “ *us not, then have we confidence towards God—*(1 John iii.  
 “ 21.) Therefore we advise all to keep a justified con-  
 “ science, and to live up to that light which God has  
 “ given them. *Christ has enlightened every man that cometh*  
 “ *into the world, and a measure of the spirit is given to every*  
 “ *man to profit withal.* Therefore, this light that shineth  
 “ in all men’s hearts, and the spirit of God that striveth  
 “ with, and teacheth all, is every man’s rule to walk by,  
 “ and to whom all should be obedient.”

This is a doctrine I then believed, and his preaching it to me, brought me into a nearer union, and much strengthened my faith in them, as we are the more ready to believe those right who are of the same opinion; and I expect this was his motive in treating thus on this subject, though I had heard the same before, from others; but this was only feeding me with milk. The real faith of the church was insisted upon sometime afterwards, as will be seen in the sequel. I state every thing according to the order of time, as they happened

Before he parted with me at this time, he spake on various other subjects; particularly the mercy of God in the final restoration of all the posterity of Adam, in the following manner:

“ We believe this to be a dispensation of the greatest  
 “ light, and the final and last display of God’s grace to  
 “ a lost world; in which the mystery of God will be  
 “ finished, and in the increasing work of it, Christ will  
 “ deliver up *all things* to the Father; and *every knee* will  
 “ have to *bow*, and *every tongue confess to the glory of God.*  
 “ And as *by one man’s disobedience, many, i. e. all, were*  
 “ *made sinners; so by the obedience of one, shall many, (i. e.*

“ the same number that were made finners) *be made*  
 “ *righteous* — (Rom. v. 19.) We believe that Christ, in  
 “ the end, will become a complete conqueror: for, *as in*  
 “ *Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive* —  
 “ (1 Cor. xv. 22.) *He is the Saviour of all men, especially*  
 “ *of those that believe.*—(1 Tim. iv. 10.) He will reign  
 “ *until he hath put all enemies under his feet*—(1 Cor. xv. 25)  
 “ until he has brought *all things in subjection to his gov-*  
 “ *ernment*—(Heb. ii. 8.) *The last enemy that shall be de-*  
 “ *stroyed, is death*—(ver. 26) not the natural death, which  
 “ all men die; but a spiritual death, a death to God:  
 “ and he will in the *end deliver up the kingdom to God, when*  
 “ *he shall have put down all rule, authority, and power*—  
 “ (1. Cor. xv. 24.) Therefore if all authority and pow-  
 “ er be put down or destroyed, then surely the power of  
 “ darkness, the second death, will not always reign and  
 “ have authority and power over fallen creatures. The  
 “ first promulgation of the gospel was, *Peace on earth,*  
 “ *and good will towards men* — (Luke ii. 14.) But with  
 “ many who pretend to publish the gospel, it is hell-fire,  
 “ brimstone, and eternal damnation; of which they  
 “ will have more in one sermon, than is to be found  
 “ in the whole Bible. Now any person who believes in  
 “ the final restoration, could not frame words more full,  
 “ pertinent, and conclusive, that all will be saved, than  
 “ the foregoing quotations.

“ Christ’s kingdom, in the book of Daniel, is repre-  
 “ sented as overcoming and destroying all other king-  
 “ doms; and also, that all shall serve and obey him.  
 “ Will he not, therefore, overcome and destroy the king-  
 “ dom and power of Satan, and deliver creatures from  
 “ under his power and thralldom, when the scriptures  
 “ declare that he was manifested for this very purpose?  
 “ *For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he*  
 “ *might destroy the works of the devil*—(1 John, iii. 8.)  
 “ Can any thing be plainer? Suppose we were informed  
 “ of two kings, who were at open war; one represented  
 “ as very powerful, and his throne established in right-  
 “ eousness; and the happiness of his subjects, and of  
 “ mankind in general, was his greatest desire: suppose  
 “ the other to be represented as a tyrant, who is weak;

“cruel, and unjust ; and who does all he can to injure  
 “the subjects of the righteous king. Again, being also  
 “informed, that this powerful and righteous king did  
 “not make a complete conquest of the unjust and cruel  
 “one ; and that he never designed to do it, but meant  
 “to rescue only a few of the sufferers from under his  
 “tyranny and oppression ; what should we think of  
 “this righteous king, of the happiness of his subjects, and  
 “of his desire to promote the felicity of mankind in gen-  
 “eral ?

“Now those who believe only in partial salvation, re-  
 “present Christ to be like this king. They make him  
 “appear but a petty conqueror. The devil, the power  
 “of darkness, and hell, reigns eternally victorious over  
 “the greatest part of poor lost men. In truth, astonish-  
 “ing to tell, some say, that *God Almighty has given the*  
 “*devil a great number of Adam’s posterity, by an irrevocable*  
 “*decree, from all eternity to all eternity ; and let them do what*  
 “*they will, or can, they cannot help themselves.* This is the  
 “most astonishing present, that ever was made ; and for  
 “injustice, there never has been any thing on earth equal  
 “to it. But to return to partial salvation : Christ came  
 “into the world, to save the world ; but, alas ! few are  
 “saved by him. He died, according to their faith, *to*  
 “*atone for the sins of the world, and pay the debt that fallen*  
 “*man could not pay ;* and yet the debt of the greatest part  
 “eternally remain unpaid. What inconsistencies ! Oh !  
 “but say they, *he did pay the debt for all ; yet all would not*  
 “*accept of the payment, or offer ; therefore, must eternally a-*  
 “*bide by the consequences of their folly.* So they represent  
 “him as a powerful monarch, who makes no conquest  
 “of his opponent’s, or adversary’s subjects, but those who  
 “please to come to him. He goes round upon his walls,  
 “or sends some among them, calling and inviting them  
 “to quit the service of a tyrant ; and a few, or as many  
 “as become sensible of their slavery, and can accept his  
 “invitation, make their escape. What sort of a power  
 “is this ? Can such a king be worthy of the title of con-  
 “queror ? Is he not like the one I represented, who had  
 “power sufficient, and did not make use of it ? In truth,  
 “a wise, powerful monarch, would go forward, *conquer-*

"ing and to conquer—(Rev. vi. 2) till he had made death  
 "and hell give up their miserable captives—(Isa. xlv.  
 "13 Pl. lxxviii. 18.) and till he had taken all their death  
 "weapons from them, and destroyed their strong holds,  
 "(2 Cor. x. 4) forts and garrisons—(Ezek. xxvi. 11.)  
 "Now we believe, *The last enemy that shall be destroyed, is*  
 "death—(1 Cor. xv. 26.) Which is not the death of  
 "the body, as I said before, for all will die. But that  
 "spiritual death, which is an enemy that will hold all  
 "souls in captivity, until it is destroyed by the conquer-  
 "ing power of Christ. Nevertheless, we believe, that  
 "all who have been favoured here with the privilege and  
 "light of the gospel, and have been disobedient thereto,  
 "their loss and torment hereafter will be inexpressible;  
 "and every one will be punished according to the resist-  
 "ance of the light received." This is the most I ever  
 heard the Elders say on this subject; for it is a doctrine  
 seldom advanced by them. Indeed, they say but little  
 about a futurity, either of happiness or misery. They  
 say, "We need not concern ourselves what is to be, or  
 "how it will be with us hereafter, (leaving it to God,  
 "who will do perfectly just by all his creatures) but  
 "make it the principal concern and business of our lives,  
 "to forsake, and travel out of all sin; living a *just and*  
 "*holy life*, which is the only way any creature ever found  
 "peace in this world: also, by so doing, we shall feel a  
 "confidence in God, and have a comfortable hope of a  
 "happy immortality." He advised me to "do what I  
 "believed to be right; and if I preached to others, to  
 "live the life I preached. Not to preach one thing and  
 "do another, like unto many preachers in the world." Observing, that "if I lived the life I preached, they  
 "were willing I should preach any where, and at any  
 "time" They proposed, that "I should go to the  
 "Methodist meeting, (nigh by) the Sabbath following,  
 "and speak to the people, after their preacher had con-  
 "cluded; and wished me, for the time to come, to man-  
 "ifest my faith more than I had yet done; and let peo-  
 "ple see there was a reality in it, by a sober, circumspect  
 "life."



After I left the house, walking in company with Seth Wells, a young believer, who opened his mind about the time I did, I told him what the Elders had proposed, but that I felt no impression of mind so to do. He replied—"If the Elders had made the same proposal to me, I should go, whether I had a desire or not; for though we may not feel it our duty (said he) to do as they advise, yet we should find, that going forth in obedience, would be attended with a blessing. When they teach or counsel me (said he) to do any thing, I do not wait to consult my own mind or feelings about it; believing they have the gift of God, and going forth in obedience to what they teach, without any hesitation, or consulting my own natural feelings and reasonings whether it be right or not, I find a blessing." I said, I had no such faith; and it is contrary to what I have heard Elder Hezekiah preach this day. So he said no more. But I have since seen, that he understood the nature of the faith, much better than I did; and had that faith then, to which I have never attained.

I continued visiting the brethren near two weeks, (who were all exceeding kind and friendly) conversing with them concerning the increasing work of God; the different dispensations; the condition of mankind; the lost state of professors in the present day, and concerning the prophecies; the fulfilment of them respecting the second coming of Christ; the political revolutions, wars, signs, and forebodings, in the present age; the first opening, preaching, and reception of the gospel; the prophecies that had been delivered by the former ministers, and other brethren, and sisters, in the church, concerning its future increase. We also discoursed of the lives of some since they embraced the faith; and concerning various points of doctrine, especially, as they term it, the works of the flesh. But the greatest topic of conversation was, concerning the direful effects of sin, and the necessity of living a holy, just, upright, honest life. By seeing the latter so much in practice; beholding such order, neatness, peace, love, and union, as I never saw before, I often thought, surely Christ is with these people: and I became much strengthened in my faith, and much satisfied



that they were the people they professed to be, i. e. in the second coming of Christ, the long promised, prophesied, and prayed for, millennium dispensation.

My companion returned from the northward; and, in a day or two, we left the place. Our brethren encouraging us to be faithful, and not to forget them: and by the last of September, we arrived at home; I having had one meeting on our way, in which I spake about one hour, to a number of people. After which, my companion appeared to be somewhat dissatisfied; telling me "I spake in such a mystical manner about the faith, that I shot over all the people's heads. Not one, said he, knew what thou wast talking about. I want, said he, to tell the people, in plain words, that I have found the only true church and people of God, and the coming of Christ; and to recommend to them to go and see for themselves, as I have done, and confess and forsake their sins before it is too late."

I replied, that it was needless to tell people what I knew they would not believe; and perhaps be laughed at, and called an enthusiast.

He said—"It was more useless to speak in such a mystical manner; and, as to being laughed at and called a fool, it was what he expected. But that he wished to remember what the apostle had said; that we must become fools in the judgment of the world, that we may become wise in the things of God."

I answered, when I recommend any thing, I wish to do it in such a manner, that there may appear a beauty in it. Suppose, in order to recommend our church, I was to say, Those people, whom the wicked world calls Shaking Quakers, are the only true believers and people of God on earth; and unless you go and join them, you'll be damned. Though it might be true, according to the faith, yet would not people be apt to conclude I was a mad man, and pay no attention to what I preached? I don't wish to follow your example in recommending the people and their doctrines; for you often introduce your discourse about them in such a plain, blunt manner, that it is enough to give people an antipathy and disgust against them. As to becoming fools, we should not

make ourselves appear such, by imprudently speaking and acting; but endeavour to do all things in wisdom.

He replied—"Thou mayest plaster and polish as much as thou likest; still I think thou wilt be counted a fool by many for embracing this faith, which I esteem as the greatest wisdom; but being counted such, and called by the despised name of a Shaker, is, I expect, a great cross to thee."

I said, I care as little what the people of the world say or think about it, as thou dost; knowing many will assert at one time one thing, and at another time another, that it is not worth minding what they say; and I trust I shall be able to vindicate and justify the faith, church, and myself, in joining them; and wish to do it in such a manner, as not to be looked upon to be more of a fool than I am.

October 24. Going a journey to Long-Island, I had a meeting at Peekskill, to general satisfaction. I spake principally concerning the vanities of the world, the uncertainty of life, the consequences and effects of sin, and the value and necessity of religion. I represented religion as the fountain of all true peace and happiness in this world, and of eternal felicity in a life to come.

I often felt such desires for the happiness and salvation of mankind, and saw such beauty in religion, that I had thoughts of dedicating all my time to travelling and preaching, as I had done some years before. Being as yet ignorant that I could only proceed in that way, as I received the gift, order, or direction, from the Elders; and that I could not do any good until I was appointed and sent by them to preach.

Now, though I was well satisfied respecting the faith which I had embraced, and the society of which I was a member, yet I said but little about it, except to such as appeared sincere and disentangled from other societies. To such I recommended the society and the faith, in such a manner, that I wondered they did not do as my neighbour, R. Hodgson, had done, after I recommended the society and their faith to him.

January 1, 1800. I began this year as I wished to end it, in reading, meditation, and thankfulness to God

for mercies and favours received; and with sincere and earnest desires, that I might this year be preserved from all sin, and live an upright, just life.

Being zealous to gain many over to the faith, I persuaded my wife's sister to take a journey with me to Neskauna, and see those people, and examine for herself. Accordingly, the 20th of the month, we left home, with my horse and chair; and after suffering with the cold, and tedious riding in the chair, in consequence of the snow being deeper to the northward than we expected, we arrived on the fourth day, late in the evening, at B. Youngs'.

Now, by this time there were ten or twelve young believers gathered to the church; three or four out of Albany, with Wm. Carter's family, he having bought a farm joining the church settlement. His wife and two daughters (who were so angry with me for informing Carter about these people, as heretofore mentioned) had now joined them; the others lived in a house the church provided for them. Most of the time we continued in Neskauna, we tarried with this family, and occasionally visiting the older believers and Elders, who all strove with me to persuade my sister to embrace the faith, and apparently endeavouring to conquer her with kindness. Indeed they were very kind to all who came to see them, if they believed they came seeking the way of life and salvation. Formerly, when I had been with the society, I assembled for worship with the elderly believers; but at this time with the young believers, who had meetings every evening. On the third day after our arrival, there came an elderly man (by name Seth Youngs) from Lebanon, who belonged to the backsliding order,\* whom I had heard had the gift of speaking in unknown tongues, or in languages he did not understand: in the afternoon he spent some time talking to my sister, respecting the

\* *Backsliding order.* By this phrase is meant those who have had faith and the privilege of hearing the gospel, but have turned from it; and afterwards have returned and acknowledged their error and confessed their sins. All such are placed in an order by themselves, having lost, as they say, their travel with those who remained faithful.

vanities of this life, the necessity and beauty of religion, and the happiness to be derived from it. While he was thus speaking, he broke out, with much earnestness, in an unknown tongue, and spake about a quarter of an hour; which appeared to me astonishing, as I was satisfied from the appearance of the man, and previous conversation, that he was not a man of learning. Therefore I believed, and received it as immediate inspiration, and concluded it was miraculous; and thought I should have been very glad if it could have been taken down in writing, that I might have found out what language it was, and what he had spoken. It was said to be Greek by one of the believers, (Seth Wells) who professed to understand a little of the learned languages.

In the evening we had a meeting of all the young believers, and three Elders with us, and a number of spectators. He then spake again about half an hour, breaking out while one of the Elders was speaking; at hearing which I was much affected, really believing it to be immediate inspiration. It was said (by the same person before mentioned) to be Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, speaking part of the time one language, and then another. After meeting, all the family sitting round the fire, as he was talking concerning the happiness of a religious life, suddenly his head shook, as if by a severe electric shock; he then closed his eyes and sung half an hour, in some language, said to be Hebrew. As soon as he ended, he said, "this was one of the songs of Zion;" and exclaimed, "how happy a soul feels that has a sense of the love of God."

The same evening he spake a few minutes in some Indian tongue, or it appeared such by the gesticulations, &c. He told us that, "he could only speak as he was inspired by the power of God, and then he had no will or power to stop; and that it often came upon him unexpected, and unthought of; and that he did not understand what he said, except when he had a sense of it given to him."

I was informed of an illiterate sister at Lebanon, in the same order, that had the gift of interpretation of tongues; and that she sometimes could translate, or ex-



plain languages thus spoken: and previously to that time, one of the young believers (namely, Seth Wells) who professed to understand Latin, informed me, in company with several others, that he had heard this same man, at Lebanon, speak half an hour in Latin, which much strengthened his faith, and which he translated into English; and that he had heard him speak in French, a Frenchman being present at the same time. He further asserted that the forementioned sister, who had the gift of interpretation of tongues, being present, interpreted the same; all of which he said, "greatly confirmed him in the faith, as it was prophesied in the scriptures, that *these signs should follow them that believe.*" (Mark xvi. 17.) *They shall speak with new tongues.*—"Now," said he, "all those gifts that were prophesied of in the scriptures, are in the church. Therefore all those who come to a knowledge thereof, and do not embrace and abide in the faith, will be left without excuse."

I shall make some remarks on these gifts and operations, in their proper place; for having had the same myself, the reader will find me hereafter to be a more competent judge of them.

I shall now turn back, and relate a few words concerning this evening's meeting.

We all appeared to be exceedingly happy, dancing, clapping hands, and shouting with all the vigour, zeal, and earnestness imaginable. This was the first of my joining them in their dance, as I felt a backwardness thereto; but as I was standing still looking on, one of the Elders whispered to me, and said, "Thomas, labour." I thought I must be obedient, and keep in union, so I stepped in among them, and laboured with them. Some spectators said after meeting, "we were deluded and full of the devil." Others, that "it was as merry a frolick as ever they saw." Some serious persons were much affected at seeing people proceed in this manner, under pretence of worshipping God. A couple who were most displeas'd, who felt sorrow, anger, and pity towards us, wept and said, "O take us away from this horrid sight;" notwithstanding, they soon after joined the society. I thought to be sure it



was a wonderful sight to people who were present, seeing our worship. But this I declare, I was sincere, and I believe all the young believers were. We did nothing from a principle of hypocrisy.

Next day I went with my sister to the church, where an Elder and an Elder sister spent two or three hours in talking to her, trying to convince and persuade her to the faith. At last she appeared to be much affected, on account, as she conceived, of their condemning all other christians, and said, "you condemn all good people that are, or ever have been in the world; and there is no possibility of any being saved, unless they receive your faith, and join your church." I replied, we do not condemn all others. I still believe that Van Nostrand, Benj. Abbot, and John Regan (with whom we were acquainted, and used to hear preach) were good men; and what I wrote in my journal respecting their piety, after I had read of their deaths, I still believed.

She replied, "I'll warrant you will soon erase it." I said, I never will.

One of the Elders said, "We own all the work of God that has ever been in the world, and in all people. We believe all those who have lived up to their light and knowledge, have stood justified in the sight of God, and have been accepted by him, according to the light they have had and improved," &c.

We left that house in order to return again to the young family. On the way she appeared to be much exercised and tried in her mind. As we were walking, she suddenly stopped, and appeared to be falling. I caught hold of her and held her up, when it appeared to me something was the matter with her. In two or three minutes she revived, and appeared for the same space of time, to be somewhat delirious. After she recovered, she told me that a strange feeling came over her mind, and that she had been blind.

I told her it was for a sign to her, to show her that she was in a state of darkness while standing in opposi-

tion to the gospel ; and that I thought she was greatly favoured in having such a sign.\*

Next morning we bid all the young believers farewell. They with me, were sorry she would not open her mind before she left them ; but on our way, we had about a mile to ride, before we passed the church, or the house in which the Elders resided ; in which time, I improved every moment in representing the people in the most endearing manner I could, persuading her to join them, that they might feel a union with her in her absence, and by which she would gather a union with them, and receive great comfort and consolation. Finally she gave up, and consented to stop and see the Elders ; and in a few minutes after we were in the house, she opened her mind to the Elder sister ; after which she came out of the private room very cheerful, and said, “ I now want to go back and see the young sisters ;” which we did, and they gave her the right hand of fellowship, being much pleased that they now could call her sister.

The next morning we parted with them, and the 4th of February, arrived at home.

We now began to recommend our faith more strongly to our neighbours, representing these people as being christian-like and exemplary. We asserted, that their order, love, and union exceeded that of any christian society in the world. We frequently made use of the expression, “ By their fruits ye shall know them ;” and “ by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.” Also, that there was that power of God among them that was to be found no where else.

Finally, my father, one of R. Hodgson’s sons, and Abraham Hendrickson, a nephew of mine, who lived then in my family, and our neighbour Thomas Howe, were prevailed on by us, to go and see them, and examine for themselves. They set off in four or five days after I arrived at home, in company with my brother in the faith, R. Hodgson, in a sleigh, and returned in ten or twelve days ; but to our disappointment, only one

\* Afterwards, on mature deliberation, I was satisfied her illness was occasioned by much exercise of mind.

had joined them; viz. R. Hodgson's son. My father, as soon as he saw me, said, "Thomas, I have heard thee speak about the power to be felt among these people, but I never felt less in my life; and when they talk, or preach, it is as dry as a bone." Continued he, "I told them that they conquered people with love and kindness."

As there were four of us now in the faith, we began to hold meetings once a week in private, except a few we sometimes admitted by particular request; and lively meetings we had. We danced, shouted, and clapped our hands with all the joy imaginable, to think we had lived to see, and partake of the long prophesied, and prayed for millennium dispensation. I felt as light as a cork upon the floor. At one time I clapt my hands, and cried, "clap your hands all ye people that are so highly favoured; shout unto God with the voice of thanksgiving\*—(Psal. xli. i.) This was somewhat singular, as I had never heard any of them speak intelligible words in the time of dancing; therefore I was fearful I had not a right gift, and mentioned it to one of the Elders sometime afterwards, desiring to know what he thought of it. He answered me, "I shall not condemn such a gift;" and told me of many wonderful gifts among the people at the first opening of the gospel.

About the middle of March, came a couple of the brethren, (namely, Philip Bartley and Benj. S. Youngs) who were sent by the ministrations residing at Lebanon, to help build us up, and strengthen us in the faith. By this time, Shakerism began to be noised all over the country; and after they had been with us a day or two, we gave public information for a meeting the succeeding Sabbath evening; to which many people came. Hodgson's house, though large, was crowded, and many without; so that we had no room to dance. The old man, Philip Bartley, spake about an hour and a half on the increasing work of God, from the fall of Adam, to the opening of the gospel of the second coming of Christ,

\* I may just observe when one feels disposed to clap his hands, all or most of the others instantly unite with him and do the same.

in order for man's final salvation and redemption : also, on the inconsistency of sexual intercourse, either married or unmarried, with the pure gospel dispensation, and with the nature of a pure and holy being. He said, " It is certain that mankind, relative to the gratification of their carnal minds in this respect, have sunk below the brute creation ; as they have their times and seasons, but mankind have not " He also spake concerning the *bond woman born after the flesh*, (mentioned by the apostle, Gall. iv. 23) and the *son of the free woman by promise, which things* (he said) " were an allegory of the two covenants : one, of the covenant which gendereth to bondage in generation, and the other is free in regeneration ; or one of the flesh, and the other of the spirit : that those who were under the covenant of the flesh, were in bondage, and not heirs with those under the covenant of the spirit. Therefore we, (said he) who have taken up our cross against the flesh, and obtained a victory over it, are not children of the flesh, or bond woman, to live after the flesh : for such as *live after the flesh, shall die* ; but they who *through the spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, shall live*—(Rom. viii. 13) and become children of the *free woman*, and of that Jerusalem (i. e. the church) of which the apostle spake—(Gall. iv. 26) *which is from above and is free ; which is the mother of us all* in regeneration. This mother can rejoice, though she bear not, nor travails not according to the flesh, and is desolate as to having children after the course of generation. Yet she *hath many more children than she who hath an husband* ; i. e. according to the covenant of the flesh by generation," &c.

He also endeavoured to show that sexual intercourse was pointed out to be impure and sinful, even under the law, or Mosaic dispensation. In order to prove this, he quoted Lev. xii. 2—xv. 16, 17, 18, 30, 32. " Now (said he) why all this washing and purification ? and why a sin offering, if no sin was committed in the act ? and if no sin, why did the priest make an atonement ? (ver. 8.) Also the impurity of it appears evident from the injunction that was laid on the children of Israel, in order for them to be prepared to behold the mani-



“ festation of the Lord, which was, *Come not at your wives.*”

He spake concerning the good and evil tree; and that “ a tree may be *known by its fruit*—(Mat. xii. 33.) Also, that by the same rule we might know what ef-  
 “ feminacy and concupiscence proceeds from.” He in-  
 stanced much evil it had produced, and said, “ that  
 “ wicked Cain was its first production. The apostle  
 “ James says expressly that *Wars* and fightings among  
 “ mankind, come from their lusts that war in their mem-  
 “ bers.—(James i. 4.) Yea, truly, according to the  
 “ apostle John, *The lust of the flesh is not of the Father, but*  
 “ *is of the world*—(ii. 16.) Then all kinds of evil pro-  
 “ ceeds from this corrupt root. Therefore, the nature  
 “ of it cannot be good, and is not the same that Adam  
 “ possessed before his fall; but by his not abiding in the  
 “ state in which his creator placed him, he became *like*  
 “ *the beasts that perish*—(Pl. xlix. 20.) According to Jer-  
 “ emiah—(ii. 21) he was *planted a noble vine, wholly a*  
 “ *right seed*, but he became a *degenerate plant of a strange*  
 “ *vine*; and though his posterity *wash* themselves with  
 “ *nitre, and take much soap*, yet their *iniquity* in this respect,  
 “ *is marked before the Lord.*”

He spake of the seed of the woman, that was promised  
 after the fall, that would destroy this corrupt nature;  
 but that “ it could not be fully or completely done, un-  
 “ til the last and final dispensation of God’s grace com-  
 “ menced. Notwithstanding many, in preceding dispen-  
 “ sations, had some sight and sense of the evil of this na-  
 “ ture, and the root from whence all sin proceeded.—  
 “ The apostle (2 Theff. ii. 4) calls it the *man of sin, the*  
 “ *son of perdition, and mystery of iniquity*; and that he  
 “ stands opposed to God, and *exalteth himself above all that*  
 “ *is called God, or that is worshipped: so that he, as God,*  
 “ *sitteth in the temple of God.* Our bodies are the temple  
 “ of God—(1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.—vi. 19) and here it is  
 “ that the man of sin has sat, from the time that sin first  
 “ entered into man: and he has been the god, and great  
 “ delight of the sons and daughters of fallen Adam.  
 “ This they have loved, above all other things in the  
 “ world; and as it is a truth, that which a man loves



“ most, or sets his chief affection upon, that he worships ;  
 “ and therefore, according to the text, this is the god  
 “ they have worshipped ; and this is that, according to  
 “ the apostle, which withholdeth the complete salvation  
 “ of man, and *will let, or hinder it, until he be taken out of*  
 “ *the way*—(2 Theff. ii. 7.) The apostle also spake of a  
 “ time, when this man of sin should be revealed ; when  
 “ the great mystery of iniquity should be opened ; and  
 “ whom the Lord would then *destroy with the brightness of*  
 “ *his coming*—(8 ver.) The same apostle treating on  
 “ marriage, and showing how much preferable an un-  
 “ married life is to a married, says, those who marry *shall*  
 “ *have trouble in the flesh ; but, says he, I spare you ; that*  
 “ is, at that time he permitted it to be so. Then he speaks  
 “ of a future time, when *they that have wives should be as*  
 “ *though they had none*—(1 Cor. vii. 28, 29.) And Christ  
 “ says, *in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in*  
 “ *marriage ; but are as the angels of God in heaven*—(Matt.  
 “ xxii. 30) and that he meant, that this resurrection is  
 “ (or may be) in this life, is evident from what he spake  
 “ touching the resurrection of the dead, *That God is not*  
 “ *the God of the dead, but of the living*”—(32d ver.)

The old man also discoursed concerning the resurrec-  
 tion ; the substance of which was, “ That the time had  
 “ commenced, and many were raised from the dead, and  
 “ had experienced that resurrection, of which we read in  
 “ many places in the scriptures ; which is a resurrection  
 “ from a state buried in sin, to a state of righteousness and  
 “ life in Christ : according to his own words, *I am the*  
 “ *resurrection and the life : he that believeth in me, though he*  
 “ *were dead, yet shall he live*—(John xi. 25.) Also, ac-  
 “ cording to the apostle, *Even we who were dead in sin .*  
 “ *have become quickened together with Christ ; and he hath*  
 “ *raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly*  
 “ *places in Christ Jesus*”—(Eph. ii. 5, 6.)

He also spake of the purity of the gospel of the second  
 coming of Christ, and that “ all should become pure as  
 “ the gospel itself is pure : like unto those of which we  
 “ read, who *were redeemed from among men ; being the first*  
 “ *fruits unto God and the Lamb, and in their mouth was found*  
 “ *no guile ; for they were without fault before the throne*

“ of God. These, we read, *were not defiled with women*”  
 —(Rev. xiv. 4, 5.)

He likewise spake of the impurity and iniquity of the gratification of the carnal mind, by way of onanism. He concluded by speaking on justification and sanctification, the purport of which was, “ justification consists in  
 “ repenting, confessing, and forsaking all sin, of which we  
 “ have any knowledge as being such; and living in strict  
 “ obedience to the light and knowledge given to us, by  
 “ not defiling or violating our consciences in any respect.  
 “ Sanctification consists in being cleansed from, and hav-  
 “ ing power over all sin, in thought, word, and deed.”

This was a long and, to many, a tedious discourse; and what made it the more tedious was, his not speaking loud enough to be distinctly heard. On the subject of what he called “ the works of the flesh,” he treated in so plain a manner, that many women wished themselves out of the house; but they could not well get out, in consequence of the crowd of people at the door and in the entry of the house. I considered that the subject he had principally discoursed on, could not be treated fully, so as to be understood by the unlearned, without making use of some indelicate expressions. After he had finished, B. S. Youngs spake about ten minutes, to general satisfaction.

Here it may be mentioned that a certain preacher, (whom hereafter I shall call our opponent) came rushing and crowding into the house with two of his friends, while the old man was speaking: as soon as our last speaker had finished, he desired permission to speak; saying, “ I have not come to oppose, or to offer any thing contradictory to what has been delivered.”— Then in a few minutes he entered on the subject of marriage, in direct opposition and contradiction to what the old man had said upon it. Many people took notice of his proceeding contrary to what he had proposed. He flourished away learnedly and fluently for about half an hour. I expected that neither of these brethren would make any reply to what he had said; and as I considered our credit relative to our faith, was in danger, as soon as he had ended, I stepped upon one of the seats, to answer him. I first proposed for the consideration of the as-

fembly, how he had proceeded contrary to his own first proposition, not to meddle in controversial points, and proceeded to state what we believed respecting marriage, and said, we do not deny the lawfulness of marriage in the manner as hath been represented, and we have been charged with tenets we do not own. But while I was speaking, he cries out, "Come, friends and neighbours, let us be going." This I (and several others) considered as great impudence; and it was taking that on him which did not belong to him, as he had no right to come here and break up the meeting. It caused much confusion, some crying out, "the plain coat durst not stand his ground." Before he got out of hearing, I raised my voice, and said, it is well known that that man is not what he professes to be, and that he holds the truth in unrighteousness.

This was saying much; but I never heard that he, or any other one offered to contradict it.

I then desired the people to be still a few minutes, and I would endeavour to open the subject respecting marriage to their satisfaction, and desired that our meeting might break up in some order. They then were silent, and I proceeded and said.\* We do not condemn lawful marriage; but believe it best for all such as are of the world, who live in, and after the course of the world, to become married, and live according to the command and order of God in that state, and under that dispensation. According to the apostle, "it is better to marry than to burn, and those who marry do well; but those who marry not do better." Read chap. vii. of 1st Cor. there you will see our faith respecting marriage. We say no more than what Christ said: "He that is able to receive this saying," that it is not good to marry, "let him receive it." But he says, none can receive it, "save they to whom it is given—(Matt. xix. 11) thus you see it is a divine gift.

When you come to have an understanding faith in the increasing work of God, through the various dispensa-

\* I have given the foregoing, and following discourses at some length, that the reader may see the principal reasons and arguments these people advance for their faith respecting marriage.

tions, to the present, in order for man's complete salvation and redemption from all lascivious and evil desires, you may then receive this pure doctrine of being married "only in the Lord."

Christ mentions some in that day, who had become "eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake." Why may there not then be some in this day?

Part of the prayer which Christ gave to his disciples, was, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as in heaven." In heaven "they neither marry, nor are given in marriage:" so neither do those to whom this kingdom is come; or, in other words, who have come to it. The children of this world marry; and so long as they are the children of this world, belong to the kingdom of this world; under the dominion and power of this world; under the order and dispensation that God has heretofore given; and in short, as they have not come into this increasing work of God, they may become married. It has been asserted this evening, that we deny the ordinance, and lawfulness of marriage. I think I know the faith of my brethren; and I here speak their faith and my faith: that I verily believe the institution of marriage to have been an order of God; and I believe what I read, that God spake to Adam and Noah, and told them to go forth, increase, and multiply, as much as I believe circumcision and animal sacrifice was an order of God under that dispensation. But you are strangers to the typical meaning of these things, and to the increasing work of God.

Now I presume there is no one, in this audience, who believes that if a person, either man or woman, chooses, for some cause, to remain single, they commit a sin by not becoming married: at least, we know that the preachers of the different denominations, do not preach that it is an indispensable duty for all to become married. Many people think that the doctrine they have heard this evening, is entirely new; that none have ever preached it before the Shakers. But they are greatly mistaken; I had read much on the subject before I ever saw these people. The Essenians, an ancient sect among the Jews, held forth the same doctrine, for several hundred years



before Christ came. It is believed by some, that with this sect Christ united; for it is observed, that although he often censured all the other sects of the Jews, yet he never spake against the Essenians. Josephus says,\* that “they rejected marriage, and esteemed continence and victory over the passions, as the greatest virtues.” Many succeeding the apostles, held the same doctrine; and I could mention several who have written decidedly on this point; and many eminent characters in the Catholic, and some in the Protestant churches, have recommended a single life as most conducive to holiness; witness William Law, and the late John Wesley, in particular.

It is believed by many, if there were to be a universal peace for a few centuries, mankind would increase so rapidly, that this terraqueous globe would not contain or support them: therefore, some say, that war is justifiable and necessary in order to thin mankind. But I think, that half had better become Shakers, than to murder half to get them out of the way. Therefore, our opponent need not be so concerned about the world’s coming to an end. He now is, I suppose, near forty years old, and has never yet been married; and who has ever said that he is the more deluded, or a greater sinner, on that account? He comes here haranguing about the command to increase and multiply, and has never acted according to the command himself.

The great cry of many is, “If all were to become Shakers, the world would come to an end.” Well then, all wars and fightings, all cruelty and injustice, all sin and wickedness, all the abominations of every kind that are in the earth, all of which have proceeded from the lusts of the flesh, would likewise come to an end; which I think would be a very good end.

The great objection to our faith is, “that the world would come to an end;” when at the same time, they themselves, who make the objection, also believe that it will come to an end, and that by fire. I think it had better come to an end by mankind forsaking generation,

\* Wars of the Jews—b. ii. chap. vii.



and embracing regeneration, and thereby become saved from their sins, than to be all burned in their sins.

“If all were to become Shakers, the world would come to an end.” This seems to be their great concern; but they are concerned nothing about it. The truth of the matter is, if all were to receive the pure doctrine that has been contended for this evening, there would be an end of the gratification of their carnal minds; this is it, as it hath been said by our aged friend, “this is the God of the world; this claims the uppermost seat in their affections; this is their object of worship.” They can part with any other thing easier than they can with this; yea, it is taking the very life of the natural man; and it is that life Christ spake of, which we must lose by a daily cross, in order to find life eternal—(Luke ix. 23, 24.) When a man comes to take up a full and daily cross against this nature, he will be brought under such trials and mortifications that one, who had been an instrument in bringing him to this, might have cause to ask him, as the men did Micah when he had lost his gods, “What aileth thee;” and he might with propriety answer as Micah did, “Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and what have I more” (of the things of this world that I can take comfort in;) “and what is that ye say unto me, what aileth thee?—(Judges xviii. 23, 24.) Some people say, they “like the Shakers very well, their manner of living, &c.; but I have a wife, and I would not like to forsake her; I love my wife too well to join the Shakers. I would join the Shakers, if they would let me live with my wife,” &c. Thus they speak the very truth and language of their carnal hearts. Yea, truly, it is with such as it was with one of those that Christ mentions, who were bidden to a great supper; several made excuses, but the one that had married a wife made none, but peremptorily said, “I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.”—(Matt. xiv. 2.)

Many people say, “curst is he who parteth man and wife;” and they think this is a text of scripture; but there is no such text in the book. Christ says, “What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder”—(Matt. xix. 6.) And what were they when joined to-

gether? Why, "one flesh," i. e. one in the flesh. The apostle speaking concerning our bodies being the members of Christ, he quotes these words of Christ, and saith, "What, know ye not that he who is joined to an harlot is one body? for two (saith Christ) shall be one flesh." So then, he that is joined to a wife, is the same flesh with her in carnal affections, as he who is joined to an harlot; yea, in their carnal gratification, their feeling, and sensation are the same. "But," saith the apostle, "he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit"—(1 Cor. vi. 16, 17) here is a wide difference. Also, "the unmarried care for the things of the Lord, that they may be holy in body and spirit. But those that are married care for the things of this world," how they may please one another—(1 Cor. vii. 33, 34) The apostle says further, "that every one should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor; not in the lust of concupiscence"—(1 Theff. iv. 4, 5.) Nevertheless, "What God hath joined together let no man put asunder." Nay, we do not wish to have any man separated from his wife, who is of the world and lives according to the course of nature, but to abide with her (as long as he remains under a back dispensation law) and be kind to her, according to those natural affections he possesses, as a natural man. Further, we would have no man separated from his wife, who is "under the law of a carnal commandment"—(Heb. vii. 16) but only such as are "after the power of an endless life"—(ib. 18 ver.) We read, "There is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof; for the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by which we draw nigh to God"—(ib. 18, 19 verses.)

Christ, in answer to the Pharisees, whether it was lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause, spake to them as under the law; which is evident by what he said to his disciples afterwards in answer to what they said to him, i. e. "if the case of the man be so with his wife." (as he had told the Pharisees) "it is not good to marry:" he answered them, "all men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given;" and then he

proceeds to inform them respecting eunuchs, that some were born so and some were made so of men; "and there be eunuchs which have made themselves such" (by taking up their cross) "for the kingdom of heaven's sake:" and then he adds, "he that is able to receive it, let him receive it"—(Matt. xix.)

But again, concerning the world's coming to an end. This need not be our concern; but our greatest concern should be, to live according to the commands of Christ, to take up our cross against all sin, and follow him "in the regeneration"—(Matt. xix. 28) and travel back again into that innocent state that Adam stood in before the fall; and leave the world to God, who "is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham"—(Matt. iii. 9.) The sin and fall of Adam consisted in his yielding obedience to that which was of the earth, earthly. But I have not time at present to enter on this subject. I say, our principal concern should be, to take up our cross against all sin, and every thing in our knowledge contrary to the nature of a pure and holy God. That this nature, of which our friend has spoken, is sinful and contrary to purity, is evident from many other passages of scripture besides those he has quoted. The apostle Paul says, "Make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lust thereof"—(Rom. xiii. 14.) Does not marriage make provision? Is it not the dictates of the carnal nature that causes men to seek wives, and women to seek husbands? Like as we read of some, "who when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry"—(1 Tim. v. 11.) What, not marry before they wax wanton against Christ? What do you think of this, my attentive hearers? The apostle says, "Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh; for the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would"—(Gall. v. 16, 17.) Many people wish to do the things that are right, and to become holy, but they cannot until they come at the root of sin and destroy it, according to the apostle in another place. They that wish to be Christ's, must "crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts"—(ib. 24 ver.)

“ For they that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh ; but they that are after the spirit, the things of the spirit ”—( Rom. viii. 5 ) “ For to be carnally minded is death ”—( ib. 6. ) Because the carnal mind is enmity against God ; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be : so then they that are in the flesh cannot please God—( ib. 8. “ If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die : but if ye, through the spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live ”—( ib. 13. ) The apostle James also says, “ When lust is conceived, it bringeth forth sin ; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death ”—( i. 15. ) How many thousands have experienced this to their sorrow ! The apostle Paul gives us an account of several characters that shall not inherit the kingdom of God ; one of whom is the *effeminate*—( 1 Cor. vi. 9 ) delicacy debars me from giving any explanation, or making any comment on this word. A certain author,\* in his reflections on this text, says, “ It is absurd to hope for heavenly happiness without being weaned from our lusts, and reformed from our gross sins. ” The apostle Peter says, “ Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul ”—( ii. 11. ) I might quote several other passages from the scriptures, that speak of the lusts of the flesh and the carnal mind ; all which means the fallen, corrupt nature of man, which stands opposed to the salvation of the soul. In truth, every one might know its impurity from their own experience and the evil impulses of their thoughts ; also from the sensations of shame which they feel attending its gratification.—According to the apostle, “ It is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret ”—( Eph. v. 12. )

A certain author† expresses himself on this subject thus : “ O the extreme filthiness of fleshly lusts, which not only effeminates the mind, but enervates the body ; which not only distaineth the soul, but disguiseth the per-

\* J. Brown.

† Fra. Quarles.



son: it is ushered with fury and wantonness; it is accompanied with filthiness and uncleanness, and it is followed with grief and repentance."

We agree with the church of England in part of her ninth article, "That the desires of the flesh are not subject to the law of God:" also, "that concupiscence and lust hath in it the nature of sin:" and likewise we agree with part of the liturgy of the same church, where it is required of all persons, before baptism, to promise, "To renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the carnal desires and inclination of the flesh," so as "not to follow nor be led by them." We also fully agree with the prayer that follows:

"O merciful God! grant that the old Adam" in us "may be so buried, that the new man may be raised up" in us "Grant that all carnal affections may die" in us, "and that all things belonging to the spirit may live and grow in" us. "Grant that we may have power and strength to have victory, and to triumph against the devil, the world, and the flesh." Thus we believe as that church expresseth concerning concupiscence, &c.; our faith requires us to renounce the same; also, in like manner we pray.

But we are condemned for believing as others profess to believe, and for renouncing what others only promise to renounce, and for praying and forsaking what others pray for only, but never forsake.

A certain commentator, in his reflections on the fifteenth chapter of Leviticus, says, "How shameful and infectious are the scandalous outbursts of original and inward corruptions, and particularly those which are any way connected with fleshly lust." Also on 2d Samuel, eleventh chap. he says, "The lusts of the flesh are the most powerful and deceitful sins, and the last to be subdued" Yea, many have had a sight and sense of the root and seat of sin, but to fully destroy it in themselves but few have been able. Many more such like quotations I might make from several other authors, but as it is late in the evening I must draw to a conclusion.



Now as an unmarried or single life, stands justified by Jesus Christ, St. Paul, and many other characters, celebrated for their learning and piety, why then so much noise about the Shakers? Why stigmatize them with all the opprobrious language that apparent malice can invent? Why poor deluded creatures, on this account? Why should they be drove out of the place or neighborhood? Is it because they preach up a holy, sinless life, and assert, with St. Paul, "That he who is married cares for the things of this world, how he may please his wife and bring up his children, and has much worldly concern and trouble in the flesh; but that those who remain unmarried care for the things of the Lord, are concerned to lay up a treasure in heaven, and to know how they may please the Lord, and become holy in body and spirit?" When you are at home, read for yourselves these passages of scripture that have been quoted: also, when you read and meditate thereon, may the spirit of truth be with you to lead you into all truth, and may it abide with you henceforth and for ever. Amen.

The assembly now dispersed in decent order. Several of the neighbours blamed the conduct of our opponent; observing he had no right to disturb the meeting; and by leaving the house with such abruptness, he evidently discovered his inability to confront the arguments I was bringing against him. Many of the audience charged us both with angry sensations. Herein they judged us wrong; for as with me, so I believe it was with him, we were only actuated by motives of zeal. But I adopted it as a rule of caution on similar occasions, to keep a meek, humble spirit, and not to proceed in any religious exercises with any confidence in my own natural acquired abilities, but to become of a child-like spirit, which is the spirit of the gospel; placing all confidence and dependence on God, for the guidance and assistance of his holy spirit; and wished to remember what Christ said, "Without me ye can do nothing"—(John xv 15.)—That is, nothing that will be of any profit to the soul's salvation. Also the apostle saith, "Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind"—(Phil. ii. 3.)

Next day I talked with the old man concerning his preaching; I told him I did not think his explanations of our Saviour's discourse with the Sadducees, right: but that I believed in an allusion to the express words of Christ, that he also exceedingly erred. The whole address of the Sadducees to our Saviour, was concerning the state of the dead; for we are expressly told that they did not believe in a resurrection, and denied the existence of angels or spirits—(Acts xxiii. 8.) They believed no part of the scriptures to be canonical, except the five books of Moses. Therefore they told him what Moses had written, "If a man's brother die, and leave his wife and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother; and that seven brethren had, in this way, one woman to wife, and dying left no children, last of all the woman died also." Now they ask the question, "In the resurrection, therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of the seven?"—(Mark xii. 19, 23.) Jesus told them that they erred, i. e. in thinking that they married in the next world as in this. For they that shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage. Mind, it is "*that world*"—a future state of existence, of which he is speaking of, which is as clearly evident as that two and two are four. If Christ meant, as you and the other brethren believe, i. e. "a resurrection from a state of death in sin, to a life of righteousness," the reply he made to the Sadducees, was no answer to their question; for that had no reference at all to this present life, it was wholly respecting those who had died a natural death. Christ also told them, "neither can they die any more"—(Luke xx. 35, 36) He also referred them to what they had read in those books which they believed; that God was the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob—(Exod. iii. 6) Then said he, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." For if Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were in a state of non-existence, God could not, with propriety, be called their God. I also objected to his having asserted, "that the account of the marriage in Cana of Galilee, recorded in the seventh

chapter of St. John's gospel, was not a natural marriage, but a spiritual marriage and union between Christ and his apostles." Which I told him I was very sorry to hear him assert, for a greater perversion of scripture I never heard; and if I could not support my opinion or faith, without wresting the scriptures in such a manner, I would give it up; for a plainer description of natural marriage could not have been written; and that there is not, in all the account, any intimations to the contrary.

He did not appear disposed to controvert the point with me; but only said, "First Mother understood it so;" thinking, as I supposed, the opinion or belief of so great an authority would have some influence on me. But I thought as little of her understanding about it as I did of his; and this was the first instance that lessened her in my esteem, particularly when I found, from further evidence, that it was really her belief.\*

They staid with us four or five days; in which time, by confession of sins, there were three more added to our number, viz. my nephew, Abraham Hendrickson, mentioned before, and a black man and his wife.

The two brethren met with us every evening in our small meetings, and gave us much good advice. They both appeared to me to be honest, well-meaning, loving, and kind men. I had considerable conversation, principally with the old man, concerning the faith. What appeared to be most on his thoughts, and which he seemed to delight to expatiate on, were the deep things of the faith. The following is a summary of his discourses with me at this time:

He said—"The soul was of divine origin; but sin had separated the soul from God, and that being removed, we may have a communion with angels, and with departed spirits." Further, "that he and some others, had often heard their singing, and had seen the

\* Some time after, I mentioned this assertion to Elder John Meacham. He did not tell me what his belief was concerning it, but only said, "If it was made known to me by immediate revelation, that it was a spiritual marriage and union, as Bartley has asserted, I would not mention it." Because, as I understood him, the account on record was so plain to the contrary.

“ order and worship of the spiritual world. But man-  
 “ kind have become so lost from God, and sunk in na-  
 “ ture’s darkness, that they have no true idea of the spir-  
 “ itual world. But when the soul, or sensitive part of  
 “ man becomes awakened, to see and have a sense of its  
 “ loss, and feel the weight of sin, it is brought into bit-  
 “ terness and anguish; and as it closes in with the gos-  
 “ pel, knowing a travail therein, and a resurrection out  
 “ of that loss, then their spiritual eyes and ears become  
 “ opened, that were closed by sin, and then is capable of  
 “ communion with the spiritual world; which world is  
 “ not so far distant above or beyond the sky, as the car-  
 “ nal and ignorant imagine. For, as they have never  
 “ partaken of the nature of it, they know nothing about  
 “ it, nor where it is. In truth, the kingdom of heaven  
 “ is where God is. As to his omnipresence, he is every  
 “ where; but as to his particular residence, he is with  
 “ his Saints, or it is by them that he is felt and known;  
 “ and those in the body, in their travail, are one in spirit  
 “ with those departed. We are united to those in the  
 “ same order, who have left the body; they are absent  
 “ in body, but present in spirit. We are one in spirit,  
 “ according to our measure, with all the heavenly host.

“ In consequence of a resurrection, restoration, or com-  
 “ plete salvation and redemption from all sin, we be-  
 “ come united to God, and consequently to holy spirits.  
 “ For whether absent in body, or present in spirit, we  
 “ are in one kingdom, and all in one travail: travailing  
 “ nearer to God, and becoming more and more like  
 “ him, though we never become equal to him in wisdom  
 “ and purity, as he is infinite in all his divine attributes.  
 “ We may arrive at a state of equality with the sera-  
 “ phim, the highest order of angels, in wisdom and pu-  
 “ rity, and they may then be as far beyond us as at pre-  
 “ sent. As there will be a continual and eternal travail  
 “ from the time we first received the gospel, all in and  
 “ according to our order, in this world and the world of  
 “ spirits. Indeed, with open vision do some of us, in  
 “ this life, behold the angelic company of the spiritual  
 “ world, and join the song of the New Jerusalem.



“ The veil of the flesh being rent, the spiritual eyes  
 “ become opened. Some of us have seen the worship of  
 “ the spiritual world, in the same order with the church.  
 “ It is the redeemed and sanctified saints, that constitute  
 “ the pure church of Christ. There are millions of spir-  
 “ its with and around such a church. As the spirit of  
 “ God dwelleth with holy souls, or such as are in obedi-  
 “ ence to the gospel, so do holy spirits. Wicked spirits  
 “ dwell with and around wicked people, or such as are  
 “ in a state of disobedience to the gospel.”

He treated concerning the gospel being offered and  
 preached to the world of spirits; and the possibility of  
 their not receiving it, in consequence of their being cloth-  
 ed with the same darkness, or being in the same dark  
 state as when in the body.

“ After the death of the body, (said he) all find  
 “ themselves, as to their understanding and state of their  
 “ minds, the same as before. Those, before their depar-  
 “ ture hence, who have received the gospel, confessed  
 “ their sins, and begun the work of salvation, do, after  
 “ the death of the body, find themselves in the same state  
 “ of attainment therein as before; and travail on in spir-  
 “ it in the same. Like unto a workman lying down  
 “ and leaving his work in the evening, and in the morn-  
 “ ing finding it where and as he left it; he then begins  
 “ and carries on the same until finished. But the nature  
 “ of the soul is such, that it admits (as I intimated be-  
 “ fore) of an eternal improvement. Its work of an in-  
 “ crease in purity and knowledge will never be finished.  
 “ There is not so great a difference from our state in this  
 “ world, and first entrance into eternity, as people gen-  
 “ erally imagine. Though the wicked may be more un-  
 “ happy, being separated from all sensual delights, until  
 “ they confess their sins and receive the gospel. Such,  
 “ who have confessed their sins and received the gospel  
 “ in this world, may become more happy, being then  
 “ separated from a body which was a clog and hin-  
 “ drance, and travail on with greater rejoicing. Fur-  
 “ ther, as all, on their entrance into the world of spirits,  
 “ are, as to their state and improvement of mind, the  
 “ same as they were here, therefore an infant is an infant

“ spirit in the world of spirits ; and they increase in understanding, and come to a conscious sense of good and evil.

“ No creature’s probationary state ends, either in this world or the world of spirits, until he attains a state, by obedience to the gospel, from which there will be no more going out or relapsing. But the greatest part of mankind have run into many errors, by confining repentance and all the salvation from sin, to this life, that can be obtained ; in consequence of which, many have concluded that the heathen, who never heard the gospel in this world, must be unavoidably and irretrievably lost. In short, all such as have not heard, or had the offer of the gospel in this world, will have the offer of it in the world of spirits ; where the gospel will finally make a complete conquest.

“ Thus I have conversed with you on subjects concerning the spiritual world, which knowledge we have obtained by putting away all sin, and having our spiritual eyes opened. But such, who are lost in sin, will not believe this our testimony, though it is according to the testimony of those whom they profess to believe. Do we not read in the scriptures of several (though they were in an inferior dispensation) who had communion with angels and departed spirits, and that they saw into the spiritual world, and to whom the heavens were opened ?”

These two brethren having given us much encouragement, we now continued to hold our meetings publicly twice a week, and many people attended them, not only of our neighbours, but from different parts of the country ; principally, I expected, on account of the novelty of our dancing. Some intimated they believed our intentions were a burlesque on all religion ; but others could not believe we were capable of such hypocrisy. I was generally engaged before, or after our dancing, in speaking to the people. Sometimes I had a hope and reason to think, many came to hear ; and I trust, from me they generally heard the truth, as my preaching was but little on the controverted points of religion, but on those subjects wherein all professors of religion are agreed, viz.

to "fear God and keep his commandments;" or, according to our fundamental principle, repent of, confess, and forsake all sin, and live a holy, just life.

I said but little about the people with whom I professed faith; for I thought that R. Hodgson, who often had something to say, praised them more than was necessary. I often said he did not preach the gospel, but the Shakers; representing what an orderly, exemplary, holy people they were, and advising the people to go and see them.

About this time I began to have operations of shaking, trembling, and stamping, similar to some of my brethren and sisters at Niskeuna; and likewise a gift, as it is called, of speaking languages, or unknown tongues. At one time I had a gift to sing; but no one understood what I sung, nor myself neither. These things I did not do as a sham, nor with intentions to make others think I was under the influence of divine power; but I really and sincerely believed I was influenced by the power of God; and these operations and gifts were in a great measure involuntary. I shall reserve my observations on these operations and gifts, for a future place in this work.

I often heard them say, that "these gifts and operations were to shew the power of God; and likewise for "signs, *not to them that believe, but to them that believe not*" — (1 Cor. xiv. 22.) They told me that some had had gifts of mortification, to bark like a dog, and crow like a cock, make a noise like a squirrel, and mew like a cat. Also, that many have had gifts to rejoice by laughing, &c. Something like this I was an eye-witness to, shortly after the two brethren left us.

In one of our meetings, while dancing, I was seized with an operation of trembling and stamping, (which generally continued two or three minutes, in which time my eyes would be closed, and when the operation was over I always found myself several feet from the place where I was dancing;) one of the sisters, a young woman, seeing me coming towards a child that lay on the floor, instantly jumped and caught it up, for fear that I should stamp on it. This being seen by R. Hodgson, who was singing for us, he held his handkerchief to his

mouth, till at last being unable to contain himself, burst out into laughter and left the room; all except two or three left the room, also laughing: when my operation ended, I found our meeting was broken up. I was surprized, and wondered what was the matter, till one present informed me of the cause. Afterwards I told them I was glad there were no spectators present; because they might have concluded our dancing and operations were in reality (as some had intimated) a burlesque on all religion. Our brother, R. Hodgson, felt somewhat condemned for his conduct, particularly as he began the laughing; but that condemnation ceased, when he was told by the Elders he had a gift to laugh. For my part I had no faith in such gifts. But my faith in these operations was so great, that I believed if there had been a dozen children on the floor I should not have hurt one of them; for I doubted not but the power by which I was actuated would have kept me clear of them.

While I am on the subject of gifts and operations, I will relate another instance, which I received an account of soon after the above transaction. But first I may observe, that in the early time of the church, there were many more of these strange gifts and operations. One was, of having the arm extended and following the way the hand pointed. Elder Ebenezer Cooley related, that the power of God, at a certain time, stretched out his hand which he was constrained to follow, and which led him to a certain house where resided a man who that day had broken three of his ribs; and that his hand led him into the house and to the place where the man lay, and finally stopt on the broken ribs; the man immediately felt an healing power, and was restored whole in a few minutes.

I do not mention these things to disparage or to detract; but in order to give the whole truth without disguise, that the reader may be able to judge for himself.

Now many of our neighbours were inquisitive concerning the rise of these people, and whence they sprang; and of what characters those were who began this work. As there was no way to obtain a correct account, many reports were in circulation. One that passed the most



currently was, that the first was a woman that came from England to America with Burgoyne's army.— This story, which was absolutely false, our opponent was very assiduous in reporting in the neighbourhood; and many other reports as false. But what appeared to retard the progress of our faith in the minds of some was, the assertion of a certain person who had been among these people soon after they came to America, and had left them, living now in a neighbourhood contiguous to us; that many of the Shakers, when he was among them, were in the practice of dancing naked, men and women together; which when mentioned to me I denied, and declared it to be an absolute falsehood.

But the principal objection that people far and near made against us was, dancing, and singing jig tunes, and hornpipes, particularly on the Sabbath, under pretence of worshipping God. They said we had neither precept nor example in all the scriptures, nor neither could we produce any thing reasonable for it. Therefore I carefully examined the scriptures to find proofs in favour of it. These I committed to writing, and treated the subject at large. Shortly after I had written, I read the same to a large assembly.

In order to do these people justice, I wish to give their reasons for their faith and practice, as far as the limits of this work will permit. I shall therefore give an abridgment of said writing, consisting of the scripture quotations and their most weighty reasons.

True and acceptable worship, in every dispensation, has been only such as was performed according to the revelation and gift of God; which has ever been opposed and reprobated by a wicked spirit in fallen man; which gave Paul cause to say to his opposers, and so say we, "In the way that ye call heresy, so worship we the God of our fathers." All who are conversant with the sacred writings, know that dancing was practised by the people of God in ancient times; and in this way they returned thanks for mercies and blessings received; which the heathens and people of the world learned and stole

from the people of God,\* and corrupted the same in their nocturnal recreations, and vain, ungodly mirth, as the Babylonians and Belshazzar did in their impious feast, with the golden and silver vessels taken out of the temple of the Lord. It has been objected by many, that dancing, under pretence of worshipping God, is a solemn mockery. This objection, however, will cease, if we consider the frequent practice of this kind of worship in ancient times, as will appear on examining the following texts of scripture. Exodus xv. 20—xxxii. 19. Judges xi. 34—xxi. 21. 1 Sam. xviii. 6—xxi. 11. 2 Sam. vi. 14, 16. 1 Chron. xv. 29. Psalm xxx. 11—cxlix. 3—cl. 4. Eccl. iii. 4. From these texts it is evident, that dancing was not only practised as worship, but that it was approved of God, and used more particularly on all festive occasions, as being the natural impulse of joy.

It is likewise objected, that the novelty of this thing evinces its impropriety, as it has not been practised in the Christian world. Here it may be observed, (as before) that dancing is the effusion of joy, which (though the church has long been without, and many in a mourning state) at length in this glorious dispensation of the second coming of Christ, according to the prophecy of Jeremiah xxxi. 4, emanates through the hearts of his people, and causes them to leap for joy. Therefore, it can be no objection, since the cause which it produces is as novel as the effects produced. No novelty can be deemed an impropriety, so long as it is the natural effect of a proper cause. Sacred dancing would not appear in so debased a light, had it not been perverted by the wicked generally for the purpose of nocturnal recreation; and by its pernicious consequences has become odious in the sight of every friend of morality.

If singing had, for many hundred years past, been only practised by the vulgar and profane part of mankind,

\* This is a palpable absurdity, which I cannot refrain from contradicting, though often repeated by these people. When I wrote I was in their faith, receiving as truth every thing they said; but there is nothing, either in ancient or modern history, to corroborate such an assertion.

it would now appear full as singular and strange to hear a Christian society sing hymns as part of divine worship, as to see the Shakers dance.

Musical instruments have, in like manner, been perverted and turned from their ancient use; and should we now use them in dancing, instead of singing, it would be looked upon by many as an abomination in the sight of God. Yet we believe there will be a time, when they will be restored to the people of God, and to their proper and primitive use in the worship of God.

Therefore we say of these things similar to Dr. Watts, on singing or poesy. See preface to his *Lyric Poems*. "It is to be lamented that poesy, whose original is divine, should be enslaved to vice and profaneness; that an art inspired from heaven, should have so far lost the memory of its birth-place, as to be engaged in the interests of hell. How unhappily is it perverted from its most glorious design! How basely has it been driven away from its proper station in the temple of God, and abused to much dishonour! The iniquity of men has constrained it to serve their vilest purposes, while the sons of piety mourn the sacrilege and the shame."

If ever any people had cause to use such lively acts, expressive of their joy in God, certainly those in this day have, who have received and experienced the greatest blessing that ever descended to the children of men, even that which hath been long prophesied of, long desired and prayed for, by the sincere in every age of the world.

David rejoiced in the dance, because he had received the ark from among the Philistines. These people rejoice because they have received that of which the ark was only typical. The children of Israel rejoiced in the dance, because they had experienced a final deliverance from Egyptian bondage.

These people rejoice in the dance because they have experienced a deliverance from a more potent and powerful enemy, even him who hath reigned and ruled in the hearts of all the children of men ever since the fall of Adam. And because they have experienced a redemption from under the bondage of the reigning pow-

er of sin and Satan, and behold every spiritual enemy destroyed by the power of God, and behold their sins, as the children of Israel did the red sea, separated from them.

Christ informs us, that in the return of the prodigal son, "there was music and dancing"—Luke xv. We have all been prodigal children. We have all strayed away from our heavenly Father, and spent our substance, or used the talents he gave us, in sin and riotous living; and when we become sensible of our poverty and loss, and return, will there be less joy than at the return of the prodigal in the parable? And we believe this parable is figurative or typical of the return of mankind in the millennium. The Jews have strayed from the gospel, and the Gentiles similar unto them—like unto the prodigal. The gospel, their portion, their inheritance, their living, the gift of the Father, has been, according to the dispensation of it, offered and bestowed on many; but not long after the apostles as some of them foretold, they travelled into a far country, and wasted all in sin and riotous living, and there commenced a famine in the land, and they joined themselves unto the spirit of the god of this world; whereby they have served their swinish, beastly nature, and they fain would have supported their religion with some little substance like unto husks: but no man gave even that little unto them, as the least substance of religion is received by rightly applying unto God. Now by becoming sensible of their loss, and applying unto Christ in this his second coming, and confessing their sins, saying, Father we have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and now see we are not worthy to be called thy sons, nor neither to be called by honorable titles, as has been with the greatest impropriety applied to many of us,\* but desire to receive the gospel as humble servants. Now, by Christ and his people, they will be received joyfully: they will be clothed with the robe of righteousness, and a signet put on them that they are of the Father's children, and their feet shod with the

\* Your Grace, Your Holiness, Your Lordship, Your Worship, My Lord, Reverend, &c.



preparation of the gospel of peace—Ephesians vi. 15. Here the fatted calf is killed ; here is given the nourishing richness of the gospel ; and to crown all, to make poor returning prodigals happy, here is music and dancing.

Then such, with us, will have abundant cause to say with the Psalmist, “Thou hast turned my mourning into dancing ; thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness”—Ps. xxx. 11. Jeremiah, speaking of this time, says, “They shall go forth in the dances of them that make merry—xxxii. 4. Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together”—ib. 13 ver. It is very singular to see these people sometimes in time of worship clap their hands and shout ; but it is what was prophesied of, “Ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace ; and all the trees of the field (meaning people in the gospel field) shall clap their hands”—Isa. lv. 12. O clap your hands all ye people, (that are so highly favoured) shout unto God with the voice of triumph”—Ps. xlvii. 1. “Sing with gladness, and shout among the chief of the nation : publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Lord save thy people”—Jer. xxxi. 1. “Sing, O daughter of Zion ; shout, be glad and rejoice with all thy heart”—Zeph. iii. 14.

We read in the fourteenth chapter and sixth verse of Matthew, of vain, ungodly dancing, and the consequences attending. The wicked, instead of rejoicing, should mourn on their birth-days, and at all times, until they know their sins forgiven, and a reconciled God. Dancing, musical instruments, and singing, is not adapted to their state, and which in truth does not belong to them, but to the people of God. The wicked should rather go to the house of mourning, than to their houses of levity and ungodly mirth. Poor lost creatures, in a state of separation and alienation from God, and every thing good and lovely, sunk in the mire of their iniquities, polluted, according to Isa. i. 6. Have not such creatures much more cause to mourn, than to sing and dance ? All that we do should be done to the honour and glory of God. We should praise him in and with every thing

we enjoy. Every faculty of the body should be dedicated to his praise. Our tongues were made to bless the Lord; our voices were given to sing his praise; and the Psalmist calls on every thing that hath breath to praise the Lord. cl. 6.

Now why should this worship I have been advocating, be thought so strange and unlikely to be of God, when, as I have clearly shown, it has been performed by the people of God formerly? These people are led to worship God in a way different from all the dead traditional forms of fallen Christendom, and to be a wonder to the world. We read the prophet Isaiah went naked and barefoot as a sign and a wonder—xx. 3. And we are called to worship him in a way not of our own choosing. Therefore let all despisers, like the wife of David, beware that they are not despising and opposing the work of God, “Lest that come upon them which is spoken of in the prophets. Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish” —Acts xiii. 41.

Sometime in July, 1800, two Elders from Lebanon, namely, John Meacham and Hezekiah Rowley, made us a visit. They met with us in our evening meetings, exhorting us to be faithful, to live an exemplary life, that our neighbours might see a reality in the religion we professed. At this time I was so strong in the faith, that one day as we were conversing concerning extraordinary gifts, I told the Elders I believed if I continued faithful, I should be so endued with power in speaking languages, I should be able to speak and preach to people in the different tongues, so that any nation or tribe of Indians could understand me, and should be instrumental in gathering thousands to the church. To which Elder Meacham replied, “Thomas, we don’t like that expression of gathering to the church, but to the gospel.”

We gave notice to our neighbours of the Elders being here, and of a meeting the succeeding Sabbath. By this time I had cleared out, and seated off the upper part of Hodgson’s house, which made a large, commodious meeting-room, easy of access. On the Sabbath, according to appointment, came a large concourse of people.

Elder Hezekiah spake about half an hour ; which discourse I shall give, as it contains their fundamental principle, and that doctrine which they generally preach. I thought he delivered this discourse with more life and feeling than I had ever heard from any of them before.

## A DISCOURSE

*DELIVERED BY H. ROWLEY.*

“ There are many people assembled here at this time.  
 “ We are willing, and indeed glad to see them, and  
 “ wish that they all came with desires to seek the truth ;  
 “ but whatever your motives are in coming, we wish  
 “ you to behave in a sober, civil manner.

“ Now whatever you think of us, we come here in  
 “ gospel love, and desire and seek for nothing else but  
 “ the happiness of our fellow creatures ; knowing that  
 “ people are in a lost state as to their salvation, and that  
 “ the world lieth in wickedness—(1 John v. 19.)  
 “ And we testify none can ever be happy, or find accept-  
 “ ance with God, who live in sin, and after the course of  
 “ this world ; and all we seek, all we desire, and all that  
 “ we want of people, and all that we preach unto them,  
 “ is to forsake their sins, become reconciled unto God,  
 “ and to live a holy life. We testify it is sin that sepa-  
 “ rates the soul from God. It was sin that cast Adam  
 “ and Eve out of paradise, drove them from the pres-  
 “ ence of God, and the whole creation is groaning in  
 “ pain and bondage from that time to this—(Rom. viii.  
 “ 22.) It is the same now with every creature, as with  
 “ our first parents. It is sin that keeps them out of the  
 “ garden of the Lord ; it is sin that keeps them from a  
 “ union and communion with God ; and people may  
 “ labour and try ten thousand ways to seek God, and  
 “ find peace to their souls, and to regain that paradisiac-  
 “ al, or happy state, and fellowship with God, from  
 “ whence all are fallen or lost ; and there is no other  
 “ way but in renouncing that which caused the fall, and  
 “ travailing back again out of sin. Adam and Eve, by  
 “ the instigation of the serpent, opened the way into sin ;

“ and the second Adam, Christ, has opened, and is the  
 “ way out of sin, and the way into that paradisiacal state,  
 “ and all that communion and fellowship with God, that  
 “ our first parents stood in before they sinned. People  
 “ exclaim against us as being deluded, and deceivers:  
 “ but there is no delusion but sin; and *all who live in sin,*  
 “ *are deceived.* The deceitful pleasures of sin, deceived  
 “ our first parents. Sin from that time to this, has de-  
 “ ceived, blinded, and hardened the hearts of all man-  
 “ kind; whereby they have lost a sense of, and relish for  
 “ the things of God; become spiritually dead, and as it  
 “ were, *plucked up by the roots*—(Jude xii.) Now since  
 “ sin has been of such terrible consequences, being the  
 “ cause of all the wars, miseries, troubles, and afflictions  
 “ that are, and have ever been in the world, it is our la-  
 “ bour, and travail to die to sin, taking up a full cross  
 “ against the world, flesh, and devil, travailing in the  
 “ regeneration and redemption, not only from the fruit  
 “ of sin, but the very nature and inward power thereof:  
 “ in which travail, many of us in this day and dispensa-  
 “ tion of the mercy of God, have obtained a victory over  
 “ sin, and an evil nature; and I am a living witness for  
 “ God, and can testify to the efficacy of his power and  
 “ grace. That for this twenty years past, I have com-  
 “ mitted no sin, have not done any thing by night nor  
 “ day, in the dark, nor in the light, that I am ashamed  
 “ to be seen doing, by God, men, or angels. Now I  
 “ don’t speak as boasting, far from it; but in humility,  
 “ and only to bear testimony to that power of God,  
 “ which through obedience to it, has worked in me both  
 “ to will and to do his pleasure—(Phil. ii. 13): and if  
 “ you all had faith in the gospel, which is the power of  
 “ God, and were obedient thereto, it would work in you  
 “ mightily to the *pulling down strong holds of sin*—(2 Cor.  
 “ x. 4) But the generality of people appear to be so  
 “ bound under the power of their carnal nature, and in  
 “ such a state of darkness, alienation, and separation  
 “ from God, that it is hard work, like digging in the  
 “ earth for a treasure, to open the gospel to them, or to  
 “ come at their hearts; and such gross darkness covers  
 “ the minds of the people (Isa. lx. 2) that while I am



“ speaking, it is like pressing against a wall, or beating  
 “ against a rock. I wish that people could see, feel, and  
 “ sense their loss, and what a distance they are from God.  
 “ You all desire to be happy; you wish to die in peace,  
 “ and go to heaven; but to which state there is but one  
 “ door to enter, which is by confessing, and forsaking all  
 “ sin. Jesus Christ, out of pity and compassion to the  
 “ poor lost children of men, came to open a door for  
 “ their salvation, and to save them from their sins (not  
 “ in their sins.) Many profess to be christians, and fol-  
 “ lowers of Christ, and at the same time live in sin, liv-  
 “ ing after the *lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and*  
 “ *pride of life* What hope can such have? If any, it  
 “ is the hope of the hypocrite, which *shall perish*—(Job  
 “ viii. 13.) Oh the darkness of the minds of most peo-  
 “ ple, deluded and deceived by the deceitfulness of sin,  
 “ under captivity to their hearts’ lusts, and evil nature;  
 “ and yet pretend to judge the people of God, and as-  
 “ sert those are deluded and deceived, who deny them-  
 “ selves, take up their cross, and follow Christ. What  
 “ astonishing inconsistencies!

“ There is but one way to the kingdom of heaven,  
 “ but one door to enter, *one faith, one Lord, and one baptism*  
 “ (Eph. iv. 5) though people have got many ways, and  
 “ *have sought out many inventions*—(Eccl. vii. 29): some  
 “ flattering themselves they are in the right way in such  
 “ a church, and others in such a church; but Christ is  
 “ *the way, the truth, and the life*—(John xiv. 6) not the  
 “ many ways. Christ is not divided. Such who are  
 “ led by the spirit of Christ, are of one faith, one heart,  
 “ and one mind; and are united together in love. Now  
 “ Christ has left us two plain rules to judge who are the  
 “ people of God: *by their fruits ye shall know them*—  
 “ (Matt. vii. 20) also, *by this shall all men know that ye are*  
 “ *my disciples, if ye love one another*—(John xiii. 35) It is  
 “ *not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into*  
 “ *the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my*  
 “ *father which is in heaven*—(Matt vii. 21) *for this is the*  
 “ *love of God, that ye keep his commandments*—(John v. 3)  
 “ *and he that committeth sin, is of the devil*—(ib. iii. 8.)  
 “ Therefore, it matters not what people may pretend to,

“ or what profession they may make, or society they may belong to, if they live in sin. For whosoever professes to know God, *and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him*—(1 John ii. 4.) I wish people would seriously consider these things, and compare their lives and conduct with the scriptures, and live up to the light and knowledge God has given them; whereby they would come to see more and more clear respecting those things which concern their salvation, and then would be better able to judge who are the people of God and followers of Christ, and who are not; what is of God, and what is not; and thus become able to judge righteous judgment.”

Now there were none that I heard of, who made any general objections to this discourse; but many denied the truth of his assertion respecting “ not having committed any sin, or done any thing for twenty years, by day or by night, in the light or in the dark, that he would be ashamed to be seen doing by God, men, or angels.”

My father, who was at this meeting, being in company with some neighbours a few days afterwards, and they speaking about it, said, “ Whether Hezekiah spoke the truth or not, I cannot say; but this I can say as confidently as he did, that it is the very state we all should come to, or the life we should all live: i. e. to do nothing we would be ashamed of, and indeed think no thoughts we would be ashamed should be known. But such is the depravity of mankind that if all their secret sins, their wicked thoughts and actions were exposed, many would endeavour to find some cave or place to for ever hide themselves from human sight.

We should always remember that we are at all times in the sight of God, and should make it a rule to always act as in his presence, and not to do any evil in his sight, which we would be ashamed to do in the sight of our fellow creatures. If people always lived as in the presence of God, or really did believe, and always kept in mind, that God is at all times present, and knows all

our thoughts, and fees all our actions, they would be more reserved and careful in their conduct, and would endeavour to rectify their thoughts."

Next day the Elders visited a few of the first characters in our neighbourhood, called Quakers, who had said they came creeping here and leading silly people captive — (2 Tim. iii. 6) and were ashamed to visit any, except those few they had caught in their net. The Elders informed them of their motives in coming here, and that they had no intentions of causing any uneasiness or disturbance in the neighbourhood, but that they came from a conscientious sense of duty, &c. They likewise visited my father's family, where they were kindly and respectfully treated; and with whom they had considerable conversation concerning their faith. They staid with us four or five days; and before they left us, they appointed our brother, R. Hodgson, as head, or to take the lead of us principally in our meetings. Likewise, if any of us were dissatisfied about any thing, or committed any sin, to open our minds to him. I told the Elders I did not fully agree with them in their choice, and thought our brother Abraham Hendrickson was the most proper person. They made no reply; but only told me to be *obedient*. This was the first time I heard of obedience to the Elders. As they were about leaving us, (all we who professed faith being together) Elder John said, "Now we wish you all to be faithful, and keep out of all sin; live in love and union with one another; be kind, tender, and obedient to one another. We don't wish you to put your dependance on us, to think we can save you or do any thing for you, any further than to give you advice; for we are but poor dependent creatures. We desire and recommend you to look to the *word* of God in your *own hearts*. So we bid you *adiu* farewell."

I thought they appeared to have a great deal of care and concern for us, and that they dealt by us as tender parents do by their children, and I thought they gave us much good advice.

Our opponent made it his business to go about the neighbourhood, warning and cautioning people to guard a

gainst the increasing delusion of Shakerism. Therefore, a few days after the Elders left us, I wrote him the following letter :

CORNWALL, July, 1800.

FRIEND,

As thou avoidest personal conversation with me, I therefore give thee a few words in this way. Thou sayest, thou art much concerned about the spirit of Shakerism, which is a spirit of delusion which has crept into this place; and repeatedly behind my back charging me with being the cause. Running from house to house like a mad man, crying "delusion, delusion! wolves in sheep's clothing!" and repeatedly asserting about us and the church we belong to, absolute falsehoods, through ignorance, I presume: talking about a people thou hast never seen, and with whom thou hast never conversed. All the knowledge thou hast of them, and their doctrine, is from flying and false reports; such as this, that the first Shaker was a woman who came from England with Burgoyne's army. This story, which I can prove to be an absolute falsehood, I expect thou hast told in almost every house in Cornwall. What a simple, unwise man thou art, to undertake to give an account of a professing Christian society from reports and stories fabricated by drunkards and people of ill fame.

Thou knowest how many false and scandalous stories were reported about the Quakers, when they first arose, by people like thyself; who, in their ignorance, could cry delusion. Thou knowest the song sung by the biggotted and nominal priests and professors about the Quakers, particularly in New-England and *Boston*, when they first appeared there: and thou hast pretty well got the old persecuting tone, "delusion, delusion! deceivers, antichrists, ah! wizzards and witches too!" What, think the Elders have learned us witchcraft, hocus-pocus, &c. already? It is no wonder thou art afraid to come to our meetings, or talk with those of us who are able to talk with thee; for surely thou shouldest act as thou adviseest others, "keep away for fear of being caught." Pray be as wise as one formerly was, who told those (like thee)



who were zealous in crying delusion, to “refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it”—Acts v. 38, 39.

Now it is wisdom not to pass judgment before hearing and examination, and not to detract from any person's or people's character by uncertain information.—Any ignorant person can cry error and delusion, but it requires a wise man to prove who are in an error and deluded, and who are not. Wishing that thou mayest act with more wisdom for the future, I for the present bid thee adieu.

THOS. BROWN.

Several persons said they believed my motives in joining with these people, and vindicating them and their faith, were pecuniary. About this time being in company with a few of the friends, one of them said, “Thomas, I expect thou art on some religious speculation, for thou art a man of too much sense and understanding, to be duped by those Elders, and believe in, and vindicate such an inconsistent system of faith; therefore I expect thou art some way to be paid for thy apparent zeal, or hast some pecuniary motive in what thou doest.

I replied—If what thou sayest be true, I must be a most consummate hypocrite. But I tell thee, I am sincere, believing in my heart that it is the way of God, and trust I shall continue to be sincere, until I see I am in an error; and then I hope as an honest man, I shall not be ashamed to recant. And if thou like a wise man, shouldest inform thyself respecting our faith, before thou judgest and condemnest, it would not appear such an inconsistent system as thou dost now imagine it to be; particularly, as to your fundamental principle of the light of Christ in all men, and to be influenced as that light directs, wherein we agree.\*

One said, “As your society has never published their faith and practice, that the world might know what they

\* So I then thought, as I had not yet heard them preach, either in public or private, any doctrine contrary thereto. See pages, 25 and 51.

believe, and have never contradicted those reports, if false, that have been in circulation about them, therefore you should not blame people for representing their doctrines and practices, according to such information as they can procure. For instance, I have been credibly informed that the first Shaker was a bad woman, who came out of Burgoyne's army, and settled at Niskeuna, and that she drank spirituous liquors to excess, and in her time, they used to dance naked. Now am I blamable for telling those stories again, since they are not publicly contradicted by them. If they are innocent, and these things are false, why do they not do it? and if they are the only people of God, and have got the gospel necessary for mankind to believe, in order to their salvation, why do they not come out into the world and preach it boldly. If they have the light, why do they not shew the light; not put it under a bed or bushel, at Lebanon, or in the woods or wilderness, at Niskeuna. They never would have shewn themselves here; this neighbourhood would never have been favoured with the gospel of the second coming of Christ, as you call it, if thou hadst not had a curiosity to go and see them."

I replied—It would be almost an endless work, to answer all the objections, and foolish fabricated stories. It is now, as it was formerly respecting Christ; the unbelievers in that day, had many ifs and objections, because he came and acted not according to their carnal imaginations, of what was right; and it has always been much the same towards the people of God, whenever such have arisen: and if these people were to come out into the world, and travel about, and preach their faith boldly, as thou sayest, the objection then would be as hath already been made in this place; viz. "If they were the people of God they would not come here and make disturbance." But their business and concern is to pay attention to the divine gift, and proceed as they are thereby influenced; and when acting under this direction, they go where they are sent, and preach their faith boldly, and that with authority.

Some time in August, 1800, I was again among my brethren at Niskeuna, and staid with them three

days ; in which time I received an account of a miracle said to have been wrought among the young believers a few weeks before. According to the account, "four of them having had the intermitting or remitting fever so long, that they were reduced to such a low state, no prospect of their recovery remained, when one of the sisters came from the church order to see them. She first spake to the one who was supposed to be the most debilitated. She told him to open his eyes. As he could not speak audibly, he whispered, "that he could not." She said—"I have come to see you in the gift of God, and you must have faith." He then, as he told me, "received strength to open his eyes." She then said, "fit up." He replied, "I cannot." As he told me afterwards, "at that time he had no more strength than an infant. She said again, "I have come to see you in the gift of God ; have faith, only believe, and all things are possible." He immediately received faith, and strength to fit up. She then said, "all of you may receive faith, arise, and labour" They arose accordingly and laboured or danced near half an hour, to a tune sung by B. Youngs' wife (who first gave me the account) from which time they began to recover, and in a few days were perfectly well."

This miracle was wrought to strengthen the young believers' faith ; and was told me, to strengthen mine. I shall not take notice, or mention any thing else that I heard or saw at this time, but return to Cornwall.

Soon after I returned home, I wrote the following letter to my wife's sister who was now with the brethren and sisters at Niskeuna.

Now I choose to insert a few letters written when I was in union with these people, 1st. because they are expressive of their faith ; and 2d. because they have preserved such letters, written by some while in the faith, and have sometimes shown them for their own vindication, when attacked, upon the change of sentiment in their authors, saying, "read this letter, and you will see what his faith was, and what he has turned from." Thus making such letters a criterion by which to judge and condemn. But I shall save them the trouble, by pro-

ducing those which are the most expressive of my faith, when written; as undoubtedly some passages in this publication will be quoted by some in conversation with them; and I keep nothing back which they say backsliders (as they call them) are ashamed of, because such things condemn them for leaving the church.

CORNWALL, *Sept. 6, 1800.*

DEAR SISTER,

Considering the privilege thou hast with the believers, I am in hopes thou wilt become strong in the faith; which will be such a satisfaction to me, that I shall think myself amply paid for all my concern and labour in gaining thee to the only true living gospel on earth. Thou hast thy reasonings and doubts sometimes. I have reasoned and doubted before thee. But let us remember that thousands reasoned when Christ was on earth, whether or not he was the promised saviour. They died in that day; they die in this, reasoning and disbelieving in him. Thou in thy day art greatly favoured. I hope to see thee established on the sure foundation, the rock of ages, which all the turbulent agitations of a carnal nature within, and the world without cannot ever overthrow. What shall I say? What can I say with more propriety than, "glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will towards men"—Luke ii. 14. All I desire is, that I may live as becometh the gospel, and die triumphant in the faith. May it be the same with thee, and that prosperity may attend thee in the one living and true faith, is the wish of thy affectionate brother.

T. B.

About the middle of September, a couple of Elders came to see us again; namely, Ebenezer Cooley, who was the Father (so called) and first Elder to the young believers, having the care of them next to, and receiving his gift to act from the first in the ministrations, and accompanied by one whom we called Elder Stephen. At this time I was not at home, consequently, as it will appear, I lost the benefit to be derived from the Elders at this time; for Elder E. left orders with our leader R. H.



for me not to labour, or dance, only to assemble with them, and I might still occasionally speak to the people.

Now why I must be debarred from any privilege, or the performance of any part of our worship, by my unavoidably being absent while the Elders were here, appeared unaccountable to me. I told Hodgson it was perfect nonsense, as I did not intentionally stay away, but improved every minute to come home before the Elders went away; but it was impossible, as I was becalmed on the passage.

He replied—"It is the gift for thee not to labour, and any reason or satisfaction why it is not, I cannot give thee."

But on a little consideration, I saw the reason, which was they had had a greater, or an additional privilege; and if any of them had done any thing wrong, they had had an opportunity to open the same; and as I had not had that opportunity and privilege, the Elders thought it best for me not to labour with them until I had; as they believe dancing is a part of worship the most sacred; "In which," they say, "none may enter with any sin covered, as it is expressly contrary to the gift of God; and would be an offering like unto Nadab and Abihu—(Lev. x. 1.) For the Lord will be sanctified in them that approach him—(ib. ver 3.) And the offering or sacrifice of the wicked, or of such as have any sin covered, is an abomination to the Lord"—(Prov. xv. 8.) Also this exercise of dancing or labour is particularly called the works of God; as I have often heard the Elders, or the one who has the lead of the meeting, after speaking a few words, conclude by one or the other of the following sentences: "All who feel justified—Or such as have not violated their consciences—Or those who have no sin covered, may prepare\* to labour in the works of God, or go forth in the works of God."

And there is so much said and preached on the direful consequences of presuming to join in this part of worship, with any sin unconfessed, or if they are in any re-

\* What is understood by *prepare*, is for the brethren to take off their coats, and form into order.

spect irreconciled to the Elders, or to the gifts they have had for them, or irreconciled to any of the brethren, that many would not dare to join in the dance, believing if they did, some judgment would fall on them.—And they believe the Elders see through an through them, and sin is not long hid from them.

The following instance which was told me among many others, may clearly evince the truth of this assertion: “One of the young sisters committed sin in meeting, by looking at a young man, a spectator, (Whosoever looketh, &c.)—(Matt. v 28.) At this time James Whittaker being in a room in the upper part of the meeting house,\* and having a sense of what was done, came down into the meeting room while they were dancing; and said, *God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. There is sin committed and coverd among you, and your worship will not be owned until it is put away.* The young woman was convicted, knowing herself guilty, fell on her knees and confessed she had sinned; after which, he told them *they might proceed.*” If this is not exactly true, it is exactly as they told me. I may further observe that it is their belief that their dancing for worship, is so sacred, reverential, and awfully solemn, that no person dare, or can join in it, who has not confessed his sins; and the few who through wantonness have attempted it, have always failed in proceeding, by instantly being taken with some violent pain, or contortion of the body, one instance excepted; as I have been informed, “a person who, from motives of sport, joined them in the dance; but after they had finished, he was unable to stop, but continued dancing near two hours.”

Now I began to conclude that the Elders stood as sole leaders, teachers, and directors; and that acquiescence and obedience to them was what in all things was required. But then I knew not how to reconcile this out-

\* It may be proper to observe that the upper part of their meeting houses are partitioned into rooms, finished principally for the residence of the ministrations.

ward popish leading and preaching to what they had heretofore preached. But more of this a few pages hence.

January, 1801. Elder John, and Hezekiah came again to see us, and stayed five days. Many people attended our meetings, particularly while the Elders were with us at this time.

Our greatest opponent appeared again in one of our meetings; at the conclusion of which, he broached the subject of marriage. He addressed himself principally to the Elders, who entered into some controversial conversation with him upon the subject, though they wished to be brief at present, as the meeting had been lengthy.

Now I took particular notice of one sentence he had asserted in support of marriage, and was determined to contradict it before the meeting broke up; so I took the opportunity of a moment's silence between him and the Elders, and said, It has been asserted in this meeting, that all, and the most pious men and women in every age of the world, have approved of marriage. I assert the contrary, that all have not, and that the most pious in every age of the world, and several whole churches have recommended and approved of the doctrine of virginity, or abstaining from marriage. As to the truth of my assertion, I leave it with those to judge, who are acquainted with ecclesiastical history.

My friend R. Hodgson, when I began to speak, gave me a pull to stop me, and after meeting blamed me for speaking, and said, I spake out of order, and interrupted the Elders. But Elder H. said, we have nothing against Thomas for speaking, so R. H. was silent.

Now in this assertion in contradiction to our opponent, I went too far in saying the most pious in every age of the world; for I do not recollect reading of any who recommended virginity, or an unmarried life, before the coming of Christ, except the Essenes, or Essenians in Jewish antiquity.

Our opponent asked the Elders if they were willing to appoint an hour for him and a few select friends to meet with them, to have some conversation on particular points of their faith; to which the Elders agreed, and appoint-

ed 3 o'clock the next day. He next requested of them, that I should not be present. They told him, "that request could not be granted; for they could not, with any propriety, hinder me, especially in my own house." He then desired that I should not be allowed to speak, or have any active part in the debate. They answered, "we cannot comply with this request neither, as we have no authority to forbid his speaking; but we are willing to propose to him to be silent, from thy request, to which we think it is likely he will agree." Afterwards they told me (smiling) of our opponent's singular requests. I said, not to be present and have the satisfaction of hearing the conference, I will not agree to. A pretty story, indeed. It is to be a public conference; all or as many of the neighbours as have a mind may come, but I must not be allowed to be among them. Did ever any body hear of such a request? But as to his third request, I will satisfy him, and promise not to speak; knowing, that if I do not grant him this, there will be no conference at all; he will never appear against you, if I am permitted to defend you and combat him. Let the poor creature and his select friends have the conversation, and make the best they can of it. But now you see how unreasonable he is. He proposes to bring with him a few select friends to assist him, to which you assent; but you are not allowed to have one. I believe his select friends will be few, as there are not many Friends in this place who have union with his zeal against us, or conduct towards us; as it favours too much of that old persecuting spirit, which most people wish might die away.

At the hour appointed, he came with only one Friend and a neighbour, who made little or no profession. Few of the neighbours attended as hearers, as there was but little notice given of the meeting. Our opponent began and continued in a lengthy discourse, in the manner of his public preaching, consisting of warnings and cautions to the Elders of the dreadful consequences of preaching and propagating false and erroneous doctrines; and of the day that was coming when, said he, "You would be weighed in the Lord's balance and found wanting."



After he had concluded, one of the Elders spake and said, "It is far from our intention knowingly to preach or propagate error; but we wish well to the souls of all our fellow creatures; and our greatest desire and labour is to bring creatures out of darknes into light," &c. He next broached his old subject of marriage, and their preaching against that divine ordinance; which, he said, "was labouring to murder souls unborn, depopulate and bring the world of mankind to an end. Which if all mankind was to embrace your system, as you wish, in an hundred or an hundred and ten years, there would not be a human creature on earth; and how you can preach such doctrine as this, without knowingly preaching error, and your desiring to bring mankind out of darknes into light in preaching a doctrine contrary to all natural and revealed light, is a mystery."

One of the Elders proceeded to answer him, and acknowledged it had been an ordinance owned of God under former dispensations, as circumcision and sacrifices were; spake something of the increasing work of God, in which many things were done away which were suffered under former dispensations, and on account of the darknes and hardness of their hearts—Matt. xix. 8. And as to the world coming to an end, "we read (said they) it is to come to an end; and how is it to end, but by creatures travailing back to the place they fell from, and becoming redeemed from that nature which brought (under the fall) all mankind into the world, and all sin and misery with it?"

Our opponent's companion, the neighbour before mentioned, spake a few words on the subject, and in about an hour the conference ended; and on both sides they came off, as they thought, victorious. But I think an impartial hearer was the best judge.

Now I should have given these dialogues in full, but they were so insipid, and want so much dressing to make them fit to be seen, I have thus passed over them.

One of the Elders asked me afterwards, if I did not think our opponent had been well answered and confuted. I answered, neither of you have any thing to boast. But you are more excusable than he, as he is reputed to

be a scholar ; I was therefore surprized to hear his weak arguments and reasonings. About this time he indirectly opposed us in his meeting. My father being present, arose and contradicted him.

As soon as I could get a convenient opportunity to converse with the Elders, I inquired of them the reason and propriety of Elder E. Cooley's breaking open a letter I had sent to a young believer. They said but very little as an apology ; but afterwards I found it was the order of the church, and practice of the Elders, to intercept and break open all letters sent to any of the believers or members of the church ; principally to see if they contain any thing contrary to the faith. Though I believe they commonly deliver letters after they have read them, as directed, let them contain what they may. I may further observe, that no faithful or obedient member writes and sends a letter without first consulting the Elders. If they concur therewith and approve of what is written, it is sent ; if not, it is destroyed, or an alteration made according to the minds of the Elders. In short, they do nothing but in the gift or by first seeking advice from the Elders.

I next queried with them respecting the propriety of the gift that had been left for me, not to join in the labouring part of our meetings, in consequence of my absence, as heretofore mentioned. One of them said, if you would be obedient to every gift that is for you, you would find strength and a blessing to attend you. I told them though it appeared strange to me when I first heard that I must not labour, nevertheless I had been obedient, except a few times when many people were present, that none might have cause to think or say I was weak in the faith, or did not approve of dancing. One of them said, " We are satisfied in your labouring a few times from that motive ; and we do not charge you with any evil, or blame you for being unavoidably absent, by no means ; but we look upon labour in meetings to be a most weighty and solemn work of God. It is the order of the people of God, for none to proceed therein but such as are clean, and particularly under the protection and gift of God.—

“ But, Thomas, if you do not see fit to be reconciled and obedient to the way and order of the people of God, you must go your own way.”

I replied, that is just like the spirit and people of the world: if one does not please them, or think and act much as they wish, if they have not power, the next thing is, you may go your own way—go about your business. But I am willing to drop all that is past, as I do not wish any unnecessary controversy; and if I have been in the wrong by being dissatisfied about any thing, I hope you will forgive me, and think no more of it. One replied, “ We shall not hold any thing against you.”

They had hours of conversation with me, endeavouring to strengthen and establish me firm in the faith. Particularly on the subject of the increasing work of God, from one dispensation to another; of which Elder Hezekiah wished me to have a thorough understanding.—An abridgment of his discourse on this subject at this time, which is, as I have heard from some others at various other times, I think best to give here.

“ When Adam, by transgression, became lost and sunk far from God, and without hope, the first work of God, in order for his restoration, was by promise—(Gen. iii. 15.) Therefore his righteousness, and that of the faithful antediluvians, principally consisted in believing in the promise. The covenant God made with Abraham, was an additional promise, and with the sign of circumcision was a further increase of the work of God in this dispensation; and which sign was typical of the destruction of that nature of the flesh which, according to the first promise, the seed of the woman was to bruise or destroy. From Adam to Moses was the first and patriarchal dispensation. How far, under that dispensation, they were saved from sin, is signified by Ezekiel’s vision of the holy waters, as being only up to the ankles—(chap. xlvii. 3.) The second dispensation and further increase of the work of God, was the Mosaic, or law given to Moses; which abounded with ordinances and sacrifices typical of the first and second coming of Christ; and salvation attained under that dispensation is signified by Ezekiel, as *waters to the knees.*

“ The ministrations of John the Baptist, was an increasing work and end of the Mosaic dispensation; a forerunner and preparatory to the third dispensation, and first coming of Christ: and the salvation attained in that dispensation, was as *waters to the loins*. And in that as in antecedent dispensations, another day is spoken of, called the second coming of Christ, which is the fourth and last dispensation; in which is a greater display of the work of God than has ever been heretofore, even complete salvation; represented by Ezekiel as *a river that could not be passed over; for the waters were risen, waters to swim in*.

“ Former dispensations consisted principally in outward purifications and sacrifices, which did not redeem from sin, or make the comers thereunto perfect; nevertheless, they who were obedient to that of God made known by patriarchs and prophets, found justification, and were accepted of God, according to the light and power afforded. But this dispensation being as a river which cannot be passed over, except we become stript of all sin, and walk or depend on nothing but the gospel and power of God: and that has ever been required of creatures as they come to further light, (and it is reasonable it should be so) which never was required in former or darker dispensations. In the first coming of Christ, they were required to confess and forsake their sins, and travail in the new birth or regeneration, which was not preached or required under the law. And there was more required under the law, and a further salvation was obtained, that was not required and obtained under the dispensation preceding. Nevertheless, all will be benefitted, restored, redeemed, and saved from all sin, by the salvation brought to light by the gospel.”

Thus I have only given the substance of his discourse at this time, as one on the same subject has been inserted in the former part of this work.\*

A few weeks before the Elders came to see us at this time, I happened in company with a man who appeared

\* See page 33.



to be candid and honest, and bore that character in general; and, as we were in some conversation respecting the Shakers, he informed me that he had seen a number of them, both men and women, dance naked; and told me when and where he saw them. Though I had often heard the same before, yet I had given no credit to it, as I had never heard any one assert the truth thereof from personal knowledge; therefore I could with propriety deny the assertions. But now, I had heard the account so correct and authentic, that I knew not what to think, or how to reconcile it with what the old believers in the church had told me. I now opened the matter to the Elders, informing them what I had heard, and that I was almost inclined to believe the truth of it. I therefore said, now let me ask you one question, to which I hope you will give me a direct answer. Have the people, or any of them, ever danced naked? Before you answer me, I added, if they have, you need not be afraid it will hurt my faith to let me know it. I promise you it shall not; and I ask you this question principally, that if they never have, I may confidently contradict it when I hear it asserted.

Elder Hezekiah answered me: "I never saw any such conduct, neither do I believe there ever has been any such conduct." And he intimated that he did not wish me to give people the lie; the person I had mentioned might have seen such conduct, which, if he did, must have been by some out of order, or that the church had no union with.

Now the reader will recollect, I received much the same answer to the same question before, as well as at several other times. I had heard this report declared to be false by several old believers, but afterwards (as will be seen) I came to a further and full knowledge respecting said conduct.

The next thing I shall take notice of is, the Elders requesting me to confess my sins again, to which I agreed; as it is customary for believers to confess their sins more than once, as some might not think of all the first time. Indeed, they are to confess until they have opened every evil in thought, word, or deed, of which they have ever

been guilty. They say, "as believers attain a travail in the gospel, they come to have more of a feeling sense of their loss while in sin, and the odious nature of it, and so confess with a more penitent disposition." I proposed reading a piece which I had written a few weeks before, including, by way of examination and queries, a catalogue of the sins of mankind. Those queries or questions, which in any respect concerned me, I told them I would remark, and such queries as did not concern me, I told them I would read without making any observations. This they did not appear fully to unite with, as there was no gift or order in the church to make use of any written form; but finally they left me to do as I thought best. And as I wished to make a full and complete confession, therefore I made use of what I had written; and by reading these queries, and how far each concerned me, much evil was brought to my mind, which otherwise I could not possibly have thought of; and in consequence of which, I more fully confessed my sins than I had done either time before. And all that I thought of, and all that I believed to be evil that ever I had done in thought, word, or deed, I fully and faithfully confessed; and concluded by saying, all the sins I have confessed, and those which I at this time have not recollected, I utterly detest and am heartily sorry for, and pray that God may forgive me, and that the people of God may feel the spirit of forgiveness towards me; and hope I may, for the time to come, utterly forsake all I have confessed, and endeavour, to the utmost of my ability and power, to live a just and holy life. To which, in brokenness of heart and with tears in my eyes, did I sincerely say, amen.

Elder Hezekiah said—"Thomas, I believe you have confessed all you have thought of, and likewise believe you have been sincere in so doing; and I hope you will, as you have said, utterly forsake all you have confessed, and become a faithful man of God in the gospel."

My wife (though a member of the society of the people called Quakers) was now, by much preaching and persuasion, prevailed on to join us; though she had but

little faith in our gifts and dancing ; but as she was with us, she endeavoured to comply and unite as much as she conscientiously could.

I invited the Elders to visit my father and his family ; and with them they had considerable conversation on several points of faith. But I shall only take notice of Elder Hezekiah's discourse respecting backsliders. But previous, I had best go back a little

Three or four weeks before the Elders came to see us at this time, our opponent had got a pamphlet, entitled, "Reasons offered for leaving the Shakers, by Reuben Rathbone," part of which he read to several ; and came, when I was from home, and read it to Hodgson, and to his and to my wife. My father also borrowed it of him and read it. The consequence of which was, he entirely lost what little faith he had. He now informed the Elders he had read said book, and that, if the author had written the truth, they were a deceived, deluded people.

Elder Hezekiah said—"We were acquainted with the author, and knew his life and conduct while he was among us. For a time he was a faithful man ; but by not keeping low and humble, and suffering himself to be lead away by a sense and feeling contrary to the gospel ; and also, being naturally of an aspiring disposition, he was reaching after office and authority in the church ; which he, nor no one, can obtain in their own will and time ; as it is obtained only by such as keep humble, according to the words of Christ, *The least among you shall be greatest*—(Luke ix. 48) and that such should rise in the order and gift of God ;\* but by his not keeping in the gift of God he fell, and great we believe has been his fall. Likewise, by his thus giving way to his aspiring mind, he so lost his strength and power before he left us, as to be overcome in the flesh. It is clearly to be seen, that it was the flesh that caused him to leave us ; for he took a female away with him, whom he had lived with contrary to his faith, and soon

\* My father little knew what they meant by the gift of God.

“ after he left us he married her.\* All who leave us,  
 “ or the way of God, are under the necessity of speaking  
 “ against us, and patching up some reason to justify  
 “ themselves for so doing. But all those who forsake

\* As this story has been often told, and undoubtedly as they will continue to tell the same on occasions like the above, therefore I think it would not be right if I did not let the man here speak for himself. Page 26, he says:

“ I have understood that it has been intimated, while I lived in the church and professed to be strong in faith, that I lived in unlawful connection with a woman, who is since my wife. Now this appears to be mean and ill usage, and beneath the church of Christ, even if it was true. You may remember, doubtless, some of you, what I spake to you a few days before I came away. I told you, if any of you had any thing against me, or knew any wickedness of me, to tell me of it before I came away, so that I might confess it; and not serve me as you did others as soon as they were gone, try to rake up every thing you could against them. Now why was you not so kind, if you knew these things, as to tell me of it while I was with you? for I presume you knew as much about it then as you do now. However, I will tell you the simple truth, as I expect to answer it to God. From the time I first professed Christianity (which was a year or two before I heard of the people called Shakers) to this day, I never have had any unlawful connection with any woman; and from the time I first knew the Shakers to this time, I never defiled myself with what is called among you effeminacy; neither did I ever know, by any certain knowledge, while I lived with you, that there was any females in the church or any where else, except it was at the time when there was a gift for men and women to strip naked and go in the water together, I was sometimes a spectator, and perhaps might *observe* the difference. As to the woman who is now my wife, I never knew whether she was male or female till after I was legally married to her. As to my making any agreement with her to come away from the church, I never did, only a few minutes before I came away; then I spoke with her and gave her the offer of my friendship and protection, if God spared my life, if it was her choice to follow me.”

As to what Elder Hezekiah told my father and me, of his being of an aspiring disposition, and reaching after office and authority in the church, he says, page 21:

“ I came to a resolution, and accordingly carried my resolution into effect, and gave up my place as Elder Brother, June 30, 1799; and desired all not to look to me for any help or counsel as they had done, but to labour for myself only, and to be esteemed one of the least of all.”



“ the gospel and sin against the gift and light they have  
 “ received, come under the power of darkness ; in con-  
 “ sequence of which, Judas-like, their hearts become so  
 “ darkened and their eyes blinded, that they lose a sense  
 “ of the gospel and way of God. Indeed, they can no  
 “ more speak the truth than Judas could. As he gave  
 “ way to an evil spirit, an evil spirit entered into him ;  
 “ whereby he was so blinded and under the power of  
 “ darkness, that though he had been with Christ and had  
 “ seen his works, and knew he was the Son of God, yet  
 “ by that evil spirit and power of darkness he was con-  
 “ strained to deny Christ and betray him. After which  
 “ he was brought under such powerful conviction and  
 “ distress, that he confessed his guilt, and bore testimony  
 “ to the innocency of Christ, and in despair ended his  
 “ life. Like him, many in this day, who have turned  
 “ from and denied the way of God and Christ in this his  
 “ second coming, have pierced themselves through with  
 “ many sorrows ; in consequence of which, some have  
 “ become delirious, and some have died in despair. Ju-  
 “ das knew that Christ was the Son of God ; so do those  
 “ in this day who have been among us, who have tasted  
 “ the heavenly gift, and have experienced somewhat of  
 “ eternal life, return again to the world, flesh, and devil,  
 “ *wallowing, like the sow, in the mire, living in the flesh ;*  
 “ and many of them in all manner of iniquity. Never-  
 “ theless, divers of them have been constrained to ac-  
 “ knowledge that they have forsaken the way of God,  
 “ (for their faith they cannot lose, though they often de-  
 “ ny it ;) but they have become so bound by the flesh  
 “ and the power of darkness, that they are holden fast  
 “ and cannot get back. As the apostle says, *It is impos-*  
 “ *sible to renew them again to repentance.* Whereby they  
 “ have become the most lost, sunk, and miserable of all  
 “ God’s creation ; daily feeling a hell within them, to  
 “ which those in the world, who have not sinned against  
 “ so great light, are strangers.”

They told my father if he would go with them to  
 Lebanon, they would show him a letter R. Rathbone  
 wrote and sent to his father Valentine, only two years  
 before he left them. In that may be seen what his faith

was, and how he bore testimony to that which he has since turned from ; also his travail and experience in the gospel ; all in direct contradiction to his book, which my father had read. They, with me, advised and persuaded him to go with them to Lebanon and see for himself, whether what he had read, and the reports that were spread abroad respecting these people, were true or not. Finally he consented to go ; and rode with the Elders in their sleigh.

By this time I began more clearly to see into the real doctrine and discipline, or government of the church ; and how and in what manner Christ, according to their faith, had made his appearance. A few days after the Elders left us, several of the believers being together and conversing concerning the Elders, their preaching ; the counsel they gave us, &c. I told them I had not been rightly informed by the Elders and brethren respecting a material point of their faith. For I had been taught to understand and believe, that the second appearing of Christ had now commenced by immediate revelation of his spirit and power individually, according to each one's understanding, faith, and obedience. In this respect it was an increasing work, a greater manifestation or revelation of the spirit and power of God in the hearts of believers, than had ever been before ; whereby they were cemented in union, and empowered to act with rectitude of conduct, according to the prophetic words of the scriptures, " Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel ; not according to the covenant I made with their fathers." N. B. That was an outward covenant, an outward ministration, an outward leading. " But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel ; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts ; and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord ;" (no more go to the priest and prophet) " for they shall all know me from the least of them unto the greatest"—Jer. xxx. 31. This, I said, I had reason to conclude was the faith of the church from what the Elders told me the second time I

went to see them, i. e. "for all to live up to the light "God has given," &c. And, as Elder John told us some time past, "we desire and recommend you to look "to the word of God in your own hearts, and not to us." And I have hitherto thought, that the Elders stood in the church for, and that their business was, to excite or persuade, and advise believers (i. e. believers in an inward law and word of God) to be obedient thereto, and to examine whether their order and example was consistent with the spirit of Christ and scriptures of truth.

Brother Hodgson replied, "the description thou hast given, is just as I have always understood it."

I said—Thou with me, hast been very much mistaken; and those of us who continue in this described faith, will not be owned by the church. I perceive they have heretofore fed us with milk, but we will soon have some meat; and I think they have flung out some pretty tough pieces already; but they have covered them in such a manner with milk, that you have not seen them, nor chewed them; but I have got hold of some pieces, and find them exceedingly tough indeed. I was asked what the faith of the church was, and wherein they differed from the description I had given.

I answered—Diametrically opposite. But as I have found the first link of the chain, I can the easier find the others; therefore, I'll begin with the first, and proceed on. As the spirit and power of God, was manifested in that body born of the virgin Mary; so, and in a greater measure, has that same power, called Christ, appeared the second time in a prepared body. First in her whom they style the first mother of the church, viz. Ann Lee, according to what we have heard the brethren assert: "That she received the greatest gift of God in her day;" and that they believe she is the person prophesied of by the prophets, particularly by David: "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him. And the daughters of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall entreat thy favour. The king's daughter is all

glorious within : her cloathing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework : the virgins her companions that follow her, shall be brought unto thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought : they shall enter into the king's palace. Instead of thy father's shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth." St. John also speaks, they say, of the same person. "There appeared a great wonder in heaven ; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars,"\* &c. to the end of the chapter. And this is what St. John was told to come and see, under the character of the bride, the Lamb's wife,† with many other passages of scripture prefigurative of this person. Also by her obedience and suffering, similar unto Christ, she opened the door for admittance into the gospel of complete and finished salvation, and became the mother of all in the new creation. While she lived, obedience to her was taught as the only way to obtain salvation. It is the same now ; the present mother of the church is Lucy Wright. She communicates the divine gift to Abiathar Babbot, and he to Elder Ebenezer Cooley, and he to Elders John and Hezekiah, and they to us. Previously to our hearing the Elders preach, and having faith, they were men of God, and believing in, and receiving the word they preached, we were total strangers to the gospel, and had never received any light, talent, or measure of the spirit of Christ in our hearts (according to the doctrine of the Quakers, and Methodists, and some others) that would ever save us from sin. As under the Mosaic dispensation, God spake to Moses, and Moses delivered the words he received to the people, or to the Elders and priests, and they to the people ; so is the order of God in this church.

Hodgson's wife exclaimed—"No popery. I am not going to be led by popes. If it be true what you say, it is just as it is in the popish church ; confessing of sins, obedience to the clergy, and they to the pope ; I see no difference, it is just so now."

\* Rev. xii. 1.

† xix. 7, and xxi. 9.



I replied, True, our brethren say "the Romish church have got the order of God, which has been handed down by tradition from the apostles; but the power they have lost." As to confessing and forgiving sins, after Peter had confessed Christ to be the son of the living God, Christ told him, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. On this rock," i. e. on that revelation or spirit of God by which Peter spake, "I will build my church," &c. : "and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven:" i. e. unto Peter and all his successors, (not successors by generation, but by regeneration) or who retained or possessed that revelation which Peter possessed: "and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth," i. e. being under the influence of that same revelation or spirit of God in man, leading and directing him, "shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth," (by the same spirit still) "shall be loosed in heaven."—(Matt. chap. xvi.) We read of the same authority given unto the apostles in chap. xx. of St. John's gospel, after they had received the Holy Ghost. Therefore, by the Holy Ghost, "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained." As this church professes to have the same revelation restored, that was given unto the apostles, and that in an increased degree; by which, in her ministrations, she is invested with the same authority: and I tell you further, all judgment is in the church. The ministrations will judge us, and all men living, either in this world, or world of spirits; i. e. they will judge and condemn the principle of evil in all men, and the soul in its adherence to it.

Hark what the apostle says, and which I have often heard the old brethren quote: "Do ye not know, that the saints shall judge the world?" and in the next verse he goes further yet, for he says, "Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life." And I'll tell you the faith of the church further, for I have got hold of the chain, and can follow on link after link, not only as it extends thro' this world, but far into the other. God never will be

known, or seen in time nor eternity any farther or more, than in his saints and angels; for he ever has, doth still, and ever will manifest himself through, or by some medium. The whole creation is to us, as far as we behold it, a manifestation of God. According to Psalms, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work." As to his purity and spirituality, the man Christ, or in him, was a greater manifestation and revelation of God, than had ever been before. As this is the second coming of Christ, it is an increasing work, and a greater manifestation or revelation of God to the destruction of sin, particularly in the ministration residing at Lebanon, than ever there has been in any church since the creation of the world.

One said—"I fear you have got hold of the wrong chain." I replied—I believe I have got hold of the right one, and you will know hereafter, if you continue in the faith. The doctrines of the church will be taught you, as you become able to receive them.

As to confessing sins to the Elders, they having the spirit of God, by that spirit they forgive sins; i. e. if they feel the spirit of forgiveness towards us, and union with us, they bind us on earth, or receive us as members of the church, or (according to our faith and obedience) own us in union; we then become owned in heaven.—Those who by continued disobedience, are cast out by the Elders, they feeling no union with them, or further gift for them, are cast out in heaven. In short, the spirit of God in all respects, accords in the saints in this world, and world of spirits: they are all of one spirit, and all in union.

One said—"If all you say, be true, respecting the faith of the people, I have done with them."

I replied—What, "done with them," because I tell you they profess to have the revelation of God, and in what manner they have received and possess that revelation? If it be true, it is the very point that should be maintained in their faith; for what are a people the members of a church, if they have not the spirit of Christ? What is a church, destitute of the spirit of Christ? Is it not anti-christ? But to return to the doctrine re-

specting the ministration, and obedience to it. Though this has not been plainly preached to us, yet we might have seen it was their faith, by the way they have talked round about, and some words they have dropped; for, according to a common saying, "a word to the wise, is sufficient." If I had been wise, I might have seen some-time ago, that this was the doctrine, and faith of the church; but they hindered me from coming to such a conclusion, by repeatedly saying—"We must act our own faith: we must do what we believe and feel to be right; and not do any thing we believe to be wrong, or that we feel convicted for. We must look to the word of God in our own hearts, and not to them; for they were poor fallable creatures." But I expect the cause of their not preaching their real faith, was fearing we would not be able to receive it; according to what we have often heard, of "Feeding first with milk, and afterwards with meat."

A. Hendrickson, a zealous believer, said—"I do not believe the Elders have ever been deceitful with us. I believe they will never preach any doctrine contrary to what they have preached."

I replied—I hope they never will, and wish I may never discover deceit in any respect; if I do, I surely shall lose my faith. But as to the doctrine, I am much mistaken if I have not heard something contrary to what they first preached already. If what I have said respecting the faith be true, I assert it is diametrically opposite to what they taught at first. I heard nothing about a ministration and obedience, except a few words from B. Youngs; and he represented it as leaving all to the dictates of the spirit of God in our own hearts. I believe we shall find the order and government of the church to be absolute ecclesiastical monarchy. We shall be led on until we have to give up every thing, and are stripped as naked as we were born: that is, we must come to have an implicit faith in the ~~ministration and~~ obedient to the Elders in all things that ~~is~~ or thought of, whether appearing right. We must lie open to their teaching, and become as soft as wax, and as pliable as clay in the hand of the potter. As I heard of

of the brethren (namely, S. Wells) say, not long since : “ The gospel is just like a tunnel ; the farther in, the narrower it grows.” As you have often heard, that it is a straight and narrow way ; yea, you will find it narrower than you have any conception of at present. Your very life will be taken from you, according to the words of Christ : “ He that loseth his life, shall find it.” The soul and body of sin, must become separated a’under— (Heb. iv. 12.) This is their faith ; and all brought about by obedience to the word preached. Also, no soul has any word of God, outward or inward, talent or light, that will finally save it. Without the Elders, we are totally helpless, and can do nothing as to our salvation. No creature can be saved from sin, (though he strive, pray, and labour to live near God,) but by having faith in the second coming of Christ, revealed through the ministrations, as I have already explained. Also having faith that they are men of God, having the revelation of God, and in faith receiving the word they preach, and being obedient to the same, is the only way to be saved ; and without this faith and obedience, there is no salvation for any creature under heaven.

One asked me—“ What then has become of all those who have died before the opening of this gospel ?”

I answered—As I conceive the faith of the church to be, all who have lived up to their light and knowledge, or according to the light of the day and dispensation in which they lived, have found justification, and died in a measure of peace. But as to a travail in regeneration, they have fallen as asleep. According to a text which I have often heard them quote : “ That we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep—( 1 Thess. iv. 15 ) They with us, may receive the power of the gospel of Christ’s second coming, enter in the work of regeneration, and experience a resurrection to eternal life : but first they must confess their sins.

I was asked—“ To whom ?” I answered—To the ministrations, who receive the gospel of the second coming of Christ in this world, and knew first for themselves, salvation from all sin, and a resurrection to life eternal,



and have entered the heavens. Yea, I have been told by some of the elderly brethren, that many spirits confessed their sins to the first ministration, viz. Ann Lee and James Whittaker, before they departed this life.— Now I will tell you a story verbatim as it was told me by an old believer: “ Some time in the last American war, the mother of the church Ann Lee, was, on account of her faith, imprisoned in a fort at Albany. At that time, a certain captain, going to the northward with a company of men, to assist General Gates against Burgoyne,\* visited the mother in her place of confinement, and had conversation with her, and finally received so much faith, that he promised her as soon as he could get released from the army, he would come and confess his sins, and join her people: but he was killed in the battle. Fourteen days after, he came in spirit, and confessed his sins to her; † so he was favoured to make good his promise.” And I have likewise been told that many thousands confessed to James Whittaker before he died.

Now the Elders have preached to me, that, “ there is but one way for all souls to enter, and that is by confessing their sins: this is the first step; and thousands, who have professed to be christians, have been so far mistaken, that they have never taken one step; they lived and died with their sins covered. Confession is the door; and the first step into the door of the kingdom of heaven: and whosoever *climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber*”—(John x. 1.)

In order to have a right understanding respecting this doctrine, and the faith in general, you should know, that the work of salvation, by the first coming of Christ, was not completed. The new, or spiritual creation, in order

\* This account was not given me quite correct. The officer was Colonel Brown, of Pittsfield; shot at Stone-Arabia, near Johnstown, under the command of General Schuyler.

† A short time after, two of the brethren were deputed by the mother, to go to Pittsfield and inform Col. Brown's family that he had returned in spirit, and confessed his sins, and was in the faith and travail with the church.

for the great work of regeneration, was not finished, no more than the natural creation was finished when the first Adam was created: while Adam stood alone, there could be no generation; but after Eve was formed, natural creation, in order for generation, was completed. Christ is the second Adam, and spiritual Father in a new creation. People think they are going to be regenerated, made whole, and finally saved, without the second Eve, the spiritual Mother, and before spiritual creation is finished, which must be in order for regeneration.—Now as Adam, without Eve, could not increase in generation, so neither could the second Adam, without the second Eve, increase in finished regeneration. Our great divines, with all their learning, have never been able to make this discovery, though the apostle gives a broad hint of it, “Neither is the man without the woman, nor the woman without the man” N. B. In the Lord—1 Cor. xi 11—that is, in the work of redemption. Thus you see, according to the faith, the work of God, in order for the salvation and complete redemption of fallen men, was not finished in the first coming of Christ; which dispensation was but as waters to the loins. According to Elder Meacham’s concise statement, this is called the third dispensation; the mystery and work of God is not yet finished, though “Christ received power and authority to administer the power of the resurrection, and eternal judgment to all the children of men:” but it is only meant thereby as a beginning of the work of God in this dispensation; for it is said shortly after, “They who were obedient to that form of doctrine, &c. were in the travail of the resurrection and redemption of the body” But if I can understand Elder Meacham’s discourse, before recited, they did not attain a full and complete redemption; only were in the travail of it, and attained according to the power of that dispensation. According to the apostle, “Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body”—Rom. viii. 23. They were in that day and dispensation, as first fruits of the spirit in the work of redemption. According to the apostle James, i. 18, “Of his own will begat he us with the word of

truth, that we should be as a kind of first fruits of his creatures." The fullness of time was not then come; the mystery of God, in man's salvation, was not finished; before it was to be, a falling away from the power in which the church then stood, was spoken of. But now the time is come, in which I tell you plainly, that I believe it is their faith that Ann Lee is the second Eve and first Mother of all in regeneration; and, as such, is the subject of scripture prophecies, as I have already mentioned. Thus the work of God is finished. As it is expressed in the concise statement, "It will be a decisive work, to the final salvation or damnation of all the children of men; which, according to the prophecies rightly calculated and truly understood, began in the year of our Saviour 1747."

Now according to the discourse of Elder Meacham, in which he refers us to Daniel and the Revelations, reference must be had to the prophetic numbers of the time, times and an half—Dan. xii. 7—and of two thousand three hundred days—Dan. viii. 14—one thousand two hundred and ninety days, and one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days—ib. xii. 11, 12: and the forty-two months and one thousand two hundred and sixty days, mentioned by St. John in the Revelations, xi. 2, 3. To rightly calculate these prophetic numbers, as the church professes to understand them, I expect they must be calculated in the following manner; but first a few preparatory words are necessary: the time, times and an half, by Daniel, must be understood as equivalent to forty-two months, by St. John. Time, times and an half, are three prophetic years and an half, and three prophetic years and an half, are twelve hundred and sixty days; which days, in this and the other numbers, must be understood to be years; which is consonant to all the commentators I have seen. Thus far premised, I proceed to a brief calculation of these numbers answering to the faith of our brethren respecting them.

The prophetic numbers must be considered as referring or pointing to three periods of time. First, to a pre-

paratory period; second, to a time at which this work actually commenced; and thirdly, to the time the church was brought into its present order.

I can the easier perform this difficult task by referring to the concise statement, or discourse of Elder Meacham, where it is said, "The falling away began soon after the apostles, and gradually increased until about the year 457, at which time the power of the church of Christ was scattered and lost." Which I think very probable, (as it was shortly after Constantine openly professed Christianity; then the church was no longer persecuted, but was protected and favoured by the civil power: this proved the fatal means of corrupting the doctrines and relaxing the discipline of the church; many became Christians, or pretended to be of the religion, only because it was the religion of the empire,\*) as from this time, according to St. John, Rev. xi. 3, the "two witnesses have prophesied in sackcloth," and they so were to continue forty and two months, i. e. the man and the woman, for the first and second coming of Christ; or those who have been faithful in this time to testify against sin. According to St. John, in the fifth verse of the thirteenth chapter, "Power was given by the dragon unto the beast to continue forty and two months, and to slay the witnesses—Rev. vi. 9: agreeing with Daniel, seventh chap. and twenty-fifth verse, "Unto the beast shall be given a time, time and dividing of time." Daniel heard a question asked, "How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" (that is, the wonders of the sinful reign of the beast) and the answer was, "a time, times and an half;" at the expiration of which time, he "shall accomplish or end in scattering the power of the holy people"—Dan. xii. 6, 7. Now as I have said before, a time, times and an half, and likewise forty-two months, are three years and an half; now three years and an half are twelve hundred and sixty days, and those days are twelve hundred and sixty prophetic years. Computing these years from 457, they will lead us down to the year of Christ 1717, which is the first period of time, when the

\* See Mosheim's Eccl. History.



way began to be prepared for the second coming of Christ, similar to John the Baptist preparing the way to Christ in his first coming.\*

The prophetic numbers of the second period of time, when this work actually commenced, are given by Daniel in the eighth and twelfth chapters. In the eighth chapter he gives the same account of the reign of the beast, as before, under the character of the ram and he-goat. Also he heard one faint ask another faint, "How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation to give both the sanctuary and host to be trodden under foot?" and the answer was, "Unto two thousand and three hundred days, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." The two thousand and three hundred days, which are as I have said two thousand and three hundred prophetic years, are to be reckoned from the time the prophecy was given,† which ends at the commencement of the year 1747; when, according to the concise statement, this work began.

The angel informs Daniel, (12th chap. 11th ver.) that "From the time the daily sacrifice" (i. e. of obedience to God) "shall be taken away, and the abomination" (the spirit of anti-christ) "that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days." Which calculating from 457, when "the abomination that maketh desolate was set up," the time ends at the year 1747, the same as the number two thousand three hundred. There is still another period of time, spoken of by St. John, when "the mystery of God should be finished"—Rev. x. 7; and according to Daniel, "Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh" to this time, that is, to the end of thirteen hundred and thirty-five days or years. Which calculating from 457 as before, brings us to 1792; when they say the church was brought into such order, and that salvation attained, which the world can form no idea of; and at which time all prophecy

\* What these preparations were will be seen hereafter.

† According to Bishop Usher's chronology, about the year 553 before Christ.

ends, except such as will be more and more amply fulfilled as the work increases; one of which is, Daniel vii. 26, 27, "But the judgment shall sit, and they," that is, the saints, "shall take away his dominion," i. e. the dominion of the beast, "to consume and destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."

Much more might be said on this subject, as allusions to this day are to be found in many parts of scripture. But I shall conclude nearly in the words of Daniel, vii. 28, "Hitherto" (that is, all dominions serving and obeying) "is the end of the matter. As for me" Thomas, "my cogitations," in often pouring over the prophecies respecting this day, have "much troubled me, but I" have often "kept the matter" and mused it "in my heart."

I have been told by several of the brethren, that before they heard of these people they were convinced that the time specified in these prophetic numbers, was past; therefore the millennium must have commenced among some people some where on earth; and when they found these people, and heard their testimony, they rejoiced, and joined them.

Now all the sons and daughters of Adam will have to come to this last and final display of God's grace, and confess their sins, either in this world, or to the ministration in the world of spirits; and then commences their travail and final salvation, and not before. For before the opening of this gospel, and sounding of the seventh trumpet—Rev. xi. 15, none were ever admitted into heaven. "No man," saith Christ, "hath ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven"—John iii. 13. and the apostle tells us expressly, "David is not ascended into the heavens"—Acts ii. 34. Daniel was told to wait the thirteen hundred and thirty-five days in which time he should rest, and at the end of the days he should stand in his lot; and the least in this work and dispensation is greater than John or any one you can

mention in inferior or back dispensations. Also as souls in this world, or world of spirits, come to this finished work of God, then their resurrection commences, and they travail or increase in wisdom, holiness, and purity eternally. Those who have the gospel offered to them, (for all will have the offer of it either in time or eternity) and do not receive it, (no matter how great their reputation as Christians has been) will, as they continue to reject it, travail from God into such a state of misery and darkness, called hell, that finally they will be conquered, give up and become poor humble souls, and thankfully accept of the least drop or crumb to alleviate their misery. Then the mercy of God, in the order of God through his ministers, will reach them; and then by confessing their sins, and receiving the gifts of God, they will arise out of that miserable lost state, and travail, as I have said of others. Thus every stiff knee will have to bow, and every tongue will have to confess—Rom. xiv. 11; and when death and hell have given up all their dead—Rev. xx. 13; when all souls have bowed to and acknowledged the gospel, bowed to the conquering power of Christ, then even the fallen angels, if any there be, will become so humbled that the mercy of God will reach them, and his goodness save them in the manner before described.

A Reply—"You seem to express a doubt of there being any fallen angels."

I answered—By examining of the doctrines advanced by our brethren, concerning the evil nature in man, I am inclined to think, that those who have a thorough knowledge of the faith, do not believe there is any devil or fallen spirit, except the *evil nature in man, and his fallen spirit* from its original rectitude.

What I conceive to be their belief concerning fallen angels, I will endeavour briefly to explain.

The body of Adam was of the earth, earthy—(1 Cor. xv. 47); his soul was from God. He was created male and female—(Gen. i. 27) the female was separated, or taken out of the body of Adam. She also, of course, was of the earth, earthy, and was likewise endued with a rational soul. Adam was commanded to yield obe-

dience to God, and no one thing beneath him. Eve was commanded to yield obedience to Adam, and to God through him. To Adam was given the *dominion over all creatures, and over all the earth*; and the woman was given unto him as an help to subdue, and keep all things in subjection under them: but she neglected her duty, and debased her noble soul, by yielding obedience to her *nature*, which was of the earth; and Adam did the same by yielding to her: in consequence of which, they both became fallen creatures, fallen from that angelic state in which they were created. Instead of their continuing under the order and government of the spirit and pure law of God, they came under the order and law by which the brute creation are governed; which order and law for them was good, as every thing was good according to its kind—(Gen. i. 24) and while remaining in the state that God had placed them. But when our first parents debased the dignity of their rational souls, by becoming governed by the same *earthly nature*, by which the brute creation were governed, then to Adam and Eve this nature was evil. Therefore, this debasement of their rational, immortal, and angelic souls, was the cause of shame. It is also the same that causes shame in all their posterity. Thus you see according to this doctrine, that which was the sin of our first parents, has been the sin of all mankind ever since. Instead of keeping in the spirit and light of the spirit, they fell into nature and nature's darkness: and this is what our brethren call the man of sin, which has become set up in the temple of God, captivating and ruling every faculty of his soul. Though, as I said before, all things in the world are good in the order in which God placed them; but when man becomes governed by them, they become evil, or the soul sins in yielding to any thing beneath God; indeed, this is according to the doctrine of many others. They say "We are to love God supremely, and not to place our affections on any creaturely enjoyments. We are to be led by the spirit of God, and not by the things, and spirit of the world." Thus, if what I have stated be true, we need not go far to find what the serpent, and sin of Adam was; for whenever we become



influenced by our earthly, carnal natures, or things of this world, we yield to the voice of the same serpent, and commit the same sin. I have often said I knew of no devil but what was in man, that is, his earthly, carnal nature, and I knew of no temptation but what proceeded from our natures, or the things of this world.

I may just observe that our brethren believe that Adam and Eve were created in a probationary state, and capable of much greater attainments; and if they had continued in obedience to the command of their creator, they would have obtained a complete victory and power over all things earthly, and they would have become established in the spiritual order of God. The gospel is to redeem us from all earthly things; and by obedience to it, we shall obtain the same victory, power, and establishment, that they might have obtained. Thus this nature which has become evil in man, is, in my opinion, what our brethren understand by the words, *devil* or *serpent*; and the rational, angelic spirit of man being debased and fallen, is what they understand by *fallen angels*.

One asked me, if I believed all the doctrines of which I had treated?

I answered, I cannot say I believe them all. And as to the truth thereof, as professed or believed by them, I leave it; as the ways of God are deep, and mysterious, and far above our comprehension.

Concerning the faith and government of the church, it appears not to be, in several respects, as I at first was taught, or understood it, as heretofore mentioned. I then conceived it to be republican; but I cannot describe my conclusion respecting it, more full and clear, than in the words I heard the second time I went to see them; by which you may judge if I had not reason to understand it in this light. One of the brethren who had been of the faith many years, said, (and I have heard others to the same purport,) "We are not bound up by written articles, and discipline, like other societies, formed by their predecessors, and if one believes in, or adopts sentiments contrary to their established doctrine, he is soon silenced or excommunicated; but we admit of liberty of conscience: all have the privi-

“lege to believe, and speak what appears to them right :  
 “no one is excommunicated for his sentiments. The  
 “gospel among us, don’t bind creatures: it opens a  
 “door of liberty, and we have union with all our brethren  
 “and sisters, whatever their sentiments may be, so  
 “long as they keep out of sin. We wish and profess to  
 “be in a travail individually, and as a body of people  
 “into an increasing light and understanding, and our  
 “conduct improved accordingly. We are willing to be  
 “taught by the least brother among us: and individually  
 “or as a body, as we come to see we are wrong in  
 “any thing, either faith or practice, to put it away, and  
 “mend.

“We don’t look back to first mother’s day, to the  
 “ministers or Elders who opened the way of life and  
 “salvation, as a rule for us to walk by, though we  
 “own them as *pillars* and *foundation stones*. But they  
 “did only begin the building, that is, the work of God,  
 “and we who come after must go on with the work  
 “they began, and know an increase, and travail in the  
 “way of God.”

Thus you see in all discourses like this, which we have  
 often heard, a ministration and obedience to the Elders,  
 as the only way to obtain salvation, was kept out of our  
 sight. I have heard some of the brethren and sisters  
 say, that “the church was in much the same order  
 as the Free Masons were, only they were *travailing downwards*,  
 but the church was *travailing upwards* ;” and that  
 as no man could gain a complete knowledge of Free  
 Masonry, without being initiated into a true and perfect  
 lodge, in due manner and form, through the several  
 degrees, “so no one can obtain a real knowledge of the  
 doctrine and order of the church, only by travail in  
*obedience* to the gift of God.”

One said—“Well, what are you going to do? are you  
 going to give up your faith?”

I answered—Nay, not for the world; and I hope you  
 will not neither. I know there can be much said in  
 support of their ministration doctrine, but I shall let the  
 truth of it, and some other points of faith, rest in a great  
 measure, on the conduct of the ministration, or Elders,

and people. According to their criterion, they often give us, I shall judge whether they are men of God or not, that is, "By their fruits." I think I have hitherto had reason to believe that they are the people they profess to be, not only by their life and example, but what has had great weight with me, to cause me to believe the time has commenced, of which they testify, is their holding to the doctrine of virginity, which doctrine appears to me to be more pure than professed by any other sect. I have read that St. Clemens, bishop of Rome, (who lived in the times of the apostles) relates that Christ being asked when his kingdom would come, answered—"When two things shall become one, and that which is outward, be as that which is inward; the male with the female, and neither male nor female," and these words were, in the next century, quoted by Clemens of Alexandria. The same author also relates another answer given by Christ to much the same question, put by Salome, to which he was answered thus—"When ye shall have put off the garment of shame and ignominy, and when two shall become one, the male and female united, and neither man nor woman," i. e. the male and female united in spirit, or in the Lord, and neither man nor woman in a carnal sense. These passages are also quoted by Wm. Law in vindication of this doctrine. They have had a tendency since I read them, to strengthen me in the faith, that our brethren and sisters are the people of whom Christ spake, and that his kingdom has come. I mention these things, that they may also strengthen your faith.

Thus we often spent hours in conversing about our Elders, the church and believers, and their wonderful *gifts, miracles, faith, and doctrines*. My friend Hodgson was by this time, strong in the faith; though for the first six months after he joined, I often went to see him (living then about half a mile from him) to solve his doubts which were principally concerning the truth of our testimony respecting marriage, and to strengthen him in the faith, as, apparently at times, he was ready to give up. Thus I acted then with all the believers at Cornwall, for I verily believed that this was the only way of God on

earth : and I thought the loss of one sheep out of the fold, would be inexpressibly great ; and that the gaining of one to it, would be as a star in my crown—( Daniel xii. 3 ) But alas ! if it be the only way of life and salvation, though I have preached it to others, I myself have become a “ castaway ;” though in every respect, according to my light and knowledge, I have acted the honest, sincere part.

1801. By this time I had partly written, according to the information I had received, an account of the rise of the church, with an explanation and vindication of their doctrines, faith, and practice ; part of which was on dancing, an abridgment of which I have heretofore inserted. I had thoughts of continuing this work, but beginning to see that some points of the faith were not as I had at first understood them, and that whatever I did, must not be in my gift, but in the gift, or according to the minds of the Elders ; and that there was no gift from the ministrations to write and publish respecting their faith and practice : therefore I wrote no more, except a few letters.

In about four weeks my father returned from Lebanon, and we were glad to hear that he had received a measure of faith, and had opened his mind. Poor old man, he appeared to be happy to think that he had lived to see the long prophesied of, and prayed for millennium.

He intimated to me, that while he was at Lebanon, something extraordinary had happened to him ; but gave no particular account of it. I thought it was probable that he had been advised to say nothing about it, as I was when my feet were frozen, on a visit to them, for fear it might be construed into a judgment, or have a tendency to discourage others from visiting them, or receiving their faith. Be that as it might, I had afterwards reason to think that while he was there, he was seized with a fit of the palsy, which might have been caused by much exercise of mind.

Many more people now came to our meetings, for they thought it strange and unaccountable that a man of his learning and understanding, and who had been a



steady member of the society of Friends near thirty years, should now unite with these people, and join in the dance. Some time previous, he had often appeared in the ministry in the Friends' meetings: he now often spake in our meetings; mostly recommending religion, and exhorting the people to live according to the principles of it.

A few days after he came home, he told us that the heretofore mentioned letter written by R. Rathbone, (which the Elders promised to shew him, if he would go to Lebanon) had much strengthened him in the faith; because he saw such instability in the man, in writing so contradictory only two years afterwards: the cause of which he believed was, that he had departed from the truth, and a sense of the gospel. While he was at Lebanon, he took a copy of said letter, and now gave it to me

The pamphlet I had not yet read, but from what I had heard of it, and now reading the letter, it appeared to me respecting the author as I have mentioned it did to my father. For I had not then a sufficient knowledge and understanding of the faith to assign a reason, how a man could be so confident in support of the faith and first Elders, and only two years afterwards repent it all to be error; and that Ann Lee and the first Elders were very intemperate, and either deceivers or deceived.

As I have not room for the insertion of this letter at full length, I shall only give the heads of it.

As to his confidence of the truth of the faith, he says, "That it is the only way of everlasting life; and that if it was a scheme, (as his father Valentine had called it) it was contrived by infinite wisdom before the foundation of the world, and revealed by the Lord Jesus Christ for the redemption of fallen man; and that it is that mystery which the angels desire to look into."—That he had an experience of more than sixteen years, and had received a continual confirmation and establishment in his faith; that his soul was "joined to the foun-

“ dation of God which was laid in Christ Jesus, being  
 “ made a partaker of his grace and the operation of his  
 “ power ”

Concerning the first Elders, he says, “ It is in vain for  
 “ you to tell me any thing about Mother, Father Wil-  
 “ liam and Father James, who first ministered the gospel  
 “ to us, by exclaiming against them with railing accusa-  
 “ tions. As an eye and ear witness I can testify of their  
 “ faithfulness in the gospel of Christ, and of their afflic-  
 “ tion, long-suffering, and patience, and of their unfeign-  
 “ ed love to the souls of mankind ; and who, while they  
 “ were here in the body, shewed the greatest and most  
 “ infallible evidences to us that believed of their relation  
 “ to the kingdom of God.”

He speaks of his father (who was a Baptist preacher)  
 thus : “ Notwithstanding your great pretensions, you are  
 “ yet in your sins, and in the gall of bitterness and bond  
 “ of iniquity. That part of the work which Christ came  
 “ to do in this world, was, *to set a man at variance against*  
 “ *his father* : you have rejected the gospel and despised  
 “ the offers of salvation ; the truth of which you will  
 “ know by sorrowful experience.”

He concluded by pointing out the following passages  
 of scripture for his father's perusal—Matt. xii. 31, 32—  
 Heb. x. 26—1 John iii 10.

1801. Sometime in March I took another journey to  
 Niskeuna, in company with our zealous brother, Abra-  
 ham Hendrickson, where we tarried with the brethren  
 and sisters seven or eight days. I had considerable con-  
 versation with several of them respecting the faith and  
 the doctrines of the church. From hence we went to  
 Lebanon, thirty-eight miles S. E. of Niskeuna. The first  
 day we travelled about 16 miles, taking our way through  
 Stephentown, to see and tarry the night with D. Train  
 and his family, who were six or seven in number, all in  
 the faith. In the evening we had a meeting, a few spec-  
 tators being present ; and a zealous, lively meeting it  
 was. We danced near an hour ; several turned round  
 like tops. And to crown all, I had a gift to speak in  
 some other language ; but the greatest misfortune was,  
 neither I nor any other one understood what I said.—

After we had finished our exercise, I spake near an hour to the spectators, on the vanity and uncertainty of all terrestrial things; the necessity and beauty of religion; the peace and satisfaction derived from it; and of our living to answer the ends of our creation, which was not to live in sin and pleasure, but to become redeemed and saved from sin, and to live to the honor and glory of God.

This family was kind to us; and in the morning we left them, and in the evening arrived at Lebanon much fatigued. Here I saw a neat settlement of (as I was informed) about four hundred of our brethren and sisters. We put up with the family in which our Elders resided, called Elder Ebenezer's family, containing about thirty men and women; the men living in several rooms in one part of the house, and the women the same in the other, as is customary in all their different houses and families. Each family assemble morning and evening for worship, in a suitable room in their own dwelling-houses.

Next day I made a short confession of some things I had done (which I did not think were right) since I opened my mind before. It is a practice, and it is required of all in the faith, if they commit any sin or do any thing which they are conscious is wrong, to open the same to the Elders, or Elder, the first opportunity; for they believe there is no possibility of gaining a victory over sin, or travailing in the gospel, so long as we knowingly keep one sin covered, according to Proverbs xxviii.

13.

The same day in the afternoon, our first Elder Ebenezer came in our room to see us; and after asking a few questions respecting the believers at Cornwall, and of our journey, spake to us in a solemn manner, as follows:

“ We are glad you have come to see us, and hope you  
 “ may be rewarded for your time and labour, which you  
 “ will be if you have sincere desires after the gospel;  
 “ and I hope you have come to a determined resolution  
 “ to forsake all sin and live a just and holy life. This is  
 “ what we desire of all souls, because we wish the happi-  
 “ ness of all; well knowing there is no real happiness or

“ peace of mind to be obtained in living after the course  
 “ of this world. *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift*  
 “ *of God is eternal life.* Through the mercy of God we  
 “ know a salvation from our sins, and experience that  
 “ peace which the world cannot give, and we desire that  
 “ all may come to know the same.

“ The world of mankind, professors as well as non-  
 “ professors, are in such a state of darkness, that we are  
 “ glad to find one soul seeking the way of life and salva-  
 “ tion; knowing all that do so, and confess and forsake  
 “ their sins, will find mercy.

“ The people of the world have many erroneous ideas  
 “ about us; and so they had respecting Christ in his first  
 “ coming, and many think we are a deluded people;  
 “ but we have seen wherein we were lost and deluded,  
 “ since we have found the gospel, and that it was by  
 “ the deceitfulness of sin. *Sin blinds the mind and hardens*  
 “ *the heart.* Now here is the sole cause of delusion.—  
 “ And as mankind have travailed into sin, they have trav-  
 “ ailed from God into darkness, and consequently into  
 “ ignorance of God and all good. But it is the gospel  
 “ that gives light, and shows unto mankind their lost  
 “ state and condition; and as we are obedient to it, it  
 “ leads us out of darkness into light. Many in the world  
 “ think they are serving God in preaching, praying, sing-  
 “ ing and in private devotion; and think they are in the  
 “ way to heaven when they daily live in the commission  
 “ of sin, and the generality of professors acknowledge it.  
 “ But Christ came to save people from their sins; the  
 “ way of Christ and to the kingdom of heaven is by sal-  
 “ vation, and salvation is to be saved from sin.

“ Now we who are of this faith, having confessed our  
 “ sins, taken up a full cross against the world, flesh, and  
 “ all evil, and forsaken all sin; not travailing farther  
 “ and deeper into sin by daily commission, and living af-  
 “ ter the course of this world, marrying and giving in  
 “ marriage, and travailing in the works of generation;  
 “ but, as I said, taking up our cross according to the  
 “ doctrine and example of Christ, and travailing in re-  
 “ generation, which is being born again, for *Except a*  
 “ *man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of heaven;*



“ therefore, regeneration and redemption from sin, is the  
 “ way and the only way to the kingdom of heaven, and  
 “ the only way of peace and comfort in this world ; and  
 “ we experience, according to Christ’s words, *an hundred*  
 “ *fold* even in this life, and have a comfortable hope of  
 “ life everlasting in the world to come.

“ As the salvation of the soul and laying up a treas-  
 “ ure in heaven is of the greatest importance, I wish that  
 “ you may seriously consider thereof, and become deter-  
 “ mined to forsake all evil, and once for all take hold of  
 “ the way of life and salvation, and count all things in  
 “ this world but as dross in comparison with it.”

As soon as he had concluded, he arose to leave us ;  
 I immediately replied to what he had said—I believe  
 thou hast spoken the truth.

While I was here I spent most of my time in reading  
 a history of the Martyrs, which I found in this family.  
 But I have since seen that in so doing I did not act like  
 a good believer ; for such an one would not pass his  
 time, while he is with his Elders, in reading accounts of  
 reputed good men in former days. I esteemed it a pri-  
 vilege to have a book. But good believers in the faith  
 esteem it a much greater privilege to hear their Elders  
 and be attentive to what they teach.

The third day I had been here I began to feel uneasy,  
 and to have a strong desire to be travelling homewards.  
 The Elders wished us to stay three or four days longer,  
 but in the afternoon I felt so uneasy and such a strong  
 impression to be going, that I could not read nor sit still,  
 but walked the floor. I told my companion how I felt.  
 He said, “ You had best open it to the Elders.” I ac-  
 cordingly went to Elder Hezekiah, who was at work in  
 his shop, and told him I felt very uneasy, and had a  
 strong impression in my mind to be going ; but that I  
 knew not what the cause of it was. I had been labour-  
 ing to put it off my mind and make myself easy, but  
 could not. I hope you will not think this desire to go  
 proceeds from any dislike I have taken to any one, or a-  
 ny thing in the family. Nay, your kindness is such, and  
 company so agreeable, it would be a pleasure for me to  
 stay a month if I could feel easy.

He left his work and went and informed his Elder of what I had told him. In a few minutes he came in our room and said, "If you can be content to tarry till morning, as the day is far spent, we shall be willing that you should then go."

After a few minutes silence, I replied, As the time mentioned is short, the weight seems to be taken off my mind, and I think I shall feel easy till then.

In the morning, after breakfast, we parted with this kind family, and walked on about two miles, and then stopped and took dinner with our brethren in what is called the backsliding order. I conversed principally with the man who had such extraordinary gifts in speaking different languages, as I have before related. He said, "It is my gift and labour now to travail into a deeper work of God in my soul; for without charity or an inward work of God, all those outward gifts will profit nothing, according to the apostle, 1 Corinthians, xiii. chap."

Next day we arrived at Kenderhook-landing, about twenty-five miles from Lebanon, just in time to secure a passage.

There were a number of passengers on board the vessel, and much idle, vain conversation; but we kept ourselves very still and quiet, having but little conversation with any of them. In two days we arrived at home.

I was now, as to my faith, in the meridian; and soon after I returned home I wrote a lengthy letter to my brother-in-law, John Everitt, of Long-Island, a serious professor in the Presbyterian church, with whom I had had some conversation respecting the faith, and obtained permission of Elder Ebenezer to send it. In this letter I spake of the great strength of my faith—of the glorious halcyon days, which had been the subject of prophecy and prayer. I observed that Christ was revealed and made known to us; that he had descended in as conspicuous a manner as he ascended; that such as were dead in sin he had raised to life eternal. I treated concerning the man of sin; and asserted that all other churches were churches of anti-christ. I expressed a strong wish that he might come into the glorious light

in which we were, and obtain a full power over sin. I urged him to come and behold "Jerusalem a quiet habitation;" and that he would be constrained to call "her walls salvation, and her gates praise;" and bid him adieu, until we met and saw eye to eye in the millenium.

My father, after he had read this letter, said, "Thomas, thou mayest yet find thyself mistaken; thou art too confident; I could not write or say what thou hast. *Let not him that girdeth on his harness, boast himself as he that putteth it off*"—1 Kings xx. 11.

I replied—If I do find myself mistaken, it must be occasioned by seeing, on a more intimate acquaintance with them, dissimulation and conduct that I have heretofore discovered from some others who make a great profession; which if I do, it will be a greater disappointment than ever I met with before; I therefore shall conclude Christianity and revelation is nothing but hypocrisy and priestcraft, and shall become a deist.

My father said—"Thomas, I am sorry to hear thee say so."

I replied—What must I think and conclude, when I look over professing Christendom, for many centuries back, to the present day? They have professed to "Do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God"—Mich. vi. 8. But the reverse is true, and Christendom is the model. Witness their contention and quarrelling about their religion; and their persecutions and murders one of another. But I need not be particular; thou knowest the lamentable history of the churches. Professing Christians (a few characters excepted) by giving their faith the lie, by their works have made more deists than a Lord Bolingbroke, Hobs, Hume, Pindal, Voltaire, Rousseau, Gibbon, Allen, Palmer, Paine, or all the deistical writers that have ever written. Now the church called Shakers make the greatest profession of any on earth, and many of them testify that they have power over all sin. Witness what Elder Hezekiah publicly said in this house; and they say that "the Christians of the world shew their faith without their works, but we show our faith by our works." But if we come to see

we have been mistaken or deceived in these people, I shall be more disappointed than ever I have been; and it will be the greatest deception of its kind I ever read of, and the greatest cloak of religion that ever mortals put on. Will it not be discouraging, and almost sufficient to make me conclude as I have said.\* And will not the poor deist, being made so by beholding the conduct of professors, meet with the compassion and mercy of God, and not stand at his tribunal bar so culpable as the Christian believer supposes he will?

My father replied—"There is some reason and truth in what thou hast advanced; and the conduct of professors has been a great trial to me; and I have said none claims my sympathy more than those who are made deists by professors' not proving the truth of their religion by its energy on their lives. Notwithstanding, if even these people prove to be like others, or worse, I could not renounce the scriptural christian religion; at least, not until the deist could produce a system more congenial to the good of society in general, and happiness of individuals. When we renounce (that which is believed to be) divine revelation, as a guide through life, to teach us our duty to God and man, (for its precepts are incomparable, as love to God, and our neighbour as ourselves) and to adhere to natural reason as a guide, we know not where nor when to stop, as the next step from deism is atheism: for we can reason away the existence of a God, and particularly the immortality of the soul, as easy, and with as much propriety as we can revelation. Indeed, it appears to me, one unavoidably falls with the other; as we only know we are mortal by revelation; and we only know the mind and will of God as it is by revelation made known. Therefore, it will be the greatest wisdom to adhere to it, and to the light God gives us; and not to let the conduct of professors sway us one way or the other; and to keep on our watch, and endeavour to weed our own gardens, and be determined

\* Contrary to what I said, I still firmly believe in the necessity of religion; the principles of which will, if properly adhered to, make men wiser and better.



with Peter, Though all should be offended, though all should deny the master, and the efficacy of his gospel, yet will I not—(Matt. xxvi. 33.) And if sometimes the master pleases to withdraw his supporting hand from us, or by not keeping on our watch, or through the fallability of human nature we fall, may we make this good use of it, i. e. to convince us of our weakness, without his supporting aid; and a look of pity from him will bring us to repentance, and restore us to his favour"—Luke xxii. 61.

I observed—Father, thy advice is very good; I shall endeavour to remember it.

1801. Sometime in April, two of the Elders came to see us again, but I was not at home, which was a disappointment to me. I always endeavoured to be at home, if I knew when they were coming.

I shall now relate a sorrowful circumstance (particularly to us in the faith) respecting my father.

The latter part of April he went to New-York, and returned 5th of May, in the afternoon, and did not go home that day, but stayed at my house, as he wished to attend the evening meeting; in which he spake about a quarter of an hour on the excellency of a truly religious life, and the peace of mind attending the practice of it. He also spake a few words on the exemplary life of our brethren and sisters, and recommended to the believers present, to endeavour to live that sober, exemplary life which they appeared to live.

In the morning, a few minutes after he arose, apparently in health, K. Hodgson came into the room to begin the meeting, as he was our leader; and as my father was attempting to rise to join them, he was struck with an apoplectic fit, and for two or three hours he lay with but little appearance of life. It was near two months before he was able to sit up; and he was afterwards paralytic in his right side, and lost the use of his right arm and leg; and was never after able to speak or write, though he in a great measure retained his understanding.

Our opponent was glad to catch at any thing by which to condemn us. He came to my house, and said—"That

it was a judgment upon my father for embracing, and becoming an advocate for this new faith; and would have the rest of us, and others take warning by it." He also said—"It was a pity there was not some law made to suppress our meetings."

He drew up a written petition to have us banished out of the place, as a public nuisance, and went to Jeremiah Clark, judge of the court of common pleas, to get him to sign it first; and then he intended to proceed through the neighbourhood, and procure as many signers as he could; but the judge would not, in the least, countenance it, and told him his proceedings were illegal; and that we had as much right in the neighbourhood as he had; and there was no law by which we could be banished. And to the credit of the judge, he absolutely refused to countenance persecution. Our opponent said he did not intend it as persecution. After controverting awhile, the judge told him it had the appearance of persecution, and that he would not countenance, but discountenance the most distant appearance of it.

When I heard there was such a petition in agitation, I went to see the judge, to know the truth of it; and the account, as I have stated, I received from him. In conversation with him on this subject, I told him I thought we should be thankful to God and our country, that, though the spirit of persecution remained yet in some, they cannot get their proceedings to banishment, imprisonment, and blood, sanctioned by popes, kings, judges, and courts, as they could a century or two ago. Also, that I wished that all judges and rulers, of every description, might imitate him in suppressing persecution; and that the spirit of it might become banished to the bottomless pit, from whence it first originated, never more to be known on earth, so long as the earth abideth or the sun shineth. I also told him, as the Friends were a people I esteemed, I was sorry that there was one among them who manifested a persecuting spirit; and admitting we were in ever so great an error, it would be wrong to persecute us, or any other people, for erroneous sentiments. But alas! said I, did I ever expect to hear of such proceedings and speeches, from a Quaker

minister. Several others in the neighbourhood disapproved of our opponent's conduct; and though they did not unite with us in our faith, yet would not have seen us injured or molested on that account: and some said—"Now we see the Quakers would persecute, as others have done, if they only had the power." Which on my hearing, I replied, A few individuals might; but as a society of people, I did not believe they would, as persecution was diametrically opposite to their principles. I further said that I had not a doubt but that the Friends in general, though they may believe we are in an error, would, nevertheless, exceedingly disapprove our opponent's conduct, if they knew it.

But our opponent had some plausible reasons and plea for his conduct.

"Oh, we do not mean to persecute by any means; but these people pretend to a religion which is no religion. They pretend to worship God in dancing on first days; which, to every judicious mind, must appear mockery of every thing sacred: and people of every description running there, as to a frolic, and likewise hearing their corrupt doctrines (particularly the delusive, pernicious harangues of that deluded, enthusiastic Thomas Brown, jun.) whereby our neighbours, especially young people, are in great danger of being corrupted, and ruined by such pernicious, delusive tenets. We conscientiously believe it just and right, that something be done to put a stop thereto, before any more such valuable members of society, as old Thomas Brown, are deluded, and ruined by judgments falling on them."

Similar to this (thought I) has been the cloak and language of all bigotted persecutors in every age of the world.

I again wrote to our opponent (May 20, 1801) stating that his treatment of us in asserting, that what befell my father, "was a judgment on him for leaving the Friends and joining the Shakers," was unbecoming and unchristian-like, particularly in a man of his learning and public character; and that it was no prodigy for a person to be struck with death in the performance of religious duties. Also concerning its being "a pity there was no

law to suppress our meetings ;” and on some other expressions he had made, tending to persecution. I then remonstrated to him in the language of sympathy against persecution ; referring him to former sanguinary proceedings against the Quakers ; and appealing to his inward light, if his conduct towards us, according to his power, was not equally inhuman and unjust : concluding, by desiring him to explore the tenor of his conduct towards us, by examining his own heart, endeavouring to attend to that inward light in which he professed to believe ; and to cultivate that charity essentially necessary to form a christian character.

After thus writing to him, I heard but little more of any proceedings against us. Whether my writing had the desired effect, or whether he being now married, had his attention otherwise employed, I know not.

Shortly after I had written to him, I received the following anonymous letter from him, though not written by him ; but by a physician who then resided in the neighbourhood

CORNWALL, *May*, 1801.

“ *Mr. Thomas Brown,*

SIR,

Please to read, and well consider the following subjects, the fundamental principles of your religion :

1st. Of singing—When Moses sang praises to the author of his deliverance, his song did not consist in bare, empty tunes. He was a man that was better acquainted with his maker’s will, than to suppose that an external sound, varied so as to gratify the musical ear, and continued a considerable length, could be an agreeable service to a God that requires to be worshipped in spirit and truth. We do not so much as hear of tunes in the songs of Moses, or Deborah, or any of the rejoicing saints, before David’s time. He seems to have been the first that instituted tunes. Also, we never hear of his using the tune, without expressing the most pathetic sentences of praise in every measure of his tunes. It appears their singing did not consist in singing, loo, loo, loo. When Jesus Christ was disposed to sing, he sung an hymn ; and



we are directed, if we are merry, to sing psalms. In all the scriptures, we hear nothing of singing tunes without words. We must suppose Christ knew the true worship, and the true manner of performing it. Wherever we are exhorted to sing, it is to sing not tunes, but praise. It will be in vain to say, that the expressive part is performed by the spirit; for if the spirit performs part, let it do the whole, and the corporeal part be silent.

2d. Of dancing—It did not originate with the true worshippers of God. It originated among Idolators. It was very common at Athens, in the days of Diogenes. It was practised among the Chinese, who never heard of Jew nor Christian, till of late years. It has been, and still is practised by every savage tribe that has yet been discovered. It is said in history, to have been practised in Sodom and Gomorrah. When it was used by the Israelites, it was not done by way of worship, but by way of rejoicing on certain occasions, or by way of diversion. We read that David leaped and danced before the ark, accompanied with shouting, and the voice of the trumpet: this appears nothing more than an occasional rejoicing, and not so much as deemed a part of their stated worship. It indeed appears to have been very uncommon for the male sex to have danced on any occasion; nor do I remember of any man's dancing, but David, except when they danced to the golden calf Aaron made. Miriam led out the Israelitish women with timbrels and with dances, after their passage through the Red Sea. And we read in Judges that the Benjaminites were advised to lay in wait and see if the daughters of Shiloh would come out to dance after the feast of the Lord; and for every man to catch him a wife. So that we find no where in sacred history, of dancing, except on special occasions of some good turn of fortune. Jeremiah mentions the cessation of the timbrels, the harp, and the dance, at the captivity of the Jews by the Babylonians; but in the same manner, and same chapter, he mentions Jerusalem's being forsaken of her lovers and adulterers; and of their being deprived of the enjoyment of the vast multitude of vices they practised; which he does not distinguish from their dancing. And it ap-

pears that the heathen claim the origin of dancing to be among them ; and that it was introduced among them before the Trojan war ; and taught by Terpsichore\* the daughter of Jupiter and Mnemosyne ; and always believed that the same Terpsichore presided over dancing, as a genius or goddess : which is as likely a story as that the Supreme ever required it as worshipping himself — I believe the truth of the matter is, that it originated among the heathen, and that the Israelites learnt it of the Egyptians, as we hear nothing of dancing among them before they came to Egypt ; but immediately after their migration, they began to dance : and that although it was made use of by some good persons, yet it was practised generally as a vice.

Now concerning the coming of Christ—Can it be possible that any man in his senses, can believe that he is come the second time ? When was the trump of God, and the voice of the archangel sounded ?—1 Thess. iv. 16. When, or where has Christ descended in like manner as he ascended, and in so conspicuous a manner as that every eye could see him ? Have those who persecuted him, particularly the Jews, seen his wounds, and all kindred of the earth wailed because of him ? Have the dead saints been raised, and those alive changed ? Where is the Lord Jesus Christ revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God ?—2 Thess. i. 7, 8. If all these scripture queries are to be spiritualized, then what proof do you give us of the second coming of Christ ? Do your Elders preach in the power and demonstration of the spirit, as one might reasonably suppose they would, if they had experienced the power of the second coming of Christ ? But these are harder questions to answer, than to tell who those are that wrest, to their own destruction, what the apostle Paul has written of these things which are hard to be understood. If the twenty-fourth of Matthew, and the corresponding chapters in Mark and Luke are to be understood of the second coming of

\* One of the nine muses, or one of the nine imaginary heathen deities ; to whom is attributed the invention of dancing and balls.

Christ, as you say, then your church does not answer the description at all, particularly, as the light shineth out of the east, even unto the west, so shall the coming of the Son of man be. Can it be possible that Ann Lee, and seven or eight men, coming from England to America, was this light spoken of, shining out of the east? Did every eye see them? Why, Sir, I am surpris'd at a man of your learning and reading. It appears to me you have lost your senses, as to distinguishing truth from such barefaced error.

And Christ tells us if any shall say, behold he is in the desert, (at Niskeuna) or secret chambers, believe it not. Where are those who say, Lo here is Christ? Where are those who forbid to marry? Where are those who pretend to shew great signs and wonders, and if possible, deceive the very elect? Where are those who pretend to receive an additional power? It may be the power of the beast and false prophet, with which they pretend to do miracles—Rev. xiii. Miracles they may do, and fulfil what is prophesied of them; but their miracles are as false as themselves. If they can do miracles, it would be well for them to cure the palsy on your father, and then we will believe on them. This cure would be but a trifle in the hands of those possessed of apostolic power; particularly, as he is a believer. Wishing you may come to see your errors, we conclude,

Your's, &c."

I was never more conscious of my inability to give a reasonable answer to any subject, than I was to those contained in this letter; I therefore wrote no answer. By this time my wife had been visited several times, by a few of the Friends, on account of her uniting with us; but she was not willing to renounce what little faith she had, in order to retain her membership with that society; she therefore received the following certificate of disownment:

*From Cornwall Monthly Meeting, held at Marlborough the  
28th of fifth Month, 1801.*

Whereas Elizabeth Brown, wife of Thomas Brown, a member of this meeting, hath neglected the attendance of our meeting, and united with another society; and she having been laboured with, without the desired effect; and as we can have no unity with such conduct, we hereby disown her as a member amongst us, until she, from a sense of her error, shall condemn the same to the satisfaction of this meeting.

Signed in, and by order of the above said meeting, by  
 WILLIAM COCKE, } Clerks  
 PHEBE EARL, } this day.

Some time in June, our first Elder, Ebenezer, and his companion Stephen, came to see us again. Some of us had faith to believe that my father would be restored by them, and I did not know but it might be so, as I had heard much of miracles being performed at different times, by the Elders; and as they professed to apostolic gifts and power.

My friend Hodgson was dissatisfied with me for doing some necessary business on the Sabbath; asserting I had broken the commands of God. After controverting the point with him respecting the commands, and doing works of necessity on the first day of the week, I told him I was willing to leave the subject to the Elders while they were here, and abide their decision; to which he agreed. We met with them, and I opened the matter in dispute. Elder Ebenezer said, "it was the order of the people of God, that were brought into order, not to travel, buy, or sell, or do any thing that can be avoided, on that day; and to be careful not to give offence to the world. But do not you differ about such things; but each one look to himself, and not blame and condemn one another; but leave each one to God, and his own conscience. We sin as we violate our conscience, and do that which we believe, or which is made known to us, to be wrong."



So the matter ended. Brother Hodgson little knew yet, that, according to the faith, the particular, and essential commands of the gospel in this day, were what the Elders taught us to do, and to leave undone: and not altogether according to what is contained in the scriptures, which were commands to those under the dispensation in which they were written.

The Elders tarried three or four days with us. I had considerable conversation with them concerning the faith. Elder Ebenezer was more sociable with me at this time than ever after; but we were then humoured, and dealt by as children.

About a month after the Elders returned to Lebanon, we sent them the following letter:

CORNWALL, *July 12, 1801.*

*KIND FRIENDS,*

According to your request when last with us, we now write to you. We all retain the faith received, and endeavour to act consistent with the counsel you (in gospel love) have given us. Though we are sorry to write that we do not make a progress and travail according to the desire of our hearts; but we beseech you not to be discouraged with us. We feel thankful for your visits and labours of love among us. Thomas' father is in better health than when you parted with him. His being struck with such a disease, has been much of a trial to us; but we wish to be resigned to it.

We endeavour to live in love and union, and act consistent with our holy profession, according to your counsel; but the gospel is against nature. We hope you will not be discouraged with us. In love and esteem for you, we conclude, and subscribe ourselves your children in the gospel.

RALPH HODGSON,  
THOS. BROWN,  
ABM. HENDRICKSON,  
ELIZABETH HODGSON,  
JANE HODGSON,  
ELIZABETH BROWN,  
MACEE EVERITT, &c.

Our meetings were not so large as they had been, since the circumstance of my father happened; and as there appeared now no prospect of any further increase in number, in Cornwall; therefore, sometime in September, the ministrations at Lebanon sent orders by Hodgson (who was then there on a visit) for all at Cornwall, who had faith, to move, as soon as they could conveniently, to Niskeuna, and gather their union with the believers and people of God there.

Hodgson, with his family, moved by water, sometime in November. Two or three days after he had left us, a couple of the Elders came again to see us, but I was not at home. This makes seven times that they came upwards of an hundred miles to visit us. They appeared to spare no labour, nor pains, to establish us in the faith.

Shortly after the Elders left here, A. Hendrickson and my wife's sister went to Niskeuna; and a couple, sometime back, having forsaken us by giving up their faith, our number was now reduced so small, we gave up our meetings.

January, 1802. I went to Niskeuna to consult the Elders what I had best to do. I tried to procure a house near the settlement of my brethren, but could not without building; and as my business was much unsettled in the world; and as there was no prospect of my following any business at Niskeuna, that would turn to much account, I had thoughts of removing to, or near Albany; at which place, I had a prospect of a profitable employment. I opened this matter to the Elders, and they agreed it was best for me to remove to that place: observing at the same time, that "I and my family could there attend meeting almost every Sabbath." I accordingly hired a house near a mile northward of the city, at a place called the Colonie; where I could almost every day have the satisfaction of seeing, and (as I hoped) at times, of entertaining my brethren, who would pass, and repass by the house in travelling from Niskeuna to Albany and Lebanon.

I returned to Cornwall; and March 24, 1802, I removed to the aforementioned place.

The remaining believers (except my father) removed to Niskeuna ; but before they did, I had to visit them, and use many persuasions to prevail on them to leave Cornwall ; knowing if they remained behind, they would not be owned in the faith ; neither did I think they would be able to keep their faith.

This summer my father visited the believers at Niskeuna, and staid with them three weeks ; and tarried about the same time at my house ; and then returned to Cornwall. About a year before he died, he attended the Friends' meeting several times ; and in one of them stood up and looked round on the assembly smiling, and by a few signs, signified (as the people generally understood him) either his comfortable state of mind, or unity with that society. He was still a member of it, as the Friends did not disown him. He lived above four years after he became paralytic, and appeared to be resigned to his situation. He died on the 6th of the seventh month, 1805, aged nearly sixty-five years.

Soon after I moved to Albany, being with the Elders at Niskeuna, and speaking concerning the people at Cornwall, one of them said—" Thomas, the cause why the people did not receive the gospel there more than they did, is because you have not been strictly obedient to your faith, and kept in the gift and power of God in preaching to them."

I replied—What ! are you going to throw all the blame, and loss of their souls, on my deficiencies ? I see no propriety in this ; for the Elders were there repeatedly, preaching in public to hundreds, and in private to several ; exhorting and persuading : therefore, I think they may bear at least half the blame ; for, if none were gathered to the gospel in consequence of my not preaching in the gift and power of God, what gift and power did you preach in ? for you never gathered one soul ; at least, not till I first began with them, and brought them on by recommending the people, and persuading them to go and see you, &c. ; except two, who have since renounced the faith. The people at Cornwall, who look upon it all as a delusion, blame me for the whole ; and the believers from that place have said that I was the

first cause of their becoming believers ; and not only at Cornwall, but those who were gathered out of Albany. I was the first who made the stir, for which I had like to have got my head broke by Wm. Carter's wife ; and was severely threatened by her son. Now this assertion appears to me the most unreasonable of any thing I have ever heard you advance. I do not speak as boasting, by no means ; but only to show that if I had no influence, you had less.

(But thus speaking my mind so plainly to the Elders, was not behaving like a good believer ; for such will conclude that whatever the Elders do, or say, must be right ; at least, they will not contradict, and dispute it.)

He replied—" Thomas, we believe if you continue faithful, you may be the means of bringing many more souls to the gospel."

I now attended meeting every Sabbath when I was at home, (with part of my family ; ) and as I wished to spend as much time with them as I could spare, I would generally ride to Niskeuna on Saturdays afternoon. My brethren always appeared glad to see, and free to entertain me, particularly B. Youngs and his family.

I often wished it was so that I could live nearer them, and be more disentangled from the world ; well knowing, that an intercourse with the world, retards the progress of vital religion. I often, when at meeting, spake to the spectators as I had done at Cornwall. But after four or five months, a couple of the inferior Elders, who took the lead of the meeting, spake to me of a gift from their Elders, " who thought it best, as I was so much connected with the world, to refrain from public preaching "

I told them I was of their mind, and had come to a conclusion to speak no more in public, if I could avoid it ; at least until such time as I could become more retired from the world, and composed as to temporal things.

One replied—" It was needless to come to any conclusion about it, one way or the other ; but to conclude and act just as the gift from the Elders was for me. And such as wish to walk in the way of God, and become



“ united to this people, must totally forsake the world, and help to build a partition wall ; which wall we are building between us and the world. And we believe (said he) the day will come, when the people of God will have no dealings with the world,” (i. e. when there are a sufficient number settled and established in different parts of the world, the churches then can supply one another with all necessary articles of consumption.)

By this time there were collected fifty or sixty called young believers ; some of which were gathered into family order, similar to the church, having all things in common, or what is called united interests ; wherein no one is to study his own temporal interest, exclusive of the good of the community. B. Youngs had given to this family an hundred acres of land, and the church assisted them to build a large commodious house ; in the lower part of which, a partition opens and enlarges the meeting room, where the brethren and sisters assemble morning and evening, but at other times they are separate, having separate apartments.

With some of these young believers, there were still operations of shaking, trembling, and shouting ; sometimes I had these operations myself. But these outward operations began to cease, as they were now taught by the Elders to travail out of them into a deeper and more inward work in the soul. One evening, about this time, being at a family meeting, a certain zealous woman turned all the time the others were labouring, and when we kneeled (which we generally did at the conclusion of the meeting) she prayed about fifteen minutes in an unknown tongue. As soon as we arose, she was taken with the operation of turning again, and continued it about fifteen minutes. She then retired to her room, where she was directly taken with the operation again. Being desirous to see every thing that was going forward, I went into her room and took a seat. She continued whirling rapidly above half an hour. I thought she would have died under the operation ; for it appeared to me it was more than human nature could bear. She broke out several times apparently in an unknown tongue,

and spake with great energy and emphasis, using violent gesticulations, and shaking, to appearance, sufficiently to dislocate every bone in her body. It was believed she was then thundering the gospel to disobedient, damned spirits. When the operation was over, she sat down. I then immediately entered into conversation with her, to see if her mind was not affected; but I could perceive no alteration in her. She told me what she uttered in prayer, was on a sheet of paper held before her by an angel. The man of the house told me, that a few evenings before while they were labouring, she spake and said, "he saw an angel labouring by the side of him," and he believed it.

I should not here pass over mentioning that this woman, who had repeatedly such extraordinary gifts, as turning, speaking languages, seeing angels dance, hearing them sing, seeing damned spirits in torment, and some who had and were receiving the gospel, and their torment mitigating; also a variety of other wonderful visions—at last departed from the faith and people. I have often heard the Elders and others in the faith say, "that many of those who have such operations forsake the way of God; of the truth of this, I know a number of instances. I had likewise been told, that these operations were to strengthen believers in the faith, though they are no real profit to the soul in its travail out of sin." I therefore began to doubt the divine reality of them. Is it not, said I, unaccountable or rather inconsistent, if these operations are by the power of God, that most of those who are thus operated on should lose their faith and forsake the way of God. The reply and cause assigned was, "that the work with such is outward; they don't come to an inward work in the soul, and experience the substance of faith." Further, "some must travail out of sin as they have travailed in."

But a believer must not examine for himself the propriety or impropriety of things, nor dive into these and other mysteries and be so inquisitive, if he wishes to retain his faith; for this was a principal cause of my losing mine.

I shall here, according to the order of time, insert a diary written while I felt as therein expressed. I had had similar feelings some years before, and the light that now shone upon my mind did not tend to strengthen my faith wherein it was deficient, viz. that there is no revelation except through the ministrations, or that we can know nothing of God but through the Elders, by obedience to them; which by this time I was sure was their faith. Most of the time in which this was written, I was on a passage from New-York to S. Amboy, and from thence to Albany; and much of the time alone and retired.

## A DIARY,

### *CONTAINING THOUGHTS AND REFLECTIONS ON SEVERAL SERIOUS SUBJECTS.*

1802. September 5th, first day of the week, (at N. York.) Felt my mind much solemnized—read a few chapters of Paul's epistles. In the afternoon took a contemplative walk, and passed by four assembled congregations for worship, and stopped at each in the hearing of preaching long enough to collect each subject. Ah! how much is preached about Jesus Christ, his birth, holy life, miracles, sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension, his divinity, of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and at the same time how little is known, felt, and experienced of the work that Christ came to do. I doubt not but there are many who breathe after holiness; who have good desires, begotten by that spirit which visiteth all. I felt solemn, and my mind drawing to God; and felt love towards all mankind. I returned to the vessel; being alone, I read St. John's gospel—blessed doctrine. My soul longed this afternoon, to experience more and more of what Christ taught. If there is any such thing as the spirit of God, as the love of God operating on the human mind, I have felt it this day. Divine love begins to kindle in my soul: oh! what a blessed thing true religion is. In the evening I went to the Methodist

meeting—I love to hear gospel truths when they come from honest, sincere souls of any sect—no matter to me what their outward profession may be—all who love God are brethren; and all who love God will love one another, and will be kind and tender towards all their fellow-creatures. Ah! if this love was universally to prevail, I am sure it would make a heaven on earth—it would cause us to bear with one another in our ideas and different sentiments—we should be careful to treat those who differ from us with kindness: all hard feelings, all cruelty, all fraud, injustice, and deceit, would be done away. In short, that excellent precept of Christ would be universally practised, “Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them.” After meeting, being alone, I read a few chapters—bowed to God in silent ejaculations. I believed I was a going to be visited again—I began to find him whom I had sought; my soul was filled with gratitude for his goodness and mercy to me a poor creature.

Second day, Sept. 6. I felt that the spirit of the world in transacting business, hurts or silences the life of God in the soul. I hope I may see the day I can live more retired, and retain this heavenly company without interruption. But I feel thankful for what I enjoy, while many I see this day appear to be destitute of the only good. Read a few chapters this evening—bowed in thankfulness to him whom I desire in spirit to serve.

Third and fourth day of the week. I feel continually thankful that I am preserved from sin. There is a possibility of keeping a *conscience void of offence*; but it is only by the assistance of the grace of God. I feel humble and thankful for this grace. My soul sings redeeming love—Oh! the sweet sensations I feel—Is not this heaven?

Fifth day, Sept. 9. I am continually kept in remembrance of that good part which I have chosen, or rather which my Saviour has chosen for me; and which I trust will never be taken from me. Am I then elected to eternal life? I feel electing love, and that for me is all-sufficient. I feel the drawings of the Father—and that to me is satisfactory.



Sixth day. More yet, but tongue cannot tell what! Oh, ye deists! revelation is true—religion is a reality. The light and love of God surrounds me!

Seventh day. I sailed near and had a view of four ships of war; and my mind was almost involuntarily occupied with such reflections as these: When will mankind become wise? When will they cease from their wickedness and folly, and use such things no more in transporting themselves from one part of the world to the other, to destroy those whom Christ came to save? Oh, how contrary war is to the peaceable, loving spirit of Christ! What an incomprehensible distance are millions of souls from God! How lost, how sunk in sin! My soul praises God for his mercy towards me—I want an eternity to praise him, and an eternity I shall have.

First day, or Sabbath, Sept. 12. Left New-York in the morning for Albany. My soul this morning blesses and praises God. Bless for ever, continue to “bless the Lord, Oh my soul;” and all my powers and faculties “magnify his holy name” I am satisfied and happy under a sense of the love of God, and the good spirit having revisited me. Renewedly convinced I am, that all endeavours after holiness, all preaching and teaching, is but little worth, setting aside this divine and heavenly gift. It is as the apostle said, “By grace we are saved.” I feel poor and nothing of myself—I feel humble and altogether dependent. The Lord visited me with a sense of his love a few years ago—I never can forget the revelation of the love of God to my soul at that time.\* O Lord, since thou hast been pleased to revisit me, if it be consistent with thy will and wisdom, continue the same; in thy inexhaustible treasure there is enough for ten thousand worlds. In this state I love and continually worship thee. I live according to thy first ordained purpose, to thy honour and glory. May I be enabled to die daily. “He that loseth his life,” said the lip of truth, “shall find it” Lose what life but a carnal life, a carnal mind, that only delights in sin and in the things of this world—a life and spirit contrary to the gospel? And what

\* See page 13.

shall he find but the life of God in his soul? My soul tastes the sweetness of the heavenly world—I feel as a watered garden. The well of living water springeth up—I drink thereof, and thirst not after the pleasures of sin and things of the world, that never did nor can give true peace. How I find the words of Christ verified: “My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.” “By this shall ye know,” said a beloved apostle, “that ye are the sons of God, by the spirit of God witnessing with your spirit.” Why am I thus favoured, and so many left to delight in vanities, in phantoms of a moment? I know not; I leave it to the wisdom of God, who I hope will bring all to himself to enjoy his divine beatitude in his good time. It is enough for me that I love and praise him. Nay, it is not this I, but that of God in me; that of God draws to God, and it draws me with it. Oh, may I never resist it. Oh the sweetness of divine love. What joys beyond expression am I sensible of! (What an infinitely wide difference there is in being under the influence of, and led by, a good spirit, and being under the influence of, and led by, an evil spirit; one causes peace and consolation, and the other perturbation and remorse.) “If ye love me,” said the divine Saviour, “ye will keep my commandments.” But what love is this? Why, the love of God in the soul, that which I this day feel; and as long as I retain it I shall commit no sin. That which is divine and holy, cannot consent to that which is in direct opposition to holiness. Ah! this love of God that St. John writes about, this life of God in the soul—in it consists all true and living faith, all believing, all prayer that is acceptable and effectual. “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.” “He that believeth in the Son of God, hath the witness in himself.” Now this is not that historical belief in Christ, which the majority in Christendom have; if it is, they are all born of God, at the same time they live in sin; when the same apostle tells us, “He that committeth sin is of the devil; and whomsoever is born of God, doth not commit sin.” Few there are who appear to know what true faith is. It is love, life, and power of God in the soul—and it is

that which gives power and victory over sin. And it is only by the spirit of God in the soul that we believe in God. "He that believeth on me," said Christ, "the works that I do shall he do also." "If a man love me, he will keep my words." What a wide difference there is in understanding all this literally, and knowing it experimentally, or by a divine work in the soul! There is much said about faith by those I profess faith with, but I fear there are not so many who know what true and saving faith is. It is only in the light we can see or have light. I feel Christ with me—I feel that "which passeth all understanding." My soul is filled with love divine; and so long as I have this love I shall keep his commandments.

This day I have felt the power and efficacy of faith. It is sufficient proof to me that I have true and saving faith, when I "love God and keep his commandments" in spirit and practice. The spirit of it is, to "love the Lord my God with all my soul, mind, and strength, and my neighbour," and all my fellow-creatures "as myself." Yea, this blessed experience is proof of itself from whence it comes, and what it is; exclusive of the scripture and every outward testimony, it carries its own evidence with it. He who is totally ignorant of all scripture, and who has never heard a word preached, if he experience what I now feel, his soul will be all alive, he will have a true and living faith in the Great Spirit; or at least he will have the substance of faith; he will feel happy and know it is from above. Oh! blessed experience! If God was thus to pour out his spirit on all souls, what a heaven there would be on earth! This would be a millennium indeed! Soon would all wars cease—soon would the words of the prophet respecting swords and spears be fulfilled. No nation or people would learn war, but all would learn peace. Then the language of every heart would be, "Peace on earth and good will towards men." O Lord, from the overflowing of my heart I cry, hasten the day: O heavenly Father, pour out of thy spirit on the children of men, that they may all know and love thee, as my soul now loveth. But

“thy will be done”—thy time is the best time. This is the power I must put my dependence in—this is that alone that will redeem.

But I fear, yea I feel confident, that there are many of my brethren, whose faith is too much in man, whose faith is in the Elders; that is, they believe the Elders have the revelation of God, and that obedience to them in an outward order will answer every purpose, and so look no further; i. e. they don't seek to feel the revelation or power of God in their own hearts. What would it signify, if an angel from heaven was to come to me with divine revelation, and only speak to my outward ears? If there was no power nor virtue attended the word spoken, it would be of little profit. And if a minister or Elder preaches to me in the same manner, it is but an outward testimony; like unto the “Letter” which “killeth, but it is the spirit which giveth life.” Words without the spirit, are but like unto a body without life. “It is,” said Christ, “the spirit that quickeneth; the words I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.” Words or teaching, without this, profiteth nothing. And even if by my natural powers and efforts, I was obedient to an outward testimony or teaching, and kept from actual sin, it would be all only the labour and work of the creature—I would still be out of the covenant of grace. It is by grace I must work—it is by grace I am saved. And this grace, in a measure, is in all men. It is within the evil lies—and where the evil is, the remedy must be made use of, and applied. If one preaches to me professing to have the revelation of God, I should have some evidence of his being sent, either internal or external; if I have no evidence, then my faith is in the creature. Christ came on earth with the word and revelation of God to man, and he showed his credentials; he repeatedly gave proof not only by the miracles he wrought, but his word reached to the heart; and blessed be God it has reached mine—and this is the best of all evidence. Fully convinced I am, that the only way to arrive at true and saving knowledge of God, is by the revelation of his spirit to each soul. I do firmly believe, there is no other satisfactory evidence of my acceptance



with God, and that my sins are forgiven, but by his spirit; this is the testimony of St. John. What I have felt of the love of God, the heavenly movings of the good spirit on my heart, endowing me with power over all evil in thought, word, and deed, as I have experienced the week past, and especially this day, is a greater evidence to me of acceptance with God, than the testimony of all external things that can be mentioned. And so long as I feel this inward peace, and love to God and holiness, if all the deists on earth were to tell me, It is all imagination and enthusiasm, I could not doubt its divine reality. But if they call this enthusiasm, *I hope to live and die an enthusiast*; for I enjoy more real happiness in one hour under the influence of it, than I ever did without it. And if I could be certain of living as long as I have, and that in perfect health, and I could have my choice either to have all my heart's desires of this world, and enjoy all the pleasures it could give—or to live in abject poverty, and enjoy this heavenly peace, I would not hesitate a moment in choosing the latter, in preference to the former. I believe what I write is the truth; I am sure it is scripture. “A day in thy courts is better than a thousand” elsewhere. “I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness”—Ps. lxxxiv. 10. “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his spirit”—1 Cor. ii. 9, 10. “If our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God”—1 John xxx. 20. “There is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus”—Rom. viii 1. Blessed be God I feel none.

O, religion is a blessed thing! I mean a sense of the love of God. Deism is diametrically opposite. It is what I have been much troubled with, before I experienced what I now enjoy; after which I had not a doubt remaining of the truth of Christianity in its purity; and under my present feeling of the love and goodness of God, it is impossible to doubt.

Further consideration this afternoon on internal light and obedience.

All mankind who live in sin, are under condemnation according to the light they have; all have a talent, or talents, to improve. What is this light but a seed of divine grace in the heart, "a manifestation of the spirit given to every man to profit withal?" Christ is "the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." This light is called by various names, all meaning one and the same—as monitor, reprover, talent, light, seed, word, gift, grace, and good spirit; and to which many of the thoughtful and serious part of mankind of all nations and sects, have borne testimony, either to the convicting, convincing, or efficacious power of it. I have a preacher every hour of my life wherever I am, either to my condemnation or consolation. The moment I have a thought of doing evil, that moment I feel within me, as plain as language can express, Do not do it. Or if I am thoughtlessly running into evil, I feel a check, and am instantly reminded. If I persevere on against its reproofs, I am brought under disagreeable feelings, and according to the enormity of the evil, I feel remorse and distress of mind. If I am obedient to its reproofs, I feel inward peace and serenity. If I, from time to time, continue obedient, and refrain from every thing it makes known to be evil, the light increases, from a spark it kindles into a flame; and glory to God, my soul is all on fire! "My heart," said David, "was hot within me; while I was musing, the fire burned." O may this heavenly flame, this heavenly fire never be extinguished! I believe it will eternally increase! Now by yielding obedience to this (which is called, and in the beginning is but as a) seed of divine grace sown in the heart, it will lead from all sin and bring salvation.—"The grace of God," said the apostle, "that bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men." This is the greatest and most blessed gift of God ever given to man; this is that which distinguisheth him from, and raiseth him above the brute creation. This is the true, the re-

al, infallible revelation of God. O may I never more quench the spirit, never more act contrary to its warning and reproofs, but live in continual obedience.

This evening I thankfully recollected the time when I was powerfully convicted for sin, about eighteen years ago,\* sailing then near where I am now. I being then alone, (it is good to be alone and retired sometimes) I began to seriously consider of my awful state and condition; living in sin and wickedness as I had done, conviction soon took hold of me. I was brought under as great distress of mind and penitential sorrow, I think as I could then bear. I lay on the deck, rolling and clinching my hands together, and crying in a flood of tears, Lord have mercy on me—forgive and preserve me for the time to come, &c. My grief and compunction for sin continued about a couple of hours, when I felt some hope and faith arise in my heart, and felt that peace of mind I never did before. From that time began my reformation; I forsook those practices I was most addicted to, as frolicking, drunkenness, and swearing. And what caused all this? What was it that thus visited me, and gave me a sight of my condition and of the odiousness of sin, but that light or good spirit of which I have written? My soul bows in humbleness and thankfulness to God for all his mercies to me, once a poor sinner. He visited me when I was in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. O may I be more watchful and faithful for the time to come than I have been! O may I for ever love and praise him. If so small a drop of the love of God, as I now feel, makes my soul so happy, what must the happiness of those be, who are totally cleansed from all sin, and have launched into the ocean? Ah! truly, “there is a river the streams whereof make glad the city of God”—Ps xlv. 4. What now are all the pleasures, honours, and glories of this world to me? Would all that this world could give, be any equivalent to the loss of this precious jewel? I pity the souls who are lost from God—who are taking their delight in the shadows of a moment—who think nor care any thing about

their poor immortal souls—who are feeding and adorning their mortal bodies, and letting that precious jewel, the soul, rust and starve. O how short is life, how certain is death and eternity! In a little time we must bid an eternal adieu to all earthly things, and enter a naked spirit into the world of spirits! O my God, how solemn the thought! How terrible to the wicked! I feel my soul drawn out in love to all mankind!

I heartily wish that all my relatives, friends, and acquaintance, may experience with me, the redeeming love of Emmanuel; may become companions with me in this peace and joy. Then when our earthly toils and trials are ended, we shall become companions in a happy world of spirits. Oh! remember that time here is short—that we must all die—be sincere souls—forsake all evil—live as for eternity—prepare for a world to which we are all hastening, and God will favour you with a sense of his love; then you will know that it is the greatest of all favours.

My soul this evening, is on the wings of love—I soar above all terrestrial things. “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it ever entered into the heart of a man,” who has never experienced this, to form the least conception of the love of God I now enjoy. Oh! ye christians, what do ye lose by living beneath your privilege? living in a luke-warm death-like state. Remember that ye are not truly christians, unless you have Christ in your hearts. Praise the Lord, O my soul, from this time for ever; and all within me magnify his holy name. Twelve o’clock this night, bowed in humility and heart felt gratitude to God, my father and preserver; and retired to bodily rest. I say bodily rest, because the soul in this state need none. It is never weary nor tired, but wants an eternity to praise him. What a blessed Sabbath I have had. It is something like the eternal Sabbath. Yea, assuredly, I have had a foretaste of heavenly joys. I have feasted on angels’ food.

All that I have written, I have experienced in silence and retirement. My men wonder why I am so still, and



do not talk more. They little know my blessed company and communion; and it would be vain to talk to them of that which they cannot comprehend.

Second day, Sept. 13 I felt a calmness, and peace of mind all the day; and most of the time my soul was delightfully engaged in secret prayer. Oh! who that knows the value of prayer, will neglect it? Not a dry, lifeless prayer of the head, or the tongue; but of the heart.

I had ardent desires this evening for the continuation of what I have enjoyed. I had rather lie in a dungeon, loaded with chains, and have it, than dwell in a palace without it. But I can say, the will of the Lord be done. I should be resigned to his will and wisdom, in all things; in death as well as in life.

Third day. The night past; and forepart of this day, I experienced another state, wherein I was clearly taught that I must be willing, and rejoice in suffering with, and for Christ, as well as to reign with him. Or, in order to reign with Christ, I must suffer with him: and that I must love the cross while in the body, in order to obtain the crown.

While experiencing this suffering state, I did not think of one passage of scripture, nor receive a mitigation of it from any quarter; but after, I could not help admiring its agreement with the apostolic doctrine. See Rom. viii. 17, 18. 2 Tim. ii. 12. 2 Cor. i. 5. Phillip iii. 10. 1 Peter iv. 13. Many are very desirous of reigning with Christ, and rejoicing in his love; which, to be sure, is a heavenly and desirable state; but few are willing to suffer with him, and bear his cross. These things cannot be truly understood, but by entering into, and feeling the work; and even this is a work of peace, and in which I have found his grace sufficient for me, and his strength made perfect in my weakness—(2 Cor. xii. 9.)

Fourth day. I spent much of the time in retirement and silence, waiting on God; and felt my soul much drawn out in secret prayer, that God would more and more discover to me the evil of my heart, and endue me with power to crucify the same. It is in the heart we want God, and there we must find him to its cleans-

ing and comfort ; and blessed be God, there we may find him. Oh ! my heavenly comforter ! thou hast ever been near me, and I have ran hither and thither, seeking thee ; and all for want of understanding these words of thy gospel : “ The kingdom of God cometh not with observation ; neither shall they say, lo here, or lo there ; for behold the kingdom of God is within you.”

Fully convinced I am, that there is no real, and permanent strength to be received from, -or through any mortal on earth. Paul may plant, Apollos may water ; but it is God that giveth the increase, life, light, and power. May I ever have a single eye to God alone. From this time forward, I renounce all dependance on all beneath the unchangeable God : all that is inferior to this inward divine principle ; to which I believe, by a close and strict attention, watchfulness, prayer, and obedience, I may work, or it will work that work in me, and I live that life which will be acceptable to God. I believe what I have written is the truth ; it is what I have seen and felt in the light that has shone on me, and love which has covered my mind.

Two or three months after I had written this account, I read it one evening to a number of my brethren ; to which, one of them replied—“ I believe you were favored with an extraordinary gift of God.” I said—According to the faith, all good comes through the ministration ; then how came this ?

He answered—“ By means of, and through the ministration ” I replied—The Elders, to my knowledge, never administered any thing like it ; if they had, I should have had that faith in them that you have ; but I have not the least shadow of reason to believe as you do. I experienced the same before ever I saw them ; but in a greater degree. For three days (in May, 1796) my soul was one continual song of gratitude and praise to God ; and I felt no more of an inclination to sin, than to put my hands into the fire. But it is not in the power of language to describe what I felt : in short, it was part of the time extatic. I was in as much of a heaven as I could contain, and live in the body. Now I have no more reason to believe, that this last blessed experience

was a gift of God through the ministrations, than the former. And if this I have last mentioned, were a gift of God (which I am sure it was, and it accords with the experiences of all good men in every age of the world) then it is clear there is a revelation of God one side of the ministrations; and how can you acknowledge, or believe this account that I have read, to be a gift of God, when, under the influence of which, I write against the very foundation of your faith? i. e. respecting the ministrations; and I believe if the Elders, or those who have a thorough understanding of the faith, were to read this diary, they would not own it in the manner you do; for I conceive they do not believe in this which is called christian experience, to be in reality the gift of God; or at least, they do not believe that it is of any real advantage to the soul in its travail out of sin. It certainly has a tendency to hinder increasing in your faith; as it gives that soul satisfying evidence that nothing ever did, or can give, that can be mentioned or conceived. And as an experience some years since, that I have just mentioned, prevented me from embracing deism, so I have thought this last will prevent me from fully embracing Shakerism. The former, I verily believe, was in mercy given me, to see and feel the truth of the christian religion in opposition to deism; which, on account of the conduct of professing christians, I was about that time settling into. And I have thought I was favoured with the latter, or a revivification, to let me see the truth of revelation one side of the ministrations.

We had considerable conversation respecting the ministrations doctrine. I told them at last, if the Elders were to tell me they had a special gift for me to go to Albany and walk across the North River on the water, I would go, and exercise all the faith I possibly could; and if I could not walk on the water, I would walk in, until I could not touch bottom; I would then turn about and come out, and conclude there was no gift of God in it.

The one who spake before, a zealous believer, (and who has since stood as leader) said—"I would do more." I asked him what more. He answered—"I would

“ walk in as you have said, and if I did not rise I would swim ; and if I could not swim across, I would drown before I would come back against the gift of God.”

I replied—I think I went full far enough in the gift ; but you have gone beyond all bounds of reason.

A short time after, I had conversation with our Elder brother S. Wells, concerning the beforementioned experience. After controverting sometime, he against the divine reality, or beneficial effects of it, and for it, he told me at last, there was no salvation in this experience ; at most, it was but as a traveller, stopping at an inn to take refreshment ; at which time, he did not travel one step. Shortly after, he came to my house, and he conversed with me about two hours on the inconsistency of my professing to be united to the people of God, and at the same time, united to the world ; and on my being in partnership (in a certain branch of business) with a man of the world. To which, the substance of my reply, was, that it was necessary in order to be able to pay some debts I owed, and to support the character of an honest man ; and if I moved to Niskeuna, or near the church, I could not see any thing I could do, that would turn to much account.

Upon religious subjects, he endeavoured to convince me of the propriety and necessity of faith in, and obedience to the Elders, as the only way to obtain salvation from sin. And I argued an obedience to the written gospel, and the light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world. He advised me, if I could not see, and believe with the people, not to own them. To which, I replied—I wish to be more satisfied respecting them and their faith.

A few days after, I wrote him a letter on “ a measure of the manifestation of the spirit which is given to every man to profit withal”—(Rom. xii 7.) He afterwards told me what I had written was not his faith ; and that if I wished to stand among the people of God, I must get a different faith from what I had.

It was repeatedly said, one to another—“ Thomas has not got a right line, or manner of faith.” And when they mentioned these things to me, I told them, I had



the same principal faith, I had at first : I had not altered, or changed ; and the faith I at first heard preached by the Elders and others, " That the rule for man to walk by, was that of God, manifested in man ; and by that light which enlighteneth every man."

But now as the real faith of the church was preached in plain terms ; and what we must come to, and abide by ; and as a new scene began to be opened, by which I became tried and wounded in my faith, I shall therefore close the first part of this work, and leave the reader to compare it with the second, and judge for himself.

END OF PART FIRST.

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AN

ACCOUNT, &c.

PART II.

*A cautious inquiry and examination into the truth and propriety of the Doctrines and Practice of the people called Shakers, together with the substance of several discourses with the Elders and others concerning their Faith and mode of Government; with the author's trials and exercises of mind, until he left them.*

I HAVE observed in the first part of this work, it was on account of the people called Shakers professing to be in the millennium, and exhibiting the fruits of their faith, by appearing to live together in love and union, that induced me to unite with them, and become a member of their society, wishing to prove whether they were the people they professed to be or not. I shall now proceed to state how, for the first time, my faith became hurt, respecting the revelation of the will of God to us through the Elders. I may first observe, that though many reports about these people, that were in circulation when I joined them, I soon found to be false; nevertheless, by this time, (latter part of 1803) I found some were true. One in particular, which I am sorry to have cause to mention, and which I would pass over, if by so doing, I could do justice to the work I have undertaken; which is to give an impartial account—neither intentionally to withhold or add any thing, for or against; but to adhere closely to my motto, “Not dare to tell a falsehood, or leave a truth untold.”

The circumstance I am about to relate, is respecting the practice among these people, formerly, of dancing naked; (the reader may recollect how this matter was denied when I questioned the old believers and Elders concerning the truth thereof;) which I now found to be true. Some time the latter part of this year, being in company with a kind friend, Derick Veeder, a young believer, I asked him if he knew of there having been such conduct among the people in first Mother's day.

He replied—"Yea, I knew it some time ago; and I have been somewhat tried in my mind respecting it; because the Elders at first denied it, when they knew it was the truth, and had danced naked themselves."

I told him, that some time after I opened my mind, I inquired of the old believers and Elders about said conduct, and they had denied it to me. I asked him how he got along with his faith in the Elders after such falsifications?

He replied—"I will talk to them about it." A short time after I saw him again, he told me "he had done so, and they had satisfied him respecting it."

I asked him how?

He replied—"They told me every soul must look to himself, and attend to his own wrongs; and whoever had denied the truth of such conduct, (or spoken in any other respect false) must answer for it themselves; and such would have to confess it." Further they said, that "I should not let that, or the failings or wrongs of others, in any respect hurt my faith."

I replied, That come-off will not do for me, as the Elders place themselves as leaders, and declare that the revelation of God must come through them to us; and according to their own doctrine, that pure revelation don't come through, nor dwell in, an impure, false vessel: and as I have found they have falsified their word in one thing, it is likely they have, or may, in another. Therefore, I think it will be wisdom in me now to examine for myself more particularly than I have done; and also to take care I am not deceived by others; and I intend to open this matter to the Elders the first opportunity.

Soon after, I was with Elder John Meacham, who was now at Niskeuna. After some conversation on indifferent matters, he said :

“ Thomas, how can you expect to hold any relation to the people of God, in a travail, and be united to the world in trade.”

We had considerable conversation on divers matters. He preached to me resignation to the gift, and obedience to what I was taught by my Elders. I told him, at last, I desired to open a matter wherein my faith was hurt, and wherein I thought I had reason to be dissatisfied ; and that is, said I, respecting Elder Hezekiah and also several of the old believers having denied that they had ever danced naked. I told him how I had questioned Elder Hezekiah, (who was now at Lebanon) he being present at the time, concerning the truth or fallacy of said conduct, and the answer he gave me. Now, said I, Elder John, I know you have all danced naked, men and women together. When we find a man has told an untruth in his dealings, we cannot place that confidence in him afterwards, which we should have done, had we found him to be a man of truth ; how much less in matters relating to our salvation. Therefore, how can you then expect me to have that faith in the Elders and obedience that is required. I tell you, my kind friend, before I can, this matter must be cleared up, if there is a possibility of doing it.

He replied—“ Thomas, you are mistaken. Elder H. never told you so ; if he did, he told you an untruth ; and I do not know what I should think of him—I could not have fellowship with him in it, or have any union with him.”

I said, I will admit of no mistake—I am certain he answered me as I have stated he did ; to which I could be qualified, if I was going to leave the world ; and it has been not only him, but several old believers, who have denied that they ever danced naked. Mary Hocknell, in particular, denied it entirely, in the presence and hearing of D Wood and widow Bennet, (old believers) R. Hodgson and myself. Now, I know they have all danced naked ; and this was denied when I first endeavoured to



gain information of the rise, faith, and practice of the church. Don't deny it, Elder John; it is a well known fact, that that conduct was hidden from us and denied: and the world, particularly backsliders, were called liars, for fear it would hinder the young believers from coming forward in the faith. Further, it is not only my assertion, but I can prove it by a number of believers.

He replied—"We don't wish any sending and proving about it. It will be best for you and Elder Hezekiah to be face to face."

I said, that is what I desire. Now I would not have you to understand me, that my faith is hurt by the apparent impropriety of such conduct; as I can dispense therewith, as it was done in the infancy of the church, and under the lead of first Mother; but what hurts my faith is, discovering positive falsehood in those who make so great a profession of truth.

He said—"If Elder Hezekiah, or any of the old believers, have said or done wrong, they will have to answer for their wrongs themselves. Therefore, you should not let wrongs and failings in others hurt your faith; but confess and forsake your own wrongs, and labour for yourself, (as every one should do) to become an honest, upright, holy man, and not look at the failings of others, which will be no food to your soul."

I replied—What deficiencies and wrongs I see in the young believers, or my equals in the faith, or if any of them had told me falsehood, I should think nothing of it touching the faith; but the ministrations of Elders preach, and not only so, but profess truth, honesty, purity, and holiness; as Elder H. publicly declared at Cornwall, that he had "done nothing in the day or night, in the light or in darkness, that he would be ashamed to be seen doing by God, men, or angels." You likewise profess and testify, that it is only by obedience to the counsel of our Elders, that we can obtain salvation; and that there is no other revelation of the Divine will, but by this medium; and we are taught to follow you as you follow Christ—and to look up to you, as standing in Christ's stead for example.

I told him my faith was likewise tried in another point; which was, respecting sins confessed being told by the Elders to others; when he knew I had often heard them say, "that they went no further; what was opened to them they did not divulge, but, if possible, buried all in oblivion" But now, said I, I know to the contrary; and that they were not only carried upwards through the line of the ministration, but likewise some things downwards, among young believers. In short, I found that I had not been rightly informed respecting several things; and in confessing sins, I considered the Elders had violated their promise.

We had two or three hours of conversation (it being one Sabbath afternoon) on several subjects; but I must study brevity, and pass over many things that were done and said.

1803. In a few months after this conference, (some time in February) I was at Lebanon; and the first conference I had was with Elder Hezekiah, respecting my charge of falsehood. I stated the question I put to him, and the cause why, exactly as heretofore related.\* Now, said I, Elder Hezekiah, I know the old believers, or church brethren and sisters, have danced naked repeatedly, under an idea, or with intention, to mortify the fleshly nature, and you have danced so with them.

He replied—"Yea, once; and I did not tell you there never had been such conduct; but that I did not know of nor believe there was any such conduct now."

I said, it would have been needless to ask such a question as that answer would have implied; because I knew there was no such conduct among the people now—and I had not heard any one charging the people with it in the present day. The question I asked was in the past tense, Have the people or any of them ever, &c.; and the way you now state it, would have been no answer to the question I asked. The truth is, Elder Hezekiah, thou didst deny there ever having been such conduct, as several of the old believers did, for fear it would hurt

\* See page 108.

our faith. He did not contradict me the second time, neither did he appear forward to controvert the point farther with me—but said :

“ Since I have been called to be an Elder and minister I have been sorry I ever saw such conduct among the people ; for I have been often asked the question by young believers, and people of the world ; and often I have known not what answer to give, as it would not do to tell them we had danced naked, admitting it to have been a real gift of God ; it would have been so out of their sight, they could not see it nor receive it as such. Some times when I have evaded such questions, I have been asked more particularly and I have often been exceedingly tried.”

I replied—You did not appear to be tried when I asked you the question very pointedly, but answered me very readily ; and I never shall believe you did right. But I do not want to say any thing more now to hurt thy feelings about it. And I can make some allowance, as I expect thou and others meant good, viz. in consequence of a concern for my faith. Therefore, I’ll drop it, that a door may be opened to proceed on other subjects, perhaps of more consequence.

But I was not fully satisfied\* nor reconciled, and began to think I had received false information respecting several other matters besides what I have mentioned ; therefore I could not place that confidence in them which they desired, and as I have heretofore intimated, if I discovered any conduct contrary to what they professed,† I should more doubt the truth of some points of their faith, particularly that of obedience to the ministration, and their being in a superior dispensation. I also con-

\* How could I be satisfied when Elder John said, he could have no union with Elder Hezekiah in his denying the truth of such conduct—then how could I have union with him and several others I have mentioned ? Indeed how could I have union with Elder John, when I verily believed he knew that Elder Hezekiah had denied it ? I began to think of Romish pious frauds.

† See page 29, fourth line.

sidered, that according to their own criterion, I must "judge of a tree by its fruit; a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit."

About this time I began to look more closely and examine for myself, whether what they advanced was the truth or not; and not take for granted every thing they asserted for truth, without examination.\*

I tarried at Lebanon this time three days; and most of the time each day the Elders spent with me, labouring to convince and establish me in the foundation, faith, and doctrine of the church. The substance of which conversations I think best to give, as their faith and doctrines were by this time plainly opened; and I shall likewise bring in occasionally the substance conversed, (on those subjects here treated) with a few others in the faith at different times, mostly preceding. Here will be seen the reasons they advance in support of their faith, with my objections against those points wherein I could not believe as they did: and in giving their reasons for their faith, I think it is a fair way of representing it; and by giving my arguments against those points controverted, their faith and doctrines becomes more clearly understood.

Next day I met with the Elders in a retired room, set apart particularly to converse in, or in which they generally laboured with the believers; Elder John first spake and said:

"Thomas, it is now some years since you first heard the gospel, and received a measure of faith; and those who received faith about the time you did, by their obedience, have travailed far before you; while, we are sorry to say, you are tarrying behind. It is time you now come to a final conclusion, whether to forsake the world or not; and take up your cross, and become obedient to the gospel; give up, and renounce

\* "We are justly chargeable with criminal sloth and misimprovement of the talents, with which our Creator has intrusted us, if we take all things for granted which others assert, and believe and practise all things which they dictate, without due examination."



“ your own way, will, and wisdom, and become as a  
 “ child, and believe, receive, and go forth in obedience  
 “ to what you are taught.”

Elder Hezekiah observed—“ Christ says we must ‘ be-  
 “ come as children, for of such is the kingdom of God.’  
 “ You must become humble and willing to be taught by  
 “ a child. We are but children in the world’s wisdom  
 “ and learning, to what you are ; but you must become  
 “ humble, and willing to count all but as dross and  
 “ dung, that you may win Christ. If you were to take  
 “ hold, and really come into the work of the gospel of  
 “ the second coming of Christ, you might be of great  
 “ service in helping others, and might be the means of  
 “ gathering many souls in the way of God ; but other-  
 “ wise, those abilities and talents, which you have, will  
 “ be buried and lost, and be of no service to yourself nor  
 “ others. As Elder John has said, you must become  
 “ simple as a child, and conclude you know nothing as  
 “ you should know, and believe and receive what you  
 “ are taught.

“ When I first received the gospel, I found, as I was  
 “ obedient to my Elders, that I knew nothing right be-  
 “ fore ; and as I was obedient to what I was taught, I  
 “ received the gifts and power of God. I now know, as  
 “ we all do, who have been obedient, that this is the only  
 “ way of life and salvation ; and you never will come into  
 “ this work of God, until you renounce a caviling spirit ;  
 “ and looking for faults, and catching at things that  
 “ don’t concern you. You must look at your own faults,  
 “ and weed your own garden, as every soul must an-  
 “ swer for their own sins. No longer now. the fathers  
 “ have eaten four grapes, and the children’s teeth are  
 “ set on edge. Admitting you were to see your Elders  
 “ do, or speak wrong, you should not judge, or find  
 “ fault with them ; nor have hard feelings towards  
 “ them, on that account ; as you cannot help them out  
 “ of their wrong. Chastisement and counsel would come  
 “ contrary to the order of God : you could not reach  
 “ us. If we were to do wrong, we must be brought out  
 “ by those above us, not by those below us i. e. by our  
 “ Elders ; we would have to confess to them, and bear

“ their chastisement : and we have to travail in obedi-  
 “ ence to what they teach us ; as we have our Elders,  
 “ and are taught by them, as you and other young be-  
 “ lievers are by us ; and in our going forth in obedience  
 “ to what they teach us, we receive from them the gifts  
 “ of God, and become able to administer to others, as  
 “ they are able to receive. I only mention these things  
 “ to show the order of God in his church. God is now  
 “ revealed and manifested in the second coming of  
 “ Christ, the final and last display of God’s grace to a  
 “ lost world. Not by immediate revelation to each soul ;  
 “ but by, and through his ministers, whom he hath ap-  
 “ pointed ; and we find that under every dispensation of  
 “ God’s grace to a lost world, he has always made use  
 “ of instruments by patriarchs and prophets ; and so  
 “ long as people were obedient to the mind and will of  
 “ God manifested through, and by them, prosperity and  
 “ a blessing attended them ; but when they were disobe-  
 “ dient, they became an easy prey to their enemies.—  
 “ Witness the consequence of their disobedience at vari-  
 “ ous times to Moses. Now we desire nothing of you,  
 “ but your salvation ; and that you may become a man  
 “ of God in the gospel, and come forward in the gift  
 “ and order of God ; and then you will be able to help  
 “ those who come after you, and to judge both in your-  
 “ self and others, what is wrong and right.”

I replied—As to forsaking the world, or more prop-  
 erly the evil that is in the world, and taking up my cross  
 against all sin, and becoming obedient to the gospel, as  
 Elder John has said, I agree ; and have come to a final  
 resolution some time ago, according to the strength and  
 grace afforded. But respecting the gospel, obedience  
 thereto, and the way I am to receive power, we may not  
 agree, as I clearly perceive what is required ; and that  
 is, an implicit faith in my Elders, non-resistance, and  
 passive obedience. I presume you will allow that I have  
 cause, and should be exceeding cautious to whom I re-  
 sign myself up, and by whom I suffer myself to be led,  
 knowing how full the world has been of confident pre-  
 tenders to revelation ; and likewise, how many ecclesi-  
 astical leaders there have been, and how mankind have

been deceived and imposed upon by many of them; though I do not speak this as if I believed that it is your intention to impose on, or deceive any one. There is a possibility of your being mistaken, and deceived in some things yourselves respecting your faith, as many other confident professors of revelation have been before you. Therefore, it is actually necessary that I should have good and sufficient evidence that you are sent of God, before I can, with any manner of propriety, resign myself, body and spirit, I mean all I have and possess, to you. You say "proof will come in consequence of obedience;" but I must have faith first, before I can go forth in obedience with any heart. You say that "faith is the gift of God." Now here is an essential, immediate revelation, entirely on one side of the ministration, unless you administer the gift of faith; if you could, all would be settled at once; the controversy would be decided; but you have not power to do it; if you had, many would have faith, and would begin to conclude the millennium was commenced sure enough.

Elder Hezekiah said—"Thomas, you say you want  
 " proof, and how am I to know? How is any creature  
 " to know according to your faith, the truth of the christ-  
 " tian religion, until he prove it by experiencing the  
 " power and virtue of it? How is any one to know  
 " there is any efficacy in that which convicteth for sins?  
 " which you call the seed of divine grace in all men, which  
 " you believe will work the salvation of all, as creatures  
 " are obedient to it. Now how can any one know what  
 " it will do for them, but by obedience to its first con-  
 " victions for sin. You may say, as you are always  
 " ready to give an answer and raise objections, that it is  
 " proof of itself, or that it carries its own proof with it;  
 " and it is likely you will tell what it has done for thou-  
 " sands of men who have been obedient to it, turning  
 " them from sinners to saints, as you believe they were.  
 " Now we say it is by obedience to what you are taught  
 " by your Elders, that you are to know whether they  
 " teach you by the gift of God, or not. But first you  
 " want proof that we have the gift or revelation of God.  
 " You have already had proof in consequence of your

" receiving a measure of faith ; and by what little you  
 " have been obedient, you have felt a measure of the  
 " power and gift of God. Christ has left a rule for  
 " you and all to know who he sends and who not ; i. e.  
 " *By their fruits ye shall, or may know them : and by this*  
 " *shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one*  
 " *another.*

" Now you have been repeatedly from one family to  
 " another, and you have seen such good fruits, such love  
 " and union, as you never saw before ; which you have  
 " often acknowledged. A bad tree cannot bring forth  
 " good fruit ; and if the ministration were false and de-  
 " ceivers, or deceived themselves, how could it be possi-  
 " ble that their ministry should be attended with such  
 " good effects ? Here are thousands of living witnesses  
 " in this day, who have obtained that salvation from sin,  
 " and borne that fruit that none ever did before, as a  
 " body of people. You will also grant, that the church  
 " of Christ should be all as one, of one heart, and one  
 " mind ; well, they are so. I suppose you have read  
 " an account of all the denominations of people on  
 " earth. You appear to be acquainted with the world ;  
 " then search it all over, look abroad, and examine all  
 " who profess religion, and you cannot find a people, as  
 " a body, who take up such a cross against the world,  
 " the flesh, and the devil, and all sin, as these people do ;  
 " and who live in such harmony, love, peace, and union.  
 " Likewise, behold their outward order, decency, and  
 " cleanliness on their farms, in their houses, manufacto-  
 " ries, and in every respect that can be mentioned ; and  
 " show, if you can, any thing on earth to equal it. You  
 " may find private families who live in a good degree  
 " of love and order ; but I speak of so large a society of  
 " people. The church is not brought forward in this  
 " way, by wise men in this world's wisdom ; but un-  
 " learned, simple men, like the fishermen and apostles of  
 " old. God has not chosen the wise of this world, but  
 " such as I have mentioned, to confound the wisdom of  
 " the world, and the worldly wise ; and I have an in-  
 " stance of it before me.



“ You are confounded when you think on these things,  
 “ and are not able to assign a satisfactory cause how all  
 “ this can be, when you throw away a revelation, and  
 “ hand of God in it. Also, the order of the church in  
 “ the present day, and the victory it has obtained over  
 “ all sin, is a living proof that first Mother and Elders  
 “ had the revelation of God ; for is it at all likely that  
 “ such a people, and order, would ever have arose from  
 “ the work they began, unless they had had God on  
 “ their side ? Christ has told you, and I tell you, that  
 “ *an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit.* The people of  
 “ the world, what little they know of us, say *The Shakers*  
 “ *are a sober, honest, industrious people ;* and this is saying  
 “ a great deal. These words contain much more than  
 “ they are aware of. But you know a thousand times  
 “ more about the people of God, than the world does ;  
 “ and unless you are obedient, that knowledge will be  
 “ your condemnation. You want proof. You have  
 “ proof upon proof, and you will be left without excuse.

“ Now I have spoken principally of the church, or  
 “ those who have travailed many years, and are brought  
 “ into the order of the gospel. But only look at the  
 “ young believers in Niskeuna (now near an hundred)  
 “ and compare them with what they were a few years  
 “ ago, or before they received the gospel. Several of  
 “ them you then knew, living in sin, following the van-  
 “ ity and evil customs of the world. How do they live  
 “ now ? You know, and I need not tell you. They  
 “ have become thus changed by their obedience, and by  
 “ what they have been taught ; which was, to take up  
 “ their daily cross against all sin ; to live an upright,  
 “ just, and holy life ; to love and fear God ; and live in  
 “ love and union one with another. If you had ever  
 “ heard the Elders preach, teach, or give any counsel  
 “ that was evil, or appeared to have that tendency, then  
 “ you might have some reason to doubt, and dispute  
 “ their having the gift of God ; but I cannot see with  
 “ what propriety you can before.

“ Now you mentioned in the latter part of your last  
 “ discourse, that faith is the gift of God, as we believe.  
 “ *No man can come unto me (said Christ) unless the Father*

“ *draw him.* We do not deny immediate revelation, so far as of the convicting power of God; but believe the spirit of God is in the world at work with many souls, preparing their minds for the reception of the gospel, as God can only be known in Zion to their complete salvation. We believe all are more or less convicted of sin, as Paul was when driving from Jerusalem to Damascus, to persecute the saints. He was powerfully convicted; so that he cried out, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do.* He was then directed to a man of God who would tell him what he should do.— (Acts vii. 6.)

“ Now if mankind felt no conviction for sin, and God had not raised up witnesses, more or less, in every age of the world, to testify against it, mankind would have become so lost and sunk in a state of sin and wickedness, that this world would have been turned into, or become a complete hell. But the mercy of God has made use of these, and other means, to bind, and restrain poor, fallen, depraved man, until the fullness of time should come for their redemption. For there is nothing in man one side of the order and gift of God in Zion, that will finally redeem and save him from all sin. For it is only in Zion that complete redemption can be obtained: therefore cries the Psalmist— *Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion.*— The prophet also says—*From Zion shall go forth the law; and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.* We read that many will inquire the way to Zion, saying— *Come let us go up to Zion.* And the Lord says *he will place salvation in Zion.* And *the Lord is great in Zion; whose fire against sin is in Zion. The Lord dwelleth in Zion. God is known in the palaces of Zion.* Now what is Zion but the church of God? and why so much said about Zion, as asking the way going up; the Lord great in Zion, if all mankind have Zion and the word of God in their own hearts? Why so many outward witnesses sent of God to preach the way of life and salvation; to open the blind eyes; to bring people out of darkness into light? If all mankind have a light within them sufficient, why does the apostle speak in this

manner?—*How shall they believe in him of whom they have  
 not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?  
 And how shall they preach except they be sent? So that faith  
 cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* Not  
 the inward word it is clear; but by the outward word  
 preached. I ask again, why does the apostles say so  
 much about obedience, and being taught by them, if  
 there be a sufficient teacher in every man; and obedi-  
 ence thereto will answer every purpose necessary to our  
 salvation? And why does the apostle recommend the  
 believers in that day to *follow them, as they follow Christ,*  
 if following an inward guide be all-sufficient? You have  
 read the scriptures over and over, and you profess to  
 believe in them. I am astonished to think how you,  
 or any other man of common understanding, can hold  
 forth doctrine or sentiments, so contrary to the whole  
 tenor of the scriptures; and likewise contrary to reason  
 and common sense. I can impute it to nothing but  
 their darkness and blindness."

I replied—I hope you will bear with me (if I am ready  
 to give an answer, and make objections, as thou sayest;) for,  
 to know the truth is my only motive; and it is often, if not  
 always the case, that greater truth and light appear in conse-  
 quence of objections being raised, than would have been  
 otherwise discovered; and not only so, but the reasons and  
 evidences for belief, are more pungent and clear. Our ideas  
 are grounded on the evidences exhibited to the mind; and we  
 are influenced as these evidences appear more or less powerful.

Now that which appears unreasonable and inconsistent to me,  
 I think I had best to open; and then I wish to have the  
 privilege to give my reasons why it appears so. But if I were  
 to keep my faith locked up in my own breast, and by my  
 silence, give assent to all you advance in support of your  
 faith, and in my heart think different, I should act the  
 part of an hypocrite; though if I were obedient in outward  
 things, I might pass for a good believer. And I know some  
 that do, who have the same faith that I have, respecting  
 the subjects upon which we have conversed. One in particular,  
 who (I believe) will never give up this doctrine of being  
 taught by the spirit

of God in his own heart, as he must do to have a right manner of faith; which, when he is convinced of, he will return to the Quakers, from whence he came.— Though I do not charge him (as I said of myself) with acting the part of an hypocrite. He is a man of few words; therefore, not disposed to controversy. But he had no idea of the faith being as it is, when he joined you, any more than I had. He was taken with a good outward appearance, as I was; but now I have come to a further knowledge, I wish to have the privilege to examine the faith, and count well the cost before I further enlist; which I could not, when I first came among you, and for sometime after, as I knew not the faith. It was not then opened to young believers. You preached such doctrines as we could receive; according to a common expression among you, of “feeding with milk, and coming to creatures where they are.” As I have heard your zealous preacher, I. Bates, say—“Catch them any how, so as we can but catch them.”

When I was a boy, I heard about people pinning their faith upon the priest's sleeve, and wondered what it meant; but now I rather wonder how people can be so duped as to do it. But I tell you before I can pin my faith, or have an implicit faith, non-resistance, and passive obedience, I must be convinced of the truth of your faith; and if I have been caught in the true gospel net, I do not wish to get out. If I know my own heart, truth in love, is my constant aim; and I am not so prejudiced in favour of any thing which I hold, but that I would willingly be convinced; and when I am convinced, I shall be willing to retract.

Now the difference between us, in an essential point, is, you believe we are to be saved by hearing the outward declarative gospel, and an obedience thereto, as preached by you; and I believe I shall be saved by an internal gospel, or by the spirit of God in my own heart, which the outward declarative gospel of Christ bears witness to; as being a “light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world;” and that the spirit of God striveth with all men. You ask “how am I to know the efficacy of this light, that I believe shineth



on the hearts of all, but by obedience thereto?" I grant that obedience to its convictions and reproofs, is the most effectual, and soul-satisfying way of knowing. But even in the sinner's breast, it carries its own proof with it, as you have truly said. He feels convicted and condemned, and at times, powerfully and irresistibly; whereby he knows in his own heart, what is wrong; and he is made to see and feel himself a sinner, even such as never heard the declarative gospel. Indeed betimes, as such have felt their own wills slain, or have united in their minds with this holy leaven, they have felt peace arise; they have an internal conviction of its truth. Now if a man feel pain or ease in body, does not he know it? Is it not proof itself? We have many instances on record of those who never heard the outward gospel, bearing testimony to this truth. In Romans ii. 15, we read, "The Gentiles show the work of the law written in their hearts; their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts, the mean while, accusing or else excusing one another." The apostle John testifies, that "Christ enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world." Now who will dare to assert it is not a saving light. "A manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit withal"—1 Cor. xii. 7. But, according to your faith, it will not profit to salvation. Then what is it given for? Only to condemn them? But the same apostle contradicts this assertion, in plain words, and tells us what the light and spirit (which is all grace) will do—"The grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared," to whom? "to all men, teaching," &c.—Titus ii. 7. Here the apostle tells us this grace appeareth to all; and that it bringeth salvation, and is a saving grace; but you say it is not. Under the Mosaic covenant, when God took the children of Israel, by the hand of Moses, and led them out of Egypt, the people had to go to the priests and prophets to know the mind and will of God; which was the order of God under that dispensation, which you are repeatedly referring to, as proof of the ministration doctrine in this day. But it appears you have totally forgotten the new covenant; at least, I never heard you mention it—"But this shall be the covenant I will make

with the house of Israel after those days saith the Lord ;” not according to the former covenant, but “ I will put my law in their inward parts (or minds) and write it on their hearts : and they shall no more teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord.” Here it is plainly distinguished from the former covenant, when they had to know the Lord, and be taught by the priests and prophets—“ For they shall all know me from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord”—Jer. xxxi. 32, 33, 34. Not from the least believer to the greatest Elder, as I heard one of the brethren say ; but all ranks and conditions of men. Now, according to your faith and order, we are yet under the same as the Mosaic covenant. We must go to the priest to know the mind and will of God, and be taught by them. Every one of us must be taught by our neighbour or brother. The apostle to the Hebrews, says—“ That covenant was not faultless ; and that it was ready to vanish away.” Christ told the Pharisees ; that *the kingdom of God was within them* ; which could, considering their state, have been no more than as a seed of the nature of the kingdom. And he also says that “ The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed ;” “ but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs.”

Reply.—“ We believe all you have mentioned of an “ inward law, light, and seed, was received by the word “ preached ; and those who believed in, and made a good “ use of what they heard, were benefited thereby ; but “ *the word preached, did not profit all that heard it, in conse-* “ *quence of unbelief—(Heb. iv. 8.)* We believe the nat- “ ural consciences of all are at times, visited by the spir- “ it of God ; exclusively of the word preached, which “ convinceth and condemneth for sin ; and those who “ have not the opportunity and privilege of hearing the “ word preached, nevertheless, if they live up to that “ light which God gives them by his spirit, such will “ find justification, but not sanctification. “ *No man* “ *(said Christ) can come to me, except the Father draw him.*” “ You and many feel the drawings of the Father to the “ Son, or to Zion the church of God, where Christ the

" Son is revealed. Here they may hear the word that  
 " is power and life ; and by obedience, they may find  
 " salvation, redemption, and sanctification. You and all  
 " must come for salvation, where Christ reveals and  
 " manifests himself, as the apostle Paul, after he was  
 " convicted, went to a man of God, as he was directed ;  
 " to one who had Christ in him ; to one united to the  
 " church, the members of which, are one body. Here  
 " Paul was taught what he must do in order to be sav-  
 " ed ; and so as all become convicted, they should pray  
 " as he did, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do*, and re-  
 " frain from those things for which they feel condemn-  
 " ed ; and patiently wait, and the Lord in his good  
 " time, will show them what they should do to be sav-  
 " ed. For the gospel will be preached or offered unto  
 " every creature. It will find all souls that God ever  
 " made ; and it will find all in their sins unconfessed.—  
 " When souls hear the gospel, if they are not then obe-  
 " dient, their condemnation will be the greater.

" Before Paul was convicted, he was zealously engag-  
 " ed in persecuting the disciples of Christ ; and he tells  
 " us he verily thought he ought to do many things  
 " against Jesus : and we read of some who would kill  
 " his followers, and at the same time think they did  
 " God's service ; then where was the inward light that  
 " teacheth all men ? The truth is, Paul had none till he re-  
 " ceived it from those who were in possession of it, and of  
 " the only means of salvation ; but he was influenced  
 " by his own carnal, wicked nature, as all mankind are,  
 " who have not heard and received the gospel. As a  
 " proof of this, we need only take a view of the past and  
 " present state of the world (taking the heathen nations  
 " into consideration) and we clearly see they are all  
 " in a lost state. *They are all gone aside ; they are altogether*  
 " *become filthy ; there are none that doeth good ; no, not one.*  
 " They appear to have but little idea of any other good,  
 " than what will answer the gratification of their carnal  
 " natures. If hitherto a divine principle or power had  
 " been in man, equal to or greater than the power of  
 " evil, as you hold, then righteousness would have pre-  
 " vailed as universally as unrighteousness has done ; but

“ the past and present state of the world, is a convincing  
 “ proof to the contrary. Also, when we take a view of the  
 “ professors of Christianity, and behold how they have been  
 “ divided, and how they have differed about their religion,  
 “ and how they have been deceived in many respects ;  
 “ in short, when we look at the lost state of mankind uni-  
 “ versally, there appears to be a great want, and we see  
 “ the insufficiency of this inward light, which you hold  
 “ forth as a light teaching all men, &c. This is the  
 “ fundamental doctrine of the Quakers ; they have  
 “ preached it up as a salvation principle, and have en-  
 “ deavoured to prove the efficacy of it. The Metho-  
 “ dists also believe much the same, or that all have a  
 “ sufficient call, and that the spirit of God strives with  
 “ every creature sufficient to save from all sin, if they do  
 “ not resist ; or that all may have grace sufficient if they  
 “ seek for it. Now what has this principle done for ei-  
 “ ther of them ? We should always judge of a doctrine  
 “ from the lives of its professors. If this had been an  
 “ effectual saving principle as they profess, or if grace  
 “ be given sufficient to save from sin, one might rea-  
 “ sonably conclude that the Methodists who so firmly be-  
 “ lieve it, would become saved from sin, and the Qua-  
 “ kers would have travailed in the increase.

“ The first Quakers preached and wrote as their faith,  
 “ that *this inward light would finally increase, until all the*  
 “ *kingdoms of the earth should become the kingdoms of Christ :*  
 “ but time has proved the contrary ; as instead of in-  
 “ creasing and proving more and more the efficacy of  
 “ this inward principle, they have degenerated, as you  
 “ acknowledge—and as they themselves confess. They  
 “ have become much like the rest of the world ; and  
 “ some times, in their preaching, they lament their own  
 “ degeneracy, and have concluded by saying, But, friends,  
 “ we trust there is a remnant among us yet. What sig-  
 “ nifies their remnant ? There was a remnant of faith-  
 “ ful, sincere souls, among the Jews at the time they  
 “ crucified Christ ; and there may be a remnant of sin-  
 “ cere souls in every society and in every nation. But  
 “ does this look like the way in which all the kingdoms  
 “ of the earth are to become the kingdoms of Christ,



“ when they have now so far proved the insufficiency of  
 “ this inward light, that they are reduced to a remnant?  
 “ If the garment has been worn out in about an hundred  
 “ years, surely the remnant cannot last long. They may  
 “ exclaim, Alas ! our light is on the decline, and going  
 “ out. Yea, and it will go out, as will all other lights,  
 “ insufficient for salvation, among every sect, as stars at  
 “ the rising of the sun.

“ The truth is, God has provided a remedy for all  
 “ souls ; the plaster is as large as the sore. The effec-  
 “ tual saving principle of good was given to the man  
 “ Christ ; and by his obedience he overcame all evil, had  
 “ power given sufficient to foil Satan in all his attempts  
 “ against him ; and that power he received from the Fa-  
 “ ther, he gives to the church, sufficient to administer  
 “ salvation to all the world : and in God’s time, as I  
 “ said before, all will have the offer of the gospel suffi-  
 “ cient to save from all sin. But that this gospel can  
 “ only be obtained by the word preached, is abundantly  
 “ proved by the words of the apostle to the Romans (x.  
 “ 13, 17)—*How shall they hear without a preacher ? &c.*  
 “ So then *faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word*  
 “ *of God.*”

To which I replied—I have often heard this text quot-  
 ed by the Elders and believers, both in public and pri-  
 vate conversation, and construed in the same manner  
 you have now done. But the apostle, in the previous  
 verses of the same chapter, gives a plain definition what  
 the word of God is, and where it is. “ Say not in thine  
 heart, who shall ascend into heaven, or who shall descend  
 into the deep ;” that is the same as saying who shall or  
 need go to any particular place on earth to find Christ,  
 or to any priest to inquire where Christ is. If I was  
 asked by a sincere inquirer, Where shall I find Christ to  
 save me from my sins ? which would be the best preach-  
 ing or direction, to say, Where thou already feels his  
 spirit, for this is it that causes thee to feel the burden of  
 thy sins and need of him, and where he has began the  
 work, there he must be found to finish it, and that is in  
 thine own heart. How ? By prayer and obedience to  
 the light he giveth. Or to say, Lo, here ; or lo, there ;

directing him to man. Where we have found help, there we should direct others; and all that have found help, have found it by the spirit of God. Therefore, to the same spirit all should be directed; and where is this spirit but within, operating upon the human heart?—“The word (said the apostle) is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith which we preach.” We preach unto you faith in, and obedience to, the inward word, the spirit of God—“Christ in you the hope of glory”—Col. i 27. If it was not for this internal word, a measure of the spirit of Christ in us, from which faith proceeds, we never could have any more faith and hope than brute beasts; as there could be nothing as a ground from whence any good could proceed; for in nature there must ever be a first cause, to produce a consequent event, or action. I believe, that the great first cause hath imparted a measure of his spirit to every intelligent creature; which, in process of time, will be so improved and increased, that all the people of the earth will be gathered into the kingdom of Christ, according to the beforementioned words of the prophet. It is believed by many, that those words refer more particularly to the millennium, when all will know the Lord. “By the law being written on the heart,” it is signified, that there will not be any necessity of an outward teaching. This prophecy of a new covenant is so pointed against your Mosaic order, that I believe I never should have heard it quoted, if I had not brought it forward for consideration. As to the Quakers and Methodists having proved the insufficiency of grace, spirit, or light, in order to salvation, it is not so; but, directly the reverse; they have not, it is true, proved its sufficiency as they might have done, and as I hope yet will be done. Further, is the degeneracy of the Quakers, any proof of the insufficiency of the grace and light for which I contend? Nay, the principle itself is eternal and unchangeable, like the Fountain from which it proceeds.

There is, in man, a principle of honesty, which is considered to be divine; yet many are to be found who do not act in conformity to it; but this is not considered as

a proof that there is no such principle. Whatever proof may be brought of the insufficiency of the principle for which I contend, may be applied, at least, with equal propriety to the Shakers; for more of them have degenerated, or left the society, in twenty years, than of the former in forty years; notwithstanding the great disproportion of the Shakers in number, when compared with the Quakers and Methodists. I have heard it said among you, that as many have fallen from the faith and have left your society, from first to last, as there are now in the faith. But you will say they departed from the principle or power of the gospel. The same may be said of the Quakers and Methodists who have degenerated; but the principle and power of the gospel remains the same in those who have continued under its influence. In short, after you have stood as many years as the Quakers have, it is more than probable that the remnant may be applied to your society with as much fitness, as it is now to that of the Quakers.

Now let us inquire of the apostle concerning the universality of the principle for which I contend. Paul—have all got the word in their hearts? We want to know in particular, how it is with those who never heard the outward gospel. Now, hark! let us hear the answer! “Yea, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world; teaching them to deny ungodliness.” “If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister”—Col. i. 23. Now we have been told of the universality of the gospel; but that we may know for certainty which gospel he means, whether the external, preached by man, or the internal, preached by the omnipresent God, in whom we live, move, and have our being—we will ask him.

Paul, by what gospel wast thou made a minister?—Didst thou go to those who were ministers before thee, to be taught by them?

“I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me, is not after man; for I neither received

it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ; for, when it pleased God to call me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, I conferred not with flesh and blood. Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter. But other apostles, or ministers, I saw none, save James. Now the things which I have told you, behold before God I lie not"—Gall. i. 11, 12, 15 to 20.

This answer is full and clear; therefore, I may thus argue, and deduce the following conclusions. As the gospel has been preached to every creature under heaven, and all have heard the sound thereof, and as by this gospel Paul was made a minister, and as he expressly tells us, that "the gospel that made him so was not of man, neither was he taught of man, but by the revelation of Christ;" then the gospel preached to every creature, is not of man, neither are they taught it by man, but by the revelation of Christ. Therefore, as the first is true, so also the last; and the result of this doctrine is undeniable according to my premises, that Christ has revealed himself, has given himself as a light, seed, &c. in all; and that it is not only received by the word preached. But again, as I presume none will deny, that that gospel of which Paul was a minister, was by obedience, salvation to him; therefore, without any more proof—by obedience, salvation to all. But I may just mention further, that every creature under heaven had not heard the outward gospel. When the apostle wrote, they had not heard a word of it either in China or America. Nay, one half of the world, from that day to this, are utter strangers to the outward coming of Christ, his sufferings and death, to atone for their sins. Nevertheless, I verily believe they are all partakers of a measure of his spirit.

Now that the apostle, on his conviction, was directed to a man of God (as the believers word it) to tell him what he should do, I have repeatedly heard mentioned among you; and it is the principal instance I have ever heard you bring forward to prove the truth of the min-



istration doctrine. But it is certainly directly opposite to your faith in this respect; and I think if I were as strong in the faith as any of you, I would never mention this conviction and conversion of the apostle, as a proof of the truth of my faith in a ministration.

I was in company, not long since, with a believer, (B. Youngs) whom I had often heard before, mention about the apostle Paul being directed to a man of God, as a proof of the necessity of being taught by the Elders. I told him I hoped he would never mention it again; for he could not mention an instance in all the scriptures, so opposite to your faith in this respect. For Paul did not receive the gospel of man, neither was he taught it by man. And he tells us he went not up to those who were apostles before him.

He then replied—"Paul was ordained an apostle to the Gentiles; therefore, it was not consistent with his call to go to, or receive the gospel of those who were apostles before him."

To which I replied—Why you confute your own position. What a weak subterfuge! Why then have you mentioned so many times this conviction and conversion of this apostle, to prove your ministration doctrine? Do you think it will answer well enough to mention about the apostle being directed, &c. to those who never read the scriptures, or who are so little acquainted with them as not to be able to recollect the context, or any further account than what you mention? To which he made no reply. But I am much more surprized at the Elders and teachers, in drawing such inferences from that passage. Must we receive and believe every thing you assert for truth, and not think and examine for ourselves, when we see such glaring inconsistencies?

As to the apostle, after his conviction, being directed to go into the city, (not to a man of God, as it is always worded by believers,) and it should be told him what he should do—Acts ix 6. What does this amount to, but that he was directed to go where he might become united to those very people whom he was going to persecute, and to build up that church of which before he was going to make havock? When he became united thereto

by Ananias, and the spirit of persecution was totally given up, the scales of darkness fell from his eyes, and he received the Holy Ghost. Now if he received and was taught the gospel by Ananias, (which we have no account that he was) then his telling the Gallatians he neither received it of man, nor was taught it by man, is a plain contradiction. But I have said enough on this subject. The plain account, as it stands on record, is a sufficient confutation of your conclusions, deduced therefrom, and your ministration faith.

Reply—"But did not the apostle, by the instrumentality of Ananias, receive his sight and the gift of the Holy Ghost? But, to pass over this, and leave the apostle Paul—What think you of Cornelius being in a vision, and an angel appearing to him informing him, that his *prayer and alms were come up for a memorial before God*, but were not yet answered? He was not yet shown the way of life and salvation, but in order there-  
to, he was told to *send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter*; and that he would tell him what he ought to do. When Peter came, as he was preaching to Cornelius and those who were present, *the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word*.\* Now why was he told to send for Peter? Why preach the gospel at all, if the gospel within is all-sufficient?"

I replied—There appears something in this a little like your faith. But I have never denied that God has made use of instruments to carry on his work. It is our duty, and Christianity teaches us, to be of help to one another in spirituals, as well as temporals. But you believe that salvation can be obtained in no other way than by outward teaching; and that man has no saving light or gift of God given him previous to hearing with the outward ear, and receiving Christ, or the divine gift, by means of, and through instruments chosen for that purpose.—But if you were to administer those gifts, or such a blessing attended your ministry as the preaching of Christ and his apostles, we might believe you were in the same standing, and had the same life and power. But seeing

\* Acts x. 44.

in others, and feeling in myself, the want thereof, has caused my faith to be hurt respecting the ministrations. It is an observation that serious people in general make, that "if you were in a superior dispensation, as you profess, you would be able to preach with more life and power than you do." The preaching I hear almost every Sabbath day, in the meeting-house at Niskeuna, is as dry as a bone. The people sit and hear with as little impression made on them, as if they were hearing indifferent matters. They feel no power or efficacy in the word preached; their hearts remain unreached, and yet they will be damned for not believing the testimony of a lifeless ministry.

Elder Hezekiah replied—"We are not to preach away our power!"

I said, Most astonishing! and yet you profess to be in, and under a superior dispensation to all that have ever been before. Christ and his apostles, who were in an inferior dispensation to you, preached in the power and demonstration of the spirit. As to your not preaching away your power—Is this Christ-like? did he not administer power? A woman only touched the hem of his garment, and he felt that virtue had gone out of him. And did not Peter administer power to Cornelius and others? The Holy Ghost fell on all that heard the word. But you are not to preach away your power; and yet you say it is through the ministrations all must receive power. Who can understand you? Oh, "it is by obedience! Go forth in obedience to what you teach—the obedient shall eat the good of the land."

Again—was not the power of the Holy Ghost administered by the apostles previous to obedience? so that faith and obedience were the effect of power received. The Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word. If such a power and blessing attended your word, I should have the evidence I stand in need of; without which, (admitting you have a divine gift or revelation) all you say, is to me but hearsay, and my obedience will proceed only from faith in man. Without a divine, internal conviction of the truth of what you teach, I can never come under condemnation for not believing and obeying.

You teach, or counsel me, "to renounce my business—to move to Niskeuna—gather among the believers, and go to work, or be obedient to all things as you direct:" and I know what will follow, step after step—first, I must put away all my books, and read no more, that I may learn nothing but what I learn from you. The next step, I must give up my interest, come into one of those families who have all things in common, my wife perhaps in one family, and I into another, and my children I know not where; and, it may be, I may seldom or never see her or them any more. So I must go on to prove what obedience will do for me; and after some time, if I cannot feel satisfied and believe with you, I must return impoverished in temporals, (as others have done) and begin the world again, and seek God for myself. And alas! I may also lose my wife and children, (as some others have) for they, by that time, may become so prejudiced in favour of the faith and people, in consequence of your kindness, that they will not return with me, and I could not take them away by force, against their faith and wish to abide with you, as that would be cruel, and like persecution (which above all things I detest) Thus I should be left in a lamentable plight! Therefore I think I had best "look before I leap."

I have talked with those who have been obedient to the Elders many years; but I cannot get much more out of them, than that they keep their faith, and feel peace. I know peace arises from various causes. If a servant is conscious of obedience to his master, and his master is pleased, and commends him for his work of obedience, he, as to his duty to his master, feels peace. Those who have travelled in obedience to their Elders, feel peace of mind, according to their faith. So the Mahometan enjoys peace of mind in obedience to his faith; and so do those of every other faith. But the essential thing is, have they love towards God? and do they love their neighbour, i. e. all their fellow-creatures, as themselves? I read, "on these hang all the law and the prophets"—Matt. xxii. 27. This is the sum and substance of the gospel—"This do and we shall live"—Luke x. 28.



Now as far as I have experienced the efficacy of an inward divine principle, I have had an internal evidence of the truth of it, and know what the love of God is. In conversation with a believer on this subject, not long since, he said, "I don't feel now as I have done in times past. But this," said he, "is a different work; the work of God is not the same in every dispensation." Now for me to give up that, the truth of which I have an internal evidence, for an outward testimony, the truth of which to me is uncertain, and of which I have no internal evidence, I think I should be very unwise.

As to what you have heretofore mentioned of the sobriety, order, and good fruit which the people bring forth, and my not being able to assign a satisfactory cause how all this can be, when I throw away a revelation and hand of God in it, I have considered lately, that Christ tells us we must not judge by outward appearance; and he says of the Pharisees, that "they indeed appear beautiful, and outwardly they appeared righteous unto men" —Matt. xxiii. 27, 28.

Also we learn, not only from sacred, but other history, of people that have been exceeding precise and circumspect in all their outward appearance, whereby thousands have been for a time deceived in them, as I could abundantly show. Besides, I do not know whether those in church order, bear such very good fruit at all times. I know they are much on their guard when strangers or young believers are present, (though that is seldom the case.) But admitting that they are at all times as they profess to be; then, can no other reason, than what you have advanced, be assigned why they are so? Are they not shut out from the world, and all its temptations, and bound by their faith to the Elders? They are not admitted to go among, or converse with any other people. The greatest part of them, for many years, have not been a mile from their dwellings, or spoken a word to any one but their brethren and sisters in their own order. They live as complete monastic lives, as ever any did in the Romish church, who were entirely secluded from the rest of mankind, having no intercourse with their nearest relations, nor any but such who were con-

fined, generally for life, within the same walls. Like unto them, they have not the least concern about procuring the necessaries of life : they rise up and go regularly to their work appointed them ; and the Deacons transact all business with the people of the world for them, as selling and buying. Therefore, are they not excluded from all temporal concerns, temptations, and trials, that other Christians pass through ? Suppose they had to provide for, and take care of themselves, and were exposed to all the temptations and innumerable trials that other Christians are, and then, as a body of people, I doubt whether they would bear better fruit, according to the number, than some other societies do. We know not so well whether a thing is good, till it is tried.

A reply by Elder Hezekiah—"The people of God have their temptations, tribulations, trials, and crosses, to which you and the Christians of the world are utter strangers, and ever will so remain, till you and they come to travail in the way and work of God."

I said, I have sometimes thought, that they take up some crosses, and have trials of their own making, or which the Elders make for them ; and which will never be of any real profit to the soul. And if you were well read, you could see the almost innumerable crosses, that many devotees have taken up—only look at the Monks of the church of Rome : what austerity ! what mortifications ! what crosses to nature ! and what penance did they voluntarily choose and undergo ! Penance was a doctrine they preached—and without penance there was no admittance into the kingdom of heaven ; and, herein as in many things, you and they agree. And now I wish to correct a mistake that is among you, viz. that no people ever took up such crosses, and denied their own wills, &c. as you do in this day. Now, as you told me, so I tell you—you are utter strangers to the crosses that many have taken up, and have lived and died under.

He replied—"Their's were outward crosses and trials—our's are inward, against a carnal nature ; laboring to become reinstated in the image and likeness of God, which was lost by transgression. Though we have outward crosses to come into the outward order

“ of God, and separate ourselves from the world, and the  
 “ evil thereof, to *touch not, taste not, handle not,\** the un-  
 “ clean thing: and, are we not called to come out of  
 “ the world, which is Babylon, and be separated from  
 “ them? and as God is a God of order, should there not  
 “ be an order of God in the church? and should not all  
 “ who come into it, take up their crosses, and conform to  
 “ that order?

“ And not only so, but each one to experience the or-  
 “ der of God in their own souls; and in order to this,  
 “ each one must take up the real and greatest cross of  
 “ all, which you will find to be so when you come to  
 “ travail into a death to a fallen nature—come to expe-  
 “ rience an inward fire and burning, a *baptism of fire* with  
 “ which John said Christ would baptize. This will cause  
 “ trial and tribulation to the old man: he is not put off,  
 “ with all his evil deeds, in a moment, by the *love of*  
 “ *God shed abroad in the soul*, as the Methodists and some  
 “ others imagine, which they call justification; and per-  
 “ haps in a moment, sanctification. As to this love of  
 “ God, which you and Christians of the world profess to  
 “ experience, we know what it is, and what it will do for  
 “ them; and they might know too, as it does not save  
 “ them from their sins, but leaves them as it finds them.  
 “ Then they have their dark times, and fall into sin  
 “ again. Why this is so, they know not. But the true  
 “ cause is, they have never confessed their sins. *The*  
 “ *strong man armed, keepeth his palace or place in the heart;*  
 “ *and his goods are in peace, or safe.* But cast out his goods,  
 “ i. e. his sins, *and a stronger will enter—*(Luke xi. 21.)  
 “ Thus their sins, the *strong man's*, the *devil's goods*, re-  
 “ main in their hearts; they have never confessed their  
 “ sins, cast them out, or put them away, and the devil  
 “ has a right where his goods are. Therefore, if they  
 “ rise a little, Satan having power over them, soon pulls  
 “ them down. Even that love and joy, that they at  
 “ times feel, will lead them into the flesh; or at least,  
 “ under the influence of that love, they can gratify their  
 “ lusts. Though the apostle said, *She* (and consequent-

\* 2 Col. ii. 21.

“ly he) *that liveth in pleasure, is dead while she liveth—*  
 “(1 Tim. v. 6.) Yet they can enjoy this sensual, car-  
 “nal pleasure, and at the same time believe they have  
 “the love of God. What astonishing darkness of mind!  
 “how estranged from the real and true love of God!  
 “Yea, they are totally dead to God, and all sense of di-  
 “vine life, even in their highest imagination of feeling  
 “the love of God. They believe themselves regenerat-  
 “ed and born of God; and some profess sanctification—  
 “and at the same time gratify a beastly, carnal nature.  
 “Yea, they act contrary to their own faith; and do that,  
 “in many respects, which they believe to be sin: when  
 “the apostle tells them, *He that committeth sin is of the de-*  
 “*vil; and whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin—*  
 “1 John iii. 8, 9. But we feel thankful that the Lord  
 “has shown us the fallacy of all their religion, and all  
 “the religion in the world; and called us to become  
 “partakers of a gospel that redeemeth us from our  
 “sins.

“But because we don't talk so much about the love  
 “of God, great flows of ravishing enjoyments, and cry-  
 “ing out, *I know that my Redeemer liveth:* but when we  
 “tell you, we feel peace under a conscientious sense of  
 “duty towards God, and one another; feeling a calm-  
 “ness and serenity in our minds—yea, that peace that  
 “the world cannot give nor take away; and that we  
 “feel love towards all our brethren and sisters, and to  
 “the souls of all mankind; and feel and find our union  
 “to the gospel and way of God; and feel thankful to  
 “God for all his favours and blessings to us, and that  
 “we feel a comfortable hope of an happy immortality,  
 “all this don't satisfy you! When we tell you that the  
 “gospel leadeth us in a steady perseverance, and that we  
 “find a continual, gradual, solid, weighty increase, or  
 “flooding without ebbings; and that the righteousness  
 “of the obedient runs even with their lives; and that we  
 “experience a continual growth in grace, receiving more  
 “and more power over sin and an evil nature—travail-  
 “ing until we become entirely redeemed from the least  
 “and last remains of sin, and finally gain a state from  
 “which there will be no more going out—all this don't



“ satisfy you ; we know not, then, what will. We believe you are sincere, and your soul is after the gospel and way of God ; and we are willing to labour with you, and to spare no pains to gain you to the gospel, as long as we can feel a gift of God for you.”

I replied—I acknowledge your good will—I have faith in your sincerity ; I believe your intentions are good. But it appears to me you err in your judgment ; for, in your last discourse, you have expressed yourself similar to what I have often heard among believers before ; and you have joined hand with the deist, and struck at the very root and essence of scriptural Christian experience. Now however much Christians have differed in opinion respecting various points of their faith, in this experience the sincere of every denomination have unanimously agreed ; and the testimony of many of them contradicts your assertion. For all that you have testified of an experience, travail, and salvation, others have testified the same.

Elder John Meacham said—“ I tell you, Thomas, there never has been one soul, from the falling away of the apostolic church, that stepped one step in regeneration, redemption, sanctification, or the new birth.— I tell you again, there never has been one soul, from first to last, that ever found complete redemption, sanctification, regeneration, or the new birth, i. e. not until the opening of this gospel.”

I replied—Then they were liars, for many testified and declared they had.

He said—“ Nay, I would not call them liars.”

I replied—If that word is too hard, I may say, they were all greatly deluded and deceived.

He answered—“ Yea.”

I said—Now let us come to a fair statement. It is said there are about three thousand now in this faith ; suppose that all these were to assert as you do—now I ask which will be the most reasonable to believe, these three thousand, or thirty thousand who have testified to the truth of which you deny of them, many of whom have sealed their testimony with their blood ?

He replied—"Why, according to your carnal way of reasoning, it is most reasonable to believe the greatest number."

I proceeded, and said—When you convince me, that that which supported the Martyrs in the flames, with such calmness, serenity, and joy, was nothing but imagination, or enthusiasm, I honestly tell you, that you must not think I shall then be a believer. Nay, I shall believe nothing at all in divine revelation, and shall totally give up the christian religion as professed by you and all others; as it is this very experience of the love and peace of God to my soul, that has hitherto preserved me from deism; which, if I had never known, I should have been a deist long ago. I wonder that such as never really experienced the comforts of religion, are not all deists, on their beholding the various fluctuating opinions of the professors thereof; and hearing how they have, and do stigmatize one another with error; and how they have quarrelled about their religion. That for many centuries past, there has been completely a (anti-christian) religious war, though latterly they don't shed so much blood about it. But it is still among many, and none more than among you—you are no christian, or he is no christian; you, or they are deluded; they are false prophets; wolves in sheep's clothing; anti-christ, deceivers, impostures, poor dark creatures, blind souls, full of error; and the other party retorting the same. It appears as if they were weary in persecuting, and fighting, and now sit like a parcel of dogs growling at one another; and you (like the most angry dog of all) declare they have been, and are all deluded and deceived. My God! when people look at these things in this light, what must they think? What must the informed part of the heathen conclude, respecting the religion of the christian world? We have heard, a christian among many of them, is the most odious character. Some of them have refused missionaries that have been sent among them, and have said, "how can you expect us to embrace your religion, when you differ so much about it yourselves." Also the Jews beholding the differences, and conduct of professed christians, what little reason

have they to believe.\* When any of the professing christian sects, endeavour to convince the Jews, heathen, or deist, of the truth of the christian religion, they may all with propriety say, Agree among yourselves first about your religion and revelation, and in what way and manner you receive it, before we believe, agree, and join with you; for you have ever been in a fermentation, contest and quarrel about your revelation and book; from which you draw all your religion, and all your disputes. Oh ye professing christians of every name, ye may cease sending missionaries to convert the heathen, until you all agree to give them one and the same account of the religion you profess; otherwise you will set them at variance concerning the way to heaven, and make them as bad as yourselves

It is said by believers, "that in order for a man readily to receive the faith, he must first run out with all other sects, and come empty." I don't know but what I shall run out with you also, for you are altogether enough to distract a man. I firmly believe that before another century after this passes away, there will be a revolution in religion; but I must stop, as this is departing from our subject. Please to excuse me; for what I have said, has proceeded from a mind sorrowfully affected, and overburdened with the conduct of professors. I am now willing to return.

A reply.—"If the professors of christianity could agree among themselves, while living after a beastly nature, they would only imitate a number of beasts in a field, whom in fighting become weary, and in consequence thereof, feed together in peace; but they would remain beasts still; and so long as the former feed on a beastly nature, we cannot agree with them.— And they never can agree among themselves so long as they live in sin, nor until they renounce their union with the flesh, the fallen nature; and that spirit which governs them; and that can only be done by confess-

\* See Dr. Levi's letters to Dr. Priestly; this being an argument with the Jews against christianity's being the peaceable kingdom of the Messiah, as foretold by the prophets.

“ ing and forsaking their sins, and coming into a king-  
 “ dom where the spirit of Christ reigns and rules, and  
 “ become governed thereby. Some people say we have  
 “ no charity ; but we have charity for their souls, but  
 “ not for sin, nor for those who live in sin. The chris-  
 “ tians of the world talk of charity, but they do not  
 “ know what true charity is. They have a charity like  
 “ unto a crow that can light upon carrion.

“ But now to return to what you have been speaking  
 “ concerning experiences of some. We believe as we  
 “ have told you before, that many of those you have had  
 “ reference to, have had a measure of the light and spir-  
 “ it of God ; and as they were obedient to that light  
 “ and manifestation, which God favoured them with,  
 “ they found the blessing of God. We believe it  
 “ was a measure of the spirit of God, that supported  
 “ many of the martyrs in their sufferings. And we be-  
 “ lieve that you, and thousands, have felt the spirit of  
 “ God ; and do not wish you to disbelieve therein ; but  
 “ to come forward in the increasing work of God.

“ The early believers in Christ, attained a good de-  
 “ gree of salvation and redemption, while they had the  
 “ revelation of God ; but when there was a falling away  
 “ (of which the apostle spake) and they lost the saving  
 “ gift of God, there commenced a night of darkness,  
 “ called by many, a night of apostacy.

“ Now in this vacant time, you produce many to prove  
 “ contrary to Elder John’s assertion, of none having ob-  
 “ tained redemption, sanctification, &c. But I think it  
 “ can be proved from such of them, of which we have  
 “ an account, that from the early part of the falling  
 “ away, to the opening of this gospel, as professed by  
 “ us, that Elder John’s assertion is the truth. For after  
 “ the falling away, they testified, in direct contradiction  
 “ to your assertion, That freedom from sin is not attain-  
 “ able on this side of the grave. It is a doctrine all the  
 “ Protestant churches have held, Quakers and Method-  
 “ ists excepted. They have all cried out, more or less,  
 “ *Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners.* If misera-  
 “ ble sinners, how then can they be saints, or sanctified ?  
 “ And hark, how they sing :



" Our sins, alas ! how strong they be,  
 " And like a violent sea,  
 " They break our duty, Lord, to thee,  
 " And hurry us away.  
 " The waves of trouble, how they rise !  
 " How loud the tempest roars !  
 " But death shall land our weary souls '  
 " Safe on the heavenly shores. *Watts.*

" Here death is to do the work. Death is to complete their salvation ; for they believe (truly) that " nothing sinful, or unholy, can enter heaven ; and they " have no idea of a work and travail hereafter. The " Methodists believe in freedom from sin ; yet hear how " whole congregations of them will, year after year, repeatedly sing :

" A poor blind child, I wander here,  
 " If haply I may feel thee near,  
 " Oh, dark ! dark ! dark ! I still may say,  
 " Amidst the blaze of gospel day.

" Again :

" Barren although my soul remains,  
 " And no one bud of grace appear ;  
 " No fruit of all my toils and pains ;  
 " But sin, and only sin is here !  
 " Although my gifts and comforts lost,  
 " My blooming hopes cut off I see,  
 " Yet will I in my Saviour trust,  
 " And glory that he died for me.

" How can a soul that has not one bud of grace, glory that Christ died for him ? And how was it possible " they could be redeemed, &c. when they lived after the " course of the world in the flesh ? which you yourself " believe to be the root of all evil. Some of them cut " off all the branches, but the root still remained alive ; " and they had not a sight of it, nor power to come at " it, to destroy it. We believe there have been many

“ who have experienced a comfortable sense of the love  
 “ of God, and which has continued with them for a  
 “ time, for their encouragement and support ; and in  
 “ which time, all evil was bound in them ; and while  
 “ they were carried along thus, like a child in the arms  
 “ of a parent, they were not learning to walk themselves.  
 “ I mean, they were not bearing the cross, and dying to  
 “ an evil nature. Therefore, it is true what has been  
 “ told you, that they did not travail one step in the real  
 “ work of redemption, no more than a child, who is  
 “ carried along in the arms of the parent, is learning to  
 “ walk.

“ All such have found, however great their experi-  
 “ ences of the love of God have been, when that was  
 “ withdrawn, they have felt again sin all alive in them ;  
 “ and thus they have been favoured time after time, be-  
 “ cause they had not the proper means to become saved  
 “ from sin. But such as come to, and have the privi-  
 “ lege of hearing of a greater light, an effectual revela-  
 “ tion, even the second coming of Christ, to bring a full,  
 “ complete, and finished salvation ; I say, if such stop  
 “ short, or do not come forward, they will be left with-  
 “ out excuse, and instead of being favoured as above,  
 “ they will lose the light they had, and come under  
 “ greater condemnation. Just like unto the Jews who  
 “ would not receive Christ a greater light, because he  
 “ came not according to their carnal imaginations.—  
 “ Therefore, that light which they had, and in obedi-  
 “ ence to which they stood justified, until a greater came,  
 “ and in their not receiving of it, they were rejected from  
 “ all light ; as all lesser lights are extinguished (as to  
 “ our being lighted by them) on the approach of a  
 “ greater.”

I replied—Admitting what you have said, to be true,  
 that none could attain a salvation sufficient to make them  
 fit subjects for the kingdom of heaven, before the second  
 coming of Christ, then the next most important point of  
 all, is to prove, or make appear that this is his second  
 coming, and that greater light of which you speak, or  
 what is called the millennium (which thousands have  
 been, and are still looking and praying for.) If you can do

this, all controversy about doctrine and order, would be settled at once. If Christ is in, and with you, and it is the word of God you speak, that is enough. I should have an implicit faith, and be passively obedient immediately. On this hangs, as it were, all the law and the prophets. All that you have said, all that you have quoted out of the law, prophets, and gospel, this is all that I and many others, want proof of. This may be called your major proposition. If your major proposition is false, your ministration doctrine, and several other points of your faith, are of course. Your telling me that you know, it is little to the purpose. Many before you have said, with as much confidence and assurance, as you do, "*We know.*" Many of every denomination, are as firm in their faith, as you are; and one sect can produce as much scripture and reason, as the other.

To this Elder Hezekiah replied :

" I think it is likely many in Christ's first coming, reasoned much as you do. The devil, or evil nature in man, will turn every way to evade the true coming of Christ. We know that this is the second coming of Christ, by the light in which we see, wherein all others are mistaken "

Now being much exercised, tried, and worn out in my mind, I only replied—If it be really the second coming of Christ, the Lord grant that I may be enlightened to receive it; and I hope you will have patience, and bear with me

The third day after I came here, one of the Elders asked me, if I wished to see Elder Ebenezer. I told him I was willing to see him, if he desired it. I accordingly was directed to his room, entered, and took a seat. Now the reader should be informed, that the Elders I had been conversing with, received their gifts, or order, from Elder Ebenezer: (and he receiving, according to their line of order, his directions from Abiathar Babbot, who stood next to the Mother of the church.—Each one acting in their gift, or according to the orders, as they received them from their Elders above them.—The Mother, according to their faith, receiving her gift, or commission, from God; and likewise acting in the gift she received from the ministration, at her election.)

Therefore the substance of our controversy, and wherein I was deficient in my faith, was carried by the Elders who labored with me, up to Elder Ebenezer; and by him, the substance, or what he thought necessary, to his Elder. Therefore the ministration above those Elders who conversed with me, knew all that was past; particularly, my lack of a right manner of faith, in being taught. Having thus premised, I proceed.

After I had been a few minutes in his room, and some indifferent conversation had passed, he began upon the old controverted subject, of faith in a ministration; and that God had always spoken by instruments; and by obedience to such, in this day, salvation was obtained. I soon quoted that of the apostle (Titus ii. 11)—The grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men, teaching them, &c.

He replied—"I don't read it so."

I asked him—If he would please to let me know how he read it.

He answered—"The grace of God that bringeth salvation unto all men, hath now appeared."

I replied—I do not recollect to have seen, among all the different readings and expositors, that have come to my hand, of any of them reading, or construing of this text, in the way thou dost. And as thou art not acquainted with Hebrew, Greek, nor Latin, would it be reasonable for me to believe thy reading, in contradiction to all others?\*

He saw I would dispute with him also: (and I thought I had reason to be thankful that I was not under a despotick, ecclesiastical government, in which I should not dare to speak my mind, for fear of an Inquisition;) and he not being disposed to controvert with me, it not being his gift, or place so to do; he arose and walked towards the door and back again, which appeared to me, I thought

\* My recollection at that time, appears to have been deficient. *In contradiction to all others*—Herein I was wrong, (and I hope I shall ever be willing to acknowledge my errors.) See margin of J. Brown's Bible, and explanatory notes on that text. M. Henry's exposition. And in the margin of J. Guyse's Bible; and several others.



as a signal to retire ; I therefore, soon arose, walked towards the door, and he beginning again to speak, I stopt a few minutes.

He said—" We desire nothing of you, but your good, and we know this is the way of God, and you will find it so, one day or other ; and I hope you may not to your loss."

When he appeared to have done speaking, I withdrew ; and the remaining part of the day, I spent with one of the former Elders. We conversed on several other subjects, which I think best, at present, to omit, and only take notice of the following. In the evening, by their request, I met Elder John Meachem, Hezekiah Rowley, and one whom we called Elder Stephen. The subject of the propriety, and necessity of obedience to the ministration for salvation, was again renewed. Elder John told me " If ever I came to be established in the faith, and become a good believer, I would be ashamed of my disputations with them ;" and said—" Thomas, we believe the day will come, when creatures will not dare to contradict, and stand against the gift of God, as you do."

I replied—If ever I see the propriety of your doctrines, and become established therein, I shall be willing to confess my errors ; and hope, and expect you will forgive me, and pass by it, as if it had never been. But said I, you and others have deceived me.

Elder John interrupting me, said—" Not so much as you are deceiving yourself, in not believing what is preached to you, and being obedient thereto. You are, and ever have been deceived by your own wisdom, self-will, and evil nature."

I replied—I am not deceived, or mistaken in contending for the doctrine you preached to me at first ; and herein I mean you have deceived me, as you now preach a contrary doctrine. When I first came to Niskeuna to see you, it was with honest intentions, and I expected you were what you appeared to be. I desired to know what you believed, and wherein you differed from others.—I first conversed particularly with Benjamin Youngs, on many points of your faith, and you won't deny that he

knew the faith of the church; and his abilities are such, I am sure he was able to give an account of it. The account I afterwards received from the Elders, and old believers, agreed with what he first gave me. I then heard nothing of a ministrations doctrine, and obedience, as the only means, and way of salvation, any further than to keep up an outward order in the church. But the doctrine then was, "Each one has the privilege to act his own faith. Do that which you are conscious is right, and refrain from what you are conscious is wrong. *A measure of the spirit of God, is given to all;* and disobedience thereto, is the cause of condemnation. And the spirit of God that striveth with, and teacheth all, is every man's rule to walk by, and to whom all should be obedient. Don't place your dependance on us, but look to the word of God in your own hearts." This was the doctrine you preached then.\* Now let any man with a grain of sense judge, if you don't preach a doctrine diametrically opposite. This is the doctrine I have been contending for, and you endeavouring to invalidate, and to substitute another in its room. You may depend on it, if my father had continued in health, he never would have continued in the faith, after he found this change; for the same doctrine was preached to him. Now you had better have told us plainly, what the real faith was, at first. You would have appeared more like honest men; or, at least, if you thought there was some things we could not receive, said but little about them, and not have advanced any doctrine contrary to any point of your faith; then I, nor any others, could not have charged you with advancing contradictory tenets. You would also have saved yourself the trouble of all this labour with me; as I was as able to hear, and bear, your real faith then, as well as now. Indeed, a principal cause of my faith being hurt, is your thus telling two stories; for you, (I don't only mean you who are here present; but others in the faith, with whom I then conversed) did then preach, as I have stated.

\* That is, they accommodate themselves to the sentiments of those they converse with.

At first we were treated like children, and had many pretty pleasing stories told us—As, “act your own faith; the gospel don’t bind creatures.” But now, as I have been told, “the gospel is like a tunnel; the farther we travail in, the narrower it grows.” If squeezing into the narrow part of a tunnel, is not binding a creature, I know not what is.

Elder Hezekiah observed—“Christ says the way of life, or to the kingdom of heaven, is a narrow way. It is a way you never can pass, until you become stripped and cleansed from all sin. Every thing you have received from the world, or spirit of it, must be left behind. There is nothing but a pure and holy spirit, can pass the narrow passage to heaven; there is no more room than just enough for it.—(Rev. xxii. 14.) But I believe you are very fearful of having an evil nature squeezed out of you. I think it’s likely it is the cross that is in the way; and it is this that causes all this disputation about the doctrines of the gospel.”

I replied—I have no such thoughts, or fear of the cross. It is but a short time I have to stay in this world; and I know there is nothing here, worth setting my affections on; and if I do, death will soon strip me of it all. I feel willing to do, or suffer any thing, to serve God, and secure a happy immortality with him. To lay up a treasure in heaven, is my principal aim, labour, and desire. If it had not have been thus with me, I should never have troubled you, I should never have taken up my cross, to be called by the despised name of a Shaker. What do you think I came among you for? I believed you were a good people; you appeared to be so; and, “I chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin, for a season;” esteeming the reproach, and love of Christ, greater riches than all the treasures of this world. Now this is a short, comprehensive, honest statement, from the bottom of my heart. You must think of it, as you like; I have spoken the truth.

He replied—“We believe your soul, and desires, are after God, and that which is good; if we did not believe so, we should spend no time, nor labours with you; and it is the light and spirit of God, wherewith

“ he has measurably enlightened every man that cometh  
 “ into the world, that has caused you to seek him, and  
 “ take up your cross to be called a Shaker, and come  
 “ among the people of God.

“ You say we preach to you a doctrine contrary to  
 “ what we did at first. Herein you are mistaken, or  
 “ have misunderstood us. We bear the same testimony  
 “ now, as at first. We tell you now not to violate your  
 “ conscience; and to act up to, and in obedience to the  
 “ light you have; and that disobedience thereto, is the  
 “ cause of condemnation. We subscribe to all this. If  
 “ a person was totally destitute of the spirit of God, we  
 “ might as well preach to a rock, as to such an one; as  
 “ the gospel could take no hold of him, as he would  
 “ have nothing in him of the nature of the gospel. But  
 “ did we, or any among us, who have a knowledge of  
 “ the faith, ever tell you that this light, measure of the  
 “ spirit, &c. would finally redeem, sanctify, or save from  
 “ all sin?”

I answered—I cannot say that you, (or any others)  
 ever did so express yourselves.

He replied—“ Well then, wherein have we deceived  
 “ you, or preached a contradictory doctrine? We have  
 “ told you concerning the operation of the spirit, the  
 “ love of God that sincere souls have experienced, and  
 “ what this experience did for them, or how far it saved  
 “ them: in all which, there is nothing contradictory to  
 “ what we preached to you at first. But you say, *why*  
 “ *did we not preach our real faith.* We did so, as far as  
 “ we thought it necessary, and you able to receive it.—  
 “ And you say we treated you as a child *in the gospel*;  
 “ *we fed you with milk.* We did so; and can you blame  
 “ us for so doing? Are you dissatisfied because we dealt  
 “ by you and others, as tender parents by their children?  
 “ Then blame, and be dissatisfied with Christ, and his  
 “ apostle Paul, without mentioning any others, whose  
 “ examples we have followed—*I have yet many things to*  
 “ *say unto you, (said Christ) but ye cannot bear them now.*—  
 “ How gradually did he lead them, step by step: how  
 “ he bore with their ideas and expectations of his becom-  
 “ ing an earthly king; and their expectations of an out-



ward kingdom. He did not tell them plainly, along at first, that he was to be crucified; and when he did tell them, it was so contrary to Peter's expectation, that he said, *it should not be*—(Matt. xvi. 22.) He told them many things which they did not rightly understand; nor could they, until they came to travail in that state in which he was, and received of his spirit.

“ We say of you, as the apostle did to those to whom he wrote—*We had many things to say, and hard to be uttered; seeing ye were dull of hearing. You were such as needed milk, and not strong meat; and now when ye ought to be a teacher, ye have need that one teach you the first principles of the oracles of God. And we could not then speak unto you, as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal; even as unto babes in Christ. We fed you with milk, and not with meat,* (i. e. we did not tell you how the real, and true revelation of God, must come, in order for your salvation,) *for ye were not then able to bear it; neither yet now are ye able. Unto the weak, we had to become weak, that we might gain the weak. We were willing to be made all things, to all men, that we might by all means save some.*

“ Thus what you have been dissatisfied about, you have now in scripture language; and we could not have framed words more pertinent, to justify us. We could abundantly show, from almost the beginning of the scriptures to the end, that the work of God has been opened to the minds of mankind, by little and little, or gradually. That which you taught your children once, it would be needless, or foolish, to teach them now; and that which you teach them now, it would have been needless to have taught them when younger, as they could not then have comprehended it.\* You say it has been said, the gospel don't bind

\* As I have quoted some authors in this work corroborating with my thoughts and assertions, (when I was with these people;) and as it is not my intention, in so doing, to gain the reader on my side; but to endeavour, impartially to give the arguments on both sides, their due weight; I therefore, quote the following, which I also, at this time, recollected corroborating, in some measure, with their arguments and reasons, on the above subject: “ The

“ creatures : neither does it, against their free consent,  
 “ or faith. Binding signifies compulsion ; but no one is  
 “ compelled. And as to each one’s acting their own  
 “ faith, so they may ; and if it is your faith, or if you do  
 “ not choose to be obedient, and come in the order of  
 “ the gospel, you will not be bound and compelled ; you  
 “ can have your choice, and do as you please ; take to  
 “ the world, or the way of God. But if each one is to  
 “ act their own faith, in the manner you have understood  
 “ us, and in the sense you mean, i. e. every one suffered  
 “ to have their own will and way, and exercise their own  
 “ private judgment, what order would there be in the  
 “ church ?

“ Thus I think we have said enough to your objec-  
 “ tion, or charge against us, in preaching a different  
 “ doctrine, or one contradictory to what we did at first,  
 “ to give any reasonable man satisfaction. Wherein you  
 “ are not satisfied, we hope you will not, by reasoning,  
 “ discourage others, nor Elizabeth ; as she has a simple  
 “ faith, and if you was satisfied, and would take hold of  
 “ the gospel, there would be no difficulty with her ; and  
 “ I have not a doubt but you would have your children  
 “ with you ; and what a comfort it would be to you, to  
 “ have your family walking in the way of God with  
 “ you ; when many others have, with sorrow, to reflect,  
 “ that their families have left them, and are living in the  
 “ world in sin, and exposed to all the trials, and troubles  
 “ thereof. What a pity it is, that while you are doubt-

ancient christians,” says Dr. Mosheim, “ are supposed by many, to have had a secret doctrine ; and if by this, be meant, that they did not teach all in the same manner, or reveal all at once, and to all indiscriminately, the sublime mysteries of religion, there is nothing in this, that may not be fully justified. It would have been improper to propose to those, who were yet to be converted to christianity, the more difficult doctrines of the gospel, which surpass the comprehension of imperfect mortals. Such were, therefore, first instructed in those points which are more obvious and plain, until they become capable of higher, and more difficult attainments in religious knowledge. Nay, more ; even those who were already admitted into the society of christians, were, in point of instruction, differently dealt with, according to their respective capacities.” *Esch. Hist.* vol. I. page 117.

“ing and disputing the way of God, and standing back, you are hindering others from coming forward. We hope you will seriously consider of these things.”

I replied—I confess there is some propriety, and reason in all you have said; and I do not feel disposed at present, to raise any further objections. I believe you have been sincere, and desired my good, from first to last; and I shall endeavour to remember, and seriously consider of all you have said; and thank you for your concern, and labours with me.

One of the Elders told my wife, next morning, that they believed I was satisfied; but I was not. The reasons they had advanced against what I had asserted, of their having deceived me, might have fully satisfied me, if I had not considered, that, we wilfully deceive, when our expressions are not true in the sense in which we believe the hearer to apprehend them.—*Paley's Philosophy.*

Besides these discourses with the Elders, I had one evening considerable conversation with two of the old believers. They gave me an account of the first Elders, viz. Ann Lee, Wm. Lee, and James Whittaker; and of the travels, labours, and sufferings they passed through, to open, and plant the gospel. Also, of several extraordinary gifts, and operations, that had been in the church.

During the time we tarried, the family were very kind to us; and at our departure, I thanked them for all favours we had received.

After I returned home, I continued to attend meetings, and visit among the believers as I had done; and often heard them converse together concerning the faith, the work of God in this day, and the lost, dark state of the world; and it appeared to me that they often spake the truth, and sometimes error.

Now as it was contrary to the gift, to open our minds to one another in any respect, wherein we were dissatisfied; or to talk contrary to the faith, I therefore endeavoured to keep silent; but nevertheless, was often drawn into conversation; and as I could not talk one way, and in my heart, believe another, therefore, my dissenting

from them, caused often much conversation pro and con, though on the account of which, I felt no hardness against them; and I believe that they did not feel any against me. Though there were several points, on which we conversed, and amicably agreed.

About once a month, the Elders came from Lebanon to see the believers at Niskeuna, to encourage, bring in order, build up, and establish them in the faith. Therefore, I often heard them in our meetings; but had not much private conversation with them, until sometime in December (same year) when I spent with them nearly two days; in which time, they endeavoured to convince me of the propriety, and reality of the faith.

As there were several subjects which we conversed on, the last time I was at Lebanon, which, in the former discourses, I omitted, I shall now insert them, with the substance of our conversations at this time.

*What follows contains the result of nearly all the conversations, which I have had with the Elders, and several believers, respecting those doctrines and practices, with which I did not unite. I have thus connected our discourses into one body (on account of brevity, and) in order to have them clearly understood. Those discourses which contain the words of several persons, begin with "A Reply." But any discourse that has been entirely spoken by any one Elder, has the name of that Elder at the beginning.*

Elder Hezekiah said—"Thomas, we are sorry to find, " that after all our labours with you, you have not yet " a right manner of faith; knowing that none ever stood " long among us, where you are; and it is impossible " for you to abide, unless you get hold, and believe in " the present revelation of God. You may believe firm- " ly in a revelation past, i. e. to the prophets, apostles, " and others, but such a faith will profit you nothing; " you must have faith in a living ministration; and by " obedience, you will find that our teaching gives pow- " er; you will find that the words that we speak unto " you, are spirit and life. Now only see how you, and " others act the part of the Jews. They would not be-



" lieve in a present revelation of God in their day, and  
 " receive the words spoken by Christ and his apostles ;  
 " but they repeatedly refer to their dead ones ; to Mo-  
 " ses, and the prophets, and to what they had written.  
 " They were willing to own a past revelation, which  
 " would do them no good. (Oh the subtilty of Satan !)  
 " But says Christ, *if ye had believed Moses, ye would have*  
 " *believed me ; for he wrote of me.\** So we say of you  
 " and others, if ye believed in Christ and his apostles,  
 " ye would believe in us ; for they wrote of us, i. e. the  
 " work of God in this day. But *if ye were the children*  
 " *of Christ*, and followers of him, and did as his apostles  
 " taught, *ye would do the works of Christ* ; but now ye  
 " seek to destroy the teaching of those who have taught  
 " you the truth, which we have received of the Father.  
 " And I suppose you would think it too hard, if we were  
 " to say to you, as Christ did to those who pleaded for a  
 " past revelation—*Ye are of your Father the devil ; and*  
 " *the lust of your Father, ye will do.†* But we don't wish  
 " to be hard, but deal tenderly with all souls, especially  
 " as long as we can feel a gift for them, and mercy of  
 " God towards them.

" Christ told Peter, after he confessed faith in, and ac-  
 " knowledged the true revelation of God—" *Thou art*  
 " *Peter ; and upon this rock, I will build my church,*" &c.  
 " i. e. upon that spirit, or revelation in Peter, by which  
 " he spake : *and I will give unto thee the keys of the king-*  
 " *dom of heaven : and whatsoever thou shall bind on earth,*  
 " *shall be bound in heaven ; and whatsoever ye shall loose on*  
 " *earth, shall be loosed in heaven—*(Matt. xvi. 18, 19.)—  
 " He also told his disciples, "*Whose soever sins ye remit,*  
 " *they are remitted ; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are*  
 " *retained—*(John xx. 23.) It appears Peter had the  
 " greatest gift, and was the first who had the lead ; and  
 " it is clear that the same order was in the apostolick  
 " church, that is among us ; and the same obedience  
 " was required. The apostle says—" Remember them  
 " that have the rule over you." " Also, " Obey them  
 " that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves."

\* John v. 46.

† John 8 to 44.

“ By the power and authority that the apostles received  
 “ of Christ, they ordained bishops to preside over the  
 “ several churches. To those bishops, the people were  
 “ exhorted by the apostles to be obedient. *Remember*  
 “ *them, says Paul, that have the rule over you. Also, Obey*  
 “ *them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves.—*  
 “ There is still something of the same order in almost  
 “ every church, though they are destitute of the power.  
 “ Most of them have bishops; and are not the ministers  
 “ of those churches, much ruled by them? and are not  
 “ the members of each church taught, and much gov-  
 “ erned by their preachers? Many of them, if they  
 “ have no minister, their meeting houses are shut up,  
 “ their worship is stopped; as if they could receive  
 “ teaching and salvation, no other way; and most of  
 “ them believe that it is by the word preached: then  
 “ why do they blame us for the same order? The truth  
 “ is, because it is in greater perfection, and that in the  
 “ life and power. According to the life and power their  
 “ preachers possess, so is that of the people. Their  
 “ preachers cannot administer more than they have in  
 “ possession, which is not sufficient to save them or their  
 “ people from sin. The truth is, the saving gift and  
 “ revelation of God, become lost in the degeneracy of  
 “ the apostolick church; but the outward order was still  
 “ retained, which has been handed down by tradition in  
 “ the Romish church, to this day; from which, all oth-  
 “ er churches have got more or less of this same order.  
 “ They have received it from the corrupt church of  
 “ Rome, and not by revelation.”

I replied—I have repeatedly heard the Elders and  
 believers say, that the Romish church had the order of  
 God in several respects; particularly in confessing sins;  
 and church government; and because it has so near a  
 likeness to our church in this respect, you conclude that  
 it received this order from the apostles, and the form has  
 been continued to this day.

This is also what the Roman Catholicks have always  
 endeavoured to support. They say that the intention  
 and appointment of Christ, was, that his followers should  
 be subject to St. Peter and his successors; and it must

be confessed that much is to be found in the writings of several of the apostolick successors, i. e. St. Clemens,\* Ignatius,† Polycarp,‡ Cyprian,§ and others, concerning the succession of Bishops from the apostles: and also, enforcing and exhorting the people to obedience to them; particularly in those of Ignatius. If these are the genuine writings of those to whom they are ascribed, they are decidedly in your favour. But I may observe, that those writings, particularly those of Ignatius, are much disputed by the learned. It is believed by many, that they were evidently adopted, if not purposely contrived, to exalt the clergy, and secure to them all power, reverence, and subjection. But the papists plead for their authenticity, with zeal and vehemence.

According to all the ecclesiastical history (written by protestants) that I have seen, the government of the apostolick church in the first, and part of the second century, was strictly republican; and it was not until some time in the fourth century, that a government like unto yours, became fully established.

The power and authority of the bishops had, from the earliest time, been gradually increasing; but when Constantine, the Roman Emperor, embraced (as it is said) the christian religion (I think it was more like anti-christian) their power and authority became greatly augmented. The bishop of Rome, now became the first in order, and was held superior to all the other bishops. In the fifth century, he was called God's vicegerent, and claimed a spiritual dominion over the minds and sentiments of men. But to be short, in the eleventh century, their power appears to have risen to its utmost height. They now were called Masters of the world, and Fathers of all in the church.

Now if the protestant historians are correct, you are mistaken respecting your order of government being handed down from the apostles, by a succession of bishops in

\* Bishop of Rome, A. D. 70.

† Bishop of Antioch, A. D. 105.

‡ Bishop of Smyrna, A. D. 140.

§ Bishop of Carthage, A. D. 250.

the church of Rome ; for it appears that your order was not in the apostolick age of the church, but arose in that of its degeneracy. A certain author, speaking of the power of the Popes in the eleventh century, says, “ But happily that power is now on the decline.”

On this I would observe, that if this power is declining in the east, it is rising in the west : and it seems that some people in every age, must be oppressed and chastised with a monarchical government, either civil or ecclesiastical ; and mankind deprived of those natural and unalienable rights which God has given to them. We have only to look into history, to see its direful consequences.

To this one of the believers said—“ I hope you do not compare our harmless and innocent Elders, and their power, to those you have been mentioning, and the power they possessed.”

I said—Nay, I do not, in their present state. What I have said, has only been to show the danger of investing individuals with power, either in church or state ; and the bad use they have hitherto made of it. And if the ministration of our church had as much power over mankind as those had to which I have referred, I doubt their long remaining the humble people they now appear to be.—I would not dare talk to them with the freedom I have done. I have reason for what I say, from their own words ; for Elder John told me last conference at Lebanon, That he believed the day would come when creatures would not dare to dispute, and stand against the gift of God, as I did. Again, as I have often heard, The time will come when the word of God will not be bound, but will come so against creatures, that they will not dare to resist. Yes, I suppose it will come as it did not long since, when one of the believers was saying something in his defence, before Elder Ebenezer ; the latter stamped his foot, spoke sharply, and told him to hold his tongue, he should not speak a word ; and I have heard of several similar instances of commanding with much authority ; and the simple believer trembles at the word when so spoken. I think I see the seeds of that power which I have heretofore described. Our first leaders now profess to be as high in power as the popes professed to be



in the fifth century, i. e. of being God's vicegerents, and fathers of all the church. I again repeat my fears, that you will degenerate as other churches have done.

A reply, (by Elder Hezekiah)—“Nay, that we, and our successors, never will; for God has began a work which he will carry on to his own glory, and the salvation of all who have faith therein.”

I said—There is a possibility of your being mistaken. I know there have been many, and they men of great parts and talents, who have been as confident of their being right respecting the millennium, as you are; but time has proved they were mistaken. Witness Emmanuel Swedenborgh and his followers: they express themselves in much the same language of assurance and thankfulness as you do.

The following are a few of their expressions, from an address to the brethren, entitled, “To those that are called of Jesus Christ according to the new dispensation, which he hath been pleased to open in these latter days, by his servant Emmanuel Swedenborgh:”

“Ye have cause to be abundantly thankful to the Lord; for, that in these last days, when darkness had covered the earth, and gross darkness the people, he hath been pleased to raise up unto you a great, and marvelous light. The words of the prophet are now also fulfilled. There shall be a shaking,” &c. “And he will destroy in this mountain, the face of the covering, cast over all people; and the vail that is spread over all nations. Blessed are ye; for many prophets and righteous men have desired to see the things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.” But to be short—“They are confident that living waters are gone out from Jerusalem, and that the Lord is indeed come in the clouds of heaven (in his witnesses) with power and great glory.”

They talk of the vail being rent, and of those of this new dispensation, the second coming of Christ, penetrating into the holy of holies, entering into paradise, experiencing the light and joy of the heavenly society, of the light of the moon having become as the light of the

fun, having a view of the invisible world, conversing with angels and departed spirits, (as some in our church profess) and a deal about the glories of the second coming of Christ, and new dispensation.

I may observe, it was likewise maintained by Swedenborgh and his followers, that all those passages in the scriptures, generally believed to signify the destruction of the world by fire, and the end of the world, does not mean the destruction of the world, but the destruction, or end of the professing christian churches of every description; and that the last judgment actually commenced in the year 1757 (only ten years difference from the time our church say it commenced) from which time, is dated the second coming of Christ.

If I was now among them, instead of being among you, I should hear much the same arguments that I now hear, to convince me that they are in the last dispensation, and only true church.

I may just observe, that Emmanuel Swedenborgh was a Sweedish nobleman, and a man of extensive learning. He had but few equals. Many of his followers were men of education; but withal, I think they were, and are still mistaken respecting the millennium.

And witness the Avignon society in France; their revelations, visions, prophecies, and confidence of the near approach of the millennium (when, according to your faith, it had commenced above thirty years before.)—Also, the late Richard Brothers. He appears to have not the least doubt of divine revelations to him, of the spirit of God carrying him away in visions, and of his seeing wonderful things.

There were many who believed in him; and several men of talents wrote in vindication of his revelations.—The principal one was N. Brasley Halled, member of parliament, a man of liberal education, and who appears to have been sincere. You cannot express your faith in your Elders, with more confidence than he did in R. Brothers, and his revelations.

I only mention these instances as specimens, out of many that might be collected, to show how men have been mistaken respecting this great point, as well as in

many other respects. And I think the safest way is for us to conclude, that we are poor, fallible, erring mortals. It appears to me, that the scriptures represent that in the millennium, Christ's coming will be attended with such evidence, as not to admit of a doubt.

To this, Elder Hezekiah replied—"I don't see that all you have said of the faith of others respecting the second coming of Christ, and their being mistaken, operates at all against us, or the work of God in this day; but rather the reverse, as thereby we see how strong many have been in the faith respecting the second coming of Christ. And faith brings things near, and there may have been many, who had some light and sense respecting it; but they being, as it were, in the twilight, they could not see clearly; and were mistaken as to the real nature, and work thereof; and the manner, way, and time of its commencing.

"There were many mistaken respecting Christ's first coming, before and after; but that is no reason, or proof that Jesus was not the real Christ promised."

I said—I acknowledge there is some truth and propriety in what you have said; but notwithstanding, I have such reasons for not fully believing, that I doubt my ever being able to get over them.

I shall now proceed to state several other particulars in the practice of the church of Rome, after its degeneracy, and show that in all these particulars, our church corresponds with that.

1. Several of the popes and inferior clergy, particularly the monks of the Romish church, and several other characters, in order to be honoured and esteemed, and to make people believe they had a correspondence and near union with God, and likewise to induce others to believe in divine revelations, which they pretended were made to them, have lived retired and recluse lives, and were seldom seen by any except their colleagues; and people were taught and impressed with the idea of its being a great honour and privilege to be admitted into their company, or to hear them speak; and when so favoured, they approached with signs of reverence and humility, even by kneeling in their presence.

Now to apply this to our church—The Mother lives a recluse life: she seldom converses with any, but those of the highest order, or next in authority to her. It is true there have been instances of her visiting and conversing with young believers; but when she does, they are taught to esteem it a great privilege. Thus this woman, and the first Elder, or Father of the church, are as much revered as ever the popes, or any others were. The inferior Elders also have a respect shewn them, according to the order in which they stand, and the company of Elder Ebenezer, is considered as a privilege, inferior only to that of the Mother. The Elders also suffer kneeling before them; and that this is wrong, appears from Rev. xxii. where St. John was forbidden to do it.

2. You are like the Romish church also in the doctrine of infallibility; and like it, hold forth the tenets of implicit faith in, passive obedience to, and non-resistance of the Elders. “As men,” you say, “they are fallible, but the gifts of God are infallible; (they being received by succession from first Mother, who received them from God\*) and by obedience you will find an infallibility attend them.” This is precisely in substance, the language of the popes. “As men,” say they, “we are fallible; † but that power and spirit, we have received by succession from St. Peter, are infallible; and we are subject to the judgment of no man.”

You hold that we must have an implicit faith, i. e. what you term a simple faith; believe, because the Elders say so, without any examination. Passive obedience, i. e. lay like clay in the hands of the potter; be obedient to what we are taught, whether it appears right to us or not; ‡

\* They believe also that these gifts have been continued and increased to the ministration by subsequent revelations.

† See Gother's two-fold character of Popery, page 36. R. Manning's shortest way to end disputes, page 23 to 68; wherein he endeavours to substantiate the infallibility of the church.

‡ It was taught in the Romish church that an opinion or precept may be followed with a good conscience, when inculcated by



and as I have been often told, "as you go forth in obedience, you will come to see what has been taught you, was right; though at first, you did not see it so. And non-resistance, i. e. do not stand against, resist, or be irreconciled to *what the Elders teach.*"

3. The clergy in the church of Rome claimed divine right and submission—the same do our Elders; and the people were taught implicit obedience, and heard the constant warning of the deadly crime of resisting the authority of their bishops;\* we hear the same.

4. Private judgment is not allowed in the church of Rome: it is virtually denied, that religion is a personal thing between God and a man's own conscience; for the members of it are not permitted to examine and judge, nor even think for themselves†—their belief is taught and enforced—it is not the result of investigation. The case is the same in this church. Private judgment, the Papists say, has been the cause of all the heresy, or different and contradictory opinions and practices in religion.‡—Much the same does our church believe. I would just observe, that you both require an implicit faith and passive obedience; but in order to have a rational and well-grounded faith, either in that church or this, it is necessary to have sufficient evidence presented to the mind to produce that faith. Now whatever arguments the Papists may produce in support of their faith, many of which

a doctor of any considerable eminence, even though it be contrary to the judgment of him that follows it. *Mosheim, vol. iv. p. 230.*

\* See *Haweis' Church Hist. vol. i, p. 220.*

† Even those of them who are the most liberal and moderate in their sentiments, say, "All obscure and disputable points, should be referred to the judgment of those whom God hath appointed pastors and teachers in the church; never presuming to contend, controul, teach. or talk of their own sense or fancy, in deep questions of divinity, but expecting the sense of these from the lips of the priests, who shall keep knowledge, and from whose mouth they shall require the law. *Mal. ii. 7.*"

*Gotber's Two-fold Character of Popery—page 297*

‡ See *R. Manning's Shortest way to end Disputes.*

are much stronger than you produce, yet how can I believe that they are the true church of Christ, when it is well known that that church has been a persecuting church, and tortured thousands to death for heresy, i. e. because they did not relinquish their reason and understanding in matters of religion, and exercise an implicit faith and passive obedience? So how can I believe that our church is the only true church, when I have discovered several things in it contrary to truth and right?—one principal thing to which I allude is, equivocation and deception, which shall be the subject of my next comparison.

5. Forgeries were esteemed lawful in the Romish church, or by the popes and clergy, on account of their tendency, as they believed, to promote the glory of God, and to advance the prosperity of the church :\* and they even considered fraud as pious, when employed for that end.†

I have cause to believe there is much of a similarity among you, in this respect, to that of the church of Rome. I have heard some of the believers quote a passage of the apostle wrong, and understand it in a sense which it is clear, from the context, the apostle did not mean, i. e. Be deceivers, and yet true—2 Cor. vi. 8.—In conversation, on this subject, with one of the Elders the last time I was at Lebanon, he quoted this text in the same manner; and likewise referred me to several instances, recorded in the old Bible, of deception being used by the people of God in that day. He intimated a propriety in deceiving the evil spirit and nature in man, in order to save the soul.

I told him at last, that I had read so much of deceit and pious frauds in the church of Rome, that I had imbibed a settled antipathy against them; and if this be the way and work of God, as you say, it appears to me that God would carry on his work without our using deception to forward it. I have often heard, that “We should

\* Mosheim's *Eccles. History*, vol. iv. p. 305, cent. 9th.

† *Haweis' Hist.* vol. ii. p. 290.

preach strong faith, (particularly in conversation with the people of the world) even if we have it not; as by preaching strong faith, or vindicating the faith according to the best of our ability, has a tendency to strengthen us in the faith; also, such who are weak in the faith, should not manifest their weakness to any one but to the Elders." Though we need not manifest our weakness, or our doubts of the truth of the faith, which I have not yet done, to any out of the society, but I consider, that to hold forth and vindicate points of faith that we do not in our hearts really believe, is deceit and hypocrisy. It is a fact, that there are many things we believe, of the truth of which we are not certain. But there are some things, the truth of which we are certain; one of which is, that we should speak the *truth* on all occasions, without any ambiguity or equivocation. Give me the *honest man*, the *candid man*, the *man of truth*: in such a man, according to the knowledge he may possess, I can at all times place the utmost confidence; him I believe to be truly a religious man and a man of God; for God styles himself to be "the God of truth."

6. The popes and clergy of the church of Rome also endeavoured to keep the common people in ignorance, by suppressing books\* and learning; and debarred them of even the scriptures,† that they might have no means of learning or gaining information contrary to what they were taught by the clergy. Indeed, it has been a maxim with many, that the best way to keep people in obedience, is to keep them in ignorance.

They believed a Christian was in the way of salvation, when he submitted to their doctrines, and yielded unlimited obedience to the orders of the church.‡

\*See Priestly's Corruptions of Christianity, vol. ii. page 118 and 195.

† See Gother's Papists Misrepresented and Represented, p. 29, 30, 31.

‡ "The clergy ignorant themselves and the patrons of ignorance had no desire the people should be instructed. The grosser the darkness that enveloped their superstitious minds, the easier dupes they were to their sacerdotal directors."

Now I ask, do not the leaders of this church walk exactly in the same steps, as the Romish clergy have done, in this respect? Though the Elders (and others in the faith) tell people, as they told me, (when I first came among you) that they do not suppress learning and books; yet I have found that you do suppress almost all books. By the order, or, as it is called, gift of the Elders, most books are forbidden to be read. I never, in public or private, once heard even the reading of the scriptures recommended; and those who have read, or do read them, they must understand (as in the Romish church) every passage consistent with what they are taught by the Elders. I know of several who, soon after they joined the church, have been counselled by their Elders to dispose of their books, and have accordingly done it. Elder Ebenezer, being at my house once, on his seeing a number of books, he said:

“ Ah, Thomas must put away his books, if he intends to become a good believer.”

Conversing once with the Elders, at Cornwall, about books, they then endeavoured to persuade me, that there was no profit in reading. I said, I think I had better spend my leisure hours in reading than sleeping, or doing nothing; and asked them what I should read. Elder Meacham answered, “ Almanacks and Spelling-books,” i. e. as I understood him, nothing at all.

I have heard several of the believers say respecting reading—

“ There is no necessity for believers to read—it is not of any advantage. All authors have been in the dark; as they have written in a back dispensation. Even the scriptures are no more than an old almanack. There is no salvation in any back dispensation book—no gospel in them. We must come into the increasing work of God—be obedient to what we are taught by our Elders, that’s enough. Herein consists our salvation, and all information necessary for us to know. No occasion or necessity to give our children learning, except to read and write a little—and even that they can do without, if they abide among the people of God; as they need not concern themselves about business where



“ in reading and writing is necessary ; as all things they  
 “ stand in need of will be provided for them by the Dea-  
 “ cons, who have the care of temporal concerns. And  
 “ if they leave the way and people of God, and go to  
 “ the world, let them abide by the consequences of their  
 “ obstinacy and folly, in departing from the way of God.  
 “ As in so doing, they go to the flesh and the devil—let  
 “ them take what the flesh and the devil will give them.  
 “ For if they receive any benefit from the people of God,  
 “ as learning or property, they will then consume it  
 “ upon their lusts, and in the service of Satan ; and like-  
 “ wise thereby be more enabled to serve him.”

So I must put away my books and leave off reading,  
 and pattern after my brethren and sisters, to be in union ;  
 two-thirds of whom, from year to year, (especially those  
 in church order) don't take a book in their hands, not  
 even the scriptures. Though they have time to read,  
 particularly in the winter, as they leave off work about  
 sun-set, wash themselves, and retire into their rooms ;  
 there they sit until nine or ten o'clock, except about a  
 quarter of an hour at supper, and about the same time at  
 family meeting—they arise at four o'clock in the morn-  
 ing, and soon assemble for worship—they breakfast about  
 day-light, and do no work until near sun-rise, in which  
 time, morning and evening, they have at least five hours  
 leisure—often nodding and sleeping. I have told them,  
 I thought they had better spend their time in reading to  
 one another some edifying books. “ Nay, there is no  
 gift for so doing”—they can do nothing without a gift.  
 Keep in the gift, is all the cry.

“ Besides, we are not to spend our time in reading,  
 “ because it will have a tendency to draw the mind from  
 “ an attention to, and consideration on, what the Elders  
 “ teach ; and we should spend our leisure hours in si-  
 “ lence, meditating on the gift of God received through  
 “ them. This is the law and commandment—and we  
 “ must therein delight, and meditate thereon by day and  
 “ by night, as David of old did on that gift of God, or  
 “ law and commandment, given to him by Moses.”

Not long since, I asked, in Seth Wells' family of young  
 believers, for a certain book they had, (as I wished to

spend part of my time in reading while I was there)—  
 “ Oh,” I was answered, “ the Elders are here now—we  
 “ don’t want books, we must pay attention to what they  
 “ teach.”

Thus it is evident, that learning and reading is not approved of, but is suppressed ; and it appears that the ministrations believe, as some other rulers both in church and state have believed, “ That the easiest way, or best method to keep people in obedience, is to keep them in ignorance.”

In short, by reading they might gain much information, and then they might doubt the truth of many things taught them by their Elders ; some of them would then begin to controvert, and say things were not so and so, as they had been taught. To this one of the believers observed :

“ Well, if this be the consequence of reading, which I  
 “ think it is likely it would be, for it is believed by the  
 “ brethren in general, that reading is of no profit, but  
 “ only tends to cause objections and disputations in the  
 “ church, (and many of us believe, if you had not your  
 “ head so full of book-knowledge, you would now have  
 “ been a good believer) then is not the ministrations wise  
 “ in not encouraging reading ?”

I answered—I grant they are ; I give them the credit of being as wise as many of the popes and clergy of the church of Rome were, who suppressed all books written by (such as they called) heretics ; and who debarred the people from reading or gaining any information contrary to what they taught them.

7. Our church is also like the Romish in its belief respecting such as depart from the faith, or doctrines, as professed by it. Like the Roman Catholics, you believe all are heretics,\* in a greater or less degree, who depart from, and hold forth doctrines contrary to such as have been received and believed by the church. With this difference they believe such will be eternally lost ; but

\* “ No person,” says Dr. Campbell, “ who in the spirit of candour adheres to that which, to the best of his judgment, is right, though in his opinion he should be mistaken, is, in the scriptural sense, either schismatic or heretic.”

you believe there will be a time when the mercy of God will reach them, though they will be the last of all the human race that will be restored.

According to the power this church possesses, its conduct towards backsliders, is like unto the Romish church towards those they called hereticks, as I could shew by a number of instances of unkindness and inhumanity towards them; with which I shall never have union. If they, by means of temptation or error in judgment, have departed from the only true church, they are objects of pity and compassion, and we should endeavour to restore them by manifesting a spirit of love and kindness; and not drive them further off by harsh treatment, and calling them backsliders, liars, deceivers, impostors, reprobates, poor lost miserable wretches; darker than ever before; sunk below all God's creation, eternal damnation will be their portion.\* My friends, this is not that mild language that becometh our profession of love and mildness, and having the peaceable, humble spirit of Christ; but is just like the spirit and conduct of some of the ungodly, persecuting popes, priests, and inquisitors of the Romish church, to those they called hereticks. In short, they only had the keys of the kingdom; they only could open, and none others could shut; and when they shut, none others could open; all were taught obedience to the popes and clergy; revelation and obedience was all the cry; the people were debarred from all means of information; they dared not open their minds, one to another, against any thing they were taught; without the pope, or one side of that line of order in the church, the people could not judge, nor know any thing; they were so under the power of bigotry, that they had no fellowship, love, nor charity, for any out of the pales of that which they denominated the catholick church. I am sorry I have cause to say that in all these respects, our

\* Elder Ebenezer Cooley is the only one I ever heard say, that "Eternal damnation would be the portion of those who forsok the way of God." Therefore, as I always understood that the real faith of the church was, that such would not be eternally lost, I concluded he only expressed himself thus, to affright or terrify believers against turning off; for which purpose, to express himself contrary to his own faith, I did not approve.

church is too much like them. Bigotry has been the cause of all the persecutions for religious sentiments, that has ever been in the world. I have thought that there is nothing wanting but a sufficient number and power, to make my comparisons complete; I hope I am mistaken. I may also observe, that the doctrine of several political, as well as ecclesiastical rulers, was also similar to yours. They affirmed, that "God, in whom is the disposal of all lives, and all properties, has given to some, as his representatives, a right of ruling over others; that he hath appointed the hereditary right of fathers over families, of patriarchs over tribes, and of kings over nations: and they treated much concerning the divinely inherent right of monarchs, implicit submission, passive obedience, non-resistance. Also, that our God is one God; and the substitute of his power should resemble himself; that their power ought to be absolute, unquestioned, and undivided; that monarchs over his chosen people, were of his special appointment; and that their persons were rendered sacred by unction, or the pouring of hallowed oil upon them. "Many miscarriages and woful defaults (say they) are recorded of Saul, as a man; yet as a king, he was held perfect in the eyes of his people. What an unhesitating obedience, what a speechless submission do they pay to all his commands! Though he massacred their whole priesthood to a man in one day, yet no murmur was heard; no one dared to speak a word, and much less to lift a finger against the Lord's anointed."

Thus these champions for monarchy, both in church and state, have founded their whole pile of argument and oratory on the divine appointment of the kingly government of the Jews. To this the Elders and believers have repeatedly referred. And in fact, I believe a monarchical government is in many respects the best; that is, if the monarch is really a good man, and his successors continue to remain so: but this is the great bar in the way, this knocks it all in the head; for make a man a monarch, you make him a tyrant, a despot, an imperious, proud, lofty being, who soon gets so high above his fellow mortals, that he apparently forgets that



He himself is mortal, and looks down with contempt on those beneath him, as not worthy of his compassion, and only fit to be his servants and slaves. All men are tyrants by nature; all prone to domineer over, to covet and grasp at the rights of others, so strong is their propensity to usurpation. Therefore dangerous it is to trust one of them with power, as such who have been intrusted, have generally proved traitors; and deputed power has almost perpetually been seized upon as property. "Monarchy (says a certain writer) has ever been found to rush headlong into tyranny."

America began to groan under the rod of a foreign power; she petitioned for certain privileges and rights, for which no power had a right to debar them; they were not granted; she then declared herself independent. This was a bold step against the lofty power of his Britanic majesty. She contended for liberty, and to be released from a foreign, and in some respects, a despotick power. If providence had not favoured her cause, she must have been crushed in the attempt. She gained what she contended for. She saw the rock on which nations had split, the rod under which nations, from time immemorial, had groaned. She saw the consequences of a monarchical government; that it had, as I said before, been ever prone to rush headlong into tyranny. She therefore adopted a republican government, under which, hitherto, prosperity and blessings hath attended. The power next to God, is in the people; they choose their rulers; those chosen have a constitutional power, with which they are obliged to act consistently, and to study the good of those who have chosen them to their several offices, and the good of the country at large. If all men are tyrants by nature, and if there is a propensity to usurpation in all, that nature and propensity is curbed by the people. They cannot become tyrants, usurp, nor grasp at the rights of the people; they cannot swerve far to the right hand nor to the left, as they have the publick eye upon them watching and criticising on their conduct. Therefore they are compelled, and not only so, but encouraged to do right (I mean in a publick capacity) as if they do, they may by the fa-

our of the people be elected again. All this is exceedingly mortifying to royal elevation, and what a monarch cannot bear.

Thus America contains a free people.\* They sit every man under his own vine, and under his own fig-tree, and there is none as yet, to make them afraid—(Mic. iv. 4.) They have got no one to bow before, to adore and fear but God; and every one has the liberty and privilege to adore and fear him in the way which they believe to be right, or consistent with the dictates of their consciences. I may with propriety exclaim, Hail! America, what a highly favoured people under the blessing of God, all in consequence of a republican government. May they be wise and virtuous enough to retain it. Now when we look around the world, and see how nations have been, and still are kept in ignorance, oppressed and imposed upon by tyrants, our hearts should flow with gratitude for those unmerited favours we enjoy; and I feel thankful that I can thus freely converse with you, and when I am at home, sit in my house in peace, reading or writing without fearing the frowns of a tyrannical monarch, or popish inquisition. The uninformed mind is insensible of these privileges. They do not know what an excellent government they are under; and how greatly they are favoured beyond other nations of their fellow mortals. Thus this new world, like Adam's paradise, is now a bright example to the old, who have for ages groaned under a despotick, and what is worse than all, a tyrannical, imperious, ecclesiastical government. But all may now see the effects of freedom and liberty. But astonishing to tell, that under this benign government, in this land of freedom, where the sun of liberty first arose, and enlightened all with the bene-

\* When we have considered that America contains millions of people who are in the enjoyment of freedom, and the rights of man in the fullest extent, our bosoms glow with heart-felt satisfaction; but when on the other hand, we have considered that this highly privileged and free people hold thousands, only because they are of a dark colour, in a state of absolute, degraded, painful, and miserable slavery, how sorrowfully the scene is reversed—how poignant is the reflection.

fits and advantages thereof, and among a people whom the Lord hath redeemed from bondage, there are above three thousands, and that number increasing, who are under the most absolute, ecclesiastical monarchy that ever was on earth; and like Issachar, who is called the ass, they willingly couch under it, because they think that the rest is good, and the government is pleasant; so they bow their shoulders to bear, and become servants thereto—(Gen. xlix. 14, 15.) “Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon”—(2 Sam. i. 20) lest the uncircumcised, the enemies to a republican government rejoice. If your government is right, and the only true government that was ever appointed and owned of God, then all America is wrong, and we are only shouting praise to, and exalting a Babel of our own building.

A reply.—“We know they are all wrong, and you too, as you see and judge every thing respecting our faith and conduct, in a wrong light. You now think you have made it appear that the first Elders are walking in the same steps, and that their conduct is like unto those ungodly rulers you have mentioned; but you have not been able to make the comparison complete, as after all you have said, there is a wide difference between them and the leaders, or first Elders in this church; as in the latter, you behold humility and plainness in dress and living; in the former, pride, vanity, pomp, and splendour; in the latter, love and tenderness; in the former, hatred and cruelty; our Elders live the life of the gospel; those monarchs and popes you have mentioned, lived in sin, and in every respect, contrary to the gospel. Then surely our Elders are far from being like them. But though they live the life of the gospel, nevertheless you intimate *they are of the same spirit, and fear that they will become fully so in spirit and practice, as they increase in number and power.* Herein your fears are totally groundless, and has no foundation in truth. And as to what you have said respecting the first Elders living a recluse life, &c. it is surprising that any man of sense should mention this as an objection against us. When I believe there is not a family at Nisheuna but what Mother has been to

“ see ; and she does associate, and converse with the be-  
 “ lievers as far as is necessary and profitable ; and all  
 “ are benefited by the light and example of the first El-  
 “ ders. Besides, should there not be an order in the  
 “ church ; and should not all conform to, and keep in  
 “ their own order, according to their several gifts and  
 “ qualifications, as is the case in other societies, accord-  
 “ ing to their order ; and indeed, with every thing in nat-  
 “ ural creation ?

“ In answer to your objection, respecting kneeling be-  
 “ fore the Elders, I may observe, that it is not a com-  
 “ mon practice ; and what few instances there has been  
 “ of kneeling before them, were by such who have had  
 “ a long privilege, and had been taught the way of God ;  
 “ and who, nevertheless, have afterwards acted counter  
 “ to the gift and counsel they had received, and had vi-  
 “ olated their own consciences by committing sin ; and  
 “ such kneeled before the Elders only as expressive of  
 “ their humility, repentance, and sorrow ; and not from  
 “ a motive of worshipping, or adoring them. Besides,  
 “ they do not kneel before them as humbling themselves  
 “ before men, considered as man ; but before the gift  
 “ and power of God, or spirit of Christ, which they be-  
 “ lieve dwelleth in the saints.

“ That passage of the revelations you have quoted, is  
 “ nothing to the purpose. You know that the Elders  
 “ believe themselves to be but men, and poor, depend-  
 “ ant creatures ; and that they would not receive any  
 “ such adoration ; and if it was offered, they would like-  
 “ wise say, *See thou do it not ; we are thy fellow servants,*  
 “ *and thy brethren ; worship God.* There have been but few  
 “ instances of believers kneeling before them ; and then  
 “ only from the cause and motive I have mentioned.—  
 “ And according to your own account (as I have under-  
 “ stood) you did the same, as you kneeled in the presence  
 “ of him to whom you first opened your mind ; and he  
 “ kneeled with you. I presume you did not so do, as  
 “ paying any adoration, or particular respect to him ;  
 “ but in humility to God ; and as you have said, that  
 “ you might confess in a right spirit, and others have



“ done the same : this being the cause and motive, you,  
 “ or any reasonable person, ought not to mention this as  
 “ an objection against our faith.

“ You also object against us, because we do not at-  
 “ tend to human learning, books, and reading. Instead  
 “ of these, we wish to attend to the gospel that will save  
 “ us from our sins. A soul never can learn the way of  
 “ life and salvation by human learning. Books and  
 “ reading will never bring us nearer to the kingdom of  
 “ heaven. Reading will never give us power over sin,  
 “ nor save us from our sins. Salvation from sin, should  
 “ be the great concern and business of our lives : this  
 “ should claim our greatest attention ; and not books,  
 “ which would only have a tendency to lead the mind  
 “ away from the simplicity of the gospel. It is certain  
 “ that the true and saving knowledge of God, cannot be  
 “ obtained by books and reading. As proof of this, the  
 “ most learned have ever differed in their sentiments on  
 “ the subject of religion ; and many of them have re-  
 “ nounced the christian religion, and all divine revela-  
 “ tion. Others have denied the existence of a God, and  
 “ the immortality of the soul. And some have read till  
 “ they believed nothing at all (i. e. become sceptics.)—  
 “ Truly, according to the apostle, many have *ever been*  
 “ *learnings, and never have been able to come to the knowledge*  
 “ *of the truth—*(2 Tim. iii. 7.) *The world, by this human*  
 “ *wisdom, knows not God—*(1 Cor. i. 21.) The things  
 “ of God are *hidden from the wise and prudent* in human  
 “ learning, and revealed unto babes—(Matt. xi. 25.) i. e.  
 “ such as are simple, and willing to be taught according  
 “ to the order of God.

“ We believe that human learning, if kept in its proper  
 “ bounds, may be serviceable in transacting the concerns  
 “ of this life ; and on this account, a few books on the  
 “ arts and sciences, may be useful to those whom they  
 “ may concern. We have no objection against geo-  
 “ graphical, and some historical books ; but respecting our  
 “ salvation, nothing is necessary, but to keep in the gift,  
 “ and in obedience to what we are taught.

“ Respecting those monarchs and popes you have men-  
 “ tioned, we believe they received their power from the

“ prince of this world ; and have acted according to the  
 “ spirit by which they were governed . Therefore, be-  
 “ cause unholy men, under the influence of an evil spirit,  
 “ have imitated, or been found, in some respects, in the  
 “ outward order of God, and preached some doctrines  
 “ that were true, is it any proof we are wrong, because  
 “ we are, in some respects, in the same faith and prac-  
 “ tice ? Does it furnish any reasons, that we should lie  
 “ under the censure of walking in their steps, and pat-  
 “ terning after them ? You might as well say the Pa-  
 “ pists believe that God ought to be worshipped, and be-  
 “ cause we believe the same, therefore we are like them.

“ You say you believe a monarchical government is  
 “ the best, if the monarch is a good man, and his suc-  
 “ cessors so continue to remain. You believe the present  
 “ leaders of the church are good men. They seek the  
 “ good, peace, and happiness of the people in every re-  
 “ spect. Therefore, you have no reason to believe but  
 “ what their successors will so continue to remain.

“ We hold to no man (or woman) ruling as man ;  
 “ but the spirit of Christ in man. We hold to no other  
 “ government but the government of Christ, or by his  
 “ spirit, which is in love, tenderness, and compassion to-  
 “ wards all souls. If ever the ministration, therefore,  
 “ deviate from this principle ; if ever they become ty-  
 “ rannical and cruel, then may all the world exclaim  
 “ against them ; as it is only the spirit of Christ by  
 “ which we now profess to be ruled and governed. We  
 “ totally renounce, and bear testimony against the least  
 “ appearance of that domineering, usurping, cruel spirit  
 “ and power that those monarchs and popes possessed ;  
 “ and if that power, as you say, is sitting in the east,  
 “ which we hope it is, you have no cause to say, it is  
 “ rising in the west, meaning among us, as here is not  
 “ the least appearance of that spirit. It is, therefore,  
 “ unjust in you, to compare us with the popes of Rome,  
 “ though we may be like them in some points of faith  
 “ and practice (and so is every church.) It is unfeeling,  
 “ it is unkind in you, so to blacken us with the spirit of  
 “ anti-christ, which you believe they were governed by,  
 “ after all the love, forbearance, tenderness, and kind-

“ nefs, which you have feen among the people, and re-  
 “ ceived from them yourfelf. I hardly know what to  
 “ think of you. I would wifh to have charity for you,  
 “ and hope your heart is better than your tongue, which  
 “ the apoftle calls an unuly member, and hard to be  
 “ brought into fubjection.

“ There never was a people on earth under fo kind  
 “ and tender a church government as we are ; and we  
 “ are confident it never will be applicable in the fpirit  
 “ of it, to your defcription of monarchy.

“ Concerning America, we have nothing againft its  
 “ government. We believe providence was on the fide  
 “ of America in the revolution ; but why it was fo, the  
 “ people did not know. In their conftitution they al-  
 “ lowed liberty for all to act according to their own faith  
 “ in religious matters ; all which, in the providence of  
 “ God, was to make way and room for the firft opening  
 “ and eftablifhment of the gofpel. Thus, according to  
 “ St. John, the earth, i. e. the earthly government, or a  
 “ government of the fpirit of this world, helped the wo-  
 “ man and her feed, that is, the people of God. The  
 “ earth opened her mouth and fwallowed up, or took  
 “ away the power of perfecution—(Rev. xii.) Now here-  
 “ in we fee the wifdom of God in caufing our firft El-  
 “ ders to leave England, at prefent a place of confufion,  
 “ noife, and war, and to come to a land of peace. You  
 “ fay, *America is an highly favoured people*. Yea, they are  
 “ as the Jews were, when Chrift came among them ; and  
 “ it is a pity any fhould be as unwife as they were in re-  
 “ fufing the gofpel of his firft appearance.

“ You fay, Many don’t know the privileges they might  
 “ enjoy. Yea, truly, they do not. They might, by be-  
 “ ing fo highly favoured, as in having the true and liv-  
 “ ing gofpel planted among them, whereby they might  
 “ become faved from their fins, and be made a happy  
 “ people.

“ You fay, ‘ Hail America ! what an highly favoured  
 “ people ! ’ Yea, they are fo. But not altogether in con-  
 “ fequence of a republican government—but in confe-

“ quence of the reign and kingdom of Christ being set  
 “ up among them, if they were wise enough to receive  
 “ this gospel and come into this kingdom of peace.

“ Then truly you say, ‘ when we look around the world  
 “ and see how nations have been and still are kept in ig-  
 “ norance, oppressed and imposed on by tyrants and an-  
 “ ti-christian teachers, you feel thankful,’ &c. But we  
 “ can say we feel thankful for the favours and privileges  
 “ of the gospel we enjoy; and that we can go forth in  
 “ obedience thereto, without fearing the wrath of the  
 “ anti-christian powers of this world. ‘ The uninformed  
 “ are insensible of the privileges’ we enjoy, and know not  
 “ ‘ what an excellent government is set up among them ;’  
 “ even that government in which, according to prophe-  
 “ sy, the Prince of Peace was to have the government  
 “ on his shoulders; and we find him a true and a wonder-  
 “ ful counsellor—(Isa. ix. 6, 7.) They do not know  
 “ what a ‘ highly favoured part of the world they live in ;  
 “ and what a blessing and privilege they might enjoy.  
 “ Thus part of this ‘ New World is become like Adam’s  
 “ Paradise.’ Thus your language only wants a little al-  
 “ teration, a little sifting and shifting, and it would be  
 “ the truth; many of your premises are true, but your  
 “ inferences are false: your tongue only wants a regula-  
 “ tor—if it was regulated by the gospel, your inferences  
 “ would be as true as your premises.

“ After you have given a short description of the Amer-  
 “ ican government, and the privileges and effects of free-  
 “ dom and liberty, you cry out, ‘ but astonishing to tell,  
 “ that under this benign government, in this land of free-  
 “ dom, there are above three thousand who are under the  
 “ most absolute monarchical government that ever was  
 “ on earth.’ Here you appear to be totally blind, as to  
 “ seeing the difference of the spirit of this government  
 “ and all former ones; for you seem to infer that it is  
 “ the same spirit, though you cautiously avoid adding  
 “ tyrannical and cruel, which you have applied to former  
 “ monarchical governments, both in church and state.  
 “ As from the knowledge you have of the people of God  
 “ under this government, your conscience won’t suffer  
 “ you to make that addition. We know that this is the



" government of the Prince of Peace, whose yoke is ea-  
 " sy, and his burden is light—(Matt. xi. 30.) And it is  
 " that which gives real freedom and liberty to the sub-  
 " jects of it; even a freedom from sin and bondage to  
 " Satan; and we have come into the glorious liberty of  
 " the children of God—(Rom. viii. 21.) For where the  
 " spirit of the Lord is there is liberty—(2 Cor. iii. 17.)  
 " And we mean to stand fast in the liberty wherewith  
 " Christ hath made us free—(Gal. v. 1.) And you may  
 " tell it in *Gath*, and *publish it in the streets of Askelon*, and  
 " all the towns and streets in America, if you like, that  
 " the uncircumcised and unacquainted with true liberty  
 " and freedom may know where to find it.

" You say, 'if we are right, or if our government is the  
 " only true government that was ever owned of God,  
 " then America is wrong, and they have only contend-  
 " ed for, and now are exalting a Babel of their own  
 " building.' There is nor never was any government own-  
 " ed of God, but what was under the influence of his spirit.  
 " The very intent of government is to establish and se-  
 " cure peace and order, to secure the rights of all men,  
 " and preserve them from injury. This, fully and comple-  
 " tely, all civil governments have ever been defective  
 " in; and the reason is, because their origin is of that  
 " nature, that is injurious to the happiness of mankind, i. e.  
 " they have all been formed and contrived in the will and  
 " spirit of fallen man. As proof of this, under all govern-  
 " ments, whether monarchical, aristocratic, democratic,  
 " or republican, the majority of the people have never  
 " been satisfied; they have ever quarrelled among them-  
 " selves and with their rulers, which has generally ended  
 " in the usurpation of some arbitrary tyrant, assisted by  
 " a body of military mercenaries, to rule and oppress the  
 " people. Some say, that civil government should have  
 " nothing to do with the church. True; because all  
 " civil governments are so defective and sinful; and it is  
 " evident that not any of these governments are owned  
 " of God, as they have all, more or less, persecuted those  
 " who have had a measure of his spirit; and have stood  
 " in direct opposition to the increase of the government  
 " and kingdom of Christ. It was the very spirit of these

“ governments, or the ruling power and spirit of this  
 “ world, that would not have Christ to reign over them;  
 “ therefore crucified and put him to death : and all these  
 “ earthly powers are prophesied against, and their origin  
 “ described as arising out of the earth—(Dan. vii. 17)  
 “ ascending out of the bottomless pit, &c.—(Rev. xi. 7.)  
 “ And according to the prophesies, there is to be a time  
 “ when they are all to be destroyed, and the govern-  
 “ ment committed into the hands of Christ, and fastened  
 “ as a nail in a sure place, never more to be removed  
 “ and changed—(Isa. xxii. 23.) And there will be giv-  
 “ en unto him *dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all*  
 “ *people, nations, and languages, shall serve him ; his domin-*  
 “ *ion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away,*  
 “ *and his kingdom that shall not be destroyed—(Dan. vii. 14.)*  
 “ And under the government of Christ will fully be ac-  
 “ complished what hath been wanting and defective in  
 “ all others ; peace and order will be established and se-  
 “ cured, and men will not only be restrained, but the dis-  
 “ position in them to injure one another will be destroy-  
 “ ed ; the rights of all will be secured, not only their out-  
 “ ward, temporal rights, but their right to the gospel,  
 “ the free gift of the Son, which will save them with a  
 “ perfect salvation from every thing injurious to their  
 “ peace and happiness ; and they will be preserved from  
 “ all injury, not only outward, but inward, from an evil  
 “ nature and spirit. This we experience among us ; and  
 “ it is a government that the wisest politicians have nev-  
 “ er been able to form, because they wanted the power  
 “ over the evil nature in man. Nevertheless, it is neces-  
 “ sary, that while creatures are not under the government  
 “ of the spirit of Christ, they be under some government  
 “ according to the state they are in, and according to  
 “ their comprehensions and understanding ; and though  
 “ we have nothing to do with earthly powers, govern-  
 “ ments, and politics, yet if we must speak our minds,  
 “ we prefer a republican government before any other ;  
 “ as no one man, in a state of nature, under the power  
 “ of his own natural propensities, lusts, and desires, is fit  
 “ to govern others. Therefore, when the power of choos-  
 “ ing and refusing rulers is in the hands of the people,

“ and the rulers bound by some law, the evil nature in  
 “ man prone to covet, and grasp at property, to domi-  
 “ neer, usurp, and tyrannize over others, has not such an  
 “ opportunity to rise to such an height as it has done, or  
 “ would do if not so bound. But nevertheless, it is all  
 “ one side of the order of God, as being destitute of the  
 “ spirit of Christ, and is a babel of their own building,  
 “ which will only last for a time, and finally end in con-  
 “ fusion as it commenced, because it is all of the spirit  
 “ of this world, which never could be at peace: and as  
 “ all the governments and kingdoms of this world have  
 “ been set up and established in the spirit, nature, strength,  
 “ and will of man, and by war, and that often in the  
 “ greatest injustice; also, as that spirit is akin to, or of  
 “ the nature of Satan, therefore he has power over them;  
 “ and it is impossible for mankind to be content and live  
 “ in peace under any government, so long as they live  
 “ in sin and wickedness. This is the sole cause of all  
 “ the dispute, of all the difficulty that arises from every  
 “ quarter.

“ Can any man, that has the least sense of the spirit of  
 “ Christ, believe, that the present republican government  
 “ (which you and others extol so much) is of God, or  
 “ has the spirit of God for its support and protection,  
 “ when we see and hear how it is supported by pride,  
 “ strife, wrangling, and contention, particularly at elec-  
 “ tionering times? The public papers are often fraught  
 “ with all manner of scurrilous, abusive language, which  
 “ plainly shows the spirit ruling the people. When they  
 “ assemble at their elections, they often act as if they were  
 “ influenced by the spirit of the devil—and truly they  
 “ are influenced by their evil nature. Is this the way to  
 “ choose wise, honest, and judicious men to take the helm  
 “ of government? One might reasonably conclude that,  
 “ a wise man would have nothing to do with it, or would  
 “ not serve when chosen at such an election. Is this the  
 “ way to obtain the approbation and smiles of Provi-  
 “ dence, and draw down a blessing on the rulers, gov-  
 “ ernment, and country? And are these the people that  
 “ *the Lord hath redeemed from bondage*, when they thus  
 “ show how they are ruled and governed by the spirit of

“ Satan, and are in bondage to this tyrannical monarch?  
 “ When all manner of sin reigns from north to south,  
 “ and from east to west, religion and the fear of God is  
 “ despised, or little thought of; and many sins have now  
 “ become fashionable, particularly that abominable sin  
 “ of swearing and taking the name of God in vain—and  
 “ the greater sin, as they have no innate temptation there-  
 “ to, and for which they have no excuse; and it may be  
 “ said, because of swearing the land mourneth—(Jer.  
 “ xxiii. 10.) If they are an highly favoured people,  
 “ they are so much the less excusable; and above all,  
 “ according to their faith, they live under the sound of  
 “ the gospel, and with the advantages of as much litera-  
 “ ry knowledge and information as any people on earth.  
 “ They are not kept in ignorance as many nations are;  
 “ they see and know the consequences of sin; they know  
 “ the rock on which nations have split; they know that  
 “ sin and wickedness has ever been the downfall and ru-  
 “ in of nations. But alas! alas! they are walking in  
 “ the same steps, and it is likely they will continue so to  
 “ do, until they become, like other nations, ripe for ruin;  
 “ when God will withdraw his mercy and protection,  
 “ and then they will more fully experience the effects of  
 “ sin, either by intestine commotions, a civil war, or the  
 “ scourge of some foreign tyrannical power, and then  
 “ become a people who no longer can glory in a repub-  
 “ lican government, freedom and liberty. For true it  
 “ is, that *Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach*  
 “ *to any people*—(Prov. xiv. 34.)

“ Thus we see the state of America; and if we look  
 “ abroad among other nations, what a miserable specta-  
 “ cle presents itself! Nations fighting against nations,  
 “ and what is more inconsistent and deplorable, profess-  
 “ ing Christians against Christians; but it is evident they  
 “ are all anti-christians, they are of their father, the  
 “ devil—and the lusts of their father they will do; whose  
 “ lust or desire is to devour and destroy like a hungry  
 “ lion seeking for his prey. If we look into cities, there  
 “ we see sin, and all kinds of wickedness, contention, and  
 “ confusion. If we go forth into the field, there we hear  
 “ the clattering of the instruments of war—thousands



“ are killed on both sides—the groans and screams of  
 “ the dying are heard! Flight, pursuit, victory ensues;  
 “ then often ravishing, murdering, plundering, burning,  
 “ hating, cursing, and injuring one another every way  
 “ that lies in their power! Look at the nature of man—  
 “ kind—see their awful depravity!”

My reply—If all your arguments were as forcible on every other point of your faith, as on most of those you have last treated, I should be a believer. I fully unite with what has been said of the origin, nature, and spirit of civil government. I firmly believe with you, that no nation or people, under any government, can enjoy permanent and uninterrupted peace, while sin or the principle of evil prevails. Admitting the world is in the lost situation you have described, on account of the insufficiency of the light for which I have contended, and all other means it has had to prevent it, then I want sufficient evidence presented to my mind that the true and saving light now shineth, and that you are enlightened above all people that are or ever were on earth. I may observe, you have hitherto pulled down all systems, both civil and religious, and I believe you have pulled down several false things; but I know it is easier to pull down than to build up. True wisdom does not consist so much in discovering error, as it does in finding, exhibiting, and demonstrating the truth. If you could as clearly point out that the government which you are under to be of God, as you have that others are not, I should have more faith. When this point respecting the millennium is sufficiently substantiated, all controversy and doubts (as I have said before) about other points of your faith, will be settled of course. But hitherto, on this subject, you have given me little more than your bare assertion; it is true, you mention your good fruits, and utter some good sentiments, and I have mentioned some fruit among you, and many ideas and notions of things, which I think are not good. Your seeing and being able to show wherein all others are wrong, and have erred, is no proof that you are right in every respect. Others can see and point out wherein you also err; and I think one is almost as deep in the mud as the other is in the mire!—

You do not produce, nor neither do I see, that evidence with which the scriptures testify, that the second coming of Christ will be attended. The texts you quote from the scriptures to prove it are very few, and those I do not think applicable, viz. "If they shall say unto you, behold he is in the desert; go not forth; behold he is in the secret chambers—believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." This text I think is pointedly against you.

Another text I have often heard Elder Ebenezer quote when preaching: "For wheresoever the carcase is, thither will the eagles be gathered together"—Matt. xxiv. 28. The carcase is the church, the body, and the eagles are the airy, wild people, who must be gathered to the church. Now let us read the text according to the plain, literal meaning of it. Where the dead carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together to devour it. These predictions were literally fulfilled in the calamities which befel the Jewish nation, in about forty years after they crucified Christ. The Jewish nation was the carcase, and the Roman armies were the eagles.\*

Elder Hezekiah observed—"All who have been faithful and have travailed in obedience, have proof sufficient within their own souls that this is the way of God, and that we are under his government. We experience the prophecies of the second coming of Christ within us. We feel no spirit or disposition to hurt or injure any creature, but love and tenderness towards all souls. We feel a kingdom of peace set up within us; and you see there is an outward order and peace among us, such as was never seen on earth before, which is the product of that of which I have spoken, which is spiritual and unseen by the carnal eye, therefore you have no reason to doubt nor dispute the truth of this our testimony."

I replied—Your feeling no disposition to hurt or injure any creature, but love and tenderness towards all, is

\* See Bishop Newton's Dissertations on the Prophecies, vol. 43, p. 181. Bishop Pearce on the Destruction of Jerusalem.

no proof that you are the only people of God on earth; as there have been and are many who can truly bare testimony of as much inward experience of peace as you do; and I myself can truly say, I feel not the least disposition to hurt or injure any creature, but love towards all souls, and would rather suffer wrong myself, than wrong or injure any one.

I verily believe God is no sectarian, i. e. he does not favour those of one sect or name more than others, but his mercy is equal towards all his creatures; and such who sincerely seek him, he causes at times to flow into the soul an unction, which I cannot describe, but which fills or satisfies it completely.

I still believe, that by obedience and faithfulness to the light that God gives me, I may increase in that good work which I have already experienced, and finally gain a victory over all sin, and in the end have an admittance into those peaceable and heavenly mansions, where I shall hear no more of lo here, and lo there, no more of sects and parties, each one wishing and endeavouring to pull down others to build up themselves.

Elder John Meacham said—"Thomas, you never will gain a victory over sin; but sin at times will have power over you, unless you receive faith in the present revelation of God in his people, and become obedient to the gift of God, one side of which there is no salvation from sin."

I replied—If all be true that you say, it appears to me it must be something more powerful to fully convince me of it, than a bare verbal testimony. It must be the power of God—I must have internal evidence. Before I became acquainted with these people, I thought (and which appeared to me agreeable to the scripture testimony) that in the millennium, Christ's coming would be attended with such demonstrative evidence, that none would have any doubt respecting it. Therefore I concluded, that all disputations and arguments about religion, that has hitherto so filled the Christian world, would then be at an end; for all would know the Lord for themselves. Also, that arguments and reasoning would no more be necessary to convince the people of the com-

ing and shining of the Sun of Righteousness, than they are now necessary to convince people of the rising and shining of the natural sun. But the truth is, I have heard more arguments and disputations, since I first came to Niskeuna, than ever I heard before. I have often sat silent for hours hearing the Elders, or others in the faith, arguing with unbelievers, and they with them: and I have reason to believe the Elders have laboured much in the same manner with several other believers as well as with me. When I became so strong in the faith as to vindicate your principles to the world, and show that this was the millennium, there was no other way for me to do it but by arguments; in which I often failed of succeeding, and could not act the part of the apostle Paul disputing with and confounding the Gentiles, (at Cornwall and other places) proving from the scriptures, that Jesus is the Christ, manifested and had appeared the second time in the people called Shakers. Thus, instead of all doubts and controversy being at an end, it appears, if your faith increases, or this church becomes popular, there will be more in the world than ever before. If only the arguments and reasoning that the Elders and several of the believers have had with me, endeavouring to convince me, and the controversy we have had together, were all written, it would be a large volume. Therefore, I think it time now to end. We have proceeded as far, and perhaps farther already, than has been profitable. But I can truly say, that my motive in plainly opening my mind to you, and making objections wherein I have been dissatisfied, and rendering reasons for those several objections, has been for information, and that you might clear them up if possible to my satisfaction, and remove those obstacles to my increasing in the faith, out of the way, some of which you have removed. And I believe your motive in bearing with me, and endeavouring to convince me, has proceeded from a concern (according to your faith) for my good; which I thankfully acknowledge. To which Elder John Meacham said—

“ Thomas, we are very willing to agree with you in  
“ ending all disputation.”



Elder Hezekiah said—"We hope you will not suffer any hard feeling to arise in your heart against us."

I replied—Never, I hope, against you nor any other people, on account of difference in sentiments. I shall ever respect you, and remember the time you spent with me, and your patiently and calmly bearing with all my contradictions and, I fear, sometimes too harsh expressions against you and the faith; and whatever I have said contrary to the spirit of meekness, I confess unto you I am sorry for; and I hope your love and good will for me will not be lessened.

Elder Hezekiah replied—"We shall hold nothing against you, Thomas; we feel nothing but good will towards you."

I now was much affected, under a sense of their love and kindness—and sorry that I could not fully unite with them—and in tears I answered—I shall remember and consider all you have spoken. If you are only in the right way, I pray that God may enlighten my understanding and lead me into it. We read, "The prayer of the righteous availeth much:" you profess to be so; and I hope you will pray for me, and that your prayers may prevail. I then left the room.

Now one principal reason of the Elders bearing so much with me in all that part of the controversy I had with them, was because it was the order for believers to open to the Elders all their doubts, and whatever they were dissatisfied about, or wherein any one was irreconciled to the faith, or the Elders, in order that the Elders might solve the doubts and objections of believers, and satisfy them if possible. And I may observe, they bore with me more than they would have done, on account of my uniting with them in every point of faith and practice, not disputed in this work.

A few days after I parted with the Elders, I being in company with a few believers, one of them said—

"Soon after your last conversation with the Elders, I being in company with them, I asked them if you was any more satisfied with and reconciled to the faith; one of them answered me thus—It is easier to gain a thousand ignorant, unlearned persons, than one who is

“learned and well read ; but when such an one is gained, he is worth a thousand of the former ; and this, they said, was one cause of their labouring so much with you.”

I replied—I never professed to be a learned man, nor did I ever consider myself as such. It is but little learning that I have. But can it be possible, that learning and reading is esteemed so highly, that a learned and well read man is worth a thousand unlearned, when I have heard so much spoken against learning and reading ?

The answer—“The difficulty that attends human learning is, that it hinders creatures from receiving faith ; as it is easier to gain a thousand without it, than one with it, who can criticise and raise objections to every thing that’s offered ; be it ever so good. But if such an one becomes effectually gained, and that wisdom or learning becomes refined and brought into subjection and obedience to the gospel, then it becomes profitable in enabling such, who possess it, to give a clear account of the faith, to convince unbelievers, and give answers to objections that may be raised against it ; like unto the apostle Paul, who having more learning than the other apostles, was more able to vindicate the cause of Christ, and prove that Jesus was the promised Messiah ; and on account of this service in the church, the Elders meant one is worth a thousand.”

I replied—I believe it has been found to be the truth ever since the faith was first preached, that it is easier to gain a thousand ignorant persons, than one learned and well informed, as there has not been gained one of the latter to a thousand of the former, or that have continued in the faith.

One said—“We know it has been much as of old, *not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble are called,* or obedient to the call, because of the cross. But *God hath chosen the foolish things, the weak, the unlearned in the world’s wisdom—(1 Cor. i. 26, 27.)* And it appears as if the *gospel was hid from the wise and prudent of this world, and revealed only unto babes ;* and Christ thanked his Father because it was so. Therefore, we should

“ be satisfied if there was not, nor never had been one  
 “ learned in this world’s wisdom among us ; and thank-  
 “ ful that we have not had that wisdom that might have  
 “ hindered us from receiving the gospel, which I would  
 “ not exchange for all the learning and knowledge in  
 “ the world.

“ The Elders have understood that you had conclud-  
 “ ed to leave us, until you could more clearly see the  
 “ propriety of our faith and practice ; but they told me,  
 “ that your faith and sincerity was such, that they be-  
 “ lieved you would soon return.”

I replied— They have misunderstood me, or you have  
 misunderstood them. I do not mean to leave the peo-  
 ple yet. It is by becoming thoroughly acquainted with  
 the faith, that I can see, or be able to judge of its pro-  
 priety. If I leave the people, I shall have but a small  
 privilege among them, and but little opportunity to be-  
 come farther acquainted with their faith and practice ;  
 therefore I mean to abide with them until I am fully  
 convinced whether this be the only way of God or not ;  
 and by waiting patiently, some evidence may be pre-  
 sented to my mind, sufficient to convince me.

One said—“ You cannot become convinced any other  
 “ way but by obedience, according to Christ’s words—  
 “ *If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine,*  
 “ *whether it be of God*”—(John vii. 17.)

Now on my considering what time the Elders had  
 spent, and of their labours with me in all our past con-  
 versations ; and knowing how subject many professed  
 christians are to get warm in controversy, and suffer a  
 spirit to arise contrary to what they profess ; but not  
 having hitherto seen the least symptoms of the like in  
 the Elders, and others with whom I had conversed ; but  
 they having always appeared to bear with me, and pa-  
 tiently hear what I had to say ; and having manifested  
 throughout, a meek, mild, and quiet spirit ; and in con-  
 sidering of their love, tenderness, and good will towards  
 me, from the first, to this time ; I felt a love for them,  
 and was much reconciled to them. I considered there  
 were many things I believed in common with them ;  
 some of which, I believed to be excellent principles ; as

confessing and forsaking every thing which they believed to be sin, and living in love and unity. I believed as Elder Hezekiah had told me, that the order, love, and unity of the Shakers, exceeded that of any people, or society with which we are acquainted. In short, I believed that there were more good principles and practices among them, than any other sect.

With respect to those points in which I could not fully believe, particularly respecting the millennium, I admitted a possibility of my being mistaken, as thousands had been in opposing that which, at last, proved to be right. I also considered that though they might be like the Papist in several points of doctrine; yet that, perhaps I had done wrong in judging that their spirit was the same, according to their power. I reflected upon what Elder Hezekiah had said, viz. That I saw, and judged things respecting them, in a wrong light; and that it was unkind to compare their spirit to that of the persecuting church of Rome.

I now took the subject of obedience to the ministration into consideration, and the arguments which the Elders had advanced on that subject. I also recollected what I had read in several authors in support of obedience to the church. I now thought so favourable of the Elders, that I concluded to be more obedient. And also to act according to the advice of a certain celebrated commentator, viz. "Those that join themselves to Christ, will join themselves to his ministers, and follow them."\*

Accordingly, the Sabbath after my last conversation with the Elders, I went to meeting, with an intention to inform our Elder Brother Seth Wells after meeting, that I was reconciled. Indeed, I felt so much so, that at this meeting I attempted to join them in the dance, which I had not done for several months before; but Seth Wells caught hold of me, and prevented me, and speaking with a low voice, he said, he wished me not to join them in labour.

I replied—Why did you not tell me before?

\* Matthew Henry, on Acts xiii. 43.



It being before a publick congregation, and many spectators being present, I much disliked his conduct. I thought he might have told me when he saw me taking off my coat, which I had seldom done before, but now I was for keeping in union.

In the afternoon I met with them in their private meeting, as usual :\* before it began, I did not open my reconciliation, Seth having given me such a repulse, and Elder Ebenezer, who was at this meeting, gave me a greater. He spake as follows, in a sharp, authoritative manner ; lashing, and whipping me, and two or three more, over the backs of others, though I was the principal one intended :

“ I desire you would keep in the gift, and not give  
 “ heed to any doctrines contrary to the faith ye have re-  
 “ ceived. There are some among us, who would bring  
 “ heresy and schism into the church. Guard against their  
 “ poisoned discourses, and hear not those who say that  
 “ Christ can be prayed unto, and found in the desert,  
 “ secret chambers, and closets of your own hearts ; † *for*  
 “ *as the lightning shineth out of the east unto the west, so is*  
 “ *the coming of Christ ; and where the carcase is, there the*  
 “ *eagles are to be gathered together.* Confess your sins, and  
 “ cast the filthiness out of your hearts, where Christ is  
 “ not, nor never will be until you do ; and receive him  
 “ in the way that he doth now, and ever hath revealed  
 “ himself. He can only be known to your salvation by  
 “ receiving him in the word preached ; *for how can you*  
 “ *hear without a preacher ? and how can any preach, except*  
 “ *they be sent ?* It is in Zion where God is to be known,  
 “ and revealed to you, by and through his ministrations ;  
 “ and salvation by that gift and word of God, we preach  
 “ unto you : and what we preach unto you is, to con-

\* In the forenoon they assembled in their public meeting-house ; but in the afternoon, in one of their dwelling-houses, where spectators, or those who are not members of the society, are but seldom admitted.

† When he expressed thus, I thought of the words of Christ—  
 “ When thou prayest enter into thy closet, and pray to thy Father which is in secret,” &c.—Matt. vi. 6. Therefore, it appeared to me Elder Ebenezer pointedly contradicted Christ.

“ fess and forsake your sins. Don't think that you can  
 “ affeible here with your sins covered. I can see  
 “ through and through you. I can call you by name,  
 “ and expose the sins you have not confessed.

“ We know that we have the word of God ; and we  
 “ know that this is the way of God ; and we can say un-  
 “ to you, ‘ *thus saith the Lord ;* ’ and cavilers and disput-  
 “ ers can never overthrow it. There are some among  
 “ you, who believe we are a sincere people, as many in  
 “ other societies are. But we want no such believers  
 “ among us, who believe no more than this. There is  
 “ one among you, who says, others before us have been  
 “ as confident and certain respecting revelations to them,  
 “ and of the second coming of Christ, as we are ; but  
 “ time has proved they were mistaken, and so we may  
 “ be. This is the reasoning of the serpent, who wishes  
 “ to bring you under doubts, and destroy your faith.—  
 “ Away with it, for it will prove poison to your souls.  
 “ It is Satan working against the gift of God. Be on  
 “ your guard, keep in the gift, and there you are safe.  
 “ For Satan's reasonings are subtle ; filled with error,  
 “ heresy, and poison. He will bring forth much truth,  
 “ and you are not able to judge the truth from the er-  
 “ ror, as by subtle reasoning, one will appear as plausi-  
 “ ble as the other ; and when such speak truth, it is of  
 “ no profit, being one side of the gift of God. There-  
 “ fore, keep in the gift ; for without us, you can judge  
 “ nothing ; one side of the counsel of the ministrations,  
 “ you are all in darkness. (I do not wish to hurt the  
 “ feelings of any one in the faith : I am only speaking  
 “ occasionally.) There are some who will tell you of  
 “ their great experience of the love of God ; but he that  
 “ saith he loveth God, *and keepeth not his commandments, is*  
 “ *a liar, and the truth is not in him ; and he that committeth*  
 “ *sin, is of the devil ; for whosoever is born of God, doth not*  
 “ *commit sin.*

“ Some talk about being taught by the spirit of God,  
 “ and will tell you about the great experiences and at-  
 “ tainments of christians of other societies ; but Christ is  
 “ *the way*, not the many ways. There is but one way  
 “ of life and salvation ; but one gospel, and only salva-

" tion by that gospel. Therefore, all talk about this  
 " one and the other one, in that way or the other, being  
 " taught by the spirit of God unto salvation, is fruitless  
 " and vain. And there is Thomas Brown, he expects  
 " to be saved one side of the gospel and counsel of the  
 " ministration, but he is deceived ; and all will find them-  
 " selves in the end deceived, who adhere to, and believe  
 " him. Such as live in sin, and are disobedient to what  
 " they are taught, however wise they may be, or great  
 " profession they may make, are in a poor, lost, dark  
 " state. And such as have had a privilege among the  
 " people of God, and afterwards forsake the way of God,  
 " eternal damnation will be their portion. Such as go  
 " to the world, and to backsliders, to inquire about the  
 " people of God, are one side of the gospel, and out of  
 " the gift. We have no union with such conduct. It  
 " is deceit, it is hypocrisy.\*

" I have not spoken from any outward information,  
 " but from the present gift of God. We wish all to keep  
 " and abide in the way they have been taught ; in which  
 " you will find peace and rest to your souls ; and not  
 " become liable to be tost about with every wind of doc-  
 " trine. We wish you to keep in love and union, one  
 " with another ; as you can no farther love God, and  
 " be in union with him, than you love, and are in union  
 " with the brethren. As much as you love the brethren,  
 " so much you love God ; and your love and union  
 " is your strength. We wish you to have no hard feel-  
 " ings towards any one ; but each one to examine his own  
 " heart, and mind his own concerns, and keep in the gift :  
 " and all who have not any sin covered, and feel their  
 " union to the way of God, may prepare for labour."

Now, as the other Elders and myself, had amicably  
 concluded to have no more controversy, (and in the  
 morning of this day all was peace and quietness, and I  
 felt, as I have said, much reconciled ;) but now the old  
 controverted subjects are again brought up, which was  
 much contrary to my expectation. Eldér Ebenezer had  
 often before spoken so pointedly as to designate me as

\* I had conversed with several backsliders, and he had heard of it.

the principal object aimed at; and I thought it extremely uncandid, and unjust, to address an individual in a publick assembly, where there is no possibility of his making a replication, without a breach of decorum; but as he had now mentioned my name, that none present might be mistaken whom he had implicated as a dangerous person; and my mind being exceedingly tried by such a sudden opposition to the state it was in just before; therefore, as soon as the believers stopped dancing, I spake a few words, signifying I had been misrepresented.

Thus publickly speaking of a person, they call publick chastisement.

After meeting, I requested to see Elder Ebenezer, which request was not granted. He sent me word he was not well. The next day I sent word to him again, that I wished to have a little conversation with him, if agreeable; but there was some excuse, and I have never had an opportunity to speak with him since.

I told some believers how I had felt reconciled, (but I told the Elders nothing about it,) and that I knew if I had informed Seth, or Ebenezer of it before meetings, they would not have treated me thus; but now said I, where is the sense of feeling which they profess to have? It appears they know nothing about any one, until they are outwardly informed.

I was answered—"The Elders may sometimes err. You should not think hard of Seth, and Elder Ebenezer, for what they have done; they wish you well."

There were some believers who were dissatisfied with those proceedings towards me, and who examined for themselves what they saw and heard, and had but little faith: with them I often freely conversed concerning the faith, the Elders, and their gifts; (for this was the topic of conversation at all times.) Shortly after this last mentioned meeting, being with one of them, and thus conversing, about 12 o'clock at night we retired into a garret, and went to bed; and still continuing our conversation; when about 2 o'clock, I heard a singing drawing on from a distance. As my companion was then talking, I said—Hark! We lay silent; when we both heard a singing exactly like that which the brethren often



fung, which they called a solemn song, apparently passed over us, near the roof of the house, which we heard about two minutes. It gradually ceased, by apparently going from us, as it came on in drawing nearer to us.— My bed-fellow asked me what I thought of it? I told him I knew not what to think of it.

He said—“ Perhaps one of the brethren have come near the house, and sung, to make us believe we heard the angels sing, in order to strengthen our faith.”

I replied—I cannot believe any of them would be guilty of such wicked deception; besides, we clearly heard the singing over the house; and you don't consider what a snow has fallen the day and evening past, it is now at least four feet deep; so that no one can walk, or ride, until the roads are trodden; and it is not likely any body has been out this very cold night.

He said—“ The singing might have been only in our imaginations.”

I replied—If so, it is extraordinary that both of our imaginations should be thus affected at the same time.— If only one of us had heard it, I should not have thought strange of it, as I could have assigned a natural cause for it.

He observed—“ The church brethren say, they often hear departed spirits, or angels sing; and it may be, it was the same, in order to strengthen our faith.”

I said—Ah! it may be this, and it may be that, and it is all—may be. I must have more substantial evidence to strengthen my faith, than—may be's. I also may reasonably conclude, that, angels or spirits have more wisdom, than to sing for us only a tune which conveys not any information, and placing a puzzling-cap on my head, when it is loaded with them already.

A short time after, I being five or six days with a family of believers (for I still spent much of my time with them) at eleven o'clock one night, they all having retired to rest, and I laying awake in a dry, well finished room; and in which was a stove and fire, there fell a large drop of water on my temples: on examination, I could not discover where the water came from. I told the believers of it in the morning.

One said—" Ah ! it is some warning for you, respecting your unbelief."

I then assigned some inconclusive reasons how the drop might have become formed in the room, and its falling.

One replied—" Ah ! that is the way you render a natural reason for the cause of every thing ; and so reason away your faith, and yourself out of the gospel."

1804. Fourteenth of March I took another journey to Lebanon, and my family with me.

Next day after we arrived, it being Sabbath day, I wished to have a sight of those in the higher order ; and accordingly I and my wife went to the meeting-house where they assembled. They were in much outward order, particularly in their labour, (which is different from that among young believers ; but in time will be the same with them, as they improve or travail as they term it, into church order.) Their leader spake a few minutes on obedience to, and keeping in the gift.

When we returned from meeting, Elder Hezekiah asked my wife " if she had ever been to so good a meeting before."

She answered—" Yea, many I think much better."

But this is much contrary to the faith, to give other professors, and their meetings, the preference.

The next day, second of the week, I was requested by the Elders to retire with them into a private room ; and after some indifferent conversation, one of them said—

" Thomas, the gift from Elder Ebenezer, is for you to confess all your sins again."

I replied—That I can shortly, and easily do. But then as I must do it as a religious act, I wish to feel and see it my duty, that I may do it sincerely ; and not as a mere matter of form, and only speak with my tongue, and not with my heart.

Elder Hezekiah said—" You should immediately close in with, and take right hold of the gift that is for you. This is your duty ; and in giving up your own will and feelings to the gift of God, will be the most acceptable sacrifice you can offer."

I replied—I hope I may have a little time to consider of it.

He answered—“ Yea, you may. We wish you to begin anew, and take up your cross in earnest, and be obedient to the gospel, and become a man of God ; and not loiter behind as a babe, while others are travelling before, and out of sight of you. When, by this time, if you had been obedient, you might have been as far advanced as any of the young believers, or more so, as you was the first that received a measure of faith in this opening ; and you might have been a help to many other souls.”

I asked him why they did not labour with, and endeavour to strengthen my wife in the faith ?

He answered—“ If you would become satisfied, and obedient, there will be no difficulty with her, nor your children. We believe they would make good believers ; but if you shut yourself out, you will ruin your own soul, and lead them in the way of ruin with you : all which, one day you will bitterly repent.”

They now left me in what may be properly termed the confessional room, as it was a small out-house, where they convened occasionally, and where the Elders laboured with the believers ; and where the latter opened their minds. Some of the believers called it the potter's house, i. e. where the Elders fashioned and moulded the believers anew.

In the evening Elder Hezekiah came to see me again, and asked me “ whether I had concluded to be obedient to the gift.”

I answered—I have confessed my sins several times already ; and it appears to me to be an idle work, to tell you of what you know already ; and foolish things that I have done in my childhood, and time of my youthful vanity and ignorance, which are of no consequence to any creature on earth, and are not worth a fool's hearing. At a time when I was powerfully convicted for sin, and felt myself a poor, lost soul, I begged of God to have mercy on me. He filled my soul with his love. I felt

my sins forgiven. I then wanted a thousand tongues to praise him. And I this day verily believe they are forgiven.

He replied—"Why then, did you ever confess them to us?"

I said—You appeared to be a more religious, and exemplary society, than any other I knew of; and I thought it no evil to tell what I had done. But I fear it will be evil to continue telling an evil, idle, foolish story over and over again. I care nothing about my sins. They don't trouble me, and I am sure they need not concern you; and I wish to do as I read in the good book—"Forget the things that are behind, and press forward to the good things before."

Elder Hezekiah said—"You must choose your own way, if you will not walk in the way of God. And if you are not obedient to the gift in confessing your sins, you will be held in union with the people of God no longer, and all doors will be shut against you, both here and at Niskeuna."

I replied—Nay, not all doors—you are mistaken. There are some believers you never can persuade to shut their doors against me; you may threaten them as you please, it will be all in vain. But I do not wish to do any thing to offend any one, or cause any believers to shut their doors against me. I wish to be in love with them, and if they were all to shut their doors against me, if I had ten thousand I would open all to them; and if any of them were hungry, I would feed them; if thirsty, I would give them drink; those of them who are strangers to me, as well as those I am acquainted with, I would take in and entertain them as well as I could; if they were naked, I would clothe them; if they were sick, I would nurse them; if they were in prison, I would visit them—Matt. xxv. Thus would I return good for evil. And the many believers that have been to my house, from time to time, have reason to believe that thus would I do unto them; not shut my doors against them, and use them or any others unkind, because they believe not as I do. Never, never; O, God forbid that I should be of such a spirit. Oh! Elder Hezekiah, how



much your last sentence favours of persecution ! Can it be possible you mean what you say ? You may depend on it, I cannot forget it very soon. Turn me out of your houses, and shut your doors against me because I can't believe as you do, or because I conscientiously cannot do what you desire of me. So the Bostonians, those pretended Christians, shut their doors against the Quakers, who had to wander in the woods until some were almost starved to death. What for ? why because they conscientiously could not conform to what those pretended Christians required of them, or do any thing to which they felt an inward reluctance ; and because they conscientiously believed that no religious performances were acceptable to God unless done as moved thereto by his spirit, or at least unless they felt a free and willing mind.

Elder Hezekiah said—" You should not let your mind run on in such a manner, but labour to get hold of the gift that is for you."

I was now brought under a trial ; for I must either be obedient to the gift, or be shut out, which I was loth to be, as I wished to have a further privilege among them, to prove whether they were the only people of God or not ; as yet I was not fully satisfied, thinking it might be possible that they were what they professed to be ; and I thought it would be wrong for me to leave them unless I was fully convinced that this was *not* the only way of salvation. Besides, after a long and agreeable acquaintance and close friendship, which had subsisted and been uninterrupted between me and many individuals of the society, the thought of having those whom I loved and esteemed shut their doors against me, was more than I could bear. It caused a grief, and gave me feelings that were truly poignant and distressing.— This was the principal cause why I was so loth to leave the society.

I shall now proceed with my narration. In the evening, being concerned and troubled in mind, I ate no supper, neither did I eat any thing for near three days after ; during most of which time I continued alone in the aforementioned room.

The second day of my retirement, third day of the week, Elder Hezekiah visited me two or three times, counselling, interceding, and persuading me to be obedient unto the gift; and told me it was the wicked, carnal nature in me that caused me to stand against the gift of God, and hindered me from obedience thereto. I said, I know not what to think of you; when I first came among you and confessed my sins, you told me then—“If at any time hereafter I felt desirous to open my mind, I would have the privilege so to do; and it was then as I felt and saw to be my duty. It was then told me to act up to, and according to the light I had from God. It was then the secret operations of the spirit and word of God in my heart you recommended me to. It was then, the gospel don't bind creatures, but gives liberty to act our faith, feelings, and mind, in matters that are not sinful. It was then, according to the light given us, and that no more is required of creatures than what is made known to them to be their duty.”

Now it is not my faith, but your faith; now it is not as I feel, but as you feel for me; now it is no more acting according to my light, but your light; no more now looking to the spirit and word in my heart, as you once told us at Cornwall, but the outward declarative word you speak. No longer now do you say, “The gospel don't bind creatures;” for I am bound to do what I cannot see or feel it my duty to do, or else I must be cast off and all doors shut against me. I have no liberty now to act my faith, but I must act your faith, or else abide by the dread decision of *anathema maranatha*. Once I was told, it was only the continued commission of sin and violation of conscience that shut any out of union; but now I am to be shut out for not violating my conscience and doing that which I fear will be sin. And I am now required to do what is not made known to me to be my duty—all diametrically opposite to the doctrine preached at first. But I forgot that I proposed to drop all controversy, with which you agreed—excuse me for thus opening a door for it again.

He replied—"We have answered all these seeming contradictions sufficiently heretofore, and you do wrong to let your mind run on things that don't concern your present calling. We wish you to be wise and labour in your mind, to be united to the present gift."

I told him, I believed I would go home; and that probably I might feel willing to open my mind sometime hereafter.

I was answered—"Now is your accepted time, and now is the day for you to come into the way of salvation. If you are not obedient to the present gift of God, you may never have the offer and privilege of the gospel again; and you will sink below the wickedest and most lost creature on earth, who never had the offer of the gospel. I think it is likely you will come to nothing, and be a poor creature, like many others who have turned their backs on the way of God. And you will not be able totally to loose your faith; the impresson it has made on your mind will abide, and it will be your torment as it hath been to others, who have turned off—and it will be your and their torment in hell! What a pity, when you might become a bright man in the gospel. I have known some who have lost their senses, who have wandered about day and night, and did not know where they were, or what they were doing. I have also known some, and heard of many, that have come to an unhappy end."

He told me a story of a certain man who had left the people, and at last was drowned in a certain lake. Considerable more was said about the danger and consequences of standing against the gift of God; and the lost, dreadful state of those who left the way of God; which I have heard the Elders and others in the faith talk of, from time to time, enough to drive or scare some people into the faith and obedience, or make them distracted, which has been the case with some poor, disobedient creatures. Many wonderful, lamentable stories I have heard about poor backsliders; but I believe that the Lord will have more mercy on them, than his professed people.

I told him, it would be a droll story for me to tell the world that I was turned off, disowned, and all doors shut against me because I would not confess my sins the fourth time.

He answered—"Tell them the true cause, that you would not take up your cross and be obedient to the order of God among his people—tell them this!"

I replied—Yea, I will tell them this, and more. For if I undertake to tell the world any thing about it I will not tell them half a story, but give them a true and full account of all matters that have transpired from first to last, and they may judge for themselves whether you are the people of God or not. And if I leave you, it is not unlikely but that I may write the wonderful religious life I have had among you; and if I was to do so, I expect I should be treated by you as you have treated several others who have left you, i. e. you would call me an impostor, liar, &c.

He replied—"I suppose you will endeavour to justify yourself in condemning the way and people of God."

I answered—Nay, that shall never be my motive, either to justify myself or condemn any; but if I was to do any thing in that way, I think I would endeavour to give a true statement, without any colouring on one side or the other, and leave all to draw their own conclusions, or judge as they think right.

He replied—"The world in their lost dark state, are not able to judge of the way and people of God. But if you ever write any thing against the church, you will finally shut yourself out in this world, and you will have hard getting back in the world of spirits; you will have to pass through inexpressible sufferings before you will be restored."

I said—What signifies talking about what I have no thoughts or intentions of doing; as I desire to abide with you, if you be the people of God. And as to the other world, the Lord only knows how it will be with us. We poor creatures can't judge truly about this world, that we see and are acquainted with, much less a world we never saw. We do not know how our souls came into our bodies, nor what they are, much less which-



er they go. But I believe there is a good and merciful God, who will take care of, and have mercy on his poor creature man. But if he has no more mercy on us than we have on one another, it is a pity that ever we were born. But I ever wish to act according to those ever worthy to be remembered lines of the poet,

*“ That mercy I to others show,*

*“ That mercy show to me.”*

We had but little more conversation, as I felt so exercised and tried in my mind I was not disposed to talk, but desired silence and retirement. The fourth day of the week my trouble and concern of mind was much greater. I walked the floor most of the time, weeping (and wetting my handkerchief with tears, and repeatedly drying it by the stove) and praying to God that he would be pleased to enlighten my mind, and give me a sense of my duty, and show me whether this was the only way of life and salvation. Walking the floor, weeping, and often wringing my hands and repeating short ejaculatory prayers, as, O Lord, if these be thy people, suffer me not to leave them. O Lord, if this be the only way of life and salvation, open thou mine eyes to see it; be pleased to give me a sense of it. O Lord, if I am in darkness, disperse the darkness: break in, O Lord, break in with thy light and life in my soul; “in thy light I shall see light; O send out thy light and thy truth, let them lead me.” O Lord, have mercy on me; “Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me; order my steps aright, O Lord, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.” I am cast down, and my heart is almost broken; but, O God, thou hast promised, “a broken and contrite heart thou wilt not despise.” Hear my prayer, O Lord, and be pleased to teach me what I must do. But I could receive no other answer but this, which several times feelingly ran through my mind, “I have already shewed unto thee the way, walk thou in it,” i. e. what I had experienced before, and once since I saw these people, as my mind immediately received that impression.

In the afternoon, Elder Hezekiah came in, and after sitting silent awhile, (seeming loth to speak, seeing the state I was in) he said—

“ Thomas, Elder Ebenezer desires me to inform you, of a special gift\* he has for you ; which is, if you do not confess your sins in obedience to the gift of God, all the sins that ever you have heretofore committed and have confessed, will be retained.”

Ah, thinks I, ye are all Job’s comforters. Break my heart quite ! kill me outright ! or if ye have the gift, power, and light of God, and I can receive it no other way but from you, then administer light, life, and power—give me some divine consolation ; bring some balm to heal a wounded soul ; let the ministration unite together, and be as one man, and act the part of the good Samaritan ; if ye cannot, then pray to God for me—and if ye are truly righteous, your prayers may avail ; light will break into my soul, and all these trials will be ended. What signifies telling me about my sins being retained, to frighten and afflict. My sins retained, because I cannot see or feel it to be my duty to tell them over again to you !

I desired to be alone, that I might pour out my soul in prayer to God. I was invited to meals, and pressed to eat—but I had no appetite ; I thought my tears were my meat and drink day and night, while they continually say unto me, where is your God ?—Pf. xlii. 3.

Early in the evening, my mind having been so exercised and tried, I experienced what these people call a death-sleep, (though not asleep, and most of the time my eyes were open ;) I continued in this situation about two hours ; part of the time I did not know whether I was in the body or out ; and it is only such as have been among these people, and have experienced the same, that can read me and know what misery I endured.† I thought

\* A special gift is immediate revelation to, and from the Mother of the church.

† Some time after, I mentioned this death-sleep to some of the believers. I was told that it was the best state that I had ever ex-

that no one, God excepted, would ever know the trials, exercises, and sufferings of mind which I had passed through, from time to time, among these people—and what can it all be for? I was ready to wish I had never seen them.

Next day in the afternoon, Elder Hezekiah came to see me again, and affectingly said—

“ Thomas, we are sorry for you and pity you, and the whole family† are sorry for you ; it is like a house of mourning. But we cannot alter the gift of God ; it is impossible—it is unalterable. If you go from this place without being obedient to the gift, and we own you and have union with you, Mother won’t own nor have union with us ; all will be shut out who have union with you. Therefore, we cannot help you, nor do any thing for you, but labour with you to be obedient as long as a gift of God is felt for you. If you would be obedient, we should all rejoice, and all the young believers at Niskeuna would be glad and rejoice on your account. What shall we do for you, or say to you ? I would be willing to suffer or undergo any thing for your good. We are sorry beyond expression, that you should be lost ; your soul is as precious, in the sight of God, as ours are. We desire, we wish, we long for you to become a man of God and brother with us in the gospel. We are willing to forgive and forget every thing that has been past ; we would hold nothing against you, and have no other feelings towards you but love and good will.”

This and more was said by several of the young believers, who visited me in apparent love and tenderness. I told them, words from without were all in vain, and that I was past conversation.

perienced ; as I was then dying to an evil nature. I also learnt, that but few of late years had experienced the like.

Some time afterwards in considering of it, I was satisfied that it was a species of delirium, and that it was caused by anxiety of mind.

† This family consisted of about thirty men and women, and, at this time, eight or ten young believers from Niskeuna.

The same afternoon, Elder Hezekiah came again; and as I was then walking the floor, wiping the tears from my face, he sat some time looking sorrowful, and then said—

“How does Thomas feel?”

I answered—I love the people, because I love their fruits; and, after a minute or two silence, added, if I was naturally of a hard heart I would go off and leave you, (I meant on account of the little evidence I felt of this being the only way of salvation) but you overcome and conquer me with your love and kindness. This gave him some encouragement; he said no more—but left me.

Early in the evening, a young believer, (Abraham Hendrickson) came in, and after sitting awhile silent, he asked me, “If I wanted to see Elder Hezekiah.” I knew well enough he was sent by him, and what was meant by that question; and as by this time I was much worn out, and felt very feeble in body and mind, I thought I must get rid of my trial and exercise one way or another, for it appeared to me that I could not live much longer under it;\* I therefore answered him, You may tell him to come if he likes. He immediately left me to carry the good news—and in a few minutes my Elder came. The reluctance that I had felt, now increased; but I considered, if I did not comply with the gift I should have no further privilege of proving the truth or fallacy of the faith, and as I wished to abide until I was fully satisfied, and being over-persuaded and conquered with their love and tenderness towards me, I concluded to comply. I walked the floor a few minutes after he came into the room, and then sat down with intentions to open my mind, when I felt as if something forbade me; directly I was surprised to find that I had lost the power of speech—and for near half an hour I was not able to speak a word; I felt as if I was bound, and my

\* “O, blindness of our earth-incrusted mind!

In what a midnight shade, what sombrous clouds  
Of error, are our souls immers'd, when thou,  
O Sun supreme! no longer deign'st to shine!”



mouth closed as by an invisible power. Nor could I recollect one sin or evil deed that ever I had done; they were all completely buried in oblivion. In the time of my silence, Elder Hezekiah spake once, and said,

“ I expect it is a greater cross now to confess your sins, than it was when you first opened your mind.”

For he thought the cause of my not beginning to open my mind, was because I was labouring to break through the cross; but he was greatly mistaken. I was not able to make any reply. When at the expiration of the time above mentioned, that something that bound me seemed to decrease, and I recovered the power of speech and recollection, when I began to open my mind—mentioning some particular sins, as swearing and intoxication, in my youth; for it was not much that I could recollect, and what I did recollect, or as it were forced into my mind, appeared like a dream, or something done a thousand years ago; and if he had not asked me questions relative to the sins of my past life, I could have recollected but little. In fact, I never felt such a sense of vanity, folly, and self-condemnation in telling any foolish story, or in any vain, idle conversation that ever I had in my life, as in thus opening my mind in obedience to the gift at this time.

Afterwards in considering thereof, it appeared to me that this gift never came from God. For, thought I, I read that “ the gift of God is life; that the spirit of God brings all things necessary for obedience to our remembrance, and gives light, life, peace, and power.” But in my endeavouring to act in obedience to Mother Lucy’s gift at this time, as far as I was able, it was all with me directly the reverse.

Next day I told Elder Hezekiah, that according to order, we are to open not only our sins, but every thing else with which we are exercised in our minds, or uneasy about; and that I had something on my mind with which I had been exercised, and perhaps I had better open it; he said,

“ Yea, to be sure; what is it, Thomas?”

I answered—I believe our first Elders, namely, Ann Lee, (her half-brother) William Lee, and James Whit-

taker, were in the practice of drinking spirituous liquors to excess; and I likewise believe, that there has been instances of their quarrelling and fighting, the natural consequences of intoxication. He appeared to be sorrowfully struck at this the confession of my belief, and said,

“Why, Thomas! what reason have you to believe  
“so?”

I answered—I have reason to believe so from the various well authenticated reports.

He then proceeded to endeavour to convince me to the contrary, saying, he had been with Mother at such a time, and such a time—and at different places he had seen her often; but had no reason to believe the truth of what I had stated—and spake some time respecting the first Elders. But all he said did not convince me to the contrary; and I recollected how dancing naked had been denied, and surely, thought I, if they denied that truth they will this.

I replied—Well, I don't know as it need concern me what they did, even if what I have stated be true, as I do not believe any of the Elders, or members of the society, are in those practices now, but are an orderly, moral people—much more so now than what they were formerly; and I do not think I should let their conduct hurt my faith, nor condemn the people now for what some have done heretofore. For if a person has been once bad or addicted to evil practices, but has become reformed, then such a man should not be condemned or thought worse of for what he has done, but is worthy of respect and praise in having forsaken his evil ways; and it is just the same with a family or society, nor neither are children to blame, nor should they be despised for the bad conduct of their parents.

He replied—“Nay, Thomas; not so respecting the  
“children of the parents of the church. For the first  
“Elders, particularly Mother Ann, was *the ground-work,*  
“*foundation and pillar of God in the church;* and if she and  
“they got drunk, quarrelled, and fought, as you say,  
“we are a deluded people, and on a sandy foundation;  
“and I, though I stand as an elder and minister, would  
“leave them to-morrow morning.”

From the candor with which he spake, I concluded he did not know or believe they were in said practices. I thought if he had seen her act like an intoxicated person, he might believe as many did, that she was bearing the states of the people.

Now previous to this declaration, I was of a mind to set the first Elders entirely aside, and not let their conduct hurt my faith; and as the people profess to be in a travail, so as soon as they see or come to a knowledge of their errors, or wrongs in any respect, to put them away and mend—so I with them. But this won't do. If the first Elders were guilty of what I had stated, "we are a deluded people, and on a sandy foundation." And he, even in his standing with his faith, would renounce the same, and pack up in the morning and be off. Then, as I did believe said conduct, what became of my poor little faith that had been so tried just before? Why, in one moment he gave it a fatal wound, viz. as to their having received the second coming of Christ, and being in the only way of life and salvation. I made no reply, (as I avoided contradiction and controversy, I having so proposed and agreed as long as I continued with them.) I believed he concluded I was satisfied, as he advised me to be obedient to the gift in settling my business, and to move up to Niskeuna and gather my union with the believers, and at times of worship join in labour, i. e. dancing.

Next evening (about nine o'clock) I attended family meeting, which I had not done before since I had been here. But I was not obedient to the gift or order in labouring with them, as I could not join them therein when I felt so little faith, without acting the part of an hypocrite, which I abhorred. After the meeting, Elder Hezekiah asked me why I did not labour. I made little or no reply. He said,

"You should take right hold of the gift that is for you, and be obedient."

I said nothing.

In the morning, seventh day of the week, after breakfast, I thanked them for their kindness, and bid them farewell, and returned home.

I now, in my own house, considered of all that had passed. But that which had the most weight on my mind was concerning first Mother being the "ground, foundation, and pillar of God in the church." I now recollected and considered more than I had done of what several old believers had told me respecting their faith in Mother Ann, and what had always been the faith of the church respecting her. That she suffered in spirit like unto Christ, and bore the different states of the people; and that they had seen her and also William Lee and James Whittaker, lie on the floor for several hours under that weight and suffering in spirit, to open the door and way of salvation—of which I could not form the least idea. Also of some who had suffered in spirit hundreds of years in a few minutes, or in a short time; or a thousand years in one day or hour, according to what we read, "one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day"—2 Pet. iii. 8. I had also been informed that James Whittaker was in eternity in spirit several thousand years in a few hours, and in that time thousands of spirits confessed their sins to him. Thus I have often sat for hours hearing the mysteries and wonders of the faith, particularly concerning Mother and the first Elders. For with the old believers I never disputed nor contradicted what they said, but was rather disposed to ask questions and gain information. I now became convinced, that what I had stated in a discourse with the believers at Cornwall, as heretofore related,\* respecting first Mother, was correct.

As further explanatory of their faith in her, I may here also remark, that according to the apostle, the woman, in its true, mystical, typical, and evangelical sense, is the glory of the man. In the Lord, the man is not (saved) without the woman, neither the woman without the man. For as the woman is of the man (i. e. saved by the man) so is the man also (saved) by the woman. But all things (i. e. the gift or power in them to salvation) is of God"—1 Cor. xi. 7. xi. 12. "In Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female," in a car-

\* See page 121.



nal sense ; but both are one—Gall. iii. 28. This is what the apostle calls a great mystery, after he had been speaking concerning men and their wives. But I speak (says he) concerning Christ and the church—Eph. v. 32. Now as the mystery of God, relating to man's salvation, was not finished, until the woman (the second Eve) received that same power that Christ, the second Adam, did ; therefore, she with him, is the subject of prophecy. And he who is curious enough, may examine the following passages : Psal. xlv. 2 to 8, speaks of Christ ; ver. 9, to the end of the chapter, of Mother Ann. Jeremiah xxiii. 6. and xxxiii. 15. Christ ; ver. 16. Ann : ib. xxxi. 22. Ann. Isa. lxvi. 7. Ann. Zech. vi. 13. Christ and Ann : ib. iv. 14. the same. Micah iv. 6, to the end, Ann : ib. v. 2. Christ ; ver. 3. Ann. Zeph. iii. 10. xiv. Ann. Rev. xii. Ann and her children : ib. xix. 7. 8. Christ and Ann : ib. xxi. 9. Ann.\*

They believe that the dispensation which they profess to be in, is “the marriage supper of the Lamb ;” and those whom are called into it, are they whom St. John was told to “Write blessed.” If those texts I have quoted, are prophetic of Mother Ann, as they say they are, then there are several more that are the same. Also many things under the Mosaic dispensation, were typical of her. It has also been asserted that the songs of Solomon, are prophetic dialogues between Christ and the Mother, and her and her virgins.

Much more might be said, concerning their faith, on this point ; but as the subject was, not further treated while I was among them, I shall not enlarge upon it. The Elders had said but little respecting their faith in Mother Ann, as it was then believed to be too strong meat to hand out to young believers. I had once told Elder Hezekiah, that when I first came among the people, I inquired why they did not publish their faith and doctrines to the world, as other societies had done. I was then answered—There has not been any gift so to do.—But now I know the reason. He asked me—“What ?” I answered—Publish your faith and doctrines in full, as

\* See page 114—15.

other societies have done ; you will then have the whole world against you. He replied—" We know that : we " should cut off all their ears."

Soon after I returned home from Lebanon, I had the following conversation with John Hodgson, a young believer, (the heretofore mentioned R. Hodgson's son,) who had belonged among the Quakers previously to his joining these people, and whom I have mentioned before. As we were pretty much of one mind on the main point heretofore controverted, we often conversed about the faith, doctrines, and practices of our brethren.

He said—" I find the faith is very contrary to the idea " I had of it at first. I never expected such an outward obedience to the Elders would be preached, and " insisted on, in order to salvation, when they preached " at first to me so clear and plain the doctrine of the " Quakers, i. e. of an inward light, spirit, and word of " God in the heart, and obedience thereto, by not violating my conscience."

I replied—If our church is right, or what they preach be the truth, the Quakers, as a body of people, and many others in every age of the world, who have borne testimony to the efficacy of the light that enlighteneth every man, have been, and are in this respect, much deceived ; though I have often heard the Elders and old believers say, that the Quakers once had the power of God, and that they have been owned of God. That as John the Baptist was a forerunner of the first coming of Christ, so were the Quakers of the second coming of Christ ; but that they lost their power by applying to the arm of flesh, i. e. when they were persecuted, representing their sufferings to the king and parliament, and petitioning a redress of their grievances. Now their acknowledging them to be the people of God, and losing their power for their thus innocently representing their sufferings, is mere nonsense. For according to the faith of our church, if they had never thus applied to the arm of flesh, they must inevitably have lost their power, if ever they had any, by living in and after the flesh ; for they tell us this has been the cause of all people's losing, or not retaining their power. As to their being a fore-

runner, preparatory, or opening the way for the second coming of Christ, it has not the least shadow of truth in it. For instead of their being any thing like this, they have been the principal people who have most effectually shut up the way; as they bore testimony an hundred years before this faith was preached, and at the time, and to this day, that salvation may be obtained without any outward ministrations. They have ever been crying out as if it were their intentions, or as if they were raised up to stop up this way—"Go not to man for teaching; look not to man. Whosoever goes to a man to be taught the way of life and salvation, goes to a wrong teacher;\* but to the light within, to the seed, talent, word, and spirit of God in your own hearts." "O friends, turn in, turn in; go not after the lo heres, and lo theres; but to Christ who is spiritually present, as he promised he would be. Where the poison is, there is the antidote. There you want Christ, and there you must find him; and blessed be God, there you may find him."† "This, then, in thy heart, O man and woman! is God's gracious visitation to thy soul; which, if thou resisteth not, thou shalt be happy for ever."‡ And that "God had come to teach his people himself, and draw them off from all outward teaching."§ They have ever borne testimony against, and endeavoured to pull down all who set up for teachers above this inward principle, or the spirit of Christ in man. As Wm. Penn's father told him on his dying bed, "Keep to your plain way of living, and plain way of preaching; you will make an end of the priests, to the end of the world:"|| all much like John the Baptist, I confess, who said, "There is one cometh after me, hear ye him." Hear the Quaker, There are some who will come after us, saying, Lo here is Christ

\* H. Turford's Grounds of a Holy Life.

† William Penn's Preface to G. Fox's Journal.

‡ R. Barclay's Apology, p. 148.

§ G. Fox.

|| Sewel's History, p. 651. Life of Wm. Penn.

among us ; but believe them not.\* Now I could show in many other respects how the Quakers have blocked up the way of the increase of this faith ; and instead of crying like John the Baptist, " Make straight the way of the Lord"—John i. 23 ; they have made it exceeding crooked to us. I have thought that if I had never known the faith of the Quakers, I might have been more satisfied with the faith of the Shakers. It is harder for the Quakers to receive this faith, than any other society, as it is so pointedly against their fundamental principle.—If they had mentioned the French prophets as being forerunners of them, they would have come nearer the truth ; but of these, they appear to know nothing, or at least, I never heard the brethren mention them.

He replied—" I think thou hast given an exact and true statement, and shown clearly the difference between the people called Quakers and Shakers ; and that the former, instead of being forerunners or preparatory, have blocked up the way of the latter. And now there is another subject occurs to my mind, which I'll mention to thee, i. e. How my faith was hurt last time I was at Lebanon, by Elder Stephen, who told me, as he thought, to strengthen my faith, that though they did not believe war was right, or that it was consistent with the gospel to fight with carnal weapons, nevertheless they conformed to the militia law, and pay without compulsion, some hundreds of dollars a year. But I considered their paying was aiding, assisting, and supporting ; therefore, no better than turning out, preparing for, or fighting themselves. I can see no material difference."

I replied—There is none ; for he who prepares, or encourages one to murder another, is even in common law, considered as guilty with the murderer. And there is no difference in the crime of stealing myself, or assisting, or hiring another to steal for me ; or in killing a man, or employing another to do it : and the same in every evil act whatever. As war, fighting, and killing of our fellow mortals, is contrary to the precepts, example, and

\* G. Fox.



spirit of Christ ; therefore, all who aid and assist in any way or manner whatever, act contrary to the commands and spirit of Christ. Therefore it is all a farce and subterfuge in their professing to have nothing to do with the fighting kingdoms of this world, and belonging to a kingdom which is not of this world, the servants of which cannot fight ; neither aid, assist, encourage, nor support, directly nor indirectly. This has been likewise a weighty consideration with me, that they are not the people they profess to be. They affirm that the gospel teaches them to beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks—(Mic. iv. 3.) Nevertheless, pay hundreds of dollars a year, for to help make them ; to help build up the works of the devil, and support the wrathful kingdom of Satan. What inconsistencies !

The Quakers, in this respect, I think are before them, as they bare a publick testimony to the world against war, in practice, by not paying ; and had rather suffer their most valuable property to be taken from them, than pay a cent willingly to the support thereof. I mean them that are Quakers indeed. But thou knowest it is contrary to the gift for believers thus to open their minds and converse together about matters that have been taught them, wherein they are not satisfied. A pretty Popish story indeed, and much like the policy of the inquisition, that we are not to examine for ourselves the truth or falsehood of what is taught us by the Elders, however glaringly inconsistent and absurd it may appear !

It had been now about three years since this young man had joined these people. Soon after this conversation, he told me he had such evidence respecting the conduct of the first Elders, as heretofore mentioned, that he could not doubt the same. That he had many hours of deep exercise respecting this faith, whereby he became more and more uneasy ; and accordingly gave up his faith in an outward ministrations lead, and left the people, and was soon again received a member by the Quakers ;\* and again (as he informed me) enjoyed peace of mind. His thus leaving this people was contrary to their expect-

\* See page 183.

tation, as he was much esteemed by them, as well as by all who knew him, for his sincerity and honesty.

As I had confessed some of my sins, or as many as I could think of, when I was at Lebanon, therefore I was held in some union; and as convenient, I went to Niskuna among the believers, and attended meeting; but did not labour (or dance) with them, though it was the gift from the Elders for me so to do. As those who do not join in this part of their worship, stand in a row with the singers, I frequently turned my face to, and leaned against the wall; and often spent the meeting in solemn silence, and contemplation. After some time, one of the Elders asked me, Why, and what was the reason, I did not labour. I made him little or no reply, as I had now done opening my feelings and doubts; for I received no help from them, in so doing. They administered no balm to cure my sick faith. Arguments were all in vain. I thought the truth of the faith must be substantiated by more effectual means.

At our publick meetings, many spectators, especially when the weather was pleasant, attended; and one of the brethren who had a gift, as they call it, from the Elders, would speak directly to them, testifying the faith of the society. This preaching appeared to me to be, for the most part, destitute of pathos and feeling; and oftentimes sentiments were delivered, with which I could not unite. Also, exhorting the spectators to civil behaviour, and cautioning them to keep their dogs out of the house, were repeated so often as to become quite tedious.

It appeared to me that they exercised but very little patience when they observed any thing among the spectators disagreeable. If any one sat with his hat on, the leaders of the meeting, or those who were the most zealous, appeared to be much displeas'd. I asked some of them, if they made such ado about such trifling things, and exercised so little patience, what they would do, if they should have dirt and stones flung in at them, as had been the case with some other sects, when assembled for publick worship. I observed, that I believed they would bear it with much less patience than others had done.

unless there was no possibility of helping themselves.— But what I most disliked, was a speech of Issachar Bates about this time, to a Methodist minister, who sat on the fore seat. This man appeared to be very attentive to Issachar's discourse, and most of the time, he looked him in the face. At this, Bates appeared to take offence.— Accordingly, he left the subject on which he was discoursing, and stretched out his hand toward the clergyman, and cried out—“ *Brute, brute, brute, you are beneath the beasts of the field.*” After meeting, the Methodist preacher went and stood before the fire to warm himself. Bates went and stood by the side of him; and by his looks, I thought he was like a dog that was ready to snap. Oh! thought I, what a spirit you show.—“ Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.” After meeting, I went home with the family, of which Seth Wells had the lead. To him, I expressed my decided disapprobation of Bates' conduct; and told him that Bates had greatly insulted the man, and done enough to excite in the breast of any one, the highest feelings of resentment. I observed that the Methodist preacher bore it with calmness, and showed the spirit of a christian.— Whereas, Bates had exemplified the spirit of the Devil.

All Seth said in reply, was—“ I don't know that we have any right to condemn Issachar's gift.”

Astonishing! thought I, do you call scurrility and abuse, a gift. But I must not omit mentioning here, that, sometime afterwards, Elder Ebenezer received information of Issachar's conduct, which I was informed he disapproved, and sharply reprov'd him for it.— Stamping with his foot, he several times said to him, in an accent of disapprobation—“ What! do you abuse people? What! have you no more sense of the order of the gospel, than to abuse people?”

I was pleas'd to hear of this. It rais'd Elder Ebenezer in my estimation.

When I was in company with the believers, particularly before and after meeting, when they are some hours together, I had but little or no conversation, but kept silent; yet they saw I was still deficient in my faith, by my not labouring with them in their meetings.

One of the believers (by name Frederick Wicker, naturally a sensible man, and with whom I had had much conversation concerning the faith) said—

“ Thomas, I believe you will yet preach this gospel and faith. The doubts, reasons, and hard way you have had to come into it, will be all for the best, as you thereby will be more able to help others through, and out of the same. Also, by much conversation and controversy you have had with the Elders and others, on account of your many objections; and you having heard answers thereto, whereby you have become much more acquainted with the faith and doctrines than you otherwise would have been: in consequence of which, you will be more able to answer objections that others may make, and vindicate the doctrines of the gospel.”

I replied—I never can preach a faith, and vindicate doctrines, unless I fully believe in the same, and have sufficient and satisfactory evidence for that belief; and there appears to me such a deficiency and absurdity in the ground work of the faith, (that you have never examined, nor known nothing of,) and so many obstacles are in the way, that though possibly I may continue with the people, yet I think I never shall become so firmly established in the faith, as to preach and recommend the same to others.

He replied—“ All the Elders want of you, is for you to take hold of the gift, and be obedient. And if you would so do, they know you would have that evidence that you have but little idea of now; and thereby become firmly established in the faith; and you might then go forth in obedience to a further gift and service in the gospel. They believe you would be of great help to others. And what a pity it is, that men to whom God has given five or ten talents, should bury them in the earth; and at last, receive no other reward but weeping and gnashing of teeth. But what deficiency and absurdity is there in the ground work of the faith, which you say has escaped my knowledge?”



I replied—You know it is contrary to the gift for young believers to open their minds to one another, wherein it will have a tendency to hurt their faith. But believers condemn me on account of my want of faith—Question, and draw words from me; and then all the blame falls on me for opening my mind, giving my reasons, and then hurting their faith.

I now had not been with the Elders since I was last at Lebanon (except with Elder Hezekiah a short time) though they had several times visited the believers at Niskeuna; but I did not request a privilege (as they call it) with them, for I had nothing to open; and was satisfied that they, by conversing with me, could not remove my doubts. But as all believers, according to order, must request, and have a privilege with them, and hear and receive the word individually, without which, they say no one can travail,\* nor be held in union; I therefore, was advised by several believers to go to Lebanon to see the Elders; and I being still desirous of a further opportunity among the people, to prove the faith to the uttermost, and not suffer myself to be disowned, until I had done it. Also, that I might not afterwards be like some who had left the people, and had still fearful apprehensions remaining: and though my faith was less than a grain of mustard seed, nevertheless to Lebanon I went.

February 3, 1805. I now had new Elders to deal with me, as Elder John Meacham was gone to preach the faith in Ohio and Kentucky; and Elder Hezekiah Rowley had retired to private life in the church order at Niskeuna. Therefore, these men (whom I had never seen before) were appointed in the place of the others.

\* I have stated and inquired of some of the elderly brethren as follows: Supposing a believer was taken away, as by a press-gang, against his will, and carried to some foreign part of the world, and could not return in a number of years, might he not, while absent, by living near to God in secret prayer and obedience, experience an increase in the divine life, or growth in religion. I was answered—“He could not gain at all in a travail; but as to that, “would stand still, though he might possibly keep his justification “by not committing actual sin.”

A few minutes after the sisters had provided me something to eat, one whom we called Elder Stephen, came and informed me that the Elders desired to see me. I followed him into the room where they sat. One of them said—

“ Thomas, you have been laboured with, and taught from time to time ; and as you have not been obedient, Elder Ebenezer says he has no further gift for you.”

I said—If you be the only people of God, and have the only way of life and salvation, I wish to abide with you.

One replied (in a tone, I thought, not christian-like ; but more like an angry man)—“ If, if, if ! you have always had your if’s. We know that this is the only way of God ; and though others should *swear the Lord liveth, they know him not, and swear falsely*. It is a path *the lion’s whelp never trod, nor the vulture’s eye never hath seen*. You may cavil, dispute, turn, and twist as much as you will ; you, nor all the world, can never overthrow it ; neither be saved any other way. Therefore, if you wish to be found in the way of God, be obedient to your Elders, and not offer to dispute with them, as you have done ; but do as they tell you, without any hesitation ; and when they tell you to confess your sins, *confess your sins* ; and when they tell you to labour, do so ; and whatever they tell you to do, that do ; and not wait until you feel and see it to be your duty with your carnal feelings, and carnal eyes. You think you know every thing ; you think yourself very wise ; your Elders can’t teach you any thing : then what do you come here for ? With all your knowledge, the most ignorant and simple believer at Niskeuna, who walks in obedience to the gift of God from his Elders, is wiser than you are. But we have no more to say to you. You have been taught sufficiently already. We have no gift for you but to be *obedient* to what you have been *taught*, and to the *gift* that has been heretofore for you. If you are so disposed, you may go and see Benjamin, and see what gift he has for you : may be you can

“agree with him. And you may cry to God on account of your disobedience, and when God hears your prayers, the people of God will hear you.”

I said—I hope I may have the privilege to speak a word, though I have not come here to dispute, or enter into any controversy with you.

One replied—“We won’t hear any thing you have to say, neither will we dispute with you :” and rose up to be going, when the one we called Elder Stephen, said—

“I would not have Thomas think, that these Elders have spoken from any thing that has been built up in them, or from any outward information, or from any thing that has been told them ; but from the present revelation and gift of God to them.”

An involuntary thought then struck me in an instant. My God ! what a falsehood ! Does the man think I am such a fool as not to know that these Elders have been told of all the labours of the former Elders with me, when they spake so pointedly to past transactions, naming the gifts for me heretofore ; as, “When you are told to confess your sins, confess your sins,” &c. And then to be so barefaced as to say—“These Elders have not spoken from any outward information,” &c. I looked at the man with such astonishment, he might have read me in my countenance. There was a few more words passed to the same import as before, and my going to see Benjamin ;\* and one said—

“Be honest in your dealings, Thomas.”

Then Elder Stephen spake again, and said to me—“Now you think this Elder means, to be honest in your dealings with the world ; but he don’t mean so, as we don’t doubt but what you are.”

\* I did not know what Benjamin they meant ; whether Benjamin Youngs, at Niskeuna (who had a spare house, into which, the gift had been for me to move my family) or Benjamin Ellis, who had the *lead* of those in the backsliding order ; and as they appeared to be so very short, I did not ask them. But if they meant the latter, I was not in the least disposed to go there, for I thought I had had trials enough in the fore order, without going into the back order, where I might meet with fresh ones.

As they were retiring, one said—"Stay in the room where you are, as long as you stay here."

A few minutes after they had left me, Elder Stephen\* returned, and asked me if I was going to stay all night; (which I took as a broad hint to be off. I thought it exceedingly unkind, as it was near sun-set, and they saw I was so much fatigued with my journey, that I was hardly able to walk.)

I answered—I shall stay unless I am turned out of doors; and then, possibly I may worry through the snow unto the first world's house, which, I am sure, will be no credit to you.

He replied—"If you stay, then stay in this room."

At the time of meals, evening and morning, after all the house had eat, I was called thereto, and sat at table alone; neither had I, while I staid there, the company of any one since the Elders left me, except one who came and spake a few words to me rather more mild.—And in the evening Abraham Hendrickson, my old acquaintance and nephew, came and sat with me a few minutes and seemingly sympathized with me, and expressed a few words of his sorrow and pity for me. I was fully satisfied that all others in the house, were told to have no conversation with me. About the time of my leaving them, i. e. eight o'clock in the morning (for I did not hurry to be off, as I thought I would not partake of their spirit, and show any thing like resentment,) I wished to bid them farewell, particularly my nephew; but I saw no one. I was confident that they had all been ordered to keep out of my sight as much as possible. Therefore, I bid no one farewell, nor any one me. But I thought I heard in the secret of my heart, farewell to Lebanon for ever; and returned home.

Elder Ebenezer, and one of the other Elders, left Lebanon an hour before I did, in a sleigh, for Niskeuna: and as I was there on foot, my wife asked me when I return-

\* He was not properly an Elder: his business was principally to attend upon the Elders.



ed, why I did not ride with the Elders ; for she had seen them go by the house four or five hours before I got home.

I replied—I ride with the Elders ! You might as well ask why common people don't ride with the President of the United States !

She said—“ Well, it is a pretty story indeed that they should set themselves up so high as to come at the same time, and from the same place, with a light sleigh, and not take thee in.”

But I did not think much of my not riding with them, because I knew it was contrary to order for believers to ride with the Elders.\*

I was always advised by the believers to go to Lebanon to get my faith strengthened ; but every time I went (except the first) it was weakened—and now it was exceeding weak indeed ; for in considering their treatment towards me, I could not feel union with them therein : though as to the words the Elders had spake to me, I had little or no disunion with them barely on that account, as I knew I had not been obedient to the gifts (or orders) that had been for me, in believing and acting up to them in several respects. But it was the authoritative manner and spirit in which they delivered themselves, that I could not have union with. Far, very far, I thought, from that meekness and mildness which they profess ; more like officers of the Romish Inquisition than disciples of Christ ; and I could not help recollecting a little of what I had read of similar language delivered in an authoritative way of speaking, and apparently like spirit to such as they deemed heretics, or who disbelieved in the only true faith, and were disobedient to their orders : “ Hold your tongue, you heretic ! we don't want to hear any thing you have to say. Do you think you

\* The reader may now recollect, that I have heretofore said, that my father rode from Cornwall to Lebanon, with the Elders : but this was mere condescension at that time, in order to gain him to the faith. Like other young believers, he was dealt by as a child ; as they suffer and bare with many things, until believers are brought into order, or until they know the order.

“ can teach us? you think you are very wise, but you are  
 “ in darkness and know nothing as you should know—  
 “ and all like you are lost men, and fallen from the holy  
 “ church. There is no salvation for you if you do not  
 “ return.” But that’s the worst of this reading, thought  
 I, as it enables us to compare present things with past,  
 therefore is a destruction to this faith.

But then, on the contrary, I endeavoured to put the most favourable construction on their conduct. I thought it might be they only talked and used me thus unkindly to try me, or my faith, but having the same regard and tenderness in their hearts as the other Elders heretofore expressed. But I concluded the truth of the matter was, they were determined to be obeyed without regard to any believers’ circumstances in life, or excuses that any one might make.

By this time I became more fully satisfied how the Elders came by their gifts, or knowledge in several respects, particularly of the unconfessed sins of believers—it appeared to me it was not by revelation, as they have frequently said, but by outward information. I considered that there is one called Elder Brother in each family, who presides over it and takes the lead; all in the family look to the Elder Brother for counsel, and to him are obedient. These Elder Brothers are oftener with the Elders than the others; also, when the Elders visit the families, the Elder Brother has the first privilege with them; he often informs the Elders of the faith, life, and behaviour of those with whom he lives and is daily conversant. Thus the Elders know all about each one in every family, almost as well as if they lived with them and daily conversed in each family themselves.

When the believers are individually admitted into the company of the Elders, they can speak to them according to their faith and conduct. Also some men and women, who have been intimate previously to joining them, one has confessed something which the other has not, which perhaps one or the other had forgotten, or neglected to mention—whatever remains unconfessed they have a knowledge of by the information they have in this manner received. Now, after the ministrations have

received their knowledge of every individual, by the method I have mentioned, and every other outward method that can be devised, I thought it was not right for them to say, either publicly or privately, as I had often heard, "Don't think that any of you can come before us and keep your sins covered! The gift of God will search and find you all out. The Lord is searching Jerusalem as with a candle. We can see through and through you! Those of you who have not confessed your sins, we can pick out, we can call you by name." When I stood among them and heard all this, I thought, whether you can or not, you are enough to intimidate weak minds and make them confess all that they can remember.

In the next place, having taken into serious consideration the first and foundation principle of the church, which is, that Ann Lee, whom they call Mother Ann, was and will continue to be equal with Christ in the work of man's salvation; and that without a woman, who should be the second Eve, in the same sense that Christ was the second Adam, mankind could not receive salvation; and she being "the ground, foundation, and pillar of God in the church," I came to the following conclusions, viz. if what I had opened to Elder Hezekiah was true, then upon the obvious principles of their own faith, the great point would be settled to a certainty, in direct opposition to their being in the dispensation of the second coming of Christ, and in possession of the only means of salvation. Hence I determined to make more strict inquiry into the character of Mother Ann, of those who had been personally acquainted with her, many persons of this description being still living. Also, I now began to have some thoughts of publishing my singular life among this people; which if I should hereafter do, I considered that an account (more full, clear, and correct than I had received from the old believers) of the rise and practice of the church previously to my acquaintance with it would be necessary. Therefore I was the more determined to prosecute this inquiry by travelling and visiting those who bore a good character, from whom I might be able to obtain the information

requisite for such an undertaking. This I thought to be the more necessary on account of the great profession of sanctity and order in outward deportment, which is made by this people, with their positive and solemn assertions of being in possession of the only means of salvation; in consequence of which, the minds of many had been and were still exceedingly tried and exercised. I had understood that several, who had been among them, in consequence of their many trials and much exercise of mind, had lost their senses; which I thought was very likely, considering what trials and exercises of mind I had passed through, and that it was a great mercy I had not been ruined in the same manner. I considered the scenes of trial and affliction passed through by many families, in consequence of only part of the family receiving the faith; especially when the husband believed and not the wife, which caused a separation. Many women have been left desolate and destitute.\* It would take many pages to enumerate all the consequences resulting from a reception of the faith of this church; which, if not a true church, would be of no profit to the soul. Further, as the church is built on the divine mission of Mother Ann, I considered it very necessary (not only for my satisfaction, but for the satisfaction of many others hereafter) that a thorough inquiry should take place before all those who were personally acquainted with her, and with the church in its infancy, were in their graves; and then

\* If the wife believes, and not the husband, according to the order of the church she must still abide with the husband, and take up her cross according to the faith. I considered the true cause was, because the church had not power to take her away. If the husband will voluntarily give her up, the church will then receive her to live among believers. But if the husband believes, and not the wife, he is counselled to forsake her, and to have no union with her; and if he pleases he can take his children from her.—Many have forsaken their wives and children. I had strenuously contended with several believers, that it was the duty of the husband to provide for his unbelieving wife and children, the same or better than he would have done if he had not believed. But this was disputed, and the following texts quoted to justify their conduct.—Matt. x. 34 to 37. Luke xii. 52, 53.



no other account of her, nor of the origin of the church, could be obtained, except what the church itself might choose to give.†

Being now fully convinced, that the account I had received from those in the faith concerning Mother Ann, and the rise and practice of the church, was not altogether to be depended on, they being so partial and prejudiced in favour of the cause as to represent every thing in the most favourable light; besides, I knew that several things which they had told me were not true. But along at first, while prepossessed and prejudiced in their favour, I could not believe any thing bad of such great characters as Mother and the first Elders were considered to have been. Also, having heard so often (and been taught to believe) that “backsliders could not speak the truth,” it was some time before I would hear them; and when I did happen in their company, I gave little credit to what they said. But, in process of time, I found many of them did speak the truth; as they gave the same account of many things that I had received from those in the faith. Likewise, some things I had read in Valentine Rathbone’s pamphlet, before ever I saw these people, I found were true; as the old believers, when I came to converse with them, gave the same account.—Therefore, from incontestible evidence, I was obliged to give some credit to what several, to all appearance, impartially and disinterestedly declared they had seen and heard while they were among these people. For there are many of them scattered about the country, according to what some of the old believers have told me, i. e. they said they “believed there were as many who had fell off, from first to last, as there were now in the faith.” I now

† A certain celebrated author observes, that “in the infancy of a new religion, the learned esteem the matter too inconsiderable to claim their attention or regard; but, after they have increased, many wish to know their origin, but the witnesses that might have given satisfaction have perished beyond recovery; and no means of information remain but those which must be drawn from those who wish to support it.”

began to believe that many of them had sufficient reason for so doing. Many of these I knew by name that I had not yet seen.

Shortly after the discourse with John Hodgson, of which I have given an account, he advised me to endeavour to see Daniel Rathbone, jun. who lived at Milton, near forty miles north of Albany—who had been of this faith soon after their first settlement at Niskeuna. He thus advised me, he said, because he had seen and conversed with him, and that he appeared to him to be a candid man; and he believed that he could and would give me a further, correct, and satisfactory account respecting the first Elders, and the faith and practice of the people while they were living. By inquiring, I learnt that D. Rathbone supported a good character; I accordingly soon wrote to him, requesting him when he came to town to call and see me. Accordingly, a few weeks after I returned last from Lebanon, he came and tarried with me nearly two days, in which time he gave me all the information he could, according to the best of his knowledge.

Respecting what I had opened to Elder Hezekiah, of the conduct of the first Elders, he said he was personally and well acquainted with them; as it was his office, by the order of Mother Ann, to act for them, particularly for her, as Deacon in temporal concerns; therefore, he he was repeatedly with them, and had seen her several times in an intoxicated condition.

I asked him if he was sure it was occasioned by liquor?

He replied—"I am sure. I bought the liquor by her order—I saw her drink the same. I have seen her overcome by it, and I have seen her vomit; and I knew she was affected by it, not only by sight, but by smelling.—William Lee and James Whittaker, I have seen sit and drink for hours—though I never saw Whittaker so much overcome by it, as I have seen Lee and his half-sister Ann."

As to quarrelling and fighting, he gave me a particular and circumstantial account of two instances; one of which was as follows:

“One day,” said he, “in the afternoon, William Lee, having drank very freely, fell asleep; when he awoke, he ordered the brethren (in number about twenty) to be assembled, I being one with them. William Lee then informed us, that he had a gift to rejoice—and ordered us to strip ourselves naked; and as we stood ready to dance, Mother Ann Lee came to the door of the room with one of the sisters. William Lee requested her to stay out, as he had a gift to rejoice with the brethren. Still she persisted. He said to her again, *Mother, do go out—I have got a gift to rejoice with the brethren; and why can't you let us rejoice? you know if any of the sisters are with us, we shall have war*, that is, have to fight against the rising of nature. But as she would not retire, he pushed her out, and shut the door against her. Then she went round the corner of the house, and attempted to get in at a window. Lee prevented her. She came to the door again, with a stick of wood, and stove it open. Lee met her at the door. She struck him with her fists in the face. He said, the smiting of the righteous is like precious ointment. She then gave him several blows in quick succession. At each of which he made the same reply. At last, the blood beginning to run, he lost all patience, and exclaimed, before God you abuse me; and presented his fists and struck her, and knocked her almost down. I immediately stepped in between them, and cried out, for God's sake, Father William, don't strike Mother! I had rather you would strike me. The brethren, who had stood waiting the event, then gathered round and prevented further blows. There was hard threatening on both sides. Thus ended the gift of rejoicing.”

The other instance of quarrelling and blows, of which he gave me a particular account, was between William Lee, James Whittaker, and Ann Lee; which contention arose from a dispute between Lee and Whittaker, which should be first in the lead, and Mother interferred to settle the controversy.

•I asked him how it was possible that he could retain his faith, after seeing such conduct?

He answered—"We were infatuated, and taught to believe that they were bearing our states, and that it was the evil nature in us imputed or transferred to them; and that they had to suffer thus on our account, and to cast that evil spirit and nature out, that we might have a visible sight of that which was still secret within us; and we were exhorted to dig deep and look into our hearts, and labour to put away every thing contrary to the gospel; so the evil spirit and nature would be cast out of the church, and all would live in peace and quietness. Notwithstanding these plausible reasons for such conduct, several from that time began to lose their faith, and finally fell off, one after another. I continued until the death of Ann Lee; then, on account of what I have mentioned, and other inconsistent conduct, I left them, notwithstanding the Mother had told me, that my name was written in the book of life, never to be blotted out."

He referred me to five or six persons whom he named, as being present when the above mentioned quarrels happened, who had also left the people. One of whom he said was Reuben Rathbone, who has since published a short account of his life among them; in which publication he has given an account of the same conduct.\* Also, said he,

"My father, Daniel Rathbone, who was one of the society five years, and who left them and published an account of the faith, testifies that he saw Ann Lee several times intoxicated."†

He further said—

"If you leave the people, and publish your life among them, and you write concerning the conduct in any respect, which I have mentioned of Ann Lee and the first Elders, you may, if you choose, make use of my name; as I know I have told you nothing but the truth.

\* Reasons offered for leaving the Shakers—page 27.

† Daniel Rathbone, of Ballston, a man of veracity and good moral character. The author has since made him a visit, and received from him (as well as from several others) a circumstantial account in confirmation of the above.



“About thirty years hence, the church may hold Ann Lee up to the world, according to what they believe of her, as a person of the greatest sanctity, perfection, and holiness; and no one who was personally acquainted with her will be living to contradict it.”

The man appeared to be so candid and free from prejudice, that I thought if all the believers at Niskeuna had been present and heard him give the account of his life among the people, their faith, and conduct of the first Elders and others, they could not have doubted the truth of his relation. For my part I could not.

The account which he gave exactly corresponded, in several respects, with what I had heard from the Elders and others in the faith. I thought I had reason to believe his account of Mother and the first Elders, from what I had heard some of the old believers say of Mother's bearing the states of the people, even the state of the drunkard—and one had told me that he himself and several others had borne the same state.

I also knew, from what I had seen myself, that spirituous liquors were used by the church above six months after I joined it; when there came a gift, as the believers called it, from the ministration to use them no longer, except as a medicine. I told some of the believers, I thought that was a very good gift. I also now recollected what some old believers had told me, that previously to the above mentioned time the church had used spirituous liquors, and that it was often bought by the hoghead. Also, I had heard an esteemed old believer say, that spirituous liquors were used by the first Elders, and that it was necessary for a support under their sufferings and hard labours; as they had a great work to do to open and establish the gospel. But when I heard this, I was strong in the faith, and did not believe they used it to excess; though I even then thought that the use of spirituous liquor did not become gospel labourers. I now thought I had sufficient reason to be fully convinced, that the assertion which I had so often heard, that “backsliders cannot speak the truth,” was absurd and inconsistent. I also considered, that I had reason to believe that there had been a want of rectitude of conduct

in the first Elders and others in the faith, from what I had often heard from several of the society, which was more fully and clearly stated by B. Youngs; on my mentioning to him some reprehensible conduct that had been in the church, he said,

“ We know there has been many things done and said  
 “ by the people, for want of a better understanding; and  
 “ we believe several have lost their faith and left us, who,  
 “ if they had been wisely dealt by, would have continu-  
 “ ed. Admitting it to be true, that the first or any of  
 “ the present leaders in the church, or any of the old be-  
 “ lievers, have done wrong, you should not let that hurt  
 “ your faith, and destroy your own soul; but you should  
 “ still travail on with the people, (as they profess to be in a  
 “ travail,) for as soon as they see they have erred, or done  
 “ wrong, they will put their errors away and mend; and  
 “ you know they are daily endeavouring to learn and  
 “ improve—and that they have travailed into a farther  
 “ increase of wisdom, understanding, and purity of con-  
 “ duct, is clearly manifested when we have compared  
 “ the church and the order therein with what it was in  
 “ first Mother’s day. There were many things done then,  
 “ that the church has no union with now.\* It was some-  
 “ time after the opening of the gospel before the church  
 “ was brought into order; and previous to that time  
 “ there was much confusion.

“ The people or church of God, may properly be  
 “ compared to natural creation, which is believed to have  
 “ been from a chaotic state; and God is represented as  
 “ having been six days in creating and bringing all things  
 “ into order; it is also the same in creation, for nothing  
 “ grows to perfection in a moment; and it is also the  
 “ same in building a house, or constructing any machine,  
 “ each part naturally lies in apparent confusion till the  
 “ artist brings them together, and puts each one in its  
 “ proper place; then the beauty of the machinery and  
 “ the wisdom of the artist are apparent. Therefore, the

\* I understood from one of the believers, that Elder Ebenezer Cooley had said. “ That dancing naked, and several other gifts that had been in the church, were not gifts of God; but that the people ran wild before they were brought into order.”

“ church is fitly compared to Solomon’s temple : God  
 “ is the great artist and master-builder, the gospel is the  
 “ means, the ministration are his labourers, and are in-  
 “ struments under his direction, and we must labour in  
 “ union with them to cast away all rubbish out of, and  
 “ from around the building ; and to labour to bring ev-  
 “ ery thing, both outward and inward, more and more  
 “ into order. Therefore, if a true written description  
 “ had been given of this building, i. e. the church, and  
 “ faith and practice of the people, twenty years ago, it  
 “ would not be, in every respect, a true description in the  
 “ present day. Also, if a correct description of the pre-  
 “ sent standing of the church was now written, it would  
 “ not be, in all respects, applicable to it twenty years to  
 “ come, on account, as I said, of the church continually  
 “ increasing in wisdom, upright conduct, and order.—  
 “ Therefore, it is not wisdom in you to condemn the  
 “ church, and cast yourself off, for wrongs that have  
 “ been, or that you see now, in individuals, (or indeed  
 “ in the whole body) proceeding from a want of wis-  
 “ dom ; when, at the same time, it is their intention, af-  
 “ ter they have attained more wisdom or a better under-  
 “ standing, to see wherein they have erred, or done wrong,  
 “ to renounce the error and put away all wrong, and la-  
 “ bour to do better for the time to come. Which you  
 “ must acknowledge is truly commendable and praise-  
 “ worthy ; for creatures cannot travail out of errors and  
 “ wrong practices faster than God pleases to enlighten  
 “ them. Again, that may not be error or wrong prac-  
 “ tice in us at one time, which may become so at anoth-  
 “ er time, when we have attained to more light and un-  
 “ derstanding. The increase of light makes objects to  
 “ be more clearly seen ; and this travail, of which I  
 “ have been speaking, will last eternally ; for to suppose  
 “ a creature ever to arrive at a state in which he will not  
 “ err, would be to suppose him perfect, or infinite in wis-  
 “ dom, and therefore equal with God ; which state of  
 “ equality no creature can ever attain.”

When I heard this statement, I thought the most of it  
 was very good. I considered, that to forsake every thing  
 that is wrong, as soon as we come to a knowledge of its

being such, is all that can be required. I told them if this had been their fundamental principle, I believed I should always have united with them; for, on the principles of the above statement, they themselves would relinquish an error as soon as they came to a knowledge of it as being such—and I could not expect them to do it before. I thought that a society could not possess better principles nor form a better plan to act upon, than as above stated. At the same time, I observed, that it was a pity they had ever laid any other foundation to build upon and find acceptance with God, but his grace, and a due improvement in the practice of good works. Further, on the principle of the above statement I thought they might soon give up their faith in Mother Ann, as being equal with Christ, for a great error. I told them if they did, then all their practices in the infancy of the church might sink into oblivion; because, neither Mother Ann, nor any thing which had been transacted in time past, could affect their present faith, and need not be produced as evidence for or against it. But notwithstanding, they tenaciously adhered to their faith in Mother Ann, as a foundation; and more and more increased in it as a doctrinal point.\* Therefore, in direct opposition to the principles and reasons in the above statement, they would have it, that if what I had stated to Elder Hezekiah was the truth, they were, as he said, a deluded people, and on a sandy foundation. The principal reasons which were offered in proof of the divine mission of Mother Ann, have been already mentioned, in page 180.

The following is the result of the conversations I have had with several; and my thoughts and conclusions respecting those operations I had seen among the people, and some of which, as heretofore mentioned, I had had myself; as about this time I became satisfied respecting their cause, and from what they originated.

\* In a book since published by the Shakers, entitled "The second appearing of Christ," more than sixty pages are taken up in endeavouring to prove and substantiate this doctrine. See pages 27 and 28, preface; pages 433 to 473, and 537 to 554.



I had, for some time past, thought that the Elders themselves did not believe those operations proceeded from the immediate power of God. The first time I had reason to think so, was about a year past—while Elder Ebenezer was preaching, one shook, stamped, and trembled so as to attract the attention of the audience; he made a stop in his discourse and said, in an accent of disapprobation, “The wild nature may stamp and tremble.” Of this I took particular notice.

Sometime after, in conversation with Elder Hezekiah concerning these operations, I told him I did not believe that the Elders themselves believed them to be caused by the power of God.

He replied—“Nay, I do not believe they all are; but “I would not have you think none are.”

I concluded he gave this answer from a fear that if he made a full acknowledgment of the truth of what I had told him, it would have affected my faith; because I had been taught to believe that they proceeded from the power of God—and had been under their influence myself.

When I became satisfied they were not caused by the power of God, I was desirous to know from what cause they took their rise. After much consideration on the subject, I came to the following conclusions:

Those who are subject to these operations have faith in them, and a strong belief that they feel the power of God operating to produce them; and the nerves, which are the organs of sensation and motion, become at once affected, which causes a trembling, or operations according to the affected state of the mind.\*

Often the operations are only caused by the act of the will, which is wrought upon by a strong imagination of feeling the power of God.

I also became satisfied that even the extraordinary operation of turning round in the rapid manner in which I had seen several turn, was caused by the same power of imagination, zeal, enthusiastic fire, or rather religious

\* “One reels to this, another to that wall,  
'Tis the same error that deceives them all.”

madness, whereby the nerves which proceed, and pass from the brain to all parts of the body, are affected, and brought into contact with the mind, in its strong imagination of feeling the power of God; and a strong belief in this operation, with a passiveness of mind, or willingness to be thus affected, they begin to turn; and so long as the power of imagination and zeal remains, so long the person can turn. But as I had told several of the believers, it ought to be particularly noticed that this described state of mind, assists them to learn to turn in this manner, and that they don't turn long at first, but according to the time and trials they have practised: and it is well known that long use and repeated trials, with a strong imagination, will perform wonders.

Respecting such as speak in an unknown tongue, they have strong faith in this gift; and think a person greatly favoured who has the gift of tongues; and at certain times, when the mind is overloaded with a fiery, strong zeal, it must have vent some way or other; their faith, or belief at the time being in this gift, and a will strikes the mind according to their faith; and then such break out in a fiery, energetick manner, and speak they know not what, as I have done several times. Part of what I spake at one time, was:—

Liero devo jirankemango, ad fileabano, durem subramo, deviranto diacerimango, jasse vah pe cii evanigalio; de vom grom seb crinom, os vare cremo domo.

When a person runs on in this manner of speaking for any length of time, I now thought it probable that he would strike into different languages, and give some words in each, their right pronounciation. As I have heard some men of learning, who have been present, say, a few words were Hebrew, three or four of Greek, and a few Latin.

I had often heard of instances of the Elders taking the power away from individuals while under excessive operations. I inquired, if they were under the power of God, how could the Elders command that power?

I was answered—"The Elders have the greater, and the less gives way to it, according to what we read—"The spirit of the prophets are subject to the prophets."

I likewise had been told, that "the Elders could give the power, as well as take it away."

But as I began to consider for myself, and reason on the propriety of every thing I saw and heard, it appeared to me that the truth was respecting the Elders giving and taking away the power, that as they have an implicit faith in the Elders, therefore, when they inform the believers that they must labour out of, and travail away from all those outward operations, and that there is no longer a gift therefor, they then cease, because then they believe the power of God ceases in those operations; therefore, they have no desire nor will for them, knowing if they have, they will be out of the gift, and that the Elders will have no union with them therein; as acting in union with the Elders, is a fundamental point of faith.

The many other operations, with visions and miracles, that are said to have been in the church from time to time, it appeared to me, as I calmly considered of them, that they proceeded from the same cause as above described, i. e. in short, a strong belief and imagination, and oftentimes, a species of insanity; and with others as with myself, when I had those operations (and faith in those gifts and miracles) reason was entirely excluded.

I had now lost that which had caused me to think favourable of the first Elders, particularly of James Whitaker; namely, that beautiful and comprehensive description of christian experience,\* said to have been written by him, as by this time I learnt that the letter which contained it, was not indited by him, but by William Skails, who was then a member of the society, and a man of much reading and education, who, soon after he indited the letter, left the society.

This work will exceed the limits at first prescribed, yet I must not omit mentioning the result of some conversations with believers respecting the assertion which had been frequently made, that "the church did what "was just and right in all cases."† It appeared to me,

\* See page 40.

† See page 24, answer 11.

from what I had observed, that the church was faulty respecting the manner in which they had acquired much property ; that is, by what they call a united interest. I observed it was my belief, that, if any one lost his faith, or for some cause chose to leave the society, the property he had deposited, ought to be returned ; and for the labour he had faithfully performed, he ought to be compensated ; that no one ought to be obliged to leave them poor and penniless. I also told them, that the children of such parents as had joined the church, whether they had been left with the world, or had gone forth into it after having been brought up in the society, ought to have an equal, just, and lawful dividend of their parents' property, the same as they would have had, if their parents had never joined the society. My reasons for this, I observed, were, that it would be highly unjust, and might, with propriety, be deemed persecution for any to suffer loss of property on account of his belief or disbelief in matters of religion.

These points were controverted and disputed in the usual way.

They observed that—" All the church came together into one joint body perfectly agreed, and thinking alike in spiritual things ; and in order that temporal things might not interfere and disturb them in their spiritual and religious concerns, it was thought best, in conformity to the example of the first christians, to come into what is called, a united interest. Therefore, of their own free will and choice, all who had property, gave it up ; and each one, and all agreed to labour and perform services according to their several abilities, for the common support of the gospel, without any pecuniary reward. Accordingly, they signed a written covenant to that effect, binding themselves not to bring any debt or demand against the deacons or any member of the church, for their property or services."— Furthermore, they plead, that—" What had been freely given, could not be remanded, or diverted from the purpose for which it was given, without the free will and consent of the person or persons to whom it had been voluntarily resigned." Also—" Those who had



“left the way of God, for the world, had obtained what they went after: they had chosen the pleasures of the world, and that was enough for them. That if they had carried their property with them, or had any thing given them for their labours, it would have been to consume it upon their lusts.” And some of them said—“That it was no matter how poor they might become; they ought to suffer for leaving the way of God. For they have no right to any property, nor compensation for their labours, which they have freely given up; and they cannot, with any reasonable confidence, demand it.” Notwithstanding, they mentioned some who had been faithful labourers for ten, fifteen, or eighteen years; and that the church had given them something, i. e. about ten dollars per year. But I believed, that even that was done, especially in some cases, to avoid contention, and a law suit with them, which some had threatened them, and in order to get from them a final discharge.

It is true these men had signed a covenant, as above mentioned, by which they had formally debarred themselves from receiving their property, or any compensation for their labours; but I considered, as they were not, and probably could not be incorporated under such a constitution, the covenant was null and void. I suspected the leaders were sensible of this, which was the occasion of their being allowed any compensation.

I contended that even admitting the covenant was binding in law, nevertheless, such as had been faithful labourers to support, and build up the society in temporal things, but could not continue in their belief of the doctrines of the church, ought in justice to be compensated for their labours. Though the covenant might be right so far as to debar any who left them from making unjust demands, or taking undue advantages of them, and I considered it just respecting property in no other point of light.

I reminded them, that in the early part of my faith, I was told several times that “people who joined them, could live where they chose; and that man and wife might live together, if they thought best so to do; and

“in all civil things, act and think for themselves; and  
 “that not any were disowned on any other account,  
 “but by continuing in the practice of what they knew  
 “to be sin.”\* Also, that “none were enjoined to en-  
 “ter into a united interest and give up their property.”†  
 But now I know, said I, that they will not be held in  
 union long, unless they move among believers, gather  
 into a united interest, give up their property, and in all  
 respects, act according to the counsel of the Elders.

I thought I should have been more satisfied, if I had  
 had a deceitful memory. Though I united with them  
 in several points of their faith, yet, in order to gather my  
 union with the believers, as the Elders had counselled  
 me, it was actually necessary for me to believe that I  
 could be saved in no other way than by obedience to the  
 Elders; and in order to this, I must believe, that the  
 reign of Christ on earth had commenced in the way and  
 manner which they had taught. But it appeared to me  
 that the scripture prophecies on the subject of what is  
 called the millennium, had no more reference or relation  
 to this church, than to any other, even if first Mother,  
 father William, and father James, as they call them, had  
 been exemplary, pious persons. Therefore according to  
 what I had once told Elder Hezekiah, the more I ex-  
 amined the scriptures, the more I doubted their being in  
 the millennium; and that I had reason to believe that  
 many of those who professed to be strong in the faith,  
 even some of the leaders, had at times their doubts, ex-  
 ercises and trials about it, as well as myself and oth-  
 ers.

Having thus considered all things appertaining to this  
 faith, I now concluded and was satisfied, that this could  
 not be that clear dispensation pointed out in the scrip-  
 tures, in which God would pour out his spirit upon all  
 flesh, and all should know the Lord, and no cause re-  
 main for doubts and exercise of mind respecting the truth  
 of it. Nevertheless, I did not doubt but that those of

\* See page 18, answer 5. Page 19, answer 6.

† Page 24, answer 10.

this society, who sincerely believed,\* and were careful to forsake all evil, would, through the mercy of God, be saved. But I concluded I could not be saved by a religion, the fundamental points of which I did not believe, and thought it would be the highest wisdom in me, to “take heed to the things” I believed to be right, for that only will bring a man peace at the last.†

It may here be observed, that many who had joined the society, having firmly believed as I did, that they had entered the latter day glory, which had so long been the subject of prophecy and prayer; and afterwards having cause to believe to the contrary, met with a mortification and disappointment, of which those who never received this faith, can form no adequate idea. It appeared to me that some, rather than brook the disappointment, were determined to believe,‡ and refused to hear any thing to the contrary,§ and appeared to be as happy as if they were really in the millennium.

Several who had been members of the society, and who had left it, had observed to me, that it was with the greatest reluctance. I had also heard the believers say, that when they were not reconciled, and had thoughts of leaving the people, they felt very distressed. I had experienced the same. One cause of which was, having heard so much of the direful consequences of

\* “Error,” says Dr. Price, “when involuntary, is innocent; and all that is required of us, as a condition of acceptance, is faithfully endeavouring to find out and practise truth and right.”—*Sermons, page 265.*

† “No way whatever,” says Locke, “that I shall walk in against the dictates of my conscience, will ever bring me to the mansions of the blessed. I may grow rich by an art that I take no delight in—I may be cured of some diseases by remedies I have no faith in—but I cannot be saved by a religion I distrust.”

‡ “Sic sentio, sic sentiam, i. e. so I believe, and so I will believe, is the prison of the soul for life time, and a bar against all the improvement of the mind.”

§ “Some persons are so confident they are in the right, that they will not come within the hearing of any notions but their own: they canton out to themselves a little province in the intellectual world, where they fancy the light shines, and all the rest are in darkness.” *Watts on the Mind.*

resisting the testimony of the Elders, and of the woful state of backsliders ; my mind had become so affected with it, and habituated to it, that I and others were filled with the most fearful apprehensions, which I found that nothing but an appeal to candid, fair, unbiaſſed reaſon, could conquer. But this reluctance and diſtreſs, and thoſe fearful apprehenſions, had been conſidered by the believers, as a proof that the diſpenſation they were under, was the only way of God. But I concluded the cauſe undoubtedly took its riſe as above metioned : and alſo from having had a long acquaintance and intimacy with each other, and in the mean time, the Elders having uſed every exertion to unite them together in love and friendſhip, their affections had become cloſely attached to each other ; and when that is the caſe, it is the ſame in other ſocieties, or among other people when they part, or any thing takes place that thwarts their affections.

I ſhall now proceed a little further with my narration. Since I returned laſt from Lebanon, as I did not attend their meetings, nor manifeſt any further faith, therefore, in about three months after, the Elders teſtified to the believers, their diſunion with me ; and ſometime after, when they found I ſhewed no inclination to return, they charged them not to harbour, or welcome me in their houſes, if I came to ſee them ; nor to have any converſation with me, as I would hand out that which would be poiſon to their ſouls ; and that as I had turned from the way of God myſelf, I would endeavour to lead others after me. They alſo forbid their ſtopping at my houſe in paſſing and repaſſing, as they had done before. Theſe things I was informed of, ſoon after, by B. Youngs, Derick Veeder, Frederick Wicker, William Richardſon, Hannah Train, my wife's ſiſter Macee Everitt, and ſeveral other believers. I was alſo told by ſeveral, that thoſe with whom the Elders have no union, the believers muſt have no union ; and that as they wiſhed to be obedient to every gift of God the Elders had for them, they were ſorry that they could not fellowſhip me any longer ; and wiſhed me not to come to ſee them, or viſit them : (theſe things were hard.) I was told that the



Elders believed that I knew it was the way of God I had turned from, and therefore, was the less excusable. I was also told of my lost, dark, miserable state and condition.

As to their testifying their disunion with me (which is the way they disown persons from being considered as members of the society) it was no great mortification to me, for which I did not blame them, as I thought it time we had parted, as to my making profession with them; but then, as I still had a friendly regard for the people, particularly those with whom I had had a long and intimate acquaintance, and with whom I had had much conversation, believing most of them were sincere, I wished to part as friends, and if we could not agree in every point of faith and doctrine, I wished to agree as neighbours, friends, and fallible mortals; and not by any means, despise, execrate, and shut doors against each other; but to endeavour to live in the constant exercise of love, pity, and kindness.

“To err is human; to forgive, divine.”

Almighty God! creator of the universe: Father and friend of all the human race! look down on us, thine erring creatures. Pity us under our darkness and imperfections. Enlighten our minds. Enable us to search and find out truth and right. Banish from our hearts the bitterness of censure. Cherish in our minds a disposition to treat those who differ from us, with kindness. Give us a spirit of forbearance and love towards all our fellow creatures. To our zeal, add knowledge; and to our knowledge, charity. Make us humble under the difficulties that adhere to our faith; and patient under the perplexities which accompany our practice. *Lead and guide us by thy spirit*; and when all the vicissitudes, changes and trying scenes of this life are over and done with, grant that we may all meet in some better state of existence.

END OF PART SECOND.

A BRIEF  
HISTORY  
OF THE  
Rise and Progress  
OF THE  
PEOPLE CALLED SHAKERS :  
IN WHICH THE MOST SINGULAR OCCURRENCES  
THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE AMONG  
THEM, ARE PLAINLY  
DECLARED.



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A BRIEF

HISTORY, &c.

THE people called Shakers, who are the subject of this history, hold all churches that are under the protection of the civil power, to be churches of anti-christ, that is, all the established national churches in the world, without exception. They also hold, that the apostolic church gradually degenerated, and finally became a church of anti-christ, under the favour and protection of Constantine, the Roman emperor. But at the same time, they profess to believe that God has, in every age, raised up witnesses to bear testimony against sin and the power of anti-christ. These witnesses have been those who were called heretics, and who were persecuted as such by the established churches. When any of these heretics were suppressed by those churches, or lost their power by seeking the patronage of the civil authority, or forming a connexion with an established church, God raised up others in their place.

The people called Quakers, they assert, were raised up to be true witnesses for God, and to prepare the way for the second coming of Christ; and that they were the last of the witnesses who were put to death for their testimony. But that they also lost their power by petitioning the civil authority for a redress of grievances, and by coming under its protection. After them, they say, a people known by the name of the French prophets were raised up, and endued with the true spirit of prophecy; and that they were the two witnesses mentioned by St. John, who "after three days and an half," i. e. twelve



hundred and sixty years, "stood upon their feet,"\* i. e. were not slain or persecuted unto death. They also affirm that the prophetic testimony of the two witnesses respecting the second coming of Christ ended, as the time which these prophets had foretold soon commenced; for this reason, that is, because the Shakers profess to believe that those prophets were the last, and had the greatest share of the spirit of prophecy, and were particularly forerunners of, and preparatory to the second coming of Christ, as professed by them,† it may be necessary to give a short account of the rise of those prophets, and their most noted proceedings.

They first appeared in Dauphiny and the Cevennes, in France, about the year 1688; in a few years, several hundred Protestants professed to be inspired; their bodies were much agitated with various operations. When they were receiving the spirit of prophecy, they trembled, staggered, and fell down and lay as if they were dead. They recovered twitching, shaking, and crying to God for mercy for themselves and for all mankind; not only in their assemblies, but at other times. After they had been under agitations of body, they would begin to prophesy, crying repent, the end of all things is near at hand. The Cevennes hills and mountains resounded with their loud cries for mercy, and denunciations of judgments against all the churches and their priests, with predictions of the downfall of Popery. Their assemblies consisted of several hundreds, and some of them of two or three thousand persons. These were the persecuted Huguenots who were subdued in 1705, when three of them, namely, Elias Marlon, John Cavilier, and Durand Fage, repaired to London, where they also began to prophesy, with the like operations and ecstasies, as in France. The French refugees, thinking themselves scandalized at the behaviour of their countrymen, were authorized by the Bishop of London, as superior of the French congregations, to inquire into the mission of these prophets. They were declared impostors. Notwithstanding this decision, which was confirmed by the Bishops, they continued their as-

\* See page 123.

† See page 124.

semblies in Soho, under the countenance of Sir Richard Bulklèy and John Lacy. They testified against the ministers of the established church. They denounced judgments against the city of London, and the whole British nation.

Marlon, Cavilier, and Fage, were persecuted as false prophets and disturbers of the public peace, and were sentenced to pay a fine of twenty marks each, and stand on a scaffold with papers on their breasts denoting their offence: A sentence which was executed accordingly at Charing-cross and the Royal Exchange. But these proceedings had no tendency to stop their progress: in about a year, there were several hundreds of both sects, in and about London, who united with them. They had numerous meetings about the skirts of the city; there was to be seen the prophet prostrate, as if expiring, or else like one out of his mind, mute, sweating, trembling, at length beginning to rave and foam at the mouth, and uttering certain unintelligible expressions. Numbers of them had various signs on their bodies, particularly shaking and staggering; and they declared that the impulses of the spirit were such, that they were forced to speak, which several would do one after another—testifying against all the churches, and prophesying the downfall of Babylon, and near approach of the kingdom of Christ, or the millennium state—that the Lord Jesus was soon again to be revealed, (for which they would heartily pray) and that the whole creation should appear in its primitive beauty, and man regain the perfection of Adam, and his immediate communion with God—and that this great restoration should be brought about by the spirit of God—and that they were as a voice to bid the world prepare for the coming of the bridegroom, that they might get on the wedding garment, and so go in to the marriage feast, the supper of the Lamb. They spake of the new heavens, the new earth, the first resurrection, and the New Jerusalem descending from above. Also, that this great work was to be wrought by a spiritual power proceeding from the mouths of those who should, by the gift of the spirit, be sent forth in great numbers to labour in the vineyard; and that their mission should be attest-

ed by signs from heaven, and the destruction of the wicked universally, as by famine, pestilence, and earthquakes; and that all the works of men being destroyed, there should remain nothing but what was good, when there should be one Lord, one faith, and one testimony among mankind.

They endeavoured to support their predictions by the many scripture prophecies concerning the millennium, or reign of Christ, and universal peace on earth. This message, they said, they were to proclaim to every nation under heaven, beginning first at England. In order to this, they professed to have the gift of languages, and power to convey the same gift and spirit to others.— They also professed to discern the secrets of the heart, and to have power to work miracles, even to the raising of the dead. They appointed a time for restoring a certain Dr. Wells to life. Vast numbers crowded to the place, where they waited for the expected miracle till their credulity became a jest. They also predicted that they should perform many other miraculous things.

They testified, that all the great things, of which they prophesied respecting the millennium, would be made known over all the earth within three years. They also declared, that if the power of God did not attest to the work before the twenty-ninth of April next, they would own themselves deluded.

An anonymous author, who has written what he has entitled, an impartial account of the prophets, says, “they erred by fixing a time,” as above mentioned, “which was not given them to know.” The said author was personally acquainted with them, though not one of them; and he appears to have taken much pains to examine into their mission, lives, and characters. He says,

“They were supposed to be mad when they had their extatic fits; but then they would argue with brighter reason than out of them; deliver discourses very elegant and long; ask or answer questions with wonderful propriety and wisdom, even exceeding their natural capacity.” Also that “they were men of sober lives and conversations, and of good characters among their neighbours.” They were generally such as had been account-

ed plain, honest, well-meaning people." "That they all practised in private what they performed and taught in public, viz. a zeal for God and his holiness, and constant prayers and praises to him." "They were despised and persecuted, but they appeared to be humbly resigned to the will of God, and to have a sincere love to their neighbour."

Several of these prophets went from London to Scotland, and afterwards to Holland, where the magistrates committed them to prison.\*

James Wardley (a taylor by trade) and Jane, his wife, persons of obscure birth and contracted fortune, lived at Bolton, county of Lancashire, in England, and belonged to the people called Quakers; but receiving the peculiar spirit of the French prophets, they joined with them in testifying against all the churches then in standing. Like those prophets, they professed to have visions and revelations of the downfall of the kingdom of anti-christ, and that the second coming of Christ, or millennium, as prophesied of in the scriptures, was then actually commencing.

However singular this might have appeared, yet there were not wanting persons of credulity enough to believe it, particularly such as had been with, or who believed the predictions of the French prophets. Several of these and others were added to them; and in 1747,† they were formed into a small society, without any established creed or particular manner of worship, as they professed to be only beginning to learn the new and living way of complete salvation, which had long been the subject of prophecy; and therefore they professed to be resigned, to be led and governed, from time to time, as the spirit of God might dictate.

\* Smollet's History of England—Cunningham's History of Great Britain—Chauncy's work. Impartial Account of the Prophets—H. Adams' View of Religions—Dr. Calamy's Commentaries on the New Prophets—J. Moser's Anecdotes.

† See page 122.



The principal members of this infant sect were John Townley, by trade a mason, of Manchester, and his wife, and John Kattis. John Townley was wealthy, and very liberal in helping the needy of his society, most of whom were poor. Kattis was said to be a scholar; but did not long retain his faith. The others were illiterate. Shortly after Townley and his wife joined the society, Wardley and his wife, being poor, removed from Bolton, twelve miles from Manchester, and lived with Townley. Meetings were frequently held under the ministry of Wardley and his wife. Wardley's wife was called Mother; to her confession of sins were made, though it was not so much yet insisted upon. She had the principal lead in their meetings, which were generally held at Townley's. At which meetings they sometimes sat silent a short space, then they would be seized with violent and tremulous motions, during which they would express their detestation against sin, and its contrariety to the divine nature. Sometimes their whole bodies would shake as if forcibly agitated by a strong hand; then they would sing and shout for the downfall of the anti-christian powers, and make signs, and walk swiftly and jostle against one another; they would jump violently, and shiver for a considerable length of time. Hence, as appropriate names for them, they were called shiverers by some, and jumpers by others.

In the year 1757, Ann Lee joined their society, by confessing her sins to Jane Wardley. She was the daughter of John Lee, blacksmith, of Manchester, (who was brother to Charles Lee, a celebrated general in the American army in the revolutionary war with Great Britain. He also had a brother who was alderman of Algate Ward, and sheriff of London.) She was born about the year 1735. There is no cause to believe that her childhood or youth was marked with any uncommon event, or that she joined any religious society, till the period above mentioned. A short time before, she was married to Abraham Standley, a blacksmith, who had worked at the same trade with her father—her occupation was a cutter of harter's fur.

She had eight children, who all died in infancy, mostly occasioned by hard labour; her last child was extracted by forceps; after which, for several hours, she lay with but little appearance of life. After she recovered, on account of her thus suffering, and the unkind treatment of her husband, who was much given to inebriety, she declared that she would never have any more carnal intercourse with man. And soon after she professed to receive, by revelation, a knowledge of the man of sin, the root of all evil; the gratification of which nature, she said, was the sin and caused the fall of Adam and Eve. Then she began her testimony against marriage and sexual intercourse. Here it may be observed, that previously to this they had held to marriage; but as they had no union with the rest of mankind in any of their proceedings, several were married by Jane Wardley, or declared to be man and wife by her, after their promises to each other before her and others of the society; Wardley having retained something like the mode of marriage which they had learnt of the Quakers, some were married afterwards according to law, to render their children legitimate.

These people uniting with Ann in her testimony against the lust of the flesh, (as they called it) acknowledged she had received the greatest gift; and from that time, which was about the year 1771, she was owned as the spiritual Mother, and took the lead of the society.

Four or five years before that time, John Partington, of Mayor-town, received their testimony and joined the society; and also John Hocknell, of Cheshire, (twenty-four miles from Manchester) who was brother to Townley's wife. They were both illiterate men, but possessed considerable property, and being zealous in the cause, they did considerable towards supporting the poor of the society. Hannah, Hocknell's wife, at first was much opposed, but after some time also joined the society.—Partington and Hocknell had both been noted men among the French prophets.

The believers,\* as they were now called, in passing and repassing from Manchester to John Hocknell's, often held meetings at Partington's, and likewise at Hocknell's.

Ann Standley, now called Mother Ann, professed to have the gift of languages, the gift of healing, and professed to discern the secrets of the heart, and to be wholly actuated by the invisible power of God; and that she had attained a state of sinless perfection. She asserted that she was the one spoken of in the twelfth chap. of Rev.; and that she had immediate revelations for all she delivered. She testified that then was the eleventh hour, and all those who rejected her testimony would reject the counsel of God against themselves, like unto the unbelieving Jews.

After she was acknowledged Mother, various operations increased, (like those which had been among the French prophets, who by this time had become extinct.) Their exercises in their meetings were singing, dancing, shouting, shaking, speaking tongues, (or speaking what no one understood) and prophesying of the downfall of all the anti-christian churches, and the increase of that kingdom in which they professed to be. Also, testifying against sin, and preaching up the necessity of confession of sins, which were now principally made to Mother Ann.

Shortly after she took the lead of the people, she was taken from one of their meetings by a number of people, at the head of whom was a civil officer, who committed her to the dungeon of the prison-house; the next day she was taken out and put into Bedlam, where she was confined several weeks and then discharged.†

About this time William Lee, Ann's half-brother, a blacksmith by trade, James Whittaker, a weaver, and James Shepard, a shoemaker, likewise joined them.—Lee and Whittaker were very zealous in the cause, and

\* Called Believers because they believed in a new dispensation, or the second coming of Christ.

† See page 46.

soon became pillars with Mother Ann in the work ; and were first called Elders, and sometime afterwards were acknowledged as Fathers.

In the year 1772, there were about thirty persons who belonged to this society, though there had many more joined it, but they had fell off. There then appeared to be no prospect of any further increase, as the people in general disbelieved in their testimony. About that time Mother Ann professed to receive a gift, or revelation from God to repair to America. She prophesied of a great increase and permanent establishment of the church and work of God in this country. Accordingly, as many as firmly believed in her testimony, and could settle their temporal concerns and furnish necessaries for the voyage, concluded to follow her. They procured a passage at Liverpool, and arrived at New-York, August, 1774. Those who came with the Mother were her husband, Abraham Ständley, though he did not believe in the mission of his wife, and of course was not a member of the society, William Lee, James Whittaker, John Partington, and Mary his wife, John Hocknell, James Shepard, and one Ann Lee the Mother's niece.

John Townley, before mentioned, lost his faith of the second coming of Christ, as did several others ; and shortly after the above named persons left England, James Wardley and his wife removed from Townley's and rented a house, but not being able to support themselves, were taken into the alms-house, where they ended their days. Thus the society in England was broken up.

After their arrival at New-York, being strangers in the country, and rather destitute in their circumstances, they made application to some of the society called Quakers, for counsel and advice, and received for answer, that the best thing they could do would be to repair to Albany, and lease a tract of land some where near that city, and settle on it. After this, Hocknell, Whittaker, and Partington, made an excursion to the northward in order to take a view of the country, and to find a place of settlement. They at last concluded to settle at Nis-



keuna, since named Watervliet, though generally known by the first name. Partington and Hocknell contracted each for a small farm, already settled.

The early part of next year, Hocknell embarked for England—and returned with his wife and four children, (namely, Richard, Francis, Mary, and Hannah; Francis was his youngest and last child he had, born Sept. 15, 1767; he had ten children, six of whom he left in England.)

By the spring of 1776, Hocknell with his family, and all those who came over first, became settled at Niskeuna, except Standley, Ann's husband, who left her while she tarried at New-York. They had also leased in perpetuity several hundred acres of unimproved land joining Hocknell's farm; and by the fall of the same year they had built a log-house, where their principal settlement now is—where Mother Ann, Elders Lee, Whittaker, and Shepard, fixed their place of residence, and where they held their meetings. Here they abode in the wilderness, much unnoticed and unknown, three or four excepted, who were mechanics and necessitated to seek employment abroad in order to provide sustenance for their common support. William Lee worked at the trade of a blacksmith, and James Shepard at shoe making, in Albany, until they became better circumstanced at Niskeuna; in the mean time, thither they resorted, particularly on the Sabbath, to attend meetings.

In the year 1779, at New-Lebanon and adjacent parts there was much of a religious awakening; and many believed the millennium, or Christ's second coming, was near. They had various operations, and professed to have visions and revelations of the glory of that day. Hence the minds of many were somewhat prepared to receive the faith of these people. In the winter of 1780, Talmage Bishop, of that place, by some means became acquainted with them, and received a measure of faith. Elated with joy he returned to Lebanon, bearing tidings of a strange people\* at Niskeuna, having the power of

\* When they came to America, they bore the name of "a strange people," which name in four or five years after, on account of

God. A number of the subjects of the revival at Lebanon, appointed Calvin Harlow to go and see the people at Niskeuna, and bring an account of them. Harlow returned; and not knowing what to think of them, went again in company with Joseph Meacham and Amos Hammond, (both Baptist preachers) and Aaron Kibbe; these four believed that what they saw and heard was the work of God, and confessed their sins. They returned to Lebanon and reported accordingly. Various and vague reports began to be spread abroad concerning them; multitudes soon flocked from Lebanon and thereabouts to see them, and many joined them; in consequence of which there soon became a settlement in that place, which, for some time past has been the residence of the ministration. The most noted characters that joined them about this time, beside those above mentioned, were David Darrow, Valentine Rathbone a Baptist preacher, Daniel Rathbone, and Reuben Rathbone. Valentine renounced his union with the society within a few months after he joined them, and soon published a pamphlet against their faith and practice.

There were (and had been for some time) a sect in Harvard, Massachusetts, whose sentiments bore some affinity to the Shakers; of course their minds were a fit receptacle for the faith of these people. This sect were called Shadrach Irelands, from Shadrach Ireland their leader. The principal tenets of this peculiar sect were: renouncing connection with their wives, and like the Shakers, testifying against, and renouncing the works of the flesh, in order to become perfectly free from sin. As soon as they arrived at this state of perfection they might marry spiritual wives, from whom were to proceed holy children, which were to constitute the New Jerusalem or millennium. Shadrach Ireland put away his first wife, and married Abigail Logy for his spiritual wife. He professed to be Christ in his second coming. He likewise believed that he should not die, or if he did, that he

their plain dress and address and their refusing to bear arms, was changed to the name of Shaking Quakers; but for some years past they have been called only Shakers.

should be raised to immortal life the third day. He however died, and his followers waited the three days, expecting to see him rise at the end of them; but as he did not, they supposed they had mistaken the meaning of his prophecy, and that a day was to be considered a prophetic year. Under these impressions, they laid him in a close cellar of his own house, as in a vault, where he remained until the Shakers visited and preached to them a better understanding of their principles of faith; they then caused Shadrach Ireland to be buried, and Abigail Logy, his wife, with several of his followers, joined the Shakers. It has been said the Mother spake of these people before she left England; and asserted they were near and ripe for the gospel.

Many now from Lebanon, Hancock, Harvard, and other eastern parts, convened at Niskeuna—believers for counsel, and others for curiosity. Such numbers resorting thither, the country being then engaged in the war with Great Britain, drew upon them a suspicion that they had some secret machinations in embryo prejudicial to the liberties and good of the public. In consequence of this jealousy, in July, 1780, David Darrow, who had lately received faith, as he was driving a flock of sheep from Lebanon to Niskeuna, was stopped and brought back before the authority at Lebanon, by whom he was tried under suspicion of treason. His sheep were taken from him, and he, in company with Joseph Meacham a believer, was sent under guard to be tried by the commissioners at Albany; before whom they were both ordered to promise obedience to the laws. With this they could not conscientiously comply; as part of their laws were of a military nature and totally repugnant to their principles, they could make no such concessions, lest in obedience they should be compelled to violate their consciences; therefore they, with Elder John Hocknell, who had appeared in their defence, were committed to prison. The suspicion of their being enemies to their country continuing to gain ground, Hezekiah Hammond, Joel Pratt, Mother Ann, John Partington, Mary Partington, William Lee, James Whittaker, Calvin Harlow, and Elizur Goodrich, all principal leading characters;

were soon after imprisoned with Darrow and Meacham; but in a short time Mother Ann,\* with her companions; were taken out with intent to banish them to the British at New-York. Having conveyed them as far as Poughkeepsie, they there imprisoned them, till a more favourable opportunity should offer for their transportation. Here many visited them, and some received a measure of faith in their testimony. And after being confined above three months, Governor Clinton, who then resided at Poughkeepsie, hearing of their imprisonment ordered them to be released. Those imprisoned in Albany were visited by many, and through the grates of the prison they preached to multitudes. Many exclaimed against the persecution and imprisonment of these people, which was believed to be merely for conscience sake. After about four months confinement they were released.

This usage, far from answering the design of their persecutors in diminishing, served to augment their numbers. Out of the many hundreds who visited the church and Elders at Niskeuna and Lebanon, many received faith in their testimony, principally in the states of Massachusetts and Connecticut; they returning and testifying their faith, proved a means of gathering more.

In the year 1781, sometime in May, the Mother, with a female companion (Hannah Kendall) and James Whitaker, in company with another Elder, took a journey to the eastward, travelling from place to place, visiting those who had received faith. Being famed for their religious singularity, great numbers resorted to see and hear them from the different parts adjacent to the places they visited. After a tour of about two years, in which time they held a number of meetings and preached; and having prevailed upon many to believe that they were sent of God, and to confess their sins to them, they returned to Niskeuna. In this journey they did not escape abuse, calumny and detraction, which was heaped upon them from time to time by the malevolence of persecutors. As nearly two thousand had received faith in their

\* See page 120.



testimony and joined them, the Elders were encouraged to persevere in the work. Whittaker spent no idle time.

There had always been among the Shakers more or less operations, contortions and agitations of body, but they now became excessive, especially at their meetings, such as trembling, shaking, twitching, jirking, whirling, leaping, jumping, stamping, rolling on the floor or ground, running with one or both hands stretched out and seemingly impelled forward the way one or both pointed; some barked and crowed, and imitated the sound of several other creatures—these were gifts of mortification. Also hissing, brushing and driving the devil or evil spirits out of their houses; often groaning and crying on account, as they said, of the remains of the evil nature in them, or for the wicked world; at other times rejoicing by loud laughter, shouting and clapping their hands. There were several instances of some of them even professing to have gifts to curse such as censured their conduct; if they were reprov'd for it, they would justify themselves by referring to the instance of Elisha cursing the children in the name of the Lord; and also, to tell certain persons to “go to hell,” particularly such as had been of their faith and turned against them, (for whatever is said or done in the gift is right, though out of the gift it would be a sin.) Every thing they said or did they had some reason or scripture for; so for this speech they would quote Psalm lv. 14, 15, saying, “David even prayed that death might seize upon such as had been his companions, and with whom he had taken sweet counsel, and that they might go down into hell quickly. Also the apostle says, Let them be *anathema maranatha*, i. e. cursed when the Lord comes, (if they will not then be obedient.) He further says, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that is, in the gift of God, we are to deliver such to Satan for the destruction of the filthy flesh.”

Their superfluous furniture, such as ornamented looking glasses, &c. in a number of instances, were dashed upon the floor and stamped to pieces; ear and finger-rings were bitten with all the symptoms of rage, and then sold for old metal. All this was done to testify

their abhorrence of that pride which introduced these things among mankind—and likewise as a type of the destruction of Babylon. They said, “all *outward adorning and putting on of costly apparel* were the works of the flesh.” Among some, all books that they had, except the Bible, they called anti-christian, and were burnt or otherwise destroyed. Some of them described circles on the floor, around which they would stamp, grin and perform all manner of grimace, and every act of disdain; they then jumped within the ring and stamped with the utmost vehemence, making a hideous noise. They considered the circle as representing sin in the world, and their actions round and in it marked their displeasure and abhorrence against sin; and likewise their stamping in the ring with a noise was figurative of the destruction of sin and passing away of the old heavens, according to the scripture expression, “as with a great noise.” In short, these extraordinary proceedings were carried to a height scarcely to be conceived. They were also continued with but little intermission till the church was brought into order, as will be seen in the sequel. I may here observe, many professed to have visions and to see numbers of spirits as plain as they saw their brethren and sisters; and also to look into the invisible world, and to converse with many of the departed spirits who had lived in the different ages of the world, and to learn and to see their different states in the world of spirits. Some they saw, they said, were happy and others miserable. Several declared that they often were in dark nights surrounded with a light, sometimes in their rooms, but more often when walking the road, that they could see to pick up a pin; which light would continue a considerable length of time and enlighten them on their way. Many had gifts to speak languages, and many miracles were said to be wrought, and strange signs and great wonders shewn by the believers.\*

\* Several who have since left the society, with whom the author has conversed, still declare they saw sights and things done, for which they have not been able to assign a natural cause.

In order to mortify the carnal mind, their dances were excessive; and the various methods they practised to mortify and try that which they called the root of all evil, were truly astonishing. Several things which took place, for the sake of modesty, are here omitted. But I may observe thus far, that they stopped every avenue of their houses, so that the world's people, as they called them, could not see them, and had one or two of the brethren out to watch; they then stripped themselves and danced naked, when the gift or order came from Mother Ann so to do; those who would not be obedient had to walk out of the room, and such were generally mortified by being called "fleshly creatures—full of the flesh."

Notwithstanding their care not to be discovered by the world's people, this conduct by some means leaked out, and it was noised about that the Shakers danced naked. It appears that Daniel Rathbone, sen. was the first who was questioned concerning the truth of it. He gave no direct answer, being unwilling to expose his brethren and sisters; he opened the matter to Whittaker for counsel in such cases; Whittaker told him he might deny it.—For the first leaders held that they might deny the truth, and at the same time speak the truth; for instance, they were not naked in one sense, being clothed with spiritual garments, "clothed with salvation"—2 Chron. vi. 41; "with righteousness"—Ps. cxxxii. 9; "If so be that being clothed, we shall not be found naked"—2 Cor. v. 3. Though Elder Whittaker did not fully unite with their stripping naked, and would often leave the room, he said those gifts of Mother which he could not fully see into, he would not condemn. Several were whipped, and some were ordered to whip themselves, as a mortification to the flesh. A young woman by the name of Elizabeth Cook, was stripped and whipped naked, by Noah Wheaton, for having desires towards a young man.—Abiel Cook, her father, hearing of it, prosecuted Noah Wheaton for whipping his daughter naked. Hannah Cook, sister to Elizabeth, who was present at the time, was called for a witness. She went to Elder Whittaker and asked him what she should say.

He answered—"I cannot tell you what you must say, for I don't know what questions will be asked you; but," says he, "speak the truth, and spare the truth, and take care not to bring the gospel into disrepute."

She accordingly testified before the court that her sister, who was whipped, was not naked. Thus she obeyed Whittaker's orders; for strictly speaking she was not naked, for she had at the time a fillet on her head. It also may be here proper to observe, that it was also said by the first leaders, "That no practice is wrong nor any oath false, which is made to gain the cause of the truth, or to defend the gospel against error; though it might appear directly opposite to truth in the eyes of the world, yet as done for the cause of the gospel it is considered as true."

Some time after Whittaker's last journey, that I have mentioned, he went another and travelled from place to place above six months, in company with Daniel Rathbone, sen. who also often preached.

Elder William Lee seldom travelled to gain profelytes, being severe in his temper and harsh in his manners; his preaching was not fraught with that mildness and urbanity which is necessary to draw the attention and win the affections of the hearers, and render a man beloved. It once happened as he was speaking to a public congregation, one of the spectators, a young man, behaved with levity and disrespect; upon this Lee took him by the throat and shook him, saying, "when I was in England I was sergeant in the King's life-guard, and could then use my fists; but now since I have received the gospel I must patiently bear all abuse, and suffer my sins to be kicked by every little boy; but I will have you know that the power of God will defend our cause."

Whittaker was more mild in his temper and soft in his manners, and accommodated his preaching to the feelings and sentiments of his hearers. He said he con-  
nived at many things of which he did not approve; but as believers came forward in the faith he was careful to correct, observing, that "any man must lack wisdom who should attempt to thresh his grain as it stands in



“the field. Nay,” said he, “first reap it, then bind it in bundles and fetch it into the barn, and then thresh and winnow it at leisure.”

Mother Ann seldom spake in public congregations, but often testified her faith to individuals in conversation. She was a woman of much confidence and boldness, and one who spake her mind freely on all occasions, whether in commendation or disapprobation. There were several instances similar to the following, which the believers called her sharp testimony against sin. As she with some of the Elders was disputing with two or three opposers, (who contradicted with some acrimony) she at length told them they were dogs, dumb dogs, damned dogs! One of the opposers replied to the Elders, “What will you make of that? do you call that the language of a woman of God?” He was answered that “it was similar to the language of scripture. St. John says, *all without are dogs and sorcerers, and he that believeth not is damned already.* And David says, speaking of Christ, *Dogs compassed him about.* Also, Christ calls such *serpents and vipers*, and that they could not *escape the damnation of hell*: and he likewise says, *He that believeth not shall be damned.*”

For sometime past William Lee and James Whittaker had been called Fathers by the believers; and they had always understood that Lee stood in the lead next to the Mother, and Whittaker next to him. But as Whittaker had been the principal instrument in gaining profelytes, there arose a dispute between them in the latter part of the year 1783, which should be first, and Mother Ann interfered to settle the controversy—and the contention arose to such a height that it was the cause of several losing their faith. But the dispute finally terminated in the death of William Lee, which was on the twenty-first of July, 1784, in the forty-first year of his age. This was a great trial to many; but it was soon absorbed in another of greater magnitude. The head and Mother of the church, Ann Lee, that extraordinary personage, who was esteemed and admired by her followers, and for her singularity was a curiosity to many others—who (for a woman) had travelled much to propagate the faith,

and had from time to time suffered scenes of insult and abuse from inconsiderate people, was now called upon to resign up her charge. She died at Niskeuna, on the 8th day of September, the same year that Lee died. Her funeral was attended by a large concourse of people, not only believers, but by many from the city of Albany and adjacent parts. The people were moderately served with wine, and returned home generally satisfied with having been at the funeral. She was buried near William Lee, in their burying-ground, about a quarter of a mile from their meeting-house at Niskeuna.

The most of her followers were much grieved on account of her death; and to many it was an unexpected event, for they had entertained an idea that she would never die, or at least that she would abide on earth a thousand years. She had given some such intimations, but Whittaker never inculcated such a belief.

Shortly after her death, many lost their faith and fell off. But by the unremitting exertions of Elder Whittaker, upon whom the lead then devolved, the believers were reconciled to the death of Mother Ann; and were taught that it was necessary for her to enter the world of spirits, in order to their further increase in the gospel. He often prophesied of a great spread of the gospel, and of an ingathering to the church, which was soon to take place.

About six months after Mother Ann's death, on account of so many falling off one after another, he denounced heavy judgments against those who should hereafter leave the church. His words were these—"Whoever from this time forsakes the blessed work of God, will never prosper in this world nor in the world to come, nor die the natural death of other men; if they do, God never spake by my mouth!" He sent out several to preach the gospel in different parts of the country; one of these was Reuben Rathbone, with a companion, who for his testimony in Connecticut was imprisoned four months in New-London jail.

In 1785 and 6, the church by order of Elder Whittaker, built a ship of two hundred tons, called the Union, at the town of Rehoboth, principally for the purpose of

spreading the gospel among foreign nations. It was an excellent ship, well built and completely finished. When, in consequence of a contention which arose between Morrel Baker and Noah Wheaton, which should be captain, the design of circulating the gospel was relinquished.—She was fitted out for Hispaniola, with a cargo of horses, flour and other articles in her hold, and commanded by Morrel Baker, who, with most of the hands, were Shakers. From Hispaniola they sailed to Havanna, from Havanna back to Hispaniola, from thence to Charleston, from Charleston to Savannah, and then to Hispaniola again, and from thence to Boston, where she was sold. The building of the ship, with these several voyages, produced no gain to the church; and the conduct of Baker and the hands did not, while following a sea-faring life, comport with their profession.

About this time Daniel Rathbone, sen. before mentioned, and his wife left the society. Soon after he gave the public his principal reasons for separating in a printed pamphlet, containing about an hundred pages. Also, by this time Richard Hocknell and Ann Lee, the niece of Mother Ann, (before mentioned) had left them. He and this Ann Lee were shortly after joined together in matrimony.

August, 1786. Elder John Hocknell and John Partington went to New-York to seek a passage for England. James Whittaker had been opposed to their going; but when they left Niskeuna, he with Joseph Meacham were at Tyringham on a visit among the brethren. Information soon reached Whittaker that they were gone—he immediately took horse, in company with Meacham, and proceeded to New-York in order to stop them, but did not arrive before they had sailed. Some days before their departure they wrote to the church at Niskeuna for a few articles of provision, which letter was received by the church September 5. The next day they wrote to them expressing a desire that they would remember them, and pray for them that they might “prosper in the way of everlasting life;” and also, that they sincerely wished that they, while gone, might “prosper both in soul and body.” The letter with sundry articles of pro-

vision was sent by Elder James Shephard, but he did not reach New-York till they were gone. He there met Whittaker and Meacham; they returned in company to Niskeuna. In about a year Hocknell and Partington returned from England. Partington soon after his return separated from the society.

And some time after James Shephard also left the society. He had presided as an inferior Elder, and had been a considerable support to the society in its infant state. Therefore Elder Whittaker said, if he should be unfortunate or live to be old, the church must not let him suffer, whether he should continue in the faith or not. The author visited said Shephard in the year 1807, and found him to be in very low circumstances and advanced in years; but an honest man. He said he had spent the best part of his days in the service of the church, and that it was their duty to help him. Shortly after, he visited the church at Niskeuna for that purpose; and the author was pleased to hear that they liberally afforded him relief. As he had no antipathy against them, but on the contrary, still manifested a regard for the society, he was invited to return and live in it, as he could live more comfortable than in the situation he was. He accepted the invitation, and was accordingly placed in the backsliding order.\* This usage to a man worn out, mostly in the service of the society, was considered as a credit to it.

It was also near this time that William Skails left them. He had been liberally educated and had read much; had belonged to the society several years, and for awhile had been zealous in the cause. At one time he stripped himself naked and testified his faith before Lucy Wright, the present Mother of the church, Samuel Fitch, John Truesdell and several other believers, saying, "Naked came I into the world, and naked must I go out; and naked must my soul stand before God, as naked as my body now stands before you. It is my faith that sin has been the cause of shame, and my soul must become divested of shame, and as completely stripped

\* See note page 58.



“ of sin as my body is now stripped, or I can never stand before you in the world of spirits.” Afterwards he discovered as great zeal against them and their faith; several times he went among them and exclaimed against them. He wrote several pieces concerning the faith and practice for publication, but they never appeared in print. It is said he afterwards became somewhat delirious.

Elder Whittaker continued indefatigable in his endeavours to spread the gospel; he almost continually employed his time in travelling and preaching, and visiting the believers and endeavouring to build them up in the faith; and though many fell off from time to time, yet many were gathered. By the year 1787, Elder Whittaker, with the assistance of several others who had travelled with him, had gained more or less believers, besides those at Niskeuna and Lebanon, at the following places; Hancock, Richmond, Pittsfield, Shirley, Harvard and Tyringham, in the state of Massachusetts; at New-Enfield, Canterbury and Loudon, state of New-Hampshire; at Enfield, state of Connecticut, and at Alfred in the province of Maine. The whole number of believers at these different places amounted to near three thousand.

A long statement of facts might be given, which the limits of this work will not admit, respecting the abuse and persecution which the Elders and many of the believers suffered. Let it suffice to say, they were often whipped out of towns and villages, and severely threatened to prevent their return. Sometimes they did return, and were again insulted and abused. Mobs frequently gathered round their houses, broke their windows and doors, dragged them into the dirt through the street, and kicked, whipped and several other ways abused them. At one time, Mother Ann was so beaten that her body was black and blue—and at the same time Whittaker had two of his ribs broken. The church having increased, as above mentioned, while America was in a war against Great Britain, many of them were pressed and taken from their dwellings to bear arms, which they would not do; when a gun was forced into their hands they would immediately let it fall, on account of

which they were often pricked with bayonets, whipped, kicked and beaten. In short, they suffered almost every thing, the loss of their lives excepted.

The church had now begun to assume the appearance of prosperity, when it was again called upon to part with its principal pillar. Elder James Whittaker, who had been out upon a religious journey in company with Reuben Rathbone, (who had been several journeys with him before) returning home was taken sick at Enfield, (Con.) in March, 1787, where he remained until he died, which was on the morning of the 20th of July following, aged about thirty-eight years. In the evening before he died he sent a believer to give information to the church at Lebanon that he was going to die, with orders for a few of his brethren, whom he named, to come and see him; but before they reached Enfield he was dead.— His death was a great trial to most of the believers, for he was much beloved by them.

Thus the church had lost its three principal leaders, who had nurtured it in its infant state, and whose fostering care had protected it through all its imbecilities and various trials, and had raised it to a degree of maturity. They had been the principal pillars to support its fabric, which more than once had been threatened by the rage of opposition and persecution to be annihilated. I shall here suspend further narration, while I give the faith of the church in, and a few characteristic traits of, these three extraordinary personages. Their faith in Mother Ann was great; and they still believe though she is absent in body, yet she is present in spirit. They believed that she was wholly actuated by the power of God; and that she, with Christ, had been the subject of prophecy; and that she was equal with Christ and suffered in spirit like unto him in a death to a fallen nature, in order to finish the work of man's final redemption.\* They believe she was the woman prophesied of by St. John that fled into the wilderness; and that Niskeuna was the place; and that in this place of retirement she was nourished for a time, times and half a time, i. e. three years and an

\* See pages 271, 272.

half, when she became known by opening and preaching the gospel as before related. Many of them believed that the man child, spoken of in the Revelations, was James Whittaker; and that he, or rather that spirit which he possessed, was as a rod of iron against sin, which in the progress of the work would rule all nations. Ann Lee, when addressed with the title of mistress or madam, sometimes remonstrated against it, saying, "I am Ann the word," meaning to signify that she was the word in the same sense that Christ is called the word in the first chapter of the gospel according to St. John. She was sometimes called the Elect Lady,\* but the believers have generally called her Mother, and Whittaker and Lee Fathers; because through or by them they were begotten in the gospel, brought forth into a new creation or birth, and empowered from babes to become men in the work of their redemption.

Ann Lee was a woman rather short and corpulent. Her countenance was fair and pleasant, but often assumed a commanding, severe look; she sang sweetly, with a pleasant voice, but would frequently use the most harsh, satirical language, with a masculine, sovereign address. Her natural genius was resplendent, with a quick and ready turn of wit, but entirely destitute of school education. She was exceeding loving and kind to the believ-

\* About the same time Ann began her testimony in America, Jemima Wilkinson, a Quaker's daughter, who was born in Cumberland, state of Rhode-Island, also began to testify that Christ had made his second appearance in her. She, like Ann, declared she had immediate and special revelation from God for all she delivered. Her profession and preaching were in most respects the same. She also gained a number of followers. Jemima was called, by many people, the Elect Lady; and as the same title was sometimes applied to Ann Lee, this, when one of them was spoken of, has sometimes rendered it difficult to distinguish which of the two was meant. Jemima and some of the leading characters among the Shakers have had conferences on the subject of their religion; though their profession was nearly alike, yet each party believed they had a revelation superior to the other. But the author has heard the Shakers say, that Jemima acknowledged them to be before her. For a further account of Jemima Wilkinson, see H. Adams' View of Religions, p. 458, third edition.

ers; she often called them her children, and sometimes her dear children, and recommended them to love one another as she loved them. Those people who came to see her and her followers, that did not oppose them, but on the contrary manifested a friendly disposition, she also treated with much kindness, especially if they manifested any inclination to receive the faith.

William Lee had been married and had two children by his wife. He was for a time a non-commissioned officer in the King's life-guard; while in it his wife proved false to him, and had a child by another man; after which (some time before he came to America) he entirely forsook her. He was large in size, strong and robust, stern and commanding, in his conduct generally harsh and severe, and was called by the believers "a son of thunder." It has often been said that he was more fit to have the command of a ship of war than of a church of Christ.

Whittaker was a man of a lively disposition, and a bright turn of mind; he had a penetrating eye, and a majestic, commanding, authoritative look, at the same time pleasant and complacent. He was of a fair complexion, the picture of health, and a man of considerable information, and generally respected and believed to be sincere even by those who were not members of the society. The author has heard several say who have separated from the society, that they "really loved Whittaker."

Mother Ann and William Lee often drank freely of spirituous liquors, and were sometimes intoxicated.\*—She sometimes said that spirituous liquor was one of God's good creatures. James Whittaker was, for the most part, a sober man and seldom drank to excess.

\* Other reports have been in circulation concerning these first leaders, particularly that Ann Lee was a lascivious and lewd woman; this has been published in the Theological Magazine—and that she was a woman of ill fame in England. But any thing which has been reported or heretofore published respecting her or her followers, that has not been sufficiently authenticated, is discarded from this work.



They sometimes observed, that *to the pure all things were pure* ; but to the *defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure, their minds and consciences being defiled*—Titus, i. 15.—Such they said were damned in all that they ate and drank, because they did not do it in faith ; for *whatever is not of faith, is sin*. But with respect to themselves, whatsoever they did was done in faith with a pure conscience, therefore they felt no condemnation in that which they allowed—Rom. xiv. 22, 23. Those things in which they found no evil, might appear evil to the wicked, being seen by them with an evil eye, and examined with a wicked heart. Further it was stated, that no man was able to judge them in their conduct with a right judgment, any more than men formerly were able to judge Christ when he did that in a number of instances which appeared to the evil-minded to be sin—as his breaking the Sabbath, as they said ; but as Christ was Lord of the Sabbath and Lord of all things, so were the Elders, particularly Mother Ann. Also, when they ate or drank, or whatever they did, they did all to the glory of God ; and they expected to be evil spoken of for that, for which they gave thanks—1 Cor x. 30, 31. The testimony of these persons, particularly Ann and Whittaker, was invariably at all times against sin and the gratification of the carnal mind, and the necessity of purity in heart and life. They professed to have many visions and revelations of the spiritual world, and concerning things in the present life. They said they often conversed with angels and departed spirits. They asserted that often when they were preaching, they saw many spirits who appeared to be attentive to hear and receive the word ; also many believers declared they saw the same. Ann and Whittaker often prophesied of a great increase and spread of the gospel in the next opening ; and that it would break out in some place far distant.

The author has made much inquiry concerning the state of mind in which they appeared to die, but he never could learn that they bore any particular testimony in support of their faith, or expressed any happy sensations or comfortable hope. Mother Ann was peevish, and even cross. Lee died in excruciating pain. Whit-

taker, some months before he was taken sick, said that he should not live long; and ten or twelve hours before he died appeared to have a sense that his end was near, and also appeared to be calm and resigned.

The vacancy occasioned in the ministration by the death of Whittaker was filled by Joseph Meacham, who had travelled and preached much with Whittaker. His useful, active zeal had procured him the esteem and veneration of the church. A short time previous to this, preaching to the world had been almost suspended, or as they term it, "the gospel was closed or shut up, and withdrawn from the world, that the church, as a body, might gather into order and increase in its own spiritual strength, and travail into the substance of what they professed."

Elder Meacham was indefatigable in his exertions to collect the believers into families, to support a joint interest and union and to hold all things in common, (for which Whittaker had begun to make some preparations previously to his death.) He signified the departure of Elder Whittaker was necessary in order that they might travail into a deeper work, and for the further increase of the gospel. In order to this increase, he laboured to convince the believers of the necessity of travelling out of a fleshly relation or union according to the ties of nature, and of being gathered into a church or spiritual relation, and of becoming purified from every principle proceeding from a carnal nature, and then they would be prepared to minister the gospel to others. They were taught that in order to become truly a church of Christ, a joint temporal interest should be absorbed in one common and indistinct property.

The first gathering commenced at Lebanon, in the year 1788, where several hundreds both male and female were collected from the different places where there were believers; some on account of their mechanical ingenuity; some for their property; some for helpers and assistants in temporal things, and others for spiritual teachers and helpers, and some on account of their own protection and salvation. All these entered into a verbal covenant, the substance of which was, to maintain

and support a joint interest, and a promise not to bring one another into debt for any services or property they should bestow on the joint interest of the church. Also an agreement to be under the order and government of the Deacons in all their temporal concerns. All the Deacons and Elders, together with the people, were under the guardianship and direction of Meacham.

Though the testimony and labours against the flesh had hitherto been severe, yet now they were increased with redoubled energy. The exercises of those who were gathering into a family, united interest and order, were extreme beyond conception. They conceived that by the power of God they could labour completely out of that natural instinct implanted in mankind for the purpose of procreation. They believed this to be the most weighty and important work they had to do; to which they were stimulated by their Elders, who told them that such a state had been attained by some in the faith, particularly by Mother Ann and Elder Whittaker. They now pressed forward in the work of mortification and suffering with cheerfulness and resolution, and endeavoured by every possible means to root out and destroy this inherent propensity. Imagination was exhausted by inventing, and nature tortured in executing this arduous work. They often danced with vehemence through the greatest part of the night, and then instead of reposing their wearied bodies upon a bed, they would, by way of further penance, lie down upon the floor on chains, ropes, sticks, in every humiliating and mortifying posture they could devise! This work continued with such unabated zeal, that several who were the most faithful and zealous, laboured into such a degree of mortification as to travail out of the flesh sure enough; the spirit took its departure out of its emaciated and ruined tabernacle—and being thus purged from carnal propensities, was consigned to the dark recesses of the silent tomb! And it was said, such gave up their lives for Christ's sake and died on the cross.

This work was not limited wholly to Lebanon, but preachers were appointed and sent by Elder Meacham, to kindle the same flame among believers in the differ-

ent parts where they lived, and to gather them in the same order. The next gathering commenced at Hancock, in the year 1791; the direction of which was assigned to Calvin Harlow. They thus proceeded in this work from one place to another till most of the believers were gathered, and the same order established at Niskena and most of those places, before mentioned, where Whittaker and others had planted the faith. Those who were gathered into this order and united interest stood in what was called church relation, i. e. related to the church at Lebanon, which was called the mother church, and first gospel church; those private or individual families who were not yet gathered, stood in what they called fleshly relation; and all were taught that those who stood in church relation could travail further out of the flesh in one week, than those who stood in fleshly relation could in a year. This work they say was effected and confirmed by the year 1792, when they believe Daniel's thirteen hundred and thirty-five days ended \*

Some time before this, those various operations I have mentioned began to abate and now came quite to an end, i. e. with those who were gathered into this order.

It may here be observed, that the last instance of stripping naked and of corporeal punishment, was at Niskena about the year 1793: two young women, by name Abigail Lemmons, Saviah Spires and another who has since left the people and had rather her name should not be publickly mentioned, amused themselves by attending to the amour of two flies in the window: they were told by Eldress Hannah Matterson for thus gratifying their carnal inclinations, and as a mortification to the same, they must strip themselves naked and take whips she had provided and whip themselves, and then whip each other; two happened at once to strike the third, when she cried *murder!* they were then ordered to stop and to plunge into a brook near by; all this was done in the presence and under the approbation of Elder Timothy Hubbard, and Jonathan Slosson one of the brethren.

\* See page 124.



Shortly after, Elder Meacham came from Lebanon, and being informed of it, he said, the gift for stripping and labouring naked, and using corporeal punishment, had entirely run out: for as they could not keep such conduct secreted from the world, the church had already suffered much persecution on account of it, therefore there must be no more such proceedings.

It may be now proper to take notice of several things that had been, and are still reported of this people.— Those reports that have been the most circulated are, that they not only stripped and danced naked in their night meetings, but sometimes put out the candles and went into promiscuous intercourse; and that the Elders had connexion when they pleased, with such women as they chose; and that they concealed the fruits of it by the horrid crime of *murder*! It was also reported, that many of the Shakers, by order of the Elders, were castrated.

The intention of the author in this history is to state things in a true light; and from the pains he has taken to procure a correct account of the practices of this people, he is able *confidently* to assert, that not any of these reports, except stripping and dancing naked, have any foundation in truth. A few solitary instances of sexual intercourse might be mentioned; but the parties were shut out of union and not received again without confessions and professions of repentance and contrition similar as in other churches.

James Seton, who had been among the Shakers, asserted before a collection of people, that he could imitate the Shakers in every thing but burning children. Being asked if they burnt children, he answered in the affirmative. He then was taken before a magistrate, and made oath, that he saw David Chauncy, his wife, and Roxey Chauncy, burn a child. A warrant was issued immediately, and the accused being brought before court, when the trial commenced, Chauncy, with a stern, impressive look, demanded of Seton if he had ever seen any of them burn a child. Seton, conscious of his wickedness in thus accusing the innocent, replied he

had not. The persons arraigned were consequently discharged, and Seton punished by the court for his perjury.

In the course of a few years after they had verbally agreed and covenanted to support a joint interest, numbers who were not able, or would not abide the fire of Zion as they called it, fell off from them; and some afterwards brought charges against the deacons whom they had been under for their services, and some of their claims were unjust. The leaders therefore found it expedient for all to enter into a written covenant, which they did in the year 1795, with an intention to invest the church with power to do what they thought right in such cases.

Before and after this covenant was signed, the deacons endeavoured to settle with, and take receipts of those who had renounced the faith, and who had made a demand for their services. But it was believed the time would come when those who went away would not be allowed any thing; and it was not long before this belief was realized. This measure was considered by many as unjust; by Reuben Rathbone in particular, who at this time had the lead of a family of believers at Hancock. He opened his mind to the ministration upon the subject, who told him that those who left the church had no more right to receive any temporal property out of the church as a compensation for any labour, or any interest they had brought in, than Judas had to an inheritance with the apostles, after he had betrayed Christ.— It was alledged, that the interest or service that was given, was given to God, and to take that away would be committing sacrilege; and it was signified that the wicked did not deserve any thing but judgment, and they that went away from the church to the world, had what they went after; they had the flesh, and that was enough for them. However, some time after the leaders of the church concluded to give those who left the church, an hundred dollars as a sacrifice for peace sake, and in order to get a final discharge from them; likewise to avoid a controversy in law.

When the covenant was signed it only included a mutual promise the same as was verbally made in the year 1788. But about the year 1800, one of the assistant deacons observed before a number of his brethren, that as they were not an incorporated society, any one who left them might by law recover wages for his services, or remuneration for the property he had deposited: for this he was chastised by the Elders. They told him it was an attempt to corrupt the minds of his brethren, and to bring that covenant into disrepute which had been given to Elder Joseph Meacham by immediate revelation from God. He was accordingly shut out of union, and had to kneel down in the presence of the brethren and sisters, and to confess, that he had done wrong, in order to be received into union again. However, the covenant was shortly after renewed, and they mutually bound themselves to the deacon or deacons, and his or their successors. The new covenant was to this effect, viz. To give up all to the care and disposal of the deacons and their successors for the good of the gospel, and to subject themselves as brethren and sisters, to the order and government of the church; to adhere to justice and equity both with respect to themselves and others; and endeavour to support a joint interest; and never to make any demand or to bring any debt or charge against the deacons, or against any member of the church for their services or property.

In testimony of which, both brethren and sisters subscribed their names in the presence of each other.

Elder Calvin Harlow before mentioned continued in his work of gathering the believers into order at Hancock, until he died, which was on the 21st of December, 1795.

It would take up too much room in this work to give an account of the gatherings, and of the Elders that were appointed to the work, at Tyringham, Enfield, and at several of the other places I have heretofore mentioned. It may suffice to say, that the work was all similar to that at Lebanon and Hancock, and that all those Elders were under the direction of Elder Meacham, who was first Bishop and Father of the church. These El-

ders had to receive the word and counsel of God (as they believed) from Elder Meacham, and communicate the same to those who were placed under their care. Elder Meacham (who was believed to be the Son of man spoken of by Ezekiel, that was to destroy Gog and Magog) became reduced in his health, and the 16th of August, 1796, he was called upon to bid an everlasting adieu to all sublunary things, and enter that "world from whose bourn no traveller returns." Some time before his death, he said, that "before this generation passed away all nations would acknowledge this gospel."

The next in succession was Lucy Wright, whom they call Mother Lucy, who had stood in the lead with Elder Meacham the latter part of his ministrations. Her name by marriage was Goodrich: there had been several gifts of mortification to separate the affections of Goodrich from his wife Lucy.

According to their faith, natural affection must be eradicated; and they say they must love all equally alike as brothers and sisters in the gospel. It would exceed the limits of this work to give a particular account of the various schemes that have been contrived to destroy all natural affection and social attachment between man and wife, parent and child, brothers and sisters, especially towards such as have left the society. Two instances that occurred about this time as specimens of others may suffice. A mother, who had renounced the faith, came to Niskeuna to see her daughter. Eldress Hannah Matterfson told the daughter to go into the room to her carnal mother and say—"What do you come here for? I don't want you to come and see me with your carnal affections."

The mother being grieved, replied—"I did not expect that a daughter of mine would ever address me in that manner."

The daughter in obedience to what she was taught, replied again—"You have come here with your carnal, fleshly desires, and I don't want to see you," and then left her mother.

Some time after, one Dunham Shapley, who had belonged to the society, called to see Abigail his sister at



Niskeuna, whom he had not seen in six or seven years; but he was not admitted; he waited some time, being loth to go away without seeing her; at last she was ordered to go to the window and address him in the language of abuse and scurrility. The words she made use of, it would be indecent to mention. For this she was applauded, and that in the author's hearing when he belonged to the society.

Elder Henry Clough who had laboured in the ministry as an assistant to Meacham, now stood next in order to Mother Lucy. He was esteemed a wise man, and it was believed he had a great work to do in relation to the further opening of the gospel.

The church had now been enclosed, or shut up nearly ten years from the world, and there was but little preaching to any but the believers. A few during this time had joined them, and those who did (as they said) were born out of due time and could not travail as those did who came in when the gospel was open, and could not gain much in a travail, until it was opened again.—Among those who during this time received faith, were Benjamin Youngs and his wife, Abraham his son, and a daughter.

A short time previously to Meacham's death, it was believed and spoken of, that the time was near for the opening of the gospel again to the world. Not long after Clough took the lead, ministers were appointed and sent forth. The gift for those who were sent out, was to go and preach the gospel to the world, and hear them confess their sins. They went forth according to their direction; visited divers private families far and near, and occasionally preached publicly, and great hopes were entertained, which was a matter of rejoicing. However, as it was to little purpose, it was thought they had not a right gift, and another was given, viz. To go and preach the gospel, and invite all to come to the church; but in this method they were as unsuccessful as before. It was then thought that the lack was in the ministers: accordingly they were suspended, and others sent out, but all yet to little effect. At Niskeuna, Peter Cocanut

and Abraham Youngs received the gift to go and preach. They accordingly went forth; travelled about an hundred miles, and returned home void of any fruit.

Some time after, John Scott, then an assistant Elder, accused Youngs of a shameful sin, and ordered him to confess it. Youngs denied the charge, and for his denial, was shut out of union. It was some time after believed that he was innocent of the crime alledged against him. Elder John Meacham told the author of this work, that "he had not been wisely dealt by, and if he would return, it should not be required of him to confess it, as he believed that he was innocent of the charge."—The author being then in the faith, and anxious to gain Youngs back again, informed him of what Elder Meacham had said; to which he replied, "that they professed to know all things by revelation; and he in this among other instances, had discovered the fallacy."

While they were labouring to open and spread the faith, Elder Henry Clough, who was much admired for his wisdom and abilities, and considered by them as a splendid ornament to the church, and who (they believed) was raised up for the increase and spread of the gospel, was taken sick, and departed this life some time in March 1798.

The next in succession as the first Minister or Bishop, was Abiathar Babbat, who also was in subordination to the Mother Lucy Wright.

Jan. 1798. The author having heard many singular reports of them, was induced to go and see them: he conceived a favourable opinion of them, and was prevailed upon to join them. He returned to the place of his residence, and persuaded several to go and visit them. Some of these received faith and joined them. He likewise represented them in such a favourable manner among his acquaintance at Albany, that several were prevailed upon to visit them: some received faith and confessed their sins. About the same time the author joined them, Seth Wells, schoolmaster in the city of Albany, did the same; and shortly after his five brothers and two sisters from Long-Island; many also from different parts of the country, so that by the year 1805, nearly a hundred young

believers were added to the church at Niskeuna, and most of them gathered into a united or family interest.\* Also B. Youngs, before mentioned, who had lived with his wife and family ever since he had joined the society, and had transacted business on his own account, now in obedience to the Elders, with his wife and two daughters who were believers, went into one of the families that supported a joint interest, and gave up the greatest part of his property into common stock, the remainder he gave to his three unbelieving sons.

But it has almost always been the case, while some are joining the church, others are falling off. One of these was Reuben Rathbone before mentioned, who belonged to the church at Hancock eighteen years. He having become dissatisfied in sundry respects with the faith and conduct of his brethren, separated from them 24th of July, 1799; and soon after published a pamphlet, entitled, "Reasons offered for leaving the Shakers."

This pamphlet being examined by the leaders of the church, was declared to be full of corruption and falsehood. The believers were charged not to read a syllable in it, nor to touch it. If any persons offered to lend one, they were told not to receive it, for it would poison their souls.

The pamphlet appears to be written with candour, and several who were believers when the author of said pamphlet was, who have also left the society, have observed that the said pamphlet is a candid statement of facts.

The author of this history, when he was a member of the society, understood from several of the believers, that the church had procured many of these pamphlets and burnt them. Daniel Rathbone's pamphlet, before mentioned, also shared the same fate.

In the time of the above mentioned increase, five persons left the church at Niskeuna, who had been members of it many years.

\* It may here be observed, that it is not absolutely required of those who join them to give up their property and enter into a united interest till some time has elapsed, according to their faith, situation, and circumstances in life.

Elder John Hocknell, mentioned in the beginning of this history, departed this life February 26, 1799, aged seventy-six years and nearly six months. He had not been much of an officiating character; his faith was not so much in the present ministration as in the first. He was spoken of as the last of the four living creatures mentioned in Ezekiel chap. i. ver. 5. Also, the last of the four beasts mentioned in Rev. chap. iv. According as some of the leaders have explained these texts, that the first, namely, Mother Ann, "was like a lion," or according to Ezekiel ver. 10, "had the face of a lion." William Lee had the face of an ox; James Whittaker "had the face of a man," and John Hocknell "had the face of an eagle," or "like an eagle."

Some time in the fall of the year 1795, after the yellow fever had subsided in the city of New-York, the church at Lebanon, Hancock, and Niskeuna, by order, (or gift as they term it) of the ministration, by and with the approbation of Mother Lucy Wright, carried twenty-seven waggon loads of provision to Albany and sent it from that place by water to the corporation of the city of New-York, for the relief of the poor, who had been in great distress during the sickness, and were at that time, in want of the common necessaries of life. Again in the year 1803, some time in the month of November, they made the following liberal donation to the said corporation for the relief of the poor who were in similar circumstances, viz. 300 dollars in specie, 853 lb. of pork, 1951 lb. of beef, 1794 lb. of mutton, 1685 lb. of rye flour, 52 bushels of rye, 24 bushels of beans, 197 bushels of potatoes, 34 bushels of carrots, 2 bushels of beets, 2 barrels of dried apples, and 26 dollars and 50 cents intended for the payment of freighting the articles from Hudson to New-York.

The corporation of the city presented the church with their thanks for its well-timed generosity, which was published in some of the newspapers.

In the years 1803 and 4, but few joined the church, but in 1805 a rapid increase commenced, and many were added to the society. Before I give a particular account of this increasing work, I conceive it necessary and in-



teresting to the reader, to state a few brief sketches of an extraordinary revival and awakening in the minds of people, in what is usually denominated the Kentucky revival, out of which this gathering was made. It may be also observed, that previously to people's receiving this faith, their minds have been somewhat prepared by receiving sentiments similar to the Shakers, and professing to have visions and revelations of the near approach of the millennium; and in particular, by becoming dissatisfied with all other denominations, and imbibing an unfavourable opinion of sexual intercourse. The first extraordinary work I have referred to, began under the preaching of John Rankin, minister of the Presbyterian church at Gasper, Logan county; from thence it began in Christian county. In the spring of 1801, the same work appeared in Mason county, upper part of Kentucky, under the exhortation of those who had received the spirit of the work, and believed in a full and free salvation, and that it was attainable. From these small beginnings the work spread extensively. News circulated through the country of a marvellous nature, which bro't many to see the novel scene. The assemblies soon became too numerous for the houses to contain them, and to avoid being crowded, they found it expedient to encamp in the open air, in convenient shady places.

Camp-meetings, one after another, were held in various places in the states of Kentucky and Ohio. To these meetings, people of both sexes resorted on foot, on horseback, and in carriages, with tents and camp equipage proportioned to the number, which was from three to twenty thousand. They generally continued from three to five or six days and nights. A great proportion of those who attended were distinguished from the rest by new and strange operations which were believed to be a special effect of divine power. Many fell and lay as if they were either dead or entranced, and were sometimes collected together to secure them from danger, and laid out side by side like so many corpses. At one of these meetings, the number who fell were computed to be three thousand. Others discovered the most ardent zeal in the cause, and laboured for the spread of what

they called, the spirit of the work, by their vociferations, prayers, and exhortations. They sang, shouted, clapped their hands, and leaped for joy; in short, the scene was novel beyond description. This work spread through the whole country like a contagious distemper. Seven Presbyterian ministers attended one of these camp-meetings, four of whom were opposed to it, and spake against it about three days, when one of them addressed the assembly, acknowledged his convictions, and said that "that they had wickedly opposed the answer of their own prayers." o

All those camp-meetings, and others in the revival, must have appeared to an unprejudiced spectator, like the greatest confusion, scarce to be described by human language. They usually commenced with a sermon, near the termination of which many would break out in an unusual outcry. Some vociferated their feelings in fervent ejaculations; others with the language of exhortation, would address their careless friends, beseeching them with the pathos of affection, to repent and forsake their sins. Some terrified at these awful proceedings, sought to extricate themselves from the group that surrounded them, and fled precipitately from the crowd.—Some in the agony of conviction and poignancy of grief, deprecating the wrath and imploring the mercy of God, continued under these impressions till the symptoms of approaching dissolution appeared prominent in every feature: others cheering their almost expiring nature with prayer and praise. Some collected from these complicated masses, censuring and disputing; others applauding and defending; and though the meetings were held at so many different places, and the operations exhibited such a variegated scenery, yet one and the same spirit seemed to actuate the whole.

The Presbyterian New Lights having received the spirit of the revival, caused a separation from that church in 1803. The principal official characters that separated were, Robert Marshall, John Dunlavy, Richard M'Nemar, Barton W. Stone, and John Thompson.\* Many of

\* See an apology for renouncing the jurisdiction of the Synod of Kentucky, page 24, 26.

the subjects of the revival united with those who separated from the Presbyterian church, who were called schismatics. These people renounced all old established creeds, forms of worship, and church government;\* therefore, each one had liberty to exercise his own faith and proceed as he believed the spirit of God might dictate; and it was, they said, to the spirit they sought for light to open the sense of scripture; particularly those prophecies of things which were to take place in the millennium which they believed was now about to commence. They had liberty to act and pray as they believed was right; and by the boldest, most energetick, and loudest gift of prayer the cause was commonly decided. In this way, says the author of the Kentucky Revival, "they generally settled their controversies of every kind. One would begin to preach or exhort, and if his doctrine was judged unsound or uninteresting, he would be presently matched with a prayer, and which ever collected the greatest warmth, and manifested the most lively sensations of soul, gained the victory, and interested the general shout on that side."

Not any thing among any people professing religion, has ever appeared more singular, than those various operations and contortions of the body that now prevailed principally among those called schismatics.

Those exercises which were believed to have been of an involuntary kind, were rolling, jirking, and barking, and were thought by some who were much engaged in the cause, to be substituted by the spirit, in the room of the falling.

In the rolling exercise, as it was called, they appeared to be forcibly thrown down, and to roll over and over like a log, or in a kind of double posture to turn like a wheel. Sometimes they went in this manner through mud and dirt which was considered very degrading. In the jirking exercise the head appeared to be violently moved towards one shoulder, then the other, and backwards and forwards. Here it may be observed, that

\* See observations on church government by the Presbytery of Springfield.

during the time they were under these operations, though they were often exposed to imminent danger, yet few received any hurt. It also seemed to be out of the power of the person thus affected to prevent it. One instance among many others was related to the author by Lorenzo Dow, a well known itinerant preacher ; while he was preaching in Kentucky, one of his hearers appeared to be jirked about the house in a violent manner ; after repeated attempts, he at last got out of the meeting-house ; he attempted to mount his horse, but his feet were jirked every way so that he could not get them into the stirrups, when all his efforts proved ineffectual, two men set him on his horse, but he was immediately jirked off on the ground, where he lie under the operations of violent twiches and jirks for some time, yet he escaped without any hurt. People of every age, sex, sect, and condition, appeared to be more or less affected with the disagreeable operations of these exercises, not only at their meetings, but in their daily employments.

Lorenzo Dow also informed the author, that about twenty Quakers in those parts who attended one of his meetings, were, just as he was beginning to preach, all taken with twitching and jirking, which to them was a great humiliation. The jirking exercise was sometimes accompanied, and often succeeded the barking. In this exercise both men and women personated and took the position of a dog, moved about in a horizontal posture upon their hands and feet, growled, snapped their teeth, and barked as if they were affected with the hydrophobia. But notwithstanding their suffering under these spasmodic or affected exercises, they had frequent intervals, in which they vociferated, that the work of God was increasing and that his blessed kingdom was about to appear. Sometimes they said they had been absent from the body, during which time they had visited their departed friends, and seen their situation in the invisible world. They professed to hear the musick of the heavenly choir, and to be flung into rapturous extacies by the melodiousness of the sound. In short, the visions they professed to have had, and the strange operations they saw of things upon earth, would take up too much room



to admit a particular relation in this work. They firmly believed this was the time prophesied of by Joel ii. 28 to 31; and they were more confirmed in their faith from a number of signs which are recorded to have been seen; as the extraordinary phenomena of the shooting stars and trains of fire that illuminated the whole hemisphere as far as the extension of the horizon, accompanied by a hissing noise and several loud reports, particularly by the shower of blood that fell in the summer of 1804, seven miles from Turtle creek meeting-house.

Their exercises were often succeeded, and sometimes relieved by dancing. The following singular instance of dancing, which is said to have first taken place, was at Turtle creek in 1804. J. Thompson, a preacher and a man of parts and education, danced above an hour at the close of a camp meeting, in a regular manner, all the time repeating with a low voice, "This is the Holy Ghost—Glory." Shortly after dancing was discovered to be a remedy for the jerks and barks, and considered by many as a part of religious worship. About the beginning of the year 1805, praying, shouting, jerking, twitching, barking, rolling, dreaming, dancing, prophesying of the near approach of the millennium, accompanied with violent shaking hands, and sacred promises to continue in the work until their prayers were answered, pervaded many parts of the state of Ohio, Tennessee, and Kentucky. Information of these things being circulated in the public papers, many of which are taken by the Shakers and read by their leaders, particularly by the deacons; through this medium the Elders at Lebanon, state of New-York, received the intelligence. They took the matter into consideration, and the ministration came to the following conclusion, viz. That the minds of many of those who were thus wrought upon, were in a prepared state to receive their faith. Accordingly, on the 1st of January, 1805, the ministration at Lebanon sent Elders John Meacham, Benjamin S. Youngs, and Issachar Bates, to visit the subjects of the revival, and open their testimony to those who were able to receive it.

The ministration did not select them for their literary talents or abilities. Elder John Meacham was the son of

Joseph Meacham. He was born in the year 1769, and being brought up among them, his mental faculties received but little improvement from school education, as by these people it is considered superfluous. He was strong in the faith; his appearance was harmless, innocent, and solid, and his deportment exemplary.

Youngs was born 1773, and received the faith in 1794. He was a small man, and had much the same appearance as Meacham, with common school education.

Bates had but little literary information, but somewhat of a poetical genius. He was strong in the faith, and so very zealous as often to incur the censure of those to whom he spake.

They arrived in Kentucky about the 1st of March, and stopped at Paint lick, where they were kindly received. From thence they proceeded to Caneridge, and tarried a few days with the subjects of the revival, by whom they were treated with respect. They then passed into Ohio, and first visited a few inhabitants at Springfield. They did not assume the characters of publick speakers at any of these places; but only conversed with individuals, endeavouring to discover their ripeness for the faith, and to open their testimony accordingly. They journeyed till they arrived at Turtle creek near Lebanon, on the 22d March. They first stopped and tarried the night at Malcham Worley's, and conversed with him concerning the revival, and partly opened their testimony. The next morning they visited Richard M'Nemar, and spent the day with him, opening and conversing on their faith and practice. Worley and M'Nemar conceived a favorable opinion of them, and were more disposed to ask questions and learn, than to controvert and oppose them. They received encouragement to open their testimony to the inhabitants of Turtle creek, either in publick or in private, as they felt disposed. Next day being the Sabbath, Bates and Youngs attended their meeting, and at the conclusion, opened their mission and testimony, by treating briefly on, and expressing their union with the work of God that had been among the people in those parts of the country, and informed them that the time was now come for them to enter into actual possession of

that for which they had been praying. In order thereto, they informed them, that they must confess and forsake their sins by self-denial and taking up a full cross against the world, flesh, and all evil, and follow Christ by walking as he walked, and by becoming in all things conformed to him as their pattern, &c. Great agitations of mind, and much inquiry then commenced concerning them and their doctrines, by this means their faith was investigated at Turtle creek, and numbers who had been leading characters, and others, soon united with them.—Malcham Worley, a man of liberal education, independent fortune, and of good character, was the first who confessed his sins.

Various and vague reports of these people and their faith, were now circulated. The agitations of mind occasioned by them, may be gathered from part of a letter written by B. W. Stone, a leading character in the revival, to R. M'Nemar, dated,

*CANERIDGE, April 2, 1805.*

“The churches thus, quid dicam? Nescio:—What shall I say? I know not. My heart grieves within me. Certain men from afar whom you know, inject terror and doubt into many; and now religion begins to lament in the dust among us. Some, as I suppose, will cast away the ordinances of baptism, the Lord's supper, &c. but not many as yet. Most dear Brother, inform me what you think of these men among us and you, from a distant region.”

The letter from which the above extract is made, was sent by I. Bates who had been to see Stone, and partly opened their testimony to him.

Meacham, Youngs, and Bates travelled from place to place with unremitting zeal and assiduity testifying their faith, which in a few months obtained so much credit that R. M'Nemar, Matthew Houston, John Dunlavy, Elisha Thomas, and a few others, all of whom had been officiating characters in the revival, embraced and preached the faith of the Shakers, testifying that the time which had been predicted, and which thousands had been praying for in the revival, had now actually commenced, and by

confessing their sins and taking up their cross against all sin in thought, word, and deed, they received that overcoming power which saved them from their sins."

In a few months numbers received the faith at Turtle creek, Eagle creek; and on the south side of Kentucky, at Mercy, Shelby, Paint lick, and Long lick; and likewise John Rankin before mentioned, Presbyterian minister, and several of his congregation joined them.

Though many leading characters and subjects of the revival had now embraced the faith, yet there were several officiating characters, and hundreds of the subjects of the same revival\* who as violently opposed them. The reader may form some idea how high opposition ran by the following extracts, and a few verbal speeches respecting the Shakers, and conduct towards them. John Thompson in a letter, dated,

*SPRINGFIELD, April 5, 1805,*

Says—"It matters not to me who they are, who are the devil's tools whether men or angels, good men or bad, in the strength of God I mean not to spare. I would they were even cut off who trouble you. I mean in the name and strength of God to lift his rod of Almighty truth against the viper. I see the mark of the beast on that church as plain as I see this paper while I write, and I know that I see it by the light of God."

B. W. Stone says in his letter of July, 1806—"They are a set of worldly-minded, cunning deceivers, whose religion is earthly, sensual, and devilish."

The Shakers had intimated that such who rejected their testimony, and opposed and persecuted them on account of it, would lose the light and power with which they had been favoured; therefore says Stone in the same letter—"Now the work of God goes on in spite of all the Calvinists, Shakers, and devils in hell. Now

\* Many through the progress of the revival joined other societies, particularly the Baptist, who received an addition of some thousands.



we know your prophets are liars.”\* “Think seriously and soberly of the shocking conduct of your revelling mock-worship, and tremble!”

Great opposition arose on account of their dancing, though many of them had practised dancing themselves. “What! (say they) go forth in the dance without being jirked? and say they are praising God in the dance. The dances too of them that make merry—of them that serve the devil. Take their dances to serve God.—Christians, read your Bibles, and you will see that these fellows are not of God, for they keep not the Sabbath.”

Stone in the postscript of his reply to Campbell’s strictures, says—“You have heard no doubt before this time of the lamentable departure of two of our preachers, and a few of their hearers, from the true gospel into wild enthusiasm, or Shakerism. They have made shipwreck of faith, and turned aside to an old woman’s fables, who broached them in New-England about twenty-five years ago. These wolves in sheep’s clothing have smelt us from afar, and have come to tear, rend, and devour.”

Much opposition was raised against them on account of their professing to be in a new dispensation, and their testifying that Christ had come the second time, though it was that for which they had been praying; but they would not believe this was the way of his coming. John Thompson, at a camp-meeting at Turtle creek on the 27th of April, 1805, entered into a publick investigation of their doctrines, and in the close of it, with a loud voice, exclaimed, “They are liars! they are liars! they are liars! According to the fable, a liar is not to be believed when he speaks the truth.”

At a general meeting held at Concord the second Sabbath in August, B. Youngs, M. Worley, M’Nemar, and Dunlavy, were all forbidden to speak, and threatened with being prosecuted as disturbers of the meeting if they did. On the last day of the meeting, J. Thompson, B. W. Stone, R. Marshall, D. Purviance, J. Stockwell, and

\* “Christians of almost every denomination appear at times to have forgotten that harshness widens rather than closes the breaches which the diversity of sentiment may have occasioned.” *Evans’ Reflections.*

A. Bramon, alternately delivered each his opinion of the Shakers in a publick address; in which they were pronounced liars, false Christs, false prophets, wolves in sheep's clothing, deceitful workers, dumb dogs,\* and every opprobrious scripture name they could think of. These discourses gave the ignorant class of people encouragement to abuse and persecute the Shakers. Accordingly, at one of those meetings, a professed Christian said to Issachar Bates, "Go to hell;" while a certain man followed J. Meacham spitting in his face, and hallowing to the people to make a fire and burn these false prophets. Some christian professors laughed and encouraged him. †

The same reports that have been mentioned, page 336, were about this time also circulated in these parts, respecting this people.

Mobs beset their houses in the night and broke their windows by flinging in clubs, stones and dirt; they then pulled down their fences, and turned in cattle to destroy their grain. They disfigured their horses, and beat and abused them. They disturbed them in their worship by

\* "Oh that great men and good men, should ever quarrel and not be willing to bear and forbear. If one is our master, even Christ, to him let us be content to be responsible; follow the best dictates of our conscience, and be happy to indulge our brethren with the same liberty." Stone and Thompson, when they arrive "at the right hand of the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, must then be ashamed of their harsh spirit and harsh speeches. It is a mercy for us all, that we have such a compassionate High Priest, who knows how to pity our infirmities, and to pardon our iniquities." *Harveys.*

"While we wrangle here in the dark, we are dying and passing to that world which will decide all our controversies, and the safest passage thither is by *peaceable holiness.*" *Baxter.*

† "Mark the man that abuses, hates, and injures his brother for his opinions: he is a murderer, in whatever church he is found."

"Those who persecute always bear the brand of anti-christ; the persecuted have presumptive evidence in their favour, that they follow at least the dictates of conscience." *Harveys.*

"He who hates another man for not being a christian, (or because he believes him not to be such) is himself not a christian — Christianity breathes love, peace, and good will to man." *Littleton.*

throwing in sticks, dirt and stones, by pushing, laughing, mocking, threatening, railing, collaring, tearing and pulling them about.\*

I. Bates returned some time in the latter part of the same year to Lebanon and Niskeuna, and brought marvellous accounts of wonderful operations and miracles in Kentucky, as proof of the truth of their faith. Bates, after a few weeks visiting among the brethren, returned to the southward. Likewise, some time after, John Meacham visited his brethren and sisters at Lebanon and Niskeuna—and returned to his allotted work. The ministration likewise sent from Lebanon a few other men and women to be helpers in the work, among which was David Darrow, before mentioned, who was appointed with Meacham to take the lead of the believers in Ohio, &c.

In the year 1807, Richard M'Nemar, (before mentioned, one of the leading characters in the revival, and one of those who joined the Shakers) published an account of the Kentucky revival. In the same publication he gave a brief account of the entrance and progress of what the world calls Shakerism, among the subjects of the revival. This publication I have partly followed in compiling this history respecting the revival and of the Shakers in Ohio and Kentucky. This is the first publication that has ever appeared from any of the members of this society, except a small pamphlet written by Joseph Meacham, entitled *A Concise Statement, &c.* with a letter annexed,† and published in the year 1790.

A further idea of the beginning and increase of the Shakers in Ohio and Kentucky, and of the opposition they met with, may be obtained by an extract from a letter written by B. S. Youngs to his brethren at Niskeuna, dated,

“*MIAMI COUNTY, Ohio, 10th of the 9th Mo. 1807.*”

“What the number of believers are at present I cannot positively tell; but to speak as I suppose within bounds, they may be rising three hundred adult per-

\* “Ye fools and blind,” why could ye not “let them alone?”

† See page 33.

fons—two-thirds of these in Ohio and the others in  
 Kentucky, scattered abroad from each other for the  
 distance of two hundred and thirty miles, principally in  
 a north and south direction. The largest body is at  
 what is (improperly) called Turtle creek, four miles  
 west of Lebanon, and are about one hundred or up-  
 wards; here doubtless a meeting-house will be built.  
 The first meetings of the believers were kept in private  
 houses, and that very secretly on account of persecu-  
 tion. After a few of these private meetings were held,  
 the believers continued for some time to assemble at  
 their old Presbyterian meeting-house, to hear preach-  
 ing after the old form. At a certain time after preach-  
 ing, the believers commenced singing and dancing—  
 such a racket, perhaps, was never heard before; op-  
 position was then high; some singing, dancing and  
 shouting with all their might, because the day of re-  
 demption had come—others cursing, swearing, threat-  
 ening, laughing and mocking—some praying and ex-  
 horting—others yelling and screaming—some weeping  
 from conviction, (for the scene was solemn on the part  
 of the believers)—others crying from pity to see the  
 people carried away with such awful delusions. From  
 this some judgment may be formed what a scene and  
 tumult there was; and such we had many—sometimes  
 in houses, sometimes in the field, and sometimes in the  
 woods. The first public place of meeting was built in  
 the woods. It was a platform without cover, twenty-  
 two feet by eighteen, and two feet from the ground,  
 surrounded with banisters; this was burnt by persecu-  
 tors in September, 1805, after it had been used about  
 two months. Another like building was afterwards  
 erected between two houses, about thirty by twenty-  
 five feet, under cover, which has continued in use to  
 this day. At Beaver creek, twenty miles north of Leb-  
 anon, are about eighteen or twenty believers, who like-  
 ly will continue there; and at Eagle creek, sixty-five  
 miles east of Lebanon, are about seventy, under the  
 care of John Dunlavy, these will likely continue there.  
 At Shawney run, twelve miles north of Danville, are  
 about thirty believers, under the care of Elisha Thom-



“ as ; here the first gathering in Kentucky will doubtless  
 “ be. At Paint lick, forty miles south of Lexington,  
 “ are about thirty believers, under the care of Matthew  
 “ Houston. At Shelby, sixty-two miles north-west of  
 “ Danville, are about ten, who will soon remove. At  
 “ Long lick, four miles south of Salt river, are about  
 “ twenty believers, these are the youngest in the faith.  
 “ And sixty miles north-east of Lexington and near  
 “ Washington, are a small number more, who will likely  
 “ soon remove from that place.”

Since the date of the above letter, they have built several meeting-houses in Ohio and Kentucky ; two at Turtle creek, one fifty feet long and forty wide, and well finished, the other not quite so large. Many have become gathered into the same order and joint interest as at Lebanon and Niskeuna, under the particular ministrations of David Darrow, a man destitute of science, but strong and zealous in the faith. Several more of their zealous brethren and sisters have been sent from the church at Lebanon to their assistance, to build up and strengthen the believers in the faith. And likewise the same church has assisted the leaders at Turtle creek in building and purchasing lands for the use of the brethren. There are now Shakers in several other places in Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee ; and though many since their first increase at Turtle creek, have separated from the society, nevertheless they are now in number near two thousand.

The following is an extract from the *Western Citizen*, written by Col. James Smith, a gentleman of public character well known in Pennsylvania, and who has lately resided in Kentucky and Ohio. He says,

“ About five years ago, three Shakers, viz. Issachar Bates, John Meacham and Benjamin S. Youngs, came to Kentucky where I then resided, but I was abroad in Tennessee. On my return to my son James Smith's in Kentucky, where I had my home, I found he had joined the Shakers ; I knew very little about them ; but soon after, they having collected a party on Turtle creek, in the state of Ohio, I asked the above mentioned Bates if I might go and live with them for some time, to see what sort of people they were ; to which he agreed. I

accordingly went, and from that time to the present, I have diligently endeavoured to find them out, (which is truly difficult) and I think I have succeeded in a good degree. My son James Smith, after joining the Shakers, appeared to be divested of natural affections towards his wife Polly and other connexions, and appeared determined to sell his plantations in Kentucky and remove to the Shakers on Turtle creek—which at length he did, contrary to his wife's consent. But before he removed, (which was in October, 1809) he promised to Polly if she would go with him, he would not take her among the Shakers, but buy a place three miles from them.—Notwithstanding he had left her bed a long time before this, and slept in a separate one from his wife, she bore this, and upon these terms she consented to go rather than to be separated from her children. Notwithstanding this, he took her directly among the Shakers, where she was constantly perplexed with their urging her to confess her sins, and telling her if she would not do so and receive their testimony, she would surely go to hell! About the first of March, 1810, they ordered Polly from the house she lived in while among them, and took her children from her. The fifth day of the same month, my step-son, William Irvin, and I, went with Polly to Shaker-town; she asked of James the privilege of seeing her children. He told her where they were, and said she might go and see them, but refused to go with her. William Irvin and I went with her to the house where the children were, and asked to see them. We were told by John Woods and Malcham Worley that James had committed the children to their care, and she should not see them. We used entreaties and finally threatened Woods and Worley with the civil law, but all in vain. That night we retired, the tender mother in deep distress, bereft of her children, not knowing whether she ever should see them again. March sixth, we returned to Shaker-town to try if by any means Polly could be admitted to see her children. A short interview was granted, on condition that she must not converse with them except in the presence of the Shakers. When she was about to take leave of her children, her eldest son laid

hold on his dear mamma and wept bitterly. O mournful scene! The feelings of my heart I cannot describe! My son, before he received their testimony, was kind to me and affectionate to his wife; he received me into his house, and gave me every reason to expect his succour in my declining age."

The author, knowing of several instances of similar conduct towards relatives, particularly such as have been taught the principles of their faith, or as they word it, "have had the offer of the gospel," and refused to receive the same, has been more ready to receive the above account as a correct statement.

According to another account, dated Cincinnati, September first, on the twenty-seventh of August several companies of militia from the counties of Warren and Butler, accompanied by a large number of citizens, amounting in all to about a thousand, assembled before the Shaker settlement at Turtle creek, for the purpose of compelling them to deliver up the three grand-children of Col. J. Smith, and some other persons who were said to be detained by them against their inclinations. Committees were appointed on both sides to confer on matters in dispute. The conference being had, it was reported by the Shakers that the children were gone to Lebanon with their father; and finding none who wished to be liberated, the multitude after threatening the Shakers, dispersed.

In the year 1809, the church published a book, printed in the state of Ohio, and next year reprinted at Albany, state of New-York, entitled "The Testimony of Christ's Second Appearing." In this work there is a display of learning and erudition; the author appears to have been instructed in the Latin and Greek languages, but the men whose names are subscribed to the work as authors, it is well known are not men of education; and it is generally believed, and has been asserted by several members of their church, that the reputed authors wrote it by divine inspiration. In this work "the tenets" of that "blunt and illiterate" woman, Ann Lee, "expressed in a rude, confused and ambiguous manner," are "digested, dressed up and presented under a different form

by" some more "masterly hands" than Darrow, Meacham and Youngs, so "that they assume the aspect of a regular system. And hence it is that these writings (said to have been compiled by Darrow, Meacham and Youngs) are more recommended than those of" the prophets and apostles.\*

The worship of the church at first consisted in dancing, occasionally preaching, sometimes kneeling in silence, and always when assembled they sang tunes without words; but soon after their increase in Ohio and Kentucky, hymns were composed by I. Bates and other members of the society, which they often sang in their meetings instead of those tunes. By the year 1811, they had near an hundred composed on the different subjects of their faith, part of which were printed only for the use of the society; some of which I have selected for an appendix to this work.

After a number have believed, the next principal labour of the leaders is to gather them into a united interest and order, like unto the church at Lebanon and Niskeuna, the order of which is such that it would take up many pages to give a particular account.† A few sketches in addition to what has already been mentioned in the course of this work, may suffice. They assemble together every Sabbath in their public meeting-house—at Niskeuna there are two orders, i. e. the church order called sometimes old believers, and the younger order called young believers; the latter assemble in the forenoon, and the former in the afternoon. They walk to the meeting-house in order two and two, and leave it in the same order. Men enter the left hand door of the meeting-house, and women the right hand. In each dwelling-house is a room called the meeting-room, in which they assemble for worship every evening; the young believers assemble morning and evening, and in the afternoon of the Sabbath they all assemble in one of

\* See Second Appearing, p. 397, ver. 28 and 29.

† In case there should be a demand for a second edition of this work, I may give a full account of the order of the church, and also treat this history more at large.



these rooms in their dwelling-house, to which meeting spectators or those who do not belong to the society, are not admitted, except friendly visitors.

Their houses are well calculated and convenient. In the great house at Lebanon, there are near an hundred; the men live in their several apartments on the right as they enter into the house, and the women on the left—commonly four in a room. They kneel in the morning by the side of the bed, as soon as they arise, and the same before they lie down; also before and after every meal. The brethren and sisters generally eat at the same time, at two long tables placed in the kitchen, men at one and women at the other; during which time they sit on benches, and are all silent. They go to their meals walking in order, one directly after the other; the head of the family or Elder, takes the lead of the men, and one called Elder Sister takes the lead of the women. Several women are employed in cooking and waiting on the table—they are commonly relieved weekly by others. It is contrary to order for a man or woman to sleep alone, but two of the brethren sleep together, and the sisters the same. It is contrary to order for a man to be alone with a woman—also to touch one another. If a man presents any thing to a female, or a female to a male, due care must be taken by each one not to touch the other. It is contrary to order for a woman to walk out alone, or be alone. A man and woman are not allowed to converse together, except in the presence of some of the brethren and sisters. They sometimes have what they call union meetings, when several of the brethren and sisters meet together, sit and converse and smoke their pipes. If a man is on the road from home alone in a carriage, it is contrary to order for him to admit a woman to ride with him on any account whatever. It is contrary to order, or the gift as they call it, to leave any bars down, or gates open, or leave any thing they use out of its proper place, consequently they seldom have any thing lost. It is according to the gift or order, for all to endeavour to keep all things in order; indolence and carelessness they say is directly opposite to the gospel and order of God; cleanliness in every respect is

strongly enforced—it is contrary to order even to spit on the floor. A dirty, slovenly, careless or indolent person, they say, cannot travail in the way of God, or be religious. It is contrary to order to talk loud, to shut doors hard, to rap hard at a door for admittance, or to make a noise in any respect; even when walking the floor they must be careful not to make a noise with their feet.— They go to bed at nine or ten o'clock, and rise at four or five; all that are in health go to work about sun-rise; in-door mechanics, in the winter work by candle-light; each one follows such an employment as the Deacon appoints for him. Every man and woman must be employed, and work steadily and moderately. When any are sick, they have the utmost care and attention paid to them. When a man is sick, if there is a woman among the sisters that was his wife before he believed, she if in health, nurses and waits upon him.

If any of them transgress the rules and orders of the church, they are not held in union until they confess their transgression, and that often on their knees, before the brethren and sisters.

Each church in the different settlements has a house called the office, where all business is transacted, either among themselves or with other people; each family deposit in the office all that is to be spared for charitable purposes, which is distributed by the Deacon to those whom he judges to be proper objects of charity; he never sends the poor and needy empty away.

## CONCLUSION.

I have refrained from expressing my belief of this people, their doctrines or practices, in this work, or making digressions on what I have written, but have left the reader to form his own judgment. But I may observe thus far, that I am not of the opinion of many, that they will soon become extinct. Their general character of honesty in their temporal concerns, and their outward deportment and order being such, that many may be in-

duced to join them; and as industry and frugality are two great points in their religion, it is likely they will become a rich people.

These inferences may be deduced by a parity of reasoning—If we consider their primitive state under the ministrations of a penurious James and Jane Wardley, whose days were terminated in an alms-house—view them in their migration from Europe and settlement at Niskeuna, conducted by the imbecility of a femanine leader—view them in their humble recess, obliged to perform servile drudgery to procure the morsel that supported their being—see their whole attenuated force collected under the roof of a log-hut, surrounded with the towering pines—observe them through all their multiplied operations and trials, calumniated and stigmatized, reproached and despised—in short, follow them through all their complicated scenes of poverty and difficulties, and then behold the present contrast! See the once uncultivated wilderness waste of Niskeuna and other places, now turned into fruitful fields—see their neat public edifices towering amidst the surrounding elegance and neatness of their more private habitations—see their ability in their munificent donations to the poor in New-York. After canvassing and weighing their past increase, beginning under such embarrassed circumstances, and having a zeal without knowledge, or lack of wisdom and experience, (as they confess) which caused them to run into many practices which they have now discarded; and judging of their future prosperity from their present flourishing state, and from their being a much more orderly people, it is possible they may increase in number and acquire a prevailing influence in the future destinies of the country.

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## APPENDIX,

Containing HYMNS composed by several members of the church called Shakers—a few of which are given, as they are explanatory of their faith; and several upon subjects entirely new.

*The Gospel from England to America; its first opening and increase therein.*

THE gospel, clear as the noon-day,  
From England to America,  
On eagle's wings did soar away,  
Unto the place appointed.

2 Then came to pass, as the prophet said,  
My church I will convey away,  
The wilderness shall be her stay,  
Until the time appointed.

3 And when the time was fully come,  
Swift as the rays of morning sun  
The gospel-fire began to run,  
Which brought on Satan's trial.

4 At Watervliet, that blissful seat,  
From whence the law went forth to greet,  
With the last trumpet to repeat  
Salvation found in Zion.

5 Now consternation seized on all!  
They saw their towers must surely fall;  
The great, the mighty and the small,  
Began to quake and quiver.

6 Some unto whom the sound did come,  
Knew that it was the morning sun;  
They seiz'd the kingdom as they run,  
Which kingdom stands for ever.



7 Lo Achor's valley spreads in light,  
The doors of hope dispell'd the night,  
And thousands brought their deeds to light,  
And wash'd in the pure river.

8 Like Pentecost, new scenes unfold ;  
With tongues and signs as Jesus told,  
And gifts of God, more rich than gold,  
Had every true believer.

9 This was not in a corner done,  
But spread towards the rising sun,  
And became the glory of New-Lebanon,  
Which God had first prepar'd.

10 From Lebanon, towards the east,  
With beams of burning light increas'd,  
And thousands called to the feast  
Of hidden glory, share.

11 Those whom the gospel call obey'd,  
Then felt a sure foundation laid,  
Whereon the righteous never stray'd,  
Nor can they be mistaken.

12 The work which God had promis'd long,  
Hath now appear'd, at last so strong,  
'Tis verify'd with a new song,  
With dancing and with shaking.

13 Some twist and turn, and back they start !  
With idols fixed on their heart,  
They hated from their sins to part,  
So call'd the work delusion.

14 Now void of sense—how God will break  
The proud, the lofty and the great ;  
At once cry out, ye mischief make—  
Ye Shakers make confusion.

15 So in their rage they turn away,  
And never think what God did say,  
That shaking in the latter day  
Should seize all earth and heaven.

16 The little stone is now cut out—  
The trump of God speaks with a shout,  
Awake, thou sleeper, and come out,  
And have thy sins forgiven.

17 O glorious resurrection day!  
The mountains skip, the hills do play,  
The islands too are fled away,  
And waters back are driven.

18 Hail nations, hail! the great I Am  
Hath plac'd his kingdom now in man—  
The virgins, followers of the Lamb,  
Have found their seat in heaven.

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*Second Appearing.*

CHRIST'S second appearing was in Mother Ann,  
Whose soul cry'd to God for salvation for man;  
And God heard her cries for the good of the whole,  
And sent the true comforter into her soul:

Zion, O break forth into singing!

Her gospel is ringing—'tis true.

With Mother, three Elders like angels did stand,  
With her cross'd the ocean and came to this land;  
They gave us the gospel which stained our pride,  
And for us these favours all suffer'd and dy'd:

Zion, to bless your dear Saviour

Is your due behaviour—'tis true.

Then our Father Joseph, whom God did prepare  
By faith and obedience, became the true heir,  
Our bless'd Mother's mantle did cover his soul,  
And a faithful Elder he was to the whole:

Zion is daily possessing

Our dear Father's blessing—'tis true.

Then our Mother Lucy, who now is our guard,  
Became a true helper with him in the Lord;  
A Father and a Mother we children then found,  
From fleshly relation our souls they unbound:

Zion then cloth'd in beauty,

Felt thanks was her duty—'tis true.

In regeneration their souls swiftly run,  
And true church relation by them was begun;  
They planted the church and establish'd its laws,  
Devoted their lives in support of its cause:

Zion in regeneration,

Does find church relation—'tis true.

Two pillars in Zion they truly remain'd,  
And by faithful labour church order they gain'd,  
And then Father's work on the earth was all done,  
Whose soul now in glory does shine like the sun:

Zion his suffering regretted,

And still feel indebted—'tis true.

Now brethren and sisters let us all agree,  
 In thanks for a Mother whom daily we see  
 Whose soul is a temple for God's only Son,  
 Whose second appearing is truly begun :

Zion, O bless your protector,  
 For God does respect her—'tis true.

Ann our blest'd Mother, who came from afar,  
 And the lovely Elders who travell'd with her,  
 Our Father and Mother who rose in this land,  
 Whose souls all unspotted in union do stand :

Zion, through these came the blessing,  
 Which thou art possessing—'tis true.

The heavens of glory did smile on the earth  
 When these blest worthies received their birth ;  
 We bless the good days when these worthies were born,  
 And bless God who kept them till the second morn :

Zion, through their intercession,  
 Is saved from transgression—'tis true.

We bless our dear Mother, the chief corner-stone,  
 Which God laid in Zion, his anointed one ;  
 We bless all the faithful who then did embark  
 With Mother to come and help build us an ark :

Zion, God thy master-builder,  
 With wisdom had fill'd her—'tis true.

The ark was a shelter to save us from sin,  
 And this they erected and left us within,  
 With Father and Mother of the chosen race ;  
 Since Father deceas'd, Mother fills up the place :

Zion, by Mother protected,  
 Does not feel neglected—'tis true.

Are we truly thankful for what we've receiv'd ?  
 Through their faithful labours we all have believ'd ;  
 And still by their labours protection we've found—  
 O brethren and sisters, may our thanks abound !

Zion, while thanks are progressing,  
 You're gaining the blessing—'tis true.

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*The Pillar of Truth.*

LET names and sects and parties,  
 Accost my ears no more ;  
 My ever blessed Mother  
 For ever I'll adore ;  
 Appointed by kind Heaven  
 My Saviour to reveal,  
 Her doctrine is confirmed  
 With an eternal seal.

She was the Lord's anointed  
 To shew the root of sin,  
 And in its full destruction  
 Her gospel did begin.  
 A fleshly, carnal nature,  
 With all its deep disguise,  
 She stript entirely naked  
 Before the sinners' eyes.  
 Sunk in your base corruptions,  
 Ye wicked and unclean !  
 You read your sealed Bibles,  
 But know not what they mean ;  
 Confess your filthy actions,  
 And put your lusts away,  
 And live the life of Jesus,  
 This is the only way.  
 Ye haughty kings and beggars,  
 Come learn your equal fate !  
 Your carnal, fallen nature,  
 You've surely got to hate ;  
 Whatever your profession,  
 Your sex or colour be,  
 Renounce your carnal pleasures,  
 Or Christ you'll never see.  
 The way of God is holy,  
 Mark'd with Emmanuel's feet,  
 Lust cannot reach Mount Zion,  
 Nor stain the golden street ;  
 If you will have salvation,  
 You first must count the cost,  
 And sacrifice that nature,  
 In which the world is lost.  
 At Manchester in England,  
 This blessed fire began,  
 And like a flame in stubble,  
 From house to house it ran.  
 At first a few receiv'd it,  
 And did their lust forsake,  
 And soon the word in power  
 Brought in a mighty shake.  
 The rulers cry'd " Delusion !  
 Who can these Shakers be ?  
 Are these the wild fanatics  
 Bewitched by Ann Lee ?  
 We'll stop this noise of shaking,  
 It never shall prevail ;  
 We'll seize the grand deceiver,  
 And thrust her into jail."  
 Before their learned councils,



Though oft she was arraign'd,  
 Her life was uncondemned,  
 Her character unstain'd;  
 And by her painful travail,  
 Her suffering and her toil,  
 A little church was formed  
 On the European soil.  
 This little band of union,  
 In apostolick life,  
 Remain'd a while in England  
 Among the sons of strife,  
 Till the Columbian Eagle,  
 Borne by an eastern breeze,  
 Convey'd this little kingdom  
 Across the rolling seas.  
 To mark the shining passage,  
 Good angels flew before  
 Towards the land of promise,  
 Columbia's happy shore.  
 Hail! thou victorious gospel!  
 And that auspicious day,  
 When Mother safely landed  
 In Hudson's lovely bay  
 Near Albany they settled,  
 And waited for a while,  
 Until a mighty shaking  
 Made all the desert smile:  
 At length a gentle whisper,  
 The tidings did convey,  
 And many flock'd to Mother,  
 To learn the living way.  
 Through storms of persecution,  
 The truth she did maintain,  
 And show'd how sin was conquer'd,  
 And how we are born again:  
 The old corrupted nature,  
 From place to place she trod,  
 And show'd a new creation,  
 The only way to God.  
 About four years she labour'd  
 With the attentive throng,  
 Confirm'd the young believers,  
 And help'd their souls along:  
 At length she clos'd her labour,  
 And vanish'd out of sight,  
 And left the church increasing  
 In the pure gospel light.  
 How much are they deceiv'd  
 Who think that Mother's dead!

She lives among her offspring,  
 Who just begin to spread ;  
 And in her outward order,  
 There's one supplies her room,  
 And still the name of Mother  
 Is like a sweet perfume.  
 Since Mother sent the gospel,  
 And spread it in the west,  
 How many sons and daughters  
 Are nourish'd from her breast !  
 How many more conceiv'd,  
 And travailing in the birth !  
 Who yet shall reign with Mother  
 Like princes on the earth.  
 I love that testimony  
 That shows me what to do :  
 I love my precious Mother,  
 I love the Elders too :  
 The Brethren and the Sisters,  
 I love them and their ways,  
 And in this loving spirit  
 I mean to spend my days.

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*The Believers' Appeal.*

**M**AN, at his first creation,  
 As he was made upright you know ;  
 While in that situation  
 He walked in the light you know.  
 As he was male and female,  
 The man must be the head you know ;  
 And by his wholesome counsel  
 The woman must be led you know.  
 The woman was beguiled  
 And got the serpent's seed you know ;  
 And though she was defiled  
 The harlot took the lead you know.  
 Then from his head old Adam fled,  
 And cleav'd unto his wife you know ;  
 And for his fall he never shall  
 Eat of the tree of life you know.  
 And in his flesh relation,  
 He lies beneath the curse you know ;  
 And every generation  
 Has still been growing worse you know.  
 But God decreed another seed  
 Of a superiour birth you know ;

Whose feet should tread the serpent's head  
 And people all the earth you know.  
 The time has been predicted,  
 And this must be the day you know ;  
 And he that is convicted  
 Will quit his former way you know.  
 The carnal life of man and wife  
 Cannot appear so right you know.  
 Now the old man's offended,  
 Unwilling yet to die you know ;  
 He says he was commanded  
 To go and multiply you know.  
 He argues still he can fulfil,  
 The all important trust you know ;  
 But this pretence is his defence  
 To gratify his lust you know.  
 The serpent now in fetters,  
 Though he's but a thief you know ;  
 To Paul's mysterious letters  
 He'll hasten for relief you know.  
 Permission blind he there can find,  
 But no exprefs command you know.  
 That some forbid to marry,  
 The carnal man can read you know ;  
 Whatever sense they carry,  
 Upon this word he'll feed you know.  
 Seducers boast he now can trace  
 With Shakers in his eyes you know ;  
 And boldly say that these are they,  
 But carnal men will lie you know.  
 The protestant reformers,  
 The Roman priests condemn you know ;  
 And this forbidding marriage  
 They've charg'd upon them you know.  
 Whoever might the civil right  
 Prohibit or forbid you know ;  
 We do not say it might be they,  
 But Shakers never did you know.  
 The lust his father gave him,  
 The carnal man seduc'd you know ;  
 And marriage cannot save him  
 But from a worse abuse you know.  
 It comes to bind the carnal mind,  
 And nail it to the cross you know.  
 The cross he will not carry,  
 But at the truth will spurn you know ;  
 Though Paul says let him marry,  
 It's better than to burn you know,  
 If he's in pain and can't contain,

And will not serve the Lord you know,  
 Then sure he must live in his lust  
 And take his just reward you know.  
 Old Adam in vexation,  
 May search the scripture through you know,  
 And find a large relation  
 Of Gentile and of Jew you know.  
 But he that would be truly good,  
 A woman will not touch you know;  
 This is the one that God will own,  
 And Paul himself was such you know.

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*Hymn of Love.*

LOVING Brethren, loving Sisters,  
 Middle ag'd and blooming youth,  
 Lay aside your Sirs and Mist'ers,  
 Love the plain and simple truth.  
 Love's the spring of our communion,  
 Life and breath of the new man;  
 Never was such love and union,  
 Never since the world began.  
 From our blessed, loving Mother,  
 First the loving tidings came;  
 That her children love each other,  
 And that love's their father's name.  
 Loving Elders brought the message,  
 Loving New-lights gave it passage,  
 Till it spread both far and wide. }  
 Let us then not be mistaken,  
 As to what we're call'd to love;  
 Whether things that may be shaken,  
 Things below or things above.  
 First divide the flesh and spirit,  
 Good from evil separate;  
 Then the thing that's void of merit,  
 We must love not, we must hate.  
 Love not self that must be hated,  
 Love not Satan, love not sin;  
 And to the flesh though you're related,  
 Love not flesh nor fleshly kin.  
 Love not riches, honour, pleasures,  
 Love no earthly, vain delight;  
 But the gospel, hidden treasure,  
 You may love with all your might.  
 Love your parents in the spirit,  
 Love them freely though unseen;



Love the kingdom they inherit,  
 Love whatever's pure and clean.  
 Love your Elders in their calling,  
 Love their counsel to obey ;  
 Love to see old Babel falling,  
 Love the new and living way.  
 Love the cross, love self-denial,  
 Love to labour day and night ;  
 Love that faith that stands the trial,  
 Love with brethren to unite.  
 Love the souls yet bound in fetters,  
 Love to help them on to God ;  
 Love to feel yourselves their debtors,  
 Love the preachers sent abroad.  
 Love the inward, new creation,  
 Love the glory that it brings ;  
 Love to lay a good foundation,  
 In the line of outward things.  
 Love a life of true devotion,  
 Love your lead in outward care ;  
 Love to see all hands in motion,  
 Love to take your equal share.  
 Love to love what is belov'd,  
 Love to hate what is abhorr'd ;  
 Love all earnest souls that covet  
 Lovely love and its reward.  
 Love repays the lovely lover,  
 And in lovely ranks above,  
 Lovely love shall live for ever,  
 Loving lovely loved love.

THE END.



