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.*

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1812.

DISTRICT OF NEW-YORK, ss.

BE IT REMEMBERED, that on the third day of February, in the thirty-fixth 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.*"

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CHARLES CLINTON,
Clerk of the Diſtrict of New-York.

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 Miniſtration.

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 ac- "count of our Faith, Doctrines, &c. propoſing to offer the man- "uſcript 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 cir- "cumſtance 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 appre- " henſion of harm that may accrue to us from thy publication; " but a regard to truth, and reſpect to the world of mankind, " who are unacqainted 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 publi- " cations of that deſcription emanating from ſuch authors.

" We hope theſe plain reaſons will be ſufficint to induce thee " to relinquiſh thy deſign without any further trouble; for we " don't wiſh to be urged to the diſagreeable neceſſity of expoſ- " ing this correſpondence to the publick, in order to prevent ſeri- " ous 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 un- " doubted 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 free- " ly on that ſubject.

" In behalf of the Church, Signed,

" DAVID OSBORN.

" *Watervliet, 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 errours 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 conſid-* " *ering 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 ab-* " *ſtractedly 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 accout 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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John Trueſdell
Iſaac Van Denburgh
Jacob Lanſing, jun.
John Maſcraft
Wm. Kane
Joſeph Whittaker
Iſaac Fowler

Niſkeuna.
Rev. Thos. Romaine
Derick Groat
Nicholas Groat
John G. Clute
Thomas Slats
Michael Freligh
Tobias Putman
Philip Linderbecker
Eldan F. Goodin
Seth Veeder

Coventry, Conn.
Leon. Handee, 20 c.

Hebron, Conn.
Benj. Davenport

Kingſton, Canada.
John Hodgſon

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.

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 in-" quire of us reſpecting our faith, we are willing, accord-" ing to our ability, to give all the information they de-" ſire."

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 con-
"feſſing 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 prophecied 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 ex-
"ternal 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 miniſtration, 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 miniſtration 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 differ 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 prophecied 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 narative 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 obe-"dient thereto; become willing when taught, or re-"quired, 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 com-*
" *eth into the world*—(John 49,) and that a talent, or tal-
" ents, 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 ex-
" preſs it, a manifeſtation of the ſpirit, is given to every
" man to profit withal—(1 Cor. xii. 7,) and diſobedi-
" ence 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 gōſpel 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 regen-
" eration, 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 goſ-
" pel 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 eve- " ry 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 God;* 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 " deſtroyed 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

" 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 right- " eouſneſs, the doctrine of atonement, nor Chriſt's mak- " ing 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 authoriſed 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 argu-
" ments 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 a-
" bout them were falſe; and what I had read in V. Rath-
" bone'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 dif-"fer 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 em-"brace 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 ſtu-"pified 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 ſo "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 circumciſſion, 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- " probated 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 xlvii. 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 Theſſ. 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 refering " to his ſecond appearing, to conſume and deſtroy anti- " chriſt, and make a final end of ſin, and eſtabliſh his " kingdom upon earth—(Iſa. lxv. 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 apoſ-

" 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 genera-
" tion, 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 hun-
" dred fold, in this preſent time, according as the holy
" Son of God promiſed in the day of his firſt appear-
" ance, 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 ar-
" dent 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 appear-
" ance, which God has committed to my truſt. *I daily*
" *feel a fountain of love, life, joy, and heavenly glory, flow-*
" *ing 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 diſtill-*
" *ed 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 Jeruſalem.

" 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 a-
" gain 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 com-
" mands 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 increaſe 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 noſtrils; 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 proſelytes. 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 millennium; 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 appears 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 theie 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 of 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 remain-"ed*, 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 propheſies, 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 propheſies 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 propheſies, 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, cencerning 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 an 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 ſinners) *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*
" *till 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 thraldom, 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 irreverſible*
" *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. Pſ. lxviii. 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 propheſies; 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 propheſies 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, prophe-ſied, 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 com-"ing of Chriſt; and to recommend to them to go and "ſee for themſelves, as I have done, and confeſs and for-"ſake 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 judment 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 con-"firmed 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 em-"brace 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, la-"bour." I thought I muſt be obedient, and keep in union, ſo I ſtept 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 diſpleaſed, 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 recieve 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 peo-"ple. 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 mellennium 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 miniſtration 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 bond-* "*age* 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 cove- "nant 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 mor-* "*tify the deeds of the body, ſhall live*—(Rom. viii. 13) and "become children of the *free woman*, and of that Jeruſa- "lem (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 inſtanced 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*—(Pſ. 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 Theſſ. 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 Theſſ. 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 reſurrection; 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 ſins,*
" *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 ſtept upon one of the ſeats, to anſwer him. I firſt propoſed for the conſideration of the aſ-

ſembly, 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 af-"fections; 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, "curſed 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 Theſſ. 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 outbreakings 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 juſtifie[d] 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 re-"moved, 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 reve-"lation, 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 vail 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 un-
" derſtanding, 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 irre-
" trieveably 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 con-
" cerning the ſpiritual world, which knowledge we have
" obtained by putting away all ſin, and having our ſpir-
" itual 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 com-
" munion 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 propheſy 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 be cauſe 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—xxxi. 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 goſ-"pel."

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 evil*—(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 peo- " ple 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 be- " come 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 ſees 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 dependence 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 "all 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 adviſeſt 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, "ſit 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 ſit 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 they 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 miniſtration, 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 Abi-"hu—(Lev. x. 1.) For the Lord will be ſanctified "in them that approach him—(ib. ver 3.) And the of-"fering 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 giſts 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 miniſtration.

ward popiſh leading and preaching to what they had heretoſore 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 5 o'clock the next day. He next requeſted of them, that I ſhould not be preſent. They told him, "that re-"queſt 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 ſavours 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 darkneſs 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 darkneſs 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 darkneſs 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 la-
"bouring a few times from that motive; and we do not
"charge you with any evil, or blame you for being un-
"avoidably abſent, by no means; but we look upon la-
"bour 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 faith- " ful antediluvians, principally conſiſted in believing in " the promiſe. The covenant God made with Abra- " ham, 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 diſ- " penſation, they were ſaved from ſin, is ſignified by E- " zekiel's viſion of the holy waters, as being only up to " the ancles—(chap xlvii. 3.) The ſecond diſpenſation " and further increaſe of the work of God, was the Mo- " ſaic, or law given to Moſes; which abounded with or- " dinances 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 miniſtration of John the Baptiſt, was an increaſ-
" ing work and end of the Moſaic diſpenſation; a fore-
" runner 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 ſpo-
" ken 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 hereto-
" fore, 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 out-
" ward purifications and ſacrifices, which did not redeem
" from ſin, or make the comers thereunto perfect; nev-
" ertheleſs, 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 rea-
" ſonable 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 ob-
" tained 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 con- " feſſed, and become a faithful man of God in the goſ- " pel."

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 a-"mong 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 diſpo-"ſition, 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 a-"mong 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 whatſover 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, "Whoſe ſoever ſins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whoſe ſoever ſins ye retain, they are retained." As this church profeſs to have the ſame revelation reſtored, that was given unto the apoſtles, and that in an increaſed degree; by which, in her miniſtration, ſhe is inveſted with the ſame authority: and I tell you further, all judgment is in the church. The miniſtration 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. Why, if this be true, it is the very point that ſhould ſtrengthen us in the faith; for what are a people the better for their profeſſion, 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 ſometime 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, to be obedient to the Elders in all things that can be mentioned or thought of, whether appearing right to us or not—We muſt lie open to their teaching, and become as paſſive as clay in the hand of the potter. As I heard one

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 aſunder—(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 miniſtration, 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 miniſtration, 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 ac- "count of her faith, impriſoned in a fort at Albany. "At that time, a certain captain, going to the north- "ward 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 final- "ly 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 fa- "voured 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 thou- "ſands, 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. Confeſ- "ſion 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 deputied 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 ſaith, 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 propheſies, 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 propheſies 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 profeſs 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 refering 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 ſaint aſk another ſaint, "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 propheſy 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 propheſy

* 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 propheſies 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 ſoci-"eties, 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 breth- " ren 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 individu- " ally 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 giſt, or according to the minds of the Elders; and that there was no gift from the miniſtration to write and publiſh reſpecting their faith and practice: thefore 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 judgdemt, 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 repreſent 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 founda-"tion 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, Abraham Hendrickſon, where we tarried with the brethren and ſiſters ſeven or eight days. I had conſiderable converſation 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 ſpectators 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 privilege 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 accordingly 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 labouring 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 any 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 morn-"ing, 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 propheſy 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 millennium.

My father, after he had read this letter, ſaid, "Thom-"as, 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 revereſe 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, Tindal, 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, R. 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, thou 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 neighbourhod 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 yêt 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 diſapprobate 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 ſect 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 Shiloah 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 ſurpriſed 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 a-"voided, on that day; and to be careful not to give of-"fence 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 miniſtration 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 preach-"ing."

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 con-"cluſion 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, "ſhe 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 opera-"tions 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 expe-"rience 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 miniſtration, 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 Pauls 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 allſufficient. I feel the drawings of the Father—and that to me is ſatisfactory.

Sixth day. More yet, but tongue cannot tell what! Oh, yè 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 woul 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. xlvi. 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

See page 13.

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 favor-"ed 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 min-"iſtration." 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 miniſtration, 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 miniſtration; 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 miniſtration; 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 reviſitation, to let me ſee the truth of revelation one ſide of the miniſtration.

We had conſiderable converſation reſpecting the miniſtration 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 I 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.

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 fending 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 be- " lievers, have ſaid or done wrong, they will have to an- " ſwer 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 be- " come an honeſt, upright, holy man, and not look at " the failings of others, which will be no food to your " ſoul."

I replied—What deficiences 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 miniſtration or 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 miniſ-
"ter 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 queſ-
"tions, 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 for-"ſake 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." *Dr. Watts' Improvement of the Mind.*

" 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 ſour 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 properly 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 reſign myſelf up, and by whom I ſuffer myſelf to be led, knowing how full the world has been of confident pretenders to revelation; and likewiſe, how many eccleſiaſtical 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 mellennium 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 chriſ- "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 Jeru- " ſalem 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 wicked- " neſs, 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 re- " ſtrain 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 redemp- " tion 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 ſal- " vation; 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 conſequence 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 quoted by the Elders and believers, both in public and private 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 preaching 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 propheſy 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 inſtrumen-
"tality 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 be-*
"*fore 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 Si-*
"*mon, whoſe ſirname 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 goſ-
"pel 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 miniſtration. 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 teſtmony 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 miniſtration 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 Niſkeüna—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 travailed 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 ſice, 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 tri-"als—our's are inward, againſt a carnal nature; labor-"ing 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 croſs, 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 perſeverence, 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—trav-ail-
" 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 be-
" lieve 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 ſtept one ſtep in regene-
" ration, 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, ſanc-
" tification, 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 conſe-"quence 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 com-
" plete 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, re-
" peatedly 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, glo-
" ry 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 mellennium (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, rea-
"ſoned 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 ſal-" vation 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 other,

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 wiſ-"dom, 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 miniſtration 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 re-"ceived from the world, or ſpirit of it, muſt be left be-"hind. 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 be-"lieve 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 un- " derſtand; nor could they, until they came to travail " in that ſtate in which he was, and received of his ſpir- " it.

" We ſay of you, as the apoſtle did to thoſe to whom " he wrote—*We had many things to ſay, and hard to be ut-* " *tered; 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 ſal- " vation,) *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." *Eccl. 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 nevertheſs, 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 loſe 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 ſometime 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 ſal- " vation 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 marvellous 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

ſun, 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 Halhed, 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, op-"erates 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 ſec-"ond 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 miſ-"taken 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 correſpendence 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 reverenced 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."

Gother's Two-fold Character of Popery—page 29.

‡ 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 Eccl. 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 ſtiles 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."

Haweis' Church Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 415.

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 goſ-"pel 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 oc-"caſion 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 morning, 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 miniſtration 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 miniſtration 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 ſhow 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 thingthey 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 denomitated 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 forſook "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 compariſions 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 ſa

vour 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 El-"ders 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 Niſkeuna 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*
" *learning, 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-

" neſs, which you have ſeen among the people, and re-
" ceived from them yourſelf. I hardly know what to
" think of you. I would wiſh to have charity for you,
" and hope your heart is better than your tongue, which
" the apoſtle calls an unruly member, and hard to be
" brought into ſubjection.

" There never was a people on earth under ſo kind
" and tender a church government as we are; and we
" are confident it never will be applicable in the ſpirit
" of it, to your deſcription of monarchy.

" Concerning America, we have nothing againſt its
" government. We believe providence was on the ſide
" of America in the revolution; but why it was ſo, the
" people did not know. In their conſtitution 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 firſt opening
" and eſtabliſhment of the goſpel. Thus, according to
" St John, the earth, i. e. the earthly government, or a
" government of the ſpirit of this world, helped the wo-
" man and her ſeed, that is, the people of God. The
" earth opened her mouth and ſwallowed up, or took
" away the power of perſecution—(Rev. xii.) Now here-
" in we ſee the wiſdom of God in cauſing our firſt El-
" ders to leave England, at preſent a place of confuſion,
" noiſe, and war, and to come to a land of peace. You
" ſay, *America is an highly favoured people.* Yea, they are
" as the Jews were, when Chriſt came among them; and
" it is a pity any ſhould be as unwiſe as they were in re-
" fuſing the goſpel of his firſt appearance.

" You ſay, Many don't know the privileges they might
" enjoy. Yea, truly, they do not. They might, by be-
" ing ſo highly favoured, as in having the true and liv-
" ing goſpel planted among them, whereby they might
" become ſaved from their ſins, and be made a happy
" people.

" You ſay, 'Hail America! what an highly favoured
" people!' Yea, they are ſo. But not altogether in con-
" ſequence of a republican government—but in conſe-

" 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
" tyranical 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 com-
" pletely, 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 tyranize 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- " tioneering 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 inate 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 inſufficincy 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, there 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 propheſies 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 Propheſies, vol. ii. 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 ſalva-"tion 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 gain-
" ed, 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 ev-
" ery thing that's offered, be it ever ſo good. But if
" ſuch an one becomes effectually gained, and that wiſ-
" dom or learning becomes refined and brought into ſub-
" jection 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 learn-
" ing than the other apoſtles, was more able to vindicate
" the cauſe of Chriſt, and prove that Jeſus was the prom-
" iſed 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 ap-
" pears as if the *goſpel was hid from the wiſe and prudent of*
" *this world, and revealed only unto babes;* and Chriſt thank-
" ed 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 people yet. It is by becoming thoroughly acquainted with the faith, that I can ſee, or be able to judge of its propriety. If I leave the people, I ſhall have but a ſmall privilege among them, and but little opportunity to become 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 preſented 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 converſations; 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 patiently hear what I had to ſay; and having manifeſted throughout, a meek, mild, and quiet ſpirit; and in conſidering 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 miniſtration ; " 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 " aſſemble 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 miniſtration, " 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 breth- " ren, 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. Elder 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 Ebene-"zer, 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

ſang, 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, reſpect-
" ing 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 rea-
" ſon 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 meet-
" ing 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 ac-
" ceptable 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 be-
" gin 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 trav-
" ailing 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 believ-
" ers; 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 ſavours 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 recommend-"ed me to. It was then, the goſpel don't bind crea-"tures, but gives liberty to act our faith, feelings, and "mind, in matters that are not ſinful. It was then, ac-"cording to the light given us, and that no more is re-"quired 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 ſalva- " tion. 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 wick- " edeſt 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 impreſſion 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 be- " come 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 whith-

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 by 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 " do not confeſs your ſins in obedience to the gift of " God, all the ſins that ever you have heretofore com- " mitted 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?—Pſ. 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 un-"ion 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 hat has been paſt; we would hold "nothing againſt you, and have no other feelings to-"wards 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 errrors, 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 propheſy. 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 an dAnn: 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 out-"ward 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 vio-"lating 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 miniſtration. 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 be-"tween the people called Quakers and Shakers; and "that the former, inſtead of being forerunners or pre-"paratory, 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 con-"ſiſtent 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 hireing 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 wich 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 plough ſhares, 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 miniſtration 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 expec-

* 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 Niſkeuna 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 diſpleaſed. 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 diſapprobated, and ſharply reproved him for it.—Stamping with his foot, he ſeveral times ſaid to him, in an accent of diſapprobation—" What! do you abuſe peo- " ple? What! have you no more ſenſe of the order of " the goſpel, than to abuſe people?"

I was pleaſed to hear of this. It raiſed 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 be-"come firmly eſtabliſhed in the faith; and you might "then go forth in obedience to a further gift and ſer-"vice 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 bu-"ry them in the earth; and at laſt, receive no other re-"ward 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 knowl-"edge?"

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 obedi- " ent, 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 al- " ways 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 over- " throw it; neither be ſaved any other way. Therefore, " if you wiſh to be found in the way of God, be obedi- " ent 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 wiſ- " er 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 your may cry to God on ac-
" count 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 bareſaced 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 ſympathiſed 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 miniſtration 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 be- "fore 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 interfered 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 act 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 hogſhead. 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 ſileabano, durem ſubramo, deviranto diacerimango, jaſſe vah pe cri 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 pronunciation. 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 Whittaker; 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 pennyleſs. 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, de- " mand 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 examined 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, exerciſes and trials about it, as well as myſelf and others.

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 ſcriptures, in which God would pour out his ſpirit upon all fleſh, and all ſhould know the Lord, and no cauſe remain 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 propheſy 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 ſhowed 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 endeaour 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 propheſy; 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 propheſy, 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 propheſy, 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 ecſtacies, 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 Bulkley 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 propheſies 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 propheſy; 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 hatter'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 Standley, 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 Abagail 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 propheſy, 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 Abagail 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 Whittaker, 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 reproved 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 obſere, 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 con- " ſidered 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 proſelytes, 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 goſ- " pel I muſt patiently bear all abuſe, and ſuffer my ſhins " 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 connived 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 ſim- " ilar 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 *ſer-* " *pents and vipers*, and that they could not *eſcape the dam-* " *nation 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 proſelytes, 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—"Whoſoever 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 propheſy; 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 travailing 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 Niſkeuna 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 Niſkeuna 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 accout 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 miniſtration. Her name by marriage was Goodrich: there had been ſeveral gifts of mortification to ſeparte 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 Matterſon 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 car-"nal 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 Abagail 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 oder 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 publickly, 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 pamphet 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."

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 jirks and barks, and conſidered by many as a part of religious worſhip. About the beginning of the year 1805, praying, ſhouting, jirking, 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 infomed 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. Brannon, 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 hallooing 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." *Haweis.*

"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" *Haweis.*

"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.

" ſons—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 miniſtration 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 re-printed 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 miniſtration 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 elegancy 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.

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.

Lo Achor's valley ſpreads in ſight,
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.

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 ſaviours 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 bleſs'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 bleſsed 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.

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.

The Believers' Appeal.

MAN, 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 expreſs 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 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.

Hymn of Love.

LOVING Brethren, loving Siſters,
Middle ag'd and blooming youth,
Lay aſide your Sirs and Miſters,
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.