

FROM THE

CHRISTIAN BAPTIST.

VOL. I. NO. II. BUFFALOE, (BETHANY) BROOKE CO. VA., SEPTEMBER 1, 1823.

Style no man on earth your Father; for he alone is your Father who is in heaven: and all ye are brethren. Assume not the title of Rabbi; for ye have only One Teacher; neither assume the title of Leader; for ye have only One Leader--The Messiah.

Messiah.

On Teaching Christianity.--No. I.

THE following essay, from the pen of a close and constant student of the Bible, is most worthy of the attention and examination of those engaged in teaching the christian religion. It is the first of an intended series of essays on one of the most desirable subjects, viz. to point out a divinely authorized plan of teaching the christian religion. We earnestly entreat our readers to give these essays a fair, full, and strict examination.

EDITOR.

OUR exertions for increasing the number of copies of the Scriptures are now multiform and great; societies for effectuating this object are to be found almost every where. Towns, cities, villages, and even the wilderness, are forward in endeavors to make the number of bibles in the world as great as possible; and though it cannot be said that the bible is even now a scarce book, yet the day is anticipated when the number of copies shall be greatly multiplied, and when the blessed volume shall be found in the possession of every family, perhaps of every individual. The object of the present paper, however, is not to enlarge either on the benevolence or the extent of the present or probable success of those societies formed for multiplying copies of the bible; but only to lend assistance to those societies or churches formed for understanding it, to present christians with an authorized plan of studying the scriptures, and to furnish the christian teacher with a certain method by which he ought to proceed in making known the great salvation to his hearers.

Were a vision vouchsafed us for the single purpose of revealing one uniform and universal plan of teaching the christian religion, would not every christian admire the goodness of God in determining a matter on which scarce two, calling themselves christian teachers, now agree? Would not every teacher feel himself bound in duty to abandon his own plan, and to adopt the plan of God--to study it, to teach by it, and, in short, to maintain its superiority and authority against all other schemes, how plausible soever in their configuration, how apparently suitable soever in their application? The writer has not been favored with any vision on this matter; moreover, as he deems it unnecessary, he of course does not expect any. And surely if his plan be authorized by the example of God himself--by the Lord Jesus Christ--by the Holy Spirit, in his method of presenting the truth to all men in the scriptures; if the apostles taught the truth on this plan, and if missionaries in teaching idolaters feel themselves forced to the adoption of it; then there is no need of angel or vision. The path of duty is before us, and we ought to pursue it. What shall we say of the present babel-like confusion among those calling themselves teachers of christianity? The champions of each sect forming schemes for themselves of teaching as chance, or whim, or interest directs, and

all employing themselves in confirming certain factional dogmas--in making merchandize of the people, or in propagating damnable heresies. Timothy had known the holy scriptures from a child, and the apostle assured him that they alone were able to make him wise unto salvation; that they were profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and instruction in righteousness; conjuring him at the same time, as he hoped to account for his conduct before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, to be instant in season and out of season, in teaching the word of God; asserting for it as a reason that the time was approaching when the professors of the religion, having itching ears, would, after their own lusts, (the love of novelty and of eloquence,) become disgusted with the scriptures, and make for themselves teachers, who would turn away people's ears from the truth and entertain them with fables.

Passing by, for the present, the various stupid schemes, all different and all wrong, pursued by Roman Catholics, Socinians, Arians, Covenanters, Seceders, Presbyterians, High-Churchmen, Baptists, Independents, and so forth, let us attend to the plan of teaching the truth pursued by God--by the Lord Jesus Christ--by the Holy Spirit, in presenting it to all men in the scriptures, and by the apostles and all who first preached it--a plan founded in the very nature of the saving truth itself, and into which ignorant missionaries feel themselves driven when every human scheme has failed. But what is the truth? Times out of number we are told in scripture that the grand saving truth is, that "Jesus is the Christ." This is the bond of union among christians--the essence--the spirit of all revelation. All the scriptures testify and confirm this simple truth, that "he that believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is begotten by God." *John* v. 2. For he who believeth it, sets to his sea that God [10] is true. Such a one, John says, loveth God and Christ and the brethren, keepeth his commands and is purified from all his sins, and overcometh the world, and shall be saved. Christ declared when departing into heaven, that he that believeth not shall be damned. The grand truth, then, being that "Jesus is the Christ" let us attend to those scriptures which are written for the express purpose of establishing this proposition; these are the writings of the four evangelists, which at once show us in what manner God would have us to learn this truth; in what manner the Lord Jesus taught it; how the Holy Spirit has been pleased to present it to mankind; how the apostles wrote of it, and of course taught it to the world. This is the beginning of the plan authorized of heaven; and every teacher of the christian religion should commence by unfolding to his hearers the matter of the four evangelists. "These things, says John, are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ; and that believing, ye might have life through his name." Now, what definition soever the holy scripture has given of one evangelist, that is the definition of them all; for each of them contain a history of that marvellous evidence by which Jesus proved that he was the Christ; by which his pretensions to the Messiahship were so amply confirmed among the Jews.

The perfection of christian intelligence is a knowledge of the holy scriptures, and no christian is intelligent but as he knows the scriptures. The desideratum, then, is a plan for teaching them to the people. By commencing with the four evangelists and abiding by them until they are relished and understood, we learn, chief of all things, that Jesus is the Christ; and while the number, magnitude, variety, sublimity and benignity of his miracles delight, astonish and instruct us, they, at the same time, carry irresistible conviction to the heart, purge it, elevate it, and fix our faith in the mighty power of God. By and by, as we become familiarized to the miraculous evidence, we become reconciled, and even strongly attached to it; losing all suspicion of its reality, and of course of the reality of our holy religion; because we come to perceive that these things were not done in a corner, but in public, and under the inspection of men who were both able and forward to decide upon their truth and certainty; men who, in point of intellect, reason, and character, might have vied with the choicest of our modern sceptics; men, in short, whose abilities to detect were equalled only by their readiness to pervert. In the writings of the evangelists we behold that power which created man and all things, exerting itself with all possible unaffected pomp and majesty, tempering, uniting, and clothing itself with all goodness and philanthropy; and so entirely at the will of the Holy One, that it accompanies those who accompany him. It sparkles, it flashes, it shines, it heals, it renovates, it creates, it controls, it rests, it leaps, it flies, it kindly raises up the bowed down, or

hushes into silence the swelling and reluctant storm; it flies forth with the breath of his mouth, it operates at the tuft of his mantle, at the tip of his finger, or at the distance of a hundred leagues; now it is in the air with a voice like thunder; it shakes open the nodding tombs, or it rends the crashing mountains around Jerusalem; always marvellous, it is always harmless, and mostly benevolent. True, there is nothing conciliating or winning in power abstractly considered; apart from goodness, we always choose to inspect it at a distance; but if joined with malevolence, we fly from it with horror and affright. Power is formidable and even terrifying in the tiger, because in him it is a mere instrument of cruelty; but the same power becomes amiable in the horse, because all the thunder of his neck, all the glory of his nostrils, the strength of his limbs, and the fierceness of his attitude, are continually held in check by that beautiful docility which so eminently characterizes this noble animal, and by which his very will is identified with that of his rider. In the evangelists we behold the everlasting, the unexpended power itself, revealed in the form of a servant, and with more than a servant's humility, the strength of the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and harmlessness of the Lamb, dwelling together in the same one.

In short, we see that the Lord our Saviour is unweariedly and everlastingly employed in supplying, comforting, and saving the unfortunate creatures whom he had originally made upright.

PHILIP.

[CB 10-11]

FROM THE

CHRISTIAN BAPTIST.

VOL. I. NO. IV. BUFFALOE, (BETHANY) BROOKE CO. VA., NOVEMBER 3, 1823.

Style no man on earth your Father; for he alone is your Father who is in heaven: and all ye are brethren. Assume not the title of Rabbi; for ye have only One Teacher; neither assume the title of Leader; for ye have only One Leader--The Messiah.

Messiah.

On Teaching Christianity.--No. II.

READER, you observe that this piece is entitled "An essay on teaching christianity." Perhaps you are at a loss to know what it means. You will understand it better by and by. My last paper was intended simply to intimate to christian bishops or pastors, that, in spite of the discrepant and inapt schemes of sermonizing that now prevail by mean of learned and popular establishments, there yet exists a certain, uniform, authorized plan of preaching Jesus, a plan consecrated by the high examples of all the heavens, and the holy apostles and prophets.

I should immediately proceed to develope it, were I not thoroughly convinced that a recognition of a few preliminaries is absolutely necessary to the adoption of this authorized plan, and even to the understanding of it. These preliminaries, indeed, are neither very numerous nor very remote from vulgar apprehension--they are only two, and a very superficial glance at scripture will put the reader in possession of all that is necessary for understanding the writer of these papers. The first of these prefatory articles is, that the members of a church of Christ are united to one another by the

belief of a matter of fact, viz. that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," and not by any attribute of government, catholic or sectarian. The second is, that the scriptures propose the belief of this fact, that "Jesus is the Christ," as the only means for increasing the body or church of God. Hence the didactical labors of a bishop or elder who would wish to edify and increase the body of Christ, divide themselves into two several sorts. In order to increase the body, he proves to the world by means of these ancient and venerable monuments which God has put into his hands, the four gospels, that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God;" and, in order to edify the church, he points out in all the scriptures, as these holy and sublime interpretations which the Spirit has every where given of this illustrious fact. But if it is true (as we shall immediately see from scripture it is,) that the body of Christ is united in its several members by the belief of this matter of fact, viz. that Jesus is the Son of God, and that it is increased by the confession and belief of it--then a number of very important corollaries are deducible from these two revealed propositions: First, the peace and union of a church of Christ are not the result of any sort of ecclesiastical government. Secondly, the increase of Christ's body is not predicated on any thing so exceedingly exceptionable as modern confessions of faith; but on the confession of the first truth. Thirdly, the worshipping establishments now in operation throughout christendom, increased and cemented by their respective voluminous confessions of faith, and their ecclesiastical constitutions, are not churches of Jesus Christ, but the legitimate daughters of that Mother of Harlots, the Church of Rome. In these establishments a breach of canon is punished with ejection, and to nauseate their vitiated creeds is a certain bar to induction, unless a man is rich, and then he may do or deny anything. But, in order that the reader may entertain no doubt respecting the above mentioned propositions, let us attend to the scriptures--let us attend to the voice of the beloved Saviour, speaking in *Matthew* xvi. 13. "When he came into the coasts of Cesarea, he asked his disciples, saying, who do men say that I the Son of Man am? And they said, some say that you are John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He said unto them, but whom say you that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, you are the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said to him, blessed are you, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood has not revealed it to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say also to you, that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." In this beautiful, interesting, and highly significant passage, four things are particularly remarkable: First, the name, Christ, Son of the living God, which Simon gives to Jesus. Second, the name *Petros*, stone, which Jesus gives to Simon. Third, the truth itself, which Simon confesses. And fourth, the name *Petra*, rock, by which the Saviour, figuratively, in allusion to Simon's name, *Petros*, stone, designates this eternal truth, that he is the Christ the Son of the living God. On the belief of this fact, then, his church is founded, and by it is held together. I do not remember to have seen it remarked, but it is very much in our Lord's manner to reply in the very same words in which he is addressed. For instance, the [23] leper says, "if you will ;" Jesus replies, "I will." Thomas says, "how can we know the way?" The Lord answers, "I am the way." "Why do your disciples transgress?" say the Pharisees; and "why do you also transgress?" says the Saviour. From want of attending to this, the vivacity of our Lord's reply to Simon is not felt, and the spirit of the whole passage, indeed, almost vanishes--you are the Christ--and you are stone, *Petros*. The Lord Jesus was very apt to speak in metaphor too. He styles Herod a fox; he calls his own body a temple, in allusion to the temple in which he at that time was. When he is on Mount Olivet among the vines, he styles himself the vine; he calls death sleep; his own death a baptism; Simon a stone, *Cephas*: and in the above passage he calls the grand truth that he was the Son of the living God, a *Petra*, Rock, in allusion to Simon's name, Stone, and on account of its stedfast and indestructible certainty; and he adds, that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it;" i. e. as I suppose, his death, which was soon to be effected by the wicked Jews, should not disprove his pretensions to the Messiahship; or perhaps he means that the grave should not interrupt the fellowship of his church, which was to be founded on this imperishable fact, that he was the Christ. This passage sufficiently shows us what is the bond of union among the despised people; and it shows us even more, for it lets us know that the confession and belief of this bare fact, (Peter at this moment knowing nothing more, nothing as yet of his crucifixion for sin,) is attended with certain blessing and salvation--"Blessed are you, Simon," &c. To the same purpose Paul says, "if you confess with your mouth the Lord

Jesus, and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you shall be saved." Now, if modern confessions of faith had such blessing and such salvation appended to them by such authorities, their abettors might well boast. But they who bow down to such idols shall go down to the grave with a lie in their right hand. The sword of the Lord's mouth is unsheathed against the man of sin, nor will it kiss the scabbard until his enemies are consumed. O Gamaliel! O Socrates! O Satan! save your sinking disciples whose judgment now of a long time lingers not, and their damnation slumbers not!

But that the glorious truth, and nothing else, holds the saints together in particular churches, is evident from the holy epistles which are addressed to them in their individual capacities. Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, who were beginning to name themselves by their respective favorites, as the moderns do, informs that church, that, when he had first come among them, he had determined to know nothing among them but the bare gospel fact, that Jesus was the Christ, and had been crucified; nor did he attempt to ornament it with the eloquence of words, thinking, as I suppose, that a truth so supremely magnificent in itself, was perfectly insusceptible of extrinsic ornament, and in its own native excellency defied the united pens and tongues of men and angels. His only aim was to demonstrate its reality by the spirit and power of God which filled him, that the disciple's faith might not stand in his word, but in the power of God--the miracles. Knowing that if this great argument, supported as it was with miracles, failed to reduce men to union and to Christ, he had nothing of equal importance to propose for this purpose. The apostle, therefore, in order to reduce them to unity, reminds them of the fundamental bond of union by which they had been originally congregated thus: "according to the grace (apostleship) of God to me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation and another builds thereon; but let every man take heed how he builds thereon, for other foundation (of union) can no man lay than that is laid, which is, Jesus is the Christ." These things may suffice to show that the bond of union among christians is the belief of a matter of fact, viz. that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God. The reader may consult *Ephesians*, ii., iii. and iv. chapters, all the *Galatians*, epistles to the *Colossians*, *Romans*, *Timothy*, &c. &c., where the apostles lay it down as a universal maxim, that this truth or word of salvation works effectually in all them that believe it!

But our second proposition, viz. that the body of Christ is increased by belief of the bare truth that Jesus is the Son of God, and our Saviour, is a scripture doctrine, which the populars nauseate, if possible, more than our first. It is so simple, so manifestly foolish, that the sons of Gamaliel and Socrates are equally scandalized and ashamed of it. Yet, says Paul, it saves them that believe it. But it is chiefly abhorrent to modern establishments on account of the consequences of which it is pregnant--it sets aside all canon, all confession, every thing indeed which opposes and exalts itself against Christ and the New Testament. Nevertheless, this second prefatory article, that the body is increased by the confession and belief of the truth, is perfectly obvious from scripture. "Whosoever shall confess me before men, says the Redeemer, him will the Son of Man confess before the angels of God." Peter, we have seen, confessed him to be the Son of the living God, though apparently a mere man; and the blessed Saviour honored his confession with a most gracious benediction--"blessed are you Simon, son of Jonas, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven." Now Peter at this moment was perfectly ignorant of every thing besides this truth, which he had learned from the Father, by the miraculous evidence which he had vouchsafed in support of it. It is wonderful the honor which the scripture writers every where do this single truth, that "Jesus was the Son of God." Paul would not dare to use learned words in speaking it, cautions the Hebrews against letting it slip out of their minds, and says to the Corinthians, that they are saved by it if they keep it in mind! *John*, 1st epistle, chap. v. declared that the man who believed it is born of God; and wrote and recorded all the miracles in his gospel to prove this illustrious fact. "These things are written," says he, "that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life through his name." In John's days there were many antichrists; but that holy man did not dare to use any unlawful means for securing the disciples against their deleterious influence. He did not write to them that they should covenant

like the Covenanters, form any sort of ecclesiastic government, make confessions of faith, liturgy, rubric, &c. &c. No--these things, says he, I have written concerning them that (would) seduce you--these things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may (continue to) believe in the name of the Son of God. One has only to believe in this name, and his is eternal life. The body of [24] Christ, thus, then, is also increased by the belief of this excellent truth; and to be convinced of this, the reader has only to turn to any page of the New Testament, and he will read it in every line.

We have glanced at the vast honor every where in scripture put upon this majestic truth, that Jesus is the Son of Almighty God; we have seen how Paul and John exalted it, and also that it is the foundation and bond of union in the church of God, and how that the body of Christ is increased by the belief of it. But look at the marvellous evidence vouchsafed in support of it; the amazing concatenation of miracles drawn out to identify the person of the Christ; miracle after miracle follows each other in rapid succession, surprisingly diversified in manner, kind, and form; until the mighty chain terminates in that amazing and inscrutable wonder, his resurrection from the dead; a miracle which, for its transcendent peculiarities, the apostle, (*Eph. i. 19.*) singles out as affording the most illustrious display of the mighty power of God. But the Holy Spirit also, in all his diversified working of gifts and graces, in wisdom and knowledge, and miracles, and healings, discoursing of spirits, tongues, prophecy, and interpretations, was given to prove that Jesus was the Christ. And Peter makes this use of them on the day of Pentecost, when pointing to the multitude of separated tongues that crowned the heads of the apostles, he said, let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God has made that Jesus whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ. It was to preach and prove this that all the apostles were sent to the nations. But greater reverence could not be paid to any truth than the Lord Jesus himself pays to this, that he was the Son of God; when he bids all men worship him as they would the Father, he says, it is eternal life to know him; and in the moment of quitting this world enforces the belief of the truth with the sanctions of eternal life and death--"he that believes (that he is the Son of God) shall be saved; he that believes not shall be damned." The philosophers indeed have stolen away these sanctions from the faith of Jesus, and have pinned them to their jejune, pretended science of moral philosophy, where the name of the Saviour is perhaps never once mentioned. But they had better confine themselves to their own baubles, and let the truth of God alone, otherwise believe it; for if they do not, he will philosophize them when he comes to be glorified in his saints, when he shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, taking vengeance on them that obey not God. and believe not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

PHILIP.

[CB 23-25]

FROM THE

CHRISTIAN BAPTIST.

VOL. I. NO. VI. BUFFALOE, (BETHANY) BROOKE CO. VA., JANUARY 5, 1823.

Style no man on earth your Father; for he alone is your Father who is in heaven: and all ye are brethren. Assume not the title of Rabbi; for ye have only One Teacher; neither assume the title of Leader; for ye have only One Leader--The Messiah.

Messiah.

On Teaching Christianity.--No. III.

"YOU are the Christ, the Son of the living God," said Simon, and "you are Stone," replied Jesus to the son of Jonas. Both the speakers were human apparently, and had been introduced to each other by Andrew, on the banks of the Jordan, about the commencement of the Saviour's ministry, when Simon had the name of Stone given to him, &c. To such an acquaintance the introduction of Andrew was sufficient, common civility seldom requiring more on such occasions, than "this is such a one, and this is such another one." Simon, with others, seems to have had no higher views of the Lord Jesus in the first instance, than the popular sect of our own day, called Socinians. Philip expresses these views to Nathaniel, "We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph." But though Peter in the first instance conceived of him as the son of Joseph, yet afterwards, as is evident, he had his views corrected, and was introduced to him as the son of one infinitely august; not, indeed, by flesh and blood, not by his brother Andrew, but by God the Father. "Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonas, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in Heaven."--All the Jews regarded Jesus as the son of Joseph. As such, they rejected his pretensions to the Messiahship; and, as such, he was reputed poor and vile by the rich and great of his own nation. If I am not woefully deceived, however, the noblest peculiarity of the christian books consists in their disproving the false conceptions of the Jews on this point, by showing that he was the son of the living God. "*God manifest in the flesh*," is the grand arcanum of christianity--the sublime mystery it divulges to those who are initiated! But I must stop, for this would clash with the paradox of the Socinians, who are both gentlemen and philosophers, and Jews and saints.

I think, and perhaps, too, the reader thinks, that in my last paper it was showed by a series of New Testament quotations, that this peerless fact, that "*Jesus is the Christ*," forms the sole bond of union among the holy brethren, and is also the means through faith for increasing the body of Christ in the earth.

Hence it may be affirmed, without fear of being disproved, that the church of Christ is something essentially different from the popular establishments, that are maintained and increased by money, and their respective ecclesiastical constitutions and confessions. Let [36] Mammon withhold his support from these schemes and they would instantly be dissolved. The church of Christ, however, is founded on a rock, and its union and fellowship are as indestructible as the eternal and imperishable fact by which it is knit together; yea, it could exist if there were no such things as silver and gold in the world, and, indeed, the church of Jesus is fast passing into a world where there are no such things. A spark of common sense might teach any of us that God and Mammon can have no communion, even in this world; and this circumstance may well teach every person who has large annual contributions to make for the support of clergymen, that the society to which he belongs is not the church of Christ, that society requiring no such support.

But has the Son of God indeed visited our benighted planet? Has the Creator of the ends of the earth really stretched forth a human hand? Has the great God for certainty strode across the stage of this ephemeral existence, and acted so mighty a part? Why then, O Emmanuel! why should we for a moment be in wonder if this matchless truth be made the bond of union among them that believe it! and the fact by which the sinful sons of men are born again into the everlasting kingdom! Reader, have your eyes been opened to this illustrious truth? The scriptures disclose this secret and lift it high above all the other revelations of God. It is the very sun of the spiritual system. Shut your eyes to it, and christianity is a most dark and perplexing scheme. Once behold it, and you behold the most certain and substantial argument for love to God and men. This same Holy One died for sin, and if the knowledge of it fails to influence our hope, and love, and joy, it may safely be said that the scriptures have nothing of equal weight to propose for this purpose. That man is, or is not a

christian, who is, or is not constrained by this grand truth to abandon sin and live unto God; and this is all the scriptures mean by the word *gospel* in the noblest sense of that term. This is the grace and philanthropy of God, which, having appeared to all men, teaches us to deny all ungodliness, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in the present evil world. The word "gospel," I am bold to say, is a term more abused than any other in our language.

The religious public devoutly reckon a pulpit man to be explaining this term, and to preach the glad tidings of heaven, if he be but deducing some grave spiritual secret from such scraps of Holy Writ as the following--"Naphtali is a hind let loose,"--"Ephraim is a cake unturned"--"Remember Lot's wife"--"Judas went and hanged himself"--"We took sweet counsel together," &c. &c. Such texts, " for Antichrist has made the word of God a mere text-book," such texts, I say, may afford the learned, subtle, and seraphic preacher an opportunity of exhibiting his own pretty talents before a polite and fashionable assembly; but they were never written by the Holy Spirit to establish the gospel fact, but for quite a different purpose; and the dry heathenish harangues spun from them are as dissimilar from the grand, certain, and divine evangelical narration, as the fabulous cosmogony of Epicurus is from the Mosaic history of the creation. In the mouth of the popular preachers, the gospel is quite a fugitive thing--rapid, flitting, retiring, uncertain--it eludes the grasp of the most expert and attentive hearer; accordingly few or none of all who attend the heptdomidal levees of these spiritual courtiers, can ever tell, in precise terms, what the gospel of the New Testament means. I have heard of several pious presbyterians who would not accept of an excellent property in the western country, because they could not think of leaving the gospel; so that the bible, which records the gospel, was to them a mere plaything of their preachers. *Apropos*:: Two popular christians have this moment called to quarrel with me for saying, in my last paper, that the peerless gospel fact is the sole bond of union among the holy children; and that the testimony of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for this fact is recorded in the four evangelists. These two gentlemen will probably see this paper, and I here appeal to them whether the drift of their conversation with me was not to show that the writings of the evangelists were intended for the Jews only, and that the Gentiles had no need of these four books to support the grand fact that Jesus is the Son of the living God.

The gospel is a question of fact. Is Jesus the Son of the living God, or is he not? If it is false, the popular preachers cannot make it true--if it is true, the four evangelists have the honor of recording the evidence for its truth; and this brings us at once to their writings. Let us look at the circumstance of this fact as found in Matthew, Luke, &c. and we shall at once see whether any thing the pulpit men can strip from texts like those quoted above, can afford the shadow of an opportunity for preaching, i. e. proving that Jesus is the Christ. The evangelists tell us that this same personage was born in a stable, of a poor, but a religious female, at a moment, too, when she seems to have been exhausted by a long and fatiguing journey; accordingly, he was cradled in a manger, until the king of the country getting intelligence of his birth, obliged his guardians to seek for safety in a flight by night to Egypt. On his return misfortune still seemed to pursue him, and the family were compelled to pass their native canton and to seek a wretched security in Zabulon. At the age of thirty, he preferred his claims to the Messiahship, i. e. to be the Son of the living God. His pretensions were instantly rejected, and his fellow citizens *en masse* conspired against him, and drove him from the city. From this time he lived a wandering life, without a place to repose his head. His own tribe did not receive him; his own brethren disbelieved him; the people who heard him, pronounced him mad; and the priests who argued with him, and who are never behind in reprehending the good, declared him possessed. He more than twice escaped being stoned, and was actually scourged publicly. He was a known friend to sinners; and so excessively poor, that when he wanted to see Cæsar's head he had to ask for a penny. Thus he lived, insulted and abused, until an intimate acquaintance of his own betrayed him for the paltry sum of thirty shillings. When he was seized in a garden by a banditti of soldiers in the dark, and accused by many of seditions and blasphemy before the national senate, the petty officer of that court smote him on the cheek, and when afterwards brought before the Roman tribunal, it was only to receive the same contumely afresh. They dressed

him like a puppet, spit in his face, and struck him with the palms of their hands. He was adjudged to be crucified, and departed for the place of execution bearing his own cross. He was immediately nailed to it, and the malicious clergymen continued to persecute him with their pious scoffs, until, as if the world was in danger while the enemy to their power was alive, they sent [37] a ruffian soldier to pierce his side with a spear. But these doctors of divinity shall look on him whom they pierced. Thus he lived without a place to repose his head in life; and thus he died, without a grave to hide his murdered form in death. Now all this is intended to humble us in the dust. And it is the history of one pretending to be the Son of Almighty God; and to believe him to be the Son of God, is to believe the gospel; and to preach the gospel, is to show by the writings of the evangelists that this same suffering was all voluntary, and that he was the only begotten Son of God. But the writings of Matthew, &c. bear no resemblance to a popular preacher's gospel, which, too generally, is little better than a song of logic or metaphysics.

Dear Lord, when I reflect that I have spent twenty years of my life under the noisy verbosity of a Presbyterian clergyman, without receiving the least degree of light from the holy word of God; when I see others led the same dark dance by the same blind leaders, I am prompted to address myself to the bishops and deacons of the church of Christ. Brethren, you are not numerous in N. America, and you see the religion of our Lord and Saviour is still in the hands of schoolmen--boys brought from colleges and sworn to maintain schemes that maintain them; as I suppose you to have adopted no system, permit me therefore to beseech you by your affection for the flock of God, by that great mystery which holds it together, by that dear name Jesus, by our fear of death and hope of life, by your bowels of love for a perishing world, throw wide open the boards of the bible, and abandon the popular scheme of teaching our holy religion by scraps. O Jesus! let me ever lay hold of you through the medium of the bible, your holy word which defies all extrinsic ornament, and is the faithful compass which ever points to heaven. Your pretended preachers have abandoned the holy commandment; they have adopted worldly schemes; they have usurped your authority, and turned the people's ears away to fables. They have no guide. Methinks I see afar, tossed upon the billows of the never sleeping Atlantic, a slender bark; the treacherous breezes have seduced her from the shore; the pilot, unable to retrace his course, stands upon the poop, and in an agony of fearful anticipation, gazes on the wide and pathless ocean: around him the bewildered crew are seized with pale affright. But why this distraction--why this horror and dismay? An angel whispers me they have no compass; and already the winds are up, the sky lowers, and no friendly star appears to point them to their much loved port. How gladly would they hie them away, but they have seen the spirit of the storm to flit athwart the heavens, and the rush of waters is in every soul. At last the tempest, the whole heaven descends, and the unbefriended bark sinks amid the tumult of conflicting waters. The mystery of this is manifest; the popular assemblies are without the bible; and may be divided generally into the superstitious, the unintelligently devout, the enthusiastic, and the philosophic or Socinian.

Now, reader, in preaching the gospel or in arguing for the truth of this illustrious fact, that Jesus is indeed the Lord of heaven, do you think that, upon the whole, it is common among the pulpit men to argue from the same topics from which the Lord himself argued? After reading the above sketch of the life of Jesus, perhaps you may think that there is no topic from which any probable argument can be drawn in support of his claims. You will probably say, what in the world can a preacher have to say in proof of this, for all human testimony seems to be in array against it? You will ask, what has he to oppose to the decisions of a Roman judicature, so famed for the inflexibility of its justice? What mighty argument to counterbalance the adjudication of the Jewish sanhedrim, the most ancient and most authoritative council that ever sat? And if it could be shown that these erred in condemning him, how is he to obviate the difficulty about the priest and the people who thought him a madman, and the testimony of his brethren who discredited him and his fellow-citizens? &c. &c. Dear reader, the modern preachers of christianity could prove any thing if you only give them a pulpit, on the terms, that not a soul of all who listen shall have the right of questioning a single word they say; accordingly they will preach up the cross and the gospel from any text between Genesis

and Revelations. The two popular christians, above alluded to, averred that the gospel could be preached at any time in five minutes; yet our Lord on his plan taught only very few, though he preached for three years, and his followers had all the glory of the miraculous evidence laid right before them. It took the Bereans two whole years before they could decide upon the reality of the report. But popular preachers can teach this truth, and nobody, even the taught, can tell how. This fact, by which we are saved, is nevertheless greatly proved; the testimony, the united testimony of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit has set it to rest; and though Jews and antichristian preachers have done all in their power to disprove and obscure it, yet we are all taught by God, and he that receives his testimony sets to his seal that God is true.

PHILIP.

[CB 36-38]

FROM THE

CHRISTIAN BAPTIST.

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Style no man on earth your Father; for he alone is your Father who is in heaven: and all ye are brethren. Assume not the title of Rabbi; for ye have only One Teacher; neither assume the title of Leader; for ye have only One Leader--The Messiah.

Messiah.

On Teaching Christianity.--No. IV.

THE ultimate design of these papers on christianity is, to exhibit a plan of preaching Christ to mankind, having for its authority the example of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, together with that of the apostles and others, who, in the beginning, were commissioned to promulgate the new doctrine. The design, indeed, may at first sight seem as adventurous as it is novel; but what of that? Christian pastors, for whom these sheets are more immediately designed, are not to be startled at the apparent presumption or novelty of my attempt. Their principal concern must be about the reality of what I propose. Is there one way, and only one, of preaching Christ to sinners; and is that one way supported by the above authorities? I answer in the affirmative; there is but one authorized way of making Christ known to men, in order that they may believe and be saved. And now it is my business to show, by scripture, that this is the case. The reader will remember that it has been shown in a former paper, that Jesus having died for sin and arisen again to introduce the hope of immortality, the great fact to be believed in order to be saved, is, that he is the Son of God; and this being a matter-of-fact question, the belief of it as necessarily depends upon the evidence by which it is accompanied, as the belief of any other fact depends upon its particular evidence. No one thinks of accrediting a mere assertion. Our blessed Saviour scrupled not to tell those among whom he alleged his divine authority; that if he alone said "he was the Messiah," his testimony was not to be regarded, and then reminded them of the testimony given by John the Baptist, whom they held to be a prophet; the testimony of the Father too, and of the Holy Spirit, and of the scriptures; and we shall see by and by that to preach the gospel is just to propose this glorious truth to sinners, and support it by its proper evidence. We shall see that the heavens and the apostles proposed nothing more in

order to convert men from the error of their ways, and to reduce them to the love and obedience of Christ.

I am not ignorant that there are thousands, who, like a certain able divine in Canonsburg, stupidly suppose that there is something else far more necessary than this. They are ready to say that every body believes Jesus to be the Son of God, and to have been put to death for sin. To this it may be proper to reply, that not a single soul who attends the popular preachers has ever been convinced of this fact, that "Jesus is the Saviour," by its proper evidences. Clergymen do not preach the gospel with its proper evidences. They proceed in their annual round of sermonizing on this capital mistake, that the audience have believed Jesus to be the Saviour; so that their very best harangues, generally denominated gospel sermons, seldom deserve a better name than rants about the everlasting fire that shall consume the despisers of the offered salvation. But every body who has read the New Testament must have observed that the scriptures never propose the rewards and punishments which are appended to the belief and rejection of the gospel as a proof of its truth; and every one who knows how the apostles preached the gospel, must know also that they never did so; that they never produced the sanctions of everlasting burning in order to secure the faith and obedience of their hearers. If, indeed, their hearers were sometimes refractory, and would even dare to despise the gospel when set before them with its proper evidences, the gifts, the miracles, and the prophecies, then, indeed, the apostles made known the terrors of the Lord--not the terrors of the law. Then, indeed, they made it known that the Lord should be revealed from heaven to take vengeance by fire on them that obeyed not God, i. e. believed not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; but this, not to prove the truth of their gospel, not to prove that Jesus had been put to death for sin, and was the Son of God; but only to warn those who might be disposed to despise or neglect that splendid evidence of gifts, miracles, &c. which proved their gospel to be true, which proved Jesus to have been crucified for sin, and to be the Son of God. In short, the apostles proceed thus: they first proposed the truth to be believed; and secondly, they produced the evidences necessary to warrant belief; and thirdly, if any seemed to despise the gospel, or resist the Holy Spirit, i. e. the evidence afforded by the Holy Spirit in gifts, miracles, and prophecy, then they warned these despisers of the consequences, and thus freed themselves from the blood of all men.

But let us see if this be the method of making the truth known, pursued by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and the apostles; and to begin with the last, the apostles. Did the apostles begin to preach Christ on a plan of their own; or at the time when, and the place where, they themselves judged most proper? By no means! In every thing that regarded time, place and manner, they acted in entire subjection to the commandments of the Saviour; and this we learn from the first chapter of the Acts. Our blessed Saviour did not treat mankind as modern ministers do--scold and insult them for not believing or having faith in a proposition, for which they are no way careful to adduce the proper evidence. He well knew that such a wonder [46] as his being the Son of God, crucified for sin, and raised from the dead, could not be believed without the most transcendent testimony; and, therefore not permitting the apostles immediately to blaze abroad his resurrection, he ordered them to remain in Jerusalem until they should be endowed with power from on high, i. e. until the Holy Spirit should descend and furnish these unlettered preachers with proper evidences to establish the gospel fact! With regard to place, the Lord Jesus was very precise, telling them to begin at Jerusalem, then to proceed to the country of Judea; then to Samaria, and lastly to the Gentiles, the uttermost parts of the earth. Now if we would ascertain the apostles' plan of preaching Christ, we must follow them to these several places, and examine, in train, their sermons in Jerusalem, in Judea, in Samaria, and among the Gentiles, and to begin with them in Jerusalem. The day of Pentecost was fully come, and the apostles were in Jerusalem, when the Spirit of the Almighty, moving as he lists, blew athwart this valley of dry bones, and lo! a noise from heaven as of a mighty rushing wind--in a moment blazing tongues like fire shone upon the heads of the disciples of Jesus; they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in languages as the Spirit gave them utterance. Great was the shaking in Jerusalem. The dry bones came together to be clothed with sinews, flesh and skin, and to receive breath; to repent, believe and be baptized, and receive the

Holy Spirit! Parthians and Medes, Elamites and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judea, in Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, in the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, all, either Jews or proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, rushed to the place where the apostles stood, in all the grandeur of this fiery spectacle. They beheld and were amazed. They listened and were in doubt, exclaiming: "What means this? Do we hear them speak in our own tongues the wonderful works of God? Are not all they who speak Galileans? Others mocking, said, these men are full of new wine." Illustrious crisis! Great and glorious day! The moment destined by heaven for proclaiming the mystery of Christ, was now arrived; the Spirit was already poured from on high; the apostles were now constituted able ministers of the new covenant; the truth and its evidences were now both in their possession; and men, devout men from every nation under heaven, stood calling for an explanation of the surprising phenomena before them-- What means this? The apostle Peter, (*Acts ii.*) standing up, addressed them solemnly; and having showed them that all they saw and heard was agreeable to the prediction of their own prophet, Joel, he takes occasion to introduce the truth, the saving truth, viz. that Jesus was arisen from the dead. "Men of Israel," says he, "hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth," &c. Will the reader please to read the second chapter of the Acts? "Him," says the apostle, "being delivered by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain. Him God has raised up from the dead," &c. The apostle then shows that this fact also was according to prophecy; and having cleared both the truth to be believed and its evidences from all suspicion, by showing that they had been plainly foretold by their own prophets, he tells them that Christ was in heaven, and having received the promised Spirit from the Father, he had shed down what they all saw and heard--the multitude of separated tongues that blazed on the apostles' heads, and the gifts of languages, concluding thus, "Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God has made that same Jesus whom you have crucified both Lord and Christ."

The first of all christian addresses merits a more than ordinary share of our attention, it we would preach Jesus as the apostles did; moreover, the reader ought to watch Philip very closely here. He says that there is but one authorized method of proposing the saving truth in order that men may believe it. Now he must have learned this from an induction of particulars, i. e. from an examination of particular addresses, or preachings, found in the New Testament. And if Philip's scheme is true, it follows that all samples of apostolic preaching, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, or in the Evangelists, or any other where, are essentially the same. The truth to be believed and its evidences will form the spirit of every gospel address made by the apostles. Is there any thing else in the Pentecostian address? Does Peter speak for any other purpose than to convince them that he who had been slain was now in heaven? or does he employ any other means for convincing the crowd of this fact, but the testimony of the Holy Spirit, the power of miracles, and the gifts of tongues, with which he and his fellows had been endowed from on high? The apostle, (verse 36,) in the conclusion of his address, makes use of the illative conjunction, *therefore*. "Therefore," says he, "let all the house of Israel know," &c. The word "therefore" has reference to the evidence which was then before the multitude; and the apostle pointing to what they saw and heard, told them from these things to know assuredly that Jesus was the Lord and the Christ. The evidence was so obvious that it pierced them to the heart; and, in agony of terror, they exclaimed, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" And now we see that in this most primitive of all christian speeches, there are just two things that are essentially obvious: the fact of the Saviour's resurrection, and the testimony of God which proves it. That is what all men are called to believe in order to be saved; and this is what warrants their belief, the gifts, the miracles, and the prophecies. And now it will be necessary to compare with this the other apostolic addresses delivered in Jerusalem, to see whether they are essentially the same; this, however, must be the business of some future paper. At present I shall only remark, that if Heaven intends that the belief of this glorious fact shall save the world, it has certainly afforded a most glorious evidence in support of it. In furnishing the christian with such accounts of our Saviour's miracles and the miracles of the apostles, Heaven has certainly put it in a preacher's power to proclaim the truth with success; and he who contrary to all scripture examples, would select a scrap, and prefer this to preach Christ from, instead of displaying before

his hearers that glorious chain of miracles recorded for the very purpose of preaching Christ, must certainly have a very bad taste. And let no one think that any thing more is necessary to our salvation than to believe this fact--it is perfectly operative in all who receive it in the love of it. The three thousand Pentecostian converts had nothing else proposed for their belief; and when they received it, gladly they lived together, had all things common, sold their possessions and goods, and distributed to all as everyone had [47] need. The belief of this same fact caused them to continue in the apostles' doctrine, and to praise God in public and private; and we may well say that if the belief of this glorious fact fails to make a man obey the Lord Jesus, every thing else must fail.