

coming with this view would neither profit you nor us." He concluded, "Then I will go and tell all the world, that you and your brother are false prophets. And I tell you, in one fortnight, you will all be in confusion."

*Fri. 20.*—I mentioned this to our society, and, without entering into the controversy, besought all of them who were weak in the faith, not to "receive one another to doubtful disputations;" but simply to follow after holiness, and the things that make for peace.

*Sun. 22.*—Finding there was no time to delay, without utterly destroying the cause of God, I began to execute what I had long designed,—to strike at the root of the grand delusion. Accordingly, from those words of Jeremiah, "Stand ye in the way, ask for the old paths," I took occasion to give a plain account, both of the work which God had begun among us, and of the manner wherein the enemy had sown his tares among the good seed, to this effect:—

"After we had wandered many years in the *new path*, of salvation by *faith and works*; about two years ago it pleased God to show us the *old way*, of salvation by *faith only*. And many soon tasted of this salvation, 'being justified freely, having peace with God, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God,' and having his 'love shed abroad in their hearts.' These now ran the way of his commandments: They performed all their duty to God and man. They walked in all the ordinances of the Lord; and through these means, which he had appointed for that end, received daily grace to help in time of need, and went on from faith to faith.

"But, eight or nine months ago, certain men arose, speaking contrary to the doctrines we had received. They affirmed, that we were all in a wrong way still; that we had no faith at all; that faith admits of no degrees, and consequently weak faith is no faith; that none is justified till he has a clean heart, and is incapable of any doubt or fear.

"They affirmed also, that there is no commandment in the New Testament, but 'to believe;' that no other duty lies upon us; and that when a man does believe, he is not bound or obliged to do any thing which is commanded there: In particular, that he is not subject to ordinances, that is, (as they explained it,) is not bound or obliged to pray, to communicate, to read or hear the Scriptures; but may or may not use any of these things,

(being in no bondage,) according as he finds his heart free to it.

“ They farther affirmed, that a believer cannot use any of these as a means of grace ; that indeed there is no such thing as any means of grace, this expression having no foundation in Scripture : And that an unbeliever, or one who has not a clean heart, ought not to use them at all ; ought not to pray, or search the Scriptures, or communicate, but to ‘ be still,’ that is, leave off these ‘ works of the law ;’ and then he will surely receive faith, which, till he is still, he cannot have.

“ All these assertions I propose to consider. The first was, that weak faith is no faith.

“ By weak faith I understand, 1. That which is mixed with fear, particularly of not enduring to the end. 2. That which is mixed with doubt, whether we have not deceived ourselves, and whether our sins be indeed forgiven. 3. That which has not yet purified the heart fully, not from all its idols. And thus weak I find the faith of almost all believers to be, within a short time after they have first peace with God.

“ Yet that weak faith is faith appears, 1. From St. Paul, ‘ Him that is weak in faith, receive.’ 2. From St. John, speaking of believers who were little children, as well as of young men and fathers. 3. From our Lord’s own words, ‘ Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith ? O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt ?—I have prayed for thee, (Peter,) that thy faith fail thee not.’ Therefore he then had faith. Yet so weak was that faith, that not only doubt and fear, but gross sin in the same night prevailed over him.

“ Nevertheless he was ‘ clean, by the word’ Christ had ‘ spoken to him ;’ that is, justified ; though it is plain he had not a clean heart.

“ Therefore, there are degrees in faith ; and weak faith may yet be true faith.”

*Mon. 23.*—I considered the second assertion, that there is but one commandment in the New Testament, viz., “ to believe :” That no other duty lies upon us, and that a believer is not obliged to do any thing as commanded.

“ How gross, palpable a contradiction is this, to the whole tenor of the New Testament ! every part of which is full of commandments, from St. Matthew to the Revelation ! But it is enough to observe, 1. That this bold affirmation is shame-

lessly contrary to our Lord's own words, 'Whosoever shall break one of the least of these commandments, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven : ' For nothing can be more evident, than that he here speaks of more than one, of several commandments, which every soul, believer or not, is obliged to keep as commanded. 2. That this whole scheme is overturned from top to bottom, by that other sentence of our Lord, 'When ye have done all that is commanded you, say, We have done no more than it was our duty to do.' 3. That although to do what God commands us is a believer's privilege, that does not affect the question. He does it nevertheless, as his bounden duty, and as a command of God. 4. That this is the surest evidence of his believing, according to our Lord's own words, 'If ye love me,' (which cannot be unless ye believe,) 'keep my commandments.' 5. That to desire to do what God commands, but not as a command, is to affect, not freedom, but independency. Such independency as St. Paul had not; for though the Son had made him free, yet was he not without law to God, but under the law to Christ : Such as the holy angels have not ; for they fulfil his commandments, and hearken to the voice of his words : Yea, such as Christ himself had not ; for 'as the Father' had given him 'commandment,' so he 'spake.'"

*Tues. 24.*—The substance of my exposition in the morning, on, "Why yet are ye subject to ordinances?" was,

"From hence it has been inferred, that Christians are not subject to the ordinances of Christ; that believers need not, and unbelievers may not, use them; that these are not obliged, and those are not permitted, so to do; that these do not sin when they abstain from them; but those do sin when they do not abstain.

"But with how little reason this has been inferred, will sufficiently appear to all who consider,

"1. That the ordinances here spoken of by St. Paul are evidently Jewish ordinances; such as, 'Touch not, taste not, handle not;' and those, mentioned a few verses before, concerning meats and drinks, and new moons, and Sabbaths. 2. That, consequently, this has no reference to the ordinances of Christ; such as, prayer, communicating, and searching the Scriptures. 3. That Christ himself spake, that 'men' ought 'always to pray;' and commands, 'not to forsake the assembling ourselves together;' to search the Scriptures, and to eat bread and drink wine, in remembrance of him. 4. That the commands of Christ oblige

all who are called by his name, whether (in strictness) believers or unbelievers ; seeing ' whosoever breaketh the least of these commandments, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven.' "

In the evening I preached on, " Cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward."

" Ye who have known and felt your sins forgiven, cast not away your confidence, 1. Though your joy should die away, your love wax cold, and your peace itself be roughly assaulted : Though, 2. You should find doubt or fear, or strong and uninterrupted temptation ; yea, though, 3. You should find a body of sin still in you, and thrusting sore at you that you might fall.

" The first case may be only a fulfilling of your Lord's words, ' Yet a little while, and ye shall not see me.' But he ' will come unto you again, and your hearts shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.'

" Your being in strong temptation, yea, though it should rise so high as to throw you into an agony, or to make you fear that God had forgotten you, is no more a proof that you are not a believer, than our Lord's agony, and his crying, ' My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' was a proof that he was not the Son of God.

" Your finding sin remaining in you still, is no proof that you are not a believer. Sin does remain in one that is justified, though it has not dominion over him. For he has not a clean heart at first, neither are ' all things' as yet ' become new.' But fear not, though you have an evil heart. Yet a little while, and you shall be endued with power from on high, whereby you may ' purify yourselves, even as He is pure ;' and be ' holy, as He which hath called you is holy.' "

*Wed. 25.*—From those words, " All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," I took occasion to speak of the ordinances of God, as they are means of grace.

" Although this expression of our Church, ' means of grace,' be not found in Scripture ; yet, if the sense of it undeniably is, to cavil at the term is a mere strife of words.

" But the sense of it is undeniably found in Scripture. For God hath in Scripture ordained prayer, reading or hearing, and the receiving the Lord's Supper, as the ordinary means of conveying his grace to man. And first, prayer. For thus saith the Lord, ' Ask, and it shall be given you. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God.' Here God plainly ordains prayer

as the means of receiving whatsoever grace we want; particularly that wisdom from above, which is the chief fruit of the grace of God.

“Here, likewise, God commands all to pray, who desire to receive any grace from him. Here is no restriction as to believers or unbelievers; but, least of all, as to unbelievers: For such, doubtless, were most of those to whom he said, ‘Ask, and it shall be given you.’

“We know, indeed, that the prayer of an unbeliever is full of sin. Yet let him remember that which is written of one who could not then believe, for he had not so much as heard the Gospel, ‘Cornelius, thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.’”

*Thur.* 26.—I showed, concerning the Holy Scriptures, 1. That to search, (that is, read and hear them,) is a command of God. 2. That this command is given to all, believers or unbelievers. 3. That this is commanded or ordained as a means of grace, a means of conveying the grace of God to all, whether unbelievers (such as those to whom he first gave this command, and those to whom faith cometh by hearing) or believers, who by experience know, that “all Scripture is profitable,” or a means to this end, “that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works.”

*Fri.* 27.—I preached on, “Do this in remembrance of me.”

“In the ancient Church, every one who was baptized communicated daily. So in the Acts we read, they ‘all continued daily in the breaking of bread, and in prayer.’

“But in latter times, many have affirmed, that the Lord’s Supper is not a converting, but a confirming ordinance.

“And among us it has been diligently taught, that none but those who are converted, who have received the Holy Ghost, who are believers in the full sense, ought to communicate.

“But experience shows the gross falsehood of that assertion, that the Lord’s Supper is not a converting ordinance. Ye are the witnesses. For many now present know, the very beginning of your conversion to God (perhaps, in some, the first deep conviction) was wrought at the Lord’s Supper. Now, one single instance of this kind overthrows the whole assertion.

“The falsehood of the other assertion appears both from Scripture precept and example. Our Lord commanded those very men who were then unconverted, who had not yet received

the Holy Ghost, who (in the full sense of the word) were not believers, to do this 'in remembrance of' him. Here the precept is clear. And to these he delivered the elements with his own hands. Here is example equally indisputable."

*Sat.* 28.—I showed at large, 1. That the Lord's Supper was ordained by God, to be a means of conveying to men either preventing, or justifying, or sanctifying grace, according to their several necessities. 2. That the persons for whom it was ordained, are all those who know and feel that they want the grace of God, either to restrain them from sin, or to show their sins forgiven, or to renew their souls in the image of God. 3. That inasmuch as we come to his table, not to give him any thing, but to receive whatsoever he sees best for us, there is no previous preparation indispensably necessary, but a desire to receive whatsoever he pleases to give. And, 4. That no fitness is required at the time of communicating, but a sense of our state, of our utter sinfulness and helplessness; every one who knows he is fit for hell, being just fit to come to Christ, in this as well as all other ways of his appointment.

*Sun.* 29.—I preached in the morning at Moorfields, and in the evening at Kennington, on Titus iii. 8, and endeavoured at both places to explain and enforce the Apostle's direction, that those "who have believed, be careful to maintain good works." The works I particularly mentioned were, praying, communicating, searching the Scriptures; feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, assisting the stranger, and visiting or relieving those that are sick or in prison. Several of our brethren, of Fetter-Lane, being met in the evening, Mr. Simpson told them I had been preaching up the works of the law; "which," added Mr. V——, "we believers are no more bound to obey, than the subjects of the King of England are bound to obey the laws of the King of France."

*Wed.* JULY 2.—I went to the society; but I found their hearts were quite estranged. *Friday*, 4. I met a little handful of them, who still stand in the old paths; but how long they may stand God knoweth, the rest being continually pressing upon them. *Wednesday*, 9. I came to an explanation once more with them all together; but with no effect at all. *Tuesday*, 15. We had yet another conference at large, but in vain; for all continued in their own opinions.

*Wed.* 16.—One desired me to look into an old book, and

give her my judgment of it : Particularly of what was added at the latter end. This, I found, was, "The Mystic Divinity of Dionysius ;" and several extracts nearly allied thereto, full of the same "super-essential darkness." I borrowed the book, and going in the evening to Fetter-Lane, read one of those extracts, to this effect :—

"The Scriptures are good ; prayer is good ; communicating is good ; relieving our neighbour is good ; but to one who is not born of God, none of these is good, but all very evil. For him to read the Scriptures, or to pray, or to communicate, or to do any outward work, is deadly poison. First, let him be born of God. Till then let him not do any of these things. For if he does, he destroys himself."

After reading this twice or thrice over, as distinctly as I could, I asked, "My brethren, is this right, or is it wrong?" Mr. Bell answered immediately, "It is right ; it is all right. It is the truth. To this we must all come, or we never can come to Christ." Mr. Bray said, "I believe our brother Bell did not hear what you read, or did not rightly understand." But Mr. Bell replied short, "Yes, I heard every word ; and I understand it well. I say, it is the truth ; it is the very truth ; it is the inward truth."

Many then laboured to prove, that my brother and I laid too much stress upon the ordinances. To put this matter beyond dispute, "I," said Mr. Bowes, "used the ordinances twenty years ; yet I found not Christ. But I left them off only for a few weeks, and I found him then. And I am now as close united to him as my arm is to my body."

One asked, whether they would suffer Mr. Wesley to preach at Fetter-Lane. After a short debate, it was answered, "No : This place is taken for the Germans." Some asked, whether the Germans had converted any soul in England : Whether they had not done us much hurt, instead of good ; raising a division of which we could see no end : And whether God did not many times use Mr. Wesley for the healing our divisions, when we were all in confusion. Several roundly replied, "Confusion ! What do you mean ? We were never in any confusion at all." I said, "Brother Edmonds, you ought not to say so ; because I have your letters now in my hands." Mr. Edmonds replied, "That is not the first time I have put darkness for light, and light for darkness."

We continued in useless debate till about eleven. I then gave them up to God.

*Fri.* 18.—A few of us joined with my mother in the great sacrifice of thanksgiving; and then consulted how to proceed with regard to our poor brethren of Fetter-Lane: We all saw the thing was now come to a crisis, and were therefore unanimously agreed what to do.

*Sun.* 20.—At Mr. Seward's earnest request, I preached once more in Moorfields, on the "work of faith," and the "patience of hope," and the "labour of love." A zealous man was so kind as to free us from most of the noisy, careless hearers, (or spectators rather,) by reading, meanwhile, at a small distance, a chapter in the "Whole Duty of Man." I wish neither he nor they may ever read a worse book; though I can tell them of a better,—the Bible.

In the evening I went with Mr. Seward to the Love-Feast in Fetter-Lane; at the conclusion of which, having said nothing till then, I read a paper, the substance whereof was as follows:—

"About nine months ago certain of you began to speak contrary to the doctrine we had till then received. The sum of what you asserted is this:—

"1. That there is no such thing as *weak faith*: That there is no justifying faith where there is ever any doubt or fear, or where there is not, in the full sense, a new, a clean heart.

"2. That a man ought not to use those ordinances of God, which our Church terms 'means of grace,' before he has such a faith as excludes all doubt and fear, and implies a new, a clean heart.

"You have often affirmed, that to search the Scriptures, to pray, or to communicate, before we have this faith, is to seek salvation by works; and that till these works are laid aside, no man can receive faith.

"I believe these assertions to be flatly contrary to the word of God. I have warned you hereof again and again, and besought you to turn back to the Law and the Testimony. I have borne with you long, hoping you would turn. But as I find you more and more confirmed in the error of your ways, nothing now remains, but that I should give you up to God. You that are of the same judgment, follow me."

I then, without saying any thing more, withdrew, as did eighteen or nineteen of the society.

*Tues. 22.*—Mr. Chapman, just come from Germany, gave me a letter from one of our (once) brethren there; wherein, after denying the gift of God, which he received in England, he advised my brother and me, no longer to take upon us to teach and instruct poor souls; but to deliver them up to the care of the Moravians, who alone were able to instruct them. “You,” said he, “only instruct them in such errors, that they will be damned at last;” and added, “St. Peter justly describes you, who ‘have eyes full of adultery, and cannot cease from sin;’ and take upon you to guide unstable souls, and lead them in the way of damnation.”

*Wed. 23.*—Our little company met at the Foundery, instead of Fetter-Lane. About twenty-five of our brethren God hath given us already, all of whom think and speak the same thing; seven or eight and forty likewise, of the fifty women that were in Band, desired to cast in their lot with us.

*Fri. Aug. 1.*—I described that “rest” which “remaineth for the people of God.” *Sunday, 3.* At St. Luke’s, our parish church, was such a sight as, I believe, was never seen there before: Several hundred communicants, from whose very faces one might judge, that they indeed sought Him that was crucified.

*Mon. 4.*—I dined with one who told me, in all simplicity, “Sir, I thought last week, there could be no such rest as you described; none in this world, wherein we should be so free as not to desire ease in pain. But God has taught me better. For on Friday and Saturday, when I was in the strongest pain, I never once had one moment’s desire of ease; but only, that the will of God might be done.”

In the evening many were gathered together at Long-Lane, on purpose to make a disturbance; having procured a woman to begin, well known in those parts, as neither fearing God nor regarding man. The instant she broke out, I turned full upon her, and declared the love our Lord had for *her* soul. We then prayed that He would confirm the word of his grace. She was struck to the heart; and shame covered her face. From her I turned to the rest, who melted away like water, and were as men that had no strength. But surely some of them shall find who is their “rock and their strong salvation.”

*Sat. 9.*—Instead of the letters I had lately received, I read a few of those formerly received from our poor brethren who have since then denied the work of God, and vilely cast away