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“ In Doctrine shewing Uncorruptness.”

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PREFACE.

NOT UNTO US, O LORD, NOT UNTO US, BUT UNTO THY
NAME DO WE GIVE PRAISE AND GLORY, FOR THY
MERCY, AND FOR THY TRUTH'S SAKE.

WE are brought to the commencement of another year, and to the beginning of the ninth volume of our work. In taking a retrospective view of the difficulties the Gospel Magazine has met with since its first publication, we are struck with astonishment that this little bark has weathered out for such a length of time the various billows to which it has been exposed.

It is with no small degree of pleasure that we announce the commendations bestowed upon the execution of our work, by several persons of eminence, both in the religious and in the literary communities; but the crowning satisfaction of all is this, the spiritual benefits, which under the Divine Blessing have been received from the invaluable papers of some of our Correspondents. Public teachers as well as private individuals, have gladdened our hearts in acknowledging in their repeated intimations, that previous to the perusal of our pages, the whole of their religious exercises consisted in the belief of their own free will powers, and that their devotions rested in the outward forms of godliness, but that now they are enabled to seek after an experience of its power. These weighty considerations have been excitements to our perseverance in this undertaking, and herein we and our Correspondents have our reward.

We frankly confess that from a consciousness of our own inadequacy, we have often wished this concern were in better hands, but till that takes place, we will faithfully conduct it to the utmost extent of our abilities. We solicit on our behalf, the prayers of our readers, that when they commend themselves at the throne of the Divine Majesty, we may not be forgotten by them. On our parts our supplications shall not cease to be poured out, "*That the Spirit of the Lord may rest upon them. The Spirit of wisdom and understanding. The Spirit of counsel and might. The Spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord, which will make them quick of understanding in the fear of the Lord.*"

In the discharge of our duty to the public it is proper to remark, that our opinions, of which this Magazine has been the vehicle, are those which emanate from the volume of Divine Revelation, and are in unison with the genuine spirit of all the reformed Churches, in their attachment to the fundamental truths of the Gospel. In defence of those principles we have never relaxed, or in the vindication of them have never descended to wanton or vindictive asperity. We readily admit, that like every human composition, this is not without its defects, but taken as a whole, we have confidence to say, that we do not shrink
from

from a comparison of its utility and merit, with those of any other religious periodical publication. The errors of composition, together with those of the press may be many, but the same candour which has appeared for us in the years past, will, no doubt, plead for us for the time to come, more particularly when it is considered that the pages have been superintended under the most critical and trying situations; circumstances of the most painful kind, which will never be known until every work shall be brought into judgment.

Respecting the subject matter of our Work it is well known, namely, that God the Father, hath from the beginning loved and elected an innumerable company of fallen sinners, that the Son of God consented to obtain glory and salvation for them, and also that the Holy Ghost works faith and sanctification in their hearts, by his effectual call of Grace. Each of the Almighty Persons filling his own peculiar office for the restoration of fallen man.

Various and repeated attempts have been, are now, and will continue till the end of time, to be made to pervert these sentiments. Every error and corruption of the head and heart co-operates with Satan to oppose the kingdom of Grace. All men who are not enlightened from above are continually endeavouring to impose a fraud, or rather a number of frauds, upon themselves and others. The human understanding being darkened, the judgment is of course perverted. Hence we find the endless windings and turnings of our modern sceptics, who are bewildered in an artificial maze until they are lost in their natural sight, sense and judgment. Shadows are mistaken for substances, and substances for shadows; the largest objects seem small, and the smallest immensely large; what is beautiful appears deformed, what is foul, fair and pleasing; trifles are deemed excellent and important, things most valuable and sacred, are considered of little or no worth.

But the greatest enemies to the Gospel are those who have a dead faith and a blind zeal, who in appearance give Christ the kiss of Judas, saying, "Hail Master," and at the same time betray him into the hands of his enemies. We have many teachers, under the specious appearance of piety and sanctity, and the plausible thesis Unity, Catholicism and Benevolence, who are corruptors of the word of God. Some are destroying the things they once built, and are building the things they once destroyed. They weave and unravel, say and unsay; driven by every wind, and tost on every wave, ever learning, and never coming to the knowledge of the truth. Their divinity is like Joseph's coat, of many colours, and who are consistent in nothing, but in being inconsistent with themselves. In the midst of error and abounding iniquity, may this be our consolation, which was that of the Psalmist. *That our God is king of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth.—Return therefore we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine; and the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted. Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand. Turn to us again, O Lord God of Hosts, and cause thy face to shine upon us.*"

EDITORS.

London, Jan. 15, 1804.