

SERMONS
ON
IMPORTANT SUBJECTS,

BY THE LATE REVEREND AND PIOUS

SAMUEL DAVIES, A.M.,

Sometime President of the College in New-Jersey.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

THE FIFTH EDITION.

TO WHICH ARE NOW ADDED,

THREE OCCASIONAL SERMONS,

NOT INCLUDED IN THE FORMER EDITIONS;

MEMOIRS AND CHARACTER OF THE AUTHOR;

AND

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SERMON XII.

The Sacred Import Of The Christian Name.

ACTS xi. 26.—*The Disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.*

MERE names are empty sounds, and but of little consequence: and yet it must be owned there are names of honour and significancy; and, when they are attended with the things signified by them, they are of great and sacred importance. Such is the Christian name; a name about seventeen hundred years old. And now, when the name is almost lost in party-distinctions, and the thing is almost lost in ignorance, error, vice, hypocrisy, and formality, it may be worth our while to consider the original import of that sacred name, as a proper expedient to recover both name and thing.

The name of Christian was not the first by which the followers of Christ were distinguished. Their enemies called them Galileans, Nazarenes, and other names of contempt: and among themselves they were called Saints, from their holiness; Disciples, from their learning their religion from Christ as their teacher; Believers, from their believing in him as the Messiah; and Brethren, from their mutual love and their relation to God and each other. But after some time they were distinguished by the name of Christians. This they first received in Antioch, a heathen city, a city infamous for all manner of vice and debauchery: a city that had its name from Antiochus Epiphanes, the bitterest enemy the church of the Jews ever had. A city very rich and powerful, from whence the Christian name would have an extensive circulation; but it is long since laid in ruins, unprotected by that sacred name: in such a city was Christ pleased to confer his name upon his followers; and you cannot but see that the very choice of the place discovers his wisdom, grace, and justice.

The original word, which is here rendered *called*, seems to intimate that they were called Christians by divine appointment, for it generally signifies an oracular nomination or a declaration from God; and to this purpose it is generally translated.* Hence it follows that the very name Christian . . . was

* It is this word that is used, Matt. ii. 12. καὶ χρηματισθέντες being warned of God, and the like in Matt. ii. 22. So in Rom. xi. 4. χρηματισμός, is rendered the answer of God. Rom. vii. 3, χρηματίσει, she shall be called, (viz. by the divine law) an adulteress. Luke ii. 26, κεχρηματισμένον it was revealed to him by the Holy Ghost. Acts x. 22, ἐχρηματίσθη, was warned from God. Heb. viii. 5. κεχρημάτισται Μωϋσῆς, Moses was admonished of God. Heb. xi. 7. Noah being warned of God, χρηματισθεῖς, Heb. xii. 25. If they escaped not, who refused Him that spake on earth; viz. by divine inspiration; χρηματίζοντα. These are all the

of a divine original; assumed not by a private agreement of the disciples among themselves, but by the appointment of God. And in this view it is a remarkable accomplishment of an old prophecy of Isaiah, chap. lxii. 2. *The Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory, and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name.* So Isaiah lxv. 15. *The Lord shall call his servants by another name.*

This name was at first confined to a few; but it soon had a surprisingly extensive propagation through the world. In many countries, indeed, it was lost, and miserably exchanged for that of Heathen, Mahometan, or Musselman. Yet the European nations still retain the honour of wearing it. A few scattered Christians are also still to be found here and there in Asia and Africa, though crushed under the oppressions of Mahometans and Pagans. This name has likewise crossed the wide ocean to the wilderness of America, and is worn by the sundry European colonies on this continent. We, in particular, call ourselves Christians, and should take it ill to be denied the honour of that distinction. But do we not know the meaning and sacred import of that name? Do we not know what it is to be Christians indeed? That is, to be in reality what we are in name. Certainly it is time for us to consider the matter; and it is my present design that we should do so.

Now we may consider this name in various views; particularly as a name of distinction from the rest of the world, who know not the Lord Jesus, or reject him as an impostor;—as a patronymic name, pointing out the Father and Founder of our holy religion and the Christian church;—as a badge of our relation to Christ as his servants, his children, his bride;—as intimating our unction by the holy Spirit, or our being the subjects of his influences; as Christ was anointed by the holy Spirit, or replenished with his gifts above measure, (for you are to observe that *anointed* is the English of the Greek name *Christ*, and of the Hebrew, *Messiah**) and as a name of appropriation, signifying that we are the property of Christ, and his peculiar people. Each of these particulars might be profitably illustrated.† But my present design confines me to consider the Christian name only in two views; namely, as a catholic name, intended to bury all party denominations; and as a name of obligation upon all that wear it to be Christians indeed, or to form their temper and practice upon the sacred model of Christianity.

I. Let us consider the Christian name as a catholic name, intended to bury all party denominations.

places perhaps in which the word is used in the New Testament; and in all these it seems to mean a revelation from God, or something oracular. And this is a strong presumption that the word is to be so understood in the text.

* Psalm cv. 15. Touch not my Christs; that is, my anointed people.—So the *Seventy*.

† See a fine illustration of them in Dr. Grosvenor's excellent Essay on the Christian Name; from whom I am not ashamed to borrow several amiable sentiments.

The name Gentile was odious to the Jews, and the name Jew was odious to the Gentiles. The name Christian swallows up both in one common and agreeable appellation. He that hath taken down the partition-wall, has taken away partition-names, and united all his followers in his own name, as a common denomination. For now, says Paul, *there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all and in all.* Col. iii. 11. And *ye are all one in Christ Jesus.* Gal. iii. 28. According to a prophecy of Zechariah, *The Lord, shall be king over all the earth; and in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one.* Zech. xiv. 9.

It is but a due honour to Jesus Christ, the founder of Christianity, that all who profess his religion should wear his name: and they pay an extravagant and even idolatrous compliment to his subordinate officers and ministers, when they take their denomination from them. Had this humour prevailed in the primitive church, instead of the common name Christians, there would have been as many party-names as there were apostles or eminent ministers. There would have been Paulites from Paul; Peterites from Peter; Johnites from John; Barnabites from Barnabas, &c. Paul took pains to crush the first risings of this party spirit in those churches which he planted; particularly in Corinth, where it most prevailed. While they were saying, *I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ;* he puts this pungent question to them: “Is Christ divided?” Are his servants the ringleaders of so many parties? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in or into the name of Paul, that ye should be so fond to take your name from him? He counted it a happiness that Providence had directed him to such a conduct as gave no umbrage of encouragement to such a humour. *I thank God,* says he, *that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius: lest any should take occasion to say, I baptized into my own name, and was gathering a party for myself.* 1 Cor. i. 12–15.

But alas! how little has this convictive reasoning of the apostle been regarded in the future ages of the church? What an endless variety of denominations taken from some men of character, or from some little peculiarities, has prevailed in the Christian world, and crumbled it to pieces, while the Christian name is hardly regarded? Not to take notice of Jesuits, Jansenists, Dominicans, Franciscans, and other denominations and orders in the popish church, where, having corrupted the thing, they act very consistently to lay aside the name. What party names have been adopted by the Protestant churches, whose religion is substantially the same common Christianity, and who agree in much more important articles than in those they differ; and who therefore might peaceably unite under the common name of Christians? We have Lutherans, Calvinists, Arminians, Zwinglians, Churchmen, Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, and a long list of names which I cannot now

enumerate. To be a Christian is not enough nowadays, but a man must also be something more and better; that is, he must be a strenuous bigot to this or that particular church. But where is the reason or propriety of this? I may indeed believe the same things which Luther or Calvin believed: but I do not believe them on the authority of Luther or Calvin, but upon the sole authority of Jesus Christ, and therefore I should not call myself by their name, as one of their disciples, but by the name of Christ, whom alone I acknowledge as the Author of my religion, and my only master and Lord. If I learn my religion from one of these great men, it is indeed proper I should assume their name. If I learn it from a parliament or convocation, and make their acts and canons the rule and ground of my faith, then it is enough for me to be of the established religion, be that what it will. I may with propriety be called a mere conformist; that is my highest character: but I cannot be properly called a Christian; for a Christian learns his religion, not from acts of parliament or from the determinations of councils, but from Jesus Christ and his gospel.

To guard against mistakes on this head, I would observe that every man has a natural and legal right to judge and choose for himself in matters of religion; and that is a mean, supple soul indeed, and utterly careless about all religion, that makes a compliment of this right to any man, or body of men upon earth, whether pope, king, parliament, convocation, or synod. In the exercise of this right, and searching for himself, he will find that he agrees more fully in lesser as well as more important articles with some particular church than others; and thereupon it is his duty to join in stated communion with that church; and he may, if he pleases, assume the name which that church wears, by way of distinction from others; this is not what I condemn. But for me to glory in the denomination of any particular church as my highest character; to lay more stress upon the name of a presbyterian or a churchman, than on the sacred name of Christian; to make a punctilious agreement with my sentiments in the little peculiarities of a party the test of all religion; to make it the object of my zeal to gain proselytes to some other than the Christian name; to connive at the faults of those of my own party, and to be blind to the good qualities of others, or invidiously to misrepresent or diminish them; these are the things which deserve universal condemnation from God and man; these proceed from a spirit of bigotry and faction, directly opposite to the generous catholic spirit of Christianity, and subversive of it. And yet how common is this spirit among all denominations! and what mischief has it done in the world! Hence proceed contentions and animosities, uncharitable suspicions and censures, slander and detraction, partiality and unreasonable prejudices, and a hideous group of evils, which I cannot now describe. This spirit also hinders the progress of serious practical religion, by turning the attention of men from the great concerns of eternity, and the essentials of Christianity, to vain jangling and contest about circumstances and

trifles. Thus the Christian is swallowed up in the partisan and fundamentals lost in extra-essentials.

My brethren, I would now warn you against this wretched, mischievous spirit of party. I would not have you entirely sceptical and undetermined even about the smaller points of religion, the modes and forms, which are the matters of contention between different churches; nor would I have you quite indifferent what particular church to join with in stated communion. Endeavor to find out the truth even in these circumstantial, at least so far as is necessary for the direction of your own conduct. But do not make these the whole or the principal part of your religion; do not be excessively zealous about them, nor break the peace of the church by magisterially imposing them upon others. “Hast thou faith in these little disputables?” it is well; “but have it to thyself before God,” and do not disturb others with it. You may, if you please, call yourselves presbyterians and dissenters, and you shall bear without shame or resentment all the names of reproach and contempt which the world may brand you with. But as you should not be mortified on the one side, so neither should you glory on the other. A Christian! a Christian! let that be your highest distinction; let that be the name which you labour to deserve. God forbid that my ministry should be the occasion of diverting your attention to anything else. But I am so happy that I can appeal to yourselves, whether I have during several years of my ministry among you, laboured to instil into you the principles of bigotry, and make you warm proselytes to a party: or whether it has not been the great object of my zeal to inculcate upon you the grand essentials of our holy religion, and make you sincere, practical Christians. Alas! my dear people, unless I succeed in this, I labour to very little purpose, though I should presbyterianize the whole colony.

Calumny and slander, it is hoped, have by this time talked themselves out of breath; and the lying spirit may be at a loss for materials to form a popular, plausible falsehood, which is likely to be credited where the dissenters are known. But you have heard formerly, and some of you may still hear strange and uncommon surmises, wild conjectures, and most dismal insinuations. But if you would know the truth at once, if you would be fully informed by one that best knows what religion I am of, I will tell you (with Mr. Baxter,) “I am a Christian, a mere Christian; of no other religion: my church is the Christian church.” The Bible! the Bible! is my religion; and if I am a dissenter, I dissent only from modes and forms of religion which I cannot find in my Bible; and which therefore I conclude have nothing to do with religion, much less should they be made terms of Christian communion, since Christ, the only lawgiver of his church, has not made them such. Let this congregation be that of a Christian society, and I little care what other name it wears. Let it be a little Antioch, where the followers of Christ shall be distinguished

by their old catholic name, Christians. To bear and deserve this character, let this be our ambition, this our labour. Let popes pronounce, and councils decree what they please; let statesmen and ecclesiastics prescribe what to believe; as for us, let us study our Bibles: let us learn of Christ; and if we are not dignified with the smiles, or enriched with the emoluments of an establishment, we shall have his approbation, who is the only Lord and Sovereign of the realm of conscience, and by whose judgment we must stand or fall for ever.

But it is time for me to proceed to consider the other view of the Christian name, on which I intend principally to insist; and that is,

II. As a name of obligation upon all that bear it to be Christians indeed, or to form their temper and practice upon the sacred model of Christianity. The prosecution of this subject will lead me to answer this important inquiry, What is it to be a Christian?

To be a Christian, in the popular and fashionable sense, is no difficult or excellent thing. It is to be baptized, to profess the Christian religion, to believe, like our neighbours, that Christ is the Messiah, and to attend upon public worship once a week, in some church or other that bears only the Christian name. In this sense a man may be a Christian, and yet be habitually careless about eternal things; a Christian, and yet fall short of the morality of many of the heathens; a Christian, and yet a drunkard, a swearer, or a slave to some vice or other; a Christian, and yet a wilful, impenitent offender against God and man. To be a Christian in this sense is no high character; and, if this be the whole of Christianity, it is very little matter whether the world be Christianized or not. But is this to be a Christian in the original and proper sense of the word? No; that is something of a very different and superior kind. To be a Christian indeed, is the highest character and dignity of which the human nature is capable. It is the most excellent thing that ever adorned our world. It is a thing that Heaven itself beholds with approbation and delight.

To be a Christian is to be like to Christ, from whom the name is taken. It is to be a follower and imitator of him; to be possessed of his spirit and temper; and to live as he lived in the world. It is to have those just, exalted, and divine notions of God and divine things, and that just and full view of our duty to God and man, which Christ taught. In short, it is to have our sentiments, our temper, and practice, formed upon the sacred model of the gospel. Let me expatiate a little upon this amiable character.

1. To be a Christian, is to depart from iniquity. To this the name obliges us and without this we have no title to the name. *Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity*, 2 Tim. ii. 19; that is, let him depart from iniquity, or not dare to touch that sacred name. Christ was perfectly free from sin. He was *holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners*. His followers also shall be perfectly free from sin in a little time; ere long they

will enter into the pure regions of perfect holiness, and will drop all their sins, with their mortal bodies, into the grave. But this, alas! is not their character in the present state, but the remains of sin still cleave to them. Yet even in the present state, they are labouring after perfection in holiness. Nothing can satisfy them until they are conformed to the image of God's dear Son. They are hourly conflicting with every temptation, and vigorously resisting every iniquity in its most alluring forms. And, though sin is perpetually struggling for the mastery, and sometimes, in an inadvertent hour, gets an advantage over them, yet, as they are not under the law, but under grace, they are assisted with recruits of grace, so that no sin has any habitual dominion over them. Rom. vi. 14. Hence they are free from the gross vices of the age, and are men of good morals. This is their habitual, universal character; and to pretend to be Christians without this requisite, is the greatest absurdity.

What then shall we think of the drunken, swearing, debauched, defrauding, rakish, profligate, profane Christians, that have overrun the Christian world? Can there be a greater contradiction? A loyal subject in arms against his sovereign, an ignorant scholar, a sober drunkard, a charitable miser, an honest thief, is not a greater absurdity, or a more direct contradiction. To depart from iniquity is essential to Christianity, and without it there can be no such thing. There was nothing that Christ was so remote from as sin: and therefore for those that indulge themselves in it to wear his name, is just as absurd and ridiculous as for a coward to denominate himself from Alexander the Great, or an illiterate dunce to call himself a Newtonian philosopher. Therefore, if you will not renounce iniquity, renounce the Christian name; for you cannot consistently retain both. Alexander had a fellow in his army that was of his own name, but a mere coward. "Either be like me," says Alexander, "or lay aside my name." Ye servants of sin, it is in vain for you to wear the name of Christ; it renders you the more ridiculous, and aggravates your guilt: you may with as much propriety call yourselves lords, or dukes, or kings, as Christians, while you are so unlike to Christ. His name is a sarcasm, a reproach to you, and you are a scandal to his name. His name is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you.

2. To be a Christian is to deny yourselves and take up the cross and follow Christ. These are the terms of discipleship fixed by Christ himself. *He said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily, and follow me.* Luke ix. 23. To deny ourselves is to abstain from the pleasures of sin, to moderate our sensual appetites, to deny our own interest for the sake of Christ, and in short, to sacrifice every thing inconsistent with our duty to him, when these come in competition. To take up our cross, is to bear sufferings, to encounter difficulties, and break through them all in imitation of Jesus Christ, and for his sake. To follow him, is to trace his steps, and imitate his example, whatever it cost us. But this observation will

coincide with the next head, and therefore I now dismiss it. These, Sirs, and these only are the terms, if you would be Christians, or the disciples of Christ. These he honestly warned mankind of when he first called them to be his disciples. He did not take an advantage of them, but let them know beforehand upon what terms they were admitted. He makes this declaration in the midst of a great crowd, in Luke xiv. 25, &c. *There went a great multitude with him*, fond of becoming his followers: *but he turned, and said unto them, if any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple*. By hating, is here meant a smaller degree of love, or a comparative hatred; that is, if we would be Christ's disciples, we must be willing to part with our dearest relations, and even our lives, when we cannot retain them consistently with our duty to him. He goes on: *Whosoever does not bear his cross*, and encounter the greatest sufferings after my example, *cannot be my disciple*. The love of Christ is the ruling passion of every true Christian, and for his sake he is ready to give up all, and to suffer all that earth or hell can inflict. He must run all risks, and cleave to his cause at all adventures. This is the essential character of every true Christian.

What then shall we think of those crowds among us who retain the Christian name, and yet will not deny themselves of their sensual pleasures, nor part with their temporal interest for the sake of Christ? Who are so far from being willing to lay down their lives that, they I cannot stand the force of a laugh or a sneer in the cause of religion, but immediately stumble and fall away? or, are they Christians, whom the commands of Christ cannot restrain from what their depraved hearts desire? No; a Christian, without self-denial, mortification, and a supreme love to Jesus Christ, is as great a contradiction as fire without heat, or a sun without light, a hero without courage, or a friend without love. And does not this strip some of you of the Christian name, and prove that you have no title at all to it?

3. I have repeatedly observed, that a true Christian must be a follower or imitator of Christ. *Be ye followers of me*, says St. Paul, *as I also am of Christ*. 1 Cor. xi. 1. Christ is the model after whom every Christian is formed; for, says St. Peter, *he left us an example, that we should follow his steps*. 1 Pet. ii. 21. St. Paul tells us, that *we must be conformed to the image of God's dear Son*, Rom. vii. 29, and that *the same mind must be in us which was also in Christ Jesus*. Phil. ii. 5; unless we partake of his spirit, and resemble him in practice, unless we be as he was in the world, we have no right to partake of his name.

Here I would observe, that what was miraculous in our Lord's conduct, and peculiar to him as the Son of God and Mediator, is not a pattern for our imitation, but only what was done in obedience to that law of God which was common to him and us. His heart glowed with love to his Father; he delighted

in universal obedience to him; it was his meat and drink to do his will, even in the most painful and self-denying instances. He abounded in devotion, in prayer, meditation, fasting, and every religious duty. He was also full of every grace and virtue towards mankind; meek and lowly, kind and benevolent, just and charitable, merciful and compassionate; a dutiful son, loyal subject, a faithful friend, a good master, and an active, useful, public-spirited member of society. He was patient and resigned, and yet undaunted and brave under sufferings. He had all his appetites and passions under proper government, he was heavenly-minded, above this world in heart while he dwelt in it. Beneficence to the souls and bodies of men was the business of his life; for *he went about doing good*. Acts x. 38. This is an imperfect sketch of his amiable character; and in these things every one that deserves to be called after his name, does in some measure resemble and imitate him. This is not only his earnest endeavour, but what he actually attains, though in a much inferior degree; and his imperfections are the grief of his heart. This resemblance and imitation of Christ is essential to the very being of a Christian, and without it, it is a vain pretence. And does your Christianity, my brethren, stand this test? may one know that you belong to Christ by your living like him, and discovering the same temper and spirit? Do the manners of the divine Master spread through all his family; and do you show that you belong to it by your temper and conduct? Alas! if you must be denominated from hence, would not some of you with more propriety be called Epicureans from Epicurus, the sensual atheistic philosopher, or Mammonites from Mammon, the imaginary god of riches, or Bacchanals from Bacchus, the god of wine, than Christians from Christ, the most perfect pattern of living holiness and virtue that ever was exhibited in the world?

If you claim the name of Christians, where is that ardent devotion, that affectionate love to God, that zeal for his glory, that alacrity in his service, that resignation to his will, that generous benevolence to mankind, that zeal to promote their best interests, that meekness and forbearance under ill usage, that unwearied activity in doing good to all, that self-denial and heavenly-mindedness which shone so conspicuous in Christ, whose holy name you bear? Alas! while you are destitute of those graces, and yet wear his name, you burlesque it, and turn it into a reproach both to him and yourselves.

I might add, that the Christian name is not hereditary to you by your natural birth, but you must be born anew of the Spirit to entitle you to this new name; that a Christian is a believer, believing in Him after whom he is called as his only Saviour and Lord, and that he is a true penitent. Repentance was incompatible with Christ's character, who was perfectly righteous, and had no sin of which to repent; but it is a proper virtue in a sinner, without which he cannot be a Christian. On these and several other particulars I might en-

large, but my time will not allow; I shall therefore conclude with a few reflections.

First, You may hence see that the Christian character is the highest, the most excellent and sublime in the world; it includes everything truly great and amiable. The Christian has exalted sentiments of the Supreme Being, just notions of duty, and a proper temper and conduct towards God and man. A Christian is a devout worshipper of the God of heaven, a cheerful observer of his whole law, and a broken-hearted penitent for his imperfections. A Christian is a compilation of all the amiable and useful graces and virtues; temperate and sober, just, liberal, compassionate and benevolent, humble, meek, gentle, peaceable, and in all things conscientious. A Christian is a good parent, a good child, a good master, a good servant, a good husband, a good wife, a faithful friend, an obliging neighbour, a dutiful subject, a good ruler, a zealous patriot, and an honest statesman; and as far as he is such, so far, and no farther, he is a Christian And can there be a more amiable and excellent character exhibited to your view? It is an angelic, a divine character. Let it be your glory and your ambition to wear it with a good grace, to wear it so as to adorn it.

To acquire the title of kings and lords, is not in your power; to spread your fame as scholars, philosophers, or heroes, may be beyond your reach; but here is a character more excellent, more amiable, more honourable than all these, which it is your business to deserve and maintain. And blessed be God, this is a dignity which the meanest among you, which beggars and slaves may attain. Let this therefore be an object of universal ambition and pursuit, and let every other name and title be despised in comparison of it. This is the way to rise to true honour in the estimate of God, angels, and good men. What though the anti-christian Christians of our age and country ridicule you? let them consider their own absurd conduct and be ashamed. They think it an honour to wear the Christian name, and yet persist in unchristian practices; and who but a fool, with such palpable contradiction, would think so? A beggar that fancies himself a king and trails his rags with the gait of majesty, as though they were royal robes, is not so ridiculous as one that will usurp the Christian name without a Christian practice; and yet such Christians are the favourites of the world. To renounce the profession of Christianity is barbarous and profane; to live according to that profession, and practise Christianity, is preciseness and fanaticism. Can anything be more preposterous? This is as if one should ridicule learning, and yet glory in the character of a scholar: or laugh at bravery, and yet celebrate the praises of heroes. And are they fit to judge of the wisdom and propriety, or their censures to be regarded, who fall into such an absurdity themselves?

Secondly, Hence you may see that, if all the professors of Christianity should behave in character, the religion of Christ would soon appear divine

to all mankind, and spread through all nations of the earth. Were Christianity exhibited to the life in all its native inherent glories, it would be as needless to offer arguments to prove it divine, as to prove that the sun is full of light: the conviction would flash upon all mankind by its own intrinsic evidence. Did Christians exemplify the religion they profess, all the world would immediately see that *that* religion which rendered them so different a people from all the rest of mankind, is indeed divine, and every way worthy of universal acceptance. Then we should have no such monsters as Atheists, Deists, and Infidels in Christian countries. Then would Heathenism, Mahometanism, and all the false religions in the world, fall before the heaven-born religion of Jesus Christ. Then it would be sufficient to convince an infidel just to bring him into a Christian country, and let him observe the different face of things there from all the world beside. But alas!

Thirdly, How different is the Christian world from the Christian religion? Who would imagine that they who take their name from Christ have any relation to him, if we observe their spirit and practice? Should a stranger learn Christianity from what he sees in Popish countries, he would conclude it principally consisted in bodily austerities, in worshipping saints, images, relics, and a thousand trifles, in theatrical fopperies and insignificant ceremonies, in believing implicitly all the determinations of a fallible man as infallibly true, and in persecuting all that differ from them, and showing their love to their souls by burning their bodies. In Protestant countries, alas! the face of things is but little better as to good morals and practical religion. Let us take our own country for a sample. Suppose a Heathen or Mahometan should take a tour through Virginia to learn the religion of the inhabitants from their general conduct, what would he conclude? would he not conclude that all the religion of the generality consisted in a few Sunday formalities, and that the rest of the week they had nothing to do with God, or any religion, but were at liberty to live as they please? And were he told these were the followers of one Christ, and were of his religion, would he not conclude that he was certainly an impostor, and the minister of sin? But when he came to find that, notwithstanding all this licentiousness, they professed the pure and holy religion of the Bible, how would he be astonished, and pronounce them the most inconsistent, bare-faced hypocrites! My brethren, great and heavy is the guilt that lies upon our country upon this account. It is a scandal to the Christian name; it is guilty of confirming the neighbouring heathen in their prejudices, and hinders the propagation of Christianity through the world. O let not us be accessory to this dreadful guilt, but do all we can to recommend our religion to universal acceptance!—I add,

Fourthly, and lastly, Let us examine whether we have any just title to the Christian name; that is, whether we are Christians indeed; for if we have not the thing, to retain the name is the most inconsistent folly and hypocrisy, and

will answer no end but to aggravate our condemnation. A lost Christian is the most shocking character in hell; and unless you be such Christians as I have described, it will ere long be your character. Therefore, be followers of Christ, imbibe his spirit, practise his precepts, and depart from iniquity. Otherwise he will sentence you from him at last as workers of iniquity. *And then will I profess unto them* (they are Christ's own words) *I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.* Matt. vii. 23.