

April 12th 1839—
Bathany Brook Vt.

My dear Sir

Among many other most interesting documents which I found upon my table on my return from a tour of almost six months through the States of Va. N. & S. Carolina Ga. Ala. Louis. Miss. and Ky. I find a very acceptable letter from yourself which, but for my long absence would have received as much earlier attention—

Times indeed are changed since you and I were made first acquainted with each other—Thirty years, next Nov. will have fled since first I saw Washington College; and change indeed, it were, if in so long a time, and in such an inquisition ago, and with such means of improvement, and minds so constituted as ours have been, we should not also have changed with them—It certainly is no reproach to us that we are wiser to day than yesterday; especially as we ammened life without a single idea; but a reproach, indeed, it should be to remain stationary when all things around us are onward or grasping towards perfection.

There to me is no mean argument against Creeds, alias hereditary orthodoxy. As it is a good misfortune for a son to inherit such a fortune from his father as enables him to live without his own energies: so is it, — nay, more is it, for him to inherit a fortune of sound tenets which in the form of a Creed — a last will and testament, makes him intelligent, orthodox, and pious without the employment of his own faculties upon the words of truth and life. Heaven, in anticipation of our schisms, would have given us an infallible synopsis, an abstract summary of what the Bible contains, all. But it did not for the wisest and best reasons. We should have committed it to memory, and then neglected the Bible. Such a labor saving machine would have been at variance with the Book itself. The Spirit of God operates upon the human heart by the friction of truth; and any invention which would dispense with this labor of digging and searching for truth and knowledge as for hid treasure

this working in the mine of salvation is so far subversive of the purposes of the author of that book of blindness.

But to the questions which you have propounded. — The gospel was once all in the law. But when Christ came, the law, like the shell of a nut or of an egg when the life is extracted, became not only weak but beggarly — wholly destitute of moral power. In this view only dare Paul have spoken of the weak and beggarly elements. The Gospel is, indeed, now the power of God unto salvation. But what are its powerful elements? Are they not — Faith, repentance and baptism, the gift of the holy Spirit — and its eternal life!

Efficient faith is, indeed, as you say — trust in a person. While in general terms it is confidence in testimony, or the belief of truth it is merely as introductory to confidence in a person. Christian Religion is, with me wholly a personal concern. — Subject and object — It is a person believing a person, trusting in a person loving and obeying a person. Christianity is all embodied in a person, whose official designation is Jesus the Christ, and therefore he is that person in whom we Christians believe, whom we love, honor and obey. Nothing more sublimely simple than the gospel plan. Faith becomes necessary because we are sinners and cannot see God, but only as a means of knowing and enjoying him. The Christian faith is the personal truth. — "That God now is Jesus Christ reconciling a world to himself" — This works repentance towards God, as well as trust in Jesus as the Son and Heir of God. Repentance towards God and trust in Jesus as the Christ are therefore fruits of belief —

The gospel religion is truly a "spiritual religion" but it is for men; for corporeal beings, having bodies, souls & spirits, therefore it is not Quakerism nor Gnosticism. Hence while it believes, repents, obeys, wonders, loves, adores, it is through the machinery of testimony, motives, developments, ordinances, — baptism, prayer, praise, Anniversaries, fasts and feasts. It has in deed, its home in the human heart. Its power is first felt, and its authority acknowledged there. It purifies the heart, and it works outwardly in all pure speech and holy action. But what is it that is called the Christian religion? It is not a theory — tenets, opinions, abstractions, generalities nor Ceremonies. It is the fact concerning Jesus, as the representative and image of God, living and moving in us. These facts becoming testimony, the testimony becomes faith; the faculty becomes feeling, the feeling becomes action — and there is

eternal life begun here and perfected hereafter. The Christian religion is then all contained in facts - testimony, faith, feeling, action. These are homogeneous and consecutive. Nay, rather it is the same thing in five forms. The love of God is manifested in facts. These are converted into testimony - testimony into faith, faith into feeling - feeling into action. Then the love of God is poured out into our souls and then love again appears in our actions, in our life, in our eternal blessedness.

For many years my mind has rested with ineffable delight in this simplification of the whole matter of religion. It is in my opinion the triumph of the Bible. It is not a book of abstract views, but a volume of facts. The Alpha is, "In the beginning God created the heavens & the earth." The Omega - "He that believeth these things shall surely be saved." Daniel expresses himself in this style when he says - "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Very simple indeed! "But" adds he, "how shall they call ^{on him} in whom they have not believed? how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? how shall they hear without a preacher and how shall they preach unless they be sent?" - "So then faith cometh by ^{hearing} and hearing by the word of God." - God speaks, man hears and hears by the word of God - God speaks, man hears and reports, then we believe, then feel, then call on the Lord, then are saved. God sends the preacher, tells him what to say. - The preacher testifies the same he hears, believes, reports, acts, and is saved. The love of God appears in the "fact" of the gift of his Son, then fact appears in the testimony - the testimony in the faith. The faith in the feeling, the feeling in the action, and the love of God in the Christian.

Now my dear Sir, pardon the repetition of the matter. It is not the form of expression, which as a father I might be supposed to feel for his own offspring, that so enamoured me with this simplification of the philosophy of the Bible: but it is its wonder working power in emancipating the mind from the unreasonable and paralyzing and entangling traditions of the elders of the Church - I have had a rich and ample experience and observation.

Lord Bacon introduced the inductive system and applied it to science in general. Lord Brougham has successfully applied it to natural philosophy. It has only recently begun to be

applied to religion. — The facts of the Bible can be studied, clasped
and learned as the facts of nature — from their facts, — sentiments,
moral motives, are to be deduced, every man for himself, and then
furnish the soul with rules of action — laws of purity and humanity.
Thus Paul 1 Cor 15 — 1 — 5. Reiterates the gospel to the Corinthians.

After this remembrance you will say it is time I should say
a word on baptism! — Well, then; you and I, are of one mind
as respects the liberal and figurative use of words in general.
Baptism as a term, is a subject of the laws of language. It claims
no sovereignty over their laws. It asks for no favors — no special
tribunal, no packed jury, no partial witnesses, no new
Code. It is figuratively used — as is the word anoint, "An-
cise" bury wash &c &c. But in all laws, institutions,
ordinances, words are used literally not figuratively — so defines
my Lord Mansfield, Blackstone Monboddy and all
authorities down to yourself. Therefore I see no meaning
a literal baptism — ~~a~~ definite action, on a definite
subject and for a definite object. There are but three
questions on baptism; — What, the action? — the subject? — the
design? Not what is the "mode" but what is the action? —
Dipping is no mode of sprinkling: nor is sprinkling a mode
of dipping. But there are figurative applications of the term
There was the Circumcision of the flesh — and there was the
Circumcision of the heart. There is also the immersion
of the body and of the spirit. The former truly may be
without the latter; and in case of invincible ignorance
the latter, you will say, may be without the former: and
so say I. If any one disdained the literal Circumcision
he would have been cut off from the Covenant. And may it not
be so in regard of baptism. Jesus has announced literal
baptism, and he was literally baptized. And the Holy Spirit
said — "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the
name of the Lord Jesus" It is then as imperative as repentance
or faith, though it may not be in its moral influence so
direct or palpable, and obvious to all.

It is, indeed, essential to our peace that we know

when we are in covenant with God, that we feel ourselves under the
administration of grace. The value of baptism in the Evangelical
economy ~~and~~ must in the first. Besides commemorating and
exhibiting our faith in the death burial and resurrection of Jesus
we then and there put on Christ: — as the Jews put on Moses
~~and~~ "anointed themselves" in the instance to which you allude.
Feeling that we are then in him we can appropriate all the prom-
ises "which are in him" grace, and so let it be to all that are
in him. Hence a sense of pardon adoption sanctification
arises in all the intelligent subjects of this grace, indi-
cution, as naturally and as simultaneously as light and
joy with the rising of the sun. Baptism is then as spiritual
as prayer, the Lords day, the Lords supper, praise, or any other
Christian ordinance. But I have no faith in it as a
ceremony, a rite, a mere observance — without previous
faith in the Lord Jesus — in his blood, and confessed repentance
towards God a sevenfold immersion in the Jordan would
avail nothing spiritual to man woman or child. —
So I sincerely believe and teach, you friend and humble servant.

In the respect to the inward light of moral feeling I know
nothing. Such a light never led man to blood or water. — to
altar, victim, or priest; to any of the elements of the gospel
of Christ. Moses led to Christ. But there is inward light led
all the Pagan Philosophers as well as the Jewish Rabbies,
who led Christ to the Galilee in his own person, and in the persons
of his followers. Reason without revelation, like the eye with-
out light, sees nothing.

Christians are much more agreed about baptism
than most of us are aware. All the world — Greek Roman
and English churches, — believe that an immersion in
water into the name of the Father &c &c on a previous
Confession of faith is Christian baptism, (though some may
and do think and say it is not the only baptism) and all
believe and teach in their standards that it is, from any
or other connection with remission of sins. True, indeed,
parts of Christendom believe in pouring and in

sprinkling, and in infant subjects. But then an Asterian views
views of parts of Christendom while the Catholic views are
acknowledged by all. We are greatly misunderstood on this
subject. We are perfectly Catholic on the action, subject &
Design of baptism. In a few years the whole world will unite
upon the Catholic principle. If any one wants now to debate
disputing with baptism, on the ground of the Spontaneity of
the gospel, in a short time he wants find himself in the
smallest sect in Christendom. Even the Quakers are
beginning to call for water and abandon the old
system.

With all the other points in your letter I am delighted.
I thank God and take courage! I can con with you
in your views and feelings touching the present crisis
both in and out of the Presbyterian Church. There are
some good men on both sides; but as usual in all such
cases, they are a feeble minority, and cannot rule,
but must be ruled by a proud aspiring and
dominant majority. — This is a time of great shaking
in all Protestant, indeed in all Catholic Christendom.
There is an under current which for years has been
sapping and mining the foundations of all partisan
establishments. This is my knowledge at the present
extensively at work in all the prominent parties in the
Union. The days of Ecclesiastical Tyranny and domination
are nearly numbered —

I write greatly rejoiced in the prospect
of one in the great work of this age, for whose judgment
talents and harmony I have always — even in the
days of our "Candidus and Timothy" entertained and
expressed a very high regard. This hasty scrawl
at the present moment in the dispatch of much business

long accumulated is rather an apology than an
answer to the bearer of your friendly letter.

I shall be much pleased to correspond
with you freely on the whole subject, or any part of it
you may please to select. Could you find leisure to
furnish me with a few essays for my periodical
I would esteem it a great favor.

Meanwhile I will send
you a few numbers of the M. A. on these topics,
with the assurance of my unforgotten friendship
and esteem.

I have the honor to be
very respectfully

Yours friend

A. Campbell

Bethany Mo
April

Rev
McCampbell
Br Mary Va
Geo. H. Nye. Drates
Bloomington
Indiana.

Bloomington
Monroe Co La

Dear Cambridge
I am here now in relation to some
the religious questions, in which
to 15 W.

1839 April 12

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