

lives to its divine and gracious requisitions. The religion of the Bible is not so mysterious and incomprehensible as may be supposed. Its directions are plain and familiar; the prospects which it opens to our view are splendid and sublime; nothing absurd nor incongruous is set before the eye of faith. The true and proper spirit in which to approach the sacred oracles, is to be divested of all preconceived opinions and notions as far as practicable, "and as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." This is the spirit which should actuate us when we apply to this fountain of life. Here the mind is enlightened, the disorders of the heart are rectified, and the soul is fitted and qualified for its native heaven.

Other books and other formularies may be good in their place, and may throw light upon the divine standard; but being the works of men, they are evidently, from their very nature, frail and imperfect, and as such are by no means to be received and recognized as standards of divine truth. These have no force to bind the conscience only so far as they conform to, and ingraft within their own substance, portions of the divine word. Hence it is the divine word, and not the notions and works of men, which constitutes the great christian standard. This is the rallying point for all God's people; here they may stand together and strike hands as brethren. The Bible must not be received merely as a nominal standard, and something else in effect set up in its place; but it must be paramount to all other books, and must stand like mount Elias on the North American coast, as a guide to mariners in a dark and cloudy night.

CHARITY.—Charity, or love, is the very soul of the christian religion. It is, as the Apostle observes, the fulfilling of the law. Without it, profession is but an empty

sound, and zeal but a foolish effort. It breathes the spirit of affability and kindness. "It envies not, it is not easily provoked." It rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. The person whose soul is regulated and tempered by the benign influences of christian charity, feels an anxious solicitude for the present and future happiness of all the human family. Limited operations do not satisfy the enlarged feelings of his manly and noble spirit. He rises superior to the narrow precincts of partizan zeal, and looks upon all the members of Christ's mystical body as his spiritual connexions, as his dear brethren in the Lord. His ardent prayer to Almighty God is, that great grace may rest upon the whole church, and that the truth of God may over all prevail, run and be glorified throughout all the nations of the earth. Charity is the uniting principle in the church; it cements together all the members of Christ's spiritual body, and spreads peace, harmony and pleasure throughout the whole. Where it reigns, discord and confusion are unknown; union and concord prevail. It partakes of the nature of the divine Being himself; for it is said in the Scriptures that God is love; and again it is said, "He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love." In the exercise of this grace, Christians rise above themselves, and in some degree imitate their adorable Lord and Master, who causeth his rain to fall upon the just and upon the unjust, and who with a liberal hand supplieth the wants of all. The divine munificence, as portrayed in the works of Providence and redemption, ought forcibly to impress upon our minds that all mankind are our brethren, and especially that portion of them who are the disciples and followers of our Lord Jesus Christ, and who profess to be guided and directed by his gracious spirit, swayed by his sceptre, and filled with love to him. Among these there should neither be bit-