

S7284

Smith, Elias, 1769-1846.

A Letter to Mr. Daniel Humphreys.

Portsmouth, N.H., Gazette Office, 1804. 12 pp.

MWA copy.

To Mr. DANIEL HUMPHREYS.

SIR,

WHEN your Letter first came into my hands, I found, by reading it, that your sentiments concerning a *worldly church, fatalism*, (under the name of Decrees and Election) and *infant baptism*, that main pillar of *Anti Christ*, agreed nearly with the sentiments of the clergy, concerning these things. This solved a query, which had often risen in my mind when reading your other writings; which was this—"Why are you not opposed by the clergy, seeing you write so much against them?" The reason is plain—you believe with them in the *main things*; you believe that the church is composed of believers and their children: so do the clergy. You believe children "are as capable of receiving an imputed righteousness as the greatest man on earth;" and that "they are as capable of justification and life by Christ's obedience, as they are of condemnation and death by Adam's disobedience;" the clergy teach the same. Mr. Buckminster says of children, "they are capable of the grace that is signified by baptism, and of receiving the seed or *habit* of faith and repentance." You believe in infant baptism, though it is not once mentioned in the scriptures; so do they. You deny the work of the spirit in the heart, (if I understand your words) and so do many of them. You appear to make light of the work of the spirit of Christ on the heart; so do they. You have given a different translation of the scriptures, from what the translators did; so do they. You and they are in one city, though not in one house. The *city* where you and they reside, is called in the scriptures, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, &c.

To answer your Letter, I shall take up the three propositions you have written upon, and shew that you have done the very things you charge me with. The propositions are these—p. 6.—1, you say, "I find among the sentiments you express, many things spoken defectively, wherein important
connected

connected truths are left out."—2, " Things spoken erroneously contrary to the word."—3, " And things spoken un-
fobberly without fear."

1/i. You say, " I find among the sentiments you express, many things spoken descriptively, wherein important connected truths are left out."

You charge me in this proposition with leaving out *important connected truths*; I think you mean the Apostle's doctrine. Did I not shew what the Apostle's doctrine was, viz. the doctrine of Christ; this I suppose you will allow, that the doctrine of Christ and the Apostles was the same.—To shew what this doctrine is, I quoted Heb. vi. 1, 2, " Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God, the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." Do you think it possible for a man to preach all these things without preaching the resurrection of Christ, when one of the six principles of this doctrine is the resurrection from the dead? After you have proved in page 7, that the Apostles preached a risen Jesus to their hearers, and thus made converts: You then say, " Modern teachers ply their hearers with directions how to become good, to obtain some pious requisite or other, in feelings or character, in order to get hope and the favour of God, according to the doctrine of the sect they happen to be of."

Do you mean here that I am one of these modern teachers who thus ply their hearers? If you do, this must be owing to your ignorance of what I preach, or because you *wish* to represent it different from what it is. I suppose you have never heard me, and so speak evil of what you know not.—This modern preaching is what I oppose.

I believe, and often tell my hearers that every natural man is as really an infidel as Mr. Paine, or any other person. I tell my hearers they do not naturally believe nor love the truth, and that if they believe not, they shall be damned.—I do not think, however, as you intimate, that such preaching will make thin assemblies, but to the contrary. People who come to hear what I preach, expect something very different from *smooth things*.

Your saying I mention nothing about the atonement, is not true—if I have not mentioned the word, I have the sub-
ject

ject. According to your charge there is but one of the Apostles that ever wrote upon the atonement ; for the word is not mentioned in the New Testament but once, that is by Paul, Rom. v. 11. Will you dare to say that the other New Testament writers have not mentioned the subject ? I think not. In the printed articles you refer to in page 12. where you say the atonement is not mentioned, are these expressions, "That God, from motives in himself, has given Jesus the Mediator, that whosoever believeth on him shall not perish but have everlasting life." In p. 5, are these scriptures, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life." "Except ye eat my flesh and drink my blood ye have no life in you." This is mentioning the atonement as plain as Jesus or any of his Apostles have, excepting once. The word atonement signifies *reconciliation for iniquity*, or the foundation through which God can be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. This atonement, is mentioned so plain in the printed articles, that every one may see it, excepting such as would make a man an offender for a word.

As to what you mention, that the members of the church I am connected with, being obliged to agree to printed articles to be received, it is not true ; all the agreement any member makes when he joins with us, after giving the reason of his hope in Christ, is, to "believe and practise according to the New Testament, rejecting all *creeds, platforms, covenants, names and sentiments* not found there." Is there any hurt in this ? Judge ye.

You charge me with leaving out connected truths. What you mean I suppose is *having all things common*. I do not find that Christ or the Apostles ever laid this down for a standing rule for the Gentiles to observe ; neither is there any command for believers to sell their houses and turn all their property into money ; how many instances have we of people dwelling in their own houses.—There is not one account among the Gentile churches, of their selling their houses or lands, as those at Jerusalem did. One instance does not make a rule. The Gentiles contributed for the poor saints at Jerusalem, and to Paul's necessities ; this is an evident duty, and this is a sentiment we believe and practise.

It is true, Sir, we do not say so much about alms giving

as you do ; because we are forbid to *found a trumpet* ; but when we do our alms, our dear Master has told us not to let our right hand know what our left doeth, that our alms may be in secret.

In p. 19, you intimate that if I should preach the pure religion spoken of by James, it is likely I should preach away some of my hearers. This is *speaking of that you know not*.

I conclude you have never attended one meeting where I have spoken, since I came here ; and it is not strange that a man should make a *noisy protest* when he does not see the mark.

You appear to be ignorant of any reformation among the people in this town ; your cloistered way of living, I think must be the reason of it. You say, p. 19, speaking of the religion of James, " I have never heard of any remarkable attachment to that religion among them." The reason is plain—you never went within the hearing of those who are attached to that religion. You say, " that the good works of the gospel, done as in God's fight, not in man's, cannot be altogether hid from men who live where they are done." This is true, but men may hide themselves from those who shine in his way : " for every one that doeth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd."

In your uncharitable way of speaking, (as you call it) you say, p. 19; " It is said, that you have a church of more than one hundred members—A grand number for a christian church ! Rarely seen in these days—A church of the living God in Portsmouth, of that number, would be a glorious sight ! Nothing on this side heaven can well be conceived of, more beautiful ! The good works of such a church, however it might resemble in poverty, those of Macedonia would amaze and provoke surrounding Pharisees and hypocrites. It would practically and strongly condemn the world, and excite reproach." This, you say, is " Something quite beyond forsaking open vices, and attending lectures and conferences."

You say, " it is said that you have a church of more than one hundred members." This is not true—I have no church here ; if I had, I should be like you and others, who are building upon their own human plans. I believe Jesus Christ has a church here of *more than one hundred members*, and that he has redeemed them by his blood, and written his

law in their hearts by that spirit which you have fearcely mentioned in your whole letter. This church is the church of the living God, (not mine.) That this is such a church, is proved from your description of the church of the living God; you say, "Nothing on this side heaven can well be conceived of, more beautiful! This is true—Here are about one hundred and forty members, who appear to have the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, *endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, exhorting one another daily, speaking to themselves in Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs, praying with and for one another, and agreeing in doctrine and practice; living like a company of pilgrims traveling home to glory—this amazes and provokes surrounding Pharisees and Hypocrites, as is evident from what you have said against them, page 20.* The *Pharisees and Hypocrites* are so amazed, that they begin to say, *what do we?* and they are so provoked, that they only want law on their side, and we should know what the *court of inquisition* means. The world is *strongly and practically condemned*, and this excites *reproach and persecution* from them. They being *condemned, cast out our names as evil.* When we have been *baptizing*, they have *baptised* at the same time; they have come round the house when we were meet to worship; with drums, fifes, fiddles, trumpets and whistles, they have fired guns by the house, and thrown stones through the windows, when we were in the house, so that our lives have been exposed; they have broken our windows when we were gone, broke down our gate, fastened our meeting house door when we were within, and thrown in things of a disagreeable smell, to disturb us, and insulted us as we passed the streets. All these things we have met with, as a church of Christ; this is what you say a church of the living God would meet with. This we experience, yet we bear it all, knowing that if we are reproached for the name of Christ, happy are we. Notwithstanding all these things you appear *like* the rest of our opposers, (ignorant of them,) though you say a church of God would meet with just such things as we do.

I shall now prove, that you have done what you charge me with. In your letter are things spoken *defectively, wherein important connected truths are left out.*

In speaking of a justifying righteousness, you say that this righteousness is revealed in the gospel, and that he who credits the gospel believeth unto righteousness; this is true; but
not

not in the way you explain it. Here is one defect wherein *important connected truths are left out.* You have said nothing about the work of the spirit of God, only what you have said against it. I think the word Holy Ghost is not mentioned but once in all your letter.

I cannot find that you represent man as an enemy to God, opposed to him, and unreconciled in his mind. You say nothing about *repentance, forgiveness, a new heart, the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost*; this you appear to be ignorant of, as all natural men are.

The scriptures do not represent sinful man as I think you do. Paul says, Rom. & 29, 'Being filled with all unrighteousness,' &c. Chap. iii. 10, "There is none righteous, no not one." Chap. viii. 7, 8, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be, so then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Eph. ii. 1, "And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." Col. i. 21, "And you that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled." This description of man by nature agrees with the whole Bible, and this is the reason why he needs a righteousness without the law,—This is Jesus Christ who is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth; and though this righteousness is revealed, yet none will ever be finally benefited by it, without the Holy Ghost.

Christ told his disciples that if he went away, he would send the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, who should "reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and judgement." This spirit which attends the gospel, shews the sinner that he is an enemy to God, and being destitute of a righteousness, he sees himself condemned, and justly, deserving death. This same spirit leads him as a helpless creature to look to the same God to pardon him, who has condemned him; the same spirit shews him how God can be just, and justify the ungodly, and that is by believing in Jesus. This spirit brings Christ near, he receives him into his heart, and is delivered at once from guilt. This same spirit writes the law of God in his heart, which is *love*, and the spirit which before was a *reprover*, now, becomes a comforter, and his heart is *filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory!* All this, I think you deny; Paul says, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God for they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." You

You say, with a note of admiration (like Nicodemus, saying how can these things be?) "What a contrast is here!" "One man confesses Christ and the work he did, the other tells of a work on his own heart which he has experienced, making him a new & good man, and his consequent good feelings and holy exercises." It is astonishing that a man should read the scriptures, and yet appear to be ignorant not only of the spirit of it; but even of the letter. You say, p. 12. "The other tells of a work on his own heart;" why does one tell of it and not the other! the reason is plain, one has experienced it, and the other is ignorant of it.

This work on the heart is a work which God has wrought by his spirit. Isaiah says, chap. xxvi. 12, "Lord thou wilt ordain peace for us; for thou hast wrought *all our work in us.*" Isaiah is one who tells of a work *on his own heart*, even a work of God. What he means by this work is explained in chap. li. 7, "Hearken unto me ye that know righteousness, the people in whose *heart is my law.*" Paul mentions this in the Epistle to the Philipians, chap. i. 6, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which has begun a *good work in you*, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Paul is one that speaks of a work *in the heart*; those who do this tell of the work of the *Father, Son, and Spirit*, you appear to own the work of the Son, and disown the *work of the Spirit*. This work of the spirit is mentioned in Rom. v. 5, "And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." When you speak of believing the gospel you do not intimate that it makes any change in the person who believes, as to his temper or situation. The new testament writers speak of both. Paul speaks of a change in the person, 2-Cor. iii. 18, "But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the *spirit of the Lord.*" Here is a change made by the spirit of God. The person who did not bear the image of God; by *his spirit*, bears it; this agrees with what is written in Col. ii. 10, "And have put on the *new man* which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." This work on the heart makes a *friend* of him who, without it, *is an enemy to God.* Col. i. 21, "And you that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your minds, by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled." This is plain to every person, that the work of God on the heart makes a
change

change in the person ; by it an *enemy* becomes a *friend*. This work on the heart which you despise, makes a change in the persons situation ; without this *work*, he is in a state of *darkness* ; by this work he is in a state of light. 1, Peter, ii. 9, " That ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of *darkness* into his *marvellous light*." Col. i. 13, " Who hath delivered us from the power of *darkness*, and hath translated us into the Kingdom of his dear Son."

You intimate that *regeneration*, or *being born again*, is no more than owning that Christ is risen from the dead, (if I understand your words.) When Christ spoke of being born again, he called it a work of the spirit, which Nicodemus appeared to be as much surpris'd at, as you are. John iii. 8, 9, " The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whether it goeth, so is every one that is *born of the spirit*. Nicodemus answered and said unto him how can these things be ?"

You appear to despise the idea that a man is *made new*, that he has good feelings and holy exercises, &c. You speak against *Experience—a new and good man—good feelings—holy exercises*. By this you intimate that *experience of divine favour being a new and good man—having good feelings and holy exercises, &c.* are things that you are not only unacquainted with, but oppos'd to. Are these things you oppose scriptural or not ? *experience*, is one thing you despise. Solomon says, Eccl. i. 16, " Also my heart had great *experience*, of wisdom and knowledge." Here is a man telling his *experience of wisdom and knowledge* ! Paul says Rom. v. 4, " And *patience experience and experience hope*, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the holy Ghost " Here is a man who speaks of *experience*, and the same man tells of the love of God in his heart shed there by the *Holy Ghost*. *Experience* is knowledge by trial ; a person can no more tell what the truth, as it is in Jesus, is, without *experience* of it in his own heart by the *Holy Ghost*, than a man can tell what fruit is by looking at it, without *tasting* it, *tasting* is *experience*, if so be ye have *tasted* that the Lord is gracious, says Peter.

A new and good man. This is another thing you despise,—2, Cor. 5, 17, " Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a *new creature*." Gal. vi. 15, " For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision but a *new creature*." Eph. iv. 24, " And that ye put on the *new man* which

which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Matt. xii, 34. 'A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things.' In Acts xi. 24, it is said of Barnabas, "for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and faith." Here mention is made of a *new creature*, a *new man*, a *good man*, &c.—all this you deny. As to any saying *they are better than others*, I hear no such thing, this you get by hearsay. What makes a *good man* is his having the *Holy Ghost* and *faith*, as Barnabas had; having the *divine nature in his heart*, this is the *Holy Ghost* in him—This was the case with *Daniel*, in him was the *spirit of the holy God*; and if any man have not the *spirit of Christ*, he is none of his. Those who have this spirit in them, will bear the fruit of it, which is, 'Love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness temperance,'—Gal. v, 22, 23. These things are plain.

Good feelings, is another thing you oppose. Paul says, Heb. iv. 15. 'For we have not an high Priest which cannot be touched with the *feeling* of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.' Here is mention of a Priest having *feeling*; I hope we shall ever be like Christ to have *feeling*, and not like those Paul mentions in Eph. iv. 19, 'Who being past *feeling*, have given themselves over to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.' This sort are described in verse 18, 'Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts.' I think we 'have not so learned Christ.' You speak against *feelings*; would you be willing to have us think that you are like those who are without, or past *feeling*? I am loth to suppose you are like such persons; but rather believe you are in a mistake about what you have written against these things.

Holy exercises—these you speak against. There are two kinds of *exercises* mentioned in the scriptures; one *good*, the other *bad*. Paul says Acts xxiv. 16, 'And herein do I *exercise* myself, to have always a conscience void of offence both towards God and towards man.' 1 Tim. iv. 7, 'And *exercise* thyself rather unto godliness.' Here is an exercise mentioned, and I think this must be an *holy one*, for it is unto *godliness*; such *exercises* as these, we believe in. Peter mentions another kind of exercise. 2 Peter ii. 14, 15, "Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin, beguiled, unstable"

unstable souls ; an heart they have *exercised* with covetous practices, cursed children, which have forsaken the *right way*.' The description of those who are destitute of holy *exercises*, is so shocking, that I believe you would be loth to have it said your *exercises* are contrary to holiness.

I leave it with the candid to judge whether you or I have spoken *defectively in leaving out important connected truths*. I think there is at least a *defect* in what you have said concerning *fellowship*. You have treated this word as the *clergy* do words that are against their unscriptural sentiments. I cannot see why you should alter it, unless you thought it would favour your sentiments more to render it *communion*, instead of *fellowship*. I never heard the clergy complain of the translation, only when the scriptures were against them. I have no doubt but the words *communion* and *fellowship* sometimes mean one thing, but I do not believe the word *fellowship* or *communion* always means *having all things common* ; neither do I believe this to be the whole meaning of the word where it is said, *in fellowship*. I said ' this fellowship was very extensive.' You say, p. 14, ' And you do not include in your extensive view the great and leading thing held up.' I here quote the extent of this fellowship, as I have laid it down in the book ; that the reader may see whether *you* or I left out *important truths*.

I said, page 6, ' This fellowship was very extensive ; 1st, ' They had fellowship with God.' This I proved from 1 John i. 3, ' And truly our fellowship is with the Father.' I said, 2, ' They were in fellowship with the Son.' This I proved from 1 John, i. 3, ' And truly our fellowship is with his son Jesus Christ.' 3, ' They were in fellowship with the Apostles.' ' That you may have fellowship with us.' 4, ' They had fellowship with each other as children of God.' They were all ' made to drink into one spirit, and to partake of the fellowship of the spirit.' ' And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one mind.' You say the *fellowship* consisted in having *things in common*. Let the candid judge where the *defect* is, whether in this, they had fellowship with *God, Christ, the Apostles and all the Saints*, being of one heart in every thing, even to selling what they had ; or in saying the *fellowship* means only to have *things common*.

2d. You mention, ' things spoken *erroneously*, contrary to the word.' You say in page 21, ' But I notice that you reckon among the preached errors, that God has *decreed* all things

things, and that I have held all an error, I fully believe, and I have held denial of his decrees. What is the meaning of this? My God decreed my denial of his decrees, and yet say I am in an error, when I do what he decreed. It appears to me that if you had been a consistent man, you would have proved that I have explained the meaning of the words *decree* and *elect* contrary to the scriptures, or else brought something from the scripture to prove that the meaning of *decree* is, that God foreordained whatsoever comes to pass; you have not done either of these, only said I believe it, and given no other proof. In your note at the bottom, you mention, that in my explanation of the word *Elect*, &c. you was not in a mistake in concluding that I had rejected and opposed *Election*. In that pamphlet I have explained the words *Decree* and *Elect* as they stand in the scriptures; in doing this I was obliged to reject the doctrine of human *Decrees* and *Election*; for, your notion of *Decrees* and the *Elect*, is as different from what is mentioned in the scriptures about it, as your *infant baptism* is different from that baptism which is from Heaven, enjoined only on believers.

3d. You mention "things spoken *unsoberly* without fear."

In this you refer to what I said upon infant baptism.—Your proof of *infant baptism* is brought from a text which says nothing about it,—were a man called upon oath to give evidence of a fact, and in giving his evidence, say nothing about the subject, the Attorney would be as much at a loss, in pleading the cause, as you and the clergy are in proving that infant baptism is scriptural, when there is not one word for it in the *whole bible*, nor in any authentic history; till *two hundred years* after the birth of Christ.—though I said that the devil was the *father of infant baptism* and the *popish council the mother of it*, yet I spake forth the *words of truth in soberness*, without any fear of having you or any person come forward and prove to the contrary.—If you wish me to prove that it came from the *devil*, and that it is a *popish tradition*, I am ready to do it. I believe, and can prove that it is the *main pillar of anti-christ's kingdom, or Mystery Babylon*; and that when *babylon falls*, this will be buried in its ruins.—Every person who believes and practises *infant baptism*, is in *Babylon*!!—That you may be born of the spirit, and feel the love of God in your heart, that so you and all the redeemed may meet at last in glory, where all exercises will be holy; is the sincere prayer of your friend, and servant in the truth:—

ELIAS SMITH.