

**Articles and Sermons :: LETTERS OF WILLIAM TIPTAFT (1832)****LETTERS OF WILLIAM TIPTAFT (1832) - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/12/17 3:51**

February 25th, 1832

My dear Brother,

Since I last wrote to you I have been actively engaged in preaching God's word; but not without giving offence, for I find the cross has not ceased. I preached at Reading about a month ago in a large chapel, and it was very crowded; and, this last week I have been to see Mr. Hitchcock, of Devises, who seceded about six years ago from the Established Church, and is now a minister at a Baptist chapel there. I preached on Tuesday evening at Trowbridge, in the chapel of an old and faithful servant of the Lord, John Warburton, to several hundred people; and on Wednesday evening at Devises. On Thursday I was severely lampooned in the "Devises Gazette"; and the "Reading Chronicle" has a copy of it today. I sent you a specimen from Devises, having an old one given to me. The cross is not to be escaped, if we are to enter into glory

My 'letter of resignation' to the bishop is now rapidly selling. About 3,000 have been dispersed, and another edition is needed. Newspapers insert it; and a bookseller at Southampton has printed it without asking my permission. One 'reply' has been published at Reading, and another at Salisbury. I have not yet seen the latter; the former strengthens my arguments. There are truths contained in my Letter so supported by the word of God that they are not able to overthrow them.

My chapel is nearly finished, and is to be opened on the 25th of March; Mr. Warburton and Mr. Hitchcock are expected to preach. Hundreds will crowd into the chapel and the two vestries; but it is supposed scarcely half will be able to enter.

I am looked upon with an eye of contempt, and am considered a troubler of Israel. Some say I am a good man; others say that I deceive the people. Though the Lord enables me to be bold and faithful, I by no means lack chapels to preach in, for I am engaged to preach in several that I have never yet entered. The more the Lord shows to me my darkness in spiritual things, the more clearly do I discern the real state of others. You know that profession is not possession; and when the religion of the bulk of professors is tried by the word of God, how awfully deficient it appears!

I am living in a very quiet part of Abingdon, in a small room, together with two bedrooms, all which I furnished myself. I have a man and his wife in the same house with me, who wait upon me. I live in a plain way, and find my expenses small. I have scarcely any one to visit me but poor people, whose company is the most profitable, and they do not feed my pride. All the best of my furniture has been sold by auction, and it sold remarkably well.

There is much excitement in this neighborhood, through the building of my chapel; but they know not what to do. I do hope and trust that it will be made manifest, that it is for the Lord's glory. The truth has been studiously kept out of the town, and I shall rejoice to find that the Lord has a few 'hidden ones' here, for gross darkness prevails. In this very town, though so large, I cannot find ten who can give a satisfactory account of the work of regeneration in the soul. My chapel has a plain appearance. It is partly pewed, for I bought the whole of an inside of a chapel at Reading for £25, with pulpit, etc.

I still continue in the same mind about not taking the hard earned pence of the poor people, while I have so much of my own, and am clothed in fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day. Let me not be eased, and another burdened. When the gospel was first preached, those who had land and houses sold them, and laid the money at the apostles' feet. The gospel has not that effect upon the rich professors of the present day. But I consider the love of money is the cause.

You will be soon "a speckled bird" in Oakham; but you have suffered very little in the Lord's cause at present, not many trials outward, and not many inward. You know little or nothing of 'the furnace' which is needful to take away our dross. If people are not opposed by Satan they know nothing of the power of godliness. Every Christian man must know the plague of his own heart. The Psalms and various parts of the Scriptures will not be understood unless we are brought to feel sensibly the same trials that the saints of old went through. Many think they are going to heaven when Satan makes no opposition, for they have nothing but head-notions. Consequently they make no encroachments upon Satan's dominions

, and he will therefore show to them no opposition.

Sometimes Satan tempts me to think that I am making a great sacrifice; but I ought to blush for shame. What is the sacrifice? All I have, from whom does it come? If I built myself an expensive house, to gratify my flesh and pride, the professors could better understand it. We can spend hundreds upon our lusts, but we sparingly bestow a pittance for Christ's cause. If the love of money is the root of all evil, from it all evil must necessarily arise. May the Lord deliver us from it; may He give us more of the mind of Christ, who made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Himself the form of a servant. Pride is a reigning principle. How very little we really need in this life! "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Vital godliness is but little known in the present day. When we are led to have a view of the Cross, how very different does everything appear! We are like dunces, for it takes us many years to learn such a truth. There are very few who can give a good account of their call by grace, and those who are really regenerate enjoy but little communion with God. When you talk upon the subject of religion, keep people close to the work of grace upon the heart. Let them know that they must learn their saving interest in Christ under the testimony of the Spirit. True religion is the life of God in the soul. Scores can speak of doctrines and the plan of salvation as clearly as possible, who know nothing of the kingdom of God within. Few contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints; and there are very few who are outcasts for their godliness.

The present day is not a time of trial, therefore hypocrites abound. The 'heap of professing Christians' would be very small—if the chaff were sifted out. If a persecuting time were to arise, and God's children were imprisoned for their faith, it would change the present scene. We are going to heaven in silver slippers. We have the wind at our backs. We are little hated and despised, and know but little of sharp conflicts with the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Affectionately yours in the best of bonds,  
W. Tiptaft.

May 4th, 1832

My dear Brother,

I am going on much as usual, giving offence to many, and pleasing a few. I have many invitations to preach; but I am not much inclined to leave Abingdon for the present. I have great numbers of hearers, so that my chapel is not large enough, although it will seat 500, and many can stand in the aisles, but many cannot even enter the door, and they are nearly all poor people. I believe the Lord is with us, and will, I trust, continue to bless us. I am not a great favorite among professors and formalists, nor do I wish it, for if I yet pleased men, I, should not be the servant of Christ.

I am glad that you liked my 'letter of resignation' to the bishop. Some do not, but they scarcely know what to say against them. The truth is very powerful, and man cannot gainsay it. The Lord shows me more fully, that there is no more true religion than what is felt, known, and experienced in the soul. There must be the kingdom of God within; and if this work of the Spirit is not described in some measure by ministers, they cannot minister comfort to God's tried and afflicted family. Many hold a form of sound words, but they must know more, or they will never go to glory. They must be brought to see themselves in need of a Savior, or they will never speak of the preciousness of His blood, or sing His praises. Many talk about religion; but ask them about a work of grace upon the heart, and they will immediately change the subject. There is but very, very little vital godliness, and the more you know of your spiritual darkness, the more fully will you discover the darkness of all around you.

I have laid out more money in the Lord's cause than many are inclined to do; nevertheless, I have a very vile and covetous heart. How closely the disease cleaves to us! it is between the very joints. How little do we understand self-denial, and making sacrifices in the Lord's cause! But what a mockery is a mere profession of a religion which costs a man nothing! He wants creature comforts and spiritual consolations, the friendship of the world and the favor of God; and, if so, we desire what we shall never enjoy together.

I liked many things in your last letter, but I fear, from what you say, religion is very flat among you.

Yours affectionately in the Lord,  
W. Tiptaft.

P.S.—The Lord has decidedly blessed my preaching lately, I am rejoiced to say. I am not much of a favorite among the clergy. Philpot has paid me a visit this week, and heard Warburton in my chapel.

July 6th, 1832

My dear Brother,

Since I last wrote to you, I have been preaching in various places, many of considerable size, and to large concourses of people. One of the effects of the bishop's threatened interference has been that he has been an excellent 'trumpeter' for me; and the newspapers, still continuing to make their remarks upon me, cause many to come and hear 'the babbler' out of curiosity.

What you say about religion in your parts is very unsatisfactory. It seems that you are without bold and faithful witnesses for the Lord. You do not tell me about men who take forth the precious from the vile. Real religion still seems to me very rare. Very few can give a good account of the Lord's gracious dealings with their souls. Few understand the truth as it is in Jesus. I think there is but little religion in Abingdon and its vicinity, but I find very few places where there is more. True and vital godliness will ever meet with much opposition. The world ever did and ever will hate the truth; and why professors meet with little or no opposition, and even the children of God, is because they differ so little from the world. Their life and conversation give no offence, because they not only mix with formalists, but even with those who have no religion at all. The children of God are in such a weak state that they are not seen and known, and the religion of the rich and respectable is more doubtful to me from day to day. If they enter heaven, they must indeed go through much tribulation, and they, at present, seem to have little or none. I feel assured that my preaching would not be so well received as it is, if it were more consistent with God's word, in plainness and faithfulness, saying to each individual, "You are the man!"

The Spirit's great work in teaching, is to show us more what we are by nature, and what we are by grace; and if there be no deep discoveries of our vileness by nature, making known to us what hell-deserving sinners we are, we shall not be brought fully to understand the riches of God's grace.

I hope that I shall find the Christian friends at Oakham more deeply established in the truth, more sensible of God's love towards them, more humbled under a deep sense of their unworthiness, and in a much greater degree separated from the mere professors around them. God's children need much humbling and stripping, much emptying from vessel to vessel; and a furnace, frequently, to take away the dross which gathers so very fast. You can find hundreds crying out, "Lord, Lord!" when you can scarcely find one who can tell you what the Lord has done for his soul.

I have as yet a very large congregation. There is a door open and effectual, and many adversaries. I am quite a "speckled bird" in these parts. My two most intimate friends, who visit me, and whom I visit, among the respectable, are Philpot and Husband, two ministers in the Church of England. There is scarcely another minister that I am intimate with; but these two are not ashamed of me.

Give my best love to Deborah, and tell her I shall be glad to hear from her own lips what the Lord is doing for her soul; what conflicts with, and victories over, Satan; what opposition from the world; what love-visits from Jesus; and what consolations, under all her tribulations for righteousness' sake.

Yours most affectionately, in the best bonds,  
William Tiptaft.

August 15th, 1832

My dear Brother,

I shall be glad to hear how the Lord is pleased to manifest Himself among you at Oakham. Real religion is so contrary to a mere profession, that you must expect much reproach and scorn for contending for it. But there is much speculative religion in the present day. Many are well able to judge of the general and gross darkness which prevails, and contend for a form of sound words, but are very doubtful characters, and show they have never felt in their own souls, the power of the truths of which they speak. You and I have a very great deal to learn, and we need much purifying, when we consider these words, that those who are "after the Spirit do mind the things of the Spirit"; and "Where your treasure is, there will

your heart be also."

It is a great mercy that God's children are at first, dandled on the knee, and put into the bosom a little; for if they had a view of their difficulties, they would faint. But it is a sweet promise—"As your days, so shall your strength be." The children of Israel were not allowed to see at first the warlike sons of Anak, lest they should be alarmed. There is nothing very alarming in religion while little but outward things are known; but when the fountains of the great deep of human corruption are broken up, God's children then learn the root of sin, the "needs-be" for Christ's death and sufferings; are stripped, in a measure, from self-righteousness, and are astonished to find what Pharisees they have been, when they have all the time been renouncing it. It is very painful to the flesh to become nothing. But the more the Lord's Spirit operates upon our spirit, the more unintelligible will our language be to those who don't know God.

Do you find many at Oakham, and in the neighborhood, who are anxious for a God-fearing minister to preach to them? If you begin to take the offensive part against Satan's kingdom, you must expect many wounds and strokes. He is a powerful enemy, and in our own strength we should not stand against him long. The great offence in religion is separating from professors, and those who deny the power. If you have no mountains for Christ to make plain, and no crooked paths for Him to make straight, you will know but little of real and true prayer to Him.

I shall be glad to hear of Deborah growing in grace. She has many fetters in her household, and with her children; nevertheless, the Lord will support her and strengthen her, as he has done hitherto.

William Tiptaft

August 27th, 1832

My dear Brother,

My chapel, hitherto, continues to be very crowded. Yesterday it was particularly so both times. Today I have had Mr. M. and his wife to drink tea with me. He is the vicar of a large parish about seven miles from here. He asked me if I had ever been 'incarcerated with insanity'. He had been told it for a fact; and though he said he always defended me, he could not contradict it, though he had no reason to believe it.

The great question is not whether we attend a church or chapel, but whether we hear the truth for ourselves, whether we receive it as the word of God in our hearts. Real religion will find its way to the heart, and its effect will be manifest in the life. The Spirit's work is so little understood in the present day. It is the work of God the Holy Spirit to convince of sin, to break the heart, and to plough up the fallow ground. If this work is not wrought in a measure in the soul none will stand the day of trial, for they have no root. The kingdom of God is within you; and when the Lord has taken a poor sinner in hand He will never leave him, but will surely purge away his dross and tin. He will slay his idols, and tear him from those things he so much loves. He will not be aware how many idols he has, until God shows him in a measure the deceitfulness of his heart. The more God's children are taught spiritually, the greater fools do they become in their own eyes; and the more they know of their own wicked and vile state by nature, the more are they astonished that God should show mercy to such poor worms of the earth.

Real religion is indeed foolishness to the world, and the feelings of God's children are indeed a puzzle to the mere professors. But you will find how vainly you have thought and talked when the Lord shows you greater abominations in your evil heart. Then you will understand how everything is opposed to the work of God in the soul of man. Then you will find that there are fightings without—and fears within. When God's children are brought into fiery trials, and persecutions from Satan's darts, the scoffings and mockings of the 'Hagar race' are no more to them than water upon a duck's back. But God sees fit to teach His children many afflicting lessons, that they may be partakers of His holiness. If your religion is of God, which I trust it is, you will have many difficulties to encounter from various quarters; and when you cannot realize any enjoyment in religion, and all things seem against you, you will think yourself very foolish for making a profession, and will be desirous of going back for leeks and onions to Egypt. But if you were losing your employment, and poverty were staring you in the face, you could even then bless God if He gave you a comforting and reviving view of the work done upon the Cross for you. If Christ is in the boat, we can smile at the storm.

If you are kept faithful, and are enabled to adorn God's doctrine, you surely will be much opposed. Remember how closely you will be watched; how every remark will be weighed. You will not receive the least kindness in any respect, and many will wait for your halting. You will not be enabled to make a bargain with any one without their endeavoring to discover

r a secret love of gain in your heart.

Your determination not to hear any minister at Oakham will give great offence, and bring with it a cross. The word of God fully justifies you—"Take heed what you hear"; and, "Beware of false prophets." If you cannot receive a man as a sent servant of God you are certainly right, and your conduct will powerfully affect the minds of others, who even do go, but not without pricks of conscience. The consistent life of a man of God is an epistle to be seen and read of all men, and he wonderfully influences others without his in any way being aware of it. He glorifies God, and lets his light shine. We need to be much in prayer, and very watchful, considering what wicked and deceitful hearts we have, and what an unruly member our tongue is.

When God leads His children into a discovery of their fallen state there are many painful lessons to learn; but faith is not worth anything if it be not tried. God's children are frequently tempted to wish they had never made a profession—but if they attempt to return to the world, they cannot, for they are kept by the mighty power of God. I hope that the Lord will be with you and bless you, and make you willing to suffer all things for Christ's sake.

Yours most affectionately,  
In the bonds of the everlasting gospel,  
William Tiptaft.

September 8th, 1832

My dear Brother,

I, without a post's delay, send you an answer to your last kind letter. I am pleased with many things contained in it; but you and I have learned but little as yet in the school of Christ. I am glad to find you are still hopeful in the Lord's cause. You will, before long, have many difficulties and obstacles cast in your way. I hope that the Lord will pour out a spirit of prayer and supplication upon you, and that your prayers may be heard, and you may have a man among you after God's own heart.

The ground for my chapel was very dear, as there is scarcely a piece of freehold land to be bought in Abingdon. My chapel and vestry nearly cover the ground. Of course land would not be so dear with you. I would not advise you to build a very large chapel, and let it be built in the plainest style. I have reason to rejoice that my preaching was not without effect among you. If the Lord will blesses my labors, I may say with David, "Let them curse, but You bless."

It seems that there is a shaking among the dry bones at Oakham. It is a very great mercy to have even the slightest real hope that we are made partakers of grace. What are all the riches and advantages of this world, compared to a good hope through grace? The world seems so closely to cleave to the flesh of many who we hope have the root of the matter in them, that they cannot rise. Their minds are clogged. It is very sweet to the soul to feel a deadness to all things here below; but we shall find, as long as we are in the body, that the world is a very great enemy. If you are bold in confessing Christ, you must expect many an adverse dart from Satan.

"One who puts on his armor should not boast like one who takes it off." You will most probably be led before long to find very great difficulties and crosses in the spiritual warfare. You will learn what it is to faint and be weary; but if God has begun the work He will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. The Lord has not brought you yet to feel in a great degree the plague of your own heart; but you will know more of that before long.

I feel anxious that the Lord's work may be revived among you. Very few in the present day are experiencing much of the power of the gospel in their own hearts.

A man does not like sinking in the world; but it is a blessed thing when our sinking is for the exaltation of Christ. We are but stewards; and "Occupy until I come" is stamped upon all that I possess. Nothing manifests more the power of religion to the world, than liberality in money matters, and when we seek not our own ends. But we are so desirous of making provision for the flesh, and seek our own so much more than the things of Christ.

With Christian love to God's dear children, believe me,  
Yours most affectionately,  
William Tiptaft.

September 20th, 1832

My dear brother,

Grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied unto you abundantly through Christ Jesus our Lord. I rejoice to hear that you are counted worthy to suffer in some degree in the cause of Christ. It is a circumstance that so seldom occurs, that I have stronger reasons to believe that you are a partaker of the grace of God. The general religion of the present day is attended with so little power that even thousands who profess to love Christ, can scarcely give a single instance of suffering, either from the fiery darts of the wicked one, or the hatred and malice of a wicked world. Your trials, persecutions, and sufferings on account of your religion are too small to cause even a murmur at present, but they may increase and abound before long. Satan and his allies care about nothing but the power; for where that is, the man must act, and 'faithfulness and decision' will surely meet with 'frowns and opposition'. If you have all manner of evil said of you falsely, and lose your employment, and see poverty staring you in your face—if you at the same time have a conscience void of offence towards God and man, you will indeed be favored of the Lord. It seems to me not very likely that you are to be honored in this way at present. You have too little grace; the image of Christ is not sufficiently impressed upon your heart, and you know at present too little of the operations of the Spirit upon your soul.

But the Lord is a sovereign, and can magnify His power in your weakness. If you have lost your employment and worldly advantages through your boldness in Christ's cause, you are pronounced blessed. It is a gift and much to be prized, for it is given to you not only to believe, but to suffer for His sake. Paul prayed to know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings; and offences must come, but woe to them by whom they come. Paul says, "To them it is an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God," for "on their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified." You have Christ and all the blessed promises on your side; but for them there is nothing but woes and judgments.

I believe that no sins are so quickly and so severely punished as those which are committed against the Lord's own family. It would be better for them "to have a millstone tied round their necks and to be cast into the middle of the sea;" and God says, "Whoever touches you, touches the apple of My eye" (Zech. 2:8).

I hope that you will be kept from having unkind and uncharitable feelings against those who may attempt to injure you. They are fulfilling God's word as well as yourself. Nature is the same; consequently, let the power of the gospel be manifested, enmity will be quickly displayed. I hope that the Lord may honor you as he did good Nehemiah, by putting it into your heart to seek the good of God's dear children in Oakham, and you will find, as Nehemiah did, Sanballats and Tobiahs, who will be exceedingly grieved, who will mock and despise you (Neh. 2:10, 19, 20). But as your day is so your strength will be. If you have deep trials, losses, and sufferings, you will have the consolations and the sweet promises applied; and when you read the latter part of Hebrews 11, you will scarcely be able to see how you are to suffer in any measure as they did, under present circumstances. God will take care of His own family. Yes, he will cut off hundreds of 'rich Nabals' rather than one of His own shall not have that which is good.

I am not afraid so much of your suffering in temporals as being puffed up with pride that you are counted worthy to suffer. The devil works with deep-laid schemes. He knows that your heart is not set upon the gratification of the flesh, and upon making large provision for your children, in order that they may fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

I rejoice that you are not in a dead calm at Oakham. If Satan roars, it is a sign that his kingdom is in danger, and we shall never see love and union among Christians until there is power enough in religion to excite persecution; through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom. It is an alarming truth for many professors. They may indeed cry, "Surely we are in By-path Meadow, very easy and comfortable." While in such a way, they have no need of that sweet promise being applied—"Your shoes shall be iron and brass."

Since I wrote to you I have received a letter from J. He offends many by his decision and self-denial. He has furnished his house poorly, which has very much offended his friends, though they are evangelical people. He has plain tables and no carpets, and that way of living is not very satisfactory to 'flesh-pleasing Christians'. He is not a legalist; he is taught self-denial, and when a man can act a little like Paul, he can preach with authority.

Religion suits people in general as long as it brings no cross, but when their Isaacs are to be sacrificed, they seem determined to wait until they can find an easier way to heaven. The Lord must lead us and teach us by His blessed Spirit how

to act. I hope that a spirit of grace and supplication will be poured down upon you, so that your cry may reach the ears of the Lord Almighty, and if He sends you one of His servants, He will fit him for the work. If a minister preaches with power, he will give offence; and if his eyes are enabled to discern the formality and hypocrisy of professors, he will have a host of 'merely religious' people crying out against him; but wisdom is justified of her children. You will be able to see more of the great lack of spirituality in the professing world. It must be 'heart work' to give offence, and that is the only work the world will oppose, and Satan will attempt to destroy.

How few 'sensible sinners' can you find! How few have ever been led deeply into a knowledge of their own evil hearts! How few know anything of being justified by the righteousness of Christ! How few have been stripped of their own filthy rags, and made willing to accept the righteousness of Christ! You must find yourself very ignorant when you meet with a person who can fully enter into a work of grace upon the heart. I have no doubt you are tried in your mind whether the work is really begun by God; and the more the Lord teaches you, the greater fool you will become in your own opinion.

Religion is a personal thing. Do you believe on the Son of God? There are glorious mansions for God's dear children, but they must be made fit for them. Many are desirous to have Paul's faith and joys, but they do not want his poverty, affliction, and extreme sufferings and trials. 'Creature comforts' and 'spiritual consolations' very seldom go together; nor do the friendship of the world and the favor of God. When you lose the friendship of the world, and are losing a large part of your income, your own heart, as well as wife, children, and friends, will cry out as Peter did, "Spare yourself!" May you answer in the words of Christ, if it be really for the Lord's cause. You are to be as wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove. You are on a hill. May the Lord hold you up and preserve you, and may you by continuance in well-doing put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.

I am very glad that you bear a testimony against the false prophets by testifying that you cannot hear them. If you come out from among them and be separate, you will be much hated. Husband was very pleased with your letter. I slept there last night, and met Philpot. He has been very much scolded by an evangelical, and chiefly because he defends me.

Yours most affectionately in Christ,  
William Tiptaft.

October 16th, 1832

My dear Brother,

Tomorrow morning I am going to visit an intimate friend a few miles from hence, who is to drive me to Cheltenham to preach there on Thursday evening. We are engaged to dine with Dr. Foot, a physician there, who is "a speckled bird" like yourself. Cheltenham is a place of great profession; there is one chapel that will admit men of truth, in which I am to preach; and I am to preach at the town of Fairford on the Friday evening, on my return. On Saturday I hope to return safely to preach in my own chapel on Sunday, and on Monday I am to go into Wiltshire, where I am engaged to preach on that evening, and on the four following evenings, in different chapels. On Sunday next week I am to preach at Trowbridge for Warburton, and on my return, at Devises, etc. I have to seek no places to preach in, but have to refuse many invitations. Two weeks ago I preached in a barn. It was at Stratton, about twenty-eight miles from hence, and I did not please them all. I preached morning and evening in the barn, and in the afternoon in a chapel at another village, and someone threw a stone into the chapel through the window, close behind the pulpit; but I escaped, for it hit the window-frame.

Lately I have preached a good deal, and have had very large congregations, and my own chapel as yet continues to be crowded. I think, nevertheless, I am liked better here than at Oakham. Many wait for my halting, and if God were to let me or any of my set fall, it would be a good feast for the Pharisees; for God says, "They eat up My people's sins as if they eat bread," but may the Lord keep us humble, crying out, "Hold us up, and we shall be safe."

From the various accounts I receive from you, I am encouraged to believe that there is a small band in Oakham "whose hearts God has touched;" there is opposition to you, and will be more so when you are more united. I am daily more fully convinced that there is no religion where there is no persecution.

Where Christ is, the devil will roar, and raise all the opposition in

his power. Christ says, "They have hated Me, and they will hate you also." Many have a religion now that costs them nothing; but Christ says, "Count the cost." "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place

ce to lay his head." Many find that religion works well with their temporal affairs, and through their religion they thrive and prosper. And many a minister after the flesh may bless God for sending His Son into the world, for they have taken His name in their mouths, and have made Him a stalking-horse to get more of this world's goods, and to enjoy them by Him; some riding in their carriages, and crying out on Sundays, "We must walk in Christ's steps." They cannot say of themselves, "Jesus, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well." It will be, alas! "You in your lifetime received your good things."

What a mercy it is to have a testimony from the Lord in being counted worthy to suffer loss and shame for His name. There must be power in true religion, and it will cause a change in a man's life and conversation. He will be brought from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God.

Paul says, "If any man has not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His." The shortest way of entering into a man's religion is to ask him whether he has the Spirit of Christ, and if he says, "Yes," then ask him what the Spirit of God has done for him, what change it has wrought, etc. If he can give a good scriptural account, you will say, "I have met with a brave companion;" if he evades questioning, you can tell him you would not be in his place for a thousand worlds.

The Lord giving you grace to set your faces against Satan's ministers will make their master very malicious and spiteful; for nothing displeases Satan so much as when you show contempt for his ministers, for they are his strongholds. Our very nature that partakes of his spirit joins with him, and the world is manifestly on the same side; consequently, any one who "takes heed what he hears" must suffer reproach. If I go to hear a minister, I want to know who that are spiritually-minded sit under him. If I can find none of the sheep of Christ, I am sure that the minister is not a shepherd. But God will, by His grace, bring out His people from such ministers as you have at Oakham by bringing home to their minds the following texts—"Why do you seek the living among the dead?" "What are you doing here, Elijah?" "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away." And again, "Come out from among them, and be separate."

When God has applied such texts with power to the heart, so that they have not received them as the word of man, but as the word of God, which effectually works in those who believe, neither friends nor relatives, neither good customers, neither good masters nor good mistresses, can make them hold up the hands of false prophets, for God has spoken unto them, and where there is the voice of a King there is power. "Believe not every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they be of God."

Since I wrote the above, I have had a very pleasing young man to see me, from Oxford, to ask me to preach for them there on Sunday next, which I intend (God willing) to do between my services; for they are there without a preacher. It is lamentable to think how many are crying out for the bread of life in various large towns, and there are scarcely any ministers to give unto them a portion in season (Amos 8:11, 12). It is a great mercy to have a desire given to us for the sincere milk of the word. It is of God's grace if we differ from the gay and foolish multitude around us!

I want to know more of what the Lord is doing for your souls at Oakham; how you are tried in your minds, whether you are really partakers of grace, and have the root in you; and what testimony you have that you shall continue to the end.

Yours very affectionately,  
William Tiptaft