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An Apology for Renouncing the Jurisdiction of the Synod of Kentucky.

Barton Warren Stone
Springfield Presbytery

Robert Marshall
Springfield Presbytery

John Thompson
Springfield Presbytery

John Dunlavy
Springfield Presbytery

Richard McNemar
Springfield Presbytery

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Recommended Citation

Stone, Barton Warren; Marshall, Robert; Thompson, John; Dunlavy, John; and McNemar, Richard, "An Apology for Renouncing the Jurisdiction of the Synod of Kentucky." (1804). *All Foundational Documents*. 17.

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A P O L O G Y

For Renouncing the Jurisdiction

OF THE

SYNOD OF KENTUCKY.

To which is added, a compendious view of the GOSPEL,
and a few remarks on the CONFESSION OF FAITH.

~~~~~  
BY THE PRESBYTERY OF SPRINGFIELD.  
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" I hate the dust that fierce disputers raise,
" And lose the mind in a wild maze of thought :
" What empty triflings, and what subtil ways
" To fence and guard by rule and rote !
" Our God will never charge us, that we know them not :
" Touch heav'nly word, O touch these curious souls ;
" Since I have heard but our salt hat, from thee,
" From all the vain opinions of the schools,
" (That peagentry of knowing fools)
" I feel my pow'rs released, and stand divinely free."

W A I T S .

LEXINGTON, (K.)

PRINTED BY JOSEPH CHURCHESS, JANUARY 31st, 1804.

INTRODUCTION TO THE APOLOGY OF THE SPRINGFIELD
PRESBYTERY.

By the request of B. W. Stone, as expressed in a previous part of this work, the Apology of the Springfield Presbytery is made a part of his Biography. This was the first publication ever made by the original five, viz: Robert Marshall, John Thompson, John Dunlavy, Richard M'Nemar and B. W. Stone, who withdrew from the Synod of Kentucky. It will be seen by reference to the Apology which follows, that this withdrawal took place in Sept. 1803, and by a reference to the Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery, that it bears date June 28th, 1804. As then this Presbytery was constituted after September 1803; and as it was dissolved in June 1804, and as the Apology was published, by that Presbytery, of course it must have made its appearance late in 1803, or early in 1804. That part of the title page of the Apology which contained the date of its publication being lost, the writer can only fix its date as above. As a historical document "the Apology" must be regarded as very valuable, as it sets before us fully and clearly that reformation-movement, that began to develope itself in the beginning of this century.

This work, it will be seen, is divided into three parts. The first part was written by Robert Marshall, the second by B. W. Stone, and the third by John Thompson, the only survivor (1846) of the original five.

AN APOLOGY for renouncing the jurisdiction of the Synod of Kentucky. To which is added, a compendious view of the Gospel, and a few remarks on the Confession of Faith.

BY THE PRESBYTERY OF SPRINGFIELD.

Whereas we have promised to give a fair statement of the causes of the late separation from the Synod of

Kentucky, and many have expressed their anxiety to see it; we propose in the following sheets, to give a brief history of the circumstances which, in a gradual chain, contributed to bring the matter to that issue. The history shall be principally composed of authentic documents, extracted from the minutes of the Washington Presbytery, and the Synod of Kentucky.

It will be generally granted, that true religion consists mainly in a feeling sense of divine truth; and discovers itself by corresponding actions. With truth, religion ever has revived, and both die together. It flows from God as rays of light from the sun; stop the communication of light, and the world is instantly in darkness. All, who are acquainted with revivals of true religion, know the doctrine under which they generally commence, is simple, plain, practical and pointed to the conscience. They also know what usually stops the gracious work; a lusting after forbidden food, and loathing the manna of simple truth. Thus began the late extraordinary work of God; and thus, we fear, it will terminate with many. Christians, in the lively exercise of religion, generally agree respecting the simple truths of the Gospel; and while their attention is fixed on these, nothing stands in the way to prevent their union and communion. Their hearts burn with mutual love, and a kindred zeal unites their efforts in promoting the common cause.

At the commencement of the present revival, preachers in general, who were truly engaged in it, omitted the doctrines of election and reprobation, as explained in the Confession of Faith, and proclaimed a free salvation to all men, through the blood of the Lamb. They held forth the promises of the gospel in their purity and simplicity, without the contradictory explanations, and double meaning, which scholastic divines have put upon them, to make them agree with the doctrines of the Confession. This omission caused their preaching to appear somewhat different from what had been common among Presbyterians; and although no direct attack

was made on these doctrines, as formerly explained; yet a murmuring arose because they were neglected in the daily ministration. This murmuring was heard in different parts of the country; but, notwithstanding, preachers and people treated each other with toleration and forbearance, until a direct opposition to the new mode of preaching took place in the congregation of Cabin-creek. This appears from the following complaints and charges, dated November 3, 1801, and laid before the Presbytery of Washington, met at Springfield.

“ *The Rev. Presbytery*:—As we expect some accounts of the unhappy situation of our congregation have reached you and excited anxiety, and as we consider ourselves under your care, and look up to you for counsel, and interference between our pastor, Mr. M’Nemar, and us, who were members of his session, together with a great part of the people; we take the liberty to give you a brief account of our differences, from their first commencement to the present time.

Some time last winter he began, as we believe, in his preaching, to deviate from the doctrines contained in the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian church, which we believe to be perfectly consistent with the word of God; an account of which we enclose to the Rev. Presbytery. Some of us then privately conversed with him on the subject, but to no purpose. We then as a session collectively, conversed with him, but the consequence was, that the difference in our opinion was augmented. We continued frequently as individuals to deal with him on those points; but to no other purpose than to make him more zealous in propagating those sentiments which we opposed. And although we endeavored to keep those differences private from the people, yet he frequently made use of such language, when on those points, as naturally led the people to understand that there was a difference between him and us, and repeatedly misconstrued our conduct and principles, ridiculing us from the pulpit; though not by

name, yet in such language as to convince every attentive person present, who and what he meant. Our influence was hurt, and deviations in doctrine and church discipline increased to such a degree that we could do little or no business in session; and the people, over whom we considered ourselves guardians, were some of them sucking in those ideas, which we believed to be dangerous and pernicious. Others of them, from a sense of those dangers, were urging us to take some measures to prevent the people from being imposed upon. In this situation we were, and the time of the meeting of that Presbytery, to which we designed to apply for redress, being far distant, we applied to a neighboring Bishop for advice; and finally concluded on a week day meeting, publicly to vindicate that cause in which we were engaged; and to show wherein Mr. M'Nemar's doctrine was inconsistent with the doctrine and discipline of our church; and after informing him, before a number of witnesses, of the measures we were going to adopt, and he remaining obstinate, we proceeded to the disagreeable though in our opinion necessary task. And ever being desirous of accommodating the unhappy difference, we lately proposed to Mr. M'Nemar, in the presence of the Rev. John Dunlavy, and Messrs. James Baird and John Donalson, two of his elders, that if he would profess to believe in the doctrines contained in the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian church, and that he would propagate and defend the same, and no other in contradiction to them, and be ruled by the book of discipline, that we would then bury all our former differences; that we would return and go hand in hand in countenancing and assisting him, as far as in our power, in his ministry among us. But he replied that our proposals were improper, and that a compliance would be attended with bad consequences. And further added, that he would be bound by no system but the Bible; and that he believed that systems were detrimental to the life and power of religion.

Thus we have given to the reverend Presbytery a

brief account of our situation, and submit the business to your superior judgment, praying that you will take such measures as in your judgment will best establish that faith, once delivered to the saints; and promote the interest and peace of Christ's kingdom among us.

The charges contained in the enclosed statement can be fully substantiated. We are, with due submission, yours, &c.

JOSEPH DARLINTON,
ROBT. ROBB,
ROBT. ROBINSON."

“A statement of such doctrines as have been advanced and advocated by Mr. Richard M’Nemar, which are considered to be inconsistent with the word of God, and the constitution of the Presbyterian church.

1. He reprobated the idea of sinners attempting to pray, or being exhorted thereto, before they were believers in Christ.

2. He has condemned those who urge that convictions are necessary, or that prayer is proper in the sinner.

3. He has expressly declared, at several times, that Christ has purchased salvation for all the human race, without distinction.

4. He has expressly declared that a sinner has power to believe in Christ at any time.

5. That a sinner has as much power to act faith, as to act unbelief; and reprobated every idea in contradiction thereto, held by persons of a contrary opinion.

6. He has expressly said, that faith consisted in the creature's persuading himself assuredly, that Christ died for him in particular; that doubting and examining into evidences of faith, were inconsistent with, and contrary to the nature of faith; and in order to establish these sentiments, he explained away these words—*Faith is the gift of God*, by saying it was Christ Jesus, the object of faith there meant, and not faith itself; and also, these words, “No man can come to me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him,” by saying that the

drawing there meant, was Christ offered in the Gospel; and that the Father knew no other drawing, or higher power, than holding up his Son in the Gospel."

With respect to this petition, Mr. M'Nemar states, that previous to bringing it forward, the petitioners, with the advice of a neighboring Bishop, had engaged in a public vindication of the Confession of Faith; in which they undertook to prove, that the general call of the Gospel was inconsistent with the Westminster doctrine of Election, and Reprobation, and Faith. These doctrines, as explained by the Westminster Assembly, being brought to public view, contributed much to the unhappiness of the congregation, and tended to check the glorious revival which had taken place. When these charges were brought forward, and Presbytery refused to take them up, (as will appear hereafter,) Mr. M'Nemar asked liberty to make a few observations upon them, as explanatory of his ideas; which he said he would not have done, if the Presbytery had thought proper to investigate them, to institute a prosecution upon them.

Upon the first charge, he observed, that faith is the first thing God requires of a sinner; and that he had no idea of him praying but in faith: "For how shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed."—Rom. x. 14.

On the second, that the question in debate was, whether any other convictions are necessary to authorize the soul to believe, than those which arise from the testimony of God, in his word.

On the third, that Christ is by office the Saviour of all men.

On the fourth, that the sinner is capable of receiving the testimony of God at any time he heard it: for "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."—Rom. x. 17.

Upon the fifth, that the sinner is as capable of believing as disbelieving, according to the evidence presented

to the view of his mind: for "if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater."—1 John, v. 9.

The first part of the sixth charge he declared was wholly groundless.

On the second, which respects doubting and self-examination, his ideas were, that doubting the veracity of God, and looking into ourselves for evidence, as the foundation of our faith, is contrary to Scripture; which represents the promises of the Gospel as the only sure foundation, and that self-examination has respect to the fruits, and not to the foundation of faith.

On the third part, viz: explaining away those Scriptures, he replied, if that was explaining them away, he had done it.

The reader will observe, that the foregoing observations, not being reduced to writing at the time, we now attempt to give the general sense of them only; and for a more full explanation, he is referred to what will be said in the sequel. The decision of Presbytery, upon the foregoing petition and charges, you see in the following extracts from their minutes, dated Springfield, November 11, 1801:

"A letter, with certain other papers, from three of the former elders of Cabin-creek congregation, containing certain charges respecting doctrines, against the Rev. R. M'Nemar, was presented to Presbytery. Presbytery having taken into consideration the papers from Cabin-creek, concluded it irregular to take any further notice of them; as no person, at present, proposed to substantiate the charges stated in them."

This wise and prudent measure of Presbytery had a happy tendency to quench the flame of opposition: the contending parties became more and more reconciled; and finally came to an agreement on the 20th of March following, to bury all former differences, and unite in communion for the future: which agreement took place

in the presence of the Rev. John E. Finley, and with his approbation ; a copy of which is here inserted :

“Whereas, a difference has existed for some time between the Rev. R. M’Nemar of the one part, and Joseph Darlinton, Robert Robb, and Robert Robinson, ruling elders in the congregation of Cabin-creek, of the other part, upon certain points of doctrine, which has threatened much evil to that branch of the church :— We, having met, and entered into a free and full conversation on the subjects in controversy, do now mutually agree to pass over all past altercations, and cordially unite in communion for the future. In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands, this 6th day of March, 1802. Signed by

J. DARLINTON,
R. ROBB,
ROBT. ROBINSON,
R. M’NEMAR.”

Testis, JOHN E. FINLEY.

After the matter was thus settled, and the spirit of toleration restored, Mr. M’Nemar was called to take charge of the congregation at Turtle-creek, where, through the blessing of heaven, his ministrations in the Lord were abundantly successful. The people here were cordially united ; not a dissenting voice among the members of the church, nor a single sentiment called in question, until Mr. Tichner, one of the elders, began to object to the doctrine in general, under the vague phrase of *Free-will*. As Mr. Tichner, for several months, expressed himself not only a friend to the revival, but also to the doctrine under which it was promoted, there is very good reason to believe that he became disaffected to both through the instrumentality of his particular friend Mr. Kemper. We have it from his own mouth, that this person, early in the revival, endeavored to prejudice his mind against the work. A letter from the same quarter was handed him on one of the preparation days of the sacrament, which was read by several members of the congregation, but afterwards

suppressed; which letter was evidently intended to irritate his mind against some of the leading members of the congregation, and draw him off from the approaching communion. By whatever means the change might have been produced in Mr. Tichner, he took a very unfriendly method to manifest it. Without ever stating a single objection to Mr. M'Nemar, in private, he gave the first notice of his disaffection to a surrounding crowd of careless sinners, in the interval of public worship. On this imprudent step, he was seriously and affectionately dealt with by the session: and advised to state his objections to the doctrine, if he had any, and lay them regularly before the Presbytery. This, however, he declined; as it appeared evident he had no accurate ideas that any thing specifically erroneous had ever been advanced. He likewise declared, that it never was his intention to complain to the Presbytery on the occasion. The small disturbance which his imprudent conduct had excited was amicably settled, and the scandal which it had brought on the church removed, and matters at least externally restored to their former train. This took place a few days before the meeting of Presbytery at Cincinnati, October 6, 1802. When Presbytery met, nothing existed as a ground of prosecution: nevertheless, an elder of Mr. Kemper's congregation, being a member of Presbytery, arose, and entered a verbal complaint against Mr. M'Nemar, as a propagator of false doctrine; and desired Presbytery to look into the matter. This elder declared that he had it only by hearsay; having himself never heard Mr. M'Nemar preach. He mentioned Mr. Tichner, who was then present, as being capable of giving Presbytery information. Mr. M'Nemar then opposed the measure, insisting that it was out of order; and informed Presbytery of the only method in which charges could regularly come before them, that is to say, in writing. Nevertheless, Presbytery proceeded to what they call an *examination* of Mr. M'Nemar, on the fundamental doctrines of the sacred Scriptures. This, the Synod after-

wards calls, "a previous orderly examination," and some of the members, "a friendly conference." It will hereafter appear to the unprejudiced reader, whether it was either a friendly conference or an orderly examination. The *examination*, or what may more properly be called, the *Presbyterian Inquisition*, was closed with the following minute :

"Whereas, it has been reported for more than a year past, that the Rev. R. M'Nemar, held tenets hostile to the standard of the Presbyterian church, and subversive of the fundamental doctrines contained in the sacred Scriptures : and, whereas, these reports have daily become more clamorous, notwithstanding Mr. M'Nemar has from time to time been warned of these things, both privately and more publicly, both by private persons, and members of Presbytery, separately and jointly : therefore, Presbytery have thought it necessary to enter into a more particular and close examination of Mr. M'Nemar, on the doctrine of particular election, human depravity, the atonement, the application of it to sinners, the necessity of a divine agency in the application, and the nature of faith ; upon which examination had, it is the opinion of this Presbytery, that Mr. M'Nemar holds these doctrines in a sense, specifically and essentially different from that sense, in which Calvinists generally believe them ; and that his ideas on these subjects are strictly Arminian, though clothed in such expressions, and handed out in such manner, as to keep the body of the people in the dark, and lead them insensibly into Arminian principles ; which are dangerous to the souls of men and hostile to the interests of all true religion. *

* What! Arminian principles dangerous to the souls of men! hostile to the interests of all true religion! And yet Arminians recognized by Presbyterians and Calvinists in general, as orthodox Christians, as agreeing with them, in all the essentials of religion, and worthy of a place at their communion tables!! Although their principles are hostile to the interests of all true religion!! How is this? J. R.

“Ordered, that a copy of this minute be forwarded by the clerk, as early as may be, to the churches under our care.”

With respect to the foregoing minute, we state the following facts:—When this minute was introduced and carried in Presbytery, it was on the last day of the session. Presbytery met that morning upon its own adjournment; the Moderator being absent, a new one was then chosen: Mr. Wallace, being sick, was absent; he had not attended during the examination. Mr. Kemper moved for an adjournment to his house, as it was certain, without his vote, this illegal minute would not have received the approbation of the majority. As the members were not aware of the intrigue, his motion succeeded. When Presbytery met at Mr. Wallace's, it was moved that they should proceed to the consideration of Mr. M'Nemar's examination; upon which he was put out of the house, by the casting vote of the new Moderator. After he had withdrawn, a message was sent, directing him to retire to the meeting-house, and preach to the people, it being on Saturday, previous to the administration of the Lord's supper. Mr. Kemper then brought forward a written copy of the foregoing minute, previously prepared in private, which after some altercation, and perhaps a little amendment, was adopted. It is farther worthy of notice, that beside the then Moderator, Messrs. Kemper and Wallace were the only stated members present, who voted in favor of this extraordinary minute. About sunset in the evening, Mr. M'Nemar returned. Presbytery was then at the point of adjourning, when the minute was read to him. He declared it was not a fair statement of his sentiments; and expressed his desire that it might be referred to the more respectable decision of Synod; which was to meet at Lexington on the ensuing week. As to regularly appealing, he conceived he could not do it; because there had been no regular trial, nor judgment; and the members expressly declared that he was not

under judicial censure ; but that they had only barely expressed to the public their opinion of his sentiments. He saw no way, therefore, in which he could carry it before Synod, without bringing forward a charge against his Presbytery, which he felt no disposition to do. He expected notwithstanding, that it would come before them, through the minutes of Presbytery, or in some other way. And in this expectation he remained every day, during the session, till Synod moved an adjournment.

On what is here stated, the reader will observe, that in the above procedure, there was no regular statement of charges, nothing reduced to writing, but the minute of condemnation ; no witnesses cited, none called, none examined ; no conviction of guilt, no confession made ; and yet without precedent, and contrary to all law, human and divine, Presbytery ordered the above minute to be published *as early as possible* throughout the churches. And what is more extraordinary, at the same time, directed Mr. M'Nemar, with all his sentiments though "*hostile to the interests of all true religion,*" to preach in the vacancies until their next stated session ; as you will see from the following minute. "Mr. M'Nemar" [was appointed] "one half of his time at Turtle-creek, until the next stated session : two Sabbaths at Orangedale ; two at Clear-creek ; two at Beulah ; one at the forks of Mad-river ; and the rest at discretion."

Those who are unacquainted with the circumstantial facts, would conclude from the foregoing minute, that the members of Presbytery had taken much pains to find out his sentiments, and set him right ; but Mr. M'Nemar states that it was far otherwise : he was uniformly treated with shyness, and the principal warnings he received, were of the threatening kind ; and better adapted to affright the dupe of a civil establishment, than to fix a mind at liberty to think for itself. It is easy to conceive what impressions the publication of the above minute was calculated to make upon the minds

of the people; some were grieved to the heart; others rejoiced, and the opposers of the revival had now full scope given them to express their opposition at pleasure. The conduct of the Presbytery in taking up and examining Mr. M'Nemar, on the verbal report of an individual, set a precedent for any to come forward, who chose to act in the same, or a similar way.

Accordingly a petition was preferred to their next session at Springfield, which was held in April 1803, praying Presbytery to re-examine Mr. M'Nemar; and not content therewith, directing them to include Mr. Thompson also, in the same examination. The brethren who had succeeded so well in the former examination, appeared anxious to go into the present one, upon the prayer of the petition, which occasioned considerable debate upon the subject; but finally, it was rejected, as you will see in the following extract from their minutes:

“A petition from a number of persons, in the congregations of Beulah, Turtle-creek, Clear-creek, Bethany, Hopewell, Duck-creek, and Cincinnati, praying the re-examination of the Rev. R. M'Nemar on the fundamental doctrines of religion; or on what the petitioners call *free will or Arminian doctrines*; and also that the Rev. John Thompson undergo the like examination. The petition was taken up, and Presbytery determined that it was improper to go into the examination of Mr. M'Nemar and Mr. Thompson, on the prayer of said petition, *as being out of order.*”

At the same session a call from the congregation of Turtle-creek, signed by about sixty persons, for the whole of Mr. M'Nemar's time, was presented through the Presbytery, which he accepted. This was the place of his residence; these the people among whom he chiefly labored, and who were best acquainted with his doctrines and manner of life; and therefore were more competent judges than those who lived at a distance,

who seldom or never heard him, and whose knowledge of him was founded chiefly on vague report. Against the proceedings of Presbytery, two of the brethren, with their two elders, entered the following protest :

“ Messrs. Kemper, Wallace, Reader, and Wheeler, protest against the proceedings of Presbytery, in the case of the petition of Wm. Lamme, and others, praying the re-examination of Mr. M’Nemar, and also the examination of Mr. Thompson ; because the people cannot be deprived of the right of proposing to the Presbytery for discussion, such difficulties respecting the doctrines taught them, as cannot be settled by the session ; and especially because Mr. M’Nemar’s principles, in particular, now stand condemned by the last meeting of the Presbytery, as Arminian. The above named members also protest against the proceedings of Presbytery, in the case of the call of Mr. M’Nemar from Turtle-creek for the above reasons ; and especially because the Presbytery now refuses to pay any attention to Mr. M’Nemar’s principles or doctrines, notwithstanding the proceedings had at the last Presbytery, as they stand upon our minutes.”

On the subject of the foregoing petition, it will be necessary to observe, that it might be thought, that because you see so many congregations named in the minutes of Presbytery, it was a congregational business ; but this was not the fact. The petition originated somewhere, and took in an extent of about fifty miles, and in the whole found fourteen subscribers, not acting in behalf of their congregations, but as individuals ; and in several congregations there was not more than one to each of them. But few of these petitioners had heard either Mr. M’Nemar or Thompson since the last session of Presbytery at Cincinnati, and it is probable some of them had never heard them. From the face of the above minutes you perceive there was a difference of sentiment in the members of Presbytery ; some

were for going into the examination on the prayer of the petition; a majority were of a different opinion, which gave rise to the protest. It is also worthy of remark, that Mr. M'Nemar and Thompson, and those of the same sentiment with them, were a majority of the Presbytery; and had they proceeded to the business, it must have been by way of self-examination, and the result must have been very different from that of the preceding session. Hence another publication would have gone out through the churches, contradicting the former, and declaring the brethren now orthodox, although they had not changed their sentiments. The Presbytery therefore waived the examination at that time, not only because they judged it illegal, but also hoped it would tend to the peace of the church.

During this session of Presbytery, the Lord's supper was administered at Springfield. The evident displays of divine power, on that occasion, carried sufficient evidence that our ministrations in the gospel were not injurious to the souls of men; and we still hoped that those of the contrary part would desist, lest haply they should be found *fighting against God*.

We felt ourselves under the patronage of heaven, and could sensibly bless the Lord that our souls had escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler. By circumstances unforeseen, a Presbytery was there providentially formed, to cover the truth from the impending storm, and check the lawless career of opposition. We considered it formed by a gracious God, in answer to ten thousand prayers: as such it then existed, though one of our present members was absent in body; it now exists substantially the same; and such it will exist till He who formed it sees fit to pronounce its dissolution. From this time the minutes plainly represented two Presbyteries, one at Cincinnati, the other at Springfield. This took place without any intention in us to counteract the proceedings of the last session of Presbytery, but we felt ourselves bound in conscience to act according to truth and good order. Had Presbytery acted upon the

petition of Lamme and others, they must have contradicted the proceedings at a former session at Springfield, November 11, 1801, in rejecting the petition of Robb and others, which proceedings the Synod approbated. If the doctrines preached were of such dangerous tendency, there was time enough to have obtained regular charges against the session in April, 1803, at the same place. But no charges coming forward, according to the book of discipline, we were in duty bound to counteract the irregular mode of proceeding at Cincinnati. Thus existed two Presbyteries in one; and it remained with Synod, when the business came before them, to say which should be retained in its bosom. In the interval between the meeting of Presbytery and that of Synod, no pains were taken by the disaffected members to obtain information from M'Nemar and Thompson respecting their sentiments, or bring about an accommodation; although they had declared in open Presbytery their willingness at any convenient time, publicly, or privately, to give a candid statement of their ideas on those subjects, and any satisfaction in their power.

When the business came before Synod, we had devised no method of defence. We felt ourselves at the disposal of Him who hath the key of David; *Him that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth.* We rested on the name of the Lord as our strong tower, and possessed our souls in patience. Through the committee of overtures, the matter was brought before Synod. The documents to which the attention of Synod was called, were the minute of condemnation issued at Cincinnati, the petition of Lamme and others, the protest against the Presbytery at Springfield, together with several other petitions, praying the examining process to be carried on against the free-will preachers, as you will see in the following attested extract from the minutes of Synod:

“Lexington, September 7, 1803. The committee of overtures report, that certain petitions, with sundry

other papers, came before the committee relative to the Rev. Messrs. M'Nemar and Thompson, as to doctrines delivered by them; which petitions and papers the committee think it their duty to overture, and lay before Synod. These being read, were ordered to lie on the table for the consideration of Synod.

“On motion, resolved, that Synod enter upon the consideration of the report of committee, relative to Messrs. M'Nemar and Thompson, on the subjects stated in the report of the committee of overtures relative to Messrs. M'Nemar and Thompson. Synod were of opinion, that the business contained in the papers lying before them, will regularly come before them, through the report of their committee, who are appointed to examine the book of Washington Presbytery; and ordered that said committee be prepared to report early to-morrow morning. The committee appointed to examine the Washington Presbytery book, report as follows:

‘We, your committee, report that we have gone through the minutes of Washington Presbytery; we found nothing worthy of remark, except one omission, (page 48) till we came to the session of April 6, 1803, at Springfield, (pages 78—81.) We, your committee, think the Washington Presbytery acted contrary to the constitution of our church, and the interests of religion, in casting the petition of Lamme and others, under the table, and taking no farther notice of it, seeing said petition implicated a charge of a most serious and important nature. If the charge were false, the Presbytery ought to have investigated and found it so, and have dealt with the complainants according to the calumny, or imprudence of their conduct. This appears to us to have been necessary, in order to have complied with the book of discipline, and also, necessary to clear Messrs. M'Nemar and Thompson from the odium cast upon their characters. But on the other hand, as it appears from a previous orderly examination of Mr. M'Nemar, that he held Arminian tenets, Presbytery

ought, as guardians of the churches under their care, to have entered upon an inquiry into those important matters laid before them. Your committee also report, that we think it was irregular in said Presbytery to present a call to Mr. M'Nemar, whose religious opinions stood condemned on their minutes.'

"On motion made and seconded, the question was put, shall the Synod approbate the proceedings of the Presbytery of Washington, in that part of their minutes, which respects the examination of Mr. M'Nemar. The yeas and nays being called for, were as follows: Yeas, Samuel Finley, Archibald Cameron, Matthew Houston, Isaac Tull, James Blythe, Joseph Howe, John Lyle, Robert Stewart, Samuel Rannels, ministers; James Henderson, Joseph Moore, William Nource, John Henderson, James Wardlow, John McDowell, Charles McPheeters, William Connel, Elders. Nays, Robert Marshall, James Welsh, Barton W. Stone, William Robinson, ministers; David Purviance, Malcom Worley, Elders; non liquet—Samuel Robinson.

"On motion, resolved, that the Synod now take up, and determine this question, viz: whether the Presbytery of Washington were in order, in publishing to the churches, under their care, that the doctrines Mr. M'Nemar held, were of dangerous tendency, and contrary to the constitution of our church; which question being called for, was carried in the affirmative.

"On motion, resolved, that the Synod take up and determine this question, viz: was the Presbytery in order in making appointments for Mr. M'Nemar, at the same session, in which they had taken a vote of censure, on some of his tenets. The yeas and nays being called for, were as follows: Yeas 7—nays 10—non liquet 4.

"The Synod went on further to consider the report of their committee, relative to the conduct of Washington Presbytery. It was moved and seconded, whether that Presbytery were in order, when they rejected the petition of Lamme and others. After mature deliberation,

the question was determined in the negative. Nays 18, ayes 5; non liquet 1."

"It was then inquired, whether that Presbytery were orderly in presenting a call to Mr. M'Nemar, while he lay under a vote of censure, by a preceding session, and determined in the negative."

Before we proceed farther, we will make a few remarks upon the extracts now before us. You will observe, that in the estimation of Synod, all things went right in the proceedings of Washington Presbytery, until the meeting at Springfield in 1803, except that they gave M'Nemar appointments to preach, after they had taken a vote of censure on some of his tenets. For they tell you they find nothing worthy of remark, on their minutes, until the time of that meeting, except one omission, (page 48) which was only of a single word. Is it not strange then, that they could not see in the same minute, a plain contradiction, not in words only, but in actions? In the proceedings of this Presbytery, you will see that when the petition of Mr. Robb and others from Cabin-creek, stating charges against M'Nemar, was introduced, it was rejected, because no person in their opinion, had undertaken to substantiate these charges; yet this same Presbytery at another meeting, with far less legal foundation, went into an examination, and condemnation of the same man. The Synod passed over this contradiction, as not worthy of notice, but at the same time approbated the examination, as stated by their committee to be *orderly*. The Synod also tell you through their committee, and by an express vote, that the Presbytery acted contrary to the constitution of our church, and the interests of religion, in casting the petition of Lamme, and others, under the table, and taking no farther notice of it; and again, that Presbytery ought to have investigated it, in order to have complied with the book of discipline; and as guardians of the churches under their care, to have entered upon an inquiry into those important matters laid before

them. If we have a right to inquire into those rules by which we are to be governed, and our actions tried, we can see no reason why the petition of Lamme should be treated with more respect than that of Robb; and why the same observations were not made on the former proceedings of Presbytery, as on the latter. But if there be a sovereignty in government into which it is unlawful to pry, by which the conduct of some men is approbated, and similar conduct in others reprobated, the solution is plain, "reason not, but resign." The readiest way, no doubt, to account for Synod passing over the proceedings of Presbytery, November 11, 1801, their approbation of those of October 6, 1802, and their reprobation of those of April 1803, is to resolve it into their sovereignty.

We are perfectly of the same mind with Synod, in considering Presbyteries as guardians of the church; that they not only have the right, but it is incumbent upon them, to inquire into, and decide upon all matters respecting the church, which come legally before them. The difference then between the Synod and us, is not, whether a Presbytery has a right to watch over their members, and censure them with impartiality, when necessary, and when the matter comes orderly before them; but whether the case under consideration ever came legally before them. According to Scripture, we know of no legal process without a charge, and witnesses to support it. "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses." 1 Tim. v. 19. According to the book of discipline, we know of but two methods of bringing forward charges: chap. 2d. sec. 3. "Process against a gospel minister shall not be entered upon, unless some person or persons undertake to make out the charge, or when common fame so loudly proclaims the scandal, that the Presbytery find it necessary to prosecute and search into the matter for the honor of religion."

In this case no person had undertaken to make out and support the charge, which the book of discipline

requires. These petitioners could not be warned, according to chap. 2. sec. 7, "that if they failed to prove the charges, they must be censured as slanderers of the gospel ministry." They did not come forward as prosecutors; they did not undertake to support charges; they appeared only by petition, and not in person. Presbytery could not therefore, take it up upon the first mode as a regular charge; neither could they take it up upon the second, in compliance with the petition in a judicial process. In a trial by common fame, a specific charge must be exhibited, and the Presbytery become the prosecutors. They are to search into the matter, but where are they to search? Are they, in the first place, to search the heart of the suspected person, or put him on the rack to make confession himself? This was indeed the method the High priest took with Christ, when he asked him of his disciples and his doctrines; and who will dispute the propriety of our Saviour's answer: "I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple whither the Jews always resort, and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? Ask them who heard me what I said unto them; behold, they know what I said unto them."—John xviii. 19, 20, 21. If then an accused person is not obliged to bear witness against himself, where is the Presbytery to go to find it, but to the public, where common fame originates? And as in the present case it was a charge of false doctrine delivered by them, the inquiry must have been of those who heard them. The Presbytery itself must institute charges, and from the public they must bring forward testimony to support those charges. The accused must be furnished with a written copy, with the names of the witnesses—have time and opportunity allowed them to confront the witnesses—to defend themselves, and if they can, to prove a negative; chap. 2, sec. 5. Could all this have been done at the meeting at Springfield? It could not. We see, then, that the matter could not have been taken up at that time, and proceeded in as a

trial by common fame. To have complied, therefore, with the prayer of the petition, and the wish of the two protesting brethren, would have been disorderly. It may be plead in favor of proceeding immediately against M'Nemar and Thompson, that the interests of religion required a speedy check to be put to the growing errors. But is it not astonishing, where so great a zeal for orthodoxy and good order abounded, that something could not have been collected, in so great a lapse of time, to lay a foundation for a regular process?

Synod seems to have taken it for granted that Mr. M'Nemar was regularly accused, convicted, and condemned; and on this presumption they have censured Presbytery for appointing him supplies, and presenting him the call from the congregation of Turtle-creek: but as we have shown above, *that* examination was not orderly, he was not under judicial censure, and therefore, the Presbytery was in order, in presenting the call. These observations not only show the impropriety of the conduct of Synod in condemning the proceedings of Presbytery at Springfield, but also in approbating those of the previous meeting at Cincinnati.

Synod having condemned the Presbytery at Cincinnati, for giving M'Nemar appointments to preach; and also that at Springfield for presenting him the call, did thereby implicitly declare that he was already suspended from the functions of his ministry. We evidently saw that the way was now prepared to censure any minister of the gospel, without charge, witness, or prosecution, through the short medium of presbyterial inquisition. These proceedings did not involve the fate of M'Nemar and Thompson alone, but also of us all; as we were in the same strain of preaching, and were viewed by Synod in the same point of light. We saw the arm of ecclesiastical authority raised to crush us, and we must either sink or step aside to avoid the blow.

Under these circumstances we retired, during a short recess of Synod, to ask counsel of the Lord, and consult one another. When we came to consult on the

subject, we found it had struck each of our minds in the same light, without any preconcerted plan. To appeal to the General Assembly, so long as human opinions were esteemed the standard of orthodoxy, we had little hope of redress. We therefore determined to withdraw from the jurisdiction of Synod, and cast ourselves upon the care of that God who had led us hitherto in safety through many trials and difficulties; and who, we believed, would lead us safely on to the end. We then concluded to draw up and enter our protest against the proceedings of Synod. While we were doing this, the Synod were debating as to the propriety of proceeding in the new inquisition, as will appear from the following extract:

“Whereas, the Synod have taken into consideration certain petitions and papers respecting the conduct of Washington Presbytery at Springfield, &c., which conduct this Synod have said was out of order, &c. On motion, resolved, that Synod now enter upon the examination or trial of Messrs. M’Nemar and Thompson, according to the prayer of the petitions, and the charges therein stated; and also, that this Synod resolve the questions of doctrines, seriously and reasonably proposed in their petitions.”

“While Synod were deliberating on the propriety of adopting the above resolution, Messrs. Marshall, Stone, Dunlavy, M’Nemar, and Thompson, appeared in Synod, and having given their reasons for not attending sooner, they presented a paper, through Mr. Marshall, which that gentleman stated to be a protest against the proceedings of Synod, in the affair of Washington Presbytery, and a declaration that they withdrew from the jurisdiction of Synod. This paper was read, and is as follows:”

“*To the Moderator of the Synod of Kentucky.*

“*Reverend Sir:—*We, the underwritten members of Washington and W. Lexington Presbyteries, do hereby

enter our protest against the proceedings of Synod, in approbating that minute of the Washington Presbytery which condemned the sentiments of Mr. M'Nemar as dangerous to the souls of men, and hostile to the interests of all true religion, and the proceedings therewith connected; and for reasons which we now offer, we declare ourselves no longer members of your reverend body, or under your jurisdiction, or that of your Presbyteries.

1. We conscientiously believe that the above minute, which you sanctioned, gives a distorted and false representation of Mr. M'Nemar's sentiments, and that the measure was calculated to prevent the influence of truths of the most interesting nature.

2. We claim the privilege of interpreting the Scripture by itself, according to sec. 9, chap. i. of the Confession of Faith; and believe that the Supreme Judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other than the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures. But from the disposition which Synod manifests, it appears to us that we cannot enjoy this privilege, but must be bound up to such explanations of the word of God, as preclude all further inquiry after truth.

3. We remain inviolably attached to the doctrines of grace, which, through God, have been mighty in every revival of true religion since the reformation. These doctrines, however, we believe are in a measure darkened by some expressions in the Confession of Faith, which are used as the means of strengthening sinners in their unbelief, and subjecting many of the pious to a spirit of bondage. When we attempt to obviate these difficulties, we are charged with departing from our standards—viewed as disturbers of the peace of the church, and threatened to be called to account. The proceedings of Presbytery have furnished the world with ample encouragement, in this mode of opposition:

and the sanction which those proceedings have now received from your reverend body, cuts off every hope of relief from that quarter from which we have at least faintly expected it. We, therefore, feel ourselves shut up to the necessity of relieving you from the disagreeable task of receiving petitions from the public, and ourselves from being prosecuted before a judge (Confession of Faith) whose authority to decide, we cannot in conscience acknowledge.

Rev. Sir:—Our affection for you, as brethren in the Lord, is, and we hope shall be ever the same: nor do we desire to separate from your communion, or to exclude you from ours. We ever wish to bear, and forbear, in matters of human order, or opinion, and unite our joint supplications with yours, for the increasing effusions of that divine Spirit, which is the bond of peace. With this disposition of mind, we bid you adieu, until, through the providence of God, it seem good to your reverend body to adopt a more liberal plan, respecting human Creeds and Confessions.

Done in Lexington, Kentucky, September 10, 1803.

ROBERT MARSHALL,
JOHN DUNLAVY,
R. M'NEMAR,
BARTON W. STONE,
JOHN THOMPSON.”

The introduction of the above protest put a sudden check to the examining system. The protest was read, and shortly after we retired from the house. Synod then appointed a committee to converse with us, as you will see by the following extract from their minutes:

“On motion, resolved, that Messrs. David Rice, Matthew Houston, and James Welsh, be a committee, seriously and affectionately to converse with Messrs. Marshall, &c.—to labor to bring them back to the standards and doctrines of our church, and report Monday morning. On motion, resolved, that Mr. Joseph Howe be

added to the committee appointed to converse with Messrs. Marshall, &c.”

The result of this conference you have in the report of the committee, as follows :

“The committee appointed to converse with Messrs. Marshall, &c., report as follows, viz:—That the aforesaid gentlemen agree that they will confer with Synod, on points of doctrine, in the following manner, viz:—They will answer any questions proposed to them by Synod, which may be stated in writing—in writing again ; and that they are ready to enter upon the business, as soon as they may receive notice for that purpose. N. B. The whole of the questions shall be given in at once.”

To this committee we further stated, that we were willing to return, and be considered under the care and jurisdiction of Synod, as formerly, provided they would constitute us into one Presbytery ; and if they had any charges to bring against us, with respect to doctrines, or otherwise, let them come forward in an orderly manner, according to the book of discipline—criminate us as a Presbytery, and bring our sentiments to the word of God, as a standard, and we were willing to stand trial.

To these proposals we received no answer. It appears that Synod had considerable debating among them, whether they would comply with the proposal, contained in the report of the committee, in conferring with us in writing ; and that there was a diversity of opinion on that subject. A resolution being introduced for that purpose, it passed in the negative, 12 to 7, as you see in the following minute :

“On motion, resolved, that Synod do accede to the proposal of Messrs. Marshall, &c., in examining them on their tenets. The yeas and nays being called for, were as follows:—Yeas, M. Houston, J. Welsh, J. Howe, and W. Robinson, ministers: J. Henderson, J.

Wardlow, and C. M'Pheeters, elders: Nays, A. Cameron, J. Tull, J. Blythe, J. Lyle, R. Stewart, S. Rannels, J. Kemper, J. Campbell, S. Finley, ministers: J. Moore, John Henderson, and T. Bennington, elders."

Why Synod did not agree to the proposal we could not then tell, for they sent us no answer. However, one of their reasons, as we afterwards understood, was, that the whole of the questions must be given in at once. The weight of this reason we leave to the reader to determine. We were not only willing, but anxious to have our sentiments fairly and fully investigated, provided we were put in a situation to have a fair hearing. This we knew we could not obtain, while the leading members of Synod were in their present spirit. We did not expect to have the privilege of discussing the subjects before Synod, in the capacity in which we then stood; and were unwilling to bring our necks again under a yoke which we had so lately shaken off. The only fair way, then, to prevent quibbling and misrepresentation, was to do it in writing; as we could not do it in any other way, unless we revoked our protest, and came again under the jurisdiction of Synod. But the Synod had another objection to our proposal, viz: They could not confer with us as a body, because they could not acknowledge the legality of *this body*. Time has a wonderful power in legalizing bodies! A few years have legalized the self-created bodies of Luther, Calvin, and all the different sects of Christians, since the reformation! A few more years may legalize our self-created body, in the estimation of Synod, when we hope they will condescend to confer with us, and unity be restored.

Though we had withdrawn from the jurisdiction of Synod, it was of necessity, rather than of choice. We found we must forsake them, or what we believed to be the truth: the former were dear to us, but the latter was dearer. Under these circumstances, we again committed ourselves to God, and constituted ourselves into a Presbytery, as you will see from the minutes of our first meeting.

“We, the above named Robert Marshall, John Dunlavy, Richard M’Nemar, Barton W. Stone, and John Thompson, having entered the above protest, and withdrawn from under the jurisdiction of the Synod of Kentucky, and of the Presbyteries to which we formerly belonged, do now formally unite in a body, as a Presbytery, to be known by the name of the “Presbytery of Springfield.” After constituting with prayer, and choosing a moderator and clerk, we proceeded to draught a circular letter to the congregations formerly under our care, which is as follows:

Dear Brethren:—By the time this letter shall have reached you, you will, no doubt, have heard that a separation has taken place between us and the Synod of Kentucky, and the Presbyteries to which we formerly belonged. The reasons which induced us to withdraw, you see in the above copy of our protest, which reasons we intend more fully to unfold, as soon as we can obtain the minutes of Synod, and those of the Washington Presbytery, which are referred to in said protest. But lest you should form an improper opinion of the nature, or kind of separation, we take the liberty of giving you a short statement of it. We do not desire, nor do we consider ourselves to be separated from the Presbyterian church, as Christians, whether ministers or people; we still wish to continue united to them in the bonds of love: we will admit to communion as formerly, and desire to be admitted. It is not our design to form a party. We have only withdrawn from the jurisdiction of those bodies with which we stood connected, because we plainly perceived that, while that connection subsisted, we could not enjoy the liberty of reading, studying, and explaining the word of God for ourselves, without constant altercation and strife of words to no profit.

We pass no uncharitable censures on those reverend bodies for their strict adherence to their standards; but as we are accountable to God for ourselves, so we must act for ourselves as in the sight of God; and can own no standard of faith but the word of God; and we

desire ever to look to him for his spirit of wisdom to lead us into all truth. Brethren, we wish to pay all due deference to the Confession of Faith, and other writings of our pious fathers; but we plead a privilege, which is granted in the Confession of Faith, chap. 1. sec. 9, 10, as we mentioned in our protest; that the infallible rule of interpreting Scripture, is not the Confession of Faith, nor any human writings whatever, but the Scripture itself. On this ground we have attempted, and still mean to proceed, to hold forth the word of life, peace and pardon to sinners, through the blood of the everlasting covenant. But as we are, by some, suspected of having departed from the true doctrines of the gospel, we design as soon as convenient, to explain to the public our views of the gospel. In the mean time, we are determined, by the grace of God, to preach the gospel, and administer ordinances as formerly. 'And now brethren we commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified.' Farewell."

Late in the evening, after our adjournment, the following resolution was handed us from Synod:

"On motion, resolved, that Messrs. Rannels, Houston, and Kemper, be a committee to wait upon Messrs. Marshall, Dunlavy, M'Nemar, Stone and Thompson, to inquire of them, what objections they have to our Confession of Faith, or to any part of it, which they have, in their remonstrance declared they could not submit to be judged by; and that they transmit said objections to us in writing, to-morrow morning, or before the Synod rises."

As several of our members were under a necessity of leaving town that night, we concluded to meet next morning, to take into consideration the above resolution. The result of which meeting you will see by the following letter, addressed by us to the Moderator of Synod:

“*Reverend and dear Sir* :—We received your resolution, from a member of your committee, requesting us to give you a statement of our objections to some parts of the Confession of Faith. We have taken the matter into consideration, and resolved to comply. But it is out of our power to state them to you, as soon as you require ; but will, without fail, give you a statement, at your next annual session. A party is not our aim ; and this we hope to evince to you, and to the world, at your next session. In the mean time, we design to proceed no farther, than circumstances may require. Brethren, you are in our hearts, to live and die with you ; our hearts are bound to you in love. We hope your intentions, in doing what you have done, were good ; but we still believe as stated in our protest. In the mean time let us unite our prayers to our common Lord and Father, that he would in his kind providence, heal our divisions, and unite us more closely in the bonds of love. We remain, dear brethren, as ever, united to you in heart and affection.

ROBERT MARSHALL,
 JOHN DUNLAVY,
 RICHARD M'NEMAR,
 BARTON W. STONE,
 JOHN THOMPSON.”

This letter was sent forward to Synod as soon as possible, on the same day of our meeting ; but they did not wait for an answer, for before its arrival, they had passed a vote of suspension ; an account of which you will see hereafter. Shortly after our return home, we were followed by heralds proclaiming our suspension from the ministerial office. In some of our congregations, the minute containing that extraordinary act was publicly read, and handed to us ; which is as follows :

“On motion, the following resolution was introduced, and on a vote being taken, was carried in the affirmative. Whereas, Messrs. Robert Marshall, John Dunlavy, Richard M'Nemar, Barton W. Stone, and John

Thompson have declared themselves no longer members of our body, or under our jurisdiction, or that of our Presbyteries; and, whereas, it appears from their remonstrance, laid before Synod, that they have seceded from the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian church, and no more wish to be united with us until we adopt a more liberal plan, respecting human creeds and confessions; and whereas, a committee has been appointed seriously and affectionately to converse with the above members, in order if possible, to reclaim them to the doctrines and standards of our church, which committee has proved entirely unsuccessful; moreover, whereas, said gentlemen came into Synod and informed us, that they had constituted themselves into a separate Presbytery, and have refused to comply with every solicitation to return to their duty, but persist in their schismatic disposition: Therefore, resolved, that Synod do, and they hereby do solemnly suspend Messrs. Robert Marshall, John Dunlavy, Richard M'Nemar, Barton W. Stone, and John Thompson, from the exercise of all the functions of the gospel ministry, until sorrow and repentance for their schism be manifested; leaving it however, to the several Presbyteries, to which the above members may have belonged, to restore them as soon as they give satisfactory evidence of repentance; and their congregations are hereby declared vacant."

"On motion, resolved, that commissioners go to the several congregations where Messrs. Marshall, Dunlavy, M'Nemar, Stone and Thompson have statedly preached, to declare those congregations, not before vacated, now vacant; and state the conduct of Synod, respecting those men, and exhort to peace and unity; and that the commissioners be as follows, viz: Messrs. Shannon and Lyle, to Bethel and Blue-spring; Messrs. Rannels and Howe, to Caneridge and Concord; Mr. Blythe to Eagle-creek; Mr. William Robinson to Springfield and Turtle-creek.

A true copy,

JAMES WELSH, S. C. S. K."

Here it is worthy of our most serious attention, to observe that the Synod had no legal grounds to proceed farther against us, after our withdrawing from under their jurisdiction. For, if the power of suspension is not legally vested in a Synod, their assuming and exercising it, must appear an empty flourish. We would humbly inquire upon what ground they proceeded? Their standard affords no pretext for such a step; the power of Synod is limited to certain bounds, which you will see, Form of Government, chap. 10, sec. 2. You see not a word there of suspension; their highest authority is to advise the Presbytery in such a case. Form of Proc., chapter 2, section 11.] It is unnecessary to prove a negative. We say they had no such authority from the word of God, or the Form of Government.—But seeing much has been said in support of their authority in that case, it is necessary that we should pay particular attention to the subject. If our suspension be orderly, and according to the will of God, the consequences are serious indeed. We are bound on earth and bound in heaven—cast out of the vineyard as fruitless, withered branches; in no better circumstances than heathens and publicans; running unshod; and all that bid us God speed, must be partakers of our evil deeds. On the contrary, if we have been called of God to minister in holy things, and have done nothing to forfeit that authority; and if any man, or set of men should rise up and command us to be silent, and forbid the people to hear us; the consequences may be serious to them in the end. It is certain Synod had no authority from the book of discipline to suspend us; their authority then must have been either from the word of God, or from such existing circumstances, as required them to dispense with order.

It is difficult to find from the minute, what was the real crime alleged against us. They tell you, that we had seceded from the Confession of Faith; that they labored in vain to bring us back to the standards and doctrines of the church; that we persisted in our schis-

matic disposition, &c. It is thought necessary, even in a regular charge, that such crimes be alleged as appear from the word of God, to merit the censure of the church. What part of the above mentioned conduct does the word of God criminate? Does it bind us to any human Confession of Faith, as a standard? Does it absolutely condemn every man, as unworthy to preach the gospel, who cannot be brought to that standard, or its peculiar doctrines? If all who differ from them in this matter, are bound to cringe to their authority as sacred, why do they not level their anathemas at others, as independent of their standards as we? They will grant that their authority does not extend to preachers of other persuasions; we ask, then, how it could possibly extend to us, when we declared we were neither of their *persuasion*, nor under their jurisdiction? Because their committee failed to reclaim us to the standards and doctrines of the church, is this crime of such a nature, as to warrant suspension? How did Synod know that their committee had used arguments sufficiently powerful to answer this end? Because we had constituted ourselves into a separate Presbytery, is this crime of such magnitude, that Scripture authorizes such to be suspended? If so, they have no right to preach, in the sight of God. To suspend us for constituting a separate Presbytery, is not this to cut off at a blow, every minister since the Reformation? Luther and his followers constituted a Presbytery, separate from the church of Rome; Calvin separated from Luther, and with his followers constituted a separate Presbytery; and so have the various sects of Christians ever since. Have these, therefore, no right to preach, according to the word of God? If not, the Synod, in their act of suspension, have virtually suspended themselves, and every minister of the reformation since Luther. They say we could not be prevailed upon to return to our duty.—They take it for granted that it was our duty to return and follow with them; and for the neglect of this duty they pass their act of suspension! We have the judgment

of Christ in a similar case. John, in the name of his brethren, lodged a verbal complaint against a certain seceder, whom they had taken under a "previous orderly examination," and silenced, because he followed not with them. But Jesus said, "forbid him not; for there is no man, which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me; for he that is not against us, is on our part." Can it be a crime to withdraw from those with whom we cannot remain in peace? No! it is the inalienable right of every moral agent, to withdraw from that society, when the rights of conscience are invaded. If the Presbyterian church, deprives its subjects of this privilege, it must be tyrannical. But there is not a sentence in that book to criminate any person for renouncing its authority. Its compilers were too well acquainted with the rights of man, either to deny the privilege of withdrawing, or to inflict censure on any for doing it. For proof of this, read attentively their introduction to government and discipline.

It may, however, be alleged, that there was something criminal in the manner of our withdrawing. The book of discipline admits it to be proper to suspend a minister for *contumacy*, which is a refusal to attend Presbytery, after being three times duly cited, to answer for atrocious crimes, of which he is accused. (Forms of proc. chap. 2, sec. 8.) This appears to be the only kind of contumacy noticed in the constitution of the Presbyterian church. It may be supposed that a minister thus cited, may not only refuse to appear, but may withdraw from under the jurisdiction of Presbytery. This step is by some called *declinature*, a higher degree of contumacy. But does this apply to our case? What was the atrocious crime laid to our charge? Where was the due citation? There was no such thing in the case, and therefore contumacy or declinature is by no means applicable to our case. If any suppose we withdrew, lest we should be charged with atrocious crimes, not yet stated; then our withdrawing could not come

under the charge of *declinature*, seeing there was nothing to decline. Besides, the only thing of which we were ever accused, and which could give occasion for a future charge, was never determined by the protestant church to be an atrocious crime.

If we wished to decline any thing on the occasion, it was vain jangling and strife of words to no profit, on those subjects about which the wisest and best have differed. All judicial authority which any society has over an individual, is in consequence of a voluntary compact, tacitly or explicitly made, by which he is connected with that society and under its laws. When such compact is dissolved, which may be done at any time, by the voluntary act of the individual, the authority ceases of course. Our voluntary act, in putting ourselves under the care of the Presbytery, put it in their power to license, ordain, watch over, censure, suspend, or depose, so long as we stood in that connection; but when we voluntarily withdrew, being under no judicial censure, it may be properly said we withdrew from them all that power over us which we had given them.

When the church is satisfied that any person is called of God to preach the Gospel, it is their duty to encourage and forward him to the work. This they may do by their Presbytery, as representatives of the church, as is common in the Presbyterian government; or they may do it in a church capacity, as is done by the Independent and Baptist churches. When the church, or their representatives, take a candidate on trial, it is not with a view to call and authorize him to preach, but to inquire into the validity of that call and authority which he professes to have received from God. If they approve his profession, they express it by the act of licensure. The candidate is then to make *full proof of his ministry*, whether it be from heaven or from men; and when the church is satisfied, they manifest it by ordaining him. In all this the church confers no power, human or divine; but only the privilege of exercising the power and authority in that particular society, which

they believe he has received from God. This privilege the church may recall; the candidate may forfeit, or voluntarily resign.

But neither the refusal of the church, his own forfeiture, nor resignation of that particular privilege, can disannul the original call of God, nor the obligation of the candidate to obey. These principles are confirmed, both by the New Testament and church history. Those who can consult Dr. Doddridge's paraphrase on the New Testament, Mosheim's Church History, and Dr. Watts's Constitution of a Christian Church, will see that the practice of the primitive church, in such matters, was exceedingly simple; and according to the principles of common sense, as stated above. Some have supposed that the legal authority, for transacting church business, wholly independent of the spirit of grace, has been committed to the rulers of the church; so that the transactions of those thus authorized, and those only, are legal. Now, upon this principle, none have legal authority to preach, administer ordinances, &c., unless he has received it through regular succession from the Apostles. This regular succession has been so often broken, that it is impossible ever to get into order again, unless we make the Church of Rome the standard, and return into uniformity with it. For every division and subdivision from that has shared the same fate of suspension, or deposition. This was the case with Luther. "He was commanded (says Dr. Mosheim) to renounce his errors within sixty days, and cast himself upon the clemency of the Pope, on pain of excommunication. At first he purposed to appeal from the sentence of the lordly pontiff to the respectable decision of a general council: but as he foresaw that this appeal would be treated with contempt at the Court of Rome; and that when the time prescribed for his recantation was elapsed, the thunder of excommunication would be leveled at his devoted head, he judged it prudent to withdraw himself voluntarily from the communion of the church of Rome, before he was obliged to leave it by force;

and thus to render the new bull of ejection a blow in the air, an exercise of authority without any object to act upon. At the same time, he was resolved to execute this wise resolution in a public manner, that his voluntary retreat from the communion of a corrupt and superstitious church might be universally known before the lordly pontiff had prepared his ghostly thunder. With this view, on the 10th of December, in the year 1520, he had a pile of wood erected without the walls of the city of Wittemberg, and there, in the presence of a prodigious multitude of people, of all ranks and orders, he committed to the flames, both the bull that had been published against him, and the decretals, and canons relating to the Pope's supreme jurisdiction. By this he declared to the world he was no longer a subject of the Roman pontiff, and that of consequence the sentence of excommunication, which was daily expected from Rome, was entirely superfluous, and insignificant.* For the man who voluntarily withdraws himself from any society, cannot, with any appearance of reason, or common sense, be afterwards forcibly and authoritatively excluded from it. However, he only separated himself from the Church of Rome, which considers the Pope infallible, and not from the church considered in a more extensive sense; notwithstanding, in a month after this noble and important step had been taken by the Saxon Reformer, a second bull was issued against him, by which he was expelled from the communion of the church, for having insulted the majesty, and having disowned the supremacy of the Roman pontiff. He was also condemned the next year by the Diet of Worms, as a schismatic, a notorious and obstinate heretic; and the severest punishments denounced against those who should receive, entertain, maintain, or countenance him, either by acts of hospitality, by

* The Pope might have published to the churches that Luther was no longer connected with the See of Rome, and thus have warned them against him. This is all that Synod could have done, respecting us, with any appearance of reason or common sense.

conversation, or writing. And his disciples, adherents and followers, were involved in the same condemnation."—*Mosheim's Eccl. History*, Vol. 4, pp. 51, 52, 55. Against this edict the reformed party protested, by which they got the name of Protestants.

Synod were of a different opinion from Dr. Mosheim, as they have acted on the very same principles with the lordly pontiff: and to justify their arbitrary proceedings, and consequently those of the Pope with respect to Luther, they adduce the example of the General Assembly in the case of Mr. Birch. (See *Cir.* p. 21.) But any one who will read the minutes of that reverend body, will see that they acted on very different principles. Mr. Birch had never been a member of their body, but was only entering on the trials necessary for a foreign minister. By his conduct he forfeited a right to their protection or encouragement, and became liable to judicial censure, or suspension, if he had belonged to their body. This not being the case, they only determined to have no more to do with him, and declared to their churches a plain fact, that he had no authority from them to preach the gospel. (See the minutes of 1803, p. 14.) "Resolved, that in consequence of his conduct, and also of his never having been in regular communion with the Presbyterian church in the United States of America, the General Assembly decline all further proceedings with Mr. Birch, and declare to the people, and to the several Presbyteries in their connection, that he is a person henceforth possessed of no authority derived from our church to exercise any part of the ministerial functions." It is pitiful for Synod to misrepresent and disgrace the proceedings of that respectable body, to justify their illegal and unreasonable conduct.

On the above extracts from Dr. Mosheim, we also observe that Luther was guilty of the crime of *declinature*. He declined the jurisdiction of the Church of Rome, when charged with an atrocious crime, to avoid excommunication. He was afterwards excommunicated

by the high court of that church. His sentence was not for false doctrine, of which he was before charged; but for insulting the majesty, and disowning the supremacy of the Roman pontiff; and also for schism. And yet he did not withdraw from the church in a large sense, but from that part of it only, which considered the Pope infallible. In like manner, we have not separated from the Presbyterian church at large; but from that part only, which considers the Confession of Faith infallible, that is, as the standard of the church. How easy it is to see the similarity between Luther's case and ours; and yet he never suspected that he had lost his authority to preach, nor has any Protestant since his day called it in question.

Synod takes it for granted that we received all our authority from them to exercise the ministerial functions, and as they have taken it away, we therefore have none. Let us apply this to the case of Luther: if he received his authority from the Church of Rome, and this authority was taken from him, through what medium, then, has it been transmitted to the Synod of Kentucky? We would be glad to see authentic testimonials of their spiritual genealogy, proving their orderly descent from the Apostles of Christ. Or if this cannot be done, we must consider them as illegitimate as ourselves. It is commonly used as an apology for the Saxon Reformer, that the church from which he separated was so corrupt that her suspension was wholly invalid. Let this be granted, and what will it argue? Certainly, that her power of ordination was also invalid. This proves at once that the ordination, not only of Luther, but also of Calvin, and every other Protestant minister, is *null* and *void*; seeing they all received their ordination from that corrupt church. Therefore, if the filthiness of the Church of Rome is taken to plaster the character of our reformers, it will render the apostolic authority of our synodical brethren not only suspicious, but absolutely a blank.

As the proceedings of Synod were evidently arbitrary, and unauthorized, we need not wonder that we

are represented to the world under the odious name of *schismatics*, without any fair statement of the crime, or evidence to support it. A schismatic is one who aims to divide the church into sects and parties; not only by separating from its communion, and drawing away disciples after him, but also, *by loving the pre-eminence in the church, receiving not the brethren, forbidding them that would, and casting them out of the church*, as did Diotrephes—3 Epis. of John.

We have before proved, that merely forming a separate association is not schism; provided that association be not intended to dissolve the union and communion of the church.

But the Synod takes it for granted that a separation from their reverend *body*, is a separation from the church; thus implicitly declaring, that they are the only true church on earth. We would hardly have thought that a body of men, so liberal in their principles as to admit Christians of other denominations to their communion, would exclude those of their own for merely renouncing what others never acknowledged. Is it not confessed by all, that a schismatic spirit and a party spirit is the same? If so, let the reader judge on which side the party spirit operated through the whole of this business. Was it a party spirit that induced the preachers at first to lay aside those points of controversy which had been a means of keeping the children of God apart? What spirit prevailed in Fleming county when the late revival first commenced; when Dr. Campbell and Mr. Northcut, a Methodist preacher, gathered their flocks together, and fed them at the same table? It was justly confessed that heaven smiled upon the union. Was it not under the same spirit of union that the flame spread to the east and to the west? Let bigotry blush and be ashamed at the recollection! But when former things were thus forgotten, and former differences laid aside, was it a spirit of union or a party spirit that prompted some who were spectators only of this glorious work, to bring forward those speculative opinions, which, at that

time were neither publicly disputed, nor combatted, and involve the church in a controversy? This may be emphatically said to be *dangerous to the souls of men, and hostile to the interests of all true religion.*

We neither felt nor expressed a wish to leave our own society, nor proselyte others to follow us: but on this ground we could not long remain in peace. The Bible doctrine was too simple for those who had been accustomed to solve riddles, and reconcile contradictions. Read attentively the complaints laid before Washington Presbytery, 1801. If you can discern between your right hand and your left, you must see that the creed of a party is preferred to the Bible. For what was this party creed introduced? To establish doctrines which we think no denomination of Christians on earth holds. Such as this: that it is proper for a sinner to pray without faith, &c., &c. Any person of common sense knows that such are not the Catholic principles of Christianity. Consequently all that divide the church in support of such notions must be schismatical. When these extraordinary sentiments were prudently cast under the table, peace and union were the consequences; no separation, no expulsion was threatened, till the meeting of Presbytery at Cincinnati, 1802. Whether it was a party or catholic spirit that influenced the proceedings of that body, let the humble followers of the meek and lowly Jesus say: let them take the most favorable review of their publication against M'Nemar, and say what spirit it breathes: no sentiment there laid open to view, or its dangerous tendency showed; but party names raised from the dead to set Christians at variance. Was there no schismatic design in this? Was there no expulsion intended? And under what pretext? Not for a deviation from the plain principles of Christianity, but because the suspected person would not be bound to fight under a party standard, and wound his fellow Christians around him with the arrows of disputation. Were these measures (painful and almost insupportable as they were) ever resented in any

way to produce schism? Instead of forming designs to effect a separation, the spirit by which we were influenced, led us to form a concert of prayer for those, who we believed had despitefully used us, and fatally stabbed the cause of our divine Master. When the fairest opportunity was offered us, at Springfield, of rendering evil for evil, and railing for railing, did we accept it? No, we were for peace, "but when we spoke, they were for war."—(p. 120-7.) What cause of offence, or separation did we give? None but what our brethren had given in the same place before; and which experience had confirmed to be for the peace of the church.

If our measures tended to unite, the protest of Messrs. Kemper and Wallace, certainly was intended to divide. It not only proved its intention in the end, but the author of it, Mr. Kemper, actually began the schism, a few weeks after, at Beulah. He was appointed by Presbytery, to assist in the administration of the Lord's supper, in that place. He attended, but publicly refused to administer or partake; and drew off as many disciples after him, as he could, from the communion of the church. Thus he not only protested against Presbytery, renounced its authority, but voluntarily separated himself from the communion of the Presbyterian church. He not only began the schism, but incessantly promoted it, from that time forward; traversing the country to get petitioners against us; and finally, as an independent, voluntarily separated from us. If there is a division in our communion, let Mr. Kemper be considered as the author of it. If the Synod choose to join in the communion of Mr. Kemper, and shut the door against Presbytery, they have their choice. We mean to abide in the same principles expressed in our protest. We neither separate from their communion, nor exclude them from ours.

With what face, then, can Synod publish to the world, that we are the schismatics, the partizans, the dividers? The churches know too well, that we have been, and are in the habit of a general communion, and

that nothing has appeared to contradict those principles; and it is notorious in the place where this scene has been transacted, that the person who has headed the separation, is a stickler for the peculiarities of a party; and we are confident the reader will need no other proof, than to turn back and read the minute from his pen, at Cincinnati. The Synod, in following the above schismatic, have again raised their standard, which for three happy years had been gathering dust. The lines will probably now be cleared; the enemies of orthodoxy, however pious, be driven out of the pure church, drowsy bigots recalled to arms, and another bold push made to Calvinize the world. May heaven prevent the furious onset, and revive in the breasts of Christians, a spirit of forbearance and love! And may we, while we go under the *name* of *schismatics*, be ever kept from the *thing*. It is not uncommon to give the blow, and raise the cry. We are brought up to public view, pronounced as the leaders of a party, thundered against by the bull of suspension, and our congregations declared vacant! Could the Synod imagine that we would be silent? No. The measures carry too strong marks of ecclesiastical tyranny, to influence us farther than we are driven. Were we sticklers for what some call *order*, we might enter upon a fair and candid proof, that the Synod of Ky. are partisans, headed by Mr. Kemper, and that our protest was simply *declining* to follow them in their career of separation. We are confident that in the nature of things, it remains with the General Assembly to say, whether we, or the Synod, belong to their body; as much as it did with Synod to say, whether the Presbytery of Cincinnati, or that of Springfield, should be taken into its bosom.

From the friendly intercourse, and plans of union which exist between the General Assembly and other churches, we cannot suppose that reverend body considers the Confession of Faith, in the same point of light, with our Synodical brethren; and we are the more confirmed in this persuasion by the following ex-

tract from the minutes of their last session: "Resolved, that the Revs. Drs. Blair, Tennant and Green; the Rev. Messrs. Irvin, Milledoler, Linn, Pott, and Janeway, be a committee to take into consideration the expediency of publishing a new edition of the Confession of Faith, &c., of this church; to consider whether any, and if any, what alterations, ought to be made in the said Confession of Faith; and to make such preparatory arrangements, on this subject, as they shall judge proper; and report to next Assembly." If any inquire why we did not appeal to the General Assembly? We answer, it appeared to us unnecessary; because the business must naturally come before them, through the minutes of Synod. David did not immediately go to his father-in-law to learn his disposition towards him, till the flying arrows determined his doom. If we learn from the minutes of the Assembly, that they are for peace, we are near at hand, and ready to obey the signal; but if otherwise, our empty seats must so remain.

We have stated notorious facts, and now let every impartial friend to order, judge for himself. If the prosecution was unprecedented, and disorderly, from first to last, let the candid reader say, whether it was not an orderly step for us to withdraw. We have said in our protest, that we only withdrew from the judicatories with which we stood connected, and not from the church; we say so still. They have beaten us uncondemned, being Presbyterians, and then would cast us out of the church. Nay, their letter of suspension will not do. We must again call for order, and desire that body to produce authority, not from the annals of the church of Scotland, but from the word of God, or at least from the constitution of the Presbyterian church in America, to justify their proceedings. If they have suspended us without authority, the General Assembly will have to say whether they were in order or not. So long as we believe their proceedings were out of order, that belief will bind us more firmly to the church.—The hireling may flee when his congregations are de-

clared vacant, and his salary called in ; and set out in search of another benefice ; but we pledge ourselves, through the grace of God, to stand fast in the unity of the spirit, and without respect of persons, endeavor to gather into one, the children of God, who have been "*scattered in the cloudy and dark day.*"

PART SECOND.

A COMPENDIOUS VIEW OF THE GOSPEL. BY B. W. STONE.

"Search the Scriptures."—John.

HAVING given a short history of the various circumstances, which have gradually contributed to bring about our separation, from those bodies with which we formerly stood connected ; and the consequences resulting from them ; we now proceed according to promise, to state our views of the gospel.

Here it will be necessary to inform the reader, that the short bounds we have prescribed for the present publication, will not allow us to enter into a full and particular statement of the various things which we conceive to be comprehended in the gospel.

We are aware that every sentence of this short treatise will be viewed with a jealous eye. By some we shall probably be considered as Antinomians ; by others, Arminians. Should we attempt to evade the censures of the critic on either side, we would wander from our purpose ; which is to satisfy the inquiries of Christians, and prevent misrepresentation.

In order to do this, we shall consider human depravity, regeneration, the means by which it is effected, including faith, and answer objections.

I. HUMAN DEPRAVITY.

That mankind are depraved, is a lamentable truth,

abundantly attested by the word of God, and confirmed by universal experience and observation. To quote the many passages of Scripture which prove this point, would be to transcribe a great part of the Bible. Let it suffice to say, that Jews and Gentiles are all under sin; destitute of the image of God, and dead in trespasses and sins. This death consists in being carnally minded; for to be carnally minded is death. This carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. All are in want of what they were made to enjoy, which is God; and have a propensity to satisfy that want with meaner things. Hence arise the busy pursuits, the incessant labors, and the universal cry of a distracted, disappointed world, *Who will show us any good?*

Such is the sinful, ruined, miserable state of the world. Yet, though man be thus alienated from God, and prone to evil, he possesses rational faculties, capable of knowing and enjoying God. If not, he has ceased to be a moral agent, and consequently is no longer a fit subject of moral government. He is a machine, incapable of rational happiness. But this we believe none will assert. Still, though a moral agent, yet he is depraved. 'The crown is fallen from our head:—wo unto us that we have sinned.

II. REGENERATION.

That mankind must be regenerated before they can see the kingdom of God, is a truth as evident from the word of God, as human depravity; and is acknowledged by the generality of Christians. See John iii. 3—“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again.”—Ib. 7. To be born again, is to be renewed in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after the image of God. Col. iii. 9, 10—“Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him

that created him." "That ye put off the old man, which is corrupt, and that ye put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness."—Eph. iv. 24. It is sometimes described by being "reconciled to God."—Rom. v. 10. Sometimes by being "made partakers of the divine nature."—2 Pet. i. 4. Sometimes by having received "divine life."—1 J. v. 12. But it is more fully explained in 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." It may here be inquired, Who is the author of this great work, or change? We answer—God. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, unto good works."—Eph. ii. 10. And "Of his own will begat he us."—James i. 18. This work can no more be effected by human wisdom and power, than the "Ethiopian can change his skin, or the Leopard his spot."—Jer. xiii. 23. It may be further inquired, By what means does God effect this work in the soul? We answer, by, or with "the word of truth."—Ja. i. 18. But before we answer the inquiry fully, we shall consider our next proposition.

III. THE GOSPEL.

The gospel is "Good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people."—Luke ii. 10. An epitome of which is found in these words. John iii. 16—"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." The love of God is the spring, or moving cause of all the benefits of the gospel. His love to the fallen world is absolute, and must be so declared to mankind. To say that God loved us, on condition that we should love him, would destroy the very idea of the gospel. "We love him, because he first loved us."—1 John iv. 19. And "herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he first loved us."—1 John iv. 10. The world, the whole world of mankind, is the object

of God's love, and to which he has given his Son. But lest the light of this glaring truth should shine too brightly, some have artfully cast a veil over it, asserting that it was the *elect world* that God loved, and to whom alone he gave his Son. Of such a world the Scripture no where speaks; but declares that the application of the term world, to the elect, is highly improper. John xv. 19—"If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." But that the whole world is the object of God's love, and that Christ is given to all, without exception, is evident, from the following arguments:

1. Because Christ is constituted the Saviour of the world. John iii. 17—"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." John xii. 47—"I came not to judge the world, but to save the world." John vi. 32, 33—"But my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he that cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." 1 Tim. iv. 10—"Who is the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe." 1 John iv. 14—"We have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." From these, and similar passages, we conclude that Jesus Christ is, by office, the Saviour of the world; and therefore, as such, was given to the world.

2. This truth is farther evident, from the many invitations, calls, and intreaties to all mankind to believe on him, and come to him, as their Saviour, and freely receive his offered gifts. Isai. xlv. 22—"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." Mat. xi. 28—"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Isai. lv. 1—"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters," &c. Rev. xxii. 17—"And the Spirit and the bride say come, and let him that heareth say come, and let him that is athirst, come; and

whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Luke xiv. 17—"Come, for all things are now ready." Now how can we account for these invitations and offers made *to all*, if Christ be not given *to all*? How could we reconcile the conduct of a prince or sovereign, who should propose terms of pardon and peace to his rebellious subjects, when at the same time substantial reasons existed why he could not accede to his own proposals? If Christ be not given to the *whole world*, that *part* to which he is not given have no right to any thing in him, more than the fallen angels; and cannot be invited to receive Christ or his benefits in truth and sincerity. Besides, how can their punishment be aggravated for rejecting Christ, when he never was, nor can be offered to them in sincerity and truth?

3. But that Christ is given, and can be sincerely offered to the world, is farther evident, because "He died for all." "For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them."—2 Cor. v. 14, 15. "Who gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time."—1 Tim. ii. 6. "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man."—Heb. ii. 9. "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction."—2 Peter ii. 1. "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world."—John i. 29. Many glosses have been put upon these and similar passages of Scripture; yet the light will beam forth. Many veils have been drawn over them, yet candor will strip them off.

It is a truth, that all mankind are given to Christ, the mediator. "All things are delivered unto me of my

Father.”—Mat. xi. 27, and Luke x. 22. “The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands.”—John iii. 35. “The heathen are given to him for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession.”—Psalm ii. 8.

That Christ died for all, is still farther evident, because sinners who hear the gospel, shall finally be condemned, for not believing and obeying it. “He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not, is condemned already; because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”—John iii. 18. “The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire; taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”—John xii. 48. “So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.”—James ii. 12. “And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.”—1 John iii. 23. All to whom the gospel is preached are, therefore, required on pain of damnation, to believe in Christ for righteousness and salvation. But how can this be required of those for whom Christ never died to procure salvation? If such are required to believe, they are required to believe an untruth, (see remarks on the Confession,) and can we think that the judge of all the earth would condemn his creatures for not believing a lie? God forbid! Therefore, as all to whom the gospel is preached, are required to believe in Christ, on pain of damnation, it follows, that he died for all! If Christ died exclusively for a part of the human race, unbelief follows of course. The scheme furnishes no proper foundation for any one, to make an application of the promises to himself. And no one, holding this system, will believe until his mind is drawn off from it, and his attention fixed on the word, the promise of a faithful God. Under the influence of

this principle, he must remain for ever in unbelief. He can have no evidence that Christ died for him, and if he should attempt to believe on him, it would be presumption. But if he take God to mean what he says, that he has no pleasure in the death of the sinner—that he is not willing any should perish, and therefore gave his Son a ransom for all, then every sinner is one of the number, and has a sufficient warrant to believe. For these and similar reasons, it is evident that Christ died for all, and therefore is given to all. “That whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Thus we see the general proposition, *that Christ is given to the whole world*, sufficiently established. And as Christ is given, so with him is all his fulness given, or all that is in him. For we have no authority to believe that a partial Christ is given, or offered to any.

Christ is not divided. “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”—Rom. viii. 32. In him is fulness of salvation, pardon, eternal life, grace, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, the fulness of the spirit; in a word, all the benefits he procured by his death, and which he afterwards received as gifts for men, even for the rebellious, when he ascended in triumph to his Father.—Psalm lxviii. 18.

That there is complete salvation in Christ is a glorious truth, which his very name imports. Mat. i. 21—“Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.” A truth evident from his office, he was sent to be the Saviour of the world, from his promise. “He that believeth shall be saved.” “Neither is there salvation in any other.”—Acts iv. 12. Pardon of sin is given in Christ. “But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) arise, take up thy bed, and go to thine house.”—Mat. ix. 6. “Him hath God exalted—to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins.”—Acts v. 31. Eternal life is in

Christ, and given with him. "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."—1 John v. 11, 12. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men."—John i. 4. "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."—John xi. 25. "This is the true God, and eternal life."—1 John v. 20. In him is the fulness of grace. "And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us—full of grace and truth."—John i. 14. "And of his fulness have all we received and grace for grace."—John i. 16. Wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, are in Christ—1 Cor. i. 30, and given with him to the world. "I will give thee, for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes," &c.—Isai. xlix. 6. "That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."—John i. 9. "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."—John viii. 12. "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."—Col. ii. 3. "He is the Lord our righteousness."—Jer. xxiii. 6. The fulness of the spirit is in Christ, by which we understand his enlightening, quickening, and sanctifying influences. "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the God-head bodily."—Col. ii. 9; John iii. 34. "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear."—Acts ii. 33. The gifts which Christ received from the Father, were for men, even for the rebellious.—Psalm lxxviii. 18. "Then Peter said unto them, repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you and your children, and all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."—Acts ii. 38, 39. These are the provisions of the gospel, equal to our most enlarged capacities, boundless as

our desires, and infinite as our wants. They are all treasured up in Jesus, and with him are given to a lost world, as we have just seen. They are freely and absolutely given, suspended on no condition whatever.—They are represented by a feast, which was prepared for sinners. See Prov. ix. 1 to 5.—“Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars; she hath killed her beasts, she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table; she hath sent forth her maidens; she crieth upon the high places of the city; whoso is simple let him turn in hither; as for him that lacketh understanding, she saith to him, come eat of my bread, and drink of my wine, which I have mingled.”

Here you see that the feast was absolutely prepared, and offered freely. Those who were invited, had no hand in preparing the provisions. All were ready furnished, before the guests were invited—before they heard of it; consequently could have had no hand in it. They were bidden, and were only to come and receive what was so freely given, and prepared for them.

In Luke xiv. 16–25, we have the same truth taught us by our Lord himself. “A certain man made a great supper, and bade many, and sent his servants at supper time to say to them that were bidden, come, for all things are now ready.” This great supper was absolutely provided; and when the servants went out to call those that were bidden, they expressed no doubt respecting the provision, no uncertainty; they held up no condition, they required no qualification, as necessary in the guests. They declared absolutely and unequivocally, that *all things were now ready*. The appetites of the guests, did not create the benevolence of the giver; their believing the report of the servants, did not set one dish on the table; nor did their coming give the food its nourishing quality. All things remained the same, whether they came and partook, or staid away. So, we cannot be beforehand with God, in any of his dispensations of grace. The Lord Jesus requires no

distinguishing qualifications to bring us within the reach of his Almighty arm. He saves freely and voluntarily. He delights in the work of saving sinners. His very heart breathes forgiveness, and he rejoices over them, as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride. In this respect every sinner stands upon equal ground; there is no difference between the king and the beggar. He lays down before he takes up, and strews before he gathers.—Neither does he require the help of his helpless creatures; *his own arm brings salvation; we are his workmanship.* He does not divide the work, nor take a sinner in hand to *finish* what *he* had begun. He calls all the ends of the earth to look unto him, and be saved; saved, not in part, but in whole, from beginning to end.

The gospel contains facts in themselves, which require nothing from us, to make them true. It is a fact, that the great supper was prepared, whether those invited believed it or not; or whether they came and partook of it or not. Their believing the fact, could not make it more true. So it is a fact, that God has absolutely given his Son to the world, with all his fulness; whether we believe or disbelieve; whether we receive or reject the gift. To insert any condition in the gospel, on which its truth should depend, would be to destroy its very nature; or to cover it with such a mist of darkness that no one could see its reality. Thus to say, that Christ died for us, on condition we should believe in him, is to cast a veil over the truth; for we should then have no certain end of his death, and therefore no foundation for our faith.

The absolute freeness of the provisions in Christ, is represented by the manna provided for the Israelites in the wilderness—John vi. 32. The manna was given to all, without exception, to those who loathed it, as well as those who loved it. For the same reason the provisions of the gospel are very frequently represented by water; as in Isaiah lv. 1. “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea come and buy

wine and milk without money, and without price.”—“The Spirit and the bride say, come; and let him that heareth, say, come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”—Rev. xxii. 17. Water is free to all, and no money or price is required to purchase. So are the provisions of the gospel. No good works, no qualifications are previously required; no time is allowed to obtain them. But all are exhorted now, immediately to come: “For, behold, now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.” And, “To-day if ye will hear his voice harden not your hearts.” Whatever the situation of the sinner may be—though his sins be like crimson, and for multitude like the sand on the sea shore; yet has he a sufficient warrant now to believe the gospel, and receive its provisions. For if the gospel does not authorize him *now* to receive its provisions, it does not suit him *now*; and while he goes to seek for qualifications, death may put a final period both to the means and the end. Besides, if the gospel require previous qualifications, while the sinner is seeking them he is obeying it; and should death in the mean time carry him off, he could not be condemned on the principles of the gospel. Nor could he be saved; for he is yet without the provisions of the gospel, and therefore destitute of spiritual and eternal life. These qualifications, by whatever name they may be called, are legal; and instead of preparing the soul to receive the gospel, they are turning it away from Jesus Christ.

The gospel then invites all to come *now*, and at no other time. Therefore it bids all welcome, just as they are. But lest any should, after all, be discouraged, God proclaims his disposition to sinners in such language and in such a manner as to remove every doubt and fear. “As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?”—Ezek. xxxiii. 11. “The Lord is long-suffering to us ward, not willing that any should perish,

but that all should come to repentance.”—2 Peter iii. 9. “Who will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.”—1 Tim. ii. 4. “He waits to be gracious.”—Isaiah xxx. 18. “God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.”—2 Cor. v. 19. “God is love.”—1 John iv. 16.

God sits upon the mercy-seat to dispense grace and mercy to a lost race. None but sinners need mercy; therefore none but sinners have any business at the mercy-seat, and no other character does God receive there. The rich he sends empty away—Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.—The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. This man (Christ Jesus) receiveth sinners, the poor, the maimed, the halt, the blind, the chief of sinners. If Christ receiveth sinners only, then every attempt of the sinner to make his condition better, before he comes to Christ, is an attempt to throw himself out of the reach of Christ, and of mercy. As long as he remains out of Christ, he remains out of the *way, the truth, and the life*. This we conceive to be that gospel; which Christ commissioned his apostles “to preach to every creature, in all the world.”—Mark xvi. 15. “To as many as they should find.”—Mat. xxii. 9.

IV. THE GOSPEL THE MEANS OF REGENERATION.

WE now proceed to prove that the gospel is the means of regeneration. This truth is abundantly manifest from the following Scriptures: “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.”—1 Peter i. 23. The word of God is the seed of regeneration, called *incorruptible seed*. “Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth.”—James i. 18. “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”—Romans viii. 2. “In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gos-

pel.”—1 Cor. iv. 15. “Now ye are clean through the word, which I have spoken unto you.”—John xv. 3. “Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.”—John xvii. 17. “Having therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”—2 Cor. vii. 1. “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature.”—2 Peter i. 4. “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.”—2 Cor. iii. 18. “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”—John viii. 32. “Thy word hath quickened me.”—Psalm cxix. 50. “The entrance of thy word giveth light, it giveth understanding to the simple.”—v. 130. “The ingrafted word which is able to save your souls.”—James i. 21.

From these and similar passages it is evident that the word of truth is the means of enlightening, quickening, regenerating and sanctifying the soul. But how does the gospel effect these mighty works? We answer, through faith. The gospel or “word of God, is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword.”—Heb. iv. 12. It is *living* and *abiding*—it *endureth forever*.—1 Peter i. 23. It is *spirit* and it is *life*.—John vi. 63. These are essential properties of the gospel. To an unbeliever, the gospel is weak and produces no effect. No means whatever, will produce its effect without application. So God never appointed, that the gospel should regenerate the human heart, without application. Faith is applying the means or admitting the truth into the heart. When the sinner believes it, he is quickened, renewed and sanctified. When it is received, it is like the seed sown in good ground, which sprang up and brought forth fruit.—Mat. xiii. 23. It is that which breaks up the fallow ground of the heart. For “it is the power of God to salvation, to every one that believeth.”—Romans i. 16. “It pleased God by

the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe."—1 Cor. i. 21. "For this cause thank we God, without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it, not as the word of men; but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh also, in you that believe."—1 Thes. ii. 13. Here we find the word of God worketh effectually in believers; but it cannot work in unbelievers, because of unbelief. For the word preached does not profit, when not mixed with faith in them that hear it.—Heb. iv. 2. It may remain in the Bible till the day of our death; unless we believe, it will no more effect a change in our hearts, than seed will grow while it lies dry in the garner. God does not operate upon us as upon dead matter. He might speak a stone into an angel, but he will not do it. He deals with man as a rational creature. The strongest motives are presented to our understandings; but they cannot move, excite, or influence us, unless we believe: in other words, they are no motives at all, without faith.

God has revealed himself to us in his word; but he is invisible; he cannot be seen with mortal eyes; nor can we have any true knowledge of him, until by faith we receive the testimony he has given of himself in his Word. Then we have evidence that God is always present with us: *in him we live, and move, and have our being*---that he is infinitely holy---that he hates every sin---that he searches the hearts and tries the reins of the children of men---that he is gracious and merciful---that he is unchangeable:---what he has spoken once, he speaks always. His word is his power to salvation. By it he spoke all things into being, and by it he upholds all things. It is the voice of his Spirit *now*, and *always* addressing us. It is as a *fire* and *hammer*; and the sinner who receives it feels its powerful efficacy. It is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. The testimony of God being now admitted as true, the sinner discovers how unlike he is to God; the more he sees of God, the more he abhors himself. His fears

may be awakened by the thunders of Mount Sinai; but it is only a view of the holiness, goodness, love,---and the free, unmerited grace and mercy of God, which produces true conviction and true repentance, and which humbles the soul, slays the enmity of the heart, and makes him willing to depart from all iniquity. He adores the riches of divine grace, which is extended to such a poor polluted worm of the dust. He hates sin, and laments over it, because he sees it is committed against a God of infinite holiness, condescension and love. He devotes himself to God, to be for him, and not for another. But all these effects are produced by the belief of divine truth, or by the evidence of things not seen, received through faith.

V. FAITH.

Having shown how the gospel effects regeneration, by being believed, we are naturally led to speak of faith. We have already shown that the word of God is the foundation of faith; but it will be necessary to say something further on this subject. "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."---John xx. 31. "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."---1 Cor. ii. 5. "So then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."---Rom. x. 17. "When he (Christ) shall come to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day."---2 Thes. i. 10. "How shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard?"---Rom. x. 14. "Howbeit, many of them that heard the word, believed."---Acts iv. 4. "After that ye believed, ye were sealed."---Eph. i. 13. "And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, who testified, he told me all that ever I did."---John iv. 39. "As he spake these words, many believed on him."---John viii. 30. "Neither pray I for these

alone, but for them also, who shall believe on me, through their word.”—John xvii. 20, &c.

The word of truth is not only the foundation of faith, but it has sufficient evidence in itself to produce faith. (See Deut. xxx. 11, and John xx. 31.) Faith can have no existence without testimony. “A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.”—John iii. 27. If a fact be stated to us, which is accompanied by sufficient evidence, we believe it. Faith does not depend on any disposition, whether holy or unholy; but on the strength of the testimony. No Christian will deny that there is sufficient evidence in the word to produce faith. For if there is not, God cannot require us to believe it, nor condemn us for not believing, when it is impossible to believe. But many say, though the evidence be sufficient in itself, it can have no access to the mind in its natural state. To this we answer, that evidence, under such circumstances, is no evidence. The word, or testimony of God is to be believed, in the same manner as we believe the testimony of one another. This is evident from 1 John v. 9—“If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater:” and therefore can, and ought to be received, by all who hear it.

As faith is a simple idea, we cannot give any definition of it, that will make it plainer than it is already. And it would have been happy for the church, if no definition had ever been attempted. But if the reader, according to custom, must have one, we say, *it is admitting testimony upon the authority of the testifier. Or it is simply believing the testimony of God.* Many elaborate treatises have been written, to explain what *faith*, or *believing* is, with no better effect than to destroy its signification. A child of a few years old understands the meaning of believing, as well as a doctor of divinity. Some have defined it—coming to Christ—trusting in him, &c. These, however, are not faith, but manifestly its fruits. For none will come to him or trust in him, till they believe in him, as able and willing to save

them. Some have distinguished it into various kinds, as the faith of credence, historical, temporary;—the faith of reliance—assurance, of miracles, and saving faith. (See remarks on the Confession.) But all these are one and the same act of the mind, believing various truths, as God has revealed them.

The Apostle, in his epistle to the Hebrews, expressly describes the nature, fruits, effects, or consequences of faith, as he does also in his other epistles, sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly. In chap. x. 38, 39, he tells us it is *that* by which the just shall live; and it is believing to the saving of the soul. Chap. xi. 1—"It is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." It is giving credit to the divine testimony, respecting the creation, as related by Moses. "Through faith we understand the worlds were framed by the word of God." Verse 6—It is believing that God is, and is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and the consequence is, *coming to God*. But we cannot know these things, in the first instance, in any other way than by faith, which is the evidence of things not seen; and is opposed to experimental knowledge, which is the evidence of things seen. It is believing the testimony of God, as in the case of Noah, Abraham, &c., verse 7, 8, &c., without any other evidence; nay, the evidence of sense, in both these cases, was against the accomplishment of the word of God. Yet Abraham and Noah believed. It signifies the same, respecting the dividing of the Red Sea, and the Jordan, and the passage of the Israelites through them, the falling of the walls of Jericho, &c. Now the act of believing, in all these cases, was the same, though the objects were various, and just as various were the effects. Faith influenced Enoch to walk with God: Noah it moved with *fear*. It caused Abraham to leave his country. It influenced the Israelites to venture into the midst of the mighty waters: to surround the walls of Jericho. See its wonderful effects described at large

throughout this chapter, and elsewhere frequently in the word of God.

We see, then, from what has been said, the simple nature of faith, and its use in regeneration. If, therefore, the gospel believed, or faith in the gospel, produces regeneration, it necessarily precedes it. This is as evident, as that the means precedes the end. But as this is an important point, we will add some further proofs to the many already mentioned. "For ye are all the children of God by faith."—Gal. iii. 26. If we become children, by, or through faith, we were not children, or born again, before faith. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."—John i. 12. Therefore, before they believed, they were not the sons of God. "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."—Rom. iv. 5. Here we see the ungodly are the persons who are justified; as God justifies none but believers, therefore the ungodly believe; and of course faith precedes regeneration.

To assert that regeneration precedes faith, is to destroy the very foundation and nature of the gospel. No unregenerated person, would then have any warrant to believe. Upon this plan the gospel ceases to be glad tidings to sinners; for sinners have no right to any thing the gospel reveals.

In the great supper already mentioned, the faith of those who partook of it did not depend upon the provision they ate, nor the sight of the well furnished table; but upon the report of the servants who invited them. So the faith of those who partake of the gospel provisions, does not depend upon their partaking, but upon the divine testimony furnished in the Scriptures. We grant, that partaking the provisions of the gospel, strengthens their faith. It adds to the testimony of God, that of experience. Then we know experimentally, that the report of the servants is true. Should those invited, reply to the servants, that they could not

believe there was such a supper provided for them; they would not act more foolishly than those, who say they cannot believe in the gospel, till they partake of its provisions. The very act of taking, or receiving the provisions of the gospel is, an exercise of faith; and therefore, faith necessarily precedes receiving them. As, therefore, faith precedes partaking of the provisions of the gospel; so it cannot depend upon the reception of them for its foundation. Now, as we before proved, that salvation, pardon, eternal life, divine light, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption, the fulness of the Spirit, &c., are the provisions of the gospel, and that faith precedes the reception of them; therefore it follows, that faith does not depend for its existence on partaking any of them, but necessarily precedes all. Will any say, that faith depends upon salvation? No; for the Scripture every where asserts, that salvation follows faith. "He that believeth—shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." Will any one assert, that it depends on pardon, or justification? No, for we are justified by faith. Does faith depend on spiritual life for its existence? No; "for these things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." Does it depend upon the Spirit's powerful, enlightening, quickening and sanctifying influences? No; for we receive the Spirit *through faith*. Gal. iii. 14—"That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." "In whom, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise."—Eph. i. 13.

Faith does not depend upon grace; for by faith we receive grace. "By grace are ye saved through faith." "By whom also we have access, through faith into this grace, wherein we stand."—Romans v. 2. As, therefore, faith precedes the reception of the gospel provisions, it cannot be a part of those provisions, in any other sense, than as it is a medium of divine appointment, through which we receive them. If it belongs to the

provisions of the gospel, then it is absolutely out of the creature's reach. And would God damn a soul for not having faith, when he had it in his own hand, to give or withhold, at sovereign pleasure? With equal propriety might he damn an individual for not creating a world. For, according to this theory, the one is as much above his power as the other. Faith is no where promised, but always represented as that through which the promises are received. Thus, according to promise, we have given you a brief view of the gospel; and we desire that you will not take these things merely on our word, nor the contrary upon the word of any other person; but search the Scriptures daily, with humble dependence on God, for the necessary aids of his Spirit, and see whether these things are so.

VI. OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

We proceed to answer some objections, for the satisfaction of honest inquirers. There are some passages of Scripture, which at first view seem to contradict our ideas of faith; yet upon a fair examination they are perfectly consistent. These passages we will first consider.

Obj. "There are many passages of Scripture, in which faith is represented as the gift of God; as Eph. ii. 8; Phil. i. 29; Heb. xii. 2; Rom. xii. 3; Acts xvi. 14; and xviii. 27; Gal. v. 22." Eph. ii. 8.--"By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God."

Ans. When Cushie told David, that Absalom was slain, David believed it. Now who was the author and finisher of David's faith? Without doubt, Cushie was. But how did Cushie give David faith? By reporting the fact. He did not, strictly speaking, give David faith, but gave him that which produced it, viz: the testimony that Absalom was slain. In this way God gives us faith. He does not give us the act of faith, in any other sense, than as he gives us all believing powers, and upholds them; for the act of faith all agree is the

creature's. God gives us that which is the foundation of faith, viz: his gospel. Hence the gospel, is frequently called *the faith*; as *the faith once delivered to the saints*.—Jude v. 3. *The faith* to which many of the Priests were obedient.—Acts vi. 7. *The faith* from which Elymas, the Sorcerer, sought to turn away the deputy.—Acts xiii. 8. This is the faith which is the gift of God *directly*. Faith, as an act, is given indirectly. The objectors themselves acknowledge that the word of God is the foundation of faith, and that faith is the creature's own act. Therefore they must acknowledge with us, that faith, as the act of the creature, is not properly the gift of God. We hold faith to be the gift of God, in the same way, with this difference. They say the mind must be enlightened by the spirit, in some secret, mysterious way, to see and *approve* the truth, before the sinner can believe it. We say, the truth which the spirit speaks, is that which enlightens the mind; and which cannot produce this effect until it is believed. "The entrance of thy word, giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple."—Psalm cxix. 130. This Dr. Watts beautifully expresses in his paraphrase:

"When once it enters to the mind,
It spreads such light abroad,
The meanest souls instructions find,
And raise their thoughts to God."

Obj. Phil. i. 29—"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake."

Ans. The manner in which faith is given, we have just seen. But it is farther worthy of observation from this text, that faith is given in the same way as *suffering*. Now suffering for Christ is not the gift proper; but that is the gift which produces it, viz: true religion. "For all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."—2 Timothy iii. 12. This is a confirmation of our ideas of faith, as the gift of God.

Obj. Heb. xii. 2.—“Christ is the author and finisher of faith.”

Ans. This has been answered already. He is the author and finisher of that which produces faith, viz: the gospel.

Obj. Col. ii. 12.—“Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.”

Ans. This does not relate to the existence of faith, operated in the creature mechanically, but barely to that faith, or belief *in* the operation of God, in raising up Christ from the dead. By this operation, or *energy* of God, in the resurrection of Christ, he “was declared to be the Son of God with power.”—Rom. i. 4. And this was sufficient evidence (and an evidence on which the Apostles much insisted among Jews and Gentiles) to produce faith in the creature, by which he rises with Christ. This operation was not wrought *on* the Colossians, but on the buried Saviour, in raising him from the dead. See Dr. Doddridge—in loco.

Obj.—Acts xviii. 27.—“Who (Apollos) when he was come, helped them much, who had believed through grace.” Therefore it is concluded that grace is received before faith.

Ans. By *grace*, in the text, we must understand the gospel. For *faith cometh by hearing*, and is produced by the gospel, as before proved. Salvation by the free grace of God, or through faith in the gospel, is here put in opposition to the works of the law, by which the Jews sought to be justified.—See Romans ix. 32. This sense is confirmed by Acts xviii. 28—“For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures, that Jesus was Christ.” The gospel is sometimes called grace; because it is the revelation of the grace of God to a lost world. Titus ii. 11, 12.—“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righte-

ously, and godly in this present world." To talk of receiving grace before faith, is absurd; for receiving is a fruit of faith, and consequently cannot be before it. Grace is among the provisions of the gospel; or, if we take the word in an extensive sense, it includes all the provisions of the gospel; but as these are all received by faith, therefore grace cannot be received before faith, consequently faith does not proceed from grace, in any other sense than as it is called the gospel.

Obj. Acts xiv. 14.—The case of Lydia, "Whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul." Hence it is concluded that the Lord immediately operated on Lydia's heart, to enable her to believe.

Ans. It is declared in the same verse, that Lydia was a worshipper of God, before she heard Paul preach; and therefore was a believer in God. "For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." The Scripture history abundantly testifies, that in the primitive ages of Christianity, there were many pious Jews, and Gentile proselytes, who did not believe in Christ already come, for want of opportunity; hence the words of our Saviour, John x. 16—"Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." It is strange that Lydia's case should be put into the list of objections, when there is not a word about faith in the text. The Lord opened her heart through the truth preached by the Apostle, but this was done through faith; if not, it was a mechanical operation, of which the Scriptures give us no account.

Obj. Romans xii. 3.—"According as God hath dealt to every man, the measure of faith."

Ans. The context shows that the Apostle is talking about the various offices in the church, called gifts or measures of faith. To see this, it is only necessary to quote a few of the following verses. "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not

the same office ; so we being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing, according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith ; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering ; or he that teacheth, on teaching ; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation," &c.—Rom. xii. 4—8. You perceive then that the Apostle is speaking of gifts, of measures of faith conferred upon believers, or Christians.

Obj. Gal. v. 22.—“The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,” &c.

Ans. Faith here signifies, *fidelity*, or *faithfulness*. This is the explanation of all the Commentators, to whose works we have had access. In this sense it is applied to God, in Rom. iii. 3—“For what if some did not believe, shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid ; yea, let God be true, but every man a liar.” Because faith produces reformation, and consequently fidelity, by a very common figure of speech the cause is put for the effect—faith, for fidelity.

Obj. “The sinner is dead, and cannot believe.”

Ans. He is quickened, or made alive by faith, as we have abundantly proved. “But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name.”—John xx. 31. “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life ; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.”—John iii. 36.

Obj. “The carnal mind is enmity against God, it is not subject to his law, neither indeed can be.”—Rom. viii. 7. Therefore those who are in this state cannot believe.

Ans. It would be hard to tell what degree of friendship we must have to God, before we can believe him, if faith depends on friendship. But the objection is

founded in mistake. It supposes we must love truth, before we can believe it,—that we must be regenerated, before we have faith. But how is our enmity destroyed,—how are we reconciled to God? The Spirit of God does it, through the gospel believed; for reconciliation and regeneration are the same thing; and as faith precedes regeneration, so it must precede reconciliation.

Obj. “The creature has natural ability, but no moral ability.”

Ans. It is astonishing that men of sense, should make this objection. What produces moral ability, but motives? And where are these but in the gospel? God told Noah, he would bring a flood of waters upon the earth, and destroy its inhabitants. Noah believed. What was the effect? He was moved with fear; and prepared an ark, to the saving of his house. If Noah had not believed, he would have had no motive or moral ability: consequently could not have acted. So God speaks in his word to all, that he will punish the wicked with everlasting destruction. If they believed God, they would be moved with fear. Again: God offers salvation to all; if they believed they would be moved to fly to him for relief. To say that a man must have moral ability before he can believe, is to say he must be born again before he believes; the fallacy of which we have already proved. Therefore faith precedes moral ability, consequently does not depend on it.

Obj. John vi. 44, 65.—“No man can come unto me except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him. Therefore said I unto you, no man cometh unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.”

Ans. How is a sinner drawn unto God? Not by physical force, but by motive; God sets before the soul the strongest motives, eternal life—eternal blessedness—displays his glorious character, in the gospel of Christ, and gives the greatest encouragement to sinners to come to him. The sinner believing, is drawn to the Saviour for pardon and life.

Obj. “This scheme is inconsistent with the doctrine of Election and Reprobation.”

Ans. Not with the scriptural doctrine of election and reprobation: For the Scriptures always represent, and describe the elect as believers, and the reprobate, as unbelievers. The characters of the elect are such as these. They “cry unto God day and night.”—Luke xviii. 7. They are justified persons. “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth?”—Rom. viii. 33. They have bowels of mercies. “Put on therefore, holy and beloved, as the elect of God, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, long suffering.”—Col. iii. 12. The Apostle Peter gives a very particular description of them.—1 Epist. i. 2, 9. They are “Sanctified, and sprinkled with the blood of Christ.—Begotten again to a lively hope. They are kept by the power of God to salvation.” They “greatly rejoice.” “Believing, they rejoice in Christ, with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls.” They are the true church of Christ.—1 Pet. v. 13. They are true saints.—2 John i. 13. These and various other portions of Scripture, describe the *elect* as true believers and saints. The character of reprobates is described in Scripture, as unbelievers, and unholy persons; persons who have rejected God, and the methods of his grace. See Jer. vi. 30; 2 Cor. xiii. 5, 6, 7; 2 Tim. iii. 8; Tit. i. 16. As we know of no personal reprobation, before unbelief, so we know of no personal election before faith. We are chosen, or elected “through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.”—2 Thess. ii. 13, &c.

Obj. This scheme robs God of his glory, and puts the crown on the creature’s head.

Ans. It is evident that they, who make this objection, do not understand what the scheme is: For what have we, that we have not received? We hold that God has given us all things, and only requires that we believe and receive them. He has also fixed the time.

“Behold *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation.”—2 Cor. vi. 2. Whether do we glorify God most, by believing his word; or disbelieving, and making him a liar? Saying in our hearts, Behold *now* is not the accepted time; behold *now* is not the day of salvation. Some to evade the difficulty, boast much of *free sovereign* grace, which has never made them *free*. Their scheme appears to be, to let God alone, as long as he lets them alone; or at best, to be found in the use of means (without faith) in order to be in readiness; if peradventure God may show them a sign from heaven, to give them faith, when his time shall come. But is it putting the crown upon our heads to say, “It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth; but of God that showeth mercy?” If so, we acknowledge we do it.

Obj. Some say, that they have always believed the Scriptures, but they do not influence them.

Ans. The Jews had the same opinion of their faith that you have of yours. “We are Moses’ disciples,” said they, “we know that God spake unto Moses; but as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.”—John ix. 28, 29. But Christ told them, chap. v. 46, 47—“Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?” A man’s works is the proper test of his faith. “Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.”—James ii. 18.

Obj. If the gospel has sufficient evidence in itself to produce faith, why do not all who hear it, believe?

Ans. Our Saviour answers the question, John xii. 39, 40—“Therefore they could not believe; because Isaiah saith, he hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.” These passages are explained by the Apostle in Acts xxviii. 27.—Referring to the same part of Isaiah’s prophecy, he says, “Their eyes have

they (themselves) closed, lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." The Apostle had been holding out the light, and evidence of truth to the Jews, as you will see in the context, which they must have seen, had they not closed their eyes; which they must have understood, had they not hardened their hearts; and had they seen and understood, they must have been converted. Closing their eyes to the light was a voluntary and unnatural act. If a man be in a dungeon, and light be immitted, he must see, if he does not shut his eyes against the light. So when the gospel is preached in the spirit, the light beams upon sinners in darkness, and were they not to resist the light, or shut their eyes against it, they would see, and believe without a previous mechanical operation, to enable them to believe. It is evident from the context, in both the places quoted, that Christ and Paul, were proving that Jesus was the Son of God; the one by miracles, the other by prophecy. Some believed, and some believed not. The reason why some did not believe is plainly declared: "because they shut their eyes," &c. "And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah."—Mat. xiii. 14. The prophet, in the spirit having foreseen these things, spoke of them as what would come to pass through the unbelief of the Jews. "These things, said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him." To say they could not believe because the Spirit of God did not work faith in them, is to take the sinner's part, and condemn Christ: For he marveled because of their unbelief. But if he knew they could not believe without the powerful influences of his Spirit, to enable them [which influences he withheld] he had no cause to marvel.

Obj. Many great and good men have preached and written differently, and their labors have been abundantly blessed.

Ans. History, observation, and experience, sufficiently prove that the blessing of God, does not accompany those objections; but the truths of the gospel held out in their simplicity. The preacher, or writer, in the forepart of his discourse, may hold out the glory of the gospel in such a manner, that before he attempts to prove that sinners cannot believe it, his hearers may be beyond the reach of his soul-stupifying arguments. Great effects may be produced, and many may be converted. But this will not prove the whole of the discourse to be true.

Obj. The word is a dead letter; what advantage can there be, in a sinner's believing it?

Ans. The objection is founded in unbelief and error, and can be solved in no other way than by proving its falsity. "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." An unbeliever is no judge of the virtue and power of divine truth. The physician is the best judge of the quality of his own medicines. It would display the ignorance of the patient to object against the *tartar* that it was *dead*, or the *cordial* that it had no *spirit*. Let him swallow them; and if the one does not work, and the other cheer him, then let him say they are *dead*. "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart."—Jer. xv. 16.

Obj. We are commanded to pray for all men, but on this scheme we cannot pray for sinners.*

* This is a strange objection to come from a Calvinistic quarter. It may be turned directly against them. Let us see. They believe "Christ died for all the sins of some men;" and that none else can be saved. That many to whom the gospel is preached, are among the number for whom he did not die. That consequently to pray for the salvation of sinners universally, where the gospel comes, would be to oppose the purposes of heaven,—would be in effect to pray that Heaven's will might be thwarted, not done. But we are commanded to pray for all men.—Paul prayed that Israel might be saved. But this he could not have done, had he known that God had decreed the unconditional damnation of a great part of the nation. The objection therefore is against the objector.—J. R.

Ans. We pray for sinners after the example of Christ, that they may be spared a little longer; and that space and opportunity may be given them for repentance.—Luke xiii. 8, 9. Christ prayed for believers *directly*, and for sinners indirectly. John xvii. 20, 21—“Neither pray I for these (the disciples) alone; but for them also who shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” He does not pray absolutely that God would save unbelievers; for this is contrary to the plan of the gospel. “He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.” But he prays indirectly for them that shall believe on him thro’ their word. He also prays indirectly for the world, that through the unity of believers, they may believe. We pray for sinners, but do not prescribe to God the particular means by which he shall bring them to faith and repentance. But we are sure the means are his word, read or preached by his ministers, or shining in his people, or particular providences, which are the means of bringing divine truth before the view of the mind. Zion, or the church of God, “is the mother of us all.”—Gal. iv. 26. When she travaileth, she bringeth forth her children.—Isa. lxvi. 8. But how does Zion bring forth her children? By shining in the glory of the Lord, and “holding forth the word of life.” “Then shall the Gentiles come to thy light,” and sinners shall “come flying, as clouds and as doves to their windows.”—Isa. lx. 3, 8. When their light shines forth before sinners, “they see their good works, and glorify God, who is in heaven.”—Matthew v. 16. Then is the sinner convinced of all, he is judged of all; the secrets of his heart are made manifest; and so falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.—1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25.

Let all Christians, therefore, unite in prayer, that God would send forth faithful laborers into his harvest; that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified; that his Spirit may be poured out upon his minis-

ters and people; that through them he may "reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." That he would collect and unite into one his scattered flock, that the whole world may believe in Christ the Saviour of sinners. "That the light of the moon may be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun seven-fold;" "that it may no longer be day and night, but one day known to the Lord, when the Lord shall be king over all the earth."

To most of the above objections, we might have waived a direct answer, as they have been answered indirectly, in the preceding view of the gospel.—But as they are objections which have been directly made, by one, or another, we concluded to state, and answer them in a direct way. As to other objections that may be in the minds of any serious Christians, the truths already illustrated and proved, are sufficient to remove them. But as for those who are prejudiced against the truth, we cannot hope to satisfy them. If Christ, who spake as never man spake, could not satisfy the Jews, it would be the height of folly in us to imagine that we can satisfy those, who are not open to conviction. But we do hope that honest inquirers will receive and rejoice in the light. We have stated truths, which are clear to us, and are the foundation of all our hopes and comforts. And we leave it with every reader, who shall peruse these sheets, to take heed how he reads and receives; to try every thing by the *law* and the *testimony*. For if we have not spoken according to this word, it is because there is no light in us. But if we have, it will be dangerous for any to reject, and oppose; lest peradventure they should be found fighting against God.

REMARKS

ON THE CONFESSION OF FAITH.

“To the law and to the testimony ; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”—*Isaiah*.

Before we enter particularly on the remarks on the Confession, we have a few previous observations to make. From the foregoing view of the gospel, which supports the life of the humble Christian, it appears that we hold those doctrines, to which every believer can bear witness, in the hours, when he enjoys sweet communion with God. These truths we have not adopted as a system of notions formed in the head ; but we have received them as the words of God, which lie at the foundation of all our hopes. We have not made them barely the subject of occasional discussion ; but the ground-work of all our pulpit exercises. For as they administer life to our own souls, so they lie near to our hearts ; and as we are anxious that others should enjoy the same life, so we are constantly endeavoring to impress them on their minds.

But although we hold those doctrines, in which all Christians are united, when they enjoy the life and power of religion ; yet we wish not to conceal that our views on many points are very different from that system which by some is called *orthodox*. This difference lies not so much in holding what they would call *positive errors*, as in leaving out of view, and indeed forgetting as far as we can, several things which they think necessary to complete the system.

But in our judgment, the ideas we lack, so far from being necessary, are real obstructions to the life of grace. And though some prize them highly, we desire forever to be ignorant of them ; because we conceive they veil the beautiful simplicity of the glorious gospel.

On this account our preaching is very different from what it was some years ago ; and it equally differs from *that* of some of the brethren at present. But notwith-

standing this, we were willing to bear, and forbear, as though no such difference existed; seeing those things which cause others to differ from us form no part of the [true] orthodox faith; but are only notions floating in the head. We have therefore in good faith, often endeavored to maintain, that we held the same orthodox faith with all real Christians; because we believe those notions, which are superadded, never enter into the religion of the heart. On this ground we have desired, and sometimes expected, the same forbearance from other Christians which we were disposed to exercise towards them.

We shall now proceed to enumerate some of those sentiments, which are not found in our preaching; the absence of which, has exposed us to the charge of making innovations in the Christian faith.

1. You have seen already, that we believe all men to be dead in trespasses and sins, by being descended from the first Adam, and connected with that *dead stock*; that none can convert themselves, or perform one holy action, without the Spirit of Christ. No arm but the Lord's can bring deliverance. But we do not hold with some, that sinners cannot believe the gospel until they are regenerated, or experience some power *exterior* and distinct from the *word*. On the contrary, we view men as fit subjects of the gospel dispensation; capable of believing the word, and in the strength of this faith, able to come to the throne of grace, and persevere in incessant cries for mercy, until they receive the Spirit of Christ, which *creates all things new*. Because we lack this idea that the sinner cannot believe in Christ, and come to the throne of grace, we are charged with denying original sin.

2. We hold with all those, who feel the power and sweetness of dying love, that the Atonement of Christ is of infinite value, sufficient for the salvation of the whole world; that he sincerely offers to all who hear the gospel the blessings he has purchased; calls them to come, and pledges his veracity to give them eternal life;

swears he has no pleasure in their death; and with all the earnestness of God, and meltings of infinite love, cries out "why will ye die?" These things we believe simply as they are spoken; that they are addressed to every man's conscience as they stand; and that all men will be judged in the last day, according to the reception they give them. But we find they need much dressing before they will suit the model of scholastic divinity. A number of things are added as explanations, which we neither understand, nor believe. Such as these: That although Christ's Atonement is sufficient for the whole world, yet it is *provided* and *designed* for a few only, to whom it will *certainly* be applied, and cannot *possibly* be given to any other. That the general *call* is not designed to gather in the *elect*, who are scattered among the common mass, and unknown to the preacher. That none ought to believe that God is addressing them, until his Spirit brings it home with power.

Hence according to these sentiments, the truth is, that although God in his word offers freely to all men all the blessings of eternal life, with every appearance of sincerity, yet he has nothing provided for any but a few *chosen ones*. To prove all this, the general expressions of Scripture must be explained away; they must mean something very different from what they speak.—The *whole world* must be surnamed *the whole elect world*; *all men* must mean *all the elect*. And the will of God must be divided, and subdivided, lest mankind should think that God pitied them, and was willing to save them. Thus they tell you, that although God by his *commanding will*, which always enjoins what is right, would have all men to be saved, yet by his *approving will*, he can save none but the *elect*.

Again: They divide his *will* into *secret*, and *revealed*; and unfortunately set the one against the other. Thus his *revealed will*, makes great and liberal offers to all men without limitation: but when his *secret will* is consulted, those inestimable blessings offered to *all*, are confined to a few, for whom they were designed.

None therefore, must, or can believe, that Christ died for them, according to the plain word of God, or hath purchased any spiritual and eternal blessings for them, until that faith is wrought in them by the irresistible energy of the Holy Spirit. Now, we are wholly ignorant of these subtle distinctions, and explanations, which tend to keep sinners from believing the revealed will of God; and harden their hearts in unbelief. We are simple enough to take God at his word; believing it is his will, that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. Therefore, we proclaim the good news to all men, wherever we come, that God, for Christ's sake is willing to save them; and urge them speedily to fly to the arms of his mercy. Conscious that we have not wisdom enough to mend the word of God, we hold up his precious promises to sinners, as the foundation of their faith, just as he has spoken them. And blessed be God, some believing that he is in earnest, have made the experiment, and found that he will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him. Preaching, which gives the promises of God as they stand in the Bible, will be very different from *that* which explains them all away; as different as noonday is from midnight. The want of these contradictory explanations, has given us the name of *heretics*. These subtle explanations, savoring so much of the jargon of the *schools*, have always bewildered plain Christians; have been a yoke, "which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear." According to them, the gospel is good news to nobody, seeing no one knows that God has any good thing for him until he actually possesses it. We know that God is a sovereign, but we neither understand nor believe many things which are said on that subject. We cannot believe that he is such a sovereign, that he can offer what he has not to give,—deceive his creature, by telling him in his revealed will, that he has no pleasure in his death, and confirming his revelation with an oath, as I live, saith the Lord God; when, at the same time, it is his secret will and

pleasure to pass him by in his sins, that his justice may be glorified in his condemnation. Neither do we believe he can mock his misery by offering relief, which the poor wretch cannot possibly receive, and then condemn him to eternal misery, for not receiving what he could not; and what God himself upon principles of law and justice, could not give him, being wholly, and exclusively provided for others.

3. Because, then, we cannot attribute to the best, and most merciful God, those properties of a most wicked and merciless tyrant, we are charged with denying divine sovereignty. This kind of sovereignty, we desire never to know; because such knowledge would destroy that sweet warmth, and melting of soul, we feel by viewing the glorious and amiable character he gives of himself in his plain revealed will, as altogether love; (1 John iv. 8, 16,) and punishing from necessity only those, who reject and despise his love. It is not strange if the adepts in this kind of divinity possess a religion as cold and melancholy as their sentiments. But some run this sovereignty so far as to destroy the connexion between the means and the end. With them it is no proof that a minister preaches the truth, when his labors are blessed, and sinners come daily flocking to Christ. For, say they, God is a sovereign. Another may lie in a deep sleep of carnal security, all his life, preaching to a people in the same situation, and never suspect he is to blame, though he has not one seal to his ministry: for, says he, God is a sovereign. He may do all he can to crush the revivings of religion among others, and then plaster over his conduct by saying, "If it be the work of God, such a poor creature as I cannot stop it. God is a sovereign; if he means to convert sinners, he will do it, let me preach as I may." These ideas of sovereignty we do not understand; nay, we exclude them, as having no foundation in the divine nature.

4. We believe God has an *elect*, a chosen people, on the earth, and by examining their character in Scripture,

we find they are the same with *believers*, who have the Spirit of Christ. But others speak of an *elect number*, who are yet strangers to Christ, dead in sin, and servants of the devil. Now we are wholly ignorant of these elect people. We believe the word, when it says, "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."—Rom. viii. 9. And if Jesus Christ be not in us, we are reprobates.—2 Cor. xiii. 5. As we believe that persons are elected through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, so we call upon all to come to Christ, obtain his Spirit, and make their calling and election sure.

5. We believe with all Christians, that the Holy Spirit, speaketh in the Scriptures. That the gospel is the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth. That those, and those only who believe the plain testimony of God, and through faith are drawn to the throne of grace, by that spirit which speaketh in the word, are created anew. And thus they are "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the word of God, that liveth and abideth forever."—1 Peter i. 23. Thus faith, though it has no holiness or merit in it, becomes a motive; and is the proper means of divine appointment, in drawing sinners unto God, to receive righteousness and true holiness. On this view of the subject, we see man a rational creature, a fit subject of moral government; we see the influence of motive, the word of God believed, which is the power of God, in drawing the soul into conformity unto God; and all this effected by means of the divine testimony admitted into the heart, as true. We, therefore, consider faith as a simple idea, and as one and the same thing in every case; though its objects are as various as the things revealed in the Scriptures.

But some talk of many different kinds of faith; as historical faith, the faith of miracles, a temporary faith, and saving faith. Some again, have the faith of credence, (which by the way is all that is properly faith) the faith of adherence, the faith of reliance, the faith of assur-

ance, &c. &c. By these distinctions they confound faith and its consequences; which the Apostle calls the sealings of the spirit. Eph. i. 13—"In whom after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." Now, we neither know these distinctions of human invention, nor care any thing about them.—We do not bewilder the minds of our hearers with these subtle distinctions, which have no foundation in truth; but we call them to come to God, believing that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him; that they may receive that unction from the holy One, whereby they may know all things. Some tell us that the word of God is a dead letter, until it is accompanied by some exterior power. But we are assured, that Christ speaks truth, when he says, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."—John vi. 63. Men do not receive the truth of the word or as it is indeed the word of God; therefore it has no effect upon them. But when sinners believe it, we find it has power to make them cry aloud for mercy.

6. A Christian is not of this world, he is born from above; belongs to the family of Christ, is possessed of his spirit, and can be distinguished from the man of the world, by those properties only, which he has received from Christ, and in which he resembles his Divine Master. When, therefore, we describe true religion, we describe the various operations of the Spirit of Christ, in causing the soul to pant after God, rejoice in his love, follow holiness, resist the devil, overcome temptations, fight against all sin, joy in tribulations, cheerfully endure persecutions for the name of Christ, and in a word whatever are the genuine fruits of the Spirit of God.—In this description we pronounce those, and those only, the blessed of the Lord, the elect, &c., who have the Spirit of Christ. Other preachers will mention the same, as evidences of a Christian. But when they have done this, they do in effect destroy it all by bringing into the account the works of the flesh, as making part of the same character. When they describe the actings

of grace, hypocrites and backsliders are brought to tremble, saying, *if this only be religion, we have none.* But the preacher, who probably himself is in a declining state, soon relieves their just distress, by a plaster of untempered mortar. A Christian, says he, may be dead, lifeless, cold and languid; God may leave him to his corruptions to humble him; thus his unbelief, doubts and fears, may be according to the will of God, &c.—The hypocrite now takes courage, for though he has none of the genuine actings of grace, he abounds in the fruits of unbelief and the works of the flesh, which he hears also belong to the Christian. The backslider also takes encouragement to lie still in his sins. In these things we differ from many preachers; for we cannot acknowledge any thing as belonging to the Christian, but what he receives from Christ. Other things come from the devil, to whom he must give no place. They are the works of the flesh, and not the fruits of the Spirit; and the soul that performs them, has its state plainly decided by the Apostle. Rom. vi. 16.—Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness.

We might have proceeded farther to show, that this duplicity runs through all that system, which by some is called *orthodox*; and have also pointed out the plainness and simplicity of the word of God on these subjects. But these few observations are sufficient to show wherein we differ from our brethren. This appears also in what has been said in the foregoing history and view of the gospel. For the charge of preaching false doctrine arose at first from the want of that double-meaning, which systematic writers have put on the plain doctrines of the Bible; and from the neglect of these explanations of the precious promises of the gospel, which entirely destroy their signification.

In the early stage of this business, those of us who were in this strain of preaching, went on in the highway of the Lord, where the way-faring men, though

fools, should not err. The truths, which we believed and felt, we were willing at all times to illustrate, and enforce, for the instruction and satisfaction of our hearers. But we were backward to say any thing on those subjects we had neglected, lest we should be involved in controversy. But those who were fonder of dry doctrines than of the glorious work which God was carrying on among us, being grieved that their favorite sentiments were neglected, dragged us, however unwilling, upon controverted ground. We were charged, as you have seen already, with endeavoring artfully to undermine these doctrines. And indeed we were not careful what became of any doctrine, which hindered sinners from coming to Christ. Our great concern was to follow the simplicity of the *word*, and to state the plain truth, as it is in Jesus. To avoid raising a flame of controversy, we said as little as possible concerning the Confession of Faith. But its vigilant friends could not bear to see some of its peculiar tenets neglected; while the Scripture doctrine of free salvation, through the blood of the Lamb, was proclaimed aloud to all, and drunk down by many, inflaming their hearts with the love of God, and demolishing the strong holds of Satan and of sin. They arose to preserve their beloved book, and its peculiarities from destruction. For by this time it began to be pretty evident, that if the wonderful work of reviving went on, it would soon sweep away the foundation on which the building stood, and overwhelm it in the ocean of redeeming love.— Their exertions awakened the attention of many, who were walking in the light and liberty of the gospel; and they soon perceived the strain of these doctrines, and their contradiction to the spirit of the revival. Thus the conduct of the warm friends of the Confession, served only to expose its nakedness in the noon-day of gospel light; and excite the lovers of the revival to make direct opposition to it. For, however good the intention of its compilers was at first, it was brought forward at this crisis, as a weapon against the growing

revival, which some thought was come to torment them before the time. But, blessed be God! “no weapon that is forned against Zion shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against her in judgment, she shall condemn.” And so we see in the case of this book. We bore with it, until we found it would be bound upon our consciences, and then we bid it adieu.

That the reader may see we had solid reasons for slipping our necks out of the yoke of human tradition, we will proceed to state a few of our objections to creeds and confessions in general, and to the Westminster Confession in particular.

REMARKS ON CREEDS AND CONFESSIONS IN GENERAL.

Through the subtilty of the enemy, the Christian church has long been divided into many different sects and parties. Each has a *creed*, *confession of faith* or brief statement of doctrines, as a bond of union among its members, or rather a separating wall between itself and other societies. This is generally called the *standard* of such a church. If the word *standard* has its true and usual signification, it imports that such a book is the pillar which supports it; the foundation on which it stands; or the rule by which it is formed, or regulated, both as to doctrine and practice. This sets aside the word of God, or at least binds the members of that particular society to understand the Scriptures as stated and explained in the *Creed*, on pain of being accounted unsound in the faith, or excommunicated from the church. This is indeed bringing the word of God to that *standard*. The people have the privilege of reading the Scriptures to *prove the standard to be right*; but no privilege to examine it by Scripture, and prove it to be *wrong*. For if any should do this, he forfeits his privilege in that church, and must be cast out as a *heretic*. Or, if he chooses to withdraw, he must be excommunicated as a *schismatic*; and all men warned to guard against him as a dangerous person.

It is an established maxim, that when any law, or rule of conduct is *authoritatively* explained, the explanation is the law; and we are necessarily bound to understand the original according to the explanation. A creed, or confession of faith, is considered both as a summary of the doctrines taught in the Bible, and an explanation of them. If it were left in its own place, to occupy the low ground of human opinion, it might do some good. But the moment it is received and adopted as a *standard*, it assumes the place of the Bible; it is the explanation, according to which we must understand the original law, the *word* of the living God. If such a church is founded on the Scriptures, it is not immediately; but by means of this *standard*, or pillar. But if there is a mistake in the business, and any part of the pretended *standard*, or pillar should not be founded on the rock, will not the whole church tumble to the ground? Is it not better to clear away all the rubbish, of human opinions, and build the church immediately on the rock of ages, the sure foundation which God has laid in Zion?

But some, to avoid the odium of setting up their *creed*, in place of the Bible, call it an *imperfect standard*. This is a contradiction in terms; a *foundation*, that is unsound, and not to be trusted; a *pillar* which is shattered and will let the building fall, unless it has something else to support it; a *rule* which is imperfect, and consequently no rule at all; because every thing which is made by it will certainly be wrong. If God had not given us a perfect *rule*, we might have some excuse for working with a crooked one of human make. But is it not strange that this *standard*, confessedly imperfect, should be set before the Scriptures, which are perfect? so that if any should happen to understand *them* differently from *it*, he must go out of the synagogue.

If it is *imperfect*, we must see the *perfect* word of God differently from it, or be in error. Would it not be better, to commit this book, which has been so long idolized, to the moles, and to the bats; and take the

infallible word of God; ask and obtain his Spirit to understand and practise it? Others again more modest, call creeds and confessions, *Helps*. But strange and unnatural as it may appear, the *help* stands first in point of orthodoxy. For a man may be permitted to explain many passages of Scripture differently from his fellows; but if he rejects the common acceptation of one article of this *help*, he is at once proclaimed a *heretic*, without ever trying his doctrine by the word of God. God has not recommended any help to understand the Scripture, but his Spirit of wisdom, which he gives liberally to them that ask. Recommending a *help*, implies that the Scriptures are not sufficiently plain, and that men can remedy that defect;—that God will not give his holy Spirit, or that it is easier to obtain help from man, than from God. And indeed, many seem to have acted upon this principle; for human authors have been gathered up, and constantly consulted; while the Bible has been laid by as almost useless. Many have thought that by such helps they could enter into the spirit of the Scriptures. But this is a mistake. Spiritual things can never be understood, until we submit to the teachings of God, by believing in Jesus. Then the Spirit of Christ leads the soul, experimentally into those heavenly truths, and gives him ideas, which he could not obtain otherwise; even though he had all the creeds, and confessions in the world to help him. These *helps*, while they endeavor to make those understand the exercises of religion, who never experienced them, generally explain away the spirituality of the Scriptures, to accommodate them to carnal reason. If a man learns the words of the *help*, and can converse well on the subjects of which it treats, he is pronounced orthodox. And the votaries of such *helps* will receive him, as sound in the faith, though he give no satisfactory evidence of real, living religion: while one confessedly pious is rejected, because he cannot subscribe that particular creed. Thus these *creeds*, *help* to split the real church of Christ, keep asunder the truly pious,

and prevent that union, which would otherwise take place among the real lovers of religion. That real Christians would be united, if *human creeds* were laid aside, is evident; because we find, that such do agree, on practical religion, when they enjoy the Spirit of Christ. And wherever this revival is going on with life and power, as in Cumberland, and some other places, there Christians of different societies, losing sight of their *creeds, confessions, standards, helps*, and all those speculations which enter not into the religion of the heart, flock together, as members of one body, knit by one spirit. And thus assist, and encourage each other, in their common pilgrimage to the heavenly Canaan.

But these human *aids* fail to attain the end designed by them, that is unity. For people soon begin to dispute as much about the meaning of their creeds, as about the Scriptures. And any unity which they do preserve, is like its source, human, barren, unsavory; not like that sweet union of soul, which is produced by the Spirit of God, living in his people. Indeed they are only sorry shifts, to supply the want of "the unity of the Spirit, and bond of peace." Say, ye that love the Lord, what is it that unites you together? Is it a *creed*, or the living Spirit of the crucified Jesus?

Some think it not possible for a church to subsist, without a confession of faith. But we think they betray their ignorance, of the uniting, cementing power of living religion. They will tell you, if Christians had always the Spirit of Christ in plentiful effusions, they would not need those aids, which are so necessary, in times of deadness. But we answer, Christ never allowed his church to be without his Spirit, which he gives liberally, and upbraideth not. Therefore he has made no provision for such a scarcity of his Spirit, as is caused by the indolence of professors. He provided no armour for the back, because he never allowed his followers to turn their backs to the enemy, but to go on from conquering to conquer. The Roman Catholics say, they use their images only as helps, to enliven

their faith. But we believe they are a hindrance, instead of a help, and keep the soul away from God. Thus we conceive that confessions of faith, keep the soul away from the word of God. These things we know by experience. That book never helped, but hindered our faith. When we neglected it and followed the Spirit of God, in his word, our minds were enlightened, and our souls were quickened. But when we compared this light, with the confession, they would not agree. We could not withstand God. We chose to hearken to God, rather than men; and therefore, have taken our leave of that book.

The preceding remarks make it evident, that if the book in question, were as perfect as it could be formed by men, it should be rejected as a *standard*. Or, in other words, that no such standard should be adopted. But we conceive it is very defective, and ought not to be received, even if the practice of owning and subscribing human creeds, were right and Scriptural. We shall now proceed to mention a few of those defects.

REMARKS ON THE CONFESSION OF FAITH.

1. The whole tenor of Scripture shows that man is made as the mouth of creation, to glorify God in an active manner; that knowing his nature, perfections, and astonishing works, he should render due praise to the divine name; and employ all his powers of body and mind, in doing the will of God. And it is also evident, that as he is to serve God, so he is made to enjoy him forever; and that nothing whatever, can fill, or satisfy the mind, but God himself. So say the larger and shorter catechisms: Quest. 1. "The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever." As every wise man, when he forms or executes any plan, has some suitable end in view; so God proposed this glorious end, when he made man. And thus we see the folly and madness of sin, in opposing the plan and will of God; robbing him of his due, and rendering miserable, the noblest creature of his hands.

But in contradiction to this Scriptural and rational view of the matter, the Confession asserts, chap. 3. sec. 1, that "God, from all eternity ordains whatsoever comes to pass." All sinful thoughts, words, and actions come to pass; therefore they were ordained from all eternity. Again, in chap. 6. sec. 1, it says, "This their sin (the sin of our first parents) God was pleased, according to his wise, and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to his own glory." We see here that God permits sin; that it makes a part of his purposed plan. For if he had any plan in view, surely his own glory must constitute a part of that plan. He purposed, then, according to the Confession, from all eternity, to ordain sin to his own glory. Therefore, from all eternity, sin made a part of his ordained plan. Again, he permits sin, nay more than permits it, according to chap. 5. sec. 4—"The Almighty power, &c., of God, extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men, and that not by a bare permission,—ordering and governing them—to his own wise and holy ends." If then sin be permitted; if it be ordained from all eternity, how can it oppose the purpose, end, and design of God, in making man? It makes a necessary part of his plan; for he ordained it before it took place. It must therefore be in conformity to his will. If sin be ordained, its consequences are ordained also. And this we find expressly declared in chap. 3. sec. 3, 4—"By the decree of God—some men are foreordained to everlasting death. These men thus predestinated, and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed," for that very purpose. If then a number of men, and a great number too, were *eternally and unchangeably foreordained to everlasting death*, this was certainly the design and end of their existence in time, and they could not be created to glorify and enjoy God. For this would be a design and end contrary to their *eternal predestination*. Here then are flat contradictions, wholly irreconcilable. As therefore, we believe the former, that God made man

to glorify and enjoy him forever; so we must deny the latter; nay we reject it with abhorrence, as destroying the difference between good and evil; and as setting the most holy God at the head of all the sins committed in the world. For, unchangeably to ordain a wicked action, and not be in some sense the author of sin, appears to us, utterly impossible. The Confession tells you, Shorter Cat. ques. 8, that "*God executes his own decrees.*" We grant that God ordains whatsoever he brings to pass. But he does not bring sin to pass. Therefore, he does not ordain it. Neither did he ever *permit*, but expressly prohibited sin, and that under the penalty of death. He foresaw sin; for there is nothing hid from his omniscient eye. But his foreknowledge is not the rule of his decrees. He decrees nothing because he foresees it, but he *decrees righteous judgment*. He can only decree to do what is right: for wickedness is an abomination to the Lord. It is right that virtue should be rewarded, and vice punished. Therefore he decrees to reward the one and punish the other. He decreed to reward the obedience of Adam, with the enjoyment of himself, if he had stood. And the happiness of his posterity would have followed of course, as the consequence of his obedience. He decreed to reward the obedience of Christ, and all who believe in him, with everlasting happiness. But these things were not decreed because he foresaw they would take place. For the contrary in the case of Adam was foreseen. But they are decreed, because it is fit and right, in a perfect God, the Governor of the Universe, *so to act*.

God foresaw that man would fall, through the temptation of the devil. But, as we have seen already, he did not decree it, but straitly forbid it, under the severest penalty. He foresaw one thing, and decreed another. He foresaw the fall, and decreed to send his Son to die for man, that whosoever believeth on him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. He foresaw that many would reject Christ, through unbelief; and he de-

creed to send them to perdition; he that believeth not shall be damned.

2. We are commissioned, and authorized to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. Mark xvi. 15. To offer Christ and all the blessings of the new covenant, to every sinner we find; to assure them that all things in Christ are now ready; that God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and to beseech them in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God, &c.

This plain Scripture doctrine, which is the sum of the whole gospel, is signified in the Confession. Chap. 7, sec. 3—"He freely offereth to sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ." And chap. 10, sec. 4—"Others not elected—may be called by the ministry of the word," &c. But notwithstanding the sincere offer of salvation, which God makes in his word, to all who hear the gospel, this same Confession declares, that all these blessings were provided for *a certain number* only, to whom they are, or shall be certainly applied; and cannot possibly be given to any other, although they are offered to all in the most plausible and friendly manner. See chap. 8, sec. 1—"It pleased God to choose the Lord Jesus—unto whom he did—from *all eternity* give a people to be his seed, and to be by him *in time* redeemed, called, justified, sanctified and glorified." And sec. 5—"The Lord Jesus by his perfect obedience, and sacrifice of himself, which he through the Eternal Spirit once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father, and purchased, not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven for all those whom the Father hath given unto him." And sec. 8—"To all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, he doth *certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same.*" And chap. 3, sec. 3, 4, 5, but especially section 6—"They who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ, by his Spirit working in due season; are justified and adopted, sanctified and kept

by his power through faith unto salvation. *Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, &c., but the elect only.*— And “Their number is so certain and definite (not merely in the foreknowledge of God, but in his decree) that it cannot be either increased, or diminished.” Now let any serious mind, which has not from infancy been pre-possessed in favor of this contradictory system, say what is the meaning of the general *call* and *offer* of salvation, to those not elected, nor redeemed; to those *eternally passed by, and unchangeably foreordained to dishonor and wrath?* Is it not a mere sham, insincere, and useless? Let God be true, but every man that contradicts him, a liar.

We are not the only Presbyterians who view the doctrine of *Atonement* different from the Confession.— We know a number who believe, that Christ’s satisfaction is as extensive as the requirements of the law. So that God can consistently with law and justice, extend mercy to all indiscriminately, who hear the gospel, upon their compliance with the terms of it. Because Christ has removed every legal obstruction out of the way; which is the same thing as to say, “he gave himself a ransom for all, and tasted death for every man.” But with what consistency they can differ from the Confession in so important a point, and yet hold it to be a *standard*, we leave for others to determine; and also how they can reconcile eternal election and reprobation with general redemption.

3. The whole tenor of Scripture declares, that mankind are in a state of trial in this world; life and death being set before them, they are called to choose which they will have. God addresses them in such language as this—“Turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die?” They who believe, are saved by free grace; but they who disbelieve are condemned for rejecting that salvation so richly provided, and so freely offered them in Christ. And there is an approaching *judgment*, when all believers shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and to celebrate the praises of him, “who

loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood." But stubborn unbelievers shall be banished into "the blackness of darkness forever," there to lament their folly and madness in refusing that life, which was so freely and so abundantly offered.

We who administer in holy things, are called of God to warn sinners of their danger, and exhort them to prepare for that awful crisis. The Confession of Faith expressly declares the same thing; chap. 33, section 1. "All persons that have lived upon earth, shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words and deeds, and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil." And yet the same Confession positively declares, chapter 3, section 5—"That the final state of all men was irreversibly fixed from all eternity, before they had a being; one part being given to Christ from eternity, redeemed by him, and made meet for heaven *in time*. Nay, they were 'chosen in Christ' from eternity "unto everlasting glory, without any foresight of faith, or good works, or perseverance in either of them." But the other part was passed by in their sins, and ordained to dishonor and wrath; left in their hopeless state, without any provision made for their recovery. They were born under the curse, and no possible way to remove it. Sinners by nature, who could do nothing but sin. For according to chap. 9, sec. 3, they have "wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good, accompanying salvation." And again, chap. 5, sec. 6—"From them he not only withholdeth his grace, whereby they might have been enlightened in their understandings, and wrought upon in their hearts, but sometimes also withdraweth the gifts which they had, and exposeth them to such objects as their own corruption makes occasions of sin; and withal gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan." And it further tells you, chap. 3, section 7, that he does all this, "for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures." For there is no cause, say

some divines, why one is taken and another left, but *the sovereign will of God*. This fixes the point at once. Men are no more in a state of trial in this world; nay, there never was one of the human family, in this state, not even Adam and Eve. For the fate of all was *eternally* and *unchangeably* fixed before they had a being. The human family, therefore, are only brought upon the stage to show what God will do *in* them, *with* them, and *by* them. All fill up the place assigned them, and act the part which God designed for them. There can, therefore, be no proper *judgment* in the last day. It will only be a pompous show. There can be no trial, no condemnation. For no cause can be assigned for acquitting one, and condemning another, but the sovereign will of the judge: because each one has filled up the secret will and determination of God respecting him. Where shall we end, if we follow this scheme of *sovereign arbitrary wrath*? But the Scriptures give us a very different statement: "Because I called and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded," &c.—Prov. i. 24, &c. Is it not right to beg off from being tried by such a crooked rule as this? A composition of contradictions.

4. According to this book, sin is a necessary part of God's plan, ch. 5. sec. 4. and ch. 4. sec. 1. He *permitted* the fall, and all other sins of men and angels. But, as we have observed already, the Scripture says he did not *permit* the fall, but forbade it by the severest penalty. The word *permit* must be taken in a very unnatural sense, or else the assertion is absolutely false. But it further adds, chap. 5. 5—"That God doth oftentimes leave his own children to the corruptions of their own hearts, to chastise them for former sins, humble them, make them live near the Lord; and for other holy ends. Sin then is not so dreadful a thing, nor so hateful to God as the Scripture represents; seeing it is *oftentimes* the Lord's instrument in carrying on his work of grace, in the hearts of his own children. We may, then, lie down in unbelief, deadness, hardness of heart, coldness, a

worldly spirit, or whatever else is the effect of the corruptions of the heart let loose; and believe it is the will of God we should be so, though in the sense of Scripture, we are *reprobates*, not having the Spirit of Christ. We believe many do so; we know it by our own experience, and have seen others in the same situation, who had lost their first love, and were dragging out a dying life, without the present exercises of religion. But through divine grace, many such have seen that they were opposing the will of God, and acting according to the will of the devil. Having earnestly addressed the throne of grace, they have found the *piece* which was lost; and have called their friends to rejoice with them. Some are yet in that dreadful state of declension, preaching up that heaven will be so much the sweeter, when they arrive there, by how much the less they have of it here; and are sheltering themselves from guilt under this lying pretext, that it is the Lord's will they should be so. "My soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united!"

5. The Confession declares, larger cat. quest. 32. That "God freely provideth, and offereth to sinners a Mediator, *requiring faith* as the condition, to interest them in him; promising and giving his holy Spirit to all his elect, to work in them that *faith*" &c. And chap. 7. sec. 3—"He freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, *requiring of them faith in him*, that they may be saved; and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto life his holy Spirit, to make them willing, and able to *believe*." Chap. 10. 4—"Others not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit; yet they never truly come to Christ, and therefore cannot be saved." And larger cat. ques. 68—"All the elect, and they only, are effectually called; although others may be and often are outwardly called by the ministry of the word, and have some common operations of the Spirit; who for

their wilful neglect and contempt of the grace offered to them, being justly left in their unbelief, do never truly come to Jesus Christ." These are extraordinary passages, considered in connection with the above system. *Life and salvation* are offered to the *non-elect*!—The gospel is preached to them, and *faith in Christ required of them*!!

What does God require them to believe? That Christ died for them? This were to require them to believe a lie, according to the Confession; for he died only for the elect. Are they to believe that God is willing to save them, and not willing they should be lost? Certainly not. For his *secret will* and *determination* is, and has *eternally* been, that they should be passed by in their sins, and perish. But it may be said *they do not know this secret will of God*. But they are informed he has this *secret will*, in opposition to the general proclamation of grace. They hear there is mercy for the *elect* only; and they cannot possibly believe it is for them, until they know they are of that number. There is no proposition they can possibly believe, but that Christ died for *somebody*, but for *whom*, the Lord only knows. To creatures under the influence of these sentiments, faith is impossible. It is impossible to believe without testimony, and it is impossible to influence the human mind without motive. This doctrine therefore, believed, renders the gospel of the grace of God, *in vain*. Or, if by *faith* they mean *trusting* in mercy, this is as impossible as the former. The sinner is told, that God offers him mercy. I cannot trust in it, says he, unless I know I am one of the *elect*. For God only intends it for them. But, says the Calvinist, you have no business with his secret will; take his revealed will and trust in his mercy. The sinner replies, you tell me, as the revealed will of God (for if it is not revealed you know nothing about it) that he has mercy only for a certain number. If this be true, the offer you call his *revealed will*, must be a sham—there must be some trick in it—the Lord does not mean just as he says. He

might as well have required the *non-elect* to create a world, that they might be saved, as to believe in Christ on these principles; seeing there is no evidence on which such a faith can be founded. And indeed those divines grant, that the *non-elect* cannot believe, because God gives them only the *common* operations of the Spirit, while he *promises* and *gives* his Holy Spirit to the *elect* to *make them able and willing to believe*. Thus God suspends the *eternal all*, of poor sinners, upon an *impossible condition*; withholds the grace from them, which could enable them to fulfil it; and damns them eternally for not believing a lie!!

May God keep such horrid jargon from the ears of poor sinners, until they have made their calling and election sure, by believing in Jesus! And through the aid of that Spirit, which he gives to all who ask in faith, may they add to their faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity.

When we set before sinners the plain testimony of God, that he hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son; that Christ hath made a complete Atonement; that the divine law and justice are satisfied, and through the blood of the Lamb, God will save all, who come—their faith is easy. It has for its foundation the word of a God that cannot lie. The sinner who believes, and incessantly addresses the throne of grace, has the veracity of God pledged, that he shall receive his Holy Spirit, and be saved. “For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

We might have proceeded to make other remarks on the Confession of Faith; but those we have made may serve as a specimen. The reader will perceive that, in our opinion, we had good reasons for rejecting it as our *judge*, and for appealing to the word of God. But we neither did, nor do we now, make the exceptionable parts of it, a term of communion. We are sensible that many of the pious have adhered to it, and do still adhere. But we believe that it will not much longer

bear the increasing light of the gospel. We doubt not but it will be given *to the moles, and to the bats, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty*. But notwithstanding we view this book, so exceptionable, in present circumstances, we would have borne with it; provided its warm friends would have borne with us. This however, they were not willing to do. It was cried up as the *standard* of the church, and we were urged to give our objections against it. This we have now done, and we leave it to the impartial reader, to judge whether they are well or ill founded. It may appear to some, notwithstanding what we have said, that our opposition to *human creeds and confessions*, is expressed with a view to make way for one of our own. We shall, therefore, the more openly and candidly address ourselves to Christian brethren, of every society, who may peruse this publication.

Brethren, we are conscious to ourselves, that we have not written these things to draw away disciples after us. We are willing that every man should abide in the same church, in which he was called; and that we strive together for the faith of the gospel. We have been, and expect to be censured for changing our sentiments—represented as unsteady and wavering in our principles. But we know him who hath said, “Prove all things—hold fast that which is good.”

The sentiments we oppose we have fully tested, and are convinced they stand not in the power of God, but in the wisdom of men. Whenever religion revives, the church is inclined to forget them. And if Zion’s watchmen were universally to partake of the reviving spirit, they would not only lose sight of them, but soon desert them. The lively Christian wants a scheme of doctrine, that will always set the Lord before his face, and afford him matter of continual joy and praise. The first breathings of divine life are often checked by those who are fond of *system*, in order to preserve uniformity in the church. Thus the living must be slain, that they may hold communion with the dead. You will be told

it is dangerous to indulge your feelings too long, lest you run into dangerous errors. You must be indoctrinated, in order to become steady Christians. You must learn the system, and when you have done it, where are you? In doubts, fears, and difficulties. You now perceive, that in many things you were mistaken, in the exercises of your first love. You now presume, you were then fools. And yet strange as it may appear, you would give the world to be such fools again. When you felt the love of God shed abroad in your hearts, by the Holy Spirit, you thought grace was infinitely free to the world; and were astonished that every one did not see and feel it; that all were not praising God and the Lamb. But now you see that you were mistaken; grace is a partial thing. When you were a fool, you wondered at the unbelief of sinners; were distressed that they rejected the Saviour;—were certain if they perished, they were wholly to blame. But *now* you are more consistent; you can excuse them a little. “Poor things, they are dead, and cannot perform one vital act;” “they are blind and cannot see,” &c. And now if any hard thoughts are to be indulged, they must be turned against the God of love. Thus as far as you apologize for the careless sinner, you grow shy of God, and imbibe the spirit of the railing thief, “If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us.”

We have now gone through what we intended in this publication. And tho’ we have endeavored to express our ideas clearly; yet it is probable, on some points, they are not so clear as to remove all difficulties from the minds of some, who are sincerely desiring to know the truth, and who may in general, agree with us, in sentiment. We are sensible that our ideas on the important doctrines of the gospel, are somewhat different from those of many of our brethren, whom we love in our Lord Jesus Christ. As we have already said, they have censured us, and probably will continue to censure; but we bear it patiently. We endeavor, and exhort others, to exercise charity and forbearance. We

have this consolation, that those who have the Spirit of Christ, yet love us; and have the same end in view, viz: That God may be glorified, and truth universally prevail. Let us not be wise in our own conceit. Let us search the Scriptures with humble dependence on God, believing that the truths necessary for us to know are therein contained; and that it is certainly the will of God we should know the truth, and that the truth should make us free. Let us unite our prayers for the universal spread of the glorious gospel; and for the building up of the kingdom of our Redeemer. Let us ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he is faithful who has promised, who also will do it.

Now to him that is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the throne of his glory, with exceeding joy; to God, our Saviour, be glory, honor, dominion, power and praise, now, and forever. Amen.

END OF APOLOGY.