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*The Confession of Faith, of the Church of
Christ in Peacham, defended.*

A

S E R M O N,

BELIVERED AT

PEACHAM,

LORD'S DAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 1817.

BY LEONARD WORCESTER,

Pastor of the Church in Peacham.

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PREFACE.

A writer in the *Panoplist*, for May and June, 1816, in a communication,* on the manner in which the scriptures are to be understood, endeavoured to establish the following rule, viz. "The sense, in which the various declarations of God, in the scriptures, are to be received, is the obvious sense; or that, which readily presents itself to a plain man, reading them with seriousness and integrity." To this rule, I think, there must be some exceptions;† though none are made by this writer. But, as a general rule, it appears to me correct; and I cannot but think it would have had a most happy influence, among professing christians, if it had always been duly regarded, by those, who have written on the doctrines of the gospel. It has long been my settled belief, that every fundamental article of christian faith may be found expressed, in some "declaration of God in the scriptures," in perfect agreement with the general tenor of scripture instructions, as plainly as in any words dictated by man's wisdom; and, hence, that an assent to any article, which cannot be found so expressed, should not be insisted on, as a term of christian fellowship. The confession of faith, brought into view in the following discourse, and the defence of this confession, rest on this ground. When this confession was formed, the design was, that it should not contain any thing, which could not be plainly expressed in the very words of scripture, taken in their obvious sense. In my defence of this confession, I have endeavoured to produce some passage, or passages of scripture, in support of the several ideas contained in it, in which what was to be proved is plainly express-

* Since the death of the late President Dwight, the readers of the *Panoplist* have been assured, that he was the writer of this communication.

† For instance, the declaration, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown," I should think, must be excepted.

ed. If, in any instance, I have failed to do this, and to do it, without perverting the text, on which reliance is placed, or making it speak a language, which is not in agreement with the concurrent testimony of scripture, in that instance, I must have failed of my object. But, if I have actually produced some such passage of scripture, in support of whatever is contained in this confession, then, let it be remembered, that, if any one should be disposed to contest the correctness of these articles, his controversy will not be with the author of the sermon, but, with the Author of the Bible. And, to any such person, it may be sufficient to say, "Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? He that reproveth God, let him answer it."

L. WORCESTER.

Peacham, October, 1817.

SERMON.

IT must always be suitable, and important, for professors of religion to examine, frequently and carefully, into the foundation, on which they rest their hopes, for acceptance with God, and eternal blessedness; and to endeavor to ascertain whether they are building “on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;” that “foundation of God,” which “standeth sure;” or whether they are building on some other foundation, which cannot abide the trial. Nor is this a matter, which is really less important to those, who do not, than it is to those, who do, profess to be christians; since the way of salvation is precisely the same for them, that it is for professors; and it must be of the same importance to them, to know what they must *believe*, and what they must *be*, that they may be saved. It is the more important that this subject should receive careful attention, because there is some disagreement, in the opinions of christians, concerning what is necessary to be believed. There is, usually, some disposition to cry, *Lo, here, and, Lo there;* and efforts are too commonly made, to divert the minds of those, who are inquiring what they must do to be saved, from subjects of primary importance, to some controverted questions, which, in comparison, are scarcely of any importance at all. This always looks to me like a stratagem of Satan, to lead men astray; as he well knows, that, if christians can be drawn into disputes, about nonessential things, they will not make much progress in the way to heaven; and that, while the attention of sinners can be fixed on such things, he is in little danger of losing his influence over them. Because,

“The Spirit, like a peaceful dove,
Flies from the realms of noise and strife.”

On this account, I have been grieved to find reason to believe,

that, in this season of unusual attention to divine things, among this people, efforts have not been wanting, to prejudice the minds of some individuals, at least, against the pastor of this church, and against the church itself, by insinuations, that the articles of their faith are not in agreement with the word of God; and to direct their attention to some controverted points, of minor importance, rather than to the things, which immediately belong to their peace. For this reason, and because it appears to me desirable, that every one, among us, should know what is here believed, it has appeared to me, that it may be useful, to call your attention, at this time, to a discourse, in which, several years ago, this subject was taken up, and the articles of this church brought into view and defended.

Let it be observed, here, and carefully remembered, that it is, and ever has been, an invariable rule, with this church, to receive to their christian fellowship, all, who, in a judgment of charity, exhibit evidence, that they love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. The question, therefore, in this discourse, is not, whether our articles contain every thing, which christians may believe; but, whether they comprise all, which the scriptures plainly require us to believe, in order to salvation.

Let me remark, further, that it is no part of my business, to-day, to contend with others, about what they believe; but, simply to defend what myself, and my brethren believe, as expressed in the articles of this church. For myself, I have long been convinced, and I trust, my friends, that you can bear me witness, that my conduct has, in a good measure, corresponded with the conviction, that my business, in the pulpit, is, not to contend with others, concerning those doctrines, in believing which, they differ from me; but, as plainly as I am able, to show, to my hearers, the way of salvation, as it appears to me to be taught in the holy scriptures. I would not be found judging "another man's servant;" but would remember that, "to his own master, he standeth, or falleth." But, leaving others to judge for themselves, I would speak the things of God, in agreement with the instructions of his word, without much inquiry whether I do, or do not, harmonize with those creeds, which are expressed, *not in the words, which the Holy Ghost teacheth, but, which men's wisdom teacheth.*

I trust the disposition, which many manifest, to listen to what concerns their salvation, will secure, at least from them, a patient attention to what is now to be offered, and induce them to compare it, carefully, with the instructions of God's holy word. And if, after all that may be said, any person should remain in doubt, respecting the correctness of our confession of faith, it will be esteemed a privilege, and a kindness, if he will favor me with an opportunity to converse with him, freely and cordially, on the subject. And may I not hope, that no one will hastily come to a conclusion, that there is any thing materially wrong here, without favoring me with such opportunity.

The text, on which the discourse is grounded, you will find.

2 CORINTHIANS, xiii. 5.

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith.

WHAT the Apostle would have the Corinthians endeavor to ascertain, unquestionably was, whether they were real disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, and savingly interested in the precious promises of the gospel. In order to this, the great question was, whether they were the subjects of that humble, penitent, believing, and obedient temper of heart, which the gospel requires. And this should be the great inquiry with every professor of the religion of Jesus Christ. For, however correct our sentiments, or the articles of our faith may be, this is to little purpose, unless the love of God be also shed abroad in our hearts, by the holy Spirit. It is very plain, however, that there are some important truths, which are necessary to be believed, and cordially embraced, that any man may have evidence to himself, or exhibit evidence to others, that his heart is right with God, and that he is interested in the blessings of the covenant of grace. Hence, in examining ourselves whether we be in the faith, one necessary inquiry is, whether we do cordially assent to these revealed truths, a belief of which, where they are made known, appears evidently to be essential to salvation. In attending to this subject, it is proposed to bring into view, distinctly, the confession of faith, which is now used by this church, in the admission of members: and then to inquire,

I. Whether the things, contained in this confession, are true.
And,

II. Whether they comprise all, which the scriptures require us to believe, in order to salvation.

The confession of faith, adopted by this church, to be used in the admission of members, is as follows :

“ You believe that the scriptures of the old and new Testaments were given by inspiration of God, and are a perfect, and the only rule of faith and practice.

“ You believe in one only living and true God, the Father, of whom are all things ; in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, by whom are all things ; and in the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God.

“ You believe that the only true God is infinite in all possible perfection ; particularly, that he is a Being of almighty power, of unlimited wisdom and knowledge, of abundant goodness, of spotless holiness, of inflexible justice, and of boundless grace ; and that his government is universal, and without control.

“ You believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express image of his person, and that, in him, dwells all the fulness of the Godhead.

“ You believe that the law of God requires men to love the Lord their God, with all their heart, and their neighbors as themselves, on pain of endless death ; and that this law is holy, and just, and good.

“ You believe that, by the disobedience of one, many were made sinners ; so that, in consequence of the original apostasy, all mankind are, naturally, destitute of all moral goodness ; are dead in trespasses and sins ; and are, by nature, children of wrath, being children of disobedience.

“ You believe that God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, to be a propitiation for sin, and to open a way of salvation for sinners ; that, in the fulness of time, the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, actually came into the world, and took on him our nature, in the body, which God prepared him,

being born of a woman ; that he was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, that he might make his soul an offering for sin, and redeem sinners from the curse of the law, being made a curse for them ; that he rose again from the dead, ascended into heaven, and now sitteth at the right hand of God the Father ; and that he is able to save, unto the uttermost, all who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for us.

“ You believe that, through Jesus Christ, pardon, and eternal life, are freely offered to the chief of sinners, and graciously promised to every one, who will exercise repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

“ You believe that, when salvation is thus freely offered to men, in the gospel, they, naturally, with one consent, begin to make excuse, and will not come unto Christ, that they might have life ; so that, notwithstanding atonement is made, and salvation freely offered, it is still certain, that, except a man be born again, or renewed by the holy Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

“ You believe that, though the offer of salvation is thus universally and ungratefully rejected, yet God is pleased, according to his eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord, to call, and save, some sinners, not by works of righteousness, which they have done ; but, according to his mercy, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he sheds on them abundantly, through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

“ You believe that Christ appointed the two solemn ordinances of the gospel, baptism and the Lord’s supper, to be religiously observed by those who love him in sincerity.

“ You believe in the resurrection of the dead, both of the just, and of the unjust. And, finally,

“ You believe that God hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by Jesus Christ, whom he hath ordained to be the Judge of quick and dead ; that, on that solemn day, the Judge will say to all penitent and humble believers, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world ; and, to all the im-

penitently wicked, Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: and, that these latter shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the former into life eternal."

Such is the confession of faith, of this church, to which, probably, every member readily assents, as true; and, so far as I know, as comprising what is essential to salvation, in such a sense, that, whoever can cordially assent to these things, and whose temper and practice appear to correspond with them, must be acknowledged as a disciple of the Lord Jesus. Whether, in so doing, they "hold fast the faithful word, as" christians "have been taught," or depart from "the faith, which was once delivered to the saints," is the deeply interesting subject of our present inquiry. In pursuing it, I shall, now, as proposed, attempt to ascertain,

I. Whether these things are true.

In relation to the first article, however, which is, "That the scriptures of the old and new Testaments are a revelation from God, and are a perfect, and the only rule of faith and practice," I would observe, that it is not my design to attend, particularly, to the evidences of divine revelation. This would lead me into too wide a field for the present occasion; and it is not necessary to the end in view. For the subject addresses itself, particularly, to believers in the divine authority of the scriptures, and not to unbelievers. Nor is it my design to go into a labored investigation of any of the articles before us; but, still believing, as I always have believed, that whatever is essential to salvation may be plainly expressed, in the very language of the Bible, it is my design to bring into view some explicit declarations of scripture, which directly support the several articles, with little other comment, than what may be necessary to show their bearing upon the points in question.

Though I shall not call your attention to the prophecies, contained in scripture, with their fulfilment; to the miracles, wrought in attestation of the truth; and to other evidences, that the writers of the Bible were divinely inspired, it may yet be suitable to notice some plain passages of scripture, by which the first article in our confession is supported. Said the apostle Paul, to

Timothy, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." This text plainly teaches, both that the scriptures were given by inspiration of God, and that they are a perfect rule. That they are the *only* rule is evident, from the fact, that the things, which are here revealed, as essential to salvation, are no where else made known to mankind. It is here declared, that, "there is no other name, under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved," but the name of Jesus Christ. Our Lord himself declared, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." But, no where else is Christ, and the way of salvation by him, made known to men, but in the holy scriptures. Accordingly, Christ, himself, directed the Jews to the scriptures, as the only source of instruction, concerning this matter. "Search the scriptures; for, in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they, which testify of me." The Berean Jews, too, are highly commended, because "they searched the scriptures daily, whether those things," which were spoken to them by Paul and Silas, "were so." Perhaps the following solemn declaration, at the close of the sacred volume, though spoken, probably, with primary reference to the revelation of John, may be justly viewed as applicable to the whole scriptures, and, consequently, as in point. "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things, which are written in this book." Much to the same purpose is the solemn caution of the wise man, "Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." I add only one passage more, which appears to me decisive. "To the law, and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." By the law, and the testimony, no doubt, is intended, the holy scriptures. These then, are the standard, by which every spirit must be tried, whether it be of God.

The second article, in the confession of faith, is, "You be lieve in one only living and true God, the Father, of whom are

all things; in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, by whom are all things; and in the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God."

One apostolic benediction is, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all;" and another, "grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God, the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love." And said Paul, to the Corinthians, "To us, there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." In confirmation of the truth, that there is but one only living and true God, the Father, much of scripture might be quoted; but, a few passages, only, must suffice. Said Moses to the children of Israel, "The Lord our God is one Lord;" or, as Mr. Poole says it is in the original, "Jehovah, our God, Jehovah is one." By the prophet Isaiah, Jehovah, himself, declared, "I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me." It is a declaration of an Apostle, "God is one." And our Lord Jesus Christ, in his prayer with his disciples, just before his crucifixion, addressing himself to this one God, said, "Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son, that thy Son, also, may glorify thee; as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." To show, that the idea, that all things are of this one God, is supported by the harmonious testimony of scripture, let it only be observed, that we read, "In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth;" that the apostle Paul says, expressly, "All things are of God;" and that the army of heaven are represented as saying, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure, they are, and were created." But, to us, also, as the apostle expresses it, "there is one Lord, Jesus Christ." The passages of scripture, in which Jesus Christ is called Lord, are too numerous to be cited here. "Our Lord, Jesus Christ," and, "Jesus Christ, our Lord," are very common expressions, in the writings of the Apostles. And the apostle Peter, in his sermon, on the day of Pentecost, address-

ing the people on the subject of the miraculous gift of tongues, to the apostles, having noticed their rejection, and wicked crucifixion of Christ, and his resurrection from the dead, said, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father, the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens; but he saith, himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy foot-stool. Therefore, let all the house of Israel know, assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord, and Christ." The apostle Paul, also, having spoken, in his epistle to the Philippians, of the humiliation of Christ, adds, "Wherefore, God, also, hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name, that, at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God, the Father." It is also, contained, in the article before us, that the Lord Jesus Christ is "the only begotten Son of the Father." In the second Psalm, we find it thus written; "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." Once, and again, God declared, concerning our Lord Jesus Christ by a voice from heaven, "This is my beloved Son." Christ, too, maintained, that God was his Father. And the apostle John, speaking of Christ, says, "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Christ, also, declared, that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." But, speaking of Christ, the apostle adds, and it is added in our confession, "by whom are all things." "Unto us there is——one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things." If any confirmation of this idea is necessary, it is found in the beginning of the epistle to the Hebrews, where the apostle tells us, that "God —— hath, in these last days, spoken unto us by his Son; —— by whom, also, he made the worlds." John, in the beginning of his gospel, says, "All things were made

by him; and, without him was not any thing made that was made." Paul, also, says again, "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." He speaks, also, of "the mystery, which from the beginning of the world, hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ." Moreover, we "believe in the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God." You all know, my friends, that "the holy Ghost," "the holy Spirit," "the Spirit of God," and "the Spirit of the Lord," are phrases, which frequently occur in the holy scriptures; and, so far as I know, it is universally admitted, that these are all expressions of the same import. The holy Ghost, therefore, is the same as the Spirit of God, or the Spirit of the Lord. This holy Spirit is abundantly spoken of, in the scriptures. "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." "By his Spirit he garnished the heavens." "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek." When Jesus was baptized, "the holy Ghost descended, in bodily shape like a dove, upon him." "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the holy Ghost, and with power." On the day of Pentecost, the Apostles were all filled with the holy Ghost." The holy Ghost said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul." "The Spirit maketh intercession within us, with groanings, which cannot be uttered."

The third article, is, "That the only true God is infinite in all possible perfection; particularly, that he is a Being of almighty power, of unlimited wisdom and knowledge, of abundant goodness, of spotless holiness, of inflexible justice, and of boundless grace; and that his government is universal, and without control."

All, who have any considerable acquaintance with their Bible, must be sensible, that the scriptures are at hand, which furnish abundant evidence of all this. "He is a rock, his work is perfect." He declared, "I am the almighty God." "His understanding is infinite." "Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world." He is "the Lord, the Lord God,

merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty." "The Lord is righteous in all his ways." He is "a just God." *Just and right is he." And his wonderful grace is manifested in the salvation of sinners, of our guilty race. He "commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet enemies, Christ died for us." We have "forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." As to his government, we are assured, that he "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will;" that "he doeth according to his will, in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand;" that "there is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel, against the Lord;" that "not a sparrow falleth to the ground without him;" and that "the very hairs of our heads are all numbered." All worlds, all creatures, all the elements, all diseases, all judgments and mercies, in short, all events are represented as being under his direction and control; and heaven and earth, and all creatures and things, are called upon to praise him, as the supreme Lord and Governor. "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice." "Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

The fourth article is, "That the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person; and that, in him, dwells all the fulness of the Godhead."

Evidence has already been exhibited, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the son of God; and that "God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name; that, at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow,—and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." He is, also, expressly declared to be, "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person;" and "it pleased the Father that, in him, shall all fulness dwell." "We beheld his glory," says the evangelist John, "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." The same thing is also evident, from all that is said of the divine dignity and

glory of the Redeemer, and from the wonderful works ascribed to him. See, particularly, what is said of him in the first chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews. "God, who, at sundry times, and in divers manners, spoke in time past unto the fathers, by the prophets, hath in these last days, spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom, also, he made the worlds; who, being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had, by himself, purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath, by inheritance, obtained a more excellent name than they. For, unto which of the angels said he, at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And, again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And, again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But, unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore, God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness, above thy fellows. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands; they shall perish, but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture, shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." Surely, if such be the dignity, such the glory, of the divine Redeemer, and such the wonderful works, which he performs, he must be, indeed, what he is declared to be, "the brightness of his" Father's "glory, and the express image of his person; in him must dwell all the fulness of the Godhead."

The fifth article is, "That the law of God requires men to love the Lord their God, with all their hearts, and their neighbors as themselves, on pain of endless death; and that this law is holy, and just, and good."

The summary, which God himself has given of his law, is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with

all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." It is also written, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die;" and, "Cursed is every one, who continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the law, to do them." That the death threatened, is endless death, is farther evident, from the consideration, that this is the dreadful evil, which shall finally come upon the impenitently wicked. "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." And it is expressly declared, that "the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good."

The sixth article is, "That man was originally created in the image of God, holy and upright, but that, being placed in a state of trial, he fell from his original rectitude, by sinning against God, and so brought himself under the dreadful curse of the divine law."

Some scripture proofs are the following: "God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him" "God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but, of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die;" or, "dying, thou shalt die" "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat." "Sin entered into the world, and death by sin."

The seventh article is, "That, by the disobedience of one, many were made sinners; so that, in consequence of the original apostasy, all mankind are, naturally destitute of all moral goodness; are dead in trespasses and sins; and are, by nature, children of wrath, being children of disobedience."

With evidence of this affecting state of mankind, the scriptures abound. "By one man's disobedience, many were made sinners;" "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and

so death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." "By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation." "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth; and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." "The Lord looked down from heaven, upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside; they are all, together, become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Said Paul to the Ephesian Christians, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein, in time past, ye walked according, to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. Among whom we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind, and were, by nature, the children of wrath, even as others."

The eighth article is, "That God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son to be a propitiation for sin, and to open a way of salvation for sinners; that, in the fulness of time, the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, actually came into the world, and took on him our nature, in the body, which God prepared him; that he was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, that he might make his soul an offering for sin, and redeem sinners from the curse of the law, being made a curse for them; that he rose again from the dead, ascended into heaven, and now sitteth on the right hand of God the Father; and that he is able to save unto the uttermost, all who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for us."

You perceive there are several particulars, in this one article, to each of which it may be necessary to produce some evidence. If, however, you bear the several particulars, in mind, you may soon be satisfied, that the proof of them all is abundant. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world, to condemn the

world; but, that the world, through him, might be saved." "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."—"When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." "When he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not; but a body hast thou prepared me." "Verily, he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham."—"Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." "He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." "In him we have redemption, through his blood, the forgiveness of sins."—"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept." "Thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day." "And he led them out as far as to Bethany; and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." "Who,——when he had, by himself, purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." "It is Christ that died; yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." "Wherefore, he is able, also, to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for us."

The ninth article is, "That, through Jesus Christ, pardon and eternal life are freely offered, to the chief of sinners, and graciously promised to all, who will exercise repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."

“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. Howbeit, for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering, for a pattern to them, which should hereafter believe on him, to life everlasting.” In this passage, it is very plainly declared, that a door of salvation is opened for the chief of sinners. Agreeably to this, the commission of Christ, to his apostles, was, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature;” and his annexed assurance was, “He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned.” Accordingly, when the Philippian jailor inquired, “What must I do to be saved?” the answer was, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” It is, however, equally taught that repentance of sin is necessary to salvation. So that it is evident, that saving faith, and repentance for sin, are inseparably connected. John, the forerunner of our Lord, preached, saying, “Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Our Lord expressly declared, “Except ye repent, ye shall all perish.” Peter, also, when the multitude, who were pricked in the heart, inquired, “What shall we do?” answered, and said, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ.” When Paul was sent “unto the people, and to the Gentiles, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified, by faith that is in Christ Jesus, he was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision; but showed, first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.” But, to whomsoever cometh, in the way of repentance, with the promise of pardon, and eternal life, is sure. The Redeemer, “Come unto me, and I will give you rest. For whosoever will, he that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.” “Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.”

The article is, “That, when salvation is thus graciously offered, sinners, in the gospel, they, naturally, with one consent, will not take excuse, and will not come unto Christ, that they may have life; so that, notwithstanding atonement is made,

and salvation freely offered, it is still certain, that, except a man be born again, or renewed, by the holy Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

That atonement is made, and pardon and salvation graciously offered, has been shown, under the preceding articles. What is now to be proved is, that, notwithstanding this, sinners excuse themselves, and will not come; so that, in order to salvation, they must be born again, or renewed, by the holy Spirit. The prophet Isaiah, speaking by the spirit of prophecy, and in the name of the Redeemer, says, "All day long have I stretched out my hand to a disobedient and gainsaying people." The language of Wisdom, in the book of Proverbs, is, "How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity, and the scorner's delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?—I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded, but ye have set at nought all my counsels, and would none of my reproof." Our Lord, himself, in his parable of the supper, represents men as all beginning, "with one consent, to make excuse," when invited to the heavenly entertainment, with the assurance, that "all things are ready." He, also, said to the Jews, explicitly, "Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life." And, again, doubtless with reference to the universal disposition of the human heart, "No man can come unto me, except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him." On this point, too, were it not, that I would rely on the explicit declarations of scripture, I might appeal to the conduct of all, who, sitting under the glorious light, and the joyful sound of the gospel, do, yet, actually refuse the salvation offered; and to the experience of all, who have been made willing to receive this salvation; who, all, though they have become willing, did once refuse. From this universal refusal, it plainly results, that the exertion of some power, not in men themselves, is necessary. Accordingly, our Lord said to Nicodemus, expressly, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Except a man be born of water, and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto you, Ye must be born again."

The eleventh article is, "That, though the offer of salvation is thus universally and ungratefully rejected, yet God is pleased, according to his eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord, to call and save some sinners; not by works of righteousness, which they have done; but, according to his mercy, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he sheds on them abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour."

A promise of Jehovah, found in the 110th Psalm, is, "Thy people shall be willing, in the day of thy power." Another assurance is, "A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation." And another is, "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." Agreeably to these things, the apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Ephesians, says, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which, from the beginning, hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ; to the intent that now, unto the principalities and powers, in heavenly places, might be known by the church; the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." And, again, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ; according as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ, to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved; in whom we have redemption, through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." To the Thessalonians, the same apostle says, "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God, for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath, from the beginning, chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth; where-

unto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." Peter, also, addressed his christian brethren, scattered in various places, as "Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." And Paul, again, in an epistle to Timothy, says, "Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God, who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." To Titus he says, "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared, not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." On this very interesting topic, I add one passage more, which is found in Paul's epistle to the Romans. It is, "We know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For, whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified."

The twelfth article is, "That Christ appointed the two solemn ordinances of the gospel, baptism and the Lord's supper, to be religiously observed, by those, who love him in sincerity."

It was the direction of our Lord, to his apostles, "Go ye, and teach," or disciple, "all nations, baptizing them in," or into, "the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Accordingly, when they began to execute their commission, on the day of Pentecost, and many, being pricked in the heart, cried, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter answered, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." We find, also, that, wherever the apostles preached the gospel, with success, the converts were baptized. With respect to the ordinance of the supper, Paul, in

his first epistle to the Corinthians, says, "For I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner, also, he took the cup, when they had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood; this do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."

The thirteenth article is, "You believe in the resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust."

Said our Lord Jesus Christ, "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." The apostles, also, "preached through Jesus, the resurrection from the dead." And Paul, in his defence before Felix, declared, that he had "hope toward God, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust."

The fourteenth, and last, article is, "That God hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by Jesus Christ, whom he hath ordained to be the judge of quick and dead; that, on that solemn day, the judge will say to all penitent and humble believers, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; and, to all the impenitently wicked, Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; and, that these latter shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the former into life eternal."

The scriptures, in proof of these things, are such as these: "God—now commandeth all men, every where, to repent; because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man, whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." "And he commanded us to preach

unto the people, and to testify that it is he, [Jesus Christ,] which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead." "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, by Jesus Christ."—"And to you, who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.—Then shall he say, also, to them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.—And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous, into life eternal."

Such, my friends, are some of the scripture proofs, on which we rely, to establish the truth of the several articles of our faith. It can hardly have escaped notice, that a very considerable part of the things, contained in these articles, are expressed in the very words of scripture; and it is hoped it is done, without, in any case, wresting the scriptures from their obvious meaning, or perverting the sense. It must have been perceived, also, that wherever, for the sake of brevity, different words are used, the ideas are generally contained, in the text produced, in language equally plain, and explicit; and, therefore, might have been expressed, with equal plainness, in the very words of scripture. May it not be concluded, then, with considerable confidence, that the things, contained in this confession of faith, are really truths, which are plainly revealed in the word of God? Are they not supported, not by the particular passages, which have been brought into view, merely; but by the harmonious sense of scripture, taken collectively? Can they be contested, without setting

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aside the plain instructions of the sacred volume? Before I proceed to the second inquiry proposed, however, it may, possibly, be useful to bring into view those covenant engagements, which persons take upon themselves, in uniting with this church, as being farther expressive of the views of the church, respecting the religion, which they profess, and of that walk and conversation, which becomes those professing godliness, and is essential to the existence of real piety in the heart. They are as follows :

“ You do now, in the presence of the great and eternal God, of angels, and of men, avouch the Lord Jehovah, the one only living and true God, to be *your* God; the object of your supreme love, and the portion of your soul; freely and heartily giving up yourself to him, according to his gospel. You receive, trust in, and desire to obey, the Lord Jesus Christ, as your Redeemer and Savior, through whose merits and atonement alone, you hope for the forgiveness of sins, and eternal life. And you desire and choose the holy Spirit of God for your Sanctifier and Comforter. You solemnly renounce the vanities of the world, and all worldly lusts, heartily engaging that, by the help of divine grace, without which you can do nothing, and which you earnestly desire, you will deny yourself, mortify your lusts, and live soberly, and righteously, and godly in the world; that you will carefully observe and attend on all the ordinances of the gospel, with reverence, faith, and love, agreeably to divine direction; that you will carefully search the scriptures, to learn the will of God; that you will practise the duties of secret devotion; that you will endeavor to train up all, who may be committed to your care, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, catechising and instructing them in the principles of our holy religion, agreeably to the word of God, and committing them to divine guidance and direction, in humble prayer; that you will do whatever is incumbent on you, that family worship may be daily maintained, in the families, with which you are, or may be connected; and that you will aim to set an example of piety before them, and before the world. You, also, cordially join yourself unto this church, as a true church of our Lord Jesus Christ; promising, in the same dependence on divine grace, as before expressed, that you will be subject to its discipline, so far as it is conformable to the rules of

the gospel; and that you will walk with the members thereof in all memberlike love, watchfulness, and purity; thus, in all things, adorning the doctrine of God our Savior."

The way is now prepared, to inquire, as was proposed,

II. Whether these things comprise all, which the scriptures require us to believe, in order to salvation.

You will allow me to repeat, here, that it has ever been an established rule, with this church, that all persons, who request the privilege of uniting with them, and who give evidence, to their satisfaction, that they really love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, are to be cordially received, as members, however they may differ in opinion from the church, in such things as do not destroy this evidence. We do not know of any authority, which Christ has delegated to his church, to exclude from fellowship, in the ordinances of the gospel, any, whom they have reason to believe he acknowledges, as his disciples and brethren. "The disciple is not above his Lord; neither is he that is sent, greater than he that sent him." If then, we see one, with whom the Head of the body, the church, appears to us to have evident communion, we cannot but think it very incongruous, and without express authority, not a little assuming, for the members to say to him, "stand by thyself; come not near to me; for I am holier than thou." Especially, since the members of the body are all subjects of much imperfection and error, it appears to us very unsuitable for them to exclude from their fellowship, on account of imperfection and error, those, who are received by their unerring and perfect Head. Hence, we do not feel authorised to insist on an assent to any article of faith, as a term of communion, unless it be such, that it must be assented to, that we may, under existing circumstances, obtain satisfactory evidence, that a person is a real friend of Christ. For, evidence of this is all that is wanted, to entitle any one to a participation with us, in the precious privileges of the family of Christ.* Hence, though I have en-

*An adherence to this rule, led, several years ago, to an alteration in our confession of faith, which has been the occasion of some reproach. Several persons proposed to unite with the church, who gave such evidence as satisfied the church, that they were real disciples of the Lord Jesus. But, there was an article, in our confession, concerning the Father, Son, and Ho

deavored to show, that the things contained in our articles of faith, are true, I have not inquired whether an assent to every one of these articles, as they stand, be, or be not, essential to salvation. My object has been to evince, that the things are true; and, of course, that those, who believe them, are not, on *that* account, in any fundamental error. In short, that, in believing these things, we do not depart from "the faith, once delivered to the saints." This point, it is hoped, has been made plain.

But, it must be admitted, that an individual, or church, might exhibit a confession of faith, containing only what is true, and yet withhold assent from other things, not less true, nor less important. Hence, in examining ourselves, "whether we be in the faith," it must be suitable to inquire, not only whether what we believe is really true; but, whether it comprises all, which the scriptures make essential to salvation. This is the inquiry now before us. Possibly, to some persons, it may appear more plain, if it be stated somewhat differently. It is, then, whether any one can honestly assent to the articles of faith, which have been under consideration, be possessed of a corresponding temper, and be conformed to these things, in his life and conversation, agreeably to what is contained in the covenant; and yet, after all, not be a real disciple of Jesus Christ. Could such an one be justly viewed, as having essentially departed from the faith, and as being destitute of the spirit of the gospel, on any account whatever? This question demands a careful attention, not only on account of its importance, in itself, but because, by persons calling themselves christians, and even by some real christians, it would, no

ly Ghost, which did not appear to them to accord with the language of scripture, and to which, therefore, they could not, conscientiously, assent. As the church could not reject them, it was agreed that, in their cases, the article should be waved. Afterwards, similar cases repeatedly occurred.—To one of the members, at least, the course, pursued, appeared improper. Accordingly, though he had, for himself, no objection to the articles, as they stood, he proposed that they should be revised, and altered, so as to remove the difficulty. To this, the church agreed. And the result was, the substitution of the confession of faith, and covenant, which have been exhibited in the preceding pages, in the room of those formerly used; which change was made, without a single dissenting voice. If, in all this, any thing was done, which is repugnant to the rules of the gospel, and injurious to the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom; or any thing, which has given just cause of offence to any sister church, or to any individual member of any sister church, let the wrong be pointed out, in the spirit of christian candor, and meekness, and brotherly kindness, and it is hoped a disposition to make all the satisfaction, which the case may require, will not be found wanting.

doubt, receive a very different answer. We need not go far to find churches and ministers of the Lord Jesus, who would not acknowledge such a person to be entitled to christian fellowship, however amiable and exemplary he might be, in other respects, unless he would, also, assent to other articles of faith, expressed, not in words which the holy Spirit has taught, but in words which man's wisdom teacheth, which they would impose. This would be the case, doubtless, with some Presbyterian, and with some Baptist churches, in our vicinity; and, possibly, with some Congregational churches, in our country. There are some, probably, who, instead of receiving such persons to their fellowship, as "fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God," would consider them as worshipping another God, as believing in another Savior, as receiving another gospel.*

In answering the inquiry before us, it is particularly important, that we attend to the terms of salvation, as they are presented to us in the word of God. In showing unto men the way of salvation, the ministers of Christ, and others, should, unquestionably, conform to their instructions, as contained in the holy scriptures. They are to speak the words of God, unto those, to whom they are sent. The inspired teachers "spake as they were moved by the holy Spirit." We, then, in stating the terms of salvation, may neither add to, nor diminish from, what God has declared, by his inspired servants. These terms are concisely stated, and have already claimed some attention, in that article of the confession of faith, in which it is said, that "pardon and eternal life are graciously promised to every one, who will exercise repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." That such are, indeed, the terms of salvation, as insisted on in

**Another God—another Savior—another gospel.* Such, precisely, is the language, which, in one instance, at least, has been applied to those, who believe what is contained in the foregoing confession of faith. But, if those, who believe these things, really worship that God, whose character is here brought into view, that God, who, alone, is infinite in all possible perfection, and any of their brethren worship *another* God, they, who, and what is he? If the Savior, in whom they believe, is the Lord Jesus Christ, "the Son of the living God," "in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead," and whom "the Father sent to be the Savior of the world;" and if any of their brethren believe in *another* Savior, then, who, and what is he? If the gospel, which they receive, is the good news of salvation for sinners, even for the chief of sinners, who repent and believe, through the mediation and atonement of this glorious Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, and any of their brethren really receive *another* gospel, then, what is that other?

the Bible, it is presumed no one will deny. Our Lord, himself, explicitly preached these things, as the terms of salvation. He “came to call sinners to repentance,” and declared, expressly, “that whosoever believed in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” “He that believeth, and is baptised, shall be saved.” As before observed, therefore, it seems obvious that, under the light of the gospel, true repentance, and saving faith, are inseparably connected. They do, as it were, necessarily imply each other. But, that we may have correct views of the terms of salvation, when thus concisely stated, it is necessary that we consider what is involved in repentance and faith.

Repentance, then, is, properly, a change of mind; and this change has respect to various objects. It is repentance towards God. Hence, it evidently has respect to God. Naturally, men are at variance with this glorious Being. Their “carnal mind is enmity against God.” This enmity is indulged, on account of what God is, and on account of what he does. They are displeased with God, especially, on account of what he is, as a being of spotless holiness, and who is, of course, opposed to all wickedness. This, no doubt, is that, in God, which is, most of all, displeasing to sinners. For the same reason, they are opposed to his holy law, and to his holy government. The law of God forbids all wickedness, on pain of death; and the operations of his government fulfil the threatenings of his law. Hence, the sinner is opposed to this law, and government. But, the true penitent’s heart is changed, in respect to these things. He is pleased with the character of a holy God, and rejoices that he is possessed of infinite perfection. He delights in God’s holy law.—He is pleased with all that it requires, and approves of all that it threatens. He rejoices, too, that God, a Being of infinite perfection, is on the throne, and does all his pleasure.

The feelings of the true penitent are greatly changed, too, in respect to sin. Once, he saw little evil in sin, and little sin in himself. Now, sin appears to him “an evil thing, and bitter;” his own iniquities appear innumerable, and aggravated; and he loathes himself, in his own sight, for all his abominations. He mourns for sin, and his heart is broken and contrite. You perceive, moreover, that such a change must necessarily involve a

disposition to forsake sin, and to walk in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord. The Westminster Assembly of Divines, in their shorter catechism, have well expressed the nature of "repentance unto life," where they say it "is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, — doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavors after, new obedience." This definition appears to agree with what holy Job expressed, when he said, "I have heard of thee, by the hearing of the ear; but, now, mine eye seeth thee; wherefore, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." It well agrees, also, with the language of the royal penitent, in the 51st psalm. "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgression, and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight; that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Create in me a new heart, and renew a right spirit within me. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, also, involves things, which must be well worthy of our careful attention. It is particularly important that we attend to the manner, in which Jesus Christ is revealed to us, as the object of our faith, in order to salvation.— Perhaps this is not more definitely stated, any where, than it is by John, near the close of his gospel, where he expressly declares the design of some things, which he had written, in these words; "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." With this, agrees, exactly, another declaration of the same Apostle, in his general epistle, where he says, "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God, which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself. He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.— And 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. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life. and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."* With this, also, Peter's profession of his faith, on account of which our Lord pronounced him blessed, exactly agrees. Jesus asked his disciples, "Whom say ye that I am?" Peter replied, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Nathanael, too, the Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile, made a similar profession.— "Thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel." And the Ethiopian Eunuch, when Philip consented to baptize him, if he believed with all his heart, replied, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." What, then, can be more certain, than that, as the object of our faith, in order to salvation, the Lord Jesus is presented to us, as "the Christ, the Son of God?" The Christ, or Messiah, is the same as the Anointed. Jesus, the Son of God, then is presented to us, as Jehovah's Anointed. He is anointed, as a Prophet, to instruct us in the things of God; as "a Priest forever, after the order of Melchisedee," such as "become us, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;" a Priest, to make atonement for sin, and to live and intercede with his Father, for his people, forever; and as Jehovah's "King upon his holy hill of Zion."

It should, also be remarked, that faith in Christ is evidently used synonymously with receiving him. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God; even to them that believe on his name." Eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, too, are expressive of believing in, or receiving him. "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life: and I will raise him up at the last day." Hence, we conclude, that true faith in Christ is a cordial and affectionate reception of him, as "the Christ, the Son of God." It evidently implies, therefore, a sense of personal vileness, guilt, and ill-desert, and of entire dependence on the merits and atonement of the

*It will not be said, surely, that those, who fully assent to the foregoing confession, do not "believe, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." Is it certain, then, that they have not "life, through his name?" And, if it be not, may not some persons have reason to fear, "lest, haply, they be found to fight even against God?"

Son of God, for pardon and acceptance. The true believer, entirely renouncing all self dependence, casts himself unreservedly, upon the mercy of God, in Christ, for pardon, justification, and eternal life. He realizes, that it is "by grace that he is saved, through faith, and that not of himself, it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast."

We are, moreover, plainly taught, that true faith in Christ has good works connected with it. "Faith worketh by love."—"And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." "Faith without works, is dead, being alone." "Show me thy faith, without thy works; and I will show thee my faith, by my works." In short, the faith and repentance, to which the promise of salvation is made, have various other graces connected with them, all which are found in the penitent believer. He adds to his "faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance, patience: and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity."

Now, will any one, *can* any one pretend, that the blessings of the new and everlasting covenant, forgiveness of sins, justification by the grace of God, through the blood of Jesus, peace with God, and eternal life, are not, by the gracious promise of God, connected with such repentance, and such faith, as have been described? Can any one be the subject of this repentance, and this faith, and yet fail of "salvation, with eternal glory?" If he can, what is the faith of God's elect, with which the promise of salvation is connected? But, if such are the terms of salvation; if such are the repentance and faith, which the gospel requires, and to which the promise of salvation is made, must it not certainly follow, that the confession of faith, of this church, does comprise all, which the scriptures make it essentially necessary that we should believe, in order to salvation; so that whoever honestly assents to these things, and is possessed of a correspondent temper, manifested by a life and conversation, such as becometh the gospel, must be acknowledged as a real christian?

It may be important to consider, here, what is the principal use of confessions of faith, in relation to this matter. This is, to

assist us in determining whether ourselves, or others, are the subjects of saving repentance and faith. For this, after all, is the important point to be ascertained. It is not to be understood, however, that a man's assenting to the important truths of the gospel is, itself, any certain evidence, that he is possessed of the spirit of the gospel. For, no doubt, very wicked men, as well as good men, may assent to these truths. Even devils believe the truth. Says an apostle, "Thou believest that there is one God: thou doest well; the devils also believe and tremble." But, though an assent to the truth is not certain evidence that a man is a humble and penitent believer in Christ; yet, there are truths, a denial of which must be evidence, that a man is not such a believer. If a man denies the existence, or the essential perfections of God: or, if he denies that the law of God is holy, and just, and good: or, if he denies that God is holy and righteous in the administration of his government; or, if he denies that sin is an evil and bitter thing, deserving of such awful manifestations of divine displeasure, as the law threatens, and justifies or excuses himself in his own wickedness; in either of these cases, it would seem to be impossible, that he should be the subject of that repentance towards God, which is unto life. So, if a man denies the existence of any such person as the Lord Jesus Christ; or denies his mediation and atonement; or his ability to save, unto the uttermost, all who come unto God by him; or, if he denies a future state of existence; in any such case, how can it be supposed he truly believes in Christ, to the saving of his soul? What benefit can such a person look for, from Christ? So, again, if a man denies the necessity of any change of heart; or the necessity of any divine operation, to effect the change; or, that conformity to the precepts of the gospel is necessary to salvation; in any of these cases, how can we believe that he is born again, or created in Christ Jesus unto good works; or, that he is really possessed of the spirit of Christ, and that "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord?"

On the other hand, if a man does seriously profess a belief in the divine authority of the scriptures, as a perfect rule; in the being, and infinite perfection of one only living and true God; in the holiness of his law, and the perfection of his government; in the fall, and entire sinfulness of mankind, and in his own vileness

and wilderness, in particular; in the justice of God in the damnation of sinners; in the Lord Jesus, as "the Christ, the Son of the living God," "in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead;" in his mediation and atonement, and his ability "to save, unto the uttermost, all who come unto God by him;" in the necessity of regeneration, by the Spirit of God; in justification by faith in Christ; in the necessity of a holy life; in salvation by grace alone; in a future judgment; in the final blessedness of all the friends of God, and the endless punishment of all his enemies; I say, if a man do seriously profess a belief in all these things, and others, as expressed in the confession of faith, which has been under consideration; what, so far as respects his belief, what more can be necessary, to our finding evidence, that he is, really, a humble and penitent follower of the Lord Jesus? If his account of religious experience, and his life and conversation, correspond with this profession, what reason can we have for withholding our charity from him, as one who is accepted in the Beloved? And if no reason can be assigned, I ask, again, is it not incontrovertible, that our confession of faith does comprise all, a belief of which is made essential to salvation; and, of course, that a want of other articles, which are found in other confessions, cannot be justly viewed as evidence, that this church has departed from the faith of the gospel?

Though the question before us should be decided by the authority of scripture alone, without any regard to the authority of uninspired writings, or uninspired men, it may not be amiss, here, to bring into view what is called the Apostles' Creed; which, though not written, probably, by any of the Apostles, is unquestionably, one of the most ancient creeds now extant. It shows what were deemed the leading articles of christian faith, in a very early period of the church of Christ; and it will be seen how exactly our confession accords with the leading articles of this ancient creed. It is in these words; "I believe in God the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day, he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sit-

asth on the right hand of God the Father almighty ; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost ; the holy catholic church ; the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins ; the resurrection of the body ; and the life everlasting. Amen."

It may be observed, moreover, that there are churches of Christ, which, laying aside all other confessions of faith, and covenants, as the unauthorised work of man's wisdom, make use of the Bible only, for the purpose, for which confessions and covenants are used by others. And, possibly, would all the churches be faithful to themselves, and to candidates for admission, in examining by the unerring standard, it would very much supercede the use of formulas of faith, and be more conformable to the simplicity of the practice of the primitive churches. At least, however, it appears to me obvious, that confessions of faith should be so exactly conformable to the instructions of scripture, as to contain no idea, which cannot be clearly expressed, in words dictated by the holy Spirit, and so used, as never to exclude a real follower of Christ, from the privileges of his house.

As to the confession of faith, adopted by this church, it certainly appears to myself, and I trust it has been made to appear to others, that the things contained in it are all plainly revealed in the holy scriptures ; and, moreover, that it does comprise the essential truths of the gospel ; so that, whoever believes these truths, and whose temper and practice are, in any good measure, conformed to them, must be a humble worshipper of the one only living and true God ; a real disciple of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ ; and savingly interested in all the precious promises of the covenant of grace. Hence, I do not see how any church can, rightfully, insist on an assent to other articles, as an essential term of christian fellowship. If, then, this be what any are pleased to call heresy, " this I confess unto you," my friends, and to all others, " that, after the way which *they* call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things, which are written in the law and in the Prophets," and by the Evangelists and Apostles.

It becomes us all, however, to examine carefully, for ourselves, in the light of that invaluable Book, which God has given

as for our rule, and which is “able to make us wise unto salvation, through faith that is in Christ Jesus;” and to see that our faith does “not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.” So far as the “profession of our faith” will abide a trial, by the unerring standard, it becomes us to “hold it fast, without wavering,” standing “fast in the liberty, wherewith Christ has made us free;” and refusing to be “entangled, by any yoke of bondage,” which any man, or body of men, acting “as lords over God’s heritage,” and assuming and exercising an unwarranted dominion over the faith of their brethren, may attempt to impose. The elders of the primitive churches were exhorted to “feed the church of God,” acting, “not as lords over God’s heritage, but as ensamples to the flock.” Even the Apostles disclaimed all pretension to having any dominion over the faith of their brethren; but they were helpers of their joy. And how happy would it be; how much would it tend to promote christian harmony, and fellowship, and love, and to diffuse the spirit of the gospel, if all ministers, and all christians, would allow themselves to be guided by this instruction, and conformed to this example!—Would not many brethren, who are now unhappily alienated from each other, soon learn, “how good, and how pleasant it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity?”

But, my friends, in examining ourselves, “whether we be in the faith,” let it be deeply impressed on all our minds, that what we should endeavor to ascertain is not, merely, or principally, whether we assent to the truths of the gospel; but, whether we have that faith, which worketh by love, and purifieth the heart, and overcometh the world. Whether we are savingly united to Christ, having his spirit, so that he is formed in us, the hope of glory. In the verse, which contains my text, the Apostle not only says, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith;” but, he adds, “Prove your own selves; know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” It is to little purpose that we assent to any confession of faith, however orthodox, unless we be possessed of the temper, which metens for heaven. As already observed, wicked men, and even devils, may assent to truth; but, neither wicked men nor devils, have the spirit of Christ. The great thing, which metens for heaven, is a holy temper of heart. When we look into the sermons, or con-

versation, of our Lord, we do not find him insisting much on any particular creeds, or confessions of faith; but, on a holy temper. He did not pronounce his gracious benedictions, on any of the sects, which prevailed, when he was here on earth; nor did he look forward to times then future, and say, Blessed will be Calvinists; or, Blessed will be Lutherans; or, Blessed will be Arminians; or, Blessed will be any other denomination among professing christians; but, "Blessed are the poor in spirit; blessed are they that mourn; blessed are the meek; blessed are they, which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; blessed are the merciful; blessed are the pure in heart; blessed are the peacemakers." In the day of final judgment, he will say, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for"—what, my brethren? Is it, For ye did believe in the doctrines of Athanasius, or Luther, or Calvin, or Arminius, or some other polemic, think you? Ah, no. But, it is, "For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.—Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me." So, he will say to the wicked, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; for"—what? Ye did not agree in religious opinions with this, that, or the other sect, among professing christians? Far from it. But, "For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.—Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me." Yet, alas, do not many professors pay much more regard to their particular sentiments, than to an holy, heavenly temper, in determining whether themselves, or others, are disciples of Christ? How many have contended with the most fervent zeal; yea, how many have contended unto blood, and unto death, in defence of a particular creed, who, however, took no care to be possessed of the spirit of Jesus Christ! My brethren, let not this be our character. While we are careful to receive, and to hold fast the truth, as it is in Jesus, let us be no less careful, that we do not hold it in

unrighteousness. Let us remember, that "the end of the commandment is charity ; out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." And, while we "contend earnestly for the faith, which was once delivered to the saints," let us always remember that we are not in the faith, to any saving purpose, unless we have also, the spirit of Christ, and "put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another ;" and unless, "above all these things, we put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness."

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succession failed to pick a church site; but meanwhile an academy was built in 1795. The church met here for forty years.

The theology presented in this church was a strict and harsh Calvinism. It was a doctrine of fear. The church enforced morality and good thinking by many forms of coercion, beginning with complaints: in fact the church became a civil court to enforce attendance at public worship, repress quarrellings, stop un-Christian language, etc.

When *complaints* failed, the church discipline was brought into action. The stages of it were: public confession of sin; suspension from the church; excommunication. At least three cases of excommunication occurred in Peacham.

Two-hour sermons in the morning, plus an afternoon service, in unheated buildings till a stove was introduced in 1816, formed the Sunday regime. Their first pastor was Leonard Worcester, who led them for forty years, never receiving a salary of more than \$400

in New York not to leave his room and for members may not realize all the difficulties under which both the editor-in-chief and his collaborators are laboring. To speak merely for himself, the present writer is under orders from his physicians both in Maine and

The town of Peacham had 1145 people in 1840; today it has but 600, thanks to abandonment of upland farms. In the early days the people raised their standard of living and their intellectual level, in this hill community.

Professor Bogart's address was discussed by President Walten, Dr. Weitenkamp, Mr. Henderson, Mr. Guild, Professor Green, Mr. Sprague, Dr. Knowles, Professor Linn, and Dr. Healey. On motion of Dr. Rich, the Club, by rising vote, thanked Professor Bogart for his paper.

Without further parliamentary formality, the Club adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

view, and likes and dislikes, of the post-war armed forces, the attitudes, the points of view, when nearly a third of our membership finds honorable place in the fosters of the war, the storm and stress of these days of war, consists in keeping our established, our habitual, activities from lapsing.

In the storm and stress of these days of war, which is all the greater because the service itself is not visible. The heart of this service consists in keeping our established, our habitual, activities from lapsing.





