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✓ THE
JUDICIAL ACTS

OF THE
GENERAL SYNOD,

✓ OF THE
ASSOCIATE REFORMED CHURCH

OF
NORTH AMERICA,

EMITTED,
FROM TIME TO TIME,

AS
OCCASIONAL TESTIMONIES AGAINST PREVAILING ERRORS

TOGETHER
WITH A WARNING AGAINST HOPKINSIAN
AND
OTHER ALLIED ERRORS,

ADDRESSED BY
THE ASSOCIATE REFORMED SYNOD OF THE WEST
TO
THE CHURCHES UNDER THEIR CARE;

WITH
A short Narrative prefixed of the State and Progress of such errors.

TO ALL WHICH IS PREFIXED
THE ORIGINAL CONSTITUTION
OF THE
ASSOCIATE REFORMED CHURCH.

WASHINGTON, OHIO.
PRINTED BY
HAMILTON ROBB.

.....
1830.

Extract from the minutes of the A. R. Church, for the year 1829.

Moved by Messrs. Morrow and Dinwiddie,

Resolved, That it is expedient to publish the acts of the Associate Reformed Synod emitted from time to time as occasional testimonies against prevailing errors; and that be a committee to cause such number of copies of the same to be printed as may be required by the several presbyteries to supply the people respectively under their inspection. Approved. And Messrs. Findley, Steele and Proudfit, were appointed said committee.

CONSTITUTION

OF THE

Associate Reformed Church.

ARTICLE I.

IT is the resolution of this Synod to persevere in adhering to the system of truth laid down in the Holy Scriptures, and exhibited in the Confession of Faith, and Catechisms larger and shorter; and to the fundamental principles of gospel worship, and ecclesiastical government, held forth in the directory for public worship, and the form of Presbyterian church Government, agreed upon by the Assembly of divines at Westminster, with the assistance of commissioners from the church of Scotland

This declaration does not, however, extend to the following sections of the Confession of Faith, which define the powers of civil government in relation to religion, viz. chap. xx. sec. 4. chap. xxiii. sec. 3. chap. xxxi. sec. 2. These sections are reserved for a candid discussion on some future occasion, as God may be pleased to direct. Nor is it to be construed as a resignation of their right to adjust the circumstances of public worship, and ecclesiastical policy, to the situation in which Divine Providence may place us. All the members of Synod, in the mean time, acknowledge that they are under the most sacred obligations to avoid unnecessary criticisms, on any of these excellent treatises, which would have a native tendency to weaken their attachment to the truths therein contained.

If any of the members of Synod shall conceive any scruple or scruples, at any article or articles of the Confession of Faith, Catechisms, Directory for Worship, or Form of Presbyterian Government; or shall think they have sufficient reasons to make objections thereto, they shall have full liberty to communicate their scruples or objections to their brethren, who shall consider them with impartiality, meekness, and patience, and endeavor to remove them, by calm dispassionate reasoning: No kind of censure shall be inflicted in cases of this nature, till this Christian process shall be fairly tried; unless those scrupling or objecting brethren shall disturb the peace of the church, by publishing their opinions to the people, or urging them in judicatories with irritating and schismatical zeal.

ARTICLE II.

The ministers and elders met in Synod also declare their hearty approbation of the earnest contending for the truth, and magnanimous sufferings in its defence, by which their pious ancestors were enabled to distinguish themselves in the two last centuries: That they have an affectionate remembrance of the National-Covenant of Scotland, and of the Solemn League and Covenant of Scotland, England, and Ireland, as well intended engagements to support the cause of civil and religious liberty,* and hold themselves bound by the Divine Authority to practice all the moral duties therein contained, according to their circumstances: That public and explicit covenanting with God is a moral duty under the gospel dispensation, to which they are resolved to attend, as He shall be pleased to direct: That it is their real intention to carry with them all the Judicial Testimonies against defection from the faith once delivered to the saints, which have been emitted in the present age by their brethren in Britain, as far as these testimonies serve to display the truth, and comport with the circumstances of our church; and they will avail themselves of every call to bear a pointed testimony against the errors and delusions which prevail in this country.

ARTICLE III.

The members of Synod also acknowledge with gratitude, that they are bound to honor the religious denominations in Britain, to which they formerly belonged, on account of their zeal for the purity of the gospel, and of their laudable endeavors to promote it, not only in Britain and Ireland, but also in America: And they profess an unfeigned desire to hold an amicable correspondence with all or with any of them, and to concur with them in every just and laudable measure for promoting true and undefiled religion.

ARTICLE IV.

It is the resolution of the Synod never to introduce, nor suffer to be introduced into their church, the local controversies about the civil establishment of the Presbyterian religion, and the religious clause of some burgess oaths in Scotland, or any unnecessary disputes about the origin of civil dominion, and the requisites for rendering it legal in

* The members of Synod esteem themselves, and such of their people as have emigrated from Britain and Ireland, deeply interested in these solemn transactions, and they have a lively sense of the obligations they are under to prosecute the ends thereof, in a suitableness to their circumstances: but when they consider themselves as the representatives of a church, of which some are now members, and many more may become members, who never were, directly nor indirectly, under the formal obligation of these covenants, as being foreigners, or the posterity of foreigners, they cannot help thinking that they would go beyond their proper line, should they acknowledge them in any other form than that which is expressed in this article.

circumstances dissimilar to those in which themselves are placed.— They esteem themselves bound to detach their religious profession from all foreign connexions, and to honor the civil powers of America, conscientiously submitting to them in all their lawful operations.

ARTICLE V.

That the abuse of ecclesiastical censures may be effectually prevented, the following general rule of discipline is unanimously adopted, viz. That notorious violations of the law of God in practice, and such errors in principle, as unhinge the Christian profession, shall be the only scandals for which the sentence of deposition and excommunication shall be passed: and that the highest censure for other offences shall be, a dissolution of the connexion between the Synod and the offender.

ARTICLE VI.

The terms of admission to fixed communion with the Synod shall be, soundness in the faith, as defined in the above mentioned Confession of Faith, Catechisms, &c. submission to the government and discipline of the church, and a holy conversation.

ARTICLE VII.

The members of Synod also acknowledge it to be their duty, to treat pious people of other denominations with great attention and tenderness. They are willing, *as God affordeth opportunity, to extend communion to all, who in every place call on the name of the Lord Jesus, in conformity to his will:* But as occasional communion, in a divided state of the church, may produce great disorders, if it be not conducted with much wisdom and moderation, they esteem themselves, and the people under their inspection, inviolably bound, in all ordinary cases, to submit to every restriction of their liberty, which general edification renders necessary.*

This article is not, however, to be construed as a licence to encourage vagrant preachers, who go about under pretence of extraordinary

* The principle expressed in this article, is not a new principle adopted by the Synod. It is one of the received principles of the Secession, and it is set in a very strong light in the 26th chapter of the Confession of Faith, which largely describes the communion of the catholic church. The members of synod do not mean to draw any other conclusions from it, than were drawn by their pious ancestors in times of the greatest zeal for the purity of religion. No objection can therefore be justly stated against it, as it stands in the article, but what may be made to it, as it stands in the Confession of Faith. The application of the principle to particular cases may indeed be attended with some difficulties. We are not, however, accountable for these difficulties, as they arise from the divided state of the church of Christ. The article is guarded, and cannot, without the most evident perversion, be construed as a licence to hold unscriptural communion with other churches. It is the intention of the Synod not to go into connexions with any denomination which are contrary to, or inconsistent with the spirit of what is usually styled the Covenanted Reformation.

zeal and devotion, and are not subject to the government and discipline of any regular church.

ARTICLE VIII.

As the principles of the Synod are detached from the local peculiarities by which the most considerable parties of Presbyterians have been hitherto distinguished, it is farther agreed to reject all such applications for admission to fixed communion with the Synod, that may at any time be made by persons belonging to other denominations of Presbyterians, as evidently arise from caprice, personal prejudice, or any other schismatical principles; and that the only admissible application shall be such, as on deliberate examination shall be found to arise from a solid conviction of duty, and to discover Christian meekness towards the party whose communion is relinquished; or such as are made by considerable bodies of people, who are not only destitute of a fixed gospel ministry, but cannot be seasonably provided for by the denomination of Presbyterians to which they belong. It is, however, thought proper, that applications of the last kind should not be admitted, till the bodies by whom they are made shall previously inform the judicatory which hath the immediate inspection of them, of the reasons of their intended application, and shall use all due means to obtain the concurrence of that judicatory.



AN ACT

Concerning Judicial Testimonies. *

Passed June 7, 1797.

WHEREAS a number of people, under the inspection of the ASSOCIATE REFORMED SYNOD, entertain doubts as to their principles and intentions with respect to the maintenance of a faithful testimony for the truth, as it is in JESUS; and whereas these doubts are accompanied with anxiety for a judicial publication, copiously illustrating and defending the doctrines of the gospel; and enumerating, refuting, and condemning errors and heresies;—to be called a *Testimony*; *The Ministers and Elders, in Synod assembled*, think it incumbent on them to explain, and by this act they do explain, their real views of these interesting subjects.

Upright and open testimony for the truths of the Lord's word, whether relating to doctrine, discipline, worship or manners, is the indis-

* It has been thought proper to prefix the Act concerning Judicial Testimonies, as this explains the reasons for which the Synod adopted the mode of occasional testimonies, as preferable to any other, in applying their ascertained principles to the publication of truth and the detection of error.—*Publishing Committee.*

pensable duty of all Christians; especially of the ministers and Judicatories of the church, who, from their office, ought to be set for the defence of the gospel.

Judicial testimonies, being designed to operate against prevalent error, are, lest they should miss their aim, to be wisely adapted to the immediate circumstances of the church.

Both these principles have been fully recognized by the Synod in their published act of May, 1790, entitled *An act to amend the constitution of the Associate Reformed Synod*. They therein declare, that “they consider the confession of faith, larger and shorter catechisms, “directory for worship, and form of church government, as therein received, as their *fixed testimony*, by which their principles are to be “tried; or as the judicial expression of the sense in which they understand the holy scriptures in the relation they have to the doctrine, “the worship, and government of the Christian church: and that it is “their resolution to emit *occasional testimonies*, in *particular acts* “against errors and delusions.”

The Synod, however, having been frequently importuned to publish a testimony of a different kind, renewed, from time to time, their discussions on this point; and, after the most impartial and serious deliberation, find it their duty not to recede from the above resolution.

For the satisfaction of such as have not had access to know the grounds of this decision, some of them are subjoined.

1. In her excellent confession of faith, catechisms, &c. the church is already possessed of a testimony so scriptural, concise, comprehensive, and perspicuous, that the Synod despair of seeing it materially improved, and are convinced that the most eligible and useful method of maintaining the truths therein exhibited, is *occasionally* to elucidate them, and direct them in particular acts, against particular errors, as circumstances require.

2. There was drawn up and published by a committee of Synod, in the year 1787, *An Overture for illustrating and defending the doctrines of the Westminster confession of faith*. And in May, 1790, Synod unanimously resolved, that said overture is, “in substance, an excellent and instructive illustration and application of these truths “unto the present state of the church of Christ in America, and warmly “recommended it as such, to all the people under their inspection.” Whatever, then, might be effected on a general scale, by any similar pamphlet in the form of a judicial testimony, may be effected by that overture. And to emit such a testimony would only be to repeat the same laborious and expensive work, without obtaining any proportional advantage.

3. Could a testimony universally acceptable be prepared, it would still be far from producing those beneficial effects which are so fondly expected.

If it were to do tolerable justice to the prodigious extent of the confession, it would swell into an immense work, of which the very bulk would defeat the intention. And if it were comprised in a volume suited to the leisure of an ordinary reader, it would be defective, and defective perhaps, on those very points on which the occurrences of a few months might require it to be particular and full.

It could scarcely give a correcter view of the principles of the Synod than is already given in their received confession: because it could scarcely hold forth any truths which are not therein held forth; or state them, upon the whole, with more luminous precision. The opinion that such a testimony is needful to *ascertain* the Synod's principles, is a direct impeachment of the confession itself; since, if they are not sufficiently ascertained by this, it must be either lame or ambiguous; and then the church demands, not a separate testimony, but an amended confession. If any parts of it are differently interpreted, and abused to the promotion of error, these ought to be explained in detached acts; and such explanation belongs strictly to the province of *occasional testimonies*.

It could not deter from application for ministerial or Christian communion with the Synod, any who are not really friendly to the doctrines of grace. Since one who can profess an attachment to the confession of faith, while he is secretly hostile to its truths, is too far advanced in dishonesty to be impeded for a moment, by any testimony which the wisdom of man can frame.

It could not silence the objections and cavils of such as incline to misrepresent the principles and character of the Synod; since it is impossible to satisfy with any thing, those who are determined to be satisfied with nothing. The very uncandid manner in which the Synod have already been often treated, both in Britain and America, leaves little reason to hope their plainest declarations will not be perverted, and their most upright intentions misconstrued.

It could not lift up a *perpetual* banner for truth: since, from the ever fluctuating state of religious controversy, and the impossibility of foreseeing the different shapes which error may assume, some parts of it would gradually grow obsolete, while some would be deficient; and the same necessity for occasional testimonies would still remain. In the nature of things, moreover, it would, after a short time, at most, a few years, be out of print and out of date, and ceasing to interest the public curiosity, would utterly fail of accomplishing its end. There is also solid reason to fear, that in the present unhappy contentions which divide the church, it would be used by too many as the rallying point of party, and would inflame those wounds in the body of Christ, which it should be our study and prayer to have speedily and thoroughly healed.

While these and similar reasons impel the Synod to decline issuing such a testimony as hath been desired, there are others which persuade

them that the plan on which, as the Lord in his providence hath called them, they have hitherto acted; and on which they are resolved to act in future—the plan of emitting *occasional testimonies*, includes all the excellencies of that which they reject; is free from its embarrassments; and is calculated to produce real and permanent good.

As witnesses of the Most High, Christians are especially bound to avow and to defend those truths which are more immediately decried, and to oppose those errors which immediately prevail. This is termed by the Spirit of God, being “*established in the PRE-SENT truth.*” It is the very essence of a judicious testimony; nor is there any way in which judicatories can so well maintain it, as in serious and scriptural *occasional* acts. Of this method of testifying there are plain and numerous traces in the holy scriptures, and in the pious practice of the primitive church.

Such testimonies have, moreover, several advantages.

They are *brief*: so that a reader of ordinary diligence can, in a very little time, make himself perfectly master of their contents.

They are *pointed*: and by singling out the error which is doing *present* mischief, they give more effectual warning of *present* danger, than could possibly be done if they were interspersed through a large and general publication.

They are *new*: and for this very reason they arrest the attention of men more than if they were diffused through an older and more extended work, however excellent. They may also throw fresh light upon received truths, and make a deeper impression on the mind, than if met with in the course of ordinary reading.

They furnish *special topics for religious conversation*: and by fixing the thoughts of pious people on a particular subject, render them greatly instrumental in edifying each other.

As they confine the attention of judicatories within a *small compass*, there is a better prospect of their being executed with ability and success.

They serve to *cement the affections* of judicatories and their people; as they oblige the former to watch, with peculiar zeal, over the interests of the latter; and afford the latter continual and endearing proofs of the faithfulness of the former.

They are *frequent*, and thus have a happy tendency to keep alive the spirit of honest testimony for JESUS CHRIST, which would slumber much deeper, and much longer, were that duty supposed to be discharged in a solitary volume.

They will form, *collectively*, a more complete and useful vindication of truth than could be expected, if the different branches of it were all to be discussed in a continued work.

They will show posterity what were the truths which, in a peculiar manner, their fathers were honored to maintain.

WM. BAEDRIDGE, *Moderator,*
JOHN M'JIMSEY, *Clerk.*

AN ACT

To amend the Constitution of the Associate Reformed Synod.

WHEREAS it is the opinion of some members of Synod, and of a number of serious people in communion with the Synod that the constitution, in some of its articles is too general, and that in others its meaning is rather doubtful, and that in its present form it does not suit the state of the Church: And whereas, it is the duty of ecclesiastical judicatories, to contribute as much as they can to remove the jealousies and quiet the fears of the Lord's people; the ministers and elders in Synod assembled: do express their views of the leading principles of the constitution in the following manner.

1st. That, with the explanations to be immediately mentioned, they sincerely receive and resolve through grace to adhere to the whole Doctrine exhibited in the Confession of Faith and larger and shorter Catechisms, composed by the assembly of divines at Westminster in England, as agreeable to, and founded upon the word of God.

The 26 chapter of said confession is understood by them as opposed not only to *Bigotry* which at least by implication, appropriates to a particular denomination of Christians the character and privileges of the Catholic Church, but also to the scheme of communion called the *Latitudinarian*, which unites all parties of professed Christians in the fullest communion on the footing only of those general principles, that some distinguish by the name of *Essentials*, a scheme which they condemn as subversive of the design of this and every other stated Confession of Faith, and as having a natural tendency to promote error, and to extinguish zeal for many important truths of the gospel, and consequently, that they do not consider themselves as left at liberty by this part of the confession, to hold organical communion with any denomination of Christians, that is inconsistent with a faithful and pointed *testimony* for any revealed truth respecting doctrine, worship, discipline, and church government.

They receive the doctrine of the Confession of Faith respecting the power of the civil magistrate in matters of religion described chapter 20th, section 4th; chap. 23d, sect. 3d, and chap. 31, sect. 2d as reducible to, or consistent with these general principles, viz: that magistrates, as such, in a country professing christianity, are bound to administer government from Christian principles, and to promote the Christian religion, as their own most valuable interest, and the interest of the people committed to their care, by all such means, as do not imply an infringement of the inherent rights of the church of Christ, or any assumption of dominion over the consciences of men; that, only such opinions and practices are punishable by civil government as have a native tendency to subvert the foundations of moral government, and injure the common rights of men in a state of civil society, and do not permit good people to live a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness

and honesty; and that all other sinful opinions, and practices should be left only to the spiritual censures of the church, and the righteous judgment of God.

2. That they also receive the Directory for the public worship of God, composed by the above mentioned assembly, as holding forth such things as are of Divine institution in every ordinance of worship; that they resolve to observe the prudential rules, respecting the circumstances of public worship, therein prescribed, as far as these rules are practicable to edification: And that no deviation from these rules shall be countenanced by them, till the necessity or propriety thereof shall have been considered and acknowledged by the Synod. And they wish that this declaration be considered, as their general testimony against wanton innovations in the circumstances of divine worship, and against every kind and degree of superstition, or the introduction of any thing into the worship of God, as a part thereof, by the authority of men.

3. That they receive with the same sincerity, the form of Presbyterian Church Government, and ordination of ministers, prepared by the aforesaid assembly, as, in substance, the only form instituted by Jesus Christ, and resolve to act upon that form, as far as the circumstances, in which, at any time, they may be placed, shall permit.

4. That they consider the above mentioned Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms, Directory for worship, and form of Church government, as received by this act, as their fixed *Testimony*, by which their principles are to be tried, or as the judicial expression of the sense in which they understand the Holy Scriptures, in the relation they have to the Doctrine, the worship and government of the Christian Church, and it is their resolution to emit occasional Testimonies, in particular acts, against errors and delusions.

5. That the terms on which any person or persons shall be admitted as a member or members of the Synod, or as a member or members of any congregation under the inspection of Synod, are, an approbation of the principles exhibited in the above mentioned Confession of Faith, larger and shorter catechisms, directory for public worship, and form of church government, as received by this act; an holy life and conversation, and subjection to the order and discipline of the church under the care of this Synod.



AN ACT

Concerning the Religious Connexions of the Synod.

THE ministers and elders, in Synod assembled, declare with gratitude, and to the praise and glory of God, that, as it is their happiness, to be united to each other in the testimony of Jesus, or the whole doctrine of the Confession of Faith adopted by them, so they consider it as

their distinguished privilege to stand clear of the local disputes, which have divided the witnesses for said testimony, with whom the united parties in the Synod were formerly connected in Scotland; and, while thus united in love to the truth as it is in Jesus, and to each other for the truth's sake, they are determined that the differences among the friends of the reformation-cause in Britain, arising from different views merely of the application of said testimony to their circumstances in Britain, shall not affect, alienate, or divide the Synod, in the application of said testimony to their own circumstances, or the circumstances of the church in America.

They desire thankfully to remember the magnanimous sufferings for the cause of truth, by which their pious ancestors in Britain were enabled to distinguish themselves in the two last centuries, and also their zeal for that cause, as expressed in the different testimonies for it, which they emitted; and in a particular manner the testimony entitled, *Act Declaration, and Testimony of the Associate Presbytery* passed at Perth in North Britain December 3d, 1736, and an act of said presbytery entitled, *an act concerning the Doctrine of Grace*, and the *Act, Declaration and Testimony of the Reformed Presbytery*, so far as these testimonies contemplate the doctrine, worship, discipline and government of the Presbyterian Church, and do not imply any decisions respecting the controversy about the civil government of Britain and Ireland, which is entirely foreign to the situation of the church in America: And they also bless God for the national covenant of Scotland, and the solemn league and covenant of Scotland, England and Ireland, with respect to which, it is their opinion, that these covenants, as taking their national form and character from the established connexion between the church and state in Britain, are not obligatory upon any other nation; but that, in respect of the religious part of these covenants, in which the covenanters solemnly avouched the Lord to be their God, and the God of their seed, and with the same solemnity surrendered themselves, and their posterity to him, promising and swearing, that they would walk in his ways, and keep his commandments, they are obligatory on the posterity of those who entered into them, wherever scattered over the world, even in virtue of the solemn public oath of their ancestors.

They love the church of Scotland and have a peculiar regard for their brethren in Britain who have borne testimony against its defections from the purity, to which it had attained, between the years 1638 and 1649: They desire to cultivate friendship with these brethren, and to concur with them in every laudable endeavor to promote true and undefiled religion: And they wish posterity may know that once they belonged to the church of Scotland, that they carried with them into America the system of truth adopted by that church, and the substance of the testimonies against deviations from that system, and that they

esteem it their honor and their duty to support their connexion with those brethren, who still labour to preserve it in its purity, as far as such support is consistent with their independence upon any foreign judicatory.

AN ACT

Concerning the Imputation of the Righteousness of Christ.

*WHEREAS, it has been reported to this Synod, that some persons of their communion either deny that the obedience which Christ gave to the precepts of the divine law, is not a part of that righteousness, by which sinners are justified before God, or treat the imputation of it to believers as a matter of doubtful disputation; and that, on this account, much uneasiness has arisen in some congregations; and whereas, it is the indispensable duty of ecclesiastical judicatories to warn all under their inspection against every deviation from *the form of sound words*; The ministers and elders in Synod assembled declare;

That the Lord Jesus, not only suffered the penalty of the divine law, but also perfectly obeyed its precepts in the place of sinners; that his obedience and suffering concur to constitute that righteousness, on the footing of which sinners are justified before God; and consequently, that, not only his suffering, but also his obedience, is imputed for justification.

These principles have been solemnly received by this Synod, as important objects of Christian faith, in the confession of faith, chap. 8, sect. 5, chap. 11, sect. 1, and in the larger catechism qu. 70, where it is declared, *that the Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice, which he, through the eternal Spirit, once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father;—That those whom God effectually calleth, he also freely justifieth—by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them;—and that, Christ by his obedience and death did make a proper, real and full satisfaction to God's justice in behalf of them that are justified.*

The ground, on which these principles have been received by the Synod, is the authority of God, as displayed in the scriptures of truth, which expressly declare, that Christ was *made under the law*; that he is the Lord *our righteousness*; that *our righteousness is of him*; that *in him we have righteousness and strength*; that *many are made righteous by his obedience*, as *many were made sinners by the disobedience of Adam*; and that *though he knew no sin, he was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* That the import of these texts may be

*This and the following act are published in pursuance of the 4th article of the Constitution, to give a specimen of the manner in which the Synod intend henceforth to emit occasional testimonies against the errors of the times.

better understood, it is necessary to observe, that *righteousness*, in scripture, is never considered, as a denomination taken from *mere* suffering that the phrase *under the law*, in the epistles of the apostle Paul, always imply subjection to the precepts of the law. Attending to these general observations, we are naturally lead to these inferences from the texts now mentioned, viz: that Christ as a surety, was made *under the law*, and in that character fulfilled it, that his obedience being directly opposed to the disobedience of Adam, has a necessary relation to the precepts of the law; that the imputation of his righteousness to us, being the reverse of the imputation of our sins to him, must include the imputation of what is commonly called his *active obedience*; and, consequently; that he is the Lord our righteousness, not only as the *propitiation or sacrifice for our sins*, but as the great *bond servant*, who did the will of the Father, as expressed in the law which he had *within his heart*.

To prevent or remove objections, it must be farther observed, that, whatever subjection to the *general* principles of *moral law* arises from Christ's assumption of our nature, he could not, in virtue of that assumption, be under any *particular law*, because, as God in our nature, being an extraordinary person, and not an individual belonging to any kind of persons, no law, adapted to any *kind*, could have any natural relation to him; that, consequently, his subjection to the *particular law* given to the *human kind*; did not arise merely from the assumption of human nature, but from an act of his own sovereignty, by which he substituted himself in the place of sinners of the human kind; that his great end in assuming our nature, was not to procure any advantage to himself, but to display the glory of the divine perfections, to secure the honor of the divine law, and to bring in, and communicate to sinners, believing in his name, an everlasting, a justifying righteousness, and to prepare them for, and, in due time, to put them in possession of eternal glory; and that, when our pardon and salvation are ascribed to his death, as to their procuring cause, his death is not to be considered abstractly, but as the termination of that course of holy obedience which the divine law required, *having become obedient to death, even the death of the cross*.

As the imputation of Christ's obedience to the precepts of the law, appears to the Synod to be a truth of the gospel of great importance, and extensive influence; they earnestly exhort all under their inspection to contend earnestly for it; and they warn them against the contrary doctrine, as a departure from the purity of the profession which they have attained, as disturbing the order, and weakening the connexions of truth in the system of the gospel, as depreciating the righteousness of Christ, by detaching from it the only quality which makes it a proper righteousness, as depriving Christians of the consolation which they may derive from the obedience of Christ, when they have an afflicting sense of the imperfection of their own obedience, as very offensive to the church of God, and plainly contradictory to his holy oracles: And

The Synod charge all the presbyteries of their denomination carefully to observe published opinions contrary to the doctrine asserted in this act, and to call the publishers thereof, if in communion with the Synod to a speedy account, and if, after using gentle means to recover them from their error, they remain obstinate, to inflict, such censures upon them, as the nature of the case, or the edification of the church shall require; and they also direct, that this act be registered in the Presbyterial books, and be read to all the congregations and vacancies where any uneasiness hath arisen, and that ministers and licensed candidates for the ministry guard people, as often as they find it necessary, against disputes about the distinction between the active and passive obedience of Christ, as not only unnecessary, but pernicious.



AN ACT

Concerning the Covenant of Works in the relation it hath to unbelievers.

THE ministers and elders in Synod assembled, finding, that there are some doubts respecting the aspect, which the precepts of the moral law, as stated in the covenant of works, hath towards unbelievers, think it is their duty to declare, as hereby they do declare, what they believe to be the mind of God, concerning this subject.

By the moral law, in its preceptive part, as stated in the covenant of works, and in the relation it hath to unbelievers, they understand the law as requiring perfect obedience, on pain of eternal misery, as the just punishment of every kind and degree of disobedience. That all unbelievers are under the obligation of its precepts, as viewed in this light, is a principle held by the Synod on the following grounds.

1. All unbelievers are actually under the penalty of the covenant of works, or are exposed to the execution of its threatening: But its penalty could not have any relation to them, and consequently could not be justly inflicted upon them, if they were not under the preceptive part of the law, as stated therein—a consequence, that would be a positive contradiction to the word of God, which declares, that he *who believeth not shall be damned*, and that *the wrath of God abideth on him*.

2. The obligation of the precepts of the law, being universal and indispensable, lies upon believers and unbelievers in a manner that is suited to their respective state and character. Unbelievers, therefore, not being interested in the righteousness of Christ, by which he satisfied all the demands of the law, in its *federal form*, must be under the obligation of its precepts, as connected with the threatening of eternal death, to which they make themselves liable by every transgression.

3. Deliverance from the moral law in the connexions which it hath, in the covenant of works, is a privilege peculiar to believers. This is evidently declared by the apostle Paul in these words, *wherefore mu*

brethren ye also are become dead to the law—But now we are delivered from the law—I through the law am dead to the law. Believers are under the obligation of the precepts of the law, as a rule of life placed under new connexions in the covenant of grace; but they are totally delivered from the obligation of its precepts, in its *federal form*, or as requiring perfect obedience, on pain of eternal misery. This deliverance, being peculiar to believers, all unbelievers are under the obligation of the precepts of the law in that form, or as stated in the covenant of works.

The Synod, impressed with the importance of this doctrine, earnestly exhort all under their inspection to adhere to the profession of it, and warn them against the contrary doctrine, viz: that unbelievers are only under, what is called, the *commanding power* of the moral law as a *rule of life*, and not under it, as stated in the covenant of works, as a doctrine, which amounts to a total abolition of the covenant of works, which brings reproach on the righteousness of Christ, as not implying the fulfilment of the precepts of the law in the place of sinners, which encourages, in unbelievers a presumptuous, hope of impunity, and, consequently, which is destructive to the souls of men.

On motion unanimously resolved, that the overture presented to the Synod by the committee appointed to prepare an overture for the purpose, illustrating the truths exhibited in the confession of faith, is in substance an excellent and instructive illustration and application of these truths unto the present state of the church of Christ in America, and the Synod warmly recommend it as such to all the people under their inspection.

Attested,

ALEXANDER DOBBIN, *Moderator.*
JOHN DUNLAP, *Syn. Clerk pro temp.*

A C T

Concerning the frequent Administration of the Lords Supper.

WHEREAS the sacrament of the Holy Supper was instituted by the Lord Jesus, to be a special and permanent memorial of his redeeming love; as we are taught in Luke 22d, 19; 1 Cor. 11th, 26th, the ministers and elders, in Synod assembled, earnestly recommend the frequent administration of it.

As the circumstances of different congregations are very different, their respective ministers and sessions, who are best acquainted therewith, are competent to determine how often the sacrament of the supper may be administered consistently with general edification; but it is the opinion of the Synod, that, in an ordinary state of things, it may, and should be administered at least twice in a year, which the

charge of every fixed minister: and four times a year, or oftener, in congregations where the minister and session shall deem it necessary and expedient: in which cases let the directory for public worship be carefully observed.

ACT

Concerning Psalmody.

THE ministers and elders in Synod assembled, having seriously considered that religious singing, or uttering the praises of God with a musical air, is entirely neglected by some, and much depraved by others, esteem it their duty to declare, and by this act they do declare, what they think is truth and duty respecting that exercise.

Devotional singing is an important branch of moral worship. It was practised, with divine approbation, before the Sinaitic covenant existed, Ex. 15; it was a common service under the Old Testament dispensation; and even then, was preferred to the most solemn ceremonies considered as external services; Psalm, 69th, 30, 31: The observance of it under the New Testament dispensation, is foretold in ancient prophecy, Psalm 66th, 1, 2. Isa. 55th, 1: It is represented as a principal part of the worship of the church militant and triumphant, Isa. 35th, 10, Rev. 5th, 9, 14, 3. 15th, 3: It is supported by the example of Christ and his Apostles, Matthew 26th, 30; and it is expressly commanded, Eph. 5th, 19, Col. 3d, 16. Heb. 13th, 14, 15. James 5th, 13.

It is the will of God that the sacred songs of scripture be used in his worship to the end of the world. These songs should not only be read, like other parts of scripture, as profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness; but being adapted to music by the spirit of inspiration, they should be sung in celebrating the praises of God; and the rich variety and perfect purity of their matter, the blessing of God upon them in every age, and the edification of the church thence arising, set the propriety of singing them in a convincing light.

The substitution of devotional songs composed by uninspired men, in the place of these sacred songs, is therefore a corruption of the worship of God; and it becomes a corruption peculiarly offensive, when it is established upon this principle, that some of the songs of scripture are effusions of a vindictive temper, and that generally they cannot be sung with propriety under the New Testament dispensation: a principle which, in the opinion of Synod, implicitly excludes these songs from a place in the rule of Christian faith and practice; and has a tendency to excite prejudices against them, and against the character of the holy men of God who wrote them: and consequently to shake our faith in the whole of divine revelation.

These songs should be sung not barely with the same frame of spirit with which they should be read; but with such an elevation of soul as is suited to praise, as a distinct ordinance: and in singing those parts of them which are expressed in ceremonial style, or describe the circumstances of the writers, or of the church in ancient times, we should have our eye upon the general principles which are implied in them, and which may be applied to individuals, or the church in every age.

Whereas the poetical version of the Psalms, commonly called the Psalms of David, which hitherto has been used amongst us, is a safe translation of these Psalms, and has been very instrumental in promoting sincere and unaffected devotion: it shall be retained in the congregations under the inspection of this Synod, till another version equally safe and acceptable and more adapted to the improved state of the English language, shall be prepared.

No tunes shall be sung in our worshipping assemblies, but such as are grave and simple: and no new tune shall be introduced into any congregation in communion with this Synod, without the knowledge and consent of the church officers, nor even then, unless it shall be evident; that the introduction of such tunes, would be acceptable to the congregation, and promote its real edification.

No chorus of singers, nor singing by parts* shall be introduced into any of our worshipping assemblies, because it is the duty of the whole congregation to praise God with united hearts and voices.

As the use of musical instruments in public worship, has no sanction in the New Testament, nor in the practice of the Christian church, for several hundred years after its erection, it shall not be introduced, under any form, into any congregation under the inspection of the Synod.

No practice shall be permitted that is inconsistent with the letter or evident intention of the directory for public worship *on the head of singing Psalms*—

The ministers and elders in Synod assembled, farther declare, that as the above mentioned principles have been always received among them; and that as an approbation of them, has been always considered as implied in the vows which ministers and other church officers come under at their ordination, and which parents come under at the Baptism of their children, all ministers and congregations who shall not conform their practice to this act, shall be considered as corrupting the simplicity and purity of the public worship of God, and liable, as such, to the censure of the church. Extracted from the Minutes.

ROBERT ANNAN, Moderator.

STEWART CUMMIN, Syn. Clk.

* This is not intended to prohibit what is termed, singing the parts; (i. e.) Treble, Counter, Tenor, Bass: but is directly levelled against *alternate* singing; and against all that kind of singing in which one or more of the parts stop while the rest proceed; when, of course, a part of the congregation remains silent. In a word, the clause is designed to forbid the introduction, or use both of those tunes which are called *fuguing* tunes; and also of all *repeating* tunes.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following appendix is not to be considered as bearing the stamp of the judicial authority of the Associate-Reformed Synod; but is published in compliance with the wishes of a number of their body, as an illustration of several of the principles exhibited in the "act concerning Psalmody." The preface of Dr. Horne, undoubtedly throws great light upon the Psalms of the scripture; and shews that they contain more, much more of the gospel than many are willing to allow. By not a few of the serious and judicious it is deemed an excellent defence of those divine composures which are too often treated with indifference, if not with disrespect. If any judge the evangelical light in which the Doctor contemplates them, far fetched, and strained; it may not be amiss for them to enquire whether this opinion be not occasioned less by the mystic fancy of the pious writer, than by their own want of spiritual-mindedness. Nothing remains to be added, but that so much only of the Doctor's preface is retained in the appendix as comports with its design: and since it is not intended to be a mere quotation; some words and sentences, particularly such as refer to subjects foreign to the act of the Synod, have been freely altered.



THE Psalms are an epitome of the Bible, adapted to the purposes of devotion. They treat occasionally of the creation and formation of the world; the dispensations of providence, and the economy of grace; the transactions of the patriarchs; the exodus of the children of Israel; their journey through the wilderness, and settlement in Canaan; their law, priesthood, and ritual; the exploits of their great men, wrought through faith; their sins and captivities; their repentances and restorations; the sufferings and victories of David; the peaceful and happy reign of Solomon; the advent of Messiah, with its effects and consequences; his incarnation; birth, life, passion, death, resurrection, ascension, kingdom and priesthood; the effusion of the Spirit; the conversion of the nations; the rejection of the Jews; the establishment, increase, and perpetuity of the Christian church; the end of the world; the general judgment; the condemnation of the wicked; and the final triumph of the righteous with their Lord and King. These are the subjects here presented to our meditations. We are instructed how to conceive of them aright, and to express the different affections, which, when so conceived of, they must excite in our minds. They are, for

this purpose, adorned with the figures, and set off with all the graces of poetry; and poetry itself is design'd yet farther to be recommended by the charms of music, thus consecrated to the service of God; that so delight may prepare the way for improvement, and pleasure become the handmaid of wisdom, while every turbulent passion is calmed by sacred melody, and the evil Spirit is still dispossessed by the Harp of the Son of Jesse. This little volume, like the paradise of Eden, affords us in perfection, though in miniature. every thing that groweth elsewhere, "every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food:" and above all, what was there lost, but is here restored, *the tree of life in the midst of the Garden*. That which we read, as matter of speculation, in the other scriptures, is reduced to practice, when we recite it in the Psalms, in those, repentance and faith are described, but in these they are acted; by a perusal of the former, we learn how others served God, but, by using the latter, we serve him ourselves. "What is there necessary for man to know," says the pious and judicious Hooker, "which the Psalms are not able to teach? They are to beginners an easy and familiar introduction; a mighty augmentation of all virtue and knowledge in such as are entered before; a strong confirmation to the most perfect among others. Heroical magnanimity, exquisite justice, grave moderation, exact wisdom, repentance unfeigned, unwearied patience, the mysteries of God, the sufferings of Christ, the terrors of wrath, the comforts of grace, the works of providence over this world, and the promised joys of that world which is to come, all good necessarily to be either known or done, or had, this one celestial fountain yieldeth. Let there be any grief or disease incident unto the soul of man, any wound or sickness named, for which there is not, in this treasure-house, a present comfortable remedy at all times ready to be found." In the language of this divine book, therefore, the prayers and praises of the church have been offered up to the throne of grace, from age to age. And it appears to have been the Manual of the Son of God, in the days of his flesh; who, at the conclusion of his last supper, is generally supposed, and that upon good grounds, to have sung an hymn taken from it; who pronounced on the cross, the beginning of the xxii Psalm: "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And expired, with a part of the xxxi Psalm in his mouth: "Into thy hands I commend my spirit." Thus He, who had not the spirit by measure, in whom were hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and who spake as never man spake, yet chose to conclude his life, to solace himself in his greatest agony, and at last to breathe out his soul, in the Psalmist's form of words, rather than his own. No tongue of man or angel, as Dr. Hammond justly observes, can convey an higher idea of any book, and of their felicity who use it aright.

Proportionable to the excellency of the Psalms, hath been the number of their expositors. The ancients were chiefly taken up in making spiritual or evangelical applications of them; in adapting their discourses

on them to the general exigencies of the Christian church, or to the particular necessities of the age in which they wrote. The moderns have set themselves to investigate with diligence, and ascertain with accuracy, their literal scope and meaning. The enquiries of many who have devoted themselves to this labor of love, evince a strength of genius, and a depth of erudition, which demand the admiration and gratitude of all the friends of sacred truth. But let us also bear in mind, that all is not done, when this is done. A work of the utmost importance still remains, which it is the business of Theology to undertake and execute: since, with respect to the Old Testament, and the Psalter more especially, a person may attain a critical and grammatical knowledge of them, and yet continue a Jew, with a veil upon his heart; an utter stranger to that sense of the holy books, evidently intended, in such a variety of instances, to bear testimony to the Saviour of the world; that sense, which is styled by divines, the *prophetical, evangelical, mystical, or spiritual sense*.

That the spiritual interpretation of the scripture, like all other good things, is liable to abuse, and that it hath been actually abused, both in ancient and modern days, cannot be denied. He who shall go about to apply, in this way, any passage, before he hath attained its literal meaning, may say what in itself is pious and true, but foreign to the text from which he endeavoured to deduce it. Jerom, it is well known, when grown older and wiser, lamented, that, in the fervors of a youthful fancy, he had spiritualized the prophecy of Obadiah, before he understood it. And it must be allowed, that a due attention to the occasion and scope of the Psalms would have pared off many unseemly excrescences, which now deform the commentaries of Augustin, and other Fathers, upon them. But, these and other concessions of the same kind being made, as they are made very freely, "men of sense will consider, that a principle is not therefore to be rejected, because it has been abused:" since human errors can never invalidate the truth of God.

It may not be amiss, therefore, to run through the Psalter, and point out some of the more remarkable passages, which are cited from thence by our Lord and his apostles, and applied to matters evangelical.

No sooner have we opened the book, but the second Psalm presenteth itself to all appearance, as an inauguration-hymn, composed by David, the anointed of Jehovah, when by him crowned with victory, and placed triumphant on the sacred hill of Zion. But let us turn to Acts, iv. 25, and there we find the apostles, with one voice, declaring the Psalm to be descriptive of the exaltation of Jesus Christ, and of the opposition raised against his gospel, both by Jew and Gentile.

In the eighth Psalm we imagine the writer to be setting forth the pre-eminence of man in general, above the rest of the creation; but by Heb. ii. 6, we are informed, that the supremacy conferred on the second Adam, the Christ Jesus, over all things in heaven and earth, is the subject there treated of.

Peter stands up, Acts ii. 25, and preaches the resurrection of Jesus from the latter part of the sixteenth Psalm; and, lo, three thousand souls are converted by the sermon.

Of the eighteenth Psalm we are told, in the course of the sacred history, 2 Sam. xxii. that "David spake before the Lord the words of that song, in the day that the Lord delivered him out of the band of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul. Yet in Rom. xv. 9, the 50th verse of that Psalm is adduced as a proof, that "the Gentiles should glorify God for his mercy in Jesus Christ, as it is written, For this cause will I confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name."

In the nineteenth Psalm, David seems to be speaking of the material heavens and their operations only, when he says, "their sound is gone out into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." But Paul, Rom. x. 18, quotes the passage to shew, that the Gospel had been universally published by the apostles.

The twenty second Psalm Christ appropriated to himself, by beginning it in the midst of his suffering on the cross; "My God, my God, &c. Three other verses of it are, in the New Testament, applied to him; and the words of the 8th verse were actually used by the chief priests, when they reviled him; "He trusted in God," &c. Mat. xxvii. 43.

When David saith, in the fortieth Psalm, "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire—Lo I come to do thy will:" we might suppose him only to declare, in his own person, that obedience is better than sacrifice. But from Heb. x. 5, we learn, that Messiah, in that place, speaketh of his advent in the flesh, to abolish the legal sacrifices, and to do away sin, by the oblation of himself once for all.

That tender and pathetic complaint, in the forty first Psalm, "mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lift up his heel against me," undoubtedly might be, and probably was, originally uttered by David, upon the revolt of his old friend and counsellor, Ahithophel, to the party of his rebellious son Absalom.—But we are certain, from John xiii. 18, that this scripture was fulfilled when Christ was betrayed by his apostate disciple—"I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen; but that the scriptures may be fulfilled, "He that eateth bread with me, hath lift up his heel against me."

The forty fourth Psalm we must suppose to have been written on occasion of a persecution, under which the church at that time labored; but a verse of it is cited, Rom. viii. 36, as expressive of what Christians were to suffer, on their blessed Master's account; as it is written, "for thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep appointed to be slain."

A quotation from the forty fifth Psalm, in Heb. i. 3, certifies us, that the whole is addressed to the Son of God, and therefore celebrates his spiritual union with the church, and the happy fruits of it.

The sixty-eighth Psalm, though apparently conversant about Israelitish victories, the translation of the ark to Zión, and the services of the tabernacle, yet does under those figures, treat of Christ's resurrection, his going upon high, leading captivity captive, pouring out the gifts of the Spirit, erecting his church in the world, and enlarging it by the accession of the nations to the faith; as will be evident to any one who considers the force and consequence of the apostle's citation from it, Eph. iv, 7, 8, "Unto every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men."

The sixth and ninth Psalm is five times referred to in the gospels, as being uttered, by the Prophet in the person of Messiah. The imprecations or rather predictions, at the latter end of it, are applied, Rom. xi, 9, 10, to the Jews; and to Judas; Acts i, 20, where the hundred and ninth Psalm is also cited, as prophetic of the sore judgments which should befall that arch traitor, and the wretched nation of which he was an epitome.

"Matthew, informing us, Chap. xiii, 34, that Jesus spake to the multitudes in parables, gives as one reason why he did so, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet; (Psalm lxxviii, 2) "I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world."

The ninety-first Psalm was applied by the Tempter, to Messiah:—Nor did our Lord object to the application, but only to the false inference which his adversary suggested from it, Matt. iv. 6, 7.

The ninety-fifth Psalm is explained at large in Heb. iii, and iv, as relative to the state and trial of Christians in the world, and to their attainment of the heavenly rest.

The hundred and tenth Psalm is cited by Christ himself, Matt. xxii, 44, as treating of his exaltation, kingdom and priesthood.

The hundred and seventeenth Psalm, consisting only of two verses, is employed, Rom. xv. 11, to prove, that the Gentiles were one day to praise God for the mercies of redemption.

The 22d verse of the hundred and eighteenth Psalm, "The stone which the builders refused," &c. is quoted six different times as spoken of our Saviour.

And, lastly, "the fruit of David's body," which God is said in the hundred and thirty-second Psalm, to have promised that he would "place upon his throne," is asserted, Acts ii, 30, to be Jesus Christ.

These citations, lying dispersed through the scriptures of the New Testament, are often suffered by common readers to pass unnoticed. And many others content themselves with saying, that they are made in a sense of accommodation, as passages may be quoted from poems or

histories merely human, for the illustration of truths, of which their authors never thought. "And this," (as a learned critic observes) "is no fault, but rather a beauty in writing." A passage applied justly, and in a new sense, is ever pleasing to an ingenious reader who loves to be agreeably surprised, and to see a likeness and pertinency, where he expected none. He has that surprise which the Latin poet so poetically gives to the tree—

"Miraturque novas frondes, et non sua poma."

The readers, who have been accustomed to consider the New Testament-citations in this view of accommodation only, must perceive the necessity of such accommodation, at least, to adapt the use of the Psalms, as a part of divine service, to the times and circumstances of the gospel; and cannot therefore reasonably object, upon their own principles, to the applications made in the following sheets, for that purpose. But not to enquire, at present whether passages are not sometimes cited in this manner, surely no one can attentively review the above made collection of New-Testament-citations from the book of Psalms as they have been placed together before him, without perceiving, that the Psalms are written upon a divine preconcerted, prophetic plan, and contain much more, than, at first sight, they appear to do. They are beautiful without, but all glorious within, like "apples of gold in pictures, or net-work cases of silver." Prov. xxv. 11. The brightness of the casket attracts our attention, till, through it, upon a nearer approach, we discover its contents. And then, indeed, it may be said to have "no glory, by reason of the glory that so far excell-eth."

Very delightful and profitable they are, in their literal and historical sense, which well repayeth all the pains taken to come at it. But that once obtained, a farther scene begins to open upon us, and all the blessings of the Gospel present themselves to the eye of faith. So that the expositor is as a traveller ascending an eminence, neither unfruitful, nor unpleasant; at the top of which when he is arrived, he beholds, like Moses from the summit of mount Nebo, a more lovely and extensive prospect lying beyond it, and stretching away to the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills. He sees vallies covered over with corn, blooming gardens, and verdant meadows, with flocks and herds feeding by rivers of water; till ravished with the sight, he cries out, as Peter did, at the view of his Master's glory, "It is good to be here!"

It would be unreasonable to suppose, that no parts of the Psalms may by us be spiritually applied, but such as are already expressly applied for us by the inspired writers. Let any man consider attentively a New-Testament citation; then let him as carefully read over, with a view to it, the Psalm from which it is taken, and see if it will not serve him as a key, wherewith to unlock the treasures of eternal wisdom; if it will not, "open his eyes," and shew him "wonderful things" in God's law. When we are taught to consider one verse of a Psalm as spoken

by Messiah, and there is no change of person, what can we conclude, but that he is the speaker through the whole? In that case, the Psalm becomes at once as much transfigured, as the blessed person, supposed to be the subject of it, was, on mount Tabor. And if Messiah be the speaker of one Psalm, what should hinder, but that another Psalm, where the same kind of scene is evidently described, and the same expressions are used, may be expounded in the same manner?

It is very justly observed by Dr. Allix, "that although the sense of near fifty Psalms be fixed and settled by divine authors, yet Christ and his apostles did not undertake to quote all the Psalms they could quote, but only to give a key to their hearers, by which they might apply to the same subjects the Psalms of the same composure and expression." The citations in the New-Testament were made incidentally, and as occasion was given. But can we imagine that the church was not farther instructed in the manner of applying the Psalms to her Redeemer, and to herself? Did she stop at the applications thus incidentally and occasionally made by the inspired writers? Did she stop, because they had directed her how to proceed? We know she did not. The primitive Fathers, it is true, for want of critical learning, and particularly a competent knowledge of the original Hebrew, often wandered in their expositions; but they are unexceptionable witnesses to us of this matter of fact, that such a method of expounding the Psalms, built upon the practice of the apostles in their writings and preachings, did universally prevail in the church from the beginning. They, who have ever looked into Augustin, know, that he pursues this plan invariably; treating of the Psalms, as proceeding from the mouth of Christ, or of the church, or of both, considered as one mystical person. The same is true of Jerom, Ambrose, Arnobius, Cassidore, Hilary, and Prosper. Chrysostom studies to make the Psalter useful to believers under the gospel. Theodoret attends both to the literal and prophetic sense. But what is very observable, Tertullian, who flourished at the beginning of the third century, mentions it, as if it were then an allowed point in the church, that "almost all the Psalms are spoken in the person of Christ, being addressed by the Son to the Father, that is, by Christ to God." In this channel flows the stream of the earliest Christian expositors. Nor did they depart, in this point, from the doctrine held in the church of the ancient Jews, who were always taught to regard MESSIAH as the capital object of the Psalter. And though, when the time came, that people would not receive Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah, it does not appear that they ever objected to the propriety of the citations made by our Lord and his apostles; or thought such passages applicable to David only, and his concerns. Nay, the most learned of their rabbies; who have written since the commencement of the Christian æra, still agree with us in referring many of the Psalms to Messiah and his kingdom; differing only about the person of the one, and the nature of the other,

When learning arose, as it were, from the dead, in the sixteenth century, and the study of primitive theology by that means revived, the spiritual interpretation of the scriptures revived with it. It was adopted, at that time, by one admirably qualified to do it justice, and to recommend it again to the world by every charm of genius, and every ornament of language. I mean the accomplished Erasmus, who omitteth no opportunity of insisting on the usefulness and even the necessity of it, for the right understanding of the scriptures; for the attainment of that wisdom which they teach, and that holiness which they prescribe; seeming to think himself never better employed, than when he is removing the earth and rubbish, with which those Philistines, the monks, had stopped up the wells of salvation, opened by the Apostles and first Fathers of the church, for the benefit of mankind.

It is obvious, that every part of the Psalter when explicated according to this scriptural and primitive method, is rendered universally "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;" and the propriety immediately appears of its having always been used in the devotional way; both by the Jewish and the Christian church. With regard to the Jews, Bishop Chandler very pertinently remarks, that "they must have understood David their prince to have been a figure of Messiah. They would not otherwise have made his Psalms part of their daily worship, nor would David have delivered them to the church, to be so employed, were it not to instruct, and support them in the knowledge and belief of this fundamental article. Was the Messiah not concerned in the Psalms, it were absurd to celebrate, twice a day, in their public devotions, the events of one man's life, who was deceased so long ago, as to have no relation now to the Jews, and the circumstances of their affairs; or to transcribe whole passages, from them, into their prayers for the coming of the Messiah." Upon the same principle, it is easily seen, that the objections, which may seem to lie against the use of Jewish services, in Christian congregations, cease at once. Thus, it may be said, are we concerned with the affairs of David and of Israel? Have we any thing to do with the ark and the temple? They are no more. Are we to go up to Jerusalem, and to worship on Sion? They are desolated and trodden under foot by the Turks. Are we to sacrifice young bullocks, according to the law? The law is abolished, never to be observed again. Do we pray for victory over Moab, Edom, and Philistia; or for deliverance from Babylon? There are no such nations, no such places in the world. What then do we mean, when, taking such expressions into our mouths, we utter them in our own persons, as parts of our devotions, before God? Assuredly we must mean a spiritual Jerusalem and Sion; a spiritual ark and temple; a spiritual law; spiritual sacrifices; and spiritual victories: spiritual enemies; all described under the old names, which are still retained, though "old things are passed away, and all things are to become new." By substituting Messiah for

David, the gospel for the law, the church Christian for that of Israel, and the enemies of the one for those of the other, the Psalms are made our own. Nay, they are with more fulness and propriety applied now to the substance, than they were of old to the "shadow of good things then to come." And therefore, ever since the commencement of the Christian era, the church hath chosen to celebrate the gospel mysteries in the words of these ancient hymns, rather than to compose for that purpose new ones of her own. For let it not pass unobserved, that, when, upon the first publication of the gospel, the apostles had occasion to utter their transports of joy, on their being counted worthy to suffer for the name of their dear Lord and Master, which was then opposed by Jew and Gentile, they break forth into an application of the second Psalm to the transactions then before their eyes. See acts iv 25. The primitive Christians constantly followed this method, in their devotions: and, particularly when, delivered out of the hands of persecuting tyrants, by the victories of Constantine, they praised God for his goodness, and the glorious success and establishment of Christ's religion, no words were found so exquisitely adapted to the purpose, as those of David, in the xvi, xviii, and other Psalms—"Sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth—Sing unto the Lord and praise his name: be telling of his salvation from day to day. Declare his honor unto the heathens, his worship unto all people."—&c. &c. &c. In these, and the like psalms, we continue to praise God, for all his spiritual mercies in Christ, to this day.

The Psalms, thus applied, have advantages, which no fresh compositions, however finely executed, can possibly have; since besides their incomparable fitness to express our sentiments, they are, at the same time, memorials of, and appeals to former mercies and deliverances; they are acknowledgements of prophecies accomplished; they point out the connection between the old and new dispensations, thereby teaching us to admire and adore the wisdom of God displayed in both, and furnishing, while we read or sing them, an inexhaustible variety of the noblest matter that can engage the contemplations of man.

Very few of the Psalms, comparatively, appear to be simply prophetic, and to belong only to Messiah, without the intervention of any other person. Most of them, it is apprehended, have a double sense, which stands upon this ground and foundation, that the ancient patriarchs, prophets, priests, and kings, were typical characters, in their several offices, and in the more remarkable passages of their lives, their extraordinary depressions, and miraculous exaltations, foreshewing Him who was to arise, as the Head of the Holy Family, the great Prophet, the true Priest, the everlasting King. The Israelitish polity, and the law of Moses, were purposely framed after the example and shadow of things spiritual and heavenly; and the events, which happened to the ancient people of God, were designed to shadow out parallel occurrences, which should afterwards take place, in the accomplishment of man's

redemption, and the rise and progress of the Christian church. For this reason, the Psalms composed for the use of Israel, and Israel's monarch, and by them accordingly used at the time, do admit of an application to us, who are now "the Israel of God," and to our Redeemer, who is the king of this Israel.

Nor will this seem strange to us, if we reflect, that the same divine person, who inspired the Psalms, did also foreknow and predispose all events, of which he intended them to treat. And hence it is evident, that the spiritual sense is, and must be peculiar to the Scriptures; because of those persons and transactions only which are there mentioned and recorded, can it be affirmed for certain, that they were designed to be figurative. And should any one attempt to apply the narrative of Alexander's expedition by Quintus Curtius, or the commentaries of Cæsar, as the New Testament writers have done, and taught us to do, the histories of the Old, he would find himself unable to proceed three steps with consistency and propriety. The argument, therefore, which would infer the absurdity of supposing the scriptures to have a spiritual sense, from the acknowledged absurdity of supposing histories or poems merely human to have it, is inconclusive; the sacred writings differing in this respect, from all other writings in the world, as much as the nature of the transactions which they relate differs from that of all other transactions, and the author who relates them differs from all other authors.

"This double, or secondary sense of prophecy, was so far from giving offence to lord Bacon, that he speaks of it with admiration, as one striking argument of its Divinity. *In sorting the prophecies of Scripture with their events, we must allow, says he, for that latitude, which is agreeable and familiar unto divine prophecies, being of the nature of him, with whom a thousand years are but as one day; and therefore they are not fulfilled punctually at once, but have springing and germinant accomplishment through many ages, though the height, or fullness of them, may refer to some one age.*

"But, that we may not mistake or pervert this fine observation of our great Philosopher, it may be proper to take notice, that the reason of it holds in such prophecies only as respect the several successive parts of one system; which being intimately connected together, may be supposed within the view and contemplation of the same prophecy; whereas it would be endless, and one sees not on what grounds of reason we are authorised to look out for the accomplishment of prophecy; in any casual unrelated events of general history. The scripture speaks of prophecy, as respecting Jesus, that is, as being one connected scheme of providence, of which the Jewish dispensation makes a part: so that here we are led to expect that *springing and germinant accomplishment*, which is mentioned. But, had the Jewish law been complete in itself, and totally unrelated to the Christian, the general principle—that *a thousand years are with God but as one day*—would no more justify us in extending a Jewish prophecy to Christian events, because perhaps it

were eminently fulfilled in them, than it would justify us in extending it to any other signally corresponding events whatsoever. It is only when the prophet hath one uniform connected design before him that we are authorised to use this latitude of interpretation. For then the prophetic Spirit naturally runs along the several parts of *such design*, and unites the remotest events with the nearest: the style of the prophet, in the mean time, so adapting itself to this double prospect, as to paint the near and subordinate event in terms that *emphatically* represent the distant and more considerable. So that, with this explanation, nothing can be more just or philosophical, than the idea which Lord Bacon suggests, of divine prophecy.

“The great scheme of Redemption, we are now considering, being the only scheme in the plan of providence, which, as far as we know, hath been prepared and dignified by a continued system of prophecy, at least this being the only scheme to which we have seen a prophetic system applied, men do not so readily apprehend the doctrine of *double senses* in prophecy, as they would do, if they saw it exemplified in other cases. But what the history of mankind does not supply we may represent to ourselves by many obvious suppositions; which cannot justify, indeed, such a scheme of things, but may facilitate the conception of it.”*

In allegories framed by man, the ground-work is generally fiction, because of the difficulty of finding one true series of facts, which shall exactly represent another. But the great disposer of events, “known unto whom are all his works,” from the beginning to the end of time, was able to effect this; and the scripture allegories are therefore equally true in the letter and in the spirit of them. The events signifying, no less than those signified, really happened, as they are said to have done. Why the allegories of the most perfect form, with which the book of God abounds, and which are all pregnant with truths of the highest import, should be treated with neglect and contempt, while the imperfect allegories of man’s devising are universally sought after and admired, as the most pleasing and most efficacious method of conveying instruction, it is not easy to say. Why should it not afford a believer as much delight, to contemplate the lineaments of his Saviour, pourtrayed in one of the patriarchs, as to be informed that the character of Iapis was designed by Virgil to adumbrate that of Antonius Musa, physician to Augustus? Or why should not a discourse upon the Redemption of the Church as foreshadowed by the exodus of Israel, have as many admirers among Christians, as a dissertation, however ingeniously composed, on the descent of Æneas to the infernal regions, considered as typical of an initiation into the Eleusinian mysteries?

A learned, judicious, and most elegant writer of the present age, hath stated and illustrated the subject we are now upon, with a felicity

* See Bishop Hurd’s excellent introduction to the study of the Prophecies. See

of thought and expression peculiar to himself. I shall endeavor to gratify the English reader with a view of his sentiments. The beauties of his language are not to be translated.

“It would be an arduous and adventurous undertaking to attempt to lay down the rules observed in the conduct of the Mystic Allegory; so diverse are the modes in which the Holy Spirit has thought proper to communicate his counsels to different persons upon different occasions; inspiring and directing the minds of the prophets according to his good pleasure; at one time vouchsafing more full and free discoveries of future events; while, at another, he is more obscure and sparing in his intimations. From hence, of course, ariseth a great variety in the scripture usage of this kind of allegory, as to the manner in which the spiritual sense is couched under the other. Sometimes it can hardly break forth and shew itself at intervals through the literal, which meets the eye as the ruling sense, and seems to have taken entire possession of the words and phrases. On the contrary, it is much oftener the capital figure in the piece, and stands confessed at once by such splendor of language, that the letter, in its turn, is thrown into shades, and almost totally disappears. Sometimes it shines with a constant equable light; and sometimes it darts upon us on a sudden, like a flash of lightning from the clouds. But a composition is never more truly elegant and beautiful, than when the two senses, alike conspicuous, run parallel together through the whole poem, mutually corresponding with, and illustrating each other. I will produce an undoubted instance or two of this kind, which will shew my meaning, and confirm what has hitherto been advanced on the subject of the mystic allegory.

“The establishment of David upon his throne, notwithstanding the opposition made to it by his enemies, is the subject of the second Psalm. David sustains in it a twofold character, literal and allegorical. If we read over the Psalm first with an eye to the literal David, the meaning is obvious, and put out of all dispute by the sacred history. There is, indeed, an uncommon glow in the expression, and sublimity in the figures, and the diction is now and then exaggerated as it were on purpose to intimate, and lead us to the contemplation of higher and more important matters concealed within. In compliance with this admonition, if we take a survey of the Psalm, as relative to the person and concerns of the spiritual David, a nobler series of events instantly rises to view, and the meaning becomes more evident, as well as exalted.

“The coloring, which may perhaps seem too bold and glaring for the King of Israel, will no longer appear so, when laid upon his great anti-type. After we have thus attentively considered the subject apart, let us look at them together, and we shall behold the full beauty and majesty of this most charming poem. We shall perceive the two senses very distinct from each other, yet conspiring in perfect harmony, and bearing a wonderful resemblance in every feature and lineament.

while the analogy between them is so exactly preserved, that either may pass for the original, from whence the other was copied. New light is continually cast upon the phraseology; fresh weight and dignity are added to the sentiment; till gradually ascending from things below to things above, from human affairs to those which are divine, they bear the great important theme upwards with them, and at length place it in the height and brightness of heaven.

“What hath been observed with regard to this Psalm, may also be applied to the seventy-second; the subject of which is of the same kind, and treated in the same manner. Its title might be, *The Inauguration of Solomon*. The scheme of the allegory is alike in both; but a diversity of matter occasions an alteration in the diction. For whereas one is employed in celebrating the magnificent triumphs of victory, it is the design of the other to draw a pleasing picture of peace, and of that felicity, which is her inseparable attendant. The style, is, therefore, of a more even and temperate sort, and more richly ornamented. It aboundeth not with those changes of the person speaking, which dazzle and astonish; but the imagery is borrowed from the delightful scenes with which creation cheers the sight, and the pencil of the divine artist is dipped in the softer colors of nature. And here we may take notice how peculiarly adapted to the genius of this kind of allegory the parabolical style is, on account of that great variety of natural images to be found in it. For as these images are capable of being employed in the illustration of things divine and human, between which there is a certain analogy maintained, so they easily afford that ambiguity which is necessary in this species of composition, where the language is applicable to each sense, and obscure in neither; it comprehends both parts of the allegory, and may be clearly and distinctly referred to one or the other.”*

In such of the Psalms as were written by David, and treat of his affairs, that extraordinary person is considered as an illustrious representative of Messiah, who is more than once foretold under the name of David, and to whom are applied, in the New Testament, Psalms which do undoubtedly, in the letter of them, relate to David, and were composed on occasion of particular occurrences which befel him; a circumstance in theology, to be accounted for upon no other principle.

When, therefore, he describeth himself as one hated and persecuted without a cause; as one accused of crimes which he never committed, and suffering for sins, the very thoughts of which he abhorred; as one whose life was embittered by affliction, and his soul overwhelmed with sorrows; yet withal, as one whom no troubles could induce to renounce his trust and confidence in the promises of God concerning him, when he repeateth his resolutions of adhering to the divine law, setting forth its various excellencies, and the comforts which it afforded him in the

*Bishop Lowth on the Hebrew poetry, Lect. xi:

days of adversity; when he complaineth of that implacable malice, and unrelenting fury, with which he was pursued by Saul and his attendants, by Doeg the Edomite, by rebellious Absalom, traitorous Ahithophel, &c. and when, contrary to all appearances, he predicteth their destruction; with his own final exaltation; the reader, in meditating upon Psalms of this cast and complexion, should direct his thoughts to parallel circumstances, which present themselves in the history of the true David; his sorrows and sufferings; his resignation under them all; his obedience to the will of his Father; the temper and behavior of his betrayers and murderers; the prophecies of judgments to be inflicted upon them, and of glory to be conferred upon him. As the Psalter was the liturgy of the Jewish church, of which our Lord was a member, and to which he therefore entirely conformed, during his abode and humiliation upon earth, he might pour forth his complaints and “offer up his prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears,” in the very words which his progenitor David had before used under his own troubles, but which were given by inspiration, with a view to the case of that blessed person, whom, in those troubles, he had the honor to prefigure.

Other Psalms there are, which disclose far different scenes. In them, the sorrows of David are at an end, and the day of his deliverance hath already dawned. The heavens are opened, and Jehovah appeareth in the cause of his afflicted servant. He descendeth from above, encompassed with clouds and darkness, preceded by fire and hail, proclaimed by thunder and earthquake, and attended by lightnings and whirlwinds. The mountains smoke, and the rocks melt before him; the foundations of the globe are uncovered, and the deep from beneath is moved at his presence. “The adversary is dismayed and confounded; opposition, in the height of its career, feels the blast through all its powers, and instantly withers away. The anointed of God, according to his original designation, is at length elevated to the throne; his sceptre is extended over the nations; the temple is planned by him, and erected by his son; the services of religion are appointed in perfect order and beauty: Jerusalem becometh a praise in all the earth; and the kingdom is established in honor, peace and felicity.— If in Psalms of the former kind the holy Jesus might behold those persecutions and sufferings, under which he was to be humbled, and to mourn, during his pilgrimage here below; in Psalms of this latter sort, he might strengthen and console himself, as a man “touched with the feelings of our infirmities, and tempted in all points like as we are,” by viewing “the glory that should follow;” by contemplating the manifestation of the Father in favor of his beloved Son; his own joyful resurrection, triumphant ascension, and magnificent inauguration; the conversion of the world, and the establishment of the church; events which were foreshadowed by those above mentioned; and to which, when the strongest expressions made use of by the divine Psalmist are applied,

they will no longer appear hyperbolic; especially if we hear in mind, that these prophetic descriptions wait for their full and final accomplishment at that day, when the mystical "body of Christ," having "filled up that which is behind of his afflictions," shall also, amidst the pangs and convulsions of departing nature, arise from the dead, and ascend into heaven; where all the members of that body, which have been afflicted, and have mourned with their Lord and Master, shall be comforted and glorified together with him.

In some of the Psalms, David appears as one suffering for his sins. When man speaks of sin, he speaks of what is his own; and therefore, every Psalm, where sin is confessed to be the cause of sorrow, belongs originally and properly to us, as fallen sons of Adam, like David and all other men. This is the case of the fifty first, and the rest of those which are styled Penitential Psalms, and have always been used in the church as such. Sometimes, indeed, it happens, that we meet with heavy complaints of the number and burthen of sins, in Psalms, from which passages are quoted in the New Testament as uttered by our Redeemer, and in which there seems to be no change of person, from beginning to end. We are assured, for instance, by the apostle, Heb. x. 5, that the sixth, seventh and eighth verses of the fortieth Psalm, "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, &c." are spoken by Messiah, coming to abolish the legal sacrifices, by the oblation of himself once for all. The same person to appearance, continues speaking, and, only three verses after, complains in the following terms; "Innumerable evils have compassed me about, mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up: they are more than the hairs of my head, therefore my heart faileth me." So again, there are no less than five quotations from different parts of the 69th Psalm, all concurring to inform us, that Christ is the speaker through that whole Psalm. Yet the fifth verse of it runs thus; "O God, thou knowest my foolishness, and my (ASHAM) guiltiness is not hid from thee." The solution of this difficulty given, and continually insisted on, in the writings of the Fathers, is this; that Christ, in the day of his passion, standing charged with the sin and guilt of his people, speaks of such their sin and guilt, as if they were his own; and appropriating to himself those debts, for which, in the capacity of a surety, he had made himself responsible. The Lamb which under the law, was offered for sin, took the name (ASHAM) "guilt," because the guilt contracted by the offerer was transferred to that innocent creature, and typically expiated by its blood. Was not this exactly the case, in truth and reality with the Lamb of God? "He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: but he bare our sins in his own body on the tree. He was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Christ and the church compose one mystical person, of which he is the head, and the church the body; and as the body speaks by the head, and the head for the body, he speaks of her sin, and she of

his righteousness; which consideration is at the same time a key to any claims of righteousness made in the Psalms by her, and to any confession of sin made by him. This seems to be a satisfactory account of the matter. Such, at least, appears to have been the idea generally adopted and received, in the first ages of the Christian church. Nay, and even in reciting the Penitential Psalms, when the unhappy sufferer is ready to sink down under that weight of woe which sin hath laid upon him, if he will extend his thoughts, as he is sometimes directed to do, to that holy and most innocent person, who felt and sorrowed so much for us all, he will thereby furnish himself with the best argument for patience, and an inexhaustible source of comfort. Nor can it, indeed, well be imagined, that our blessed Lord, as a member of the Jewish church, and an attendant on the service of the synagogue, though conscious to himself of no sin, did not frequently join with his "brethren according to the flesh," in the repetition of the Penitential, as well as the other Psalms, on the days of humiliation and expiation, when the use of them might be prescribed. If, from his circumcision to his crucifixion, he "bare our sins in his own body;" why should it be thought strange, that he should confess them, on our behalf, with his own mouth?

The offence taken at the supposed uncharitable and vindictive spirit of the imprecations which occur in some of the Psalms, ceases immediately, if we change the imperative for the future, and read, not "LET THEM BE confounded," &c. but, "THEY SHALL BE confounded," &c. of which the Hebrew is equally capable. Such passages will then have no more difficulty in them, than the other frequent predictions of divine vengeance in the writings of the prophets, or denunciations of it in the gospels, intended to warn, to alarm, and to lead sinners to repentance, that they may fly from the wrath to come. This is Dr. Hammond's observation, who very properly remarks, at the same time, that in many places of this sort, as particularly in Psalm cix. (and the same may be said of Psalm lxxix.) it is reasonable to resolve, that Christ himself speaketh in the prophet; as being the person there principally concerned, and the completion most signal in many circumstances there mentioned; the succession especially of Matthias to the apostleship of Judas. It is true that in the citation made by St. Peter from Psalm cix. in Acts i. 20, as also, in that made by St. Paul from Psalm lxxix. in Rom. xi. 9, the imperative form is preserved; "LET his habitation be void," &c. LET their table be made a snare," &c. But it may be considered that the apostles generally cited from the Greek of the LXX version, and took it as they found it, making no alteration, when the passage, as it there stood, was sufficient to prove the main point which it was adduced to prove. If the imprecatory form be still contended for, all that can be meant by it, whether uttered by the Prophet, by Messiah, or by ourselves, must be a solemn ratification of the just judgments of the Almighty against his impenitent enemies, like what we find ascribed to the blessed spirits in heaven, when

such judgments were executed. But by the future rendering of the verses, every possible objection is precluded at once.

Of the Psalms which relate to Israel, some are employed in celebrating the mercies vouchsafed them; from their going forth out of Egypt, to their complete settlement in Canaan. These were the constant standing subjects of praise and thanksgiving in the Israelitish church. But we are taught by the writers of the New Testament, to consider this part of their history as one continued figure, or allegory. We are told, that there is another spiritual Israel of God; other children of Abraham, and heirs of the promise; another circumcision, another Egypt, from the bondage of which they are redeemed; another wilderness, through which they journey; other dangers and difficulties, which there await them; other bread from heaven, for their support; and another rock to supply them with living water; other enemies to overcome; another land of Canaan, and another Jerusalem, which they are to obtain, and to possess forever. In the same light are to be viewed the various provocations and punishments, captivities and restorations of old Israel afterwards, concerning which it is likewise true, that they "happened unto them for ensamples," types or figures, "and were written for our admonition."

What is said in the Psalm: occasionally of the law and its ceremonies, sacrifices, ablutions, and purifications; of the tabernacle and temple, with the services therein performed; and of the Aaronical priesthood; all this Christians transfer to the new law; to the oblation of Christ; to justification by his blood, and sanctification by his Spirit; to the true tabernacle, or temple, not made with hands, and to what was therein done for the salvation of the world, by Him who was, in one respect, a sacrifice; in another, a Temple; and in a third, an High Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedeck. That such was the intention of these legal figures, is declared at large in the Epistle to the Hebrews: and they are of great assistance to us now, in forming our ideas of the realities, to which they correspond. "Under the Jewish œconomy," says the excellent Mr. Pascal, truth appeared but in figure; in heaven it is open, and without a veil; in the church militant it is so veiled, as to be yet discerned by its correspondence to the figure. As the figure was first built upon the truth, so the truth is now distinguishable by the figure." The variety of strong expressions used by David, in the nineteenth, and hundred and nineteenth Psalms, to extol the enlivening, saving, healing, comforting efficacy of a law, which, in the letter of it, whether ceremonial or moral, without pardon and grace, could minister nothing but condemnation, do sufficiently prove, that David understood the spirit of it, which was the gospel itself. And if any, who recited those Psalms, had not the same idea, it was not the fault of the Law, or of the Psalms of Moses, or of David, or of him who inspired both, but it was their own; as it is that of the Jews, at this hour, though their prophecies have now been fulfilled, and their types real-

ized. "He that takes his estimate of the Jewish religion from the grossness of the Jewish multitude," as the last cited author observes, "cannot fail of making a very wrong judgment. It is to be sought for in the sacred writings of the prophets, who have given us sufficient assurance, that they understood the law not according to the letter. Our religion, in like manner, is true and divine in the gospels, and in the preaching of the apostles; but it appears utterly disfigured in those who maim or corrupt it."

Besides the figures supplied by the children of Israel, and by the law, there is another set of images often employed in the Psalms, to describe the blessings of Redemption. These are borrowed from the natural world, the manner of its original production, and the operations continually carried on in it. The visible works of God are formed to lead us, under the direction of his Word, to a knowledge of those which are invisible; they give us ideas, by analogy, of a new creation rising gradually, like the old one, out of darkness and deformity, until at length it arrives at the perfection of glory and beauty: so that while we praise the Lord for all the wonders of his power, wisdom, and love, displayed in a system which is to wax old and perish, we may therein contemplate, as in a glass, those new heavens, and that new earth, of whose duration there shall be no end. The sun, that fountain of life, and heart of the world, that bright leader of the armies of heaven, enthroned in glorious majesty; the moon shining with a lustre borrowed from his beams: the stars glittering by night in the clear firmament; the air giving breath to all things that live and move; the interchanges of light and darkness; the course of the year, and the sweet vicissitude of seasons; the rain and the dew descending from above, and the fruitfulness of the earth caused by them; the bow bent by the hands of the Most High, which compasseth the heaven about with a glorious circle; the awful voice of thunder, and the piercing power of lightning; the instincts of animals, and the qualities of vegetables and minerals; the great and wide sea, with its unnumbered inhabitants; all these are ready to instruct us in the mysteries of faith, and the duties of morality.

They speak their Maker as they can,

But want and ask the tongue of man.

PARNEL.

The advantages of Messiah's reign are represented in some of the Psalms under images of this kind. We behold a renovation of all things, and the world, as it were, new created, breaks forth into singing. The earth is crowned with sudden verdure and fertility; the field is joyful, and all that is in it; the woods rejoice before the Lord; the floods clap their hands in concert, and ocean fills up the mighty chorus, to celebrate the advent of the great King.

Similar to these, are the representations of spiritual mercies by temporal deliverances from sickness, prison, danger of perishing in storms at sea, and from the sundry kinds of calamity and death, to which the body of man is subject; as also by scenes of domestic felicity, and by the

flourishing state of well ordered communities, especially that of Israel in Canaan, which, while the benediction of Jehovah rested upon it, was a picture of heaven itself.

The Psalms, which remain, are such as treat, in plain terms, without figures or examples, of wisdom and folly, righteousness and sin; the happiness produced by one, and the misery caused by the other; of particular virtues and vices; of the vanity of human life; of the attributes of God; of that patience with which the faithful should learn to bear the sight of wickedness triumphant, in this world, looking forward to the day of final retribution; and subjects of the like nature.

Let us stop for a moment to contemplate the true character of these sacred hymns.

Greatness confers no exemption from the cares and sorrows of life. Its share of them frequently bears a melancholy proportion to its exaltation. This the Israelitish monarch experienced. He sought in piety that peace which he could not find in empire, and alleviated the disquietudes of state with the exercises of devotion.

His invaluable Psalms convey those comforts to others, which they afforded to himself. Composed upon particular occasions, yet designed for general use; delivered out as services for Israelites under the law, yet no less adapted to the circumstances of Christians under the gospel; they present religion to us in the most engaging dress; communicating truth which philosophy could never investigate, in a style which poetry can never equal; while history is made the vehicle of Prophecy, and creations lends all its charms to paint the glories of Redemption. Calculated alike to profit, and to please, they inform the understanding, elevate the affections, and entertain the imagination. Indited under the influence of Him, to whom all hearts are known, and all events fore-known, they suit mankind in all situations, grateful as the manna which descended from above, and conformed itself to every palate. The fairest productions of human wit, after a few perusals, like gathered flowers, wither in our hands, and lose their fraganey; but these unfading plants of paradise become, as we are accustomed to them, still more and more beautiful; their bloom appears to be daily heightened; fresh odours are emitted, and new sweets extracted from them. He who hath once tasted their excellencies, will desire to taste them again; and he who tastes them oftenest, will relish them best."



EXTRACT

FROM THE

CHRISTIAN REMEMBRANCER.

The first of all earthly singers gave this as an inspired rule; 'sing ye praises with understanding.' Without spiritual understanding we can

only make a noise. Unless we know how deeply we are indebted to God, and have the sweet sense of his goodness in our souls, we may please ourselves with a tune, but we yield no music to him. Some of old, 'chanted to the sound of the viol,' and 'invented to themselves instruments of music;' but, at the same time, they were among those, who were 'at ease in Zion,' and who put 'far away the evil day,' to whom 'woe' was denounced. God never instituted music in his service, however, like other carnal ordinances he might bear with it under the Jewish economy; but only trumpets and rams' horns, to usher in the seasons and solemnities. It is spiritual harmony which is the delight of heaven, and not outward jingle and sound; and therefore, if we are not spiritual, we can have no true notion of this delight, nor 'make melody in our hearts to the Lord.' The thrills of music and the divine joys of the soul, are very different things. Worldly men have had the first, and thought them from heaven; but they continued no longer than the sound; while the peace of gracious praise, is full, sublime, and abiding. We must indeed, be real Christians before any of us can say with the apostle, 'I will pray with the SPIRIT, and I will pray with the understanding also; I will sing with the SPIRIT, and I will sing with the understanding also.'

I cannot but shake my head, when I hear an officer of the church calling upon the people, "to sing to the praise and glory of God;" and immediately half a dozen merry men, in a high place shall take up the matter, and most loudly chant it away to the praise and glory of themselves. The tune perhaps shall be too difficult for the most part of the congregation, who have no leisure to study crotchets and quavers; and so the most delightful of all public worship shall be wrested from them, and the praises of God taken out of their mouths. It is no matter whence this custom arose: In itself it is neither holy, decent, nor useful, and therefore, ought to be banished entirely from the churches of God.

When Christians sing altogether in some easy tune, accommodated to the words of their praise, and not likely to take off the attention from sense to sound; then, experience shews, they sing most LUSTILY (as the Psalmist expresses it) and with the best good 'courage.' The symphony of voice and the sympathy of heart may flow through the whole congregation, which is the finest music to truly serious persons, and the most acceptable to God, of any in the world. To 'sing with grace in their hearts to the Lord,' is the melody of heaven itself; and often brings a foretaste of heaven to the redeemed even here. But jingle, piping sound, and singing, without this divine accompaniment, are grating discordant harshness with God, and vapid wretched insipidity to the souls of his people.

I am no enemy to music as an human art, but let all things be in their place. The pleasures of the ear are not the gracious acts of God's Spirit in the soul: but the effect of vibrated matter upon an out-

ward sense. This may be indulged as an innocent and ingenious amusement; but what have our amusements to do with solemn and sacred adorations of God?—Would not this be carnal, and after the modes of the world, and not after Christ? Surely, no believer will venture to call any thing spiritual, which doth not proceed from the Spirit of life, or tend to ‘mortify the old man with his affections and lusts.’

Neither sounds of air, nor words of sense, alone, however excellent, can please God.—“He is a Spirit; and they who worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth;” for such “he seeketh.”

Lord, help me, I beseech thee, thus to love and adore, thee! Give me a lively sense of thy mercy, to my soul; and then my soul shall offer up her gracious returns of lively praise. Sacrifice and burnt offering thou requirest not, for no outward thing even of thine own appointment, when not inwardly understood, can please thee, the music of my voice without the incense or breathing of my soul, thou wilt not accept: O assist me then, to praise thee aright; for, without thee, I can do nothing. Thou alone givest occasion to praise; and thou also givest the Spirit of praise to use the occasion. Vouchsafe both unto me. Then shall I one day join in the great “assembly of the first born, whose names are written in heaven,” and sing “with joy unspeakable and full of glory,” That ever new song, “Salvation to our God who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb! Amen Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever.” Amen!



AN ACT

Concerning Faith and Justification.

Passed June 12th, 1798.

THE Ministers and Elders, in Synod assembled, finding that dangerous errors are entertained and propagated concerning the doctrines of saving faith, and of justification; feel it their duty to declare, and by this act they do declare, what they conceive the holy scriptures to teach on these important points, chiefly as they are at present perverted or opposed.

I. Of the APPROPRIATION and ASSURANCE of faith.

Faith, in its general idea, is assent to, and reliance on, testimony. Its peculiar character must arise from the testimony on which it is founded. That divine faith, therefore, by which alone sinners are saved, must be an assent to, and reliance on, the Divine testimony, as exhibited in the written word. The gospel is expressly termed the *record or testimony which God gave of his Son*; and faith a *believing* of this record, 1 John v, 10. In perfect harmony with the scriptures.

its general character, its special office, and its true and only warrant are comprehended in the concise and correct definition of the shorter catechism. "*Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is freely offered to us in the gospel.*"

1. In its general character, which it has in common with other benefits of the covenant, it is said to be a **SAVING GRACE**.

A *grace* or a free gift; an unmerited favor: *It is the GIFT of God*, Eph. ii, 8; and that both in its principle and in its exercises. Christians *believe even as the Lord giveth to every man*, 1 Cor. iii, 5. And it is he who *deals out to every man the MEASURE of faith*, Rom. xii, 3.

A *grace*—being purchased for us by Christ's precious blood, and freely bestowed on us for his sake. *It is given unto us in the behalf of Christ, to believe on him*, Phil. i, 29.

A *grace*—because it is wrought in the heart of a sinner by the free Spirit of God, through the instrumentality of the word. For this reason he is called the **SPIRIT OF FAITH**, 2 Cor. iv, 13; and the people of God *believe according to the working of HIS MIGHTY POWER, which, by the Spirit, he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places*, Eph. i, 19, 20. And this faith, so produced, *cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word fo God*. Rom. x, 17.

This faith *saves*. As its origin is grace, so its issue is salvation from sin and from wrath, both here and hereafter. *He that believeth shall be saved*, Mark xvi, 16; *he hath everlasting life*, John vi, 47; *and shall not come into condemnation*, John v, 24; *but shall receive the end of his faith, even the salvation of his soul*, 1 Pet. i, 9.

2. The *special office* of faith is to *receive, and rest upon Christ alone for salvation*. But, in order to have just views of this part of the subject, we are previously to consider the *true and only warrant of faith, which is the free offer of Christ to us in the gospel*.

All that is necessary for elucidating this point may be summed up in the following propositions.

1st. God hath made a *grant* of his Son Jesus Christ, as an all-sufficient Saviour, to a lost and perishing world. He hath not merely revealed a general knowledge of him, but has directly and solemnly *given* him to sinners, as such, that they may be saved. *God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*, John iii, 16.

2dly. This gift is *absolutely free*; independent, in every possible manner, on the worthiness or good qualities of men. This is essential to the very nature of his gift. *Redemption through the blood of Christ is according to the riches of his grace*, Eph. i, 7. *It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save the chief of sinners*, 1 Tim. i, 15.

3dly. This gift is indiscriminately to all the hearers of the gospel, and to every one of them in particular. *Unto us a child is born: unto us a Son is given*, Isa. ix. 6. *The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thine heart: that is the word of faith which we preach: That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved*, Rom. x. 8, 9. No sins, however enormous or aggravated, place any sinner beyond the reach of this liberal grant. The very terms in which it is conveyed suppose the objects of it to be unbelieving, unrighteous, and even obstinate in transgression. *God gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish*; manifestly implying, that they to whom he is given are unbelievers. The Lord Christ, whose invitation to sinners must be grounded on the Father's gift of him as the covenant of the people, thus addresses them: *Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness; behold, I bring near my righteousness*, Isa. xlv. 12, 13.

The Saviour thus given, God hath made it the duty of every one who hears the gospel to accept. that he may be saved: and he cannot reject the gift but at the peril of his soul. *This is the commandment of God, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ*, 1 John iii. 23.

Now, the divine command requiring all the hearers of the gospel to receive the Lord Jesus for salvation, it is manifest, that he is freely given, in the gospel offer, to every one of them in particular. Moreover, all the hearers of the gospel are either believers or unbelievers. That Christ was offered to believers is evident from the fact, that they have received him, and are saved by him. And that he is offered to unbelievers is no less evident, because they will be condemned for their unbelief. *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. But the righteous Lord, who loveth righteousness, will not condemn sinners for rejecting an offer which was never made.

From all this it results, that God hath laid, in his word, a firm foundation for the faith of sinners—that they have his own *warrant*, and therefore a perfect *right*, to take the Lord Jesus, in all his grace and fullness, for their own salvation *in particular*.

Now, as saving faith must correspond both with the warrant of the divine testimony, and with the right to an offered Saviour which that warrant creates, it is properly asserted to be *a receiving and resting upon Christ alone for salvation, as he is freely offered to us in the gospel*.

It is to be carefully noted, that the true and only object of faith is the Lord Jesus Christ himself, set forth and given to sinners *as such*, in the free promise of the gospel: and that, in believing, we receive and rest upon *him*, and upon *him alone*, in all those relations, for all those ends, and in that manner which the divine testimony exhibits, and thus *set to our seal that God is true*.

This *receiving* of Christ, and *resting* upon him, are usually termed the *appropriation* and *assurance* of faith. By the former we take the Lord Jesus, who is ours in the general grant, to be ours in personal possession. By the latter, we trust in him that we shall be saved; believing, that whatever he did for any of the human race, he did for *us*; and that whatever God hath promised to his people, shall be performed unto *us*. These are not to be considered as different acts, but as essential properties, of the grace of faith. And that they are essential to it, is most demonstrable.

First, then; *Appropriation* of the Lord Jesus to ourselves, for our own salvation in particular, is essential to saving faith—For,

1. Without such an appropriation faith could not answer to its warrant in the divine testimony; which, as hath been proved, tenders Christ to every one in particular; nor to the authority of the divine command, which requires every one in particular to take him thus tendered.

2. Without such an appropriation there would be no material difference between the faith of God's people, and that of hypocrites or devils. Both may believe, in general, that Christ died for sinners, that God is in him, reconciling the world unto himself; that he is able to save sinners, and that many shall be saved by him. Mere assent to the abstract truth of the gospel does not and cannot imply any complacency or interest in the salvation which it reveals. But that faith which may be found in the devils and the damned can, in no sense, be *saving* faith.

3. The condemnation of the law is particular. *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them*, Gal. iii. 10. When the Holy Ghost convinces of sin, the sinner sees himself, in particular, shut up under the curse. "*Thou art the man*," says the violated law. "*I am the man*," replies his awakened conscience. Nor is it possible that he should have peace or safety till the blood of Christ purge his conscience, and he, for himself, be delivered from the curse. Therefore if there were not, in believing, a particular application of Christ to the soul, the curse of the law would be more efficacious to destroy than the blood of Christ to save.

4. Salvation is particular. A sentence of justification must pass upon, and a work of sanctification be wrought in, *every one* who shall see the kingdom of God. But justification, and sanctification, and whatever else belongs to the salvation of the gospel, flow unto us only in and through Christ Jesus. And as we receive his benefits in believing, as they cannot be separated from himself; and as they are all communicated by particular application to our souls, it is evident that the faith which embraces him, and with him his benefits, is a faith of particular appropriation. *He is made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*, 1 Cor. i. 30.

5. The experience of God's people, as it is described in his word, proves that their faith is an appropriating faith. Whether they rejoice in the light, or mourn under the hidings, of his countenance, they

equally claim him as their God, even their own God. I will love thee, O Lord, *my* strength. The Lord is *my* rock, and *my* fortress, and *my* deliverer; *my* God, *my* strength, in whom I will trust; *my* buckler, and the horn of *my* salvation, and *my* high tower, Psalm xviii. 1, 2. Thou art the God of *my* strength: Why dost thou cast me off? Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? O send out thy light and thy truth—Then will I go—unto God *my* exceeding joy. Yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God, *my* God, Ps. xliii. 2, 3, 4.

6. The scripture continually ascribes this appropriation to faith. It is illustrated by figures, than which nothing can more strongly mark its appropriating quality. It receives the Lord Jesus, as a gift, John i. 12—puts him on, as a garment, Rom. xiii. 14—flees to him, as a refuge.—lays hold of him, as a hope, Heb. vi. 18—claims him, as a portion, Lam. iii. 24—feeds upon him, as the living bread which came down from heaven, John vi. 51. This, indeed, is the very life of a believer's soul; the fountain of his hope, his peace, his consolation, that Christ is his Saviour, and God, in Christ, his covenant God.

Secondly. In believing, we not only appropriate the Lord Jesus to ourselves; but are persuaded, that whatever he did for the salvation of sinners he did for *us*: and that whatever God hath promised to his people, shall be performed to *us*. This persuasion is the *assurance* of faith, and is inseparable from it.

1. Faith, being an assent to, and reliance on, testimony, respects nothing but the veracity of the testifier. It is this which distinguishes it from all other principles, and which is essential to every kind of it, in every degree, and under every circumstance. Now the testimony of the living God hath set forth the Lord Jesus as a propitiation through faith in his blood. There can be no medium between receiving him by faith, and rejecting him by unbelief: and in believing, we can believe nothing but what God hath testified, because this is the sole ground of our faith. But he hath testified, that whatever Christ did as a Saviour, he did for them who receive him; and that, to them, and every one of them, all the exceeding great and precious promises shall certainly be accomplished. I cannot, therefore, cast my soul upon Christ for salvation, without believing the divine testimony: and this assures me that, as a believer, I, in particular, shall be saved; so that my faith, corresponding with God's testimony, necessarily includes a persuasion of my own salvation in particular.

2. In the scripture, faith is uniformly opposed to doubting. If ye have faith, and doubt not, Matt. xxi. 21. O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? Matt. xiv. 31. If a man lack wisdom, let him ask of God—but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering, James i. 5, 6 but doubting being the want of assurance, and being the reverse of faith, assurance is necessarily of the essence of faith.

3. The testimony of God's word to this property of faith is clear

and decisive. It forms the chief part of the definition which the Holy Ghost has given. Now faith is the substance of things hoped for; the evidence of things not seen.* We are exhorted to draw nigh to the holiest of all, with true hearts, and in the full assurance of faith, Heb. x. 22. Where the truth contended for is doubly established, (1.) By direct assertion; "the assurance of faith," i. e. the assurance which belongs to faith; or else the expression is destitute of meaning. (2.) By allowing degrees in this assurance—"the *full* assurance of faith. Which implies the existence of the assurance itself: for a thing which has no being cannot have degrees of being. These passages alone, and especially in connection with others, which represent faith as building on Christ the foundation, Eph. ii. 20—trusting in him, Eph. i. 12, 13—resting, Ps. xxxvii. 7, and leaning, Song. viii. 5, on him, do fully prove that assurance is of the nature of faith.

4. The fruits of faith do also bespeak assurance. Believers have peace in their consciences—they are freed from the dominion of sin—they overcome the world—they receive from the fulness of Christ Jesus—they mind the things of the Spirit, &c. All these blessings are the subject of promise, and are enjoyed only in the way of believing the promise. But how can he believe the promise who has no confidence in it? And how can a sinner have relief from the terrors of the law? How can his enlightened conscience be pacified? Much more, how can he walk in newness of life, unless he be persuaded that he, in particular is reconciled to God; that he in particular shall be saved; and unless he repose his soul upon the faithfulness of God in Christ, who hath promised to do to him and for him far more abundantly than he can ask or think?

Against this doctrine of faith it cannot be justly objected, "that it requires every one who hears the gospel to believe that Christ died for him in particular; and thus terminates in the error of universal redemption."

This consequence is avoided by a very plain and important distinction between faith as a general duty, and as a special grace. As a general duty, it is to believe assuredly on the testimony of God, who cannot lie, that Christ Jesus is freely given, in the gospel offer, to me in particular; and to take him to myself, as the Father's gift, for my own particular salvation; persuaded, in thus receiving him, that I shall be saved. It is this receiving of Christ which converts the indefinite promise of salvation to believers, into a promise of salvation to me in particular; and without this appropriation of Christ, none have a right to conclude that he died for them, and that they shall be saved.—As a special grace, faith does actually receive the Lord Jesus, and thus binds the divine faithfulness to the particular salvation of him who believes: so that he may warrantably say, and ought to be persuaded, and, in some

Heb. xi. 1. The original word rendered "evidence," signifies demonstration,—argument which forbids reply.

measure, is persuaded, that whatever Christ did for sinners, he did for him; and whatever God hath promised to his people, shall be accomplished to him.

Nor can it be objected, that "this doctrine of faith, representing true believers as at all times undoubtedly assured of their own gracious state, is inconsistent with christian experience, and with the encouragements held forth in scripture to those who labour under doubts and tears; and tends to make sad the hearts of those whom God hath not made sad."

The question is not concerning a believer's opinions of his state, which are influenced not only by his faith, but by his feelings, by temptations, by corruptions, and especially by unbelief; but concerning the nature of his faith itself. That this is sometimes strong, sometimes weak; yea, so weak that he cannot discern its operations, and even disputes its existence, is most certain. But faith he has notwithstanding. His being unconscious of it at the time, does no more prove the want of it, than unconsciousness of the vital motions of the body proves a state of death. Though his faith be small as a grain of mustard seed, and feeble as the first motion of embryo-life, it is essentially the same with the branching tree, and with the active energy of a perfect man. It is, therefore, as really opposed to every kind of doubting in its faintest, as in its most vigorous exercise. The difference lies only in degree. Doubting believers there are; but doubting faith there cannot be. In so far as a believer doubts, he is under the power of unbelief; for be his darkness and his fears what they may, they prevail exactly in the same proportion as his faith fails. A doubting faith, then, is equivalent to an unbelieving faith; or, which is the same thing, a believing unbelief. But this is a contradiction. It is, therefore, undeniable, that, in the midst of conflict and dejection, the believer does, and cannot but trust, and that for himself, in the mercy and faithfulness of his covenant-God. This is evinced to others, and may be evinced to the satisfaction of his own soul, by his clinging to the Lord Christ as his only hope; and by his horror at the thought of relinquishing his claim to the promises, and to the living God as his portion. Poor as he may call his hope, he would not barter it for millions of worlds. This speaks a trust, and that not a slender one, in the Lord's promise, in Christ, for personal salvation; and this trust is precisely the assurance asserted as essential to saving faith.

It would greatly conduce to clear views of this subject, were the distinction between the assurance of *faith*, and the assurance of *sense*, rightly understood and inculcated. When we speak of assurance as essential to faith, many suppose we teach that none can be real christians who do not *feel* that they have passed from death unto life; and have not unclouded and triumphant views of their own interest in Christ, so as to say, under the *manifestations* of his love, "my beloved is mine, and I am his." But God forbid that we should thus offend against the gen-

eration of his children. That many of them want such an assurance, may not be questioned. This, however, is the assurance, not of faith, but of sense: and vastly different they are. The object of the former, is Christ revealed in the *word*; the object of the latter, Christ revealed in the *heart*.—The ground of the former, is the testimony of God *without us*: that of the latter, the work of the Spirit *within us*—the one embraces the promise, looking at nothing but the veracity of the promiser: the other enjoys the promise in the sweetness of its actual accomplishment.—Faith trusts for pardon to the blood of Christ; sense asserts pardon from the comfortable intimations of it to the soul. By faith we take the Lord Jesus for salvation; by sense we *feel* that we are saved, from the Spirit's shining on his own gracious work in our hearts.

These kinds of assurance, so different in their nature, are very frequently separated. The assurance of faith may be, and often is, in lively exercise, when the other is completely withdrawn. “Zion said, *my Lord hath forgotten me*, and the Spouse, *my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone*.” “He may be a forgetting and withdrawing God to my feeling: and yet to my faith, *my God, and my Lord still*.” This case is accurately described by the prophet. Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God, Isa. 1 10. Here the believer, one who fears the Lord, is supposed to be absolutely destitute of sensible assurance; for he *walks in darkness, and has no light*; yet he is required to exercise the assurance of faith, by *trusting in the Lord, and staying upon his God*.

Seeing, therefore, that the scriptures teach, that there is, in saving faith, a special appropriation of the Lord Jesus Christ to the soul, with a persuasion of its own particular salvation through him; and that this doctrine is in no wise contrary, but most conformable, to the experience of the saints; the Synod do reject, and solemnly testify against the prevailing errors, that justifying faith does not necessarily contain an appropriation of Christ to ourselves, as our own Saviour in particular; nor any assurance that we, in particular, shall be saved; but merely a belief and persuasion of God's mercy in Christ, and of his ability and willingness to save those who come unto God through him. And the Synod do warn their people against the principles herein condemned, as contrary to the faith of God's elect; as tending to encourage, in sinners, a lying hope, founded on a general assent to the truth of the gospel; and to mar, instead of promoting, the growth and consolation of believers.

II. OF JUSTIFICATION.

Justification, being the reverse of condemnation, expresses a change, not of personal qualities, but of relative state. For, as condemnation does not make the subjects thereof wicked, so justification does not make them holy. But as the former is a sentence, according to law, declaring a person unrighteous, and adjudging him to penalty; so the latter is a sentence, according to law, acquitting him from guilt, and declaring him righteous. In justifying sinners, the Most High God, as an upright moral Governor, passes a sentence wherein he pardoneth all their sins, and accepteth them as righteous in his sight. For he forgiveth all their iniquities, Ps. ciii. 3, and makes them accepted in the beloved, Eph. i. 6.

This justification is an *act*; and is, therefore, completed at once. It is necessarily an *act*, because it is a legal sentence; and an act cannot be progressive: this is the property of a *work*.

The origin of justification is the sovereign grace of God—We are *justified freely by his grace*, Rom. iii. 24.

The meritorious cause of it; that which renders it meet and right for God to absolve the sinner from the curse, and receive him into favour; and on account of which he is just in justifying, is the righteousness of the Lord Jesus, consisting of his whole obedience to the law, both in its precept and penalty. We have redemption through his blood, Eph. i. 7: and by his obedience many are made righteous, Rom. v. 19.

This righteousness is conveyed to us by *imputation*; that is, is placed to our account as really and effectively as if it had been accomplished in our own persons. He was *made under the law*; so under it, as to become *sin for us, though he knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*, 2 Cor. v. 21. i. e. as our sin being charged on him, is sustained, in law, as a sufficient reason for exacting from him, in our name, full compliance with all the demands of justice; so that compliance, which is his righteousness, being imputed unto us, is sustained, in law, as a sufficient reason for acquitting us, in his name, from guilt, and conferring on us a title to everlasting life. The Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all; and, therefore, by his stripes we are healed, Isa. liii. 5, 6.

With the imputation of the Surety's righteousness, on the part of God the Judge, there is necessarily connected the cordial reception of it on our part. This is done by faith, the faith of the operation of God. It is in believing on the Lord Jesus, or, as has already been explained, accepting him, for righteousness; on the divine warrant, that our *persons* are released from the curse, and we are *personally* instated in the right to the inheritance. In this sense, and in this only, does faith justify; not as being, in any possible form or degree, our justifying righteousness; but simply as it embraces the righteousness of the Surety, to the entire exclusion of our own. So speaks the scripture; We are

justified by faith, Rom. v. 1; only as it is faith in his blood, Rom. iii. 24.

Hence it is apparent, that personal justification takes place at the moment of believing, and not before. But as this part of the doctrine of justification has been recently and boldly denied within the bounds of the Synod, they judge it their duty briefly to confirm it, and to bear their testimony against the contrary error.

1. It is not righteousness as *imputed* merely, that justifies; but as *received* also. On this the scriptures lay particular stress. *As many as RECEIVED him to them gave he power to become the sons of God;* which receiving is immediately explained by *believing on his name*, John i. 12. No righteousness can justify me at the bar of justice, unless I am warranted in law to plead it as my own. It is palpably absurd to plead a righteousness which I reject. The very plea supposes that the righteousness is mine, and that I trust in it. Now, the righteousness of Christ is not mine in possession till I accept it as the Father's gift; which I do in believing. Before believing, therefore, I have no righteousness to oppose to the claims of the law, and, consequently, neither am, nor can be justified. It will not be questioned that the Lord never imputes righteousness to those who never believe; and that he always bestows the grace of faith on those to whom he imputes righteousness. And this demonstrates that there subsists such a connexion between imputation on his part, and faith on ours, that without the latter, the former could not produce its effect. But that effect is our justification; therefore justification cannot take place before believing.

2. The law applies its curse to the person of every sinner in particular; and its terror to the conscience of every convinced sinner in particular.

That the gospel, as the ministration of righteousness, may be directly opposed to the law, as the ministration of condemnation; and that its effect may completely destroy the effect of the law's curse, it is necessary that there be a particular application of righteousness to the person of the sinner; and that the peace speaking blood of Jesus be particularly applied to his conscience. Both are asserted in the scripture. Believers are elect according to the foreknowledge of God, the Father, through *sprinkling* of the blood of Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. i. 2— which purges their conscience from *dead works*, Heb. ix. 14. But it has been shown under the preceding head, that it is faith which appropriates the Lord Christ in his saving benefits. And as there is no justification before he be thus appropriated, there can be none before believing.

3. The scriptures divide the hearers of the gospel into believers and unbelievers; and pronounce upon them sentences according to their respective characters. He that believeth is not condemned, John iii. 18; he is justified from all things, Acts xiii. 39; he hath everlasting life, John iii. 36. While he that believeth not, is condemned already, & the wrath of God *abideth* on him, John iii. 18, 36. Till the sinner be-

Beve, he is an unbeliever. And as long as he continues so, he is in a state of condemnation; the wrath of God *abideth* on him. Justification, therefore, before believing, is impossible; it exhibits a monster which the bible cannot know—a *justified unbeliever*. It includes the revolting absurdity of a man's being, at the same time, and in the same respects, both acquitted and condemned; both in a state of favour and in a state of wrath; at once a partaker of Christ, and an heir of hell.

However plain and peremptory the scriptural doctrine on this point, there are not wanting some to corrupt and oppose it, by teaching, not only that justification precedes believing, but that the elect were justified from eternity.

If nothing more were meant than that the Lord from eternity, *purposed* to justify his elect through the righteousness of their head, Jesus Christ; and that this gracious purpose or decree infallibly secures their justification in time, it would be a glorious truth. Though to call this *justification*, when it is, in fact, the same with *election*, would be a strange abuse of terms; and would engender an idle and unedifying strife of words. But it is contended, that justification, strictly and properly speaking, is eternal: That Jehovah having, from eternity, accepted the suretyship of the Son, accepted, and therefore justified, the elect in him: that as his will to elect, is election, so his will to justify, is justification: that this being eternally an *immanent* act of the divine mind, is the true justification: that the *transient* act, which passes, in time, on the person of a sinner, and which we style justification, is only an intimation to his conscience of what was done in eternity: and that the proper business of faith is not to justify, but to impart to the believer a clear manifestation, and a comfortable sense, of his eternal justification.

How contrary all this is to the nature of things, to the testimony of God's word, and to the experience of his people, may be easily demonstrated.

1. Justification, being the sentence of God the Judge, acquitting the sinner from guilt, and pronouncing him righteous, according to the tenor of the moral law, necessarily implies both the existence of the law, and the breach of it by the person justified; neither of which can consist with the doctrine of eternal justification.

2. If, as is alledged, the will to justify is justification, as the will to elect is election, it is certain, that the will to create is creation; the will to sanctify, sanctification; the will to save salvation; so that men were created, sanctified, saved from eternity.

That sanctification is a change of personal qualities, and justification of legal relations, will neither alter the question, nor remove the difficulty. For justification as necessarily supposes the existence of the relations affected by it, as sanctification does the existence of the person sanctified. Both these blessings impart a real and glorious change; only the subject of the latter is a sinner's person, and of the former, his

state. Beside, condemnation affects only legal relations; and if the will to justify is justification, the will to condemn must be condemnation; so that mankind were condemned from eternity; that is, eternally before the covenant, for the breach of which they were condemned, had any being; or else the covenant with Adam was as eternal as the covenant with Christ; i. e. was made with Adam an eternity before he was created.

3. If the elect were justified from eternity in virtue of their being from eternity in Christ, by covenant representation, it must follow, either that they never were in Adam as a head of condemnation; or else that they were condemned in Adam after their justification in Christ; because the latter was from eternity, and the former only in time; for it is evident that they could not be condemned in Adam, before he fell under condemnation himself. But both these propositions are most repugnant to every principle and declaration of the scripture.

4. The elect could not be eternally justified in Christ their surety, because the surety himself was not thus justified. As the God man, he was made under the law, both in its precept and penalty, nor was he discharged till he had satisfied both to the uttermost. God was first *manifested in the flesh*, then *justified in the Spirit*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. This is usually called the *virtual* justification of the elect: by which must be understood, that in the obedience and death of the Lord Jesus a foundation was laid for their pardon and acceptance, so that God might be just in justifying them, and the promise thereof made irreversibly sure to them as the seed. But that this was not their own proper justification, is clear from the example of those who, by faith in the Saviour to come, were justified *before* his appearing to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

5. If the elect were justified from eternity, and, of course, came justified into the world, it is undeniable that every elect person is regenerated and sanctified from the womb; or else that justification and sanctification may be and often are separated: so that a person in favor with God, and an heir of life, may, notwithstanding, be for years, and scores of years, under the dominion, and wallowing in the filth, of sin. The former is contrary to notorious fact; and the latter, exploding sanctification as the necessary concomitant and test of justification, destroys our Lord's rule, that *the tree is known by its fruit*, Matt. xii. 23.

6. The notion of eternal justification overthrows the whole doctrine of the scripture concerning the office of the grace of faith. This is, pre-eminently, to receive Christ Jesus the Lord, as Jehovah our righteousness; for *he is made of God unto us—righteousness*, 1 Cor. i. 30; and *with the heart man believeth unto righteousness*, Rom. x. 10. But if the use of faith be merely to *manifest* our eternal justification, it can in no sense be said to *receive* Christ for righteousness, which implies, that previously the person exercising it had none. In addition to which it is obvious, according to this scheme,

1st. That faith can no otherwise justify than works; because holiness being the effect of cleansing by the blood of Christ, manifests our justification; yet the scriptures attribute justification to faith, and positively deny it to works

2dly. That no person can be a believer who has not a comfortable sense of his justification; for faith *manifests* it; and he loses his faith as often as he loses the *manifestation* of his justification; so that there are either no believers in the world, or else men are believers or unbelievers, as their comfortable sense of their justification comes and goes.

3dly. That no sinner can be called by the ministry of the word to believe, or be condemned for unbelief. Not to believe; because the use of faith being to manifest justification, the call, if general, must be addressed to many who never were, and never will be, justified; and, therefore, have no justification to be manifested; and if restricted, must be grounded on election; the objects whereof no man knows, or can know. Nor could any be condemned for unbelief; for faith, not being a receiving of Christ for justification, but only manifesting our eternal justification, embraces no offer; and, therefore, unbelief, which is the reverse of faith, rejects none; and if sinners be condemned for their unbelief, they will be condemned for a non-manifestation of what never existed.

7. The people of God, when enabled at first to believe, never do it as *already justified*; but feeling themselves accursed and perishing sinners, shut up under the most righteous condemnation of the law, flee to the Lord Jesus, that they *may be* pardoned, and *may be* saved from the wrath to come. These views are absolutely inconsistent with the idea and the doctrine of eternal justification. To say that they are erroneous, seeing the elect sinner was eternally justified, though he does not know it, is, on the matter, to say that the Holy Ghost fills his people with groundless terrors, and leads them to lying exercises; for it is he who convinces them of sin, by applying to their consciences both the precept and the curse of the law. Nor will it be any relief to plead, that the elect considered as in Christ are justified; but considered in Adam, are children of wrath; for this not only silences the challenge of the apostle, *Who shall lay ANY THING to the charge of God's elect?* But supposes them to remain under the very condemnation from which justification in Christ was intended to deliver them. And as, on this plan, there is no inconsistency *now* between their being justified in Christ, and, at the same time, condemned in Adam, there can be none at any future period: so that the elect may continue to all eternity, in the heavens, in the presence, and in the enjoyment of God,—children of wrath!

From this pernicious tenet, as from a root of bitterness and poison, spring many noxious errors, which, at various times, have infected the church of Christ, and which a regard to her spiritual health has compelled the Synod, however reluctant in severity, to aim at extirpating from

their bounds. Hence the infatuated notions, that Christ is offered in the gospel to the elect only—that ministers have nothing to do with the reprobate—that the immediate duty of the hearer of the gospel is to believe, first of all, his personal election to eternal life—that one may be for a series of years in a gracious state, without knowing it, or bringing forth the fruits of grace, and yet ought not to question it; with other of a like nature and tendency; all of which do necessarily arise out of the doctrine of eternal justification.

The SYNOD do, therefore, bear this, their explicit and public *testimony* against it; and do solemnly warn and enjoin both ministers and people under their care, as they regard the glory of the Lord Jesus, and the welfare of their own souls, to discountenance it; and every one who, in any manner, inculcates it, as subverting the very foundations of the gospel; leading sinners to a false and ruinous confidence; and ministering powerful incentives to all ungodliness.

JOHN YOUNG, *Moderator.*

JOHN M'JIMSEY, *Clerk pro temp.*

AN ACT

Concerning the Kingly Authority of the Lord Jesus.

WHEREAS a principle has lately been propagated, highly derogatory to the Lord Jesus, and hostile to the peace and prosperity of his church, “denying him the exclusive right to ecclesiastical legislation,” *the Ministers and Elders, in Synod assembled*, feel themselves obligated to declare, they hereby do declare, their sentiments on that subject.

Jesus Christ is the only Lawgiver of his church; and to invest any man, or body of men, with legislative powers, is a daring infringement of his royal prerogative. It may not be unnecessary to remark, that this authority, strictly considered, belongs to *Him as Mediator*; was given to him of the Father, and is distinct from that underived, essential dominion, of which, as a Person in Jehovah, he is necessarily possessed.

That the Lord Jesus is the only Lawgiver of his church, appears obvious from those princely names by which he is uniformly exhibited in scripture. Thus he is emphatically called “the Prince of Peace;” “our Judge, our Lawgiver and King;” a “King set” or appointed by Jehovah over his Holy Hill of Zion;” “Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting;” that “one Shepherd” raised up of the Father for Israel his spiritual flock; the “one Lawgiver who is able to save and destroy.” In these and other passages of scripture the Redeemer is not barely denominated chief Shepherd, Lawgiver, &c. denoting a mere pre-eminence of authority, but he is enti-

held that "one Shepherd" and "Lawgiver," undeniably evincing that legislative authority is his peculiar prerogative.

This doctrine is still further confirmed by those ensigns of supremacy by which the Redeemer is distinguished. Long before his appearing in our world, it was foretold of Messiah, that "the government should be upon his shoulder;" that he should sit and rule upon his throne, and should be a Priest upon his throne, "that the Lord God would give unto him the throne of his Father David; that he should reign over the house of Jacob forever." In conformity to these ancient predictions, Christ is afterwards set forth as possessing "all power in heaven and earth." "The Father loveth the Son," says the Holy Ghost by the Evangelist John, "the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand." These and similar passages of scripture evidently hold forth the Lord Jesus as the only Lawgiver of his house, and rebuke, as both arrogant and presumptuous, all such as claim any legislative power therein.

Connect with these another argument equally convincing in itself, and appropriate to the foregoing proposition, that church officers are appointed only by Christ. It is his divine prerogative to raise up, qualify and establish them in the church. He commissioned the disciples to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. "He gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." As the appointment of officers belongs peculiarly to him, in like manner the establishment of all sacred institutions. No observance, however rational in its nature, or cunningly calculated to inspire or assist devotion, is binding on the church, unless sanctioned by the command, and enstamped with the signature, of Zion's King. "To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." "In vain," is the challenge of his jealousy; "in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Add to this, that ordinances are dispensed invariably in his name. Ministers are only ambassadors for Christ. By authority derived from him "they hold the keys of the kingdom of heaven, that whatsoever they bind on earth is bound in heaven, and whatsoever they loose on earth is loosed in heaven." "I have received of the Lord," says the apostle establishing the venerable ordinance of *the supper*, "I have received of the Lord that which I also delivered unto you." Church censures are also administered agreeably to his appointment. Is the offending brother cut off from the communion of the faithful; or, upon his apparent repentance, restored to the privileges of the church? Both are executed in the name and by the authority of Christ.

These arguments, either separately or unitedly considered, undeniably prove that the Lord Jesus is the sole Lawgiver in Zion, and that church officers are vested with no other than executive or ministerial

powers. They are servants under Christ as their Master; they are disciples of Christ as their Lord; they are only stewards of the mysteries of godliness. The Synod, therefore, embrace the present opportunity of testifying against the contrary opinion as unscriptural; as highly degrading to the Great God our Saviour, and dangerous to the peace and order of his house: and hereby they publicly and solemnly warn the people under their inspection against complying with the same.

JOHN YOUNG, *Moderator.*
JOHN M'JIMSEY, *Clerk pro temp.*

A WARNING

AGAINST HOPKINSIAN, AND OTHER ALLIED ERRORS,

ADDRESSED BY

THE ASSOCIATE REFORMED SYNOD OF THE WEST,

TO THE CHURCHES UNDER THEIR CARE.

TO WHICH

IS PREFIXED A SHORT NARRATIVE

OF THE STATE AND PROGRESS OF SUCH ERRORS.

THE Associate Reformed Synod of the West, at a meeting held in Chillicothe in May 1824, taking into consideration the prevalence of hurtful errors, which disturb the peace of the church, and hinder union among professing Christians—appointed a committee to prepare the draught of a testimony against Hopkinsian Socinian and Semi-Socinian errors as prevalent in the present day; with a brief narrative of the state and progress of such errors in the churches. At the next succeeding meeting held at Cadiz the committee reported—and the report being duly considered, and having undergone some amendments was unanimously adopted, and ordered to be printed.

THE NARRATIVE.

EVERY attentive reader of the writings of the apostles, must have observed the free and honest manner in which they noticed the errors which were infesting the church in their day; how fearlessly they branded them with the mark of disapprobation; and how carefully they put those to whom they wrote on their guard against them.— Taught by the Holy Ghost as they were, they never would have pursued this course, if, as some pretend, religious opinions are matters of indifference. That sacred injunction, *Beware lest ye also being led away with the error of the wicked fall from your own stedfastness* while it makes it our duty to exercise vigilance, in guarding ourselves and others with whom we may have influence, against whatever in opinion or practice is calculated to subvert the faith of Christ; will at the same time; justify us in the view of every pious mind, in attempting to point out to our people, the errors which at the present day are prevailing amongst those who profess the Christian name; that being aware of them, they may see, that now as formerly, it is not safe *believing every spirit, but may try the spirits, whether they be of GOD.*

It is not, however, our intention to pass in review, every error which is doing mischief in the churches. This would be a work of labor and of time. It would also be needless; as many of the prevailing errors have existed for a long period with very little variation, and have been often noticed and refuted; so that, at first sight, they are by all intelligent members of the *household of faith* recognized to be *diverse and strange doctrines.* It shall be our part only to notice the present state of some errors of more recent origin; or which come abroad in a *new* and more imposing dress; and furnish some hints and facts, which may enable those who observe *the signs of the times,* to form an estimate of the progress which they are making in the churches.

That district of the United States, commonly known by the name of New England, having been the first which cultivated literature and science to any considerable extent, has always given something of a tone to the other parts of the Union. A circumstance which enabled this section of our country, to exert great influence over other sections, as it regards religion and religious opinions, was, that a great portion of its early settlers were both intelligent and pious, being such as were forced to leave their native country by the persecution raised against the puritans. As there were, therefore, here large and well organized churches, supplied with able and faithful ministers, while in most other parts, Christians were few, and as sheep having no shepherd; the religion and religious opinions of New England readily acquired respectability, and authority over the minds of the religious class of mankind far from home. Nor was this attended with any but the most happy consequences, while the New England churches retained that pi-

rity of faith which they inherited from their ancestors. But this, as a general fact, was not of long continuance. We learn from the histories of the times, that Arminianism soon began to prevail, even in some of the colleges where youth received the rudiments of their education for the ministry. Those, who fell into this aberration from pure Christianity, were not long content with it. A metaphysical turn of mind, which often displayed itself in handling the word of God; soon carried them farther. As it came to be esteemed that alone which could give a minister eminence, no one was satisfied unless he were able to set up some distinction before unknown to Christians, or introduce some new subtlety worthy of his critical acumen; and refinement after refinement, or in their own language—a language which still prevails—*improvement* after *improvement*, in the received system of theology, was the consequence. President Edwards, though an able and orthodox teacher of religion, and one whose name ought never to be mentioned but with respect, contributed, unintentionally, no little to this state of things. His work on the *Will*, though a masterly production, containing an able refutation of the Arminian notions of Free-Will, was yet written in a style too metaphysical for the mass of his readers; and falling into the hands of Theologians who possessed all his fondness for philosophizing, though without his ability, was the occasion of leading many of them into consequences of which he never thought, and which he would have regarded with abhorrence.—Having taught that the inability of sinners to believe and obey the gospel is not natural but moral; his followers, by an easy, though very absurd mistake, took occasion to assert that fallen man possesses all the requisite natural ability to obey the commandments of God. In vindicating this position it was soon found necessary to assert that his intellectual powers are not affected by the fall—that his moral powers are alone depraved. Hence the origin of the distinction between *total* and *universal* depravity. That man is totally depraved they admitted; that is, his heart or his moral powers are depraved; but he is not universally depraved—his understanding, &c. is as unimpaired as Adam's in a state of innocence; neither indeed can moral good or evil be predicated of the intellectual faculties or of their operations.

The same pious author having incorrectly, or at least inadvertently taught,* that Christ was subject to the law merely as a man; that the righteousness by which he merited Heaven for himself and his people consists principally in his obedience to the Mediatorial law, to which obedience belongs his last sufferings;—those who came after him took occasion to say and teach, that what is commonly called the active obedience of Christ is not imputed to believers for their justification in the sight of God; but that the righteousness of Christ consists wholly in his sufferings, and the consequent act of justification wholly in pardon.

**Ist. Redemption*, p. 327

In the year 1792, Dr. Hopkins of Newport published his system of Divinity, in which he taught many tenets which differed widely from the received faith of the Church of God: and from him the system has derived the name of Hopkinsianism. It does not appear, however, that Dr. Hopkins embraced all the views which at present go under that name. In its present degree of perfection, this system of doctrine, contains among many others of minor importance, the following tenets, all of which; are either such as *minister questions rather than God-ly edifying*, or such as are manifestly subversive of the Gospel of Christ.

1. That all true holiness consists in disinterested benevolence.
2. That sin and holiness are immediately created by God; and he is as much the author of sinful as of holy volitions.
3. That there are no means of grace, nor promises of regenerating grace to the doings of the unregenerated, and consequently it is idle to exhort sinners to pray or use any of the ordinances of God as means of grace.
4. That the *heart* of man only is affected by the Fall; and that fallen man possesses all the requisite natural ability to believe in Christ, and obey the commands of God.
5. That although Adam's sin was the *occasion* of the sinfulness of his future offspring, yet they did not sin in him and fall with him; but by a divine constitution it was made certain or declared to be so; that if he sinned they should in like manner sin; so that sin is neither imputed nor conveyed from Adam to his posterity, but he simply proved the occasion of God's bringing all his posterity into the world in a state of moral depravity.
6. That Christ did not represent the elect in the covenant of grace, so as to obey and suffer in their room; nor is his righteousness imputed to believers so as to become their justifying righteousness.
7. That faith is a modification of love, and the condition of Gospel justification.
8. That Christ did not by his obedience and sufferings satisfy the law and justice of God, so as to purchase pardon reconciliation, and eternal salvation for his people; but merely suffered as a general substitute for the sinful race of mankind, that the real disposition of God towards sin might be seen. In this manifestation of the disposition of God atonement consists. The way is, therefore, now opened for God to be reconciled to sinners; and the situation and circumstances are such, that he may consistently bestow or withhold mercy, just as shall tend most effectually to answer the purpose of Divine goodness; while he is not brought under any covenant engagement to Christ, to save any of the human race. Consequently the idea of Christ being legally charged with the guilt of the representees, and of their sins being removed by the atonement, is excluded.
9. It is requisite to the existence of faith and of every saving grace.

that the sinner should have such a disposition as implies a willingness to be damned for the glory of God; if it be more for his glory, that he should be damned than saved.

10. To which now, at least, may be added, *That Christ is not the Eternal Son of God.*

A few years ago, this dangerous corruption of the doctrine of our Saviour's person was disowned by Hopkinsians generally; or, at least, by those of that school, who left their country and kindred, to settle in places, where it would not have been well received. But those days are now passed away. What would then have been resented as a slander had they been charged with holding it, and what Hopkinsian teachers then held back as too offensive to Christian ears; is now proclaimed on the housetops and publicly defended both from the pulpit and press. In the year 1822, the Rev. Moses Stuart, an Assistant Professor in the Theological Seminary of Andover, addressed a volume of letters to the Rev. Samuel Miller, D. D. Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the Princeton Theological Seminary, on the eternal generation of the Son of God. In these letters, he labors hard to prove, that the subject on which he professedly writes, has no existence. The titles *Father* and *Son*, he insists do not denote eternal, natural, and necessary relations, between these persons in the Godhead. He seems to think he has done something of importance when he has made it appear, that the name *Son of God* has in some respects a speciality of meaning when applied to the Saviour, Page 103. But what is this "speciality of meaning"? Why is he called the Son of God? The Rev. Professor does not leave us in the dark. 1. "Christ is called the Son of God, because in respect of his HUMAN NATURE, (Page 110) he is derived from God." 2. Because of "*the elevated dignity which was conferred upon him as the Messiah,*" page 115. A third reason creeps in, because "*when he was raised from the dead there was the commencement of a new life, i. e. something analogous to birth or generation.*" But, "The principal or predominant reason for giving him the appellation, is, because he is the Messiah—the King, Head or Lord of all things." page 117.

That he may not be thought singular in his views, he takes care to inform us in his Introduction, page 5, that "nearly all the ministers in New England, since he has been upon the stage, have, so far as he knows their sentiments, united in rejecting it [the eternal generation] or, at least, in regarding it as unimportant." Dr. Miller has replied, in a style, which does credit to his talents and learning as a Theologian; and gives reason to hope, that, so far at least, as his influence extends, the interests of "general orthodoxy" are well supported in the Princeton School. He detects and exposes the fallacy of many of Stuart's Socinian perversions of Scripture in the most satisfactory manner; supports his side of the question that the Sonship of Christ is eternal and divine by cogent Scripture arguments; and administers to his brother

whom he deems in an error by no means of small importance, several reproofs, which derive a species of severity, from the very delicacy with which they are administered. We cannot forbear giving the following as a specimen: "A number of your arguments; the strain of your principal objections; and the licence which you indulge, in many cases, in the interpretation of Scriptures;—all savor so much of a school with which I should abhor the thought of associating your respected name, that I read them with not a little pain; * * * * * yes, my dear sir, though I know you abhor the sentiments of that school from your heart; yet if your name were removed from the title-page; and if the several passages in which you profess your firm belief in the Divinity of Christ, were expunged from your pamphlet, I should really suspect it had come from some member of the Unitarian ranks, rather than from the midst of the orthodox camp."

But still, this is not the worst. In Boston and its vicinity, there has long existed a party who embrace the Socinian error. These, with some others who agree with them in their opposition to the doctrine of the Trinity, though they do not go to the full length of making the Saviour a mere man, have taken to themselves the name of Unitarians. They have, by emigration and otherwise, extended themselves far from the "cradle of Socinianism;" and are to be found in Philadelphia, in Baltimore, in Kentucky; and, indeed, in most parts of the U. States.

It was to be expected that the Hopkinsian views of the Atonement would produce such fruits: for, even though it were admitted, that those views have not a direct tendency towards Socinianism; they, at least, prepare the minds of those who embrace them, to receive the Socinian errors when proposed. That the doctrine of an indefinite atonement, however, does not lead directly to Socinianism, we most firmly believe. For, if Christ did not die to satisfy the law and justice of God, and purchase salvation for his people; but if, as Hopkinsians say, he died merely to make a display of the hatred of God against sin, so that this being done, he may in sovereignty extend mercy to *some* or *all* or *none* of the human race, as seems best to his infinite wisdom:—then, as the hatred of God against sin is displayed in the punishment of Devils and finally impenitent sinners, and in the declarations of his word, where is the absolute necessity for an atonement made by a *Divine* Saviour? The ends of his government can be answered without it. But it does not agree to our ideas of God to suppose, that he would inflict any sufferings on Christ without an absolute necessity. His sufferings, therefore, were not expiatory; but were merely incidental to the discharge of his duties as a "Teacher sent from God." But that an atonement may be made for sin is the great reason which calls for a *Divine* Saviour. As, therefore, we have seen that this reason does not exist, we may safely conclude that Christ is not *Divine*; and any thing in the Scriptures apparently to the contrary must be charged to the account of metaphor and figure.

That speculative men, who are fond of carrying their principles out, will arrive at the conclusion just stated, from such premises as the Hopkinsian ideas furnish them, admits, we think, of no dispute. But it is not necessary for us to suppose that this is the only cause, which has favored, and is yet favoring the growth of Socinianism. It may be worth remarking, that about the time Dr. Hopkins' system of divinity was published, Dr. Joseph Priestly whose labors in the Socinian cause have been very abundant, arrived in the United States, and his writings were published and much read in the vicinity of Boston. Extracts from his works still continue to be published and re-published to the world, in the news-dealing prints, and in separate pamphlets; many a scribbler and declaimer against the true Deity of Christ makes heavy draughts on the Doctor; and, but for the aid derived from him, or from writers who have copied him, many a *sectarian* preacher, who can harrangue fluently against the doctrines of the Trinity, and of the Divinity of the Redeemer, would have nothing to say.

In 1795, another work was re-published in Boston; which, though it neither contains Socinianism, nor Arianism, nor Sabellianism, clearly marked, yet verges towards almost every error relating to the person of Christ. The work to which we allude is a "Treatise on the glory of Christ as God-Man by Isaac Watts, D. D." In this work the Doctor often speaks in a vague and loose manner of the characters, distinctions, relations or persons in the Godhead; and if he ever uses a language, as he sometimes does, which would seem to denote a belief in the doctrine of three persons in the one Divine essence, it appears rather to be in compliance with the usage of the orthodox, as it is evident he wished to offend none, but, if possible make his views of the constitution of our Saviour's person *take* with all. On this subject his notion appears to be that the *human soul* of our Saviour had a very early existence, being the first and greatest being which God ever made—that under the Old Testament, God dwelt in this human soul, which he often calls an *Angel*, as he dwelt in the pillar of cloud and fire, though, by an incomparably more near and intimate union "and on this account the angel may be called God in a *more proper manner*, than the fire, cloud, or bush could ever be," page 66-7. That "though the Angel who revealed the will of God to the Patriarchs and Prophets was really Jesus Christ the Son of God—yet when he assumed flesh and blood—and became a complete man by a miraculous conception, then he was more completely the Son of God both in soul and body," page 69. That, "in the New Testament when this glorious person appeared among men as the Son of God; when he was discovered to be so, in his body by his extraordinary conception—when he was farther made the Son of God, by his being "begotten from the dead"—when he was preached by the apostles as the only begotten Son of God," both in his pre-existent and incarnate state—he sustains hereby a superior character to that of an angel, a servant or mere messenger, even that of God's own Son," page 73.

[Recollect what Professor Stuart means by the name *Son of God*, and you will have Dr. Watt's meaning.] That the covenant between God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ could not be properly made "within the Divine essence, by such sort of distinct personalities, as have no distinct mind or will"—but we should suppose Christ [he must mean his human soul] to be also present before the world was made, to be chosen or appointed the Redeemer or Reconciler of mankind, to be then ordained the head of his future people, to receive promises of grace and blessings in their name, and to receive the solemn and weighty trust from the hand of the Father i. e. to take care of millions of souls," page 193. The Doctor, therefore, teaches that it was this *Angel* or *human soul* of Christ, who had glory with the Father before the world was, page 173—5; that it was he "who being in the form of God [i. e. was vested with a God-like form or glory as the Doctor inclines to interpret it] thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but humbled himself," &c. page 176—9; that it was he "who though he was rich yet for our sakes became poor," page 181—that it was he "who came down from Heaven not to do his own will, but the will of Him that sent him," page 183—4; and that it is "rather" his *human soul* who is "the Lord from Heaven," page 189.

It can never be made a question, whether a book containing such sentiments; could circulate through the Christian community, under the respected name of Watts, without producing consequences the most disastrous. In addition to the learning and apparent piety of the author, there is another circumstance, which would powerfully contribute to recommend his opinions to the multitude. His Psalms and Hymns had, for a length of time, been used in the praises of God in the New England churches, as they still are both there, and elsewhere. Now although it has been alleged, that whatever may have been the author's creed, no unsound views of these all-important subjects appear in his poetical compositions: still, this, though good so far as it goes brings but small aid against the evil: see note 1, at the end. Admitted that his Psalms and Hymns, after being modified by Barlow, Dwight and others, contain no Socinianism, nor any thing allied to it; yet it is a fact that in his other writings, views are exhibited which have no friendly aspect, either upon the Divinity of Christ, or a Trinity of related persons in the Godhead. Dr. Ely, a leading member of the Presbyterian church, and who is interested in defending the orthodoxy of Watts as far as circumstances will permit, grants it to be "incontestible, that some of his later writings are hostile to the real Deity of Christ, and the doctrine of the Trinity: Qu. Theo. Review, Vol. II. page 394. The same gentleman also testifies, that Dr. Watts' Treatise on the Pre-Existence of the Human Soul of our Saviour has wrought much mischief. It has enabled the Socinians to claim that good man as one of their Anti-Trinitarian party. It was the book which first turned the head of the Rev. John Sherman of Mansfield in Connecticut; for we well re-

member to have seen it in his hand, and to have heard [him comment upon it, when he first published his departure from the faith, to the Clerical Association of which he was a member, and attempted to convince them that Dr. Watts is correct in his Sabellian notions. We wish the pernicious consequences of that treatise had terminated here," &c. Qu. Theo. Review, Vol. I, p. 221. And James R. Wilson, in his review of a pamphlet published by Dr. Miller, has, we think, fully proved, that Dr. Watts was an Anti-Trinitarian, as that term is, and as has always been understood by the great body of the orthodox: See note 2. Now the use of his Psalms and Hymns cannot fail to give his name great authority in the Churches where they are used. The people accustomed to consider him as no ordinary saint; to praise his heaven born and seraphic piety; and to honor him, as the giver of so excellent a Psalm-book, must, if we understand any thing of the laws of the human mind, be measurably prepared to swallow his errors wherever they meet them in his writings. They can suspect no poison in that which has Watts' seal. The mischief is heightened, by a practice which prevails to some extent among those clergy who use the Doctor's Psalms and Hymns—the practice of citing passages from the *Divine* and the *Godly*, and the "Seraphic," and the "Ethereal" Watts in their pulpit exhibitions. And can any good reason be given why Watts is not to be regarded as that same high authority when the people read him, as when they hear him quoted in the pulpit? Must he not be entitled to the same credit, when quoted by a Socinian as when quoted by any orthodox minister? In this way, whether some men know it or not, there are those who *do know* that the use of the Doctor's Psalms and Hymns in the Church, or the authority which it gives his name, is of great service to those who war against our Saviour's true and proper Divinity. We can here state a fact, which sufficiently justifies this assertion. Some years ago, a work was published by Barton W. Stone, the Great Apostle of the Western New-Lights, a sect, which has, by a pretty high authority, been denominated a "Socinian Association." To break the force of those prejudices, which he saw bristling up against him, on account of his heresy respecting the person of Christ, he, in one place, declares himself to be "a follower of the illustrious Dr. Watts of England, and Henry Patillo of America; Address--Nashville, Tenn. 1814, p. 13 & 19; and in another, refers his readers to Dr. Watts on the Glory of Christ, for a more full view of his sentiments, in relation to the pre-existent human or angelical soul of Christ. Stone knew what means to use with those who might still have some small hankers after the old orthodoxy. He was not ignorant of the magical influence of Watts' name.

Here we do most earnestly deprecate any misconstruction of our views or motives. We do not, by any means, insinuate that any man is to be esteemed hostile to the Divinity of Christ because he uses the

Imitations of Dr. Watts in praising God. We believe, that in those churches who use them, there are hundreds and thousands, who equally with ourselves, would shudder at the thought of letting go their hold on a Divine Saviour; and with hundreds and thousands of them, we hope to praise God to all eternity in a far happier world, where there will be no divisions among the worshippers of the Lamb, nor one discordant note in the mouths of those who lift up the high praise of God. Such may be in no danger of being turned aside from the truth. Many of them may never see the exceptionable writings of their admired Watts, or if they should see them, their heart is too firmly "established with grace," for them to be seduced, even by one who has so large a share in their affections and confidence. But all are not such. And we tremble for their children. We tremble for our own youth, who dwelling among them, and having their fancies warmed, and all their natural sensibilities touched by the melodious strains of Watts, are in danger of being allured to follow, wherever he leads. We say nothing designedly to wound the feelings of any mortal. We judge no man's servant. We would not arrogate to ourselves the office of a "reprover of brethren." But if any of those estimable men who love and honor our Lord Jesus Christ, but think it a privilege which they must claim to have a Psalm Book, as they suppose, better adapted to the Christian dispensation, than that which is contained in the Bible—if any such getting the better of all previously existing prejudices against our lowliness, should ever honor our pages with their notice, we would ask them: Is there not some danger here? Among the causes which are favoring the growth of Socinianism in the present generation, is there not one to be found *on or near* the spot to which we have just now pointed? And if they must have what they call a Gospel Psalmody, ought they not for the truths sake—for the sake of that Church which God hath purchased with his blood, and which is in danger of being overwhelmed with the billows of Socinian perdition, ought they not to place it before them as a desideratum, to have a system with which the name of no man can be associated, any of whose writings "are incontrovertibly hostile to the true Deity of Christ"?

One word more on this subject. Though there is nothing we should more regret, than its being supposed that these remarks arise from any unfriendliness of feeling; and though the great evils which in our view may be expected to result from the celebrity which the use of Watt's imitations gives to his name, might serve as our apology for touching the subject as we have done; yet it is perhaps too much to expect that we shall pass without censure from many, whom we would rather see taking some such view of things as ourselves. The right to charge those with bigotry who prefer not to use the imitations has become almost prescriptive; but we are persuaded that there is also a bigotry *to* Watts, which is by no means the most gentle thing in the world.—The *Psalms* of the Bible may be despised and ridiculed when render-

ed into a faithful metre version; David may be called a Jew whose mind was too dark to enlighten such Christians as perhaps only yesterday "got religion" in a revival; he may be accused of having uttered under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, curses too shocking to be repeated by Christian lips; and pious minds may be grieved, because in their view, a slur is thus cast on the whole Book of God, of which the Psalms are a part:—but however careful you may be to let the ashes of Watts rest, you shall not be permitted to say one word about the questionable tendency of the use of his imitations in the praises of God, without offence. And it has often been witnessed that the fond admirers of Watts have been offended when certain tenets were imputed to him, asserting that he held no such tenets, and that it was a slander on the memory of a pious man to say so; but when shown from his own writings that he did, they have immediately begun to extenuate, to palliate, to defend. Thus what at first was esteemed *too bad* to be uttered by Watts; becomes when uttered by him good enough to be received as pure and wholesome doctrine. This only shows how easy and how common a thing it is to extend our affection for a *man*, into an affection for his *doctrine*; and is an illustration of the ominous aspect which the authority of Watts' name, bears upon the future interests of the church of God.

What proportion Hopkinsians and Socinians, bear to the orthodox in the American Churches, we possess no means of forming a correct estimate; but from the number of causes operating to make men fall into their ranks, it cannot be doubted that their number is great and daily increasing. *Ingruit horror*: the dreadful havoc which they are making among the dearest hopes of men is still growing nearer. Mr. Stuart of whom we have already spoken as hostile to the Eternal Sonship of Christ, is a professor of Sacred Literature in the Theological School of Andover; and has with his students the reputation of being a great Biblical critic. Mr. Murdock another Professor in the same School, has lately published a work on the Atonement; in which he is thought by some of the brethren to have renounced all that is vital to the hopes of a sinner in that precious doctrine. Dr. Griffin a *quondam* Professor also in the same institution, some time since favored the world with his views of the Atonement. The difference between him and Mr. Murdock, to use his own words, is **CHIEFLY VERBAL**; and from his appendix it appears he is not far from being "altogether such as" Mr. Stuart, in relation to the Sonship of our Saviour. The number of students who attend the school for Theological instruction is very great; and none of them so far as has come to our knowledge, leave it without having at least imbibed Professor Stuart's *notions*. And if, as we verily believe, those notions have a tendency to unsettle and distract the minds of Christians on the question who Christ is; if when "the mass of plain unlettered Christians are made to believe that the title *Son* in the form of baptism prescribed by our Saviour, and in other parts of Scrip-

ture, does not express an eternal relation and person in the Godhead *as such*, but something else and something less; no criticism or explanation—that can be given will be likely to prevent their faith in the Divinity of the Saviour, and in the Trinity generally from being seriously shaken; if many will be ready to suppose, that if the Lord Jesus Christ is *Son* by office; and not naturally and eternally, he may on similar principles, be *God* by office:—then will the growth and prosperity of that institution, be closely allied to the success of another cause, and Socinianism will flourish just in proportion to the copiousness of the streams which issue from that fountain.

The Western Newlights, a party, who are the off-spring of the famous revival which took place in the Middle and Western States, about the year 1801, are generally Unitarians. Their great leader, Barton W. Stone, whom we have lately seen borrowing the sanction of his opinions from Dr. Watts, is indefatigable in the propagation of his creed; both in his itinerations among the societies of his connection, and in his writings, which are every few years issuing from the press. They have arrayed themselves under a *party standard*, for the declared purpose of putting down all parties in the church; and like most who hold out such professions, they endeavor to accomplish their object, by proselyting all to their own party. They have a considerable number of preachers; most of them illiterate, but all of them able to infuse prejudices into the minds of the simple multitude, against the doctrine of the Trinity, and those other fundamental doctrines of the Gospel which stand or fall with it.

These tenets have also made their appearance among the Baptists. Wilson Thompson a preacher of that denomination, a few years ago published at Lebanon in the State of Ohio, a small volume entitled "Simple Truth;" in which, so far at least as the person of Christ is concerned, he advanced substantially the same ideas with those taught by Dr. Watts and Barton W. Stone; See note 3. He was answered with considerable decision, by some brethren of his general persuasion, but is said to have a strong party who adhere to him, and are highly offended with those who opposed the dogmas of their favorite.

The time is then surely come, when it is necessary for all those watchmen on the walls of Zion, who are not prepared to see the Church of God, glide into such defections from *the truth as it is in Jesus*, to lift up their warning voice. An alarm must be blown. "The enemy is coming in like a flood," under the garb of a friend; professing to hold out to the followers of the Lamb a better light than that by which the Church has been conducted from the beginning; starting them in pursuit of an *ignis futurus*; and then leaving them in "darkness visible." The trumpet must give a certain sound. Things must be called by their proper names. The sheep of Christ must be told what those errors are which are doing present injury—where they exist—and who are engaged in urging them on. This we have endeavored to

do, as fully as it was possible for us, in the narrow limits to which we must be confined. They must also be furnished with armour to defend themselves against the rude assaults of the enemies of truth. This we shall yet endeavour to do.

We doubt not, but for this attempt, many will be disposed to cast out "our names as evil." We expect to hear ourselves accused of being lacking in charity, that lovely Christian grace; and our influence whatever it may be, will no doubt be regretted, as having an unhappy tendency to retard that general union among professing Christians, which many take to themselves great credit for loving and being zealous to promote, while, of the real grounds of division, they perhaps, know but little; and have never been at much pains to inquire how far union would be desirable, and how it may be best effected. But we hope this little piece will have no such evil influence. We know, that the exciting causes of divisions in the church, are before those divisions themselves; and these causes must be done away, before we can "all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the *Son of God*, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Professing Christians—a name which applies to Socinians, Arians, Hopkinsians, Arminians and Calvinists—must have "one mind and one mouth," at least, in some greater degree than we see them have at present, before "with one mind and one mouth," they can "glorify God even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." And now, whosoever, shall declare themselves in favor of such a union as this, and shall in very deed labor with all fidelity to bring all parties to unite in speaking the "language of Canaan"—to them, we shall say, *may the Lord God prosper you in the way wherein you go*; and we, though feeble; and unworthy to be employed in so hallowed a cause, will join you with what aid we can bring.

Causes which ought to have no such influence, do indeed, in some instances separate between the followers of the Redeemer; but a union of all sects and parties, holding all their jarring creeds and professions, is we believe, neither possible nor desirable; and if it were even possible to effect it, by the aid of some charm, the patent for which, has not yet been taken out—human nature is frail—and it would exist no longer, than till differences of views opinions, &c. would excite controversies, and controversies angry passions; and it cannot require more wisdom than falls to the lot of ordinary men to tell how long this would be. Those denominations which have made, or are now making the experiment, and are labouring assiduously to reconcile contradictions in their own bosom, can best tell whether the "joyous" circumstances connected with such a state of things, counterbalance those which are "grievous." We had almost said that we could venture to make the appeal to Dr. Ely himself; but on a little reflection it occurred to us, that he may have reasons of his own for giving the decision against us.

That gentleman, losing sight, as we think, of his dignity, as a respectable minister of a church highly respectable for its numbers and influence in the community, has been pleased to shew himself out of humor with us and others, who choose to abide in our own communion, in preference to connecting ourselves with his denomination. In the exuberance of his charity, he can see nothing but the basest motives or the most stupid prejudices influencing us to such a determination. We feel no disposition to "render railing for railing." His situation suits him best, & probably ours suits us as well. He has become known both to the Christian and un-Christian public by his opposition to his Hopkintian brethren; and has risen to an eminence as a controversialist, which he probably never would otherwise have acquired, by arraying himself under a hostile standard against those with whom he is living in the most close and sacred communion, and we are willing to let him enjoy *all* the pleasure, See note 4. But as we never did suppose that we *could* render ourselves famous by going "up to war against our brethren," and as we really have no such desire; we wish to enjoy a privilege common to ourselves with other free men in this land of liberty; and only ask him and those other conductors of the P. Magazine, to excuse us, while we file off in "little squadrons" into humbler fields, where, far from the "voice of mighty captains," we may *as much as in us lies, live peaceably with all men.*



THE TESTIMONY

ON THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY.

THAT there is but "One only living and true God," is a doctrine clearly revealed in the scriptures, and which so fully accords with *sound* reason, that it needs only to be *made known*, to obtain its sanction. None but Heathens, and a few Paganizing Christians ever denied it. It is, therefore, unnecessary to undertake the vindication of this fundamental article of all religion. But there is another truth revealed in the scriptures, of equal importance to the faith and hope of men; but which, being a matter of *pure revelation*, and therefore not "seen in the things which are made," has always met with much opposition from that human pride, which would consider its glory stained, were it thought to believe any thing, which it could not boast of having reasoned out. "In the Unity of the Godhead, there are three persons of one substance, power, and eternity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost."

This doctrine is opposed with great virulence and spite, by self-styled rational and liberal minded Christians. As we cannot yield our confidence in the Divinity and distinct personality of the Father who plah-

ned, of the Son who purchased, and of the Holy Ghost who applies, our salvation, we must to our latest breath, and with our utmost efforts, defend this precious doctrine: and by the grace of God, we are resolved, that no reproaches of prejudice or bigotry, shall ever make us keep silence, or compromit the glory of a Triune God and the salvation of immortal souls, for the praises of men, who talk with as much confidence as if they had monopolized all the wisdom, and the reason, and the learning in the world. The doctrine for which we contend, we know, has been believed, and professed and held dear, in every age of the Church by men who were pious, and wise, and intelligent; at the present day, it enters into the creed of men who can boast at least an equal share of learning, and can exhibit as convincing proofs of their emancipation from the tyranny of established opinions, as any of their accusers; but even if this were not so, we know that it is taught in the *Bible*, and this is enough for us.

The cry which the opponents raise against the doctrine of the Trinity, or that there are three persons in the *one* Jehovah, Godhead, or Divine essence, is, that it is *absurd, unintelligible, contrary to reason*. But is there *reason* in all this confidence of assertion?— or impious *presumption*? Who qualified them to decide so peremptorily, as to the *mode* of his existence who is unsearchable? By what extraordinary lights, withheld from other men, have they been fitted to decide with so much positiveness, what *may* or *may not*, rationally be predicated of him, whose essence, whose attributes and ways, they must, if they have modesty remaining, acknowledge they cannot “find out unto perfection?” Let them reflect, how little they know of a subject concerning which, their mode of objecting, takes for granted, they know all.

But wherein is the doctrine of a Trinity of ineffably related persons in the God-head, absurd or contrary to reason? Clamour as loud and as long as men may, it involves no contradiction in terms to say that *three persons make one God*. It does not say that “God is three in the *same* respect that he is one—but that in one respect he is three and in another one. The *Trinity* refers to one respect of the God-head, the *Unity* to another.” The *Unity* is predicated of his *essence*, the *Trinity* of his *mode of subsistence*. The doctrine is not that three persons make one person, or that three Divine beings make one Divine being, but that three persons are one God or Divine essence. But the opponents allege—what? The same thing over again—this is contrary to reason: for according to all that we have ever seen or heard, just so many persons as you have, just so many distinct beings. But is not this the folly and impiety “of venturing to do, what in the scriptures we are forbidden to do, i. e. conceiving of God as if he were altogether such an one as ourselves?” God indeed speaks to us in our own language, but it is plain that the language of men, when applied to God, cannot have in all respects, the same meaning as when applied to the creatures. We are not to understand the word person, in that gross carnal sense, when

used in reference to God, as when used in reference to men. What it means we are humbly to learn from the scriptures; which ascribe personal actions, relations, &c. to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Farther than the scriptures make it necessary for us to go, we ought not to push the idea. And of such persons as only can agree to God may there not be *three* in the Divine essence? Deny it, and you virtually say, that there can be no properties in the nature of him who is incomprehensible, which we do not perceive in the creatures. And then ought not the reason of your rejecting the doctrine of the Trinity to be expressed in other language? You reject it, not, as you say "because it is contrary to that reason which God has given us, but because it is contrary to our weak, foolish and superficial prejudices;" you reject it because it is contrary to that vanity which puffs us up with the conceit, that nothing is credible that we cannot illustrate by facts which have come under our observation.

We have said that the doctrine of three persons in one Jehovah involves no contradiction in terms; nor any idea which can be said to be *contrary* to reason. It only involves a *fact*, which like the Eternal existence of God, his omnipresence, and his several perfections is *above* our reason;—transcends our comprehension: and this its incomprehensibility, puts it forever out of our power to say whether, if it were explained, or if it were capable of being explained to our finite minds, it would accord with our reason or not. The same holds of the omnipresence of God, and of every perfection of his nature. And there would be quite as much wisdom and as much truth in saying, that the doctrine of the scriptures in relation to any of these is contrary to reason, as in making the assertion concerning the doctrine of the Trinity.

But it will be asked, how can we believe a thing we cannot comprehend? Take this ground then, and you must fasten the character of incredibility on a thousand facts, the existence of which, no man of common sense, calls in question. Can you explain the magnetical influence—how it operates? Can you explain a blade of grass—how it grows? Can you explain your own existence—the union of your soul and body—and how the one influences the other? You cannot. These are inexplicable mysteries to you. Then on your principles, you must disbelieve their existence. But this is not the half. Can you comprehend God? Can your mind grasp any of his perfections? Is there not here, a length and breadth, a depth and height which passeth knowledge? Hold fast your principle then, and you must deny that God exists, or that he has any attributes. And more: the blessedness of heaven that "exceeding and eternal weight of glory," is unutterable, incomprehensible. Believe nothing mysterious or incomprehensible then, and you must deny the existence of all those things. Are you really prepared to do so?

But, it is asked, if the existence of three persons in the Godhead be incomprehensible, of what use can it be to believe it? Where is the

utility of the doctrine? Imposing as this objection appears at first sight, it is really so superficial, that the like of it would be sought for in vain, among all the follies of the human mind. Let us try the principle of the objection in relation to some other things. Is it not of great utility to mankind to know, that under certain limitations, the magnetical needle will keep its polar direction in every clime? Cannot the mariner sail the trackless ocean with perhaps as much certainty and safety, as if the mystery were fully unfolded? Is not the knowledge that a human person consists of a material body, and a rational soul, of great utility to us, though we cannot explain the union between these two constituent parts of our nature? And to ascend to a far more sublime object:—Is not the little which is known of the incomprehensible God of great use in the world? Cannot the Christian adore him, and confide in him, and hope in his mercy, though he cannot tell *how* he is “from everlasting to everlasting God?” May not the omnipresence of God, be a source of consolation to the Bible believer, though in this world, and most probably in the next, he never will be able fully to comprehend how it is that God is *wholly present* in every point of his creation; and yet at the same time, not in the smallest degree *remote*, from the most insignificant of his creatures in every other part of his wide dominions? Why then should the doctrine of the Trinity be of no use, unless we can fully comprehend the fact?

It ought therefore to be enough for us, if we find the doctrine clearly taught in the Bible. We may safely receive those delineations of himself, which he who only perfectly understands his own nature gives in his word: nor can we, without the utmost impiety: refuse to embrace any thing as truth, which he has revealed in relation to his *mode of subsistence*; however far it may be above our reason. It would be strange indeed, if a book, purporting to be a revelation from God, should contain nothing which is above our ken—strange, if there should be there no “knowledge too high for us,” into which we may desire to look through eternity, and through eternity be still penetrating farther and farther into, without ever being able fully to fathom. The weak mind of man cannot, indeed, originate any thing beyond its own grasp: but our capacity is not the measure of God’s understanding. And if in God, and in all his works, mysteries abound, why not in his word? Reasoning from analogy, instead of rejecting the Bible revelation for its mysteries, we should rather have reason to reject it if it contained none.

The direct and positive testimony of Scripture in favor of this doctrine is abundant. We shall only attempt to give you a specimen, advising you to study the subject carefully for yourselves.

There are three persons every where spoken of in the Scriptures, to whom the names, titles, attributes and works of God are ascribed. They are represented as being concerned about the work of creation, and the salvation of sinners, in a way in which none but God could be concerned. They are spoken of as distinct, and yet concurring, in all

the works which are ascribed to God. One, the Father is said to *send*; the Son is said to be *sent* by the Father, and to *come*; and the Holy Ghost is said to *come*, and to "*proceed from the Father and the Son.*" This language undoubtedly lays a foundation for a distinction of persons. We often find them in one sentence distinctly and severally enumerated under appropriate titles.—The form of the apostolical benediction runs thus: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all." Sometimes the Father is mentioned before the Son; but sometimes the Son is placed before the Father, as if on purpose to guard us against the mistake of supposing him inferior in Divine character and dignity. The apostles were commanded to "baptize all nations, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." "The Son and the Holy Ghost are here put on a par with the Father, both as to personality and Divine character."

But, there is a passage in the xlvi chapter of Isaiah, which contains a full and unequivocal testimony to the truth—"And now the Lord God and his Spirit hath sent me." v. 16. The speaker here is evidently the Lord Jesus Christ; for in the 12th verse he calls himself "the first and the last," which is a New Testament description of our Saviour. The "Lord God" it will not be denied is a person. And as persons only perform actions, the "Spirit," must also be a person; for the *action* of sending is ascribed to him in conjunction with the "Lord God," i. e. the Father. That the first, i. e. the "Lord God," is true and very God, none will deny. A little attention to the context will convince any candid person, that the speaker claims the works and prerogatives of God; and he is moreover expressly called "the true God and Eternal Life," 1 John v, 20. And for the Divinity of the Spirit we have positive testimony. In the Acts of the Apostles v, 3, Ananias and Sapphira are said to "lie to the Holy Ghost," but in the verse following speaking evidently of the same person, they are said to have "lied to God." The Holy Ghost therefore is God. Now either these three persons are three Gods, or they are but one and the same God.

Our business is to *explain* Scripture, and in doing this we must ever carry with us this principle, that every part is consistent with every other part. We cannot therefore, admit the first supposition, i. e. that these three persons are three Gods; for this would contradict the great *revealed* truth that there is but one God: we must consequently adopt the last, that these *three persons* are *one God*. And this we do with the greater freedom as an inspired Apostle has done it before us: "There are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one," 1 John v, 7. The authenticity of this text, has indeed been disputed; and this alone, is a sufficient reason with some for its rejection. We, however, cannot agree to this summary method of excluding the inspired witnesses from giving testimony, for then, all the enemies of the truth would have to do, would

be to dispute the genuineness of every text, which could not be accommodated to their wishes. This done, it must now be rejected, because learned men *like themselves* have disputed it; and no doubt but their heresy would triumph. In this very way, Socinians, and the various tribes of their "brethren in iniquity," have always proceeded. First, put the Scriptures to the torture to make them speak their own language—do what they can in this way by the aid of emendations, corrections and figures of speech: next get rid of all those texts which are found incapable of a *plausible perversion*, by calling them interpolations; and to make all appear more probable, tell of old manuscripts, which *they never saw*, but which *some person saw*, or *said* he had seen, in which he *said* these texts were wanting. We have read a little, of what is to be said both for, and against, the text in question, and believe that there is no reason for considering it spurious: especially, "as it is not the first assertion of the doctrine which it contains; nor the only, nor the principal foundation on which it stands, but only a summary of what has been fully expressed before throughout the Bible."

To the doctrine of a *Trinity in Unity*, the adversaries have absolutely nothing in the whole compass of Divine Revelation to oppose. True, indeed, there are many Scriptures which teach that God is *one*: but we derive aid from them, in establishing our view of the subject: for we contend for a Trinity in Unity—*three persons, but one God*. They must not suppose that they have confuted us, or even brought one word in opposition to us when they have *only proved one half of our doctrine*. Were it said that *man is mortal*, would any person consider this as confuted by establishing the *immortality* of his soul; or were it said that he is *immortal*, alluding to his soul, would this proposition be overturned by bringing forward all the arguments in the world to prove that his *body will die*? The answer at once is, no. Well, God we are taught, possesses a *tri personal* nature, but at the same time a *unity* of essence. Those texts which prove his essential unity, cannot prove against his personal plurality, and *vice versa*.

But that the opponents betray a want of candor, when they marshal those texts which assert the Divine Unity, against the doctrine of the Trinity, appears from another consideration. In the age when the Bible was written, every nation had its own peculiar deities. One set of gods were supposed to preside over the land of Egypt, and received the worship of its inhabitants, the Assyrians had another catalogue of gods, &c. The children of Israel alone had the knowledge of "the only, the living, and the true God." Hence "the God of Israel" is but another designation for him who alone is Jehovah. The Jews were not only in danger, but in fact often were, seduced by the example of their neighbors to worship false gods. Therefore, for the right understanding of those Scriptures which teach that God is *one*,—that the God who made the Heavens is God *alone*, it is necessary to advert to his prevailing theology among the heathen, and to the peculiar circum-

stances of God's people. Their special design, manifestly was, to put the children of Israel on their guard against the Polytheism of their heathen neighbors. Hence we find such warnings more common in the Old Testament, than in the New when God had gained the point of his unity on them; they having been effectually weaned from idolatry, by his "many and sore judgments," through a series of ages. Such Scriptures, then, though they do prove against the Polytheism of the heathen, yet they cannot, without the utmost perversion, be brought to prove against the Trinity of the Christians. In other words, they prove that there are no local deities—no plurality of gods distinct from each other in being and essence, as the heathen imagined; but while *none* of them prove that there is but one person in the Godhead or Divine essence, *some* of them plainly intimate that there is a foundation in his nature, for our attaching some how or other, the idea of plurality to him.

This is emphatically true of that famous text so often in the mouths of Anti-Trinitarians: *Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, is one Lord.* If God had never revealed himself under the idea of plurality; or, if there is but one person in the Godhead; and if this is the uniform voice of reason and revelation as Anti-Trinitarians pretend;—then, it must at first sight appear strange to every reflecting person, that such a proposition should ever be thought worthy of a place in a revelation from God. Indeed, it would have no meaning. It would be a mere silly truism, such as to say that John our President is one John, or that this globe our earth is one globe. Who would need such a proposition to enlighten him, or could be enlightened by it? But on the supposition that Jehovah exists in a plurality of persons, distinct, yet inseparable from each other; and that some intimations of this had been previously given; then such a declaration might be necessary, and have an important meaning, which would be readily apprehended. And what we have supposed is the fact. Where it is said, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," and in many similar passages, the word rendered *God* is found in the plural form. We find also such a language as the following: "And God said, let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness." How was this to be understood? Is there a society of *Gods*? Without something to put the readers of the Bible on their guard, they might draw such a conclusion. This is furnished in the text under review—*Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.* The word, in the original, rendered Lord is *Jehovah*, and signifies the self-existent, independent, and unchangeable One. The word which stands for *God* is a plural term, and more closely rendered would be, our Divine or Worshipful Ones. The word "*Jehovah*," therefore, expresses *his essential* unity, the word "*God*," his *personal plurality*. And the declaration is full of meaning. It was a note highly necessary at the time, and worthy of being ushered in with a solemn *Hear O Israel*—to teach Israel that these distinct personal sub-

sistences are not to be conceived of as so many *Gods*, but that they are but one and the same Jehovah. The text, stripped of its English dress with which our translators clothed it, would run thus: *Hear O Israel, Jehovah, our Divine or Worshipful One, is one Jehovah*—and how does this prove that there is but one person in the Godhead!



ON THE ETERNAL SONSHIP OF CHRIST.

THESE three persons are Divinely and ineffably related to each other; and thus constitute a distinguishable Trinity in the one Jehovah; or, a Trinity, distinguishable by their appropriate titles, works, order of subsistence and operation, and personal relations to each other, and to mankind sinners. But as God only can reveal his own nature; so for us to hope to acquire by our investigation or research, any farther knowledge of these mysterious relations, than he has been pleased to communicate in his word, is as presumptuous, as it is vain. We shall, therefore, content ourselves with saying in a language, for which we conceive we have Scriptural authority, that “The Father is of none neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; and the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.” The *mode* of the Son’s generation, or the procession of the Holy Ghost, we do not attempt to explain. We content ourselves, with declaring the *fact*.

But that the Son is *eternally begotten* of the Father, is, as we have seen, in the preceding narrative, denied by many, who wish to palm themselves on the Church as the distinguished friends of orthodoxy; and among these to the disgrace of the Ministerial office, and the Christian name, there are some who have canonically sworn to support a standard of Christian doctrine, in which this truth is explicitly held forth. We shall, therefore, adduce some considerations to satisfy you that the Son is *eternally begotten* of the Father; or, that the Sonship of Christ is Eternal and Divine.

As the opponents of this truth, allege that Christ has the name *Son of God*, merely on account of his supernatural birth, his being appointed the Messiah, and his exaltation to the dignity of that office when he was raised from the dead; our point will be gained, if we can shew that he was and is the Son of God, and that the name of *Son*, properly belongs to him prior to the consideration of any of these things. To evince this—

1. Our first argument is drawn from such passages of scripture, as speak of God’s sending or giving his Son. If God *sent*, his *Son*, then he had previously a *Son* to send. Were any of you to speak of having sent your son to a certain place, on some business; all the world would draw the conclusion that previously to his being sent he *was your*

son. They would never suppose from your language that he *became your son* in consequence of his being sent. But this unnatural construction, the opponents of the Eternal Sonship of Christ, have to put on the language of scripture. There is one passage which deserves particular consideration here. "When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law," &c. Gal. iv. 4. Now his being *made of a woman*, and *made under the law*, are two leading ideas which enter into God's sending his Son. But he was a *Son* before these events took place, according to the plain, natural meaning of the words. His Sonship therefore cannot arise from his incarnation, or his investiture with the Mediatorial office. These events do not furnish the reason of his being called the *Son of God*:

2. The Divinity of Christ is represented in scripture, as being prior to his assumption of the Mediatorial office; and as making that office, and the discharge of its duties, an exercise of gracious condescension, Phil. ii. 6. 8. But the same is true of his Sonship.—He "*maketh the Son a High Priest—Though he were a Son yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered*," Heb. vii. 28, v. 8. Christ was therefore not only a Divine person, but he was the *Son of God*—as really the *Son of God* as he was *God* before he was constituted Mediator;—which was from eternity.

3. It is the real Divinity of Christ which gives *dignity* to his official character, Rom. ix. 5: but this *dignity* is also represented as flowing from his Sonship—*We have a great High Priest Jesus the Son of God*, Heb. iv. 14. There is, therefore the same reason from scripture for supposing his Sonship to be prior to his being clothed with office, as for supposing the priority of his divinity.

4. The exalted merit of Christ's blood results from his *proper* Divinity, Acts xx. 28; but this merit is also ascribed to his being the Son of God. *The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sins*, i. John, i. 7. His being the Son of God, therefore amounts to the same thing as his being God: consequently if Christ is the Eternal God, he is also the Eternal Son of God.

5. To give us just and adequate ideas of the greatness of God's love we are told, that, *he spared not his own Son—he gave his only begotten Son*, &c. Now what is there in this language so well calculated to touch the Christian sensibly, and fill his soul with gratitude and thankfulness to God? Is it not that the *Father* in commiseration of our deplorable condition consented to part with the *Son of his bosom*;—that parental tenderness was so far overcome by the consideration of that misery to which we were exposed, that he did not withhold his *own*, his *only Son*, but delivered him up for us all? Such as these, are certainly the impressions, which the language of scripture on this subject is fitted for making; and, unless we have always been mistaken, on a point, where, we had hardly supposed that any person who reads the scriptures, with the feelings of a *Christian*, could mistake, such are the impressions which it

does make, on every Christian heart. But how would the force of this language be weakened, if Jesus Christ is not the Son of God by an Eternal, natural, and necessary relation! Or what would be its propriety, if he is only the Son of God in some secondary or figurative sense? Truly, on this supposition, we *must* say that the language of scripture seems carefully adapted to excite emotions in the Christian breast which the nature of the subject does not require; and that the Holy Spirit in representing to us the exceeding love of God towards sinners, has drawn the picture in colors too vivid and glowing! We freely acknowledge, that there is something in these scriptural representations awfully mysterious, and with which impious scoffers may make themselves merry. *But against whom do they magnify themselves and make a wide mouth? Against him who can vindicate his own word, and whose existence is pledged to do it.* And those who call themselves Christians, should rather be employed in admiring, adoring, and melting in gratitude, in tenderness, and in love; than in impairing their force, and frittering them away by cold fretting criticisms.

We have not forgotten the text in Luke i. 35, where it is contended that the miraculous conception is assigned as the reason of his Sonship. "But if this be the proper foundation of his Sonship how could his calling himself the *Son of God*, or his saying that *God was his Father*, infer a claim of equality with the Father, which, on a reference to the v. chapter of John's Gospel, we find it did. A Sonship of this description could never be fairly construed to make him equal with God. The text, however, does not say that Christ is the Son of God in consequence of his extraordinary conception; but that for this reason he shall be so called. Now, it may be a reason why he was called the Son of God in his person as God-man, without any prejudice to the doctrine that he was the Son of God in his original and Divine nature, as a person in the Godhead." It might be readily inferred, that he for whom a body was prepared by supernatural Divine influence, was more than man; and justly entitled to the appellation of *the Son of God*.

ON THE MEDIATORIAL PERSON OF CHRIST.

"THE Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance and equal with the Father, did, when the fulness of time was come, take upon himself man's nature—so that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God, and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and men." *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God—And the word was made flesh. God was manifest in the flesh,* John i. 1, 4. Tim. iii. 16.

This union of two distinct natures in the person of the Son, which constitutes the Mediatorial person of Christ, lays the foundation for, and reconciles all those *apparently*, contradictory attributions which are made to him in the scriptures. For, there being in his person a *Divine* nature, this justifies all those scriptures, which ascribe to him *Divine* names, titles, attributes, works and worship. So also, there being in his person a human body and soul, *the nature of man*, which, as it cannot lay claim to what is said of him as *God*, it must receive to its own account whatever seems to lessen him when compared with the Father." When, therefore, the enemies of our Saviour's Deity, have paraded a multitude of passages, containing statements which cannot agree to him as *God*, what have they done? Why they have proved what none deny, that Jesus Christ is partaker of *flesh and blood*. Refer them to his humanity and all is consistent. There still remains evidence enough to support his Divinity. So, when Christ is spoken of as distinct from God, there is no difficulty; when the language is referred, as it ought to be referred, to his person as the Mediator God-man. As Mediator, he is not only a distinct (though inseparable) person from the *Father*, but he may be spoken and conceived of as distinct from *God* abstractly considered in his own essence. In such texts, as; *This is life eternal that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent,*" we can easily see a distinction, and we can as freely admit the distinction intended to be made, between Jesus Christ as the God man, Mediator, and the abstract essence of *God* subsisting in the person of the Father, without any prejudice to his claims to Divinity. So also when a language is used which implies that as Mediator, he was in some sense inferior to the Father, it gives us no difficulty in believing his proper Divinity and essential equality. And it is enough for us to know, that in his original nature he is *God* equal with the Father. This we are clearly taught in the scriptures. And if he humbled himself to be *found in fashion as a man, and took upon himself the form of a servant; if he consented to be made a little lower than the Angels for the suffering of death that he by the grace of *God* might taste death for every man, and save us weak miserable creature from sin and wrath:—*Instead of producing this marvellous condescension, as an argument against his claims to Divinity, or as a reason for withholding from him equal honors with those which are due to the Father, we shall and we will make it a matter of praise, of gratitude and of thankfulness, to a Three-one God. Should we be so foolish and unwise, as to require the Lord our God otherwise? In his unsearchable wisdom, it was found necessary, that his own Son should leave his own heavens, and come down to dwell with men on earth, clothed in human flesh; and lead a life of sorrow and of lowliness, and undergo death of pain and of ignominy; that we might have *redemption through his blood even the forgiveness of sins*; and shall we take hold of some circumstances connected with his humiliation, and torture the little po-

tion of ingenuity which we enjoy by his gift, to manufacture arguments out of them, for diminishing the glory and dignity of the Heavenly Visitant! Shall Christians, who hope to be cleansed from sin and pollution by his purifying blood, thus receive and treat the Lord from heaven! Nay let the Jews, let Herod and Pontius Pilate, let Socinians and Arians act so hellish a part; and let a great multitude of Hopkinsians accompany them "with swords and staves:"— but let those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious beware!

The scriptures, we have said, furnish abundant evidence that Jesus Christ is true and eternal God. In the beginning was the word and the word was with God, and the word *was* God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made, John i. 1-3. Now as really as every house is builded by some man, he that built all things is God.

But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne O God is forever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom, Heb. i. 8. How would this language sound, if applied to any one inferior to God in nature and perfections?

And Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; the heavens also are the work of thy hands, Heb. i. 10. Creation is a work which God claims to himself; and if there is any truth, which may be held as self evident, Divine power only is adequate to the work. Christ therefore is God.

Omniscience, which is an incommunicable attribute of God belongs to Christ—he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man, John ii. 24, 25—he searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins, Rev. ii. 23.

Almighty Power is ascribed to Christ. He shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his own glorious body; according to the effectual working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself, Phil. iii. 23.

Eternity is ascribed to Christ. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last, Rev. xxii. 13.

Divine Worship is due to Christ. All men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father, John v. 23. Let all the Angels of God worship him, Heb. i. 6. Stephen filled with the Holy Ghost, called on Jesus, and commended to him his departing spirit. And to whom should a dying man commit his soul but to God?

But let us for a moment attend to what he has to do, and promises he will surely do for his people; his sheep; and those who confide in him for salvation. *I give unto them*, says he *eternal life*. And he assures us that *power was given him over all flesh that he might give eternal life to as many as were given him of his Father*. John xvii. 2. Does this look like the language of a creature? Would any creature be capable of receiving and exercising such a power? It is impossible:

unless we suppose such a miracle to be wrought, as would take him entirely out of the rank of creatures, and endue him with infinite intelligence and power: i. e. a miracle which would clothe him with the incommunicable attributes of God!—Jesus shall *save his people from their sins*. Is any creature worthy to have a people, to save from their sin, or would he be adequate to the task? Consider what he must do to be such a Saviour. He must *bear his people's sins*, he must *offer himself without spot to God, to purge their consciences, to purchase eternal redemption for them*, and to make peace between the offended majesty of Heaven, and their souls; and he must shed upon them the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. He must act by them the part of a good shepherd: He must be with them wherever they are, to preserve them from wandering, or to recover them when they do wander; to heal their diseases; to save them from their enemies. He must know their wants, and be able to supply them in a seasonable hour. His ears must always be open to their cries; and he must be able to send down from above, and deliver them out of all their distresses though ten thousand of them cry to him at the same time; and whether they dwell in Europe, in Asia, in Africa, in America, or in the Islands of the sea. Who is adequate to work such manifold salvation in the earth, but one who is verily God? *Lo! I am with you always even unto the end of the world*, was his promise to his disciples, and through them to their successors, when he gave them their extensive commission to preach the gospel and administer its ordinances. Could any but the omnipresent and eternal God, who fills heaven and earth, accomplish this promise? Let the tribes of Arians and Socinians, and other light-hearted religionists with whom this generation abounds, consider these things, and beware, before it be too late. Their Saviour is not the Saviour of the Bible. That they can rest satisfied, with such a Saviour as their creed allows them, is an awful evidence that they have never yet seen their need of one. And nothing more is wanting to satisfy us of the truth of that Apostolical declaration, that “the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not,” than the eagerness manifested by too many, even of those who call themselves Christians, to place the Saviour of sinners so much on a level with the weakest of the creatures, that no sinner could safely trust him with the eternal interests of his soul.



ON THE MEDIATORIAL RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST.

The Son of God, having assumed the human nature into a union with his Divine Person, is, in his character of God man, the Mediator between God and man. The business of a Mediator, is to interpose between parties at variance and make peace. This Christ does between God, as the party offended, and man as the party offending.—

He makes peace, or effects a reconciliation between God and man by his obedience and sacrifice on earth, and his intercession in Heaven.

In his obedience to the law of God, and his atonement, or infinite satisfaction for sin, consists his Mediatorial righteousness; even the same "righteousness of God which is revealed in the Gospel to faith," and through which believers obtain justification of life. In performing this righteousness Christ sustained the character of a surety or substitute. This position admits of decisive proof.

It is plain that he could owe no obedience to the law for himself.—Being God, he was and is the great Lawgiver, and consequently could not be a natural subject of his own law. The circumstance of his possessing human nature could never place him under its obligation. "The word nature conveys an abstract universal idea; so the angelic nature includes all angels, the human nature, all men." A nature, as such, has no existence except in the persons of those to whom it belongs.—Consequently, a nature as such can violate or fulfil no law; nor be the subject of law; except as in a person. But "the human nature of Christ never had a distinct personal subsistence of its own." It never existed one moment but in a state of union with the Son of God; consequently, it never was a person—never was a subject of law: That the Son of God in our nature was *made under the law*, must therefore, have been by a gracious and voluntary condescension to accomplish some great and important results. Hence the obedience of Christ could not have been for himself. Neither could his sufferings. If he never was made under the precept of the law for himself, it is impossible that he could be under the penalty, which results from the violation of the precept. But waving this consideration. . . . A prophet assures us, that "he had done no sin neither was guile found in his mouth," and an Apostle that he was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." But he did obey and suffer. How can this be accounted for, on any other principle, than that he sustained the character of our surety or substitute, having assumed all our legal relations and responsibilities?

But the scriptures every where, use a language which admits of no consistent exposition on any other principle. "When the fulness of time was come God sent forth his Son, made of a woman made under the law that he might redeem them that were under the law," Gal. iv. 4—We would ask, why was it necessary for our redemption that Christ should be *made under the law*, unless it were that he might fulfil its demands? If only some general exhibition of the real disposition of God towards sin was to be made, could not this have been done, without his being made under the law? If an innocent being not charged in law with our sins was made to suffer, that God might manifest his displeasure against sin in order to its consistent forgiveness; we can see no reason for his being *made under our law*, nor any meaning in the language. But Christ was *made under the law* that he might be a Redeemer; and as

this could only be necessary, on the supposition, that the demands of the law which sinners were under, must be fulfilled by him in order to their redemption—then, it clearly follows, that he became their surety, and entered into a voluntary engagement, to perform that obedience, and endure that suffering to which they were bound in law. With this view, a multitude of other scriptures fall in; such as, “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 suffered for sins the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.”

The notice taken of the substitution of Christ and its consequences, in the liii. chap. of Isaiah, is very remarkable. In the 4th verse it is said, *Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows*—That is, the griefs and sorrows which he endured were due to us—they were the consequence of our sins. We had procured them to ourselves, so that they were ours. But we unbelieving Jews, did not view the matter in this light. On the contrary *we did esteem him smitten, stricken of God, and afflicted*. When we saw that no sorrow was like his sorrow, the conclusion which we drew was, that he was a sinner beyond all other men; and that the vengeance of heaven pursued him for his atrocious blasphemies. This was our opinion; but we were greatly mistaken. Not, indeed, in our inference that his griefs and sorrows were the consequence of sin. We were correct in our principle, that sin is the only cause, why any being is subjected to pain and misery under the righteous government of God; but we erred in the application of this principle to his case—erred in supposing that he was afflicted because he was personally a sinner. *Nay he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed*. Here, indeed, was justice and holiness displayed in the punishment of sin; but it was not an ordinary case under the Divine government. It did not take place in the ordinary distribution of justice. We, the criminals, were permitted to escape, while justice took hold of him in our room; and the fruit of his “stripes” is “peace” to us. Yea it is so. *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all*. By going astray, by turning every one of us to his own way, we have amassed iniquity enough to bring an awful weight of suffering upon ourselves; and consequently enough, to account for his enduring so many sorrows, and griefs, if it be but admitted that by a gracious constitution of God, he has to bear the punishment of our iniquity: And this must be admitted; for the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. The correlate idea must be true. If the Lord hath laid on him our iniquity, he must have borne our iniquity. This is not only a matter of fair inference, but of positive testimony—his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree, 1 Peter ii. 24. Now what is the scriptural idea of bearing iniquity? Ask the children of Israel whose carcasses fell in the wilderness, what the threatening meant that

they should *bear their iniquity forty years*. They tell you that the punishment which their sin deserved was really executed on them; and they were excluded from entering the land of promise. If, then, a person's bearing his own iniquity, means—without any Socinian or Hopkinsian figure—his bearing the punishment due to his iniquity; it follows as a matter of course, that when a person is said to bear the iniquity of another, the meaning is that he bears the punishment due to the other's iniquity. There is a real transfer of guilt or liability to punishment. The substitute stands in the room of him for whom he is substituted, and assumes all his legal liabilities. In this light, the prophet presents Christ to our view. And he who can read the passage, without finding in it a Saviour charged in law with his people's sins; suffering, as their surety, the punishment due to them, and making a complete atonement for their sins, or satisfying all the demands of law and justice—is to be pitied, either for his enmity against the truth; or, for the fatal bias which some, at least half Anti Christian system, has given to his mind, See note 5.

The law of God, which the Mediator was made under, has two claims against all the descendants of fallen Adam. It has a claim of obedience on them as the creatures of God; and a claim of endurance of penalty, which respects them as the sinful creatures of God. The former claim the law had on Adam in the state of innocence; the latter results from the breach of the covenant of works. Christ being constituted the surety of his spiritual seed in the covenant of grace, and being *made under the law that he might redeem*, had both these claims to satisfy. And he did by the obedience of his life satisfy the former; and by his satisfactory sufferings the latter. In these two things consists his righteousness—his satisfaction to law and justice. Thus he magnified the law, and made it honorable. It was declared to be *holy, just and good*; when its precept was fulfilled, and its penalty endured by a divine surety, as the only condition on which sinners could be justified and obtain the blessing. Hence the believer in Christ stands completely righteous, not in his own righteousness, but in that of his surety: for, this righteousness being graciously imputed to him the moment he believes, becomes his legal righteousness; and answers him in law every purpose, the same as if he himself had performed it. This appears to be the plain and unforced meaning of all such scriptures as the following; By one man's disobedience many were made sinners, even so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. This is the name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our righteousness.—Their righteousness is of me saith the Lord.—In the Lord have I righteousness and strength. And we see how it is, that God is a just God and yet a Saviour. He is just in requiring obedience to his law, and inflicting the punishment which sin deserves on a surety: he is a Saviour in bestowing pardon and eternal salvation on believers in Christ. When he justifies a sinner his judgment is according to truth. The sinner is not

justified on account of his own sincere but imperfect obedience, i. e. he is not justified or declared to be righteous when he is not so; but he is justified in the strict and proper sense of the word, or "accepted as righteous in the sight of God, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to him and received by faith alone."

This view of the subject is very different from the Hopkinsian doctrine, that the whole design of the atonement is to manifest the real disposition of God towards sin; so that when he receives the sinner into his favor, no one can suppose him reconciled to sin. We reject this doctrine as unscriptural.

It falls infinitely short of the spirit and force of such passages as these: The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and give his life a ransom for many—ye were not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold—but with the precious blood of Christ—having obtained eternal redemption for us. Redemption we know to be the deliverance of captives from bondage, by laying down some valuable consideration, which those who hold them, are willing to accept as their ransom. The ransom being paid, their liberation is due as a *matter of justice*, to him who paid it. Such a ransom we view the precious blood of Christ, that God, in justice to his Son, will not execute the threatnings of the law on those for whom it was paid.

2. We reject it as Socinian in its tendency. The real disposition of God towards sin is manifested in the threatnings of his word; in the judgments which he executes on transgressors in this life; and in the future punishment of Devils and finally impenitent sinners. Another generation of speculative theologians have, therefore, only to arise and ask. When the Divine displeasure against sin is sufficiently manifested in other ways, what need of an atonement for the special purpose? None. Then, what need of a Divine Redeemer? None. And thus entering at the breach which Hopkinsians have made, tear away the whole foundation of the hope of the Church.

3. We detest this idea of the atonement; because, it leaves no more reason for the saints in Heaven to sing, *worthy is the Lamb that was slain*, than for the damned in Hell. Upon these two classes of men, different as are their characters, and their eternal condition, the atonement according to it, has one and the same aspect. That the saints in Heaven are saved by the atonement, does not arise from any influence flowing from it, nor from any influence of grace exerted on their souls as purchased by the blood of Christ; but from their complying with the condition on which it was offered; or if any who hold this view of the atonement, reject this as not their sentiment, they must then resolve all into eternal election. If they do this, it still remains true that the saints in Heaven are under no higher obligations to the atonement of Christ than the damned in Hell; whatever may be their obligations to the electing love of God.

The view of the subject which we have taken also shews what is to be thought of another Hopkinsian dogma, nearly allied to the former, that Christ did not suffer the punishment due to us for sin, but something which would answer the purpose of punishment. Not having been brought up in a school, where the plainest language of scripture is turned into metaphor and figure, whenever Christ or his atonement is to be banished from the pages of the Bible, we believe that he literally endured the wrath and curse of God. We rest with entire confidence in this truth because we find it written. *Christ hath delivered us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us*—and that he *bore our sins in his own body on the tree*. We have already seen that to bear our sins, is to bear the punishment due to us for our sins.

The view which we have taken of the subject from the scriptures is also irreconcilable with a more modern and refined method of teaching Hopkinsianism. According to this, there are two influences arising from the death of Christ; of which, the one constitutes an atonement for sin, and regards all men as moral agents, bringing them into a salvable condition; the other flowing from his obedience to the Mediatorial law, or commandment which he received from the Father to lay down his life, constitutes the claim of the Redeemer, for regenerating grace to make the elect willing in the day of his power.

This scheme, if it does not entirely confound the obedience and sufferings of Christ, at least narrows down his obedience so as to make it consist entirely in the cheerfulness and patience with which he yielded himself up to death. Hence the great Doctor Griffin, who has taken the lead in its defence, is obliged as though the righteousness of the Redeemer were insufficient, to make faith the “condition of Gospel justification.” It professes to give the non-elect “a chance;” but it is a chance of which they cannot avail themselves, unless they regenerate and sanctify their own souls. It contradicts the scriptures, which speak of Christ having been made under the same law, which those were under whom he came to redeem; and that his obedience to this law is the ground or condition of justification. It represents God as having failed to execute his threatening against sin, in relation to all who are saved; and as leaving the holy, just, and good law of the covenant of works under all the dishonor cast upon it by man’s transgression. It is essential to the scheme, that we are not legally justified on account of a perfect righteousness imputed to us and received by faith alone; but that God accepts from believers less than a perfect righteousness as the condition of justification. It, therefore, asserts that believers are justified only in an improper or figurative sense of the word; and by necessary consequence it may be contended, whenever it shall answer a purpose, that unbelievers are only figuratively condemned.

The view of the subject which we have taken also stands in fronted opposition to the Socinian and Hopkinsian objection, that if God bestows pardon and eternal life on believers only on the ground of a complete

satisfaction made to the claims of law and justice, there is no grace exercised towards them—salvation is of justice and not of grace. That salvation is of justice, we maintain but with respect to Christ. He performed the condition—he merited all good things for his people. Their salvation, is, therefore, due on principles of justice to him. But what have believers in his name done, to give them a claim? Nothing. They are unworthy; in themselves considered as unworthy as if Christ had never satisfied for them. To them, therefore, pardon, justification and eternal life, are gratuitous favors.—But we must look at the whole dispensation of God towards sinners. There was *grace* in God's giving his only begotten Son to be the propitiation for our sins—*grace* in consenting to our being saved by a surety—*grace* in laying our iniquities on him that he might expiate them—*grace* in regenerating our souls—bestowing upon us the gift of faith, and every consequent blessing. In all, *grace reigns through righteousness, unto eternal life by Christ Jesus our Lord.*

The view which we have taken of the subject, moreover excludes the idea of an indefinite or universal atonement. We contend that all those for whom Christ shed his blood will be saved, and in the end, constitute so many gems in his crown of glory. In their natural state they are children of wrath even as others; but a time is fixed in the purpose of God, when he will begin actually to bestow upon them the fruits of Christ's death. These, we believe, were that *seed* whom the Redeemer *saw*, when he made his soul an offering for sin. Their salvation was the *joy which was set before him*—the definite object which he had in view when he laid down his life.

1. Because it is written: "*he gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works,* Titus ii. 14. We cannot therefore believe that he gave himself for any who are not in time thus purified, and made zealous of good works; for if this were the case, the end which he had in view with respect to many, is not answered. The Redeemer is disappointed. It is written: *he suffered for sins, the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God,* 1 Peter iii. 18. But, if we believe scripture and facts, many are never brought to God. Then one of two things must follow: either Christ did not suffer for all mankind; or the design of his suffering with respect to many has failed. The latter cannot be admitted; the former is therefore established. It is written: he was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification, Rom. v. 25. He was raised for the justification of the same persons, for whose offences he was delivered. "But all men are not justified; believers only are; and all men have not faith." Then either Christ was not delivered for the offences of all men; or his resurrection has failed in procuring justification for many, for whom it was intended. To suppose the latter would be injurious to the Son of God: We choose the former.

2. We read every where in the Bible of a people; a certain number,

is contradistinguished from the mass of mankind, whom Christ came to save, and for whom he laid down his life. The reason given by the Angel for his being called Jesus is "because he shall save his people from their sins. The Angel knew nothing of a *Jesus*, so called, because he came merely to bring all men into a salvable state, or procure for them a possible salvation, which yet is impossible in the event, unless their own desperately wicked heart can renew itself. *He came to give his life a ransom for many*; and the *nations who are saved* are an exceeding great number. He laid down his life for *his sheep*. He purchased the church with his own blood. He brings sons to glory. He gives eternal life to *as many as were given him of the father*. And the Apostle does not say, that it was because *all mankind*, but because the *children* were partakers of flesh and blood, that he took part of the same. Why this language, if his death was intended alike for the benefit of all?

3. We can never persuade ourselves that Christ died for Cain and Judas, as he did for Peter and Paul. That the same cause, and that so powerful a cause as the death of the Son of God, extending its influence alike to all, should yet produce absolutely no effect with respect to some, while it works the deliverance of others from the wrath and curse of God, making them Kings and Priests unto him—is an idea which the Theological speculatist may reconcile to his mind, but the process by which it is done, the plain believer will never learn by reading his Bible. If we could believe that the Lord Jesus Christ in making his atonement, had as full an intention to save those who perish in their sins, as those who shall in the end constitute the great body of the redeemed from among men; and that he died for the seed of the serpent, for Pharaoh, for Jereboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, for the man of sin and son of perdition, and for all those cruel enemies of the church who have lived and died shedding the blood of his saints, many of whom were in hell long before he died;—If we could believe that his precious blood was shed for these and such as these, as well as for those who by his Spirit applying the virtues of his atonement, are made to submit to his righteousness and honor him as their Lord—then indeed we would renounce that system of doctrine commonly called Calvinism; but it would not be to embrace the Arminian nor the Hopkinsian, nor any other scheme which professes to be founded on the revelation of God: but that which avows itself the enemy and rival of them all.

Nevertheless we admit, that the sacrifice of Christ, is in itself, of infinite value: but neither its virtue nor its existence, in any sense can be considered, as extending beyond the limits of the covenant of grace. In this covenant we have the *intention* with which it was offered. This is the salvation of God's elect. But previous to the day of believing, *these are children of wrath even as others—For all have sinned*. As, therefore, all men are sinners and in one common condition of ruin; as the atonement of Christ is a remedy suitable to them all; and as the

promise is that whosoever believeth shall be saved:—Christ and salvation through him, are to be offered to all who hear the Gospel. And they, while they are called upon to believe their lost condition as sinners, and that a remedy is provided for them as sinners which if they accept they shall be saved; are to look to God that he would bestow upon them the gift of faith. The doctrine of a limited atonement is supposed by some to be a discouraging doctrine. But how? What is there discouraging in that view of the atonement which represents Christ as having purchased the influences of the Spirit to make men able and willing to embrace the offer of mercy; so that while their ears are saluted with the glad tidings of salvation, they may look to God, that for Christ's sake, he would make them *a willing people in the day of his power*? We think, if any scheme of the atonement has a tendency to discourage the fearful sinner, it is that which makes Christ only to to have *opened a way* of salvation while he is left to struggle with all the power of sin and temptation, and overcome by his own weakness, before he can embrace the offer of life.

Here is an atonement limited indeed—limited in a way that we pray God none of us may ever have a hand in limiting it. But still, we know that after we have said all, could we even say an hundred times more than would be proper in a paper of this kind, it will be thought by many that it would be more *comfortable* to believe in a general atonement. But how? If such is the language of any man's heart we would say to him: Friend, you are either an unawakened prayerless sinner, or you are a serious soul earnestly inquiring the way of life. If you are the former, what comfort *can* you find in believing a general atonement by which you will never be benefitted, if you live and die such as you are now? You cannot surely suppose that Christ's blood will save a despiser who neglects his salvation. But if you are serious on the subject because you feel your need of the atonement, what comfort could it be to you to believe a general atonement which has not profited thousands for whom it was made? Or "what could you desire to know more than that the atonement of Christ is as ample as the petitions for pardon will ever require?" Of this you may be assured. *Whosoever believeth shall be saved. Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him.*

We shall now conclude this paper, by addressing to you a few miscellaneous remarks—

Brethren, the cry of the present day is *free inquiry, liberality, charity* and with such sounds unstable souls, are too often beguiled. Every one, who has something to say against the truth, deals largely in such language for a double purpose:—to make the popular impression that those who hold fast the *form of sound words* are lacking in these qualifications; and to flatter the vanity of their gaping admirers, by insinuating to them that they are men of intelligence, and expanded intellect though they may never have read nor thought nor understood enough

to entitle them to the denomination of inquirers of any description. In the name of all that is not absolutely ludicrous, what can *free inquiry* mean in the mouths of men whose religious creed consists in negatives; whose religious ideas are not so numerous as to allow them one for every day in the week; and whose religious conversation consists in ringing the changes on a few Biblical quibbles?—We are not afraid of free inquiry, provided it be conducted in a sober, cautious, reverential manner. It is licentious inquiry—men's exalting their reason to sit in judgment on the Book of God, and discarding all those doctrines which are not easily comprehensible by their disordered minds, that does all the mischief. Neither have we any objections to *Christian liberality* and charity: our lamentation is that so little of them exists.

Those doctrines which we have advanced in these pages, have long been received by the church of God. This, which, we would suppose ought rather to be their recommendation—for there is surely safety as well as pleasure in walking by the footsteps of the flock—will be with many a sufficient reason for rejecting them with lordly contempt. *Their practical principle will be*, that the system of doctrine which God has revealed to us by his Spirit, is as susceptible of improvement as a human art or science; and that the *faith of God's elect*, like a labor-saving machine, is to be brought to perfection by the successive efforts of human ingenuity. Nor could better have been expected, than that a rage for novelty should attack the immutable truths of God, in an age when every thing is changing and nothing fixed. *But wisdom is justified of her children.* The doctrines delivered by our Lord and his apostles; preached, professed, believed in, lived in, and died in, by tens and hundreds and thousands, who have taken their flight from earth to heaven, with the song of salvation on their lips, and anticipated glory in their hearts, will not be parted with so easily by any who are included in the election of *grace*. Besides the claim which these doctrines have upon our regard from their being the doctrines of the scriptures, they have also another claim which none of our modern notions can consistently set up. They have been professed, they have been believed in, they have been lived in, and died in, against all the power and terror of proscriptions, and confiscations, and imprisonments, and banishments, and scourgings, and burnings. They have braved the fire, the faggot, and the stake. They have been subjected to the trial by fire, and have passed the horrid ordeal. Scotland can attest; Germany can attest; France can attest; the numerous provinces of the Roman empire can attest, that their contexture was too firm, and their spirit too determined to be subdued by the utmost fury of the cohorts of persecution. And if in any of these lands the truth now lies slain in the street, it is not because its advocates meanly shrunk in the day of trial; but because another generation arose, who became vain in their imaginations, and bartered the substantial truths of God, for the vapouring speculations of men. Now, can the easy light hearted reli-

gious projector, who basking in the sunshine of liberty and prosperity, has stricken a new theory out of his brain; and laughing himself, would set others a laughing at all that our Fathers believed,—can he say as much for his notions? Let the fires of persecution, be lighted up with such fury as they have blazed around the church of God, but a few centuries ago; and have we any facts to convince us that these notions would not meanly sneak into their lurking places; or make their peace with the persecutors, by declaring, as many of them might consistently enough, that they had never been with Jesus?—We readily grant that all ancient things are not to be venerated; nor is an opinion therefore good because it is old: But still, will the wise man say, If my country is in danger, give me the tried veteran who has seen a field of battle without running away; and not the upstart officer, who but yesterday sprung into consequence, with his sword by his side, his epaulettes glittering on his shoulder—describing figures on the sand, to shew me what plan of attack would be his, if he could get the enemy on some vantage ground which his fancy has created. On the same principles, as I am a sinner born to die, and my soul is in danger, commend me to those doctrines which have been tried, and have yielded grace and glory to the saints of the Bible; and thousands of others before me. But do you tell me, that *your* notions which ape the Gospel so dexterously, or contradict it so impudently, are better? Well, if you think so, and they must be *yours*, let them be *yours*, and do *you* reap all the consolation. I want none of it.

Much is said at the present day about union in the Church; and more zeal is frequently spent in drilling Christians into some favorite views of this subject, than to convert sinners from the error of their ways. From the ground which we have taken, and the course which we have thought it our duty to pursue, it is probable that some may suppose us hostile to union on any principle; and we think, we have, in some instances, witnessed, something like an attempt to array popular prejudice against us on this pretence. But we declare ourselves the inflexible advocates of union, See note 6. Be it remembered, however, that the union which we esteem and would wish to promote is not an outward organic union, among those who differ so widely in sentiment that while the outward show of unity is kept up, contentions, and jealousies and animosities, like putrid sores, fret and fester within: but a real union, which has for its basis, a oneness of heart in the love of Christ, and of mind, in the love and profession of his truth. And whenever a proposal is made to us in good faith, by any denomination, that each of us shall go to the Scriptures and examine whether what we believe and practise has a warrant there, with the view of forming such a union as this: we trust we shall always be willing to accept it in the same good faith and with the utmost cordiality. We protest, however, against any and every attempt to call in the aid of popular fashion or prejudice to compel us to form any such union, as will involve the burial of any of the precious

truths of the Gospel. And we give public notice that we will ever regard every officious appeal to us on the subject as coming with peculiar infelicity, while we must listen to all this offensive Theologism, that God creates sin—that unconditional submission to God is the test of true Christianity—that faith is the condition of Gospel justification—and that the Sonship of Christ is not eternal and divine. Let any branch of the church which would have us unite with her, silence this blasphemous contradiction within her own jurisdiction, and we will know better how to appreciate the invitation, “come with us, and we will do thee good, for the Lord hath spoken good concerning us.”

We have a word to say on the subject of communion in sealing ordinances with Christians of other denominations. This is a point on which men’s ideas differ and always have differed; and were liberality half as much practised as praised, we should suppose that every denomination might have permission to hold its own views, and abide by its own practice, without exciting the opposition or ill-will of others. But that this should really be the case, is perhaps too much to expect, in an age; when there exists so much of that charity which is willing that nothing should exist but itself.

Whatever may be the length to which communion may lawfully be extended, one thing is certain, that an advocate for free communion should be influenced by some nobler and more disinterested motives, than a wish to gain proselytes from those denominations to whom he sets open the doors. That there are some honest advocates for it we freely admit, and hope there are even many; but that there are also some of another description, we should be great novices were we to doubt. How else shall we account for a fact of frequent occurrence, that when two contiguous congregations belonging to denominations which have declared for union, begin to draw up closer to each other, the members of each are immediately expressing their hopes that all will *join them*; but when some suspicious circumstances make each begin to fear that instead of *gaining*, their party will *lose* by the intimacy, it is speedily broken off, and coldness, distance, evil speakings and evil surmisings, take the place of all that lately went under the name of love, charity, liberality, union. And have we not seen the public declaimer in favor of communion with all professing Christians, acting on all politic occasions the part of the sly, intriguing partizan; and by a tone of language and of conduct more easily conceived than described, endeavouring to diffuse the most injurious prejudices against every party but his own, into the minds of all with whom he has influence.

Having, for our own part, no purposes to serve of which honest men need be ashamed, we shall speak out. We do not extend communion to those denominations whom we view as corrupting the doctrine or worship of the church, because, we think, the Scriptures forbid us; and because the consequence of such communion must inevitably be a sacrifice of truth. Men may speculate as they please about its being the best way

to recover erring brethren "to walk together with them" to the utmost verge of safety, but it will not be found to hold in fact. Error is congenial to the human heart: and it is much more likely that a promiscuous communion among all professing Christians, will result in the deterioration of those denominations which are more pure, than in the approximation of the less pure to the standard of the former. For such results, after what we have seen, we must surely be convinced, that the church of God has no need. Besides, if we depart from our own standards in admitting others to our communion table, where shall we stop? We employ no other reasoning here than all employ when it suits them, but we wish to employ it uniformly. "Stop at fundamental errors, say some. It is, indeed, difficult to give a complete list of fundamental errors, but call in the aid of practical good sense, and you will be safe." Indeed! but has not every person some idea of the ease with which a little sophistry can lead good sense captive? "How many grains of sand make a heap? Do three? You must say no. Do four? You must make the same answer. In this way the question may proceed, still adding a single grain till you come to a thousand, and then if you say, These are a heap, you may be accused of having absurdly made a single grain, constitute the difference between little and much." Now, there is every variety of heresy in the church; and with errors still increasing in magnitude, but distinguished from each other only by the slightest shades of difference, is the whole distance filled up, from the smallest doctrinal aberration, to a vital corruption of the Gospel, or a fundamental error. What then is a fundamental error, or an error of sufficient magnitude to exclude a man from communion? Is Arminianism? The zealous advocate for extended communion will at once say, no. Is Hopkinsianism? No. Is Arianism? Doubtful, See note 7. Why, many Arians talk respectfully of Christ, and hold as real an atonement as some Hopkinsians. Well then if an Arian should appear to be pious, I could have communion with him. Is Socinianism? Doubtful. Oh! you are prejudiced against them. They are indeed more liberal in their sentiments than others, but many of them are hopefully pious--talk in as high terms of Christ as some Arians—And worship him as much. Well I do not see how I could refuse to have communion with such Socinians. It may be said that this is a sophistical method of puzzling the subject: and it is granted there is sophistry in it; but it is a kind of sophistry which has a real existence, and by which every one who departs from the standards of the church to which he belongs, in admitting others to his communion, will find the subject practically puzzled.

BRETHREN, we hope none of you will mistake our intention, so far as to suppose, that in this paper, we design an attack on Christians of any name. Let it not be, nor be viewed by any of you, as a bone of contention. Our object, is not to excite unfriendly feelings, towards Christians of other denominations: but, so far as our feeble voice will reach, to warn all against impending evil. And though we expect to be stigma-

tized as sectarian selfish bigots, by all whose zeal expends itself in serving little party purposes, while they would be thought the men of liberal minds; we have yet some confidence of hope, that the general tone of this address, will be approved by the wise and the good, in different denominations. We would earnestly recommend to you, to cherish sentiments of esteem and regard for all who love our Lord Jesus. For the errors of any who bear this character, it would be improper for you to treat their persons with unkindness. It is your duty on the contrary to desire their welfare; to be helpers of their faith; and if in any thing they be otherwise minded, to pray that God would reveal even this to them.

But for the sake of being esteemed liberal and charitable, never make any unhallowed compromises with sinful opinions or practices. As Deists and Socinians, are at present the loudest boasters of the liberality of their sentiments, so soon as a man becomes covetous of this praise, he is in a fair way of being caught in the snares of death.

See that you walk as becomes the followers of Christ. Let it be your chief study to recommend the truth of the Gospel by leading peaceable lives in all Godliness and honesty; that so you may evince to the world that *you know the truth and the truth has made you free*. Pray much for the prosperity of Zion— and for us. And take heed to yourselves. Remember, that you are sinners against a God of infinite justice and holiness, and that your souls must be purified by the blood of atonement, before you are fit for that holy happy place which God has provided for his saints. See that you secure an interest in the righteousness of the Redeemer by believing on his name.

God has committed to you who are parents an important trust—the religious education of your children. This is always a chief part of the duty of a Christian parent; but it is especially so, in an age of the Church; when efforts so various, so imposing, and so successful are made to *pervert the right ways of God*. The time has fully come, when there is no longer any reason to hope, that our youth will be preserved from the seductions of those who lie in wait to deceive, unless they are early well instructed in the doctrines of Christianity. In nine cases out of ten, perhaps in which the youth of the Church are captivated by that “shew of wisdom,” which leads to a “denying of the Lord that bought them,” the evil may be traced to the neglect of parental instruction.

As your Pastors it is our duty, by parochial visitation, and by frequent diets of examination, to instruct the youth as well as others; and woe unto us if we neglect our duty—but this does not remove the burden from your shoulders—All will have enough to do. And unless our endeavors are well seconded by parents they must prove abortive.

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 all them that are sanctified. Amen.

NOTES.

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(1) P. 61. Dr. Ely, however, admits, that while Rouse's version, "cannot be charged with any unscriptural doctrines, in some few instances we must withhold this praise from Watts."—Qu. Theo. Review, Vol. ii. p. 403. Yet if the Doctor pleads *for* any thing it is for the use of the Imitations of Watts, in preference to the version of Rouse. Having noticed this, we cannot forbear making a few extracts from a writer under the signature of *Moderator*, in the July number of the Presbyterian Magazine, for the year 1822. He pleads *softly* for the use of human compositions; but at the same time rebukes some on his side of the question for running to unwarrantable extremes.

"It is true, concerning the Psalms of Scripture, that they were given under the Mosaic economy, and that they were used in the service of the Temple; but it will not do to infer from this that they are to be laid aside under the Gospel. The whole Old Testament Scriptures were given under the Mosaic economy, and appointed to be read in the synagogue every sabbath day. But are they abolished with the typical part of that economy which was the shadow of good things to come, and to be read no more? Nobody will pretend it—and that the Book of Psalms is abolished to be sung no more is as little to be pretended. For the very same reason which would exclude them from being sung with profit, would exclude them from being read with profit. The duty of praising God has undergone no change—in substance, it is the same now that it was when David and Asaph, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, delivered their Psalms to the Church. That which was praise then is certainly praise still; and the very fact of the Scripture Psalms being the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, would seem to give them a superiority above every uninspired production; and a superiority they unquestionably have in all the great essentials of praise. * * * Now I will venture to assert, without fear of contradiction, from any who would have a right to contradict, I mean those who have an intimate and experimental acquaintance with their Bibles, that all those things which the heart can pour forth before God, abound in the Book of Psalms, at least equal to any thing that is found in any other part of the Scripture, either of the Old or New Testament: and if so where is the human production that will surpass them?" [*Reader, where?*]

"As for the opinion, that some portions of the Psalms breathe a spirit of resentment and revenge, against the personal enemies of the Psalmist, inconsistent with the forgiveness of the Gospel, and tend to generate such a feeling in the bosoms of those who use them, it is surprising that any who believe in the inspiration of the Psalms should allow themselves to entertain it. Does God's word contain contradictions? Is it the minister of sin? Certainly before such a sentiment is hazarded, we ought to be sure we thoroughly understand those portions of God's word to which such a defect is attributed."

After alleging the want of a smooth and harmonious literal version of the Psalms of Scripture, as in part the reason of the disrelish into which

they are fallen, the writer goes on to remark—"But it is humbly conceived, it is not the chief reason. The very excellence of the Psalms themselves has its effect. Their depth of matter, their spirituality, their sublimity, their transcendant elevation of devotion, raise them above the comprehension, and above the standard of devotional feeling of ordinary Christians. It is a fact that Christians of deficient attainments often find themselves more edified in reading other books than the Bible, and really relish them more. But the higher Christians rise in gracious experience, the higher is their esteem for the pure word of God, until at length every human production becomes insipid in comparison therewith. As it certainly can have no good effect to produce in the public mind a preference of other books to the Bible, so it is conceived there can no good effect arise from promoting in the public taste, a preference of other compositions to the Psalms the Holy Spirit hath inspired." When the views and feelings of this writer shall have become universal among those with whom the "Psalms of Scripture have fallen into disrepute," if that better day ever arrives, the Church of God may then hope soon to see a *day still better*, when a preference for the Psalms of Scripture will be evinced by Christians, not only in acknowledging their superiority above uninspired productions, but also in their *confining themselves exclusively to them*. Then too, will Christian ministers and Christian men, begin to be ashamed of promoting a *wrong preference* in the public taste, by saying all those fine things of Watts and of his poetical effusions, "which they have received by tradition from their Fathers," and at the same time sneering at the best version of the Psalms of inspiration with which the church has ever been blessed, because the poetical *fect* do not always trip so neatly over the whole length of a stanza as the "*real judges*" say they ought—the usual and most successful arts employed by *very small men*, to seduce a victim of proselyting zeal, away from his preference "to the Psalms which the Holy Spirit hath inspired—Pub. com.

(2.) P. 62. The circumstances connected with this review were somewhat amusing. Dr. Miller had been attacked in the Unitarian Miscellany. He wrote a reply and sent it to the Editors; but they, notwithstanding their promise, that their columns should be open for temperate discussions on either side of the question, refused to insert it. Dr. Miller appeared before the public in the pamphlet form. The Rev. James R. Wilson of the Reformed Church, wrote a review of this pamphlet; in which he undertook to prove, that as the Unitarians claimed Dr. Watts, he should be given up to them, and sent it to the publishing committee of the Presbyterian Magazine, who, in their turn, refused to admit it, but would not give their reasons. Dr. Ely, however, one of the committee, declared "his willingness for its insertion, and said he was not afraid to let the whole truth be known." Mr. Wilson then published his review in a separate pamphlet. We state these facts on the authority of this gentleman. They speak a language which will be understood.

Soon after Mr. Wilson's pamphlet made its appearance, Dr. Janeway published in the P. Magazine, an extract from Dr. Watts' works to prove that he was orthodox on these subjects. A similar controversy about the orthodoxy of the poetical Doctor, is said to have existed in England soon after his death. Now, what are we to make of all this contradiction?—and contradictory testimony? Simply this—in the course of his Theological life, Dr. Watts was “every thing, and nothing long.” His mind was always unsettled on the doctrine of the trinity—in the early part of his life he was *perhaps* pretty correct—but he wavered; became the longer the more loose in his views, till he finally rejected it. As Dr. Janeway has furnished the premises, we shall draw the following inference, and leave it with *all men who think*, to say whether it is not a fair one. *Dr. Janeway must have felt that the character of Dr. Watts' writings, is exceedingly vulnerable in point of orthodoxy.* Were any person to accuse such a man as Hervey, or Boston, or Brown, or Scott, of gross heresy on any of these subjects, it would never call forth the zealous efforts of his friends to defend him. It could do no more than excite a smile of mingled pity and contempt for the accuser. But was not Dr. Watts a good man? We hope so. How then can his writings do harm? Let Dr. Miller answer:—“As a literary and scientific teacher may put others on the way of being far more learned than himself; so ecclesiastical history furnishes many examples of Theologians, who, though substantially orthodox and fervently pious themselves, did, in fact, so conduct their instructions as to send out pupils—grievously heretical.” Letters to Stuart, page 291. What is true of a teacher must, we presume, be true of a writer.

(3.) P. 65. If any well meaning persons shall be offended with this remark, it will be to us a source of regret, as our object is not to irritate. It is made deliberately; after a careful comparison of the views exhibited by the three writers, and of their manner of expounding particular texts of scripture; and we have only to observe—and the observation may be taken either as our *apology* or *justification*—harm “does not arise from the description, but from the real character” and sentiments “of ministers.”

(4.) P. 67. The existence of different denominations in the Church, is often professedly regretted, because it “opens the mouths of infidels.” It is even so. But here again the mischief is to be charged to those errors which give rise to different denominations. The evil must be cured by attacking it in the root. Here superficial observers mistake. They suppose, the ground of offence taken by Deists, would be removed, if the different denominations would only coalesce, though far from being agreed in sentiment, i. e. the evil would be cured if the different parties could only be got to agree in *outward pretence*, though differing widely in *reality*. Deists profess to love candor and honesty—would they love this?—But would not the same contentions rage in the midst of the great apparently united body?—And with greater fury?

And is it not possible for two different denominations, though maintaining their separate communions, to live peaceably together as friends, and give less *occasion to the enemy to blaspheme*, than is sometimes given by different parties in the same denomination. Let facts speak, Doctors Ely, Griffin, and Perrine, are in the same denomination. But Dr. Ely calls Dr. Perrine's sentiment, "mongrel Hopkinsian-Arminianism"—and Dr. Perrine himself, he calls, "the Alleghany mountain Doctor—that elevated mountain of literary honors and Epitaph memory. Q. T. R. Vol. ii. p. 132-3. Dr. Griffin he calls this eminent teacher of false doctrine in the Presbyterian church—and of him, he says: "No Arminian in modern times, has vindicated so stoutly as he, the absurd notion of a *razed or docked-down* righteousness, *Ibid.* p. 249. Again, "Oh that grammarians would introduce into their systems a new figure to be called the figure of *literal truth*, that the future generation of Socinian and Hopkinsian teachers may have some mode of expressing the simple verity of things, for with them every thing about the salvation of sinners seems to be a *figure*. Even Dr. Griffin's public assent to the catechism may have been a *figurative assent*, or something designed to pass off instead of it; and Dr. Griffin's renunciation of the Presbyterian confession of faith, in relation to several important points may be only a figurative renunciation." *Ibid.* p. 268. The insinuation here draws deep.—Now Dr. Ely himself, and we ourselves are not exactly agreed on all points, and we really do not know, what kind of a farce we might act, were we to unite without previously adjusting our differences—but we see very little reason to fear that we shall ever disgrace the Christian name more, by retaining our distinct communions than if we were to unite and afterwards *perform in this style*.—Yet we do not say the Doctor has treated the sentiments of these men with undue severity.—We take no pleasure in stating these things, but to prevent impositions, it is sometimes necessary to shew, that "it is not all gold, that glitters.

(5) P. 82. This is a hated doctrine. *Away with such an idea*—is the cry of the great majority of professed Christians. What has roused all this opposition? We believe the enmity of the carnal mind is the source: but enmity against the truth, especially when connected with a Christian profession, must have some plausible pretence. What is this? A desire to appear more charitable and liberal, than those who are contemptuously called, *bigotted Calvinists*. This doctrine it is said does not give all "a chance" of salvation—for it is easy to be seen that it shuts the door against a universal atonement.—A *universal atonement*, and a *real atonement*, not differing materially from the view given above, has indeed been held by some. Contradictions gave them no difficulty, for they were not perceived. But Hopkinsians generally, are too subtle to embrace such a creed. An indefinite or universal atonement, however, they must have. They had no other refuge, than to fritter the atonement away, or pair it down to something which

secures blessings for none, but simply makes salvation *possible* for all. They now, cannot be charged with holding a scheme which leads to universal salvation. They have made it easy to answer the question, why are not all saved.

Such is *their* atonement—for they use the *term*. Substitution is also frequently in their mouths. But what do they mean by the substitution of Christ? Simply the substitution of that exhibition which he made of the “real disposition of God towards sin,” in the room of the *punishment* of sin, but which does not imply that he was charged in law with his people’s sins; nor that he suffered the punishment due to them; nor that he satisfied the claims of law & justice; nor that he purchased pardon, reconciliation and eternal salvation for the elect; nothing—but that he *opened up a way*, or rendered salvation possible. Consequently, a poor sinner cannot pray for grace, to *bring him to God*, because Christ *suffered for sins, the just for the unjust*. This is another Gospel. Let Christians beware, lest they be imposed on by sounds. The language of Scripture may be retained; but if its terms are used in another or improper sense, they may be employed in teaching error, with as much, and even more effect, than other terms.

(6.) P. 89. “The inflexible advocates of union.” But it is not our habit to deal much in such “enticing words.” We had long thought, there is much hollowness in many such high-sounding professions, and the candid acknowledgement of one, who has labored much to promote union, has convinced us, we were not mistaken. No insincerity, however, is imputed to him. We quote his words, because coming from one who must be acquainted with the views and feelings of his co-workers, they must be considered as decisive proof of what we have just stated. “Whilst he” [the advocate for union and liberality] “joins in Bible Societies with others of every denomination, whilst he denounces bigotry, and extols sentiments of liberality; and whilst he is hailed, and has his harangue reciprocated by those of different sects, he is not sure that they are friendly to his particular views and party, and on his return home he feels more sensibly, that all things are getting afloat, and that he cannot calculate on the public liberality for the support and protection of the bark in which he sails.” Signs of the times, by J. M’Farland of Paris, Ken. page 23. Who would have thought, that the *little* trembling partisan devoted to the interests of a sect, and the *great* noisy advocate for liberality and charity without regard to sect, are, after all, *but one and the same person!*

(7.) P. 91. Let no one suppose it impossible, that a minister of an orthodox church, could be dragged thus far. Dr. Ely, does give us to know, that he could have communion with Arians. In his Q. T. Review, Vol. I. page 153, speaking of a Synodical letter he says—“We did not even proceed so far as to advise the exclusion of these persons from the communion of the Lord’s Table; for we believe that a man may hold a damning error; that is, an error which is calculated to destroy

men; and not be himself in every instance damned by it; we think that an Arian, an Arminian, a Hopkinsian, and a Universalist, may give us reason to suppose he is a renewed man; but we are confident, that no errorist of either kind ought to be an Elder or Pastor in the Presbyterian church." The Doctor then has no objections to their being private church members; and enjoying communion. What kind of Christianity must prevail in any district of country, to enable a man to give utterance to such sentiments, with any prospect that public opinion will "bear him out or bear him harmless?" Let not the question be answered, without a moment's previous reflection.

Some fearless spirits have indeed insinuated, that the Doctor and more of his brethren in the city of Philadelphia, do hold communion with Arians, every time they sit down at the Lord's Table in their own congregations. For the truth of this we cannot vouch: but the strain of the Doctor's writings, makes it probable, so far as he is concerned. And if he preaches as he sometimes writes, should half his congregation, at no very distant day, become Arians, or something worse, no one could say that the event was not to have been expected. A preacher may show much flaming zeal against error, to please the orthodox part of his audience; but at the same time, take such good care not to offend errorists, by following them up with his charitable allowances, in favor of their sincere piety, as entirely to neutralize all he has said. Under the severest castigation, the errorist feels quite comfortable; because he knows he has the preacher so completely under his brow, that he will not fail to compliment him before he has done for fear of driving him away. What proud spirited rebel against the Living God, would not consent to take a sound flagellation from the pulpit once a week, for the pleasing consciousness, that he possesses such influence over an Ambassador of Christ?

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