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Rev. Amos A. Phelps

Batavia

Single Paid -

Massachusetts

12th. Whereas there are professing christians amongst us who patronize Missionary and other Societies, which solicit contributions from slaveholders: Resolved, therefore, That such professing christians cannot be sinless, unless God has repealed his declaration: "I hate robbery for burnt-offering." (Isaiah lxi. 8.)

13th. Whereas there are in this community professing christians, as well as others, who vote to fill civil offices with slaveholders, and with persons who wield their official power in behalf of the most murderous and diabolical oppression of millions of God's poor: Resolved, therefore, That it is the duty of this Church to declare such voting to be very guilty treason toward the cause of humanity and the cause of God. And whereas the criminality of such voting is partially, or entirely, hidden to many eyes by plausible excuses—such as that, there cannot be great sin in voting with a large party—in voting as thousands and millions vote—such as that, the person voted for, although on the side of the oppressor, will nevertheless, if elected, accomplish in his office more good than evil, and will wisely conform himself to the maxim which requires the securing of "the greatest good to the greatest number": Resolved, therefore, That God has left His admonitions—"Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil" (Ex. xxiii. 2); "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished" (Prov. xi. 21)—for the very purpose of teaching men that they cannot hide themselves and escape from responsibility in a crowd; and that, in the light of these admonitions and of other Divine instructions, the whole sin of electing a tyrant, or an upholder of tyranny, rests on each of the votes, as well as on the sum of the votes, which elect him: And Resolved, further, That so long as the maxim should be, not "the greatest good of the greatest number," but "the greatest good of the whole number;" and so long as Christianity forbids our seeking the good even of a universe, at the expense of the least right of the least being in it,—it cannot be proper to clothe a person with official power, when we foresee that it will be employed to wrong, though it may be, but a single individual, and that too the obscurest individual among the millions subject to such power: And Resolved, further, That if the consideration that he will exercise his official power justly toward others of his fellow-men, can authorize us to set up a tyrant over some of them,—then, by the like reasoning, can that tyrant derive from the justice of his dealings with some persons a license to be unjust toward others; then can the adulterer, the slaveholder, the murderer, be able to vindicate their adultery, slaveholding, and murder, if they can but prove that the harm which they have done to some of their fellow-beings by these crimes, is overbalanced by the benefit which, in whatever ways, they have done to others of them. To illustrate and justify the positions of this Resolution, we say, that whoever would estimate the measure of his own sin against the tens of thousands of slaves in the District of Columbia and in the Territory of Florida, for having voted to fill the Office of President of the United States with a tyrant, who uses the power of that Office to retain in slavery those tens of thousands, should hold out of view every other vote cast for that tyrant except his own, and make his own wholly responsible for the election; and should, also, hold out of view all, however good or bad, of the official acts and influences of that tyrant, save only such as bear upon those tens of thousands of slaves.

14th. Whereas there is, even amongst professors of religion, a prevailing opinion that it is wrong to preach politics on the Sabbath: Resolved, That the correctness of this opinion turns wholly on the character of the politics which are preached: for, whilst it is clearly wrong to preach anti-bible or unrighteous politics on the Sabbath, or on any other day, nothing can be clearer than that no day is too holy to be used in preaching the politics which are inculcated in the bible.

Peterboro Dec. 14 1843

Dr W. Phelps,

Your copy of mail brought me your letter. Believing that the time has come, when every Christian in this country should take "an anti-slavery position with Bondage," I cannot consistently comply with your kind & complimentary invitation.

In relation with the subject in your letter - you are right & I am not entirely wrong. However it was in New York churches, in this part of the country, there has long been much clamor against some of our faithful ministers for "preaching politics" in their pulpits. That which these ministers did under the name of "preaching politics" - a name given by the enemies of the slave, I declare that I am not. In calling it "preaching politics" I did not act with philosophical exactness - but I do not see by these -

Wm. P. Weston  
Samuel Smith

Rev. A. A. Phelps -

## RESOLUTIONS.

1st. Resolved, That

be Deacons of this Church.

2d. Resolved, That Samuel Wells of Vernon is affectionately invited to remove into this community, and thereby become a member of this Church; and that, in the event of such removal, he be expected to officiate as its Elder or Bishop, and to assume that share in instructing and feeding it which is appropriate to one whom the Holy Ghost hath made an overseer (Acts xx. 28).

3d. Resolved, That, in view of the abundant means of living in this neighborhood, we hope our Elder may always be in circumstances to give himself "continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word" (Acts vi. 4). But, whether such shall be his circumstances, or whether he shall be compelled to "labor, working with his own hands" (1st Cor. iv. 12), we cannot, without guiltily shutting our eyes to the glaring evils of the practice of subscribing salaries to preachers of the gospel, promise him a salary. We trust that contributions in money will be made in our place of worship from Sabbath to Sabbath; and that the Deacons, in their appropriation of these contributions—a part to this needy disciple and a part to that—a part to one object and a part to another—will pay especial and constant regard to the wants of the Elder and his family.

4th. Resolved, That the Elder be expected to keep an account of all the contributions, whether in moneys or otherwise, which shall be made to him by his Church and Congregation; and that he be expected to make a public and full report thereof, at the expiration of every three months.

5th. Resolved, That for the edification both of its members and others—for the honor<sup>and</sup> and establishing of the truth—this Church will, as there shall be occasion for it, express its convictions in relation to doctrines and practices.

6th. Resolved, That a Church of Christ is a company of moral reformers; and, therefore, that a Church which refuses to engage in the prosecution of moral reforms, especially those that are nearest at hand and most urgent, is, however excellent may be the character of individuals in it, not a Church of Christ.

7th. Resolved, That sectarianism, guilty as it so clearly is of rending the seamless garment (John xix. 23) of the Saviour—of dividing the Church of Christ into mutually warring parties—of tearing asunder those who should esteem themselves to "be one," even as the Father and the Son "are one" (John xvii. 22); guilty also, as it so clearly is, of making the strongest and most successful appeals to the pride, bigotry, and intolerance of the heart; is, therefore, the mightiest foe on earth to truth and reform, to God and man; and is, in its features and spirit, one of the most ~~wicked~~<sup>wicked</sup> ~~marked~~<sup>marked</sup> children of its "father, the Devil."

8th. Whereas there is a prevailing delusion, that a Union Church requires a surrender of private judgment and a compromise of truth; and that but for this surrender and compromise, the contentions in such Church would be too great to be endured: Resolved, therefore, That the members of a Union or Gospel Church are not only free to entertain their respective views, both of doctrine and practice, but are bound to inculcate them on their brethren, and to rebuke the rejection of them; and resolved, further, that whilst, on the one hand, such freedom and faithfulness do not only not engender fatal strife, but do actually produce assimilation of character and that true peace which follows purity (James iii. 17), the barriers which sectarianism erects do, on the other hand, by hindering the mutual access, and fomenting the mutual jealousies, of Christians, obstruct the progress of truth, and maintain an increasing disagreement of sentiments and opposition of spirit between those who are commanded to be "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1st Cor. i. 10), and to merge their diversities of character even in oneness itself (John xvii. 21, 22, 23).

9th. Resolved, That although, as is evident from the 15th chapter of Acts, there are occasions which justify the assembling of christians together from different parts of a country, or from different parts of the world, to discuss and decide on questions of religious interest; nevertheless, for a local Church to refuse to come into an Association of Churches, is a wise precaution for preserving its independence and purity.

10th. Whereas the mob which, in the year 1842, disgraced this community, and which is justly supposed to be the most fruitful cause of the disorders and lawlessness that have subsequently prevailed amongst us, was approved, rather than condemned, by the great majority of our professing christians: Resolved, therefore, That this Church feels itself loudly called on to declare that mob to have been, what every other mob is, a most flagrant outrage on human and divine laws—on the rights of man and the rights of God.

11th. Whereas there are in this community professing christians, as well as other persons, who defend the use of intoxicating liquors as a drink; and who also defend the selling of grain to the brewer and distiller: Resolved, therefore, That this Church condemns such defences as unscriptural and wicked; and pronounces the selling of such liquors for a drink—the licensing of the sale of them for that purpose—the election of officers who license the sale of them for that purpose—the manufacture of such liquors for that purpose—and the furnishing of materials for the manufacture of them for that purpose—to be all parts, one of them as certainly so as another, in that great and horrid work of death, which has already destroyed the bodies and souls of millions of our countrymen.

Gerrit Smith Dec. 14. 1843

"In the beginning of the Gospel, whosoever had received the spirit of Christ, was esteemed a member of the Church. But now (in the 16th century) the order was inverted: and no one, unless a member of the Church, was counted to have received the spirit of Jesus Christ."

D'AUBIGNE'S HIST. OF THE REFORMATION, (vol. I., p. 21.)

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## CHURCH OF PETERBORO.

THE 29th day of November, 1843, was observed as a day of fasting and prayer by persons in Peterboro (N. Y.) and its vicinity, who believe that the christians therein do, simply because they are christians—do, of mere Divine organization, all human arrangements to the contrary notwithstanding—constitute "The Church of Peterboro." In the after part of that day, they held a public meeting in the Session room in Peterboro, and spent the time of it in prayer, reading the bible, singing and conversation. A creed and a series of resolutions were submitted to the meeting, with the request that they should be made the subject of much and earnest thought, conversation, and prayer, until the time for definitive action on them.

The meeting was adjourned to the second day of the following month.

At the adjourned meeting, a part of the time of which was spent in prayer, singing, and conversation, the creed and resolutions, submitted to the former meeting, were read, commented on, and unanimously adopted. Near the close of the meeting, the request was made that all who, in view of the doctrines and language of the creed, believe themselves to be members of "The Church of Peterboro," should give their names to the Secretary of the Meeting. In accordance with this request, a number of persons gave their names.

The creed and resolutions are as follows:

### C R E E D .

We learn from the Holy Scriptures, which are the only infallible guide in all questions of morality and religion, that Christian and Church relations spring, not from external fellowship and human arrangements, but from the union of those who are the subjects of such relations with Jesus Christ, who is "the Head of the body, the Church."—(Col. i. 18; Eph. iv. 15, 16; Eph. v. 23, 30; John xv. 5; 1st Peter ii. 4, 5, 6; Eph. ii. 20; Rom. xii. 4, 5: vii. 4.) Hence we believe, that the Church of Christ on earth is composed of all the Christians on earth; that the Church of Christ in any nation is composed of all the Christians in such nation; and that the Church of Christ in any smaller community, even down to a single family, (Rom. xvi. 5; 1st Cor. xvi. 19,) is composed of all the Christians in such community. Thus believing, we declare that the Christians of Peterboro and its vicinity compose a Church; and that, following Apostolic usage, we may properly call it "THE CHURCH OF PETERBORO."—(The propriety of this name, and also the propriety of declaring that *all* the Christians of a given locality constitute the Church of such locality, are justified by the following and other texts: Rom. i. 7; 1st Cor. i. 2; Eph. i. 1; Phil. i. 1, connected with Phil. iv. 15; Col. i. 2; in 2d and 3d Rev., "Church of Ephesus," &c. &c.) As a consequence of the beliefs which we have expressed, we acknowledge ourselves bound—not to vote into our local Church, (for we can neither vote into it, nor vote out of it,)—but bound to recognise as a member of it every person within our territorial limits, who affords satisfactory evidence that he is a disciple and friend of Christ—and bound too to do this, even in the case of those who do not consent to our thus recognizing them, and even in the case of those also who, in their doctrines or practices, or both, are peculiar, unscriptural, blameworthy, be it to whatever extent it may. Another consequence of the beliefs which we have expressed is, that, whilst we are to maintain a strict Church discipline, and to admonish and rebuke each other as occasion shall call for such fidelity, we are to deem no persons worthy of being disfellowshipped by us but those whom we have ceased to regard as Christians.