greater occasion to watch. It was not therefore without reason that our Lord gave that solemn caution to all his followers: "Take heed and beware of covetousness."

8.

AGENTS FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

KENTUCKY.—Stephen G. Marshall, and Alex'r. McHatton, *Georgetown.* Benjamin Cassell, *Lexington.* Michael Rice, *Jessamine.* C. C. Moore, *Winchester.* Josiah H. Yager, *Elizabethtown.* Richard Hart, *Flemingsburg.* John Bryan, *Hopkinsville.* John Jones, *Liberty.* Andrew Henderson, *Everett's house.* Thos. Hall, *Frankfort.* Thos. M. Allen, *Union meeting-house.* H. F. Wilson, and H. Parker, *Paris.* Wm. Morrow. *Cynthiana.* Wm. Rule. *Falmouth.* David Cassell, *Bethel.* A. Perrin, *Stanford.* Jas. Houston, *North Middletown.* Dr. A. W. Bills, *Millersburgh.* Dr. John Sanders, *New Castle.* Wm. Read and Ephraim R. Osborn, *Richmond.* James Durham, *Perryville.*

INDIANA.—Thomas Parsons, *Terre Haute.* Wm. Armstrong, *Bloomington.* George Perry, *Greencastle.* Clement Nance, *Nanceville.* Joseph Graham, *Crawfordsville.* Obadiah Seward, *Rushville.* David Stewart, *Tuckersville.* M. Morris, *Indianapolis.*

OHIO.—Henry Montfort and D. Purviance, *Eaton.* Levi Purviance, *New Paris.* Isaac N. Walter, *Dublin.* George Alkire, *Williamsport.* Wm. Miller, *Columbus.* G. Foose, *Springfield, Clarke co.* E. Vickars, *Franklin and Monroe, Butler co.* Nathan Worley, *Dayton.* Saml. Kyle, *Piqua and Troy.* Isaac Sparks, Jas. Carnahan, and G. Vanousdol, *Cincinnati.* Richard Simonton, *Lebanon.* Joseph Baker, *Chillicothe.*

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THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

BY BARTON W. STONE,

AN ELDER IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

"Prove all things: hold fast that which is good."—PAUL.

VOL. I.] GEORGETOWN, KY FEBRUARY 24, 1827 [N. 4.

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HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

No. I.

Towards the close of the eighteenth century, there was an unusual death in the professors of religion, throughout the western country, both among the preachers and the people. In the commencement of the present century, the more pious became seriously alarmed at the prevalence of vice and the declension of vital piety. They agreed to meet often in prayer to God to revive religion, which appeared ready to die. These meetings were frequent, and began to attract general attention. The humble Christians prayed fervently, and sang the praises of God with warm devotion. Their prayers reached the ears of the Lord; *he answered by fire;* for he poured out his spirit in a way almost miraculous. This powerful work was first experienced

in Tennessee, and in the lower parts of this state, among the Presbyterians, in the summer or fall of 1800.

At this time I had gone to Virginia and North Carolina. From Carolina I was returning to Kentucky in company with Dr. Hall, who was going on a mission to Natchez and the low countries. Never shall I forget the events that transpired on our journey. We were met by a company returning from Tennessee, who had letters to Dr. Hall. We stopped in the woods. The Doctor began to read silently; but soon cried out aloud, and burst into a flood of tears. At first we were at a loss for the cause; but soon learned from the bearer of the letters, and from the letters themselves, that which equally affected us all. It was an account of a wonderful meeting at Shiloh in Tennessee—that many had been struck down as dead, and continued for hours apparently breathless, and afterwards rose, praising God for his saving mercy—that the saints were all alive—and sinners all around weeping and crying for mercy—and that multitudes were converted and rejoicing in God.

The work spread and progressed like fire in a dry stubble. The sparks, lighting in various parts of the field, would quickly raise as many blazes all around. So the Christians from various and distant parts met together; and returning home in the spirit and power of religion, they became preachers, successful preachers, in their neighborhoods, by simply stating what they had seen, heard, and felt; and so spake that many believed and turned to the Lord. I knew an old Presbyterian in a barren neighborhood. He heard of this strange work, and went 60 or 70 miles to one of those meetings. The work was very great and strange. He felt the flame of it in his own heart, and returned home in the power of the spirit. He had a very wicked son. He went to see him, deeply impressed with the situation of his child. As soon as he saw him, he burst into a flood of tears, and cried out, O my son Reuben. The son was instantly convicted of his sins, and immediately repaired to the woods, and cried for mercy; nor did he

cease till he obtained it. He straightway began to exhort and warn his companions in wickedness to repent and believe the gospel; and many turned to the Lord. From that period to his death, about 20 years, he laboured without ceasing, in the vineyard of the Lord, and was eminently useful.

In the spring of 1801, the Lord visited his people in the north of Kentucky. In Fleming, and in Concord, one of my congregations, the same strange and mighty works were seen and experienced. On the fourth Lord's day in May, we had an appointment for a communion at Concord. Various causes collected an unusual multitude of people together at this time,—between five and six thousands, of various sects, and many preachers. The house could not contain them, and we repaired to the woods. Worship commenced on Friday, and continued without intermission day and night, for four or five days. From this meeting, the flame spread all around, and increased till the ever-memorable meeting at Caneridge, in August following. Here an innumerable multitude collected, estimated at 25,000 souls. The meeting commenced on Friday, and continued six or seven days. It was truly a solemn scene to see the multitudes coming together, and the number of wagons and carriages bringing provisions and tents to stay on the ground; for it was found that no neighborhood could entertain and support the multitudes that came together. The members of the church and the neighbours brought their provisions to the encampment, for themselves and strangers. Long tables were spread with provisions, and all invited to eat. This was the beginning and introduction of camp meetings. During this time, night and day worship continued. Hundreds were lying as men slain in battle; many engaged in prayer for the distressed in every part of the camp; many in the woods around crying for mercy; many rejoicing aloud in songs of praise. In other parts many of the preachers of various names, were proclaiming the gospel of salvation. The number of converts could never be ascertained: it is thought to have been between 500 and 1000.

The doctrine preached by all was simple, and nearly the same. Free and full salvation to every creature was proclaimed. All urged faith in the gospel, and obedience to it, as the way of life. All appeared deeply impressed with the ruined state of sinners, and were anxious for their salvation. The spirit of partyism, and party distinctions, were apparently forgotten. The doctrines of former controversy were not named; no mention was made of eternal unconditional election, reprobation, or fatality. The spirit of love, peace, and union, were revived. You might have seen the various sects engaged in the same spirit, praying, praising, and communing together, and the preachers in the lead. Happy days! joyful seasons of refreshment from the presence of the Lord! This work from this period spread throughout the western country.

It should not be concealed that among us Presbyterians, there were some, both of the preachers and private members, who stood in opposition to the work, and the doctrine by which it was promoted. They did not like that the doctrines of their confession should be neglected *in the daily ministration.* They therefore became jealous lest those doctrines should be entirely rejected by the churches; they began to preach them, and oppose the doctrine of the revival. The other sects began to take the alarm and to oppose the doctrine of Calvin. The war commenced; and now there appeared to be more solicitude to establish certain dogmas, and to enlist members into a particular party, than to preach the gospel, and win souls to Christ. The pious wept at the sight, and were groaning at the devastations of Zion, the breach of union, and the unhappy check put to the work of God! Never before did partyism to my mind appear so hateful, so destructive to the progress of truth and vital piety, and to the salvation of souls. Many saw it in the same light, and felt determined to stand fast in the gospel of Christ, and labour to promote his work.

But here we were not permitted to rest. We must come into the party views and party spirit of the de-

nomination by which we were called, and cease from preaching that doctrine which was considered contrary to the doctrines contained in our confession of faith, contemptuously called *arminian*. These doctrines were, that the provisions and calls of the gospel were for all, and to all the family of Adam; that Christ died for all, and was the constituted Saviour of all; that the poor sinner must believe in him, and that he was capable to believe from the evidences given in the gospel. In this strain of preaching, a number of the Presbyterian preachers had been for some time past engaged. But these by no means suited the sticklers for *orthodoxy*. Richard McNemar, a member of Washington Presbytery, was zealously engaged in preaching these views. At the session of this Presbytery in Cincinnati, Oct. 6, 1802, a *lay* elder, a member of the Presbytery, arose and entered a verbal complaint against McNemar, as a propagator of false doctrine, and desired the Presbytery to look into the matter. Though McNemar protested against this measure as disorderly, yet he was overruled, and the Presbytery, as a court of inquisition, proceeded to examine him, on the doctrine of particular election, human depravity, the atonement, the application of it to sinners, the necessity of a divine agency in the application, and the nature of faith. The result of the examination was, that his views were essentially different from Calvinism—and that his *principles were strictly Arminian*, "which, (say they) are dangerous to the souls of men, and hostile to the interests of all true religion." A copy of their judgment was ordered to be sent to all the churches under their care. What appeared extraordinary is, that this same presbytery in the same session, in which they passed a vote of condemation on his principles, as dangerous to the souls of men, and hostile to the interests of all true religion, appointed McNemar to preach among the vacancies, as usual, as their minutes shew.

At the next session of this Presbytery in April 1803, a petition was presented, praying Presbytery to examine McNemar on the fundamental doctrines of religion;

and that the Rev. John Thompson undergo the like examination. The Presbytery rejected the petition as improper; and presented McNemar a call from Turtle-Creek, which he accepted. The minority of Presbytery protested against these acts of the majority.

In Sept. 1803, the Synod met in Lexington. Here the books of all the Presbyteries were to be examined, and their improper conduct arraigned at the bar of this court. Through the committee of overtures, the business of the Washington Presbytery in their sessions in Cincinnati and Springfield with respect to McNemar and Thompson, was laid before the Synod. The Synod soon determined, that the Washington Presbytery acted orderly in examining McNemar, and of publishing their vote of condemnation of his principles, as dangerous, and contrary to the constitution of the Presbyterian church, and that they were disorderly in giving him appointments to preach. They also determined that the Presbytery acted disorderly in rejecting the petition to examine McNemar and Thompson at Springfield, and in presenting McNemar the call from Turtle Creek. It was now evidently seen that the way was prepared to censure any minister of the gospel without charge, witness, or prosecution, through the short medium of Presbyterial inquisition. We, who were of the same sentiments, now plainly saw that the proceedings of Synod not only involved the fate of McNemar and Thompson, but equally our own. We saw the arm of ecclesiastical authority raised to crush us, and we must either sink, or step aside to avoid the blow.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

THOUGHTS ON PREACHING.

We have seen many and great improprieties in this particular among ourselves, as well as among others. To correct these is our present design, in a few of the following pages. In times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, all Christians are more or less affected with the importance of truth, and feel a deep concern for the prosperity of Zion, and for the salvation of

souls. It is a liberty granted by the Head of the Church, that all may prophecy and exhort one another. In this way parents are often successful preachers to their children, and neighbors to their neighbors. In a congregation, great and good effects have been produced by a plain, simple, and short address, made by an unlettered person, who felt the force of truth; while the learned and polished doctor may have rhetorized and philosphized the people to sleep, or to careless indifference.

There are many persons in those times of refreshing, who, feeling the worth of souls, and a great desire for the interests of Zion, are impressed with the belief that they are called to preach the gospel. Should they be possessed of correct information or knowledge, and be endowed with a capacity of communicating that knowledge to the edification of their hearers, the church should encourage such to exercise their gifts in their meetings—*in their meetings;* for such speakers should first learn at home, in the church of which they are members, before they go abroad to preach; nor should they go abroad as preachers until they are sent and recommended by the church.–II. Cor. iii. 1.–Acts xiii, 1, 4. We view it an impropriety for a person, impressed with the idea that he is divinely called to preach, to go abroad, and travel from country to country preaching, without being sent by the church with letters of commendation. Paul did it; but he was miraculously called and inspired by the Holy Spirit, as an apostle of Christ. Hence he so frequently says, that he was not sent by man to preach. This person going abroad contrary to gospel order, frequently does more injury than good to the cause of Christ. Had he believed and not have made haste, he might have become a profitable member in the church. Many have acted thus for want of information on the subject. It is hoped this hint will cause such to examine the New Testament, and that the churches as well as themselves will in future attend more closely to the order of our Head, the Lord Jesus.

We have seen with pain another impropriety amongst us. We have seen a person eminently qualified to preach the gospel with clearness, spirit, and power, confined to one particular charge or church; who before his confinement laboured extensively; and by whose labors the saints were every where revived and sinners converted. This person should not be confined to one church, but should travel among all as much as possible. For fact proves that as soon as he is confined to one place, his labours become unprofitable, and both himself and the people too frequently sink into unfruitfulness and death. On the other hand we have seen men eminently qualified with the gift of *government*, to keep and put in order the things that may be wanting in the church, yet have not the gift of preaching with profit—we have seen such men travelling and labouring extensively, when it was evident to all, they ought to labour and govern at home. In this they would be useful. That there is a diversity of gifts is evident.–Rom. xii, 6, 8.–I. Cor. xii, 28, 31, &c. Of these gifts the church is the best judge. We are grieved to see those preachers among us, who are capable of edifying the churches, generally confined at home; and those of very limited knowledge, capacity, and influence, travelling abroad. A course opposite to this is certainly correct, and ought to be pursued by us.

It is commonly objected, that by travelling and preaching abroad, the preacher would lack a support for himself and family. Nothing is more reasonable and scriptural, than that he that preaches the gospel should live by it; and if every church stood in gospel order, each would have a pastor, or overseer, and meet together every Lord's day for worship; and on that day each member would give to his deacon, as the Lord had prospered him, for the help of the needy; and who in our free country are more needy than they who devote their time to the preaching of the gospel? We fear that the objection to preaching extensively may arise from a covetous spirit, which requires more, in order to live in the style of the day. For this poor trifle, shall

souls be forever lost? Shall preachers neglect their duty? Shall they spend the Lord's day at home, doing nothing to advance the cause of God? Let them think how they will meet their judge in the great day of account.

We shall mention one more impropriety among the preachers in general, and that not the least. Many destroy their usefulness by ever preaching controversy. On a few particular subjects their attention is fixed, and on these they dwell till they are almost brought to conclude that they are the sum of truth, and the very essence of religion, and that all who reject them must be destitute of both. The doctrines of eternal election, absolute decrees, perseverance in grace, trinity, the atonement, and their opposites, have long engaged almost the sole attention of many; or if they occasionally touch on the practical points of religion, it is evidently done with a cold indifference, their zeal having been expended in the defence of their peculiar dogmas, and in handsomely drubbing and anathematizing their opponents. Such is the popular cant of many in the present day, and this, though unprofitable, is the popular preaching of this time. This fault is chiefly found among the younger class of preachers, the old having learned by good sense and experience the inutility and folly of such labours, and that the hearts of the preachers and hearers are left barren of devotion, communion with God, and brotherly love, after such addresses. Let such carping controversialists ask themselves, if what they preach to others, is living food to their own souls? If not, how can they expect to feed the sheep, and cause them to thrive? Does not such preaching destroy brotherly love and Christian union, and therefore must be a serious injury to society? To declare plainly our views on controverted points at proper times and places, is certainly proper; but wisdom should regulate, and moderation and meekness should ever be manifested.

The attention of the churches and preachers is earnestly invited to this subject; and as we expect to meet in conference shortly, we request communications on this subject from brethren who have made it their study.

EDITOR.

☞Our annual conference will be on Friday before the first Lord's day in April next, at Upper Indian Creek meeting house, near Cynthiana, Harrison county, Kentucky.

We have lately read a piece in the Western Luminary, entitled *The Trinity*.–Vol. III, No. 28. We have yet to learn what the writer had in view in publishing this to the world. It could not be for the conviction of the anti-trinitarian, nor for the establishment of the trinitarian; for the arguments used are presumptive, and not calculated for either conviction or establishment. We cannot but view it as a beacon of alarm, raised up to excite the fears of the weak, and to inflame their angry passions against their fellow creatures, who may be as acceptable to their God as themselves. The writer appears to have forgotten a solemn precept of Jesus: *Judge not, that ye be not judged.* To us the piece under review, is a perfect exhibition of the intolerant spirit of the fourth century, by which piety, peace, love, and union, were almost driven from the church.

In the first paragraph the writer expresses his opinion that Unitarianism (by which term he understands *Socinianism*) is the most dangerous of doctrines, with regard to the Christian religion. We shall not contend with him as to the degree of danger attached to this doctrine; for with him we agree in rejecting the doctrine as "inconsistent with the simple and plain declarations of the Bible. But we fear to judge, as he has done, that it assumes a ground or station, which is entirely repugnant to the experience of every child of God." We think there is a numerous and growing class of Socinians in the present day, who disseminate the doctrine under the cloak of orthodoxy. For how many nominal trinitarians at this time, deny the preexistence of the Son of God, and affirm that the *Logos*

or *Word, which was made flesh*, was not a distinct mind, or spirit, or intelligent being, but was the only true God himself. What then but *man* was born, grew up, lived, and died? The professed Socinians are no doubt, highly pleased with this change of professed trinitarians, and look forward with pleasure to the period when a union between them shall be effected.

In the second paragraph, the writer says: "If our Saviour in his essential character, was not God—the eternal being—the creator of the universe—the creator of all things, whether in heaven or on earth, he was the greatest impostor the world ever saw." But on the supposition, the Saviour never assumed one of these characters to himself, what then? Could he be called the greatest impostor the world ever saw? We boldly affirm that he never assumed one of these characters to himself; nor are we afraid of a contradiction from the Bible. The highest character he ever assumed, was, *the Son of God.*

The writer proceeds: "And his apostles were a simple, infatuated people, not worthy of the least regard—seeing they have asserted that to be a fact, which is not true." That the apostles ever asserted this to be a fact, that Jesus Christ in his essential character was God—the eternal being—the creator of the universe, is denied by many, probably as learned, as honest, and as good as the writer. It is a subject of long and endless controversy, into which we have no desire here to enter; as enough and too much has been already written on this point. But should the writer hereafter make specifications of the apostles' testimony *to this fact*, we shall not decline an investigation.

The writer in his great zeal has transcended *orthodoxy* itself, by confounding the persons of the trinity; for he says, "He is the Father; he is the Son; he is the Word." He asks, "Is he the Saviour of those, who do not believe him to be what he is in reality?" that is in his essential character, God—the eternal being—the creator of the universe. He boldly denies salvation to such, unless they renounce their unworthy pretensions,

and acknowledge "that he was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not." We hope there are none, professing Christianity, who would not willingly make this acknowledgement; we hope there are none who would not with Peter acknowledge that *he was the Christ, the son of the living God.* We hope there are none, who do not receive the witness of the Father, "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased." How all things were made by him, we are informed, Heb. i, 1. Here God is said to have made the worlds by his son. In v. 10, the father declares of the son, that the earth and the heavens are the works of his hands. In v. 8 and 9, the father addresses the son:—"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Such declarations need no comment; should any be thought necessary, we refer to Eph. iii, 9, I. Cor. viii, 6.

"Christians, (says the writer) have the evidence within themselves, that Christ is God. But is not the evidence wanting in those who deny the fact?" This is bare assertion. With equal ease the contrary might be asserted, and the arguments or assertions be of equal weight. But the writer, and his copyist by this expression, have plainly manifested a perfect want of charity for such as receive not their dogmas on this subject. It would certainly do them no harm, but much good to read, and ponder well I. Cor. xiii.

He proceeds: "If the doctrine of the adorable trinity be true, then are a large majority of professing Christians right." This is not so self-evident as he may think. If trinity be a doctrine of scripture, all the various and discrepant theories of trinitarians cannot be right—they may all be wrong; but one only can be right; and who can determine which is the right one? and whether the majority of Christians are in this right one? We know it to be a fact, that many professed trinitarians, made so by education, deny the doctrine

when stated to them fairly. They have received the doctrine as an incomprehensible mystery; yet by reading the scriptures they have formed correct notions of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The writer adds, "But if it (the trinity) is not true, then are a small minority correct; not, however, by reasons, or just inferences, drawn from the Bible; but from a course of reasoning, which has either sophistry or deism for its guide." This sentence appears to us strange, very strange! If the doctrine of trinity be not true, then a small minority is right, the Bible wrong, and Deism true! This brings to my recollection the sentiment of a late English writer. Speaking of the United States, he says: "In no country is the wise toleration established by law so complete as in this. But in no country whatever, is a spirit of persecution for mere opinions, more prevalent than in the United States of America. It is a country most tolerant in theory, and most bigoted in practice." EDITOR.

The last number of the Western Luminary gave us cheering intelligence of revivals of religion among the Presbyterians in different parts of the United States. But great fear appears to be excited, lest these revivals should eventuate as that did in 1803, when so many rejected man-made creeds, and party names; and received the Bible alone as the standard of faith and practice, and the name *Christian* instead of party names. These the Luminary strangely considers as *new notions* and *new lights;* and solemnly warns his friends in the west, lest they should fall into the same fatal heresy! Astonishing! that in a Christian land, and by a protestant too, such a sentiment should be uttered! Yet he advances five arguments to persuade them to cleave to their party creeds and names, and to reject the receiving of the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice, and the name *Christian* as their only name. To these arguments we will attend.

1st. That in all those places where the Lord is reviving his work, the churches of the different denominations are going on *in the good old way*, without carrying on a warfare against creeds and confessions." Vol. III, no. 30.

The force of the argument is this: If you desire to be blessed of God, and have revivals of religion among you, continue *in the good old way*, by which the Luminary means the various, jarring creeds and confessions of the different sects and denominations. Though the Presbyterians condemn many of the doctrines of the Methodist creed and discipline, as errors; yet it is thought better for them to continue in those errors, than to receive the Bible alone, and the name of Christ. For they who have done so are not blessed with revivals. This is his second argument to dissuade his friends in the west from rejecting their human authoritative creeds and party names, and taking the Bible alone and the name *Christian*, in their stead. For he adds:

2. "If there have been revivals in churches, in which the hue and cry have been raised on the subject of *priest-craft*," "*the kingdom of the clergy*," "*creeds and confessions* &c. &c. we have not been informed of them."

We think he must have lived a recluse in the west, not to have heard something of the many thousands, who, in the different revivals in the west, have been converted to the Lord, in those places too, where authoritative creeds and party names were zealously opposed, and the Bible alone warmly recommended to be received as the only rule of faith and practice, and the name *Christian*, as that given by divine authority. On the contrary, we profess never to have heard of one soul converted to God, by warring in defence of human authoritative creeds and party names, as being more acceptable and pleasing to God, than the Bible *alone*, and the Christian name. Is it possible that the Luminary thinks that the frowns of God are upon those who prefer his word, and the name he has given, to the jarring creeds and names devised by men?

The revivals at this time among Presbyterians, we believe from the knowledge of facts, have not commenced and progressed by preaching the confession, or its

peculiar and leading doctrines; for these, in every revival we have known among them, have been left out of view. The simple, plain doctrine of the Bible has been preached, and warmly urged; as the necessity of regeneration, faith, and repentance; the general calls and invitations of the gospel; the encouragements and promises to returning sinners; the willingness and sufficiency of Christ to save all that come to him, and the danger of rejecting him, and his grace. This is the doctrine blessed of God, when preached in the spirit, and received by faith, joined with obedience. A true revival always manifests its divine character by brotherly love, peace, union, and humility. Wherever these are found, we acknowledge it of God, and cordially unite in giving him the glory.

The Luminary produces three more arguments to persuade his friends to cleave to *the good old way*, their jarring creeds and confessions, and to avoid the *new notions* and *new lights* in the west. He warns them of the danger of being carried away by them, from the facts which transpired in 1803.

1st. A part of the Synod of Kentucky at that time assumed the Christian name, rejected creeds and confessions, and received the Bible alone without comment or explanation. Oh, what dreadful heresy is this! In what awful danger must such people be! It must be wonderful that the Church of Christ for the three first centuries, could have been preserved from ruin without the aid of a human creed, or party name; for they had the Bible alone, and the name of Christ alone! Alas for his friends in the west, should they be led away with these *new notions!* For of six Presbyterian preachers who did so, *three were swept off by the Shakers.* What is the conclusion? Surely, that the Bible is an insufficient guide—a dangerous book! So thought the Pope and his Cardinals long ago, and therefore in their wisdom and clemency, debarred the people from reading it. Protestants permit the people to read it, but they must understand it as explained in the confession, or become subject to censure and exclusion from the Church. Which of the two acts most consistently?

The argument used by the Luminary against the *new notion* of receiving the Bible alone will equally apply against receiving the confession of faith. For we might warn our friends in the West against receiving the confession, because several ministers were swept off by the Shakers. It must therefore be a dangerous book, an insufficient guide, and bond of union. So we might prove the danger of the Methodists' and Baptists' creeds, as many of their societies were swept off by the Shakers, and this before they had taken the dreadful leap of taking the Bible alone as their rule, and the name Christian for their name. These *new notions* they had not previously received.

2. The Luminary states another important historical fact, as a beacon to warn his friends from going after *new notions*. Two others of the six preachers who assumed the name *Christian*, and took the Bible alone for their rule, returned to the church from which they departed. As the design of stating this fact is to warn, let us hear it. Take warning from these two men of the west, not to follow after *new notions*, as they did in assuming the name *Christian*, and in taking the Bible alone, to the rejection of all authoritative creeds and confessions. They have found the Bible *alone*, by experiment, an insufficient guide—a book not profitable for doctrine, reproof, nor correction, nor for instruction in righteousness—that it cannot make the man of God perfect, it cannot thoroughly furnish him to every good work. They have after wandering in the wide fields of the Bible some years, become discouraged; and being convinced of the necessity of the confession of faith as a better guide, as *the good old way*, have returned to the Church which is built upon it. Look at this beacon and take warning.

The last fact stated to warn his friends from going after *new notions*, is, that Mr B. W. Stone, the remaining one of the six preachers, who took the Bible alone, is now at the head of the Unitarian sect in the west. Surely the *Bible alone*, without an orthodox comment or explanation, must be, in the eye of the Luminary, a very mis

chievous and dangerous book: three preachers were made Shakers, two wandered long, and one became a Unitarian, by receiving it alone; and some other *ism* is hinted at towards the close, by which, we presume, is meant *deism;* as this is the common epithet of the day. Though the arguments lead us clearly to this conclusion, we cannot for a moment think that the Luminary entertains this view of the Bible, or would put such a Bible—destructive weapon—into the hand of infidelity.

The honor of being the head of a sect in the west Stone never claimed; the name *Unitarian* he never assumed, but equally rejects with every other party name; and as to a party sect, he abhors, and for more than twenty years has opposed the idea. He stands with his brethren on the Bible, a ground safe and sure. This we know shall ultimately triumph over all opposition, when boasted creeds and confessions shall be known no more, only as monuments of the folly and weakness of poor fallible men. We know that the war between the Bible and human creeds has commenced, and will never cease till the weaker dies. We are in no doubt as to its issue. All the physical and moral means of the various parties, are brought forth into operation to defend their creeds and standards. A mighty effort is making in the east, west, north, and south. The heavens are shaking, and every thing which cannot stand the shock, must be shaken out. The Bible will stand, and all who stand on it, and are possessed of its divine spirit, shall stand firm and undismayed forever. EDITOR.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

Mr Editor—As the principal objects of the Christian Messenger, are to exhibit truth and expose error, with a view to these I wish to present a few thoughts to your readers, which were suggested by a sermon delivered a few evenings since in my hearing, by an *orthodox* preacher of one of the popular sects of the day. His text was Luke xiv, 17: "Come, for all things are now ready." After a short exordium, he proceeded, with all the self confidence of a true son of the mother church,

very methodically to the investigation of his subject. He took the following positions, and made some efforts to maintain them, especially the first.

1st. God the Father is ready, for God the Son has died.

2d. God the Son is ready, for God the Holy Ghost is given.

3d. God the Holy Ghost is ready, for light and conviction have reached the world.

Strange positions! thought I. And if they be true, surely tritheism is the doctrine of the Bible; for here are three Gods as distinctly named, as words could make them. For if different persons, with different names and of different works, will not prove separate existence, I ask what will? God the Father is ready; for God the Son, who is a distinct person from him, and equal to him, has died. God the Son is ready, because God the Holy Ghost, who is distinct from both the Father and the Son, and equal to each of them, is given. God the Holy Ghost is ready, because light and conviction has reached the world. So that these three persons, each of whom is *perfect God*, are ready; but each is ready for a separate and distinct reason!

Suppose I assert that A, B, and C, have a particular work to perform; that each has to act a particular part in accomplishing the work; that A is ready to perform his part, because B has fulfilled certain previous obligations to him; that B is ready because C has done something else; and that C is ready for a reason different from both the others. I farther assert that A is a man, that B is a man, and that C is a man. What must be the conclusion from these statements? Certainly that A, B, and C are distinct and different men. For similar reasons, it appears to me impossible to draw any other just conclusion from the positions of our preacher than this, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are three distinct Gods.

Suppose I farther assert, though A, B, and C, are distinct persons, and each a separate man, and filling a separate office, yet they are not three men, but one

man; would not all exclaim with one voice, 'that is impossible, it is a contradiction'? To reason in proof of this proposition would be useless. The application is easy, that the positions of our preacher are self-contradictory, and in opposition to the language and import of scripture, as they go to destroy the very foundation of all true religion, the doctrine of the "one God, the Father."

It will not help the matter, to assert that the terms, *Father, Son, Spirit, Person,* &c. as used in the scripture, are understood in a sense different from what they have in common use among men; for if words, when used by the Almighty to communicate divine and important truth to his creatures, are to be understood in a sense different from any known to us, we should be as much in the dark in relation to the important truth contained in those words, as if no communication had been made.

"How can we reason, but from what we know!" Could such a communication be properly called a revelation? And can any man of good sense seriously maintain such a position?—a position which reflects disgrace upon the wisdom and benevolence of our heavenly Father. Am I mistaken when I affirm that this sentiment, that the scripture is mysterious, and contains a hidden meaning, different from that communicated by its words, which meaning none but priests specially called of God, and furnished with spiritual perceptions, can explain?—that this sentiment was the very means by which the priests of the mother of harlots established and maintained that unhallowed influence and power over the consciences of the people, which have been so productive of mischief to the church and to the world? Do not Protestants themselves, who plead for this sentiment, carry with them this relic of the old mother, the very life and soul of popery?

I think it is clearly ascertained, that the positions of our preacher involve the absurd idea of three Gods. I do not suppose that he believes this absurd notion; he no doubt abhors it as cordially as any other. I wish merely to shew that the ground which he took, and which the *ortkodox* generally take on this subject, cannot be maintained in consistency with this glorious Bible truth, that there is *but one true and living God.*

The only exposition the preacher gave of *the all things* in the text was, that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, were ready, and the reasons why. What! thought I; and do *the all things* in the text mean the three persons in the trinity! And are these three eternal persons (admitting the doctrine true) *things! three things,* and but one being!! I had ever thought that the *all things ready* had an exclusive reference to the provisions of the gospel; but our preacher thought differently. Having stated, that "God the Father is ready, for God the Son has died," he attempted by four arguments, or rather positive assertions, to prove negatively that God the Father never could be ready, till God the Son had died. For until he died, according to the preacher, "the way to heaven was blocked up." The proof of this assertion he found in the flaming sword, spoken of in Genesis, which was placed "to guard the way of the tree of life." This sword he explained to be the justice of God. What! Did the justice of God "block up" the way to heaven? Is not the way to heaven "the high way of holiness"? So the Bible teaches. The justice of God, then, or the just God himself was actually engaged in keeping mankind from the way of holiness till "God the Son died"! Would it not be difficult, on this hypothesis to clear God from being the author of sin? To keep men from the way of holiness has always been the delightful employment of the prince of darkness. In this horrid work, according to this doctrine, we see both God and Satan unite and heartily concur in blocking up the way to heaven!

But I asked myself, did not the justice of God always require of men to be holy? Most certainly. Will it not appear then, that while justice "blocked up the way to heaven," it had claims upon us of the most contradictory and opposite nature? Will it not appear to be divided against itself, requiring of us to be holy, and yet at the same time opposing it by blocking up the way?

Will it not also hence appear, that the justice of God must fall, and with it the Deity himself, according to the well known maxim of the Saviour, "A house divided against itself cannot stand." However strange this sentiment may seem, it is in perfect accordance with the drift of our preacher's discourse; for he informed us, that the way to heaven, which had been blocked up by the justice of God, was opened when *God the Son died.* Then justice did not *stand in the way*, but *was moved out of the way!!* I forbear farther remarks on our preacher's sermon. A few reflections and I shall have done.

Merciful God! and is this orthodoxy? Is this the test of Christian character? Who then can be saved? And are these the sentiments, to support which so much charity and Christian feeling have been thrown away, and the earth been crimsoned with blood? Are these the notions yet maintained by the popular sects as the distinguishing badge of the Christian? Are these the notions for the rejection of which we must must be cast out from the bosom of our friends, treated as intolerable heretics, our names loaded with infamy and reproach, the Christian name and character denied us, and we ranked among Deists and other enemies of the cross? Oh! how long shall the doctrines and commandments of men occupy the place of God's holy and perfect word! How long, O Lord, till the mists and clouds of ignorance, superstition, and error, be driven from the heavens by the gales of truth, and the sun of righteousness shine in all his resplendent glory upon thy drooping church, and diffuse light, life, and health through every part!

Though it is calculated to sink the heart of piety to behold the errors and superstitions, which like a flood are deluging the church, and drowning in their deeps, peace, love, union, and almost every virtue, that assimilates man to his maker, and fits him for the society of the blessed; yet such a heart derives consolation from the consideration that error is fast flying before truth; that liberal gospel principles are fast gaining ground; that the spirit of inquiry has gone forth; that men every where begin to see and feel that they are fallible, and

therefore not disposed to lay such infinite stress upon their own notions and speculations; they begin to acknowledge *heartily* that the right of private judgment is the gift of God to all, and that he alone is the Lord of conscience. Above all, the pious heart may rejoice from this consideration, that "the Lord reigneth," and has promised the complete and eternal triumph of truth. Happy shall that people be, who shall be found walking in it! Then, Christian reader, let it be our great concern to know and obey the truth, lest while we think we may be doing God service, we be found fighting against him. TIMOTHY.

THE COLONIZATION SOCIETY.

The nation appears roused to this subject. The greater part of the state legislatures have expressed their decided approbation of it. Religious societies are every where lending their aid. It is our wish to awaken the attention of the West, and to engage all in the laudable work. The subject is now before our national legislature, and it is hoped, not in vain. We publish an extract from the speech of a distinguished citizen, for the information of our readers. The constitution shall appear in a subsequent number.

"Mr. Custis anticipated with exultation the results that would follow the success of the society's efforts in removing this wretched population from the American soil, and restoring them to the land of their forefathers. When the bark that bore them approached the African shore, it would not be hailed with such shouts as welcomed Columbus when he bore to the people of the Western Archipelago the emblem of the cross—an emblem that appeared only to both nations in each others' blood. We sent them the star-spangled banner, that constellation whose rising lighted the world to freedom. When that banner shall float over their corn-clad hills and plains, waving in harvest, they will not think of Cortez or Pizarro; the name of America will be hailed with enthusiasm by millions on that vast continent that are now unborn. He called the society to remember the first

colonization of this country. A feeble little vessel bore the adventurous band, but virtue and religion led the way; the genius of philosophy was perched upon the helm. Now we are a great nation; should we not pity others?

"In his remarks upon the unhappy situation of the planters, Mr C. said, that what he spoke, he spoke not from speculation; he brought not the dreams of others, but his own experience; touching all those evils, he might with truth say, "*Quorum magna pars fui.*" He had lived to see, and painfully to feel, the errors of the system. His great hope lay in the magnanimity of those who were happily free from that system, and who, when they understood and became convinced of the feelings and desires of the men of the south for its entire removal, and saw a plan for that removal that presented a feasible prospect of success, would not, could not, refuse their aid to carry it into effect. The nation possessed the power to effect it. The republic was not now feeble and panting from the mighty effort of its newly accomplished emancipation; it had had time to breathe, to recruit its strength, to be refreshed, and to prepare itself for new exertions in the cause of light and liberty, and human happiness. On the subject of this enterprize, the nation has been as if in deep sleep; but when the lion has slept, it was not the time to form conjectures on his power; would you see his strength, you must rouse him from his lair. With respect to the American republic, she had only to awake, she had but to

"Stretch her hand—
She heav'd the gods the ocean of the land."

What had she not already achieved? If she could only be brought to *think* upon the subject, and once to turn her strength to its accomplishment, all difficulties would vanish before her way. The national genius, like the tube of Herschell, will discover satellites and suns that none believed had place within the starry sphere.

To CORRESPONDENTS.—"Milton" and "Philip" are thankfully received, and shall be inserted in our next.

THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

BY BARTON W. STONE,
AN ELDER IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

"Prove all things: hold fast that which is good."—PAUL.

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HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.
No. II.

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

When we came to converse on the subject, we found it had struck each of our minds precisely in the same point of light, without any preconcerted plan. To appeal to the general assembly, so long as human opinions were esteemed the standard of orthodoxy, we had little hope of redress. We therefore determined to withdraw from the jurisdiction of Synod, and cast ourselves upon that God, who had led us hitherto in safety through many trials and difficulties; and who we believe, will lead us safely on to the end.

We then concluded to draw up, and enter our protest against the proceedings of Synod. While we were doing this, the Synod were employed in debating on the propriety of proceeding on in the new inquisition, as will appear from the following extract:

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

"While Synod were deliberating on the propriety of adopting the above resolution, Messrs Marshall, Stone,