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.

VOL. I.] GEORGETOWN, KY. MARCH 24, 1827. [No 5.

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,

Dunlavy, McNemar, and Thompson, appeared in Synod, and having given their reasons for not attending sooner, they presented a paper through Mr Marshall, which that gentleman stated to be a protest against the proceedings of Synod, in the affair of Washington Presbytery, and a declaration that they withdrew from the jurisdiction of Synod, this paper was read and is as follows:

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

"Rev. Sir—We, the underwritten members of Washington and West Lexington Presbyterries, do hereby enter our protest against the proceedings of Synod, in approbating that minute of the Washington Presbytery, which condemned the sentiments of Mr McNemar, as dangerous to the souls of men, and hostile to the interests of all true religion; and the proceeding therewith connected: and for reasons which we now offer, we declare ourselves no longer members of your reverend body, nor under your jurisdiction, or that of your Presbyteries.

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

2. "We claim the privilege of interpreting the scripture by itself, according to section 9, chapter 1, of the Confession of Faith; and believe that the Supreme Judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the scriptures.

"But from the disposition which Synod manifests, it appears to us that we cannot enjoy this privilege, but must be bound up to such explanations of the word of God, as preclude all farther enquiry after truth.

3. "We remain inviolably attached to the doctrines of grace, which through God have been mighty in every revival of true religion since the reformation. These doctrines, however, we believe, are in a measure darkened, by some expressions in the Confession of Faith, which are used as the means of strengthening sinners in their unbelief, and subjecting many of the pious to a spirit of bondage. When we attempt to obviate those difficulties, we are charged with departing from our standards, viewed as disturbers of the peace of the church, and threatened to be called to account. The proceedings of Presbytery have furnished the world with ample encouragement in this mode of opposition; and the sanction which those proceedings have now received from your reverend body, cuts off every hope of relief from that quarter, from which we have at least faintly expected it. We therefore feel ourselves shut up to the necessity of relieving you from the disagreeable task of receiving petitions from the public, and ourselves from being prosecuted before a judge* whose authority to decide we *cannot in conscience acknowledge.*

Rev. Sir—Our affection for you as brethren in the Lord, is, and we hope shall ever be the same; nor do we desire to separate from your communion, or to exclude you from ours. We ever wish to bear and forbear in matters of human order or opinion, and unite our joint supplications with yours for the increasing effusions of that divine spirit, which is the bond of peace.

With this disposition of mind, we bid you adieu, until, through the providence of God, it seem good to your reverend body, to adopt a more liberal plan respecting human creeds and confessions.

ROBERT MARSHALL,
JOHN DUNLAVY,
RICHARD MCNEMAR,
BARTON W. STONE,
JOHN THOMPSON.

"*Done in Lexington, Ky. Sept. 10th,* 1803."

The introduction of the above protest put a sudden check to the examining system. The protest was then

*Confession of Faith.

read, and shortly after, we retired from the house.

Synod then appointed a committee to converse with us, as you will see in the following extract from their minutes:

"On motion, resolved, that Messrs D. Rice, Matthew Houston, and James Welsh, be a committee, seriously and affectionately to converse with Messrs Marshall, &c. to labour to bring them back to the standards and doctrines of our church, and report Monday morning."

"On motion, resolved, that Mr Joseph Howe be added as a member to the committee appointed to converse with Messrs Marshall, &c."

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

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

N. B. The whole of the questions shall be given in at once."

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

To these proposals we received no answer. It appears that Synod had considerable debating among them, whether they would comply with the proposal contained in the report of committee, in conferring with us in writing; and that there was a diversity of opinion

on that subject. A resolution being introduced for that purpose, it passed in the negative, 12 to 7.

Why Synod did not accede to the proposal we could not then tell, for they sent us no answer. However, one of their reasons, as we afterwards understood, was that the whole of the questions must be given in at once. The weight of this reason we leave to the reader to determine. We were not only willing, but anxious to have our sentiments fairly and fully investigated, provided we were put in a situation to have a fair hearing. This we knew we could not obtain, while the leading members of Synod were in their present spirit. We did not expect to have the privilege of discussing the subjects before Synod in the capacity in which we then stood; and were unwilling to bring our *necks again under a yoke*, which we had so lately thrown off. The only fair way, then, to prevent quibbling and misrepresentation, was to do it in writing, as we could not do it any other way, unless we revoked our protest, and came again under the jurisdiction of Synod.

But the Synod had another objection to our proposal, viz: they could not confer with us as *a body*, because they could not acknowledge the legality of *this body*. Time has a wonderful power in legalizing bodies! a few years have legalized the self-created bodies of Luther, Calvin, and all the different sects of Christians since the reformation! A few more years may legalize our *body* in the estimation of Synod, when we hope they will condescend to confer with us, and unity be restored.

Though we had withdrawn from the jurisdiction of Synod, it was of necessity, rather than of choice. We found we must forsake them, or what we believed *the truth*: the former were dear to us, but the latter was dearer. Under these circumstances we again committed ourselves to God, and constituted ourselves into a Presbytery, known by the name of the Springfield Presbytery.

TO BE CONTINUED.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

To Thomas T. Skillman, Editor of the Western Luminary, and a ruling Elder in the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

Sir—Your publication in the Luminary of the 24th of January, demands of the friends of truth, and the disciples of Jesus Christ, some attention.

The attack you have made against the Church of Christ, and against the Christian name and character as innovations, to be avoided, and as being fraught with error and heresy, is a real novelty in this enlightened age. You array Presbyterianism and every species of schism against the religion of Jesus Christ and the unity of his church. I wonder that you were not afraid to act thus; nothing but ignorance of the truth and of consequences, would have inspired you with so much boldness. Did you not feel some misgivings of heart, when you indulged in railing against the name and church of Christ? You have indeed, like Goliath of Gath, come out with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; they are however of Presbyterian mould and temper. I come out to thee in the name of Jesus Christ, the Lord of Hosts, the God of the Armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. You ought to have remembered that the word of God utters forth a warning voice against your whole ecclesiastical system, a system which most evidently bears the image and mark of the beast. By this remark I do not design to be understood as meaning that none of your subjects are Christians; I am sure that many of them are. I mean that your whole church system of Presbyterianism is anti-scriptural, and is usurpation over the consciences of men; and to the full extent of its legitimate operations, is an injury to the interests of true Christianity. It was rash in you to provoke investigation under the light of civil and religious liberty in these United States. The fetters which you have fastened upon the consciences of the people, and which were forged in a period of darkness, ignorance, and oppression, are liable to be exposed and broken.

Have you forgotten, Sir, the circumstances under which your Presbyterian establishment originated? The Westminster assembly, you know, which began its session July 1st, 1643, 183 years ago, met to reform some abuses of episcopacy, but in consequence of the Parliament of Great Britain becoming very much embarrassed in its contest with Charles I, and for the sake of the advantages to be derived from the Scots' alliance in men and money, they laid aside Episcopacy and attempted to establish the Presbyterial form, which they at length advanced into *jus divinum*, or a divine institution. When they commenced their session, they took *an oath*, (yes, you know your confession of faith authorizes religious swearing, though positively forbidden by Christ) that they would not maintain any thing in matter of doctrine but what *they believed in their consciences to be most agreeable to the word*, or in point of discipline but what *they should conceive* most to the glory of God, and the good and peace of his church. This oath was read every Monday morning. Their oath, to be conscientious and honest in making *your book of doctrines* agreeable to the word of God, and to form *your church* agreeably to *their conceptions*, without reference to the word of God, is fairly put in *contrast* with, and in *opposition* to, the direct instructions of Jesus Christ, who is the foundation, head, and builder of the church, and the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, imparted to the Apostles for the express purpose of making a full development of the church of God in every particular.

Your establishment in these United States, has gone one step further than the Westminster Assembly did. Your Professors in your Theological Schools are required by your General Assembly, "In the presence of God" (this is their oath or asseveration) "and the Directors of the Seminary, solemnly and *ex amino* adopt, receive, and subscribe the confession of faith and catechisms of the Presbyterian church in the United States of America, as the confession of *their* faith; or as a summary and just exhibition of that system of doctrine and religious belief, which is contained in Holy Scripture.

and therein revealed by God to man, for his salvation; and they do solemnly *ex animo* profess to receive the form of government of said church as agreeable to the inspired oracles; and do solemnly promise and engage not to inculcate, teach, or insinuate any thing, which shall appear to them to contradict or contravene either directly or impliedly any thing taught in the said confession of faith, or catechisms; nor to oppose any of the fundamental principles of Presbyterian government, while they shall continue professors in the Seminary."

Here they swear to receive the form of church government as agreeable to the inspired oracles, which the Westminster assembly only conceived to be most to the glory of God, without reference to the scripture; for they bound themselves to make their *doctrinal matter* only agreeable to the word. That which was *forced* upon the Westminster assembly by the necessity of the times, and which they were compelled to receive, in order to strengthen their army against the king, by entering into the Scots' alliance, and which was in the terms of the oath excepted from the word of God as being agreeable thereto, is by Presbyterian professors in these United States solemnly avouched before Almighty God "as being agreeable to the inspired oracles." Now, Sir, the difference between *your* authority and power to preserve order and to communicate the truth for *your own* glory and honour and emolument, and the authority of Jesus Christ and the apostles, and those who act in conformity to their word, is the precise difference between the Presbyterian name and church of Jesus Christ. You have publicly, in your paper, acknowledged that your whole system of human wisdom and authority were not able to prevent poor Dunlavy, McNemar, and Huston, from becoming Shakers. The reason was, that these men, though very honourable and popular preachers, *as Presbyterians*, never knew what the scriptures were written for, nor had they ever learnt the intrinsic difference between the word of God, and the authority and church of Christ, and the word and authority of the Presbyterian church. Suppose these men had been

placed directly under the authority of Jesus Christ, and in the knowledge of gospel truth, instead of being under the authority of Presbyterianism and in the knowledge of your catechisms, confessions, &c.; do you not think they would have been kept by *His* power through faith unto salvation? Suppose further, as you have insinuated, that many others are erroneous, which is most likely to convert them, the word of God and his spirit, or *your* word and your spirit? It would be just as seemly for you to urge the people to go back to old England for a constitution, laws, and form of government, in a civil point of view, as to go there for confessions of faith, catechisms, and church articles, in a religious point of view. The latter is not less treasonable against the church and laws of Christ in the gospel, than the former would be against the constitution and laws of these United States, in reference to civil government. You have yet to learn, that there is a great difference between revivals which produce accessions to mere Presbyterianism and to the Presbyterian ranks, and revivals which turn even from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan, and every form of the heart, unto God.

If any thing in this address has the appearance of harshness, your own temerity has produced it. You seem to consider yourself placed for the defence of all old errors, and to measure out blows hot and heavy upon the shoulders of those who prefer the word of God and the church of Christ in religion, to the opinions of men and human institutions. This is according to Presbyterianism throughout. Dr. Miller as your champion, acting under the *strange oath* above detailed, has come out with a zeal that becomes a better cause, against the sensible, conscientious, and pious Mr Duncan, for declining Presbyterial supremacy. The exhortatian of God to every Christian is, "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free." All your efforts will not be able to stop the power of that redeeming spirit, whose breath dissolves the chains of tyranny. You have my prayers for success upon all your exertions in disseminating the scriptures, and by the use of the

means God has ordained, for converting sinners; but not for building up anti-Christian churches, and thereby derogating from Jesus Christ his honour and glory, and placing them upon your own brow.

MILTON.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

Having submitted a few remarks in one of your former numbers, on the propriety of occasional meetings of Christians, with a single view to religious worship and edification, I propose making some additional observations on the government of the church of God. For information on this subject, our strong appeal will be to the Bible; to that high source every Christian should go, and "*learn of him, who is meek and lowly in heart,*" the various duties that necessarily devolve upon the followers of the Lamb.

When we read in the New Testament, the form of doctrine taught by the Lord and his apostles, the unsullied purity of that doctrine, the equal privileges and immunities of every member of each church, and the simplicity of that divine order of government therein exhibited; and when we contrast it with the present divided, jarring, and abstruse government, now prevalent in the Christian world, we are filled with astonishment in beholding the striking difference between the primitive simplicity of that order, instituted in the early and flourishing age of Christianity, and that which was subsequently introduced, and which has been continued through successive ages, overrunning and obscuring the original plainness of the ancient order. When we therefere ascertain what that system of government was, which was instituted by Jesus and his apostles, we then ascertain what is yet binding on the church, being still governed by the same King, "*who is head over all things to the church,*" as his government knows no alteration, and his people must continue to be controlled by the same unalterable laws, while in a state of probation. To the great law-giver we must submit, without regard to those who may thereby *decrease*.

"*The church,*" we maintain, is the highest, and only religious tribunal, to which any member "*of the body*" is responsible; it is absolutely independent, as being accountable to no earthly association for its conduct, and when moving in its proper sphere, is entirely uncontrolled by councils, synods, conferences, or associations. By a church I mean an assembly of disciples, believing with all their hearts the gospel of the Son of God, and manifesting in all their conduct, the truth of Jesus, and the purity of his gospel, "*by walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.*" To this assembly only is every member responsible, whether of a public or private character; and it invariably possesses the inherent right of exercising supreme authority, in governing and controlling its members, maintaining its virtue and purity, and doing every thing necessary and proper for its complete and entire independency, prosperity, peace, and happiness. That Christian churches were originally invested with these sovereign rights, powers, privileges, and liberties, is apparent from the Holy Scriptures; and we are unspeakably astonished, that these fundamental principles should be controverted by any candid inquirer and lover of truth.

For the truth of the position we have thus taken, let us appeal to the only infallible guide and unerring authority. In support of the fact that each church originally exercised supreme authority in governing and controlling its members, we cite the reader to Mat. xviii, 15, 16, 17, "Moreover, if thy brother tresspass against thee, go and tell him his fault, between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established; and if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church. But if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." Thus speaks the great head of the church. Does it not go clearly to confirm that for which we contend? No mention is made of a higher tribunal; no intimation of an appeal to a supe-

rior ecclesiastical court; "but let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." To pursue or to adopt a different course, is to oppose the order of God, and appears to be a species of rebellion against the King of Heaven. Again, II. Tim. iii, 16, 17, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Here the design of the scriptures is unequivocally declared to be given, that Christians may be perfect, and thoroughly furnished with every thing necessary to be known, for their edification and perfection; and as no intimation of a tribunal superior to the church is given, we are bound to believe, that Christians have a form of government entirely perfect, without the addition of laws made by fallible councils. I. Cor. v. chap. and numerous other passages we might introduce, go conclusively to establish the same fact. The following passages confirm the statement that each church had, and selected its own officers: Acts xiv, 23; Titus i, 6; Acts i, 2–6, & vi, 3; I. Peter v, 1–4; Phil. i, 1. From which it is evident, that the primitive religious societies, planted and set in order by the apostles, and governed by those laws and rules given by inspiration, were completely independent, uncontrolled by any foreign jurisdiction, or any association of churches; they managed their own affairs, and chose their own officers. Hence their government was materially variant from that which has been generally received for ages past.

If no other testimony existed to prove the original and former sovereignty or the churches, that already given would be amply sufficient for every lover of truth; but the same fact stands most clearly attested by Church History. Dr. Mosheim, in speaking of the government of the church, in its early age, remarks, that "Every Christian church consisted of the people, their leaders, and ministers; and these indeed belong to every religious society. The people were undoubtedly first in authority; for the apostles shewed by their example

that nothing of moment was to be carried on or determined without the consent of the assembly. It was therefore the assembly of the people, which chose their own rulers and teachers, or received them by a free or authoritative consent, when recommended by others; that excommunicated profligate or unworthy members of the church; restored the penitent to their forfeited privileges; passed judgment upon the different subjects of controversy and dissention, that arose in the community; in a word, that exercised all that authority which belongs to such as are invested with the *sovereign power*." Such is the candid statement given by this distinguished historian. How analagous the picture thus drawn by Mosheim of the government of the churches in the first century, with that exhibited in the New Testament! Is not the position that "the churches were entirely independent, none of them subject to any foreign jurisdiction, but each one governed by its own rules and laws," (for such is again the language of Mosheim) fairly and positively established by the word of God, and corroborated by Church History?

Reader, observe with attention the above quotation from Mosheim: "Every Christian assembly consisted of the people, their leaders, &c. which essentially belong to every church—the people first in authority." Is not this satisfactorily proven from the word of God? Is such the fact at present, with the great majority of churches in our land? Instead of the "people being first in authority," are they not in many societies the mere dupes and vassals of the clergy? Instead of being first in authority, do they not suffer themselves to be shamefully dictated to, and their Christian rights and privileges entirely taken from them? Even the apostles, who were placed upon the twelve thrones, by the great head of the church, "shewed by their example that nothing of moment was to be carried or determined without the consent of the assembly." Oh that the dignitaries of this day would follow their "example." It is certainly worthy of imitation. But alas! how different! Now, those who lord it over God's heritage, can carry

and determine matters of importance, *without the consent of the assembly*, spurn the *people* from their deliberations, compel them to obey their canons and rules, and submit unreservedly to their *determinations*, or be *cast out of the synagogue*. How variant this from apostolic times! "It was the people which chose their own rulers and teachers;" but now the people receive those chosen, not by themselves, but by others for them. But why comment? The extract shows for itself, and plainly marks the difference between the ancient order of things, when "the church exercised all that authority which belongs to such as are invested with the sovereign power," and the modern or present order, when the church is governed by laws, not made by Jesus or his apostles, but by conferences, synods, and associations.

I know that there are exceptions amongst many of our opposing brethren, to whom many of our remarks will not apply; we only design them for such as they will suit; and that they will apply to many in our day is apparent. The church must be restored to her original independence: Christians must arise and shake off that yoke of ecclesiastical despotism, and burst those fetters of degrading tyranny, which have so long sunk them below their privileges, before all will be right, and Christian union restored. We fondly hope the time is not far distant, when the "people" will assert and maintain their right to be free and independent, under Jesus the great head; and will search, examine, and judge the scriptures for themselves, and flow together in love.

For further information on this subject, I hope the reader will attend to your remarks on the "*family of God*," in your first number.

It is my intention to let you hear from me again.

Yours, PHILIP.

OBJECTIONS TO CHRISTIAN UNION CONSIDERED.

We find that the grand objection made against Christian union, or against rejecting all authoritative human creeds and party names, and adopting the Bible alone

and the name *Christian*, is, that on this plan all the various, heterogeneous mass of sectarians, of every name, would amalgamate, to the real injury of religion.

Answer. Let us suppose that the various denominations of Christians in the West, from reading the scriptures, have learned that it is the will of God that all his people should be *one;* that they should walk by the same rule; and that there should be no divisions or schisms among them; that the opposite to these is contrary to the will of God, and to the order established by the Head of the Church. And what Christian, acquainted with the Bible, can be blind to these facts? Let us again suppose, that under the conviction of these facts, they all agree to meet at a specified time and place, and to confer together respecting some plan of reform, so as to sink into the will of God and do it. They meet. It is at once discovered that they cannot unite on any one of their particular creeds. It is equally impossible for them to make a creed in which they can all unite, without giving up their different systems; the Calvinists must give up the *five points*, and the Arminians must relinquish their opposites; the Trinitarians so divided among themselves, could never unite in an article on that subject; and the Unitarians, also divided among themselves, could never unite in a creed on this subject. All attempts at union on these plans are vain. We may rest assured, that the will of God can never be done in this way. It is as evident as demonstration, that as they all believe and receive the Bible as divine, and as the only authoritative creed and bond of union, on the Bible alone they can and must unite, or still remain in disobedience to the will of God.

Objection.—If we unite on the Bible, without an explanation of its doctrines, as a bond of union, we shall all soon be disunited again.

Answer.—Will the case be better if an explanation is made the bond of union? This has long been tried, and the history of the church for fifteen centuries proves, that from the very introduction of these *explanations*, as bonds of union, evils have been accumula-

ting, schisms increasing, and union appearing more distant. Were we all agreed to take the Bible alone, and to labor to conform our lives and hearts to its holy precepts, to provoke one another to love and good works, to exhort, admonish and comfort one another, would not the Lord be pleased with such a plan? Would he not perfect the union by pouring out upon us his uniting spirit? Surely he would bless his own doctrine. Unbelief and distrust in God can only doubt it. It will be realized, though our unbelief may repel the blessing from us.

Objection.—The precious doctrine of the Bible must be respected; and certainly the denial of any should be discountenanced, and made a term of fellowship.

Answer.—We must distinguish between a doctrine of the Bible, and human opinion of that doctrine. No Christian of any name among us, but receives every doctrine of the Bible clearly stated; yet Christians may have various opinions respecting the doctrine. Here let the old neglected virtues of forbearance and long suffering be cultivated, and the spirit of humility and brotherly love be maintained, and the soul-revolting idea of a general union of Christians will be banished, and religion, in its glory, be restored. Do we ever read in the scriptures of any being excluded from the church, but for ungodly conduct or immorality, or for doctrines which necessarily led to, and were connected with, sin? The person who was to be accounted by the church *as a heathen man*, or a publican, had previously transgressed, and every attempt to reclaim him had failed. The person excluded from the Corinthian Church was guilty of incest: So they who held the doctrines of Baalam and of the Nicolaitans, should be justly excluded, because those doctrines were immediately connected with sin. Rev: ii.

Will a good king punish or expatriate his subjects for not apprehending the meaning of some of his laws?—Does he not rather inflict this punishment on those alone, who presumptuously violate them? In the empire of Great Britain, the kingdom of Ireland has formed opinions of some of the laws of the government, different from the opinions formed by the kingdom of Scotland; and the kingdom of Scotland has formed opinions of the same laws different from the opinions, which the kingdom of England has formed. Yet they all live united in the bonds of peace; all are attached to their king and his government. Would this diversity of opinions be so offensive to the king, that his indignation should burst forth in vengeance upon them? If he should, would he not be justly execrated as a merciless tyrant? And will the merciful *King of Kings* deal thus with his poor ignorant subjects for not perfectly understanding all his laws, or for forming different opinions of some of his doctrines, while they are honestly and sincerely labouring to know and do his will? We think not. And if any, professing to act by his authority, should act otherwise from him, would they not betray their profession? Undoubtedly they would.

But suppose each of these kingdoms in the empire of Great Britain, should deem its opinions of the King's laws so sacred and correct, as to warrant a disunion from those who differed from it; suppose each kingdom should establish a government on its peculiar notions, and should exclude from the kingdom all who differed from it: would not this be called rebellion against the government of the empire? Would not every loyal subject in the empire, uninfluenced by sinister or party views, oppose it? And in acting thus, would he not equally incur the displeasure of every party? That the application may be easily understood, we observe: in the empire of heaven, there are many kingdoms. They have all formed different opinions of some of the doctrines of the government, and deem those opinions so sacred as to warrant a separation from, and exclusion of, all that differ from them. They have all established separate governments on their peculiar notions of the doctrine of their lawgiver and king, and they exclude from their communion and kingdom all that differ from them. Is not this rebellion against the King of Kings and his government?—*his government*, designed to unite all his

subjects in the strong bonds of love and peace? If it be not rebellion, we know not by what name to call it. Who should be accounted a loyal subject to the King of heaven? Surely the man who defends and supports the government of heaven, in opposition to partyism, and who labors in the *meekness of wisdom* to convince the different parties of their error, and to reclaim them to the right way. Such a man may expect to incur the displeasure of every party spirit, and be strenuously opposed in such a worthy cause. Let us persevere, and success will crown our endeavors. Our works will follow us in time and in eternity; *in time*, for posterity will profit from our labors; *in eternity*, for God, we believe, will own them.

Objection. If what you state be correct, why has the Church been permitted to err so long?

Answer. Why has the church been permitted to be driven into the wilderness for 1260 years? Why was the apostacy of which Paul propbecied, ever permitted to take place? Will any say that the Church of Rome is the church driven by the dragon into the wilderness for 1260 years? No Protestant will say it, and no Roman Catholic will own it. Will any one say, that any one of the existing sects is that church? Not one can or will say it. Who then, and where is that church? It is composed of all the humble obedient believers of every name. They are all in the wilderness of the confusion existing among the various, jarring, and discordant sects, called in the Revelations, *Babylon*, which literally signifies *confusion*. All think the 1260 years are nearly closed. The signs of the times are visible to such as are observant. The Christians in this wilderness of confusion are beginning to see and lament their situation, and the evils of partyism, of human authoritative creeds and party names. In fact they begin to make a solemn move out of Babylon, or out of the wilderness, leaning, not on man, but on their beloved, whom they acknowledge alone as their leader. They will be *one* in spite of all opposition from earth or hell. Vain are their opposing efforts! The weak and tearful

may, for a while, be influenced by the fear of man and the terrors of expulsion from their party; they may dread the dangers and evils of a reform, pourtrayed in glowing colors by their leaders; yet on earth shall God's will be done as it is in heaven. In heaven all are one; so shall it be on earth among the saints.

Obj. If you be correct, why have the great, the learned, and the pious, so long and so universally erred?

Answer. These characters are found in every sect, teaching and defending contradictory doctrines, with all confidence and boldness, and endeavouring to build up and establish their various parties. Are they all right? Are they not all wrong, the Bible being judge? Various reasons might be given; but we think that hinted at in the objection, is not among the least. It is this: some great, learned, and pious man, in his speculations, has invented a doctrine; this he has published and defended; this is received by many, who may also be great, learned, and pious. Thus the doctrine gains credit through its great, learned, and pious propagators and advocates. *That such were surely right*, has greater weight on the mind than is generally admitted, and inclines it to that way which they have shewn; especially if relatives, friends, or associates are walking in this way. Temporal emolument may influence some, (not the pious) and a popular party many more.

Obj. But why has God blessed them with his saving mercy, if they have so eggregiously erred?

Ans. Because he is God and not man. He is long suffering and forbearing; and in this has set us an example for our imitation. Alas! how far all have erred from this copy! Had the Lord confined his favors to one sect only, then the conclusion would almost be irresistible, that *that* sect was only right, and all others wrong. But as he condescends to bestow favors on all, and to commune with the good of every name, surely *we should be imitators of him as dear children.* To act otherwise would be to act ungodly. If we make it an argument, that people are not in error, because God blesses them with his grace and communion, then must

we conclude that no sect is in error; for it is evident that all experience these his blessings. This conclusion is irresistible. Therefore we are obliged to admit the argument fallacious, or to make no distinction between right and wrong, truth and error. This cannot be admitted by any.

This subject shall be farther considered in our subsequent numbers. As we learn the objections made to Christian union, we shall notice them.

EDITOR.

CHILLINGWORT'S THOUGHTS ON HUMAN AUTHORITY.

"This presumptuous imposing of the senses of men upon the words of God—the special senses of men upon the general words of God—and laying them upon men's consciences together, under the equal penalty of death and damnation; this vain conceit, that we can speak of the things of God, better than in the words of God; this deifying our own interpretations, and tyrannous enforcing them upon others; this restraining of the word of God from that lattitude and generality, and the understanding of men from that liberty, wherein Christ and his apostles left them, is, and has been, the only fountain of all the schisms of the church, and that which makes them continue the common incendiary of Christendom, and that which tears in pieces, not the coat, but the bowels and members of Christ, *ridente Turca, nec dolente Judæo*, (to the great satisfaction of the Jews and infidels.)

"Take away these walls of separation, and all will quickly be one; take away this persecuting, burning, cursing, damning of men, for not subscribing to the words of men as the words of God; require of Christians only to believe Christ, and to call no man master but him only; let those leave claiming infallibility that have no title to it; and let them that in their words disclaim it, disclaim it likewise in their actions. In a word, take away tyranny, which is the Devil's instrument to support errors and superstitions, and impieties

in the several parts of the world, which could not long otherwise withstand the power of truth; I say, take away tyranny, and restore Christians to their just and full liberty of captivating their understanding to scripture only; and, as rivers, when they have a free passage, run all to the ocean, so it may be well hoped by God's blessing, that universal liberty thus moderated, may quickly reduce Christendom to truth and unity."

CHILDREN CATECHETICALLY TAUGHT TO SIN.

"*Judge not, that ye be not judged.*" As a perfect contrast to this precept of our Saviour, I shall bring to view a precept of Mr Thomas Vincent, contained in his "Explicatory Catechism, or Explanation of the Assembly's Shorter Catechism:"

"*Question.* What should we judge of them that deny that there are three distinct persons in one Godhead?

"*Answer.* 1. We should judge them to be *blasphemers*, because they speak against the ever glorious God, who hath set forth himself in this distinction in the scriptures. 2. To be *damnable heretics;* this doctrine of the distinction of persons in the unity of essence being a *fundamental truth*, denied by Sabellians, Arians, Photinians, and of late by Socinians, who war against the Godhead of Christ the Son, and the Holy Ghost; among whom the Quakers are to be numbered, who deny this distinction."

It may be doubted whether there is any doctrine by which one denomination of Christians has been thus distinguished from another, which is so dangerous to the souls of men, as this *practical* doctrine taught by Mr. Vincent.

This mode of teaching children to violate one of the plainest precepts of the Messiah, will account for the bitter enmities which have existed between different denominations of Christians—for the vile and abusive language with which sermons and various publications have been disgraced—for the odious opinions which have been entertained of all who have dissented from a

barbarous phraseology, which has been preferred to the simple language of the gospel, for the perils with which free inquiry has been accompanied, for the slow progress of light and truth, and for the various modes of persecution.

By this one passage in Mr Vincent's catechism, probably thousands and tens of thousands have been taught and influenced to regard the whole of *five sects* of Christians as "*blasphemers*" and "*damnable heretics.*" Yet of these five sects, whom children have been thus taught to judge, abhor, and calumniate, there have probably been thousands and tens of thousands who will be acknowledged by the Saviour as his humble followers.

Can it be wonderful that people who have been thus taught from their cradles, should be unable to see evidences of piety and goodness in persons of any denomination, which they have been accustomed to abhor? Or that they should be able to prove, to their own satisfaction, that men of their own party are much better than other people? Or that they should mistake a burning and malignant zeal against their opponents, for the fervor of that *love which worketh no ill to its neighbor?*

If it were my aim to ruin children, to lead them into a course of self deception, and to render them a curse to community, I hardly know what method would be better adapted to accomplish the purpose, than to infuse into their minds such sentiments and such prejudices against Christians of every denomonation but their own.

[*Christian Register.*

EXTRACT FROM DR. CHANNING'S DEDICATION SERMON.

"Trinitarians imagine, that there is one view of their system, pecularly fitted to give peace and hope to the sinner, and consequently to promote gratitude and love. It is this: They say, it provides an *infinite* substitute for the sinner, than which nothing can give greater relief to the burdened conscience. Jesus, being the second person in the trinity, was able to make infinite satisfaction for sin; and what, they ask, in Unitarianism, can compare with this? I have time only

for two brief replies. And first, this doctrine of an infinite satisfaction, or, as it is improperly called, of an infinite atonement, subverts, instead of builds up, hope, because it argues infinite severity in the government which requires it. Did I believe, what Trinitarianism teaches, that not the least transgression, not even the first sin of the dawning mind of the child, could be remitted without an infinite expiation, I should feel myself living under a legislation unspeakably dreadful, under laws written like Draco's, in blood; and instead of thanking the sovereign for providing an infinite substitute, I should shudder at the attributes, which render this expedient necessary. It is commonly said that an infinite atonement is needed to make due and deep impressions of the evil of sin. But he who framed all souls and gave them their susceptibilities, ought not to be thought so wanting in goodness and wisdom, as to have constituted a universe, which demands so dreadful and degrading a method of enforcing obedience, as the penal sufferings of a God. This doctrine of an infinite substitute, suffering the penalty of sin, to manifest God's wrath against sin, and thus to support his government, is, I fear, so familiar to us all, that its monstrous character is overlooked. Let me then set it before you in new terms, and by a new illustration; and if in so doing, I may wound the feelings of some who may hear me, I beg them to believe, that I do it with pain, and from no impulse but a desire to serve the cause of truth.—Suppose then, that a teacher should come among you, and should tell you, that the Creator, in order to pardon his own children, had erected a gallows in the centre of the universe, and had publicly executed upon it, in the room of the offenders, an infinite being, the partaker of his own Supreme Divinity; suppose him to declare, that this execution was appointed, as a most conspicuous and terrible manifestation of God's justice and wrath, and of the infinite woe denounced by his law; and suppose him to add, that all beings in heaven and earth are required to fix their eyes on this fearful sight, as the most powerful enforcement of obedience and virtue. Would you

not tell him, that he calumniated his Maker? Would you not say to him, that this central gallows threw gloom over the universe; that the spirit of a government, whose very acts of pardon were written in such blood, was terror, not parental love; and that the obedience which needed to be upheld by this horrid spectacle, was nothing worth? Would you not say to him, that even you, in this infancy and imperfection of your being, were capable of being wrought upon by nobler motives, and of hating sin through more generous views; and that much more the angels, those pure flames of love, need not the gallows and an executed God, to confirm their loyalty? You would all so feel at such teaching as I have supposed; and yet how does this differ from the popular doctrine of atonement? According to this doctrine, we have an Infinite Being sentenced to suffer as a substitute the death of the cross, a punishment more ignominious and agonizing than the gallows, a punishment reserved for slaves and the vilest malefactors; and he suffers this punishment that he may show forth the terrors of God's law, and strike a dread of sin through the universe. I am indeed aware that multitudes, who profess this doctrine, are not accustomed to bring it to their minds distinctly in this light; that they do not ordinarily regard the death of Christ, as a criminal execution, as an infinitely dreadful infliction of justice, as intended to show, that, without an infinite satisfaction, they must hope nothing from God. Their minds turn by a generous instinct from these appalling views, to the love, the disinterestedness, the moral grandeur and beauty of the sufferer; and through such thoughts they make the cross a source of peace, gratitude, love and hope; thus affording a delightful exemplification of the power of the human mind to attach itself to what is good and purifying in the most irrational system. But let none on this account say, that we misrepresent the doctrine of atonement, the primary and essential idea of which is, *the public execution of a God*, for the purpose of satisfying justice and awakening a shuddering dread of sin. [*To be continued.*]

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 IN THE WEST—No. III.

After constituting with prayer, and choosing a moderator and clerk, we proceeded to draught a circular letter to the congregations formerly under our care, which is as follows:

DEAR BRETHREN: By the time this letter shall have reached you, you will, no doubt, have heard, that a separation has taken place between us, and the Synod of Kentucky, and the presbyteries to which we belonged. The reasons which induced us to withdraw, you see in the above copy of our protest; which reasons we intend more fully to unfold as soon as we can obtain the minutes of Synod, and those of the Washington presbytery, which are referred to in said protest. But lest you should form an improper opinion of the nature or kind of separation, we take the liberty of giving you a short statement of it. We do not desire, nor do we consider ourselves to be separated from the presbyterian Church, as christians, whether ministers or people; we still wish to continue united to them in the bonds of love; we will admit to communion as formerly, and desire to be admitted. It is not our design to form a party. We have only withdrawn from the jurisdiction of those bodies, with whom we stood connected, because we plainly perceived that, while that connexion subsisted, we could not enjoy the liberty of reading, studying and explaining the word of God for ourselves, without constant altercation and strife of words to no profit. We pass no uncharitable censures on those reverend bodies for their strict adherence to their standards; but as we are accountable to God for ourselves, so we must act for our-