jects of the proposed general Conference had been disclosed by the brethren who desire it. This might have influenced our Conference to coalesce in the proposal. EDITOR.

The names of the Elders and unordained Preachers in the Conference, north of Kentucky:

Elders—B. W. Stone, J Hughes F R Palmer, Tho. Smith, John Morrow, Wm Morrow, John Rogers, L J. Fleming, M P Wills, John Roberts, T M. Allen, J Shawhan, J. Longley, J. Powell, H. Osborne, M Rice, L. Hamblick, Rowland Burns, J. Durham, A. M'Lean, P Mauzy, Aaron Sanders, Cummins Brown.—23

Unordained—S. G. Marshall. S. Ellis, W. Parker, P. Cox, J. Caldwell.—5.

OBITUARY.

DIED, March 7, at his own residence, in Scott County, Kentucky, ROBERT WARFIELD NUCKOLS, son of Mr Lewis Nuckols, and son-in-law to the Editor, aged 24 years He suffered long and severely; but his sufferings were sanctified to the good of his soul. A few weeks before he died, he sought and obtained the favor of God, and continued a happy expectant of immortality till he quit these mortal shores A few days before he expired, feeling the near approach of death, he said, "I am not afraid to die—I am going home—I am going to Jesus" With joy he repeated these words: "Hereby we know we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." He raised his hands, and said "O! I love every one that loves Jesus" Often with pleasure he repeated these texts: "Our light afflictions which are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;" and "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" The morning previous to his death, he suddenly laid his hand on his breast; being asked by his mother the reason of his doing so, he said he felt an unusual sensation. Then lifting his eyes to heaven, he calmly said "Thou Lamb of God, resign to me thy will; if this is death let it come, and come as easily as possible. Mother, said he, I am not deranged; it is death— the Lord Jesus is with me in the valley and shadow of death" Being asked whether he feared death, he answered, "Oh! no." Soon after, without a struggle or groan he fell asleep in Jesus. A great multitude of weeping mourners attended his funeral. He left a wife and many respectable relatives, in whose breasts his memory is embalmed.

☞ *The Editor conceives an apology due his patrons for the bad quality of the paper, on which his present and last number were printed. Better paper will be procured for the next and future numbers.*

G. L. FINNELL, PR.—GEORGETOWN, KY.

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 JUNE, 25, 1827. [No 8.

HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN THE WEST—NO. V.

On the above extracts from Dr. Mosheim, we also observe that Luther was guilty of the crime of *declinature*. He declined the jurisdiction of the church of Rome, when charged with an atrocious crime, to avoid the censure of excommunication. He was afterwards excommunicated by the high court of that church. His sentence was not for the false doctrines, of which he was before charged; but for insulting the Majesty, and disowning the supremacy of the Roman pontiff; and also for schism. And yet he did not withdraw from the church in a large sense, but from that part of it only, which considered the Pope infallible. In like manner we have not separated from the Presbyterian church at large; but from that part only, which considers the Confession of Faith infallible, that is, as the standard of the church. How easy it is to see the similarity between Luther's case, and that of ours; and yet he never suspected that he had lost his authority to preach; nor has any Protestant since his day called it in question.

Synod takes it for granted, that we received all our authority from them, to exercise the ministerial functions, and as they have taken it away, we therefore have none. Let us apply this to the case of Luther; if he received his authority from the church of Rome, and this authority was taken from him, through what medium then has it been transmitted to the Synod of Kentucky? We would be glad to see authentic testimonials of their spiritual genealogy, proving their orderly descent from the Apostles of Christ. Or if this cannot be done we must consider them as illegitimate as ourselves. It is commonly used as an apology for the Saxon reformer, that the church from which he separated was so corrupt that her suspension was wholly invalid. Let this be granted, and what will it argue? Certainly, that

her power of ordination was also invalid. This proves at once, that the ordination, not only of Luther, but also of Calvin, and every other protestant minister, is *null and void;* seeing that all received their ordination from that corrupt church. Therefore if the filthiness of the church of Rome is taken to plaister the character of our reformers, it will render the apostolic authority of our Synodical brethren not only suspicious, but absolutely a blank.

As the proceedings of Synod were evidently arbitrary and unauthorized, we need not wonder that we are charged to the world, under the odious name of *schismatics*, without any fair statement of the crime, or evidence to support it. A *schismatic* is one, who aims at dividing the church into sects and parties; not only by separating from its communion and drawing away disciples after him, but also, *by loving the pre-eminence in the church, receiving not the brethren, forbidding them that would, and casting them out of the church*, as did Diotrephes, 3 Epis. of John.

We have before proved that, merely forming a separate association, is not schism: provided that association be not intended to dissolve the union and communion of the church. But the Synod takes it for granted that a separation from their *reverend body*, is a separation from the church; thus implicitly declaring, that they are the only church on earth. We would hardly have thought that a body of men so liberal in their principles, as to admit Christians of other denominations to their communion, would exclude those of their own, for merely renouncing what others never acknowledged. Is it not confessed by all that a schismatic spirit, and a party spirit, are the same? If so, let the reader judge on which side the party spirit operated through the whole of the business. Was it a party spirit that induced the preachers at first, to lay aside those points of controversy, which had been a means of keeping the children of God apart? What spirit prevailed at Fleming, when the late revival first commenced; when Dr. Campbell and Mr. Northcut, a methodist preacher, gathered their flocks together, and fed them at the same table? It was justly confessed that Heaven smiled upon the union. Was it not under the same spirit of union, that the flame spread to the east and to the west? Let bigotry blush, and be ashamed at the recollection! But when former things were thus forgotten, and former differences laid aside, whether was it

a spirit of union or a party spirit, that prompted some, who were spectators only of this glorious work, to bring forward those speculative opinions, which, at that time, were neither publicly disputed, nor controverted; and involved the church in a controversy? This may be emphatically said to *be dangerous to the souls of men, and hostile to the interests of all vital religion.* We neither felt nor expressed a wish to leave our own society, nor proselyte others to follow us: but on this ground we could not long remain in peace: The bible doctrine was too simple for those, who had been accustomed to solve riddles and reconcile contradictions.

The Synod have again raised their standard, which, for three happy years had been gathering dust. The lines will probably now be cleared; the enemies of orthodoxy, however pious, be driven out of the pure church; drowsy bigots recalled to arms, and another bold push made to Calvinize the word. May Heaven prevent the furious onset, and revive in the breasts of christians a spirit of forbearance and love! And may we, while we go under the *name* of *schismatics* be ever kept from the *thing*.

It is not uncommon to give the blow and raise the cry. We are brought up to public view, pronounced as the leaders of a party thundered against by the bull of suspension, and our congregations declared vacant! Could the Synod imagine that we would be silent? no: The measures carry too strong marks of ecclesiastical tyranny, to influence us farther than we are driven.

If any enquire why we did not appeal to the General Assembly, we answer: it appeared to us unnecessary; because the business must naturally come before them through the minutes of Synod. David did not immediately go to his father-in-law, to learn his disposition towards him; he chose rather to remain in the field, till the flying arrows determined his doom. If we learn from the minutes of the assembly, that they are for peace, we are near at hand, and ready to obey the signal: but if otherwise, our empty seats must so remain.

We have stated notorious facts, and now let every impartial friend to order, judge for himself. If the prosecution was unprecedented and disorderly from first to last, let the candid reader say, whether it was not an orderly step for us to withdraw. We have said in our protest that we only withdrew from the judicatories with which we stood con-

nected, and not from the church; we say so still. They have beaten us uncondemned, being presbyterians, and then would cast us out of the church. Nay, their letter of suspension will not do. We must again call for order: and desire that body to produce authority, not from the annals of the church of Scotland, but from the word of God, or at least from the constitution of the presbyterian church in America, to justify their proceedings. If they have suspended us without authority, the General Assembly will have to say whether they were in order or not. So long as we believe their proceedings were out of order, that belief will bind us more firmly to the church. The hireling may flee when his congregations are declared vacant, and his salary called in: and set out in search of another benifice. But we pledge ourselves, through the grace of God, to stand fast in the unity of the Spirit, and without respect of persons, endeavor to gather into one the children of God, who have been *scattered in the cloudy and dark day*. How this solemn pledge was redeemed, will be seen in the progress of this history. It will be also seen how little dependence can be put in the pledges of men! Who could have believed that such a noble purpose should so soon be blasted?

After the adjournment of Synod we returned to our several homes with a sorrowful heart, and with many tears. We were soon followed by the authorized heralds of Synod, proclaiming our suspension, and declaring our congregations *vacant*. The mournful scenes of those days can never be forgotten by me, nor by thousands who were witnesses of their evils. Who without a sigh could see torn asunder the pastor and his flock, united in the closest ties of friendship and christian affection, strengthened too by the growth of years? Who without a tear could see the flood gates of strife raised, and the sweet spirit of religion swept from the sanctuary of God, where peace, love and union had long delighted to dwell? Who, that had been accustomed to see the great congregation collecting from every quarter on every Lord's day at the house of God to worship together with solemnity and joy,—who, accustomed to this, but must feel a holy indignation at the men, who should raise their voice and forbid the people to worship together under the penalty of excommunication? This was done. Future ages will be incredulous; for many in the present day can scarcely believe it. But why all this mischief?

What evil had we done? This was our crime, we preferred the Bible to the Confession and preached the *doctrine* of the former rather than the *doctrines* of the latter. We could not believe both, for we saw they widely differed; we could not preach both without preaching contradictions; we could not serve both, for who can serve two masters? We were under the necessity of cleaving to, or of rejecting one or the other. We could not conscientiously bear a party standard, or fight under it against our brethren.

The great majority of our congregations cleaved to us and to the word we preached Their confidence could not be shaken. The Presbyterian preachers generally thinking their cause in danger, expended much zeal and labor to crush our influence, and divert the attention of the people from us. But all their efforts were apparently vain. Their endeavors to defend and establish the peculiarities of their system, rather tended to open the eyes of the people to its deformity, and opposition to what they deemed the gospel of God, and to strengthen their attachment to the doctrine we preached. The Methodists, thinking that we would all unite with them, were very friendly, and treated us with brotherly attention.

In the mean time we were busily engaged in preaching and defending our views of the gospel. To the Bible we paid assiduous attention, *determined to know nothing but Jesus and him crucified.* The people followed our example in studying the Bible; and knowledge and true piety began to shine forth in the professors of religion. We prepared and published our apology, including our views of the gospel, and our remarks on the Confession of Faith. This publication had a happy effect on the public mind; not only to soften their prejudices against us, but also to convince many of the truth, of which they became zealous advocates. It is now thought necessary to give a concise view of that doctrine we published and preached continually at that time, that the world may more correctly judge and determine respecting us, and of the justice or injustice of our opposers.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

THE CHRISTIAN EXPOSITOR.

[CONTINUED.]

John xx, 31. These are written, &c.

In the two last numbers, we have endeavored to prove that the scriptures are the cause and foundation of believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; we also considered the import of the expressions, *Christ* and *the Son of God*. We now proceed—

3dly. To state the evidence recorded in the Scriptures, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

The evidence to which John particularly appeals, is, the works done by Jesus in his life; as the healing of all manner of diseases with a word or with a touch—restoring sight to the blind—hearing to the deaf—speech to the dumb—life to the dead—speaking the raging sea to instant calmness, &c. &c. These works John with the other witnesses testified as done in their presence, and most of them before multitudes of people. These works were performed by Jesus, or they were not. If performed by him, it will be confessed that he is the Messiah, the Son of God. If they were not performed by him then it is also confessed that his disciples were false witnesses, endeavoring to palm an imposture on the world. Let us calmny examine on which side the greater evidence lies.

1st. That a people, called Christians, have lived in the world, ever since the days of Christ, admits of no doubt. That these people have always believed that these works were done by Christ, as witnessed by his apostles, is evident from their quotations of the apostolic writings.

2. The bitterest enemies of Christ to the days of Celsus never denied that these works were done by him. They acknowledged them, but attributed them to the power of magic, as did Celsus himself. This age of reason contemptuously spurns such magical power.

3. These works are said to be done in the presence of multitudes. If they had not been done, how easily could the apostles have been detected as false witnesses by the opposers of christianity, who were disposed to take every advantage to destroy a religion, which they saw must destroy their own. We will select one of many of these works; the case of raising Lazarus from the grave. The family is described as consisting of Lazarus and his two sisters, Martha and Marv. Their place of residence is declared to be in Bethany near Jerusalem. Lazarus died and was buried. A great many Jews are said to be with the two sisters, endeavoring to comfort them. After he had been dead four days, Jesus in the presence of the multitude, said, "Lazarus come forth," and instantly he rose from the grave, and afterwards lived among the Jews. Had this been a false statement, would not the opposers have said, We have gone to Bethany—we have enquired for such a family—we have searched the records of the nation to find it—we have diligently enquired respecting his dying, and of his being raised from the dead by Jesus Christ; but no such family, and no such events have ever been known or heard of there. This contradiction to the Apostle's testimony would have been widely circulated and preserved to all future generations. But of such contradiction to any one work of the Savior the world has never heard, from those who lived in the same country and age, for no others can be competent witnesses.

4. The disciples had no earthly motive to induce them to palm this imposition upon the world, if it were one; but every thing would have dissuaded them from it. Profit, honor, and pleasure are the grand incentives to our actions on earth. These they well knew they could not acquire by testifying these things, but the opposite they knew they must continually meet, as shame, disgrace, poverty, persecution & death. They certainly believed what they wrote.

5. It is certainly reasonable that God should by this means establish a religion for the eternal advantage of his creatures.

On the other side, should a person assert that he believed these works were not done by Jesus, I ask him on what evidence do you base your faith? Have you testimony that they were never done by any competent witnesses who lived where and when they are said to have been done? No: not any from friend or foe. Do you think it incredible that divine power could perform such works? No. Do you think it unreasonable and contrary to infinite benevolence that such works should be performed to bring mankind to believe for their eternal happiness? No. Yet you believe these works were not done; in other words, you believe that they are untrue and false, without one shade of evidence. Will not a man of feeling blush to say he believes any fact without a shadow of evidence? Is it not an outrage on reason and

common sense? We must believe the facts or become sceptics; there is no alternative.

2. Jesus prophesied that he should die and rise again the third day from the dead. This prophecy was generally known, and nothing more improbable was ever predicted.—Had he been an impostor, he took the most effectual plan to defea his own influence and designs; for it must then after three days have been known of all that he was a false prophet. Attend to the witnesses of his death and resurrection.—They say that he was crucified at the passover, which was always at the full moon. While he gung on the cross the sun was preternaturally eclipsed for three hours, from 12 to 3 o'clock in the evening—an unusual earthquake split the rocks round about Jerusalem—the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom—and the graves of many of the saints burst open. These were the works of almighty power and they establish the truth that Jesus is the son of God.—Has this testimony of the witnesses ever been denied? The world is defied to produce one instance of any person, who lived at that time and place, (for the testimony of none else can be admitted) that ever contradicted it.—Had these things not taken place at his death, would not all Judea and especially Jerusalem have proclaimed the apostles false witnesses and deceivers? Would not their contradiction have been carefully preserved by the enemies of christianity? What hope could the apostles have had of gaining the belief of any, when they testified to facts which all must have known were false, had they been fabricated? We need not urge the argument. Will any rise up and say I do not believe these events took place at his death—I believe the account of them is false. Pray, sir on what evidence do you found your faith? Not the shadow of evidence to the contrary can be produced. Twelve credible witnesses in a court of justice depose that at a certain time and place they saw A kill his neighber B. Not one evidence appears to the contrary. Every Juror except one believes the fact. This one declares that he believes A did not kill B. He believes without evidence and contrary to the best evidence. Is not this an outrage upon reason and common sense? And can a man unblushingly say that he believes the wonders related as having taken place at our Saviour's death to be fabrications?

Let us see the works that are witnessed as having taken place at the resurrection of Jesus. The doctors alarmed at

what transpired at his death felt very uneasy lest his prediction of rising again from the dead on the third day, should be verified. They go to Pilate and tell him their fears.—They procure a Roman guard to watch the sepulchre day and night to prevent his body from being stolen away. They get Pilate to seal the door of the sepulchre with his own seal. The third the eventful morning rolls round. Heaven, Earth and Hell in awful and silent attention. If he rise Heaven triumphs, Hell is vanquished, salvation is the worlds portion, and Jesus is declared to be son of God according to the spirit of holiness. If he rise not, Hell conquers, Heaven is vanquished—the world's last hope is cut off—and Jesus is an impostor—his deciples false witnesses, and all the Bible a book of lies. The third morning just began to dawn—all nature was hushed in silence. The pale beams of the setting moon were glittering against the furbished spears of the guard still standing round the sepulchre. An angel was despatched to the sepulchre—he alighted—the earth quaked—the dead Saviour rose—the guard fell as dead men—but recovered and fled to the city—they announce the dreadful news to the trembling crowds in the streets roused by the earthquake. The Doctors persuaded the guard to say "while we slept his deciples stole him away." Such evidence would be spurned from any court of justice. Yet it is the best, and only evidence against the fact. Will any say, I believe the statement of his resurrection false? We again enquire for the evidence of his faith? We boldly affirm he has none. And how can he believe, rationally believe?—We confess that a man must shut his eyes and stop his ears, lest he see and hear the evidences of truth, and believe, and be converted and saved.

We might attend to the evidence of the prophets and the works of the apostles to confirm this soul cheering truth that Jesus is the Christ the son of God; but it is not our design to enter fully into this subject. Our design was merely to shew that the works performed by Jesus were sufficient to prove that he was the Christ the son of God, and that they were written and declared by John, sufficient for this purpose.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

Remarks on the Circular letter, written by Elder SILAS M. NOEL, *to the Churches, composing the Franklin Association.*

[CONTINUED.]

The great principle, in the reformation from Popery, urged by Luther and others, was, that each one should interpret the Bible for himself,—that the rights of conscience should be preserved inviolate. Have the Franklin association retrograded beyond the reformation? Do they not wish to usurp the rights of conscience? If any thing degrades the dignity of a human being, it surely is, for him to surrender his understanding and conscience into the hands of others.—The spirit of tyranny is the same in Kentucky as in Rome.

But it is contended that in voluntary associations there can be no tyranny though a creed should be formed. Voluntary acts are the only kind, if they be wrong, that deserve censure. I attribute no blame whatever to an involuntary act. Is it right for a number of men, to go a head of the blessed Lord, and make a creed for him, without any athority for so doing? Can a creed be found upon earth, which contains precisely the language of scripture? There is not! consequently there must be an attempt, whenever a creed is made, to amend the work of the Lord.

Voluntary associations are no proof of freedom. Because principles, at first agreed on, are by experience frequently found to be oppressive; hence alterations both in Church and state; and to say a person shall be bound, when he feels oppression, is the very essence of tyranny.

So far as I have noticed the conduct of the Baptists, in receiving members into their churches, they say little or nothing about the peculiar doctrines of their creed at that time. The creed is to be known afterwards, when it may be necessary to feel its authority. Does the writer of the circular, examine a candidate, whether he or she believes that there are three persons in God; or whether the doctrines of his creed are believed. Let those who are in the habit of attending to him judge. The course pursued in receiving members is about as strange, as it would be, for a man to marry a woman, and afterwards to agree to have her.—The creed therefore is a deception.

In the circular we find the following, "before the adversaries of creeds can boast of having gained any thing in this controversy, it devolves upon them to do, what we apprehend

cannot be done; they must exhibit some method scriptural and practicable, of excluding corruption from the church, without a creed."

Taking the Bible as the *creed* we have already shewn that the man of God is by it made perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. This whole statement is predicated upon a deficiency in the Bible. Suppose I were to say the Bible has nothing in it by which to keep corruption from the church; the writer of the circular would say you are wrong; it has an entire sufficiency if attended to. So I think. Ah! but we should guard against false interpretations of the scriptures; say the friends of creeds. Let me ask, who since the days of the apostles, has any certainty, that he always interprets right? I should like to see that man, could he be found. The defenders of creeds say our creed is according to the scriptures. Who thinks so? None, but its particular friends; while others may think it destroys the fundamental doctrines of the Bible and is full of corruption.

I find one great object of the circular is to guard against unitarianism—we profess to be *Christians*, and want no other name; but the unity of God in the person of the *Father* we believe to be the truth. Trinitarians in this country have become alarmed; *an earthquake* has taken place, and portends an explosion. Well may the writer of the circular represent the unitarian doctrine under the metaphor of *a Vortex*. A vortex awfully draws all that comes within the sphere of its operation. Take away human creeds which bind and fetter men, and unitarianism like a vortex would draw thousands to its belief, who are now in bondage. The friends of unitarianism have multiplied in proportion as men have thought for themselves, without the fear of avowing their sentiments. Well may the Preachers be alarmed. An *earthquake* on the one hand, and a *vortex* on the other are truly alarming.

The writer of the circular has given a representation of the unitarian doctrine, which is not believed by many, if any, in this country.

Creeds, as the enlightened Thomas Jefferson declared, have ever been the engines of cruelty. If the Bible will not stand upon its own intrinsic worth, let it fall. It has stood for ages, and will stand till time shall end. Take away human creeds and a fair prospect opens for a union among the people of God; but creeds have ever, and will forever keep

the people of God apart. Christ prayed that his people might be one, will any oppose him?

A Friend to the Bible.

Circular to the Clergy.—The following Circular and memorial, addressed to the Clergy of the United States, has been put into our hands with a request for its publication:—

WASHINGTON, 14th March, 1827.

Reverend and Dear Sir:—Urged by the most powerful considerations, the President and Board of Managers of the American Colonization Society respectfully solicit your friendly exertions in the great enterprise in which they are embarked. Obliged to depend, at present, upon the charities of their countrymen, they cannot but hope, that you will be pleased to bring the claims of their cause before your congregation on the sabbath which shall immediately precede or succeed the Anniversary of the National Independence, and invite contributions for its benefit. As the Society will make application to Congress, at its next session, the managers transmit, herewith, the form of a memorial, which they perceive has been already circulated to some extent by the friends of the Society, to which, should it meet, your approbation, they would earnestly request you to obtain the signatures of those who may regard the object of the Society as one of National interest, and that you would transmit it to the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

BUSH. WASHINGTON, *President.*

R. R. GURLEY, *Secretary.*

The Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled.

The prayer of your memorialists, respectfully presents, that among the free People of Colour, residing in different sections of the country, there are many individuals earnestly desirous of removing to some part of the world where they may form a separate and independent community, and that there can be very little doubt, but that, by suitable encouragement to emigration, a similar disposition might be created in the greater part, if not the whole, of that class of coloured people already free.

Your memorialists have also reason to believe, that there are many of their fellow citizens in the South and West possessed, by inheritance, of large numbers of slaves, to whom

they would very readily extend the blessing of freedom, if they could do so without entailing on their country the evils inseparable from a free coloured population, and on their slaves themselves, the dangerous consequences of freedom, unconnected with sufficient inducements and sufficient means for its proper and wholesome enjoyment.

With a view, therefore, as well to encourage the emigration of free people of Colour, as to afford the necessary facilities for the general removal of slavery from amongst those desirous of ridding themselves of its evils, your memorialists beg leave respectfully to suggest to your honorable body, the propriety of providing, on the Coast of Africa, a suitable asylum for the reception of such free People of Colour, as may think proper to emigrate, and of such slaves, as the humanity of individuals may induce them to liberate, and the laws of the different States may permit to emigrate.

And in connexion with this measure, your memorialists would further suggest the importance of setting apart from the annual revenue of the government, a suitable fund, for furnishing the means of transportation to such free people of Colour as may be desirous of emigrating to the Coast of Africa.

In bringing this subject to the consideration of your honorable body, your memorialists deem it unnecessary to enter into the various and delicate considerations rendering the removal of both descriptions of population in question, desirable. The evils inseparable from them, are too obvious to require elucidation. They are too great to be reached by any means within the power either of individuals, or of the States. And their extension, in a greater or less degree, to every section of the country, designates them as objects peculiarly worthy of National consideration.

To you, then, as guardians of the National weal, the subject is most respectfully submitted, in the earnest hope, as there is none other, involving such deep and extensive interests, it may command your early and untiring consideration, and that the result of your labours may be, to lay the foundation for the gradual and voluntary removal of the greatest evil, with which the wisdom of Providence has been proper to afflict our country.

To the Editor of the Christian Messenger.

DEAR BROTHER,—In general I am pleased with your Edito-

rial remarks, and also with the sentiments of your correspondent Philip, on the subjects of conference, preaching and church government. Yet I hope I shall be permitted to occupy the place of an inquirer while I state a few things which I wish to see more fully explained.

In the communication of Philip, published in your 3rd No, when stating the duty and business of conference, he concludes, "attend to ordination, if thought proper, when required by the brethren." The same writer in his communication, in your 5th number, says, "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, 1 Peter v, 1—4, Philip i, 1.

In your piece entitled, "thoughts on preaching," you observe, "nor should they go abroad as preachers until they are sent and recommended by the church," 2 Cor. iii, 1. Acts xiii, 1—4. And again; "That there is a diversity of gifts is evident," Rom. xii, 6–8. 1 Cor. xii, 28, "Of these gifts the church is the best judge."

That it is the duty and privilege of each church to select its own officers and to recommend by letters those who go out from them to administer to others, I have no doubt; and that Christ is the head of the church is equally plain.—But my enquiries are—in whom has he vested the important trust of judging of the gifts and qualifications of preachers? And to whom has he given the authority to induct men to the sacred office of the Gospel ministry? It is implied in the statement of Philip, that the act of ordination is to be performed by the eldership, by the requisition of the brethren, and in yours, that the church is the judge. But I suppose you do not mean that the call of the church is imperative, and that the elders are bound to act upon her judgment. In this point I wish you to be more explicit. I shall, however, state some things for your consideration. Christ, in his own person, called and ordained the first preachers of his gospel: And I would enquire, whether he does not yet call and qualify men for the ministry? And whether it is not his plan to induct them to the ministerial office by the agency or instrumentality of bishops or elders? And whether he has not vested in those agents a special trust, in examining and judging of their qualifications? On this point I shall write a few texts of scripture—1. Tim. iv. 14. "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery." Thus Timothy was inducted to the office. Tit. i. 5.—"For this cause left I thou in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee." Here is an appointment or special trust; and the apostle proceeds to delineate the qualifications which those elders must possess: And he gives similar instructions to Timothy;—Ch. iii. 1—7. 2. Tim. ii. 2—"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also:" Verse 14, "Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers." It appears that elders were to be ordained in the churches, and no doubt with their approbation: But my enquiry is, whether the special and authoritative trust is not vested in the ministry? My remarks and inquiries are equally directed to yourself and Philip, you may either or both answer them just as you shall think proper. I suppose your ideas of the independence of churches are correct; but should be glad to have some further explanation on that subject. In a certain sense each church is independent, & has a right to exercise discipline and manage its own concerns, but the whole number of believers in Christ is one body, and it is important that the spirit of unity should pervade the whole: Preachers are a kind of common property; the churches have a common interest in them. Paul says, "All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas." Their commission is:—"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." If each church is absolutely independent, and authorised to make or choose her own preacher, and depose or silence him at pleasure, it would be difficult for preachers to fulfil their commission and act in concert as fellow laborers in the harvest of the Lord; and to preserve unity and harmony in the churches.

Philip says, in No. 5. "The church (we maintain is the highest and only religious tribunal to which any member of the body is responsible," and in No. 3. "And every member is alone responsible or answerable to the particular church where his membership may be." Now I inquire if a particular church is to judge of the qualifications of a preacher and is to induct him to the office of the ministry, and has the exclusive control over him as respects discipline, if other

churches must receive him, or be again deprived of his labors according to the will or judgement of that church?—The membership of a preacher may be in one church, and many others be deeply interested in his labors. That church may depose him and others think it was done unjustly, or in a remote church, there may be charges against him, and it may be impracticable to bring him to an account, in the church where he has his membership. Again, as respects the independence of churches, I inquire, if according to the views of Philip, in governing and being governed, preachers do not stand precisely on the same ground with private members each having one voice? And if so how are we to understand the following scriptures? Heb. xiii, 7—Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God. Verse 17, obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account. 1 Thes. v, 12. And we beseech you brethern to know them that labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you.

The Apostle Peter, Chap. v, exhorts elders in their united capacity, to feed the flock of God.—Taking the oversight thereof, &c. And finally enjoins upon them to be subject one to another. And it appears to be consistent and reasonable in case the authoritative trust is vested in them, of committing the work to others, that there should be subjection, and orderly discipline among them, and that no one should be deposed from the office without the counsel and concurrence of the authority by whom it was conferred, and with whom he is a co-worker or fellow laborer.

From Acts xv, it appears that in the church at Antioch there was a dissention and dispute took place between Paul and Barnabas and certain other preachers which could not be settled in the church, and they determined that certain of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders about this question.—and the apostles and elders came together to consider of this matter. And in my experience I have known difficulties to exist with preachers which the particular churches could not finally settle. It was of necessity that they had recourse to a conference or convention of elders. The elders are not to legislate for, or control the churches, but they are overseers, and it is their duty to see that things are in order.

The churches have but little opportunity to obtain a knowledge of or acquaintance with one another; they are generally acquainted with the preachers who labor among them; and if there is order and concert in the ministry, it will be so likewise in the churches, and not otherwise.

In the epistle to the Gallations, Chap. ii, we are informed of a conference at Jerusalem. The particulars are not stated, but we learn that Paul, Barnabas, Titus, James, Cephas and John were there, and at the close they expressed their fellowship and approbation of each other to go on certain directions to preach the gospel.

I have dropped the few hints contained in this paper, with the same view which Philip has expressed, viz: "of eliciting information." Perhaps as much explanation may be required from me, as I have desired from yourself and brother Philip. If so, let the enquiries be proposed and I will answer as well as I can.

PROCHORUS.

TO PROCHORUS.

Dear Brother—We have attended to your inquiries and remarks on church government, and are cordial in giving you what information we possess on this subject, according to your request. You agree with us that it is the duty and privilege of each church to select its own officers, & that Christ is the head of the church. You inquire in the first place, "in whom has Christ vested the important trust of judging of the gifts and qualifications of preachers?" As you agree with us that it is the duty and privilege of each church to select its own officers; then it follows that the church must judge of their gifts and qualifications. Take this liberty from it and tyranny is the consequence. But we suppose you mean by your inquiry, whether the church has divine authority to judge of the gifts and qualifications of a person, and having judged favorably, whether it has authority to commit to him the word, and send him forth to preach it? To this we reply, that it is the privilege of every member of a church to exhort one another. Heb. iii, 13, x, 25 &c. In the exercise of this privilege in the church, a person is found to possess gifts and qualifications to speak to profit and edification. The church judges favorably of his qualifications; but has the church the authority to commit to him the word to teach others also; or to induct him into the ministerial office? We agree with you that the

church has not this power vested in it. It belongs to the bishops or elders. Christ committed to his apostles the word, and ordained them to preach it. "I have given unto them the words thou gavest me," John xvii, 8. xv, 16. 2 Cor. v, 19. Gal. ii, 7. &c. To these apostles he gave authority to commit the word to other faithful and qualified men.—1 Tim. vii, 20—"O! Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babbling, and oppositions of science falsely so called." That committed to Timothy's trust, was undoubtedly the word, with authority to teach others. Hence, says the apostle, "neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by (according to) prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." It is also evident to us that those faithful men, to whom the apostles committed the word, were also divinely authorised to ordain other faithful men to the ministry. Thus Titus was appointed to ordain elders in every city. Tit. i, 5. Timothy also was authorised to commit the word to other faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also, 2 Tim. ii, 2.

Yet we believe that when a church has judged favorably of the gifts and qualifications of any one of its members, and when it believes that this member, is called to preach the gospel, they should present him to the elders for ordination to the work. In Acts vi. we have this matter plainly declared. But we do not think the elders are bound to ordain any thus presented until they are satisfied that he has the qualifications of a Bishop, 1 Tim. v, 22. "Lay hands suddenly on no man." Without the commendation of the church, the elders should ordain no man; and without the satisfaction of the elders, the church should not urge it to be done.—But the church and the elders should be satisfied with the gifts and qualifications of the person, and concur in the matter.

The membership of this person thus ordained is not affected. He is still a member of the particular church with which he was before united, and therefore subject to the same rules of discipline. Should he act disorderly, or commit sin, he is to be dealt with as another member. But should he be charged with preaching doctrines contrary to the Gospel, he should be presented to the conference of bishops and elders for adjudication, as Acts xv. This is the meaning of our brother Philip, when he asserted that

"the church is the highest and only religious tribunal, to which any member of the body is responsible." He had no reference to doctrine, but to practice.

With respect to the independence of churches, you enquire, "If according to Philip's views, in governing and being governed, preachers do not stand precisely on the same ground with private members, each having one voice? And if so how are we to understand the following scriptures. "Remember, and obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, &c."—Heb. xiii, 7, 17. Thess. v, 12.

In the kingdom of Heaven on earth we are persuaded that every member of it is under the same laws and regulations with regard to moral conduct, and that every transgressor is to be dealt with according to the same rule, Mat. xviii,—"If thy brother tresspass against the, go and tell him his fault between the and him alone," whether he be a preacher, bishop or a private member—ultimately—"tell it to the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee a heathen man and a publican." A bishop or overseer is chosen by a church to have the rule over them, to preach to them the word, to admonish them and put in order the things which are wanting among them. He is not to rule, as exercising lordship over them. In performing his duty, he brings to the view of the church the rules of heaven, by which every member is to be regulated.—He is to watch over the church—if any one transgress the rules he must admonish him—if the transgressor continue in sin, the bishop must inform the church, and teach them their duty, as Paul taught the church at Corinth, "to deliver such a one unto Satan," when they were gathered together. This act the church was to perform *in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and with his power.*" 1 Cor. v, 5.

Every church organised on gospel principles has its overseer or bishop. If every particular church on earth was thus organised, all would be one; not united by conferences, synods, or associations, but by the spirit of truth. The union and independence of the churches are beautifully represented in the apocalypse. The seven churches of Asia are the seven lamps united in the one candlestick. Each lamp was independent of another—so each church was independent of any other. The faults of one are not imputed to another; nor the virtues of one accounted to another.—

Destruction was threatened to one for its evils; while salvation was promised to another for its labors of love.

Dear brother, I must close my remarks. Philip may appear in a subsequent number to answer for himself. With brotherly affection I bid you adieu.

EDITOR.

We have attended for a long time to the unhappy controversy, existing among the Friends, or Quakers in the Eastern states. We are sorry to say that too much uncharitable zeal, virulence and passion has appeared in their disputes. We have been unable to conjecture the issue of this controversy, or satisfactorily to find the cause of it till now. A writer among them called Admonitor, has lately fully developed the cause, in the Christian Inquirer, May 12. Believing it will be acceptable to our readers, we give a few extracts from his communication.

"The crisis that has long been apprehended and predicted, has now arrived, and consequently the doubtful and the wavering must take one side or the other, and abide the issue. Hypocrisy, however consumate, can no longer wear its deceptive disguise, but must be at least once honest from necessity.

It is however, of the first importance to fully understand the points at issue between the contending parties. Some, and indeed I may say almost all, who are not well informed on the subject, apprehend the principal cause of the divisions and dissentions in the society has arisen from a discordance in the speculative belief of the doctrine of the trinity, atonement and divinity of Jesus, and also as to the belief of the primitive Quakers on those subjects;—but such is not my understanding of the case. The true cause of the dissention is of much greater moment than the truth or error of any abstract proposition—it is of more vital importance: it is a contention for the right of conscience, on the one hand, and the flat denial of that common right, on the other. The address from the Green-street Meeting, as stated in the last Christian Inquirer, sums up the whole subject in a few emphatic words, and publishes to the society and to the whole world, that they are "*prepared to promulgate the glorious truth, that* GOD ALONE IS THE SOVEREIGN LORD OF CONSCIENCE, *and with this unalienable right, no power, civil or ecclesiastical, should ever interfere.*" But the enjoyment of this "glorious truth—this unalienable right," is denied by a

misguided and deluded few; which few assume to be, *themselves*, the "sovereign lords of conscience," and claim the exclusive right of dictation—proscribing and denouncing all who question such pretensions. This is the whole subject in dispute. Let but this principle be determined, and there will be an end of the present controversy. If this unalienable right to enjoy religious liberty is conceded and maintained, then there can be no dissentions in scripture explanations; for each will concede to others the privileges he enjoys himself.

But, on the other hand, a *select few*, is admitted to be the "*sovereign Lord of concience*," then indeed is there an end to all Revelation, and the Lord have mercy upon their followers.

It ought to be borne constantly in mind, that the Tolerants, freely and unlimitedly, concede to their opponents the rights they claim themselves, and pretend not to molest the orthodox in the full enjoyment to believe in their doctrine of the trinity, atonement and divinity of Jesus. They claim not to deny them the right of membership for these, or for any speculative opinions. Those opinions on these points, are the same as were held to, by almost all christians before the origin of quakerism; and it is freely admitted they are the very same that are called *orthodox* by his holiness the present Pope of Rome, and the whole of protestant Christendom who assumed to be orthodox. We claim no merit for these concessions; but they are stated for the soul purpose to the right understanding of the controversy Such opinions, whoever may entertain them, cannot, surely, do any harm to a rational mind that dissents from them. And an *irrational* mind, they certainly cannot injure. If we are under a delusion as to the fundamental principles of christianity, we claim, and we deserve the pity and compassion of the more enlightened; not their proscription, and virulent denunciations. To those who honestly believe that the Virgin Mary did *actually* conceive *her own Creator*, and after the usual parturition bring into existence *her own Creator*,—nurse from her bosom, or feed with pap, *her own Creator*;—cleanse, physic, dangle and rock in a cradle *her own Creator*;—surely, those that believe any part of this, deserve the utmost pity and commiseration a fellow man can bestow.—Especially too, when we view this orthodoxy in its real nakedness, without any other covering than plain common sense

will supply. Accordingly to proceed—Mary took, on the 8th day, *her own Creator* to be circumcised. CIRCUMCISE ALMIGHTY GOD!!! Some of my readers may exclaim, hold, enough, and all orthodoxy will cry blasphemy—abominable blasphemy; yet I appeal to every rational mind, if this is not the unvarnished doctrine of the latter. Who then are the blasphemers?

Should any one inquire who has preached this doctrine, I refer them specially to Jonathan Evans and Israel Lloyd, as reported in the third No. of the Quaker, page 72, and also to all the dignified orthodox clergy "from declinature Cox, of Doctor of Divinity memory; to his Papal Holiness inclusive, more especially including Anna Brithwaite's warm and intimate friend, the R. R. Bishop Hobart.

That these apostolic characters now claim, and have long claimed to be "Lords of conscience," and that their *rational* and *independent* followers tamely submit to these claims, is most true. But that a select few, or any number of the society of Quakers should advance such claims, is truly wonderful, and has no parallel since the time of George Keith. I would then respectfully and reverently ask, where the warrant for such claims are to be found? Away with such preposterous and supercilious pretension:—To confute them, is but to state them.

The truth or error of speculative opinions is not then the great, but the minor cause of the present lamentable divisions in society: it is only the consequence of the major cause, which I have endeavored to state in the clearest manner.

The Universalists appear to us fast approaching their dissolution and end. This we learn from eastern prints, and from other sources. An overwhelming majority of them at present deny the doctrine of a general judgment, and future punishment; affirming that every man suffers in time all the punishment for his sins that will ever be required. The doctrine of fatality and necessity, is plainly avowed and zealously urged. Two of their most distinguished leaders have lost their great influence among them. ELIAS SMITH has publickly renounced their doctrine and connexion; and ABNER KNEELAND, formerly of Philadelphia, now of New-York, we learn from the Telescope, May 12, has become a decided advocate for *Robert Owen's System of Communities*; and eulogizing the system has used all his influence to induce people to

embark their substance in the community, he was foremost in establishing. "When Mr. Owen's famous oration was published, denying all revelation, if not even the existence of a Supreme Being, and aiming a deadly blow at all the civil and religious institutions in our highly favored country, Mr. Kneeland, to our surprise and regret, carried the said infidel production into the pulpit on the Sabbath, and made it the subject of his discourse, giving it his unqualified praise and approbation." The Trustees of his church in stating other facts and charges against him, plainly insinuate that he has become a deist. Thus is confirmed the opinion of Elias Smith, not long since published, that Universalism is so nearly allied to deism, that it may be called deism in disguise. We firmly believe that the doctrine now advocated by the majority is nothing better. In fact we have more confidence in a deist's honesty than we have in a man, professing to believe the scriptures, and yet denying the doctrine of a general judgment, future punishment, &c. The Christian Inquirer, p. 166, says:

"This doctrine possesses no power nor energy to reform the sinner; he whose passions and appetites have been debased, corrupted, and strengthened by a course of vice and wickedness, can neither see nor feel any motive in this doctrine sufficient to induce him *to break off his sins by righteousness, and his iniquities by turning unto God;* for according to that system, he can live in the gratification of his corrupted passions and appetites, and when he dies, go to heaven, and this is quite enough for him. Accordingly the doctrine of universalism has been regularly preached in some parts of New-England for the last forty years, without one solitary instance of moral reformation."

We are far from saying that there are no good men among the Universalists. The minority zealously oppose the majority in their infidel speculations; yet we think with the Christian Inquirer, that the sentiments expressed above are correct: The doctrine has no power nor energy to reform; and this is confirmed by fact, as far as our knowledge extends. Indeed, we know a body of people not far distant, who were once famed for their piety, and success in winning souls to Christ. A few years ago the greater part embraced Universalism, and are zealous in propagating the doctrine. The consequence is, as might have been expected, they have greatly degenerated from that fervid piety, and success in

converting souls to the Lord. We wish Christians to be aware, and examine well every step they take in this dark and cloudy day. EDITOR.

The Editor receives daily, cheering accounts of the progress and spread of truth from various parts of the United States; especailly from the Southern and Western States. The doctrine of union among Christians prevails, and must ultimately triumph in despite of bigotry and intolerance. The light of the sun may be partially obstructed by a few intervening clouds, but those clouds are transient, and the light will break forth in full lustre before long. Let the motto of our lives be HOLINESS TO THE LORD. In our subsequent Nos. we will present to our readers some accounts of revivals of religion in different sections of our country. Being now supplied with smaller type and better paper, we shall be able to furnish much more matter, and in a superior manner. EDITOR.

TO POST MASTERS.

The Editor has received from the Post Master in this place the following note, to which he would respecfully solicit the attention of those Post Masters who charge postage for the covers of the Christian Messenger:

"Post-Office, Georgetown, Ky. June 1, 1827.

"SIR—You inform me that at some of the Post Offices to which the Christian Messenger is sent, the subscribers are charged with the same postage on the covers that they are for the numbers themselves. This, I have no doubt, is improper; and arises from a misconception of the law, by the Post Masters. At this office no postage has ever been charged on the envelopes of Pamphlets, or other Periodicals, even when a list of Agents, Conditions, &c. are printed on them. The proper postage on the Messenger, will be 1 1-2 cents per number, for those sent to places under a hundred miles, and 2 1-2 cents, if over a hundred miles, either with or without covers.

Respectfully yours,

N. L. FINNELL, *P. M.*

Rev. B. W. STONE.

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. VI.

The doctrine we preached at the commencement of the Revival, and which we urged before and for some time after our separation from the Synod of Kentucky, were not novel, except among the Presbyterians. We labored to convince the unconverted that they were lost sinners, and must be born again, or never enter into the kingdom of Heaven. We endeavored to point out the means of regeneration, as divinely ordained, and urged the sinner to a speedy compliance. These means we declared to be the Gospel, believed and obeyed by the sinner—that in the use of these means he should be born again, be saved or made alive unto God, by his holy spirit given to him. We continually taught that God was the author of this great change, and confirmed the doctrine by such texts as the following: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." "Of his own will begat he us."—Eph. II. 10; Jas. I. 18, &c. But we as continually taught that God's revealed plan of effecting this change was by the means of the word or gospel. "Of his own will begat he us *with the word of truth.*"—Jas. I. 18. "In Christ Jesus I have begotten you *through the gospel.*"—I. Corinth. IV. 5, &c. We also every where taught that this gospel had no power, and could produce no good effect on the heart of the unregenerated, "till it was believed by them." The gospel is the *power of God* unto salvation, to every one that believeth."—Rom. I, 16. "For unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, *not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.*"—Heb. IV. 2.

This doctrine preached by us, was considered a novelty and innovation by many of our Presbyterian brethren. For this we incurred their displeasure, and suffered much opposition from them. It is a fact which cannot be denied,