which I read with pleasure, and wish my aged brother and venerable friend Elder Stone, success in his arduous undertaking—and hope the Messenger will be a message of glad tidings to thousands.

BROTHER STONE—Please to insert the following lines in the next number of the Christian Messenger:

NOTICE.

On the Friday preceding the fifth Lord's day in September next, our Christian Conference will commence at Big Spring, in Overton county, West Tennessee, four miles north of Monroe, and twenty-five south of Burksville, Ky. and is expected to continue five or six days. We hope the brethren and friends, who live within a reasonable distance, will come prepared with provisions, to camp on the ground; otherwise we fear the neighborhood will be oppressed beyond measure, by the expected multitude. We solicit the attendance of laboring brethren from all parts.

Elder W. D. JOURDON,
June 2, 1827. JOHN COONS, Sen.

We have seen the first number of the "MORNING STAR," a periodical, edited monthly by Elder Elias Smith, of Boston. It is a duodecimo pamphlet, of 24 pages, at one dollar a year. From the known abilities of the Editor, and from the specimen of the first number, we hope it will eminently subserve the cause of religion, to which it is devoted. We recommend it to the patronage of the friends of truth

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.—A great many communications are thankfully acknowledged. In so limited a work as ours, we cannot immediately attend to them. But they shall be noticed in subsequent numbers.

OBITUARY.

DIED on May 28th, at his father's, in Bourbon county, Elder *LEVI PARKER*. He had been ordained to the work of the Lord a few years before; but for a long time had labored under a breast complaint, by which he was at last taken from this world. He was a man of deep piety, and of a sound mind. He suffered patiently and died triumphantly.

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 AUG 25, 1827. [No 10.

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

FAITH.

Having shown how the Gospel effects regeneration, by being believed, we are naturally led to speak of faith. We have already shown that the word of God is the foundation of faith; but it will be necessary to say something further on this subject. "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." John, xx. 31. "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." 2. Cor. II. 5. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Rom. x. 17. "When he (Christ) shall come to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day." 2 Thess. I. 10. "How shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard?" Rom. x. 14. "Howbeit many of them that heard the word believed." Acts IV. 4. "In whom ye also believed, after that ye heard the word of truth the Gospel of your salvation." Eph. I. 13. "And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, who testified, he told me all that ever I did. John IV. 39. "As he spoke these words many believed on him."—Chap. VIII. 30. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also, who shall believe on me through their word."—Cap. XVII. 20, &c. &c.

The word of truth is not only the foundation of faith; but it has sufficient evidence in itself to produce faith (see Deut. XXX. 11. and John xx. 31.) Faith can have no existence without evidence. "A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven." John III. 27. If a fact be stated to us, which is accompanied with sufficient evidence, we believe it. Faith does not depend upon any disposition, whether holy or unholy; but on the strength of the testimo-

ny. No Christian will deny, that there is sufficient evidence in the *word* to produce faith. For if there is not, God cannot require us to believe it, nor condemn us for not believing, when it is impossible to be believed. But many say, though the evidence be sufficient in itself, it can have no access to the mind in its natural state. To this we answer, that evidence, under such circumstances, is no evidence to us.—And therefore neither God nor man ought to wonder, if we do not believe.

The word, or testimony of God, is to be believed in the same manner as we believe the testimony of one another.—This is evident: See John i. 9. "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater;" and therefore can, and ought to be received by all that hear it.

As faith is a simple idea, we cannot give any definition of it, that will make it plainer than it is already. And it would have been happy for the church, if no other definition had ever been attempted. But if the reader, according to custom, must have one, we say—*it is admitting testimony, upon the authority of the testifier*: Or, *it is simply believing the testimony of God.* Many elaborate treatises have been written to explain what *faith*, or *believing* is, with no better effect, than to destroy its signification. A child of a few years old understands *believing* as well as a doctor of divinity.

Some have defined it *coming to Christ, flying* to him, *trusting* in him, &c. which are not faith itself, but the fruits, or consequences of it. For none will come to him, till they hear and believe the report of the Gospel; that he is, and is able and willing to save them.

Some have distinguished it into various kinds, as faith of *credence; historical*; *temporary;* the faith of *reliance; assurance*; of *miracles;* and *saving* faith. But all these are one and the same act of the mind, believing various truths, as God has revealed them.

The Apostle, in his epistle to the Hebrews, expressly describes the nature, fruits, effects, or consequences of faith, as he does also in his other epistles, sometimes directly, and sometimes indirectly. In Chapter x. 38, 39, he tells us it is *that* by which *the just shall live*; and it is *believing to the saving of the soul.* In Chap. xi. 1, "It is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen." Verse 3, it is giving credit to the divine testimony respecting the *Creation*, as related by Moses; "Through faith we understand the worlds were framed by the word of God," &c. Verse vi, it is *believing that God is, and is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him;* and the consequence of it is *coming to God.* But we cannot know these things, in the first instance, any other way than by admitting the testimony of God, which *is the evidence of things not seen;* and is opposed to experimental knowledge, which is *the evidence of things seen*, or experienced. It is believing the testimony of God, as in the case of Noah, Abraham, &c. Verses vii, viii, &c. without any other evidence; nay the evidence of sense, and experience had hitherto contradicted it. It signifies the same thing respecting dividing the Red sea and Jordan, and the passage of the Israelites through them; the falling of the walls of Jericho, &c. &c. Now the *act* of believing in all these cases is the *same;* though the *objects* of their faith are *various*, and the effects produced on the mind accordingly.—As we have already said, faith influenced Enoch to *come* to God. It moved Noah with *fear:* it induced Abraham to leave his country; it gave Sarah strength to conceive seed; *for she judged him faithful that had promised.* Verse xi. It influenced the Israelites to venture into the midst of the mighty waters; to surround the walls of Jericho, &c. &c. See its wonderful effects, described at large throughout this chapter, and elsewhere frequently in the word of God.

We see, then, from what has been said, the simple nature of faith, and its use in regeneration. If, therefore, the Gospel believed, or faith in the Gospel produces, or effects regeneration, it necessarily precedes it. This is as evident as that the cause precedes the effect, and the means the end. But as this is an important point, we will add some further proofs to the many already mentioned. "For ye are all the children of God, by faith." Gal. iii. 26. If we become children *by* or *through* faith, then it is plain we were not children, or born again, before faith. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." John i. 12. Therefore before they believed they were not the sons of God. "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Rom. iv. 5. Here we see the *ungodly* are the persons, who are justified; but as God justifies none but them that believe, therefore the ungodly believe; and so faith precedes regeneration.

To assert, that regeneration precedes faith, is to destroy the very foundation and nature of the Gospel. No unregenerated sinner would then have any warrant to believe; he would be more solicitous to work *for* righteousness than to believe *unto* righteousness; and until he imagined he had the evidences of regeneration in himself, he never would regard the Lord Jesus as the Saviour of sinners. It is in fact the foundation of *legality*. Upon this plan the Gospel ceases to be glad tidings to sinners; for sinners have no right to any thing the gospel reveals.

In the *great supper*, already mentioned, the faith of those who partook of it, did not depend upon the provision they ate; nor the sight of the well furnished table; but upon the report of the servants, who invited them. So the faith of those who partake of the gospel provisions, does not depend upon their partaking; but upon the report of God in the gospel. We grant that partaking the provisions of the gospel strengthens their faith; it adds to the testimony of God, *that* of sense. Then they know *experimentally*, that the report of the servants is true. Should those invited reply to the servants, that they could not believe there was such a supper provided for them; they would not act more foolishly than those who say they cannot believe in the gospel, till they partake of its provisions. The very act of taking, or receiving the provisions of the gospel is an *exercise* of faith: and therefore faith necessarily precedes receiving them.—As, therefore, faith precedes partaking the provisions of the gospel; so it does not depend upon the reception of them for its foundation.

Now, as we before proved, that salvation, pardon, eternal life, divine light, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption, the fulness of the spirit, &c. are the provisions of the gospel; and that faith precedes the reception of them: therefore it follows, that faith does not depend for its existence on partaking any of them; but necessarily precedes all.

Will any say, that faith depends upon salvation? No; for the scripture every where asserts, that salvation follows faith. *He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.* Will any assert that it depends on pardon, or justification? No; for we are justified by faith.—Does faith depend on spiritual life for existence? No; for "these things are written, that ye might believe; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

Does its existence depend upon the Spirits powerful, enlightening, quickening, and sanctifying influences? No: for we receive the Spirit *through faith*. Gal. III. 14. "That we might receive the promises of the spirit through faith." See also verse 25; "In whom, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise." Eph. I. 13. Faith does not depend upon grace; for by faith we receive grace. "By grace are ye saved through faith," &c. Eph. II. 3. "By whom also we have access through faith into this grace wherein we stand." Rom. v. 2.

As, therefore, faith precedes the reception of the gospel provisions, it cannot be a part of those provisions, in any other sense than as it is a *medium* of *divine appointment*, through which we receive them. If it belongs to the provisions of the gospel, then it is absolutely out of the creature's reach. And would God damn a soul for not having faith, when he had it in his own hand to give or withhold, at sovereign pleasure? With equal propriety might he damn him for not creating a new world. For the one is as much above his power as the other. Faith is no where promised, but always represented as that through which the promises are received.

Thus, according to promise, we have given you a brief view of the Gospel; and we desire that you will not take these things merely upon our word, nor the contrary upon the word of any other person; but search the scriptures daily, with an humble dependence on God for the necessary aids of his spirit, and see whether these things are so.

To the Editors of the Baptist Recorder.

We have read with some interest your periodical work. We have paid some attention to the controversy between *Aleph* and *Beth* on the doctrine of Creeds and Confessions. We should have been better pleased, had they confined themselves to the point in debate, and not have descended to the low grounds of personality.

Beth pleads for the principle, that "the people have a divine right to interpret the scriptures, each one for himself, and each voluntary association of believers (or church) for itself."

Aleph admits the principle as a self-evident truth (No. 7.) and thence infers that "churches (even Sectarian churches) have a right to think, to speak, and to act—that is to make

a Creed." We cannot but view this inference as illogical; for the principle is not whether a church has *a right to make a creed*, but whether a church has *a divine right* to make a a creed. From this illogical inference, that a church has *a right* to make its own creed, *Aleph* infers that a church has the right or privilege to deny admission to those who reject its creed. Had he proved from the New Testament, that each church had *a divine right* to make its own creed, and to deny admission to such as rejected its creed, the controversy had been settled. But this he has not done, nor attempted to do, nor is able to do. Advocates for creeds, human authoritative creeds, meddle very little with the Bible to prove their positions, because this book gives them no countenance. They are rather disposed to refer us to history, and the operation of human laws, governments and courts, and from these deduce their strong arguments. If Aleph means that every church has a *divine* right to make a creed, and to deny admission to such as reject it; then it cannot be denied that the Roman Catholic Church has this divine right, and that exclusion from that church is *divine*, because the right to do so is *divine*. Whatever, therefore, they bind on earth, is bound in heaven. Does not Aleph plead against the whole world of protestants and their adherents, as justly and *divinely* excluded from the Church and from Heaven? Does he not plead the justification of the Church of Rome in exercising the *divine* right given it, by excluding such as rejected its creed? Does he not know that this principle, for which he pleads, is the same as that for which the Roman Catholic pleads, with a mere shade of difference? For the Catholic denies the people the right to read and interpret the scriptures for themselves, they must learn the scriptures from the reading and interpretation of them in their creed. Aleph grants the people the right or privilege to read the scriptures, but they must read and interpret them as they are interpreted in the creed. Though he admits that a church, being fallible, may err, and not give the true interpretation of the scripture, yet still it has a *divine* right to deny admission to such as reject its creed, though the person refused may have the true interpretation! Does not *Aleph* know that this was the very principle opposed by the Reformers, Luther and his coadjutors? and that the very principle for which they contended was that for which Beth pleads—that every one had a

divine right to read and interpret the scriptures for himself without being trammelled with a creed. Does Aleph by seeing this divine right abused, wish to relinquish the principles of the reformation, and return to those of the Roman Catholic Church?—to prostrate liberty, and re-establish tyranny?

Should it be denied that God has given the Roman Catholic Church the *divine* right to make a creed and to deny admission to any that reject it, by what scriptural arguments can it be proved that any other church has this *divine* right? We are assured that such arguments can never be produced. Yet Aleph thinks that they who have no creed are Latitudinarians. I would ask him, what were the Baptists in England prior to 1643? Till that period, it is believed, they had no creed, no authoritative creed. What are the Baptists in Rhode Island? They were the first settlers of that State; they had no authoritative creed then, nor have their worthy descendents any from that time. It is true a creed has been lately attempted to be imposed upon them, but they indignantly reject it. What was the whole Church of Christ for the three first centuries? They had no creed but the Bible. Were all these worthies *Latitudinarians*? We think not, in the sense of Aleph.

Should it be proved that this divine right is given to the Baptist, still there would be a difficulty to know to which of the various sects of Baptists it is given. Each has the same claims. This point must first be settled before any can feel conviction of error or danger in being denied admission or excluded. But Aleph, in true latitudinarian style, says that *each church* (*even a Sectarian church*) *has this right*. Then it follows that Catholics, Reformers, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, and all other Sectarian Churches, have equal claims to this right of making their own creed, and of denying admission to such as reject it! Who then can be saved? For each, exercising this right, denies admission to another into the church and into the kingdom of Heaven. None can deny this to be a just inference from the principles assumed and advocated by Aleph. The claiming and exercising this right of making creeds, and of denying admission to such as reject them, have been from the beginning or introduction of them, the source of incalculable evils to the church—they have divided it into innumerable contentious sects, which have disgra-

ced christianity by their unchristian debates and strifes about their peculiar notions—they have made orthodoxy the test of religion, and orthodoxy is measured by the creed of each party—they have thrown the church into confusion and distraction—they have sunk religion in the estimation of the world, and prevented its divine influence on their hearts—they have discouraged the pious, and caused infidelity to abound. Can Aleph think seriously that such a right is divine? Do not the evils, arising out of this right, prove its origin to be human? Shall we introduce and apply such a right to divine things? Let this be done, or rather continued, and we shall soon see religion pushed out of the world, or shaped to the conveniency of every man.

Aleph may deny that a *divine* right is given to a church to make a creed and to deny admission to such as reject it. What shall we then call it? If it be not divine, it must be human. On this point there is no controversy. A church in our free country has a right to do a thousand things; to live in pleasure and in sin; to work wickedness; to say all manner of evil against others: and, in the language of Aleph, to think, to speak and to act, that is, to make a creed, and to deny admission to those who reject it: But who will say that a church has a divine right to do these things? This is the main point, which he evades to touch.

But he lets us know, why he so zealously pleads for the right of making a creed, that it may be a "test of fellowship, and a fence against corruption." Is orthodoxy, then, the test of fellowship? Orthodoxy—measured by the creed or standard of every party? This truly is a *fence* against truth, and the union of Christians;—a *test* to the destruction of fellowship, as facts plainly show. But Aleph calls a creed "a fence against corruption." By corruption he means undoubtedly, errors in doctrine and practice. I would humbly ask, whether the creed has ever produced this good effect? are there no errors in that church? no sin, no moral evils? If there are, of what use is the creed, seeing it does not answer the purpose of a fence? We think the Bible alone can answer at least as good a purpose. But as every church has a right to make a creed as a test of fellowship and as a fence against corruption, then the Methodist Church has as good right to do so, as the Baptist—and as the creeds of each church are vastly descrepant, it follows that fellowship is fenced out, and corruption fenced in by the one

or the other; and probably by both. If ever there is fellowship or union betwen them, it must be in opposition to their creeds and fences.

Aleph sees the necessity of a creed in order to keep out from the Church the Pedo-Baptist, the Arian, and Socinian. I would ask, does the bible keep them out of the Church? If so, what need of a creed. If the Bible does not exclude them, who shall presume to do it? We are neither Pedo-Baptists, Arians nor Socinians; yet God forbid that we should reject or despise any of these little ones that believe in Jesus as an all-sufficient Saviour, and who proves the sincerity of his faith by a holy walk and conversation. Were we to reject Arians and Socians, we believe that many of the reputed orthodox would be found in their ranks.

Aleph with every other person, who pleads for human creeds and confessions, labors to establish a party in opposition to the union of Christians. Partyism and union are perfectly opposite ideas, and both cannot be right; both cannot be agreeable to the will of God: one or the other must be wrong. The union of Christians is the will of God, the prayer of Jesus, and the means of bringing the world to believe in Jesus, therefore it must be right. That man is then engaged in a righteous work, who labors to promote this union, by removing every obstruction to it; and as creeds are pre-eminently in the way of it, he labors in a good work, who is engaged to banish them, with all party names, from the world. But the man who acts a contrary part must be wrong, and engaged in a work in opposition to the will of God, the prayer of Jesus, and the salvation of the world.—Many honest men are not apprized of these things, and therefore continue in their course; but it is believed that increasing light will soon convince the pious and honest of every name of their error, and then will they in spirit flow together in one body, and convince all that Jesus was sent by the Father to be the Saviour of the world. These thoughts are submitted to you and to the honest inquirer after truth. EDITOR.

UNIVERSALISM—No. III.

As the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is the grand scheme, and last effort of the Almighty (so far as we know) to enlighten, to reform, and to save the world; and as all the rays of divine light concentre and

shine conspicuously in it; here, if the doctrine under consideration have any foundation in truth, it may be found. In our last No. we think, something was said, shewing conspicuously that the doctrine in question has no place in the New Testament. But that it may be seen that the uniform language of that book is against it, we will quote a few more evidences from it. To cite every passage which bear upon this question, would be to transcribe a large portion of the Christian Scriptures, and would carry us beyond the narrow limits, we have prescribed for ourselves: We shall, therefore, content ourselves by noticing some few of the plainest and most unequivocal declarations of Christ and his Apostles, which bear upon this point. The reader will bear in mind that the proposition which we are considering is this: "That all rewards and punishments are confined to this life; that virtue rewards the virtuous, and vice punishes the vicious." Then, "to the law, and to the testimony." John v, 28, 29. "The hour is coming, in which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." Could language more clearly than this, express the doctrine of rewards and punishments after death? We confess we can conceive of none that could. Comment is unnecessary. The good, shall come forth from their graves, to live forever with the Saviour; but the evil, the wicked, to be damned; to be "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power." In the 2d chap. of Rom. it is declared, that God will render to every man according to his deeds: that he will render eternal life, to those who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honor, immortality; but to those who are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, he will render indignation and wrath; tribulation and anguish. For there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law, shall perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; in that day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ."

Now reader, ask yourself, What is that reward which God will render to every man according to his deeds? Paul answers; to them that continue in well-doing, he will render as a reward, eternal life. But to them, who are contentious, and do not obey the truth, he will render as a punishment, indignation and wrath.

Again, reader, ask; when will God thus render to every man according to his deeds? Paul again answers: "In that day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ." But says an objector the doing of any act, such as rewarding, or punishing, implies a begining and an end; but an eternal reward cannot be given, nor an eternal punishment inflicted, because neither will have an end!! If this is not sophistry I know not what deserves that name.—Will not God give eternal life to his people? O, Yes! This is a favorite sentiment with the Universalists. But will not this be an act of the Almighty? Certainly. Then according to the objection, this eternal life must end, and the whole race of Adam, must leap into the desolate abyss of nonentity.

This objection overturns the whole system of universal restoration, and establishes that of universal destruction!! 2 Cor. v. "We labor to be accepted of the Lord: For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Now does not this text necessarily imply, that if the Apostle did not labor he would not be accepted with the Lord? and that, consequently, when he should appear before the judgment seat of Christ, he would be punished for his evil deeds? But if our preacher had heard the Apostle make this declaration, he would have said, (as in effect I heard him say,) "you are mistaken, Paul, your laboring in the ministry, cannot advance you one step towards Heaven; it may affect your condition here, but it can have no bearing upon your future destiny. All the evil in the world is good in the view of the Almighty, as tending to consummate the happiness of man in the future world: The Almighty, therefore, equally recognizes a Cruel Nero as his servant, who seeks to put down christianity, as a Paul, who seeks to establish it."

For how could an Apostle, or how can we consider any man a friend of God, and of righteousness; who teaches that even sin itself is good, and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; that we could know nothing of happiness without it; that the greatest sinner and the most devout christian, both rise to Heaven to share in the same eternal happiness as soon as they die? Jesus says, Luke xii. 4, 5,—"Be not

afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do: But fear him who, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell, yea, I say unto you, fear him." Can this text be reconciled to the doctrine of no punishment after death? We think not. We know, however, that a caviller, who wishes to evade the truth, might say, "Though the Almighty hath power to cast into hell, yet he will not do it."

But this would represent the Saviour as acting the part of a mother who seeks to govern her children, by holding out to them false terrors of ghosts and witches. She knows there are no such things, but then it would be unsafe to tell her children so. So the Saviour, upon this principle, knows that there is no hell into which the wicked will be cast after death, but the world must not know it!! It is said in Rom. 8, "That all things work together for good to them that love God." Now this certainly implies that all things do not work for the good of those who do not love God. And yet according to the doctrine we are opposing, all things in in the world are just as they should be, and are working for the eternal happiness of all men! Paul said his afflictions were working out for him an eternal weight of glory, while he looked not at the things that were seen, but at those that were not seen, which were eternal. And yet, after all his labours, his watching, his praying, his sufferings by sea, and by land, his imprisonments, and stripes for Christ's sake, he had not a whit the advantage of the vilest sinner that ever lived, if the doctrine of our preacher be true! In Luke IV, the Saviour, in teaching the people to be humble, and merciful, among other things, says to this effect: "When thou makest a feast call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy rich neighbors, least they also bid the again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame and the blind: And thou shalt be recompenced at the resurrection of the just.

Here the doctrine of future rewards is as clearly stated, as language could state it. We shall therefore leave it without comment, to speak for itself. In Rev. XXI. 7 & 8, we find these words: "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolators, and all liars shall have their part in the lake that burneth

with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." Now upon the principle of no future punishment, what can this mean:—"he that overcometh shall inherit all things."

For we know, that the most pious are not unfrequently, the most destitute of the blessings of this life. The all things, therefore, which he that overcometh shall inherit, refer to a reward that shall be given in another life—refer to a place which he shall have in the holy city, spoken of in the connexion, in which it is said that "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death; for the former things are past away." This shall be the reward of the righteous: a reward worthy of a God to give, and worthy of man to receive.

But while the righteous shall be thus exalted to the city of God, (O dreadful contrast!) the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and whoremongers, &c. shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.

Now, none can suffer the second till they have suffered the first. And that the second will follow the natural, or first death of unbelievers, is clear from another portion of scripture, in connexion with that just referred to. It reads thus: "And I saw the dead small and great stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire."

Here we read of a general judgment, which is to take place after the dead small and great shall arise and stand before God. And also, that all who are not found written in the book of life shall be cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death.

TIMOTHY.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

Ohio, April 30, 1827.

My strange Brother—I have been lately favored with an opportunity of perusing a few numbers published by you, and entitled the "CHRISTIAN MESSENGER," and am pleased to find that some of its contents agree with its title; therefore as a young and earnest enquirer after truth, and believing from the pages of your Messenger that you and some of your subscribers are fully adequate to the task of amply elucidating the most, if not all theological subjects, I have assumed the liberty of honestly proposing a few questions to be inserted in one of your numbers. Should you be so good as to give them an insertion, please to answer them as lengthily as your pages will admit, or solicit some of your subscribers to make some general remarks on them, and do it hastily, for our King's business requires haste.

Question 1. Is there a gospel Church now existing in the world? If there be where is she?

2. Are the present divisions and subdivisions of all the professed Christians in the world, *the wilderness* into which the woman took her flight, and there continued for twelve hundred and sixty days?

3. Is the present administration of the ordinances of the Lord in any denomination a Gospel administration?

4. Is it essential under the present discrepancy of the government of Churches and of men's opinions, that the Clergy of different denominations should presume to plant or establish Churches (so called) under the name of "the branch, or branches of the Church of Christ?"

5. Shall we from the face of scripture look for a period of time in which primitive order and ancient gifts will be restored to the Church, and all the people of the Lord be consolidated into one body?

Yours in the bonds of Christian love.

AN ENQUIRING STRANGER.

The Editor wishes some qualified brother to answer these queries for the next number.—If not done by another, he pledges himself to do it. The enquiring Stranger must exercise patience.

EDITOR.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

Dear Brother:

As your paper is designed to detect error, and disseminate truth, I transmit to you a few lines respecting some of my difficulties on the popular doctrine of trinity. From a child I have been accustomed to hear trinitarian preachers. They have stated the doctrine as an incomprehensible mystery, and urged the belief of it as essential to salvation. Not long since I heard a popular preacher in my neighborhood. In the former part of his discourse he declaimed against mystery in revelation, affirming that what ever was revealed, ceased to be a mystery—that mystery and revelation were of directly opposite import. Presently he introduced the doctrine of trinity, and labored to develope its mystery by a familiar simile; the court of appeals, he observed, was composed of three men, and these three were one court. So the trinity was composed of three persons, and yet but one God! Good Lord! Is the mysterious doctrine of trinity at length unmasked and explained? And must I believe it or be denounced a heretic, and sentenced to eternal perdition? For several days my mind was fixed on this subject and strangely agitated. Can there be a court in Heaven, composed of three intelligent beings, like our court of appeals, who can counsel, dissent or agree according to their judgement! If so, I concluded, these must be three independent and eternal beings; and indeed our preacher said, that each of these beings or persons was independent God.

To the Bible I went, honestly enquiring after truth, and determined to rest on no decision, but what was found there. I was soon convinced from the old and new Testaments that the doctrine of trinity was no where taught in the Bible—I shall only mention a few of the many texts which occurred to my view. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." Deut. vi, 4. "Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the Lord, he is God, there is none else besides him." Deut. vi, 35–39. 1 King viii, 60. Isa. xlv, 5. 6, 14, 18, 21, 22, &c. But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him."—1 Cor. viii, 6. Of the Son of God the scriptures every where represent him, as the Son of the living God, God's own Son, his only begotten Son. From these expressions I concluded

that if he was the Son of God, he was not God himself, the self existent God. For the very idea of a Son implies derived existence. Hence said the Son, "I came down from Heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." John vi, 38. I also found that the Son was mediator between God and men. 1 Tim. ii, 5. But if he were the self-existant God, how could he mediate between himself and his offending creatures? Of the Holy spirit, I could not conclude from any thing I read in the Bible, that it was a distinct person from the Father and Son, and equal to them. For it is said *to be poured forth*, and *to be poured out* upon the people by the Father and by the Son, and when the redeemed are seen and heard worshiping the Father and Son in heaven, there is no mention made of worshiping the spirit. Nor can I find any precept or example for worshiping the spirit any where in the Bible.

Thus by reading the Bible I have been led to the above conclusions; my mind is happily relieved from embarrassment, and joyfully engaged in the work of the Lord. O that all would read the Bible for themselves, and labor honestly to understand it and live according to its precepts!—All would then imbibe the same spirit, and flow together in one Body.

Yours respectfully.

PETER.

QUERIES PROPOSED FOR INVESTIGATION BY ELDER C. NANCE.

1. What is the work of an evangelist?

2. Is every pastor an evangelist in his respective church? or does an evangelist preside over a specified district?

3. If so, who appoints him, and to whom is he accountable for his conduct? We earnestly desire to understand the subject, that we may know our duty, and act accordingly.

It is hoped that some one, who understands these subjects, will give us satisfactory information for our next number.

EDITOR.

We have just received the two first numbers of a periodical, called the "Lamp of Liberty," published in Cincinnati, by the "*Liberating Community*." We have hastily glanced over the work, and are sorry to say, that it appears to us as far removed from the meek and humble spirit of christianity, as any we have ever seen. While they boast that the Universalists "were never known to be persecutors," yet they manifested an unusual degree of hostility to all who receive not their views of the doctrine of Christ, and plainly declare non-fellowship with them all. But against none have they emitted more of their venom, than against us. By this we view ourselves as receiving more honor than is in justice our due; because we are led to conclude that they view us pre-eminently in their way of spreading what we are constrained to think pernicious doctrines.

They have made some very harsh strictures on a small piece we published in our 8th number, respecting the Universalists; and represent it as *falsehood, calumny, wilful lying* and *slanderous misrepresentation*. At first, we thought to let them pass unnoticed, as we have others of a similar cast; but at length concluded to make a few remarks, lest some might think their charges correct. We said in number 8, "That an overwhelming majority of them (the Universalists) 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." In reply to the expression, "an overwhelming majority deny the doctrine of a general judgment," they say, that "this assertion is very far from bearing any resemblance of truth—that neither a majority nor minority of Universalists deny the doctrine of a general judgment." By the general judgment we understood that taught us in the New Testament, and believed in by all who profess Christianity, except the Shakers and the *majority* of Universalists—that which is so ably defended by Timothy in the present number. That they deny this general judgment, their own words shall prove, without appealing to "eastern prints." They say "We believe that *judgment has come upon all men*. That *he that believeth not is condemned already*, and that as no person can be legally condemned without being first judged and found guilty. *Now is the judgment of this world*, John xii—in order that the condemnation and punishment due to the transgressor, may be awarded day by day. This doctrine is the doctrine of the Universalists. We believe then in a general judgment, but we limit it to this life, and believe that every man suffers in time all the punishment for sin that will be required."—p. 28. This confirms the fact that they deny what the scripture and the generality of Chris-

tians call the general judgment. They have introduced three mutilated texts of scripture to shew that they believe in a general judgment, not one of which, it is believed, has any reference to that event.

They quibble at the expression, "an overwhelming majority." In the Christian Inquirer, a periodical printed in the city of New York, for March, 1827, are contained these words. "All (the Universalists) unite in the belief that the wicked are punished for their sins; but some contend that it is only in the present life, while others believe that it extends to a future state of existence, but is disciplinary and for a limited period; the former class is probably THREE TO ONE of the latter." This I called *an overwhelming majority*, and fear not a contradiction. It is well known that those of them, who deny future punishment in another state, also deny what we call the general judgment.

They represent us as unchristianizing the Universalists. This we have not done with respect to the minority, with whom alone we are acquainted; for we expressly stated in the very article, which has irritated the *liberal community* to madness, that "We are far from saying that there are no good men among the Universalists. The minority zealously oppose the majority in their infidel speculations."—We have known some truly good men of this latter class; but we have never heard any of them say, that they were converted from their evil ways by the belief of this doctrine. No: it was received afterwards. With the majority we are unacquainted; but were we to judge from the doctrine and spirit manifested in their numbers, we must entertain an unfavorable idea of their piety. While they boast as the *liberating community*, and promised liberty to others, we fear they may be the servants of corruption" 2 Pet. ii. 19.

They farther say, "Our editor (B. W. Stone) if not believed by some respectable preachers of his own society (who are intimately acquainted with his private sentiments) is as far from believing the doctrine of endless misery, as any Universalist. "Unhesitatingly we pronounce the charge false; and it is not believed by us, that any preacher, *respectable* or not, in our society, will ever say that we informed him we did not believe the doctrine of endless misery. We have ever opposed the doctrine of the Universalists from a full conviction of its being an error. I have been lately informed that a book is circulated in in some parts of Ohio,

under my name, in defence of Universalism. I boldly declare it a base fabrication of some impostor.

The Liberating Community proceeds to say, "There are [is] a number of respectable preachers in our certain knowledge (whom we could name) at this time in full connexion with the Christian body, called New Light, who are quite as much opposed to the blasphemous doctrine of endless misery, as any of the honest Universalists are; but still keep themselves behind the curtain, concealed in the dark." If they are behind the curtain concealed in the dark, how did the Liberating Community become acquainted so well with them and their sentiments? We aver they are yet concealed from us, we know them not. We have heard such things stated of one or two in our connexion, but know not whether the statement be true or false.

About 25 years ago, while I was in the orthodox view of atonement, my mind was for a few days much bewildered, and inclined to think more favorably of the Universalian scheme. I applied myself closely to reading the Bible, and was soon convinced that it was not a Bible doctrine. Had I retained the idea that Christ died for all to make satisfaction to justice, I should certainly view the minority of the Universalists as more consistent than many who are esteemed orthodox.

"Timothy" was in type for this No. before the "Lamp" was received. We view it as a sufficient reply to the doctrines advanced in that work. Editor.

ON PRAYER.

Prayer is the offering up of our desires to God for things agreeable to his will. The habitual performance of this duty produces that habitual sense of the presence and inspection of God, and of our entire dependence upon him, which is the foundation of a holy life.

It is objected, that prayer, being a direct petition, is improperly addresed to God who is an unchangeable Being.—We answer; that we have good reasons for believing in the direct and immediate operation of God upon the mind in answer to the prayer of faith and desire. This opinion is founded on the language of our Saviour on different occasions, on arguments drawn from his own prayers, and on the case of the first converts to christianity. This fact is adapted to establish a much more intimate sense of connex-

fon with and dependence on God, and answers better to his paternal character, to suppose that. when we pray, he will grant us favors than to suppose he will not. But these direct influences are undoubtedly given in conformity to general laws, which the infinite wisdom and goodness of God, have imposed upon himself.

It is again objected, That God has predetermined what he will do for us, and with us; his determinations are not to be changed by our prayers, therefore our prayers are useless. We answer; on this principle, *our exertions of any sort*, are equally useless. We may say, God has determined what he will do for us and with us; his will and determination cannot be changed; therefore any exertion on our part, the performance of any duty, or the use of any means, is idle and fruitless. It would be folly to use any means to obtain the necessary comforts of life, or to preserve life itself, on this principle.

Again it is objected, God is infinitely wise and good, and knows better what we need than we do ourselves; that without our solicitation his benevolence inclines him to confer on us all real benefits; therefore there is no use in our prayers.

We answer; This reasoning may be extended equally to all actions. We may say, God knows far better than we do, what is good for us and is disposed to confer every real good upon us; therefore it is idle for us to plan or act, or use any means whatever of obtaining what we think good. In every case in God's government, the blessings which he has enabled us to procure for ourselves by the use of certain means, he will not confer upon us without we use those means.—Therefore as prayer is a means of forming a holy character, it is folly to expect it in the neglect of this means.

The denial of the direct operations of the spirit cuts the very nerves of prayer. We have known some, who were once warmly engaged in the duty of prayer, lose the very spirit and practice of it, by speculating, & philosophising on this subject. We can conceive of no doctrine more dangerous to the souls of men, than that, which tends to check and destroy the spirit of prayer. Such a doctrine stands opposed to the spirit and practice of Jesus, our pattern—to the doctrines and example of his apostles and primitive saints, and to the experience of every living christian. Prayer is the means by which we receive the grace of God, and enjoy sweet communion with the Father and the son. Enjoying this we have communion one with another, and grow up into Christ our living head in all things.

Some have objected to the mode of praying vocally.—Had this mode been wrong, Jesus would never have practised it. When in secret and alone he was distinctly heard to pray at the distance of a stone's cast which might be a hundred yards. Weightier objections have been made to many persons praying at the same time, in the same assembly with an audible voice. Though this might suggest the idea of confusion in the minds of those, who may not have witnessed what we have in this country; yet there are seasons when this mode has been practised without any apparent disorder. In the great revival of religion in Kentucky more than twenty years ago, it was common in the great congregation to hear many poor convicted sinners in different parts crying and pleading for mercy, and entreating their friends around them to pray for them. In whatever direction you passed through the crowd, some one would be found around the distressed, helping with his prayers. This was confusion to none but the prayerless, many of whom felt so wretched and restless, that they also were constrained to cry for mercy.

We have heard many praying audibly at the same time and place, when indeed the exercise appeared to exhibit confusion. They prayed without the spirit of prayer, and when there was no apparent necessity for it. This we have never seen blessed of God. It was only the form of that which we have described as practised in the revival. There are many who speak against this exercise of religion in a contemptuous way, not becoming the profession they make. They object to what we are not disposed to justify; but in their objection they include every case, which we think rash and unwarrantable.

For some of these thoughts we are indebted to the Christian Register. EDITOR.

REVIVALS.

Extract of a letter from Elder Joseph Banfield in the Christian Herald, Portsmouth N. H.

In this town, and Middleton, adjoining, the Lord has lately wrought a great work. About sixty, I believe, profess to

have received a pardon of their sins, and the work is still going on.

The labors of Elder Simeon Swett, and others, have been much blessed in this vicinity. Elder Swett has baptized a number. Last Sabbath I preached at Middleton to a large assembly of people, after which the ordinance of baptism was administered in the presence of the numerous concourse. Several others have offered themselves as candidates for baptism, and will probably go forward soon.

Extract of a letter from Elder Samuel Rand, to the Editor, dated Portland, June 22, 1827.

Br. Foster,—The work of God is still going on in this town. Last Lord's day I baptized twenty one, which makes just one hundred, which I have baptized since the work began, there has been over thirty more before the Church, some of them will go forward soon.—There is a large number now in distress for their souls. Other churches share largely in the glorious work. Elder Phinney has been laboring here with me as a yoke fellow; he is a faithful servant of Christ, he has also been laboring in Westbrook, and the Lord has blessed his labors there; he has baptized ten in that place, and they are considered members with the church here. The prospect is still glorious with us. Poor mourning sinners come and bow around the altar while the children of God offer up strong cries for them, and often some go away rejoicing. We never saw such a day here before.—Pray for us that the work may not cease until all shall be brought to know him from the least to the greatest. Yours in gospel fellowship.—*Christian Herald.*

The revival continues at Union Meeting House in Fayette County Ky. Christians are much engaged, and sinners are turning to the Lord.

At our monthly meeting in Georgetown the 4th Lord's day of June, it pleased God to visit us in mercy. Several were awakened, and came forward from the crowd to join us in prayer. We religiously celebrated the 4th of July. This day will be held in everlasting remembrance by many who attended. It was truly a day of solemnity.—Many were weeping, and many resolved on that day to follow the Lord. Some experienced the consolation of the gospel, and in a few days after were baptized into the name

of Jesus Christ. Since that time the work is increasing, and many are daily professing religion and joining the different churches in this place. We have feared that the spirit of partyism may retard and ultimately check the good work. This evil, deplored by the pious of every name, has, since our recollection, been the cause of crushing every revival in the world. May God revive the pure religion of heaven, which consists in peace, love and union! We shall in subsequent numbers give the particulars of this revival.

From the Baptist Recorder for Aug. 4th, we learn that there has been a great revival of religion in some parts of Virginia. Since last October 273 have been added to the Baptist churches in Richmond, 175 to the Methodist church, and 100 to the Presbyterian church; all in the same city, and during the same revival.—10 miles north of the city 60 more have been baptized. In Hanover and Caroline counties between 2 & 300 have been baptized by Elder Barlow. Ten miles below Richmond 20 more have been recently baptized. In Portsmouth, Norfolk, Williamsburg, Isle of Wight, York, Surry, and the adjacent counties, there is an unusual excitement. The number of converts has increased to more than 200 in Norfolk.

In Guilford Me. nearly 100 have been baptized since January last.

PARTYISM.

Of all the evils to be deplored in the religious world, partyism stands pre-eminent. It is believed to this cause may be traced the termination of every revival and reformation in the world. We are confident of the truth of this fact as far as our own knowledge extends. What but this terminated the revival of religion in Kentucky and the West, twenty five years ago? Then were living christians happily united; their distinctions and notions were almost lost in the glory of religion. It was evidently seen that if this state of things continued all parties must sink into oblivion, human Creeds be neglected, and all christians would flow together into one body. Party spirits trembled at this; for such spirits are always more solicitous to strengthen their party than to convert souls to the Lord—they are more zealous to maintain their peculiar notions and creeds than to support and defend the simple doctrine of the Bible.

These fearing the downfall of their party, and in the pride of their hearts, wishing to increase it, began the horrid work of drawing disciples after them, and of dividing the flock of Christ, that *they might glory in their flesh*. The alarm spread, and every party spirit was crying *O Israel to your tents*. Now peace, love and union the religion of heaven en, were lost in the din of controversy, strife and war.— Now families and neighbors, before happily united were divided, and separated by party walls, from communion with each other. By continually hearing from the pulpit each party anathematising one another, they become suspicious of each other, and manifested a distance and indifference, incompatible with the christian profession. Thus terminated that glorious revival, which had caused the earth to quake for fear, and multitudes to turn to the Lord.

Two numbers more will complete the first volume of the "CHRISTIAN MESSENGER." Should any of the subscribers wish to discontinue their subscriptions at the close of the year, they will please give information to the Editor, thro' the Post Masters or his Agents, against the 25th of September. If not given by that time, they will be considered as subscribers for the second volume. The terms are the same. It is hoped that agents for the work will endeavor to increase their list of subscribers. Every attention shall be given to render the work interesting. The Editor is sorry that by negligence of Postmasters, or want of correct information on his part, as to the residence of some of his subscribers, some numbers of the Messenger have been lost.— As far as he could, he has supplied the deficiency.

COMMUNICATED.

On Aug. 2, 1827, the first conference of the Elders and Brethren of the Christian Church in the Eastern District of Indiana, met at Pleasant Meeting House, on Indian Kentucky.

The Elders present were, Jesse Hughes, Beverly Vawter, Jesse Frazier, Daniel Roberts, Henry Logan, and Joseph Shannon. J. W. Mavity, unordained preacher.

Agreed that our next Conference be at bro. Frederick Steemberger's Bartholomew county, near Edingburgh. We wish the Churches in our connexion to send letters and messengers to that Conference.

JESSE HUGHES, *Pres't.*

B. VAWTER, *Clk.*

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. SEPT 25, 1827. [NO. 11

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

We have been thus particular in giving our views of the gospel, which we preached prior to separation from the Presbyterians, that the world might be able to form a correct judgment respecting our course. After we had stated our views of the gospel, we next proceeded at the request of Synod, to state our objections to their confession of faith. We deem it unnecessary to notice particularly those objections which we made and published in our apology; for by attending to our views of the gospel, any one may at once see their discrepancy with the confession of faith. We objected to all the rigid doctrines of Calvin, contained in the confession. We also stated our objections to all human, authoritative confessions; as being separating walls between christians from their first introduction to the present time.— We determined therefore in order to promote christian union, to cast all such books *to the moles and bats*, and to take the Bible alone as the only standard of faith, practice and discipline. This was then considered a daring and dangerous step indeed. For this we were ranked among the atheistical Illumineers of Germany, and derided, reproached and persecuted as the enemies of God and man. The pulpits were disgraced with invective, and the presses groaned under the weight of opposition to us.

In the mean time we were earnestly and successfully engaged in preaching the gospel, and churches were multiplied. We ordained to the ministry David Purviance, who had long served his country as a legislator. His labors were then, and still are, a blessing to the church. We listened to objections made against us by enemies as well as friends, and determined to correct our errors, and receive truth by every means. While we were denouncing partyism and urging christians to union, it was frequently cast up to us