NOTICE.

All letter communications to W. D. Jourdan must be sent to Locust-shade, Overton co. Tenn.

PROSPECTUS

OF

THE GOSPEL LUMINARY,

VOL. I.—NEW SERIES.

To be devoted to subjects Experimental, Doctrinal, Historical, Biographical, Miscellaneous and Political,

BY DAVID MILLARD & SIMON CLOUGH.

CONDITIONS.

THE GOSPEL LUMINARY, in the proposed form, if suitable encouragement be given, will be published once in two weeks, on a half sheet of imperial size, folded in quarto form, the first number to be issued in January, 1828.

2. It will be afforded to subscribers at one dollar a year, payable on the receipt of the first number, or one dollar and twenty-five cents, if not paid within six months from the time of its commencement.

3. To be fowarded to any part of our country where conveyance is practicable by mail; postage paid by subscribers.

4. Agents who obtain ten subscribers, and become responsible for the pay, will be entited to the *eleventh* and *twelfth* for their trouble, and for all above that number, every sixth.

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6. Returns should be made to Simon Clough, city of New-York, No. 206 Cherry street, by the middle of December next.

ERRATA IN VOL. 2, No. 1.

P. 18, line 9 from bottom, read *of* instead of *or*.
P. 21, lines 22 and 23, blot out *as*.

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. II.] GEORGETOWN, KY. JAN. 1828 [No 3.

AN HUMBLE ADDRESS TO THE VARIOUS DENOMINATIONS OF CHRISTIANS IN AMERICA.

No. III.

IT is hoped that some impression is made on the minds of our serious readers from attention to our last number, with respect to the lamentable situation of the people of God; and that they seeing the evil, are disposed to reform, and unite according to the will of God. The inquiry now is—on what ground shall we unite? Or, in what creed shall we agree? It is evident that the Presbyterians cannot receive the Creed of the Methodists, nor can the Methodists receive that of the Presbyterians; nor can the Baptists receive the Creed of either of the other sects, nor either of these sects receive that of the Baptists. So of every other sect established on a creed. On any of these grounds or creeds, it is impossible for the various sects to unite. To us it appears equally impossible for them to form a creed to which every sect would cordially subscribe, and on which they could unite. The history of the church from the commencement of creeds proves this fact. For 300 years after Christ the church had but one authoritative creed, which was the Bible. Though they had different opinions of some truths, yet in the spirit of forbearance, they generally lived together in love and worshipped together in peace. But since the council of Nice in 325, when the first authoritative creed was formed, peace and union have forsaken the church, and war, strife, division and confusion, have succeeded to the disgrace of chrstianity, and to the shame of its humble professors.—Creeds and parties increase with time, and yet new parties rise and new creeds are formed.

But we will suppose that all the various sects should harmoniously agree to unite on the Creed or Confession of the Presbyterians; will this creed keep them in union. No. Witness the various parties of Presbyterians who are as far from union and communion, as any other sects on earth, and yet they all hold to the same Confession, but form different

notions of its doctrines. Should all the parties agree to unite on the Methodist Creed, would this keep them united? No: For they too are broken, and are still breaking into parties, hostile to each other. And the many parties of the Baptists prove that their Creed cannot answer the purpose of uniting christians. No human Creed can, as we before stated.

We can propose a Creed, which all the sects can agree to receive, as the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and on which they can unite. This creed is the Bible. Faith in this as the book of divine inspiration, and the directory to heaven, with an humble and unreserved obedience to the precepts of the New-Testament can, and will unite the various jarring sects in one body and in one spirit. For this book inculcates humility, and frowns indignantly on that proud, aspiring spirit that seeks the highest seat—it forbids the love of money, and inculcates contentment with our humble lot, "having food and raiment therewith to be content,"—it enjoins upon us to seek the honor that cometh from God, and forbids us to seek honor one of another—It commands us to forsake father and mother and brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, houses and lands for the kingdom of heaven's sake. For the truth's sake we must deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Jesus, through persecution, tribulation and distress. In a word we are to set our affection on things above, and not on things on the earth, always endeavoring to perfect holiness in the fear of God—always endeavoring to do unto others as we would they should do unto us. Believing thus we should be christians indeed, and should adorn the doctrine of God our Savior. We should then by our holy life confirm the gospel of the Son of God, and convince the world that it is divine—the evidence would be so clear that the world would believe that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of it.

We have said, the Bible has never divided christians—the very spirit which that book breathes is love, peace, and union; and all who possess the spirit of the Bible, possess these graces. The love of money and the shame of poverty—the love of honor and the fear of contempt—the love of ease and the dread of persecution, stand as mountains in the way of union. A preacher who has a large church and a large salary, could not easily deny himself of it, nor rejoice to see his people forsake him, reject their Creed and party

name, and flow together in Christ, taking his word alone for their creed, and his name alone for their name. Many from this avaricious spirit would oppose them, though they must be convinced that they were right in thus acting. How different the spirit of the old Baptist! He rejoiced to see his disciples forsake him, and follow Jesus. He rejoiced that Jesus would increase, and he himself must decrease. It is from this low, sordid, selfish spirit, that many preachers, we fear, with their satellies, are so fearful of other sects, lest they should draw away some of their flock after them. They therefore warn their people, not to countenance them; and represent them and their doctrines in such colors, as effectually to prejudice their flock from hearing them. This spirit must be banished before the union of the parties can be effected.

A preacher in great esteem and honor among his party, would feel it a cross too heavy for nature to bear, to deny himself for truth's sake of the honor and friendship of the world, and to submit to be despised and rejected by his party, his friends and relatives. Yet this must be done by preachers and people before the parties can unite.

A preacher in wealth, honor and ease is the farthest, in human view, from reformation and union. Shall I forsake all, my wealth, my honor and ease, and submit to poverty, shame, contempt, labor and persecution for the truth's sake? Nothing but grace can give him the victory; and too commonly those in the situation just described have but a small share of it. To make religion wealthy, and honorable in the view of the world, and to confer on it worldly ease and comfort, were among the first causes of its ruin and fall; and while these things are sought after, it will never rise. While the preachers have not so much of the spirit of Christ as to weep over the ruins of Zion, and the misery of the world lying in the wicked one, they never will deny themselves of these worldly advantages—nor will they cease to endeavor to bind their party with the cords of a man. And while the people love *to have it so*, and are under the influence of such a ministry, there can be no hope of a reformation.

There is another spirit attached to a party equally foreign from true religion,—the spirit of carnal emulation. Who shall be the greatest? is the very soul of it. Some seek the pre-eminence by having a very learned and numerous body of preachers; and too much like the Jewish Rabbies assume

high seats, and look down on all others as accursed, *not knowing the law.* Others seek it by increasing their party, and multiplying their numbers. By various means the different parties endeavor to excel, not so much to please God, as to stand high in the esteem of the world. We are very far from including every one among the various parties as possessing this spirit; but it is greatly to be lamented that too many are under the influence of it. If these remarks are by any deemed too severe, we beseech such to ask themselves as in the presence of God the following queries. Does the love of God incline my heart to seek his glory, though it be at the expence of my own honor and glory in the world? Does the love of souls, to save them from sin and misery, and to make them holy and happy in time and eternity, influence my heart to be zealous to preach, exhort and pray them to be reconciled to God—or am I zealous to preach, exhort and pray to add numbers to my party—honor to my name—or wealth to my store? Does the love of truth influence my heart so entirely that I will search for it and embrace it and declare it, though for this I lose all earthly good, honor, glory, wealth and ease—and though I have to forsake the nearest and dearest friends, and meet persecution, shame and contept "in every lane of life?" Is it my great object to please God and save souls?

They, who can with a clear conscience answer such questions in the affirmative, are the men whom God will bless—They shall build up Zion and lead her sons and daughters to peace, love and union—They shall lead the ungodly to repentance, and the world to believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God. Where shall the partizan, the schismatic, the promoter of discord and division then appear? If on earth he lives he must live alone wretched and forsaken—if dead, his memory will be forgotten, or retained in disgrace. "O Lord revive thy work, in the midst of the years make known; In wrath remember mercy."—*Amen.*

EDITOR.

LETTER II.—TO ELDER S. CLACK.

It is hoped, sir, that from my former letter, you are convinced that you have wronged us in your representation of us and our doctrine. We proceed to make a few more strictures on a few of your assertions, of a character similar to those before noticed.

You said "They deny that Jesus Christ is God." Had you said "They deny that Jesus Christ is *the only true God*," you would have spoken correctly. This we have learned from a teacher greater than you may be aware of—from Jesus Christ himself, the faithful and true witness. In his prayer to his Father, (Joh. xvii, 3,) he says "This is life eternal, that they might know thee *the only true God*, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."—All, acquainted with us and our writings, know that we have not denied that Jesus is *God*, but that we maintain this truth, as stated and explained in the scriptures, but not as explained in the *orthodox* creeds of the day. Should you wish correct information on this subject, do, sir, put yourself to the trouble of examining our publications, or cease to speak evil of what you know not.

You ask an important question, "Do they worship him" (Jesus Christ)? We boldly answer, we do.—Again you enquire, "If they do (worship Jesus Christ) I ask, by what authority?" We fearlessly answer by divine authority; as we shall presently shew. You think, that either you or we are idolaters—you in worshipping him as the true God, if he be not, or we in worshipping him as a *being* not the true God. To this important point let us seriously and honestly attend. We both worship the Son, and it is hoped in the same spirit; but you worship him as the supreme, and only true God; we worship him as the Son of the only true and living God. To the Bible let us go, and by this alone determine our authority.

1. We have on record many instances of people and of the disciples, worshipping Jesus Christ when he was on earth. In not one of which instances was he viewed by the worshippers as the supreme, self-existent, or only true God. Matt. ii, 11, 12. viii, 2. ix, 18. xiv, 33. xv, 25. xx, 20. xxviii. 9, 17. Luk xxiv, 52. Mark v. 6 Joh. xi, 38, &c. If this had been idolatry would not the faithful and true witness have testified against it? Would he, who sought not his own glory, but the glory of the Father who sent him—would he not have forbidden it? Doubtless he would.

2'ly. The only true God, the Father, has declared his will that the Son of God should be worshipped and honored by us his creatures. "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son, that all men should *honor* the Son even as they honor the Father." Joh. v, 23. It is evident that the Son in this text is not the very and true God;

for *all judgment was committed to him* by the Father. And, says Paul, "With us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things—" &c. Had the Son been the only true God, he must have all judgment independently of another, therefore it could not be committed to him. The very expression of its being committed to him, implies that he had it not before it was committed, and therefore was not independent God—Yet it is the will of the Father that his Son, a being not the independent and self-existent, should be honored and worshipped by his creatures on earth, because the Father had committed all judgment to him."

3'ly. The angels themselves are commanded to worship him. Heb. i, 6. "When he (the Father) bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him."—There are none who will dare to say that the *first begotten* brought into the world was the only true God. Yet this being, not the only true God, was to be worshipped by angels? Are angels idolaters for this act of obedience to the command of the Almighty Father? None will affirm it.

4'ly. Phil. ii, 8, 10, 11. Here it is declared of Jesus Christ that after he suffered the death of the cross, "God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name, that *at the name of Jesus*, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess Jesus Christ to be Lord, to the praise of God the Father." Will any affirm that this being, who was emptied and humbled, and who died on the cross, whom God highly exalted, and gave a name above every name, was the only true God? Yet this being, not the only true God is to be worshipped by all in heaven, earth and under the earth. And by this the Father is glorified. If you, sir, and the *orthodox* be right in refusing to worship the Son, only as the true God, you condemn the obedient univere as idolaters! Yet are they idolaters by the will and command of God!

5'ly. It was the universal practice of christians of old to call on the name of the Lord Jesus. See Acts xi, 14. Cor. i, 2, &c. "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth—with all that in every place *call upon the name* of Jesus Christ our Lord both theirs and ours. Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ."—It was also the practice of primitive Christians to ascribe to

him glory and dominion. 2 Pet. iii, 18. "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory, both now and forever. Amen." Rev. i, 5, 6. "Unto him (Jesus Christ) that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests to God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." That this worship was given to a being, not the only true God, is too plain to admit of a doubt. But lest a doubt might rise, we will quote a few verses in Rev. v. "And I beheld and heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts and the elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lord that was slain to receive power and riches, and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth,—heard I saying, Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever. And the four beasts said Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth forever and ever." In Rev. i, 18, the Son says "I am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forever more." These verses need no comment, and are decisive on the point, that Jesus Christ, a being, not God supreme, is worshipped by all the saints and angels in heaven and earth. And who will dare to call them idolaters? And who will dare to withhold from him that worship, required of the Father, and paid so devoutly by the countless myriads of glory? O for the spirit which animates their devotions, that we on earth might swell his praise to the glory of God the Father. Human systems of religion and vain speculations have too long robbed the Lord of his glory, and caused man to err from the way of holiness and life.

In the whole Bible there is not an instance of Christ being worshipped on the ground of his being the self existent, or only true God; but on the ground of his being God's *own* Son, and the *constituted* Lord and Savior of the world.

You object to worshipping the Son of God, because it is said, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him *only* shalt thou serve." Dear sir, is not obedience to God, a great part of the worship and service required of us? Has not God required men and angels to worship and honor the Son? *And*

he that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father that sent him? If therefore we worship and honor the Son, we keep the commands of God, and thus worship and serve him supremely and ultimately through Jesus Christ. "I am the Lord; that is my name; and my glory I will not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." Isai XLII, 8. The meaning, no doubt, is, I will not permit my creatures to give that glory and praise, due to me to false Gods or to graven images; but when we give glory and praise and bow the knee to Jesus, we fulfill the command of God the Father, and glorify him ultimately, as before proved. The terms *only* or *alone* with application to God, seem frequently to carry this meaning. Thus, Ps. LXXII, 18. "God *only* doth wonders." Yet wonders were done by Moses and the prophets, by Christ and his apostles. But the power is *ultimately* referred to God. Acts II, 22. "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which *God did by him.*" Again Deut. XXXII, 12. "The Lord *alone* did lead him (Israel through the wilderness) and there was no strange God with him." Yet it is evident that Moses lead them under the direction of God. So that all the wisdom and goodness manifested in their journeyings are *ultimately* referred to God. "God is said to be only wise." Yet many are called *wise;* but God is the source of all wisdom. Again Isai XLIII, 11. "Beside me there is no Savior." Yet Israel had many saviors; but the power was from the Lord, and was ultimately referred to him. Did Israel exalt these earthly saviors in cheerful songs with the approbation of God, to whom they ultimately referred their praise? and shall christians be silent with regard to our great Savior Jeses Christ, and give him no praise, no thanks, nor worship? Shall Jesus be thus neglected, when God the Father is glorified and pleased when we humbly bow to, and worship his Son? Can we feel guiltless in this neglect, when God has commanded, and his command performed by the myriads of glory?—"*Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven!*"—"Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?"

Trinitarians and Unitarians agree in the object of their worship, the only true God. They also agree in refusing to worship the Son of God, as a being not the true God. We believe they both have been led to this by theorizing and speculating on their various notions of religion, and not confining themselves to the simplicity of the gospel.

Now, sir, if we, in worshipping the Son of God, as we have stated, are idolaters, so were the disciples of our Lord, and so were all the primitive christians—so are the angels and all the redeemed in heaven. If they are guilty of idolatry, who is the author of the crime? Has not God himself appointed the worship?

But if you be right, then all the angels and saints in heaven and earth are worshipping the only true God, who had been emptied, humbled, dead and alive again—one who had been slain and had redeemed sinners to God by his blood—(To what God had he, the only true God, redeemed them?)—one who had a name given him above every name—(what God gave the only true God this name?)—one to whom all in heaven and earth were to bow, and to confess him to be Lord, to the glory of God the Father. What! the only true God to be worshipped to the glory of God the Father! Dear sir, think seriously on these things, and do not let prepossession close your eyes to examination. My charity believes that your practice is at war with your system. If not I should awfully fear for the world. Take heed lest your love of orthodoxy and human systems may not cause you to err *essentially* indeed. Yours sincerely, EDITOR.

[*To be continued.*]

An Address to the Christian Brethren, in the different States, who desire a General Conference.

BELOVED BRETHREN,

Permit an humble brother, who feels a lively interest, in the prosperity of the Church of Christ—who greatly desires to see New Testament doctrine and practices universally prevail among us, to present a few thoughts for your serious consideration. From the minutes of your Conference, as published in the Messenger, I see you wish to have a General Conference. This wish, my dear brethren, I am inclined to think, has been prematurely formed. I am not without hope, therefore, that when you shall have carefully examined its propriety, in the light of the New Testament and of Church history, you will yet abandon it.—And such an examination, or re-examination, I hope you will make, before you go farther—for much, very much may depend upon it. The most of you, I presume, are teachers of the people. You have much to do, therefore, in forming the public mind, and in directing its energies, in a reli-

gious point of view. Should you go astray, thousands of the present generation, yea, and thousands yet unborn may be involved in the consequences thereof. How awfully solemn and responsible therefore, is the station you fill! And well was the inspired apostle aware of this; and hence his warnings to the teachers of his day, and through them to the same characters in all ages: "Take heed to yourselves, (said he to the Elders of Ephesus) and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers:" And to Timothy, he said, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto thy doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." But to come to the point in hand. You desire a General Conference. Now I would humbly ask, Does *Our Creed* authorize such a meeting? Either it does, or it does not. If it does, then by all means let us have a General Conference. And "for the purpose of a more general union, and uniform understanding," in doctrine and practice; when we are thus met, let us put all our heads together, and make *a little form of sound words*, or "a summary of what the Bible teaches," and ordain that all our Churches shall adopt it, that we may all see eye to eye, that there may be no divisions among us. Yes, let us do all this, and more too; *if our present Creed will allow it.* But if it will authorize nothing of all this, not even the meeting of a General Conference, (and we do not hesitate to say it will not) then why do my brethren desire such a meeting? Would you act without authority?

But perhaps some may contend that the meeting of the Apostles, and Elders, and brethern at Jerusalem, to determine the affair of circumcision, affords authority for a General Conference. That any should draw such a conclusion, seems to me astonishing. For, in the first place, this was but a meeting of one Church with some of the Apostles and the Elders of the Church at Jerusalem. This appears from the form of the letters written to the Gentiles. "Then it pleased the Apostles and Elders, with the *whole Church* to send chosen men," &c. Acts xv. 22. Again, "It seemed good unto us, being assembled with *one accord*, verse 25.

In the second place, the question of circumcision was determined infallibly by the Holy Ghost; so that the decrees of that council are authoritative to this day. This appears from the 28th verse, "For it seemed good unto the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things."

Where then is the authority here for a general conference?

This was but the meeting of one church; but *that* which you desire, is a meeting of delegates or representatives from all the churches. The characters of the meetings then, are essentially different.

Again: This meeting was furnished with inspired apostles, who could determine questions infallibly; but that which our brethren contemplate, could have no inspired men in it thus to determine points of controversy. I am afraid therefore of such a meeting. Could I be assured that, as at the meeting at Jerusalem, it would seem good to the Holy Ghost to direct us in all our decisions infallibly, I would most gladly attend such a meeting; otherwise I should be afraid. Never certainly, was any portion of scripture more tortured than that in Acts which we have been considering.

It is used by the Methodists to prove the propriety of all their various conferences, and by the Presbyterians to prove the propriety of a Presbytery, a Synod, and a General Assembly; and in a word, it has been introduced to sanction the meeting and proceedings of every unlawful ecclesiastical assembly that ever convened. But, probably some of our brethren, will plead that the scripture does not directly forbid such a meeting,—that we cannot have a thus saith the Lord for every thing we do, and that such a meeting is expedient, &c. I am exceedingly fearful of this doctrine of *expediency*, in matters of religion; for if I am not much mistaken, this is the precipice from which the church was hurled into Babylon, in which she has continued for centuries, and from which she has not yet escaped. Has not every innovation been introduced on the ground and under the pretext of expediency? Mosheim, informs us that general councils were never known until the second century: but that when they were introduced they were considered so useful, *so expedient*, that they soon became common. He tells us also, what was their effect upon the church. He states, that by those councils, the whole face of things was changed; that the right and independency of the churches were taken away by aspiring ecclesiastics. Indeed, I think nothing is more apparent from church history, than that general councils were a great means, by which Popery was established.

But we have no thus saith the Lord for many things we

do; why then may we not have a general conference?—True enough! And why not make a calf too, and fall down and worship it? This argument, as well as that drawn from expediency evidently occupies Popish ground; and certainly ought to be abandoned by our brethren.

But a word or two as to the proposed object of a general conference. One says, "for the purpose of a more general union, and uniform understanding;" another says, "for the purpose of more effectually uniting us together, and of spreading truth upon the earth."

These are imposing pretexts: for union, and uniformity, and the spread of truth, are desirable objects. And I doubt not, our brethren believe that these important purposes may be answered by such a meeting. But here again, I must believe they are egregiously mistaken; for all experience, all observation, and all history in relation to such meetings are against their conclusions.

Glance again at their history, my brethren, and you will see that discord, disunion, and divisions have frequently been their inmates, or have followed close in their train. The present condition of the church speaks volumes in opposition to such assemblies—it presents an omnipotent argument against them.

Our neighboring party churches call their general councils bonds of union, peace, &c. But it grives me to see my brethren inclining to walk in their steps, and thus build again the things they once destroyed. Away then with all human bonds of union. I am much better pleased with love, *that* "bond of perfectness," which united the numerous churches, independent of all councils, for the first hundred and fifty years after Christ. Heavenly bond! It is this which unites all the redeemed around the throne, in one glorious family, and binds them to their common God and Saviour as the centre of all their joys. It is this which unites the master and the servant—the rich and the poor—the wise and the ignorant—the teacher and the taught, all as brothers; and this excites them to aspire after holiness, and act in their various stations, each with an eye to the benefit of all. Where this predominates therefore, there is no danger of incroachments; for the interest of one, is the interest of all. If one member suffer, all suffer with it; if one be honored, all are honored." Then my dear brethren, let us follow after love, or charity, for where this abounds there will be heavenly union,—but

where it is wanting, Conferences will be found a poor substitute for it. Wishing that we may all know the truth; that we may be made free in Christ, I subscribe myself, your brother, in hope of eternity, TIMOTHY.

REMARKS

On the annexed Communication of Bro: Joshua Irvin.

As the Church of Christ at Antioch has determined to find the primitive ground of a christian church, and to occupy it; we ask the brethren, composing that church, from what part of the New Testament they have drawn the conclusion, that "each church has the right—to ordain and induct into office its own officers?" This right we have not been able to find in that book, as belonging exclusively to any particular church. Had this right belonged to a church, why would Paul and Barnabas have ordained elders in every church? Why would they not have permitted each church to exercise its own right in ordaining elders for itself? Why would Paul have left Titus in Crete to ordain elders in every city, if the right to ordain elders belonged to the church itself? Why was Timothy cautioned against laying his hands on any man suddenly, if the right to ordain belonged to the church?

That Jesus Christ ordained the twelve apostles, admits of no doubt—That he authorized them to ordain other men to the work of the ministry, is equally clear. And that those men ordained by the apostles, were divinely authorized to ordain other faithful men to be co-workers with them in the ministry, none can reasonably doubt, who will read the epistles of Paul to Timothy and Titus. We have no good reason to believe that any, except the apostles, were divinely inspired. Timothy and Titus have the best claims; but had they been inspired, why would Paul have taught them so particularly on the subject of the ministry, as well as on other matters? Surely if they were inspired, they had no need of such instructions. If they were not inspired we have no more reason to believe that they conferred any supernatural or spiritual gift by the imposition of hands, than a minister or elder can at the present day. Yet Timothy in ordaining laid hands on the person to be ordained.

This church has come to another conclusion from reading the New Testament, which is, "That the word *ordain* simply means to *appoint, elect,* or *set apart,* by a decree of the

church."—We confess that we have never found this in the Book of God. A church may appoint, and elect men for an office, as in the case of the seven Deacons, but we have never understood that this was *ordination* to an office. For after these seven were elected the Apostles laid their hands on them, (Acts 6.) and then and not before were they ordained to fill the office of *serving tables*. We cannot view these men, by this apostolic act, ordained to preach the word. The reason given by the apostles, excludes this idea; For said they "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word." Would they have ordained men to preach the word, and at the same time have imposed the burden of *serving tables*—a burden they found by experience to be incompatible with preaching the word? We think not. Philip and Stephen served tables a while, but soon left this office and went forth to preach the gospel. Philip travelled extensively, and therefore could no longer *serve tables*.

This Church at Antioch has also concluded, by searching the scriptures, "that 'in most instances, if not in all, where the apostles' hands were imposed, some spiritual gift was communicated." It is granted that Jesus by the imposition of his hands healed the sick, and performed wonders. Mar. VI, 5. Luk IV, 40. XIII, 13, &c. It is equally plain that the same works were done by the imposition of the hands of the apostles. Acts XXVIII, 8. It is also granted that by the laying on of the hands of the apostles the newly baptized converts received the Holy Ghost. As Acts VIII, 17, 20. XIX, 6.

Many have thought that because spiritual gifts were conferred, by the imposition of the Apostles' hands, therefore the very act of imposing hands conveys the idea of conferring some special gift. Hence they have concluded—that we in this day, who are not authorized to confer these spiritual gifts, should not make use of the sign, the laying on of hands in the act of ordination. This reasoning at first view appears plausible, but to us it is inconclusive. Because we find certain teachers, who were not apostles, laying their hands on Barnabas and Saul, and sending them away to certain countries to preach the gospel. Acts XIII, 1—4. Surely

we cannot suppose that any spiritual gift was conferred on these two, one of whom was an apostle. The laying on of their hands was nothing more than a solemn dedication of these two to this particular work or ministry to which they were appointed. It cannot be supposed that Timothy, who was not an apostle, conferred spiritual gifts on those whom he ordained, (unless the gift of teaching be such.) Yet he performed this act by the laying on of hands. 1 Tim. v, 22.

The act of laying on hands has been considered, time immemorial, a consecrating, or dedicating any thing to God. Thus the Levites were consecrated to the work of the tabernacle. Num. VIII, 9—17. "And thou shalt bring the Levites before the Lord; and the children of Israel shall *put their hands* upon the Levites; and Aaron shall offer the Levites before the Lord for an offering of the children of Israel, that they may execute the service of the Lord—and after that shall the Levites go to do the service of the tabernacle—." Thus was Joshua consecrated to be a leader to Israel over Jordan into Canaan. Num. XXVII, 18—23. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua, the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thy hands upon him—And thou shalt put some of thine honor upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient."

Can we conclude that spiritual gifts were conferred on the victims for sacrifice by the laying on of hands?

From what is advanced, we conclude that if teachers in apostolic times, who had not the power of conferring spiritual gifts, yet ordained others by the imposition of hands; therefore teachers or elders now should perform the same act in ordaining other faithful men to the work of the ministry. We cannot find one instance of a church ordaining any to this work.

We have suggested these things for the consideration of brethren, searching for truth. We wish them not to be too hasty in drawing conclusions in opposition to facts. If we cannot see all things clearly now, let us follow original, apostolic practice as near as we can. When we leave this ground, we are like the bark on the ocean without a compass or pilot. EDITOR.

For the Christian Messenger.

Lately, while on a visit to my friends in Ohio, I stopp[ed] near Antioch, a christian church in Clinton county. Here I

staid Saturday and Lord's day. It being the time of their monthly meeting, I attended with them. After we had assembled, the brethren took their seats in a church capacity. From a recapitulation of former business, I learned that they had been investigating the ground they occupied, as a christian church, and some other subjects relating to christian worship. And as the investigation was still progressing, they had unanimously came to the following conclusion, to-wit:—That the church at Antioch is not in Gospel order, That she search the scripture to find primitive ground and occupy it. That the term church, in the New Testament, is used in a general sense with reference to the whole family of God in heaven and earth; and in a particular sense to one society of brethren and sisters habitually assembling at one place to worshp. That each church has the right to judge of the qualifications of its officers and to appoint, ordain, or induct them to office. That the word *ordain* in the New Testament sense simply means *to appoint, elect,* or *set apart,* by a decree of the church; and that in most places, if not in all, where the apostles' hands were imposed, some spiritual gift was communicated, or some miracle wrought. That the first day of the week is the only day set apart by divine appointment for public worship.

The foregoing items, as I understood, were unanimously agreed to. After which the church proceeded to consider the propriety of attending to the weekly breaking of bread, or Lord's supper, which was thought scriptural by a majority; but some doubted. However a spirit of forbearance seemed to pervade all their deliberations and determination to know their Maker's will and do it.

If you think fit you may give this a place in your Christian Messenger. Yours, in the bonds of the love of Christ,

JOSHUA IRVIN.

Nov. 30th, 1827.

ZANESVILLE, (Ohio.) Nov. 6th, 1827.

BROTHER STONE,—I have long thought of writing to you, that I might communicate something of the dealings of God with us, since the session of our last Conference—an account of which, you will receive through the Luminary. We have continued our operations in giving publicity to the gospel with (I think) more than ordinary success. Though we hear complaints of coldness and want of spiritual energy,

yet the cry, *come over and help us*, is frequent, and many effectual doors are opened for the preaching of Christ. Never have I seen and felt more clearly the necessity of an evangelizing ministry. O that the churches and ministers were awake to this important subject! I see no external barriers that can so effectually hinder the general and decided influence of the christians in this country, as those found within their own body. The principles of these are, I believe, the following:—ignorant Watchmen and covetous Lay-men. It must be acknowledged, that the indulgence of the latter evil, is one great reason why the former exists. If any effectual means can be devised to remedy the evil, let the wise project. Through all the discouragements in this country, the cause is advancing; our meetings are interesting, and attended with frequent additions. I hope our ministering brethren in your country will remember us, and make us as frequent visits as possible; and in this, I assure them, that I speak the language of hundreds—yea, of thousands of our warm-hearted friends here. I have many things to write but must content myself with saying but few now.

B. H. MILES.

FLATRUN, *Bourbon Co. Ky.* Dec. 15, 1827.

Dear and esteemed Sir,—Forasmuch as I have many times been comforted by intelligence from various parts, of the increase of the Kingdom of Christ, which has come through the Christian Messenger, I have thought fit also, to give a short account of the work of God in and near this neighborhood, hoping to comfort my brethren that are scattered abroad.

Within the last six weeks the Lord has brought many precious souls from darkness to light, and the power of Satan to the service of the living and true God. Twenty-five of the young converts have publicly put on Christ, by following him in the solomn ordinance of immersion, and several more expect to submit to that ordinance next week. I do not believe the work is over. Two souls were set at liberty last night, at our social meeting, and had a new song put in their mouths, even praises to God. Indeed we have had but few meetings lately, but some weeping mourners have been set at liberty, to praise God for redeeming grace and dying love, while brethren are made to rejoice and feel happy in the love of God.—My heart says, ride on, conquering King.

till the stone that was cut out of the mountains without hands shall fill the whole earth. Your brother in the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, HENRY PARKER.

Brother B. W. Stone.

For the Christian Messenger.

A writer in the MESSENGER, Vol. 1, No. 12, who calls himself "PHILIP," says, "*A church is the proper, and only tribunal to judge of the qualifications of its officers!*" If so, why did not God give the churches some directions on the subject? Not one church, in the New Testament, is directed, to ordain, or set forward, any person to the office of a bishop; and it cannot be the duty of a church to do, what God has not commanded her to do.

The same writer says, "*I do not believe that any special trust has been vested in the elders, to examine, judge, and determine on the qualifications of elders.*" If this be so, why were the directions relative to the ordination, and qualifications of elders given to Timothy, and Titus, and not to the church? "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."—2 Tim. II, 2. This cannot mean that Timothy should confer the Holy Ghost on others; because the things, that he had heard of Paul among many witnesses, cannot be the Holy Ghost—the Holy Ghost is not *things*. If Paul does not here give a special charge to Timothy, to commit the Gospel Ministry, as a special trust to others, what can he mean? He could not be exhorting Timothy to preach the Gospel;—it was his duty to preach it to all characters. The phrase, "teach *others also*," must mean that the men, to whom these things were to be committed, should be able to teach others, as Timothy should teach them, or as Paul had taught him. Paul did not command the church to commit, nor to cause their preacher to commit the ministry to others, but he commanded Timothy to do it; of course it was his prerogative to judge of the faithfulness, and ability of those, to whom he should commit this important trust. When Paul delineates the character of a Bishop, he addresses himself to Timothy, and not to the church. He says, "he must be blameless, apt to teach, one that ruleth his own house well, having his children in subjection with all gravity; for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?—Not a novice,

lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the Devil."—1 Tim. III, 2. IV, 5, 6. From this it appears that a bishop must have a care of the church similar to that, which he has of his own family. Paul cannot here mean a novice in christianity, because he is not treating on it, but on the office of a bishop; of course when he prohibited a new beginner from the office of a bishop, he must mean a new beginner in the work of a bishop. If a Wheel-wright would tell the workmen in his shop, he did not allow a new beginner to finish work, he would not mean a new beginner at farming, but at making wheels. If it was the duty of Timothy to ordain such as the church might approve, why was he not told to do so? If it was the prerogative of the churches to decide on the qualifications of bishops, whether they should be ordained, or not, why were they not told to do so? Rev. II, 2, has been brought to prove the church has this power. "Thou hast tried them who say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars." This was only detecting imposters, which is certainly the duty, and privilege of every church; but there is a wide difference between that, and conferring an office.

In the epistles directed to particular churches, we learn the order, and duties of churches; in those addressed to Timothy, and Titus, we are taught the qualifications, order, and duties of the elders; and in the Acts of the apostles, and the general epistles, we are informed of the practice, both of the primitive church and the apostolical ministry. Paul did not exhort Titus to obey the churches in every city of Crete, and hold himself responsible to them, and to them alone; but he directed him to set in order the things, that were wanting among them, and ordain elders, or overseers over them, and to *exhort*, and *rebuke* with *all authority*.—Tit. I, 5. Chap. II, 15. Titus was not directed to ordain such as a church might tell him to ordain, but such as had the qualifications that Paul described; of course he, and not the church, was the judge in the case.

In 1 Tim. I, 11, Paul says, "The glorious Gospel of the blessed God was committed to his trust." And in the 18th verse, he says, "This charge I commit unto thee son Timothy according to the prophecies, which went before on thee, that by them thou mightest war a good warfare." In Chap. IV, 11—16, he continues his address to Timothy. "These things command, and teach. Till I come give attendance to

reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery. Meditate on these things, give thyself wholly to them, that they profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." From the above text we learn the following things: 1st. That the gospel was committed in trust to Paul. 2d. That he committed the same to Timothy. 3d. That in accordance with certain prophecies that had gone before respecting Timothy, this gift was given to him by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery. Timothy was not told to obey the church, but to *command, and teach* her. As I have already proved that Timothy was commanded to commit that ministry that he received from Paul, to others, it must be evident to every unprejudiced mind, that the elders are authorised to commit the pastoral office to others, and that in doing this no power on earth has any right to control them. "Now there were in the church, that was at Antioch certain prophets, and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon, that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, who had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, separate me Barnabas, and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted, and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away."—Acts XIII, 1, 2, 3.

From this passage we learn the following things relative to the ministry of the primitive church: 1st. That prophets, and teachers, and not the church, separated men for the work of the ministry. 2d. That they were so separated by fasting, and prayer, and the laying on of the hands of a Presbytery, or convention of ministers. 3d. That the men so ordained were not Novices, but had been engaged in the work long enough to establish a character for usefulness. Saul, and Barnabas had been preaching a good while.

In performing this work, for which they were separated, we find Saul, and Barnabas ordaining elders in every church. To ordain is to appoint, therefore it is the duty to appoint elders. This is the order of the New Testament, the only discipline of the Christian church. It will be better for us to continue in it, than to adopt any new plan.

The christian ministry was established by Jesus Christ

near eighteen hundred years ago. They did not, they could not, derive their authority from the churches; they existed anterior to, and were sent by their master, to plant churches. "And Jesus spake unto them saying, all power is given unto me in Heaven, and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo I am with you, even unto the end of the world. Amen."—Mat. XXVIII, 18, 19, 20. He could not have meant the end of the Jewish state, that probably ended on the day of Pentecost, or at farthest with the distruction of Jerusalem, which happened long before the end of the first century. Of course he must have meant that, this order of preachers should continue, and that he would be with them, to call, qualify, and assist them to preach by his spirit, and protect them by his providence, till the end of the Gospel dispensation. To give up this doctrine, would be to give up a spiritual ministry. From this text it is evident Christ has constituted his ministers, spiritual teachers, and placed the whole world under their tuition. As a convention of teachers is abler to judge of the qualifications of a school-master, than are the scholars he is to teach; so the scriptures make it the prerogative of elders to ordain, *i. e.* to appoint qualified men to teach all nations. Although all good teachers are learners, still they are abler to judge of the ability of a teacher, than the little children are. It always has been the practice of the conference, to which I belong to ordain no member of any church without a recommendation from the church, to which he belongs, but the elders are *obliged* to reserve to themselves the power of setting their negative on the petition, because, to ordain an elder, whom they think unqualified, would be to sin against God. I do not think however that the elders are bound to ordain none without a petition from a church, because, it has happened, and may again happen, that men have been called, and qualified, to preach, that did not belong to any church: in such cases it is the duty of Conference to ordain them without a recommendation.

Philip says, "*I do not believe that any special trust has been vested in the elders to examine, judge, and determine on the qualifications of elders.*" Then on turning one short period, he says, "*The elders of course will not participate in ordination without a belief on their part of the candidate's ability*

to teach others." This premise is, that they have no right to determine in the case; and his conclusion is, that they, of course will act according to their own opinion. If Philip thinks the elders ought to act respecting the ordinations in that way, which they think is right, the opinion of the church to the contrary notwithstanding, he believes the very doctrine he is opposing. Any church that would oblige preachers to ordain elders, whom they did not think qualified, would act as a tyrant.

WILLIAM KINKADE.

[*To be continued.*]

AN ADDRESS

To the elders, preachers and brethren, in the Church of Christ.

DEAR BRETHREN,—We wish to turn your attention to a few subjects of vital importance, especially at the present crisis. We have been viewing the marvellous works of grace of late, exhibited among the various denominations of christians, as well as among ourselves. We have with great desire been looking for the religion, taught by Jesus and his apostles to be revived—the religion of love, peace and union. Though we hear much of christian love and union preached by the different sects; yet in the end they generally let us know that they acknowledge none to be christians, but such as believe that Jesus Christ is God, equal with the Father. Such as deny this doctrine are debarred from all fellowship and communion with them. By them we are accused of doctrines we do not believe; and when we attempt to defend ourselves they will not hear; but persist in reiterating the charges. By them we are denied the name and character of christians, and by many doomed to endless perdition. These people have assumed a seat, too sacred for a mortal to fill—a seat, on which none but God the Judge of all should sit—a seat denied them by Jesus, when he said, "Judge not lest ye be judged."

We are pleased to see the approximation of the sects to each other; but we must acknowledge that what we have seen is yet very far from that fellowship and union taught in the New Testament. We see them sit down together at the same table of the Lord; but we see jealousies existing among them—each party endeavoring to get prosolytes from the other—each envying the success of the other, and rather grieved than rejoiced to see multitudes converting and uniting with another sect. With all this imperfection, yet the

grand work is progressing, though slowly. The apostacy, from small beginnings, advanced step by step to the alarming height in which it has been seen in years past; it may be expected to sink as gradually. In our memory and time we have seen it sink several grades; and we confidently anticipate the joys of that day, when the man of sin shall be destroyed, and the pure apostolic religion re-established on earth. The present is an eventful crisis, and calls aloud to all to be awake and doing their duty.

We that preach the gospel should be diligent. More can be done in a day when the attention of the people is arrested, than in a year when they are asleep. Let us dwell on the more important doctrines of the gospel, as the depraved and lost condition of the world, as dead in sin, as enemies to God, his laws and government, as captives to sin, death and hell, as unholy and exposed to indignation and wrath, as without help and unable to save themselves. Urge the doctrine of regeneration, that they must be born again or never enter into the kingdom of God. Teach the great plan of redemption—how it originated in God—how his love to the world moved him to send his Son to be their Savior—hold forth Jesus as the prophet, priest and king of his people—his life, death, and resurrection, and his coming again to judge the world. Insist much on the doctrine of faith, repentance, and obedience. Hold forth the cheering promises of the spirit, of eternal life, of pardon, and of salvation through faith and repentance. O let us avoid speculation on these important doctrines! Let us labor to feel the weight and force of them on our own hearts. If not, in vain we labor to impress them on others. The successful preacher is the feeling preacher; and the feeling preacher is one, who converses much with his own heart, and is often on his knees conversing with his God, and delights in studying his word. We have seen great preachers in the pulpit, apparently engaged in delivering important truths; but out of the pulpit we have seen them immediately mingling with the vain, the sportive, and the gay, and joining in their empty talk about trifles, and political subjects. Such too plainly shew the want of the spirit of religion, and their labors are fruitless. Let us always preach in private circles as well as in the public assemblies.

As much as possible let us avoid dwelling on the controversies of the day. These rather please the curious, than

profit and convince the sinner, or comfort and strengthen the saint, or promote the cause of true piety on earth. Let us pursue steadily the course we have taken, and leave the event with God. We have taken the Bible as the only rule of our faith and practice, and the name christian, as the only name we wish to have. In this we cannot be wrong. While others may be contending for their various creeds and notions—while they lose sight of religion by endeavoring to prosolyte to their faith—while they are quarreling about *Who shall be the greatest*, who shall have the greatest numbers, let us steadily follow our Leader, Jesus Christ, and keep his commandments. Let the parties deride and defame us—let them anathematize and reject us,—Let them call us heretics, arians or devils—still let us cultivate the gentle and meek spirit of Jesus. "Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves." We are advancing to the judgment where justice will be done us. There party-spirits and names, human creeds and high pretensions, shall be disregarded, unless to be divinely frowned upon, or branded with eternal infamy, and their advocates be filled with shame and confusion.

Let us not neglect to meet together every Lord's day for worship. Should you have no preacher, meet and read the scriptures, sing, pray and exhort one another. Let a part of the day be devoted to the instruction of our children in the scriptures. Choose one or more pious and intelligent men, who shall preside over the class of children; let them previously assign the portion of scripture to be read, and labor to make them understand it. This will be found profitable and pleasant.

To you, dearly beloved, are these thoughts humbly submitted by your brother and fellow laborer. EDITOR.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We have many letters addressed us by our patrons, requesting our correspondents to affix their proper names to their communications, and no longer conceal themselves under fictitious names. I cannot see the impropriety of the request, and therefore urge my correspondents to comply with it. EDITOR.

Notice.—Elder Barzillai H. Mills has lately published a Hymn-book. They can be had wholesale or retail in Zanesville, Ohio.

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. II.] Georgetown, Ky. Feb. 1828. [No. 4.

REMARKS OF BRO: WILLIAM KINKADE,

[concluded.]

Philip tries to prove that no man is called to the ministry now as they were in the apostolic age; he admits that Christ called the apostles, and then in a bantering manner asks the following question: "Are any ministers in the present day, or have they been since the days of the apostles, called in a similar way?" To this I answer, the ministers of the christian church, as far as I am acquainted, do not believe they were called exactly in the same way, *i. e.* by an audible voice, but in a *similar* way *i. e.* by the Holy Spirit, or Comforter, that Christ promised should abide with his ministers forever. Those who receive no special call to the ministry, but derive their authority from the church alone, ought to shape their doctrine to please the sovereign people, and like good republicans, obey the will of their constituents. that elected them. This appears to be in accordance with Philip's views of Government; he says, "*I believe that every member, whether preacher or not, is responsible to the church, and to the church alone.*" If we are responsible to the church *alone*, we cannot be accountable to God, nor to our brethren in the ministry. Saint Peter addressing the elders says, "Likewise ye younger submit yourselves to the elder, yea all of you be subject one to another." But Philip says we must be responsible to the church *alone*. Those who believe with Philip may do so, but we, who were called by Jesus Christ, and brought into the pastoral office, through the order of his ministry, should be careful to teach the people all things whatsoever he has commanded us, whether it please them, or not, and be in subjection to his ministers, through whom we received our commission.

If every preacher is responsible to the church *alone*, what is the use of Conference? No argument made in it can be obligatory on one of its members without the consent of his