ORIGIN OF EVIL.

The following anecdote, cited from Brandt, occurs in Jortin's Dissertations.

"Two of their (the Contra-remonstrants* of the synod of Dort) divines, elated with victory, insulted a poor fellow, who was a Remonstrant,* and said what are you thinking of, with that grave and woful face? I was thinking, gentlemen, said he, of a controverted question—who was the author of sin? Adam shifted it off from himself, and laid it to his wife. She laid it to the serpent. The serpent, who was then young and bashful, had not a word to say for himself; but afterwards, growing older, and more audacious, he went to the synod of Dort, and there he had the assurance to charge it upon God."

* The remonstrants were the Arminians—the Contra-remonstrants, Calvinists.

NOTICE.

Now in press, and will shortly appear, a Discourse delivered at Carlisle, Ky. on the 4th of July last, on civil and religious liberty, by Elder John Rogers. We have examined the manuscript, and hesitate not to pronounce it the best production we have seen on this subject. We recommend it to the patronage of all who love civil and religious liberty. The pamphlet will contain 30 or 40 pages, and can be sold at 12 1-2 cents. Such as wish to have them will direct their orders with the money to Mr. N. L. FINNELL, P. M. at Georgetown, Ky. who will remit the pamphlets by mail. EDITOR.

Our 4th letter to a Presbyterian preacher, is deferred to our next No.

We are advised by some of our patrons, to cease, for a while, publishing any more communications on Church-Government. We have determined to receive the advice, as nothing new appears to be advanced. EDITOR.

ERRATUM.

In Vol. 2nd page 190, line 35, Instead of *some of the Presbyterian members, &c.* Read, *one of the Presbyterian members, &c.* The error was not designed.

T. M. ALLEN.

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. SEPT. 1828. [No. 11.

From the Christian Advocate and Journal:

MURDER WILL OUT!

"Fear them not, therefore, for there is nothing *covered* that shall not be *revealed*, and *hid* that shall not be *known*.

"What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light, and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye on the house tops."

Jesus Christ.

Mr. Editor,—For some months it has been cautiously rumoured in my region of country, that one or more travelling agents have been itinerating through the land, calling together the ministers of the gospel in every city and neighbourhood, for the purpose of a secret conclave. It has been stated that at these conclaves, a certain SECRET of vast and paramount importance, has been entrusted to them under a solemn promise of secrecy for a specified time. This is all we common people, the vulgar herd, or swinish multitude, could learn of this matter, and not a little curiosity has been awakened among us, which, until lately, was not gratified.

But behold, a Morgan has been among them, or mayhap a bird has flown,—already the SECRET is on the four winds of heaven, and as many of your readers may be anxious to learn the true reason of the midnight deeds of these modern missionaries, so novel in their character, I send you the stupendous and appalling account of the whole matter, which I humbly conceive to be a conspiracy against the people's rights, which needs all the secrecy with which it has been enveloped; for when disclosed, it must be abhorred by every lover of civil and religious liberty.

Be it known then that for some months, one or more agents have been travelling through the United States, calling meetings of the clergy in every place, and after obtaining a promise of *secrecy*, entrusting them with the following propo

sition, as nearly as can be communicated by my imperfect though authentic information.

1. Let a "Central Society" be established, say at Boston, New-York, or Philadelphia, of a character both *political* and *religious*. The objects of this society are to raise a fund to be expended in printing books of all kinds, approved as orthodox, newspapers, &c. &c.

2. Let a press be established in every city and county in the United States, auxiliary to, and dependant upon the Central Society. By these means a tremendous engine may be brought to bear upon the whole country; for the books can be printed so cheap as to ruin all the book establishments in the nation, and the newspapers as well as the orthodox books may "be rendered so abundant as to force all others out of circulation."

3. The effect of these multiplied presses, and the monopoly they would occasion in politics and religion, being devoted to both subjects, are intended to establish and discipline a "Christian party in politics," which in a few years would bring "millions of electors into the field," whose "characters are formed" by the universal dominion of this "Central Society."

After submitting this sweeping proposition, the travelling agent modestly solicits pecuniary contributions from the reverend clergy assembled, to be employed in paying his travelling expenses. This game has been played in the east, north, and west, and probably at this moment the south is marshalling under the same religious and political conspiracy.

Now, Messrs. Editors, I disclaim any other views in bringing this combination to light, than a desire to warn my fellow Christians of their danger, lest they be overwhelmed in the fearful vortex which these modern Jesuites are preparing in the erection of what they will call a salutary "moral police." I would rejoice in any additional measures to promote the cause of God, and subserve the glories of Emmanuel's kingdom; and with all such efforts I might cheerfully unite heart and hand. But I conceive that this fearful negotiation, now in progress, is "carnal, sensual, and devlish." It is an attempt to make Christians,—but will only succeed in making hypocrites. It is a specious, plausible *union* of professing Christians against infidelity and vice; but it is no other than using "carnal weapons," instead of those which are "mighty through God to the pulling down of the strong holds of Satan." It is in effect serving God and Mammon, an attempt to unite Christ and Belial, to identify the world and religion.

Christians, like their Master, have a "kingdom not of this world," and can have no amalgamation with carnal, selfish, or worldly views of aggrandizement, without suffering in their personal piety, and overthrowing the very corner stone of our holy religion.

The holy apostle would "know nothing among men save Jesus Christ and him crucified," because in this truth of God, there is an efficiency which must eventually triumph over error, and vice of every kind; for against "this rock the gates of hell shall not prevail."

It is true, infidelity is making rapid strides in our country, and immorality abounds it would seem unabashed and uncontrolled: but "why do the brethren rage and the people imagine a vain thing?" Are we to conclude hence, that true religion will not finally triumph?" "Oh ye of little faith, wherefore do ye doubt?" the "testimony of the Lord is sure." Let "the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and his Anointed." "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall hold them in derision." It is enough that we as Christians, "grieved at the wickedness" of our modern Sodoms, meekly approach the throne of grace, and say, "O Lord, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and see how thine enemies triumph." But let us never bring "strange fire" to the altar of Jehovah, lest the "fire go out from the Lord, and consume us," as it did Nahab and Abihu, the two sons of Aaron, for their sacrilegious presumption. Touch not the ark of the Lord with unhallowed hands. Let us renounce our sectarian efforts at monopoly, and disclaim all "national" or political combinations. Let it be our glory still to say, "As for us, we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block, to the Greeks foolishness; but to them that believe, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

A LAYMAN.

How the author of the above communication came to the knowledge of the secret combination on which he has animadverted so freely and justly, we cannot tell. That a plan similar to the above is in operation, we believe is known to many, most of whom were put in possession of it in a way

which does not permit them, consistently with their integrity as Christians, to make it known. We are no friends to secret associations of any sort, nor do we believe it possible long to conceal any plan, good or bad, for "whatsoever is spoken in the closet shall be proclaimed upon the house top."

We have only to say, if those who are engaged in the plan alluded to, find their views and motives misapprehended in the above communication, they shall have the use of our columns to set the matter in a fair point of light, provided a responsible name be given.—*Editor Adv. & Jour.*

LETTER IV.

TO —— A PRESBYTERIAN PREACHER.

Dear Sir,—According to promise I proceed to state the result of my re-examination of the doctrine of Trinity, and of the Son of God, as contained in my former writings.—From my youth my mind had strong objections against the *orthodox* notions of Trinity, and you well know that they remained when I was ordained among you; and so clear were my convictions of the error of those notions, that I refused to adopt and receive your confession of faith at my ordination. I am fully convinced of one fact, that there is no agreement among the orthodox themselves on the doctrine of trinity; and that many, who are reputed and received as orthodox trinitarians among you, are as far from believing the doctrine received by you, as I am. Of this you are fully convinced.

I do with my whole heart reject that system of trinity, received and advocated by many, who affirm that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are not proper persons, but that they are *three modes, relations*, or *distinctions*, in which the one God exists. That is, The Father is not a proper person, or intelligent being, but he is a mode—a relation—or a distinction in deity. The Son is not an intelligent being or proper person, but is also another mode, relation or distinction in deity, &c. I yet think that such doctrine is not only foreign from revelation, but it destroys the very foundations of the righteous. For when it is so frequently declared that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world, we must believe in accordance with this doctrine, that one mode or distinction sent another mode or distinction to be a Savior. A mode—an unintelligent distintion—a non-entity, sent by

another mode—another unintelligent distinction—another non-entity, to be a Savior!! On this principle the Deity, the divine nature or Divinity did not send, nor was sent; but the modes or distinctions only of the Divinity were sent and acted in sending. What then of Divinity was in this ideal Savior? For if the divinity or divine nature which is simple or uncompounded, did send, and was sent, then the whole deity, sent the whole deity, and was sent by the whole deity; the whole deity came down from heaven not to do the will of the whole deity, but the will of the whole deity that sent the whole deity—the whole deity, included in the distinctions of Father, Son, and Spirit, was born of a woman—became incarnate—suffered, died, ascended to heaven, and sat down at the right hand of the whole deity!! Can any sober man—a man not intoxicated with the wine of Babylon—Can any man, not inveloped in the covering of the man of sin, which covering is the mystery of iniquity—Can any man with unveiled face, believe these contradictions? We think it impossible. You, sir, I am persuaded, reject these visionary notions with equal abhorrence with myself, and view them infinitely foreign from truth. It is to deny the Father and the Son, which is the doctrine of Antichrist.

I also reject as unworthy of notice that system of Trinity, which affirms that the Father, Son and Spirit are three distinct beings, and together compose the one infinite Being, God; as the three judges of our supreme court compose one court—they are three distinct men but one court. This is preached by high toned orthodoxy in our country, which joins to anathematize and denounce all those who deny the trinity! This notion, though it destroys the unity and indivisibility of God, is believed to be the common faith of the less informed, who venture to attach any idea to the word *trinity*. They, not being sufficiently wise to see any difference between an intelligent *person*, and an intelligent *being*, of course when they hear of three persons in one God, receive the idea of three beings in one being. The more learned theologian affects to see a great difference between an intelligent person and an intelligent being; but he is certainly mistaken—he cannot understand himself, and consequently cannot be understood by another.

I am obliged, with the Bible in my hand, also to reject the commonly received, and *orthodox* notion of trinity, as that there are three persons in one God, and one God in three

persons. This proposition I cannot receive without attaching some idea to it. If it contains no idea it must certainly be an unprofitable doctrine. For of what use can a doctrine be which is unintelligible? Can the mind be rightly affected by such a doctrine? You, sir, acquainted with the philosophy of the human mind, are convinced that such doctrines cannot be of any profit whatever. To be profited by the doctrine I must enquire into its meaning, and have some understanding of it.

That there is bnt one God, is plain from the law and the gospel—so plain that all christians profess to receive it.—But that there are in this one God three distinct persons coequal, co-eternal, aud co-essential, is a doctrine not so plain; because it is no where taught in the law nor in the gospel. I have diligently enquired into the definition of a *person*. Your doctors have not yet determined its signification. Their notions are as various as their faces; one affirming one thing, and another a different and opposite thing. The term *person*, must be taken in its proper sense as an intelligent being, or in its improper sense as an unintelligent being. If we take it in the proper sense, then three such persons must be three intelligent beings. To say then that the Father, Son and Spirit are three proper persons, is the same as to say that they are three intelligent beings, spirits or minds; and if each be equal, we have three equal, eternal, infinite and self-existent Gods. This is certainly the doctrine of tritheism, or polytheism revived, and stands in direct opposition to the revelation of one God. I am certain, sir, that you cannot receive this. Therefore you must reject with me the notion of three equal proper persons or intelligent beings in the one proper person, or infinite Being, God. Nor can I for a moment think that you hold that the three *persons* in the one God are to be taken in the improper sense as meaning, non-intelligent beings. If so, then you must believe that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three non-intelligent beings. We naturally ask, Can three non-intelligent Beings constitute one intelligent being without parts? Can such a being be a sufficient Savior? Is not this doctrine atheism in disguise? It surely is.

Is not the Creed, called improperly the Apostles' creed, much better than those, more improperly called *orthodox?* That simply states, "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is—

and in Jesus Christ his only Son, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried—rose again the third day from the dead, ascended into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God, from whence he will return to judge the quick and the dead—I believe in the Holy Ghost," &c. Here are simple facts stated, in which all christians are agreed. Here is no speculation, no mystery—all is plain. But the real apostolic creed I prefer. In opposition to the polytheism of the nations around, who had Lords many and Gods many, the apostle contrasts the christians' creed. "But with 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." Here every thing is plain—here is nothing to astound the human intellect—here is no mystery to involve us in everlasting doubt and uncertainty. The apostle does not say, With us there is but one God, the Son—nor but one God the Holy Spirit—nor but one God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These expressions are never used in the Book of God. He simply says, "with us there is but one God, the Father," to the exclusion of every other as the only true God.

The Bible has long been examined and tortured to make it speak in favor of trinity, and to give arguments in its support. Nothing has been left untried from Genesis to the end of the revelation. Yet we believe not one genuine text has ever been exhibited to prove that three persons are one God, and one God is three persons, while every page of the Bible exhibits this glaring truth, that God is one.

The doctrine that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God, and not the living God himself—that he existed a distinct intelligent being from the Father in heaven before creation, and by whom God created all things—that this being was sent into the world by the Father, not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him—that he was made flesh and dwelt among us,—that he suffered, died and ascended up where he was before—This doctrine we cannot but believe, and do verily think that all the combined ingenuity and power of men will fail to destroy it. It stands invulnerable by their feeble shafts, and will stand or fall with the Bible.—This doctrine established destroys the doctrine of *orthodox* trinity. I fear, sir, the zeal manifested in defence of triaity is hurrying its advocates into the awful doctrine of

Antichrist, which denies the Father. and the Son. For if they be but one essence or being, the Father and Son are but two names or relations of one Being, spirit or mind; and if this be not the doctrine of Antichrist, it approximates so nigh that our feeble powers can never discriminate between them. We should be glad to know whether there is any difference between your views of trinity, and the pagan mythology of Diana. She had three names and but one being. In her various names she is represented as performing or executing different offices.

I did design to have written another letter on the worship due the Son of God, as Son. But a correspondent has prevented me by a communication sent me, which will be found in this number. I warn you, my friend. to beware of the spirit of systematizing and of speculating on divine subjects. It has already led many to doubt the propriety of worshiping the Son of God, and many in their great zeal denounce as idolaters all who worship the Son of God!—Yet strange indeed! in their hymns are commonly found worship ascribed to the Son, not as God, but to one that was born, suffered, died, rose from the dead, &c. My warning voice may not be heard; but I must speak, *whether you hear or forbear.*

You still persist in making your notions of trinity a term of christian communion—a doctrine of which you yourself are ignorant, seeing you acknowledge it an incomprehensible mystery—a doctrine of no profit. seeing the mind cannot be rightly affected with unintelligible language, and ideas—a doctrine involving so many difficulties, absurdities and contradictions—a doctrine so variously stated and received by its abettors—in fine a doctrine not taught in the scriptures. By what authority do you, sir, thus denounce from your fellowship and communion those who cannot subscribe your dogmas? By what authority do you and your fellow laborers, indiscriminately call us modern infidels, deists, &c. In this unhallowed work your party has taken the lead, and you the other parties are closely following in dealing out *pious* abuse against those who deserve better treatment. It becomes you to know your authority to be divine before you thus act—you are responsible to the Judge of all. I advise you to read often, and attentively our Lord's sermon on the mount; and conform yourself to its divine principles.

I rest assured, sir, that the fiery persecution now raging

against us, has no good effect in promoting piety, but the contrary. Your followers will not always be kept in the dark respecting us and our doctrine, though every effort is made to prejudice them against us, and to keep them from hearing us. They will be free, and will not forever remain under the control of the priesthood, so as to surrender their right of reading, hearing and judging for themselves. You already see this spirit awakened among you. May God increase it in every party? No sectarian can respond, Amen, to this petition, I know; for this being granted, sectarianism must fall. Because our opinions differ, you may think it strange that I yet own you as a brother beloved in the Lord. Though I view your notions erroneous, yet not so essentially wrong that I cannot acknowledge you a christian. May heaven's best blessings be yours. EDITOR.

For the Christian Messenger.

STRICTURES

On a Sermon delivered by Mr. N. H. HALL, *in Lexington, 1st Lord's day of July,* 1828.

On the 5th Lord's day of June, I thought it prudent to investigate the claims of Trinitarians for their supposed Trinity of three co equal persons in the Godhead; and to test it by the Bible, reason, and common sense. I the more cheerfully engaged in this investigation, because myself and the society with which I stand connected, had been represented in the most unfavourable light, and especially by the preachers who believed in three persons constituting the one God. My argument. therefore, may be considered as defensive; to attend to which, my duty to God, to the public, and to myself bound me.

On the Lord's day following, Mr. N. H. Hall, a Presbyterian preacher, thought proper to take the opposite side of the question, no doubt, to counteract the influence of my address on the Lord's day before. I suppose Mr. H. thought his sermon so good, that he determined it should appear in print. I am glad for one, that he has favoured the public with it; not because I believe he has proved a Trinity of persons in God; but because I believe his sermon is calculated to sustain my own views, and to show his own to be utterly untenable.

Mr. Hall attempts to show more learning, than I supposed he had ever acquired, for one of his principle arguments, he

derives from his knowledge of the Hebrew language, I would think it to be his duty, to teach his congregation the Hebrew, if it be necessary to refer to the Hebrew in order to know that a Trinity of persons exist in God.

I will on my part, without professing to have a knowledge of the Hebrew, state what men, as learned as he can possibly be in the Hebrew, say of his favourite word *Elohim*. By this name, Mr. Hall attempted to prove that God exists in three persons, because the word *Elohim* being of plural termination, yet is translated in the singular, *God*. How does he know that *Elohim* is in the plural, and not in the dual number? for the learned say, that the terminations are the same in each of these numbers in Hebrew. The term may then include but two persons, the Father and the Son.—Therefore when God said, "Let us make man after our image," it may be intended, that the Father spake to the Son; for we know that God created all things by Jesus Christ, and by his Son he made the worlds. But Mr. Hall will have it plural, and including the number three persons only. Let us then for argument's sake admit his conjecture, that the termination Elohim is plural and includes in it three persons. Let us try it on a few texts. Ps. 45 6, 7. "Thy throne, O God (Elohim) is forever and ever—thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness, therefore God, (Elohim) thy God (thy Elohim) hath anointed thee." &c. This is an address of the Father to the Son, as Paul declares, Heb. 1. 8. In this passage the Father is called *Elohim*, and therefore the Father is three persons, according to Mr. Hall. The Son is also called Elohim, and therefore the Son is three persons: and if the Holy Ghost be called *Elohim*, then there are three more persons. Thus in the Trinity we shall have a Trinity of *Trinities*, or a triple Trinity, including nine persons instead of three. Did Paul believe this? No: he was a better scholar, and better taught in divinity; for when he quotes the passage, he uses the singular number. Had the word *Elohim* included three persons, this inspired scholar would have known it, and could easily have expressed it in the Greek language in which he wrote. Had he believed the doctrine, and attached as much importance to it as modern teachers do, he certainly would not have neglected this argument, had it been correct.

The story of the converted Jew, which Mr. H. introduces in his sermon in favor of trinity, argues no great depth of

thought. The Jew said that *Elohim* was plural, and confirmed the doctrine of trinity. I ask, how did this Jew understand the Hebrew better than the Gentile? Did he believe this before he embraced christianity? or did he receive it afterwards? It is not uncommon for people to imbibe the notions of the party to which they attach themselves. This no doubt was the fact with regard to this Jew. But, sir, all the Jews on earth and all the Gentiles together could not make me believe any thing in direct opposition to the plain word of God. Was Moses called *Elohim*, a god to Pharaoh because he was constituted of three persons? Enough for the wise. They will forever after this, it is hoped, relinquish this argument in their attempts to support the doctrine of trinity.

Mr. Hall not contented with guessing at the meaning of the word *Elohim*, in order to make his trinity appear, proceeds to conjecture with increased confidence, when he comes to the pronoun *us*, from which he has actually brought out a trinity. Gen. 3. 22. "And the Lord God said, Behold the man has become as one of us." "One of us; that is, one of the trinity or Godhead," says Mr. H.

It will be recollected, that Mr. Hall was trying to prove three persons in one God. Had he not carried the notion of trinity with him into the pulpit, can any, for a moment, believe that he ever would have thought of it, from the passage he adduced? We have positive proof that God created all things by Jesus Christ, that he made the worlds by him; from this view, the Son must have been with the Father at the time the above expression was made; and consequently to a thinking mind, free from prejudice, all difficulty vanishes.

Besides, when inferential proof is adduced it should never be made to bear against positive testimony. This *rule* of interpretation every one will admit. Then, I would ask Mr. Hall, by what figure, or by what language, will he ever make it appear, that the singular pronouns *I, thou, thee, thy, he,* or *him*, will stand for a plural being or more persons than one? If he should fail in this, his trinity is gone, or rather never was. See Gen. 17. 1. "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, *I* am the Almighty God; walk before *me*," &c.—In this, the pronoun *I*, stands for, or represents the Almighty God. Now, although Mr. H. attempts by guessing to make

a trinity of persons from the words *Elohim* and *us*; yet the pronoun *I*, standing for the same Almighty *Elohim*, forbids him positively from drawing any such conclusion. We can then account for the use of *us*, &c. but we can never account for the singular pronouns, standing for God, if more persons than one exist in him. The singular pronouns are so numerously applied to the Deity, it would be useless to attempt an enumeration of them; but the passages in which the plural terms are used at all, are very few

Several other passages Mr. Hall adduces in proof of his trinity, I think unworthy of notice;—they are too much like a drowning man catching at straws. Sitting down to write or standing up to address an audience with the Trinity in his head, he is led to believe he can see a trinity of three co-equal, co-eternal persons every time God speaks. Who, for example, could ever have thought that the *breath* of a being is that being whose breath it is, and at the same time a distinct person from that being? See the following passage produced by Mr. Hall—Ps. 33. 6: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the hosts of them by the *breath* of his mouth." "This *breath* (says Mr. H.) must mean the third person in the trinity." He adds, "When Christ communicated the Holy Ghost to his disciples, he *breathed* on them," that is, he breathed the third person of the trinity on them, according to Mr. Hall's logic. Any who can be convinced by such an argument, Mr. H. may easily control.

The baptismal form, is considered by Mr. Hall as good evidence for a trinity of three persons making one Supreme God. Matt. 38. 19: "Go ye, therefore, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Mr. Hall seems to have forgotten the preceding verse, where he may be informed, that all power in heaven and earth was given to the Son, and that in consequence of this power having been given, he authorized his disciples to baptize in his name. This passage therefore, proves that the Son was dependent on the Father. For if Jesus was the self-existent God, power never could have been given to him. There is not one word in the passage, of three persons constituting one God. This is the point in hand; and so long as Mr. H. fails to bring positive proof to this point, he has failed altogether. I contend that the trinity for which Mr. H. pleads never did, nor ever will

exist; and that it is contrary to both reason and the plain word of God. Look at a plain text, such as the following: 1 Cor. 8. 6. "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." I will venture to assert, that with all Mr. Hall's Hebrew, Latin, and Greek language, he can never explain this text in any other way, than to destroy his doctrine of three co-equal persons in God. The Father is here called positively the one God, and recognised as the fountain or source of all things; and the Lord Jesus Christ is added as an additional idea. This needs no comment.

Mr. Hall has made, not only such as do not believe in his trinity, infidels; but has put many of his trinitarian brethren in the same class. This must be owing to his being a little intoxicated with a party spirit—finding evidence somewhat scarce to support his tottering system, abused all who did not happen to see with himself, respecting 1 John 5. 7.—After enumerating several passages, and placing John 5. 7. last, he says:—"Infidelity has attempted to exclude this precious doctrine (trinity) from the word of truth, by casting out many parts of the scriptures, and this last quoted text particularly." Now it can be shewn beyond all doubt, that many of the most learned trinitarian critics of the last and present age, have rejected this text as spurious, among whom, are bishop Lowth, Archbishop Newcome, the bishop of Lincoln and Dr. Jortin. Griesback rejected the text as totally indefensible. Bishop Middleton and Mr. Wardlaw, consider it spurious. Even Luther would not have it. Dr. Clarke gives the most decisive evidence against it. Beza and Calvin did not allow that this text affords any argument for the trinity. I could increase the number were it necessary. You see that Mr. Hall asserts that infidelity has excluded this precious text from the word of truth; whereas, his own party, even his old Father Calvin, will not help his ungrateful son. If Calvin never had existed, Mr. Hall would probably not have been a Presbyterian. He might possibly have been numbered among those whom he now calls heretics. Calvin explains this text as I do, that it means one testimony, not one essence, nature or one God. McKnight explains this text the same way, i. e. one testimony. I suppose McKnight will be admitted to be as good a critic as Mr. Hall. The object of this passage was not to prove that

three co-eternal persons make one God, as any one may see by examining the context, but to prove that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; so that whether it be spurious or genuine, it will not answer the purpose of Mr. Hall to prove a trinity. The Father bore testimony in favor of his Son, when he spake from heaven, "This is my beloved son, hear ye him!!" The Son bore witness to the same fact; the Holy Ghost bore witness to the same, through and by the Apostles. So that they prove the simple fact, that Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God. John 17. 22. "And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given *them*; that they might be *one*, even as we *are* one." Here the disciples of Christ were one, even as (i. e. in the same manner) Christ and his Father were *one*. Will Mr. Hall say that the disciples would be equal in consequence of this? Will he say they are one *being* because of this oneness? If not, why say, John v. 7, means one God or being, one essence, &c.? This cannot be answered, as I conceive, therefore I will leave this subject for the present.

Another argument which Mr. Hall thinks very conclusive, is the evidence which he uses of a trinity at the time of Christ's baptism. But Mr. Hall's own explanation has destroyed the idea of three persons making one God. For, says he, "as the blessed Jesus went up straitway out of the water after he was baptized, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God (not God, but the spirit of God) descending like a dove, and lighting upon him, and lo, a voice from heaven, (the voice of the Father) saying, "this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Now Mr. Hall in his parenthesis, says, that the spirit of God, which Jesus saw descending *was not God*, but the spirit of God.—This is contrary to his own faith, for says he, "Here are the three; the Father speaks from heaven, this is my beloved Son: the Son ascends from the water, and sees the Holy Spirit descending; and the Holy Spirit lighted upon him, and anointed him with the Holy Ghost above his fellows."!!!—Error naturally tends to destroy itself. For although Mr. H. acknowledges the Holy Spirit to be one of three, yet he declares that the spirit is not God, and yet declares that this Spirit, which is not God, anointed Jesus with the Holy Ghost, in opposition to that passage which asserts, that "God anointed Jesus with the Holy Ghost." Acts x. 38.

This last passage of Mr. Hall's, when further examined, will be found far short of proving a trinity of persons in God. For one of the three, (the Father) who was in heaven, spake to the Son, who was upon earth, and was himself the very being to whom he spake at the very time. This is Mr. Hall's own doctrine, otherwise he would divide the deity, which his confession forbids. But it is impossible that the Father should be that being to whom he spoke, and therefore the passage proves a distinct existence.

Now be it remembered, that Mr. Hall proposed proving a trinity of persons in the Godhead; his Confession of Faith binds him to do this: Because, in the unity of the Godhead, there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; God the Father. God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. Con. Faith, page 37. It hence follows, that unless Mr. Hall positively proves, by a plain text of Scripture, that three persons are in the Godhead, he fails altogether. Has he brought a single text to this point? I answer no. There is no man upon earth, who can explain three persons, so as not to include the idea of three beings or three Gods.

[*To be continued.*] THOMAS SMITH.

For the Christian Messenger.

There is scarcely any thing more common among those who regard themselves the orthodox in our country, than to charge and accuse all those of "*Idolatry*," who worship the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, and first begotten of the Father,—and consequently not as the only true God.—As this charge is so exultingly made by our opposers and it being one of a very serious character, I propose submitting a few thoughts for publication in your work, with a view of making apparent the fallacy of such charge—confirming and establishing the humble follower of Jesus in the *truth*—and of exhibiting the plain and abundant authority there is for worshipping the Son of God, as a distinct being from the Father.

To understand the subject distinctly, it is necessary to enquire for the meaning of the word worship;—which evidently signifies *honor*, *respect*, or *reverence*, from an inferior to a superior—and in proportion to the degree of inequality or difference, is the degree of honor, respect, reverence or homage.

Keeping this in view, we understand that when Lot prostrated himself before the angels that appeared to him in Sodom, Gen. 19. 1. it was simply honoring them as God's messengers. Will any say that in doing so he was guilty

of *idolatry?* Again, when it is written, "*All the congregation of Israel blessed the Lord God of their Fathers, and bowed down their heads, and worshipped the Lord, and the King.*" 1 Chron. 29. 20. No more is understood than that the people of Israel intended to pay supreme reverence to the Almighty; and honor, (or as it is written worship,) David as a legitimate Sovereign, who under God, was swaying to divine approbation, the royal sceptre over the land of Judea. If the people of Judea could thus do homage to their King without committing idolatry; shall the charge be made with impunity againts those who honor the Son of God, the King of Kings, as the constituted Lord of all? Thus, when wives are commanded to *reverence* their husbands, Eph. 5. 33. no person can suppose them guilty of idolatry in fulfilling a plain bible precept. Without making other quotations in support of the signification of the term worship above given, we will only refer the reader to Josh. 5. 13, 24. and 2 Kings 2. 15. to show that in other parts of the Bible, as well as those just quoted, homage and reverence have been given to beings inferior to the Almighty. Having endeavored to learn the true signification of the word worship, and made a few quotations and references in support of it, we will next endeavor to examine the grounds and authority which exist for worshipping, honoring, or reverencing the Son of God.

Hear then the "*Wonderful Counsellor.*" "who spake as one having authority." His testimony surely no Christian will reject. "For 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. He that *honoreth* not the *Son*, honoreth not the Father which sent him." Jno. 5. 22, 23. Here is evidently authority for *all men to honor the Son*, and in so doing they likewise honor the Father which sent him. While on the other hand, to withhold this homage from the Son, is likewise withholding it from his Father. Is not the above high authority in favor of the fact, that the Son is an object of worship distinct from the Father? And can any Christian believe that he will be guilty of idolatry in doing homage to the Son, with this plain precept before them, should there not be found one other passage to favor the idea in the Bible? Having thus found a warrant for *all men to honor the Son*, we will go to the next order of beings as we ascend the scale of creation, and see that the precept for angels to worship the Son is equally positive. "And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, and let all the angels of God *worship* him." Heb. 1. 6. The Almighty speaks—All the shining orders of angels are commanded to worship the first begotten. Would God command his creatures to do that, which would be idolatry? If it be not idolatry for angels to worship the Son, surely it cannot be for man, who was made a little lower than they, to imitate their pious example. If it be idolatry to honor the Son, I humbly ask who is to blame for it?—Is God, who specially commands, and requires all men to honor his Son; or the creature, who humbly obeys his God?

We will next introduce the testimony of that eminent apostle, who was chosen "*to open the eyes of the Gentiles*,"—"to turn them from the power of satan unto God." His business was not to inculcate idolatry—but to "turn" idolators from their dumb idols, to the service of the living and true God. He observes, "Wherefore God also 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 that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Phil. 2. 9–11. This is the manner in which this holy man would *turn* the people from their idolatrous worship, to the service of the true God. To worship God acceptably, every knee should bow to the Lord Jesus,—every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, and all this to the glory of his Father who made him Lord of all. Acts 2. 36. How analagous the teaching of Paul, to that of the Son of God himself!—Paul says, When we worship the Son it is to the glory of his Father: Jesus declares, all that honor the Son, honor the Father.—The reason given by the apostle, why all in heaven and earth should honor the Son, is that God has highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name,—Surely a good one it is!

That the Son is worshipped as a being distinct from the Father is evident from Rev. 1. 5. 6. "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, and his Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever, Amen." Here the Son is evidently an object of worship, and it is equally cer-

tain he is not the only true God. Again, Rev. 5. 9. "And they sung a new song, saying. Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto God kings and priests."—Again; verse 12, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."—Again, verse 13, "Blessing, glory, honor, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." This worship is given by all in heaven, earth, and sea.—Is not the Son an object of worship as well as his Father?

In addition to the foregoing precepts, and commands, and the example of the redeemed in glory, we have also the example of the primitive christians, who in their day did, "in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, both theirs and ours." 1 Cor. 1. 2. It was no disparagement to a christian in apostolic days, to respect and honor the Son of God; they were filled with joy and rejoicing to know that God had made his Son both Lord and Christ.—Many in those days had learned personally from him who "*spoke as man never spake*,"—"*that all men should honor the Son*."

How numerous are the instances recorded in the New Testament of Jesus being worshiped as the Son of God? And never on any occasion did he say to one, who thus honored him, it is idolatry.—How can this be accounted for, if it had been wrong?

When he calmed the raging tempest,—they who were in the boat worshiped him, "saying of a truth thou art the Son of God." Mat. 14. 33. How favourable an opportunity was this for Jesus to check this idolatrous spirit, if such it had been; but no intimation from him that it was wrong.—It was too much like the precious truth declared by Peter, when he said "*Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God*," to meet with any reproof from Jesus.—An extraordinary phenomenan once directed the wise men of the East, to the place where the Saviour was born; it was their glory to honor the "infant Redeemer."—He was adored and honored thro' all his ministry,—was worshiped after his resurrection from the dead,—was worshiped when ascending to glory,—was worshiped by his primitive followers—and to all eternity will receive blessing, glory, and honor, from all those who

are washed from their sins in his own blood, and stand around the throne, forever monuments of his redeeming grace.—Shall we then conclude that it is idolatry to worship Jesus Christ? Forever perish the impious thought.

In your next No. I will answer the objections, made against worshipping the Son of God. PHILIP.

For the Christian Messenger.

JULY the 25th, 1828.—The second Conference of the Eastern District of the State of Indiana, met on the day and date above, at the house of Bro: F. Steinberger's, Bartholomew county.

Elders present; Jesse Hughes, Jno. Wright, Peter Wright, Henry Logan, Jesse Frazier, Beverly Vawter, Jas. Doudle, James Daugherty, William Tracy, Wm. P. Ritchie, Thomas Johnson, Joseph Ashley and Joseph Hatchitt. Unordained; Pliny Hatchitt, James M'Coy and Henry Leonard.

Letters of correspondence from several conferences and churches were read, which afforded much comfort and consolation to the brethren.

Agreed to send letters and messenger to two conferences: Whereupon, Elders John and Peter Wright and Pliny Hatchitt, are appointed to bear a letter of correspondence to the Christian Conference, on Buck creek, Harrison county, commencing the Friday before the second Lord's day in September next.—And that Elders Jesse Frazier and William P. Ritchie, bear a corresponding letter to the Christian Conference, to be held at Bloomington, Monroe county, commencing the Thursday preceding the second Lord's day in September next.

It is unanimously Agreed, That Pliny Hatchitt be set apart by the imposition of hands, to the office of an Elder in the Church of Christ, and that Elders John Wright, Henry Logan, Jesse Frazier and James Dougherty, be the Presbytery to set apart the said Pliny: and to-morrow morning he be ordained; which was accordingly done.

It is Agreed, That Bro: James M'Coy be licenced to preach the gospel, and that the Clerk make out a certificate for the same.

Agreed, That our next conference be held on Indian Kentucky, Jefferson county, Liberty Meeting-house, commencing the Thursday before the first Lord's day in Sept. 1829.

Agreed unanimously, That these minutes be published in the Christian Messenger. JESSE HUGHS, *P. Elder.*

A Letter from Elder J. HATCHITT *to the Editor, dated July 25th, 1828, Ia. Bartholomew county.*

BRO: STONE,—A few years ago a small church was planted in this neighborhood by that faithful servant of the Lord, Henry Logan. From the commencement until the present time, we have met with what is usual, great opposition from the different sectaries, but we still hope that we are alive to God. Some few have been lately called home, from sorrow, trouble and labor, to joy and reward. Lately, in an adjoining neighborhood, seventeen persons have united with us upon the gospel, among whom is a worthy Elder. These people have freely and voluntarily come out of Babylon. The Lord is with them, and I think more will come out. Our conference that is just past, has been to us a very interesting meeting. The Bros. Wrights, whose names you will see in the minutes, have been formerly denominated "Depending Baptists;" but lately have laid that name aside, and now call themselves "the Church of Christ." I judge there are six or eight Elders among them, and many churches. When we met in conference together, we could find nothing to separate us asunder.—In fine, we saw as nearly eye to eye as any company of Elders who have assembled in modern times—and then there was such a sweet spirit of love. I shall never forget this meeting. We abounded in brotherly love. We were almost as cautious of wounding one anothers feelings as if we had been in our father's own country. The preachers while preaching were often bathed in tears. They wept profusely over sinners, and over the deplorable state of the world, while those preachers who were hearers shed the sympathetic tear with the speaker. On Saturday Elder Joseph Berry from near Bloomington, appeared at the meeting. On Lord's day he addressed a large congregation from the Foundation of God. He did the subject great justice. When he was done I passed through the congregation and asked many of other denominations, "what think you of the doctrine you have heard?" The reply was, "truth, truth, truth." The fact is, the preacher won the hearts of the congregation. Babylon must fall,—she is falling. The Lord's people will come out of her, and are coming out of her. In this state, we are not doing that main business that you are doing in Kentucky; but we are not asleep. We further learn that J. & J. Gregg have united with us, but of this I cannot speak with absolute certainty. May our God

shake on, until only those things remain which cannot be shaken. If I had leisure I would write more, but I must close. However, I will say that I love God; I love to preach his word; I love his people; I love to hear and see sinners turning to the Lord. Pray for us—and may the Lord bless you.

JOSEPH HATCHITT.

Extract of a letter from Elder J. E. CHURCH, *to the Editor,*

"NEW LISBON, O. July 26, 1828.

"With Elder Walter Scott I fell in company a few days ago, at Fairfield, O. He has made an unusual number of disciples the past year. His method and manner are somewhat novel to me; but in consequence of his extraordinary success in reforming mankind, I feel no disposition at present to pronounce him heretical. He seems to suppose the Apostolical Gospel to consist of the five following particulars, viz: faith, repentance, baptism for the remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and eternal life. Thus you see he baptizes the subject previous to the remission of his sins, or the receiving of the Holy Spirit. I would like to have your views upon the subject, either through the medium of the Christian Messenger, or by a private letter. Br. Scott informs me that in almost every instance, his plan has produced the most salutary effects. He has baptized several hundred of late. I am now with him at his house, in this village, and expect to tarry with him a few days. He was appointed last year by the Mahoning Association of Baptists to travel, and the developement of those peculiar principles of his grew out of that appointment. His general principles correspond very nearly with those which are peculiar to the Christians You will please to send him the Christian Messenger, directed to this place. The Messenger still continues to bring many glad tidings from the south and west. I still feel bound to give it my feeble support. I am heartily glad to see the courage and fortitude you and many of the brethren appear to possess in the western country in attacking the popular forms and theories of the self-styled orthodox, and your dexterity in wresting the weapons of trinitarians and sectarians, out of their hands. May Almighty God enable you to persevere!

There is a passage of scripture to be found in Rev. XXII. 16.—"I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright and morning star," which is very frequently and confidently

brought forward to prove that Jesus Christ is both God and man. I would be happy to see an illustration of this passage in the Christian Messenger from your pen. Also one in the record of John's Gospel vi. 51.—"I am the living bread, which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give him is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." This is urged by some to disprove the pre-existence of Christ, in consequence of that bread which is said to come down from heaven being said to be Christ's flesh.

—

Answers to Bro: Church's Remars.

Dear Bro:—You wish me to give my views on the manner of bro: Scott's baptizing the believing subjects prior to the remission of his sins, and of his receiving the Holy Spirit. I am sorry that I have not the back Nos. of the Messenger to send you, in which this subject is particularly treated. We have for some time since practised in this way throughout our country. Many of the most successful Baptists pursue the same course. I have no doubt but that it will become the universal practice, though vehemently opposed.

You also wish my views of Rev: 22. 16. "I. Jesus, am the root and the offspring of David; the bright and the morning star." Jesus is called the root of Jesse, and a rod out of the stem of Jesse, (which stem was David) and a branch out of his roots. Isaiah 11. 1–10. These expressions are equivalent to his being the Father and the Son of David. This proves that as the root and father of David he existed before him and was independent of him; but as the son of David he derived his existence from him. By the root the tree is supported, and receives all its life and nourishment from it. Severed from the root, the tree falls, withers and dies, having no support nor life in itself. In this sense Jesus is the root of all creation, of angels as well as men; "for God created all things by him, and by whom he made the worlds. All things not only exist by him, but also by him *consist*, i. e. stand together or are supported and upheld. As the tree derives its life from the root, so the root receives its life from the earth; for if the root be separated from the earth it dies with the tree. So Jesus is not the source of life, but the medium of communicating life to all, and to believers in particular who are represented as a tree united or ingrafted into him. For he says, "As the Father

hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself."—Again says he "I live by the Father." Again says Paul, "Our life is hid with Christ in God." These and similar expressions convey the plain idea that the Father is the source of natural and spiritual life; and that Jesus, as the root in union with the Father, receives this life from him, and communicates it to believers in union with himself.—Thus God through the great Mediator gives life to us, and by him as the middle link unites us to himself. "I in them and thou in me that they all may be one in us.

Thus it appears plain, that Jesus the root of David existed before him; and that this person was not God supreme; for he was dependent on God for life, which was given him by the Father. If dependent, he was not self-existent nor eternal. He was the son of God, by whom God made David. and all things that are made, and therefore is he the root of David, and of all creation. Yet is he the offspring of David, as being born of Mary, who descended from the line of David. The Apostle clearly explains this point. Speaking of the pre-existent son by whom God made the worlds, he says, "Forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same, &c. Heb. ii. He, the agent, existed prior to his acting in taking flesh and blood, such flesh and blood as the children had, subject to pain, temptation and death. This same person when coming into the world said to the Father, "Lo I come—a body hast thou prepared me, O God." He existed before the body did. Paul to the Rom. i. 3, says, "he was the seed of David *according to the flesh*, but declared to be the son of God with power *according to the spirit of holiness*." This spirit of holiness was the Son of God, that person who took flesh and blood, or was made flesh, and tabernacled amongst us. The Son of God, on earth, was a being consisting of a reasonable soul and a true body. The soul or spirit was the Son of God, the only begotten of the Father, the first begotten before all creation—the body was the seed of David, born of Mary; with which body the Son of God was united, and became the soul, the only soul of that body. United with this body, he is called the second man, the Lord from Heaven, Cor. xvi. Now we understand how he is the root and the offspring of David. Now we understand how he is David's Lord and David's Son.

You also wish my views of John vi. 51. The argument

drawn from this in opposition to the pre-existence of the Son of God, is new, and to me without weight. A better argument might be taken from it to prove the pre-existence of the body or flesh of the son of God—a doctrine received by none—and every where condemned in the Bible.

Your brother in the Lord, . EDITOR.

FAYETTE COUNTY, K. Sept. 3, 1828.

BR. STONE: Having been prevented, by the extreme illness of some of my family from meeting many of my engagements for the last several weeks, I avail myself of the opportunity of informing such of my friends as have not been informed of the cause, that my presence has been necessary in attending to the sick members of my family, and so soon as *the Lord will*, I shall again take pleasure in mingling with them in the social worship of God. In haste, I will also observe, that since the date of my last letter, published in the June number, 8 have united with the church at Antioch, and I have immersed 9; at Union 9 have united, and 8 been immersed; at Paris, 7 have united, and 10 immersed; at Cynthiana 6 have united and 4 immersed. The above account embrace only such as have united within my knowledge, and I have immersed; but as I have been necessarily compelled to neglect several meetings, the number may be greater.

On the third Lord's day of July last, I attended, with several other brethren, a very comfortable meeting at Harrodsburg. The congregations were large, and attentive, and many of God's children from different societies surrounded the table of their common Lord and master; 11 united with the church during the meeting, one of whom was a member of the Presbyterian church; the prospect was truly flattering, and I do believe the cause of the Saviour is advancing in our land, far beyond the most sanguine anticipations of its friends. In my next I will be more particular, and give an account of our labors in other places not hitherto named. The principal object of this communication being to advise my friends of the reason why I have not met my appointments, and to assure them, that as far as I am able, I will with pleasure co-operate with them in promoting the cause of our Redeemer. Your Brother, TH: M. ALLEN.

[We have received several communications which shall appear in our next.—EDITOR.]

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. OCT. 1828. [No. 12.

A FEW REMARKS ON MR. STEELE'S SERMON ON BAPTISM—CONTINUED.

NO. III.

We have, in the two former numbers, considered Mr. Steele's indirect and direct proof for the church membership and baptism of sucking infants, and are well convinced that it is insufficient to establish those doctrines. We proceed to notice his other argument to establish the right of infant baptism, which is, "that baptism is significant of the same spiritual blessings to the Church of God now, as circumcision was to the Church of God in ancient times; and consequently the one has taken place of the other, by appointment of God himself." p. 18. That circumcision and baptism are significant of the same spiritual blessings, has been often asserted but never proved. Mr. S. has proved that circumcision signifies holiness of heart.—Dieut. xxx. 6. Rom. ii. 28, 29. But has he proved that baptism has ever this signfication? He has introduced as proof, John iii. 5; Acts i. 5; and 1 Cor. xii. 13: In not one of which texts does baptism signify holiness of heart. Baptism signifies the burial of Jesus Christ, and his resurrection from the dead; and is ordained as the means of the remission or the washing away of sin—of receiving the Holy Spirit, and of salvation. Did circumcision ever signify these things? and was circumcision ever ordained as the means of the remission of sins; of the receiving of the spirit; or of salvation from sin? It cannot be shewn; therefore baptism and circumcision are not significant of the same spiritual blessings. Their designs are vastly different, as will be shewn in the sequel.

We grant to Mr. Steele that circumcision is called a seal—once and but once is it so called. In Romans 4. it is said to be a seal of the righteousness of Abraham's faith, which