

TESTIMONY
OF THE
United Presbyterian Church

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THE



TESTIMONY

OF THE

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United Presbyterian Church

OF

NORTH AMERICA.

ASSOCIATE & ASSOCIATE REFORMED CHURCHES UNITED.

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1858.

ADOPTION OF THE TESTIMONY.

The Associate Synod, in May, 1857, in the city of Philadelphia, adopted the Basis; and the Associate Reformed Synod at the same time in New York city also adopted it. The Associate Synod at the same meeting declared how she understood the language of the Associate Reformed Synod in her adopting act on the subject of forbearance. The following preamble and resolutions were adopted by both Synods, on the day preceding the consummation of the union, in Pittsburgh, May 25th, 1858.

Whereas, it is understood that the Testimony submitted to the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Church by the Associate Synod was proposed, and accepted as a term of communion, on the adoption of which the union of the two churches is to be consummated.

And whereas, it is agreed between the two churches that the forbearance in love which is required by the law of God, be exercised toward any brethren who may not be able fully to subscribe to the standards of the United Church, while they do not determinedly oppose them, but follow the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

Resolved, 1st, That these churches, when united, shall be called the "United Presbyterian Church of North America."

Resolved, 2d, That the respective Presbyteries of these churches shall remain as presently constituted until otherwise ordered, as convenience shall suggest.

Resolved, 3d, That the supreme court of this church shall be a General Assembly, to meet annually, to be composed of delegates from the respective Presbyteries, the number of delegates to be according to the proportion of the members constituting each Presbytery, as now fixed by the rules of the Associate Reformed Church, until a change shall be found expedient.

Resolved, 4th, That there shall be subordinate Synods, and these shall be the same as those now existing in the Associate Reformed Church, to which Synods the different Presbyteries in the Associate Church shall attach themselves for the present, according to their location: *Provided*, That the separate Synods and Presbyteries of the said Associate Reformed and Associate Churches shall also continue as at present constituted, until otherwise directed.

Resolved, 5th, That the General and subordinate Synods shall be regulated according to the rules presently in force in the Associate Reformed Church, until the United Church shall see fit to alter such rules.

Resolved, 6th, That the different Boards and Institutions of the respective churches shall not be affected by this union, but shall have control of their funds, and retain all their corporate or other rights and privileges, until the interests of the church shall require a change.

THE TESTIMONY

OF THE

United Presbyterian Church of North America.

INTRODUCTION.

We believe it to be the duty of the church, as a faithful witness for the truth, to exhibit, plainly and explicitly, all the principles of her profession, in a published creed or confession. A simple acknowledgment of the Scriptures as the word of God, and the only rule of faith and practice is not sufficient, while there are multitudes professing such a belief in the Scriptures, whose principles are grossly heretical, and subversive of the doctrines of our holy religion. It must therefore be evident to every one who duly considers the matter, that the church of Christ cannot maintain her high character as a witness of Jesus Christ, nor deal honestly and faithfully with those who are outside of her pale, without such a clear and unequivocal statement of those principles which she is bound by the word of God to maintain and propagate.

This course the church of Christ has pursued, with a greater or less degree of faithfulness, in all periods of her history. It particularly characterized the witnesses for the truth at the time of the Reformation, and has ever been eminently blessed by God, as a means of preserving the truth, and transmitting it to future generations.

Upon this principle, our reforming forefathers, in Great Britain were enabled to act with a high degree of faithfulness, and that too, under peculiar trials and difficulties. To them we are indebted for that venerable document called the Confession of Faith, which constitutes the symbol of the faith of the Presbyterian family in this country and in Great Britain.

To these Westminster standards, (including the Confession of Faith, Catechisms, Larger and Shorter—the Form of Presbyterian Church Government, and Directory for the Public Worship of God,) we, as a church, declare our adherence, as containing a true exhibition of our faith as a branch of the church of Christ. In making this declaration of adherence, we are not to be understood as giving an unqualified approbation of the principles respecting the power of the civil magistrate, as they are set forth in chap. 20th, sec. 4th; chap. 23d, sec. 3d; chap. 31st, sec. 2d, of the Westminster Confession. The language there employed has been variously interpreted, and by many thought to be inconsistent with that “liberty of conscience” and that “distinct government in the hands of church officers” which the Confession itself recognises. For this reason, we have deemed it a duty, without passing any judicial opinion in relation to the meaning of these parts of the Confession, to exhibit, in a parallel column, the acknowledged doctrine of the church*—leaving it to every reader to form his own opinion as to the agreement or disagreement between the views thus set forth. This course we have been led to adopt, from a desire to avoid doing violence to that feeling of veneration, which all true Presbyterians cherish for this standard of faith to which the church, under God, is so much indebted; and, at the same time, to discharge a duty that is resting upon us, to exhibit clearly and fully what we believe to be the principles of divine truth on this subject. If we are here agreed, a difference of opinion, as to the import of the language employed in the Confession, ought not to affect Christian union and communion.

We have said, that it is the duty of the church, to exhibit, plainly and explicitly, all the principles of her profession, in a published creed or confession. This duty was discharged with a high degree of faithfulness by the framers of the Westminster Confession. It should, however, not be forgotten, that the church of God, while “holding fast that whereunto she has attained,” should also strive to be making progress in the attainment of divine truth. If it be the duty of Christians, in their

*For this, see the Appendix.

individual capacity, to “press forward” towards perfection, it must certainly be the duty of the church, in her associated and collective capacity, to do the same thing; and having made additional attainments, to declare her belief in them, and her adherence to them as a part of “the testimony of Jesus.” It is only by doing so, that she can fully accomplish her mission in the world, and faithfully carry out the injunction of her ascended Lord, *to teach all things whatsoever he has commanded her.*

Under a solemn conviction of our duty, in this respect, we, as a church, have, in the following document, set forth our views on certain points, which were either not *distinctly* introduced into the Confession of Faith by its framers, or not exhibited with that fulness and explicitness, which the circumstances of the church, the times in which we live, and the views and practices of those around us, demand of us as witnesses for the truth. The articles, set forth by us in the following Testimony, on Psalmody, Communion, Slaveholding, Secret Societies, and Covenanting, may be regarded as specially referring to this class of subjects, and might therefore very properly be introduced into the body of our Confession of Faith. It may, however, be most convenient for the present, that they appear in this Testimony.

As all the principles of our profession are set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith, and in the Articles on the subjects just referred to, (which Articles may be said, in a peculiar manner, to distinguish our profession from some of the churches in this country, whose recognised symbol of faith is the Westminster Confession,) it may appear to some, that a further exhibition of truth is unnecessary. Such would be the case, if all who profess an adherence to this Confession received it in its genuine sense, and maintained it by the faithful exercise of discipline, and by their writings and public ministrations. It is, however, to be lamented, that this is far from being always done by those from whom it might be expected. We would be sorry to make a representation more unfavorable than the facts of the case would justify, and we desire not to be unmindful of any manifestations of faithfulness on the part of those Presbyterian churches from which we are in a state of separa-

tion. We love them for the sake of the truth we hold in common. Yet, faithfulness to our Divine Master, and love to our brethren, whom we desire to see, not only professing, but *walking in the truth*, require us solemnly to testify against some of the more serious departures from the Confession of Faith, with which many, particularly in this land, are chargeable. In doing this, we cannot be justly regarded as attaching a disproportionate importance to these points. The fact that we have brought them prominently to view has arisen mainly from the circumstances just mentioned, which we think attach to them the character of the "present truth," in which it becomes us to be "established." We believe that when the principles set forth in the creed or confession of a church are assailed, misrepresented, or thrown into the shade, it becomes the duty of the church, to declare, explain and defend these principles, by the emission of a distinctive testimony. On this principle, those who have, from time to time, felt it to be their duty to secede from the Church of Scotland, and those who have maintained a separate ecclesiastical organization from the two great divisions in this country, known by the name of Presbyterian, have acted in one form or another, and we believe that there are still sufficient causes for the performance of this duty. Such a testimony, although containing the same principles which have been already embraced in the church's confession, is certainly well calculated to bring out clearly before the mind, the principles of that confession from which there have been departures, and thus serve, with the blessing of God, to revive a love for them in the hearts of those who profess them, and thereby secure their faithful maintenance on the part of all concerned. Nor can such a course be regarded as opposed to a spirit of union and brotherly love, or a desire for union among those who profess an adherence to the same standard of faith. On the contrary, we believe it to be the dictate of love, and directly calculated, by the blessing of God, to secure an intelligent and cordial union among all those who are the true friends of our common Confession.

Deeply impressed with this fact, and sensible of the solemn responsibilities of our position as a Presbyterian church, in a

state of separation from other Presbyterian churches, particularly in this land, and animated as we trust, by an ardent desire to maintain and promote the purity of the Lord's house in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, and in subordination to this, the unity of the church of Christ, we hereby, in the name of the great Head of the church, publish to the world, this, our Testimony; beseeching all those into whose hands it may fall, and especially all the friends of the Westminster Confession of Faith, to give it their serious and prayerful consideration.

An adherence to the Westminster standards before referred to, and to the Declarations contained in the following testimony, will be required of those seeking communion with us. An assent to the argumentation and illustration under each Declaration, cannot, with propriety, be demanded as a term of communion, but these parts may be useful as a guide to the meaning of the Declaration.

ARTICLE I.—OF THE PLENARY INSPIRATION OF THE
SCRIPTURES.

DECLARATION.

We declare, That God has not only in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments made a revelation of his will to man, as the only rule of faith and practice, but that these Scriptures, viewed as a revelation from God, are in every part the inspired word of God, and that this inspiration extends to the language, as well as to the sentiments which they express.

Argument and Illustration.

This we hold to be the doctrine of our Confession, chap. 1st, sec. 2d.

It is the only view of the subject that accords with Scripture and reason. Such an inspiration is involved in the phrase "word of God," which is applied to the Scriptures, (Mark vii. 13; Rom. ix. 6; 2 Cor. iv. 2; Heb. vi. 5.) It is expressly declared, (2 Tim. iii. 16,) not merely that Scripture was written by *inspired men*, but that the *Scripture* itself, and *all* Scripture, was divinely inspired. "Holy men of God," we are told, (2 Pet. i. 21,) "*spoke* as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Paul tells us (1 Cor. ii. 13,) that he *spoke in the words* which the Holy Ghost taught him. David declares (2 Sam. xxiii. 2) that the Spirit of the Lord *spoke* by him, and his *word* was in his tongue. It may also be inferred

from two Scriptural facts. 1. The writers themselves did not always fully understand what they wrote. 1 Pet. i. 10, 11. But no man could write intelligibly on a subject which he did not understand, unless the language itself was dictated. 2. We find the apostles sometimes reasoning from the very terms or modes of expression used in the Old Testament Scriptures, (Gal. iii. 11, 13, 16; Heb. i. 6, 8; Heb. iv. 7; Heb. x. 8, 9; Heb. xii. 26, 27.) But why this, if these terms or modes of expression were not dictated by the Holy Ghost?

It may be thought that the historical parts of Scripture did not require such an inspiration; but no one can prove this to have been the case. On the contrary, as every part of Scripture has a higher end than the temporal benefit of individuals and nations, even the advancement of salvation in subserviency to the glory of God in Christ, it is most reasonable to suppose that it would require a manner of thinking and writing peculiar to itself.

There is nothing in the above declaration and testimony on this subject inconsistent with the belief that the inspired penmen wrote agreeably to their respective talents for composition; and consequently, there is no argument, in the diversity of style which characterizes the Scriptures, against their plenary inspiration; unless it can be shown that the Spirit of God could not direct them according to their respective talents.

We deem it a matter of great importance that the truth on this subject should be maintained, as any thing short of it is calculated to weaken the authority of the Bible, render indeterminate its teachings, and throw a suspicion over the whole of Divine Revelation. It is plain, if the ideas only were inspired, that we have only human authority upon which to depend for the accuracy with which the idea is presented. To the neglect or denial of this truth, is to be ascribed, in a great measure, the elevation of reason to the place of supreme judge in matters of revelation, the low views which many entertain of the Old Testament Scriptures, and of the feelings and motives by which their writers were prompted.

ARTICLE II.—OF THE ETERNAL SONSHIP OF CHRIST.

DECLARATION:

We declare, That our Lord Jesus Christ is not only true and supreme God, being one in essence with the Father, but also the Son of God in respect of his natural, necessary, and eternal relation to the Father.

Argument and Illustration.

The doctrine here stated, and which is exhibited in our Confession, chap. 2d, sec. 3d, stands opposed, not only to the opinions of those who deny the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, but also of some who profess

a belief in the Trinity. They deny that our Lord is called the Son of God because of his relation to the Father as one of the persons of the Trinity, and affirm that He is so called because of His mission, incarnation, or resurrection.

That the declaration we have given on this subject is the doctrine of God's word, will appear when we consider that Jesus called God His Father, (in the original his *proper Father*,) when speaking of him as the Supreme God, (John v. 17, 18;) and the name *son* being a correlate of that of *father*, must mean, when applied to the second person of the Trinity, an identity of nature with the Father. The Jews understood our Lord, in calling himself the Son of God, to claim an identity of nature with him, and their understanding of the extent of this claim was sanctioned by our Lord, (John x. 30—36.) It is "the Son" that knows the Father, (Matt. xi. 27)—that does the same works with the Father, (John v. 19, 21)—is entitled to the same honours, (John v. 23.) The fact that he was the Son of God is urged as an evidence of the greatness of God's love in sending him to die for our sins, (John iii. 16; Rom. viii. 32)—as an evidence of his own amazing love and condescension, (Heb. v. 8; Gal. ii. 20)—as an evidence of the dignity of his person, (Heb. i. 2; v. 8:) as an evidence of the efficiency of his offices, (Heb. iii. 5, 6; iv. 14, vii. 28; John i. 18; v. 25; 1 John i. 7)—all which imply a natural and necessary relation.

He could not be called the Son of God on account of his eternal appointment to the mediatorial office, for he is recognised as a Son in this appointment, (Ps. ii. 6—8; John iii. 16, 17;) nor on account of his incarnation, for the formation of the human nature is ascribed to the Holy Ghost, who is not called by him the Father, (Luke i. 35)—nor on account of his resurrection, for he was then only "*declared* to be the Son of God with power," (Rom. i. 3, 4.) Paul, it is said, (Acts ix. 20,) "*preached* Christ, that he is the Son of God," in which there is a distinction evidently recognised between his mediatorial office, as the anointed of God, and his Sonship.

We deem it a matter of great importance that this doctrine of our holy religion should be witnessed for by the church; as it affects the supreme deity, distinct personality, and mediatorial offices and work of our glorious Immanuel.

ARTICLE III.—OF THE COVENANT OF WORKS.

DECLARATION.

We declare, That God having created man in a state of perfect holiness, and in possession of a perfect ability to obey him in all things, did enter into a covenant with him, in which cov-

enant Adam was the representative of all his natural posterity, so that in him they were to stand or fall as he stood or fell.

Argument and Illustration.

This is the doctrine of the Confession, chap. iv. sec. 2; chap. vi. sec. 3; and also of the Larger Catechism, Questions 20, 21, 22.

In this Declaration we have affirmed that God entered into a covenant with man. That this was the nature of the transaction recorded in Gen. ii. 16, 17, will appear from the following considerations. It is called a covenant, (Hosea vi. 7, see the margin.) It possesses all the parts of a covenant. 1. There are two parties mentioned, "God" and "man." 2. There is a promise on the part of God implied in the threatening, (Rom. vii. 10; viii. 3; x. 5; Matt. xix. 16, 17.) 3. There is a condition imposed upon man; namely, that he is not to eat of a certain tree. 4. There is a mutual agreement between the parties, which agreement on the part of God is expressed in the command and promise of God, and implied on the part of man in the fact of his perfect conformity to the will of God—in his silent acquiescence, in the reply of Eve to the serpent, and in the apology which he offered to God for his sin. These considerations, we believe, show that the transaction referred to was truly and properly a covenant between God and man. God, in entering into this covenant with Adam, manifested the greatness of his condescension and kindness. It is highly important that the strictly federal character of this transaction should be maintained, as erroneous views here must necessarily lead to erroneous views in reference to the nature of the transaction in the covenant between God and Christ, "the second Adam."

We have also affirmed that Adam, in this transaction, was the representative of all his natural posterity, so that in him they were to stand or fall, as he stood or fell. By "representative" we do not simply mean that he was their natural head or parent,—this circumstance laid a foundation, and proved his fitness for sustaining a representative character—but we mean that he was their moral head—that he appeared and acted in their name, as well as his own, so that in law, according to the covenant agreement between God and him, his acts became virtually their acts, they as well as he being held responsible for them.

That Adam thus represented his posterity, is evident from the fact that they are all said to have "sinned in him," (Rom. v. 12, see margin,)—that they were "made," or constituted "sinners" by his "disobedience," (Rom. v. 19,)—that they all died in him, (1 Cor. xv. 22,)—that they were all brought under the sentence then passed, (Rom. v. 12—18,)—that even infants are subjected to this sentence, (Rom. v. 14.) The representative character of Adam in the covenant appears further from the special notice which the apostle takes of the "offence," the "offence of one," and

“one man’s offence,” (Rom. v. 15—18)—thereby showing that in that offence he sustained to his posterity a peculiar relation. It appears also from the representative character ascribed to Christ, (John vi. 37; x. 15; xvii. 2; Isa. liii. 10, 11; Heb. vii. 22; 1 Cor. xv. 20, 23,) taken in connection with the fact that Adam is called his “figure,” or type, (Rom. v. 14,) where the reference must be to his representative character, and also taken in connection with the comparison which the apostle draws (Rom. v.) between Adam and Christ as to their respective relation to the introduction of sin and of righteousness. Another convincing proof that the posterity of Adam were represented by him in the covenant, we have in the moral character and condition of infants, (Rom. v. 14; 1 Cor. vii. 14,) it being impossible to account for their subjection to the law and its curse but by a reference to the “offence of one,” by which “judgment came upon all men to condemnation.”

This doctrine of the Bible and of the Confession has been sadly corrupted by many in this land who profess an adherence to the Westminster standards—affirming that Adam and his posterity were connected only by a principle of “social liability;” according to which his sin was only in some way the occasion of their sin and death, and not the judicial ground of these; and that we have no more to do with the first sin of Adam than with the sin of any other parents. Such a view of the subject we regard as wholly unscriptural, and of dangerous tendency. It is the dictate of carnal reason and vain philosophy.

ARTICLE IV.—OF THE FALL OF MAN, AND HIS PRESENT INABILITY.

DECLARATION.

We declare, That our first parents did, by their breach of covenant with God, subject themselves to his eternal wrath, and bring themselves into such a state of depravity as to be wholly inclined to sin, and altogether unable, by their own power, to perform a single act of acceptable obedience to God; and that all their natural posterity, in virtue of their representation in the covenant, are born into the world in the same state of guilt, depravity, and inability, and in this state will continue until delivered therefrom by the grace and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Argument and Illustration.

The declaration that we have given on the fall of man, and its consequences, is in accordance with the Confession of Faith, chap. vi. secs. 2, 3, 4; chap. ix. sec. 3.

That our first parents became by their sin subject to death, appears from the threatening of death pronounced by God, (Gen. ii. 17;) which death includes in it the separation of the soul and body, with its antecedents as a penal evil, (Rom. vi. 23; 1 Cor. xv. 56; Rom. i. 32;) and the everlasting separation from his favor and presence of both soul and body as appears from the contrast which the apostle draws between the sin and death introduced by Adam, and the righteousness and life introduced by Christ, (Rom. v. 12, 18;) and also from the terror, shame, and confusion into which our first parents were thrown, and their disposition to hide themselves from the presence of the Lord God, (Gen. iii. 7, 8;) all which, with the provision of grace revealed for their restoration, (Gen. iii. 15, 21,) clearly indicate that the condition of our first parents was one of guilt, depravity, and inability.

That this is the state in which the posterity of Adam come into the world, follows as a necessary consequence from his representative character, which we have before proved; his sin is theirs, and is so imputed to them by the righteous Judge of all. Accordingly we find man declared to be in a state of condemnation, (Rom. iii. 19; v. 16, 18; Gal. iii. 10,)—of death, (Rom. v. 12, 14,)—having an understanding darkened, (Jer. iv. 22; 1 Cor. ii. 14; Eph. iv. 18.)—a will opposed to the will of God, (Rom. viii. 7; Col. i. 21; Rom. i. 30,) a mind and conscience defiled (Tit. i. 15; 1 Tim. iv. 2; Heb. ix. 14,)—affections corrupted, (Rom. viii. 5,)—and the body subjected to a state of sinful subservience (Phil. iii. 19, 21; Rom. vi. 13; James iii. 6; Rom. iii. 13, 15.) This state of condemnation and depravity, is universal, extending to every individual of the human family, (Rom. iii. 9, 19; John iii. 6,)—total, corrupting the whole man, (Gen. vi. 5; Ps. xiv. Jer. xvii. 9,)—native, having been brought with us into the world, (Ps. li. 5; John iii. 6; Eph. ii. 3.)

Such being the condemnation and depravity of all men, their inability to believe, repent, or by their own power to do any thing which is pleasing to God, follows as a necessary consequence. But the proof of man's inability does not depend upon inference. The Saviour says, (John xv. 5,) that *without him we can do nothing. We cannot come to him, unless divinely drawn, (John vi. 44.)* Paul declares that we are *without strength, (Rom. v. 6.)* We are represented as *dead, (Eph. ii. 1,)*—corrupt trees, *which cannot bring forth good fruit, (Matt. vii. 17, 18.)* This inability of man is also supposed in the Scripture doctrine of the necessity of a change of state and of heart, in order to his walking with God in newness of life, (Rom. vii. 4; Eph. ii. 10; Phil. ii. 13.)

Many who profess an adherence to the Westminster standards, claim for the sinner what is called a "natural ability" to believe, repent, and perform good works. The expression conveys an erroneous idea, if it be used in any other sense than simply to affirm that man is still in posses-

sion of his rational faculties; but if used in this sense, it is an improper expression; it claims for man more than this—it claims for him what he has not, in any sense, an ability to do what God requires him to do.

Man's responsibility to God is no proof of his ability. This ability he possessed in Adam, and in him lost it. It is also an inability which involves in it opposition to God and his law, which, of course, cannot be excused, (John iii. 19.) He, moreover, does not perform towards God even those natural acts which God requires of him, and thereby shows that a *sense* of inability is not the motive of his disobedience. And let it be remembered also that strength is freely offered in the gospel, (Nah. i. 7; Ps. xxvii. 14; Isa. xl. 29;) of this strength we are commanded to take hold. (Isa. xxvii. 5.)

We, therefore, solemnly testify against the following errors:—that there is no such thing as original sin—that infants come into the world as perfectly free from corruption as Adam was when he was created—that by original sin nothing more is meant than the fact that all the posterity of Adam, though born entirely free from moral defilement, will always begin to sin when they begin to exercise moral agency, and that this fact is somehow connected with the fall of man—that there is no such thing as imputed sin—that the impenitent sinner is, by nature, and independently of the aid of the Holy Spirit, in full possession of all the powers necessary to a compliance with the commands of God—and that if he labor under any kind of inability, natural or moral, which he could not himself remove, he would be excusable for not complying with God's will.

ARTICLE V.—OF THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT.

DECLARATION.

We declare, That our Lord Jesus Christ did, by the appointment of the Father, and by his own gracious and voluntary act, place himself in the room of a definite number, who were chosen in him before the foundation of the world; so that he was their true and proper legal Surety; and as such, did, in their behalf, satisfy the justice of God, and answer all the demands which the law had against them, and thereby infallibly obtain for them eternal redemption.

Argument and Illustration.

The doctrine here declared is the doctrine of our Confession, chap. viii. secs. 3, 4, 8.

That our Lord sustained the character and relation of a Surety and Substitute is, we believe, unequivocally taught in the word of God. He is called (Heb. vii. 22) "the Surety of a better testament," (covenant.) He was "made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law," (Gal. iv. 4, 5.) He is represented as acting not for himself, (Dan. ix. 26,) but *for* (or instead of) his people in the work of salvation, (1 Pet. iii. 18; Matt. xx. 28; Isa. liii. 5.) Our "iniquities" were "laid upon him," (Isa. liii. 6.) He "bore our sins," (Heb. ix. 28; 1 Pet. ii. 24.) He "was made sin for us," (2 Cor. v. 21.) He was "made a curse for us," (Gal. iii. 13.) This truth also appears from the vicarious character of the typical sacrifices under the ceremonial law, (Lev. xvii. 11; Heb. x. 1—12; Lev. iv. 24; Lev. xvi. 21.) On no other principle can we reconcile the sufferings endured by Christ with the holiness of his nature and life, and with the love of the Father for him, both which are asserted in the Scriptures, (Luke i. 35; Acts iv. 27; 2 Cor. v. 21; Matt. iv. 17; John xvii. 24.) As the Surety of his people, our Lord represented them in law; and in this light he is clearly exhibited to us in Romans v. 12—18. These proofs fully establish the truth of our declaration that our Lord was the true and proper legal Surety of his people.

We have also declared that our Lord, as the Surety of his people, satisfied the justice of God, and answered all the demands which the law had against them. If Christ did, as we have seen, take the place of his people in law, he must have done all this, and nothing less than this.

Retributive justice enters essentially into the character of God as Lawgiver and Judge, (Ps. ix. 8; Rom. ii. 6—9; Rom. vi. 23; 2 Thess. i. 6—8; Heb. x. 30, 31; Prov. xi. 21.) This being the case, it was necessary that, as one who was "made under the law," he should make satisfaction to the retributive justice of God in behalf of his people: or, in other words, that he should suffer in their room the penalty of the law. Accordingly, we find the great Lawgiver himself represented as dealing with him in what he suffered through the instrumentality of others, (John xix. 11; Acts ii. 23; Acts iv. 27; Isa. liii. 10.) It is only on this principle that we can account for his amazement and agony in the garden, (Luke xxii. 42—44;) and his bitter lamentation on the cross, (Mark xv. 34.) That our Lord satisfied the justice of God by suffering the penalty of the law, is asserted in Galatians, iii. 10, 13—"As many as are of the works of the law, are *under the curse*;" "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, *being made a curse for us*." The same important truth is also exhibited to our view by the word "sacrifice," which is frequently applied to the sufferings of Christ. This word, especially when interpreted in the light of the ancient types, clearly involves the idea of the satisfaction of justice in the strict and proper sense of that term, (Heb. ix. 26; x. 5—12.) In no other way can we reconcile the sufferings of Christ with the justice of God the Father, in his dealings with his Son; or see how

God can be "just," and yet "justify the ungodly," (Isa. liii. 10; Rom. iv. 5.)

As the vicarious character of Christ involves the idea that he satisfied the retributive justice of God for those for whom he was made under the law, so it also involves the idea that he perfectly obeyed all the precepts of the law for them. The law, under which he was made as the Substitute of sinners, required obedience as the condition of life; and consequently, it was necessary that this obedience should be rendered by Him who came that we might have life, (Tit. i. 2; Matt. v. 17, 18; Rom. x. 4.)

This doctrine of the suretyship and satisfaction of Christ stands opposed to the ideas that in the sufferings of Christ there was not an endurance of the penalty of the law; but that they were simply designed as a substitute for the infliction of the penalty—that the whole legal system has been suspended by the atonement—that the satisfaction rendered by Christ was simply a satisfaction to the principles of what some call general or public justice, and that its only effect is to render it consistent with God's honor to propose lower terms of salvation to the sinner, such as faith, repentance, and sincere obedience—ideas which are held most inconsistently by some professed Presbyterians.

We have further declared, that the satisfaction and obedience of Christ were rendered by him in the room of a definite and a chosen number. That this was the case follows as a necessary consequence from their vicarious character, taken in connection with the fact that some will be lost. (Matt. xxv. 41.) While his death possessed, intrinsically, an infinite value, and must have been sufficient as a ransom for all mankind, had it been the design of God that all mankind should be redeemed by it, the Scriptures clearly represent him as giving his life for a definite number, called "his seed," (Isa. liii. 10, 11,)—his "sheep," (John x. 15, compared with verses 26, 27, and Matt. xxv. 12, 33,)—his "church," (Eph. v. 25.) They are some *out of all nations*, (Rev. v. 9, 10,) and such as were *given to him by the Father*, (John xvii. 2, 4, 6.) The very terms, "redeem" and "ransom" which are used to express the work of Christ, clearly imply this, unless all shall actually be saved; for justice can have no claims upon those for whose deliverance an adequate price has been paid. Christ himself expressly declares that he did not *pray* for any but his sheep; and it is altogether unreasonable to suppose that he would exclude from his prayers, as a priest, any for whom as a priest he had laid down his life. It is true that universal terms are employed in connexion with the atonement; but they will be found, upon examination, to refer to the atonement of Christ as distinguished from the Levitical atonement which was restricted to the Jewish nation, (Rom. iii. 22, 23, 29,)—or to the applicability of the atonement to all, (1 Tim. ii. 6,)—or to the exclu-

sion of every other way of salvation, (1 John ii. 2,)—or to the offer of salvation to be made to all, (2 Cor. v. 19.)

These views in reference to the nature and extent of the atonement, which we have exhibited, and which we have shown to be in accordance with the Scriptures, clearly involve the idea set forth in our Declaration that the satisfaction and obedience rendered by Christ for his people, infallibly secure their salvation, and of course, stand opposed to the idea that Christ did not die, properly speaking, in the room of sinners; but only for sin in general, with the view merely of rendering salvation attainable, and equally attainable, by all. Such an idea is directly contrary to the Scriptures, which represent him as dying, not merely for our sins, but for, (or in the room of) persons (Isa. liii. 4—6; Matt. xxvi. 28; 1 Pet. iii. 18; Rom. v. 6; 1 Thes. v. 10; John x. 15;) and which also represent the salvation of these persons as infallibly sure, (Rom. viii. 29, 30; 2 Tim. ii. 19; Rom. vi. 11; Tit. ii. 14; Eph. v. 25—27,) which it would not be if he died alike for all, and that only to render salvation possible.

Correct views in relation to the nature and extent of redemption are necessarily and intimately connected, and it is a matter of the utmost importance that the truth on both these points be clearly perceived and faithfully maintained.

ARTICLE VI.—OF IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS.

DECLARATION.

We declare, That in justification there is an imputation to the believer of that righteousness, or satisfaction and obedience which the Lord Jesus Christ, as the surety of his people, rendered to the law; and that it is only on the ground of this imputed righteousness that his sins are pardoned, and his person accepted in the sight of God.

Argument and Illustration.

This Declaration is evidently in accordance with the Confession of Faith, chap. xi.

The imputation of the righteousness of Christ, is placing to the account of the believer in Christ what he did as the Substitute and Surety of his people. The truth of the preceding Declaration follows as a necessary consequence from the doctrine that we have already established in relation to the substitution of Christ in the room of his people; and hence, it is denied only by those who deny that as a Substitute, he fulfilled the law, and endured its penalty. This doctrine, however, is not less clearly taught in the Scriptures. God is said to “impute righteousness without works,” (Rom. iv. 6, 23.) We are said to be “made the righteousness of

God in him," (2 Cor. v. 21.) Christ is said to be "made unto us righteousness," (1 Cor. i. 30.) "By the obedience of One many" are said to be "made righteous," (Rom. v. 19.) Christ is "called—THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS," (Jer. xxiii. 6.) "In the Lord," we are said to "have righteousness," (Isa. xlv. 24.) "Of his righteousness, even of his only," we are to "make mention," (Ps. lxxi. 16.) "The righteousness of God" is said to be "unto all and upon all them that believe," (Rom. iii. 22.) These passages fully establish the doctrine of the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, as the ground of the believer's justification before God. As Jehovah is a just God, if we are justified by him, it must be either on the ground of our own righteousness, or that of a substitute, (Ex. xxiii. 7.) That we are justified on the ground of our own righteousness, is expressly denied, (Rom. iii. 19—21; Gal. ii. 16; iii. 10; James ii. 10.) Hence it follows that the righteousness of Christ is the only ground of our justification.

Some affirm that the believer is justified on the ground of his faith. This, however, is to pervert the office of faith in the justification of the soul, which is simply as an instrument to "receive the gift of righteousness," (Rom. v. 17.) or Christ as "the Lord our righteousness," (John i. 12; Rom. xiii. 14; Heb. vi. 18.) Faith, though the gift of God, (Eph. ii. 8,) and a grace of the Spirit (Gal. v. 22,) is nevertheless the act of the believer, in which he performs a duty required by God, (1 John iii. 23; John xiv. 1; John vi. 29.) If, then, he is pardoned and accepted by God on the ground of his faith, his justification is of works, which the Scriptures expressly deny, (Rom. iii. 20; iv. 6; ix. 11; xi. 6.) Again, the fact of the sinner's justification *by faith* is referred to as evincing his justification to be *by grace*, (Rom. iv. 16; Eph. ii. 8, 9.) It would, however, evidently fail to evince this if he were justified *on account of* his faith, and not simply *by faith*, as an instrument. To affirm that God accepts of our faith as a justifying righteousness for the sake of Christ, does not in the least change the aspect of the doctrine, or render it less subversive of the grace of Christ in the salvation of the sinner.

We therefore testify against the following sentiments that have been maintained by some, the symbol of whose faith is the Westminster Confession:—That under the gospel, sinners are not justified by having the obedience of Jesus Christ set down to their account—that Christ owed all his obedience to the law for himself—that faith is itself a righteousness, and as such is the condition of the sinner's justification before God—that the expression, "righteousness of God," so frequently occurring in the Scriptures, never means the ground of the sinner's justification, but only God's method of justifying sinners.

ARTICLE VII.—OF THE GOSPEL OFFER.

DECLARATION.

We declare, That the gospel, taken in its strict and proper sense, as distinguished from the law, is a revelation of grace to sinners as such; and that it contains a free and unconditional offer and grant of salvation through Christ, to all who hear it, whatever may be their character or condition.

Argument and Illustration.

The doctrine here stated accords with the Confession of Faith, chap. x., and Shorter Catechism, Quest. 31.

When we speak of the gospel, in its strict and proper sense, as distinguished from the law, we understand it simply as a proclamation of good news, which is the literal import of the word, (Luke ii. 10; 1 Cor. xv. 1, 2; Rom. xi. 28.) Although, as such, it comes to all who hear it with divine authority, and binds them to receive and improve it, (Heb. ii. 1—3;) yet it is a revelation of grace to sinners, containing neither precepts nor sanctions, (Rom. vi. 14; Acts xx. 32; 2 Cor. vi. 1.) In this gospel there is a free, unconditional, and unlimited offer of Christ, and salvation in him, to man as guilty and depraved. That there is an *offer* of these in the gospel is evident from the fact that they are received by man, which they could not be if they were not given, (Col. ii. 6; John i. 12; John iii. 27.) That this offer is *free* appears from the fact that it is referred to the love of God, (John iii. 16.) That it is *unconditional* appears from the guilt, depravity, and helplessness of the sinner, (Rom. v. 12, 16; Ps. xiv. Eph. ii. 1.) That it is *unlimited*, being made to all who hear it without any restriction, appears from the express testimony of God's word, (Mark xvi. 15; Isa. lv. 1—3; Prov. viii. 4; Isa. xlvi. 12; Rev. iii. 18; Rev. xxii. 17; John vi. 32, 37.) If the offer of the gospel were not thus made to each sinner who hears it, its rejection could not be, as it is declared to be, a ground of condemnation, (Prov. i. 24; John iii. 18, 36.) Salvation is thus freely offered to all, not because Christ died for all, (which we have seen to be contrary to the Scriptures,) but because there is in his obedience and death a sufficiency of merit for the salvation of all, (Isa. xlii. 21,) and because he is invested by the Father with all power, (Matt. xxviii. 18, 19.)

The doctrine here declared and vindicated, is opposed to the idea that salvation is to be offered by the minister of the gospel to none but sensible, awakened, or penitent sinners, and that it is only such sinners that are warranted to come to Christ—and that, therefore, sinners are in the first place to prepare themselves to come to Christ, by trying to make themselves sensible of their need of him, and to excite in their hearts

desires for his salvation. Such a view of the gospel offer is not only dishonoring to the grace of God, but discouraging to the sinner, as it sets him to work without strength, and gives him no assurance when he is sufficiently prepared for the reception of Christ. Against such views we, therefore, solemnly testify.

ARTICLE VIII.—OF SAVING FAITH.

DECLARATION.

We declare, That in true and saving faith there is not merely an assent of the mind to the proposition that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Saviour of sinners; but also a cordial reception and appropriation of him by the sinner as his Saviour, with an accompanying persuasion or assurance corresponding to the degree or strength of his faith, that he shall be saved by him; which appropriation and persuasion are founded, solely, upon the free, and unconditional, and unlimited offer of Christ and salvation in him, which God makes in the gospel to sinners of mankind.

Argument and Illustration.

This declaration we make in defence of the doctrine of the Confession Chap. xiv. sec. 2d.

Faith, in the general acceptation of the term, is a belief of testimony. Human faith is a belief of human testimony; divine faith is a belief of divine testimony. Now, in order that we may ascertain what is the nature of that faith which respects Christ as a Saviour, we must inquire what is the testimony of God respecting this Saviour. This we have seen in the preceding article to be, that he has made in the gospel a free and unconditional offer and grant of Christ to us as sinners. This is the testimony of God, (1 John v. 10.) and also of Christ himself, (John vi. 32.) This being the case, the believer must, in the exercise of faith, contemplate Christ as given to himself in particular. He sees Christ in the gospel, as made of God unto him wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, (1 Cor. i. 30;) and thus seeing him he appropriates him to himself, or receives him as his own Saviour. Hence faith is expressed by terms, which clearly imply this direct application of Christ by the believer to himself. It is called the receiving of Christ, [Col. ii. 6,]—putting on Christ, (Rom. xiii. 14,)—a fleeing to Christ, and laying hold of him, (Heb. vi. 18,)—a feeding on him, (John vi. 51.) This reception of Christ we call *appropriation*, because the believer views the offer which God makes of Christ to him as giving him a warrant to take him as his Saviour. That he thus views him is implied in the very words which express this exercise of the soul (John xx. 28; Ps. xviii. 1, 2; Ps. xliii. 2—4; Ps. xvi. 2.)

We have declared, that in this appropriation there is, according to the degree and strength of the faith exercised, a belief, persuasion, or assurance, that we shall be saved. When the soul receives Christ, and rests upon him, it is *for salvation*. This salvation, must, therefore, be in the mind, as a result to be realized. Hence faith is declared to be the *substance* of things hoped for, the evidence (or demonstration,) of things not seen. We are exhorted to draw nigh to the Holiest of All in "the full assurance of faith," (Heb. x. 22.) This can only mean that assurance which is in the direct act of faith; for, the reason assigned for it is not the work of God in the heart, but the fact that we "have a High Priest over the house of God," (verse 21.) This persuasion, or assurance, is also implied in those passages which represent faith as a building on Christ, (Eph. ii. 20,)—a trusting in him, (Eph. i. 12, 13.)—a resting on him, (Ps. xxxvii. 7,)—a leaning on him, (Song viii. 5.)

The assurance of which we have spoken, is different from that "assurance of grace and salvation," of which the Confession speaks, (chap. xviii.,) and for which "a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties before he be a partaker of it." The one rests upon the testimony of God, speaking in his word; the other, upon the work of God in the heart. The one may exist without a consciousness or sensible impression of its existence; the other, in the very nature of the case, cannot. Nor do we deny—but on the contrary, maintain—that this assurance that is in the nature of faith may be associated with doubts respecting the testimony of God to us in the gospel, (Matt. xiv. 31.)

We deem it a matter of importance that the doctrine which we have exhibited on the subject of faith be maintained by the church, as it cannot fail to encourage the sinner to close with the offers of the gospel and thus open up to his soul a source of true and permanent peace. If he must know that he is a true believer before he can warrantably say—"Surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength," where is "the beginning" of that "confidence" which he is to hold "steadfast unto the end?" We, therefore, solemnly testify against all those who give such an exhibition of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and of the offers, and promises of the gospel, as is calculated to excite a doubt in the mind even of the chief of sinners, that he has a perfect warrant for an assured appropriation of Christ, and of all the blessings of the new covenant.

ARTICLE IX.—OF EVANGELICAL REPENTANCE.

DECLARATION.

We declare, That that repentance which is a saving grace, is one of the *fruits* of a justifying faith; and, of course, cannot be regarded as a ground of the sinner's pardon, or as necessary to qualify him for coming to Christ.

Argument and Illustration.

The doctrine here presented is that of the Confession of Faith, chap. xv., secs. 2d and 3d.

To prevent misunderstanding we would distinctly state that the repentance of which we speak, is an essential part of that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord," (Luke xiii. 3, 5; Acts xvii. 30.) It is, however, as we have declared it to be, a *fruit* of faith. It does not go before faith, but follows after it as an immediate effect. This will appear evident if we consider either the nature of these two acts of the soul, or the testimony of God's word. Whatever may be the nature of the repentance, there must be, in the very nature of the case, belief in order to that repentance. According to the belief so will the repentance be. He who has no belief in the law, cannot be said, in any sense, to repent of sin as sin: for "sin is the transgression of the law," (Rom. iv. 15; 1 John iii. 4;) and "by the law is the knowledge of sin," (Rom. iii. 20; vii. 7.) There must then, necessarily, be a legal faith in order to a legal repentance. Now, this legal repentance, or that sorrow for sin which arises merely from a view of the requirements and sanctions of the divine law, may and does precede evangelical faith. The sinner must see that his sin is destroying him before he will think of applying to the Saviour. Faith in the law merely, however, is not saving. Neither is that repentance saving which flows from it. Such was the repentance of Saul, (1 Sam. xv. 24, 30; xxvi. 21,) and of Judas, (Matt. xxvii. 3—5.) Such is "the sorrow of the world," (2 Cor. vii. 10.) Saving faith has a respect to a Saviour offered in the gospel, and the mercy and grace of God in making this offer; and there is the same necessary connection between this faith and that repentance which is saving, as there is between the legal faith and the legal repentance of which we have just spoken. This saving repentance, or repentance unto life, has respect to a God in Christ as one who has been offended by our sins. The sorrow for sin experienced by the true penitent, springs up in the heart as an immediate result of that view which the believing soul takes of sin as committed against the God of grace, revealing and making over to us Christ with all his saving benefits. It is therefore, necessarily, the fruit of faith; and as different from a mere legal repentance, as is the faith which produces it, from a mere legal faith.

The Scriptures also clearly exhibit true and saving repentance to us in this light, as may be seen by consulting the following passages:—Zech. xii. 10; Jer. xxxi. 18, 19; Ezek. xxxvi. 26—31; Luke xv. 20, 21.

This rational and scriptural view of repentance shows the error of those who would call the sinner to repentance, either as a means of appeasing the wrath of God against him for his sin, or as qualifying him for the reception of Christ by faith.

Against such an exhibition of repentance we testify as dishonoring to the grace of God and to the atonement of Christ, and as tending to discourage the sinner from making an immediate application to Christ.

ARTICLE X.—OF THE BELIEVER'S DELIVERANCE FROM THE
LAW AS A COVENANT.

DECLARATION.

We declare, That although the moral law is of perpetual obligation, and consequently does and ever will bind the believer as a rule of life, yet, as a covenant, he is by his justification through Christ, completely and for ever set free from it, both as to its commanding and condemning power, and consequently not required to yield obedience to it as a condition of life and salvation.

Argument and Illustration.

This declaration is in accordance with the Confession of Faith, Chap. xvi, and Larger Catechism, Ques. 97.

We have said that the moral law does, and ever will bind the believer as a rule of life. That this is the case appears from the very character of the law as "holy, just and good," (Rom. vii, 12,)—from the nature of that principle which is said to fulfill the law, namely, love, (Rom. xiii. 10,)—from the sovereignty and supremacy of God as Lawgiver, he having given but one moral law, (Isa. xxxiii. 22; James iv. 11, 12,)—from the preface to the ten commandments, setting forth as a reason why we should obey the law, not only the sovereignty of God, but also his character as a Redeemer, which reason, in the case of the believer, will always be in force, (Ex. xx. 1, 2,)—from the declared end of Christ's death, which is to make us "zealous of good works," (Tit. ii. 14,)—from the charge of God to his people to "remember the law of Moses," (Mal. iv. 4,)—and from the express declaration of the apostle that we are "not without law to God, but under law to Christ," (1 Cor. ix. 21.)

While, however, believers are bound to keep the whole law, and to seek after perfect conformity to it as a rule of life, it is nevertheless a truth clearly taught in the word of God that they are wholly, and forever delivered from it as a covenant, promising life in case of obedience, and threatening death in case of disobedience. Believers are declared to be "delivered from the law," (Rom. vii. 6,)—"not under the law, but under grace," (Rom. vi. 14,)—"dead to the law,"—(Rom. vii. 4;)—and Christ, in whom they are "found, not having their own righteousness, which is of the law," is declared to be to them "the end of the law," (Phil. iii. 9; Rom. x. 4.) The apostle expressly declares it

to be the privilege of believers that they are "redeemed from the curse of the law," (Gal. iii. 13.) Deliverance from the curse of the law, as a covenant, implies deliverance from its command as a covenant; for if it *command* believers in this character, it must also *punish* them when they transgress it. The complete freedom of believers, both from the preceptive and penal power of the law as a covenant, further appears from the fact that Christ was, as a Surety, made under this law in this form, and in the name of his people fulfilled its precepts, and suffered its penalty, (Gal. iv. 4, 5,; Matt. v. 17; Gal. iii. 13.) The same truth also appears from all those passages which represent the believer as justified by Christ and his righteousness, (2 Cor. v. 21; Rom. v. 18, 19,)—as justified without works, (Rom. iii. 20; iv. 6,) and as justified by grace. (Rom. iii. 24; Tit. iii. 7.)

Such being the blessed privilege of the believer, his obedience to the law, when it is of an evangelical nature, and such as is pleasing to God, does not spring from a slavish fear of God's vindictive wrath, or a hope of life on the ground of his own works, (Luke i. 74; 1 John iv. 18; Rom. viii. 15.)—but from faith in God as his new covenant God in Christ, (Deut. x. 20, 21; 1 Pet. i. 17; Tit. ii. 14.) In rendering this obedience to the law as a rule of life, the gospel presents to us the most powerful considerations, such as the love of the Father in sending his Son to save us, (1 John iv. 8, 9,)—the love of Christ in giving his life to redeem us, (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20,)—the love of the Spirit in applying this redemption, (Eph. iv. 30,)—and the hope of a glorious immortality in heaven, (1 John iii. 2, 3; Matt. v. 8; Heb. xii. 14.)

We deem it a matter of the greatest importance that the doctrine of the believer's exemption from the law be distinctly set forth, as its belief is necessary to a life of holiness, (Rom. vii. 4; Gal. ii. 19,)—and to the performance of those good works that are acceptable to God, (Eph. i. 6; 1 Peter ii. 5,)—and to the cultivation and enjoyment, by the believer, of a true and heavenly peace, (Rom. v. 1, 2.)

ARTICLE XI.—OF THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

DECLARATION.

We declare, That the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, does, by a direct operation accompanying the word, so act upon the soul as to quicken, regenerate, and sanctify it; and that without this direct operation the soul would have no ability to perceive, in a saving manner, the truths of God's word, or yield to the motives which it presents.

Argument and Illustration.

The statement here made is in accordance with the Confession of Faith, chap. x.

The Scriptures clearly hold forth the idea that the Holy Spirit does, in a gracious and supernatural way, operate upon the soul. Such an operation is implied in the names by which it is expressed. It is called a creation, (Eph. iv. 24,)—a renewing of the Holy Ghost, (Titus iii. 5,)—an opening of the eyes, (Ps. cxix, 18,)—an opening of the understanding, (Luke xxiv. 45,)—a quickening, (Eph. ii. 1,)—the giving of a heart of flesh, [Ezek. xxxvi. 26,]—a circumcising of the heart to love the Lord, [Deut. xxx. 6.] These expressions clearly intimate a direct and supernatural operation of Divine power upon the soul. The necessity of such an operation, appears from the condition of the sinner as exhibited in the word of God. He is represented as dead in sins, [Eph. ii. 1,]—as blind, [Luke iv. 18; Rev. iii. 17; Eph. iv. 18.] In accordance with all this, God is represented as working in the soul, [Eph. iii. 20; Phil. ii. 13; Col. i. 29; 1 Thess. ii. 13; Eph. ii. 10.]

This doctrine stands opposed to the idea that the regeneration and sanctification of the soul are the result of mere moral suasion, or the bare presentation of truth to the mind. Such is the natural condition of the sinner, that without the direct operation of the Spirit of God on his soul, the doctrines, precepts, invitations and warnings that are contained in the word, must necessarily be ineffectual. He is blind, and must therefore have his eyes opened that he may see: he is dead, and must therefore be quickened, in order that he may hear. The apostle expressly tells us, [1 Cor. ii. 14,] that the natural man *cannot know* the things of the Spirit of God, because they are spiritually discerned. David prays [Ps. cxix. 18,] to God to open his eyes, *that he might behold wondrous things out of his law.* The apostle prays [Eph. i. 17, 18,] that God would give those to whom he wrote the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, *that they may know what is the hope of his calling.* The Saviour, we are told, [Luke xxiv. 45,] opened the understanding of the disciples, *that they might understand the Scriptures.* The Lord opened the heart of Lydia, *that she attended to the things that were spoken of Paul,* [Acts xvi. 14.] Paul says—“I have planted, Apollos watered, *but God gave the increase,*” [1 Cor. iii. 6—9.] These passages clearly show that there is an operation of Divine power, distinct from that of the word, and by which alone the word is rendered efficacious; yet, though this operation is distinct from the word, it is not ordinarily without the word, [1 Pet. i. 23; Rom. x. 13—17; 1 Cor. iv. 15; 2 Thess. ii. 13.] The word is the light and food of the soul, [Ps. cxix. 103, 105.] The Spirit of God, in thus operating upon the soul as a Spirit of light and truth, does not impart any new faculties to the soul, but quickens and brings into exercise, and sanctifies those which the sinner already possesses. Nor is there any violence done to the soul:

the sinner is drawn. (John vi. 44, 65) and made willing in the day of God's power, (Ps. cx. 3.)

It follows as a necessary inference, that the sinner is altogether passive in regeneration, it being the communication of a principle of spiritual life to the soul; and not, as some contend, a mere change of purpose.

ARTICLE XII.—OF THE HEADSHIP OF CHRIST.

DECLARATION.

We declare, That our Lord Jesus Christ, besides the dominion which belongs to him as God, has, as our God-man Mediator, a twofold dominion, with which he has been invested by the Father as the reward of his sufferings. These are a dominion over the church, of which he is the living Head and Lawgiver, and the source of all that Divine influence and authority by which she is sustained and governed; and also, a dominion over all created persons and things, which is exercised by him in subserviency to the manifestations of God's glory in the system of redemption, and the interests of his church.

Argument and Illustration.

The doctrine of Christ's Headship, as above exhibited, is in accordance with the Confession, chap. ii., sec. 1.

The statement we have made on this important subject affirms Christ to have, as Mediator, a dominion over his church. For this we have the express testimony of the Divine word. He himself calls the church *his kingdom*, (John xviii. 36.) God, the Father, in speaking of him says, (Ps. ii. 6;)—"I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." The angel that announced his birth declared that he should "reign over the house of Jacob for ever," (Luke i. 33.) The prophet Isaiah (Isa. ix. 6.) declared that "the government shall be upon his shoulder;" and Paul speaks of him as "a Son over his own house," (Heb. iii. 6.) It is, therefore, his exclusive prerogative to provide for the preservation and perpetuation of his church. In order to this he communicates grace. Hence he is said to be the Head of the church, (Eph. v. 23,) and the church is said to be his body, (Eph. v. 23,) plainly implying that all gracious and saving influences proceed from Him, (John xvi. 26.) The authority, also, to appoint officers and institute laws and ordinances must, in virtue of His prerogative as King of Zion, belong to him alone; and to him it is expressly ascribed, (Isa. ix. 7; xxii. 22; Matt. xxviii. 18—20; Eph. iv. 8—13; John xx. 21.) It is, therefore an unwarranted assumption of power, and a direct encroachment on the rights of the Lord Jesus Christ as King and Head of his church,

for any man, or any body of men, either in the church or state, to exercise or claim a legislative power in relation to the doctrine, government, worship and discipline of the church, (Matt. xv. 9; Isa. viii. 20.)

We have also, in the above declaration, ascribed to our Lord Jesus Christ a dominion over all created persons and things. The testimony of Scripture in proof of this, is equally direct and explicit. All power is given unto him in heaven and in earth, (Matt. xxviii. 18.) God has given him a name which is above every name, (Phil. ii. 9.) He has set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the Head over all things, (Eph. i. 20—22.) He has put all things in subjection under his feet, and left nothing that is not put under him, (Heb. ii. 8.) He has given him power over all flesh, (John xvii. 2.) Jesus has the keys of hell and death, (Rev. i. 18.) These passages clearly hold forth the idea that Christ, as Mediator, possesses universal power.

This dominion over all persons and things, we have declared to be exercised by our Lord Jesus Christ, in subserviency to the manifestation of God's glory in the system of redemption, and the interests of his church. This follows as a necessary consequence from the fact that this power has been delegated to him as Mediator; for the distinct and formal end of the mediatorial office is the manifestation of the glory of God as the God of grace, and, in subordination to this, the salvation of an elect world. Hence our Lord is said to be Head over all things *to the church*, (Eph. i. 22,)—to have power over all flesh, *that he should give eternal life to as many as the Father gave him*, (John xvii. 2;) and all things, we are assured, work together *for good to them that love God*, (Rom. viii. 28.) The subsidiary character of this dominion of Christ over all persons and things, is also clearly taught in the vision of the wheels seen by Ezekiel, (Ezek. i. 19, 20.) Accordingly, we find our Lord, as Mediator and Redeemer of his people, overthrowing nations to make way for his church, (Hag. ii. 7; Heb. xii. 26, 27; Dan. ii. 44,)—raising up rulers that knew him not, to deliver his people from oppression, (Isa. xlv. 13,)—employing wicked men to correct them, (Isa. x. 7,)—and punishing these wicked men for their malignant opposition to them, (Isa. li. 22, 23; Isa. xxxiv. 2, 8; Dan. vii. 26, 27; Isa. lxiii. 1—7,)—casting the ungodly into hell, (2 Thess. i. 6—9,)—exercising a control over Satan, the god of this world, (Luke x. 18; John xii. 31; Rev. xx. 7, 10; Mark xvi. 17, 18,)—and employing even the inferior parts of creation as instruments of good to his people, and of evil to their enemies, (Ex. viii. 9, 10; Ps. cxlviii. 8.)

Such being the universal dominion of our Lord as Mediator, it follows

that all intelligent beings to whom he has been revealed in this character, are bound to acknowledge his mediatorial supremacy in all their respective stations and relations. The angels are called upon to do so, (Heb. i. 6.) This is enjoined upon all men, (Phil. ii. 10; Col. iii. 17.) It is required of civil magistrates, (Ps. ii. 10—12; Isa. lx. 12; Ps. lxxii. 10, 11.) While this, however, is unquestionably the duty of the civil magistrate, a failure to perform this duty does not, of itself, as our Confession truly declares, (chap. xxiii. sec. 4.) “make void his just and legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience to him.” Nor is he, on the plea of regarding the authority of Christ as Mediator, to do violence to the rights of conscience, or encroach upon the liberty of the church as a distinct and independent kingdom. The civil magistrate, as such, is bound, as are all others in their respective spheres and relations, to recognise the authority of Christ in the performance of the duties that are *appropriate to his calling*, and ever to keep in view *the nature and end of his calling*.

We deem it a matter of importance that the doctrine which we have declared in relation to the headship of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, be faithfully maintained, and distinctly exhibited by the church, as it has an important bearing upon the honor of Christ, the purity of the church, and the welfare of civil society, and cannot fail, when duly appreciated by Christians, to impress their hearts with a sense of the obligations that are resting upon them to devote themselves to his cause, and to labor for the spread of his gospel throughout the world.

ARTICLE XIII.—OF THE SUPREMACY OF GOD’S LAW.

DECLARATION.

We declare, That the law of God, as written upon the heart of man, and as set forth in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is supreme in its authority and obligations; and that where the commands of the church or state are in conflict with the commands of this law, we are to obey God rather than man.

Argument and Illustration.

This declaration is in accordance with the Confession, chap. i., sec. 2, chap. xx. sec. 2.

The Declaration we have made on this subject is so plainly in accordance with the principles of the word of God, that it seems to be scarcely necessary to adduce any arguments in its defence; and yet the principle which it embodies has been not a little opposed in this land by some, and entirely lost sight of by many professing Christians. Subjection to civil and ecclesiastical authorities is strictly enjoined upon

in the word of God, (Rom. xiii. 1—7; Tit. iii. 1; 1 Pet. ii. 13; Heb. xiii. 17,) and it is no doubt, therefore, a principle of the Bible, as well as of our Confession of Faith, that “they who, upon pretence of Christian liberty, shall oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical, resist the ordinance of God,” (Confession of Faith, chap. xx., sec. 4,) yet the power must be “lawful;” and the “exercise,” even of that power, must be “lawful” to make resistance to it to amount to a resistance of the ordinance of God. When, therefore, either the church or state passes laws requiring us to do what the law of God forbids us to do, obedience to such laws would be resistance to Him who is the *source* (Rom. xiii. 1,) of all authority. Authority exercised in opposition to the law of God, is so far null and void, and cannot bind the conscience. Open and violent resistance may not be a duty; for it is sometimes the duty of Christians to take wrong, and submit to oppression, (Matt. v. 39; 1 Cor. vi. 7; 1 Pet. ii. 18.) Yet where human authority requires us to do what the law of God forbids, or forbids us to do what the law of God requires, it is in that particular instance to be disregarded by us, let the consequences be what they may. Upon this principle Daniel acted with divine approbation. A “royal statute” was enacted, forbidding a petition to be asked of any god or man, save the king, for thirty days. This statute Daniel violated, (Dan. vi. 7—10.) Upon this principle, also, did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego act, in refusing, at the command of the king, to worship the image which had been set up, (Dan. iii. 18.) Upon this principle, also, did the apostles act when commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, affirming that they ought to “obey God rather than man,” (Acts v. 29.) Those, therefore, who plead the statutes of man as a justification for the doing of what the word of God forbids, are guilty of exalting human laws above the divine law. Those who pass unrighteous decrees expose themselves to the displeasure of that God who “has prepared his throne in the heavens,” and whose “kingdom ruleth over all,” (Ps. ciii. 19; Isa. x. 1, 2;) and those who carry out these decrees, “have fellowship with the throne of iniquity,” (Ps. xciv. 20.)

We therefore solemnly testify against those who will plead the law of the land or of the church as a reason for doing what the law of God forbids, and against those who do not oppose those sins that have received the sanction of law.

ARTICLE XIV.—OF SLAVEHOLDING.

DECLARATION.

We declare, That slaveholding—that is, the holding of unoffending human beings in involuntary bondage, and considering

and treating them as property, and subject to be bought and sold—is a violation of the law of God, and contrary both to the letter and spirit of Christianity.

Argument and Illustration.

This declaration is in accordance with the Confession of Faith, chap. iv., sec. 2, Larger Catechism, Ques. 142.

That slaveholding is, as we have declared it to be, a violation of the law of God, will appear from the following considerations :

1. The word of God represents the whole human family as possessing a common nature. The slave is a *man*—as really and truly a man as the most gifted and illustrious of the human family. He is a child of Adam, who was made in the image and after the likeness of God, (Gen. i. 26.) He is of “one blood” with him who holds him in bondage, (Acts xvii. 26.) This being the case, his natural rights must be the same as those of any other. If man possesses, by the law of his creation, any natural and inalienable right, that right must be inconsistent with the condition of a person who is considered and treated as property, subject to be bought and sold. Slaveholding, then, is at war with humanity.

2. The word of God, in the grant of dominion which it makes, restrains the power of man thus to treat his fellow-man. He has, by the authority of God his Creator, dominion over all the lower creatures, (Gen. i. 26.) The possession of such a dominion by a person, is, in its very nature, inconsistent with his condition as a slave—a person who is himself considered and treated as property. While, therefore, he is held in this condition, the grant of his Creator is rendered a nullity. Nor is this all: while this grant of dominion secures to the slave his right to liberty, it interdicts, by the clearest implication, the assumption of that right which the slaveholder claims. The grant of his Creator gives him dominion *over the lower creatures*. These he may make his property; thus far his dominion as owner extends, but no farther. Slavery, however, assumes this power. It reduces to the condition of property, him, who by divine right is lord of all. (Ps. viii. 6.)

3. The law of God recognizes the right of all men to use the powers of body and mind, which their Creator has given them, in the pursuit of happiness. It sanctions labour with a view to their support, (Gen. ii. 15; iii. 23; 1 Thess. iv. 11; 2 Thess. iii. 10—12.) But slavery, while it dooms its victims to toil, lays its hand upon the fruits of that toil, and appropriates it to him who has not performed the labor. It thus ~~takes~~ takes away from man that incentive to labor which the Creator has given to him, by giving to him a right to its fruits. The slave, being

himself the *property* of another, can own nothing, and of course can acquire nothing.

4. The law of God enjoins it upon masters to give to their servants "that which is just and equal," (Col. iv. 1.) The slaveholder gives nothing to his slave, *as a right acquired by labor*. What he gives *as a slaveholder*, has a reference merely to the support of his slave, that he may thereby be qualified to labor. The fruits of that labor he appropriates to himself. He therefore violates the law of *justice* enjoined upon the master, and exposes himself to the wo pronounced against him who "useth his neighbor's services without *wages*, and giveth him not *for his work*," (Jer. xxii. 13.) Neither does he give his servant that which is "equal." There is no proportion between the labor performed by the slave and what he receives from his master. The slave may be hired out to another, by whom he is fed and clothed; but the *owner* of the slave receives from the man to whom he is hired, the wages. Nor is there any proportion between what the *slave* receives and what another receives who performs the same amount of work. He therefore violates the principle of *equality*, which he is bound by the law of God to observe.

5. The law of God recognises marriage as the right of all, (Heb. xiii, 4.) It requires the parties to dwell together, (1 Pet. iii. 7,) and makes the relation indissoluble by man, (Gen. ii. 24; Matt. xix. 6.) But the right which the slaveholder claims to his slave as his property, subject to be bought and sold, is in direct conflict with these divine requisitions. He may, by the exercise of his right as a slaveholder, forbid his marriage, or place him in circumstances in which he cannot enjoy this divine right; or, if married, he may, at will, entirely and forever separate the parties. The laws which govern and control property imply all this.

6. The law of God requires parents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, (Eph. vi. 4.) The slaveholder, in virtue of the relation which he sustains, and by the right of ownership which he claims, may not only interfere with the government of the parent over his children, but entirely and forever separate them from each other.

7. The law of God requires every man to search the Scriptures, (John v. 39.) The right of the slaveholder interferes with this. The laws which govern all property necessarily secure to him the right of prohibiting his slave from doing any thing which may operate against the attainment of the end for which this species of property, in common with all others, is held—his own gain.

8. The law of God forbids man-stealing, (Deut. xxiv. 7; 1 Tim. i. 9, 10.) In this the alleged right of one man to make merchandise of his

fellow-man, must have originated. As the fountain is corrupt, the stream cannot be pure.

The foregoing considerations clearly show this relation to be, as we have declared it to be, in violation of the law of God.

We have also declared it to be contrary both to the letter and spirit of Christianity. What says the Author of Christianity? He says:—"All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." (Matt. vii. 12.) There is no slaveholder who would not resist being made a slave, and who would not feel an irrepressible conviction that a wrong had been done him. This being the case, he is bound, by this express precept of the Saviour, to break the yoke and let the oppressed go free, (1 Cor. vii. 21; Isa. lviii. 6.) And what is the spirit of Christianity? It is surely love, (Rom. xiii. 10; 1 John iv. 20, 21; Luke x. 27—37.) Is not, however, the reduction of a fellow-being, (he may be a brother in Christ,) to the condition of a piece of property, liable to be bought and sold, in violation of this holy and divine principle? Who, that is not a stranger to the impulses of a Christian's heart, will deny it?

We have, therefore, in the law of God, and in the letter and spirit of Christianity, abundant reasons for testifying against slaveholding as a sin, and consequently a disqualification for membership in the Church of Christ. It is the relation itself, which we have examined in the light of Scripture, and which we have found to be so inconsistent with it; and not the many cruel laws, which blacken the statute-books of the slaveholding States, and the many gross and fearful evils, that result from this relation. A consideration, however, of these laws and evils which everywhere attend it, cannot fail to impress the mind with a sense of the inherent wickedness of the system.

ARTICLE XV.—OF SECRET SOCIETIES.

DECLARATION.

We declare, That all associations, whether formed for political or benevolent purposes, which impose upon their members an oath of secrecy, or an obligation to obey a code of unknown laws, are inconsistent with the genius and spirit of Christianity, and church members ought not to have fellowship with such associations.

Argument and Illustration.

This declaration is in accordance with the Confession of Faith, chap. xxii., secs. 1—5,

In making the above Declaration, it is freely admitted that there are many things with which an individual becomes acquainted which it

would be improper for him to reveal, (Prov. xi. 13; xx. 19.) The same thing, also, may be affirmed in relation to associations. It is not, therefore, the fact of secrecy, simply considered, that we condemn. What, then, is it? It is the fact of a person giving an oath or promise that he will not make known to others matters which are to be subsequently communicated to him, or that he will obey a code of laws with which he is not made acquainted until after the oath or promise be given by him. This we believe to be wrong under all circumstances; and all associations founded on this principle are to be condemned, whatever be the object for which they are formed.

1. Such an obligation is inconsistent with our subjection to the law of God. This law is the supreme standard. We are always to obey it, (Gal. iii. 10; Isaiah viii. 20; Acts iv. 19.) When, therefore, we come under an oath or promise to keep the transactions of a society of men concealed, we know not but that the law of God may require us to reveal them. When we bind ourselves to support the principles of a society with which we have not been made acquainted, we know not but that the law of God may bind us to oppose them. When we pledge ourselves to obey a system of laws, of which we are ignorant, we know not but that they may be in conflict with the law of God. We are, therefore, giving promises, obligations and pledges to do that which, for aught we know, may involve us in sin. These, under such circumstances, cannot be given "in judgment," as required by the command of God, (Jer. iv. 2.)

2. Such an obligation is ensnaring and enslaving to the conscience. God alone is Lord of the conscience, (Jas. iv. 12; Rom. xiv. 4; Matt. x, 28.) To bring ourselves, however, under an obligation to obey a code of *unknown* laws, is, in the very act, whatever may be the character of these laws, doing violence to the freedom of conscience. It is making ourselves the "servants of men," (1 Cor. vii. 23.)

3. Such an obligation is not only not countenanced by the example of the saints in Scripture, but is inconsistent with it. When Abraham directed his servant to swear to him, although he informed him of the matter of the oath, yet his servant did not swear until he first understood what he would be required by his oath, under certain circumstances to do. This was made known to him by Abraham, (Gen. xxiv. 2—9.) See, also, the case of David and Jonathan, (1 Sam. xx.)

We deem the foregoing considerations in point, whether the pledge given be a promise or oath, for the principles to which we have referred are equally applicable to both. When, however, an oath is given, the person swearing, under such circumstances, involves himself in the additional guilt of profaning the name of God, and does not, as our Confession properly requires, take an oath when imposed "by lawful authority," nor

“duly consider the weightiness of so solemn an act,” or “avouch nothing but what he is fully persuaded is the truth,” and what he “believes to be good and just,” and is therefore guilty of “swearing vainly or rashly.”—(See Confession, chap. xxii.)

In addition to these considerations, while we would not deny the right of associations to withhold some of their transactions from the public, when it may be deemed advisable at the time; yet associations *formed on the principle of secrecy*, are liable to objections of a very serious character—such objections as show them to be, as we have declared them to be, inconsistent with the genius and spirit of Christianity.

1. The Founder of Christianity did not act upon this principle. He could appeal to his enemies, and say—“I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort, and in secret have I said nothing,” (John xviii. 20.) He is a light that *lighteneth every man*, (John i. 9.)

2. The apostles did not act upon this principle. They “renounced the *hidden things of dishonesty*,” and “commended themselves to every man’s conscience by the *manifestation of the truth*,” and had their “conversation in the world in *simplicity and godly sincerity*,” (2 Cor. iv. 2; 2 Cor. i. 12.)

3. The disciples of Christ are forbidden to act upon this principle. They are “the light of the world,” and are commanded to let their “light shine *before men*,” (Matt. v. 14—16,) and to “have *no fellowship* with the unfruitful works of darkness,” (Eph. v. 11.)

4. This principle is represented as a favorite principle with the wicked. Their “works” are said to be “in the dark,” (Isa. xxix. 15;) and are called the “works of darkness,” (Eph. v. 11;) and “they love darkness, because their deeds are evil,” (John iii. 19.)

5. The fellowship of professing Christians with such societies, where the members are bound together by *covenants of love and friendship*, and constitute a distinct and separate *brotherhood*, is inconsistent with that principle of separation from the world which is so repeatedly and explicitly enjoined upon us in the word of God—we say separation from the world; for the standard of their faith and morals is evidently and confessedly adapted to the world, (Ex. xxiii. 32; xxxiv. 12, 15; 2 Cor. vi. 14—18; Ps. cvi. 35; Ps. xvi. 3; Ps. cxix. 63.)

The foregoing considerations clearly show that in our condemnation of secret associations we are sustained by the word of God.

We have said nothing of the usurpation of the place of the church—of the Christless character of the forms of worship in use—of the profane use that is made of the sanctities of our religion—of the selfish and unscriptural character of their benevolence—of the compromise of truth, in which a connection with them must involve the friends and witnesses of Christ—of their injurious effects upon the civil and political relations of

life, and of the unhappy influence which they have in drawing persons away from the duties of the family and the sanctuary,—all of which in relation to *some* of the principal of these associations, are made manifest by their published writings, and by the workings of the system in the community,—of these things we have said nothing, because there may be some secret associations upon which all these things are not chargeable, and because we think the considerations presented by us are sufficient to show that the church should solemnly testify against them.

ARTICLE XVI.—OF COMMUNION.

DECLARATION.

We declare, That the church should not extend communion, in sealing ordinances, to those who refuse adherence to her profession, or subjection to her government and discipline, or who refuse to forsake a communion which is inconsistent with the profession that she makes; nor should communion in any ordinance of worship be held under such circumstances as would be inconsistent with the keeping of these ordinances pure and entire, or so as to give countenance to any corruption of the doctrines and institutions of Christ.

Argument and Illustration.

This Declaration is believed to be in accordance with the Confession of Faith, chap. xxvi., secs. 1, 2; chap. xxviii., sec. 4.

We have not, in the above Declaration, set forth the whole doctrine of the Scriptures pertaining to the communion of saints; as it is not the object of this Testimony to do so in relation to any of the points on which we have deemed it our duty to give a declaration. We have, as in all the preceding statements, exhibited only that view of the subject which we think has been lost sight of by some who profess an adherence to the Confession of Faith. We deem this remark the more necessary here, as the principle which the above Declaration contains is not *distinctly* brought to view in the Confession. From this circumstance, and from the general expressions employed in that document, there has been thought to be an inconsistency between the statements there made on the subject of communion, and the view here presented. The first section of the chapter that formally treats of the subject, exhibits union to Jesus Christ by his Spirit, and union to one another in love, as the foundation and source of their fellowship with Him and with one another. The next section declares:—"Saints, by profession, are bound to maintain a holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification ;

as, also, in relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities. Which communion, as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended to all those, who, in every place, call upon the name of the Lord Jesus." Here, let it be noticed, that the Confession is not speaking distinctly of communion *in sealing ordinances*. It is the general subject of communion, including "the relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities." Now, while fellowship in sealing ordinances is no doubt included in the communion in "the worship of God" enjoined in this section; yet the subject being treated in this general aspect, there was a necessity for the use of the general expressions, "Saints by profession," and "All those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus," in speaking of the persons to whom this communion is to be extended. We believe that the Scripture expression, "All those who in every place call on the name of the Lord Jesus," was chosen for the special purpose of setting forth the important idea, that Christians, in different lands, should cultivate towards each other a holy fellowship, and not suffer their mutual love to be restrained by local boundaries or national distinctions. The special object for which the Westminster Assembly was convened, namely, to effect in the three kingdoms a uniformity in doctrine, worship, and government, indicates this. It should also be remembered that the persecutions to which Christians of the Reformation were at that time exposed, rendered it necessary for their brethren in other lands, who were more highly favored, to extend relief to them in their necessities. This, though always a duty to some degree, was at that time a duty to which Christians were especially called. Hence the principle is inserted, that Christians, *in every place*, should be the objects of our love and sympathy. In addition to this, it should not be forgotten that the churches, at that time, were in a course of reformation; and their entire conformity in doctrine, worship, government, and discipline, was anticipated, and in contemplation at the time that the Confession was made. The Ordinance of the Parliament, calling the Assembly together, expressly declares the object of convening that Assembly to be, the "nearer agreement" of the Church of England "with the Church of Scotland and other Reformed Churches abroad." [See the Ordinance.] The Church of Scotland, also, adopted the Confession of Faith "as a principal part of the intended uniformity in religion." [See Act of the Assembly approving the Confession.] Similar acts were passed in adopting the Catechisms, Directory for the Public Worship of God, and Form of Presbyterial Church Government—all which clearly indicate that the communion which they enjoined was to have *uniformity in profession* for its basis. How unreasonable to suppose that those who declared that they adopted the Confession of Faith with this view, and as "a special means for the more effectually suppress-

ing of the many dangerous errors and heresies of these times," and who, in their National Covenant, had declared that they "abhorred and detested all religion and doctrine contrary to that received, and believed, and defended by many and sundry notable kirks and realms, but chiefly by the Kirk of Scotland"—who had covenanted that they would "endeavor the preservation of the Reformed religion in the Church of Scotland, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government," and who in their "Engagement to duties" had solemnly bound themselves to "preserve the purity of religion against all error, heresy and schism, namely, Independency, Anabaptism, Antinomianism, Arminianism, Socinianism, Familism, Libertinism, Skepticism, and Erastianism"—how unreasonable, we say, to suppose that they designed by this article in the Confession to enjoin the duty of the church of Christ, to extend sealing ordinances to those who, though they "called on the name of the Lord Jesus," were making opposition to the principles of the Confession—making opposition, either as individuals, or in a collective and organized capacity as a church! Nothing could be more unreasonable than such a supposition. We do not believe that the framers of the Confession thought of "God offering opportunity" (which word means "a time favorable for the purpose") to Christians to hold communion in sealing ordinances, under such circumstances. The truth is, the present practice of intercommunion among Christians living in the same place, and professing principles opposed to each other, was far from their thoughts.

While, therefore, in accordance with our Confession, we maintain that communion as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended to all, who in every place, call on the name of the Lord Jesus; yet, in perfect consistency with this, we have declared that the church should not extend communion in sealing ordinances to those who refuse adherence to her profession, or subjection to her government and discipline, or who refuse to forsake a communion which is inconsistent with the profession which she makes.

In making this declaration, we have assumed that this profession is in accordance with the word of God. If this be so, the church is surely bound to maintain it by the due exercise of government and discipline. If it be the duty of the church to profess the truths of Christ, as must be apparent to any one who duly considers the end of her organization, and the solemn injunctions of the word of God, (Jude 3; Prov. xxiii. 23; Rev. iii. 10; Phil. i. 27; 1 Cor. xvi. 13; 2 Thess. ii. 15; Heb. iv. 14; x. 23; John xv. 27; Matt. xxviii. 20,) it must also be her duty to maintain these truths by the faithful exercise of that government and discipline which have been instituted by her King and Head. The correctness of this principle is so obvious that we see not how any one can call it in question. The word of God clearly recognises it, as may be seen by a

reference to 2 Thess. iii. 6, 14, 15; 2 John 10, 11; Rev. ii. 2, 14, 15.— Now, what is involved in the act of the church extending to any one a participation in sealing ordinances? It surely involves in it a full recognition of the right of that person to membership; or rather, the membership itself of the person thus received. If this be denied, we ask, what stronger pledge of membership can be given by the church than is done in extending to a person this privilege? And in what way can the church withhold a recognition of this membership from a person for any cause, but by refusing to extend to him this privilege? This being the case, it must appear to those who consider the matter, a palpable inconsistency to extend the privilege to those who refuse an adherence to her profession, or subjection to her government and discipline. By so doing, the church gives the strongest pledge which it is possible for her to give, of communion with those, between whom and herself, as a church professing certain truths, there is not only no communion, but actual opposition. To these persons she gives the very same pledge that she gives to those who are "holding fast the profession of their faith." According to this practice, it is plain that the government and discipline of the church cannot be co-extensive with her profession; that is, there are some truths which Christ has made it the duty of the church to profess, and though he has given to her a government and a discipline, yet she may not exercise these in maintaining these truths. How palpable is the inconsistency in which this practice involves its advocates! Is it said that the profession may be maintained, even though this privilege be extended to those who may be opposed to it in some particulars? We ask, How is this possible? If those who are opposed to the profession which the church makes in some of its distinguishing principles may be admitted to baptism and the Lord's Supper, opposition to this profession, on the part of any of its members, cannot, with any show of consistency, be made a ground of exclusion from these privileges; for if one may oppose the profession which the church makes, another may, and so may every member of the church. What security under the operation of such a principle, has the church for the preservation of her purity.

It is said that the *private members* of the church, (as they are called,) are not to be supposed to have expressed their approbation of the principles of the church; and, therefore, opposition to them is not to be made a ground either for excluding those who are members from the sealing ordinances, or of withholding these ordinances from those who are not members. In relation to this we would observe—[1.] That the very fact of their membership implies an approbation, on their part, of the principles of the church of which they are members. If they are professors at all, and if their membership constitutes them professors, they are professors of *all* its principles; and, of course, have come under an

implied, if not an express obligation to maintain them. [2.] The admission of persons to membership, with this understanding, proceeds upon the supposition that private members constitute no part of the church, but that it is confined exclusively to the officers of the church, which is unscriptural, (Matt. xvi. 18; Acts ii. 47; viii. 1; xiv. 23, 27; xv. 22; Eph. i. 22; v. 25; 1 Cor. xii. 28;) anti-presbyterian, and contrary to the Confession of Faith, which defines the church to be "those who profess the true religion together with their children." [3.] This principle, if it were always recognised and acted upon, would render the government and discipline of the church a mere nullity, and totally annihilate the jurisdiction of church officers. What authority could be consistently claimed and exercised over those who had given no promise, either express or implied, of adherence to the doctrine, worship, and government of the church?

We have also declared, that communion in sealing ordinances should not be extended by a church to persons who "refuse to forsake a communion which is inconsistent with the profession which she makes." The correctness of this principle follows as a necessary consequence from the principle already established; namely, that there should be an adherence to the profession, and subjection to the government and discipline of the church required of those who are admitted to her communion in sealing ordinances. It is plain that a person cannot be a member, at the same time, of two churches; nor can he be consistently admitted by a church to those privileges, a participation of which implies a full right to membership, on the ground of his membership in a church whose profession is inconsistent with that of the one to which he seeks admission. The impropriety of extending to such a person the sealing ordinances, becomes, under these circumstances, the more palpable; for not only does he give no declaration of adherence to the church extending to him its highest privileges and its most affecting pledges of communion, but he appears there as the member of a religious association whose principles are known to be different from, and in some respects adverse to, those of the church which invites him to this communion. Such a practice, too, involves the following evils and irregularities:—[1.] It recognises the propriety of receiving persons to membership in the church who do not profess our principles and subject themselves to her laws. For if they may be received, on one occasion, to the highest privileges of the church, they may be received, in the same way, to permanent membership. [2.] It recognises the principle that mere saintship is the criterion of the right of a person to the communion of the church, which is unscriptural, (2 Thess. iii. 14, 15; 1 Cor. v. 5.) [3.] It requires, and supposes a recognition of the acts of those who admitted these persons to membership in other churches, without a knowledge of

the evidence of Christian character given by these persons, the standard by which they were tried when they became members, and the authority belonging to those by whom they were admitted, and who are in no sense responsible to the church acting upon the principle we have condemned. [4.] This practice produces an inequality among those who are all enjoying, for the time being, the same privileges, and thus destroys the unity of the church. [5.] It impairs the fullness and freeness of the communion of the church. Those who partake of sealing ordinances under such circumstances, have not, if judged by their profession, a common faith. [6.] It destroys the force of the testimony, which the members and officers of the church would otherwise be giving in behalf of their distinctive profession, and of their sincerity in making it. [7.] It has a tendency to make persons indifferent, in regard to divine truth, and the duty and importance of faithfully maintaining it. [8.] It prevents the due exercise of discipline in the church of God, and thus endangers her purity. [9.] It encourages separate church organizations or sectarian divisions, as it proposes a remedy for the evils of these divisions, which contemplates the continuance of these divisions, and thus makes Christians indifferent to that which receives no countenance in the word of God, and is highly displeasing to the Head of the church.

While, therefore, we believe that no Christian should be excluded from the sealing ordinances of the church, simply because of the weakness of his faith or the smallness of his attainments, or because of difficulties that may be in his mind in relation to some points connected with the profession of the church, yet the considerations we have presented fully establish the truth of our Declaration on this subject, and call upon us solemnly to testify against the practice which prevails even among many who profess the Presbyterian name, of receiving persons into the communion of the church, without requiring them to declare their approval (as far as they are able to judge,) of the profession which the church makes, and of admitting to occasional communion the members of other Christian churches, of a different faith and profession, simply on the ground of their membership in said churches, and without making them in any way responsible to the government and discipline of the church that admits them to this occasional communion.

ARTICLE XVII.—OF COVENANTING.

DECLARATION.

We declare, That public social covenanting is a moral duty, the observance of which is not required at stated times, but on extraordinary occasions, as the providence of God, and the circumstances of the church may indicate. It is seasonable in

times of great danger to the church—in times of exposure to backsliding—or in times of reformation, when the church is returning to God from a state of backsliding. When the church has entered into such covenant transactions, they continue to bind posterity faithfully to adhere to and prosecute the grand object for which such engagements have been entered into.

Argument and Illustration.

This Declaration is in accordance with the doctrine of the Confession of Faith, chap. xxii. secs. 5—7.

The Confession, in the sections referred to, treats of “vows.” These are essentially the same as covenants with God. In covenanting with God we, in the way of taking hold of his covenant of grace, in which he engages to be our God, promise to him, or vow, that in the strength of his promised grace, we will be his people, and perform those duties which he has enjoined upon us in his word. He says, in the promise of the covenant, “I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people,” (Heb. viii. 10.) The believer, in exercise of faith, takes God to be his God; and, having done so, he engages on his part, that he will be one of his people, and act towards him in a way becoming this relation. This avowal and engagement are made when the believer first gives himself away to the Lord, and they are renewed upon every subsequent dedication. This is the essence of covenanting with God, whether it be personal and private, or social and public. The churches of Macedonia, therefore, covenanted with God, when they *gave their own selves to the Lord*, (2 Cor. viii. 5.) This is the duty to which the apostle exhorts the Romans, when urging them to *yield themselves to the Lord*, and to *present their bodies a living sacrifice unto God*, (Rom. vi. 13; xii. 1.) The idea of a covenant is necessarily involved in such a surrender. In every such surrender there must be a taking hold of God’s covenant, and an engagement, on our part, to be his people, and to perform the various duties that are incumbent upon us.

Besides this covenanting with God, in which every believer must be supposed to have engaged, the Scriptures also clearly authorize the doing of this on special occasions, by a formal and solemn deed. The children of Israel at Horeb, after Moses had related to them the promises and requirements of God, said—“All that the Lord hath spoken we will do,” (Ex. xix. 5—8.) Here were solemn engagements to duty, publicly expressed. These engagements were afterwards renewed, and in making these engagements they are said to “enter into covenant with the Lord their God;” the end of which covenant is declared to be that the Lord “might establish them a people unto himself,” (Deut. xxix. 10—13.) Here was a public transaction, in which they formally and explicitly en-

tered into engagements with the Lord. At a subsequent period, we are told that the children of Israel presented themselves before God, and that Joshua "made a covenant with the people; in which covenant they declared, "The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey." Additional solemnity and formality were given to this covenant; it was committed to writing by Joshua, doubtless with a view to perpetuate it and that it might be referred to, (Josh. xxiv. 1, 24—26; Isa. xxx. 8.) On a still later occasion, we are informed that "they gathered themselves together at Jerusalem," and "entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers with all their heart, and with all their soul." The solemnity of an oath was observed on this occasion, (2 Chron. xv. 9—15) Hezekiah says, (2 Chron. xxix. 10,)—"Now it is in mine heart to make a covenant with the Lord God of Israel, that his fierce wrath may turn away from us." We are told (2 Kings xi. 17) that "Jehoiada made a covenant between the Lord, and the king, and the people, that they should be the Lord's people." Josiah (2 Kings xxiii. 3,) "made a covenant before the Lord to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all their heart, and with all their soul." Many years after this Ezra made the chief priests, the Levites, and all Israel enter into a covenant and swear that they would perform certain duties, (Ezra x. 3—5.) In the time of Nehemiah the children of Israel say, "We make a sure covenant, and write it;" and we are farther told that they "entered into a curse and into an oath to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses," (Neh. ix. 38; x. 28, 29.) These examples of God's people clearly authorize the duty set forth in the Declaration.

We have seen that the duty, essentially considered, is performed by every believer when he dedicates himself to the Lord, and was performed by the churches of Macedonia. The *matter* of the duty being moral, the *form* in which God's people are represented as observing it on several special occasions, is certainly designed for our imitation, when the occasion is such as to demand it. In addition to this, we may observe that we are expressly commanded to "vow and pay unto the Lord our God," (Ps. lxxvi. 11.) The duty of swearing, not only by the Lord, but *to the Lord*, is enjoined upon us, (Isa. xlv. 23; Matt. v. 33.) He has given us his oath, and it appears to be a reasonable service that we should give him ours, (Jer. xxxii. 22; Gen. xxii. 16, 17; Ps. cxxxii. 11; Luke i. 73; Acts ii. 30; Heb. vi. 16, 17; vii. 20.) It is prophesied that, under the New Testament dispensation, "Five cities shall swear unto the Lord of hosts," and "vow a vow unto the Lord," (Isa. xix. 18, 21;) and also that the children of Israel and the children of Judah shall say—"Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant, that shall not be forgotten." Jer. 50, 4—5 God's people are commanded (2 Chron. xxx. 8, margin) to "give the hand unto the Lord." It is promised, (Isa. xli

5,) as the result of the outpouring of his Spirit, that his people "shall subscribe with the hand unto the Lord." Such formal, solemn transactions, have been not only privately entered into by the best of God's people; but also publicly, by the churches of the Reformation, and particularly the Church of Scotland.

Such transactions, when entered into according to the will of God, do not bind to any thing additional to what the law of God contains; but they bring those who engage in them under an additional *obligation*—an obligation arising from their own engagement, promise, or oath, as the case may be.

We have said that this duty is not a stated, but an extraordinary duty. That this is the case, appears from the very nature of the duty. It is only on special occasions that writings and an oath between parties are required. It also appears from the Scripture examples referred to.

We have said that this duty is seasonable in times of great danger to the church. Such was the character of the times in the reign of Asa. They were "in trouble"—"great vexations" were upon them—they were "vexed with all adversity," (2 Chron. xv. 3, 4, 5, 6, 12.)

We have said that this duty is seasonable in times of exposure to backsliding. Such was the case in the time of Joshua. There were "strange gods" among them, (Josh. xxiv. 23.)

We have also said that it is seasonable in times of reformation. Such was the case in the time of Ezra. "The people wept very sore" of their sins, acknowledging that they had trespassed against their God, (Ezra x. 1—3,)—and in the time of Nehemiah they had "separated themselves from the people of the land unto the law of God," (Neh. x. 28, 29.)

This duty being thus of a special and extraordinary character, and its seasonableness to be determined by the indications of God's providences and the circumstances of the church, there may be times when the call to it may not be so clear to the minds of some of the members of the church. On this account such members should not be required to observe it, nor subjected to discipline for declining to do so; provided they are not making public opposition to it as a moral duty to be observed on proper occasions.

We have declared that "when the church has entered into such covenant transactions, they continue to bind posterity faithfully to adhere to, and prosecute the grand object for which such engagements have been entered into." The principle here recognised, is not peculiar to these transactions. It is the same principle that is acted upon in all corporate or organized bodies, whether civil or ecclesiastical. Every society regards its acts, (unless these acts are such as, in their nature, limit their own duration to a certain period,) as properly binding the body until they are repealed. The removal, by death, of some, or even of all those who originally passed these acts, does not in the least affect their obligation

upon the society. The same principle, of course, is to be recognised by the church in the performance of this duty. And we find it recognised in the Scriptures, not only in other transactions, (Gen. xxviii. 13; xxxii. 28, compared with Hosea xii. 4; Josh. ix. 15, compared with 2 Sam. xxi. 1; Ex. xiii. 19,) but in immediate connection with this duty of covenanting with God. Moses says to the children of Israel, forty years after the transaction in Horeb, (Ex. xix. 5—8,) “The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even with us, who are all of us here alive this day,” (Deut. v. 3.) Again: Moses, speaking as the mouth of God, says, (Deut. xxix. 14, 15,) “I make this covenant also with him that is not here with us this day.” The children of Israel are charged by God with breaking the covenant which he made *with their fathers*, (Jer. xi. 10.) He also reminds them of the “old time,” when *they* said, “I will not transgress,” (Jer. ii. 20.) He promises them that he will not forget the covenant *of their fathers*, which he swore unto them, (Deut. iv. 31;) and that he will remember the covenant *of their ancestors* whom he brought out of the land of Egypt, (Lev. xxvi. 44. 45.) The descent, therefore, upon posterity, of obligations arising from covenant engagements, is most clearly recognised in the Scriptures. In accordance with this scriptural principle, we, having descended from the Church of Scotland, regard ourselves as bound by the engagements of our reforming ancestors, in the National Covenant, and Solemn League and Covenant, to prosecute the grand object for which these covenants were entered into, namely, the preservation and transmission to posterity of the true Reformed religion, (Ps. lxxviii. 5, 6.) In making this statement, however, we are not to be understood as expressing our approval of every thing connected with these transactions, as entered into by them.

We have thus fully established the principles of the foregoing Declaration in relation to this duty, and therefore we solemnly testify in behalf of its observance by the church. And although, in the consideration of this subject, we have been guided exclusively by the teachings of God's word; yet the fact that this duty is, when properly observed, so evidently calculated, in its own nature, to unite the hearts of God's children, in their efforts to maintain and advance his cause, and keep alive in their souls a sense of their devotement to Him, fixes in our minds more deeply the conviction that the glory of God, and the interests of the church, demand its observance, as the providences of God and the circumstances of the church may indicate.

ARTICLE XVIII.—OF PSALMODY.

DECLARATION.

We declare, That it is the will of God that the songs contained in the book of Psalms, be sung in his worship, both public and private, to the end of the world; and in singing God's

praise, these songs should be employed to the exclusion of the devotional compositions of uninspired men.

Argument and Illustration.

This Declaration is in accordance with the Confession of Faith, chap. xxi. secs. 1 and 5; Shorter Catechism, Ques. 51; Larger Catechism, Ques. 109; and Directory for the Public Worship of God.

Although the Declaration we have just made on this subject is in opposition to the statements and practices of many, even of those who profess an adherence to the Confession of Faith, we believe it to be in accordance with the authority of God's word.

This Declaration affirms it to be the will of God, that the songs contained in the book of Psalms should be used by the church of Christ. In testifying in behalf of this, we, of course, are to be understood as speaking of the use of the Psalms in the formal worship of God. Now, the word of God is the only source to which we can apply in order to ascertain his will. In the light of this word, we urge in favor of the use of these Psalms:—1. God has given them as a book of psalms. They were composed by the inspiration of God, (2 Tim. iii. 16; 2 Pet. i. 21; 2 Sam. xxiii. 2;) and, of course, were given by God. We have said that they were given as a *book of psalms*. They are expressly so called in the New Testament, (Luke xx. 42; Acts i. 20.) Our argument, then, is—The book of Psalms, whence was it? From heaven, or of men? If from heaven, why not use it? (Matt. xxi. 25.) 2. The title given to David, their penman, indicates that it is the will of God that they should be used by the church. He is called “the sweet psalmist of Israel,” (2 Sam. xxiii. 1.) 3. They are called the “songs of the Lord,” (1 Chron. xxv. 7;) which, like the expressions, “table of the Lord,” “supper of the Lord,” “day of the Lord,” implies divine authority and appointment. 4. They are called “the songs of Zion,” (Ps. cxxxvii. 3,) which implies that they were designed for the use of the church. 5. God's worshipping people, under the former dispensation, were directed to sing them, (1 Chron. xvi. 4, 7; 2 Chron. xxix. 30; Ps. cv. 2; Ps. lxxxii. 2;) and they sang them after their captivity. (Neh. xii. 24.) These directions and examples are still in force, as there is in the New Testament no intimation to the contrary. 6. These commands are renewed in the New Testament, (Eph. v. 19; Col. iii. 16; James v. 13.) 7. They were most probably sung by our Lord and his disciples at the institution of the Lord's Supper, (Matt. xxvi. 30;) the Jews made use of them at the passover, on which occasion the Lord's Supper was instituted. Here the argument is the same as we have for the observance of the first day of the week as the Sabbath. These considerations fully establish the truth of our Declaration, that the songs contained in the book of Psalms should be sung in the worship of God.

We have also declared that they should be employed, to the exclusion of the devotional compositions of uninspired men. The truth of this part of our Declaration follows as a necessary consequence, unless it can be shown that God himself has authorized the use of such compositions. For it is not only the doctrine of our Confession that "the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will," but the doctrine of the word of God, (Deut. xii. 32; Lev. x. 1—3; Matt. xv. 9.) The simple question, then, is—Have we divine authority for the use of the compositions of uninspired men in the worship of God? It is alleged that we have such an authority in the directions of the apostle to sing, not only "psalms," but "hymns and spiritual songs," (Eph. v. 19; Col. iii. 16.) In order that the authority sought for may be found in these verses, it must be shown that the terms, "hymns" and "spiritual songs," are designed to indicate compositions differing from those referred to by the name "psalms," as the compositions of uninspired men differ from those of inspired men. This, however, cannot be shown. It does not appear in the fact that a variety of terms is employed; for we know that the Scriptures often, under a variety of names, refer, in the same place, to that which has been appointed by God, as "statutes," "judgments," "ordinances," and "commandments," (Ex. xv. 26; Deut. xxvii. 10; 2 Sam. xxii. 23; Ex. xviii. 20; 2 Kings xxiii. 3.) It does not appear in the names, "hymns" and "songs;" for these names correspond to the Hebrew names *Tehilla* and *Shir*, which are applied along with *Mizmor*, (a psalm,) to some of the inspired Psalms. The whole collection is called, in Hebrew, *Sepher Tehillim*, the Book of Hymns. The Septuagint version of the Old Testament—the version that was in use in the times of the Apostle—applies to some of the inspired Psalms the very terms, "hymns" and "songs," which the apostle employs; and Josephus, and other writers, refer to the Psalms of David under the name of "songs" and hymns." It is, therefore, utterly impossible to *prove* the distinction claimed, and consequently to find in the passages authority for the use of any other compositions but the psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs of inspiration.

But not only is there a lack of authority in these passages, but there are several considerations which are conclusive against the supposition of such a distinction as the one sought. 1. It is known that there was an inspired collection of psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, in existence at that time. 2. We have no command to make hymns or songs for the worship of God, or the least hint that would infer that the church possessed such a right. 3. It is not probable that the Ephesians and Colossians would, at that time, be qualified for such a service, as they had been lately converted from idolatry. 4. The Jews would in all probability, have opposed the use of any thing else but the inspired collection, having been from their childhood accustomed to their use. 5. It is not

likely that the apostle would thus place the word of God and the word of man upon a par, by directing them both to be used for the same end. 6. If we make the distinction which is alleged to exist between *psalms* and *hymns*, we must make a distinction equally great between *hymns* and *spiritual songs*. 7. These songs are called spiritual, which word implies that the Spirit of God is their author, (1 Cor. x. 3, 4; Rom. vii. 14; 1 Cor. iii. 1; xv. 44, 46; Eph. i. 3; Gal. vi. 1; Col. i. 9, &c.) 8. They are to be used as a means of being "filled with the Spirit;" to this end the words of inspiration are peculiarly adapted. 9. We are to sing them as a means of "letting the word of Christ dwell in us richly"—language which will apply more appropriately to the inspired Psalms than to any human composition. In view of these considerations, these two passages of the New Testament Scriptures are to be regarded as an apostolic injunction to praise God, by means of those psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, which He himself had given to his church. In making use of any thing else, we are doing that for which we have no warrant, and against the expressed will of Him to whom alone it belongs to say in what way, and by what means, he shall be worshipped. We, therefore, solemnly testify against the use of uninspired compositions in the worship of God.

In testifying for the use of an inspired psalmody, we, of course, make no reference to any particular version. We should use the most faithful that can be obtained. It is for the use of the book of Psalms, in a faithful translation, whether it be in measured or unmeasured lines, and against the use of a mere imitation or loose paraphrase of these Psalms, or the use of a religious song, composed by man, that we testify.

The evils which have followed the exclusion of an inspired psalmody from the worship of God, and the arguments which have been urged by many of the advocates of the practice which we condemn, (indicating, as they often do, a disregard of Divine authority, or a want of reverence for the Scriptures, and low views in relation to their inspiration,) only impress us the more deeply with a sense of the importance of maintaining this ordinance in its purity.

CONCLUSION.

We have thus, with all plainness, but we trust in "simplicity and godly sincerity," given a declaration of our faith in relation to certain articles of divine truth, which have been either denied by not a few professing Christians, or permitted to lie in obscurity. Our object has been by thus, as a church of Christ, "speaking the truth in love," to draw attention to these things, in the hope that our brethren of the Presbyterian family, from whom we are in a state of separation, may be brought seriously to consider the grounds of our controversy with them. We most deeply deplore the divisions that exist in the Church of

Christ, and especially among those who have the same Confession of Faith: believing that they are highly dishonoring to Christ, and tend to harden the enemies of the truth in their opposition to it—to promote improper feelings among brethren—to counteract the exercise of discipline, and to retard the grand and avowed design of Christianity, which is to unite men of all countries and classes to God, and to one another, in sentiment, heart, and confession. With this conviction in our minds we have agreed upon the foregoing Testimony; and it is with a sincere desire that it may, with the blessing of God, be instrumental in bringing our brethren and us to see eye to eye, that we now publish it to the world.

It has been the farthest from our design, to displace by this Testimony, the Confession of Faith, or in any measure to throw it into the shade. Had this been the case, we should have introduced into it many things on which we have been entirely silent. The very form in which we have exhibited this Testimony, clearly indicates that our object is directly the reverse of this. We have hoped, by this means, to direct attention to that document which contains the Confession of our Faith, and to which, as a Church we have solemnly declared our adherence.

We would also, with all earnestness, remind all those into whose hands this Testimony may fall, and especially those who have received it as their Testimony, that a profession of its principles will be in vain, and worse than in vain, if this profession be not attended by a holy life—a life of prayer and communion with God, and devotion to his cause. The “grace of God,” which we have endeavored to exhibit, is a grace which “teaches us, that, denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” Let it be known, therefore, and solemnly considered, that we regard ourselves and all those who may profess to receive this Testimony, as coming under an engagement to renounce the world, the flesh and the devil—to strive against sin, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord—to wait upon God in all the ordinances of religious worship, individual and social, private and public, and observe these in all their appropriate times and seasons—to promote the purity, unity, and prosperity of their own congregation, and the extension of the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ throughout the world—to seek the good of their fellow-beings, and to cultivate and promote a spirit of charity and brotherly love towards all their brethren in Christ. “And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.” Amen.

A P P E N D I X .

CONFESSION OF THE U. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

Confession of Faith, Chap. 20, Sec. 4—And because the powers which God hath ordained, and the liberty which Christ hath purchased, are not intended by God to destroy, but mutually to uphold and preserve one another; they who, upon pretence of Christian liberty, shall oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical, resist the ordinance of God. And for the publishing of such opinions, or maintaining such practices as are contrary to the light of nature or to the known principles of Christianity, whether concerning faith, worship, or conversation, or to the power of godliness; or such erroneous opinions or practices as, either in their own nature or in the manner of publishing or maintaining them, are destructive to the external peace and order which Christ has established in the Church; they ought to be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the church, if they belong to her communion, and thus be amenable to her own spiritual authority. And as the civil magistrate is the minister of God for good, to the virtuous, and a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil, he is therefore bound to suppress individuals and combinations, whatever may be their avowed objects, whether political or religious, whose principles and practices, openly propagated and maintained are calculated to subvert the foundations of properly constituted society.

Confession Chap. 23, Sec. 3—The civil magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the Word and Sacraments (2 Chron. xxvi. 18; Heb. v. 4; Rom. x. 15;) or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, or in the least interfere to regulate matters of faith and worship. (Matt. xvi. 19; 1 Cor. iv. 1—2; John xviii. 36; Acts v. 1—9, 18—29; vi. 5; Matt. ii. 7.) As nursing fathers, magistrates are bound to administer their government according to the revealed principles of Christianity, and to improve the opportunities which their high station and extensive influence afford in promoting the Christian religion as their own most valuable interest and the good of the people demand, by all such means as do not imply any infringement of the inherent rights of the church; or any assumption of dominion over the consciences of men, (Col. iii. 17; Ps. ii. 10—11; Ps. xciv. 20.) They ought not to punish any as heretics or schismatics. No authoritative judgment concerning matters of religion is competent to them, as their authority extends only to the external works or practices of their subjects as citizens, and not as Christians. It is their duty to protect the church, in such a manner that all ecclesiastical persons shall enjoy the full, free and unquestioned liberty of discharging every part of their sacred functions without violence or danger. (Is. xlix. 23.) They should enact no law which would in anyway interfere with, or hinder the due exercise of government and discipline established by Jesus Christ in his church, (Ps. cv. 14; Acts xviii. 14—16.) It is their duty, also, to protect the person, good name, estate, natural and civil rights of all their subjects, in such a way that no person be suffered, upon any pretence, to violate them; and to take order that all religious and ecclesiastical assemblies be held without molestation or disturbance. (1 Tim. ii. 2; Ps. lxxxii. 3.) God alone being Lord of the conscience, the civil magistrate may not compel any under his civil authority to worship God contrary to the dictates of their own consciences, yet it is competent in him to restrain such opinions, and punish such practices, as tend to subvert the foundations of civil society, and violate the common rights of men, (2 Cor. x. 4; Rom. xiii. 3—4; Nehem. xiii. 15, 17, 21, 22.)

Confession of Faith, Chap. 31, Sec. 2—We declare that as the Church of Jesus Christ is a kingdom distinct from and independent of the State having a government, laws, office-bearers, and all spiritual power peculiar to herself, for her own edification; so it belongs exclusively to the ministers of Christ, together with other fit persons, upon delegation from their churches, by virtue of their office, and the intrinsic power committed to them, to appoint their own assemblies, and to convene together in them, as often as they shall judge it expedient for the good of the church, (Acts xv. 4, 6, 22, 23, 25; John xviii. 36; 1 Cor. xii. 28; Eph. iv. 11, 12.)

WESTMINSTER CONFES- SION OF FAITH.

IV And because the powers which God hath ordained, and the liberty which Christ hath purchased, are not intended by God to destroy, but mutually to uphold and preserve one another; they who, upon pretence of Christian liberty, shall oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical, resist the ordinance of God. And for the publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of such practices, as are contrary to the light of nature, or to the known principles of Christianity, whether concerning faith, worship, or conversation; or to the power of godliness; or such erroneous opinions or practices, as either in their own nature, or in the manner of publishing or maintaining them, are destructive to the external peace and order which Christ hath established in the church; they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the church, and by the power of the civil magistrate.

III. The civil magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the word and sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven: yet he hath authority, and it is his duty, to take order, that unity and peace be preserved in the church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed, and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered, and observed. For the better effecting whereof, he hath power to call synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God.

II. As magistrates may lawfully call a synod of ministers, and other fit persons, to consult and advise with about matters of religion; so if magistrates be open enemies to the church, the ministers of Christ, of themselves, by virtue of their office, or they, with other fit persons upon delegation from their churches, may meet together in such assemblies.

RULES

FOR THE

TRANSACTION OF BUSINESS

IN THE

JUDICATORIES

OF THE

UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

NOTICE.

We have introduced so much of the Discipline here as we thought necessary for present use. The Rules are all that were designed by the resolutions found in the first part of this pamphlet, but we thought that so much of the Discipline of the Associate Reformed Church as related to the General and particular Synods should be published, that those who had not that book of Discipline might thus be possessed of this part. In all other matters the books of the Associate and Associate Reformed Churches are so nearly alike that it can make no difference which is used, and probably it is best that each confine himself, for the present, to the one with which he is most familiarly acquainted. "The rules for the transaction of business" are substantially the same as those found in the Discipline of the Associate Church, but as we are to meet together in the same Synods it is necessary that we should have the same form. Hence the adoption of these rules.

Of Synodical Assemblies.

THESE ARE EITHER PARTICULAR OR GENERAL.

SECT. I. OF THE PARTICULAR SYNOD.

1. This Synod is immediately superior to the Presbytery, and consists of several Presbyteries met together for their mutual help and comfort, and for managing the affairs of the churches under their inspection.

2. The Synod hath power to decide on references, and appeals, brought regularly before them from Presbyteries—to examine, censure, or approve their records—to try all causes in which a Presbytery is a party: if found guilty of flagrant misdemeanors in their judicial capacity, to censure them according to the nature of their offence—to erect new Presbyteries—to unite or divide those which are already erected—to appoint days of fasting and thanksgiving throughout their bounds—to employ members of Presbyteries, or probationers belonging to any of them, in public service—to give advice to Presbyteries—and, generally, to make such regulations, with respect to Presbyteries, Sessions, and people under their care, as do not interfere with the established order of the church.

SECT. II. OF THE GENERAL SYNOD.

1. When the multiplication of Presbyteries, and their distances from each other, render it impracticable or unedifying to meet all in one Synod, it is proper that they be divided into two or more, as their circumstances may require.

2. It is lawful and requisite, for the maintenance of union, and for the promotion of the common interest, that all the particular Synods meet together, by Presbyterial delegation, in one general Synod.

3. Delegates to the General Synod shall be apportioned as follows: Every Presbytery containing not more than two ministers, shall be entitled to send one minister and one elder; and for every three ministers above that number, one minister and one elder more. This proportion shall be preserved till the number of delegates exceed thirty; after which each Presbytery consisting of more than ten ministers, shall, for every four additional ministers, be entitled to send one minister and one elder.

4. Delegates to the General Synod must produce commissions

signed by the moderator and clerk of the Presbytery by whom they are sent; nor can they, without such commissions, be entitled to a seat.

5. Nine delegates shall constitute a quorum for business.

6. The General Synod, thus constituted, is, in every respect, to the particular Synods, what the latter are to the Presbyteries within their bounds. It is also the province of the General Synod, to decide questions respecting doctrine and discipline—to bear testimony against errors and immoralities—to correspond with other churches; and, in general, to preside over the religious interests of the church at large. But no regulations intended to be universal and permanent shall be established, without previously transmitting them to the several Presbyteries, that they may have time to consider and report their judgment thereon.

7. The particular Synods are required to be very strict in calling the several Presbyteries to account, with respect to their punctuality in sending delegates to the general Synod, and censuring such as are found negligent. Presbyteries are to observe equal strictness in examining their delegates with respect to their attendance, and in censuring delinquents.

BUSINESS RULES.

IN THE SYNOD.

I. If the Moderator be absent, the senior Minister shall take the chair.

II. On the day after the choice of the Moderator, the following committees shall be appointed, viz:

- A committee of Overtures;
- A committee of Correspondence;
- A committee of Accounts; and
- A committee of Revision.

III. The committee of Overtures shall be charged with the consideration of all such proposals for public acts, or other measures of general interest, as shall not, by a special order of the court, be otherwise disposed of.

IV. The committee of Correspondence shall be charged with the care of all matters relative to the intercourse, in writing, with other churches.

V. The committee of Accounts shall be charged with all matters relative to the finances of the church.

VI. The committee of Revision shall be charged with the examination of the Minutes of the judicatory; and with comparing them when transcribed into the proper book, with the original draught.

VII. Particular matters, as much as may be, shall be referred to select committees.

VIII. Committees shall be nominated by the Moderator, subject to the vote of the judicatory, which, after mentioning their names collectively, he shall take upon each nomination separately, in the manner following, viz: "Shall Mr. A. B. be a member of this committee?"

IX. The general order of business shall be as follows:—

1st. Immediately after prayer, the roll shall be called by the Moderator; all absentees marked, and, if their absence appears not to have been necessary, censured.

2d. After calling the roll, the minutes of the last meeting or sitting are to be read, and if need be, corrected.

3d. Immediately after the reading of the minutes, the clerk shall present to the Moderator an accurate enumerated list of all business left unfinished at the close of the preceding meeting.

4th. This being disposed of, reports of the presbyteries, and other new matter, shall be introduced, and if need be, referred.

5th. At every *sederunt* the *first* business in order shall be the introduction of petitions, on matter requiring reference from other courts, or from persons not members of the judicatory.

Next: Reports of committees; and

Finally: New business proposed by members of the judicatory.

X. All papers presented to the court, shall be filed in the order in which they are read, and, with proper indorsements and minutes thereof, shall be given to the Moderator.

XI. Papers referred to a committee, with a copy of a minute of their appointment when it contains any specification of their duty, and a list of the members in the order of nomination, shall be forthwith delivered by the clerk to the person first named, who shall always be the chairman.

XII. Committees shall make a succinct and lucid statement of facts and reasons, with reference to the proofs, and shall close their report with one or more propositions in the form of "resolutions," accompanied with a bill for an act when it shall be necessary; which resolutions when read aloud by the Moderator, shall each of them be equivalent to a motion regularly before the judicatory.

XIII. The judicatory cannot act but in virtue of a motion regularly in its possession.

XIV. No motion shall be in possession of the judicatory for discussion, until it shall have been announced from the chair by the Moderator, in the words of the motion.

XV. No motion or amendment thereto, excepting for adjournment, reference to a committee, and such like matters, shall be received by the Moderator, unless reduced to writing and seconded.

XVI. There can be but one motion in the possession of the judicatory at the same time.

XVII. Motions are always open to amendment, even to the complete alteration of the proposition moved.

XVIII. An amendment suspends the original proposition, and becomes itself the motion immediately before the judicatory. It is suspended in its turn, by any amendment to itself, so that the amendment last offered, is first to be considered.

XIX. An additional amendment to an original proposition, can not be received until the previous one be disposed of.

XX. Amendments must be introduced in the same manner as original motions.

XXI. The name of the person who moves and seconds a motion admitted to discussion, shall be entered on the minutes.

XXII. When there is no debate, or it appears to be concluded, the Moderator shall rise, and having distinctly read the motion, shall apprise the judicatory that he is about to take their sense, in this form: "*Are you ready for the question?*" No objection being offered, nor any one rising to speak, he shall put the question thus: "*Shall this motion (or this bill, as the case may be,) pass?*" And, pausing for a moment, shall add: "*As many as are in favor thereof, will say AY!*" And then, reversing the question: "*As many as are of a contrary opinion will say No!*"

XXIII. The Moderator, after the vote, will pronounce the motion to be carried or lost accordingly.

XXIV. If there be any doubt of the vote, he shall desire the Ayes to rise, and shall count them; then the Noes to rise, and count them, and shall pronounce accordingly.

XXV. After the Moderator shall have declared the vote, or the Clerk shall have begun to call the roll, upon a division, no further discussion of the subject thereof, shall be permitted.

XXVI. Any vote may be reconsidered upon a motion therefor, proceeding from the side of the majority; but not at the same sitting

at which it was passed, without the concurrence of two-thirds present; nor shall a motion to reconsider any vote be received, unless notice thereof be given, at farthest, on the next day.

XXVII. In cases of great importance or difficulty, it may be highly proper, before the members have made up their minds, or have committed themselves in their speeches, to employ one of the brethren in prayer for special light and direction.

XXVIII. Every speaker, unless exempted by the court on account of age or infirmity, is to rise and address himself to the Moderator.

XXIX. Members are to observe great gravity while judicially convened, and closely to attend, in their speeches, to the subject in debate, avoiding prolix and desultory harangues.

XXX. Personal reflections are by no means to be tolerated.

XXXI. Without express permission, members are not to engage in private conversation, nor are they to address one another or any person concerned, but through the Moderator.

XXXII. If two or more members rise about the same time, the Moderator shall decide who has the floor.

XXXIII. No speaker is to be interrupted, except he be out of order, or to correct mistakes and misrepresentations.

XXXIV. A member called to order, (which may be done by any other member,) shall immediately sit down until the Moderator decide upon the point of order, which he shall do without assigning reasons.

XXXV. An appeal from the chair on a question of order shall be decided without debate.

XXXVI. A motion for adjournment is always in order.

XXXVII. The roll shall be called upon the demand of any member, and the number of votes on both sides marked. The Yeas and Nays shall be recorded at the request of one-fifth present, and not otherwise.

XXXVIII. No member shall be excused from voting when his name is called, but by consent of the court.

XXXIX. A minute may be expunged with the unanimous consent of the members present.

XL. A rule of order may be dispensed with, on an urgent occasion, by unanimous consent.

XLI. As it may sometimes answer valuable ends for the members of judicatories to confer together on certain subjects, in a manner which would not consist with the regularity and authority of a cou-

stituted court, it may be expedient to hold, on such occasions, *extra-judicial conferences*; when the members, laying aside their judicial character, converse as private individuals.

XLII. No member shall speak more than once upon matters which have been discussed in *extra-judicial conference*, nor more than twice upon any other, unless for explanation or rectifying mistakes, without the special permission of the judicatory, and then only once.

XLIII. Judicatories have a right, when they think it proper, to sit in private.

XLIV. Judicatories shall meet upon their own adjournment, unless convened upon special occasions by the Moderator, or by the order of a higher court.

XLV. No business regularly before the court at a stated meeting, shall be transacted at a meeting *pro re nata*.

XLVI. No member is to leave a judicatory, to return home, or for other business, without its consent.

XLVII. All judicatories, sessions excepted, are to close their meetings, after prayer, by singing the 133d, or some other Psalm, and pronouncing the Apostolic benediction.

IN PRESBYTERIES.

XLVIII. The same rules of order shall be observed in the Presbyteries as in Synod, **in** so far as circumstances shall render them suitable.

