

SPIRIT OF THE XIX. CENTURY.

VOL. I.

JULY, 1842.

No. 7.

THE CALLING OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

A Discourse to Illustrate the Posture and Duty of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. Delivered at the Opening of the General Assembly of 1842, by ROBERT J. BRECKINRIDGE, Moderator of the previous Assembly.

We pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power.

2 THESS. i. 11.

FATHERS and Brethren, chosen representatives of a great and wide-spread communion, I stand before you this day to perform one of those remarkable official acts required by Divine Providence of but a man here and there in successive generations, and as yet, with us, of no man a second time. Deeply impressed with the solemnity of the occasion, let us fervently rejoice in the many evidences upon which we are allowed to trust that the God of Jacob, the God of a chosen people, is still with us as our refuge and our strength; let us reverently seek in his dealings and his commands, for the knowledge of our peculiar posture and vocation as an important portion of his visible kingdom; and let us humbly address ourselves to him for grace to be found worthy of our high calling, and for faith to fulfil all the purposes of his infinite goodness towards us.

I. The Church of the living God, is one, and is eternal. It is the light and the hope of this guilty and ruined world. The real history of man, when truly read, is a history of religious ideas, in their progress, revolutions, and results. Though these have been often wrong and often disastrous, yet in all their manifestations they establish the universality and the intensity of the religious constitution of man. And amid the mass of deplorable errors which have covered and polluted the earth, a stream of clear and life-giving truth, issuing from the throne of God, has urged its way, onward and onward through perishing generations, and has rolled its increasing and purifying waters even as far as unto us.

The perversity of man, which forfeited the benefits of the covenant of works, in an aggravated form has availed to deprive our race of the full blessings of every successive development of the

covenant of grace. The antediluvian dispensation of personal visitation from the heavenly intelligencies, the Abrahamic covenant which brought with it a visible and gathered Church, the Mosaic economy which was replenished with the blessings of a permanent, written revelation, and the personal ministry of the Lord of glory, God descended amongst men to perfect his work; all these passed away, leaving but a very small remnant to save the whole earth from the fate of Sodom. The free dispensation of the Divine Spirit early perverted by an incipient hierarchy, was at last swallowed up, over the whole Western Church, by the successive corruptions of a spiritual oligarchy, tyranny, and despotism; until the bride of the Lamb, driven into a waste and howling wilderness, sat for weary centuries, weeping over her murdered children and sorrowing at the long delayed coming of her Lord.

Prone as man is to every false religion and greedy of every corruption of the true, no lesson has been more sternly taught him, than that the spirit of all these falsehoods and corruptions is fatal even to his earthly hopes. It was not therefore without resistance, though often ill-conceived and ill-directed, that Antichrist rose to such authority and ruled with such absolute sway. The civil power throughout Europe sought in vain to curb his iron rule, and to reform the church upon the bosom of which he sat proclaiming himself a God. The whole learning of the west banded itself against him again and again, only to make manifest its emptiness in such a conflict. The Church itself over which he reigned, often and by its most numerous and powerful councils, sought without success its own reformation in its head and in its members, confessing before earth and heaven and trembling at the sight of its dreadful apostacies. And more than all, the true children of God, throughout these fearful and protracted ages, lifted up their voices in solemn testimony, from the depths of dungeons, and from the dust into which they were trodden, and from the racks on which they perished. At length when the cup of abominations was full and that of suffering had been drained to its dregs, the Spirit of God, in infinite compassion, re-visited the earth; the light of the Incarnate Word broke forth once more upon the nations; and down-trodden men arose and shook off their gross darkness, and flocked with mingled lamentations and rejoicings to be healed by the beams of the bright and blessed day-star. Thought, which had slept for ages, awoke as a strong man refreshed by slumber. Inquiry, which as to all useful objects had been fettered, and as to most stifled, burst a bondage no longer possible when thought was free. The conscience, long blinded, partook of the same impulse that enlightened the understanding, quickened the perceptions, and sharpened the faculties of man; and his moral emancipation followed immediately, if indeed it did not, step by step, accompany his intellectual. And then the triumphs of personal and public liberty crowned and adorned the glorious fabric of the Reformation.

There is a profound and pervading sympathy amongst all the grand interests of man. Even the convulsions which his sins and follies render necessary, subvert obstacles otherwise irresistible, and consolidate a progress which would be imperceptible and uncertain.

The advance of modern civilization, and the developement of all those great elements which constitute the grandeur and strength of our present social state, have been co-ordinate with the progress of that spiritual revolution which, though it had long worked, gained its first decided victories in the fore part of the sixteenth century. Nor is the unity of the religious standards of the Reformation less striking than the co-ordinance of all the great interests of society, with the spirit of the Reformation itself. The various national churches which emerged from the apparent chaos of that tremendous struggle, were all designed to be constructed, and except where untoward obstacles in a few cases hindered the work, were all constructed on the same plan, from the same divine model; evangelical in doctrine, pure and strict in morals, simple and free in order, faithful and exact in discipline—they were, with a few exceptions, essentially apostolical, Presbyterian. And from that day to this, as states and communities have most thoroughly felt the power of those great principles on which repose their highest glory and success, they have, in a corresponding degree, cherished the true spirit of Reformed Christianity. The era of the Synod of Dort, or that of the Westminster Assembly, or that of our own Assemblies of 1837 and 1838; the case of the Puritans, the Covenanters, or our own; the struggles and results in Switzerland, in Holland, or in Scotland, where nature has done least, and where, of all the old world, the principles of the Reformation had the freest scope; the synchronous rise of liberty and Christianity in our own land, their mutual relations, and their widely diffused and increasing influences, starting from our bosom and operating through so many channels and in so many lands; all these things and ten thousand like them, are so many proofs of this sympathy which we assert, this unity which we observe amongst all the elements of human progress. A progress easy to be traced whether in its grand combination, or in its separate elements moving side by side across the track of ages. A progress which has been not only real and immense, but *total*, that is in all things; and which for three centuries past, has advanced, and is still advancing with a progressive ratio inconceivable to those who have not attentively compared successive generations with each other, and all with the standard of eternal truth.

It is not pretended that this progress has been uniform; nor even that its separate elements have been steadily developed. We have already shown how in regard to religion, the basis of all, it has been remarkably otherwise; and in regard to freedom, to knowledge, to civilization, and to every other element, the same truth, which on our theory would be inevitable, might easily be separately established upon indisputable proof. Nor is it for us to say that this progress either separately or generally considered, will be more uniform in the ages to come than in those that are past. It is our part to learn what has been, and what is: and while we survey with steadiness and intelligence our present position, and courageously perform our present duty, meekly but confidently commit the future, into his hands with whom is the disposal of all its issues. And blessed be the name of God, whether he condescends to use

our poor services or not, one thing is certain, he will never forget them.

II. There can be but two aspects in which religion can be presented, in its last analysis. It is of God, or it is of man. It ascribes every thing to God; or it ascribes something, more or less, to man. And this something, however minute, so that it be essential, conditional, and meritorious, makes it, as the hinge of our destiny, man's work and religion and not that of God. Under the grand dispensation of revealed truth, from the first Prophet to the last Apostle, the form in which this fundamental and all-pervading error most frequently exhibited itself, was in the way of dishonour to the person and glory of the Lord Christ. For these eighteen centuries, its prevailing manifestation has been in derogation of the work of God the Eternal Spirit. Whether it be the man of sin who claiming that vicariate of Christ, which Christ himself hath assigned to the Holy Ghost, thereby blasphemes unpardonably; or whether the teachers of that subtle infidelity, which, in various forms, impeaches the personal existence of the Divine Spirit; or whether that pest of Christianity which passes under the name of Pelagius, and reasons away the necessity of his Almighty work; or whether that madness of wild sectaries, which claims his miraculous powers and inspiration; or whether that boastful and obdurate reliance on a mere form of godliness, in which no power abides; still, and alike throughout, it is the person, the work, and the glory of the ever-blessed Spirit, which men attack.

The innocence of error is amongst the most absurd imaginations of a corrupt and shallow philosophy. It is indeed our duty to maintain with modesty all possible opinions, since nothing is more certain than that even the wise and the good have erred; and to extend even to apparent errors, a charity heightened by the remembrance that our own foundations are often esteemed immoveable, only because we have not carefully examined them. But to maintain the innocence of error, is to confound all the distinctions of good and evil, truth and falsehood, to obliterate the characteristics of our moral and rational nature, and remove the very foundations of all religion. So far otherwise is the truth, that the worst errors in religion have their origin far more in the derangement of our moral, than in the mistakes of our intellectual faculties. And it seems unquestionable, not only that heresy in general is to be classed with moral delinquencies, but that each particular form of it is invested with its own peculiar and uniform moral character, which will be found to differ as widely from the standard of righteousness as its opinions do from that of faith.

The grand mission of the Church of Jesus Christ is to perpetuate and extend the truth committed to her. The great obstacles to her success are corruption in her own bosom, and oppression from the outward and surrounding kingdom of Satan. When she has been openly pursued with fire and sword, when she has been terrified into silence, when she has been bribed into unholy support of wicked rulers, when faithless intruders have been forced upon her, when she has been seduced into adulterous union with

secular authorities—when she has sunk down into a sinful conformity to the world; in all such cases, we see her hallowed mission arrested by the influence of outward wickedness upon her. But when we see her resting in dead forms and outward ceremonies; opening her arms to embrace as her children, those who have nothing of the spirit of her Master; throwing wide her portals to the entrance of every form of doctrine; mitigating her testimony against sin, explaining away the glorious but hated peculiarities of her faith, lowering the exalted tone of her piety, shorn of her eager and intrepid zeal; then it is the working of inward folly that defeats the end of her sacred vocation, and reveals her self-convicted before God. Who shall say that the dangers from within are less than the dangers from without, or that less grace is needful to deliver a Church from false but pretended friends than from open enemies, to restore her from an insidious poison consuming her vitals than to sustain her under storms beating upon her head?

Fathers and Brethren of the General Assembly, it is to the work of inward purification of our beloved Church, and thereby of her perfect preparation for the whole performance of her divine mission, that we have been called. This has been emphatically our lot, the matter for which God did set us. And as it was the temper and fashion to consider the danger but small, until we had well nigh been swallowed up; so, is there now danger that we shall consider the signal deliverance but little more than ordinary, and the work complete before all its blessings are obtained. I thank God for this peculiar opportunity to testify to the greatness of that work which he has wrought for our Zion; to record as her organ, her grateful sense of his blessed interposition; and to exhort her, in his name, to perfect in faithfulness that to which she has set her hand.

For that form of renunciation of God's religion and adoption of man's religion—which, under the general assault upon the office and work of the Spirit of life and grace, goes under the name of Semi-Pelagianism; and which, under a form of sound words, attacking the very essence of religion in the soul, as well as the very ground of man's acceptance before God, manifested, both towards God, the sinner, and the church, a shameful perfidiousness as its chief moral characteristic; had so entered amongst us, and so spread its insidious spirit, and so shot forth its roots and branches, that it remains an equal wonder how it so grew, and how, having so grown, it was ever cast off.

In the year 1801, a treaty under the name of "A Plan of Union between Presbyterians and Congregationalists in the new settlements," was formed between our General Assembly and the General Association of Connecticut, by force and virtue of which the outward form of Presbyterianism, was, to the whole extent of the operation of the treaty, prostrated, for the benefit of the peculiar and antagonist principles of Congregationalism; but with the avowed purpose of ultimately transferring the interests that might grow up under the treaty, to the sole care of this General Assembly. This extraordinary act, performed under the hope of advancing the general interests of Christ's kingdom, was steadily used to

ruin those of the chief party to act itself. Though by its very terms it was in derogation of Presbyterianism, and therefore upon the clearest principles was to be strictly limited to the cases specified in it; yet was it used as a pretext for every thing needful to be done to break up our church order, and substitute one the opposite of it in many important particulars. Though it related exclusively to church order and discipline, it was made the instrument of introducing, fostering, and spreading amongst us every sort of doctrinal and speculative error. Though it was, by its terms, confined to frontier and destitute places, it was adhered to and the interests growing up under it consolidated and extended until it covered four entire Synods, had insinuated itself extensively into three or four others, and had affiliated, as its friends boasted, six hundred ministers and sixty thousand communicants in a single section of the church, who, as the event proved, had adopted our standards without embracing them, and in order to wield the whole power of those who really believed them. Though it was meant to be temporary, it was, after more than thirty years of forbearance mixed with anxious and oft expressed solicitude on our part, and on theirs with solemn and repeated protestations calculated to soothe our inquietude, at length claimed to be eternal and unalterable. And the final result is, that the system generated under this treaty—the bastard union of Presbytery and Independency impregnated with Pelagianism—has set itself up not only as the *best*, but as the *true and only* representative of the Presbyterian Church in these United States, and has appealed, and notwithstanding its signal discomfiture still appeals to the civil tribunals to maintain itself in this honest, moderate, and conscientious claim.

They who believe that God has revealed a system of Church order for the government of his people in their associated character, as nearly all Christians profess they do believe; and they who hold that the Presbyterian system embodies all the principles of this revealed government, as every Presbyter, whether ordained to teach and rule or only to rule, has solemnly declared he does hold; must see at once, that if no question beyond one of Church government had been involved in this case, conscientious men had no alternative, but that proposed by the Assembly of 1837 to the four Synods; and that conscientious men ought never to have proposed, and never could accept that put by the Seceders, to the Assembly of 1838, and rejected by it. "Become real Presbyterians, as you have long been nominally, and abide with us in peace; or remain what you please, and leave us in peace;" was the language of the Assembly to the four Synods in 1837. The reply was, "We will alter nothing; we will not be Presbyterians, which we have sworn we are; we will continue what we are, and still be Presbyterians." In 1838 the demand of a riotous secession was, "Take back the four Synods, as they are, and as though they were Presbyterian, which they refuse to become; or else we, a minority of yourselves, will become forthwith, and by an act of mingled fraud and violence, the only true Presbyterian church." And even without awaiting an answer, they proceeded by preconcerted and perfidious counsels to attempt the violent revolution of a church whose tribunals they

had bound themselves by covenant to obey, and whose peace they had vowed they would study. Guided even in their last extremity by that master instinct to which their whole career had been subordinated, they pronounced themselves to be the church which they forsook, as soon as it was apparent they could not thoroughly undo it; and concealing their final attempts to destroy it, under expressions of reverence and love, made the extinction of the church, as then organized, the indispensable condition even of a peaceful separation.

But the fate of our Church was staked on questions far more momentous than any relating merely to her outward organization. Infidel theories of moral and mental philosophy, shallow views of the doctrines of grace and salvation, false principles of action, wild impulses and methods, had sprung up afresh in the land. And while all the Christian denominations were, in their turn, troubled with heresies and disorders, from which it was hoped the Church, having tried and rejected most of them before, was finally delivered; the Presbyterian Church, became, from many causes, the battlefield on which was to be decided, once more, a contest between the religion of heaven and that of earth. For a long time, attempts were made to prove that the new theology was not essentially different from the old. Then it was conceded that there was an apparent difference, but it was zealously contended that this lay more in terms and forms of expression, than in substance. After this came the apparently frank admission that there was a real and substantial variance; but then it was argued that this regarded only the philosophy, and not at all the facts either of morals or theology. After another interval, came another change, and then the proclamation went forth that the new system and the old were indeed fundamentally different; that the former was not only most consistent with common sense and the Scriptures, and in a signal manner owned of God the Spirit in his using it and its adherents to convert sinners, but that the old system was absurd and ruinous to the souls of men. And when at length, in the Assembly of 1836, the long sought hour of complete triumph had apparently arrived, the leaders of the party stood boldly forward and said, "The time is come to decide whether men who hold such dangerous errors can be tolerated any longer." And they proceeded to acquit and discharge men condemned for grievous heresy; to vindicate in *these* opinions subversive of the doctrines of grace; to destroy our cherished plans of benevolence; and to deny, for the benefit of voluntary corporations, the great, important, and before unquestioned powers of the Church in the prosecution of her Master's work. But even in such a crisis this extraordinary party could not lay aside its moral characteristics; and after doing so much to destroy the church and corrupt its faith, they drew up and recorded a confession not only at direct variance with their own published declarations, but more orthodox than many who dreaded and opposed them, ever held.

During all this period, a period so far from brief that its origin is laid in the days of our fathers, this mass of persons professed to have received and adopted *ex animo* the forms of doctrine, order,

and discipline of the Presbyterian Church. And yet they could have had no settled views at all, and were constantly varying their opinions; or, what is perhaps worse, they were firmly holding doctrines directly opposite to those they publicly confessed, and were by little and little revealing their real sentiments as they supposed they had prepared the minds of men for their reception. And when obliged to defend such conduct, they did it on principles utterly at war with all sound morality. Some said they never meant to be bound more than "*for substance of doctrine*;" and claimed the right to be exclusive judges of the sense in which they made an unqualified adhesion to public standards, as well as of the sense of the standards themselves. Some said it was not clear what the supposed standards really contained, nor perfectly certain what constituted the standards; whence came the practical inference that as the subject matter of the oath was vague, men might swear positively and precisely to that in regard to which they were wholly uncertain. Others more dexterous, swore not at all; but evading all open compact with those towards whom they had premeditated a breach of faith, declared themselves to be of us, gained entrance through bye-paths to us, and assumed station and authority amongst us. At the bar of conscience it is perfectly clear that none of them were ever for one moment lawfully entitled to so much as a shoe latchet from that church, which even until now they claim as absolutely and totally their own; and that such proceedings instead of being defensible on Christian principles, are incompatible with the well being, if not the existence of any social system whatever.

Such conduct and such principles were united to a theology equally intolerable. What was the peculiar doctrinal system against which we have been called, in the fear of God, to contend so earnestly, can never be a matter of doubt to any honest inquirer. In the newspapers, periodicals, and more permanent and systematic works of the prominent persons in the ranks of the new theology, that system as expounded by its teachers and embraced by their disciples, remains for the impartial judgment of posterity. In the formal testimonies and deliberate decisions of many of our church courts of every class, the doctrines of the orthodox and their judgment upon the heresies that have so vexed and polluted the church, stand also, along with the writings of such of our brethren as have publicly defended God's truth, for the judgment of coming generations. This venerable court, attentive to its high calling and sacred obligations, has not failed to bear its formal and repeated testimony against those deplorable errors, which, at the last, it so firmly, and through God's mercy, so triumphantly withstood; and especially in the years 1835 and 1837 adopted detailed statements of those which it judged to be most common and most dangerous. The earliest, the simplest, and the most remarkable public proceeding against the disorders which had inundated the church, was perhaps "*The Act and Testimony*," issued by a few persons, met in the city of Philadelphia, on the 27th of May, 1834, and which, before the meeting of the next following Assembly, had received the adhesion of five Synods, thirty Presbyteries, and above two thousand minis-

ters and ruling elders of the church. In that instrument the errors charged are classed under the following seven heads, viz., 1. Our Relation to Adam. 2. Native Depravity. 3. Imputation. 4. Ability. 5. Regeneration. 6. Divine Influence. 7. Atonement. On all these fundamental points, it sets forth "doctrines and statements" which it rightly pronounces "dangerous and heretical, contrary to the Gospel of God, and inconsistent with our Confession of Faith," and which it asserts had extended so far and been so long connived at by the church courts, that there appeared no escape for the church from "dissolution," or "corruption in all that once distinguished its peculiar testimony"—but a solemn appeal for instant and effective action, to the "ministers, elders, and private members" of the church. That appeal it proceeded to make, and by God's blessing it so resulted, that within five years from that time, the General Assembly of 1839 in providing for the commemoration of its fiftieth anniversary, no longer had occasion to warn the church against wide-spread errors and disorders in her own bosom; but could call upon her to rejoice that the first "great cycle in her history had been characterized by a series of remarkable deliverances from imminent dangers which threatened her purity, her peace, her Christian order, and her sacred liberty."

Well did it become the church thus to rejoice; and well does it become her still to keep fixidly in her remembrance the nature and extent of those deliverances in which she rejoiced, and the character of that work to which this blessed interposition so plainly calls her. We never rejoiced, as we have been falsely accused of doing, in the misfortunes and exposure of such multitudes who once called us brethren; much less, would be glad because of their rejection of the truth, or because of all the evils which must overtake them on that account. But we should and do rejoice, because God allowed us not to fall after the same manner of unbelief; and because he allowed not them, having thus fallen, to subject us to their yoke in the house of our fathers. We rejoice not that our church should be diminished in numbers, and shorn of much wealth and power and many distinguished names; but we do and will rejoice that while thus curtailed in outward circumstance, she is more pure, united, and efficient than she ever was before, and that she has a better title to the favour of God than she ever had before. We do not pretend that the work has been complete. But while we pray for grace to perfect it in the fear of God, we rejoice in the benefits already conferred both upon us and others. Those who injured us so deeply, and who meditated evils so much more serious against us, even they have been led, in many instances, to pause and examine more carefully that for which they have paid so great a price; and there is perhaps less deep and pervading error in the ranks of the new theology at the present moment, than during the heat of their contention with us. Sister churches, which stood by in cold distrust, careless of the truth, and such as in carnal self-seeking, hoped by a feigned neutrality to gain at our expense; left to us the whole burden and odium of the strife, and therewith the whole glory, but not as we rejoice, the whole blessedness of a victory, which if they be faithful now, will many ways

strengthen their ancient foundations. The world around us has been obliged to hear discussions which have made all men more clearly understand the great doctrines of Christ, and the peculiar errors that now assail it. Society at large has profited by the firm and righteous settlement of some of the most difficult questions which are to be reconciled in establishing the absolute freedom of the churches and the legitimate supremacy of the civil power. Error, long bold and insolent, has been stripped and abashed, and has learned to dread the truth whose long-suffering she despised, and whose strength and courage she misdoubted. And the church itself, roused by the fear of losing its most precious deposite, has come to love that treasure more, by how much she was agonized at the prospect of its loss; and her true members, valuing more justly those rights and mercies now assured unto them, feel more keenly the obligation to bestow them upon those perishing for lack thereof. Nor is it too much to say, that, dating from 1831, the church has, by divine grace, done more for the cause of her adorable Lord within the intervening ten or eleven years, both in what she has pulled down and what she has set up, than in any period of double the same length, since her first plantation on this continent; nor to add, that nothing but want of fidelity to her Master and of faith in his name, can prevent her from advancing with increasing power on her bright and holy career, wherever that may lead, or however it may be marked by sufferings or by triumphs.

Fathers and Brethren, let us accomplish our destiny as becomes men whom God has set for a chosen service. The indications of Divine Providence are extremely remarkable. The posture of the church as well as that of the nations, indicates an immense revolution already wrought, and one still more stupendous ready to be achieved. A body such as ours, covering so large a portion of this vast empire, embracing such and so great elements of power and influence, combining so many and such varied resources, moving side by side with the progress of the country from its first settlement by civilized men, imbued with the spirit of its institutions and identified with all the elements of its strength and glory; such a body, thus placed at an era like the present, cannot fail to be the means of incalculable good or evil to mankind. Let us then prove ourselves worthy of our lot. Let the spirit of our high calling burn within us. As long as God is in our midst we cannot be moved. Let us but be assured that the Lord of hosts is with us; then we will not fear though the heathen rage and the kingdoms are moved, and the waters roar, and the mountains shake, and the earth itself be removed. And whatever may be our perils by sea or by land, in the city or the wilderness, from our own countrymen or from strangers, from public oppressors or from pretended brethren, we shall still fight the good fight, keep the faith, finish our course with joy, and receive at last, from the righteous Judge, that crown laid up for all "that love his appearing."

III. In contemplating the nature and extent of the mission which God has entrusted to his church, every reflecting mind must be struck with awe, at its majesty, its difficulty, and its boundless scope. The religion of Jesus, is the religion of universal man.

No truth is more clearly revealed, more cordially embraced by every child of God, or more thoroughly incorporated with the practical life of every real soldier of the cross, than that the healing streams must flow till they have effaced from the whole earth, the last trace of sin and the curse.

Labourers together with Christ—depositaries of that truth by which a world is to be saved—separated unto God by his own eternal and free calling as chosen instruments of his most gracious purposes—how illustrious, how sublime is the vocation of his people!

And yet, themselves by nature the children of wrath even as others, prone to mistake alike the truth and the providence of God, and by their sins and their follies coming short in all things; cast too upon a battle field where every combatant is armed against them, every power of earth and hell in league for their destruction, and the fundamental principle of their whole warfare blazoned in letters of light upon their bloodstained banner, rendering all peace or even truce impossible; how appalling to the carnal heart, are the difficulties of this glorious calling!

And then the scope of the work! From the creation of this apostate earth God has had a church in it: and yet, after sixty centuries of long suffering, perhaps not a sixtieth part of its inhabitants truly know or honour him. For eighteen centuries and more, the Lamb of God has been held up to the view of a ruined world, as the only and the all-sufficient remedy for its wretched inhabitants, sunken in guilt and misery; and yet who shall venture to estimate the overwhelming proportion of its buried generations who lived and died without Christ, or who can contemplate, without a shudder, the millions and tens of millions and hundreds of millions now living in the flesh, who are without God and without hope? We have indeed scarcely broken the first ranks of the King's enemies. The church has only gathered in a few early ears of a harvest not only ripe but rotting before her face in its boundless profusion. The light of life has but dimly glanced upon the edges of the perishing nations.

Oh! do not our hearts burn within us as we catch the inspiration of a subject so stupendous—of a theme so awful! Instead of being discouraged, every noble and every holy emotion should be mightily stirred within us. If we can do nothing else for the truth, we can seal its testimony with every treasure of our lives; if we cannot save our perishing brethren, we can embrace them in the arms of our love and pour out our sorrows over them; if we cannot serve our Lord with profit and acceptance, we can at least go and die with him, and if need be for him.

But, blessed be God, if we can do nothing worth, our Master can do all things. All our fitness, all our sufficiency is of him. It is by *faith* that the church is built, established, delivered, enlarged. By *faith* we not only perish not with them that believe not; but by it we work righteousness, receive the promises, wax valiant in fight, subdue kingdoms, and turn to flight the armies of the aliens. By it, confessing our own emptiness and nothingness, and clearly discerning the vanity and worthlessness of all human

devices in accomplishing the decrees of God, we yet learn not to despise the day even of smallest things; since with him who rules all things by the same infinite wisdom and power, nothing is great and nothing small except as his favour or his frown is upon it. And well do we know that he who makes the death of one accused and reputed a malefactor, the only life of the world, is able even by "things which are not," to bring to nothing all the powers of darkness.

This principle is the very life of the church of God. By it we "acknowledge ourselves naked of all virtue, that we may be clothed of God; empty of all good, that we may be filled by him; slaves to sin, that we may be liberated by him; blind, that we may be enlightened by him; lame, that we may be guided; weak, that we may be supported by him; divested of all ground of glorying, that he alone may be eminently glorious, and that we may glory in him." Away then, with all human trust, all human contrivances. With a doctrine taught of God, an order revealed by him, an efficiency communicated from him, a mission entrusted to us of him; all carnal devices of whatever kind are at once a hindrance to us, and an insult to the majesty of heaven. God has laid for himself the model of his kingdom: why should we mar, by our foolish additions, the workmanship of infinite wisdom? He has committed to his church, as his church, the means of saving the world: why should she with an imbecility at once faithless and presumptuous, confessing herself an insufficient *agent*, and claiming at the same moment to be an all-sufficient *counsellor*, turn over to others, no matter to whom, her own appropriate, nay her express work? The germ of all apostacy is concealed in this defection. For if the objects set before God's people are not addressed to their *faith*, they come with no obligation to his church: but if they do address themselves to our *faith*, then they specifically appertain to the kingdom of Messiah. In the one case we divest the sacred investiture of Christ; in the other we substitute as his, the commandments of men. In either case, a principle is enthroned in the bosom of the church, which is sufficient, if fully acted out, to remove every landmark established by God, and to bring in every invention ever devised by man. It is a defection whose principle covers the totality of revealed religion. For the instant we settle it, as the mind of God, that the office of his church is, not *to do* his work, but *to see it done*; then the whole position of the church as well towards God and his people, as towards this guilty world, is utterly changed from the ground on which the apostles, the confessors, and the reformers have all placed it. But until this be done, there is an end of all reason by which to justify the least departure from the simplicity of faith.

To our immediate portion of the kingdom of Christ, these considerations are of the more importance, as it has been in some sort the especial vocation from generation to generation, of that part of the blood-bought host, to testify for the simple and sacred appointments of God. To testify for them, in all their completeness, and spirituality; or, if men will have it so, in all their nakedness. We have no catch-words, nor cant-phrases, nor reserved helps,

nor short methods, nor royal ways either by land or water, whether by Oxford, by Rome, or by Purgatory. We lay no stress on the efficiency of this or the other rite, ordinance, compliance, conformity, or succession, any more than on might, or power, or blood, or the flesh, or the will of man. They who make these things stand in the place of the powers of an endless life, and they who so far imitate such madness, as to deface the truth they really teach with such pitiable follies, are, surely, already enough and to spare, and have won over to these idle and wicked fancies, enough and to spare of our fallen race. Why should we, at this late day, turn aside from our long descended testimony, and seek to build upon the foundation upon which Christ has established us, such miserable wood, hay, and stubble? The period of a great deliverance is rather the period to cultivate with fresh ardour a spirit appropriate to our great and peculiar work. To stand more boldly than ever for our distinctive testimony. To contend more earnestly for those heaven appointed ways in which we have found salvation, those doctrines of grace which are the support of our souls. To uphold with renewed zeal the established ordinances of God, and to resist with redoubled energy every thing that even tends to impair or dishonour what he has established.

IV. There are two aspects, both of them peculiar, in which the nominally Christian world, as it exists before us, must impress every close observer. The first is the position of Christianity with respect to all other religions; the second is, the relative position and spirit of its own various sects.

The most accurate modern scholars estimate the whole population of this earth at about six hundred and fifty or sixty millions of souls. Of these, about two hundred and thirty millions are nominally, but alas! to a woful extent only nominally Christians; while the remaining four hundred and twenty or thirty millions, excepting four or five millions of Jews, are divided between various degrading forms of superstition and idolatry.

There can be no question, in any rational mind, that Christianity in name and form at least, must assuredly and perhaps rapidly extend over the whole world. Indeed it is extremely remarkable that it has not done it long ago. For perhaps every system of religion now existing, with a single exception, is, in its present form, of later origin than Christianity; and that only exception, the religion of the Jews, by the universal dispersion of those professing it and by their clear and enduring testimony to some of the fundamental truths of all true religion, would have appeared fit rather to have prepared the way of Christianity, than to have permanently obstructed its progress. But when the present posture of the various religious professions amongst men is considered, it is obvious that every element of power and stability, as well as all means of enlargement, are wholly with Christianity, and against all other systems. Whatever of liberty, commerce, knowledge, civilization, or national wealth, power or glory exists amongst men, belongs out of all proportion, it might almost be said exclusively, to those nations that profess the Christian religion; and to them also belongs, nearly alone, the spirit of intense and eager proselytism.

It is not only well nigh inconceivable that any other solution except the universal spread of Christianity, in name at least, should result from the present position and action of human society; but if the mode of conversion common in all ages before the reformation were now resorted to with vigour and perseverance for a few generations, there is nothing in the condition of the world to prevent its early and entire success.

The grand divisions of nominal Christianity when stated as they were for ages contemplated would give to the churches of the west about one hundred and sixty millions; and to the oriental churches, principally to what is called the Greek church, about seventy millions. Dividing the churches of the west again into Papal and Protestant, giving to the latter about fifty millions and to the former about one hundred and ten millions (of whom however many millions are geographically amongst the oriental rather than the western churches;) and we have the three general, grand divisions of Christendom. Although the papal element is still numerically the largest separate element of the three; yet it is to be remembered that three centuries ago, the combined anti-papal portion of Christendom instead of being, as it now is, decidedly the strongest, both numerically and otherwise, was in fact protected against the pope either by its obscurity or by the shield of anti-Christian powers. To this let it be added that several of the principal anti-papal powers of the earth, as Russia, Prussia, Holland, and these United States, have been created since the reformation; that England, perhaps the leading nation of the world, has quadrupled her power within the same period; that no papal power in the old world has increased its relative strength, and very few their positive, and that some, as Spain, have rapidly and decidedly sunk, in the same time; and a clear idea is obtained of the progress and position of the parties. The probability is that, all things considered, the actual force of the three great divisions of Christianity is not very unequal, at the present moment; and that the Protestant and Oriental elements have at least as much affinity for each other, as either has for Popery. It is to be conceded, however, that as most of the oriental churches are prelatical, and God has never yet blessed the world with the sight of a pure prelatical church; if the issue ever seriously comes, the oriental churches, following the spirit now so painfully manifest in Anglican and Anglo-American Episcopacy may prefer a relapse into popery, before a thorough reformation.

With these facts before us, it becomes a question of overpowering interest and importance—in what form shall Christianity be the religion of the world? Shall it be Popery with its dark tyranny, its ferocious spirit, its besotted ignorance, its open idolatry, its shameless immorality? Shall it be the cold, dead, childish, stagnant, formal superstition that has so long reigned in most of the oriental churches? Shall it be glorious Protestantism, with her open Bible, her universal education, her regulated liberty, her wise and vigorous spirit, her noble institutions, her benign influences?

It is as vain as it is unworthy to shut our eyes to an issue so stupendous and so inevitable. The Protestant and the oriental churches, might indeed, exist together, permanently on the earth,

so far as the original spirit and inherent principles of both, in their best estate, are concerned. Not so with Popery. With it, there is no other question but death or Papism. It offers to mask it but this alternative, to embrace it or to extirpate it. And there is too much reason to apprehend—whether we examine the character of this great apostacy, or reflect on the course of God's providence, or ponder his divine revelation—that this terrible arbitrament is hastening apace, and that it will be submitted at last to the edge of the sword. The world's destiny must be decided on the field of Armageddon when great Babylon shall come in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

All that is worth contending for on earth is involved in this contest. It must be vehement; it may be protracted. The power of Antichrist is immense and thoroughly consolidated. More than a hundred millions of the human family wait on his nod. A stupendous ecclesiastical organization, extending from his throne to the remotest corners of the earth, and controlling with absolute authority, the minds, bodies, and goods of all who have received his mark, are obedient to his will. Many kings and potentates, many principalities and powers, wear his yoke as an ornament of gold; and prostrate nations adore him as the vicar of God abiding in the midst of his invincible hosts. All the corrupt propensities of our fallen nature cry, day and night, for the advance of his standards; and the dregs of our generation, impregnated with the very genius of disorder and excess, work without ceasing for the overthrow of every barrier against his progress. He proposes as the rewards of success, in this world, signal vengeance, uncontrolled indulgence, unlimited power, absolute supremacy; in the world to come, endless glory. What a mixture of power, enthusiasm, passion, and superstition! What a force—what a prize! But his spirit is adverse to the better spirit of the age; his system revolting to the common sense of mankind; his despotism odious to every good impulse of our nature. Every enlightened motive that stops on this side the grave, impels every good man amongst his own followers, to forsake him; and every one that penetrates that dread future beyond the tomb, eagerly requires every being not subdued to his debasing sway, to strive for the liberation of the world. With us are freedom, light, the whole force of movement, the power of knowledge, and the consolations of eternal hope. God and the right are ours. And though we wait long and suffer much, we look with unshaken *faith*, for the glorious appearing of the great God, our Saviour Christ, to raze this synagogue of Satan, to destroy the mother of harlots who has ruled in it so long—to bring to nothing the kings of the earth drunk with the wine of her fornications, to lead forth to victory and to glory his saints whose blood has been ever found in her, and amid the rejoicings of heaven and earth, of all blessed and of all-redeemed things, to establish a throne upon which he will reign King below, as now he reigneth King in the highest!

V. Fathers and Brethren beloved in the Lord, there are two duties so imperative upon us, and so obvious in a crisis like this,

that they can hardly fail to command your cordial assent. The first is to cultivate assiduously in our own hearts and in the hearts of our people, the spirit of our high vocation—our great mission. The second is to cultivate an intimate and cordial union and co-operation with all the true followers of our divine Redeemer. These two reflections seem to me to contain the sum of that practical wisdom, to which these meditations would conduct us.

When we reflect how absolute has been the wreck of all human organizations, how invincible is the destructive force of time and chance, how certain is that fiat that every thing which can even be shaken, must be one day removed; it is not the dictate of modesty, wisdom, or grace, to rely with certainty on the permanent endurance of the best works of our hands. Where Paul planted, and Apollos watered, and God himself gave the rich increase, the glorious Master and the faithful servants have been alike forgotten. Alas! what are we, and what the objects of our care and love, to deserve a different destiny? But though outward ordinances perish, and visible organizations pass utterly to nought, the spirit which forsakes their lifeless remains neither perishes nor passes away. Let this be the object of our incessant cultivation—the spirit of our calling and of our work. If any thing can eternize the institutions we so much love, it will be to baptize them into the spirit out of which they grew; and if nothing can, the transmission of that spirit in undiminished vigour and untarnished purity, is a better and holier end, than all the boastful nothingness of an empty and vapid existence, spun out in ignominy to the end of time. Wherever God's people are, there is God's church; which indeed "may exist without any visible form"—as Calvin truly saith, but which cannot exist, at all, without the power of his indwelling Spirit. A holy zeal for God's ordinances, an unquenchable love for his truth, a consuming earnestness in his service, an intense eagerness to save men's souls; this is the spirit that we need; a spirit without which, we shall do nothing worthy of our name, our era, our calling, or our hopes.

Such a spirit is the farthest possible from bigotry and intolerance. It is indeed the only spirit in which we can establish on true and permanent foundations, the intimate fellowship of the true followers of the Lamb; since truth is the basis on which we must unite, love the power that binds us to each other, and faith the living and moving principle of the whole spiritual bond.

Nothing is more unjust and absurd than the common outcry against the Reformed churches on account of their alleged diversity of faith. It is unhappily too true that many who pass under the Protestant name, like the bulk of the members of the Latin and Greek churches, are Christians only in profession; and that some whose views of divine truth are more scriptural, are governed too much by the temper of that apostacy from the midst of which God, in tender mercy, called their fathers. But the undeniable truth is, that the great body of Reformed Christians are and have always been essentially agreed in their faith; and that the largest branch of this great family has been so truly one spiritual body, as to have used the same confession, or interchangeably the confessions of each

other. What is now insisted on is, that this oneness of spirit and faith, and as far as possible, of order and practice, is a matter of exceeding great importance and value; that where it exists it should be carefully cultivated; and where it may have been broken or allowed to sink into forgetfulness, all favourable occasions should be eagerly seized to restore it. And it is believed that the peculiar dispensation upon which we have fallen and into which we are still further hastening, imperatively calls upon all the Protestant communions that sincerely love the Lord Jesus, to draw closer and closer the bonds that unite them to each other; while the peculiar character and position of the body represented in this General Assembly, eminently fit it to take a leading part in a work so good and so necessary.

How far the bonds of Christian union can be extended, it is not possible to decide until the experiment has been made in humble and earnest dependence on God. But the wonder is that it has not been more thoroughly cemented between those great families of Christians, who not only agree entirely in every important part of religious faith and duty, but actually use, and have long used the very same formularies of doctrine, discipline, and order. The Presbyterian body throughout the world forms by far the largest portion of Protestant Christendom; and that portion of it scattered over Great Britain and her dependencies, and the United States, is by much its most numerous and powerful part. And these latter without exception, so far as they adopt the Presbyterian name; also adopt the standards arranged by the Westminster Assembly, to express their views of Christian doctrine and practice. They are really, and should be visibly, as far as possible, one body.

We are drawing very near to the second centennial period of that illustrious Assembly. The first day of July, 1843, will complete the two hundredth anniversary of its meeting. If any thing effectual is done towards commemorating on that great occasion, the remarkable event it recalls, it seems to devolve on this General Assembly to do it, and to begin the work during its present sessions. I have not felt myself at liberty to omit a suggestion, which, if properly taken up by this venerable court, cannot fail to produce very precious and lasting results. And I am the more emboldened in this when I recall, with gratitude to God, the circumstances attending the first suggestion of the general religious observance of our late semi-centennial period, and contemplate the results, actual and probable, of that movement. That the occasion is capable of being so used as greatly to promote, under God's blessings, the highest interests of truth, the mutual love of God's people, and the general strength of his kingdom, seems not to be questioned.

It is true we are nothing, and of ourselves can do nothing. Mournful confessions, and but the more humiliating as we behold how much is to be done, and how unspeakably important it is that it should be done well and at once. But through Christ strengthening us we can do all things. And when we consider his promises—when we contemplate the excellency of the work set before us—when our conceptions dilate to the vastness and grandeur of

the assured results ; then it is we know the sweetness and fulness of the truth that God is indeed with us, our refuge and our strength. Oh ! may he abide with us continually, and make us a joy and a praise in the whole earth. The work is his, and the faith whereby it may be accomplished is his free and divine gift. The vocation is his, and it is only of his mere good pleasure that he doth fulfil by it his infinitely beneficent purposes towards those he has purchased with his blood. The power is all his, and so shall be all the glory.—Amen.

[Continued from page 267.]

M O L I N I S M .

No. XVII.

XXIV. *The Effect of the Bull Unigenitus, upon the Clergy and the Public generally, and the measures taken to enforce its adoption.—A brief Description of the Court of Louis XIV.*

THE first impression made by the Bull *Unigenitus*, upon the minds of the Gallican clergy, was various. Some regarded it as very obscure,—and the reason of this impression (it is said) was that that Bull was assumed to be sound in its doctrines, and conformable to the writings of the fathers. Hence there was a necessity for recourse to forced explanations in order to make it conform to this preconceived view. Another portion of the clergy, not being satisfied with such forced explanations, addressed Pope Clement XI. directly, and asked of him the elucidation necessary to render it clear. The object of this portion of the clergy was in truth, to induce the see of Rome to allow this Bull to pass into oblivion ; for they hoped that if they could draw the pope into an attempt at explanation, he would be made to see how repugnant it was to the Scriptures and the fathers. They did not like to offend the pope by declaring the bull heretical—although evidently they thought it so—and therefore they took the method of *supposing* it to be conformable to the truth, though *very obscure*. The pope, however, thought the bull clear enough, (and so it was,) and he gave them to understand that they were less concerned to *explain* it, than to *obey* it. Another part of the clergy took the honest course of appealing from the bull to a future Council, thus treating it as a document which condemned important truths, and sanctioned the peculiar errors of the Jesuits. Another part of the clergy received the bull through motives of interest or prejudice without taking the trouble to inquire as to its meaning.

The publication of this bull also produced an extensive and powerful effect upon the French nation generally. Cardinal de Noailles had promised the king, that he would condemn the book of Quesnel, as soon as the see of Rome should do so ; accordingly he condemned the book, and withdrew it from the hands of the Catholics under his control, but without imputing any error to it. The king convoked an Assembly composed of bishops, who happened to be at Paris, and of those who were specially called, which

Assembly convened the 16th of October, 1713, and continued till the 5th of February, 1714. Cardinal de Rohan (a creature of Tellier, the king's confessor,) was at the head of it; and De Bissy, bishop of Meaux, took the most active part in its proceedings. This bishop had formerly approved of Quesnel; but his connection with the Court and the prospect of a cardinal's hat, which he afterwards obtained, changed his language if not his opinions. By force of intrigues and threats of the king's interference, the bull was accepted with explanations contained in a pastoral letter, and was so represented to the French clergy, while the pope was given to understand, that the bull was accepted purely and simply. This pastoral letter was signed by forty bishops of the Assembly. Cardinal de Noailles and seven others took no part in it. The letter was exceptionable on many accounts, though designed to save the faith of the Roman church from further corruption by the obvious sense of the bull. These eight prelates took the course of writing to the pope and of urging upon him the necessity of explanation. They wrote, also, to the king, explaining the motives of their conduct. De Noailles, after this, viz. on the 25th of February, 1714, by a public act, declared that he was waiting for explanations, and forbade any act of jurisdiction relative to the bull, or the reception of it independently of his authority.

The Court, (at which Tellier and the bishops of his party predominated,) was extremely irritated at this conduct, and Noailles was forbidden to appear any longer at Court, and the others (seven bishops) were sent into their dioceses by *lettres de cachet*. The next step was to draw up letters patent for the publication of the bull, in which the king exhorted the bishops and then enjoined them. The Parliament did not like these expressions, and made some difficulties about the matter, but finally the express and reiterated commands of the king prevailed, and the letters patent and the bull were registered with modifications, which showed that the Parliament thought the obvious sense of the bull contrary to the laws of the realm, especially in the propositions relating to unjust excommunications.

Before proceeding farther, it may be useful to take a brief survey of the Court, with a view to show the sort of influence which directed these transactions. The reader is aware that Louis XIV. was, at the time in question, king of France. During his minority he had for his confessor, Father Paulin of Orleans, who died in 1653, and was succeeded by Father Dinet, confessor of Louis XIII. His next confessor was Father Annat of Rhodes, of whom some mention has been made. This Jesuit swayed the conscience of the monarch sixteen years. During this period, the Jesuits, as has been shown already, were very powerful at Court, and the influence of this confessor served to shield them from ill consequences in their enterprizes. It has already been stated that Annat, Peter de Marca, and Mazarin formed a sort of triumvirate, and they in effect convoked the bishops to decide that the famous five propositions were the substance of the *Augustinus* of Jansenius. It was this Jesuit, too, who influenced Louis XIV. to cause the declarations concerning the formulary to be registered in 1664 and

1665. The reader remembers the chagrin of Annat at the peace of Clement IX., which he represented as a calamity to religion and to the state. At the age of seventy, Annat retired from his office, though he took care that it should devolve on another member of that Society;—this was John Ferrier, a man of like spirit, and the real author of the formulary. Ferrier succeeded to this office in 1670, and exercised it till 1674, when he died. La Chaise succeeded Ferrier in 1675. As soon as La Chaise became the king's confessor he became also in fact the head of the Gallican church. It was his opinion that a bishop should be a man of the world and a politician. Accordingly his influence was given for the promotion of men of that character. Madame de Maintenon, who also meddled in ecclesiastical matters, made less account of talents and services than he did. Fenelon, in a letter which has been preserved by Rulhieres and D'Alembert, gives him a character far from being enviable or estimable. La Chaise, in concert with Madame de Maintenon and Louvois, concerted and decided upon the revocation of the edict of Nantes, an iniquitous as well as impolitic measure, and which inflicted a deep wound upon the prosperity of France. Afterwards, however, there was less cordiality between this lady and La Chaise, owing to his connivance at the irregularities of the king. She tried to displace him, but without success. La Chaise had the sagacity of a courtier, and by representing those who were named to the king for the office of confessor as devotees or Jansenists, he succeeded in retaining the place. Quesnel accused him of being the cause of all the evils which had afflicted France during five and twenty years. He died on the 20th of January, 1709, after having been confessor of Louis XIV. thirty-four years. A few days before his death he said to the king, "Sire, I ask it of you, as a favour to choose my successor in our company. It is strongly attached to your majesty—it is greatly extended, very numerous, and all are passionate for the glory of the Society. One could not answer for it in a disgrace, and a bad blow is soon struck." The king was surprised at this proposal. He must have been even alarmed at the request, as it gave him the alternative either of confiding his soul to men of lax morals, or of fearing a *bad blow*.

Michael Le Tellier succeeded La Chaise. His character was odious. He abused the old age of Louis XIV., to elevate his Society upon the ruins of the opposing sect. He incited the king against the Parliaments which protected the Jansenists. The first year of this Jesuit's reign was signalised by the downfall of Port Royal. So powerful was the influence of the Jesuits with the king, that he compelled the persons of his family to choose their confessors from among the Jesuits. But few of the clergy had the courage to brave the tyranny of this Jesuit. The mass of them feared him. A crowd of ambitious persons beset him continually, and he, like La Chaise, disposed of benefices, although he was obliged upon nominations to come to an understanding with Madame Maintenon, who at the suggestion of Cardinal de Bissy, meddled with those matters, and sometimes exercised a predominating influence.

The character of Louis XIV. is too well known to need a detailed description. More influenced by splendor than utility, corrupted by luxury, libertinism, flattery and despotism, he allowed himself to be governed by Madame Maintenon, who wished to exalt to the pinnacle of honor, the bastard issue of that monarch. Louis XIV. surrounded himself with magnificence and pleasures, while his subjects were suffering extreme poverty, thousands of whom he sacrificed in wars undertaken to gratify his pride. During his reign, the appearance of devotion was associated with libertinism. The exterior of public worship in the royal chapels was pompous, while prostitutes under the name of mistresses a multitude of bastards, and a Jesuit confessor, (such as has been described,) were among the worshippers.

It is said of Louis XIV., that as he knew nothing of religion, but wished to save himself, he flattered himself all his life, with doing penance on the back of another—on that of the Calvinists or the Jansenists, whom the Jesuits taught him were equally heretics; yet he suffered remorse of conscience, and was greatly agitated, as he saw his end approaching. He had proscribed all liberty, and his conscience was so alarmed on his death-bed, on the subject of his persecutions, that he expressed his sorrow for them to the Cardinals de Rohan and de Bissy, and offered to remedy the evil he might have done. He asked them to tell him if there had not been passion in their conduct?—He said he should have no repugnance to see Cardinal de Noailles. But Le Tellier, who observed these last movements of the heart of the king, stifled them by saying if he received the Cardinal, he would destroy, in a moment, the work of his whole life; and one of the Cardinals added that he could not see the Archbishop of Paris without abjuring all he had done. The Cardinal de Noailles did not see the king in his last moments. Another author informs us that Le Tellier caused a letter to be written to Cardinal de Noailles, informing him that the king would see him, provided he would receive the bull. The same author also relates that the king said to the Cardinals de Rohan and de Bissy, that they well knew he never understood any thing of the affair—that he had followed their advice, and put himself upon their conscience, and that they would have to answer for it before God. These prelates replied, with a confidence which made some of the persons present (who did not believe either in the goodness of their cause or in their good intentions) shudder, that they would willingly become sureties for his majesty—that he ought not to feel pain for having followed the pope and the bishops—that for themselves, they had had in view only the glory of God, the service of the church, and the acquittal of their own consciences.

This brief account of the Court of Louis XIV., which has been taken chiefly from the "*Histoire des Confesseurs des Empereurs, des Rois et d'autres Princes par M. Gregorie, ancien eveque de Blois, etc.*," will enable the reader more justly to appreciate the difficulties with which the better part of the Gallican clergy had to contend. But to resume the narrative.

After the bull had been registered as has been mentioned, the Court took measures to have it received by the Faculty of Theology of Paris. The bull was taken into the Sorbonne, with a *lettre de cachet* from the king, on the first of March, ordering that it should be received, which was before the pastoral letter was made public. The Syndic was a creature of the Jesuits, and by threatening the doctors with the displeasure of the Court, unless they would receive the bull, he deterred many of them from being present. By artifice he succeeded in having the bull and *lettre de cachet* inserted in their registers, in a manner different from what was proposed in that body, and then by having it printed differently from the register, he represented the doctors of the Faculty as submitting to the bull as a rule to which the faculty would conform with pleasure, so that the Court felicitated itself upon the acceptance of the Sorbonne.

At subsequent Assemblies of the Faculty, several of the doctors protested warmly against the manoeuvre practiced upon them, and as the best way of getting rid of the embarrassment thereby created *lettres de cachet* were issued by which several of the chief, were sent into exile. Among the exiles were the Abbé Bidal, M. Hulot, Brageologue, Habert, and M. Witasse professor of theology. The assemblies of the doctors in Sorbonne, on this occasion, were tumultuous. Clamours and threats drowned the voices of those who were opposed to the bull, and several of those who could not obtain a hearing, afterwards wrote letters to Cardinal de Noailles, in which they declared their sentiments—(See these letters collected in a book in 12mo, entitled *Temoignage de l'université de Paris, &c.*, printed in 1716.) In one of these letters—(written by the Abbe of Asfeld,) after giving his sense of the doctrinal character of this bull in various particulars, he concluded by saying, *et je ne fais aucune difference entre le recevoir et tomber dans l'apostasie.* "And I put no difference between receiving it (viz., the bull) and falling into apostasy." This sentiment will not appear extravagant to those who carefully study the system canonized by the bull. Yet the Jesuits had already embraced that system, and by the judgment of this author, were apostates, and afterwards the major part of the Catholic clergy not only in France but elsewhere, (it is to be feared,) embraced it. At least this bull teaches the theology of the popes and of the Court of Rome.* Their system forbids

* Bishop Kenrick in his *Theologia Dogmatica*, (Phil. 1840,) vol. 2, p. 267—8, cap. iii., de *gratis efficacia*, No. 98, concludes a brief notice of the bull thus:—"Post multas turbas *Constitutio* obtinuit plerisque ad obedientiam sanctæ sedi debitam redeuntibus; jamque agnoscitur in universa ecclesia." If the bishop is good authority upon this matter, (as we suppose he is,) the theology of that bull is now universally received in the Roman Catholic church. In other words, Molinism is the system universally approved in that church. The errors of this system have, as we have seen, been invented principally since the reformation, and they are among the worst which have obtained currency with Roman Catholics. Those Protestants who desire to know minutely what these errors are, should study that bull, and the authors which have explained it. Or they may consult the writings of those Jesuits whose system was in effect adopted by the bull. *Les Hexaples on les six colonnes sur la constitution Unigenitus*, (*Amsterdam*, 1721,) already several times referred to, contain a vast amount of learning

them to recant a doctrine once advanced, or to retrace a step once taken. *Nulla vestigia retrorsum* is the maxim of Rome. In the judgment, then, of this Abbè, Rome, by imposing such a system of doctrine as is contained in this bull upon the clergy of that communion, thereby became (if she was not so before) apostate. To conclude this topic; similar methods were adopted to compel the acceptance of the bull by the Theological Faculties of Rheims and Nantes. Letters patent of the king were sent into the different dioceses of France enjoining them to receive the bull. Some did so, with the pastoral letter of the forty bishops. Others received it with qualifications and explanations different from those of the forty bishops. Some who were favourable to the Jesuits adopted it without qualification. Among these was the Archbishop of Cambray,* in respect to that part of his diocese which was out of

upon the subject, and this work will point the reader to the most ample sources of investigation. Will not some of our learned Protestant theologians undertake an examination of the theology of the Bull against Baius, and the Bull *Unigenitus*, especially of the latter? More attention should be given to this subject in our theological seminaries. Very few Protestants are aware of the enormous heresies of the Roman Catholic clergy upon the doctrines of grace.

* Fenelon favoured the Jesuits and their system of doctrine, while we have seen that Bossuet wrote in defence of the book of Quesnel. In a pastoral instruction of Fenelon, in the form of dialogues, the following passage occurs, which will show what his sentiments were on the doctrine of grace and man's accountability. "Voici comment je parlerai a Dieu, &c. See how I will speak to God:—Lord, (votre grand docteur Augustin,) thy great doctor, Augustin, and all his disciples, the most rigid, have taught me that *pleasure is the only spring that moves my heart*. Now I feel that the pleasure of virtue has no force upon me, and that that of vice alone reigns over my will. Wouldst thou (voudriez vous) punish me with infinite torments for having yielded to an invincible and all powerful attraction? I should believe I should be doing thee (vous) the most cruel injuries if I supposed it. But in fine, even though thou wouldst punish me for that which in no respect depends upon the free choice of my will, this necessity would not be the less invincible to me. Thunder, overwhelm, crush (tonnez, foudroiez, ecrasez) thy creature eternally—have no compassion on his weakness; it (viz., the creature) will be none the less powerless to obey (vous) thee, nor less necessitated to violate (votre) thy law. Either change his pleasure;—thou (vous) who art able to change it (le maitre de le changer) in a moment, or cease to expect that the threat of pain, which is only future, can prevent my will from following a present pleasure which in respect to it is invincible. *Necessè est.*" Fenelon had said just before, "With two words of Saint Augustin, which I shall not fail to say to God in his judgment, I shall efface all my sins, I shall frustrate the devil of all his pretensions, I shall extinguish all the flames of hell; *necessè est.*" At page ten of the same pastoral letter is the following sentiment: "I am too much persuaded of the justice and goodness of God to believe that he will punish eternally by the torments of hell almost all men because they shall not have conquered by their feeble will a pleasure which is all powerful over them. I have horror of such blasphemy. To teach this scandalous impiety is to destroy the idea of Divinity and make the Atheist triumph."

The author of the fourth column of the Hexaples, (vol. 2, p. 49, Ed. 1721,) from which the foregoing extract is taken, remarks, "according to the system of this prelate, (who in this point is but the echo of the Jesuits,) it is a blasphemy, a scandalous impiety—it is to destroy the idea of the Divinity, and to establish Atheism, to believe that man, a sinner by his birth, to whom God refers his omnipotent grace, (which overcomes creature delights) deserves eternal punishment when he being abandoned to himself, violates the law of his Creator. Did Pelagius and the impious Julian run to a similar excess?" Fenelon's attachment to Molinism is very discernible in his "Letters upon divers subjects concerning Religion and

France. But the bishop of Montpellier took a very decided course against the bull. His course of reasoning was very brief. "The religion of Jesus Christ is true, therefore this bull shall not pass. The religion of Jesus Christ is true; and the bull cannot be allied with the religion of Jesus Christ." This sentiment (which amounts to as much as that before quoted of the Abbé of Asfeld,) regulated the conduct of this bishop, and he performed a distinguished part in subsequent transactions.

During these difficulties, a national council was proposed, but Rome would not consent to that measure through the fear that it might adopt some measures not favourable to her. At last, however, the Court of France resolved that the opponents of the bull should feel its utmost indignation. Many ecclesiastics were exiled—others were imprisoned—others fled to escape imprisonment. The king finally resolved to hold, what is called in France, his *lit de justice*, and because his officers refused to present the bull, he resolved to come into the Parliament in person. The procureur general was displaced, and another was appointed. *Lettres de cachet* were prepared for those who should resist. It was resolved to proceed to extremities against Cardinal de Noailles—so at least it was rumoured, and the public were in consternation. But the king suddenly fell sick, which prevented him from going to Parliament. He grew worse daily till the 1st of September, 1715, when he died. After his death, the regent emptied the prisons of state, which Le Tellier had filled with the opponents of this bull, and that Jesuit was himself banished to La Fleche, and afterwards to Amiens, where he died in 1719.

THE FUNERAL OF THE MASS.

CHAPTER IV.—*Against the Real Presence of Christ's Body in the Host, or Consecrated Wafer.*

1. THE Romish Doctors affirm, that immediately after the priest, in the celebration of the Mass, hath pronounced these words, *this is my body*, the body of Christ is really present in the Host, and that it is whole and entire in every part and point of the Host; which doctrine I destroy by these following arguments, the first whereof is this:

2. If a thing be created in a place, either it must be produced there, or it must come or be brought thither from some other place; for it is impossible to find out a third way of putting any thing in a place. And the Romish Doctors have hitherto been able to invent but one of these two ways of putting Christ's body in the

Metaphysics," translated from the Paris edition of 1718, into English, and published at Glasgow in 1750. "Liberty," he says, "consists in a sort of equilibrium of the will between two different objects," &c. "He," *that is, man*, makes himself either good or bad at his own choice—he turns his will towards good or evil, and he is, like God, master of his inward sentiments and operations," &c. "He is his own, he deliberates, decides and has a supreme empire over his own will," &c.

Host, the Jacobins telling us that it is brought thither from some other place, and the Jesuits that it is produced there. But the body of Christ can neither come, nor be brought thither into the Host, nor can it be produced there. Therefore the body of Christ is not in the Host.

3. First, The body of Christ cannot come, or be brought into the Host from any other place, because it can come from no place but heaven, being no where but in heaven. But Christ's body neither comes, nor is brought from heaven into the Host, which I prove thus: When a body comes, or is carried from one place to another, it must leave its first place. For example, if a man would go from Paris to Rome, he must leave Paris. But the body of Jesus Christ never leaves heaven; for *the heavens must contain him until the time of the restitution of all things.* Acts. 3. Therefore Christ's body neither comes, nor is brought from heaven into the Host. Besides, it is impossible that Christ's body should come or be brought into the Host, without passing through the space that is between heaven and earth, where the consecrated Hosts are; because a man cannot pass from one extreme to another without passing through the space that is between them. But the space between heaven and earth is too vast to be passed through in a moment (for these doctors will have it, that immediately after the pronouncing of these words, *this is my body*, the body of Christ is brought into the Host.) Moreover, it must in a moment be in all the heavens, and in all the airs between the highest heaven and this earth where the Hosts are, (because a man cannot pass through a place without being there) and then it would have three sorts of existences at once, viz., one natural and glorious existence in heaven, one sacramental existence in the Host, and one airy existence in the air. But seeing all these things are absurd, we must conclude that Christ's body neither comes nor is brought into the Host.

4. Secondly, Christ's body cannot be re-produced in the consecrated Host, because a thing that is produced already, cannot be produced again, without a preceding destruction; for as a dead man cannot be killed, nor that be annihilated, which is annihilated already; so neither can that be produced which is produced already, nor that receive a being which hath one already. This common conception of all men is founded upon this principle, that every action, whether it produceth or destroyeth a thing, must necessarily have two distinct terms, the one called in the schools, *terminus a quo*, that is, the term from which the thing comes, and the other *terminus ad quem*, that is, the term to which it comes. But according to this principle, that cannot be annihilated which is so already, nor that receive a being which hath one already, because the term from which it should come, and the term to which it should come, would be one and the same thing; contrary to the maxim already laid down, viz., that the terms of action must necessarily be distinct, and that one of them must be the negation or privation of the other.

5. Here perhaps it may be objected, that by transubstantiation the substance of Christ's body is not newly produced, but only a new presence of him in the place where the substance of the bread

was. But to this I answer, that in all substantial conversions and actions, a new substance must be produced, as in accidental, a new accident must be produced. But transubstantiation (according to the Romish doctors), is a substantial conversion. Therefore by transubstantiation a new substance must be produced. And seeing that the new presence of Christ's body in the place where the substance of the bread was, is not a substance, but an accident of the *Category* which the philosophers call *Ubi*, it is evident that by transubstantiation, the presence of Christ's body only is not produced in the place where the substance of the bread was; and seeing that the substance of Christ's body is not produced there (as hath been proved in the preceding number), we must conclude that there is no transubstantiation nor real presence of Christ's body in the Host. This instance doth also destroy the adduction of Christ's body into the Host, which hath been already refuted in number 3.

6. My second argument is this. In a true human body such as Christ's body is, there is something above, and something under, right and left, before and behind; for the head is above the neck, and the neck above the shoulders, the shoulders above the breast, the breast above the stomach, the stomach above the belly, the belly above the thighs, the thighs above the legs, &c. But all the world knows that in a point there is nothing above or under, right or left, before or behind. Therefore Christ's body is not in a point, and consequently it is not in every point, or part of the Host. To this I add, that the quantity and greatness of Christ's body is nothing else but its length, breadth, and thickness, which cannot be in a point. Lastly, The quantity of Christ's body is nothing else but its extent, as we all know; and a body is extended when it hath its parts one without another, that is, they are not one within another, as all the Jesuits expound it. But the doctrine of the presence of Christ's body in the Host, puts all its parts one within another, because it puts them all in a point. Therefore such a doctrine takes away its extent, and consequently its quantity.

7. My third argument is this. To move and not to move at the same time, to be eaten and not to be eaten at the same time, to be in a point and not in a point at the same time, to occupy a place and not to occupy it at the same time, are contradictory things. But if the body of Christ were in divers consecrated Hosts, it would move and not move at the same time. For example, when a priest carries a consecrated Host to a sick person, the body of Christ which is pretended to be in it, moves with the Host, for it leaves the altar and goes with the priest towards the sick person's house, and at the same time the body of Christ, which is pretended to be in the other Hosts that remain on the altar, moves not; and so the same body of Christ at the same time moves and moves not, which is a contradiction. Seeing then it is impossible that one and the same body, at one and the same time, should move and not move, it is likewise impossible that Christ's body should be in divers Hosts at the same time. In like manner, if Christ's body were at the same time in heaven and in the Host, it would be eaten and not eaten at the same time; for it would be eaten in the Host by the

priest, and, at the same time, it would not be eaten in heaven. Also it would be in a point and not in a point at the same time; for in the Host it would be in a point, and in heaven it would not be in a point at the same time. Therefore seeing it is impossible that one and the same body, at one and the same time, should be eaten and not eaten, should be in a point and not in a point, it is also impossible that Christ's body should be both in heaven and in the Host at the same time.

8. The fourth argument is this: Two relatives are always different, as the father and son, the husband and the wife, &c. And relation is always between two things that really differ; as the equality between two ells, the resemblance between two crows, &c. In a word, nothing can have relation to itself, but whatsoever hath relation must necessarily have it to something else, as appears by the definition of relation: But to be distant is a relative and not an absolute term; for when we conceive an absolute term we conceive but one thing, as when we conceive a crow, but when we conceive a relative term, we necessarily conceive two things. For example, we cannot conceive a crow to be like, without conceiving something else to which it is like. Seeing then we cannot conceive a thing to be distant without conceiving something else from which it is distant, it is evident that to be distant is a relative term; and that distant things are relatives, and consequently are really different. Whence I form this argument: Relative things are really different, as hath been proved. But the body that is at Rome is distant from that which is at Paris, by reason of the space of about 300 leagues that is between those two cities; and the body that is in the highest heavens, is distant from that which is upon earth, by reason of the many thousands of leagues that are between heaven and earth: therefore the body that is at Rome is different from that which is at Paris; and that which is in heaven, is different from that which is upon earth; and consequently, one and the same body cannot be at the same time at Rome and at Paris, in heaven and upon earth; else one and the same body might be distant and different from itself, which is a contradiction: Therefore seeing Jesus Christ is not distant and different from himself, it follows that he cannot be at the same time in heaven and in the Host, nor at the same time in the consecrated Hosts at Rome and at Paris.

9. But perhaps it may be said that a body, being at the same time in two distant places, is not distant from itself, but that the places only are distant; and, therefore, that Christ's body in heaven is not distant from itself in the Host, but it is the places only, viz., heaven and earth (where the Host is) that are distant. To this I answer, that it is only the distance of places that makes the distance of things existing in those distant places. For example: The reason why Peter that is at Rome is distant from Paul that is at Paris, is not because they are two things really different, else they would be always distant, even when they are in one bed together (for they are always really different), but all the reason of their distance is, because they are in two distant places. Seeing then (according to our adversaries) that Christ's body is in two

distant places at once, viz., in heaven and in the Host, at Rome and at Paris in divers Hosts, it follows that Christ's body is distant, and different from itself. And seeing it is impossible that it should be distant and different from itself, it is evident that it cannot be in two distant places at once; and consequently not in heaven and in the Host.

10. Besides, suppose that Peter could be at Rome and at Paris at once, and that Peter that is at Rome should have a mind to go to Paris and should go accordingly; and that the same Peter that is at Paris should have a mind to go to Rome, and should go accordingly, it is certain that Peter would draw near to himself and meet himself. But things that draw near to each other, must of necessity have been at a distance before, and therefore if a body draws near to itself it is certain that it was distant from itself before. And hereupon I would fain ask our adversaries, whether, when Peter should meet himself, he would let himself pass, or not? and if he should let himself pass, whether Peter going to Rome, would step aside and give way to himself going to Paris, or else the contrary? But if he should not step aside and give place to himself, I would ask whether he would hinder himself from passing or not? and if he should not hinder himself from passing, whether he would pass through himself, and so make another Janus with two faces, &c. Whatsoever answers they shall make to these questions must (I am sure), be very absurd and ridiculous.

11. The fifth argument is this. It is a perfect contradiction, that a body should be one and not one. But if Christ's body should be at the same time in the heaven, and upon earth in the Host, it would be one and not one; for it would be one by our adversaries' own confession, and it would not be one; which I prove thus. That a thing may be one, it must neither be divided in itself, nor from itself, as appears by the definition of unity; and it is certain that nothing is divided or separated from itself. But if Christ's body be at the same time in heaven, and upon earth in the Host, it will be divided and separated from itself, that which is in heaven being divided and separated from that which is upon earth, because it is not in the space between both.

12. Here again it may be objected, that a body in divers places is divided from itself locally, because the places in which it is are divided; but not entitatively, because it is still one and the same entity of body. To which I answer. I. That entitative division (which is nothing else but a plurality of beings, or a plurality of things really different) is no true division, for then the three divine persons which are really different, would also be really divided; and the body and soul of a living man which do really differ, would also be really divided. II. I say, that if a body be divided and separated from bodies which it toucheth, it is also divided and separated from bodies which it doth not touch; and if a body be divided and separated from bodies to which it is near, it is also divided and separated from bodies that are far distant from it; but especially the division is true, when between two there be bodies of divers natures, to which there is no union. Therefore, seeing that between Christ's body, which is really in heaven, and the same

body, which is pretendedly upon earth in the consecrated Hosts, there be divers bodies of divers natures, to which it is not united; it is evident by our adversaries' own doctrine, that Christ's body is really divided and separated from itself, and seeing it is impossible it should be separated from itself, it is also impossible that it should be in heaven and in the Host at the same time. III. I say, that local division takes away entitative division, and things that are divided locally, are also divided entitatively; that is, they are also really different; else no reason can be given why two glasses of water taken from the same fountain, are really different, seeing these waters are alike in all things, except in reference to place; and there can no reason be given why the ocean is not one single drop of water only, reproduced in all places occupied by the ocean, except it be that one drop of water cannot be reproduced in all those places, but if it be possible, then reason obligeth us to believe that it is really so, because God and nature do nothing in vain; and it is in vain to do that by many things, which may be done by one thing; and if it be really so, then it follows, that all the sea battles that ever have been, were fought in one drop of water, and many thousands of men have been drowned in one drop of water, and people since *Adam* have drunk but one drop of water, which things are absurd and ridiculous.

[To be Continued.]

ARE RULING ELDERS PRESBYTERS OR NOT? IF THEY ARE PRESBYTERS, HOW SHOULD THEY BE ORDAINED? AND WHAT PART SHOULD THEY TAKE IN PRESBYTERIAL ORDINATIONS?

We take the following paragraph from the *Presbyterian of the West* (published at Springfield, Ohio,) for June 2.

"The question mooted by some few individuals, respecting the right of Ruling Elders to assist in the ordination of ministers was decided, by an almost unanimous vote, to adhere to what has been the almost uniform practice of the church in former days. This will be followed, I presume, with a protest from Dr. Breckinridge."

The initials (J. S. G.) signed to this paragraph—which was part of a letter written from Philadelphia during the late sessions of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church in the United States of America—seem very plainly to designate the *Rev'd John S. Galloway*—a very respectable member of that body from the Presbytery of Miami, in the Synod of Cincinnati. His allusion to the editor of this periodical, by name, in such a matter—though evidently not intended in the way of compliment, is not taken unkindly at all. It is true, Mr. G. seems to think our opinions on the important subject referred to, are against those held by nearly all the members of the last Assembly; and also against "the almost uniform practice of the church in former days." This may be so, or it may not. One thing we beg our brother Galloway to bear in mind, and his public allusion to us, may justify this reference; however we may have been obliged, more than once, within our

comparatively brief career in the ecclesiastical courts, to stand up against "almost unanimous votes," and against "almost uniform practice"—we have never yet taken such a stand, without afterwards seeing on our side, and that very soon, the great majority of our ministers, elders and people. We stood nearly alone, in 1831, in resisting the seating of a committee man for a Ruling Elder, in the General Assembly. How many are now for such a practice? We stood nearly alone in 1832, in pronouncing the church of Rome to be the synagogue of Satan; how many now differ from us, in our communion? We stood nearly alone, five years ago, in opposing paid agencies and ecclesiastical corporations; how long will it be, before both are laid aside? We stood absolutely alone, as late as 1834 in urging the restoration of the office of deacon in our churches; who now opposes it? And here we predict, that with God's blessing, ten years will not pass, perhaps not five, till the office of Ruling Elder is restored to its rights and dignity, and that by a consent as general, as in the cases above stated, and divers others that might be enumerated.

The facts in the present case, so far as the action of the last Assembly is concerned, stand thus. On Tuesday morning, May 24, being the 5th day of our sessions, the Committee of Bills and Overtures, reported overture, "No. 11, A communication from the Presbytery of the Western District on the subject of allowing Ruling Elders to unite in the imposition of hands in the ordination of Bishops." The Committee with a flourish of trumpets, which was just so much breath wasted, condemn the practice. At the same time, the same Committee reported "No. 13, An overture from the Presbytery of South Alabama, on the subject of ordaining Elders and Deacons by the imposition of hands." And here, with another flourish, the committee recommend that each church session "determine the mode of ordination in this respect;" although God in his holy word, had plainly determined it already. And the house, without more ado, adopted both recommendations without debate, question, or examination—as we were informed. We were out of the house at the moment; and when we ascertained what had been done, we procured a motion to reconsider both votes, to be made, and had that motion laid over for consideration, at some time of leisure on the part of the Assembly. No such moment arrived; and by general consent, both votes were afterwards reconsidered, and the whole matter, with much other business, referred to the next Assembly—simply because the last was unable to attend to it.

So far then as the votes of the Assembly go, there is about as much proof that the body was for as against our opinion. But we fear the bulk of our ministers really have a sort of notion that they are somewhat more than mere Presbyters; and we are not without apprehensions, that if the vote were now taken, the majority of them would so decide. But this is nothing. They are generally learned and candid men, and a little examination of the merits of the question will bring every thing right. Or if in this we are mistaken, and the leaven of high-churchism on one hand and Independency on the other, still so far works amongst us, as to make

the bulk of our ministers desirous of being semi-prelates themselves while they reduce the Ruling Elders to a state of ecclesiastical inanity; why, in that case, the controversy will only have to be prolonged, till our Elders, who are of right the majority in most of our church courts, get to see the absolute ruin that impends over their office, which indeed Christ has established—and then the end of the matter is clear and sure. We ask nothing, but that the subject be carefully, candidly and scripturally examined.

It was our purpose, when the subject should come up in the last Assembly, to offer a minute expressive of those principles which it appears to us, are clearly set forth in the word of God on this matter. We therefore drew up the paper printed below, and should have advocated the adoption of it, if a suitable occasion had presented itself. We now print it, hoping that, as the subject will probably be before the next Assembly, this notice of it, may have some influence in encouraging its more careful study, before our highest church court is called to decide it. It will certainly be a great evil in itself, and would tend only to evil, to have such a question erroneously decided by that venerable court.

The proposed minute.

I. There are three modes of ordination; viz., 1, By a single Bishop, which is Prelacy. 2. By the whole brotherhood, which is Independency. 3. By the Presbytery, which is Presbyterianism; and this last, we judge to be the true, scriptural mode of ordination, whether of ministers, elders, or deacons. For the church session is a parochial Presbytery; and evangelists and committees of Presbytery, act by the authority of the Presbytery.

II. The particular method of ordaining church officers, set forth in the word of God, is by prayer and imposition of hands, attended with fasting.

III. Ruling Elders, are Presbyters, ordained by a parochial Presbytery, or by authority of a larger Presbytery. They are ordained for permanently bearing rule in a particular congregation, as members of the parochial Presbytery; and are to sit by delegation of the church session as representatives of the people, in Presbytery and Synod; and by delegation from the Presbytery in the General Assembly. They constitute an organic portion of all our church courts, and in all except the church session, should be at least as numerous as the ministers, and in the church session more so.

IV. in answer, therefore, to the two questions put to this Assembly by lower courts, it is replied, 1, That Ruling Elders, being Presbyters, must be Presbyterially ordained, viz., by such a Presbytery as they permanently belong to, that is, a parochial Presbytery—or by the authority of a larger Presbytery; and this ordination, is to be by prayer and imposition of hands, with fasting. 2. That Ruling Elders, members of church session ought to partake in the ordination of new Elders; and that Ruling elders who sit in Presbytery should partake, in all ordinations by their Presbytery—laying on their hands with those of the Preaching Elders, in ordinations.

ARCHIBALD MCQUEEN, APPELLANT FROM A DECISION OF THE PRESBYTERY OF FAYETTEVILLE, BEFORE THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, IN A CASE OF INCEST.—OPINION DELIVERED BY ROBERT J. BRECKINRIDGE, ONE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE HIGHEST SPIRITUAL COURT.

MODERATOR. I ought not, perhaps, to trouble you and this venerable court with more than the conclusions to which I have come in this case. For it has been argued at very unusual length and with much ability by the gentlemen respectively representing Mr. McQueen and the majority of the Presbytery of Fayetteville.* And what has been advanced by members of the court called by the clerk before reaching my name, has been, as it seems to me, so conclusive, as to render further elucidation of the views I take of this case, the less necessary. It is, however, obvious, that a difference of opinion upon the principles that controul this case exists in this body; and members whose minds incline to opposite conclusions, have been urgent with me, to explain the grounds of my own fixed judgment in regard to it. A duty, I the more readily undertake, as I cannot help thinking that the decision to which this General Assembly will come in this case, will either tend greatly to arrest a most pernicious practice which is extending in the country, or will break down one of the last barriers against the general toleration of a connexion, which our standards pronounce incestuous, and which, I believe, is prohibited by God. In such a case it is greatly to be desired that our decision should be clear, final, and if possible, with common consent; and no one has a right to withhold any suggestions that may, by the divine blessing, conduce to such a result.

On the 5th day of January, 1842, the Presbytery of Fayetteville, being met at Bethel church, in the county of Robeson and state of North Carolina, proceeded on the ground of *common fame*, according to our forms, (*Dis. ch. iv.*) to arraign the Appellant in this case, *Archibald McQueen*, then a minister in regular standing and a member of said Presbytery—on a charge of *Incest*, for having shortly before that taken to wife Mary McCloud, the sister of his deceased wife. It appears from the record that this marriage was celebrated on the sabbath day; and it is known, *aliunde*, that it was the third marriage of the appellant. Upon this arraignment and charge the Presbytery convicted Mr. McQueen, and proceeded to suspend him from the gospel ministry and from church privileges—until he repent. From this decision Mr. McQueen took his appeal, at first to the Synod of North Carolina; but afterwards, viz., on the 1st day of April, he appeared before the Presbytery, then met at Centre church, in the county and state aforesaid—and at his own request, was allowed to prosecute his appeal directly to this General Assembly.

When the record in this case, was put into my hands at an early

* REV. DR. KREBS of New York, and REV. MR. McIVER of N. C.—The case having been taken up at first on *general rumor*, there was no prosecutor.

day of our present sessions, as the chairman of the Committee on the Judicial business of the Assembly; I brought the questions of form involved in it distinctly before the house, and advised that the case should not be tried; 1, because the usual and orderly course of discipline required it to go first to the Synod of North Carolina (Dis. ch. vii. sec. iii. sub. sec. 6;) and there were no special reasons known to us, why this established and most proper order should be departed from in this case: 2, because it was inconvenient and irregular if not illegal, to try the case at all or to consider it prosecuted at all, in the absence of the appellant (Dis. ch. vii. sec. iii. sub. sec. 11.) especially as there are no reasons known to us, which justify such a procedure, even though requested by him, in his absence. When the Assembly overruled these suggestions and the Judicial Committee directed me to report the case as in order and ready for trial; I again attempted to give a different shape to the business, and moved a resolution remanding the cause for trial below, and expressing the sense of the Assembly as clear and fixed that the doctrine of our standards on the subject of prohibited marriages is in full accordance with the word of God and ought to be righteously enforced without respect of persons. But when it seemed evident, that the Assembly thought it would not only be best to meet the question at once, in which I fully agree; but also to decide it judicially rather than abstractly, which was contrary to my opinion; I withdrew all farther opposition to the present proceeding. Whatever immediate damage, therefore, the unfortunate parties here implicated may come to, through any instrumentality of mine in upholding the great and permanent interests of truth, will be against my wishes and contrary to my judgment as to the proper manner of adjudicating this case.

Mr. McQueen assigns upon the record, five reasons of appeal. The substance of the 1st reason is that the decisions of our highest judicatories have not uniformly sustained the illegality of such marriages; of the 2d, that if affinity is made a ground of prohibiting marriages, the peace of many virtuous families will be disturbed; of the 3d, that the members of the court below were governed by the Confession of Faith, though they doubted the scripturalness of their own decision; of the 4th, that the minds of the persons who tried him below were made up as to his guilt, before they tried him; of the 5th, that the decision of the Presbytery condemning him "is evidently at variance with God's word." The first four of these reasons do not seem to me to require any special notice, or to possess any particular weight, in the present aspect of the case. Even if they were all true, they would afford no justification, nor even an excuse to a minister of the gospel to commit an offence of the nature of that here charged; and cannot surely be deemed sufficient to acquit him here. The 5th reason goes to the whole ground of the proceeding; and though it is very unusual to hear one of our ministers plainly denying the truth of our standards, and attempting to shield himself from the discipline of the church by openly denying its doctrines; yet, if indeed the assertion of our Confession of Faith (chap. xxiv.) that God forbids such marriages as it is proved and confessed the appellant has per-

petrated, and the sentence of the Presbytery upholding this assertion, are not true, nor consistent with, but "evidently at variance with God's word"—as is asserted; then indeed great injustice has been done, and we are bound to redress it amply. For however we may venerate our Confession of Faith, we do so because it seems to us to embody and set forth the plain and precious doctrine of God. And I liken the present case, not as some who have preceded me do, to that of a suitor at the bar of a civil tribunal impeaching the very constitution of the land; but rather to that of one trying the laws by the constitution itself, and invoking the court to look back to the sacred fountain of all law. And I the more willingly admit such a defence to be made out, if it can be done, because, besides the solemn duty we are all under to hold for God's will nothing but what is his will—we are also obliged, as I think, to be always ready to prove those standards which we gather up out of God's word, to be rightly and truly composed out of divine truth, and impregnably established thereupon.

The whole question, therefore, now submitted to us is this—*Does God in the Holy Scriptures, forbid a man to marry the full sister of his deceased wife?* If he does, Archibald McQueen is guilty; if not, he may be innocent.

1. In deciding this point, the *first* consideration, and the one which appears to me to lie at the foundation of the subject—may be expressed in the question, *Is there any law of marriage revealed in the word of God?* If there is not, then this trial and this discussion are at an end. For we sit here a court of the church of God, not a court instituted by the law of nature or that of the state; a court to try and decide no other than spiritual offences, that is, offences against that religion revealed by God. If God has revealed no permanent law about marriage, we have no jurisdiction about marriage; and in that case amongst the largest and most important parts of those duties which fall under what we commonly call the second table of the law, that is the last six commandments, cease to be moral obligations; and the violations of them, though involving the deepest turpitude and spreading the widest misery, cannot properly affect the religious standing of men, nor subject them to spiritual censures. These things are too absurd and too horrible to need refutation. And yet, if God has revealed any law of marriage and armed it with any prohibitions—that very law and those very prohibitions, are the rules which it is necessary to make void, upon some pretext or other, in order to allow the connexion now under consideration. For it is all one, whether we deny that God has given any law of marriage; or whether, while we admit in general terms that he has, we abrogate that law, by making part of it relate to uncleanness, by nullifying part of it as belonging to the ceremonial system, and by frittering away the remainder by our glosses.

A great deal has been said about the instinct of our nature, the public sentiment, and the general principles of all law—as a safe basis for this question of the allowed degrees of blood and affinity in marriage. But it seems to be forgotten that it is an instinct, a sentiment, and a law enlightened and regulated by a Christian

education and tracing back to these very divine institutions which it is sought to overthrow, that can alone be trusted, if they can be even then, to decide such questions. For the most defiled of the brute creation have not gone to more revolting extremes, than many polished nations have done on these very subjects; and no people, destitute of the Bible, has failed to allow and practice enormities, at which all of us shudder. The Romans and Greeks allowed the very nearest relations not in the direct line of decent, to intermarry; and brothers and sisters of the half blood, and uncles and nieces of the full, have been no where prohibited by law from forming such connexions. Amongst nearly every oriental nation of antiquity, the marriage of parents with their children was not only allowed but common; and learned men tell us, that amongst the ancient Persians whose religion was more rational and their manners purer than those of most of their neighbours, the Magi, who were their religious teachers, were men begotten by sons of their own mothers.

It is impossible, I think, for the candid reader of the Bible to deny that it is full of passages wholly incapable of being understood except upon the distinct admission, that it contains a clear, full, and explicit declaration of God's mind in regard to the solemn contract of marriage; which, however it may be regulated by civil forms, or founded upon ultimate principles of nature, neither of which do I question, is as to its institution and fundamental laws, unquestionably divine. Such are the declarations of God before and when he created Eve, and his directions to Adam when he delivered her to his longing embrace—(Gen. ii. 18–24.) Such is the evident foundation of the fifth, the seventh, and the tenth commandments. Such is the sense of our Saviour's repeated discourses on this very subject—(Matt. xix. 4; Mark x. 6.) And such the instruction constantly given by his apostles—(Eph. v. 22–33; 1 Peter iii. 1–6, &c.) I conclude, therefore, that God has revealed a law of marriage.

2. The second question to be determined is this, *Does the divine law of marriage appertain exclusively to the Jewish dispensation whether political or ceremonial, or does it form a part of the permanent and universally binding law of God?*

The considerations which lead me to decide that it belongs to this latter class, are such as the following. In the first place, marriage was not a part of the ceremonial dispensation, nor did it appertain exclusively to the political institutions of the Jews; it appertains to the universal race, and to every possible state of man's being in this life. It is therefore as unreasonable to maintain that the divine laws regulating marriage are abolished by the coming of Christ, as that those regarding any other equally permanent interest or relation of the human race are. When to this reflection we add the plain declarations of our Saviour, that he came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it, and that not a tittle should pass from it till all is fulfilled—(Matt. v. 17–19,) it seems impossible to avoid the conclusion, that as long as marriage exists amongst men, God's law regarding marriage must remain in full force.

Again, it is to be remembered that the divine law of marriage was revealed long before the Jewish state existed or the ceremonial law was given to it; nay, as we are taught both in the Old Testament and the New, "from the beginning of the creation"—(Mark x. 6; Gen. i. 27, ii. 18:) and that, after the ceremonial law was abolished and indeed after the doom of the Jewish state was finally sealed, this law of husband and wife is placed on the same footing as the law of parent and child, master and servant, nay as that of universal brotherhood and Christian charity, and so pressed upon the consciences of Christian people as permanently obligatory—(Col. ch. iii.) It is therefore wholly impossible to limit this law to the polity of the Jews, or abolish it with the ceremonial dispensation.

Nor can we forget, that God has once and again condemned and deeply chastised nations for transgressions of the law of marriage, when it is confessed on all hands, those nations could not possibly know, and were under no sort of obligations to obey, the ceremonial regulations or the political institutions of the Jews. The determination of God to destroy the old world for its enormous wickedness ages before Moses was born, is recorded in immediate connexion with the alleged general violation of the law of marriage and the substitution of carnal passions in the place of divine commands on this very subject; and it is not a little remarkable, that after an interval of nearly thirty four centuries, one of these violated laws is again carefully expounded, by an inspired apostle to a Gentile church—(Compare Gen. vi. 1-7, with 2 Cor. vi. 14.) And so when God reiterated to the Jews the very prohibitions which we are to interpret in the case before us, he put on record for everlasting instruction the fact that both the Egyptians whom he had already so fearfully visited, and the Canaanites whom he was about to cut off, had committed all the abominations—for so he called them—thus prohibited; and he plainly declares, that for "these abominable customs"—amongst which incestuous marriages were prominent—the land itself was defiled and vomited out her inhabitants—and God visited it and them in terrible wrath—(See the xviii. ch of Leviticus, throughout.) With such facts before us, how absurd is it to say that the divine law of marriage, and of course of incest, was not and is not, of permanent and universal obligation?

It is proper to be observed here, that the only restrictions on marriage, on account of nearness of blood or affinity which are contained in the Bible, must stand or fall as we decide the question now immediately under consideration. If the law against incestuous marriages revealed by Moses, is not obligatory on us, then there are no prohibitions in God's word, which render it improper for men to marry—as they did whom God destroyed by the flood—according to the unbridled dictates of lust—"and take them wives of all which they choose."—(Gen. vi. 2.) If there be no law about marriage, then as I have before shown, there can be no moral obligation and no sin about it. If the prohibitions on marriage are to be reasoned away, because they are found in their full force and in detail no where but in the Pentateuch; then, even though

there remain a divine law of *marriage*, there is no divine law of *incest*, and men may, at pleasure, marry their own sisters, or if they prefer it, their mothers or their daughters, by the same scriptural warrant that they marry the sisters of their deceased wives. So horrible is the conclusion at which we arrive if we deny that the divine law of marriage, and that too in its great and general features as plainly set forth by Moses, is of permanent and universal obligation. I conclude therefore that this law is still binding.

3. The *third* question to be considered is this. *Do those prohibitions which we find connected with what has been proved to be a permanent law of marriage, in fact restrain marriage connexions, or do they relate only to uncleanness?*

I suppose, by all fair exposition the prohibitions must relate to the subject matter of the law to which they are attached; and that they must be considered as permanent as the law itself. And as the law has been shown to relate to marriage, and to be universally binding, so must the restrictions also. But as it is strenuously contended, that the prohibitions in the book of *Leviticus* do not necessarily apply to the institution of marriage, and doubt is thus attempted to be thrown over the whole subject of incest; I will suggest such considerations as make me judge differently.

And in the first place it is to be observed that the words of the command are as general and as precise as they possibly could be. "None of you shall *approach* to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover their nakedness"—(Lev. xviii. 6.) The words necessarily forbid marriage. Whatever else they may mean, they do not admit of being translated, much less interpreted so as to exclude marriage; and such has been the general opinion, always. All sexual intercourse, between certain persons, is absolutely forbidden. Who the persons are, will be subsequently considered; but the nature of the prohibition, cannot, I should suppose, be a matter of reasonable doubt.

Let it be remembered, moreover, that all sexual intercourse, out of wedlock, was already and universally prohibited; so that this and similar *special* prohibitions, would not only be useless, if that was their sense; but their direct effect would be to weaken, by limiting, the previous and more express and general commandment. Besides, if it were to be so understood, it is hard to see how they who would so interpret it, could, upon their principles of exposition, fail to make the law allow all uncleanness not precisely forbidden. And thus we shall have incestuous marriages allowed universally, and uncleanness except in a few prohibited cases between near kindred.

But again, if we consider the whole of the special enactments following the general principle asserted in the sixth verse, we cannot, I should think, fail to see that the restrictions are really upon marriage, and not upon illicit intercourse only, which, as I have said, is, by other prohibitions unlawful in all cases. For example in the 18th verse, "thou shalt not take a wife to her sister," &c.; if the word wife, really means *wife* here—and it is hard to see how it can mean any thing else—then my present argument is complete—and these prohibitions belong to the law of marriage. Again,

in ch. xx. 14, "if a man take a wife and and her mother," &c. the same truth is apparent. I therefore conclude that these are restrictions on marriage, prohibiting it in certain cases; and that it is against the law of God and incestuous to marry within these degrees.

4. The fourth question which we must determine is this:—*Are these prohibitions founded on consanguinity only, or also upon affinity?*

The mere perusal of the law would seem to settle this question. In Leviticus xviii. 6—18, the general principle is first laid down, and then thirteen specifications are given under it; or if we count the specification in the 7th verse as double, though the relationship is the same precisely, then we have fourteen specifications. Now in six or seven out of these thirteen or fourteen specifications, which contain expressly and most fully the law of incest—there is not the slightest consanguinity between the parties who are forbidden to marry, under the severest penalties; not one drop of common blood exists—but *affinity* only, is the total ground of the prohibition.

In order to make the laws of God obligatory on mankind, it is not indispensable that we should be able in all cases to penetrate his eternal councils, and draw forth the secret ground of reason or goodness on which he lays them. Nor is it indispensable to the upholding of the divine institutions, that we should be able to point out to the satisfaction of all gainsayers, their superiority to those vaunted instincts of man, laws of nature, and principles of general polity. In the present case, however, God has been pleased to explain to us, the principle on which he selects the wife out of her family and the husband out of his, and makes them alone of all their respective families bear, each to the family of the other, the very same relation they do to their own; that is, the ground on which he places these prohibitions of *affinity*. Out of a portion of the first man did God make the first woman, and gave her to him, to be his wife; and Adam said "this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." And God added that the relationship thus formed was nearer than that of parent and child, for "they shall be one flesh"—(Gen. ii. 21—25.) A doctrine emphatically reiterated by our divine Saviour, (Matt. xix. 3—9;) and used by the Apostle Paul (Eph. v. 22—33) to illustrate the real but mysterious union of Christ and his church. However inexplicable this oneness produced by a marriage approved of God, may be in its nature, it is nevertheless real, and as to the effects which flow from it touching the matter now in hand perfectly simple. I therefore conclude that affinity is as really and as decisively a ground of divine prohibition of marriage, as consanguinity. As to the present matter, a sister by affinity, is in the sight of God as really a sister, as a sister by consanguinity.

5. These preliminary questions have now conducted us to the main point. *Do any of these prohibitions of God's law cover the case here litigated?* This is a matter in regard to which we cannot give a wrong decision at the present time, without doing such evil as we all shrink from committing. May God enable us to decide it truly and righteously.

The most obvious consideration which suggests itself here is, that this question is by no means new; and that there has been comparatively but little diversity of opinion in regard to it. The doctrine of our own standards is perfectly explicit. "The man may not marry any of his wife's kindred nearer in blood than he may of his own, nor the woman of her husband's kindred nearer in blood than of her own."—(Confession of Faith, ch. xxiv. 4.) Unless, therefore, Mr. McQueen was permitted by the law of God to marry his own sister, he was not permitted to marry the sister of his wife; and, so far at least, I the more confidently rely on the considerations I have already advanced, as they conduct me to the same abstract conclusion at which the illustrious men who formed our standards arrived, viz., that consanguinity and affinity stand in precisely the same category. I quote the words of our standards not as *conclusive*, since the appeal is by common consent to the Scriptures; but, they are surely *prima facie*, at least to us; and it is the more important to state our common doctrine clearly, as it has been argued and asserted on this floor, that our standards are not without some obscurity in the premises. It seems to me also, that as these standards are a common bond between us all, to which we have formally and solemnly given our assent—a mutual and public covenant, highly important to peace and general confidence amongst us; the true posture of the business before us, is not as it has been argued, that the appellant must be acquitted unless it can be shown from the scriptures, and independently of our standards that he is guilty; but that he stands before us, *prima facie* guilty, under the rule he has himself voluntarily adopted—and that when he denies, at this late day, and after the act committed, the scripturalness of this portion of his solemn covenant with us and with God's church—it is his part to prove the alleged iniquity of our common confession. I do not ask him to prove himself innocent; but the marriage being proved and confessed, and the mutual covenant between him and us pronouncing that marriage to be incest, he alleges (in his 5th reason of appeal,) that this is contrary to scripture. The *onus* therefore is on him; *prima facie*, the word of God is against him; and instead of begging for the benefit of our doubts, as has been done for him, those doubts are legitimately with our standards and not with him.

The past decisions of the church courts are also referred to in the appeal, and largely insisted on in argument. I draw from these a conclusion opposite to that arrived at by the advocate of the appellant. It is true that for more than a century past, marriages within degrees of affinity judged by our Confession to be prohibited, have been occasionally contracted by members of our church, and brought before the church courts. I also admit, after an attentive examination of most of the adjudicated cases, that our lower courts have decided such cases variously; and that the highest court has not been perfectly consistent with itself, nor always gone to the full extent of the definitions of our Confession or the requirements of our Discipline. Nevertheless, I must insist that the spirit of all the decisions of this General Assembly from its very origin, and the general drift of all the decisions in all our church courts,

taken in the mass, upon the subject of incest—are with and not against my construction of the law of God. I do not find a single case, in which a single principle on which the act of the appellant can be justified, was established; but many condemning his main reasons of appeal. I do not find that this Assembly ever relieved a party appellant at its bar, by a judicial sentence reversing a sentence of a court below, in any case of incest. I cannot discover that as near a case of affinity as the present one was ever brought up here before, except the case of McCrimmon, nearly twenty years ago, from one of the churches of this same Presbytery of Fayetteville, and with which therefore Mr. McQueen was probably familiar; and in that case the Assembly gave no relief, and the Presbyteries, on the question sent down for the alteration of our doctrine of incest, refused by a decisive majority to make any change. I therefore take courage from the whole current of decisions, and confidently assert my conviction to be that an attentive study of them from the origin of our church organization in this country, would lead us to place its general testimony along with its authorised Confession as evidence conducing to show that God's word, rightly construed, condemns such marriages as the one under consideration.

If we turn our attention to the general current of opinion in the church of God in all ages, we shall see reason to be convinced that our own branch of the Redeemer's kingdom has not been singular in its judgment on this subject. The Apostle Paul rebuked the Corinthian church, for tolerating a man who had committed incest with his father's wife, (1 Cor. v. 1;) and John the Baptist lost his life for his fidelity in warning the tetrarch Herod that it was not lawful for him to have his brother's wife—(Matt. xiv. 3, 4; Mark vi. 18.) I am aware the force of these scriptures is attempted to be parried by playing on the word *wife*; but any one who will examine the scriptures will find *wife* put for *widow* so continually, that I consider such criticisms unworthy of special notice; especially when it is remembered that, by the law of God, the taking of any body's *wife*, while the husband lives, is so plainly forbidden and was so perfectly known both to Paul and John the Baptist, that their laying any special emphasis on the affinity in these cases, provided the first marriage still subsisted, is wholly unintelligible. There has been an attempt made, also, to prove that these scriptures cannot mean what they are cited to prove, since the Jews (as their Reader, Mr. Lessor of Philadelphia and others, are quoted to prove,) never considered the law of incest as forbidding a man to marry the sister of his wife; and therefore John the Baptist at least must be differently understood. In reply, I cite Philo Judæus, who says in so many words, expressly writing of the laws of his people, that "two sisters were not permitted to marry one husband, either at the same time or successively."—(*Philonis Judæi, &c. Basil. 1554, p. 490. De Specialibus Legibus.*) John Selden, too, has been referred to as establishing the fact that the Jewish church so construed the laws of Moses as to permit a man to marry his wife's sister. This is an error; Selden expressly asserts the contrary, both in his *Hebrew Wife* (Lib. i. ch. 1,) and in his *Law of Nature and Nations*—

(Lib. v. ch. x.) Grotius, also has been cited, to the same point; but he also is mis-quoted; for treating expressly of the matter he says (in his book *On the Law of War and Peace*, lib. ii. cap. v. sec. xiii. and xiv.) that the prohibitions, both on account of consanguinity and affinity, which are contained in the xviii. ch. of Leviticus, are obligatory on all men; and supports his opinion by a variety of considerations, amongst which, (contradicting the judgment and assertion of Mr. Lessor,) is the judgment of the ancient Hebrews, which he proves by citing Moses Maimonides in the text, and Philo Judeus in a note. An effort has also been made to cast odium on the restriction which our standards after the divine law establish, by saying it had its origin in the church of Rome; to which I reply, many of the earliest Christian councils whose decrees have come down to us, show that this notion is entirely incorrect. The second canon of the Council of Neocæsaria, held A. D. 314, is levelled against women that married two brothers, and men that married two sisters; and excludes such persons from the church while they live in this forbidden connexion. The Council of Elvira or Illiberrita, held A. D. 305, in its sixty-first canon forbids a man to marry the sister of his deceased wife; which Mendoza (ch. xlix.) specially notes was a virtual abrogation by the Christian church of the old Roman law; and Apuleius (Apol. 2,) shows to have agreed with that of the Jews. These decisions were rendered at least two centuries before the earliest date assigned for the commencement of the Roman apostacy; and before the church of Christ was corrupted by worldly prosperity. And if there was need, abundance of similar proofs could be produced that the doctrine of the primitive church was the same as our own on this whole subject.

Certainly no question ever received a more thorough or more anxious investigation, than this of the binding obligation of these prohibitions of marriage did at the era of the Reformation of the sixteenth century; and none was ever settled by a more unanimous consent of the learning and piety of mankind. Henry VIII. of England had married the wife of his deceased brother, had lived many years with her, and had several children by her; when becoming uneasy in his conscience, he sought long, earnestly and in vain, from the pope, a dissolution of the marriage, which had been contracted at first upon a dispensation from Rome; but which the Pope, through fear of the Emperor, Charles V., who was nephew to the Queen of England, long delayed, and at last refused to grant. Upon the suggestion of Cranmer, the question was submitted to the principal universities, scholars and ecclesiastics of Europe; and it is known, that nearly with one accord, the decision was that the marriage was null, as being contrary to the law of God; an opinion in which nearly all the reformers appear to have concurred, and which was engrafted into the faith of all the reformed churches. It is at least curious, that the very thing God had denounced, and which Henry so much apprehended, occurred nearly as threatened; for not only did all the king's children, by Catherine, die without issue, but though he had a large family, of whom no less than three mounted the throne, his race ended in the first generation.

When we reflect that the spirit of God has been in his church always, and that such things as have been generally received by it, as taught in the divine word, have a powerful if not a controlling presumption in their favour; we ought to be extremely clear in our convictions, before we set ourselves openly against a doctrine thus established. I therefore consider such testimonies not only legitimate but very weighty, in conducting to show what the true sense of the scripture may be; and the more difficult the passage, the more importance should we attach to such helps in ascertaining its true meaning.

To the law, however, and to the testimony? What saith God? "None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover their nakedness: I am the Lord"—(Lev. xviii. 6.) Here is the general statute. It runs in the terrible name of Jehovah; "I am the Lord." Let those who violate it remember with whom they have to do. This is followed (verses 7-18,) by various specifications, of such "near of kin" as are forbidden to marry; of which, as I have said, there are fourteen particular cases, seven of the fourteen being cases of *affinity only*. So that on the face of the law, *affinity* is "near of kin;" and its very terms forbid such marriages.

Here then is the *reason* of the law. Certain persons must not wed because they are "near of kin." And here is its own exposition—persons become "near of kin," within the meaning of the law, by *affinity*. And that *reason* of the law is founded on this consideration (verse 17) that for "near of kin" by affinity to wed, "is wickedness;" which is farther enforced (ch. xx. 21,) by this additional consideration that such marriages of "near of kin" by affinity—are not only "wickedness," but are also "an unclean thing." No law was ever based on clearer reasons or backed by more explicit statements; and no terms could more precisely cover such cases as that before us.

Now the principle of affinity being thus incorporated in the law and based upon such considerations, the question is, within what compass do the specifications of that principle confine its operation? How far does it reach? I will state the seven cases of affinity. A man may not marry, 1, his father's wife, (verse 8,) 2, his father's brother's wife, (v. 14,) 3, his son's wife, (v. 15,) 4, his brother's wife, (v. 16,) 5, his wife's daughter, (v. 17,) 6, his wife's grand-daughter, (v. 17,) 7, his wife's sister, (v. 18.) In regard to the 18th verse, I will speak more particularly again. But it will at once be seen, that if we leave that verse wholly out of the question, then of the remaining six specifications, two, the 1st and 3d, though in the direct line, cannot be said to be as near as the case before us, at least it cannot be affirmed that a man is more of kin either to his father or his son (of each of whom the common blood with his own is just one half,) than he is to himself; one, the 4th, is of the very same degree as the case before us; and the remaining three, the 2d, 5th, and 6th, are evidently more remote. All these cases are called (verse 6) cases of '*near kin*;' cases 5 and 6, which are more remote than the one before us, are called (verse 17,) cases of "wickedness;" and case 4, which is precisely the degree before us, is called (ch. xx, 21,) "an unclean thing."

The principle, therefore, on which affinity restrains marriage, not only applies with entire force to this case, but the case is in the front rank of nearness, in the prohibited degrees, and it is of its degree in special that the crowning charge of *uncleanness* is specifically made. It is a case forbidden not only by the general enactment, but by the specifications also. All this reasoning is entirely irrespective of the 18th verse, which is, for the present, left out of the computation, because though some understand it as expressly forbidding in terms the very marriage before us, others give it another sense; and I therefore rely not on it in this analysis.

If we determine the sense of this law by its scope and spirit, as we have done by its reason and principle, we must come to the very same result. The law tells us what it intends, to wit, amongst other things, the prevention of marriages within certain degrees of affinity; and it explains the grounds of this intention, to wit, that such marriages are in the sight of God wicked and unclean. Shall we then dare to say that a marriage coming within the scope of any of these prohibitions, much less of the very nearest prohibited degree, is not contrary to the mind of God? What would such a decision be, if not trifling with the majesty of his law, and handling deceitfully his eternal truth? Shall God say two brothers must not marry the same woman, because it is an unclean and wicked thing for such near kindred as a brother-in-law and sister-in-law to marry; and shall we say this law allows two sisters to marry the same man, although thereby a brother-in-law and a sister-in-law marry? Are not two sisters as "near of kin" to each other as two brothers are? And is not the sister-in-law just as near of kin to her brother-in-law, in one case as the other? And is not nearness of kin, the entire ground of all the prohibitions? It seems to me nothing can be plainer.

And what is alleged to weaken the force of truths so clear? We are told that as the particular marriage of a man with two sisters is not prohibited in terms, (supposing verse 18 not to do it,) we have no right to consider it prohibited by implication—as they call it. I have shown that the general enactment, (verse 6) in terms forbids this marriage. But even if it be allowed that verse 18 means something else, which may well be doubted, and that the very terms of the law in verse 6 do not forbid this marriage; can any thing be more certain than that we are as much bound by that which follows by good and necessary consequence from the word of God, as by that which is revealed in so many words? And this canon of interpretation is as universally received and of as extensive and constant application, as any whatever; as none here will, I suppose, question. But was any consequence ever more clear and certain than that when God forbids a brother-in-law to marry his sister-in-law, for the reason of her near affinity to him, he means every sister-in-law? And is not a wife's sister, a sister-in-law? Nay, must we not consider the prohibition general and positive, rather than inferential, in cases where the implication is so direct and so violent, even if no general terms were used such as are contained in verse 6? At least we have here a double and irresistible inference.

It is also argued that these positive statutes of the divine law-giver are to be strictly construed. Why? Because they are positive statutes. And are not all the commandments of God positive statutes? And is the real mode of understanding the scriptures such, that no man is bound by any thing that is not set down in terms? If so, we have indeed a short method with the Bible; one that extirpates Christian doctrine and morality more effectually than the Roman way of suppressing the word of God entirely; since it is a more fatal stab at it, to deny virtually that it means any thing, than to claim the ultimate right of saying what it does mean. Nor does it mend the matter to say, what I suppose was intended, that these prohibitory statutes are in a sense penal, and for that reason should be construed strictly. It is true that human tribunals acknowledge this distinction, partly to favour liberty and partly from a sense of their own imperfections, that they may not by error of law or of fact punish the innocent. But what they mean is, that penal laws shall not be extended beyond their terms; as for instance, that a law prohibiting "near of kin" to marry, should not be construed to restrain *remote* kindred, nor wrested from its terms so as to make it forbid *uncleanness* instead of *marriage*. But are not all God's laws addressed to ruined and condemned sinners, as much penal as these? And does God favour the liberty of sinning, and that by the law itself? Or is God distrustful of the perfection of his law or of his ability to execute it righteously? The excellence of this new mode of scripture interpretation is easily tried. By these specifications a man is forbidden in terms to marry his uncle's wife and his wife's grand-daughter—which, therefore, he cannot do without committing a wicked and unclean thing, which God hates; but he is not forbidden in terms, nor even by implication, except upon the principles I contend for, from marrying his own daughter, which therefore by this new canon he may do, and be pure, law-abiding, and accepted of God! Are we prepared to adopt principles which are equally absurd in themselves and revolting in the consequences to which they lead?

I have several times referred to the 18th verse of the xviii. chapter of Leviticus. It is largely insisted on that this verse contains at least an implied permission to contract the marriage in question. It is in these words, "Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister, to vex her, to uncover her nakedness, besides the other, in her life-time." This verse has received various interpretations. Many learned men understand it to be a simple prohibition of polygamy; this is perhaps the common interpretation, and the one most consistent with the scriptural use of the terms in which it is couched. Others understand it to convey a plain prohibition of precisely such marriages as we are now considering; and amongst these are some of our most sober and judicious expositors. It is contended by those who favour such marriages as this of Mr. McQueen, that the words are to be taken in the literal sense of our English version; and mean that a man must not marry two sisters at a time. Upon this they raise the implication that he may marry the second sister after the first is dead. It seems then after all, that *implication* is a just method of ascertaining the sense of the divine law?

If so, does not the prohibition against marrying two sisters, raise as good an implication that a man may have two wives who are not sisters, as the prohibition to marry two sisters at once does that he may marry them in succession? What seems to me very clear is, that what is singularly plain from other scriptures, should not be obscured by forced and untenable inferences from such as may admit of various interpretations.

It is argued that as the law of God absolutely required a man in one particular case, to wit, when his brother died childless, to take his wife and raise up seed unto his brother (Deut. xxv. 5—9,) thus, in this instance annulling the general law against this marriage, there can be no moral impropriety in the connexion itself; and therefore a man may now marry his wife's sister. Here again they who thus argue, depart from their own principles; and by the very argument concede that we may conclude from the case of the brother's wife, to the case of the wife's sister; but without advantage to their cause. For if the general principle prohibiting a man from marrying the wife of his brother, required an express exception in the law itself, to allow a departure from the principle in a single and most urgent case; the conclusion is most absurd that therefore the general principle which forbade a man to marry the sister of his wife, to which there was no exception, may be violated in every case. The inference is just the contrary; and proves that if there is any real distinction between the case of a brother's wife and that of a wife's sister; then a man may not marry his wife's sister without a positive command from God: and as there is no such command he may not do it at all. It is moreover a very unsafe way to argue that what God has permitted or directed under special circumstances, is a good test of his judgment as to the general character of an action; as for example, it could thus be shown that it is, in general, expedient and innocent for men to marry their own sisters, which they not only did, but by God's appointment could not avoid doing, in the first age of the world; and I see not, but that the conclusion is as good in the one case for marrying a sister by blood, as in the other for marrying a sister by affinity. And again, it is to be remembered, that this case with its general principle and particular exception in special circumstances is not different from all others that involve our duties to each other and many of those to God also, and the moral laws that regulate them. "Thou shalt not kill," is one of the great general laws; and yet how many times did God require departures from it; and how clearly do we see that departures from it may still be allowed, and yet the binding force of the general law receive no permanent abatement? Thou shalt not commit incest, is a great general principle also; and it seems utterly ridiculous to contend, that because its application was waved by its divine author, in very special circumstances and by express command, in a particular case, for a limited time, and for avowed reasons which were wholly transient—therefore the general law never had a moral character, and is not obligatory now, when the ground of the special exception is removed and the foundation of the original law is left unbroken!

I am therefore obliged to conclude, that it is clearly against the

law of God for a man to marry the sister of his deceased wife ; that the doctrine of our standards on this subject is true and wholesome ; and that the decision of the Presbytery of Fayetteville, in the case of Archibald McQueen, instead of being, as he has alleged in his appeal, "evidently at variance with God's word," is in full accordance with it.

7. It is scarcely worth while to say any thing in regard to those alleged considerations of prudence and propriety, convenience and advantage, which, it seems to be supposed, render marriages of this sort excusable, if not indeed commendable. My own views are entirely different, and it appears to me, that every reason of a personal, domestic, and public kind, forbids them. But we must not forget, that if God who has considered all these things in enacting his laws, has seen fit to disregard them all and set them aside, it does not become us to revise his determinations, but to submit to his wise and righteous ordinations. Our wisdom and our happiness as well as our duty, require us to keep, not to tamper with, much less make void, our Master's statutes.

Nor is it proper to give controlling weight to those purely personal considerations, which are always found to mingle with every case of discipline, and which often render it so very painful for us to discharge our duty. There are no reasons in this case, which may not be urged with equal or greater force in most cases like it, to mitigate a strict adherence to the doctrine of our church and our Redeemer. There are difficulties which I would gladly avoid if I could consistently with my duty. But the longer we connive at this evil, the greater and the more powerful become the personal and public embarrassments that obstruct our way.

I am aware that there is an impression on the minds of some of the members of this venerable court, that although it is clear the offence has been committed, and the standards of the church and the word of God forbid it, yet the punishment is too great. I cannot agree with these respected brethren. For, if the mind of our Creator is to be taken as the rule of our judgment in this case, the offence is very heinous in itself, and the more to be resisted as there is unhappily a proneness not only to commit but to justify it. And, moreover, if there is any offence at all in the case, it is continual, renewed from day to day, a public and standing scandal in a minister of the gospel of Christ. I cannot see that there is any alternative between finding that there is no law of marriage or incest in the word of God, or at least, that the present case is not embraced by it, and therefore the appellant is wholly innocent and ought to be acquitted ; or finding that he is guilty of incest, and that in a very near degree, and confirming the decision which suspends him from the ministry and from church privileges—till he repent.

Moderator, if I had any serious apprehensions that this venerable court would falter in its decision of the great and vital principles involved in this case, I should be filled with sorrow and dismay. I thank God I have none. His blessing has been of late years too manifestly with us, for me to distrust his presence now. And I am not ashamed to say I consider it providential that this matter did not come up here, in times of defection, but under circumstances that

will render your decision of it the means, through the mercy of Christ, of great and lasting blessings to the church and to the world. If, however, I am deceived in the hopes which I repose on the fidelity of this body to God and to his truth, I clear myself, in the sight of earth and heaven, of all connivance at a sin, which will surely bring down the anger of God upon our land, if it be not arrested; and I warn you of the fate which, as a church, we shall certainly draw upon ourselves if we forsake the law of the Lord. Whatever we may do against God's truth, he will do so to us and more also; and from being a light in the world, it will be easy for us to become a hissing and a bye-word, as soon as the glory of God's presence is departed from us. We cannot tolerate sins like this, especially in our ministers, and expect a continuance of the divine favour. We cannot pervert judgment and prostrate the truth in order to screen flagrant offenders against the discipline of the church, the doctrine of our standards, and the purity of society, and long escape the anger of the Lord.

(On the afternoon of Friday, June 3, the calling of the roll of the Assembly was concluded, and the final vote was taken, viz.:

Shall the appeal be sustained? And the votes thereupon were recorded as follows, viz.:

To sustain:—Messrs. Reed, Huntingdon, Benedict, Hale, F. A. Ewing, Studsdorf, Wynkoop, Aikin, Stanton, McRee, McCombs—11.

Not to sustain:—Messrs. (Sherwood, Davidson, Carlo, Beers, Baldwin, Ramsay, Dumont, Clark, Foster, Platt, Sargent, Macklin, Dulty, Janvier, Breckinridge, Cazanove, Moody, Nelson, Betts, W. R. Smith, Greer, Hassinger, W. T. Smith, Hill, Swift, Morrow, Lea, J. G. Wilson, James Montgomery, Colledge, Hutchinson, Shearer, Denton, Stone, Fullerton, Galloway, McDonald, McIntyre, Lattimore, Smock, Prince, John Montgomery, D. Montgomery, Bell, Newell, Harbison, Templeton, R. Stuart, Preston, McFarland, B. M. Smith, L. F. Wilson, Pryor, M. Wilson, Anderson, J. Brown, Cummings, Frontis, Reynolds, Harris, Fosbrook, Caldwell, English, M. MacLean, J. B. Thompson, Finley, E. T. McLean, Weatherby.—68.

To sustain in part:—Messrs. Fox, Andrews, Walker, Kerr, S. M. Wilson, Todd, S. K. Talmage, Hadden.—8.

Excused from voting:—Mr. Lacy.

Non liquet:—Messrs. Lord, Jenks, Cozad, Riggs, Stuart.—5.

It was also, on motion, recorded, that Dr. Krebs, as having been the counsel of Mr. McQueen, was, by the constitution, precluded from voting.

Whereupon, it was on motion,

Resolved, That the judgment of the Presbytery of Fayetteville, in the case of the Rev. Archibald McQueen, be affirmed, and that the appeal be dismissed.)

NOTICES, ACCOUNTS, ANSWERS TO LETTERS, &c.

Payments. Wm. Garvin, Esq., Louisville, Ky., by the hands of Rev. W. L. Breckinridge, \$20, of which \$5 are for 1842 and 3, and the rest in full for the former work.—C. Barrie, Esq., \$4, in full for the former work.—James Wilson, Esq., Marietta, Lancaster Co., Pa., \$5, of which \$2.50 for himself for 1842, and \$2.50 for Miss H. Hays, for 1840, (if our books are correct).—P. M. Cumberland, N. C., \$3, for Rev. N. McKay, which over-pays for 1842, by 50 cents.—We have received from Rev. J. Le R. Davies, of N. C., \$2.50, which added to \$6 paid in May, 1838, and \$2 paid in April, 1839, makes \$10.50, in all; subscription from January, 1836, till December 1842, seven years, at \$2.50 a year, \$17.50; balance due, to the end of this year, if our books are correct, \$7.—We received from Rev. R. J. Leach, (in May) \$2.50; he had previously discontinued in December 1841; his subscription is for 1837—41, five years, at \$2.50 a year, \$12.50; his payments, March, 1839, \$2.50, December, 1841, \$5; and now the above credited \$2.50,

sent, \$10 due us, \$2.50, to say nothing of discontinuing last autumn, in arrears.—Rev. J. Carroll, of N. J., per A. McLaine, \$2.50 for 1842. [] The P. M. would have fringed the letter, if Mr. McLaine had asked him, and saved us double postage []—P. M. to Rev. J. D. Dixon, Shelbyville, Ky., \$2, which by an over payment last year, pays to the end of this year.—Rev. A. D. Montgomery, Halifax Co., Va., \$2.50, for 1841, by the hands of Rev. Dr. Plumer.

New Subscribers. Rev. Donald McQueen, Sumpterville, S. C., by order of Rev. J. C. Coit, from Jan'y, 1842, and the back numbers from Jan'y to May sent.—Mr. William Miller and Mr. Archibald Sample of Philadelphia, by order of Rev. A. Mackin, from Jan'y, 1842, and the back Nos. delivered.—P. M., Kanawha C. H., Va., for Rev. S. Rinsason, \$2, whose name is added and back Nos. from Jan'y to May sent.—Names of Levi Dickson, Phila., and W. H. White, Fredericksburg, Va., added from Jan'y, 1842, and back Nos. sent to both, by order of the latter.—Wm. H. Dillingham, Esq., Phila., from Jan'y, 1842, and back Nos. sent, and \$2.50 paid.—Rev. Thos. E. English, Bishops-ville, S. C., from Jan'y '42, and back Nos. delivered.—James B. Reynolds, Esq., Clarksville, Tenn., name added from last Jan., and back Nos. to June inclusive sent.—Mr. James Miller, Mill Point P. O., Pocahontas Co., Va., name added from Jan. last, and back Nos. to June inclusive sent, and \$2.50 paid by our friend, Col. Wm. H. Allen, whose direction is changed to Green Valley, Bath Co., Va., after the June number was sent off.

Discontinuances. By order of P. M. Albany, N. Y., Ananias Platt, Esq., who has been a subscriber and pessenger since 1837, but has at last, at a good old age, and in full enjoyment of the confidence of all good men who knew him, gone to be with Jesus; we have stood by his side in the troubles of the church militant, and we hope, through grace, to meet him in glory.—Delphian Institute, Union College, Schenectady, N. Y., refused, in arrears. In the year 1819, the editor of this work, in company with about a dozen friends, all of us boys, founded this Institute; which being now of full age, treats its parent thus cavillously. We wish it well, nevertheless.—Maj. R. M. Garvin, Tuscaloosa, Ala., refuses by the P. M.; subscription for '40, '41, and '42, \$7.50; cash paid, \$2.50, in July '40; balance, \$5, which we are ready to receipt for when paid.—Rev. Abraham Rick, by the P. M., Cincinnati, Ohio, formerly of Indianapolis, Ind., refuses; subscription for '40, '41, and '42, \$7.50; benefit of clergy (what sect?) per contra, balance in full.—P. M., Leesburg, Ky., for Col. Wm. Cogswell, removed to Missouri, refuses; subscription 1838-'42, five years, at \$2.00 a year, \$12.50; no payment is credited on our books; but our friend, Maj. Curry, tells us in a letter dated May 7, that Col. Cogswell said he had paid Mr. Thomas Dolan of Lex., Ky., part or the whole; about which we fear some mistake, as Mr. Dolan himself refused through the P. M. a year ago; at the worst, we can put it on the debit side of profit and loss, as many better men have to do these disjointed times.—P. M. for James A. Ramsey, Clinton Co., Ill., tells us to stop, and adds "if you do not stop it you will be accountable for the postage, nothing more, only remaining yours, &c: J. C. Shelton, P. M.;" indeed, that is quite enough; to lose our labour, (Mr. Ramsey owes us \$2.50,) and pay postage besides, both ways, for Mr. Shelton, though post master, did not frank his own letters; who is Mr. Ramsey.—Rev. Dr. Jas. Blythe, late of South Hanover, Ind., by request of P. M., bill sent to him. Will not some friend in the West, send us a brief sketch of his life, labours and death of this venerable, faithful, and excellent servant of God? Will his worthy successor at Piquah, do us this favour, or have it done? It is probable that the best public testimony made by this venerable man, (who died on the 20th May, at an advanced age,) was his "Letter to the Presbyteries," printed in our May No. (p. 213-45); a testimony worthy of a dying soldier of the Lord Jesus.

Corrections, Changes, &c. The error in the entry of Rev. Mr. Bell of Va. (crediting a payment to '42 which should have been to '41,) corrected by his letter of May 23, and the No. for May sent to him again.—Nos. lost, re-sent to Rev. Mr. Smith, of Charleston, S. C., Rev. Mr. Reid, of Lynchburg, Va., Mr. John S. Scott, of Columbia, S. C., and Mr. Robert Marshall, of Madison, Ind.—Rev. S. D. Campbell's direction changed from Lexington to Natural Bridge, Va., after the June No., was mailed.—In reply to Mr. John Sanger, of Albion, S. C., we have to say, that his account appears to have been mixed up with that of another gentleman of his own name, so that we must rely on his memory for the period at which his subscription commenced; when he tells us this, we can make out his account.

[] When receipts are given privately, either by the editor or by D. Owen & Son, the payment is not again publicly receipted for. The published notice, is in place of the receipt where none can be conveniently given.

[] We, perhaps, owe some apology to our readers for occupying so unduly large a portion of the present and the last preceding Nos. with matter from our own pen. It seemed not to be avoided, consistently with the proprieties of the case. The argument on the question of Incest, printed in this No., would not have been written out, but that there appeared to us to be a concerted attack made in some of the northern organs on the decision of the last Assembly; and as we had some small part in that most righteous decision, we thought it but right, to bear our share of the responsibility, and contribute our part towards its defence. If any man thinks he can answer the argument, let him try; our pages are at his service; not for *slang-changing*, but for a scriptural and rational examination of the subject. []