

*Presbyterianism  
in U.S.A.*

**S. J. Baird**

**SUPERIORITY**  
**OF**  
**THE CALVANISTIC FAITH,**  
**AND**  
**THE PRESBYTERIAN GOVERNMENT.**  
**A DISCOURSE**  
**COMMEMORATIVE OF THE MEETING**  
**OF**  
**THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY,**  
**DELIVERED UPON THE OCCASION OF THE TWO HUNDRETH**  
**ANNIVERSARY THEREOF.**

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**BY REV. D. X. JUNKIN, A. M.**  
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NOTICE.

The following discourse was first delivered in the Presbyterian Church of Greenwich, of which the author is pastor, in accordance with a recommendation of the General Assembly of 1843, that the 1st of July 1843 or some other convenient day, be observed in commemoration of the meeting of the Westminster Assembly, which convened July 1st 1643. This discourse was supplementary to one delivered upon the same occasion by the Rev. JOHN GRAY, in which an able historical view of that venerable convocation was embraced, together with other interesting topics, but which the excellent author has declined furnishing for the press. This fact is mentioned to account for the absence of any historical detail in the following discourse.

This Bicentenary discourse was repeated, by request, in the churches of Easton, Milton, Allen Township, Lower Mount Bethel and Stroudsburg, Pa.; and as many individuals in most of these churches, as well as that under my own pastoral care, have expressed a wish to see it in print, it is hereby offered to them, with the prayer that God will own the humble effort as an instrument in promoting his own glory and the good of men.

D. X. JUNKIN.

Manse of Greenwich, Dec. 22, 1843.

## DISCOURSE.

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NUMB. XXIII. 23. *What hath God wrought!!*

II. TIM. I. 13. *Hold fast the form of sound words.*

The first of these passages was the exclamation of the astonished Balaam, when from the field of Zophim on the top of Pisgah he gazed upon the tented camp of Israel. Bribed by the monarch of Moab to use divinations against the people of God, then upon their journey from Egypt, he came to pronounce a curse upon them. Surrounded, upon the high places of Baal, by the princes of Moab, and by an imposing array of pompous sacrifices prepared for the grand occasion, he offers upon each of seven altars a bullock and a ram; and then resorted to a high place, with the hope of meeting with the Lord and receiving authority to curse the hosts of Jacob. The Lord met him, indeed, and put a word into his mouth, but by his spirit constrained him to exclaim "How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed, and how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied, \* \* \* lo! the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations: Who can count the dust of Jacob; and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" The disappointed monarch reproves him for this unwelcome announcement of the future glory of Israel: and in the delusive hope that a change of location, on the part of the wretched prophet might secure a change of purpose in the changeless Jehovah, "he brought him to the field of Zophim on the top of Pisgah" and there they repeated their sacrifices. But still the tongue that would fain have cursed, was constrained to pronounce a blessing upon the Israel of God. "God is not a man that he should lie," exclaims this involuntary instrument of inspiration, "neither the son of man that he should repent! Hath he said and shall he not do it? or hath He

spoken and shall he not make it good? Behold I have received commandment to bless, and He hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it. \* \* \* Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, what hath God wrought!"

And fully were the predictions of the unhappy prophet verified, in the subsequent history of that wonderful people. Often, in after times, did the prophets and the bards of Israel recur to the period at which this impotent attempt of Balak was made. Often was the attention of the families of Jacob directed to the story of the glorious past; often were they reminded of the wonders wrought in their behalf in the land of Egypt—of the mighty deliverance he accomplished for their fathers from the thralldom of the Pharaohs—of the sublime pathway his breath prepared them amid the waters of the sea—of the august displays of his majesty and glory upon Sinai's awful summit—of their wonderful preservation amid the dangers of the desert, during a pilgrimage of forty years—their triumphs over the hosts of enemies that forbid their progress towards the promised land, or disputed its possession—their final settlement in that land of beauty and abundance—their triumphs over surrounding foes—their rapid advancement in power and splendor, and the glowing hopes of future glory, pledged in that blessed charter of their nation, the covenant with Abraham. In this spirit-kindling reminiscence, they employed all the fervor of gratitude to God, and all the eloquence of poetry. And as often as the wondrous story was re-told, so often was it said of Jacob and of Israel "*what hath God wrought?*" Some of the loftiest strains of Israel's sweetest singer, embody the tale of Israel's many deliverances: nor did the Hebrew father cease to repeat it to his listening child, until their Deliverer-God, was himself forgotten, and their once favored nation had become a by-word in the earth. Indeed, a prominent part of their peculiar system of worship was the part that made provision for *perpetuating* the *remembrance* of what God had wrought for them. Their passover

and their feast of the tabernacles—their sabbatical year and year of jubilee, whilst adapted to other beneficial ends, were also designed to keep in perpetual remembrance the mercies of the Lord to their church and nation. It formed *part of their religion* to recall the memory of the past kindness of their covenant God, and “to praise him for his mighty acts—to praise him for his excellent greatness.”

Now, Brethren, we must not suppose that the *literal* Israel only were bound by the *spirit* of that system, which, while it cherished in the bosom the liveliest gratitude for the past, inspired the most animating hopes for the future. We must not suppose that the Lord has no Israel *now* upon the earth, to perpetuate the *spirit* of those institutions that were the glory of Israel of old. We must not think that, because that wonderful people exist no longer in a national capacity, the *spirit* of their laws has also ceased. That, because the hills and vallies of Judea no longer smile beneath the loveliness of sabbatical influence, nor echo the voice of the trumpet and the swelling shout of the joyous jubilee—there remaineth no Sabbath for the people of God, and that no jubilant shall again employ their voices. That, because the glorious temple no longer crowns the summit of Mount Zion and the Shekinah no more irradiates the Holy of Holies, incense shall no more ascend to God, nor a pure offering—We must not believe that because the *body* of the church, as regards its ancient *form*, is *dead*, its eternal *Spirit* has ceased to be, or has become the subject of mutation. The same religious duties that were enjoined upon the ancient church are binding in *spirit*, if not prescribed in form upon the Israel of the New Testament. The same blessed truths, read by them in the dimmer language of type and ceremony, and which were the means of their sanctification, are to prove to the people of God in every age, a source of present comfort and ultimate salvation. The same *love*—the same *gratitude*—the same *joy*—the same inspiring *hope*—the same *penitence* and *humility*, which formed at once the happiness and adornment of the ancient believer, are still the blessed fruits of the Spirit, in all that are born

of God. The *spirit* of piety, like the God who is its author, is ever the same; however the *means* of its *production* or the *forms* of its *development* may vary.

If, therefore, it became the people of God, under the old dispensation, to awaken their souls to gratitude, and to make their vallies and their mountains and their temples vocal with the praises of Jehovah—If it was in the spirit of genuine piety that the royal Psalmist so frequently exclaims “O! that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men”—and if under the former yoke of bondage God’s people still rejoiced in him, and with gladness told of his wonderful works: surely the same, and even stronger obligations rest upon those who are now the freemen of the Lord: and drawn, not by the bands of formal enactment, and at times of positive appointment, but by the gentle and the joyous attraction of a Saviour’s love and a covenant God’s beneficence, Christians should rejoice, at times, to draw near to Jehovah with *free will offerings* of praise and thanksgiving, exclaiming, as they kindle with the memories of the past, and the glowing hopes of the promised future. “What hath God wrought!”

To the discharge of a duty so obvious, and the enjoyment of a privilege so delightful, we are impressively invited by the arrangements that have been made for the celebration of the two hundredth anniversary of the meeting of that learned, godly and venerable assembly that framed the standards of the Presbyterian Church.

There are points of time in the lapse of duration, which seem to start into *prominence*, and upon which months and years and ages, with all their important issues seem to rest—points of time that form epochs in the dispensations of God and the history of man. Moments, brief and fleeting as other moments, are often pregnant with the destiny of ages. Events small in themselves, unportentous, and unattended with the pomp and pretension that awaken human wonder, may oftentimes contain the embryo of achievements the most stupendous, or of disasters the most dire;

and may prove the commencement of a series that shall reach onward to the latest ages—yea even into eternity! Such is the epoch, and such is the event which is now being celebrated throughout the Presbyterian world. The convening of the Westminster Assembly and the work they accomplished, when taken in connexion with the stupendous civil and religious movements with which they synchronized, form one of those bold features which rise, with Alpine grandeur, above the common level of human affairs, and furnish landmarks to fix the historian's eye, and to attract the admiring gaze of generations. The event which we commemorate is itself fraught with a moral grandeur as forming an epoch in the progress of pure and mighty principles. But besides this, there are high and inspiring associations connected with the origin of the venerable standards of the Presbyterian Church. The glorious banner of our faith was first unfurled at an epoch in England's history, which, when that history shall have been *honestly* written, England and the world will confess to have been one of the brightest in her annals. "There were *giants* in those days." The British mind, roused by the thunders of a revolution, that shook the elements of both church and state, was awake to prodigious effort. Monuments of learning and of genius were then reared, that will prove enduring as Albion's rocks. In poetry, in philosophy, in physiology, in politics, in theology advances were made that shed lustre upon the age and country. It was the era of the immortal bard who sang of Paradise. It was the age in which nearly the whole English and Scottish heart throbbed for freedom, and in which was imparted to the progress of human liberty an impulse which is still felt through the civilized world. It was that part of the XVII. century which is illuminated by the glory of the English Commonwealth, and by the lustre of a galaxy of great names which even the malignant bigotry of a Hume, and other craven historians can neither tarnish nor consign to oblivion. It was that period in the progress of the glorious reformation which, to my mind, has seemed analogous to the fourth day in the progress of the material creation,

when the *sun, moon and stars* were set in the firmament of Heaven. Light there was upon the first day of that great reform: but it was light bursting in wild glory from surrounding chaos. It was not reduced to that order and beauty that might fit it, like the luminaries of Heaven, to dispense knowledge and warmth and life in proper season and due proportion. It was during the first half of the XVII. century that the great doctrines of the reformation were reduced to systematic '*forms of sound words,*' and both on the Continent and in Great Britain, elevated, as the authorized standards of the churches, to shine in steady contrast with the night of error. I may say without arrogance, and without the fear of contradiction from any mind possessing both *candour* and *logic*, that, whilst the BIBLE itself is the glorious SUN of the reformation, amongst the luminaries which the XVII. century planted in the theological firmament, the WESTMINSTER CONFESSIO<sup>N</sup> shines like the *full moon* amid the lesser lights!

That the church has scripture authority for deducing from the word of God, a *form* of sound words, and setting it forth as a confession of her faith and a manual of her practice, is proved by such passages as the second one we have placed at the head of this discourse. "Hold fast," said Paul, "the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me." The word here rendered *form* signifies the *formation of a model* or outline, and hence also a *model, outline* or *sketch*; and I cannot doubt that the Apostle alluded to some succinct arrangement of doctrines, which he had delivered to Timothy; but which being an abstract of the doctrines more elaborately taught in the Gospels and his own epistles, he designed not as a part of the ~~same~~ canon. And what the scripture thus indicates as proper, reason approves, and the necessities of the case demand. It is the will of God that men shall worship him *socially*, and that for this purpose, and mutual edification, his people shall unite in a visible church. But "two cannot walk together except they be agreed"—and the union of professed believers in order to be profitable, must be a *union in the truth*. Now since men differ in

opinion concerning the meaning of the Bible, it cannot; whilst this difference continues, be made the basis of a union; although it is the ultimate standard by which all others should be tried. In order to christian union those who believe alike must come together, and it is both *necessary* and *convenient* to have a *symbol* of their agreement, a "form of sound words" in which they declare what they believe to be the faith once delivered to the saints.

The rapt Isaiah in predicting Gospel times, had declared "When the enemy shall come in like a flood the spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him;" and the history of the Gospel church accords with the prediction. From the earliest times symbols of faith were employed as testimonies against error; and catechetical forms of sound words were used in the instruction of the Church. And when the reformers from Popery came to protest against its errors and abominations, they were led to the adoption of *confessions of faith*, in which they sought succinctly to state what they understood the Bible to teach; in opposition to the errors which papal superstition on the one hand, and wild fanaticism upon the other, had propagated. From the brief form of sound words, usually called the Apostle's creed, down to the more extended confession of faith framed by the Westminster Assembly, all formularies of doctrine (and they were many) originated in this obvious necessity: and we cannot doubt that in most instances, these standards were lifted up at the prompting of the Spirit of God, and under his guidance. As a proof of this, it is a striking fact that all the most prominent confessions agree in the great fundamentals of Gospel truth; and it is also remarkable that in the *standards* of most of those societies which are known to hold and preach erroneous doctrines, *error* is not *avowed*. The Spirit of the Lord seems to have come with *restraining grace* upon the men who penned their formularies, so that they were withheld from asserting error, where they would not assert the *whole truth*. But I dwell not elaborately upon the scriptural warrant of confessions of faith, nor upon their history or usefulness. Enough has been said to satisfy

minds unswayed by prejudice; and with others the present is not a fitting time to deal.

The object of the present solemnity is to improve in a becoming manner the completion of one of those great cycles, that begin in some august event, and roll on amid the development of its issues. The recurrence of the two hundredth anniversary of the meeting of the Westminster Assembly is calculated to awaken the remembrance of that venerable convocation—of their great learning, talents and piety—of their arduous, patient and successful labors—the stupendous events of their times—and the grand results of their principles which succeeding ages have unfolded. And the remembrance will surely inspire the bosom of every lover of those principles, with the liveliest gratitude to that God from whom they emanate, and by whose blessing they have been preserved and extended; and with a firm resolve to hand them abroad to all the earth, and down to the latest generations. The Presbyterian world is now sounding the fourth jubilee that she has numbered under the auspices of that glorious banner that was unfurled at Westminster. The occasion calls up, in the teeming memory, so many topics of thrilling interest—so many spirit-kindling recollections of the glorious past, with that banner of truth is associated, that it will be difficult *selecting*, from the crowded array, so as at once to meet your expectations and avoid too great a tax upon your time. But that I may give limit to our range of observation, I shall, in the subsequent part of this discourse, invite you to the consideration of a single distinct proposition. We celebrate the embodiment in our venerable standards of what we believe to be the great principles of God's word. Those standards have for two hundred years waved, in sunshine and in storm, over our fathers' heads and ours. Their past *history* has been *glorious*—their *present position* commands the *wonder* of an admiring world\*—their future destiny we cannot doubt is full of inspiring promise.

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\*In allusion to the recent change in the Church of Scotland.

And what do these standards contain? *The Calvinistic faith and Presbyterian form of church government.* All who receive our confession, profess to believe that this faith and this form of government are taught in the word of God. Believing this, we cannot be consistent unless we are prepared to *affirm* the proposition to which I now invite your attention, viz: That,

THE RELIGION OF CHRIST IS MOST EFFICIENT, IN PROMOTING THE GLORY OF GOD, AND THE TEMPORAL AND ETERNAL WELFARE OF MAN, WHEN THE CALVINISTIC FAITH IS UNITED WITH THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH GOVERNMENT!!

Fully to illustrate this position would require more time than I dare at present claim: but a brief inspection of the *nature* and the *history* of this *faith* and of this form of Government will render it sufficiently obvious.

The name of Calvin has, by consent of the theological world, been applied to that system of Doctrines of which he was so learned and able an advocate: but with equal propriety they might have taken the name of Augustin, for Augustin taught them long before Calvin: and with *still greater* propriety might they have borne the name of the Apostle Paul, for he elaborated them in his epistles. We should not, therefore, be prejudiced against the doctrines because they bear the name of a *man*. We call these truths the "Calvinistic faith," or "Calvinism," in conformity to the usages of the learned world—a usage which originated with the enemies of these doctrines—and not because they were invented by the illustrious Calvin. A *GREATER than Calvin is here!!*

I. That this system of faith is more promotive of the *glory* of God, than any other, is manifest from the fact that it uniformly ascribes *all* the power, grace, merit and *glory* of salvation to God and to God *only*. It is the system which abases man and exalts God. In this it stands in contrast with all other creeds. Other forms of faith attribute more to *man's* power and glory, and less to God's. This system describes man as utterly fallen and depraved—as deeply guilty—as totally helpless and entirely dependent upon the

*sovereign, free, unbought* mercy and grace of God. Other systems give man a *share* in the *work* and *merit*, and, by necessity, in the *honor* of his own salvation; this empties him of himself, and lays him a beggar at the footstool of Jehovah. Other systems make man, to a greater or less extent, the author and finisher of his own faith—and his salvation dependent upon his own *will*: this ascribes to God the authorship of all—and makes all to depend upon the *Divine will*. It teaches that God willed the salvation of his people, before they had any will of their own—that he ‘loved them with an eternal love, and therefore with loving kindness draws them’—that he “chose them, in Christ, before the foundation of the world, that they might be holy and without blame before him in love.”\* Other systems make the use of the means of grace to depend upon the *creature*: this system teaches that God secures the use of the means by his eternal *purpose*, and the consequent *mission of his Spirit*. Other systems teach that man *chooses himself* to salvation—this that “God hath from the beginning chosen us to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.”† In short other systems attribute man’s deliverance partly to God and partly to man *himself*: Calvinism attributes it, in its *origin, progress* and consumation, to *God only*. From an inspection of the *nature* of this system of doctrine it is manifest that its tendency is to give “*glory to God in the highest!*”

II. *But it is also most efficient in promoting the temporal and eternal welfare of man, and the glory of God therein.*

1. Man’s highest duty and most blessed state consists in complete and cheerful submission to the *Divine authority*, and entire and willing dependence upon the *Divine power* and *goodness*. To know no other will but God’s—to delight in his perfect law, and to rely upon his almighty power and infinite fullness, as the fountain of blessedness—this is the highest bliss of the creature: And such is the condition to which it is the *legitimate tendency* of the Calvinistic faith

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\*Eph. i. 4. †2d Thes. ii. 13.

to bring all who truly receive it. Its lesson is *justification by faith in the merit and intercession of God's dear Son!* A faith that implies distrust and renouncement of *self*—a faith that fully acknowledges the sovereignty of God; a faith that recognizes Christ as our best benefactor—a faith that beholds the sins of men nailing the Lord of glory to the cross—a faith, therefore, which ‘worketh by *love*, and purifieth the heart—and leadeth to repentance and to a crucifixion of the world’— a faith that places the believer *under the law* to Christ, whilst it frees him from the law as a covenant of works and a yoke of bondage—a faith, in short, which unites the possession of it to “God manifest in the flesh;” and whilst it secures his admission to the privileges of God's own children, at the same time produces a filial spirit of obedience. This faith proves “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,” in the present life. It elevates the character—it overcomes the world—it triumphs over sorrow and persecution, and beyond this life it secures the eternal rewards of the righteous.

Having thus glanced at its influence upon the glory of God and the temporal and eternal interests of *individual man*, I remark,

2. That the *Calvanistic faith* and that faith only contains the true principles of *social* happiness, and prosperity. If it makes individual men holy and happy, the society made up of those individuals will be happy also. And that it does fit the individual for rightly acting the part of a *social* being, is manifest from an inspection of its principles and their legitimate results. *Humility* is one of the most essential virtues of a social being, for pride is the bane of society. Now humility is one of the first lessons imparted by the Calvinistic faith. A Calvinist *cannot be proud*, if he be a *true believer* in his creed. Why? Because that creed teaches him that he has nothing to be proud of. It tells him that he is a fallen descendant of a fallen father—that by reason of Adam's fall he is conceived in sin, and born in iniquity—and that in himself he is “wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.” It tells him that

by reason of original and actual guilt he is liable to the sorrows of the present life, to death itself and to the pains of hell forever, and that he has no wisdom, merit or strength of his own, by which he can deliver himself; but that for salvation he is entirely dependant upon a crucified Redeemer. Other creeds leave *fuel* for pride by deluding man into the belief that he can, *in part* at least, be the maker of his own fortune—Calvinism strips him of all and lays him in the dust. Other creeds make the Divine purpose in regard to our salvation to depend upon the *contingency* of man's own faith and repentance; so that if a man is saved, it is not because God chose to save him, and elected him to everlasting life, but because the man himself chooses to be saved—thus, after all, making man his own Saviour. Calvinism makes all to depend upon God, by teaching that He hath *decreed* our salvation and the *means* thereof. Calvinism prates of no *contingencies* in the administration of the infinite God. It makes God *all in all*—it makes man “nothing—less than nothing and vanity.” Its legitimate fruit is *humility*.

I know it has been urged in opposition, that Calvinism, with its doctrine of election, puffs men up with pride by leading them to believe that they are the peculiar favorites of Heaven—the chosen of God. Ah! how little do they, who thus speak, know of the true nature of that doctrine. True our system does teach that God is *sovereign*, that “he will have mercy upon whom he will have mercy”—that he has a *chosen people*. But what do we alledge to be the *grounds* of that election? any merit in man? any foreseen good works of *his* of which he may be proud? Far from it—far from it! To other systems we leave the assertion of such folly. Calvinism declares that if men are chosen to be the favorites of Heaven—if they are (to use the language of Paul,) “predestinated unto the adoption of children,”\* it is “not for works of righteousness which *we* have done, but according to *his mercy* he saved us.”† That we were

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\*Eph. i. 5. †Tit. iii. 5.

“chosen *in Christ* before the foundation of the world, that we might be holy and without blame,”\* not out of regard to our merits, but exclusively upon the ground of his. How preposterous then to charge the Calvinistic doctrine of election with fostering human pride, when it is the *very doctrine* that sweeps away *all human merit*, and all grounds of boasting.

But I remark again, the Calvinistic faith has a natural tendency to place men upon an *equality*—to level all *improper* and *unnecessary* distinctions in society. Denying, as it does, all human merit, it lays the very foundation for the sentiment that *all men are born equal*. And asserting as it does the absolute sovereignty of God—the absolute dependence of men upon Him—the doctrine of a general and a particular providence—and that if one man differs from another in regard either to temporal or spiritual things, it is *God* that *makes* him to differ, and not any original merit of one above another; it reduces all to a level before God. The king and the peasant—the president and the humblest citizen—the Rothchild and the beggar—the sage and the savage, all stand on a level in the eye of the Calvinistic creed. All originally are equally sinners—all equally guilty—equally unworthy—helpless—dependent: and the loftiest as well as the lowest must come as a helpless beggar to the throne of grace. Such is the lesson taught by Calvinism; whilst all opposing creeds, admitting the idea of human merit and rejecting the sovereignty of grace, make men fancy a difference to exist, and encourages him to say to his fellow man “stand aside, for I am holier than thou!” And whilst our venerable creed thus brings men *down* to the same level, by its tendency to *humiliate*—it brings all who truly believe *up* to the same level by the blessings it confers. Our doctrine of the covenants teaches all believers to feel themselves to be united in covenant to Jesus Christ their glorified head, and to one-another as the members of his body, the church. As in the covenant of works they were

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\*Eph i. 4.

united to the first Adam, and with him *fell* to a common level—so in the covenant of grace they are united to the second Adam, and are *raised* by him to a common level, and to the enjoyment of common privileges. Calvinism teaches that, in virtue of the Redeemer's merits, those embraced in the covenant are born into the *same family* of God—by the power of the same spirit—that they are entitled to the same benefits—are joint heirs to the same inheritance—that they cherish the same hopes—are communicants in the same joys and consolation—that they will pass through death to the same eternal home—and there will hold fellowship in the same high enjoyments and employments; ascribing the praise and glory of all they are, and all they enjoy, to the merits of the same blessed Lamb that sitteth on the throne. Can men who truly hold such a creed as this either cherish in themselves or encourage in others a spirit of *aristocracy*? Can men who are under its influence either aim to domineer, or yield to domination? No: the Calvinistic creed embraces the true principles of *social equality* of rights. Well did Paul declare that “in Christ Jesus there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free”—that in our blessed religion all these distinctions are lost, and man brought to a level with his fellow man. Now no other creed can produce this effect. The doctrine of *human merit* is the very essence of aristocracy: and if it be admitted as true then we have an aristocracy that will prove eternal:

But again: When truly wrought *in the heart*, the Calvinistic creed is the faith *most efficient to beget and foster the social virtues of forbearance, forgiveness and charity*. In illustration of this point I might cite every item of doctrine that pertains to the whole system. But our time will not permit. Take then as examples the doctrines most hated and misrepresented by the enemies of the system—*election*, and *gratuitous justification*. Calvinism teaches us to pray “forgive us our debts *as* we forgive our debtors”—and it teaches us to expect forgiveness from God as a *free grace*, without any satisfaction made by us to Christ—*gratuitous*

*justification.* Is not this a most touching and eloquent lesson of forbearance and forgiveness of injuries? God *freely* forgives us—without wreaking his vengeance upon us—without demanding that *personal* satisfaction which he might justly have required: Does not this teach us that we should *freely* and without *rigid satisfaction* forgive our enemies? Now, I solemnly aver, that this lesson is taught by *Calvinism only*: for all opposing systems admit, in some form, and to some degree, the doctrine of *merit in man's good works*: i. e. they do not teach that God *freely* forgives without *personal satisfaction*, but that He demands *something—some portion* of the debt from man. Can systems which thus represent the conduct of Jehovah ever fully inculcate lessons of *free forgiveness* of injuries? lessons of forbearance—lessons of sacred charity and unbought benevolence? Never! never! They are systems of selfishness all!! But Calvinism, with her doctrine of gracious redemption can *consistently*, and with all the force of a *Divine example*, urge upon its believers the touching exhortation of the Apostle, “Let the same mind (disposition) be in you that was also in Christ Jesus, who though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor.” Its constant lesson is—as God imparts to us *freely*—without money and without price, all that we enjoy or hope for—as he forbears and forgives—so ought we to impart—so ought we to forgive.

But again, the doctrine of *election*, whose name sounds in many ears like the very *war-whoop* of theological combat, is fraught with lessons of mercy—forgiveness—benevolence—humility and long-suffering. What *is* that doctrine? Simply this—that instead of leaving all mankind to perish in an estate of sin and misery, as they all deserved, God, out of his mere good pleasure elected some to everlasting life—that he chose to save sinners—chose his dear son to be their Saviour, and out of regard to his sufferings and obedience, chose sinners in him to be saved. And is there not here a wonderful display of disinterested benevolence—unmerited goodness—astonishing condescension—mercy—forbearance and compassion? Truly “*herein is love—God commendeth*

his love unto us in that whilst we were yet sinners Christ died for us. And if we have before us the example of God *electing* his enemies as objects of his favor and compassion; can those, who really believe this doctrine, fail to practice the lesson it teaches? Must not the Calvinist, to be consistent, *choose* even his *enemies* as objects of his kindness, and that not out of regard to their merits, but in imitation of the example of his God? Now, my brethren, no opposing creed *can* thus teach. Those who deny election altogether—and those who, admitting a kind of election, base it upon the foreseen faith and good works of the creature, can *never* thus ‘commend the love of God unto us’ for our imitation: for, according to them, God did not choose sinners to salvation out of his sovereign love—no it was because he foresaw good works in them. It was not then an act of *grace*—of unmerited mercy—He saw that they would *deserve* it—and that as a *just* God he would be *bound* to save them, and he *therefore* elected. Ah! Brethren, how desolating is such a belief! Indeed it sweeps the attribute of mercy from the Divine bosom altogether, and teaches that God *never forgives* except when he *cannot help* it—that is, when man has *earned* forgiveness. Such a system of belief can *never* teach man to pity and forgive his erring brother—to love those that are undeserving of his love—to render good for evil. No! no! the only advice it can consistently give is to take the debtor by the throat and vociferate “pay me that thou owest.” But the Calvinistic faith, when it inculcates the doctrine of God’s eternal electing love, teaches the most tender lesson of love to the undeserving and forbearance to all. And such was the estimate in which the inspired Paul held this very doctrine, as you may see at Col. III. 12, 13, and similar passages. When he would inculcate those Christian virtues that impart a charm to social life, and meliorate the asperities of earth, he connects the lesson with the doctrine of *election*, “put on therefore, as *the elect of God*, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any man have a quar-

rel against any, even as Christ also forgave you, so do ye !” As much as if he had said, “you profess to hope that you are *the elect of God*—that God chose you even when you were his enemies, as objects of his forbearance and compassion and love—now to be consistent follow the example of your God, and choose even your enemies to do them good.” Yes, brethren, our venerable creed is the only one that, in all its fullness, redeems the promise of the angelic song “glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards man ! !”

3. I cannot omit to declare—although I dare not take time fully to illustrate the position—that the *Calvinistic System* contains the true elements of *good social government*, and the only practicable theory of *republican democracy*.

The *principles* of society are found in the *doctrines* of the system—and are developed in the *Presbyterian government*. *Presbyterianism* is the *natural and necessary result of the Calvinistic doctrines* ; and Presbyterianism is a representative democracy.

The doctrine of covenants, including the ideas of *imputation* and *representation* are essential elements of society. Every society, from the smallest family to the vastest nation, must exist under a covenant—some acknowledged bond by which the members are held in a social *unity*, and by which each is held to the performance of certain *conditions*, upon which he receives the benefits of the social union. Every family, for example, exists under a covenant, real, although not formally written and promulgated. The parent is the covenant head, representative and magistrate. Each other member, son, hired laborer or slave is a party to the covenant—each has his duties to perform—each has his rights and privileges ; and between those parties duty, right and privilege are reciprocal. Now in order to the carrying out of the details of the covenant, the principles of *representation* and *imputation* must be called into play, and without those, the smallest society cannot get forward for a day. The head of the family is the representative of each

and all the members to perform the duties of a head: and so in turn each member may become, for certain purposes, the representative of the family. When the father acts, the whole family gains or loses in consequence of their union with him; the effects of his actions for good or evil come upon them. And so if the head of the family has been in the habit of deputing any member of the family to transact business—to do errands—to make purchases, and if he has paid debts contracted by that member, that member, though a minor or a slave becomes the recognized representative of the parent and the family, and his acts will bind the whole, for their profit or loss. If he contract debt, the parent and the estate is bound: i. e. the act of the *agent* or *representative* is *imputed* to those in whose name he acts, and the law holds them liable. Here then we have, 1st. The idea of a *covenant* or social compact. 2d. The idea of *representation*, or one acting for another or for many. 3d. The idea of *imputation*, or the consequences of the act of the representative being set over to the principal or constituent. Now any man can see at a glance that these are every day ideas—that these principles are in daily use amongst men, and that society cannot get on without them. But none of these principles can be *voluntarily* employed by men, without another element of free government, viz: *faith*. I say *voluntarily*, for there are instances in which they are used without the previous consent of all the parties. In the covenant of works, Adam was constituted, by the Sovereign of the Universe, the covenant head of the great family that descends from him, and for a specific object appointed their representative. This was an extraordinary case—the consent of the represented *was* not—*could* not be asked. Hence faith could not be admitted as an element of the first covenant. Somewhat similar to this is the case of every ordinary family, in which the parent is, by the act of God in the law of nature and providence, appointed the covenant head, and representative of his household. But in every other social covenant amongst men, *the consent of parties*, either by positive agreement or acquiescence, ought of right to be

given, and where this is the case *faith* comes into play. The constituent or principal must have *faith* in the person proposed as his representative or agent, or he will not consent to be represented by him, and the agency cannot be constituted. Now no government can exist—no business carried on amongst men without contracts, constituents, representatives, agencies and imputation. Even an autocrat is the representative of his subjects. If the potentate of the North should be dethroned to-morrow and Russia become a free republic, that republic would be bound to pay all debts which the Czar had contracted. Why? because he is recognized by the civilized world as the head and representative of all the Russias.

Please notice, my hearers, that whilst these principles enter as elements of all society, they are modified by the *presence* or *absence* of that great bond of union *faith*. Where *faith* is introduced as an element of the social covenant, it imparts *life* and *liberty* to the other elements thereof, and brings them all into harmonious and delightful play. Faith is the free, voluntary trust reposed in a representative by the constituent, the cordial choice of him as a representative, and the relying upon him for the accomplishing of the business entrusted to his agency. This is the element which makes all the difference between *thralldom* and *liberty*—between *despotism* and *republicanism* in social covenants. The despot is the representative of the subjects of his sway: but there was no *faith*—no *enlightened freedom* in the mode of *constituting* the representative relation. The people had no *choice* in appointing him, and hence they are not governed according to the principles of liberty. And it matters not whether a despotic government be administered by one or many. If our Congress should depose the President—disband the cabinet—reduce the courts to their sway, and by force establish their usurpation, taking the right of suffrage from the people; the liberty of the country would be as completely gone as if a single despot should grasp the reigns of government: and indeed, we would probably find that three hundred tyrants are worse than one. Wherein,

then, does *liberty* consist? I answer in the *right use* of the principles of *covenant representation* and *imputation* resting upon the principle of *faith* as the only legitimate basis of the whole. That is—where a people, under a social covenant, do, in an enlightened manner and in the fear of God, make and execute laws and transact their own business by *representatives of their own choice*, they are a free people. Where they are deprived of the privilege of choosing their representatives—i. e. where they are not represented by those in whom they, or a majority of them, have *faith*, they are not a free people. Here then we have the elements of all social government: and the principles of all *practicable* democracy i. e. *representative republicanism*. And where did we get them? *From the Calvinistic creed*, as clearly deduced from the Book of God. There, and there *only*—there *primitively* are they found. There is the doctrine of *covenants*—there the doctrine of *representation* or *vicarious agency*—there the doctrine of *imputation* and there the vital spirit of them all, the doctrine of *faith*. And when that Bible-born creed warns *fallen* men to flee from a *covenant of works*, in which *faith* was not recognized, and to embrace a covenant of grace, of which *faith* is the very frontal doctrine—it teaches them to be jealous of the manner in which their representatives are constituted: it sheds upon them the very SPIRIT OF LIBERTY. And when that creed urges them to choose as their glorious covenant Representative and Advocate with the father, the perfect Jesus—the immaculate Immanuel—it imparts a lesson which as freemen they should not forget. It teaches them to choose as their representatives in earthly government, not mere party demagogues, but men *worthy* of their *confidence*—men in whom they can really have *faith*. A corollary from the statement made is, *that Presbyterian government is the natural and necessary result* of Calvinistic doctrines. The principles of Presbytery are found in the very bosom of this creed. Presbytery is but the natural development, in the external form of the church, of the doctrines of grace which warm her bosom. And for a Calvinistic church to wear any other form of government would

be a monstrous developement—so monstrous indeed that the world has never for any great length of time witnessed such a wonder. *No other form of government can naturally grow out of Calvinism*—and although repeated attempts have been made to preserve a union between this faith and other forms of government, none has ever succeeded. In the English reformation an attempt was made to imprison this free faith within the walls of a hierarchy. But the prisoner burst the bondage, and sought a home beyond the precincts of the English establishment: and although the Church of England still retains the body of that creed, in her thirty-nine articles—it is a *cold corpse* in her arms—its free spirit has fled to seek its native development elsewhere. Attempts, too, have been made, to plant this faith in the loose sands of independency and make it flourish there: but every such attempt has failed. For one of two results has always followed, viz: Either, 1st. It has taken root in the sands and thrown its fibres abroad, and by its native tendency to produce *cohesion*, has gradually transformed those shifting sands into the fixed soil of Presbyterianism: or, 2d. It has endured but for a time—has soon withered and been uprooted, and blown away from such unpropitious soil by the blasts of error. The truth of this corollary is manifest from an inspection of the principles we have already laid down; and if there is anything proven, to absolute demonstration, by the history of the Church, it is this.

But, my brethren, I have dwelt perhaps too long upon the theory; and as experience is the most valuable test of truth, I hasten to gather some of the rays of light which history sheds upon our proposition. And here I feel that our field is too ample for our time, and the most we can do is to scour it with rapid wing, and take a bird's eye view.

In pointing to the position occupied by the Presbyterian Church in the history of the past, in order to illustrate the value of her principles and government, I do not exclude any legitimate branch of the great Presbyterian family; for from the Apostolic church down through the church of the Piedmontese to the churches of Switzerland, France, Ger-

many, Holland, England, Scotland, Ireland and America, Presbyterian doctrine and order has been ever substantially the same.

And in pointing, as we boldly may, to the historical position of the Presbyterian Church—whilst we do it with exultation we do it without boasting, for by the grace of her God she has been what she has been, by the grace of her God she is what she is. Her sons claim none of the glory of her eminence either for their fathers or themselves—to her glorious *Head* they ascribe it all. True she has ever been emphatically “a city set upon a hill that cannot be hid,” but she owes her elevation to the grace and power of her covenant God. If her constitution and polity be, as we verily believe, the truly primitive and Apostolic—we may not boast of its *purity*, its *simplicity*, its capability of *universal extension* and *adoption*, as if we, or our fathers were its *authors*. Its authorship is with God. If her doctrines are indeed the truth—if her standards stream in Heaven’s own light—that light is borrowed all from the book of God, and we boast not of it, as of inventions of our own. If her sons have ever stood foremost amongst the learned—the pious—the suffering and the brave. If she can point to an unbroken succession of godly and self-denying, and faithful, and suffering generations, witnessing for God and his truth. If she can number amongst the illustrious, learned and pious advocates of her principles a Peter and a Paul—a Calvin and a Knox, a Cameron and a Henderson, a Chalmers & a Cook, a Witherspoon and a Mason, a Green, a Miller and an Alexander, a Monod and a Merle, and others by the thousand worthy to be named in such a catalogue. If she can point to her thousands of martyred dead—to the butchered Waldenses—to the crushed and hunted and slaughtered Covenanters—to the seventy thousand victims of bloody St. Bartholomew—to

“The good Coligne’s hoary hair all dabbled with his blood,”

—to the murdered Argyles and a host of other illustrious names, of which the world was not worthy. If she has been honored by her Lord with a station in the very van of the

sacramental host of God's elect. If by her sons has been chiefly fought every successful battle for the world's liberty; and if to her principles and her firmness in maintaining them, can be traced nearly all of regulated freedom that blesses any portion of our race—these are honors for which she should be devoutly thankful, but of which she may not boast: for in all the glorious past, as at the present moment, she is but an humble instrument in the hands of her God.

History, with the augmented voice of eighteen centuries, proclaims the truth, that the Calvinistic faith, united to the Presbyterian government, has been most productive of glory to God and good to man. It was in the use of this simple and unpretending, but mighty and majestic moral machinery, that the illiterate fishermen of Galilee, assisted by the learned and indefatigable Paul, accomplished, in the face of the bitterness of Jewish persecution, and the iron sternness of Roman cruelty and power, one of the mightiest revolutions that have ever changed the aspect of our world. It was Presbyterianism that preserved religion in its purity, throughout those centuries of trial and corruption, which commenced with the day when the cross was planted on the throne of Constantine. And when Rome, that "mother of harlots and abominations," extended her leaden sceptre over the world, and began to be "drunk with the blood of the saints," the Presbyterian church furnished a large proportion of her victims. And throughout those ages of darkness, that gloomed at the rise of Popery, and reached their midnight after the inundation of the barbarians of the north—where and who were the seed that God, according to his promise, had preserved to serve him? If some christian Elijah, had heard the voice of Jehovah proclaiming "yet have I left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth that hath not kissed him"—where, in that age of darkness and rebuke, could the prophet have found the faithful remnant? At the foot of an *European* and not an *Asiatic* Horeb were they found. In the fastnesses of the Alps, those mighty barriers which have baffled many a tyrant's rage, the people of God, driven

from their eastern home, and hunted, for the truth's sake, from land to land, had taken refuge, and there, despite the rage of the Roman and the fury of the Frank, they preserved and practiced the truth in its primitive beauty and simplicity. And *who* and *what* were these dwellers of the Alpine vallies? *Presbyterians all!!* The faith we hold was their faith—the government under which we rejoice was their government. And faithfully did they maintain them. Amid the flames of their burning villages—or unsheltered amid the desolation of Alpine winter—hunted from mountain to mountain and from valley to valley—oppressed—imprisoned—burnt and driven from their homes, still, with unbending firmness, they held on to the truth of God; until by that very *dispersion*, by which Rome thought to crush them, was sowed the seeds of that Reformation that makes Rome totter to her fall. The great Reformer of Geneva learned much from the Waldenses in regard to that primitive and Apostolic christianity, of which he was so learned and eloquent an advocate: and the enemies of the other Reformers often charged them with deriving their opinions from these Godly and faithful victims of Rome. Indeed, the candid searcher of history will be constrained to believe, that from the Apostolic times, a church maintaining the Presbyterian doctrine and order, was by the providence of God preserved, until she gave to the purest branch of the great reformation, the doctrine and ecclesiastical image, which she had preserved unmarred, through so many centuries of darkness and of blood.

Did time permit, it might be profitable to glance at so much of the history of the Presbyterian church as might illustrate her efficiency as a *moral society*—a society which has for ages proved the bulwark of the social weal of man, and the promoter of civil and religious liberty. Whilst *protestantism*, in all its forms, has done much to bless the earth and to people Heaven, it cannot be denied that, in its *Presbyterian* form, its achievements have been most *glorious* and *substantial*. From the days of Calvin down, the Presbyterian church, in Britain, in Germany, in Holland, in

Switzerland and in America has chiefly manned all the heavy ordnance by which the citadel of truth has been defended. And no candid philosophizer upon historical facts can deny her the proud distinction, of having accomplished more for human freedom than all other portions of the church combined. Who first broke the iron arm of British despotism? *The Presbyterians of Britain!* And when that arm was broken and the spirit of tyranny was crushed with the fortunes of the infatuated Charles, who would have saved the nation from rushing to the opposite extreme of anarchy—from sickening of licentious freedom, and again welcoming the restoration of monarchy? *The Presbyterians of Britain!* Had *Presbytery* instead of *Independency* obtained the ascendancy in the English mind—had it stamped its system of *regulated and ballanced republicanism* upon the English Commonwealth: England and not America had won the glory of having first solved the problem of *national self-government*.

And when the glorious Covenanters of Scotland, for nearly eighty years, contended against the combined force of prelacy and despotism—when they stood, despite the curses of a Charles and the claymore of a Claverhouse, for their *principles*, their *presbytery*, their *covenant* and their God—they stood for the LIBERTY OF THE WORLD!! and in the language of another “they watered with their blood that plant of renown, of which succeeding ages have reaped the pleasant fruits.” In regard to the influence of the Presbyterian church upon the liberties of our own loved land—I need not tell even the tyro in her history what it has been. Of the influence she exerted in the achievement of our independence I need not speak. Her pulpits rung with sentiments of Christian patriotism. Her ministers urged their people to the field, and followed them to the camp and the conflict with the comforts of religion. The illustrious Jefferson (no partial witness, as the world knows) declared that he could not get the Old Dominion to come up to the struggle, until a fast was appointed, and the Presbyterian ministers preached patriotic sermons, and then Virginia rush-

ed to the rescue. The sons of Presbytery poured out their blood upon every battle field. Our *Witherspoon* imparted wisdom and energy to our national Councils, and his name adorns the declaration of independence—and our Calwell and our Rosebrough poured out their blood as martyrs in the cause of freedom. And after the conflict was over, and the sages of America came to settle the forms of our government, they did but *copy* into *every* constitution, the simple elements of representative republicanism, as found in the Presbyterian system. It is matter of history that cannot be denied, that Presbyterianism, as found in the Bible, and in the standards of the several Presbyterian churches, gave character to our free institutions. Am I reminded of the glorious part which New England Congregationalists took in our country's deliverance? My heart's best feelings kindle at the recollection: and in according to New England all the glory that she has so well earned, I yield not my position, for New England is *substantially Presbyterian*. It must not be forgotten that the Pilgrim Fathers, after witnessing the sad effects of simple independency in their own land, had been nursed in the bosom, and had drank of the spirit of Presbyterian Holland and Geneva, *before* they reached the rock of Plymouth, and from the very first their institutions partook of the Presbyterian form.

From the very nature of the Presbyterian government, that church must, in proportion to her resources, exert a mightier influence upon the popular mind than any other system. Papacy and the various forms of Prelacy, require the ecclesiastics to be *shrewd* and capable of *managing* the people, but there is no tendency in those systems to develop the *popular mind*: and hence under those systems the people are content to be managed by the priesthood, and to leave all their church interests in their hands. But the Presbyterian system, which is a representative democracy, adapted at once to a single neighborhood, and to the vast continent, brings the mass of her people to be interested in the affairs of the whole church. Each member feels himself to be a free citizen of a great ecclesiastical republic,

whose affairs he has a right to discuss, and whose principles it is his duty to understand. Her eldership have an equal share with the ministers of the word in all legislation and adjudication in the church courts; and both they and the people they represent, are led to master all the doctrines and the entire polity of the church. No system could be better adapted to promote the general intelligence of the people, by securing the inculcation of all the principles it embraces. Other systems may produce a *shrewd and managing priesthood*; ours cannot but make an *enlightened people*: and no system is so efficient in stamping its *moral image* upon a *whole people*.

Once more. Presbyterianism teaches the people to prize, and never to relinquish the *right of suffrage*. We have already shown that the principle of free suffrage is found in the Calvinistic system of Gospel grace, and that it finds its natural development in the representative form of free government. Deriving the principle from such a source, and finding in Acts VI., and elsewhere, apostolic example for its practical application in the election of church officers, the Presbyterian Church has always contended for the freedom of God's people in choosing their teachers and rulers. And it was for this very privilege the Church of Scotland has lately suffered the loss of all things but her Bible, her ministry and her God. The Presbyterian Church is teaching the world to prize this privilege; and so efficiently has she inculcated this lesson of freedom in our own happy land, that even the arrogance of prelacy is constrained to bow in some degree before its free spirit. And no religious sects venture wholly to deprive their people of the right of suffrage, except the papacy itself, and that ingenious hierarchy which shapes the destinies of Armenian Methodism. I would be an unworthy son of one who bled in defence of American independence, did I not warn my countrymen against all influences that might lead them to relinquish the right of suffrage. And if men can be induced to forego that right, when their *dearest interests* are concerned—the interests of immortality: will they be likely to

prize it when their civil interests only are involved. If men consent to give up the right of electing those who serve them in *spiritual* things, will they care to elect those who serve them in *temporal* things. Beware, my countrymen, of that religious policy that accustoms the people to surrender the right of suffrage !!

Again, and lastly. One of the most glorious and promising of the problems which the history of the Church has solved is, that Presbytery is most efficient to *preserve* the truth in its purity; and that it has a *recuperative power*, by which, when corruptions have been forced upon the church, or have crept in unawares, she can be purified. I dare not detain you with the historical detail necessary to illustrate this. I will only point you to the Synod of Dort, in Holland—to the Synod of Ulster in Ireland—to the progress in purity of the German Reformed Church in this land—to the recent reform in our own branch of the church, and last, though not least, to the always glorious Kirk of Scotland, now more illustrious than ever, as she stands erect and sublime—firm and lofty as her own Ben Nevis, and glorious as he, when his snow-capt summit is bathed in the brilliance of the noontide sun. Yes, brethren, the Kirk of Scotland, the blessed mother from whom we drew the milk of piety and freedom, stands disenthralled. And I challenge the world to point to a spectacle producing more of the moral sublime than her recent renouncement of the establishment. Show me, if you can, upon the ample scroll of all history, any church, but a Presbyterian church, that being once established by law—endowed with large revenues—accommodated with stately churches, fertile glebes and comfortable manses, and being urged to retain these advantages, guaranteed by a powerful government, has renounced them all for the sake of *principle*; for the Headship of Christ and the right of suffrage of God's people—and in the face of poverty and reproach have sacrificed all to the cause of truth and freedom !! Brethren, it was a glorious spectacle—worthy to lead off in the celebration of the Bi-centenary of our venerable creed! It asserts with an eloquence that words can never furnish—with all

the power of absolute demonstration, that the Calvinistic faith, connected with the Presbyterian government is most efficient for promoting the glory of God, and the temporal and eternal interests of man !

Well, brethren, if these things be so, let us prize our principles. Let us never blush to avow them. Let us with zeal, and liberality, and self-denial, and prayer strive to spread these principles round the globe. And whilst, with humble exultation, we recall the memory of the glorious past, and adoringly exclaim, "*What hath God wrought?*" let us "*hold fast the form of sound words,*" and contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints !

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ERRATUM.—Page 24, line 16, for *adoption* read *adaptation*.