

1855
A
DRAUGHT
OF AN
OVERTURE
FOR AN
ACT, DECLARATION
AND
TESTIMONY
OF THE
REFORMED DISSENTING
PRESBYTERY
FOR
NORTH-AMERICA.

WASHINGTON, (Pa.)

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1855

ADVERTISEMENT.

WE have published this Draught of an Overture for an Act, Declaration and Testimony of the Reformed Dissenting Presbytery, in order that all those concerned may have an opportunity to see it before it is passed into an Act; so that nothing, in so weighty a matter, may be done without due deliberation. It is hoped therefore, that all concerned will examine it carefully: and if any should find any doctrine or principle not agreeable to, or founded on, the word of God, and disagreeable to our Standards, they are requested to bring, or send forward their observations, on what they conceive to be so, to the next ensuing Presbytery, where they will be candidly considered.

The Overture is required to be returned by every person possessing them, against the next meeting of Presbytery.

John Fowler his Son

M 24

1795 A

DRAUGHT of an OVERTURE

FOR A

TESTIMONY OF THE REFORMED DISSENTING CHURCH IN AMERICA.

Chap. I.—Of the Divinity and Necessity of the Scriptures.

WE BELIEVE,
1. That the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God, written by men inspired by God, and bear in themselves evident marks of their divine original; such as their majesty, purity, power and harmony; the manifold predictions of things to come made in them, and their distinct, remarkable and exact accomplishment; the great number and variety of miracles wrought for their confirmation, some of them in judgment, many of them in mercy; their scope and tendency, which are to give all glory to God, and to humble sinners; the ample and perfect discovery they make of the way and means of man's redemption and salvation, and the many mysteries respecting it revealed in them, abundantly evince, as the Apostle says, that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God:" and that they are to be received, not as the word of men, but as they are indeed and in truth, the word of God.

2. That the authority and ground upon which the Scriptures ought to be received and believed, are not the testimony and authority of any man, or church, or council; for, though the authority of the church of Christ, or a council of Reverend and Godly men, or of the civil magistrate, ought to stimulate to the study of the Scriptures, and a careful attendance to the things therein revealed, both with regard to doctrines and precepts; yet neither the one nor the other, neither any nor all of them put together, are the authority, ground and reason upon which we ought to receive and believe the Scriptures with a divine faith. Nor are the marks of divinity, before-mentioned, evidently legible on the face of the Scriptures, which are evident even to reason itself, and which are sufficient to stop the mouths of gainsayers, the ground of a divine faith; but the authority and testimony of God himself speaking in the Scriptures, made evident, by the light of the Spirit of God, to our understanding.

3. That although the light of nature and the works of creation and providence, make it evident that there is a God of infinite power, wisdom, holiness and goodness, so that those who are without a divine revelation are left inexcusable, because they do not live up to that light which they have; for the law of nature, as to some notices of it, is written in their heart, by which some of the duties which God requires of all men may be known; yet the light of nature is utterly insufficient to teach us the saving knowledge of God, in any degree. It never did, since the fall of man, nor never can, teach men, now, how they might glorify God, and come to the enjoyment of him. The light of nature cannot teach how he ought to be worshipped. It cannot even teach

as wherein man's happiness lies. It neither does nor can give a sufficient rule of duty. It does not even offer sufficient motives to obedience. It cannot inform us of the origin of sin, and how it came into the world. It cannot, sin being in the world, and all having become guilty before God, inform whether, or how, any man can be pardoned and accepted with God. It cannot shew us how our inclinations to sin may be overcome, and its power subdued. Now all this is plain from this single consideration, that no man, since the fall of Adam, can be produced, who had such a knowledge by the light of nature; and yet the knowledge of these things is absolutely necessary to the salvation of any man who has the exercise of reason. THEREFORE, WE BELIEVE,

4. That a revelation from that God against whom we have sinned, is absolutely necessary with regard to those things just before mentioned, and many other things not there named; since it is utterly impossible for any of mankind to have any knowledge of them without such a revelation. Every thing necessary for men to know, believe and do, in order to glorify God and enjoy him, must be revealed to us now since the fall, or we could have no proper and adequate knowledge of it: but all this is done in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments; which we declare we receive, not only as a perfect, sufficient, supreme rule, but as the only rule of faith and obedience, to the exclusion of all other rules, in matters of religion, whether it be reason, or conscience, or the light of nature, or the authority of men, or any other thing that can be mentioned.

5. That the canon of the Scripture is long since closed, to which nothing is to be added by new revelations of the Spirit, nor traditions of men.

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6. That the infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself. And though men may judge in controversies of religion, in their own proper sphere and place, in such a way, and for such ends and purposes, as the Scriptures warrant them; yet the supreme judge of all controversies in religion, and by which decrees of councils and doctrines of men are to be tried and determined, is no other than the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures.

WE THEREFORE TESTIFY,

1. Against such as maintain, that a revelation from God to men cannot be given.

Against such as deny the necessity of a revelation from God, and maintain that the light of nature and reason is sufficient to instruct us with regard to all those things that are necessary for glorifying God and enjoying him.

3. Against such as deny that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are a divine revelation.

4. Against such who, though they profess to believe that the Scriptures are a perfect, supreme, infallible rule; yet deny that they are the only rule.

5. Against such as maintain, that conscience is such a rule, and of such great authority, that if we are conscientious we are right, even when we profess the greatest imaginable errors and blasphemies, even to the denying of the God, that made us, we are more in our duty, to maintain and propagate such opinions, and to persuade all men to embrace them, than even to suppress our opinions.

6. Against such as maintain, that the Old Testament is not the word of Christ, nor of divine authority, and that it is now mostly obsolete, and of no more use than any other old history.

(7)

7. Against such as maintain, that the Scripture is in any case erroneous.

8. Against such as maintain, that any man, or church, or council can be an infallible judge of religious controversies, or an infallible interpreter of Scripture; as well as against such as deny that any man should judge at all in matters of religion, either in an ecclesiastical or civil manner, so as to award church censures, or civil punishment, for any errors or heresies whatsoever, while such a person is conscientious that he is professing and propagating the truth.

Chap. II.—Of God, and of the Holy Trinity.

WE BELIEVE,

1. That there is but one only living and true God, who is a most pure Spirit, invisible, without body or bodily parts or passions, of whom no corporal nor carnal representation can or ought to be made, neither inwardly in our minds, nor outwardly by any image.

2. That this one true and ever-living God is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in all his perfections; as, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth, who created all things by his power, and rules, governs and directs all things, by his Providence, to their proper and appointed ends; who is a most merciful and gracious God, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin; and yet such an hater of sin, that he will by no means clear the guilty.

3. That this infinitely great and only true God is in and unto himself all-sufficient, having no need of any of his creatures to make him more blessed and happy, this being impossible, he being

infinitely blessed and happy in himself: nor does he derive any glory from any of them, but manifests his glory in, by, upon and unto them. He hath sovereign dominion over his creatures, to do by, for, or upon them, whatsoever is pleasing in his sight. His knowledge is infinite, infallible and independent on his creatures; so that nothing is or can be contingent unto him, or any way uncertain. To God is due from all intelligent creatures, all that obedience and worship which he is pleased to demand of them.

4. That though we believe there is but one God, yet we believe that in the one undivided essence or Godhead, there are three distinct persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

5. That these three persons, as they are one in essence, so they are equal in power and glory. The Father is God, and the Son and Holy Ghost are also God, of the same essence and equal in power and glory with the Father: for the same names, attributes, works and worship are ascribed to the Son and Holy Ghost, as are ascribed to the Father. And if divine attributes, works and worship can be ascribed to none but God, but the true God, without blasphemy; then it is blasphemy to deny, that the persons to whom they are properly ascribed are God, the only true God, in opposition to all idols and inferior deities. These glorious persons of the Godhead are distinguished by their personal properties. It is proper for the Father to beget the Son, and the Son to be begotten of the Father, and for the Holy Ghost to proceed from the Father and the Son from all eternity.

WE THEREFORE TESTIFY,

1. Against all Atheists, who deny that there is any God; and all who not only say it with their mouth, but say it in their practice.

2. Against all such as deny that there are three persons in the Godhead, all of the same essence, equal in power and glory; and therefore deny the divinity of Christ and of the Holy Spirit. We TESTIFY against all such, as blaspheming Atheists, whatever they pretend. We TESTIFY against all such as maintain that our Lord Jesus is no more than a mere creature, either created before all worlds, or who had no existence till conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary: Against such as maintain that his human soul was created before all worlds, and the Covenant of Grace made with it.

Chap. III.—Of Predestination.

WE BELIEVE,

1. That God hath from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass, especially concerning angels and men; but in such a way as God is neither the author of sin, nor is the liberty, nor (what men call) the contingency of second causes destroyed, but rather established; nor is there any violence done to the will of the creature.

2. That though God, from all eternity, foreknew all things whatsoever, which might or could come to pass in any case, or upon any supposable condition; yet he did not decree any thing to come to pass, because he foreknew it would come to pass; but on the contrary, God foreknew all things which have, shall, or can come to pass, because he has fore-ordained that they shall so come to pass, together with all the causes, means, or conditions, whether by permission or actual influence, necessary to bring them to pass.

3. That, especially with regard to angels and men, God has predestinated some of them to eternal life and glory, for the manifestation of his own grace; but the rest he hath fore-ordained to eternal punishment, on account of their sins, for the glory of his justice. But as our chief concern is with men, **WE BELIEVE,**

4. That God from all eternity hath, of his own free grace, according to the immutable counsel of his own will, chosen in Christ a certain number of men, out of the common mass of mankind, to special and spiritual blessings here, and to the complete enjoyment of himself and uninterrupted happiness hereafter, to the praise of the glory of his grace.

5. That those of mankind whom God has chosen to eternal life, are some of mankind, not all: this the very nature of choosing supposes. If all were taken, then there would be no choice: hence said to be "a remnant according to the election of grace."

6. That the number chosen is a certain definite one, which cannot be increased nor diminished. "The Lord knoweth them that are his," and in comparison of the rest of mankind, they are but few.

7. When the choice was made, all were considered in the same common state and condition; all were on a level: those who were chosen were no better than those who were left, as considered in themselves. "Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump, to make one vessel to honour and another to dishonour?"

8. That those are not whole nations nor churches, but particular persons. "Jacob have I loved:" "Salute Rufus, chosen in the Lord:" "According as he hath chosen us in him."

9. Election is entirely of grace. There neither was nor is any thing in the object chosen, which was the moving cause of this choice. Nothing out of himself can be a motive to God. All motives to God's acts and proceedings are entirely within himself. And so it is with regard to election. His own free grace and love were his motives to it; for which reason it is called the election of grace. And being according to the sovereign and unchangeable will of God, it stands firm and immovable: it is the purpose of God according to election, not of works, but of him that calleth.

10. That God hath chosen none of mankind upon their foreseen faith, repentance, or good works, or because he foresaw that some would be better than others; nor did he delay his choice till he should see who would believe, &c. and then choose them because they were such; but he chose them before the foundation of the world; before they had any existence; before they had done good or evil; and not because they were holy, but in order to make them such. It is only as many as were ordained to eternal life who believe.

11. That the blessings to which they are chosen, are grace here and glory hereafter, union to Christ, regeneration, justification, adoption, sanctification and complete glorification. The means and the end are both alike ordained, and both alike sure, since both stand upon the immutability of his counsel and will.

12. The supreme and ultimate end which God had in view in choosing any, was his own glory, the glory of his own attributes, such as his wisdom, power, holiness, justice, and of his rich and free grace.

13. That as God has chosen some men to eternal life and the means thereof; so he determined to pass by the rest, and to punish them for their sins. The Scriptures never represent God as punishing any man, but for sin; nor does it represent him as decreeing to punish any, but on account of sin: but then the Scriptures represent some as ordained of old to this condemnation; as the rest, who are blinded, in opposition to such as were chosen; as not written in the Lamb's book of life, &c.

14. That this doctrine ought to be preached by the ministers of the Gospel. This doctrine tends to bring down the haughtiness of man, and to lay his loftiness low; and to exalt the highest God. It tends to stain the pride of man's glory, and to shew him that he is indebted to God for every good and perfect gift. It tends to strengthen a believer's hopes, and invigorate his endeavours to please and honour God. It tends to encourage him under affliction, and to excite him to come continually to God, through Christ, for the supply of all his wants. In a word, it tends to make him quiet and calm under the various vicissitudes of Providence, as knowing that all things shall work together for good.

WE THEREFORE TESTIFY,

1. Against all such as deny, that God has eternally and infallibly decreed any thing, especially concerning angels and men.

2. Against all such as deny that God has, from eternity, chosen any to eternal life and the means thereof. Against such as deny that election is eternal, particular, and of God's rich and free grace, and infallible in the event; but maintain that it is conditional, and depends upon men's faith, repentance and good works, either done, or to be done.

3. Against such as maintain, that the Scripture representation of election only respects the choice of a nation, or a number of persons under the notion of a visible church, to the participation of visible privileges.

4. Against all such as maintain that it would be injustice in God, to choose, infallibly, any of mankind to eternal life and the means thereof, and at the same time pass by, and reject others no worse by nature than those who were chosen; and to determine to withhold his grace from them who were not chosen, and to punish them for their sins.

5. Against such as maintain, that it is unsafe and unnecessary to preach the doctrines of election and reprobation, because they may be abused by weak and corrupt men.

6. Against all such as maintain, that though election should be granted, yet some of the elect may be lost, and some of the non-elect saved.

Chap. IV.—Of Creation.

WE BELIEVE,

1. That the three-one God, for the manifestation of his own glorious perfections, hath communicated a finite created existence to all other beings, and has formed them with natures wisely adapted to the various ends of their creation.

2. That when God had made all other creatures, he created man, endowed him with a reasonable, intelligent, and immortal soul, stamped his image, consisting of knowledge, righteousness and holiness, upon his soul, and wrote his laws upon his heart, requiring of him personal, perfect and perpetual obedience; but subjected him to inconceivable punishment for the least breach of

his law ; having given him complete ability to keep it, but left him to the freedom of his own will which was mutable, to improve the ability given, to God's glory and his own happiness, or to abuse it, to God's dishonour and his own ruin.

WE THEREFORE TESTIFY,

1. Against such as deny, that the world and all things which began to exist, and are finite, were created by the power, and for the pleasure of one first cause, which is God.

2. Against all such as deny, that God created man with an immaterial and immortal soul ; and maintain that the soul of man is material, and consequently mortal.

3. Against such as deny, that man had sufficient ability given him, as he came out of the hands of his Creator, to keep God's law.

4. Against such as maintain, that man was not subjected to eternal punishment for every, nor for any of his sins.

Chap. V.—*Of Providence.*

WE BELIEVE,

1. That as God by his almighty power created all things out of nothing, from the highest seraph to the lowest insect and atom, and endowed them with natures adapted to the ends of their creation ; so does he constantly and invariably preserve and uphold them by his divine Providence, and unremittingly overrules and directs them, and all their motions, or actions, for the manifestation of his own glory.

2. That though men often talk of chance, contingency, casualty, accident, and the like, yet properly speaking, there are no such things : for as the number of creatures which God made, or

shall make hereafter, is certain and definite, there can be neither more nor fewer, not one ; so are the thoughts, words and actions of men, or other reasonable creatures, and all the various motions of other beings, animate or inanimate, certain and invariably determined.

3. That as God has immutably fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass ; so by his Providence he actually brings them to pass, most commonly by means of second causes, which perhaps may be another name for what is called the fixed laws of nature. But,

4. That God works not only by means, but without, above and contrary to means. Sometimes the laws of nature cease, for a time, from their operations ; as causing iron to swim, and fire to cease to burn.

5. That the Providence of God extends to the ~~first~~ fall, and all other sins of angels and men ; and that not by a bare permission, but such as hath joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering and governing of them in a manifold dispensation to his own holy ends : yet so as the sinfulness of these actions proceedeth only from the creatures, and not from God, who is neither the author nor approver of their sins, but hates and abhors them.

6. That God in his holy Providence, for his own holy ends, suffers his own dear children to fall into temptations, and leaves them for a time to the corruption of their own hearts, to correct them for their former sins, to shew them the hidden strength of corruption within them, and their own deceitfulness, that they may be humbled, and to stimulate them to a more close and constant dependence on himself for support, and to make them more watchful over their hearts and ways for the time to come, &c.

7. That with regard to the rest of mankind, whom God, as a just Judge, punisheth for their sins in their own persons; from these, God not only withholdeth his grace, whereby their understandings might have been opened and their hearts ameliorated; but even withdraweth those gifts of which they were possessed; and they are often, in his Providence, in the presence of those objects which their corruption makes occasions of sin; and besides, gives them up to the influence of their own lusts, the world's allurements, and the power and temptations of Satan; whereby it comes to pass, that they harden themselves under the very means which God useth to soften others.

8. That as the Providence of God is extended to all his creatures in general, so it is essentially exercised about the church of Christ in this world, making all things work together for its good.

WE THEREFORE TESTIFY,

1. Against all such as deny the Providence of God, either general over all things, or particular and special with regard to his church and people.

2. Against such as substitute such unmeaning names as chance, contingency, fortune, and the like, in the room of an all-directing and ordering Providence.

3. Against such as maintain, that God, when he created the universe, stamped it with such fixed and invariable laws, that when once it was set on motion by its Creator, it required no farther providential care or direction from him.

4. Against such as maintain, that when God created the worlds, he endowed them with such qualities and properties, as have necessarily produced all events and circumstances which have, or at any time shall take place in them, without the immediate agency of God who created them.

Chap. VI.—*Of the Covenant made with Man in innocency: His fall and the consequent evils.*

WE BELIEVE,

1. That God having made man in an upright estate, and stamped his image upon his soul, as before said, he condescended to enter into a covenant with him, promising him life as the reward of his obedience to his law, now written upon his heart, together with the positive precept which prohibited him to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, (obedience to which law, moral and positive, was the condition of this covenant) but threatening death, natural, spiritual and eternal, as the righteous and unavoidable punishment of any breach of his law, moral or positive: by the positive precept, God made trial of Adam's obedience. The threatening of death was the penalty of this covenant.

2. That, of this covenant, Adam was constituted the public head and representative of all mankind, which should descend from him by ordinary generation; so that if he had perfectly obeyed the law, moral and positive, during the time of his trial, not only himself, but also his posterity would have been confirmed in holiness, and entitled to the promised reward; but if he failed in his obedience, he should incur the threatened penalty both upon himself and his natural offspring.

3. That although our first parents were created with sufficient ability to yield the required obedience, yet, being left to the freedom of their own will, they were seduced by the subtil temptations

of the old serpent, the devil, to eat of the forbidden tree. By yielding to, and complying with this temptation, the covenant of works was completely broken. This breach of the covenant God was pleased to permit, having purposed it as an occasion for manifesting the glory of his mercy and grace.

4. Our first parents having broken the covenant made with them, they were immediately deprived of the image of God, lost all spiritual communion with him, and became spiritually dead, and liable to natural and eternal death: and the covenant being made with Adam as the representative of all his posterity descending from him by ordinary generation, this first sin of his was imputed to all his natural offspring. Hence they are conceived in sin, created without original righteousness, and come into the world with all the powers and faculties of their nature corrupted, and utterly disabled, opposed and inimical to every thing spiritually good, and inclined and disposed to all evil; under the curse of the law and sentence of condemnation; liable to all the miseries of this present life, to death with its most envenomed sting, and the most dreadful punishments, in soul and body, in hell's fire forever.

That it is from the imputation of Adam's sin, that we are deprived of original righteousness, and from the want of original righteousness proceeds the corruption of our nature. The imputation of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of our nature, is what we call original sin: and from this proceeds all actual sin, in thought, word or deed.— This depravation of nature remains in part, even in those who are really regenerated, and is, with all its motions, truly and properly sin, though it

be, for Christ's sake, pardoned, and in some degree mortified.

WE THEREFORE TESTIFY,

1. Against all such as deny, that there was any covenant of works made with Adam.

2. Against all such as deny, that Adam was constituted a representative of all, or of any of his natural posterity, so that they should stand or fall with him.

3. Against all such as deny, that there is any such thing as original sin; that Adam's sin is imputed to his posterity; and maintain, that, at the utmost, we are only destitute of original righteousness.

4. Against all such as maintain, that man's nature, as he comes into the world, is not so corrupted as to render him utterly incapable to do any thing spiritually good, and acceptable to God.

5. Against such as deny that all, or any of mankind, are under the curse of the law and sentence of condemnation, by the imputation of Adam's first sin.

Chap. VII.—*Of the Covenant of Grace.*

WE BELIEVE,

1. That as Adam sinned, and thereby brake the covenant of works, and involved himself and all his natural posterity in misery and wretchedness, out of which both he and they were utterly incapable, in the least degree, to extricate themselves: and God foreseeing this fall and ruin, and having determined to deliver some of fallen mankind from sin and misery, and to bring them into a state of salvation, did, moved thereto by nothing but his own free and unmerited love, enter into

covenant with his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, as the representative and surety of such only as were designed and appointed to salvation. This covenant is commonly called a covenant of grace.

2. That the covenant of redemption and the covenant of grace, are not two distinct and different covenants, but one and the same covenant under different considerations. With regard to our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom it was made, it may be with propriety called a covenant of redemption: but with regard to the elect, in whose favour it was made, and as all its blessings come freely to them, it may also with propriety be called a covenant of grace.

3. That in the covenant of grace, our Lord Jesus did not represent all mankind, but only a certain number of them, whom God chose in Christ from eternity. These chosen ones only bear his name and image; they only are called his seed, his children, his sheep; and they only are made participators of its purchased and promised blessings.

4. That the condition of the covenant of grace is not to be performed by the covenantees, or the elect, in whose favour it was made. Therefore, neither faith, nor repentance, nor new obedience, neither any of these, nor all of them put together, is the condition of the covenant of grace. That alone can be its condition, which gives us a meritorious right to its blessings: but this neither any one, nor all the forementioned qualifications can do, neither in whole nor in part; therefore they cannot be its conditions. Faith, and repentance, and new obedience are not conditions, *fine qua non*, of the covenant of grace; for they are not conditions of it at all, in any sense. These may be conditions or qualifications, *fine qua non*, of some of the covenantees, as they have no

ground nor warrant to conclude, that they have any actual, saving right, title, or interest in the covenant, while they are destitute of these: we say, some of the covenantees; for it is only such of them as come to the use and exercise of reason, of whom these qualifications are required: elect infants are not capable of these; and yet the condition of the covenant is fulfilled for them: even that condition, *fine qua non*, or without which neither infants nor adults can ever have any advantage by it, nor interest in it.

5. That the covenant of grace was made with our Lord Jesus Christ, as the party contractor, on the part or behalf of the elect, who were not capable of being parties contractors themselves; and the fulfilling of the condition of it was required of him alone. He alone was capable of fulfilling its condition, and he alone did actually fulfil it. The condition required was, that he should fulfil all righteousness; which righteousness consisted in the holiness of his human nature, his perfect, sinless obedience to the law as a covenant, and his bearing the wrath and curse of God due for sin. This is the only proper condition of the covenant of grace: for the elect, having this righteousness imputed to them, have a perfect freedom from all penal evils, and a title to eternal life; which includes all the blessings of the covenant. The elect of God, not being parties contractors in this covenant, but only covenantees or representees, as they were not capable, so neither was it required of them, to fulfil the condition of the covenant: and as their faith and repentance could neither fulfil the law, nor satisfy the justice of God; so they do not belong to the conditional, but to the promissory part of the covenant.

6. That the Old Testament Church and the New Testament Church were not under two distinct and different covenants of grace; but under one and the same covenant differently administered. The Old Testament saints were justified by the same righteousness, regenerated by the same Spirit, and saved by the same Saviour, as the saints are under the New Testament; though under the New Testament there is a greater abundance of light, and of the gifts and influences of the Holy Spirit, than under the Old. There was, nor ever will be, any other name, by which men formerly were, now are, or ever will be saved, but the name of Jesus.

WE THEREFORE TESTIFY,

1. Against all such as deny, that there is one covenant of grace.
2. Against such as maintain, that the elect are parties contractors in the covenant of grace; and consequently that it is made with them, and they are required to fulfil its condition.
3. Against such as deny the covenant of grace was made with Christ as the representative of the elect, and of them only.
4. Against all such as maintain, that the covenant of grace has an equal respect to all mankind, and is not the privilege of the elect only.
5. Against such as maintain, that the covenant of redemption and the covenant of grace are two distinct covenants.
6. Against such as maintain, that the covenant of grace under the Old and New Testaments differed essentially, and not in administration only.
7. Against such as maintain, that faith, and repentance, and new obedience, or any other duty or qualification wrought in us, or done by us, is the condition of the covenant of grace.

8. Against all such as deny the righteousness wrought out and brought in by our Lord Jesus Christ, to be the only condition of the covenant of grace.

Chap. VIII—Of Christ as Mediator.

WE BELIEVE,

1. That as Adam and all his natural posterity have sinned against God; so there is enmity between God and man; a legal enmity on God's part, and a real enmity on man's part; which enmity must be removed, if any of the human race should be saved. This could not be done but by a suitable Mediator. None but God could know, appoint, or accept of such a Mediator. God having determined to save some of fallen men, did choose and appoint such a Mediator as was capable to make a full reconciliation between God and man; as could remove the legal enmity on God's part, and the real enmity on man's.
2. That the person chosen, appointed and ordained of God to be the Mediator, was Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, equal in power and glory, and all divine perfections, with God the Father and God the Holy Ghost. The person chosen is the true God, God over all, blessed forever. Amen.
3. That in order to qualify and fit our Lord Jesus for the full execution of his Mediatorial office, the Father prepared, and he assumed a human nature into personal union with his divine nature; which human nature consisted of a true body and a reasonable soul: so that two whole, perfect and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition or confusion: which person is very God, and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man.

4. That our Lord Jesus did not assume the human nature from eternity: for it did not subsist, nor had any existence from eternity, in any of its constituent parts, neither in body nor soul. Christ's human nature had no existence before it was conceived by the Virgin Mary, by the power of the Holy Ghost. It was in the fulness of time, that he was made of a woman.

5. That the person of Christ, by assuming the human nature, underwent no mutation, or real change. Its glory was neither increased nor diminished by that assumption. There was a change indeed, but it was wholly in the nature assumed, not in the person assuming. Christ's mediatorial person, is the person of the Son of God. He could not have been our Mediator, nor executed the mediatorial office, were he not God. His being God was so essential to the very execution of his mediatory offices, that they could never have been executed unless he had been God. But if these things are so, then Christ, as Mediator, is God; and if so, then he is the object of divine worship as he is Mediator: for if God be the object of divine worship, and Christ, as he is Mediator, be God; then Christ, as Mediator, is the object of divine worship.

6. That Christ, as Mediator, is the redeemer, surety, head and representative, prophet, priest and king of his church: as Mediator, he has all power in heaven and earth, given to him; angels, authorities, and powers are made subject to him, and he is set far above them all: He is not only king of saints, but governor among the nations; made Lord and Christ, Lord of all: and as Mediator, is appointed judge of quick and dead. These things are evident from many passages of scripture.

7. That although it is essential to the Mediatorial office of Christ, that he be God; because he could not execute that office unless he was God; yet it is not essential to his God-head that he should be a Mediator: for, abstracting from the consideration of his Mediatorial office, he is God; therefore it is not by office that he is God, and the Son of God; or in other words, it is not his Mediatorial office which constitutes him God, or the Son of God; nor is he the Son of God by creation, nor by adoption; but he is the true self-existent and eternal God, and is the natural, necessary, and eternal Son of God.

8. That our Lord Christ being appointed to this office by the Father, did voluntarily undertake it; and in order to his completely executing it, had all necessary furniture promised and given him for that purpose; being anointed with the Holy Ghost above measure. As our Lord Jesus is vested with the Mediatorial office, so will he remain vested with it forever.

WE THEREFORE TESTIFY,

1. Against all such as deny, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God by natural, necessary, and eternal generation; and therefore not the same in essence, nor equal in power and glory, with the Father.

2. Against all such as maintain, that he is God only by office and appointment; and the Son of God by creation, or by office, or by adoption only.

3. Against all such as deny, that Christ our Mediator is God and man in one person.

4. Against such as maintain that Christ as Mediator is not God; and therefore is not the object of worship.

5. Against such as maintain, that the Medlatory kingdom of Christ extends no farther than the Church.

6. Against such as maintain that it was possible for Christ, during the time of his humiliation, to commit sin.

7. Against such as maintain, that the divine and human natures, in Christ, are blended and confounded with each other, so that the human nature is deified, &c.

8. Against such as maintain, that an imaginary idea of Christ as man, is helpful to the faith of him as God-man.

Chap. IX.—*Of Christ's Satisfaction and its extent.*

WE BELIEVE,

1. That all mankind were represented by Adam in the covenant of works, so when he sinned and brake it, his first sin was charged to them all, who proceeded from him by ordinary generation; and sin being imputed, the penalty was incurred, and the threatened curse takes such effect upon every one of them, as soon as they exist, that they can never, while in their natural state, yield any acceptable obedience to the law of God; and therefore, could never procure life for themselves. Besides, as they are all charged with sin, satisfaction must be given to the justice of God, which it was impossible for them to give. The justice, holiness, and faithfulness of God absolutely required that the law should be obeyed, and justice satisfied, if any of mankind should obtain the promised life, and escape the threatened punishment.

2. That as none could perform the obedience, nor endure the penalty, so as to satisfy justice for

themselves, nor any mere creature do it for them; and as God designed to magnify and glorify his mercy and grace in the redemption and salvation of some of the fallen race of Adam, he laid their help upon one that is mighty, one chosen out of the people, from whom he should get that obedience and satisfaction which law and justice required, even his own eternal and only begotten Son.

3. That our Lord Jesus Christ did willingly undertake to give the obedience and satisfaction so indispensably required, and actually and exactly gave it. He gave the required obedience, to found and secure their title to life, and the satisfaction demanded, to deliver and secure them from the threatened penalty.

4. That the law which our Lord Jesus was made under, and gave obedience unto, was not the ceremonial law only, but the moral law more especially. Though the Jews were under the ceremonial law, yet the Gentiles were not: but the law which our Lord Jesus was made under, was, and must be such an one as had an equal reference to Jews and Gentiles, because he came to save both Jews and Gentiles. Now no law had an equal obligation on Jews and Gentiles, but that which they were equally under: but this could be the moral law only. Hence, though our Lord was made under the ceremonial law, because the Jews were under it; yet he was more especially made under the moral law because both Jews and Gentiles were equally under it. And he was made under the law for his people, not as a rule of life, but as a covenant only.

5. That the obedience to the law, and satisfaction to justice, which our Lord Jesus Christ gave, was not for all mankind, but for a certain, defi-

nite number of them only, which can neither be increased nor diminished. He made satisfaction not only for some, but for all the sins of this definite number; but neither for all, nor for any of the sins of any others. Those for whom our Mediator made satisfaction, are in Scripture called his elect, his sheep, such as were ordained to eternal life; and they are such as he intercedes for with the Father: but all mankind are not his chosen, his sheep; nor ordained to eternal life; nor does he intercede for all mankind.

6. By the obedience and satisfaction which Christ gave to law and justice, he purchased for the elect all things necessary for their happiness in time and eternity. The elect have the common benefits of life, as a fruit of Christ's purchase. It is not only the sanctified use of these things for which they are to pray, and which is promised to them; but the things themselves: and when we pray for them, we must not approach to God as an absolute God; and as these things are promised, and are not always present with the elect, they may trust in God's promise, not only for the sanctified use of them, but for the things themselves which are promised.

7. That the satisfaction which Christ gave to law and justice, was not only and barely for the good of the elect, but in their name, room and place: and when it is imputed to them and received by faith, it is accounted theirs, to all intents and purposes, as if they had done and suffered all in their own persons.

WE THEREFORE TESTIFY,

1. Against all such as maintain, that Christ died for all mankind, and not for the elect only.

2. Against all such as maintain, that Christ died, not to purchase certain salvation for any, but to

purchase a possibility of salvation for all mankind, upon conditions to be performed by themselves, by a kind of common grace, which Christ purchased for, and bestowed upon all mankind, which they who have and they who have not the gospel, may improve to their own salvation: or that he died for all mankind, not with a design to save them all, nor to make salvation possible for all, but to lay a foundation for offering Christ and salvation to all with sincerity.

3. Against such as maintain, that by the death of Christ mankind are freed from the rigor of the law as given to Adam; and that they are placed under a new and milder law, requiring easier and milder conditions—this new law is the gospel, and the milder conditions, faith, repentance, and sincere, though imperfect obedience.

4. Against such as maintain, that Christ did not obey the law for any, but only suffered and died for the purpose mentioned in the preceding paragraphs.

5. Against all such as maintain, that Christ did not make satisfaction for any by his death and sufferings; but only obeyed and suffered, to leave us an example, and for our good; but not in the room and place of any, so as to be imputed to them to found a title to life, and freedom from eternal death.

6. Against such as deny, that temporal benefits to the elect, are the fruits of Christ's satisfaction.

Chap. X.—*Of the Gospel Offer.*

WE BELIEVE,

1. That it is impossible to have any knowledge of Jesus Christ, of pardon of sin and salvation by him, without a revelation of them from God. The revelation of the way and means of salva-

tion by Jesus Christ, is called the gospel; which imports good, or glad tidings.

2. That the gospel, or these good tidings of Christ a Saviour, and life and salvation by him, is presented to every sinner, wheresoever the gospel comes and is preached, with the call, invitation and command of God to receive them, whatever has been their former state or conduct.

3. That in the gospel, wherever it comes, Christ with all his saving benefits are given to every hearer of the gospel. By giving here, we do not mean giving in possession, but only giving in right to possess. In this manner the gospel offer is represented in various passages of Scripture.

4. That the unlimited offer of the gospel to every one who hears it, is not founded on Christ's dying for all mankind, since he did not die for all men; nor upon eternal election, for all the hearers of the gospel are not elected: but upon the command and commission which Christ gave to his Ambassadors, to preach the gospel to every creature, and the sufficiency of his satisfaction, to save every one that believes in him.

5. That though preaching the gospel does not consist in promising salvation to all who hear it, or in affirming that Christ has redeemed each of them; yet it consists in presenting Christ, pardon of sin, and salvation to each of them, and in informing them, and asserting, that Christ with all his benefits is given them in right to possess; which giving is the proper ground upon which any one can receive Christ with all his unspeakable mercies that are offered with him.

6. That though none but such as are convinced of sin, will come to Christ, none but such as see their need of a saviour, will ever be persuaded to apply him to themselves, or with proprie-

ty to apply to him for their own salvation: Yet the offer of the gospel is not to be limited to such as are convinced of sin: nor are the ministers of the gospel to suspend the offer of the gospel from men, until they are humbly penitent, hungering and thirsting after salvation, as if none had a right to have the gospel offered to them but those who are such: for as this is contrary to the scripture, so none could be guilty of unbelief but such as those mentioned: besides none can be evangelically penitent, humbled, &c. but such as have actually come to Christ. Now all qualifications, that can be named, which a man may have before he comes to Christ, are nothing but sinful ones; which surely can give us no better right to Christ than other sins.

WE THEREFORE TESTIFY,

1. Against all such as maintain, that the unlimited offer of the gospel is founded upon the universal purchase which Christ made for all men.

2. Against all such as maintain that there is an obscure offer of the gospel, among the heathens, where they are entirely destitute of a divine revelation, by the light of nature.

3. Against such as deny, that there is any offer of Christ, pardon of sin, or of salvation by him, made to any in the gospel.

4. Against such as maintain, that the gospel should be preached to none but sensible sinners, and such as are penitent, and humbly hungering for salvation.

5. Against such as maintain, that sorrowing for sin, hungering after Christ, &c. are necessary preparatives upon which the sinner's right to come to Christ is founded; and while destitute of these preparatory qualifications his right is suspended. This is contrary to our Lord's orders

to his Ambassadors, to go and preach the gospel to every creature.

6. Against such as deny, that Christ is given to the hearers of the gospel in any sense until they receive him : That Christ and salvation is given to every hearer of the gospel in right to possess : and that this gift of Christ and all his purchase, in the gospel, is the ground of faith.

Chap. XI.—*Of the Freedom of the Will.*

WE BELIEVE,

1. That God hath endowed the soul of man with a faculty or power of choosing or refusing, approving or disapproving, &c. which is called the WILL. The will of man is endowed with a natural liberty, so that it cannot be forced to choose or refuse, &c. by any natural necessity.

2. That when God created man in a state of innocency, he made him with a freedom of will, and with sufficient ability to choose that which was good only ; but God did not make the will of man immutably determined to good only ; for he was capable of being biased, and determined to that which is evil.

3. That when our first parents had broken covenant with God, they representing all their posterity, both they and their posterity lost all power to will, or to do any thing spiritually good ; so that, though the will retains its natural freedom, yet it is free to choose evil only : the understanding being, by the fall, rendered wholly spiritually blind ; there is no beauty nor comeliness in any thing spiritually good, that can be discerned by the mind of man, until his eyes, the eyes of his understanding be opened : Hence the

will cannot choose, but refuse what is spiritually good, till it be renewed.

4. That when God converts a sinner, he illuminates the understanding and renews the will, by which it is enabled to choose the good and refuse the evil : yet by reason of remaining corruption, the will cannot choose the one and refuse the other perfectly, but according to the old nature, it often chooses the evil and refuses the good, and according to the new nature, it chooses the good and refuses the evil.

5. That the will does not exert itself and produce its acts by a self-determining power, but is determined to act by suitable motives.

6. That the will cannot act while in equilibrio, or in a state of indifference ; for to suppose it does infers a contradiction : it supposes that the will acts when it has no inclination to act. Before the will chooses or refuses any thing, it must be inclined some way, or by some thing, to choose or refuse that thing.

7. That though the acts of will are not necessary by a natural necessity, yet they are necessary in all cases, whether respecting sin or duty, with a moral necessity, or a necessity of connection or consequence. The sum of all is,

8. Unregenerate men and devils have a freedom of will to that which is evil only. Regenerate men have a freedom of will to that which is spiritually good, according to their new nature, and to evil only, according to their old nature. The holy angels and the spirits of just men made perfect, and they only of all the creatures of God, have their wills unalterably determined, not in their own nature, but by the good pleasure and grace of God, to that which is good only. The

will of God alone, is naturally, necessarily and unchangeably determined to that which is good.

WE THEREFORE TESTIFY,

1. Against all such as maintain, that all men have a freedom of will to that which is spiritually good, even while unregenerate.

2. Against all such as maintain, that man's will is possessed of a self-determining power, by which it can turn itself either to good or evil at any time.

3. Against all such as maintain, that when the will acts, it is in a state of indifference, and in equal balance with regard to good and evil, sin and duty.

4. Against such as maintain, that the volitions or acts of the will are contingent and uncertain, and that the volitions of intelligent creatures are not necessary with a moral necessity, or a necessity of consequence.

5. Against all such as maintain, that all men, even in a state of irregeneracy, have a freedom of will and ability to convert themselves, and to prepare themselves to conversion; and that maintain that man, in an unregenerate state, can will and do any thing that is good in a spiritual point of view.

Chap. XII.—*Of Effectual Calling, or Regeneration.*

WE BELIEVE,

1. That all God's elect are, before their conversion, dead in trespasses and sins, ignorant of God, and of themselves, and of the nature and necessity of salvation by Jesus Christ, and are enemies to God; and they are utterly unable to convert themselves, or to prepare themselves thereunto.

2. That regeneration is not effected by moral suasion, or by moral causes, or means only; but

by the powerful, irresistible, efficacious and supernatural influences and operations of the Holy Spirit of God.

3. That although God hath appointed means, such as the reading and preaching of the word, and therein and thereby uses commands, exhortations and persuasions with men, to turn from sin to God; yet neither these means of themselves, nor the sinner in the most diligent use of them, can effect his own regeneration. It is the Spirit of God regenerating the man, that only can enable him to use the means which God hath appointed, to any good purpose for turning unto God.

4. That regeneration is not the creating of any new faculties in the soul, nor the repairing and mending the old ones; but the creating and implanting of principles entirely new in the same soul; such as light instead of darkness, faith instead of unbelief, love instead of enmity, and the like; whereby the soul is renewed, and changed, as to its habits and principles of action.

5. That in regeneration, properly speaking, and as distinguished from conversion and sanctification properly taken, there is the exercise of no grace, as of faith, repentance, and the like; but the habits and principles of all grace are implanted in the soul. Faith and repentance, or any other grace in exercise, are the effects of regeneration.

6. That though the soul of man be an active being, before, in the time of, and after regeneration; yet it is not active, but wholly passive in regeneration: or in other words, it hath no active hand in regenerating itself, but is altogether a passive recipient therein. The soul of man has no more activity in its own regeneration, than a

child has in its own generation and formation in the womb, or a dead man could have in his own vivification. We can neither do, nor actively receive any thing before we are made spiritually alive.

7. That regeneration is a work of the Spirit of God, in which the sinner is convinced of his sin and misery, his mind is enlightened in the knowledge of Christ, and his will is renewed; and thereby he is persuaded and enabled to embrace Jesus Christ is offered to him in the gospel: which embracing or believing in Christ, is the effect and evidence of our regeneration.

8. That all those whom God hath chosen from eternity, and predestinated to eternal life, and none but these, are, in time, regenerated, or born again. Most, if not all the elect that ever come to the use and exercise of reason, are not regenerated till they are capable of being convinced of sin, and of having their minds enlightened in the knowledge of Christ.

WE THEREFORE TESTIFY,

1. Against all such as deny the absolute necessity of regeneration.

2. Against such as maintain, that every man has sufficient power and grace given him to regenerate himself.

3. Against such as maintain, that all the work of the Holy Spirit necessary to regenerate any person, is only to represent divine truths to the understanding, and to bring them to remembrance and thereby raising some ideas in the brain, and making some impressions on it; but deny that any supernatural habits are implanted, or supernatural aid is necessary to regenerate a sinner.

4. Against such as maintain, that regeneration is effected by merely moral means and moral suasion.

5. Against such as maintain, that we can prepare ourselves for regeneration, and that it is very necessary we should do so.

6. Against such as deny, that the operations of the Holy Spirit in regeneration are efficacious and irresistible, and maintain that men can frustrate the operations of the Spirit, so as to prevent the regeneration even of such as he is determined to regenerate.

7. Against such as maintain, that man is not wholly passive in regeneration, and consequently that men are active in their own regeneration.

8. Against such as maintain, that the elect are regenerated from the womb.

Chap. XIII.—Of Justification.

WE BELIEVE,

1. That all those who were from eternity predestinated to eternal life, are, in time, united to Jesus Christ as their head and husband, and they and they only are justified.

2. That the author of justification is God only. "It is God that justifieth."

3. That justification does not change our nature, but our state with regard to the law.

4. That in justification we are neither made nor pronounced holy, but sustained and declared righteous in law.

5. That justification is not opposed to unholiness and ungodliness in Scripture, but to condemnation. And as condemnation puts no wickedness nor criminality into the person condemned; so neither does justification put any righteousness or godliness into the person justified.

6. That we are not sanctified in any degree before we are justified. The sinner can neither repent evangelically, nor love God, nor do any

good work whatsoever, before he is justified: for before he is justified, he is under the law, and so under the curse, and under the strength and dominion of sin.

7. That we are justified upon the ground of a law-magnifying and justice-satisfying righteousness; which cannot be our own, or wrought by us; for our own righteousness is as filthy rags, and "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified." It is therefore upon the ground of that righteousness wrought out and brought in by our Lord Jesus Christ, and upon it alone, that we are justified.

8. That in order to our being justified by the righteousness of Christ, it is imputed to us; and we receive and appropriate Christ and his righteousness, and justification by it, to our own souls by faith alone.

9. That when we are justified, all our sins, past, present and to come, are pardoned, and our persons accepted: we have a complete title to eternal life, and freedom from eternal death, upon the account of the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and upon no other ground whatsoever.

10. That it is by the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, that we are delivered from the law as a covenant.

11. That the righteousness of Christ is not only the meritorious and purchasing cause of justification, as it is of all other benefits and blessings of the covenant of grace, but the very matter and ground of it, on account of which we are accounted righteous before God.

12. That justification is an act, and perfect and complete at once.

13. That though God from eternity decreed to justify the elect; yet they are not justified actually

from eternity, but in time; for they are represented as actually under the law in time, and as delivered from the law in time; but this they could not be, if they were justified from eternity. They are delivered from the law by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them; because that righteousness answers all the demands of the law, and being reckoned theirs in law, they are as perfectly delivered from the law as a covenant, as Adam would have been had he kept it during the time of his probation.

14. That justification is immediately succeeded by sanctification as its proper fruit and evidence; for the sinner becomes thereby "dead to the law, that he may bring forth fruit unto God," and is, in justification, "delivered from the law, that he may serve God in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter."

15. That those who are justified can never be condemned. It cannot consist with the distributive justice of God, to condemn to eternal wrath, those in whose room and place Christ fulfilled the law and satisfied the justice of God.

WE TESTIFY THEREFORE,

1. Against such as deny, that justification is upon the ground and foot of Christ's righteousness alone.

2. Against such as deny, that justification is perfect at once; but maintain a first and second justification, and that it can be increased by our good works.

3. Against such as maintain, that though we may be justified by the righteousness of Christ; yet we have a title to heaven by our good works.

4. Against such as maintain, that justification, like the other blessings of the covenant, is only purchased by the righteousness of Christ, and that

it is not the very matter of our justification, and the alone ground of it.

5. Against such as maintain, that it is only a title to pardon, the favour of God and deliverance from the law, and not these blessings themselves, that we obtain, in the very sentence, and in the very instant of justification; but only a title to them, such as we obtain, by the righteousness of Christ, to the other blessings of the covenant, such as sanctification and glorification.

6. Against such as maintain, that their own faith, and not the object of their faith, the righteousness of Christ, is their justifying righteousness before God.

7. Against such as maintain, that justification by the righteousness of Christ, and justification by the free grace of God, are inconsistent.

8. Against such as maintain, that we are justified, either wholly or in part, by our own good works; or that even the grace of God wrought in men's hearts, is, in any respect, the ground and matter of our justification before God.

9. Against such as maintain, that sanctification, in any degree of it, precedes, or must be in exercise in men's hearts, before they are justified: that it is necessary that men be in the exercise of evangelical humility, repentance and love to God, previous to our being justified: but without faith it is impossible to please God, and such as are under the law are under the curse.

10. Against such as deny, that sanctification is the immediate fruit and evidence of justification.

11. Against such as maintain, that those who are justified may fall again into condemnation: and against such as maintain, that it would be consistent with God's distributive justice to damn those for whom Christ died.

12. Against such as maintain that the elect are justified, or which is materially the same thing, freed to and delivered from the law from eternity: there being no ground, from Scripture, to conclude that any that are capable of it, are justified before they actually believe in Christ.

Chap. XIV.—Of Faith.

WE BELIEVE,

1. That true saving faith is wrought in the heart of a sinner, sensible of his sin and misery, and of his absolute need of salvation, by the word and Spirit of God.

2. That the whole word of God is to be believed with a divine faith; but the immediate object of what is called justifying faith, is the gospel only; as Jesus Christ, and remission of sins, and eternal life and salvation, are proposed and presented to sinners, to be believed, in the gospel only, and not at all in the law, as properly distinguished from the gospel.

3. That not any thing done by the sinner, nor wrought in him previous to his believing; neither his humility, repentance, love to God, nor any other grace or exercise of mind that can be named, is or can be that upon which the faith we speak of is founded. Nothing acceptable to God, nothing but that which is sinful can precede faith, according to the Scriptures; but that which is not acceptable to God, that which can bear no other denomination but that of sin, can never be the ground of faith divine.

4. That all kinds of faith are founded upon testimony. A human faith is founded on human testimony, and a divine faith is founded on a divine testimony. Believing that any record, nar-

rative, gift, grant, or offer, is the record, narrative, &c. or the testimony of such or such a person, is not all that is necessary to the believing of his testimony; but it is necessary to believe the things contained in the record, narrative and testimony. Now if there be things in that testimony which relate to all persons to whom it comes; if in that testimony there are grants made, offers given, gifts presented, promises and records of great favours and benefits held out to every one to whom the testimony is presented, and to every one of them in particular; then we cannot be said to believe this his testimony, unless we believe that such gifts, grants, offers, promises and records, have been and are made to us in particular, every one for himself.

5. That a particular part of the testimony and record of God, which he hath addressed to sinners wheresoever the gospel is preached, is, that he hath given unto them eternal life, pardon of sin, and a complete salvation, not, indeed, in possession, but in right to possess; to which testimony and record he requires their assent and belief.

6. That the great impediment in the way of the sinner's faith in Christ, is his not crediting or not being persuaded, that the offer of Christ, and pardon of sin, eternal life and salvation by and with him, is presented, offered and given to himself in particular, on the ground of the gospel testimony, to be believed, by him, for his own benefit, without any predisposing qualifications to found his faith on.

7. That as where there is no degree of assurance of the truth of the fore-mentioned testimony of pardon of sin, eternal life and salvation, to the sinner himself in particular, to whom the testimony is addressed, as it is to every one in particular

where the gospel is preached; there there can be no faith, but a total unbelief: for every degree of hesitation, staggering, doubting, wavering, fearing, with regard to the truth of God's testimony, respecting their own pardon, eternal life and salvation by Christ, thus offered, given, promised and recorded in God's testimony, to be believed and received, is unbelief, and no way belongs to the nature of faith, though they may be, and often are, in the same soul where faith is.

8. That faith, therefore, includes not only an assent to the truth of God's word in general, an approbation of the gospel scheme of salvation, and an hearty acquiescence in it; an appropriation of Christ to ourselves in particular, and a certainty: all which some grant to belong to the very nature of faith, and particularly grant that appropriation and certainty belong to the very essence of faith, who yet deny that there is any assurance in its nature and essence; which is most absurd and unreasonable. Therefore we maintain, that every act of saving faith has some degree of assurance belonging to its very essence; and it is a contradiction in terms to deny it, and to talk of faith without assurance, and especially to allow appropriation and certainty to belong to the nature of faith, and yet deny assurance to be essential to its nature: and we maintain that assurance, founded on God's testimony, that he shall be saved, is inseparably connected with true faith in every believer's heart.

9. That though it is dangerous for sinners to persuade themselves, that they are savingly interested in the promises of the gospel, without solid grounds for their assurance; yet the gospel offer, God's record of giving to sinners eternal life in Christ, and his commands and invitations

to believe in him for pardon of sin and everlasting life, with an assurance that he will call none off who come to him, afford a solid ground for believing, not only that Christ and salvation are given, offered, &c. to sinners in general, but to himself in particular, and a more solid ground of assurance that he shall have eternal life and salvation, than any experience of ours. That must be granted to be the most solid ground of assurance of the promised blessings, which will abide when any other is gone: but the word of God will continue when all other grounds of assurance, such as the experience and sensible manifestations of grace, are gone. It is dangerous, therefore, to teach that God's word is not a solid ground for assuring ourselves of his promised mercy.

10. That though faith may be known by its fruits, and therefore we should examine ourselves whether we be in the faith or not; yet the strength of faith is better known by its firm reliance on God's word, when its fruits cannot be discovered, and when it can find nothing to grip to but God's faithfulness, like Abraham, who against hope believed in hope, than by its fruits. And though the pious and faithful may be, and often are, possessed with doubts and fears respecting themselves; yet their doubts and fears of God's giving them Christ, pardon of sin and eternal life, in the gift and offer of them in his word, and their doubts and fears that they have no warrant nor right to assure themselves of God's mercy, but what arises from their own experiences, &c. is none of their piety and faithfulness, but their sin of unbelief.—Moreover, though the careless, presumptive and enthusiastic may be, upon the ground of their own righteousness, enthusiastic impulses, or the general mercy of God, full of assurances of their being the

favourites of heaven; yet it is neither presumption nor enthusiasm, but true and genuine faith, even the faith of God's elect, to persuade and assure ourselves, upon the ground of God's word, and his offer of pardon, life and salvation in Christ, therein exhibited, that we shall have these blessings.

11. That faith is not founded on the intention of God to save the elect, nor upon election; nor is the first act of faith a belief that we were elected from eternity; but, as we before said, faith is founded on God's record, &c. and the first act of faith is the believing God's record, and a receiving his gift and offer of Christ and salvation as held forth in the gospel, that to the sinner in particular, now believing, is preached the forgiveness of sins.

WE THEREFORE TESTIFY,

1. Against all such as deny, that pardon of sin, and eternal life and salvation, are, together with Christ, presented, given and made over, in the gospel, to sinners in general, wherever the gospel is preached; and deny that this is the ground of faith.

2. Against such as maintain, that the ground of justifying faith is something done by, or wrought in the heart of the sinner.

3. Against such as deny assurance to belong to the nature and essence of justifying faith, and maintain that assurance is inseparable from faith in the believer's heart.

4. Against such as absurdly and inconsistently admit of appropriation and certainty as belonging to the nature of faith, and yet deny that assurance belongs to its essence.

5. Against such as maintain it to be dangerous for a sinner to persuade and assure himself of pardon and mercy, upon the ground of God's word, without the knowledge of our pardon, &c. by marks of grace in the heart.

6. Against such as maintain, that the strength of faith is better known by its fruits, than by the firmness of its confidence in God's word when none of its fruits can be discovered; contrary to the Scriptures and the experience of the saints therein.

7. Against such as maintain, that it is presumptuous and enthusiastic, to persuade and assure ourselves of pardon of sin and acceptance with God, upon the ground of his gift and offer of these to us in his word, without sensible manifestations of grace in our hearts.

8. Against such as maintain the general and doubtful faith of the Papists, and say with them, that the faith of special mercy is a consequent of justification; wherefore the faith of special mercy is not justifying faith: and that the confidence by which any one trusts that his sins are forgiven, depends on a good conscience; and therefore presupposes justification does not bring it about; and that it is exceeding rash, for men to believe that their sins are forgiven them, as if they were warranted to do so by the word.

9. Against such as maintain, that the first act of faith is, to believe that we were elected from eternity.

Chap. XV.—Of Repentance.

WE BELIEVE,

1. That God commands all men, every where, to repent of their sins.

2. That there is a kind of repentance which is commonly called legal repentance, which men may have while in a state of nature; and while such they can have no other sort of repentance. Fear of punishment, and not hatred of sin, as sin, is the principal motive to it: self love, and self prefer-

vation, and not the love and glory of God, are the chief ends in view. This kind of repentance may, and, in some degree, always does go before justification, and is preceded by a faith of the law: but cannot please God, nor is it any mark of a gracious state.

3. Evangelical repentance is a grace of the Holy Spirit, wrought in the heart of a believer; whereby from a sight and sense of his sins, as dishonouring and offensive to God, and from an apprehension of God's mercy in Christ Jesus, he turns from it unto God, being grieved for it, and loathing and hating it for its odiousness and contrariety to God's Holy nature and law, sincerely purposing and endeavouring to live a life of new obedience.

4. That this evangelical repentance cannot exist in the soul, until the person is justified before God, and is a consequent of faith in Christ Jesus: For if we can do no good thing while we are under the curse; so without faith we cannot please God; but evangelical repentance is a good work, and is pleasing to God; wherefore it is a consequent and not an antecedent to justification and faith.

5. That evangelical repentance is absolutely necessary in all subjects capable of it; and without it, no person has a right to conclude, as is plain from the Scripture, that he is in a gracious state, but is yet in his sins.

WE THEREFORE TESTIFY,

1. Against such as maintain, that a man may be so free from sin in this life, as to need no repentance.

2. Against such as maintain, that an unpardoned sinner can repent evangelically.

3. Against such as maintain, that evangelical repentance is absolutely previously necessary to judicial pardon and justification.

4. Against such as maintain, that repentance is any atonement for sin.

5. Against such as deny, that evangelical repentance is a necessary consequence of the removal of the curse in justification, and so of faith in Christ.

Chap. XVI.—*Of the Assurance of Grace and Salvation.*

WE BELIEVE,

1. That though unbelievers and hypocrites may be elated with the false hopes and deceptive assurances of their being high in the favour of God; which hopes of the hypocrite perish; yet true believers may arrive at a well founded and infallible assurance, that they are in a state of grace and salvation, and that they shall finally obtain the full and complete enjoyment of God.

2. That this assurance of grace and salvation, which the believer may obtain, and which many have obtained, is not the same as the assurance which belongs to the essence of faith. Hence we maintain with our Confession of Faith, that the assurance of our being in a state of grace and salvation "doth not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a believer may wait long and conflict with many difficulties before he obtain it; yet being enabled by the Spirit to know the things that are freely given him of God, he may, without extraordinary revelation, in the right use of ordinary means attain thereunto." The assurance which we maintain to belong to the essence of faith, which we have spoken of before, and the assurance of grace, &c. of which we speak in this chapter, ought carefully to be distinguished, for they differ in several respects:—1. They differ in their acts. In the assurance of faith we receive Christ as ours

in the promise; but by sensible assurance we know by sense and experience, that he is ours in present possession. 2. They differ in their object. The object of the assurance of faith is altogether without the believer, and is Jesus Christ and his righteousness revealed in the promises of the gospel; but the object of sensible assurance is partly without and partly within the believer, and is both the promises of God and his own sensible experience of grace. 3. They differ in their order. The assurance of faith is first, and the assurance of sense follows. No man can have the assurance of sense, but such as, in some degree, have the assurance of faith first, no more than a man can have grace in exercise before he has faith. 4. They differ in their consequences. The consequence of the assurance of faith is a deliverance from the guilt of sin, whether they be sensible of their own act, or rather, the genuineness of their own act, or not; but the consequence of the assurance of sense is, not only the sensible removal of guilt, but comfort and consolation arising from the sensible experiences of the grace of God in the heart, whereby the truth and reality of the assurance of faith is made manifest, and that the guilt of sin is removed.

3. That as true believers may wait long before they obtain the assurance of their present being in a state of grace, and that they shall be saved; so after they have obtained it, they may have it weakened and intermitted through manifold temptations and desertions; yet are they never left destitute of such a presence of the Spirit of God as keeps them from sinking into utter despair. Wherefore, a person may be in a state of grace, and yet not be sensible and assured that he is presently in a state of grace. G

4. That as an infallible assurance of our being in a state of grace, is attainable in the ordinary use of the means of God's appointment, without extraordinary revelation ; so it is the duty of every believer to obtain it ; and the person who never seeks after it by self-examination, prayer, and other means of God's appointment, gives but a sorry evidence of his being a true believer.

WE THEREFORE TESTIFY,

1. Against such as deny, that there is any infallible assurance attainable by a believer in this life, that he is in a state of grace, and shall undoubtedly come to the full enjoyment of God.

2. Against such as maintain, that there is no difference between the assurance that is in justifying faith, and that which is obtained by reflection, or sensible assurance.

3. Against such as maintain, that no person can be in a state of grace but they must know it, or, which is to the same purpose, be sensibly assured of it.

4. Against such as deny, that it is any man's duty to seek for the assurance of their being in a state of salvation.

5. Against such as profess themselves to be believers, and yet never examine themselves whether they be in the faith, nor use any means and endeavours to know the state of their souls, in order to obtain an assurance of their salvation.

Chap. XVII.—Of a Believer's Deliverance from the Law.

WE BELIEVE,

1. That all men, while in an unregenerate state, are under the law as a covenant of works, demanding perfect, personal obedience of them, under the penalty of God's wrath and curse.

2. That all true believers are delivered from the law.

3. That the law from which the believer is delivered, is the same from which every believer, at any time or period of the church, was delivered ; and the law which every unbeliever, while such, at all times was, or is under.

4. That it could not be the ceremonial nor judicial laws only, from which the believer, when such, is delivered ; for believers under the Old Testament were not delivered from these laws, but were under them, and bound to give obedience to them, though believers and unbelievers under the New Testament are delivered from the ceremonial law wholly, and from the judicial law as far as was peculiar to the Jews. Again, that it cannot be these laws only, which believers are said to be delivered from, is plain from this, that every believer, in every period of the church, was never under these laws ; none but the Jews under the old dispensation were ; the Gentiles never were. Now none could be delivered from a law they never were under.

5. That the law from which believers are delivered, is a law common to both Jews and Gentiles : but no other law was common to both, but the moral law.

6. That as it can be no other but the moral law from which believers are delivered ; yet they are not delivered from it as a rule of life, but only as a covenant ; for no man ever was, is now, or ever will be, delivered from the law as a rule.

7. That every believer is perfectly delivered from the law as a covenant of works, so that he can neither be justified nor condemned by the law in that point of view ; for he is not under it as such, nor does he owe it any obedience as a covenant.

Every attempt to obey it as a covenant is an offence against God ; for it is making of Christ's death in vain.

8. That the great mean by which the believer is delivered from the law as a covenant, is by the righteousness of Christ imputed to him: for as that righteousness answered all the demands of the law, both with regard to obedience and satisfaction ; so when it is imputed to any person, then that person is delivered from the law, both in respect of obedience and satisfaction, and therefore has no more to do with it as a covenant.

WE THEREFORE TESTIFY,

1. Against all such as deny, that man, while in an unregenerate state, is under the law as a covenant of works ; but that mankind are, since the fall, or at least now, under the New Testament dispensation, under a new and milder law, which requires no more but sincere, though imperfect obedience.

2. Against all such as maintain, that the law from which the Apostle says believers are delivered, is no other but the ceremonial law.

3. Against such as deny, that believers are delivered from the law as a covenant ; and maintain that the believer may be either justified or condemned by the law as a covenant.

4. Against such as maintain, that a believer is still bound to give obedience to the law as a covenant of works.

5. Against such as deny, that the believer is delivered from the law as a covenant, by the righteousness of Christ imputed to him.

6. Against such as maintain, that a believer, or any others, either are or can be delivered from the moral law as a rule of life. Therefore, we testify against all the wilful despisers and violators of God's holy law.

Chap. XVIII. *Of Good Works.*

WE BELIEVE,

1. That our Lord Jesus Christ "gave himself for his people, to redeem them from all iniquity, and to purchase to himself a peculiar people, that should be zealous of good works."

2. That good works are only such as are required and commanded by God, in his word, and not such as are, without his authority, devised and commanded by men only. No authority of men, however learned, holy or great, nor any pretences of zeal, good intention, nor any other thing imaginable, can constitute that a duty which God never commanded, neither expressly nor by necessary consequence.

3. That good works are only such as are performed from good principles, viz. the grace of God, and particularly faith ; from good motives, viz. the authority and love of God ; and to a good end, viz. the glory of God ; agreeable to a good rule, viz. the word of God : Hence, a man in a bad state, an unregenerated man, can perform no good work, neither to prepare himself for regeneration, nor as a condition of his justification, nor for any other purpose whatsoever.

4. That every good work is performed by strength derived from God, and not in our own strength. Believers, who are every one of them participators of the grace of God, need continued supplies of the grace of God, to enable them to perform every good work ; yet are they not, because of this, to turn indolent and negligent, as if they were to attempt to perform no good work, until they were sensible of present grace given them ; but they ought to be very diligent in stirring up the grace that is in them, and in crying to God for more.

That the good works of men, even of the

greatest saints that ever lived, cannot be meritorious of any good thing from God; they give us no title to eternal life, nor deliverance from eternal death; yet are they very necessary on various other accounts, such as they are, when performed from the principles, motives and ends before mentioned, fruits and evidences of true faith: by them believers manifest their thankfulness to God, strengthen their assurance, edify their brethren, adorn their profession of the gospel, stop the mouths of adversaries, and glorify God, whose workmanship they are, created unto good works.

WE THEREFORE TESTIFY,

1. Against such as live profanely, and are wilful violators of God's law.
2. Against such as profess themselves believers, but yet make no conscience of shewing their faith by their works.
3. Against all such as maintain that their good works are meritorious by any means or cause whatsoever.
4. Against all such as maintain that good works may be done by an unregenerated man, and that they are means to prepare us for regeneration, and conditions of our justification.
5. Against such as deny that strength from God is necessary for the performance of every good work.

Chap. XIX.—*Of the Imperfection of the Saints in this Life.*

WE BELIEVE,

1. That no man can arrive at perfection in holiness in this life.
2. That believers are, every one of them, justified at the very instant in which they believe.

The weakest believer is as perfectly justified as the strongest; for they are not justified on account of their own righteousness, which is imperfect; but upon the account of the righteousness of Christ, imputed to them, which being perfect, their justification must be so also.

3. That the Saints are never represented in scripture as arriving at a sinless perfection in this life. The Scriptures, indeed, speak of a perfection which the Saints either have, or may arrive at, but they never intimate, in one instance, that any of the Saints might, or ever did arrive at a sinless perfection. Every regenerated person, has, with regard to the new creature, formed in him a perfection of parts; but not of degrees; and every believer is comparatively perfect, that is, compared with himself or any other person while in an unregenerate state; and with such a comparative perfection, one saint may be a great deal more perfect than another, and the same saint may be more perfect, that is more holy, at one time than another; which are the kinds of perfection the scriptures speak of when they mention any perfection as belonging to the saints in this life; but never of a sinless perfection: in regard to such a perfection, the saints one and all of them say with the Apostle Paul, "not as though I were already perfect," and with others, "there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not;" "and if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us."

WE THEREFORE TESTIFY,

Against all who maintain, that a sinless perfection is attainable in this life; as such deceive themselves and the truth is not in them; and they go about deceiving others.

Chap. XX.—*Of the Perseverance of the Saints.*

WE BELIEVE,

1. That a person who never had the saving grace of God in his heart, may profess, as confidently as any true saint, that he believes the doctrines, precepts and promises of the Bible; and may make as splendid an appearance of saintship outwardly, as any saint whatsoever; and that such a professor and apparent saint may fall away totally and finally, not, indeed, from the true grace of God, which he never had, but the outward profession which he made, of believing the doctrines of grace, and of being a saint, which he never was.

2. That the real saints of God may fall into very grievous sins, and remain impenitent of these for a time; and also, that they may fall from some degree of grace which they were once possessed of, so that they may not have such a high degree of faith, love, godly sorrow for sin, and the like, as they once had, in exercise.

3. That no person who was ever possessed of the least spark of the true grace of God, can at any time fall away from it totally; that is, from every degree of it; nor finally; that is, so as to be never recovered again to the exercise of it: but every truly gracious person shall infallibly persevere unto the end, and be eternally saved.

4. That the saints perseverance in grace does not depend upon the right improvement of free will, nor upon their own best endeavours to persevere, though such endeavours are means which ought to be used; but upon the eternal love of God, and his infinite wisdom, almighty power, his precious promises and well ordered covenant,

and his inviolable veracity; and because every person in the Godhead, and every divine perfection, are concerned in their preservation, and engaged to maintain it.

WE THEREFORE TESTIFY,

1. Against all such as deny the certain and infallible perseverance of the saints; and maintain that a person who is endowed with the true grace of God, may, notwithstanding, fall totally and finally away from it, and be condemned to eternal wrath.

2. Against such as maintain, that the saints perseverance depends wholly upon the right improvement of their own free will, and diligent endeavours to persevere.

Chap. XXI.—*Of Christian Liberty, and Liberty of Conscience.*

WE BELIEVE,

1. That the liberty which is purchased for believers, and with which they are so highly privileged and blessed, does not consist in any liberty to break any of God's holy commandments, nor to neglect any of the duties required by him; but in their being freed from the guilt of sin, the condemning wrath of God, the curse of the law; and in their being delivered from this present evil world, bondage of Satan, and dominion of sin; from the evil of afflictions, the sting of death, the power of the grave, and everlasting damnation; as also in their free access to God, and their yielding obedience to him, not through slavish fear, but a child-like love and a willing mind: all which were common to believers under the Old Testament. But under the New Testament, christian liberty is farther enlarged; for believers under the

New Testament are not only delivered from the ceremonial law, to which believers under the Old Testament were subjected, but have greater access of boldness to the throne of grace, and fuller communications of the Holy Spirit, than believers under the Old Testament did ordinarily partake of.

2. With regard to liberty of conscience, we believe, that now under the New Testament dispensation, it is the same as it was under the Old Testament. It was then limited to whatever God commanded, by his word, to be done, or refrained from: and so it is now under the New Testament. Whatever he commands to be done, or refrained from, we have liberty of conscience to do, or refrain from doing; but we have no more liberty of conscience to break God's laws, worship him according to our vain hearts' inventions, either with regard to matter or manner, or to vent blasphemous opinions or heretical tenets, now, more than they had such a liberty of conscience under the Old Testament. We deny that God ever gave to any people, under any dispensation of the covenant, or in any period of the church's existence, such a liberty of conscience; and we believe it to be little short of blasphemy, to maintain that he ever gave any such liberty of conscience.

3. We believe, with our excellent Confession of Faith, that God alone is Lord of the conscience. It is the law of God only that can bind the conscience, and not the laws of men which are in any thing contrary to, or beside the law of God. The conscience is free from all such doctrines and traditions of men. But we also believe, that God, who is the alone Lord of conscience, and because he is the Lord of all men's consciences, has a right to restrain, by what means he pleases, the irregularities, rebellion and disobedience of a blinded,

erring conscience; and has a right to appoint such punishments as he pleases, to be inflicted in this world by whomsoever he shall appoint for that purpose, when the rebellion of a blinded, erring conscience appears in overt acts. It is not conscience, but the law of God, that is the rule prescribed by the Lord of conscience, by which we are to be ruled, and according to which all our thoughts, words and actions are to be squared; and conscience itself must be ruled and regulated by this rule prescribed by the Lord of conscience. Therefore, if men transgress the rule and law of conscience, prescribed by the Lord of conscience, they may be punished as the Lord of conscience directs and prescribes by his laws; and these laws prescribed by him for the punishment of the transgressors of the law of conscience, should be as conscientiously obeyed as any other of his laws; for they are enjoined by the same authority that any other of his laws are, and because God is Lord of the conscience. To pretend a liberty of conscience to reject, contradict, oppose or neglect this or any other of God's doctrines or commandments, is to pervert and destroy the true nature of liberty of conscience, as much as it is to require an implicit and blind obedience to the doctrines and commandments of men, or in matters of indifference. Therefore, whosoever takes upon him to teach men, that they have a right to profess what they please, and to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences, notwithstanding they profess and worship directly contrary to the Bible, which is the rule of conscience prescribed by the Lord of conscience; and although contrary and contradictory to this rule, (the Bible) they profess and teach blasphemy, and worship in a manner grossly idolatrous; no human

authority having (they say) any commission from God to take cognizance of them as blasphemers, false worshippers, or hereticks, is a teaching rebellion against God, who in his word has ordered blasphemers and idolaters to be put to death, and other opinions and practices contrary to his word, to be punished according to the degree of their criminality.

WE THEREFORE TESTIFY,

1. Against all such as deny, that christian liberty consists in a freedom from the guilt of sin, and from its power and pollution, from the wrath of God and curse of the law, &c.

2. Against such as maintain, that christian liberty consists in a dispensation to indulge themselves in any sin, or a freedom from the obligation to submit and subject themselves to all God's commandments without reserve.

3. Against such as deny, that God is the alone Lord of the conscience.

4. Against all such as deny, that God's word and law is the only rule of conscience, by which alone it ought to be directed, and by which alone it can be bound to an implicit compliance and obedience to the Lord of conscience, who is God alone.

5. Against such as maintain, that every man has a right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of his own conscience, free from the cognizance of any human tribunal, notwithstanding that he worships in a way and manner directly contrary to that prescribed by God in his word, and in such a way and manner as God hath ordered the worshipper to be punished by the civil magistrate. And therefore,

6. Against such as deny, that God, who is the alone Lord of the conscience, has given any orders

in his word, that any human tribunal should take cognizance of, and punish men, for any opinions or practices whereof they are conscientious that they are right; and especially with civil pains.

7. Against such as maintain, that if an Atheist, Deist, Arian, or any other such blasphemers and hereticks, are conscientious that their wicked opinions are right, that it is more their duty to maintain their opinions, and even to persuade all men that they are right, than to suppress their opinions.

Chap. XXII.—Of the Civil Magistrate.

WE BELIEVE,

1. That civil Magistracy is an ordinance of God, the supreme Lord and ruler of the Universe. Civil Magistrates are, by God, appointed under himself, over the people, for his own glory, which is the supreme and the public good, which is the subordinate end of Magistracy. Magistracy being ordained for these great ends, Magistrates are not only to have an eye to the good of the Commonwealth simply considered, but in connection with, and subserving to the advancement of the declarative glory of him, by whom kings reign, and princes decree justice.

2. That Magistracy is founded, not in supernatural revelation, nor in grace, but in the law of nature; which we believe to be substantially the same with the moral law; a plain and full copy of which is given us in the Bible.

3. That even the light of nature shews, that the law of nature requires, that such as are advanced to Magistratical dignity, should be men possessed of such qualifications as are necessary to fit them for the discharge of that high and important trust

that is committed to their management: the qualifications which the very light of nature, we should think, points out as necessary, are expressed in the Bible; which are, that they should be just men, men fearing God, and hating covetousness. Unless men are possessed of these qualifications in some good degree, they are morally unfit to be entrusted with, or to discharge the Magistratical functions, to the glory of God, or good of men.

4. That as it is impossible that any man can have the fear of God in him, who denies the being of a God, or who have ventured to deny a trinity of persons in the Godhead; and as it cannot be reasonably expected that men who shew so little regard to God as fearlessly to deny his being and perfections, can ever have any true regards to the rights of men. Hence the necessity of a religious test in all governments; for if a man discredits the being of a God, of what use is it to require an oath of him? Or if he denies the scripture to be the word of God, of what use is it to swear him on the Bible? A book which he ridicules, as nothing but imposture and priest-craft: can such an oath be supposed to bind him? Therefore a religious test is necessary, in order to know whether men even believe the existence and divinity of what they swear by.

5. That agreeable to our Confession of Faith, Infidelity or difference in religion doth not make void the Magistrate's just and legal authority, (tho' we believe that it is both absurd and unreasonable for christians to invest an infidel with the Magistratical office) yet if the constitution of the nation excludes every citizen from all official privilege, or from a seat in any and every department of government, legislative, executive and judicial, unless he swears to support infidels in the

possession and propagation of their infidelity, blasphemy in the propagation of their blasphemy, and hereticks in the propagation of their heresy; under pretence of liberty of conscience, or any other pretence whatsoever; or unless they swear to support something or any thing contrary to the word of God; then such constitution, and such government, is such that no citizen can, without sinning against God, accept any office under them, supreme or subordinate, where such an oath is made essential to his office; nor can such a constitution, taken in its whole compass, be a moral constitution.

6. That the Magistratical duties are essentially the same in Heathen, and Christian government; though the Heathen magistrate cannot be supposed to be capable of performing his duty, in every respect, because he wants sufficient light to direct him to what are the duties of his station. The duties of the civil magistrate are, to protect the subjects in their person and property from all unjust violence, to support and establish the true religion of Jesus Christ, in their dominions; to suppress all infidelity, blasphemy, heresy and idolatry in their realm; to call Synods on emergent occasions, to be present at them, and to require and command that the members of Synod do every thing agreeably to the word of God; but he is not to be present at Synods as a member of them, to agree, debate or vote on any question, which properly belongs to such Synod to move, debate or vote in their Synodical capacity; for the magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the word and sacraments, nor the power of the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven: but as the deputy of the God of Heaven and Earth, to see to the advancement of his Lord's glory a-

mong his subjects, commanding them to perform carefully the duties of their office and station; so that the religion of Jesus Christ may be more firmly established and propagated in the nation at large, in opposition to all false religion; that God's name may be glorified, the commonwealth prosper, and the subjects rendered more happy.

7. That the duty of subjects is, to yield obedience to all the lawful commands of their lawful superiors, and to support them in the execution of their magistratical trust, with their persons, property and prayers.

WE THEREFORE TESTIFY,

1. Against all such as deny, that civil government is of God's instituting and ordaining; but maintain that it is an invention of man.

2. Against all such as maintain, that a christian is not bound, under the New Testament, to yield allegiance to civil authority.

3. Against such as maintain that dominion is founded in grace.

4. Against such as maintain, that the moral law and the law of nature are so materially different, that magistracy cannot be said to be founded equally in the law of nature and the moral law as revealed in the Bible.

5. Against such as maintain, that the civil magistrate, as such, has nothing to do with the propagation and establishment of the true religion, more than a false religion; nor with the suppression of errors, blasphemies, idolatry and the like, as such; and that all blasphemers, idolaters, hereticks, and errorists of every kind, have as good a right to all civil privileges, and to be protected in their blasphemies, heresies and abominable errors and idolatries, as the professors of the religion of Jesus Christ.

6. Against such as maintain, that all men are bound to receive and support, as the ordinance of God, all such as are, in the Providence of God, exalted to power in a nation, though tyrants or usurpers; or bound to give their power to the beast, and such like.

7. Against such as deny, that any religious test whatsoever, even the acknowledgment of the being of a God, is essential to the being and constitution of a lawful magistrate.

Chap. XXIII.—*Of the Church; of Christ as Head of the Church; of her Government; of Church Fellowship; of the Sacraments; of Church Discipline.*

SECT. I.—OF THE CHURCH.

WE BELIEVE,

1. That the church of Christ is distinguished into his church visible and invisible. Christ's invisible church consists of all true believers, and of them only. Christ's visible church consists of all those who, in every part of the world, profess the true religion, and their children.

2. The church of Christ hath been sometimes more, sometimes less pure, according as the doctrine of the gospel is preached, ordinances administered, and worship performed, more or less purely in them.

3. That the marks whereby the true church is distinguished from the false, are, the sound and true preaching of the word of God, wherein God hath revealed himself to us; the right administration of the sacraments of Christ Jesus; and eccle-

statistical discipline uprightly administered according to God's word.

4. That unto the visible church, Christ hath given the ministry, oracles and ordinances of God, for gathering the elect and perfecting his saints more and more in this life, to the end of the world; and doth by his own presence and Spirit, according to his promise, make them effectual thereunto.

5. That there is no church so pure, but it is subject to mixture and error; and some have so far degenerated as to become no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan: but there will be always a church of Christ on earth, to worship him according to his will.

WE TESTIFY THEREFORE,

1. Against such as deny, that the church of Christ can so far degenerate, as to become a synagogue of Satan.

2. Against such as maintain, that the church of Christ may arrive at perfection in purity, and even to infallibility in this life.

3. Against such as deny, that the infants of church members are also members of the visible church.

4. Against such as maintain, that it is immaterial to what church we belong, whether pure or impure.

SECT. 2.—OF CHRIST AS HEAD OF THE CHURCH.

WE BELIEVE,

1. That Christ Jesus is the alone head of the church. That neither angels nor men; neither Popes, Kings, nor Emperors, nor councils, can claim the headship of the church without blasphemy. The Pope of Rome is so far from being the head of the church, that he is that antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself against Christ and all that is called God.

2. That as our Lord Jesus is head of his church, so he is head over all things to his church; angels and principalities and powers being made subject unto him, and all things put under his feet, to subserve the great design of glorifying God and perfecting his saints.

WE THEREFORE TESTIFY,

1. Against such as deny, that Christ is the alone head of the church.

2. Against such as maintain, that Kings, or any other rulers, are head of the church.

3. Against such as maintain, that the Pope of Rome is head of the church.

4. Against such as deny, that Christ is head over all persons and things for his church's good.

SECT. 3.—OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH.

WE BELIEVE,

1. That the government of the church, which is of divine right, or which is founded in, and agreeable to scripture, is presbyterial.

2. That a Minister, a Pastor, a Bishop, and a teaching Elder, according to the scriptures, denote one and the same office; and this is the highest office in the church. The scriptures know nothing of Bishops, Archbishops, &c. superior in power or dignity to a Pastor of a congregation. There are other Elders of divine right, whose office it is to rule only, in conjunction with the teaching Elder; but not to teach. Deacons are also of divine right.

3. That in Presbyterian church government, which is the only scriptural one, the lowest court is denominated a Session; the next higher court is denominated a Presbytery; the next higher to that is denominated a Synod; the next higher above a Synod is denominated a General Assembly; and the highest of all is an Œcumenical Council.

4. That to the Apostles and their successors, the ordinary Ministers of the gospel, our Lord committed the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and with them to the ruling Elder the key of rule only. Neither the key of doctrine, nor of rule and government, were committed to the people in general; nor is any of the keys committed to the civil magistrate; nor do the scriptures give any countenance to the Episcopal church government, by Bishops, Archbishops, &c.

5. That the actual members of every congregation have an exclusive right to choose their own Pastors and other officers.

WE THEREFORE TESTIFY,

1. Against such as deny Presbyterian church government to be of divine right.

2. Against such as would invest the civil magistrate with the keys of the kingdom of heaven.

3. Against such as maintain, that the key of government is vested in the community of professors in general.

4. Against such as maintain, that the government of the church by Bishops, Archbishops, &c. as superior to Pastors, has any scripture authority; or that a Bishop, Archbishop, &c. is a different and superior office to that of a Pastor of a single congregation.

5. Against such as maintain, that there is no form of church government of divine right.

6. Against such as deny the divine right of the ruling Elder.

SECT. 4.—OF CHURCH FELLOWSHIP.

WE BELIEVE,

1. That every gospel hearer is bound to believe the word of God, and in Christ as revealed therein; to make a profession of his faith, and to join in communion with the church of Christ: in which

faith, profession, and joining in church fellowship, if he would avoid the great evil of self-deception and hypocrisy, he ought to act with the greatest sincerity.

2. That it is not essential to the reception of any one into church fellowship, that the church should be infallibly assured, that such an one's faith and profession is genuine and sincere; it being impossible for the church to ascertain infallibly, or any other way but by external appearance and profession, that any one's faith, or even profession is sincere. To search the heart is the prerogative of Jehovah alone. All the church can demand of any, desirous to join in her communion, is an apparently candid profession of faith in Christ, and in the doctrines and precepts of his word, and of a resolution to walk agreeably thereto unreservedly.

3. That in order to obtain, and preserve unanimity and mutual co-operation among Church members, it is necessary that they be of one mind, as far as human frailty will admit, about the genuine meaning of the scriptures; for it cannot be supposed that men can comfortably walk together in any society, unless they be, in some good measure, agreed. It is necessary therefore, to exhibit in a Confession of Faith, and on proper occasions, in a Testimony for truth and against error, in a summary point of view, the true and the genuine sense of the scripture: And the acknowledgment of the belief of these, either one or both, as the necessity of the case may require, by an applicant for communion with the church, as the true sense of the scriptures, and the point of view in which he understands them, ought to be made the term or condition of his membership and communion in the church. Did all men see with one eye, as

it were, and think with one heart, in respect to the doctrines and precepts of the word of God: were there no corruption nor blindness in the human heart; were there among the hearers and professors of the gospel and christian religion, no opposition to, nor enmity nor hostility against, nor perversion of the doctrines and precepts of our holy religion; then confessions and testimonies would be unnecessary: The profession of belief in Christ, and of the scripture would be all the terms of admission into the fellowship of the church necessary. But as constant and woeful experience teaches us, that men are far, very far from seeing or thinking alike, in matters of true religion; and that man is by nature, corrupt, blind, unfriendly and hostile to God's word, and way of salvation: Hence the necessity of confessions of faith and testimonies for the truths of God's word, and in opposition to all contrary errors, as terms of communion; that the church may be kept pure, enemies to the truth kept out of her, communion, and errors and errorists detected, should they at any time creep into church; and as a mean of purging her of these, when at any time she is infested with them.

4. That nothing should be made a term of communion in the church, which is not perfectly agreeable to the scriptures; much less should any thing be made so, that is contradictory to the scriptures; but all those truths, to the knowledge of which the church hath attained, and which have been any part of the churches testimony, should be held fast, and earnestly contended for, against all opposers and backsliders, however high their pretences, to zeal for the truth, may be. As no pretences of zeal for reformation, can warrant the church, to make terms of communion which are not scriptural, or clearly deducible therefrom; so no pretences of moderation, can

warrant her to decline from the truths of the word, nor from the church, testimony which is agreeable thereto.

WE THEREFORE TESTIFY,

1. Against all such as exclaim against and reprobate confessions of faith, and stated testimonies for truth and against error, as tests of orthodoxy, and more especially as terms of communion; whether it be under pretence of their being impositions on conscience, or that they cramp freedom of enquiry, or whatever other pretext.

2. Against such as maintain that the bare profession of a belief of the scriptures is all the term of communion the church should make.

3. Against all such as make terms of communion of notions and opinions, which have no scripture warrant, neither express, nor by necessary consequence.

4. Against such as make terms of communion, excluding from church fellowship, such as endeavour, in their conduct, to follow the approved examples of the saints recorded in the scriptures.

5. Against all such as, notwithstanding their baptismal and other solemn engagements, to believe, profess and walk according to the scriptures, have declined from the profession they have made, and the vows they have come under: And not only so, but also require, as a term and condition of church communion with them, that every applicant, for such communion, shall approve of their declension from their solemn profession and breach of vows: or which is to the same effect; who reject from sealing ordinances, all such as cannot nor will not reject the obligation and binding authority, of some of God's laws, which being once enjoined by his authority, neither they, nor any others can shew, that they have been ever re-

pealed by the same authority; and so, as far as they can, make void these laws of God by their tradition; and thus involve themselves and all others, as many as they can get, in apostacy from these laws of God, their own profession and covenant obligations to adhere to them;—And also from a clear and noble testimony of the church, not only in their Confession of Faith, but also in many other earnest contentings for the authority and binding obligation of these laws, now under the New Testament, as much as under the Old.

SECT. 5.—OF RELIGIOUS WORSHIP, AND OF THE SABBATH DAY.

WE BELIEVE,

1. That the very light of nature manifests that there is a God, who ought to be feared, revered and worshipped by all his reasonable creatures; but that which he requires, and is due to him, and the manner and means of performing it acceptably, cannot be known by the light of nature, but by divine revelation only: for he may not be worshipped according to the devices and imaginations of men, nor by the suggestions of Satan, nor by any visible representations of him; but as a Spirit, in spirit and in truth.

2. That religious worship is to be given to all the persons of the Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, equally, and that through the merits and mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ only, and not to nor through any mere creature, men nor angels, as objects or mediums of worship.

3. That as God is to be worshipped internally, by trusting in him, loving, delighting in him, &c. so praying to God secretly by every individual; in the family by the heads of families, every morning and evening at least; publickly in the assembled congregation; and by christians meeting together

for prayer and conference, is one principal part of God's worship. Praising God publicly and privately, is another principal branch of God's worship: Also the sound preaching and hearing of the word, the administration and receiving the sacraments according to God's word, and the reading of the scriptures publicly, and privately religious oaths and vows, solemn fastings and thanksgivings on such occasions as there is a proper call for them, are all parts of worship which God requires of his creatures, of the human kind, while in this world.

4. That in celebrating God's praises, the psalms, hymns and spiritual songs indited by the Holy Spirit, and none other ought to be used in the worship of God either publicly or privately.

5. That God hath appointed one seventh part of our time to be devoted to his service, besides the time required for our daily morning and evening devotions; which seventh part of time, is, in scripture, sometimes called the sabbath, the first day of the week, and the Lord's day. From the creation of the World to the resurrection of Christ the seventh day of the week was to be kept by divine appointment; but ever since, it is the first, and not the seventh day of the week that is to be kept by divine appointment.

6. That the Lord's day is the only day appointed by God to be kept holy; though he allows us to set days apart on proper occasions for fasting and thanksgiving. Those days, which, by men now under the New-Testament, are called festival or holy days have no warrant from the word, and are superstitious.

WE THEREFORE TESTIFY,

1. Against all such as maintain that all forms

of worship are indifferent, and all alike acceptable.

2. Against all such as deny, either by principle or practice, that families are bound to worship God morning and evening, every day; and against such as do not make conscience of secret prayer.

3. Against such as maintain that the inspired psalms, given to us by God, in the Bible, are not now suitable to be sung in gospel worship; and that uninspired psalms and hymns ought, and are more suitable to be sung now under the gospel dispensation.

4. Against such as assume to preach the gospel without a regular call thereto.

5. Against such as encourage women, or any others not warranted by the word of God, to speak, exhort and teach in the church; and encourage the hearers to confuse and disturb the worship and worshipers, by screaming and crying out in time of worship, and also by such distortions and gesticulations, as oftentimes prevents the minister from preaching, and the people always from hearing with seriousness and composure; which seem to be evident marks of delusion.

6. Against all such as deny that God has appointed any time to be kept as a holy sabbath to the Lord, now under the New Testament, against such as maintain this either in principle or practice; and also against such as refuse to keep the first day of the week as the Christian Sabbath.

7. Against all such as are observers of days dedicated to saints, commonly called festival, ~~and~~ and holy days. This is a considerable branch of their superstition.

7. Against such as without absolute necessity, follow any labour, travelling, driving waggons, or pack-horses on the Sabbath day.

SECT. 6.—OF THE SACRAMENTS.

WE BELIEVE,

1. That the sacrament under the New Testament, are baptism and the Lord's supper, and these only; there are, under the New Testament no other sacraments of divine appointment: therefore all others are spurious, being wholly of human invention.

2. That these sacraments, ^{are} only to be administered by the ministers of the gospel only: and neither of them is to be administered privately, but publickly before the assembled congregation.

3. That the outward element used in baptism is water only; the outward elements used in the administration of the Lord's supper, are bread and wine only: Any additions to these, are the superstitious inventions of men.

4. That the infants of believers are to be baptized, as being members of the church. Baptism is rightly administered, by washing, pouring, or sprinkling of water upon the person to be baptized.

5. That the Lord's supper is to be received after suitable preparation by self-examination, and humiliation; which requires some time to be set apart for that purpose, previous to the administration of that ordinance. It is rightly administered by a minister of the gospel, after preaching the word to the people, taking, and by solemn prayer setting apart the elements, which, as before said, are bread and wine only, and giving them to the communicants, who also are to receive them and divide them among themselves, all according to Christ's appointment.

WE THEREFORE TESTIFY,

1. Against such as deny that it is the proper and exclusive province of a gospel minister, to administer the holy sacraments

2. Against all such as deny that baptism is to be administered to the infants of believing parents; but to adults only.

3. Against such as make dipping or overwhelming in water essential to the right administration of baptism.

4. Against such as maintain that none can be saved unless, and that infants of believers are as heathens until they be baptized; and that maintain that baptism regenerates those who are baptized.

5. Against such as maintain more sacraments, under the New Testament, than baptism and the Lord's supper; and that the elements are transubstantiated into the real body and blood of Christ; that the bread only, and not the cup also, should be given to the laity, and that the cup belongs to the priest only: and also against those who tho' they deny transubstantiation; yet maintain consubstantiation; or that the real body and blood of Christ is in, with and under the bread and wine, though the elements are not changed into the body and blood of Christ.

6. Against the principle and practice of those who maintain that it is proper and right to administer any of the sacraments privately.

7. Against such as adulterate the elements in either sacrament by un instituted mixtures; or by adding any thing of human invention to any of the sacraments.

SECT. 7.—OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE. WE BELIEVE,

1. That as the visible church is in a state of imperfection, it is impossible to prevent disorders altogether; but as those who still remain in their natural state, often profess themselves to be real believers, and cannot be kept out of the church

by all the care of the church officers, at all times, and from the remainders of corruption in the true saints of God, it is not possible but that offences will come.

2. That an offence or scandal is not every thing at, or with which a person may be displeased. That is properly an offence or scandal which, in a persons conduct is, either in itself, or from its circumstances, calculated to provoke others to sin, or may, in any respect, hinder or prevent their spiritual edification or consolation.

3. That our Lord Jesus Christ has instituted discipline in his church, for the purpose of removing scandals, and for preventing their baneful consequences; nor can any church, where it is not impartially applied according to scripture direction, expect, upon good grounds, his presence to be with her.

4. That discipline properly exercised, is extremely necessary,

1. For vindicating the honor of our Lord Jesus, which suffers greatly, by the corrupt principles and practices of professors.

2. For maintaining the authority of his ordinances, and chastening disobedience thereunto.

3. For averting threatened judgments against those churches who are not zealous in removing scandals.

4. For keeping the church pure, lest the whole should be infected with evil principles or practices.—And lastly for the benefit of those who offend, that they may be humbled, and ashamed, and recovered from sin.

WE THEREFORE TESTIFY

1. Again such as profanely deny that church discipline is necessary; and hold it to be tyranny over the consciences of men.

2. Against such as maintain that discipline ought to be exercised only against immoral practices, not against erroneous principles, and practice accordingly.

Chap. XXIV.—Of Oaths and Vows.

WE BELIEVE,

1. That an oath when lawfully taken is a part of religious worship. In swearing, the swearer appeals to God as a witness of the truth of what he swears, and for judgment and condemnation if he swears falsely.

2. That there is no other thing, name or person, by which we must swear, but by God only with an uplifted hand; which ought to be done with reverence and holy fear: hence ~~an~~ irreverent and profane swearing by the name of God or swearing by any other person or thing is to be abhorred, being very sinful.

3. That an oath may be taken, when the importance of the case requires it, as well now, under the New Testament, as formerly, under the ~~old~~, and if in such a case, an oath be imposed, by lawful authority, it of right ought to be taken.

4. That every person, who has a right to be admitted to take an oath, as well as every person, who can with propriety, be admitted to administer an oath, ought to be such only as understands the nature of an oath, and its importance.

5. That no man can oblige himself by oath in any case or to any thing, which is not just and good, and which he is not ~~fully~~ persuaded is so, but is sinful to refuse to swear, in order to decide controversies between man and man, and to pre-

serve the innocent from injury, or to detect villainy, and it is even sometimes right and proper to take an oath voluntarily, or when called to do so, by those who have no authority, in order to protect the innocent, and detect the guilty; but this could only apply to cases where there is no lawful authority to appeal to for justice.

6. That an oath is to be taken in the plain and common sense of the words, without equivocation or mental reservation. It cannot bind to any thing sinful; but in any thing not ~~single~~ ^{sinful}, it binds ^{to} performance, even to persons own ~~heart~~ ^{honour}; and may not be violated, though made to heretics or infidels..

7. That a vow or covenant, is of the like nature with a promissory oath, and is to be taken with the same religious care and fear, and to be performed with the like faithfulness. It is to be made to God, only and not to any creature; and must be made voluntarily if we would have it accepted. By such a covenant we bind ourselves more strictly to necessary duties, or to other things not prohibited in the word of God, so far and so long, and no longer, as they may fitly conduce to God's glory, and our own and others good.

8. That covenanting is a duty now under the New Testament, as well as under the old. It may be done by individuals, congregations, or nations.

9. That if an individual covenant for himself, if it be in matter indifferent, he may limit his vow to a certain period, but if it be with regard to the service of God there ought to be no limitation but the end of his days. If the covenant be made by individuals, or collective bodies designing and intending their posterity therein, as well as themselves, for their good, then the posterity is bound as well as the original contractors. The volunta

ry covenant engagement, is a superadded obligation, distinct from the divine law.

9. That no covenant can bind any person to any thing contrary to God's word, nor to any thing impossible, either to be performed by our own natural ability or in cases where we have no promise from God to enable us to perform it.

WE THEREFORE TESTIFY,

1. Against all profane swearers, and swearing whatsoever.

2. Against such as deny, that it is a duty to take an oath to end strife, or for any other purpose however good, now under the New Testament.

3. Against such as allow themselves to swear with mental reservations, and not in the plain meaning of the words.

4. Against such as maintain, that it is no matter how men swear provided they declare the truth and consequently that it is right to swear by killing the book.

5. Against such as deny covenanting to be a duty under the New Testament.

6. Against such as deny personal, congregational, and national covenanting to be a duty.

7. Against such as deny that any covenant can bind any but those who personally entered into it that any covenant can bind posterity.

Chap. XXV.—*Of Religious fasting and Thanksgiving.*

WE BELIEVE,

1. That religious fasting is an ordinance of God.

2. That it is not an ordinary duty, such as prayer and praise, reading, preaching, and hearing the word, and the like are; but it is an

occasional duty, to be performed when the proper occasion, in providence offer.

3. That according to the Scriptures, the proper times and occasions for performing this duty are such as the following: when any judgments are imminent or actually inflicted, when men are under conviction of sin, and resolving on reformation when men are under the hidings of God's face, and are either sensible or insensible, of it, when a person or community would have special light in matters of great importance, when men individually, or socially are about to seek for any special mercy, and when a very important duty is to be performed, by them, and they see the necessity of the special presence and blessing of God, in order to their success therein; when men have an uncommon difficulty to encounter, or danger to avoid, and when men either individually or socially have some very solemn approach to God in view, which requires special preparation and self-examination.

4. That as in the participation of the Lord's supper we make a very solemn approach to God, so we need special preparation by self-examination, need special light, not only that we have grace, but that we have it in exercise, and have great difficulties to encounter, such as indwelling sin and unbelief, and great danger to avoid, even of eating and drinking unworthily, fasting seems both proper and necessary before attending on that ordinance.

5. That fasting consists in abstinence from food, except in cases where the constitutions or present circumstances of persons will not, without injury admit, and even then, it ought to be used sparingly; and from wordly employments and recreations.

ons, and on such occasions men ought to be exercised in solemn confession of sin and deep humiliation on account of it.

6. That the scriptures teach us, that it is our duty to set some time apart, for solemn thanksgiving, on some particular occasions; such as, when any imminent judgment is averted, or if inflicted, removed; when any signal mercy is vouchsafed, or distinguished favour obtained either unexpected, or which we have been earnestly seeking by fasting and prayer. It is lawful and right for nations, congregations, families and individuals to appoint times of fasting and thanksgiving; which when appointed in a proper manner, and for proper ends ought to be religiously observed.

7. That after the celebration of the Lord's supper it is proper to set some time apart for solemn thanksgiving, for therein we have been commemorating the dying love of our Lord Jesus, whereby the greatest judgments were averted from, and the greatest mercies obtained for all true believers.

WE TESTIFY THEREFORE,

1. Against all such as maintain that fasting is not required under the New-Testament, but was proper only under the Old-Testament.

2. Against all such as maintain, that it is superstitious in christians to appoint a congregational fast, every time they examine themselves, in order to a right attendance on the Lord's supper, and also to appoint a and hold day of thanksgiving immediately after the celebration of that solemn ordinance, is superstitious.

Chap. XXVI.—Of the State of Men after Death, of the Resurrection and of the last Judgment.

WE BELIEVE,

1. That after death the bodies of men, return again to dust, and therefore see corruption.

2. That the souls of men being of an immaterial and immortal substance, can neither die or fall asleep with the body.

3. That when the soul is separated from the body at death, it returns to God who gave it, to receive its sentence of approbation, or condemnation.

4. That the souls of the saints being, upon their separation from the body, made perfect in holiness, they immediately pass into glory, and there wait for the redemption of their body.

5. That the souls of the ungodly upon their separation from the body, are immediately cast into hell; where they are reserved in darkness and torments to the judgment of the great day. The scriptures know nothing of any other places of happiness or torment, but heaven and hell, for separate spirits.

6. That at the last day, there shall be a general resurrection of the bodies of the just and unjust; when their bodies and souls shall be re-united forever. The self-same bodies which lay down in the dust and no other shall then be raised again, but with very different qualities. Such of mankind as are found alive at the last day, shall not die, but undergo a change equivalent.

7. That immediately after the resurrection, the judgment of the great day shall commence. The wicked then shall receive their final doom, and be cast into hell, both soul and body, even all the nations that forget God. The righteous being

accepted in their beloved, shall then receive a sentence of approbation, and be admitted both soul and body, into the joy of their Lord, and to take possession of, and to inherit, through eternity, that kingdom prepared for them before the foundation of the world.

WE THEREFORE TESTIFY,

1. Against all such as maintain that the souls of men are material, and consequently die with their bodies; or that they fall asleep with the body, and are inactive till it rise again.
2. Against such as maintain that the souls of the righteous do not immediately go to heaven and glory, when they depart from their bodies; nor all the go immediately to hell at death; but that there is a third place different from heaven and hell, the souls of such, as have been guilty only of venial sins, shall be sent to be purified by purgatorial fire, in order to fit them for heaven.
3. Against all such as deny that there shall be any resurrection of the bodies of the righteous or the wicked.
4. Against such as deny that it shall be the self-same body, that shall be raised under what pretence soever.
5. Against such as maintain that the bodies of beasts on which men feed, being incorporated with the bodies of the saints, may be united with them and glorified together.
6. Against all such as deny that there will be a general judgment of just and unjust, or any judgment day at all.
7. Against all such as deny the eternity of the punishment of wicked; and maintain a universal redemption and salvation, of all the wicked from hell: or that the wicked shall be immediately burnt up, as in an instant.

The Conclusion.

WE have exhibited in the preceding testimony, no other Doctrines, nor principles, but those which, we humbly conceive, are the doctrines and principles of the Bible, and of our reformers, in the best and purest, times of reformation. — Let this testimony be compared with the word of God, and with the confessions and testimonies of the churches of the reformation, and especially with those of the church of Scotland, at the time, when, it is acknowledged by all that know any thing of that church, and of reformation, she exceeded all the churches on earth, for the glory and purity of her reformation, and we are persuaded, if comparison be made with candor, and without partiality, it will be acknowledged that it is conformable to the word of God, and the purest reformation testimony, which was plainly founded on the word of God.

WE have neither presumed to exceed our reformers, in reformation, nor have knowingly dropped any part of her testimony. Our ambition, and desire, is to follow the footsteps of the flock, which we believe followed the Great Shepherd, and the Shepherd in his doctrine and example. We think, indeed, that it is proper and right, to go forward in reformation: But we have thought, it sufficient, at present, to testify for the same things, and no other; because so many have made defection from them on the one hand, and because so many who have presumed to go farther in reformation, have stretched themselves beyond, not only the spirit and doctrines of the reformation; but also beyond the limits of the Bible.

Believing then that the principles and doctrines contained in this testimony, are no other than those of our best reforming times; and to which, all those who have emigrated from Britain and Ireland and their children are bound, by solemn covenant engagements; we beseech all into whose hands it may come,

1. To consider the matter of this testimony, and to approve or disapprove as they find it agreeable, or disagreeable to the word of God and our reformation standards. And as we hope, that it will appear to every unprejudiced person, agreeable to the word, and our standards therein :

2. That they would not reject this testimony, upon the account of its weak and imperfect parts, or the unpopularity, obscurity, or for the fewness and obscurity of those who are attached to it; nothing being a sufficient reason to reject and condemn it, if it be the truth, and opposed to error and falsehood.

3. We beseech you that you would, not only not reject it, but that you would, with all humanity of mind receive it. You will do a manifest injury to us and the truth by declining to join with us in bearing testimony for the truths here exhibited, and you will also injure us greatly. You will injure truth by refusing to profess it at a time when it is run down : You'll injure us by weakening our hands, or by refusing to strengthen them when there is so great a necessity to encourage us; you will injure others by hardening them in their evil course. May he in whose hand, the hearts of the children of men are, turn the hearts of his people from every false way; and incline them to embrace the truth in the love of it.

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