

AN EXPOSURE

OF

DR. McMASTER'S "BRIEF INQUIRY."

BY THE REV. DAVID SCOTT.

He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him!
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DR. McMASTER'S BRIEF INQUIRY, &c.

THE work upon which the following remarks are made, professes to be "A Brief Inquiry into the Civil Relations of Reformed Presbyterians in the United States according to their judicative acts." The Brief Inquiry is written in the form of a letter, and addressed to the members of the church: it consists of an introduction, and four questions, to each of which, the writer gives an answer. The questions are—"What is the question at issue among a few of the members of this church? Upon the question of our civil relations, what are the existing authoritative acts of our Supreme Judiciary? Against what should this church at present guard? What means should be employed to insure harmony, mutual good will, and efficient co-operation in promoting the cause of God?" This, is every way inferior to the former letters of Dr. McMaster, on a similar subject. With all the characteristic faults of the letters on civil government, this shows little of the capacity which they display; nor is this opinion given for the purpose of undervaluing a production, because the sentiments which it contains are different from our own. It is from a sincere conviction, which, we are persuaded will find a response in the mind of every unprejudiced reader who is entitled to give an opinion on the subject. The "Brief Inquiry" is not likely to attain an old age, nor add much to the writer's celebrity. In a moment of excitement however, it may not be without effect, when it is considered that some who read it may be more disposed to seek an excuse for their opinions and practices, than severely scan the arguments by which it pretends to be supported. The probability of this grows stronger, when we look at the bold assertions which it contains, unsupported by any kind of proof or satisfactory reasoning, and the general air of dogmatism by which it is distinguished. It is a convenient, and at the same time summary mode of settling a knotty question, when a writer finds that he has no good argument to support his

views, boldly to assert his opinions, and finish a long vapouring sentence, or answer a string of irrelevant questions with such pithy words, as "no, no, the thing is impossible." The "Brief Inquiry" possesses too, in a remarkable degree, the peculiarity of arguing against a view of the subject, in many instances, which is not adopted by those against whom the writer argues; the conclusion always, however, is brought into immediate connexion with the real question at issue; thus the unwary reader is made to acquiesce in a conclusion for which he has not had any evidence.*

The author of the "Brief Inquiry" does not fairly meet the difficulties of his subject, but treats them generally as a fox-hunter does a fence, when he cannot find a gap, he leaps over it. When a man of Dr. McMaster's talent is so straitened in the defence of a favourite theory, we may safely conclude that it is wrong; for without intending to pay Dr. McMaster any compliment, we are of opinion that if new-lightism could have been defended by any of its votaries, it was as safe in his hands, and perhaps more so, than in the hands of any others.

The "Brief Inquiry" is swelled out unto twenty-four goodly pages, although it might easily have been condensed into four or five. The writer had a particular object in view by enlarging the discussion; the statements of the "Inquiry" are many of them false; and the reasonings by which the conclusions are obtained, are uniformly erroneous. Had the "Inquiry" been what it professes to be, and what such a work ought to have been, a simple statement of facts accompanied by such brief remarks as were necessary to give the reader a comprehensive view of the laws of the church on this subject, the Dr. would have exposed the weakness of his arguments by placing the premises too near the conclusion; in which case a child might have detected the inconclusiveness of his reasonings. But by introducing a great many uncalled for, and irrelevant observations between the statement of his argument, and the conclusion, the attention of the reader is drawn away from the weakness of the former! Thus, by a kind of trickery quite worthy of the cause in which it is employed, the thoughtless and unwary are led to acquiesce in the most silly conclusions. There is an air of mystery too, thrown over the subject, as if there were something in it, too far removed from the knowledge and capacity of

* The writer of the "Brief Inquiry" frequently, instead of grappling with his opponent, makes a man of straw, whips him soundly, and then boasts of victory. This may answer party purposes, but it will never *serve truth*.

members of the church to understand, and which can only be comprehended by such extraordinary minds as that of Dr. McMaster, and such as he chooses to admit to the honour of being equals. This has a striking resemblance to the scheming of popery, the object of which is to keep the people in a kind of superstitious reverence for something which is supposed to be beyond their reach! We were particularly struck with the whining tone in which the "Brief Inquiry" is written; there is evidently a great effort to impress the reader with the notion that the Dr. himself and his liberal brethren are more than ordinarily pious! We do not say that this is affectation, and designed to answer a purpose, but it looks very like it.

As we mean to do the "Brief Inquiry" ample justice, we shall begin with the title page, which part is not the least curious, of a very curious production. The author has chosen for motto, part of the sixteenth verse, of the sixth chapter of Jeremiah, "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask, for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein." The precept of the prophet is excellent, and accompanying other principles than those advocated in the "Brief Inquiry" would be an appropriate motto; but placed as it is, we are almost tempted to believe that the writer meant it to be understood ironically! What has the "Brief Inquiry" or Dr. McMaster, to do with "the good way" of the old covenants? Is it not the tendency of the "Inquiry" and the evident object of its writer to shut up "the old paths" in which our fathers walked, and cast a stumbling block in the way of the present generation? The Dr. knows well that what he calls the good way, and what the covenants call the good way are different ways. But words are flexible things, when a man feels himself at liberty to use them in his own sense; and there is such a thing too, as mental reservation.

Socinians profess to receive the scriptures, and the doctrine that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, but they take the liberty of attaching their own meaning to the words by which their profession is conveyed. Thus a man may say one thing and mean the very opposite.

In his introduction the Dr. says, "at no previous period had our church a fairer prospect of answering the great ends of her organization than she has at this time, and never were her appropriate administrations more required." This is in the same style, with the use, which has been made of the quotation from Jeremiah. Nothing would gladden our

hearts so much, as a fair prospect, for the Reformed Presbyterian Church to answer the ends of her organization. But her members, and her ministers particularly, must pursue another course, than that recommended by the "Brief Inquiry," or she will soon be disorganized. We make no pretension to the gift of prophecy, but we will venture our reputation for sagacity, by saying, that if the church pursues and puts into practice, the views which Dr. McMaster has exhibited in this, and his former work on a kindred subject, the name Reformed Presbyterian shall have become extinct before ten years are elapsed. We are abundantly satisfied that the *name* is all that some men now have; but in the case supposed, which, "God forbid," name and reality would all go by the board. The ultimate "aim" of the late frustrated correspondence would be more effectually gained than it could have been by that proposed *experiment* on the order of the church.

The recommendation which the Dr. gives to "ministers and people," to act "in harmony," can only be useful, and ought only to be followed in support of truth. Harmony is necessary to the successful maintenance of truth; but harmony in error is ruinous. To be harmoniously in the wrong way, is only to increase the confusion, and add to the sum of already existing evil. Peace is desirable, if it can be obtained at a fair price, but truth must be maintained, at the expense of peace, or whatever else it may cost. Respecting the harmony which the Dr. recommends, it is added, "There is no justifiable reason why it should not be so; and a little patience and candour will make it so." We are otherwise minded; and we are persuaded that the great body of Covenanters will agree with us, when we say there is "justifiable reason" for the absence of harmony among us. What some of us consider truth is abandoned, and opinions, and practices which the church disapproves of, are openly maintained and followed. Is not this a "justifiable reason?" We mourn over the divisions of our Israel; but we would mourn still more, if with the cause which exists for division, there were harmony and peace. The happiest omen that we can observe in the present movements of the church, is the decided opposition to newlightism which is manifested by her members; and the application of discipline to those who have introduced it. Nor do we think it harsh to say to such, "what hast thou to do with peace," seeing ye have abandoned the testimony of the church? While such a state of things exist, neither "patience" nor "candour" can produce harmony.

By all means, let the people of God exercise patience and candour towards their erring Brethren; but the good order of the house is not to be dispensed with, by a mistaken application of charity; the greatest kindness that can be shown to such as err, is to deal with them as in error, and faithfully, and unshrinkingly apply to them the discipline of the church.

"It is, however, not difficult to perceive, that if a proper temper be not cherished, and a course becoming the gospel pursued, we are at the commencement of a family quarrel." No, Doctor, not "at the commencement." It is long since it was *commenced*; and Covenanters understand now, too, pretty well by whom. It is silly enough to talk of being "at the commencement of a family quarrel," as if the church or even the world could be made to believe that it had not *commenced*, at least two years ago. Instead of commencing, it is, we trust, nearly over; and that peace and harmony will soon be restored, on the only permanent basis on which they can endure—The faithful application of the church's testimony in doctrine and discipline.

Dr. McMaster places himself in a very awkward predicament by saying, "Into this evil work of a domestic broil I cannot enter." No one wishes it, of those against whom he writes, and certainly none will force him into it. The Dr. is rather late in forming this resolution, or he has kept it ill. What has Dr. McMaster been doing for several years back? Wrangling with his brethren in church courts on these very subjects, and occasionally insulting his junior brethren when he could not force them into his views—writing "the celebrated four letters," and in manuscript, scattering them like fire-brands, and afterwards publishing them, when the church was thought to be sufficiently prepared—countenancing schism and resistance to the authority of Synod, by giving his name to the publication of the rejected part of the pastoral address—and now publishing his "Brief Inquiry," which he knows is in opposition to the views of many of his brethren, and "the judicative acts" of the church. The Dr. finds now, that he, and those with whom he acts, have been too fast in their operations; faster a great deal, than plain unsophisticated people are inclined to follow. And having run ahead a long way, before he has ascertained that the people are not following; and becoming apprehensive that they will not follow, he thinks of a truce—"Into this evil work of a domestic broil I cannot enter." We wish this thought had come into the Dr's mind some years sooner. Placed as Dr. McMaster and his associates are, they remind us of the

magicians, in former times, of whom it is fabled, that, by their enchantments they could raise spirits, which they had not always power to quell. Our ecclesiastical magicians have waved their wand so *manfully*, that they have become alarmed at the spirit which they have raised. No fabled spirit either. It is the spirit of Covenanterism, which has overturned thrones, and dominions; it has been slumbering, but is now awakened. And the man who has hardihood enough, to dare it, will fall in the attempt!

"What is the question at issue by a few of the brethren of this church?" Those who differ from the Dr. it seems are only a *few*, of course he is among the many. This, is truly amusing. The Dr. knows better; he knows, that so far from being few, that they are numerous, including, as we have no doubt, a great majority of the *members* of the church, and of ministers too, we hope. As far as the Eastern Sub-Synod is concerned, we speak from personal observation. Here, our opportunities for observation have been extensive. We know certainly, that a large majority will resist any attempt at innovation, on the testimony of the church: and the views of the "Brief Inquiry" they do consider an innovation. Could Dr. McMaster persuade us, that the testimony of the church is maintained only by a minority, this would not influence us in the least, nor suffer us to think the less of truth, that it was forsaken by the many. "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil."

To ascertain "the question at issue" the Dr. thinks, "it is much easier to render a negative than a positive reply." It is, we consider, rather a shuffling way, to ascertain a point in dispute, to tell us what it is not, and slyly slur over the thing itself, by keeping it nearly out of sight. But admitting this mode of discussing the subject, the Dr. makes assertions, that neither we, nor our readers will be disposed to admit. For example. "In what have been sometimes considered peculiar aspects of certain truths, presented in this church, there is a complete oneness as far as these forms of peculiarity have been settled by public authority." Not the least peculiarity of this assertion is, that it *modestly* assumes, and takes for granted, the whole of what the "Brief Inquiry," professes to settle according to "the judicative acts" of the church. Thus, the Dr. quietly sets the question at rest, without "judicative acts," or any other act, than an act of assumption. That is, begging the question. Every member of the church knows, that so far from there being "complete oneness" or any thing like oneness, there is a division.

True Covenanters, who hold by the "peculiar aspects of certain truths," and a violent faction pushing on, in the course of "progressive improvement" as they themselves term it.

But, says the Dr. "attend upon the ministration of our respective churches, and in the whole of them you will find the same tone of sentiment that distinguished them twenty, thirty, forty years ago." This is too great a draught on the credulity of the people. The tone of sentiment which prevailed thirty years ago, and even at a later period, is not now to be found in *some* pulpits. We judge of the tone of sentiment of those times, by the printed specimens which are on record. We take one case, and our readers can make the same application, in other cases. Does the same tone of sentiment distinguish Dr. McMaster's pulpit now, that did when he wrote and preached "the duty of nations?" We know that the tone of sentiment that distinguished "the duty of nations" is not found in the letters on civil government, nor in the "Brief Inquiry." What a change of sentiment—what a difference of tone?

"The application of the principles, thus recognized to the public evils of the land, whether civil or ecclesiastical, is such as it used to be. The point of, where the evil is, in an instance or two, is of small account: for example, of the crime and calamity of slavery." Slavery it appears is an evil of "small account" in the opinion of Dr. McMaster!! Is this the tone of sentiment which distinguished his pulpit twenty-three years ago, or the pulpit of any of his brethren of that period? We hope such a sentiment will meet with the reprobation which it justly deserves. And if Dr. McMaster "do not accuse the Federal constitution of this evil, we thank God the Reformed Presbyterian church has.†

"As regards connexion with the governments of the land, it ought to be noticed, that there is not a Covenanter in the United States, holding property and engaged in business, who is not voluntarily in connexion with the government, and holding communion with its functionaries in what is properly political. The testimony of the church has never been understood as forbidding that to which I now refer, and, by parity of reason, other relations implying no more, though under another form, have by many been considered no violation of the principles of that testimony."

* See Duty of Nations, pp. 18, 19. and "Sons of Oil, pp. 34—50.

† "It," (the U. S. Constitution) "establishes that system of robbery, by which men are held in slavery, despoiled of liberty, and property and protection." Testimony, historical part, p. 136.

The connexion to which the Dr. refers in the former of these sentences, has nothing to do with "the question at issue." He undertakes in the "Brief Inquiry" to try the question according to the judicative acts of the church. This, no act of the church has forbidden; for a very good reason---it involves no immorality. Nor, can it be called a political connexion, without an abuse of language. The drift of the latter sentence is, that since the church does not prohibit all connexion, with the government, whether it may involve immorality, or not, therefore, that which is forbidden on account of immorality, may be entered into, because *some* consider, that, the one implies no more immorality than the other. Supposing this were true, which is indeed far from being the case, yet it would not settle "the question at issue" which is to be decided by "the judicative acts" of the church; and not by the opinions of this, or that man, however respectable. *Some* may consider, that conforming to the common order of society implies as much connexion with the government, as swearing an oath of allegiance; Reformed Presbyterians have thought otherwise, and every man of sense who has not "a little purpose" to serve by it, will think otherwise. Dr. McMaster makes a request before he enters upon the consideration of his first query, which he says "is a reasonable one. It is this: that my inquiry be not judged by a standard which I never recognised as of authority, whether private opinions of individuals," &c. We wish to remind the Dr. of this reasonable request, which he mentions in another place "as indispensable to the formation of a right judgment in the case." If it was "reasonable" on the part of the Dr. to make the request, it cannot be unreasonable in us to hold him to it. The "parity of reason" by which *some* consider themselves at liberty to do what the church has forbidden, because *they* think it no worse, than what she allows, we disclaim. To such a tribunal we will not submit the testimony of the church.

The Dr. undertakes, to persuade his readers "that members of the church in various places, more or less, maintained a political fellowship with the institutions of the land"---that this, "was well known" and that those who "refrained from a full participation in the affairs of State, did so, not from a conscientious conviction that such a participation was in itself immoral; but through delicacy to a few who had scruples on the subject." We hope these assertions are not true. It may be that in particular instances political fellowship with the institutions of the land have been maintained: and it may

be, that in particular cases, individuals may have refrained not from a *conscientious* conviction; but we do hope, for the sake of truth, and the honour of the church, that "a great majority" did not violate the engagements into which they entered upon admission into her privileges. For, certainly, every one did engage to refrain, and that conscientiously too. The church may be imposed upon, by a mere outward obedience to the laws of the Redeemer, on the part of professors; but she cannot knowingly, without a fearful dereliction of duty, admit of an obedience which is avowedly *not conscientious*. To say, that "a great majority" of church members paid so little respect to their vows, solemnly repeated, is, we hold, a *foul slander* on the moral character of covenanters. That we are not mistaken in this opinion, we express our perfect conviction, that their future actings will vindicate them from the factious and ungenerous charge!

In the paragraph which we are examining, Dr. Mc Master attempts further to account for the existence of the impression that fellowship with the government was prohibited, as arising from delicacy to a few who had scruples on the subject. It appears, that when the Dr. is compelled by his *unreasonable* opponents, to tell the whole story, it was an act of *forbearance* in the church, not to urge "an incorporation with any political society, as a term of ecclesiastical fellowship." How dull and stupid must Covenanters have been these thirty years past, not to have understood that their testimony did not forbid, but implied, that they *all* should become citizens: and that it was an act of "delicate forbearance" not to inflict censure upon them for omitting the duty? What a discovery in the history of the Reformed Presbyterian Church? And a discovery, left for Dr. McMaster to make, in the year eighteen hundred and thirty-three! We ask was this the tone of sentiment which prevailed, twenty, thirty, or forty years ago? The whole paragraph, is so nearly allied to nonsense, that it does not deserve any serious attention. The concluding sentence claims a passing notice. "Occasion, too, was taken to give a currency" to the impression that fellowship with the government was prohibited "from the manner of public discussion on the subject. Too seldom contemplated as a practical thing, in the exhibition, all that are requisite to give government ideal perfection, in constitutional provision, personal qualification, and actual administration, were brought, and very properly into view; but the hearer often forgot that man is an imperfect being, and rashly drew the conclusion, that he must wait for the concentration

of all this excellence in actual government, before he can recognize it as the ordinance of God." Thus the Dr. gives us to understand, not merely, that there were no laws in the church forbidding fellowship with the government; but, what is still more extraordinary, this was taught by ministers in their public discussions. The incorrect "impression" originated with the people themselves; they "rashly" drew erroneous conclusions. The people of the Reformed Presbyterian Church are under *everlasting obligations* to Dr. McMaster for the *favourable* view which he gives to the world of their capacities! So dull, that they understood not the plainest statements; and even "often forgot that man is an imperfect being!" But who, of all these people, of whose understanding the Dr. thus talks so lightly, is so weak, as to be imposed upon by such bare-faced effrontery? The whole paragraph is at variance with truth; its statements are the figments of the Dr's fancy, which he would not have dared to publish three years ago!*

"Upon the question of our civil relations, what are the existing authoritative acts of our supreme judicatory?"

The first judicative acts bearing on this subject, of which we have any information, were those of May 1806. They respected the giving of testimony under oath before an unqualified administrator, and the serving upon juries. The former of these at once became a dead letter. That which gave occasion to the latter, the one respecting jurors, was the existence of slavery, at that period in most of the States in which Covenanters resided. The conclusion, to which the Dr. comes from this, is, "It would then follow, that where this evil did not exist, this act must be without object, and consequently void." Let us see whether these things be so, or if the Dr. is only giving loose reins to his imagination. Of the act which relates to giving oath, we are told by the Dr. that it "respected giving of testimony before an unqualified administrator." Where did the Dr. learn this fact? Not from the act itself, nor from the authenticated history of the church, for this declares that it is "an act respecting giving oath when summoned before the *constituted authorities* of the nation."† Equally erroneous, is the statement that it "at once became a dead letter." The declared ground on which

* It is recommended to the reader, to compare the passage on which the above remarks have been made with "the Duty of Nations," particularly, pp. 19, 45, 46. And the "Sons of Oil," p. 47. When the reader makes this comparison perhaps he may be satisfied, that the hearer neither rashly concluded nor forgot any thing. But the preacher has changed his tone.

† Testimony, historical part, p. 133.

the act was passed was the immorality of the United States' Constitution. The constitution has undergone no change since the passing of this act; it remains therefore in all its original force: *maugre*, the statement of Dr. McMaster.

Of the "act respecting serving as jurors in courts of justice," we are told by the Dr. in the passage above quoted that the existence of slavery gave occasion for it. And then he concludes "that where this evil did not exist, or where it had ceased to exist, this act would be without object, and consequently void." If it were indeed true, that slavery was the sole evil to which it referred, and on account of which it prohibited acting as a juror, we would readily assent to the Dr's conclusion—It would be without object and consequently void. But unluckily for the Dr. his statement is not only without proof, it is also at variance with the recorded facts of the case—It is a *something* of his own creation, which he would thrust upon such as are simple enough to receive for facts whatever he may assert. Read what is said in the authorised history of the Church as the reasons for passing the juror's act. "Jurors are executive officers created by the constitution, and deriving from it all their power. They sit upon the bench of justice as the ultimate tribunal, from whose verdict there is, in many instances, no appeal. They mingle together—the virtuous and the vicious, christians and infidels, the pious and the profane, in one sworn association. They incorporate with the national society, and in finding a verdict, represent the nation. The juror voluntarily places himself under the direction of a law that is immoral. The Reformed Presbytery declare this practice inconsistent with their testimony, and warn church members against serving on juries under the direction of the constituted courts of law."*

Thus our readers will see that the juror's act prohibits sitting on juries, not because of slavery, or even any other *particular* evil, but because of immorality found in the constitution, under which the juror must act; of this immorality slavery is only one item. We quote from the same authority another passage in which some of these evils are enumerated. "The act respecting serving on juries, is absolutely prohibitory. There are moral evils essential to the constitution of the United States, which render it necessary to refuse allegiance to the whole system. In this remarkable instrument, there is contained no acknowledgment of the

* Historical part of the testimony, pp. 137, 138.

being or authority of God.—There is no acknowledgment of the christian religion, or professed submission to the kingdom of Messiah. It gives support to the enemies of the Redeemer, and admits to its honours and emoluments, Jews, Mahometans, Deists and Atheists—it establishes that system of robbery, by which men are held in slavery, despoiled of liberty, and property and protection.”* Having read these reasons as given by the highest authority in the church, which made the juror’s act necessary, the reader is competent to judge of the candour and fairness of Dr. Mc Master, when he says, that the occasion of the act was the existence of slavery, and that the act consequently becomes void where slavery does not exist. It is painful to make remarks on such juggling! Again,

“By some oversight,” says the Dr. “the jury act was never entered upon record. The law was thus null.” We suggest to Dr. McMaster, another view of this subject—a view which we are persuaded our readers will be disposed to prefer. The validity of a statute depends, not on its being entered on record; but on the fact, of its being made by the proper authority. It would be rather a dangerous power to leave in the hands of “a slender clerk,” that, which is indispensable, to the validity of a law, made by the proper authority.

The entering of statutes on record is a matter of great importance; to such record recourse may be had for ascertaining the law, but there are other ways of knowing it, if this should fail, either through design, or carelessness of a clerk. A statute may be in full force, where there is no written document to appeal to, as is the case in common law. In the present instance, we have common law; according to this, the statute is in force, and *is acted* upon where a proper regard to discipline is maintained. But more; the statute respecting serving on juries *is on record*: if not found among the minutes of presbytery, it is found in the printed and authorized history of the church. What are the minutes of a court, and what end are they designed to answer? Are they not the history of its acts and decisions? And are they not placed on record, as a convenient way of ascertaining these acts and decisions? And not that which gives validity to them. If these acts and decisions are found in an authorized and printed form in the history of the church, is not this superior to any manuscript minutes whatever? Now, this is the case: it appears upon investigation, that in consequence of some culpable negligence on the part of the clerk

* Historical part of the Testimony, p. 136.

of Presbytery, the jury act has not been recorded; but the history of the church, which was published in the year immediately following, the passing of the jury act, contains a record of it, and the grounds and reasons which made it necessary. We would not have urged the history of the church as proof, if it had been published by any individual however respectable: because in that case, it would have been nothing more than his view of the law, and as such would not be obligatory. But we urge the historical part of the testimony as decisive proof of the juror's act; because it is published by the same judicatory who passed the act, and gave it the authority of law. It is solemnly sanctioned by the court as an authentic record. "The Reformed Presbytery, do hereby ratify and approve of the preface and brief historical view of the church." Here, then, is a record preferable to any manuscript minute; because it has all the authority any manuscript can have, that is,—The authority of the court whose business it records. And it is accessible to every member of the church who may thus know the law, which he could not have had an opportunity of examining in manuscript. Does Dr. McMaster dispute the authority of the Supreme Judicatory? Will he venture to say that the court authorized the printing of acts which had no existence? If not, let him cease his quibbling about acts not being put on record. The acts of 1806, on civil relations, are recorded; and that too, where Dr. Mc Master's enmity cannot reach, nor his sophistry conceal? They exist. And what is better; they are accessible. When we judge on this subject, then, we are directed by a known law; and not by any thing that is unknown. The sneer, with which the Dr. is pleased to entertain his readers, respecting Ministers "ordained within the last twenty-seven years," judging, if they judge at all, "by something else than that law" is below criticism: and happy would we be if this were the worst thing that might be said. It is every way worthy of the place which it occupies in the "Brief Inquiry."

Dr. McMaster, having, as he imagines, disposed of the acts of 1806, makes the fact that they once existed, (for with him they are now "null") an argument in behalf of the United States' Constitution. We give it in his own words, "But whatever were the terms in which that statute were couched, it cannot but strike the attentive inquirer, that its very existence proves the court which enacted it did not consider the whole governmental system as immoral. Had

it done so, why specify one or two acts of danger alone." The Dr's question is easily solved. Be it known to Dr. McMaster and all concerned, that the church judicatory specified the two points of danger alluded to, because some individuals had difficulties respecting them; while they had no difficulty in applying their testimony to the United States, Constitution, in other things. "Some persons, however, who in other things profess an attachment to reformation principles, have considered serving on juries as consistent with their testimony. In order to expose the inconsistency of this practice, the Presbytery have determined at a convenient time to publish a warning against it; and in the mean time deemed it expedient to pass a prohibitory act."* So much for the jury act. The one respecting giving testimony "before the constituted authorities" of the nation, was designed to give an explicit view to the members of the church of the grounds on which they might give such testimony, without infringing upon reformation principles.†

We return to the former part of the Dr's statement: and here let him be informed, that the existence of the jury act does not prove, that "the court which enacted it, did not consider the whole governmental system as immoral." On this view of the subject, the act says nothing. But it may be noticed here, that neither the judicatories of the church, nor those who defend them, and against whom the Dr. writes, have ever said that the United States' Constitution, is destitute of every moral attribute. Dr. McMaster frequently reasons as if they did so; of course such reasoning is irrelevant. It is reasoning against a view of the subject, that no man ever held! The judicatories of the church, and the Dr's opponents, have said, and do say, that it contains immoralities, therefore allegiance cannot be sworn to it by Covenanters. They have said that, "were every article which it contains, and every principle which it involves, perfectly just, except in a single instance, in which it was found to violate the law of God, christians cannot consistently adopt it."‡

Dr. McMaster has an uncommon dread of the historical part of the testimony. Not satisfied with having set it aside, he seems alarmed lest his readers should treat it with more respect than he has done, he provides for this by very sagely telling us, that "The historical notice of supposed or alleged

* Historical part of the testimony, p. 137.

† p. 135.

‡ p. 134.

immoralities in the system, refers to the opinions formed of it in 1789, rather than to those of 1806. A man must feel himself hard pushed, when he has recourse to such a subterfuge, as to refer the historical notice to another period, in defiance of the document itself. "The historical notice" makes no reference whatever to any period antecedent to 1789, nor to that period itself; but to that which is subsequent: and that too, in the most explicit terms, "Since the adoption of the constitution in the year 1789, the members of the Reformed Presbyterian Church have maintained a constant testimony against these evils."*

Truth will come out, notwithstanding every effort made to conceal it. Dr. McMaster is not ignorant, that what he argues against, is the law of the church, and was once uniformly acted upon, without any opposition; and knowing, that though he might perplex the inquirer, he was not likely to convince him of the contrary, he becomes apprehensive of trusting his cause to the arguments he has employed, and therefore boldly questions the right of the supreme judicatory to settle the question of civil relations. He says, "without discourtesy to the excellent men of the former period, we may be allowed to doubt their right, had they attempted the task, to settle for coming generations the complicated question of civil relations in the United States." This is plain speaking. We say nothing of its *propriety* and *courtesy*. We, who feel ourselves bound to submit to the laws and usages of a community, while we voluntarily remain in it, think differently. The Dr. is too late, in thinking that the church had no right to legislate on the subject of civil relations; he should have thought of this before he became a member of it. "It is a snare to the man who devoureth that which is holy, and after vows to make inquiry."†

"The Fathers of the church," says the Dr. "presumed not to pronounce the system immoral. The notice of it in their historical narrative comes the nearest to doing so; but they declared that narrative no term of communion, and this part of it they subsequently expunged from their records. We *were* as well aware as we can be, by any information of Dr. McMaster's that the narrative is no term of communion. But is it not true? Is it of no use to the church because it is not a term of communion? We hope that it will be distinctly kept in mind, that we have not, and do not make any reference to the narrative as a term of communion; and, we

* Historical part of the testimony, p. 137

† Prov. xx. 25.

wish it to be as distinctly borne in mind, that we receive the statements which it contains as authority, which no member of the church has a right to contravene. The facts which it relates, and the acts which it records, have received all the formal authority of law: their truth is acknowledged by a deed of the highest judicatory then existing. We will never allow ourselves to be influenced by the assertions of any individual, when they oppose the authorized history of the church. Nor, ought it be forgotten, that the part of the narrative, which declares the United States' constitution to be immoral, is that which relates the reasons for passing the jury act. "This constitution is, notwithstanding its numerous excellencies, in many instances inconsistent, oppressive, and impious."* It is true, Dr. McMaster says, that the part of the narrative which contains this, is *expunged*, but there is no *truth* in what he says. To expunge is to blot out; and make the thing recorded, in point of law, as if it had never been. Is it so, in the present instance? The narrative itself tells a different tale. In the edition of the testimony, published in 1824, the two acts which have been referred to, in the preceding remarks, are simply mentioned, as having been made in the session of 1806. But, the acts themselves, and the reasons for which they were passed, are omitted in the narrative and reserved to be published separately with other acts, in a statute book. Let the narrative speak for itself. "It is deemed proper, by Synod, in this edition, to omit the insertion of these acts, and reserve them together with the act abolishing slavery in the church, and other acts since passed, for publication in a statute book, hereafter to be prepared."†

The Dr. proceeds to the second enactment of the supreme judicatory, and at the same time takes an opportunity of making several irrelevant remarks. Such as, that in the interval since 1806, "The African slave trade has been abolished by an act of Congress," and that "important state decisions in favour of religion and morals had likewise taken place in the same period." In passing we only notice, that the African slave trade was not abolished in the interval referred to. Provision was made for its abolition in the constitution itself;

* Page 136. The Dr. thinks that this does not charge the U. S. constitution with immorality, it only "comes the nearest" to it!

† Edition of 1824, historical part, p. 125. If the Dr's remark about expunging, be worth any thing at all,—if the witness and jury acts be expunged by it, then also, the act abolishing slavery is *expunged*; "and other acts since passed" are expunged. The next thing we will hear from the Dr. *may be*, that the distinct standing of the Ref. Pres. Church ought also to be expunged.

and that provision limited the importation of slaves to the year 1808. In the interval nothing had taken place which in the least affected the principles on which the Presbytery legislated in 1806; slavery was not abolished, the importation of new slaves was only prohibited. As to the "important state decisions" of which the Dr. speaks, what have they to do with "the question at issue?" The evils of the state governments were not the grounds on which the Presbytery warned the members of the church against connexion with the government. The decisions of Presbytery would have been the same, had the state governments been unobjectionable. The objection is to the United States' Constitution. To this the citizen swears allegiance: he is a citizen of the United States, and not merely of a particular state. While, the evils complained of, in the testimony, as existing in the United States' Constitution continue, our objection to citizenship continues: and since 1806, when the two prohibitory acts were passed, not the slightest change has taken place in it. On this subject congress has no power.

The second enactment, on civil relations, to which the Dr. refers, is a report by a committee of Synod in 1812.* We feel no disposition to follow him, in the painful and heartless work of exposing his fallacies in this part of his "Inquiry." It is an incoherent string of sophisms wretchedly connected by bold assertions without proof. The weakness of this part

* The report of Committee is as follows,

"1. That this Synod in the name of its constituent members, and of the whole church which they represent, declare, that they approve of the Republican form of the Civil Order of the United States, and the several States; that they prefer this nation and its government, to any other nation and government; that they will support to the utmost the independence of the United States, and the several States, against all foreign aggressions, and domestic factions, and disclaim all allegiance to any foreign jurisdiction whatever.

"2. That believing it to be the duty of nations, formally to recognize the sovereignty of Messiah over all persons and things, and to construct their system of government upon principles, which publicly recognize the authority of that Divine Revelation which is contained in the Scriptures as the Supreme law, their disapprobation of the presently existing constitutions, is with them a matter of conscience, and wholly founded upon the omission of their duty.

"3. That emigrants from foreign nations, lest they should be esteemed alien enemies, be instructed to give to the proper organ of this government, the following assurance of their allegiance to this empire, each for himself when required.—I, A. B., do solemnly declare, in the name of the Most High God, the searcher of hearts, that I abjure all foreign allegiance whatsoever, and hold that these States, and the United States, are, and ought to be sovereign and independent of all other nations and governments, and that I will promote the best interests of this empire, maintain its independence, preserve its peace, and support the integrity of the Union, to the best of my power.

"4. That a delegation be appointed to proceed, so soon as they shall deem it eligible, to the seat of government, and confer with the government of these States upon this subject, with a view to obtain the protection of the laws, in maintaining their present testimony."

of the "Brief Inquiry" is only rendered ridiculous by the pompous and would-be logical manner in which its sophistries are expressed. It can satisfy no inquirer, unless he has made up his mind before he comes to the inquiry: and even then, if he is a man of sense and candour, the false reasonings which it contains will excite suspicions in his mind,—that all is not right. The object of the committee of Synod is obvious. And bears in its very face a contradiction to the principle plead for, by Dr. McMaster—that the assurance allowed by Synod to be given by the members of the church "is as ample in its engagements, and particular in its provisions, as that required by Congress." The Dr. will admit that "the constituent members of Synod" possessed some *small share* of understanding—and that they *understood* the simple language in which the report of their committee is expressed. And it is expected that he will admit too, that they had no intention to deceive the people under their charge. If then, Synod understood the full meaning of the report which they adopted, and had no intention of deceiving; is it possible that the *assurance*, or pledge which the report proposes giving to the "Empire" should embrace in it the acknowledgment of the constitution; when to avoid this acknowledgment, and at the same time enjoy part of the advantage of being citizens, was the object of the proposed pledge? If any man maintains that it does; he can do it, only, on the ground of impugning, either the common sense, or the honesty of the men who could pass such a resolution! The object, of the report we have said is obvious; Covenanters could not, without doing violence to their testimony, swear allegiance to the United States' Constitution, nor do any act which implied an acknowledgment of the immoralities which it contained; yet they were unwilling to be esteemed enemies and aliens in the land in which they lived; they were particularly so, at a time of great public excitement, when there were both danger and inconvenience connected with such a relation to the government. Reformed Presbyterians approve of some of the leading features of the constitution of the United States; but, the immoralities which it included held them back from allegiance to it. While they could not identify themselves with the constitution; they had no objection to give a pledge to the government, that they were not enemies; that they would seek the good of the country—and that they renounced allegiance to all foreign governments whatsoever, maintaining the Independence of the United States. All this might have been done without any recognition of the immoralities of the

constitution. And this is all that the report contemplated. It is exceedingly idle, to talk of this report being a law. It was designed as an offer to government on the part of the church, that her members might be admitted to the privileges of citizens without compromising their testimony. The project failed! and of course the report became a dead letter. It was not, and *could* not be acted upon.

It is rather an odd conclusion to which the Dr. comes respecting this report.—The Synod could not acknowledge the constitution because of its immoralities; they propose to offer a security to the government that they are not enemies, and are unwilling to be treated as such, therefore this security includes an acknowledgment of the constitution! This is the amount of the Dr's reasonings when stripped of their unnecessary appendages.*

Dr. McMaster makes the following declaration "so far as personal observation went, I never knew an accusation tabled against a church member, for acting as other citizens in the affairs of state." It would perhaps, be useful to know precisely what the doctor means by "personal observation." It might too not be uninteresting, to ascertain whether he will admit of knowing any thing unless he has seen or heard it with his own eyes, or ears. If he does, what matters it whether the accusation has come under his own "personal observation" or not; if he knows by testimony, that is knowledge of the case. If he does not, then farewell to testimony, although upon it, by far the greater part of our knowledge rests. And understanding the expression "personal

* There is a nice specimen of jesuitism in p. 13 of the "Brief Inquiry." It consists of remarks on the second article in the report, "disapprobation of the presently existing constitutions is with them a matter of conscience." This, the Dr. tells us, is not a "rejection." "It is a conscientious disapprobation, wholly founded upon an omission of duty." According to the Dr's view of the matter, there may be "a conscientious disapprobation" of a constitution, and yet no "dissent from the system." In the English language there are such phrases, as a tender conscience—a good conscience—a bad conscience—and even a seared conscience; but there is one still wanting, namely—a stretching conscience; one that will pull any way without paining its owner!

In conclusion the Dr. grows so logically inclined, that he states his argument in full syllogistic form. p: 14. "T_o no immoral government may an oath of allegiance be given; but an oath of allegiance may be given to this government, therefore this government is not immoral." We wonder much, if the Dr. meant this as a quiz on his readers; or if he were serious. Can it be that he knows so little of the nature of syllogisms as not to perceive the fallacy which is included in the middle term. The expression "oath of allegiance" is ambiguous, it is not used in the same sense, in the middle term, that it is in the first term. The syllogism if fairly stated, would stand thus—the Synod has not prohibited any allegiance to a moral constitution; but it has prohibited allegiance to the constitution of the United States; therefore the constitution of the United States is immoral.

observation" in the strictest sense, we have difficulty in giving credit to the declaration. Has Dr. McMaster forgotten the memorial laid before the Northern Presbytery, May 1831, from the congregation of Stirling? In their memorial, the writers stated the existence of a "*fama clamosa*," namely, that some members of the church, belonging to Dunesburgh and New-York congregations, had acted "as other citizens in the affairs of state." Of this the memorialists complained, as a violation of the law and usages of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Dr. McMaster was no idle spectator during the discussion that followed: he took an active part in the whole business. Did he meet the complaint, by maintaining as he does in the "Brief Inquiry" that the things complained of were not a violation of the law and usages of the church? He did not. He tried to rebut the charge, on the ground that there was no evidence for the *fama clamosa*, and did what he could to bully the elder from Stirling, on the score of the complaint being libellous. Was this not "personal observation" of a complaint being tabled?

Has Dr. McMaster forgotten the appeal which came before the Northern Presbytery, August 1831. In this case there was a regular libel. A member of the session of Coldenham had been tried on a charge of "acting as other citizens in the affairs of state." He denied the charge: it was proved against him, and he was adjudged to receive an admonition. Against this decision he protested, and appealed to Presbytery. Dr. McMaster was present when it came before the court, and took part in the discussion as far as it went. Did he attempt to justify the appellant on the ground that the things charged were not a violation of the law and usages of the church? He knows he did not. We well recollect the struggle made by one of the oldest members of Presbytery to have the judgment of Coldenham session reversed. Nor did he, any more than Dr. McMaster presume to say, that the conduct charged upon the appellant was not unlawful. On the contrary, he admitted that it was sinful and deserved censure. Absence, of satisfactory proof, was in his opinion the reason why the judgment of session should have been set aside. Had the Dr. no "personal observation" of "an accusation tabled" in this case?*

"The third enactment on the subject of civil relations was

* We mention these two cases of accusation, because they came under Dr. McMaster's own eye in presbytery. He alone can say, whether, they include what he calls "personal observation;" we might mention other cases which are well known, Such as those of Rygate, Newburgh and Pittsburgh.

in 1821:”* An act which left the question of civil relations precisely where it was; by this enactment, the question was embarrassed indeed, by a new decision, but it was one, that left it in substance and form, where it always had been. The church had never, at any time, prohibited such connexion with the government, as did not involve immorality. The acts of 1806; and the reasons given why they were passed proceed on this principle. The whole objection of covenanters to connexion with the government, rests on the immorality of the constitution; were this removed, their objection would become void. And, where an acknowledgment of the immorality is not demanded, nor tacitly implied, there never has been any prohibition. The inference which Dr. McMaster draws from this enactment, is altogether gratuitous. He says, “does not this evidently imply, that the system at large is moral, and, except in some particular cases in which immorality may occur, connexion with the laws, officers, and order of the state, may be formed and maintained in all its extent.” Connexion in all its extent requires a recognition of the constitution; and of this the church has said, that, “notwithstanding its numerous excellencies it is in many instances inconsistent, oppressive, and impious.” With immorality she can hold no communion.

The enactment of 1821, leaves then, the question of civil relations on the original ground, which prohibits serving “in any office which implies an approbation of the constitution, or which is placed under the direction of an immoral law” or voting “at elections for legislators and officers who must be qualified to act by an oath of allegiance to this immoral system.”

The fourth judicative deed respecting civil relations, is that of 1823.† Be it remembered, that this act, relates only to a part, and a very small part too, of “the question at issue,” namely, that of serving on juries. On the general question, of connexion with the government, it says nothing. And, as far as sitting on juries is concerned, which is the only thing to which the act relates, it leaves the question where it was originally—That there can be no communion with

* This act was made in consequence of information sought on the subject by a member of the church from Synod, and is, “That no connexion with the laws, officers, or the order of the State, was prohibited by the church, except that which truly involved immorality.”

† This act is expressed in the following terms—“On the subject of juries the committee recommend, that the inferior judicatories of this church be directed to determine, on a due consideration of the practice of the several courts of jurisprudence, whether the juror comes under the operation of an immoral law, in the several courts in their own bounds, and give instruction to their people according to the special state of the case.”

immorality. If a case could occur, where a covenanter could sit on a jury, without such communion, this act allows it; the church has always allowed it; and no man would object to it. But, we are convinced, that such a case cannot occur; because "the juror voluntarily places himself upon oath, under the direction of a law which is immoral." Subsequently to the passing of the act of 1823, it was ascertained that its meaning and its principles were misunderstood. Some imagined that it cancelled the former statutes and usages of the church on this subject. This gave occasion to bring the subject before synod in 1825. The decision of synod at this time explained the act of 1823, as we have done it in the preceding observations.*

The resolution of 1831, respecting "free discussion" might as well have been left out, had Dr. McMaster thought proper. Every one who was present, and understood the business, knows how to appreciate this famous resolution.†

One who has not narrowly examined the question of civil relations; and who is not acquainted with the movements of individuals respecting it, may be surprised at so many acts and resolutions on the subject. It is easily explained. Now it is as well to speak plainly, that there may be a thorough understanding; the time has passed for concealment. When a church court was organized by covenanters in the United States, the principles of their testimony were applied to the civil institutions of the land; and the duty of members relative to these was distinctly understood and applied. While Covenanters valued what was good in these institutions,—the provision which they made for the rights of men, (as far as it went) they lamented over the neglect which distinguished them, as it respects the honour of the Redeemer. Conscientious disapprobation and dissent was evidently the course of duty; this they followed. They preferred "suffering to sin." For men to deny themselves civil and political privileges, rather than betray truth, requires a large portion of honesty, of principle and self-denial: such a portion indeed, as is seldom found in the world. This, however, was required of Cove-

* The act of 1825 is, "that this Synod never understood any act of theirs, relative to their members sitting on juries, as contravening the old *common law* of the church on that subject." The old *common law*, is that which was embodied into the act of 1806, and is now, the *statute* as well as *common law* of the church.

† The "free discussion" resolution was part of the *cut and dry* measures, of 1831, brought into Synod by a party and carried by a kind of stolen march. For, sure, the Covenanters, *good and true*, of that Synod, and we hope it will yet be seen they were a majority of the court, never dreamed that when they assented to the proposal of "free discussion" that they were admitting that the question of civil relations was *unsettled*: or, that by it, they were making any new enactment on the subject.

nanters. For a time, there was no difficulty; but, as the church increased in numbers, and her members grew in wealth, the sacrifice became more apparent; and to some it became burdensome. Some, who had come from other denominations, and some who had been brought up in the Church, not having counted the cost before they were admitted to her fellowship, began to look around them, if there were no way of enjoying civil and political privileges without abandoning the Covenanters. This led to attempts, on the part of individuals, to accommodate the testimony to their own wishes, and the wishes of others who were similarly inclined. In the meantime some church members took the liberty of *quietly* enjoying the much *wished-for* privileges. To these discipline was not applied, as it ought to have been; in some cases it was winked at by ministers and elders. Hence, the variety of acts on the subject. Those who wished, to have the testimony of the church accommodated to their lax views, of course did not scruple to urge upon her such accommodation: those who were afraid of backsliding; on the other hand urged the necessity of holding by the present usages of the church. Thus, the subject was frequently brought before Presbytery and Synod. At first it was only the privilege of being jurors that was plead for, and this too, let it be recollected, on the ground of cases occurring where the juror did not act under an immoral law. Emboldened by perseverance, some went the lengths of pleading for a recognition of the Constitution, and participation of all civil and political privileges. Where such men will stop, it is hard to tell! One thing is certain; two years ago not a man of them would have ventured to avow the doctrines of the "Brief Inquiry," in Presbytery or Synod. Dr. McMaster had the fairest opportunity of doing so, in the northern Presbytery, again and again. But he shrunk from the undertaking. He ventured not to plead for communion with the civil institutions of the land as christian in their character.

Perhaps Sessions and Presbyteries were culpable, in not promptly applying the discipline of the church, before the evil became so great. But from the sketch which has now been given, the reader will observe that it crept in gradually, and almost imperceptibly. Judicatories were forbearing; their forbearance was abused. Such was the state of things in the church, when the Synod met in 1831, and from that time till the present, newlightism has been, we do not say growing, but developing itself more boldly.*

* We are unwilling to use the term newlightism, or any of its cognates, but necessity is laid upon us; we cannot without circumlocution, express our meaning otherwise.

Before we proceed further, we advert to some things which Dr. McMaster says respecting some of those who differ from him in their views. He makes a *mean* and *invidious* attempt to discredit the opinions of his opponents by representing some of them, as "neither in the ministry, the country, nor the church," in the year 1806, when the juror's act was passed. This may be true, but what has it to do with the business in hand? Is truth any thing the worse of being told by a man who may not have been "in the ministry, the country, or the church" in the year 1806? What if he may not have been in the world at that period, will truth become less so, because he speaks it? This *kind of argument* is not new with our author. We have met with it before in various shapes, and some of his junior brethren have felt it in church courts. It betokens either a bad cause, or a bad temper; perhaps both. We come to the Dr's third question.

"Against what should this church at present guard?" One of the things to be guarded against is "a detestable neutrality." Few who know Dr. McMaster will blame him with neutrality on the subject of civil relations. He has done valiantly as a partizan, and is entitled, at least, to the honour of "a mural crown." In the illustration of his advice, the Dr. says, "watch too, against the inroads upon a sound and comprehensive faith, that may be made, by the little stratagems which may be found to have answered a purpose, in the conflicts of party polemics. No less disastrous would be the adoption of rules of administration, deduced from scraps of history, ill understood, and worse told, torn from their proper connexion, and at best referring to times, circumstances, and events, very different from our own." Dr. McMaster dared not directly charge his opponents with having used "little stratagems" in defending the testimony of the church, against himself and his associates; but this is evidently what he wishes his readers to understand. We repel the insinuation, as a calumny. We defy him to mention a single "little stratagem" employed by those who abide by the testimony in the whole controversy, as far as it has been publicly carried on. Private things we do not profess to know. Nor do we know that any friend of the testimony has misapplied history in the manner referred to by the Dr. It is an unjust and unmanly insinuation. If such abuse has been made of history, why has he not detailed it, and exposed the ignorance and want of candour in those who could be guilty of it? This the Dr. could not, because nothing of the kind has been done; but it was an easy matter, for want of an argument to make an insinuation. Those who support

the testimony of the church and plead for the application of its principles, are some of them as well acquainted with history as Dr. McMaster, with all his pretensions, and none of them need any such weapons. They stand on the side of truth, and can easily afford to spare the ill-used and caricatured "scraps of history" to the advocates of newlightism. It would have been only decorous in Dr. McMaster to have said nothing about "scraps of history," all things considered. It ill becomes a man to talk of scraps of history, who deals in wholesale assertion! It ill becomes a man to talk of scraps of history whose reference to history has been almost uniformly a misrepresentation! It ill becomes a man to talk of scraps of history, who can quote laws from the statute book, which are not there, and never had a being!

We are to guard "against the dangerous maxim of the infidel, that affairs of state are too profane to be consistently touched by the christian's hand." He adds, "It is indeed an odd conjunction of practical sentiment avowed by both christians and infidels in our day." It would indeed be an odd conjunction, if such a conjunction there were! Tell us, Dr. what christian holds this "practical sentiment." Covenanters do not hold it; they know the Bible better, and they have more common sense than to hold any such sentiment. The most rigid application of their testimony requires it not.

"Confound not things that are distinct." So Dr. McMaster advises, and to illustrate the danger of neglecting his advice, he adds, "Hence the inferences, that civil government must therefore be founded in grace," &c. Who inferred from either, one thing or other, that civil government must be founded in grace? Assuredly, none of those against whom the Dr. is writing, ever did so. They have uniformly, when speaking on this subject, said that civil government was founded in the will of God, the Creator, but that like every thing else in the universe, it was subjected to the authority of the Mediator.

We offer the Dr. our advice in return for his *well meant* cautions—"Do not bear false witness against thy neighbour." The Dr. will find this, if he follows it, a wholesome advice; and should he ever write another letter on civil relations, it may save him the trouble of writing a great many things, which do no credit to the "Brief Inquiry."

The last of the Dr's queries is, "what means should be employed to insure harmony, mutual good will, and efficient co-operation in promoting the cause of God?"

The evils of which the Dr. complains, and the removal of which we presume he considers necessary to the restoration

of harmony, have not originated with those against whom he argues in the "Brief Inquiry." They have had their origin with the party whose views the Dr. defends.* By such, has the peace of the church been disturbed, by views and applications of her principles, of which her testimony knows nothing. By such, the law of christian charity has been rendered void; and some of the most respectable and pious members of the church been treated, as if they were the off-scourings of the earth. While these things are done, it is in vain to cant about "Brethren separated." The law of kindness is a small matter, when it is found only on the lip, and utterly disregarded in practice. "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." If Dr. McMaster and his friends really wish to insure harmony and good will, let them speak and act as they did in their earlier and better days. Let the same tone of sentiment distinguish them in the pulpit, and in church courts, that distinguishes "The Duty of Nations" and "The Sons of Oil." This will restore harmony and good will. But do not talk of these, while important truths are trampled upon, and practically given up. If Dr. McMaster thinks, that any of his Brethren, either "misrepresent," or "misunderstand" him, it is in his power to expose the misrepresentation, or correct the misapprehension, without entering into any "captious or angry conflict." If "self-respect" does not keep him from writing such things as the "Brief Inquiry," it ought not to prevent him from exposing misrepresentation or mistake in any brother. Till he does so, we will be excused for believing, that there is neither misrepresentation nor misunderstanding, respecting what has been said of Dr. McMaster's views and opinions on civil relations.

* Who were they that refused baptism to a respectable member of the Church, for his child, for no other reason than that he had not partaken of the previous communion—and that his reasons were known to be scruples relating to the explanation of terms of communion? Who were they, that drove *their* Brethren from their prayer meetings—and would not suffer them to meet in the same houses with them? Who were they, that excommunicated from the membership of the church more than a hundred persons, men and women, because they obeyed the authority of synod, and that too without ever citing them to trial, or even telling them that they were charged with what was improper? Those who are acquainted with recent transactions, know that these are only a specimen of the questions, that might be asked on the subject of brotherly love!