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THE POSITION OF OUR NEW LIGHT BRETHREN BY ONE OF THEMSELVES.

SOMETIMES we meet with plain and important truth where we did not expect it. A change of circumstances has a wonderful effect in changing the views of men, who, without any fixed principles, are ever on the lookout for the readiest means of accomplishing some long pursued selfish object. With them dissimulation will be unscrupulously employed so long as it will answer the end, and when the plain truth offers itself as likely to suit the design, plain truth will be spoken, even though at the expense of consistency, and at the risk of having the outrages inflicted on her on former occasions exposed.

In the *United Presbyterian* of July 20, there is a communication the reading of which suggested the above reflections to our mind. Though without a signature, it bears unequivocal marks of being the production of one of our New Light brethren not a great distance from Pittsburgh. In it the doings of the late General Synod receive a full share of notice. It is in the form of a reply to one of his brethren, Rev. John M'Millan, who had taken him to account for some things that he had formerly written respecting the Synod. The subject of union with the United Presbyterian Church, and the remarks on it in Synod are discussed with a good deal of freedom, and the discussion evinces anything but harmony of views between these brethren. The writer of the article is earnest for the union; Mr. M'M. is earnest against it. The argument of the anti-union men, that to go into the union would break up their relations with the Reformed Presbyterian Church, is disposed of in this wise:

“Who, acquainted with the history of our Synod, can believe that the union with the U. P. Church would sever our connection with the Reformed Presbyterian family of the world? With it, as a Synod, since the disruption in 1833, we have had little connection. Our relations with Scotch Covenanters are of no practical value. Our Synodical correspondence has been, by the Scotch brethren, for years suspended, while with the Synod of the Reformed

together with Christ." God loved his people before they fell in Adam, and blessed them with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it."

Jesus Christ—the Rock of Ages—is a hiding place from the wind: the wind of chilling conviction. When God the Holy Spirit convinces a man of sin, and shows him his real state by nature, in the sight of God, what cutting work it is. He then views sin in a very different light to what he did before; instead of trifling with it, he feels it to be an intolerable burden. O, what a mighty revolution takes place in the soul! His *supposed* righteousness he now seeth to be *filthy rags*; and his heart's language is, "What must I do to be saved?" Yet, alas, how little do we hear of this in our day from the fashionable pulpits of Canada, &c. Orations on every subject, except Jesus Christ, and him crucified; and instead of using the sweet strains of the "man according to God's own heart," hymns and paraphrases, in which error predominates, hath usurped their place. We hear much of union, Sir, in our day; but is not union, in almost every case, nothing but a *compromise* of truth? May the Lord heal our backsliding.

O, may a witnessing Church rally round the banner of truth, and let them not be afraid, though they be few and despised, for God will yet arise and have mercy on Zion.

When storms of persecution or times of defection arise, when the love of many for *unpopular* truth grows cold, how precious and suitable is it then for witnesses to have Jesus as a hiding place; when faith seems to be clean gone, and unbelief is rampant, when the enemy is coming in like a flood, and temptations of the severest kind abound, what a harbor of refuge is Jesus in his *matchless love*, in his *peace-procuring* and *peace-speaking* blood; in his *everlasting salvation*; in his *justifying righteousness*; in his *all-prevailing intercession*: yea, in all that he is, and has been for his people.

A CALEDONIAN.

ABBOTSFORD, C. W., 6th June, 1859.

EDITORIAL NOTICE CONSIDERED.

WE publish the following communication from Mr. Steele as an act of justice to him, inasmuch as he appears to think his discourse was unfairly treated by our remarks in noticing it. We confess our inability to understand Mr. S's position, and the more he attempts to define it, the more to us he mystifies it. As we design not to have any controversy with him on the subject, we cheerfully give him the *last* word.

THE editor of the *Reformed Presbyterian*, vol. v., No. 6, p. 196, in noticing the "Two Witnesses," "regrets to say something that might mislead the inquirer for the testimony of Christ" is discoverable in said pamphlet. Should this be so, no one ought to regret it more than the writer. In the editorial notice, I am made to say—"that the history of the church should be made an article of her creed." The reader, I believe, will search in vain for any-

thing contained in the essay of such equivocal import. The distinction between "saving faith and a faith that is not saving," I have not made. I have distinguished between the *grounds* of saving faith and *terms* of communion in the visible church. There is a distinction, and a difference too, between saving faith and a faith that is not saving, but it had nothing to do with the subject of which I was treating. Let us shun irrelevant matter, and avoid the use of equivocal terms, if we desire to be understood.

The editor "does not admit that a faith that is not saving is that with which we believe that the standards (subordinate standards, of course,) are founded on the word of God." Well, then, as "saving faith" is the only alternative, this faith with *saving* faith, we must believe the *subordinate* standards to be founded on the word of God. Have I apprehended the language of the editor aright? or have I misrepresented his idea? I think not. Now this is the position groundlessly imputed to me, a position which I have controverted, and which I continue to reject, as derogatory to the supreme authority of God's word, and fraught with baleful consequences to the church of Christ?

The term *faith* sometimes means the *principles* of the Christian's profession—as "earnestly contend for the faith." Sometimes *faith* signifies a saving grace seated in the Christian's heart—as "like precious faith." The latter is the proper sense of the word: the former is figurative and also scriptural, because of the relation or connection between them. Hence the term *faith* has come by ecclesiastical usage to signify the *bond* of fellowship, or *terms* of communion in the church of God. The propriety, indeed I may say the *necessity* of subordinate standards both of faith and practice in the visible church, arise from the corruption of our nature. This is the true cause why men differ so widely in their conceptions of God's mind and will speaking to us in the Scriptures. And "how can two walk together unless they be agreed?" And if two shall agree, or ten thousand shall agree, in their joint apprehension of the word of God, does that *agreement* amount to *infallible truth*? Do the *bond* and *symbol* of unity constitute divine testimony—challenge divine or saving faith? I understand the editor to affirm. I deny. No—God only can of right challenge implicit faith or obedience. This is not due to synods, councils or any other assembly of sinful and fallible men. The subordinate standards, or which is the same thing in other words, the terms of communion in the visible church, are all conclusions drawn from the word of God—and since by her divine constitution she is to continue till the end of time, preserving her covenanted identity, and giving point and publicity to her doctrine and order, until she shall have completed and finished her testimony; these doctrines and this order, so deduced from the Bible, she must receive as *historical* doctrines and order, besides being satisfied that they were in accordance with the "pattern shown in the mount." So, then, the church of Christ is to adhere to her subordinate standards, not as *formally divine* or *infallible*, but as she

has always expressed herself—as “in nothing contrary to the Holy Scriptures.”

I have never furnished my fellow mortals with ground, or the shadow of ground to say, that I put “human history on a footing of equality with the Bible, or make history an article of the church’s creed;” but a heresy akin to this it has been my lot to oppose, and I trust through divine grace to be enabled to oppose while in the church militant; that the doctrinal conclusions deduced from the word of God by fallible men are *infallible*; and that the faith with which we believe these doctrines to be founded on the word of God is *saving* faith!

An approbation (not *saving* faith) of the faithful contendings of the martyrs of Jesus, is justly required as a condition of membership in the Reformed Presbyterian church. But it would be equally irrational and tyrannical to require an approbation of contendings, without defining and specifying which are faithful and which are unfaithful; and more irrational, if possible, to suppose that these contendings can be known otherwise than by history! History, history alone, *uninspired* history, can furnish the facts in our covenanted father’s contendings in the British Isles, or in the United States, by which we can possibly judge whether they were faithful contendings or not. This history the church must transmit to her children, or abide the displeasure of Zion’s King and Lawgiver. See Ps. 78:5, &c.

If the editor of the *Reformed Presbyterian* will exhibit me as making “thrusts” at any object, it is surely well that I am not chargeable with aiming at anything *vulnerable*! My analysis of the “Preface to Reformation Principles Exhibited,” was intended to show that the book which bears this name was not a consistent or full exhibition of our covenanted testimony—the testimony of Jesus; and besides, that those who framed the document *never intended* that the “historical view” should be considered by the reader as a part of the church’s testimony, but simply as a part of the *PLAN* upon which they proposed to exhibit their *principles* to the world. The *practice* of each member and of the whole body was left out of the *Testimony*, and inserted in the “historical part of the author’s *plan*.” The “argumentative part of the plan” has never yet been framed!

As to my “never finding fault with that work, ‘Reformation Principles,’ while in the Synod,” and insinuations relative to “a good spirit, candor, consistency,” &c., I only say, these things are not *arguments*; and avoiding *personalities*, I merely invoke the memory and pose the consciences of the *senior* ministry, relative to efforts made in 1834 to have *defects* supplied in our *Terms* and *Testimony*; in 1836 to give “more point and publicity to our Testimony;” in 1838, to “restore the term *Testimony* to its former ecclesiastical use;” to the “preamble and resolutions” of 1840, which providentially gained publicity through Synod’s clerk, and therefore continue to speak for themselves to all “who have ears to hear.”

Whether in leaving the communion of the Synod I thereby "withdrew from the church," contains a problem, or suggests a question which every reader will readily determine for himself. And moreover, believing from long experience and extensive observation, that *anonymous* articles and *fictitious* signatures have often been prejudicial to truth, and injurious to Christian and ministerial character, I do not hesitate to subjoin to the foregoing article my genuine signature.

DAVID STEELE.

SPARTA, Illinois.

MISSIONARY CORRESPONDENCE.

A TOUR IN PALESTINE.

BEIRUT, January 11th, 1859.

MY DEAR BRETHREN—Having finished our second and last Sabbath in the Holy City—a day not quickly to be forgotten—we were anxious on Monday morning, as we purposed during the week to see Bethlehem and Hebron before going down to Jaffa, to make the best possible improvement of our time, in visiting such remaining places of interest as we had not been able previously to do; among which stood prominent the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Tombs of the Kings, &c. But finding the former not opened, as we expected, at an hour seasonable for all the party to call in the forenoon, and not having made arrangements for visiting the latter places until on the following day, we concluded to devote the early part of Monday to calling on the English and Prussian Consuls—a duty which some of us felt desirous to perform, and reserve our anticipated visit to the church until the after part of the day. The afternoon soon came; and setting out *en masse*, to the number of ten or twelve, we reached, about three, P. M., the far-famed Church of the Holy Sepulchre, an ancient and time-worn looking edifice, whose entrance, with shame and humiliation be it spoken to the Christian name, we found guarded by a Moslem, whose proud and sullen bearing afforded the strongest evidence to the stranger of the hearty contempt he entertained, both for the worship and the worshipers within, stationed there by the civil authorities, who found it necessary some years ago to take the control of it into their own hands, to prevent the members of the various factions who worship within its walls, from openly assaulting one another; who, notwithstanding their reverence for the sacred spot, have been unable, in former years, to mingle their tears over the so-called tomb of Jesus, without staining the sepulchral marble with fraternal blood.

This remarkable building, as is well known, takes its original celebrity from the supposed sepulchre of our Saviour, which it incloses, located in its centre, directly beneath its shattered dome, which, together with the *true* cross upon which our Lord was crucified, (according to tradition,) were discovered in the year 336 by the Emperor Constantine the Great, under whose imperial and benevolent auspices a church was erected over the spot, to perpetuate the memory of the joyous event, and command the veneration of an ignorant populace, who, believing the discovery, as was reported to have been, by the immediate direction of Heaven; of which the priesthood, perceiving the readiness with which the imposition was received, took advantage, deeming it an auspicious moment to favor the accomplishment of their designs, and set themselves newly to work to add fresh interest by their inventive genius to the place already worshiped by credulous thousands, by locating with marvelous accuracy incidents and places, until every circumstance attending the crucifixion is