G. P. Blue
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Declaration and Address

THOMAS CAMPBELL

CENTENNIAL EDITION

Declaration and Address

Thomas Campbell



In the United States, Canada, England, Australasia, and the various mission fields there are in 1908 a million and a third persons organized into independent churches of Christ pursuant, in the main, to the call of this address. Their missionary offerings last year amounted to over a million dollars. Five thousand preachers are in active service and a thousand young men are in schools and colleges preparing for the ministry. A four years' Centennial Campaign for betterment in all phases of individual, local and general Christian life and service is being waged. It will culminate in a great convention at Pittsburgh in 1909.

Though Barton W. Stone and others had taken the same posi-

DECLARATION

AND

ADDRESS

OF THE

CHRISTIAN ASSOCIA**TION**

AT a meeting held at Buffaloe, August 17, 1809, consisting of persons of different religious denominations; most of them in an unsettled state as to a fixed gospel ministry; it was unanimously agreed, upon the considerations, and for the purposes herein after declared, to form themselves into a religious association, designated as above—which they accordingly did, and appointed twenty-one of their number to meet and confer together; and, with the assistance of Mr. Thomas Campbell, minister of the gospel, to determine upon the proper means to carry into effect the important ends of their association: the result of which

DECLARATION, &c.

FROM the series of events which have taken place in the churches for many years past, especially in this western country, as well as from what we know in general of the present state of things in the christian world; we are persuaded that it is high time for us not only to think, but also to act, for ourselves; to see with our own eyes, and to take all our measures directly and immediately from the Divine Standard: to this alone we feel ourselves divinely bound to be conformed; as by this alone we must be judged. We are also persuaded that as no man can be *judged* for his brother, so no man can *judge* for his brother: but that every man must be allowed to judge for himself, as every man must [illegible]

tions of men, as of any authority, or as having any place in the church of God, we might forever cease from farther contentions about such things; returning to, and holding fast by the original standard; taking the divine word alone for our rule; The Holy Spirit for our teacher and guide, to lead us into all truth; and Christ alone as exhibited in the word, for our salvation that, by so doing, we may be at peace among ourselves, follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.—Impressed with these sentiments, we have resolved as follows:

I. That we form ourselves into a religious association under the denomination of the Christian Association of Washington—for the sole purpose of promoting simple evangelical christianity, free from all mixture of human opinions and inventions of men.

II. That each member, according to ability, cheerfully [redacted]

rer, be chosen annually to superintend the interests, and transact the business, of the society. And that said committee be invested with full powers to act and do, in the name and behalf of their constituents, whatever the society had previously determined, for the purpose of carrying into effect the entire object of its institution—and that in case of any emergency, unprovided for in the existing determinations of the society, said committee be empowered to call a *pro re nota* meeting for that purpose.

VII. That this society meet at least twice a year, viz. On the first Thursday of May and of November, and that the collectors appointed to receive the half-yearly quotas of the promised subscriptions, be in readiness, at or before each meeting, to make their returns to the treasurer, that he may be able to report upon the state of the funds. The next meeting to be held at Washington on the first Thursday of November next.

VIII. That each meeting of the society be opened with a sermon, the constitution and address read, and a collection lifted for the benefit of the society—and that all communications of a public nature be laid before the society at its half-yearly meetings.

IX. That this society, relying upon the all-sufficiency of the Church's Head; and, through His grace, looking with an eye of confidence to the generous liberality of the sincere friends of genuine christianity; holds itself engaged to afford a competent support to such ministers, as the Lord may graciously dispose to assist, at the request, and by invitation, of the society, in promoting a pure evangelical reformation, by the simple preaching of the everlasting gospel, and the administration of its ordinances in opposition to all

ADDRESS, &c.

To all that love our Lord Jesus Christ, in sincerity, throughout all the Churches, the following Address is most respectfully submitted.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,

THAT it is the grand design and native tendency, of our holy religion, to reconcile and unite man to God, and to each other, in truth and love, to the glory of God, and their own present and eternal good, will not, we presume, be denied, by any of the genuine subjects of christianity. The nativity of its Divine Author was announced from heaven, by an host of angels, with high acclamations

christianity—from under the direct influence of the anti-christian hierarchy—and at the same time, from any formal connexion with the devoted nations, that have given their strength and power unto the beast; in which, of course, no adequate reformation can be accomplished, until the word of God is fulfilled, and the vials of his wrath poured out upon them. Happy exemption, indeed, from being the object of such awful judgments. Still more happy will it be for us, if we duly esteem and improve those great advantages, for the high and valuable ends, for which they are manifestly given; —and sure where much is given, much also will be required. Can the Lord expect, or require, any thing less, from a people in such unhampered circumstances—from a people so liberally furnished with all means and mercies, than a thorough reformation, in all things civil and religious, according to his word? Why should we suppose it? And would not such an improvement of our precious privileges, be equally conducive to the glory of God, and our own present and everlasting good? The auspicious phenomena of the times, furnish collateral arguments of a very encouraging nature, that our dutiful and pious endeavours shall not be in vain in the Lord. Is it not the day of the Lord's vengeance upon the anti-christian world; the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion? Surely then the time to favor her is come; even the set time. And is it not said that Zion shall be built in troublous times? Have not greater efforts been made, and more done, for the promulgation of the gospel among the nations, since the commencement of the French revolution than had been for many centuries, prior to that event? And have not the churches both in Europe and America, since that period, discovered a more than usual concern for the removal of contentions, for the healing of divisions, for the restoration of a christian and brotherly intercourse one with another, and for the promotion of each others spiritual good; as the printed documents, upon those subjects, amply testify? Should *we* not, then, be excited, by these considerations, to concur with all our might, to help forward this good work; that what yet remains to be done, may be fully accomplished. And what! Tho' the well meant endeavours after union, have not, in some instances, entirely succeeded to this wish of all parties, should this dissuade us from the attempt. Indeed, should christians cease to contend earnestly for the sacred articles of faith and duty once delivered to the saints, on account of the opposition, and scanty success, which, in many instances attend their faithful and honest endeavours; the divine cause of truth and righteousness might have, long ago, been relinquished. And is there any thing more formidable in the Goliah schism, than in many other evils which christians have to combat? Or, has the Captain of Salvation sounded a desist from pursuing, or proclaimed a truce with, this deadly enemy, that is sheathing it's sword in the very bowels of his church, rending and mangling his mystical body into pieces. Has he said to his servants, let it alone? If not, where is the warrant for a cessation of endeavours to have

it removed? On the otner hand, are we not the better instructed by sage experience, how to proceed in this business; having before our eyes the inadvertencies, and mistakes of others, which have hitherto, in many instances, prevented the desired success? Thus taught by experience, and happily furnished with the accumulated

by using all due means in our power to promote it; and also that we have sufficient reason to rest assured that our humble and well-meant endeavours, shall not be in vain in the Lord.

The cause that we advocate is not our own peculiar, nor the cause of any party, considered as such; it is a common cause, the cause of Christ and our brethren of all denominations. All that we presume, then, is to do, what we humbly conceive to be *our* duty, in connexion with our brethren; to each of whom it equally belongs, as to us, to exert themselves for this blessed purpose. And as we have no just reason to doubt the concurrence of our brethren, to accomplish an object so desirable in itself, and fraught with such happy consequences, so neither can we look forward to that happy event, which will forever put an end to our hapless divisions, and restore to the church its primitive unity, purity and prosperity; but, in the pleasing prospect of their hearty and dutiful concurrence.

Dearly beloved brethren, why should *we* deem it a thing incredible that the church of Christ, in this highly favored country, should resume that original unity, peace and purity, which belongs to its constitution, and constitutes its glory? Or, is there any thing

nal constitutional unity of the christian church; and in this happy unity, enjoy full communion with all our brethren, in peace and charity. The like dutiful condescension we candidly expect of all that are seriously impressed with a sense of the duty they owe to God, to each other, and to their perishing fellow-brethren of mankind. To this we call, we invite, our brethren, of all denominations, by all the sacred motives which we have avouched as the

thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward, but lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand." Let the ministers of Jesus but embrace this exhortation, put their hand to the work and encourage the people to go forward upon the firm ground of obvious truth, to unite in the bonds of an entire christian unity; and who will venture to say, that it would not soon be accomplished? "Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling block out of the way of my people," saith your God. To you, therefore, it peculiarly belongs, as the professed and acknowledged leaders of the people, to go before them in this good work—to remove human opinions and the inventions of men out of the way; by carefully separating this chaff, from the pure wheat of primary and authentic revelation;—casting out that assumed authority, that enacting and decreeing power, by which those things have been imposed and established. To the ministerial department then do we look with anxiety. Ministers of Jesus, we can neither be ignorant of, nor unaffected with the divisions and corruptions of his church. His dying commands, his last and ardent prayers for, the visible unity of his professing people, will not suffer you to be indifferent in this matter. You will not, you cannot, therefore, be silent, upon a subject of such vast importance to his personal glory and the happiness of his people—consistently you cannot; for silence gives consent. You will rather lift up your voice like a trumpet to expose the heinous nature, and dreadful consequences of those unnatural and anti-christian divisions, which have so rent and ruined the church of God. Thus, in justice to your station and character, honored of the Lord, would we hopefully anticipate your zealous and faithful efforts to heal the breaches of Zion; that God's dear children might dwell together in unity and love—But if otherwise—* * * * we forebear to utter it. See Mal. 2, 1—10.

Oh! that ministers and people would but consider, that there are no divisions in the grave; nor in that world which lies beyond it: there our divisions must come to an end! we must all unite there!—Would to God, we could find in our hearts to put an end to our short-lived divisions here; that so we might leave a blessing behind us; even a happy and united church. What gratification, what utility, in the meantime, can our divisions afford either to ministers or people? Should they be perpetuated, 'till the day of judgment would they convert one sinner from the error of his ways, or save a soul from death? Have they any tendency to hide the multitude of sins that are so dishonorable to God, and hurtful to his people? Do they not rather irritate and produce them? How innumerable and highly aggravated are the sins they have produced, and are at this day, producing, both amongst professors and profane. We entreat, we beseach you then, dear brethren, by all those considerations, to concur in this blessed and dutiful attempt—What is the work of all, must be done by all. Such was the work of the tabernacle in the wilderness. Such is the work to which you are called; not by the authority of man; but by Jesus Christ and God the

Father, who raised him from the dead. By this authority are you called to raise up the tabernacle of David, that is fallen down

thing can be farther from our intention. They are merely designed for opening up the way, that we may come fairly and firmly to original grounds upon clear and certain premises: and take up things just as the Apostles left them.—That thus disentangled from the accruing embarrassments of intervening ages, we may stand with evidence upon the same ground on which the church stood at the beginning—Having said so much to solicit attention and prevent mistake, we submit as follows:

PROP. I. THAT the church of Christ upon earth is essentially

man authority power to impose new commands or ordinances upon the church, which our Lord Jesus Christ has not enjoined. Nothing ought to be received into the faith or worship of the church; or be made a term of communion amongst christians, that is not as old as the New Testament.

6. That although inferences and deductions from scripture premises, when fairly inferred, may be truly called the doctrine of God's holy word: yet are they not formally binding upon the consciences of christians farther than they perceive the connection, and evidently see that they are so; for their faith must not stand in the wisdom of men; but in the power and veracity of God—therefore no such deduction can be made terms of communion, but do properly belong to the after and progressive edification of the church. Hence it is evident that no such deductions or inferential truths ought to have any place in the churchs's confession.

7. That although doctrinal exhibitions of the great system of divine truths, and defensive testimonies in opposition to prevailing errors, be highly expedient; and the more full and explicit they be, for those purposes, the better; yet as these must be in a great measure the effect of human reasoning, and of course must contain many inferential truths, they ought not to be made terms of christian communion: unless we suppose, what is contrary to fact, that none have a right to the communion of the church, but such as possess a very clear and decisive judgment; or are come to a very high degree of doctrinal information; whereas the church from the beginning did, and ever will, consist of little children and young men, as well as fathers.

8. That as it is not necessary that persons should have a particular knowledge or distinct apprehension of all divinely revealed truths in order to entitle them to a place in the church; neither should they, for this purpose, be required to make a profession more extensive than their knowledge: but that on the contrary their having a due measure of scriptural self-knowledge respecting their lost and perishing condition by nature and practice; and of the way of salvation thro' Jesus Christ, accompanied with a profession of their faith in, and obedience to him, in all things according to his word, is all that is absolutely necessary to qualify them for admission into his church.

9. That all that are enabled, thro' grace, to make such a profession, and to manifest the reality of it in their tempers and conduct, should consider each other as the precious saints of God, should love each other as brethren, children of the same family and father, temples of the same spirit, members of the same body, subjects of the same grace, objects of the same divine love, bought with the same price, and joint heirs of the same inheritance. Whom God hath thus joined together no man should dare to put asunder

way for a permanent scriptural unity amongst christians, by calling up to their consideration fundamental truths, directing their attention to first principles, clearing the way before them by removing the stumbling blocks—the rubbish of ages which has been thrown upon it, and fencing it on each side, that in advancing towards the desired object, they may not miss the way through mistake, or inadvertency, by turning aside to the right hand or to the left—is, at least, the sincere intention of the above propositions. It remains with our brethren, now to say, how far they go toward answering this intention. Do they exhibit truths demonstrably evident in the light of scripture and right reason; so that to deny any part of them the contrary assertion would be manifestly absurd and inadmissible? Considered as a preliminary for the above purpose, are they adequate; so that if acted upon, they would infallibly lead to the desired issue—If evidently defective in either of these respects, let them be corrected and amended, till they become sufficiently evident, adequate, and unexceptionable. In the mean time let them be examined with rigor, with all the rigor that justice, candour, and charity will admit. If we have mistaken the way, we shall be glad to be set right;—but if, in the mean time, we have been happily led to suggest obvious and undeniable truths, which if adopted and acted upon, would infallibly lead to the desired unity, and secure it when obtained; we hope it will be no objection, that they have not proceeded from a general council. It is not the voice of the multitude, but the voice of truth, that has power with the conscience—that can produce rational conviction, and acceptable obedience. A conscience that awaits the decision of the multitude, that hangs in suspence for the casting vote of the majority, is a fit subject for the man of sin. This we are persuaded is the uniform sentiment of real christians of every denomination. Would to God that all professors were such—then should our eyes soon behold the prosperity of Zion; we should soon see Jerusalem a quiet habitation. Union in truth has been, and ever must be, the desire and prayer of all such—Union in Truth is our motto. The Divine Word is our Standard; in the Lord's name do we display our banners. Our eyes are upon the promises; "So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun." When the enemy shall come in like a flood the spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." Our humble desire is to be his standard bearers—to fight under *his* banner, and with *his* weapons, "which are not carnal; but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;" even all these strong holds of division, those partition walls of separation; which, like the wall of Jericho, have been built up, as it were, to the very heavens, to separate God's people, to divide *his* flock and so to prevent them from entering into their promised rest, at least in so far as it respects this world. An enemy hath done this; but he shall not finally prevail;—"for the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." And the

kingdom and dominion, even the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, and they shall possess it forever." But this cannot be in their present broken and divided state, "for a kingdom, or an house divided against itself cannot stand, but cometh to desolation." Now this has been the case with the church for a long time. However, "the Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his heritage, but judgment shall return unto righteousness, and all the upright in heart shall follow it." To all such, and such alone, are our expectations directed. Come, then, ye blessed of the Lord, we have your prayers, let us also have your actual assistance. What shall we pray for [redacted]

nect in large circles, where several of those smaller societies may

our brethren, as to any thing we have suggested for promoting the sacred cause of christian unity; farther than it carries its own evidence along with it: but we humbly claim a fair investigation of the subject; and solicit the assistance of our brethren for carrying into effect what we have thus weakly attempted. It is our consolation, in the mean time, that the desired event, as certain as it will be happy and glorious, admits of no dispute; however we may hesitate, or differ, about the proper means of promoting it. All we shall venture to say as to this, is that we trust we have taken the proper ground, at least, if we have not, we despair of finding it elsewhere. For if holding fast in profession and practice whatever is expressly revealed and enjoined in the divine standard does not

this country to take part with either of the beligerents in the pre-
basis for promoting and maintaining unity, peace and purity, we cease and
utterly despair of attaining those

but have they at all answered the end? Confessedly, demonstrably, they have not—no, not even in the several parties which have most strictly adopted them—much less to the catholic professing body. Instead of her catholic constitutional unity and purity, what does the church present us with, at this day, but a catalogue of

APPENDIX.

TO prevent mistakes [redacted]

above the express authority of God. Our inference upon the whole, is, that where a professing christian brother opposes or refuses nothing either in faith or practice, for which there can be expressly produced a "thus saith the Lord": that we ought not to reject him because he cannot see with our eyes as to matters of human inference—of private judgment. "Through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish? How walketh thou not charitably? Thus we reason, thus we conclude, to make no conclusion of our own, nor of any other fallible fellow creature, a rule of faith or duty to our brother. Whether we refuse reason, then, or abuse it, in our so doing, let our brethren judge. But, after all, we have only ventured to suggest, what, in other words, the Apostle has expressly taught: namely, that the strong ought to bear with the infirmities of the weak, and not to please themselves. That we ought to receive him that is weak in the faith, because God has received him. In a word that we ought to receive one another, as Christ hath also received us to the glory of God. We dare not therefore, patronize the rejection of God's dear children, because they may not be able to see alike in matters of human inference—of private opinion; and such we esteem all things, not expressly revealed and enjoined in the word of God. If otherwise, we know not what private opinion means. On the other hand, should our peaceful and affectionate overture for union and truth, prove offensive to any of our brethren; or occasion disturbances in any of the churches; the blame cannot be attached to us. We have only adventured to persuade, and if possible, to excite to the performance of an important duty, a duty equally incumbent upon us all. Neither have we pretended to dictate to *them*, what *they* should do. We have only proposed, what appeared to *us* most likely to promote the desired event; humbly submitting the whole premises to their candid and impartial investigation; to be altered, corrected, and amended, as they see cause; or any other plan adopted that may appear more just and unexceptionable. As for ourselves, we have taken all due care, in the meantime to take no step, that might throw a stumbling block in the way; that might prove now, or at any future period, a barrier to prevent the accomplishment of that most desirable object; either by joining to support a party; or by [illegible] we have at least

will reap the first fruits of that blissful harvest, that will fill the face of the world with fruit. For, if the first christian churches walking in the fear of the Lord, in holy unity and unanimity, enjoyed the comforts of the Holy Ghost, and were increased and edified; we have reason to believe, that walking in their footsteps will every where, and at all times, ensure the same blessed privileges. And it is in an exact conformity to their recorded and approved example, that we through grace, would be desirous to promote the,

judgment of any individual, which does not expressly contradict the express letter of the law, or add to the number of its institutions. Every sincere and upright christian, will understand and do the will of God, in every instance, to the best of his skill and judgment; but in the application of the general rule to particular cases, there may, and doubtless will, be some variety of opinion and practice. This we see was actually the case in the apostolic churches, without any breach of christian unity. And if this was the case, at the erection of the christian church from amongst Jews and Gentiles, may we not reasonably expect, that it will be the same at her restoration, from under her long antichristian and sectarian desolations?

With a direct reference to this state of things; and, as we humbly think, in a perfect consistency with the foregoing explanations, have we expressed ourselves in page 10th; wherein we declare ourselves ready to relinquish, whatever we have hitherto received as matter of faith or practice, not expressly taught and enjoined in the word of God; so that we, and our brethren, might, by this mu-

derstood, in the first instance; though we do not say, but something farther is intended. For certainly we may lawfully suspend both declaration and practice upon any subject, where the law is silent: when to do otherwise must prevent the accomplishment of an expressly commanded, and highly important duty: and such, confessedly, is the thing in question. What saith the Apostle? "All

scourge of those evils; as in an instance somewhat similar, he formerly did his highly favored Israel. "My people, saith he, would not hearken to my voice. So I gave them up to their own hearts lusts, and they walked in their own counsels." "Israel hath made many altars to sin: therefore altars shall be unto him to sin." Thus, then, are we to be consistently understood, as fully and fairly intending, on *our* part, what we have declared and proposed to our brethren, as, to *our* apprehension, incumbent upon *them* and *us*, for putting an end forever, to our sad and lamentable schisms. Should any object and say, that after all, the fullest compliance with every thing proposed and intended, would not restore the church to the desired unity, as there might still remain differences of opinion and practice. Let such but duly consider, what properly belongs to the unity of the church, and we are persuaded, this objection will vanish. Does not the visible scriptural unity of the christian church consist in the unity of her public profession and practice; and, under

may be it is, for we are told "the commandment is exceeding broad ;" and we intend to go just as far as it will suffer us, but not one hair's breadth farther—so, at least, says our profession. And surely it will be time enough to condemn our practice, when it appears manifestly inconsistent with the profession, we have thus precisely and explicitly made. We here refer to the whole of the foregoing premises. But were this word as bad as it is long : were it stuffed with evil from beginning to end : may be, it better belongs

revealed and enjoined therein; without, at the same time being *alledged*, much less *found* guilty, of anything to the contrary: but instead of this, asserting and declaring their hearty assent and consent to every thing, for which there can be expersly produced a "thus saith the Lord," either in express terms or by a [illegible]

of course treating him as such, by censuring, or otherwise exposing him to contempt; or, at least, preferring ourselves before him in our own judgment; saying, as it were, stand by, I am holier than thou.

A third and still more dreadful evil is, when we not only, in this kind of way, judge and set at nought our brother; but, moreover proceed as a church, acting and judging in the name of Christ; not only to determine that our brother is wrong, because he differs from our determinations: but also in connexion with this, proceed so far as to determine the merits of the cause by rejecting him, or casting him out of the church, as unworthy of a place in her communion;—and thus, as far as in our power, cutting him off from the kingdom of heaven. In proceeding thus, we not only declare, that, in our judgment, our brother is in an error; which we may sometimes do in a perfect consistency with charity: but we also take upon us to judge, as acting in the name and by the authority of Christ, that his error cuts him off from salvation; that continuing such he can have none

tion; that is to say, if it acknowledge itself to be a church of Christ, and to have acted justly. If after all, any particular church acting thus, should refuse the foregoing conclusion, by saying, we meant no such thing concerning the person rejected—we only judged him unworthy of a place amongst *us;* and therefore put him away; but there are other churches that may receive him. We would be almost tempted to ask such a church, if those other churches be churches of Christ; and if so, pray what does it account itself? Is it anything more or better than a church of Christ?

Should it still be urged, that this would open a wide door to latitudinarianism, seeing all that profess christianity, profess to receive the holy scriptures; and yet differ so widely in their religious sentiments. We say, let them profess what they will, their difference in religious profession and practice originates in their departure from what is expressly revealed and enjoined; and not in their strict and faithful conformity to it—which is the thing we humbly advise for putting an end to those differences. But you may say, do they not already all agree in the letter, though differing so far in sentiment? However this may be, have they all agreed to make the letter their rule; or rather to make it the subject matter of their profession and practice? Surely no; or else they would all profess and practice the same thing. Is it not as evident as the shining light, that the scriptures exhibit but one and the self same subject matter of profession and practice; at all times, and in all places;—and, that therefore, to say as it declares, and to do as it prescribes, in all its holy precepts, its approved and imitable examples, would unite the christian church in a holy sameness of profession and practice, throughout the whole world? By the christian church throughout the world, we mean the aggregate of such professors, as we have described in props. 1 and 8th, page 7th; even all that mutually acknowledge each other as christians, upon the manifest evidence of their faith, holiness, and charity. It is such only we intend, when we urge the necessity of christian unity. Had only such been all along recognized, as the genuine subjects of our holy religion, there would not, in all probability, have been so much apparent need for human formulas, to preserve an external formality of professional unity, and soundness in the faith: but artificial and superficious characters need artificial means to train and unite them. A manifest attachment to our Lord Jesus Christ in faith, holiness, and charity, was the original criterion of christian character—the distinguishing badge of our holy profession—the foundation and cer[redacted]

schism in the body; no self-preferring sect of professed and acknowledged christians, rejecting and excluding their brethren. *This* cannot be, however, till the offensive and excluding causes be removed; and every one knows what *these* are. But that all the members should have the same identical views of all divinely revealed truths; or that there should be no difference of opinion among them, appears to us morally impossible, all things considered. Nor can we conceive, what desirable purpose such a unity of sentiment would serve: except to render useless some of those gracious, self-denying, and compassionate precepts of mutual sympathy and forbearance, which the word of God enjoins upon his people. Such, then, is the imperfection of our present state—Would to God it might prove, as it ought, a just and humbling counterbalance to our pride! Then, indeed, we would judge one another no more about such matters. We would rather be conscientiously cautious to give no offense; to put no stumbling block, or occasion to fall in our brother's way. We would then no longer exalt our own opinions and inferences to an equality with express revelation, by condemning and rejecting our brother, for differing with us in those things.

But although it be granted, that the uniformity we plead for, would not secure unity of sentiment; yet we should suppose, that it would be as efficacious for that purpose, as any human expedient, or substitute whatsoever. And here we would ask, have all, or any, of those human complications been able to prevent divisions, to heal breaches, or to produce and maintain unity of sentiment, even amongst those who have most firmly, and solemnly, embraced them? We appeal for this to the history of all the churches, and to the present divided state of the church at large. What good then have those divisive expedients accomplished, either to the parties that have adopted them, or to the church universal; which might not have been as well secured, by holding fast in profession and practice that form of sound words, contained in the divine standard; without at the same time, being liable to any of those dangerous and destructive consequences, which have necessarily ensued upon the present mode? Or will any venture to say, that the scriptures thus kept in their proper place, would not have been amply sufficient, under the promised influence of the divine spirit to have produced all that unity of sentiment, which is necessary to a life of faith and holiness; and also to have preserved the faith and worship of the church as pure from mixture and error, as the Lord intended; or as the present imperfect state of his people can possibly admit? We should tremble to think that any christian should say, that they would not. And if to use them thus, would be sufficient for those purposes; why resort to other expedients—to expedients, which, from the beginning to this day, have proved utterly insufficient; nay, to expedients, which have always produced the very contrary effects, as experience testifies. Let none here imagine that we set any certain limits to the Divine intention, or to the

greatness of his power when we thus speak, as if a certain degree of purity from mixture and error were not designed for the church in this world, or attainable by his people upon earth; except in so far as respects the attainment of an angelic or unerring perfection; much less, that we mean to suggest, that a very moderate degree of unity and purity should content us. We only take it for granted, that such a state of perfection is neither intended, nor attainable in this world, as will free the church from all those weaknesses, mistakes, and mismanagements, from which she will be completely exempt in heaven:—however sound and upright she may now be in her profession, intention, and practice. Neither let any imagine, that we here, or elsewhere suppose, or intend to assert, that human standards, are intentionally set up in competition with the Bible; much less in opposition to it. We fairly understand and consider them as human expedients, or as certain doctrinal declarations of the sense in which the compilers understood the scriptures; designed, and embraced, for the purpose of promoting and securing, that desirable unity and purity, which the Bible alone, without those helps, would be insufficient to maintain and secure. If this be not the sense of those that receive and hold them, for the aforesaid purpose, we should be glad to know what it is. It is, however, in this very sense that we take them up, when we complain of them, as not only unsuccessful, but also as unhappy expedients; producing the very contrary effects. And even suppose it were doubtful, whether or not those helps have produced divisions; one thing at least is certain, that they have not been able to prevent them; and now that divisions do exist, it is as certain, that they have no fitness nor tendency to heal them; but the very contrary, as fact and experience clearly demonstrate. What shall we do then to heal our divisions? We must certainly take some other way than the present practice, if they ever be healed; for it expressly says, they must, and shall, be perpetuated forever. Let all the enemies of christianity say amen. But let all christians, continually say, forbid it, O Lord. May the good Lord subdue the corruptions, and heal the divisions of his people. Amen and amen.

After all that has been said, some of our timid brethren may possibly still object, and say; we fear, that without the intervention of some definite creed or formula, you will justly incur the censure of latitudinarianism; for how, otherwise, detect and exclude Arians, Socinians, &c. &c? To such we would reply, that if to profess, inculcate, and practice, neither more nor less, neither any thing else nor otherwise, than the Divine Word expressly declares respecting the entire subject of faith and duty; and simply to rest in *that*, as the expression of our faith, and rule of our practice; will not amount to the profession, and practical exhibition, of Arianism Socinianism, &c. &c. but merely to one and the self same thing, whatever it may be called; then is the *ground* that we have taken, the *principle* that we advocate, in nowise chargeable with latitudinarianism. Should it be still farther objected that all these sects,

and many more, profess to receive the Bible, to believe it to be the word of God; and therefore will readily profess to believe and practise whatever is revealed and enjoined therein; and yet each will understand it his own way, and of course practise accordingly: nevertheless, according to the plan proposed, you receive them all. We would ask, then, do all these profess, and practise, neither more, nor less, than what we read in the Bible—than what is expressly revealed and enjoined therein? If so they all profess and practise the same thing; for the Bible exhibits but one and the self-same thing to all. Or, is it their own inferences and opinions that they, in reality, profess and practise? If so, then upon the ground that we have taken, they stand rejected, as condemned of themselves; for thus professing one thing, when in fact and reality they manifestly practise another. But perhaps you will say, that although a uniformity in profession, and it may be in practice too, might thus be produced; yet still it would amount to no more than merely a uniformity in words, and in the external formalities of practice; while the persons thus professing and practising, might each entertain his own sentiments, how different soever these might be. Our reply is, if so, they could hurt no body but himself; besides, if persons thus united, professed and practised all the same things, pray, who could tell, that they entertained different sentiments; or even in justice suppose it, unless they gave some evident intimation of it? which, if they did, would justly expose them to censure; or to rejection, if they repented not; seeing the offence, in this case, must amount to nothing less than an express violation of the expressly revealed will of God—to a manifest transgression of the express letter of the law; for we have declared, that except in such a case, no man, in our judgment, has a right to judge, that is, to condemn, or reject, his professing brother.—Here, we presume, there is no greater latitude assumed, or allowed, on either side, than the law expressly determines, But we would humbly ask, if a professed agreement in the terms of any standard be not liable to the very same objection? If, for instance, Arians, Socinians, Arminians, Calvinists, Antinomians, &c. &c. might not all subscribe the Westminster Confession, the Athenasian Creed, or the doctrinal articles of the Church of England. If this be denied, we appeal to historical facts; and, in the mean time, venture to assert, that such things are, and have been done. Or will any say, that a person might not with equal ease, honesty, and consistency, be an Arian, or a Socinian, in his heart, while subscribing the Westminster Confession, or the Athenasian Creed, as while making his unqualified profession to believe every thing that the scriptures declare concerning Christ? to put all that confidence in him; and to ascribe all that glory, honor, thanksgiving, and praise to him, professed, and ascribed to him in the Divine Word? If you say not it follows of undeniable consequence, that the wisdom of men, in those compilations, has effected, what the Divine Wisdom either could not, would not, or did not do, in that

all-perfect and glorious revelation of his will, contained in the holy Scriptures. Happy emendation! Blessed expedient! Happy indeed, for the church, that Athenasius arose in the fourth century, to perfect what the holy apostles and prophets had left in such a rude and unfinished state. But if, after all, the Divine Wisdom did not think proper to do any thing more, or any thing else, than is already done in the Sacred Oracles, to settle and determine those important points; who can say that he determined such a thing should be done afterwards? Or has he any where given us any intimation of such an intention?

Let it here be carefully observed that the question before us is about human standards designed to be subscribed, or otherwise solemnly acknowledged, for the preservation of ecclesiastical unity and purity; and therefore of course, by no means, applies to the many excellent performances, for the scriptural elucidation and defence of divinely revealed truths, and other instructive purposes. These, we hope, according to their respective merit, we as highly esteem, and as thankfully receive, as our brethren. But farther, with respect to unity of sentiment, even suppose it ever so desirable, it appears highly questionable, whether such a thing can at all be secured, by any expedient whatsoever; especially if we consider, that it necessarily pre-supposes in so far, a unity or sameness of understanding. Or, will any say, that, from the youth of seventeen to the man of four score—from the illiterate peasant, up to the learned prelate; all the legitimate members of the church entertain the same sentiments under their respective formulas. If not, it is still but a mere verbal agreement, a mere shew of unity. They say an amen to the same forms of speech, or of sound words, as they are called; without having, at the same time, the same views of the subject; or, it may be, without any determinate views of it at all. And what is still worse, this profession is palmed upon the world, as well as upon the too credulous professors themselves, for unity of sentiment; for soundness in the faith: when in a thousand instances, they have, properly speaking, no faith at all: that is to say, if faith necessarily pre-supposes a true and satisfactory conviction of the scriptural evidence and certainty of the truth of the propositions we profess to believe. A cheap and easy orthodoxy this, to which we may attain by committing to memory a catechism; or professing our approbation of a formula, made ready to our hand; which we may or may not have once read over; or even if we have, yet may not have been able to read it so correctly and intelligently, as to clearly understand one single paragraph from beginning to end; much less to compare it with, to search and try it by, the holy Scriptures; to see if these things be so. A cheap and easy orthodoxy this, indeed, to which a person may thus attain, without so much as turning over a single leaf of his Bible; whereas Christ knew no other way of leading us to the knowledge of himself, at least has prescribed no other, but by searching the Scriptures, with reliance upon his holy Spirit. A person may, however,

by this short and easy method, become as orthodox as the Apostle Paul (if such superfical professions, such mere hearsay verbal repetitions can be called orthodoxy) without ever once consulting the Bible; or so much as putting up a single petition for the Holy Spirit to guide him into all truth; to open his understanding to know the Scriptures; for, his form of sound words truly believed, if it happened to be right, must, without more ado, infallibly secure his orthodoxy. Thrice happy expedient! But is there no latitudinarianism in all this? Is not this taking a latitude, in devising ways and means for accomplishing divine and saving purposes, which the Divine law has no where prescribed; for which the Scriptures no where afford us, either precept or precedent? Unless it can be shewn, that making human standards to determine the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, of the church, for the purpose of preserving her unity and purity; and requiring an approbation of them as a term of communion; is a Scripture institution. Far be it from us, in the mean time, to alledge, that the church should not make every spiritual exertion, in her power, to preserve her unity and purity; to teach and train up her members in the knowledge of all divinely revealed truth; or to say, that the evils, above complained of, attached to all that are in the habits of using the aforesaid helps; or that this wretched state of things, however general, necessarily proceeds from the legitimate use of such; but rather, and entirely, from the abuse of them; which is the very and only thing, that we are all along opposing, when we allude to those subordinate standards.—(An appellation this, bye the bye, which appears to us highly paradoxical, if not utterly inconsistent, and full of confusion.)

But however this may be, we are by no means to be understood as at all wishing to deprive our fellow-christians of any necessary and possible assistance to understand the scriptures: or to come to a distinct and particular knowledge of every truth they contain;—for which purpose the Westminister Confession and Catechisms, may with many other excellent performances, prove eminently useful. But, having served ourselves of these, let our profiting appear to all, by our manifest acquaintance with the Bible; by making our profession of faith and obedience, by declaring its divine dictates, in which we acquiesce as the subject matter and rule of both—in our ability to take the Scripture in its connexion upon these subjects, so as to understand one part of it by the assistance of another—and in manifesting our self knowledge, our knowledge of the way of salvation, and of the mystery of the christian life, in the express light of divine revelation; by a direct and immediate reference to, and correct repetition of, what it declares upon these subjects—We take it for granted, that no man either knows God, or himself, or the way of salvation, but in so far, as he has heard and understood his voice upon those subjects, as addressed to him in the Scriptures; and that, therefore, whatever he has heard and learned of a saving nature, is contained in the express terms of the

Bible. If so, in the express terms, in and by which, "he hath heard and learned of the Father," let him declare it. This by no means forbids him to use helps: but, we humbly presume, will effectually prevent him from resting either in them or upon them; which is the evil so justly complained of—from taking up with the directory instead of the object to which it directs. Thus will the whole subject of his faith and duty, in so far as he hath attained, be expressly declared, in a "thus saith the Lord." And, is it not worthy of remark, that, of whatever use other books may be, to direct and lead us to the Bible; or to prepare and assist us to understand it; yet the Bible never directs us to any book but itself. When we come forward then as christians to be received by the church, which, properly speaking, has but one book. "For to it were committed the oracles of God;" let us hear none else. Is it not upon the credible profession of our faith in, and obedience to, its divine contents, that the church is bound to receive applicants for admission? And does not a profession of our faith and obedience, necessarily pre-suppose a knowledge of the dictates we profess to believe and obey? Surely, then, we can declare them; and as surely, if our faith and obedience be divine, as to the subject matter, rule, and reason of them, it must be a "thus saith the Lord;" if otherwise, they are merely human; being taught by the precepts of men. In the case then before us, that is, examination for church membership, let the question no longer be what does any human system say of the primitive or present state of man; of the person, offices and relations of Christ, &c. &c. or of this, that, or the other duty; but what says the Bible? Were this mode of procedure adopted, how much better acquainted with their Bibles would christians be? What an important alteration would it also make in the education of youth? Would it not lay all candidates for admission into the church under the happy necessity of becoming particularly acquainted with the holy Scriptures? whereas, according to the present practice, thousands know little about them.

One thing still remains that may appear matter of difficulty or objection to some; namely, that such a close adherence to the express letter of the Divine word, as we seem to propose, for the restoration and maintenance of christian unity; would not only interfere with the free communication of our sentiments one to another, upon religious subjects; but must, of course, also necessarily interfere with the public preaching and expounding of the Scriptures, for the edification of the church. Such as feel disposed to make this objection, should justly consider that one of a similar nature, and quite as plausible, might be made to the adoption of human standards; especially when made as some of them confessedly are, "the standard for all matters of doctrine, worship, discipline, and government." In such a case it might, with as much justice, at least, be objected to the adopters; you have now no more use for the Bible; you have got another book which you have adopted as a standard for all religious purposes—you have no farther

use for explaining the Scriptures, either as to matter of faith or duty: for this you have confessedly done already in your standard, wherein you have determined all matters of this nature. You also profess to hold fast the form of sound words, which you have thus adopted; and therefore you must never open your mouth upon any subject in any other terms than those of your standard. In the mean time, would any of the parties, which has thus adopted its respective standard, consider any of these charges just? If not, let them do as they would be done by. We must confess, however, that for our part, we cannot see how, with any shadow of consistency, some of them could clear themselves, especially of the first; that is to say, if words have any determinate meaning; for certainly it would appear almost, if not altogether, incontrovertible; that a book adopted by any party as its standard for all matters of doctrine, worship, discipline, and government; must be considered as the Bible of that party. And after all that can be said in favor of such a performance, be it called Bible, standard, or what it may; it is neither any thing more nor better, than the judgment, or opinion of the party composing or adopting it; and therefore wants the sanction of a Divine authority; except in the opinion of the party which has thus adopted it. But can the opinion of any party, be it ever so respectable, give the stamp of a Divine authority to its judgments? If not, then every human standard is deficient in this leading, all-important, and indispensable property of a rule, or standard, for the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the church of God. But without insisting farther upon the intrinsic and irremediable deficiency of human standards, for the above purpose, (which is undeniably evident, if it be granted that a Divine authority is indispensably necessary to constitute a standard, or rule for divine things: such as is the constitution, and managements; the faith, and worship of the christian church)—we would humbly ask would any of the parties consider as just, the foregoing objections, however conclusive and well founded, all or any of them may appear? We believe they would not. And may we not with equal consistency hold fast the expressly revealed will of God, in the very terms in which it is expressed in his Holy Word, as the very expression of our faith, and express rule of our duty; and yet take the same liberty that they do, notwithstanding their professed and steadfast adherence to their respective standards? We find they do not cease to expound, because they have already expounded, as before alledged; nor yet do they always confine themselves to the express terms of their respective standards; yet they acknowledge them to be their standards, and profess to hold them fast. Yea, moreover, some of them profess, and, if we may conclude from facts, we believe each of them is disposed to defend, by occasional vindications (or testimonies, as some call them,) the sentiments they have adopted, and engrossed in their standards; without, at the same time, requiring an approbation of those occasional performances, as a term of communion. And what should

hinder us, or any, adopting the Divine Standard, as aforesaid, with equal consistency to do the same; for the vindication of the divine truths expressly revealed and enjoined therein? To say that we cannot believe and profess the truth; understand one another; inculcate and vindicate the faith and law of Christ; or do the duties incumbent upon christians, or a christian church, without a human standard; is not only saying, that such a standard is quite essential to the very being of christianity, and of course must have existed before a church was, or could be formed: but it is also saying, that without such a standard, the Bible would be quite inadequate, as a rule of faith and duty; or rather, of no use at all; except to furnish materials for such a work—whereas the church of Ephesus, long before we have any account of the existence of such a standard, is not only mentioned, with many others, as in a state of existence; and of high attainments too; but is also commended for her vigilance and fidelity, in detecting and rejecting false apostles. "Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars." But should any pretend to say, that although such performances be not essential to the very being of the church, yet are they highly conducive to its well being and perfection. For the confutation of such an assertion, we would again appeal to church history, and existing facts, and leave the judicious and intelligent christian to determine.

If after all that has been said, any should still pretend to affirm, that the plan we profess to adopt and recommend, is truly latitudinarian, in the worst and fullest sense of the term; inasmuch as it goes to make void all human efforts to maintain the unity and purity of the church, by substituting a vague and indefinite approbation of the Scriptures as an alternative for creeds, confessions, and testimonies; and thereby opens a wide door for the reception of all sorts of characters and opinions into the church. Were we not convinced by experience, that notwithstanding all that has been said, such objections would likely be made; or that some weak persons might possibly consider them as good as demonstration; especially when proceeding from highly influential characters (and there have not been wanting such in all ages to oppose, under various plausible pretences, the unity and peace of the church) were it not for these considerations, we should content ourselves with what we have already advanced upon the whole of the subject, as being well assured, *that* duly attended to, there would not be the least room for such an objection: but to prevent if possible such unfounded conclusions; or if this cannot be done, to caution and assist the too credulous and unwary professor, that he may not be carried away all at once with the high-toned confidence of bold assertion;—we would refer him to the overture for union in truth contained in the foregoing address. Union in truth, amongst all the manifest subjects of grace and truth, is what we advocate. We carry our views of union no farther than *this;* nor do we presume to recommend it upon any other principle than truth alone.

Now surely truth is something certain and definite; if not, who will take upon him to define and determine it? This we suppose God has sufficiently done already in his Holy Word. That men therefore truly receive and make the proper use of the Divine word for walking together in truth and peace, in holiness and charity, is, no doubt, the ardent desire of all the genuine subjects of our holy religion. This we see, however, they have not done, to the awful detriment, and manifest subversion of, what we might almost call, the primary intention of christianity. We dare not therefore follow their example, nor adopt their ruinous expedients. But does it therefore follow, that christians may not, or cannot, take proper steps to ascertain that desirable and preceptive unity, which the Divine word requires, and enjoins? Surely no—at least we have supposed no such thing;—but on the contrary, have overtured to our brethren, what appears to us undeniably just, and scripturally evident; and which we humbly think, if adopted and acted upon, would have the desired effect—adopted and acted upon, not indeed as a standard for the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the church; for it pretends not to determine these matters; but rather supposes the existence of a fixed and certain standard of divine original; in which every thing that the wisdom of God saw meet to reveal and determine, for *these*, and all other purposes, is expressly defined and determined; betwixt the christian and which, no medium of human determination ought to be interposed. In all this, there is surely nothing like the denial of any lawful effort, to promote and maintain the churches' unity; though there be a refusal of the unwarrantable interposition, of an unauthorized and assuming power.

Let none imagine, that we are here determining upon the merits of the overture, to which, in the case before us, we find it necessary to appeal, in our own defence, against the injustice of the supposed charge above specified. To the judgment of our brethren have we referred that matter; and with them we leave it. All we intend, therefore, is to avail ourselves so far, of what we have done, as to shew, that we have no intention whatsoever of substituting a vague indefinite approbation of the Scriptures, as an alternative for creeds, confessions, and testimonies; for the purpose of restoring the church to her original constitutional unity and purity. In avoiding Sylla we would cautiously guard against being wrecked upon the Charybdis. Extremes we are told are dangerous. We therefore suppose a middle way; a safe way; so plainly marked out by unerring wisdom, that, if duly attended to under the Divine direction, the wayfaring men, though fools, need not err therein; and of such is the kingdom of God; "for he hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the things that are wise." We therefore conclude, it must be a plain way, a way most graciously and most judiciously adapted to the capacity of the subjects; and consequently not the way of subscribing, or otherwise approving human standards, as a term of admission into his church; as a test

and defence of orthodoxy; which even the compilers themselves are not always agreed about; and which nineteen out of twenty of the Lord's people cannot thoroughly understand. It must be a way very far remote from logical subtilties, and metaphysical speculations; and as such we have taken it up, upon the plainest and most obvious principles of divine revelation, and common sense—the common sense, we mean of christians, exercised upon the plainest and most obvious truths and facts, divinely recorded for their instruction. Hence we have supposed in the first place, the true discrimination of christian character to consist in an intelligent profession of our faith in Christ and obedience to him in all things according to the Scriptures; the reality of which profession is manifested by the holy consistency of the tempers and conduct of the professors, with the express dictates, and approved examples of the Divine word. Hence we have humility, faith, piety, temperance, justice, charity, &c. professed and manifested in the first instance by the persons' professing with self-application the convincing, humbling, encouraging, pious, temperate, just and charitable doctrines and precepts of the inspired volume, as exhibited and enforced in its holy and approved examples; and the sincerity of this profession evidently manifested, by the consistency of the professor's temper and conduct with the entire subject of his profession; either by an irreproveable conformity like good Zachariah and Elizabeth, which is of all things most desirable; or otherwise, in case of any visible failure, by an apparently sincere repentance, and evident reformation. Such professors, and such only, have we supposed to be, by common consent, truly worthy the christian name. Ask from the one end of heaven to the other, the whole number of such intelligent and consistent professors as we intend, and have described, and we humbly presume, there will not be found one dissenting voice. They will all acknowledge with one consent, that the true discrimination of christian character consists in these things; and that the radical, or manifest want, of any of the aforesaid properties, completely destroys the character.

We have only here taken for granted, what we suppose no rational professor will venture to deny; namely, that the Divine Word contains an ample sufficiency upon every of the foregoing topics to stamp the above character; if so be, that the impressions which its express declarations are obviously calculated to produce, be truly received; for instance, suppose a person profess to believe, with application to himself, that whole description of human depravity and wretchedness which the Scriptures exhibit of fallen man, in the express declarations and dismal examples of human wickedness therein recorded; contrasted with the holy nature. the righteous requirements, and inflexible justice of an infinitely holy, just, and jealous God; would not the subject matter of such a profession be amply sufficient to impress the believing mind with the most profound humility, self-abhorrence, and dreadful apprehension of the tremendous effects of sin? Again should the person

profess to believe, in connexion with this, all that the Scriptures declare of the sovereign love, mercy, and condescension of God, towards guilty, depraved, rebellious man, as the same is manifested in Christ, and in all the gracious declarations, invitations and promises, that are made in and through him, for the relief and encouragement of the guilty, &c. would not all this, taken together, be sufficient to impress the believing mind with the most lively confidence, gratitude, and love? Should this person, moreover, profess that delight and confidence in the Divine Redeemer—that voluntary submission to him—that worship and adoration of him, which the Scriptures expressly declare to have been the habits and practice of his people; would not the subject matter of this profession be amply sufficient to impress the believing mind with that dutiful disposition, with that gracious veneration, and supreme reverence, which the word of God requires? And should not all this taken together satisfy the church, in so far, in point of profession? If not, there is no alternative but a new revelation; seeing that to deny this, is to assert, that a distinct perception, and sincere profession, of whatever the word declares upon every point of faith and duty, is not only insufficient, as a doctrinal means, to produce a just and suitable impression in the minds of the believing subject; but is also insufficient to satisfy the church, as to a just and adequate profession:—if otherwise, then it will necessarily follow, that not every sort of character, but that one sort only, is admissible upon the principle we have adopted; and, that by the universal consent of all, that we, at least, dare venture to call christians, *this* is acknowledged to be, exclusively, the true christian character. Here then we have a fixed point, a certain description of character, which combines in every professing subject, the scriptural profession, the evident manifestation, of humility, faith, piety, temperance, justice, and charity; instructed by, and evidently answering to, the entire declaration of the Word, upon each of those topics: which, as so many properties, serve to constitute the character. Here, we say, we have a fixed and at the same time sweeping distinction; which, as of old, manifestly divides the whole world, however, other ways distinguished, into but two classes only. "We know," said the Apostle, evidently speaking of such, "that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."

Should it be enquired concerning the persons included in this description of character, whether they be Arminians, or Calvinists, or both promiscuously huddled together? It may be justly replied, that, according to what we have proposed, they can be nominally neither, and of course not both; for we call no man master on earth; for one is our master, even Christ and all we are brethren—are christians by profession; and, as such, abstract speculation and argumentative theory make no part, either of our profession, or practice. Such professors, then, as we intend, and have described, are just what their profession and practice make them to be; and this we hope has been scripturally, and, we might add, satisfactorily

defined; in so far, at least, as the limits of so brief a performance would admit. We also entertain the pleasing confidence, that the plan of procedure which we have ventured to suggest, if duly attended to, if fully reduced to practice, would necessarily secure to the professing subject all the advantages of divinely revealed truth, without any liability to conceal, or diminish, or to misrepresent it; as it goes immediately to ascribe every thing to God respecting his sovereignty, independence, power, wisdom, goodness, justice, truth, holiness, mercy, condescension, love and grace, &c. which is ascribed to him in his word; as also to receive whatever it declares concerning the absolute dependence of the poor, guilty, depraved, polluted creature, upon the Divine will, power, and grace, for every saving purpose: a just perception and correspondent profession of which, according to the Scriptures, is supposed to constitute that fundamental ingredient in christian character, true evangelical humility. And so of the rest. Having thus, we hope, scripturally and evidently determined the character with the proper mode of ascertaining it, to the satisfaction of all concerned: we next proceed to affirm with the same scriptural evidence, that amongst such, however situated, whether in the same or similar associations, there ought to be no schisms, no uncharitable divisions; but that they ought all mutually to receive, and acknowledge each other as brethren. As to the truth of this assertion, they are all likewise agreed without one dissenting voice. We next suggest that for this purpose they ought to all walk by the same rule, to mind and speak the same thing, &c. and that this rule is, and ought to be, the Divine Standard. Here again we presume there can be no objection, no, not a single dissenting voice. As to the rule itself, we have ventured to alledge that the New Testament is the proper and immediate rule, directory, and formula, for the New Testament church, and for the particular duties of christians; as the Old Testament was for the Old Testament church, and for the particular duties of the subject under that dispensation; at the same time by no means excluding the old as fundamental to, illustrative of, and inseparably connected with, the new; and as being every way of equal authority, as well as of an entire sameness with it, in every point of moral natural duty; though not immediately our rule, without the intervention and coincidence of the new; in which our Lord has taught his people, by the ministry of his holy Apostles, all things whatsoever thay should observe and do, till the end of the world. Thus we come to the one rule, taking the Old Testament as explained and perfected by the new, and the new as illustrated and enforced by the old; assuming the latter as the proper and immediate directory for the christian church, as also for the positive and particular duties of christians, as to all things whatsoever they should observe and do. Farther, that in the observance of this Divine rule—this authentic and infallible directory, all such may come to the desirable coincidence of holy unity and uniformity of profession and practice; we have overtured that they

all speak, profess, and practice, the very same things, that are exhibited upon the sacred page of New Testament Scripture, as spoken and done by the Divine appointment and approbation; and that this be extended to every possible instance of uniformity, without addition or diminution; without introducing any thing of private opinion, or doubtful disputation, into the public profession or practice of the church. Thus and thus, have we overtured to all intents and purposes, as may be clearly seen by consulting the overture itself; in which, however, should any thing appear not sufficiently explicit, we flatter ourselves it may be fully understood, by taking into consideration what has been variously suggested, upon this important subject, throughout the whole of these premises; so that if any due degree of attention be paid, we should think it next to impossible, that we could be so far misunderstood, as to be charged with Latitudinarianism in any usual sense of the word. Here we have proposed but one description of character as eligible, or indeed as at all admissible to the rights and privileges of christianity. This description of character we have defined by certain and distinguishing properties, which not only serve to distinguish it from every other; but in which all the real subjects themselves are agreed, without one exception: all such being mutually and reciprocally acknowledged by each other, as legitimate members of the church of God. All these moreover agreeing in the indispensable obligation of their unity; and in the one rule by which it is instructed—and also in the preceptive necessity of an entire uniformity in their public profession and managements for promoting and preserving this unity—that there should be no schism in the body; but that all the members should have the same care one for another—yet in many instances unhappily, and, we may truly say, involuntarily differing through mistake and mismanagement; which it is our humble desire and endeavour to detect and remove, by obviating every thing that causeth difference; being persauded that as truth is one and indivisible wherever it exists; so all the genuine subjects of it, if disentangled from artificial impediments, must and will necessarily fall in together, be all on one side, united in one profession, acknowledge each other as brethren, and love as children of the same family. For this purpose we have overtured a certain and determinate application of the rule, to which we presume there can be no reasonable objection, and which, if adopted and acted upon, must, we think, infallibly produce the desired effect, unless we should suppose that to say and do, what is expressly said and done before our eyes upon the sacred page, would offend the believer; or that a strict uniformity, and entire scriptural sameness in profession and practice, would produce divisions and offences amongst those, who are already united in one spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one hope of their calling, and in one God and father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in them all; as is confessedly the case with all of this character throughout all the churches. To induce to this we have also at-

tempted to call their attention to the heinous nature and awful consequences of schism, and to that evil anti-scriptural principle from which it necessarily proceeds. We have likewise endeavored to shew, we humbly think with demonstrable evidence, that there is no alternative, but either to adopt that scriptural uniformity we have recommended, or else continue as we are, bewildered in schisms, and overwhelmed with the accursed evils inseparable from such a state. It remains now with our brethren to determine upon the whole of these premises; to adopt, or to reject, as they see cause; but, in the mean time, let none impeach us with the latitudinarian expedient of substituting a vague indefinite approbation of the Holy Scriptures, as an alternative for the present practice of making the approbation of human standards a term of communion; as it is undeniably evident that nothing can be farther from our intention. Were we to judge of what we humbly propose and urge as indispensably necessary for the reformation and unity of the church, we should rather apprehend, that there was reason to fear a charge of a very different nature; namely, that we aimed at too much strictness, both as to the description of character which we say ought only to be admitted, and also as to the use and application of the rule. But should this be the case, we shall cheerfully bear with it; as being fully satisfied, that not only the common sentiment of all apparently sincere, intelligent and practical christians is on our side; but that also the plainest and most ample testimonies of the inspired volume sufficiently attest the truth and propriety of what we plead for, as essential to the scriptural unity and purity of the christian church; and this we humbly presume is what we should incessantly aim at. It would be strange, indeed, if in contending earnestly for the faith, once delivered to the saints, we should overlook those fruits of righteousness—that manifest humility, piety, temperance, justice and charity—without which faith itself is dead being alone. We trust we have not so learned Christ: if so be, we have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus, we must have learned a very different lesson indeed. While we would therefore insist upon an entire conformity to the Scriptures in profession, that we might all believe and speak the same things, and thus be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment; we would, with equa..y scrupulosity, insist upon and look for, an entire conformity to them in practice, in all those whom we acknowledge as our brethren in Christ. "By their fruits ye shall know them." "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven. Therefore whosoever heareth those sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man which built his house upon the sand. Woe unto you scribes and pharisees, hypocrites, for ye say and do not." We therefore conclude, that to advocate unity alone, however desirable in itself without at the same time purging the church of apparently unsanctified characters—even of all that can-

not shew their faith by their works, would be, at best, but a poor, superficial, skin-deep reformation. It is from such characters, then, as the proposed reformation, if carried into effect, would entirely deprive of a name and a place in the church, that we have the greatest reason to apprehend a determined and obstinate opposition. And alas! there are very many of this description; and in many places, of considerable influence—But neither should this discourage us, when we consider the expressly revealed will of God upon this point, Ezek. 44 6—9, with Matt. 13, 15—17, I. Cor. 5, 6—13, with many other Scriptures. Nor, in the end, will the multitude of unsanctified professors, which the proposed reformation would necessarily exclude, have any reason to rejoice in the unfaithfulness of those, that either through ignorance, or for filthy lucre sake, indulged them with a name and place in the church of God. These unfaithful stewards—these now mistaken friends, will one day be considered by such as their most cruel and treacherous enemies. These, then, are our sentiments, upon the entire subject of church reformation; call it latitudinarianism, or puritanism, or what you please: and *this* is the reformation for which we plead. Thus, upon the whole, have we briefly attempted to point out those evils, and to prevent those mistakes, which we earnestly desire to see obviated for the general peace, welfare, and prosperity of the church of God. Our dear brethren, giving credit to our sincere and well meant intentions, will charitably excuse the imperfections of our humble performance; and by the assistance of their better judgment correct those mistakes, and supply those deficiencies, which in a first attempt of this nature may have escaped our notice. We are sorry, in the mean time, to have felt a necessity of approaching so near, the borders of controversy, by briefly attempting to answer objections which we plainly foresaw would, through mistake or prejudice, be made against our proceedings; controversy making no part of our intended plan. But such objections and surmises having already reached our ears from different quarters, we thought it necessary to attend to them; that, by so doing, we might not only prevent mistakes, but also save our friends the trouble of entering into verbal disputes in order to remove them; and thus prevent, as much as possible, that most unhappy of all practices sanctioned by the plausible pretence of zeal for the truth;—religious controversy amongst professors. We would therefore humbly advise our friends to concur with us in our professed and sincere intention to avoid this evil practice. Let it suffice to put into the hands of such as desire information what we hereby publish for that purpose. If this, however, should not satisfy, let them give in their objections in writing: we shall thankfully receive, and seriously consider, with all due attention, whatever comes before us in this way; but verbal controversy we absolutely refuse. Let none imagine, that by so saying, we mean to dissuade christians from affording all the assistance they can to each other, as humble enquirers after the truth. To decline this friendly office would be to

refuse the performance of an important duty. But certainly there is a manifest difference between speaking the truth in love for the edification of our brethren ; and attacking each other with a spirit of controversial hostility, to confute and prove each other wrong. We believe it is rare to find one instance of this kind of arguing, that does not terminate in bitterness. Let us therefore cautiously avoid it. Our Lord says, Math. 18, 7, woe unto the world because of offences Scott in his incomparable work lately published in this country, called his Family Bible, observes in his notes upon this place, 'that our Lord here intends all these evils within the 'church, which prejudice men's minds against his religion or any 'doctrine of it. The scandalous lives, horrible oppressions, cru-'elties, and iniquities of men called christians ; their divisions and 'bloody contentions ; their idolatries and superstitions, are, at this 'day, the *great offences* and *causes of stumbling*, to Jews, Mahome-'tans, and Pagans, in all the four quarters of the globe ; and they 'furnish infidels of every discription, with their most dangerous 'weapons against the truth. The acrimonious controversies, agi-'tated amongst those who agree in the principal doctrines of the 'gospel, and their mutual contempt and reviling of each other, 'together with the extravagant notions and wicked practices found 'among them, form the grand prejudice in the minds of multitudes 'against evangelical religion ; and harden the hearts of hereticks, 'pharisees, disguised infidels, and careless sinners, against the 'truths of the gospel. In these and numberless other ways, it may 'be said, "woe be to the world because of offences;" for the devil, 'the sower of these tares, makes use of them in deceiving the na-'tions of the earth, and in murdering the souls of men. In the 'present state of human nature it must needs be, that such offences 'should intervene ; and God has wise and righteous reasons for 'permitting them ; yet we should consider it as the greatest of 'evils, to be accessary to the destruction of souls ; and an awful 'woe is denounced against every one, whose delusions or crimes 'thus stumble men, and set them against the only method of salva-'tion." We conclude with an extract from the Boston Anthology, which, with too many of the same kind that might be adduced, furnish a mournful comment upon the text—we mean, upon the sorrowful subject of our woeful divisions and corruptions. The following reply to the Rev. Mr. Cram, missionary from Massachusetts to the Senecas, was made by the principal chiefs and warriors of the six nations in council assembled at Buffaloe creek, state of New-York, in the presence of the agent of the United States for Indian affairs, in the summer of 1805. 'I am come, brethren,' said the missionary, 'to enlighten your minds, and to instruct you how to 'worship the Great Spirit, agreeably to his will ; and to preach to 'you the gospel of his son Jesus Christ. There is but one way to 'serve God, and if you do not embrace the right way you cannot be 'happy hereafter.' To which they reply, 'Brother we understand 'that your religion is written in a book. You say that there is but

'one way to worship and serve the Great Spirit. If there be but 'one religion, why do you white people differ so much about it? 'Why not all agree as you can all read the book? Brother, we do 'not understand these things. We are told your religion was given 'to your forefathers; we also have a religion which was given to 'our forefathers. It teaches us to be *thankful* for all the favors we 'receive—to *love* one another, and to be *united*. We never quarrel 'about religion. We are told you have been preaching to the white 'people in this place. Those people are our neighbors; we are 'acquainted with them. We will wait a little to see what effect 'your preaching has upon *them*. If we find it does them good, 'makes them *honest*, and *less* disposed to cheat Indians; we will 'then consider again of what you have said.' Thus closed the conference! Alas! poor people! how do our divisions and corruptions stand in your way? What a pity that you find us not upon original ground, such as the Apostles left the primitive churches? Had we but exhibited to you their unity and charity; their humble, honest, and affectionate deportment towards each other and towards all men: you would not have had those evil and shameful things to object to our holy religion, and to prejudice your minds against it. But your conversion, it seems, awaits our reformation—awaits our return to primitive unity and love. To this may the God of mercy speedily restore us, both for your sakes and our own; that *his way* may be known upon earth, and his saving health among all nations. Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. Amen and amen.

POSTSCRIPT.

THE publication of the foregoing address has been delayed much longer than was at first expected, through an unforeseen difficulty of obtaining paper of the quality intended. This difficulty and detention has also interfered with the publication of the discourse delivered at the first general meeting of the society, held in Washington, November 2d, in pursuance of the 7th resolution; (see page 4th) which discourse the committee has requested Mr. Campbell to have published, as soon as conveniency may serve for that purpose. At the first monthly meeting of the committee, December 14, (see resolution 6th, page 4,) the following considerations and proposals for the better carrying into effect the highly interesting and comprehensive object of the foregoing address, were submitted and received with approbation, viz. That considering the very extensive and important design for which we have associated, as specified in the foregoing pages; wherein we propose and urge

the **necessity of a thorough reformation in all** things civil and religious according to the word of God, as a duty of indispensable obligation upon all the highly favored subjects of the gospel; and especially in this country, where the Lord has been graciously pleased to favor his professing people with such ample opportunities, for the prosecution and accomplishment of those blessed and desirable purposes; it behoves us, in so doing, to exert our utmost energies, in every possible direction that may conduce to render successful, this arduous and important undertaking.

Besides what has been already agreed upon, and recommended in the foregoing pages, there yet remains two things of apparently great importance for promoting the grand object of our association; which this committee would do well to consider, as they seem to fall within the prescribed limits of its operation; and also as it appears to be within the compass of its power to take effectual steps for ascertaining the advantages, which the things intended, if duly executed, would appear obviously calculated to produce. The first of these is a catechetical exhibition of the fulness and precision of the holy scriptures upon the entire subject of christianity—an exhibition of that complete system of faith and duty expressly contained in the sacred oracles; respecting the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the christian church. The second thing intended is a periodical publication, for the express purpose of detecting and exposing the various anti-christian enormities, innovations and corruptions, which infect the christian church; which counteract and oppose the benign and gracious tendency of the gospel—the promotion and establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom upon earth; by means of which an infinitely good and gracious God has designed to bless the nations—to ameliorate as much as possible the present wretched and suffering state of mankind; upon the success and establishment of which depends the spiritual and temporal welfare of every individual of the human family. Whatever therefore has a tendency to undermine, or in anywise to counteract and oppose the interest of this benign and gracious institution of infinite goodness and mercy, becomes an evil of no small magnitude, how trifling soever it might otherwise appear. "Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil our vines; for our vines have tender grapes." Cant 2, 15. Such a publication from the nature and design of it, might with propriety be denominated The Christian Monitor.

The former of these, namely, a catechetical exhibition of the fulness and precision of the sacred scriptures upon the entire subject of faith and duty would, if duly executed, demonstrably evince their perfect sufficiency independent of human inference—of the dictates of private judgment; and would, at the same time, inevitably lead the professing subject to learn every thing, respecting his faith and duty, at the mouth of God, without any reference to human authority—to the judgment or opinions of men. This would, at once, free the great majority of professing christians from that per-

plexing uncertainty and implicit faith to which so many of them are unhappily subjected, by the interposition of human definitions and opinions between them and the Bible; many of which are erroneous; and also many of which they are unable to understand, so as to determine certainly, whether they be just and scriptural, or not. By such an exhibition, therefore, would professed christians be delivered, not only from these perplexing and dangerous evils ("their faith," by this means, "no longer standing in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God; not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth,") but they would also become better acquainted with the scriptures of truth—with that all-important word which shall judge them in the last day:—and at the same time, would come to possess a much more ample and enlarged view of the alone sufficiency and perfection of the scriptures themselves; advantages these of no small moment to the interest of christianity. A performance of this nature might with apparent propriety, be called the Christian Catechism.

In consequence of these considerations it is proposed and intended, with the approbation and under the patronage of the Christian Association of Washington, to forward as fast as possible the publication of the works above described, viz, To publish in numbers monthly by subscription, commencing with the year 1810—a work entitled the Christian Monitor, each number to consist of 24 pages, stitched in blue, price 12½ cents, type and paper as in the foregoing address. The numbers to be delivered to the subscribers at the respective places appointed for distribution. The execution of this work to commence as soon as 500 annual subscribers can be obtained. It is to be understood, that a number for each month will be duly delivered; though it is probable that the first two or three numbers may come together, as it is not likely, that the number of subscribers above specified can be obtained in time to commence the publication in the month of January, now so near at hand.

Also to prepare for the press and proceed to publish as soon as a competent number of subscribers can be obtained, a work entitled the Christian Catechism, to consist of upwards of one hundred pages, type and paper as above, price 50 cents. There will be prefixed to this work a dissertation upon the perfection and sufficiency of the holy scriptures; in which care will be taken to detect and expose, that unhappy ingenuity, which has been so frequently exerted to prevent and wrest them, from the obvious purpose for which they were graciously designed.

ERRATA—Page 2, line 5, the comma point should be after agreed, and not after upon.

Do line 7, for titled read designated.

Page 7, line 15, for spurious read specious.

Page 16, line 3, for grounds read ground.

Page 29, line 23, for preaching read practising.

Page 32, line 39, for would read could.

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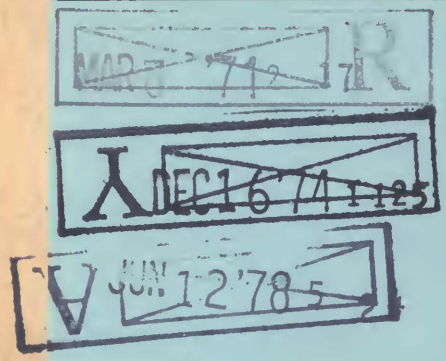
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