

PASTORAL LETTER

Synod of the Carolinas

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At a Meeting of the SYNOD of the Carolinas, in November, 1788, the following persons, viz. the Reverend messieurs David Caldwell, Samuel Maccorkle, James Hill, jun., James McRae and Samuel Houston together with the following elders, Messieurs Hezekiah Alexander, John Dickey, Zacheus Wilson and Robert King, were appointed a committee to draft and publish a PASTORAL LETTER, to be directed to the churches under the care of said Synod.

The committee met for the above purpose, except the Rev. Samuel Houston Hezekiah Alexander and Robert King, and drafted said letter; but as some unavoidable circumstances prevented its publication till the present meeting of the Synod, November 1789, it was submitted by the committee to a Synodical review, was read, amended and approved and is as follows.

PASTORAL LETTER

The Synod of the Carolinas to all the churches of the Redeemer in general, and to all the people of the presbyterian persuasion falling under their jurisdiction and care in particular with grace mercy and peace through Jesus Christ our Lord,

Very Dear Brethren,

It has been the good pleasure of God the great parent of the universe and the King of Sion, to visit us in these utmost ends of the earth both with the smiles of his providence and the riches of his grace. He hath lately made bare his arm in our defense, driven back our foes, delivered us from calamities of a civil war, given us peace and independence. In his tender mercies he hath also been peculiarly attentive to our best interests, the concerns of our souls. He hath spread his gospel among us, hath permitted us to organize churches, erect presbyteries and synods in this howling wilderness, where lately roamed the savage and the beasts and said "America be thou exalted among nations."

The lord our God with a mighty hand and outstretched arm hath brought us as it were out of the land of Egypt and out of the house of bondage and hath in his free and unmerited mercy emancipated us as a church from the anti-christian and unscriptural control of earthly kings.

The shock of war and revolutions in America have been happily so far from unsettling the principles of our church, they have brought them into a much more unfettered and confirmed state and have most agreeably issued in such republican forms of government as are altogether congenial with the government of the church by presbyteries where no crowned sovereign, no mitred pontiff, no haughty and usurping power, can arrogate dominion over the church of Christ.

Such a glorious revolution in our civil affairs could not fail to mingle its free rational and salutary effects with the affairs of the church. Ecclesiastic revolutions have taken place in every age of the world when alterations have been made in civil government. The former from the latter must and will receive their connections. Every denomination of christians in America have experienced the



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influence of the late civil change, in a degree greater or less in proportion to their dependence upon and attachment to those churches in Europe from which they derive their origin and their names and with which they were connected before the American revolution. In the independent churches of England, the ecclesiastical revolution has been scarcely perceived as they were separated from others in a religious view and understanding and under the power of no foreign prejudice or restrictions. In the episcopal church the change has been more sensible, even those states in the union where there principle management of public affairs was in the hands of those who were members of the episcopal church, the citizens possessed so much national virtue and felt the flame of liberty so warmly that it reached to their ecclesiastical policy and they honorably disdained to settle their religion on a civil establishment or to support their clergy by the laws of the land, but generously allowed of an universal liberty of conscience to christians of every denomination, and not only into the episcopal, but also into the seceding and covenanting churches the irresistible influence of a change in civil government has spread its effects and sown the seeds of alteration. Even to them it has given an American complexion so far at least that there is ground of hope that those thin and useless partitioned walls which now exist between the churches of our common redeemer will soon be broken down and all the sheep of the great and good shepherd collected into the same fold, and when the conduct of mankind will universally attest what every christian by his language and example ought to express that Christ is not divided.

Agreeably to these principles we find that a change in some respects has taken place in our church. A change equally necessary and unavoidable, a change which might have been foreseen and was expected and to which every good man must have looked forward with a pleasing anxiety for the event. A total separation from Great Britain and Ireland in point of civil policy rendered a dependent connection within the churches in that distant part of the globe both unreasonable and impractical, in fact, the time has come when God calls us, the Americans, to know not any head in a religious light but Christ himself.

From Calvin and Knox down to the Westminster assembly of divines we sincerely revere the memory of those great and good men who boldly contended for the faith once delivered to the saints and who were eminent champions for the cross of Christ and the religion of Jesus. We would that peace may be within the wall of every christian church upon earth and that the pleasure of the lord may prosper in the hand of every minister of the new testament yet as we think it an unalienable right that belongs to all christian societies to take their rules for doctrine, worship and discipline from Christ alone, we wish only to be indulged in the free and unmolested exercise of the same privilege, which privilege we believe is the unmerited gift of God to us in common with others and with graciously descending free and unsullied from Jesus Christ we are bound to employ for his glory the propagation of his interest upon earth and permit us to tell you for your everlasting welfare however insufficient for these things and inadequate to the task we are bound to watch for your souls as they who must give an account. Standing therefore in that liberty where with Christ hath made us free the presbyterian churches in these United States by the good hand of God upon them have been enlarged to such magnitude and extent as to admit of a need of plurality of

synods. Four synods have accordingly grown out one, viz. the Synod of New York and New Jersey, the Synod of Philadelphia, the Synod of Virginia and the Synod of the Carolinas. The Synod of the Carolinas comprehends the presbyteries of South Carolina, Abingdon, and Orange. These Synods with their several subordinate constituent presbyteries are all co-arranged under one great assembly precisely on the model of church government obtained and adopted among our fathers and predecessors in Scotland, at and after the glorious reformation from popery. O that our hearts were at all times disposed to praise God for his goodness and for his wonderful works to children of men.

Paint to yourselves, if you please, a synodical meeting ministers and ruling elders throughout our churches. Imagine some of them to be your aged experienced and venerable teachers by whose piety and precedent care you have been instructed in the first principles of the oracles of God before you visited this land. Imagine others to be your sons and pupils, your former acquaintances and perhaps the companions of your youth. Imagine others who have come from and received their education in Europe who have long resided in this country and thereby have collected all the wisdom and experience which both Europe and American can afford. Imagine that all these have convened with the glory of God and the edification of the church for their object, uncalled by any magistrate, unawed by any government, unsupported by civil power, unopposed by popery or bloody persecution, uninfluenced by lucrative motives, unbiased by a mother church, directed by the wisdom and warned by the errors of all councils and synods before them amidst the confluence of all these happy circumstances assisted by your prayers and the spirit of judgment how flattering the prospect. This pleasing prospect, our dear brethren, we trust in God has been realized. That it has excited in you grateful hearts and that you have mingled your gratitude and praise to God on this account for all the wonders of his grace and love. We speak with more plainness on this subject, because few of the members of our synod were present but we hope and believe such an assembly has met. An assembly that wants but antiquity and the world of knowledge of their learning piety and ability to render them in every view respectable and we think, brethren, you will concur with us in believing that an assembly thus circumstanced, as free from civil control under as few temptations to please mankind and to comply with the humors of the times have no sovereign but Christ, nor any laws to bind them but his word never met before the era of American independence.

Similar preceding assemblies have generally been convoked at the instance, under the influence, and by the support of civil power and have thereby bound to attend to some objects of much less magnitude than the cause of Christ or the propagation of religion. This was the case both before and since the reformation. The Council of Pisa was called by Lewis XII to answer a political question, while the Council of Lateran was convened to oppose it. But there is no necessity to go back to these dark ages for examples, we know that Edward VI call the bishop of Canterbury and bishops to form the 39 articles and a common prayer book. When it was found that some things in the prayer book gave offence to Bucer, Calvin and some others abroad, he required them to revise it and compleat it. Queen Elizabeth, by her ecclesiastic agents, reviewed it, after it had been abolished by Mary; and James I gave it another revisal at the famous conference at Hampton-Court.

It is altogether certain, that the Westminster assembly of divines were called and supported by a parliament; and the excellence of their celebrated performance is much more to be attributed to the goodness of God, and the wisdom and piety of those divines, than to all other concurring circumstances. Perhaps no assembly ever yet convened, to manage the affairs of the church, had greater cause to say, 'The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad,' than the general assembly of the presbyterian church in North-America.

Here let us say with the psalmist, Higgion Selah - Pause and consider the marvellous loving kindness of the King, both of saints and nations. For America has he reserved the solution of that important question, 'To what degree of perfection can a people in the enjoyment of every possible advantage, carry forward the good order and government both of church and state.'

There are not wanting some, perhaps, under our pastoral care, who by their uniform opposition to every appearance of change, seem to imagine we have already reached that perfection. Such persons are principally our view in the first division of this work, and more especially if they be, as in charity we hope many of them are, sincere servants of our common Lord. It is plain from the word of God, that the church of Christ will never arrive at full perfection in her militant state; certainly, then, improvements may be made in those things that respect the interest of Sion."

"That this work may be involved in as little perplexity as possible, we shall,

1st. Explain those matters in which we suppose some changes to be necessary at this time.

2d. Recommend to you the observation and practice of a variety of things, all of which appear to have considerable weight, and may terminate in your advantage.

3d. Address you on a few subjects that are of unchangeable and unceasing importance, at all times and in all places.

With respect to the first of these divisions, a little reading and reasoning will inform you, our dear brethren, that there are four things which, with certain limitations and restrictions, all churches in all ages and places, have claimed or possessed, the right of performing wherever circumstances seem to require it; and they have also possessed the right to judge those circumstances.

1st. To arrange and declare their sense of the system of doctrine taught in the scriptures.

2d. To form a directory for public worship.

3d. To give their sense of that form of government established by Christ in his church.

4th. To draw up a series of prudential rules for the purpose of carrying into execution the above government.

This right, or these rights, were claimed, and justly claimed by

several councils before the reformation, and were dreaded and disputed by none but the Pope and his bigoted partizans.

They were boldly and openly asserted by Luther, Zuengle, Melancthon and others, during the time of the reformation - by the English clergy in the reign of Edward VI - by the church of Scotland in the end of the 16th century, at the formation of the national covenant - by both the Scotch and English churches, in the unhappy days of Charles I, and are now claimed and justly claimed, in these United States, by the episcopal and presbyterian churches, the associate reformed synod, and associate presbytery.

These several churches, though they have not all made new arrangements of the subjects mentioned; yet some of them have done it; and all have agreed in declaring, that they do understand the scriptures either according to arrangements already made, or according to such changes or alterations as they judged necessary to be made.

Dear brethren, permit us to deal plainly and honesty with you. We know that we must give an account of our stewardship. God forbid that we should flatter, prejudice or court popularity; therefore give us leave with one judgment and one heart, in this united synodical capacity, to inform you, that these rights cannot, ought not to be disputed.

If a synod of ours, or of the seceding or covenanting churches, or any other churches, have acted without these rights, in Philadelphia, or in any other part of America, another synod or assembly at Westminster, Edinburgh, Strassburgh, Spires must certainly have done the same. If we have been wrong in principle, our reforming fathers were also wrong. If they claimed no privilege but that which they received from the head of the church, no reasonable person will say that privilege is denied to us; or that a right was delegated to them by Jesus Christ, which in this age of the world has ceased to exist. But the propriety and necessity of exercising this right, in its full vigor, will appear, were we only to consider the nature of things.

The truths and doctrines in the bible, like the stars in the firmament, shine without visible order. To arrange one or other, so as to be understood, we must give names and reduce to classes. The human mind, best able to see things in successive order, requires this. Hence the necessity of systematic divinity - hence the necessity of confessions of faith and catechisms.

These are advantageous both for understanding the scriptures and keeping up an uniformity of doctrines in the same church; but as perfection is the characteristic of the word of God alone, it would be both dangerous and wrong to give that epithet to any confession, catechism, or other system of human composition. This matter is set in a proper light by the venerable compilers of our present standards. Conf. chap. xxxi. sect. 6 "all synods and councils, since the Apostles' times, whether general or particular, may err, and many have erred; therefore they are not to be made the rule of faith and practice, but to be used as a help in both."

As to those doctrines in the word of God that respect public worship, in point of matter are very plain; but in point of order or arrangement they are not so easily understood. Hence different forms of public worship in different churches; and hence the propriety of

one uniform directory among members of every church or denomination of christians, that each individual may previously know the order and manner of religious exercises. As to church government, we only repeat the right already asserted, that each church or denomination may, and ought to declare, in what sense they understand the model laid down in the word of God. And as the subject of church government is not very clearly treated in the scriptures, opinions, in regard of this matter (sic), have been various.

The doctrine of church government hath given names to three denominations of christians: the Independents, Episcopalians and Presbyterians, each possessing and claiming the right of declaring their respective sentiments on the subject.

With regard to discipline, or the form of process in executing this government, every sensible man knows, that it is left chiefly to the direction of human prudence. Christ Jesus has not given his church a form of process; and this very circumstance is sufficient to convince us, that there was no necessity.

Now, brethren, the exercise of these rights are attended, in our judgement, with only two restrictions.

First - That no man or set of men be allowed to impose his or their sense of the scriptures on any other man or set of men, so as to persecute on account of any doctrine or sentiment, purely religious, and not immediately striking at the peace and good order of civil society.

Second. That no one thing be proposed as a term of communion in the different churches, either in doctrine or practice, unless in doctrine it be essential, and in practice directly contrary to some express command.

Acting on these scriptural and rational principles, let us, dear brethren, divesting our minds of all prejudice, and in the spirit of meekness, take a short and summary view of the transactions of the late synod at Philadelphia. In the first place, with respect to doctrine, they have done little; and indeed little was to be done. The greater part, on his subject, which is necessary, was already prepared to their hands, by the Westminster assembly of divines, whose confession of faith they have adopted themselves, and have recommended the adoption of it to you, as containing in their judgment, the system of doctrine taught in the holy scriptures. This is expressed in such manner as not to exclude from our communion, a pious Episcopalian, Associate, or Independent, believing, that those who shall at last commune together forever in Heaven, may very justly hold communion with each other on earth.

The synod of New-York and Philadelphia have adopted, as far as we know, every tittle (sic) of the articles contained in the Westminster confession of faith, excepting those paragraphs that respect the magistrate's power over the church; and those paragraphs they have given the explanation which they think corresponds with scripture, reason and justice: and in our judgment, they have left the matter on that footing on which it was left by Jesus Christ in his gospel, who renounces all concern in civil government, and uniformly testified,

that his kingdom was not of this world; but as this is a subject that has not been much disputed either by ministers or people, we refer you to the explanation of the new system to speak for itself.

This system has been the subject of long, repeated and critical discussion by the late synod of New-York and Philadelphia, and may be shortly expected among the churches bound up with the larger and shorter catechisms, and these unitedly remain the form of doctrine for the presbyterian church in America. We believe that any candid person, examining with attention this confession of faith; and placing in front the glory of God, the good of the church, and the salvation of his own soul, instead of rejecting it, will become more informed, and better established in the doctrines of christianity, that it will increase his esteem of the piety and abilities of its venerable compilers, and be to him a public testimony of the attachment of the late synod of New-York and Philadelphia to the same good cause. By due and impartial perusal of the late published system, not considering so much who did it, as what it is, and by diligently comparing it with the word of God, which we beseech you to do, you will be able to detect and counteract the insidious attempts of designing men. The aim of such incendiaries is, to shake your confidence on the orthodoxy of your teachers; to persuade you that a total subversion of the faith has taken place in the late synodical revivals; that all is wrong with us, and all is right with them. It is a great pity that such good principles as they would wish you to imagine they possess, were not accompanied with a better practice.

It is lamentable to observe, that some who profess to be ministers of Christ, declare by their conduct that they are trumpeters of sedition rather than ambassadors of the PRINCE OF PEACE.

Our blessed Lord has told you that the tree is known by its fruit - their words may appear to profit you; they may be calculated to please and deceive you; but follow their example, and, in God's great name, where would it end? - Although perfection in holiness be not attainable in this life, yet you will grant, that there is a conversation which becomes the Gospel of Christ, and there is another contrary to that peace and holiness which it universally enjoins. Your teachers and pastors lay no claim to infallibility; they are not only willing to acknowledge and expunge an error when discovered to them, but also to express their obligations to the person who makes the discovery; remembering all the time, that there is a wide difference between a bare assertion, the basis of a prejudiced education and a full proof. On the whole, we trust you will do them the justice to believe that their adherence to reformation principles is as steady, their attachment to scriptural discipline as warm, and their wishes for your your souls' welfare as genuine and sincere as any class of protestant clergy in United America. With regard to public worship, the recommendations respecting the more frequent administration of the Lord's supper, appears in particular, to demand an impartial and serious enquiry; and were you you to take the time and pains to do this we are persuaded that any objection against the mode prescribed, would, nearly or altogether, vanish - namely that the sacrament of the Lord's supper be administered with more frequency, and fewer public exercises. It is with a view of keeping up a lively remembrances of the greatest event that ever took place in this world, and the salutary influence of this blessed ordinance on the hearts of God's people that we are disposed to plead for this

alteration. This ordinance is one of the most lively emblems of heaven, which the christian worship affords. When the hands are washed in innocency, and we encompass the altar of God with a lively and devout frame of soul, in the reception of the holy ordinance, there appears to be one step between this and "beholding him as he is." Can there be any object that should be remembered so frequently, as that redeemer who loves us, and washed us from our sins with his own blood, who remembered us before his incarnation; through his suffering and despised life, in the garden and on the cross: who on Mount Olivet lifted up his hands and blessed his disciples, and through them, communicated a lasting blessing to his church; and while the sweet melody of his voice was sounding in their ears was parted from them and carried up into heaven, where the memory of his people is engraven on his heart and their names on the palms of his hands, and where he pleads the merits of his sufferings in behalf of his people. If he thus remembers us, how can we forget him ?

"Now though he reigns exalted high.

"His love is still as great;

"Well he remembers Calvary,

"Nor let his saints forget."

Were we able to unite the necessary frequency of the administration of this ordinance with the labour and vacinity of exercises that attend the usual mode, we would most cheerfully attempt it; but you know that these are incompatible. The apostles administered it weekly, the primitive christians quarterly or monthly; and in the days of Knox, the reforming apostle of Scotland, it was monthly. And distance of time from the memorable time of the crucifixion, instead of taking from, seems to form an argument for the more frequent administration of that holy ordinance. The Westminster directory and ours both recommend a preparatory sermon some time on the preceding week, and one on the morning of the day on which the ordinance is to be administered. The General Assembly of the church of Scotland, have prescribed one sermon on the day before, one on the morning before, and a thanksgiving sermon, it is presumed, on the evening after; and one assisting minister, whose pulpit is to be supplied by another. How easy is all this where there are more ministers than vacant churches ? yea, more would be practicable. It has been the practice in some parts of Scotland to have three sermons on a fasting day: two action-sermons, a thanksgiving sermon on the evening, and two on Monday. But is all this necessary to the right administration of the ordinance ? or is it possible in a land like ours, where there are many churches and few to supply them ? Is it essential to the ordinance ? -you know it is not. No sensible man will suppose this, after he has attentively read the primitive institution, and the manner of its first administration. Is it practicable in this country ? You must be sensible it is not. All that you gain by restricting us on this subject, is, that you deprive yourselves of the reception of this ordinance more than once or twice in the year, and the vacant churches altogether. This is the true state of the subject; your mistake arises from comparing the churches in Scotland and Ireland with the churches in America, without comparing their different circumstances; and the clergy in those countries complain that the multiplicity of exercises destroys the frequent administration there, notwithstanding the number of administrators. What would be the complaints of such men, were they acquainted with the true state of our churches !

Words might be multiplied on this subject, but we speak as to wise men, judge ye what ye say, and the Lord give you understanding in

the things that belong to your peace.

Respecting church government; we believe you will find no material alteration. The Westminster form, nearly in the words we are used in that system hath been adopted, except where circumstances of time and place might have made some change necessary. The synod of Philadelphia do not appear to thought explanations or amendments on that subject needful, and we concur with them on that point; but as to discipline it was otherwise. Discipline was undoubtedly the chief object of the synod. Our reforming fathers had but just emerged from popery, when they gave us their systems of discipline; and it was difficult for them; all at once, to be entirely free from that bigoted, persecuting spirit which they opposed. Religious liberty and rights of conscience were, in that dark and persecuting age, but imperfectly understood. Religious assemblies were then called by the civil magistrate; he supported their authority by the sword; they were under his controul, and in their turn, ratified his decrees. The question too often in debate was, what is the sovereign's pleasure? The influence of these things would naturally shew itself more in discipline than doctrine - hence many things therein contained that would not suit a people under no civil restraint in matters of religion, and who are at liberty to draw their systems both of doctrine and discipline from the pure fountain of divine revelation.

The old books of discipline are too severe in their spirit, too ceremonious in their form, too disproportionate in the objects of their censure, and the style in which they are written is almost obsolete, on account of the improvements made in the English language, since the period in which they were written. Witness the severity of the acts of uniformity, under all pain, civil and ecclesiastic - witness their forms of citations, and the greater excommunication, prescribed in Stewart's collections - witness the disproportionate notice taken of Sabbath-breaking and fornication, compared with drunkenness, tale-bearing, profane swearing, and other crimes. In these we also find a complication of things civil and religious, such as the question concerning the right of the King's commissioner to sit in general assembly - the right of patrons and patronage, &c. all which are by no means applicable to the present state of our churches; which considerations are sufficient to convince every normal and unprejudiced mind that alterations were necessary in the discipline of the church. Having endeavored to explain some necessary things relative to the church of Christ we proceed -

Secondly, To recommend to you the observation and practice of a variety of things, all which appear to have considerable weight, and may terminate in your advantage. You may not think them absolutely necessary; but must acknowledge they are altogether expedient. They might be enforced with arguments; but these would swell this letter beyond its intended bounds. We therefore hope that the bare mentioning of them, with the due exercise of your own thoughts, will be sufficient, and answer the designed purpose. Live within your income. To do this is a duty you owe to yourselves, your families and the commonwealth. If any of you have contracted the ruinous habit of unnecessary expenses, endeavor immediately to retrench them. Contract no extravagant debts. Be sparing of foreign luxuries; they will keep the balance of trade against us, and make our country poor; therefore prefer manufactures of your own country, and the productions of your own industry and your own land. Seasonably prepare your wills and testaments, which ought to be reviewed and ratified as changes and occurrences may take place, at least once on every year. Clearly ascertain your property in the worldly estates you hold, that your

posterity, as well as yourselves, may be as little involved as possible in litigation and law ; and in order to that , let your debts and credits be fairly stated, that recourse may be had to your papers when you are dead and gone. Keep your congregational and other public accounts in as good a state as possible. A neglect in these cases is often the source of much confusion and uneasiness. Dispense with the use of ardent spirits, at marriages, funerals especially, times of harvest and other occasions, where it has been found pernicious to the peace, health and morals of mankind. Train up your children in some honest occupation, and think not that binding them to a trade is a degradation. May we ever to see the time, when he only will be considered a free citizen, who earns his living by some lawful employment, and when parents, who teach their children nothing but idleness, will, by the laws of the states, be deprived of the government of them altogether. Accustom your children, therefore, to the habits of industry, economy, temperance, and subordination; refrain from vagrant, idle and disorderly companions. "He that walketh with wise men, shall be wise; but the companion of fools shall be destroyed." Revere the government under which you live and by which you are protected; teach your children the constitution of your country; inform them that we and they with us, were in the design of our enemies, pharaoh's bond-men ;and that the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. Conscientiously abide by all the just and equitable laws of your country. Pay a due respect to all officers of justice and good order, as ministers of God for good to you. Attend punctually, as the law points out, on all military duty, and consider it your duty to obey; be punctual in attending on all public elections for representatives, and give your votes for those who appear to you to be best qualified to serve you in that station. How surprising and inconsistent is the conduct of those who have struggled through a war of so many years duration, to obtain certain privileges, and will not at this time spend one day in the year at our places of election. Discharge your public dues with punctuality and without murmuring; assume no part in riots or quarrels: have as little intercourse as possible with the licentious and disorderly; either in church or state; furnish your families with as great a variety as possible, of approved religious books; appropriate a reasonable portion of your income to the building and repairing of churches , and to the education of poor and pious youths, who may possess promising talents for the ministry of the gospel; countenance and promote as much as possible all schools and seminaries of learning from the most private up to those of the most public and important nature; diffuse your benefice to the poor and needy around you and with hearts filled with benevolence to your fellow-creatures, endeavor to honour God in the use of that worldly substance with which, in the bounty of his providence, he has blessed you.

We recommend to all vacant societies, who expect stated supplies from our several presbyteries, to form themselves into congregations regularly organized, and to elect such of their members as may appear best qualified to act as ruling elders, and to apply to their respective presbyteries for ordination; that they may be helps to us in government, and be able to act in a judicial capacity, in those societies in which they are appointed; to take up regular subscriptions and annual collections for all necessary purposes; to erect and put in order suitable houses for the worship of God, and to obtain legal right for the lots of ground on which they are built; on order to prevent those difficulties that might hereafter ensue, by a transfer made by the present proprietors to persons of other

denominations. We further recommend to vacant congregations, to apply to their respective presbyteries for congregational catechising, and the administration of the Lord's Supper; and although the former cannot be expected to be as largely entered into, not the latter as frequently administered as in our stated charges, yet we do not wish that any of the churches under our care should be altogether destitute of those ordinances which have been salutary to god's people, in all ages of the christian church. We sincerely lament the destitute situation of our vacancies - so many in number - some of them remote from us - and so few to supply them. We are sensible that your destitute situation may sometimes induce you to invite and encourage strangers to administer ordinances among you..., before you are sufficiently acquainted with their characters, abilities and principles. - But as you have taken the members of the presbyteries of South-Carolina, Abingdon and Orange for your spiritual guides, permit us to inform you that these are the channels through which you ought only to receive them. - God forbid that we should desire to prevent you from hearing a single sermon from any one, of whatever denomination, whom Christ hath sent to preach the gospel, or that we should wish any vacancy to adhere to us one moment longer than is consistent with their advantage; but we beseech you to conduct orderly with regard to strangers. Look at the fate of some unhappy congregations who have been too rash already in their conduct toward them. He must be a very ignorant man, or a very bad man, who cannot pass for one day among any people; and think not because a man may please you for a sermon or two, that he will always continue to merit your approbation. We do not mean to hinder you from occasionally hearing strangers of any regular denomination of christians, who are found in the faith provided they be not of ill fame. Every man ought to be considered as a good man, until he be known to be bad; nor should an evil report be believed, whoever may be the author, till we are certain it is true. But we would dissuade you from encouraging strangers to settle among you for any considerable time, as your teachers, who refuse to cultivate an acquaintance with your respective presbyteries, who may appear to be more intent on making parties than christians; or who cannot produce proper testimonials from some regular church in America. Foreign credentials may be either forfeited or forged; and it may be difficult, if not impracticable, to be informed of the one or detect the other; and every man of a fair character and honest heart, will readily submit to those rules established in the church of Christ, by attaching himself to that church and subjecting himself to that body of ministers with whom his religious sentiments may correspond. We solemnly call upon all, especially the rulers of our vacant congregations, to be cautious in this matter; and we think it the duty of the private members to leave the direction of it to the rulers of their respective societies. We also call upon all ruling elders and representatives in our vacant churches to be careful in the admission of members to the sealing ordinances of the gospel; to see that not only the profane and grossly ignorant be prohibited from them, but also those, whatever may be their moral characters; who acknowledge to be habitual absentees from the public worship of God, or who omit his worship in their families. We exhort all under our care to cultivate christian charity and forbearance toward all men, and especially to those you belong to the household of faith; to prevent and remove as much as possible every ground of unchristian animosity, that no occasion may be given for enemies to reproach the cause of religion, nor unnecessary trouble given to the rulers of the church. But when it is known that any

member of the church has been guilty of immorality, which, if it should pass without censure, the cause of religion would suffer, we earnestly recommend that it be made known to the rulers of the church, least, by a criminal silence, those who know it, become partakers of other men's sins; and where it seems necessary to give such information, let the glory of God, the honor of religion and the good of the offender be the leading motives. But let not such information be delayed until immediately before the party offending may expect to be admitted to sealing ordinances, provided it can be made soon, in order to prevent those difficulties which must inevitably occur, both in respect to the parties themselves, and the judicatory to which they are subject.

Brethren, we beg leave to call your attention, in the recommendatory way, to one subject more, to which, if you properly attend cannot fail to conduce to the advantage both of religious and civil society - we mean literature. It has been the object of all wise nations to promote the education of youth. The Jews, at a very early period, had their schools of the prophets. The apostles and primitive christians had their gymnasias, or places of education for young men, who designed to preach the gospel. It would be endless to enumerate all the exertions that have been made by nations, societies, and individuals to promote the improvement of the human mind; nor do we believe it is without weighty reasons, that our southern legislatures have not paid more attention to that important subject, when we consider that complication of civil and military business in which they have been necessarily involved. But we hope the time is not far off, when they will give us more than charters for colleges and academies, of which, perhaps, they have been too liberal.

Certain it is that literature is not encouraged in these southern states, equal to its importance - too much learning and not half enough - too many seats of learning, and not one properly furnished. Should we be remiss in this matter, and the northern states promote it with zeal and vigour, as it is well known they do, is it possible we will maintain that importance in the view of the political and literary world that will be productive either of our honour or advantage. This, with many other considerations that will readily occur to you, should excite you to pay friendly attention to the education of youth, that their minds may be enlightened, and their hearts formed to religion and virtue, and may be capable of conducting the affairs of church and state, when you shall be laid in the dust. To live long, those of us who are now on the stage of active life, have no reason to expect. It ought then to be our care so to act, that posterity may bless our memories after we are gone down to the grave, and the eye which hath seen us shall see us no more. We therefore recommend to you all, to confer with one another on this interesting subject, and with one heart, if you regard your posterity, to take without delay, such measures as may appear best calculated to promote the interest of learning. We proceed -

Thirdly. In this synodical capacity, with hearts and tongues united, to address you on some subjects that are of unceasing importance at all times and in all places. - They may be reduced to these two - personal and social duties. Personal religion is in the first place necessary, because it only can lay a solid and permanent foundation for the performance of any duty, whether personal or social. The limits of a single letter will not allow us to enter largely into this very interesting subject. Perhaps it may be sufficient to say, that personal religion consists in a heart

regenerated by the holy spirit of God, the exercise of evangelical repentance, and of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; and these expressing themselves in a life of goodness, righteousness and sobriety, or in an inward esteem and reverence for God, and an outward regard for his worship and law. Without these, dear brethren, without the love of God shed abroad in your hearts, you cannot possibly be either safe or happy - you cannot have communion with a holy God here, nor enjoy him in the world to come. Suffer us to tell you what the Lord God himself hath said: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Unless the living and divine principles of faith, repentance, and love be implanted in your hearts by the good spirit and grace of God, you cannot enjoy the communion of the saints in this world, nor the presence of God in a world of glory. For God's sake, and for the salvation of your own souls, receive this truth, "he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved, but he that believeth not, shall be damned." depend not on outward profession, but remember that the temper of mind is the standard in the sight of God. The necessity of the alternate exercises of faith and repentance, through the whole course of the christian's life - the necessity of these graces acting and re-acting on each other - viewing alternately our sins and our saviour, our savior and our sins - the malady and the cure, the cure and the malady - the necessity of a renewed heart and a progressive work of sanctification is founded both in the nature of God and man. This necessity grows out of the divine nature and attributes; and the depravity of the human heart calls loudly for the above mentions exercises. It grows out of all the attributes of God, but is especially connected with his holiness - that holiness which glows, and burns, and blazes and consumes - "our God is a consuming fire." This attribute is the glory of the divine glory; it is resounded through the universe both in acts of mercy and judgment. Holy! holy! holy! is the unceasing and active voice of heaven. Holy! holy! holy! is the suffering language of Tophet. Every cry and groan from those dreary regions, says, holy art thou Lord God Almighty ! The garden of Eden, the plains of Sodom, Mount Sinai, and Mount Calvary all speak the same language; and will not man believe their united reports ! Now this holy Lord God Almighty hath, in all his truth and terrible majesty, raised up his right hand, and said, yea sworn, that unbelievers " shall not enter into his rest - that there shall not enter into Heaven any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever work abomination or maketh a lie."

The necessity of regeneration, or personal religion, is also deeply rooted in the depravity of human nature; as in the nature of God himself. "You must be born again." Were God to dispense with his holiness - to break both word and oath - to take up the unholy to Heaven, and place him in the rays of the sun of righteousness - to crop the flowers of Paradise, and drink the streams of love; all in vain; that sun to him would lose its brightness, the flowers waste their fragrance, the songs of the Heavenly host be grating to his ears, and rivers of pleasure flow in vain. All these, and even the presence of God himself, with the addition of the smiles of his countenance, would yield no happiness to the unrenewed heart.

Is it not surprising, that man, otherwise sensible, will never compare their feelings here with those they may expect hereafter ? A bible and a ball - a church and a tavern- a burying ground and a race track - a sacramental table and a gaming table; set these in competition, call on conscience, and one would think the work were

done. "What concord hath Christ with Beliel?" Some may perhaps say the contrast is unfair. Modes and manners, the indulgence of a few passions, relaxation, innocent amusements, unguarded hours, &c. are too trivial to be made the criterion of personal and real religion. Let us rather judge how this matter stands from our daily stated employments or regular occupations in life. We acknowledge that these things may appear trifles, light as the feather which flies before the wind; but they are trifles which like feathers, may discover to you the direction of the wind, and point out the course in which your immortal souls are travelling, and what will be the end. Our Lord took notice of the Jewish phylacteries; and it is likely that to them this appeared a trifle; nor could the border of a garment be of much consequence in its own nature, but it discovered the prevailing temper and turn of the mind, and what objects most engaged the attention.

Dear brethern, we beseech you to compare the life and spirit of, your actions, with the spirit and genius of the gospel. the life of its author and his followers, and examine if the same mind be in you, which also was in Christ Jesus; for if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his. Do not rashly conclude, that there is no reality in religion, because some of you, who may read this letter, have never felt the power of it in your own souls. And if you be found wanting, when thus weighed in the balance, rest not, for God's sake, and the sake of your own souls, rest not we pray you, until you obtain some comfortable hopes of your personal religion, and an interest in the favour of God, by faith in Jesus Christ.

When the principles of grace are implanted in the heart they will soon scatter their influence and become diffusive; as a stone, falling into the lake, spreads the circling waves wider and still wider; so personal religion will catch from heart to heart, spread and become social, and still more social, and at last diffuse itself to such extent, till the earth be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. And can we, brethren, behold so many precious souls tottering, as it were, on the brink of eternal perdition, and not unite our prayers to God for a time refreshing from his presence.

We, then, as ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, pray you, in this united capacity, in Christ's stead, that you be reconciles to God; give him no rest until Christ, by his spirit, be found in you. Then only will you be fitted to live; then only will you be prepared to die; and will know, to your happy and everlasting experience, that in keeping God's commands there is a great reward - then will you be prepared to perform your personal duties.

These consist in preparing the heart for communion with God, living near to him in the secret as well as the more public duties of religion, reading and meditating on his word; the exercise of fervent, secret prayer keeping the heart mortifying sin, and crucifying the flesh, with affections and lusts; exercising moderation in the use of meat, drink, recreation, and all other gifts of providence; and improving those means that God hath appointed for preserving our life, health, and reputation. In fine, denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living righteous, sober and godly lives. before God as well as before the world.

These things we barely mention and pass by. being well persuaded,

that those whose hearts have been renewed by regenerating grace, will make them their study, and reduce them to practice. And those whom God and their own conscience know to be living in the neglect of any or all of these duties, ought to note it as a melancholy fact, that they are in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity.

Having addressed you on the subject of personal duties, exhorted you to secure through grace, the salvation of your own souls, we come now to mention some things respecting relative or social duties.

A family was the first, and is the foundation of all other societies; and husband and wife the first of all family relations. We do, in the language of the Apostle Paul, exhort you who are husbands "to love your wives, and be not bitter against them - Wives submit yourselves to your own husbands, as is fit in the Lord." Remember, that your plighted vows are registered in Heaven; you have joined hands, let your hearts be united. Encourage and support each other in your journey through life; and, with a happy union of souls, keep steadily in view that abode of endless joy in Heaven, where "they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in Heaven.

Cultivate family peace - "See that ye fall not out by the way." It is good and pleasant for all; but oh, how good and pleasant for husband and wife to dwell together in unity! Without unity between the heads of a family, the relative duties can never be discharged; it is of the last importance with regard to the education of your children, and greatly contributes to your own improvement in virtue and religion; and finally family peace is attended with a degree of pleasure and satisfaction, which nothing under Heaven can afford but itself; with it there will be little wanting; without it, and possessing all the world besides, you will be poor indeed - "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith." If there be a person under Heaven who deserves the contempt of men and the displeasure of the Almighty, it is that person, whether male or female, who is the author of family discord and contention. - In order to obtain and perpetuate family peace observe this short rule "love one another with pure hearts fervently."

When a family live together in peace, it is one of the brightest images of Heaven that this troublesome world can afford; and the contrast is a terrible and striking picture of that place of blackness darkness and tempest; where there is nothing to be seen but sights of woe - all confusion and eternal pain. "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God, and cursed are the peace-breakers, for they must be accounted the children of Satan. - Live in peace, and the God of love and peace be with you."

If God hath been pleased to bless you with a number of olive plants around your table, unite your exertions in nursing them up for God, and for the good of mankind.

Delightful task ! to rear the tender thought; To teach the young idea how to shoot; To pour the fresh instructions o'er the mind.

Oh, parents ! remember your obligations both natural and voluntary, to walk in the ways of piety yourselves, and to bring up

your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Consider that the testimony of a good conscience can never be supported, unless it be by a life of practical godliness, and the faithful discharge of relative duties; that children, even in early life, become sensible to their parents' obligations to regard both their education and morals. - And although children from their early proneness to walk in the ways of impiety, may be well pleased for the present with the liberty of an unlawful indulgence; yet they will secretly blame their parents for granting it, and in the end despise both them and their authority; and consider what pernicious effect it must have on their minds to see you passing by, with negligence, those important duties which you owe to God and your families, or walking in ways inconsistent with them. Consider that example is the best instructor, and that the best precepts will probably be inefficacious, unless they be manifested in conversation.

Be pleased farther to consider, how great may be your influence over your children's minds; you are their natural guardians, and have usually the highest place in their affections, they will therefore be most easily influenced by your counsels, and disposed to follow your example; and as the best means commonly procure the most desirable end, so diligence in instruction, and godliness in practice, will probably obtain the beginning and farther progress of religion in your families.

We therefore exhort all who have the government of families to walk worthy of the christian character. Consider how much with the blessing of Heaven, you may do to make our work pleasing and profitable; and how happily you may unite your influence with ours, in promoting the common cause of religion.

Parent, be not so inconsistent with your baptismal profession as to refuse the other seal of the covenant of grace. The sacraments have been both instituted by the same God; they are both seals of the same covenant; they both require faith in Christ as the term, and have been when thus received, the means of communion with Christ, and channels by which he has often conveyed spiritual life to his people.

But parents and heads of families, think it not surprising if we inform you, that God hath committed others to your care besides your natural offspring, in the welfare of whose souls you are also deeply interested, and whose salvation you are bound to endeavor to promote - we mean your slaves: poor creatures ! shall they be bound for life, and their owners never once attempt to deliver their souls from the bondage of sin, nor point them to eternal freedom, through the blood of the son of God ! On this subject we beg leave to submit to your consideration the conduct of Abraham the father of the faithful, through whose example is communicated unto you the commandment of God Gen xviii. xix "For I know him (says God) that he will command his children, and his household after him, that they shall kept the ways of the Lord, to do justice and judgement."

Masters and servants attend to your duty in the express language of the Holy Ghost - "servants obey your masters in all things; not with eye-service as men pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God; and whatsoever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not to man. And you masters render to your servants their due, knowing that your master is also in Heaven, neither is there respect of persons

with him."

And let those who govern, and those who are governed, make the object of living in this world, to prepare to meet your God and Judge, when all shall stand on a level before his bar. and receive their decisive sentence according to the deeds done in the body.

Children, you have read the duties and obligations of your parents - is it possible they owe so many to you, and you owe none to them ? "Obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right: honour thy father and thy mother, for this is the first commandment with promise." But, children, is your God to be forgotten ? the support of your infancy, the guardian of your childhood, and the protector of your riper years ! surely no. "Remember your creator in the days of your youth. enter not in the path of the wicked; go not in the way of evil men; avoid it, pass by it, turn from it, pass away; for youthful lusts, which war against the soul; have no fellowship with unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

Young people, we exhort you to be sober-minded; you are our hope both for church and state, when we shall be numbered with our fathers in the dust, only lips dozed in silence, and our voices reach you no more. We beseech you, by the mercies of God, that you remember your obligations to your creator; and also to your dear parents, who have solemnly devoted you in baptism; and remember, through them, your own obligations and vows to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live righteously, soberly and godly in this present world. Remember that this is the most favourable time to obtain the grace of God, and to secure an interest in his favour, before the habits of vice become rooted in the heart, and the mind entangled with love of pleasure. May God direct this truth to your hearts. that there is no solid pleasure for the present, nor foundation for future happiness, without an interest in Christ; and that wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace.

Hasten then young men and women, hasten to the school of Christ; learn of him, for he is meek and lowly, and ye shall find rest to your souls; manifest your attachment to the cause of the Redeemer, by a constant attendance on his ordinances; shew the world your adherence to him, by appearing among his people at his holy table, and learn to despise that reproach which others cast on you for his sake; he is the best master, his service is perfect freedom, and his wages honour, glory and immortal life. "And whoever shall be ashamed of him and of his words in this wicked and adulterous generation, of him shall the son of man be ashamed, when he comes in his own, and in his father's glory, with the holy angels."

Servants be willing to receive instruction, and discourage not your masters by your stubbornness or aversion. Remember the interest is your own, and, if you be wife, it will be for your own good; spend the sabbath in learning to read, and in teaching your young ones, instead of rambling around from place to place; a few years will give you many sabbaths, which if rightly improved, will be sufficient for the purpose. Attend also on public worship when you have opportunity, and behave there with decency and good order.

Were these relative duties conscientiously practised by husbands

and wives, children and servants, how pleasing would be the sight expressing, by your conduct, pious Joshua's resolution, "as for me and my house we will serve the Lord."

The next branch of relative or social religion is that which arises from the several churches or religious societies to which you you may respectively belong. One word on this subject will be sufficient, after what has been said in the recommendatory way: our stated charges we have weekly opportunities of addressing; and were the churches in general to comply with the mode of administering the Lord's supper, prescribed by the late synod of New York and Philadelphia, it would put it in our power to visit the vacancies more frequently in that way, and who does not see that this would have a greater tendency to cherish the life of religion in our vacancies, than only a sermon or two in the course of a year.

The last branch of relative duty is national.: this, like the former, grows out of family relation; for nations are but a collection of families, and the families under our care form a part of the nation to which we belong. We say to you, in the language of the Holy Spirit, by the Apostle Paul "let every soul be subject to the higher powers; for the powers that be, are ordained of God." And considering the present state of our public affairs, we beseech you to study those things that make for peace; promote and preserve unanimity, and finally bring forward a permanent union, on the broad and solid basis of civil and religious liberty; remember that union will make us happy at home, and respected abroad - in a word, remember that "righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people."

We would as a synod, commit and commend you and all men to God, and to his holy protection. We beseech you to look up to the king of nations, and believe in his providence; he sitteth king and shall forever; see that you observe his laws; call down by frequent, ardent prayer, the blessing of Heaven on yourselves and families, the church in general, and the nation to which you belong; and be not unmindful of past favours, unite in prayer to God for the increase of the Mediator's kingdom, that he would be graciously pleased to send: his gospel, in its power and splendor, to the most distant parts of the earth and bring heathen nations to know the truth as it is in Jesus.

To magistrates we say "hear you the causes between your brethern, and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him; seek judgement, relieve the oppressed. plead for the widow. You shall not respect persons in judgment; but you shall hear the small as well as the great; you shall not be afraid of the face of man, for the judgment is the Lord's." Therefore be faithful in the execution of your work - discourage vice - encourage virtue - and bear not the sword in vain. Manifest your attachment to religion, and good morals, by a conversation becoming the gospel, and the impartial administration of justice.

There is yet another subject to which we wish to call the attention of all, and especially the people at large, as the matter rests more immediately with them. The subject is the manner in which matrimony is celebrated among us. We know it is delicate, and that we hazard the suspicion of mercenary views; but as we sometimes meet with such charges without cause, and as we are conscious of the purity of

our motives in this particular, we take the liberty to tell you, that it is your duty to comply with the laws and regulations of your country, and procure either licence or publication (we recommend the latter) previously to marriage; a neglect of this must introduce a confusion into both church and state. We also think it your duty, as good citizens, to make application to the ministers of the gospel to celebrate the rites, when they can be obtained. We take the liberty to say this, because it is well known, that the perquisites of marriage are no adequate compensation for the labour attending it. We are very far from saying that marriage may not be celebrated with authenticity by a magistrate. We also say that the time has been, before a ministry was settled amongst us, when marriage by the magistrate was unavoidable and necessary; and we believe that there may now be many places in our bounds, where marriage by the magistrate may still be rendered necessary, by want of clergymen; but in other cases and among all civilized, and even barbarous nations, marriage, though originating from civil usage and custom, and by those who administered in holy things, authorized and called by the civil usages and laws, for that purpose. The reasons are obvious. Marriage is a solemn transaction - one of the most solemn in life. The celebration should not, therefore, be made a frolic or farce, but attended with solemn prayer to God, and a serious advice to the parties. By whom shall this be done? By men unaccustomed to public prayer and exhortation, or by those whose very office calls them to these exercises in public? Surely no man will hesitate for the proper answer.

Neither the Westminster assembly, nor the Synod of New York and Philadelphia have given us a form, and it is not easy for every magistrate to turn the directory into a form. The more sensible magistrate will not presume to extemporize, but will either select that part from the common prayer book, which may be applicable, (and even this selection is not very easy) or hurry along with the bare ceremony, without either prayer or exhortation, and without that decency and dignity that becomes the institution. The more injudicious have often brought contempt on both marriage and magistracy, by their attempts to give an exhortation and prayer. Upon the whole, a most solemn institution of Heaven is often turned into a ridicule, and the giddy youth who attend are more entertained by the manner of the marriage than by anything else exhibited on the occasion. It is justice to say, that there are some magistrates who celebrate the rites with becoming dignity; but their number is small, and the common practice must have a silent sapping influence on the sacredness of marriage, and the peace and good order of families and nation.

For the sake of the magistrates who may still be under the necessity of performing the ceremony, we have turned the whole directory, as given by the late synod of New York and Philadelphia, into a form, in the note below the use of which we beg leave to recommend, where a clergyman cannot be procured to officiate.

While we are speaking thus plainly and honestly to others, we pray God, that we be not unmindful of our own duty, as pastors, husbands, fathers, masters, neighbors and citizens. There is no duty we have recommended to you, to the performance of which we are not bound in a most eminent degree.

Let the ministers of the gospel of all denominations feed the flock of Christ, of which God hath made them the overseers. Let them study to be workmen who need not be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth: let them be examples to their flocks in word, in charity, in conversation, in faith, in purity; and not think it hard to be servants to their people for Jesus' sake; let them take heed to themselves, and to their doctrine, and continue in the work; for in so doing God hath promised that he will both save themselves, and them that hear them. And, while they press others to travel the way to Zion, let their conduct loudly speak, follow me ! Let them of all denominations cling together like a band of brothers, to promote the same glorious and common cause, and testify to the world that Christ is not divided. Animated with your master's promise - "Lo I am with you to the end of the world." Offer your services cheerfully as faithful soldiers in the great campaign, under the banner of the captain of your salvation; quit yourselves like men; be determined in the conflict, and fight the battles of the God of armies. A crown is the prize: a seat with Jesus on the throne; be faithful unto death. "they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever; and though Israel be not granted, yet in the eyes of the Lord you shall be glorious, and when the chief shepherd shall appear, you shall receive a crown which fadeth not away!"

In one word, let ministers and people so conduct, that, when we shall be called to stand before the judgement seat of Christ, we to give an account of our stewardship, and you an account of the improvement of your privileges, we may have the heart felt pleasure to say, and you the joy to hear us pronouncing " here, are we, Lord, and the children thou hast given us, of all the number, through grace, we have lost none."

To conclude, we wish the following short sentence to be printed in capitals, and may God by his Spirit imprint it on every heart who may read it here or elsewhere - WITHOUT HOLINESS NO MAN SHALL SEE THE LORD.

That God who has so constituted human nature as to connect vital breath with animal life, hath made holiness and happiness as inseparable - hence they who would be happy, must be holy.

We would wish to add one sentence to an ungodly world, that lieth in sin. You who hear, and obey not the gospel, will be of all men the most miserable; your guilt will be great, and awful will be your destruction, if you repent not. To break the law, and reject the gospel, to step over the cross, to trample on the body of Christ, to force a passage through the broad ocean of his blood, to do despite the spirit of grace, and silence the loud cries of conscience - these are exploits of wickedness that will meet with exemplary vengeance. But is there no timely remedy? is there no balm in Gilead ? Is there no physician there ? Yes, blessed be God, there is. Let the wicked man forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the lord, and he will have mercy upon, and to our God, and he will abundantly pardon.

We will grant that most exalted station does not exempt us those duties we owe God; or that any is so remote and obscure as not

to fall under his cognizance; and that they who command the greatest degree of influence over their fellow creatures, are under the greatest obligations to promote the cause of religion and virtue, and stem the torrent of vice; seeing to whom much is given, of them much will be required; and the servant who knows his master's will and does it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.

They must be blind indeed who cannot discern that the present is a time of deafness, degeneracy and backsliding in religion, that iniquity abounds; and the love of many waxeth cold. The people of God may say with propriety and lamentation, oh, my leanness ! oh, my leanness ! and the professors of christianity wear too plainly the complexion of the men of this world. Profane swearing, uncleanness, drunkenness, the breach of the holy sabbath, horse-racing, gaming, night frolicking, and revelling, are become predominant and (what is truly to the dishonour of religion) have been done by many who call themselves the professors of christianity; who have opened their mouths to the Lord, and have yet gone back and have thus crucified the son of God afresh and have put him to open shame. Deism, universalism and many such pernicious plants have taken root among us, and are spreading in our land, daily sending forth the baleful influence, by which many have been drawn from the truth and simplicity of the gospel.

[The remaining pages are missing evidenced by a handwritten note]

(Typed from a copy of the original obtained from the Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. NC by David J. Caliri)

