

no. 4

ADDRESS

John Bowman *Secy*

OF THE

Fishback

CHURCH OF CHRIST ON MILL-STREET,

IN LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY,

TO THE

MODERATOR

OF THE

ELKHORN ASSOCIATION,



LEXINGTON, KY.

PRINTED FOR THE CHURCH, BY THOMAS T. SKILLMAN.

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1827.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The Church of Christ on Mill-Street in Lexington regrets that circumstances make it necessary, that, instead of publishing a manifesto of her order alone, she has to appear in the defence of her character against what she conceives to be injustice and injury. She designed to have published a short account of the leading features of her reformation only, but finds it necessary to blend the two subjects together. This makes the publication longer than was intended.

This information is given to advise the reader that the following pages are not made up of disputatious matter alone, that is interesting only to the parties immediately concerned, but embraces subjects of high practical consideration to the kingdom and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, the happiness of his people, and the conversion of the world.

ADDRESS, &c.



The Church of Christ on Mill Street in Lexington, to the Moderator of the Elkhorn Association.

BROTHER MODERATOR,

Through you this Church desires to address the Association over which you preside. This desire is prompted by a sense of injury and injustice, which she has received at the hands of the Association, and from a sense of duty to the Lord Jesus Christ and to herself.

Our address will be made in several sections. The minutes of the late meeting of the Association contain upon their face, in a note at the bottom of the second page, and the concluding paragraph in the sixth, expressions which we consider to be highly erroneous in themselves; and, in the latter case, reproachful and degrading to the character of this Church.

Your conduct in reference to this Church, was not only flagrantly unjust and oppressive, but was, in our judgment, a manifest outrage upon Church rights, as they stand connected with the Association.

At your late meeting in August, when this Church appeared on Saturday, by her letter and messengers, to take her seat in the Association of which she had been a member for the last nine years, you refused to receive or read her letter, or to receive or hear any thing from her messengers, because her letter was headed, "The first Baptist Church of Lexington, now denominated *The Church of Christ on Mill Street in Lexington.*" Heretofore we had been known by the name of "The first Baptist Church of Lexington" only. The name of God, or of the Lord Jesus Christ in any form of expression, composed no part of her original denomination. This we

considered an error in the denominative style of the Church, and we corrected it. This we did, from a sense of religious duty, by what we considered a lawful vote of the Church, agreeably to her rules.

In the amendment or alteration of the name, there was a minority against it, who also presented a letter to the Association under the former name. They, with their letter and messengers, were received as the Church, while this Church was rejected, without investigation, on account of the name of the Church being altered, as above suggested, from "The first Baptist Church of Lexington," to "The Church of Christ on Mill Street in Lexington."

That this Church had a right to alter or improve her denomination, and still retain her membership in the Association, if she involved no change in doctrine or ordinances, neither of which has been alleged, will appear from the following extracts from the records of the Association.

With respect to the rights, privileges, and duties of the Churches composing her body, the Association, in her Circular Letter of 1825, declared, that "it ever had been a fundamental principle with her, that the Church or Churches of Christ are independent and free, and have no authority from their Great Head," the Lord Jesus Christ, "to delegate any portion of their freedom to any individual or body of men," *not even to a Baptist Council of helps*, "and that the actual correction of every thing that is wrong in opinion, principle, or practice, and the supply of all that is wanting, must be effected in the Churches by the members acting up to their duties and privileges according to the word of God." The Association, moreover, declared in the same Letter, in reference to the necessity of reformation, that "it is manifest that the present state of religion falls very far short of the standard of the Gospel;" that "the Churches are below their privileges and duties——the members often appear but little more than formal" or nominal "professors,——we see and

feel that by the neglect of religious duties at home and in the Churches, there is a want of the life and power of the religion of Jesus Christ in the soul; and, in the same degree, there is a want of Christian comfort and happiness in professors." And, with regard to the style of address in heading of letters to the Association, she replied, in her minutes of 1826, to a query occasioned by a Church having dropped the name of *Baptist* from her denomination, and substituted the name of *Christ*, "that the practice of the Churches had been different, some styling themselves The Church of Christ, and others, The Baptist Church of Christ, and others, The Church at such a place."—At the meeting of the Association in August 1826, the Church above alluded to was received under her changed name, and the above advice was given in reference to the subject.

In addition to all this, the Association did, in her Circular Letters of 1825 and 1826, address and style the Churches composing her body, "The Churches of Christ." And the Constitution of the Association declares that it was formed for "the comfort and happiness of *the Churches of Christ*." Notwithstanding all this authority of principle, example, and advice, this Church was rejected or disowned by the Association, as having forfeited her membership in the Association by changing her name, without being permitted to utter a word by her letter or messengers in explanation or in justification of what she had done!—While you thus acted towards this Church, you received the letter and messengers of a schismatick minority of this Church, as the Church, without any inquiry being made into their order or standing, simply because they presented themselves under the name of "The first Baptist Church of Lexington." [We term the minority a schismatick minority, on two accounts. 1. Because they separated themselves violently from this Church, after she assumed the denomination and style of "The Church of Christ." And, 2ndly. Because, agreeably to their own vote in Decem-

ber 1825, they retain a name which is unauthorized by Scripture, and which is divided or distinguished from the name of the Church of God in the Gospel in its denominations, and is *condemned* and *forbidden*. All of which will appear in the next section.] And thus you find yourself in the strange attitude of maintaining and defending a Baptist Church, as different from, and in direct opposition to, a Church of Christ! We cannot discover the reason of this, unless it be found in the sentiment which some entertain, and not a few we believe, that Baptism is the bond of Church union and fellowship in a Baptist Church, while we maintain that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, with love and obedience to him according to the Gospel, are the principles of Church union and fellowship in the Church of Christ. In this system of union and fellowship, Baptism is included, but is not permitted to possess the place of the name of Christ, to give name or character to the Church, more than any other ordinance or duty.

Perhaps the above is the reason why we frequently hear members of Baptist Churches in the West free to declare that they know that they are Baptists, but do not know that they are Christians; for Baptism is made the mould of their character, as it is the principle of their union and fellowship.

What we have stated above occurred on Saturday.

You allege in the note at the bottom of the second page, in reference to Saturday's business, that the two letters, one from this Church and the other from the first Baptist Church, being presented, "a motion was made to read both letters, which was overruled; the causes of the division of that Church, being set forth in discussion. And on motion, the letter, with the original name and style of the Church, was received by a unanimous vote, and the messengers therein named took their seats." The assertion that "*the causes of the division of the Church being set forth in discussion,*" is totally erroneous; and if intended to induce a belief that the state of the Church, which we considered called for reformation,

or the measure adopted by the Church to effect it, in which the change of name was only a part, were in *any degree* set forth in discussion, truth compels us to assert that it is a flagrant misrepresentation; and is designed, if there be any design in it, to deceive the Churches and the publick at large. For you know, as do all the members of the Association who were present, and as do all the spectators, that we were not permitted to say or read a word in explanation of the subject, or in defence of what we had done, nor did any one for us.

Having rejected our letter and messengers on account of the name of Christ on Saturday, with many reproachful remarks, made particularly by Elder Vardeman against us, it was reasonable to expect that you would have permitted us to pass without further observation. In this, however, we were mistaken.—On Monday the subject was called up again “*by the statement*” which concludes your minutes, and which you profess unanimously to have adopted; than which a more erroneous and unjust representation we have not seen made in any case. It is as follows.

“On motion the following statement was unanimously adopted, viz.

“It is with deep and sincere regret that this Association has learned that an unhappy difference has taken place in the first Baptist Church at Lexington, so as to rend that Church as it were asunder, on account of an attempt made by part of the Church, lead on by Dr. James Fishback, to change her denominative name. The difficulty has run so high that both parties claim to be the church—and have exercised in distinct and separate bodies the privileges and business of Churches; so that Dr. Fishback and his party have excluded 7 of the most prominent members opposed to them; and those opposed to Fishback and his party proceeded to exclude Dr. Fishback and his party to the number of 42 members. This association disclaims all interference in the internal government of the Churches composing her body. But being satisfied, that the first Baptist Church of Lexington, is the regular church at that place, received her letter to the exclusion of that presented by Dr. Fishback and his party;

and they would earnestly advise the first Baptist Church at Lexington to use her best exertions, in charity, to restore fellowship and harmony in the Church; and the Association would also most solemnly warn that part of the Church attached to Dr. Fishback, of the awful danger and alarming tendency of causing divisions in society by the introduction of a system of things by which the name and character of the Baptist denomination would be essentially changed, and we adjure them in love to return to the Church from which they have rent themselves."

Compare what you have said in this paper, of your *professed* "deep and sincere regret," and of "the awful danger and alarming tendency of a system of things by which the name and character of the Baptist denomination would be essentially changed," by denominating this church a church of Christ instead of a Baptist church, with the extracts above exhibited from your own minutes and from the constitution of the Elkhorn Association itself, and tell us, Were you really sincere in using this language of sorrow and of awful danger and alarm? Or was it not rather intended to cover in some degree the glaring injustice that this church received from you?

During the many passionate and opprobrious remarks which were made while this subject was under consideration on Monday, you continued the seal upon our lips—you not only injured and insulted us, but forbid us to complain.—A Spanish Inquisition in our land could have done no more. You permitted our motives, conduct and character to be assailed with asperity and rudeness, not only with impunity, but with apparent applause, particularly by Elder Vardeman, who was the most prominent leader in this strange business, as he had been the principle adviser of the minority of this church, and promoter of division and strife since her April meeting. He, after having employed much invective against us, by which he seemed to think he had succeeded in the Association, to disgrace us beyond the hope of recovery, and to have deprived us of the fellowship and love, and even of the common

hospitality of all Baptist christians, railed upon us in the following style: "Where now are these Mill-street christians! Let them seek an asylum where they can find one!" This scornful railing reminded some of us who were present, of the scene that was acted at the cross when the Saviour was suspended upon it, and brought forcibly to our recollection a few of the first verses in the second Psalm, concluding with the 6th: "*yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion,*" notwithstanding their raging and vain imaginations.—Yes, we were reminded of these things, and repeat them without designing to apply them to poor brother Vardeman. Could he have known our hearts, or have been acquainted with our motives in what we had done, or have felt the consolation and happiness we felt, he would have been at no loss to know where we find an asylum, under the peltings of so much unchristian feeling and rudeness as we experienced from him and others in the defence of the name of Baptist in opposition to that of Christ. He would have known that "the name of the Lord is a strong tower,—the righteous runneth into it and is safe." Yes, we have found the word of God verified: "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ happy are ye, for the Spirit of God and of glory resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified." While we have had the frowns and the reproaches of such Baptist brethren as Elder Vardeman for the name of Christ upon us, we have enjoyed the smiles of God in our souls, and have felt a spirit of forgiveness towards them.

In what we have said we do not intend to include or to censure all the members of the Association or the churches composing that body. A very few leaders, in our opinion, who have been *bad counsellors* and mere *partisans*, have caused the *continuance* of the division and strife, and have *aggravated* all the errors and evils of which we complain, and for the most part are *themselves* the authors of them.

The churches, we are persuaded, cannot approve the con-

duct of the Association, when they are informed of the real nature and state of the case.

We were surprised and sorry at seeing the ease and willingness with which our brother Jacob Creath, Sen. lent himself to the work of oppression and denunciation. In his accustomed style of military eloquence, he charged us, in denominating this church a church of Christ, with having "tore down the Baptist flag contrary to the Bible!" The latter part of the expression excited some interest. We hoped to have heard him point to the paragraph in the Bible that would justify the assertion. But when asked for the authority of a Baptist church, he declined an answer, as he did to the three following questions: Whether or not John the Baptist ever formed a church? How long it had been since any church was called a Baptist church? And whether or not the majority of a church, acting agreeably to the rules of the church, could be guilty of schism in adopting any measure? as was the case with this church in changing her name.

We have sometimes heard Brother Creath eloquent in exhibiting the colours of the cross when preaching, but in his address at the Association he would seem to have given some reason to fear that this was only a sort of *parade day pulpit theme*, while the *Baptist flag* is the object of his constant, every day care and concern; and, of course, that *Christianity* is only *periodical*, while *Baptism* is the *order of every day*.—Is not this too much the state of the religion and of the churches of the present time, and which the Association, in her circular letter of 1825, said demanded reformation?

After you determined to expose us in your statement on Monday, you became concerned about the evidence by which you should sustain the things contained in it, and called for the members of a *committee of helps*, which had been convened without our knowledge or consent, to give testimony. This, however, was waved for that which was considered still better, viz. the written report of that council, which you thought

would be quite sufficient to justify your statement, especially the assertion in it, "being satisfied that the first Baptist Church of Lexington," meaning the minority of this church, "is the regular church at that place, we received her letter to the exclusion of that presented by Dr. Fishback and his party." And being thus satisfied, you proceeded to the solemn warning you addressed to the party, as you call them, attached to Dr. Fishback, of "the awful danger and alarming tendency of causing divisions in society by the introduction of *a system of things* by which the name and character of the Baptist denomination would be essentially changed."—After which you advise us "in love to return to the church from which we have rent ourselves." In a previous part of your statement you allege that the rent was the consequence of "an *attempt* made by *part of the Church*, led on by Dr. Fishback, to change the denominative name of the church." Although that council was called by the advice of Elder Vardeman to the minority, without our knowledge or consent, and against the rules of this church, to whom we submitted nothing for their judgment and advice; and although their written statement and advice is fraught with error, which we will hereafter show; yet, that very written report, on which you professed to rely as the best evidence in the case, informed you that the name of the church had been *actually* changed, that the *attempt* made was a *successful* one, notwithstanding the council thought it ill-advised and improper:—in which opinion, however, this church, "which is independent and free, and has no authority from her Great Head to delegate any portion of her freedom to any individual or body of men," as was declared by the Association in 1825, and which she did not pretend to delegate, differed with the council, and considered it *well-advised, proper, and absolutely necessary*. That paper, moreover, states, "the Church should have *reconsidered* the vote adopting the preamble and resolutions by which the covenant and name was changed, when forty-nine

of her members asked a reconsideration." What! *reconsider* a measure that had never been *considered*! Thus your own *best* evidence proves the name of the church was changed—and we assert that it never has been reconsidered; *nor did the forty-nine members, or any number of them, ever apply for a reconsideration of it.*—The minority broke off directly and violently from the church at the April meeting, and never has submitted to the act of the church, or applied for a revision of it. This will appear hereafter. And yet you were satisfied that the minority was the regular church at Lexington!

Thus you perceive how altogether misplaced and frivolous your affected solemn warning to us is, and how preposterous and absurd it was for you to exhort us to *return* to the church from which you allege we had *rent* ourselves, when the imputation of our having done so is itself untrue, and is a calumny, and falls with all the force of truth and merited rebuke upon the minority whom you received as the church, and upon yourself for receiving them.

It has been very industriously reported by Elder Vardeman and some others, that the council of helps had settled the difficulty in the church, and therefore "the Association, which has no power over the churches, had nothing to do with it." This is said to justify the violent procedure of the Association. But there is not a word of truth in it. The Association declared in her circular letter of 1825, that she "has power to regulate herself in her associate capacity," and of course to preserve all the rights of the churches as they stand connected with her, and are members of her body.

But let us see what the council *pretended* to do.

The council of helps were called, as above suggested, for the purpose of sustaining the minority of this church in defiance of her authority, and not only without the knowledge or consent of this church, but in violation of her rules. This will appear in a subsequent section. We did not therefore sub-

mit any matter or thing appertaining to the rights or the interests of this church to their judgment or advisement. We gave them information to enable them to understand the subject, and that they might know that they were altogether an *ex-parte* council, and were not authorized to sit by the consent of this church to advise about her concerns.

We informed that council that "all the difficulties that existed could be settled by the disaffected members of the church getting into a good state of religious feeling, which would be effected more readily by the friendly and religious co-operation of Brother Vardeman, than by their agency; and suggested that uniting in prayer to God for instruction and direction and in friendly conferences, would aid the object." These things we communicated to them by way of hints, in a written statement we read to them by a committee, from a belief and hope that they would in some degree influence them in the advice they might give to the minority. They seem, however, not to have taken the hint, and rather to have considered their business of quite a different nature than to conciliate the parties in a way that accorded with the freedom and independence of the church.

The council of helps did themselves and the subject great injustice on several accounts, and the minority very great injury, perhaps principally through precipitancy or a want of due consideration. After learning that they were altogether an *ex-parte* council, they should have refused to act, unless by the consent of this church they had been made a *mutual* one. Instead of this they proceeded, in violation of our statements, and in the face of our protest against considering any thing that appertained to us, to make out the following statement:

"The first Baptist Church of Christ at Lexington having called for helps to aid them in settling some difficulties existing in said church, pursuant to the call on the 16th June, 1827, the following members as helps attended the church; viz: From the Great Crossings, John T. Johnson, James Suggett, and Thomas Henderson.—From Davids Fork, Ed-

mond Darnaby, and B. A. Hicks.—From Providence, James Marrs and W. T. Bryan. A motion was made, and the said first Baptist church appointed the following members, who were present, as additional helps, viz: John Payne, John Parker, Peter Higbee, S. M. Noel, W. C. Buck, W. Gist, Th. Bullock, and B. S. Chambers.

“The committee organized themselves by appointing S. M. Noel Moderator, and B. S. Chambers Clerk. A motion was then made and adopted by the committee of helps, requesting the members of the church to state their difficulties upon the most important subjects in writing. The members, pursuant to the request, submitted their written statements, and made their remarks in relation to the causes of difficulty. After which the committee of helps being left alone to consult upon the subjects of difficulty in the church, upon motion adopted the following statements and advice, (viz:) The committee state that the change of the covenant and name of the church was ill-advised, and improper in the first instance.— That the church should have reconsidered the vote adopting the preamble and resolutions by which the covenant and name of the church was changed, when forty-nine of her members asked for a reconsideration, and that the forty-nine members had a right at their May meeting to vote for a reconsideration themselves, when those members friendly to a change left the meeting-house. And the committee of helps recommend to all the members of this church, to meet together as a church under their old name and covenant, and endeavour by all means in their power to unite in harmony and brotherly love.

“The committee then appointed their Moderator and Clerk to report their proceedings to the Church, and adjourned.

Test. B. S. CHAMBERS, *Clk.* S. M. NOEL, *Modr.*”

It is seen by the names of the committee, that they composed the strength of the Elkhorn Association.

This church did not attend the committee of helps, but sent a committee to read to them a written statement of the whole matter, for the reasons above suggested. They did not leave with them the paper they read, but left with the council two other papers containing a statement of facts with protests, &c. which were not read to them at all. These papers the council did not read before they made out their

statements and advice, as members of it have frankly acknowledged since. From the paper we read to them we make the following extracts.

“One thing we think due to this committee to state, and that is, that unless the leaders of the minority have been entirely mistaken in their design, the object they have had in view in calling this committee was to employ them as an instrument to assist them to injure and degrade this church with the religious community and the public at large, as far as in their power. Of this, however, this church feels no fear, for she cannot for a moment think that this committee would be so disregarding of her own dignity and respectability, as in any advice she might give to the minority to invade the rights and independence of this church, and render themselves deservedly odious to the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ and the friends of truth and good order.

“This church feels herself humbled and mortified at being placed in a situation that makes it necessary to enter into the previous detail. This committee has been called without her knowledge, consent, or participation. This church does not believe that any thing had occurred that justified the call of this committee. If the vote of the church in the adoption of the paper changing the name of the church was oppressive and offensive to the minority, we were ready and willing at any time to have reconsidered it, and if wrong to have rectified it. They never even asked us to do any thing to help them. We tendered to them every thing that was in our power, without the violation of our rules and of our conscience. We therefore protest against the necessity or the propriety of calling this committee, and cannot but think that the minority acted very improperly in doing so, as they have thereby filled the country with many evil surmises, rumors, and apprehensions that are altogether groundless with respect to this church, and have put the brethren of the committee to the inconvenience and trouble of attending without cause.

“As the committee has been convened without the knowledge, participation or consent of this church, and in her judgment without any occasion, this church submits no matter or thing in which she is concerned to the deliberation or advisement of the committee.”

And yet it has been asserted that this committee settled all the difficulties in the church!

In making out their statements and advice they assumed to themselves the right to change the name of the church without consulting any body; the very thing which we did by a regular vote of the church, and which was the cause of their being called! The only difference was that they retained the name of Baptist, and we dropped it; they assumed the name of Christ in their denomination, and so did we. In this we were more scriptural than they,—their denomination having no authority in the word of God.

The council erred in their statement in the following particulars, viz. The change of covenant had not been alleged by the minority, nor did they ask them any advice or aid in reference to it. Their whole object was to have their aid in reconsidering “the denominative name.”

It was not true, as we stated, that the minority ever applied to the church for the reconsideration of the vote by which the name of the church was changed, nor have they said publicly, that we have heard of, that they ever did—and it was emphatically denied by this church before the council.

It is not true that the members friendly to a change left the meeting-house at the May meeting, until after a regular motion was made and seconded for an adjournment, and a vote was taken and the motion was decided in the affirmative, without one opposing word having been uttered, or one opposing vote having been given. The forty-nine members, several of whom were African slaves, remained in the house after the church adjourned and were dispersed, and in her absence, and without her knowledge or consent, voted for the reconsideration of the subject, or that they would reconsider it; and in four days afterwards, after consulting Elder Vardeman, at an unlawful meeting resolved to call the council of helps to assist them in doing so. These members had no more right, after the church had adjourned, to consider any

thing that appertained to the church, or to sit in a church capacity, than they had to consider any thing that appertained to the government of the United States, or to sit as the congress of the United States. And we assert, that since the meeting of the helps, this church has never been invited to meet with the minority, either under the old name or any other, to endeavour to restore harmony and brotherly love, as recommended by the council. And we, moreover, declare that the question relative to the change of name *never has been reconsidered*, and stands just where it was left at the conclusion of the April meeting, when the first Baptist Church of Lexington was denominated The Church of Christ on Mill-street in Lexington; nor is there any thing in the statement of the council of helps that contradicts the latter part of this statement. And yet you affected to be satisfied that the minority is the regular first Baptist Church of Lexington; and that the council settled all the difficulties!

What we have stated above, were some of the facts and circumstances which we were prepared to prove to you, relative to the minority and the committee of helps, at the Association.

As a full and clear expression of the judgment and disposition of this church, relative to the council of helps and their statements and advice, we publish the following resolution, which this church spread upon her book at her next meeting after the council of helps sat, which you will consider in connection with the above extract from the address of this church to them.

Resolved, that a council of helps having been called by the minority of this church, under the superseded name of the first Baptist Church of Lexington, without the knowledge or consent of this church, and without a shadow of authority or propriety in her judgment, and in violation of her rules; and having laid before that committee our protest against their intermeddling with any matter or interest that appertained to this church, after presenting to them a statement of

facts for their information, its advice is not acknowledged by this church as having any claim to her regard.

“And with a view of all the circumstances of the case, we declare, that *if it was designed* by the council, that their opinion and advice should be considered as having any bearing upon the rights or privileges, the order or the interests of this church, so as in any degree or manner to bring them into question, or to involve them in doubt, as they are viewed and understood by us, *to that extent* the council of helps is considered to have been guilty of an officious interference with, and to have committed an outrage upon, the freedom and independence of this church, and the rights and feelings of her members: Against which, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only acknowledged Head, Counsellor, and Help of this church, and in the face of the world, We protest.”

The foregoing statements and resolution we have exhibited to show, among other things, how unauthorized and unjust the assertion is, that a committee of helps had settled the difficulty in this church.

Elder Vardeman has preached almost every other Lord's day to the minority, since the April meeting of this church, and was regularly attended by the members of this church four or five weeks, without ever saying a word to one of them in reference to the division, or of the authority by which he preached in our house; nor did he, that we know of, visit a single member except of the minority during that time. He did nothing, of which we have ever been informed or have any reason to believe, to promote peace and union, but the reverse. This conduct the Association ought to have inquired into. We regret that his conduct in this case does not entitle him to the benediction of the Lord Jesus Christ; “Blessed are the peace makers: for they shall be called the children of God.”

The Helps, we apprehend, spoken of by Paul, and who were of divine appointment, were very different from the helps of the present day. Dr. Lightfoot supposes them to have been helpers of the Apostles; persons who accompanied

them, baptized those who were converted by them; and were sent by them to such places as they could not attend, being otherwise engaged. Macknight considers Helpers to be those "who, speaking by inspiration to the edification of the church, were fitted to assist others." They were certainly endowed with supernatural gifts, and were employed in building up *the Church of Christ*, and in *glorifying Him*;—for these purposes all spiritual gifts were given. The helps in the New Testament promoted no sectarian interests in religion in reference to the church of God in the Gospel—they sustained no rival flags, sectarian banners, or party names. They did all things in the name of Jesus Christ, and held fast the form of sound words, in faith and love, which were given unto them.

Three of the churches out of the four that were applied to for helps by the minority at the instance of Elder Varde- man, were of a greater number, in several counties, over which he was pastor! We cannot say precisely to what extent they possessed the spiritual gifts and qualifications for Helps which are according to the gospel; and whether or not, if their own condition, ascertained by their practice, were the criterion, they would not in their attempts to help us, have helped us rather *backwards* than *forwards*.—Had we have submitted any thing to their counsel and advisement, we should have considered it a duty first to have inquired into these things, and to have known how far they had actually succeeded in helping themselves. For instance, we would not have called into our aid, under the idea of religious helps, those whose churches were not in Gospel order in constitution and practice; nor would we those individuals who neglect family worship, or who fail to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; or who do not consecrate the Lord's day to his peculiar service, and give to the Lord Jesus Christ the *pre-eminence in all things*; or those who do not themselves enjoy the life and power of religion in their

own souls: as it was for the promotion of these religious duties and enjoyments *successfully* that we desired reformation.

Before concluding this section, we must consider one other excuse which our brother Creath made for your not reading our letter:—it is this: that the name in which we presented ourselves was not known on the minutes of the Association. This we considered quite frivolous, because the address of our letter, which you heard read, presented this church to you as “The first Baptist Church of Lexington,” (the name under which it had been formerly known,) “now denominated “The Church of Christ on Mill-street in Lexington.” This address demanded of you an inquiry into the subject of the change, as there was an opposing minority, with a view however only of ascertaining whether or not the change had been effected agreeably to the rules of the church; if it had been, you were bound to have received us, unless we waved the right from prudential considerations in reference to the minority, as there was nothing, as we have already shown, in the name itself that could deprive us of our seat, agreeably to former usage and the decisions of the Association, but the reverse.

In thus acting you would have maintained the dignity and propriety of character that become an Association of “the churches of Christ,” as you had styled yourself the two preceding years; and you would have preserved the rights of the churches composing the Association in their associate capacities, *if indeed they have any*, while you would have acknowledged their independence, and left them free to manage their own internal concerns.

Whatever you may have said about reformation, and about your want of power over the churches, your conduct at the last Association proves very clearly, that any church which may desire to improve her state, that is a member of the Elkhorn Association, and makes the attempt, must do it at the hazard of being published to the world, as having forfeited

her character, and as deserving the reproaches of the Baptist denomination.

Had you have done yourself justice at the setting of the Association, which you were urged to do, by an impartial investigation, you would have learnt that the whole matter on the side of the leaders of the minority about the name in opposition to this church, was mere *pretence*. You would have known to an absolute certainty, that they had declared again and again that for the name of Baptist Church, for which they contended in opposition to the name of the Church of Christ, which formed a part of our reformation, and on account of which they divided the church, they cared nothing,—that with them it was not worth any thing, and that their opposition arose from personal motives. This they attempted to conceal from many of the members, under the expression of great affected horror at the idea of a division in the church, and by which they endeavoured to influence their votes; which was fully proven by the fact, that when they found themselves, after all their efforts, in the minority, they were the first to declare themselves in favour of division, and were actually the leaders in it. You would moreover have learnt, that all the hard speeches that have been made against us for having endeavoured to degrade the name of Baptist, were undeserved and erroneous. This you would have known by simply examining the last resolution in the paper we adopted at the April meeting, and by reading the resolution tendering to the minority a *friendly* separation; in the former, you would have found that we reserve to the members of this church the name of Baptists, and to this church her membership in the Elkhorn Association, and connection with the United Baptists. And thus you would have saved yourself the reproach and disgrace of prostituting the character of the Association to the purposes of injustice and injury, by becoming subservient to the passions and personal resentments of a few individuals, by whom you permitted yourself to be deceived

by implicitly crediting what they said, and by closing your eyes and ears against all other information. For these things nobody is responsible but yourselves.



SECTION 2.

We now proceed to give you some account of our change of name, which we tendered to you at the meeting of the Association and was refused.

In this part of our statement, which relates to the state of the church which we considered demanded of us reformation, we shall be brief. Suffice it to say, that an unhappy state of things had occurred, arising from a variety of causes, some of which were of considerable standing, and much diversified in their character. Our church meetings became very unpleasant, and a number of the members of the church began to talk of applying for letters of dismissal.

This state of things, connected with what we knew of God's will and of our duty, with a sense of obligation to do it, left us without excuse in continuing as we were, and without hope of getting into a better condition should we do so.

Searching the Scriptures, prayer, experience and observation, with the lights of church history, had convinced some of us that no church can be spiritually prosperous for any length of time, that is not built *directly* upon the Lord Jesus Christ, through faith in him, as the only bond of church union and of christian fellowship, agreeably to his offices and character as revealed in the word of God, and placed under him *in his name* as her head, guide and protector, to be governed and influenced alone by the laws and institutions of the Book of the New Covenant as written by the Apostles and Evangelists. With this order of religion and of religious society we considered the glory of God, the happiness of the

saints and the conversion of sinners are connected, as upon them the operations and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit are bestowed.

The church of the Apocalypse in Philadelphia, *for keeping the word of Jesus Christ and not denying his name, was kept from the hour of temptation which came upon all the world to try them that dwell in all the earth.*

The depravity of the human heart after its conversion to God, renders it perpetually liable to error, passion, hatred and division, and which have no antidote but in Jesus Christ dwelling in it by faith without a rival, as he is revealed in the gospel. The hearts of christians are liable to be cast into a great variety of moulds, which give a correspondent diversity to their characters in sentiment and affection; for it is a law of our moral constitution, that whatever principles are the objects of our confidence, become of necessity the mould of our characters. The image of God is impressed upon the heart by the gospel alone, and thus "we are renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created us." The prominent characteristics of that image are love to God and love to man, and hatred to sin. All sectarian principles and peculiarities, to the extent they operate, prevent the word of God having free course, that it should be glorified in the saints and in the conversion of sinners, and exclude the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, and are the elements of strife and divisions among christians, to the dishonour of the Lord Jesus Christ. These views of the subject had impressed the minds of some of the members of this church so strongly, as to allow them no peace or satisfaction in continuing as we were, particularly when in distress, and it became a matter of conscientious religious duty to attempt a reformation.

A more full developement of our views, as connected with the *Name, and word of Jesus Christ*, will appear in a subsequent section.

Brother Fishback, the former pastor of this church, and the only one she has had since she was first constituted, on account of the difference of opinion between him and some of the members on this subject, resigned his pastoral office in November last, and in April he introduced the paper hereafter presented, for the consideration of the church.

It will be seen by the paper itself, after all that has been said upon the subject, that the whole plan of reformation at which we aimed, consisted alone in acting out the great protestant principle, that "the Bible is the religion of protestants," by restoring the Lord Jesus Christ to his throne in his kingdom or church as sovereign Lord of all, and his laws to his subjects and kingdom:—or in other words, by a solemn Religious Church Act to place our hearts and the whole interests of the church directly under his protection, instruction and guidance in his name according to his word. This we have done—and we ask, To whom else could we go in our affliction, but to him? We were in distress and needed help.—We had no confidence in the arm of flesh or in the help of men.—We were convinced that "Our help was in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth." We turned with our hearts to him, and found him a present help in time of need. Yes, it is due to his truth and faithfulness to declare, that we have enjoyed more sensibly the blessings of God since we assumed the denomination, order, and style exhibited in the following paper, and have endeavoured to cultivate the spirit of them, than we had done for several years before. We find that there is an *enlightening*, and *sanctifying* influence communicated to our hearts by the Spirit of God through the name of Christ, as it is present to our thoughts, meditations, and affections by faith, in its scriptural qualifications and manifestations in the system of redemption, which are as "a well of water springing up into everlasting life." We have baptized a greater number of persons upon the profession of their faith since April, than we had done the two years and

a half before. These things we realize, notwithstanding the opposition we have experienced from our mistaken brethren, whose participation with us in the blessings we enjoy would greatly enhance our happiness.

From the Scripture views of the origin, nature and design of religion in our world, as it is connected with Jesus Christ in fact and in authority as its author, and the condition and relation of man in reference to it, which made it necessary, we are convinced, that all the errors in religion, in principle, affection, and conduct, and the inglorious state of the churches almost universally, together with the want of evangelical piety and spiritual enjoyment, arise from a refusal or the neglect to honour the Lord Jesus Christ according to the Scriptures as Lord of all; which involve, as a consequence, the substituting for his word, the inventions and commandments of men.

In December 1825, after considerable deliberation, an attempt was made at reformation in this church, as is intimated in the following paper; but, owing to a difference of disposition among the members, it was postponed. In September 1826, brother Fishback having previously declared that he would no longer be pastor of a sectarian church, a church meeting was called to change the name and style of it, without his knowledge. At the meeting he advised that the subject be no more agitated, until there should be more unanimity, on account of the passion and bad feeling that had been excited by it. But the state of the church having become so much worse than it was, he considered it his duty to introduce it at the April meeting, to which he was also urged by other members, and which they had determined to do, had he declined it.

At the time he introduced the paper, he assured the church, that he had no desire ever again to be pastor of it,—that he felt himself bound by a sense of religious duty, and the relation he sustained to the church, to propose the paper

as an antidote to the existing evils, and tendered to the church his hearty co-operation in bringing any minister of the gospel that the church might choose as her pastor, after having corrected the internal state of discord, previous to which he considered no minister could be happy or useful in the church.

The following is the paper:—

“Whereas this church did, at a church meeting in December 1825, in answer to the questions, Is or is not this a church of Jesus Christ, and if it be, Is or is it not demanded in truth and in honour to her Head, that she be so denominated? declare, that she believed this to be a church of Jesus Christ, and considered it due in truth and in honour to her Head, that she be so denominated: that the church or churches mentioned in the gospel are denominated the churches of Christ, the church of God, the churches in Christ, &c. Rom. xvi. 16. 1 Cor. i. 2. Eph. i. 22, 23, 30. Chap. iv. 12, 15, 16. Chap. v. 23, 30. Coloss. i. 18, 24: that this church was constituted in January 1817 by the name of the first Baptist Church of Lexington, but that she could not find any authority in the word of God to denominate a church of Christ a Baptist church.—This church, moreover, declared, that the church of God in the Gospel, in its constitution, denominations, laws, doctrine, ordinances, and duties, is the only divinely established order of religious Society in the world, and that every thing of a different or of a schismatick character in reference to it, is condemned and forbidden:—that sectarian religious christian societies are those which are divided or distinguished from the church of God by certain peculiarities in constitution, denominations, laws, doctrine, ordinances, &c. These peculiarities have originated in the inventions and commandments of men, in violation of the word of God, by altering or perverting it, or by adding to or taking from it, in which all the different sects are more or less involved.

“Notwithstanding the declaration and avowal of the above sentiments and truths by this church, owing to some difference of *disposition* among the members on account of their attachment to the name of Baptist as applied to the church, thought it expedient to defer the direct acknowledgment of Jesus Christ as her head by styling herself the Church of

Christ, since which she has experienced much darkness and distress.

"Therefore, under a sense of violated duty, which the records of this church testify, and from a desire to place ourselves as a church directly under the authority, protection, and guidance of Jesus Christ, and to meet together and to do all things in His name agreeably to His instructions and commands, that we may enjoy His presence and be happy in Him,

Resolved, That this church, which has heretofore been known by the name of "the first Baptist Church of Lexington," be, and she is hereby denominated

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST ON MILL-STREET IN LEXINGTON.

"This church further declared that, "if we would learn and speak the truth as in Jesus, and enjoy its divine influences, and know how to behave in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth, we must hold fast and practice in speech and in conduct, the form of sound words in faith and in love as revealed in the gospel." And as it is impossible, according to the scriptures, for us to know and to speak the things of God which are freely given us of Him, and be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment in religion, only as we use the words which the Spirit of God, the Holy Ghost, hath taught, and practice the duties He hath commanded; and as there is no authority from the word of God, or in the nature of things, but the reverse, ever to expect the union of all christians, which is most devoutly to be wished for, as with it is connected the glory of God, the happiness of the saints, and the conversion of the world, only as they renounce their sectarian peculiarities, human commandments and inventions, party names, and systems in religion, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ through the word of the Apostles, agreeably to His intercessory prayer, John xvii. 20, 21. and build their religious congregations or churches upon the foundation of the doctrine of the Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone, and *continue* in the word of Christ, and conscientiously practice the duties and ordinances of the gospel, in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ alone, and cultivate the spirit of mutual forbearance and christian charity.

"Therefore, *Resolved*, That we do acknowledge and receive

the word of God revealed to the prophets and to the Apostles, in the Old and in the New Testaments, in its own statements, facts and connections, as the only mean of faith and rule of conduct and practice in religion, regarding the word of God in the New Testament, as the proper expounder and interpreter of the things that are written of Jesus Christ in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms in the Old. And we do, as members of the body of Christ and of one another, give ourselves to each other in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and do promise, by the aids and the influences of His Spirit and truth, to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men, and to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace.

“And now, O thou blessed Lord Jesus, who savest thy people from their sins, who art the way and the truth and the life, and art over all God blessed forever; Bless us we pray thee, in what we have done in thy holy name. As members of thy body, we acknowledge thee as our head, and receive and rest upon thee for wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption;—and as thy bride, we desire to bear thy name and to sustain thine honour in all holy conversation and godliness.

“That we may enjoy the refreshings that come from thy presence, after a long period of undutifulness, darkness and affliction, we do humbly beseech thee to take up thine abode in us, and by thy grace and power, enable us, through faith, to cultivate and exhibit the fruits of the Spirit in love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, and to maintain at all times, the humble posture of heart, in the Spirit and answerable to the prayer, to be taught and to be lead into all truth, that we may know by happy experience, the divine import of thine adorable name, IMMANUEL, God with us:—in thy incarnation, God united to our nature; God with man, God in man—God with us by thy continual protection—God with us by the influences of the Holy Spirit:—in thy Ordinance of Baptism and the Supper, in the preaching of thy word:—in private prayer. And God with us in every action of our life, that we begin, continue and end by faith in thy name: God with us when we meet in thy name as thy church, and when we meet with

each other in social intercourse, to enlighten, comfort and sanctify us; and to defend us in every time of temptation and trial, in the hour of death, in the day of judgment. And God with us and in us, and with thee and in thee through eternity!

“King eternal, immortal, invisible, only wise God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, forever may we be consecrated to thee! And now, Lord God our Saviour, accept our offering and consecration of ourselves to thee! Fulfil the desire of our souls in respect to thy gracious presence, for which thy church, assembling here in thy name, is encouraged to hope.—Amen.

“*Resolved*, That the adoption of the above preamble and resolutions is not designed to deprive the members of this church of the title of Baptists, or to indicate in any degree a change of sentiment or of practice on the subject of Baptism as exhibited in the gospel and ordained by Jesus Christ, as heretofore viewed and practiced among us. Nor is it intended to change in any degree the connection of this church with the United Baptists, or with the Elkhorn Association, as a member of that body.

“In assuming the denomination, order and style of the Church of Christ, we act in strict conformity with the constitution of the Elkhorn Association, which declares that it was formed for “the comfort and happiness of the churches of Christ.” And we consider that the above measure, with its necessary practical consequences, is for our happiness and comfort, as it is a direct acknowledgement of, submission to and reliance upon what we conceive to be God’s plan and order of bestowing them, by the operations and influences of His Spirit through the Lord Jesus Christ.

“The Association, in her circular letter of 1825, in answer to a request made by this church under her former name, justified this church in doing what she has done, by replying that “it ever had been a fundamental principle with her, that the churches of Christ are independent and free, and have no authority from their Head,” the Lord Jesus Christ, “to delegate any portion of their freedom to any individual or body of men, and that every thing that is wrong or is wanting in the churches must be corrected or supplied by the churches themselves acting according to the word of God.

“And in reference to the heading of letters sent by the churches to the Association, in her minutes of 1826, she

informed the churches, that it is not the province of the Association, to prescribe to the churches the way of heading their letters, some of them having styled themselves "the Church of Christ,"—"the Baptist Church of Christ," and others "the Church at such a place." "

This is the paper which has excited all that "deep and sincere regret," that sense of "awful danger and alarm for the name and character of the Baptist denomination," by which they "would be essentially changed," against which you have, in such deep-toned expostulations, remonstrated! Yes, this is the paper which has been the cause of the division, noise and strife, that has employed so many anxious minds and active tongues since April last, and has caused the noise of war through the borders of *Baptist Israel*. Poor human nature, how frail and trifling art thou when panopled under any sectarian banner! And how many ridiculous things it does and says, when acting in the situation of those who "do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God!"

This paper exhibits the form in which the subject was presented to the committee of helps, and was finally adopted by this church, when written out in the church book, and was made a record by being read over and approved by the church, and signed by the Moderator at the May meeting. It was, in a few of its ideas and expressions, a little enlarged and rendered more comprehensive and explicit than it was in the form in which it was adopted at the April meeting, without, however, materially changing its sense or meaning. In this, we acted according to the custom of this church in recording her proceedings. The proceedings of the preceding meeting are read over at the subsequent one, and any amendments or alterations that are thought proper, are made before they are signed by the Moderator. The resolution changing the name of the church, at which the minority took exception alone, is expressed precisely in the same words it was at the April meeting. The extension and enlargement

in the phraseology, are particularly in the concluding part of the prayer.

Brother Moderator,—We desire you to read this paper with care, that you may discover, if you can, (now that your alarm and violence of feeling have subsided,) those parts of it which were “ill-advised,” “improper,” “and of an alarming tendency,” as evinced by being compared with the word of God, and which we can consistently with the love of truth, and of our allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ, and a sincere desire for the spiritual prosperity and happiness of this church, and her members individually renounce, and which deserved the unkind treatment we experienced at your hands.

That your mind may be brought to act definitely upon the subject, permit us to propose to you the following questions, which are suggested by the paper:—

1. Is or is not the Church of God in the gospel, in its covenant—the new covenant in the blood of Christ—in its constitution, or actual state of being, denominations, doctrine, laws, ordinances, duties and privileges, the only *divinely established order of religious society*, or of a *church* in the world?

2. Is schism a sin, and are not all religious christian societies or churches schismatick, that are divided or distinguished from the church of God in the gospel, by any peculiarities in covenant, constitution, denominations, laws, doctrine, ordinances, and duties, and are they not condemned and forbidden?

3. Is not a minister of the gospel and other christians, who knowingly, labour to build up a sectarian or schismatick church, guilty of sin?

4. Is or is not the word of God the only mean of faith and rule of conduct and practice in religion; and, if there be any other mean of faith or rule of conduct and practice in religion of divine origin or authority, what is it?

5. Is there any other bond of church union, or any other principle of christian fellowship, as of divine authority, than

faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and love and obedience to him according to the gospel?

6. Is not union among christians a duty, and most devoutly to be desired and aimed at; and is there any authority from the word of God or in the nature of things, ever to expect it only as they renounce their sectarian peculiarities, human inventions, party names and systems in religion, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, through the word of the Apostles, agreeably to his intercessory prayer, John xvii. 20, 21, and build their religious societies upon the foundation of the doctrine of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone, and cultivate christian love and forbearance towards one another, and mutually agree conscientiously to continue in the word of God, and practice the ordinances and duties of the gospel in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ alone, as they shall be made known to them by his word and Spirit?

7. How long would schism continue were all christians *to be christians according to the gospel*, and to unite in restoring King Jesus to his throne, as the one lawgiver and as Lord of all, and his laws in the New Covenant to his kingdom and subjects?

8. Would not the different sects in that case speedily abandon their contention with and the thought of conquering each other, lose the spirit of hostility against each other, and be soon conquered by Immanuel to himself, and to the unity of faith in the bonds of peace and love; and would not the conversion of the world and the Millennial state be speedily ushered in thereby?

9. Does not sectarianism prevent the operations of the Holy Spirit in illuminating and sanctifying christians, and in converting of sinners?*

* See note (A.) at the end of this publication, for the opinion of the Synod of Kentucky, on the effects of schism.

10. Is not the honour and glory of Jesus Christ, as really concerned in the constitution and order of his church according to the gospel, as in the conversion of sinners?

11. Is not mutual love and church fellowship the spiritual birth-right of all christians; and have any a right to claim them upon sectarian principles, or have any a right to impose sectarian conditions on others in granting them, and ought any to accept of them on sectarian principles?

12. And lastly,—In the last resolution, Have we not treated with as much respect and friendly regard, the *Baptist name and sect*, as are compatible with our paramount obligations to honour the Lord Jesus Christ and his truth; and is not the charge of our having endeavoured to dishonour them untrue, in what we did in adopting that paper?

13. In a state of conscious error and real distress, did we err in endeavouring by prayer and supplication to place ourselves directly under the protection and guidance of the Lord Jesus Christ, in his name, to be taught and lead into all truth, that we might realize by happy experience the import of his adorable name, Immanuel, God with us, in our individual, social, and church capacities?

You, Brother Moderator, with other members of the Association, have frequently said that some of the minority assured you, as one of them declared before the committee of helps, that if this church had thrown away every thing but the Bible in her plan of reformation, that they would have united with us. This, we apprehend, was done to save appearances or to conceal the personal feelings by which they were influenced in their opposition. In proof of this, we ask you, Have we retained any thing but the Scriptures in the preceding paper, except the name of Baptist to the members, if they choose to wear it?

We will give you some account of the adoption of the paper, and of subsequent events, in the next section.



SECTION 3.

The above paper was introduced into the church, and was acted upon under the following rules of the church:—The business of the church is divided into ordinary and extraordinary cases.

All ordinary business requires the concurrence of a majority of the members. The extraordinary cases are, the admission of members and the choice or election of a pastor, which require unanimity, and the exclusion of a member, which requires a majority of the male members. The interpretation and meaning of these rules by the church, agreeably to her uniform practice, has been that *the members present* at each regular monthly meeting, or regularly called meeting of the church, is *the church*; and that the majorities or unanimity, as the case may be, are the majorities or unanimity of those who are present at such meetings. The rules also provide that any measure or question may be reconsidered within four months after its adoption, when brought before the church by a regular motion for that purpose—but the measure goes into operation immediately after its adoption, unless otherwise directed by the nature of the subject or the terms of the vote.

It has been asserted that *this church* divided the first Baptist Church of Lexington, and much reproach has been brought upon us thereby. This we deny. We have stated the above rules, and now state the following facts in connection with them in proof of it:—When the vote was taken upon the question for the adoption of the paper, there were in favour of it *thirty-four votes*, besides the Moderator, who did not vote, and *thirty-two* against it. That this was not one of the extraordinary cases that required unanimity, is proved by the facts, that it is not included in the *enumerated cases that are extraordinary, and which are made so by the enumeration, and*

which ascertains and limits their number, and by the church having voted in 1825, that the constitution and actual state of the church as then existing made it a church of Christ according to the gospel, and as such that it was demanded in truth and in honour to her Head, that she be so denominated. The minority, by a resolution on the 4th Saturday of June last, and in their letter to the Association, declared that "the covenant has always recognized the church as a church of Christ." The committee of helps, moreover, entitled it a church of Christ, and the Association in her circular letters of 1825 and 1826, addressed her with the other churches, as a church of Christ.

From these facts and circumstances it appears rather to have been the correction of an error, or of an omission in the name, to denominate the church a church of Christ, than as involving any thing new.

We now propose to you the following question, under all the circumstances of the case:—Suppose that the vote as given with the majority in favour of the paper, had been recorded, and nothing more had been said about it; Would not the church, by that vote, have been properly denominated the Church of Christ on Mill-street in Lexington; and would not the Association have so recognized her? You will doubtless answer in the affirmative. If this be true, then, nothing but an orderly reconsideration of the subject agreeably to the rules of the church, and a majority voting back the former order of things, or altering the present one, could have set aside the denomination of *The Church of Christ*;—Neither of which were or have been done.

After the vote was ascertained, the leaders of the minority appeared exceedingly dissatisfied, and apparently irritated, at seeing the majority against them. To give them the best assurance of affectionate regard, while we felt it our duty to God to do what we had done, we tendered to them the following preamble and resolution.

"Whereas there is supposed to have been a conscientious difference of sentiment among the members of this church on the subject of assuming the name, order and style of the Church of Christ, agreeably to a paper just read, which renders it impracticable, that in the present state of things they can harmonize, either in continuing as they are, or in reforming what is thought to be wrong and erroneous; it is therefore agreed, that it is necessary and proper that members thus circumstanced shall not be compelled to remain in their present connection with this church *who desire to depart*; this church disavowing any disposition to exert a power over individuals to force them to stay, who, for conscience' sake, desire to leave her to form a new church, or to unite themselves with other churches already formed.

"It is explicitly declared by this church, that this measure is a friendly one, and is not prompted by any other than a conscientious sense of duty to God and to one another, the difference being, as it is apprehended, an honest one; nor is it intended to affect the union and fellowship of those who may retire or may remain with the United Baptists or with one another, they agreeing to cultivate fellowship and love with each other as far as practicable.

"It is, moreover, agreed, that, should another church be formed by the members who may withdraw, that each church shall have an equal interest in the house and property of the church, and occupy the house one half of the time, and make joint efforts to pay any portion of debt that may be due upon it; and that they will carry on the Sunday School and other benevolent interests as heretofore.

"They do, moreover, unite their sincere desires, that, should another church be formed, it may be for the glory of God, the happiness of the saints, and the conversion of sinners."

Read over again this paper, and say, What more could a majority, in the love of Christ and of their brethren, have offered to a minority in testimony of their fellowship and tender regard in a matter of difference, than is contained in this paper? But instead of tranquilizing, it greatly exasperated their leaders, one of whom, who, but a short time before, was ardent and industrious in persuading the members to agree to the alteration of the name, and who now affects to

have opposed the change of name to *prevent* a division only, declared that they would receive nothing at our hands, and that if only one dozen of the members would unite under the former name and state of things, he would be one. The minority united themselves with him, and thus the separation took place.

Here was the first act of schism and division, and here lies the sin of schism, and no where else. This was the origin of all the disorder and turmoil that have succeeded. This was the act, and its consequences, which ought to have called forth your "deep and sincere regret:"—this should have occasioned your tears to flow, and to have induced you to lift your "warning voice against the awful danger and alarming tendency of causing divisions in society" against the minority, unless you intended to deny the independence of the church, and the right of the majority to govern according to her rules.

In proof of the truth of these statements, we submit the following facts in reference to the division:

The former Clerk refused to act for the church under the order and style produced by the recent vote in the presence of the church, when inquired at whether he would act or not. Whereupon, the office having become vacant, it was voted, upon a motion and second for that purpose, in the presence of the minority, without one word of opposition, or a dissenting vote, that the church now appoint another Clerk. After the vote was taken, Brother Fishback, being more in the habit of writing than the other members, offered his services to act as Clerk, the duties being at that time burdensome; whereupon the Moderator, after pausing a moment, observed, that as there was no opposition, he would act as Clerk, in which the church acquiesced without a formal vote.

The former Clerk, at the instance of the member who first proposed the separation, took the books of the church, and carried them off, and has not only detained them against the

will of the church ever since, but has refused to give to us a copy of any of the records therein contained.

When the church adjourned, the former Pastor of this church made an appointment for preaching the next day, and the leader in the division appointed one for the first Baptist Church of Lexington the Lord's day after, and a day or two after applied, with another member, to Elder Vardeman to preach to them, under that denomination and style, which he has done nearly ever since twice a month, although he had at the time a greater number of churches to preach to than there were Lord's days in the month.

Had Elder Vardeman, when informed of the division, put himself to the trouble, with the spirit of Christ in him, of inquiring into the affair, and have used his influence to restore union and peace, we have no doubt but that it would have been effected; but, instead of this, at the unhappy moment of passion and temptation with the leaders of the minority, he employed his influence with them, to strengthen and increase the difficulties, until, at length, he has rendered them inveterate. We consider that he is much more censurable than are the minority;—it was a moment of unhappy feeling and temptation with them, but it was not so with him.—He was, moreover, officiously intrusive in respect to *this* church.

According to the rules of the church, a motion might have been made within four months for a reconsideration of the subject, which would not and could not have been denied them, had it been properly made; but the minority preferred a disorderly and violent separation, to an orderly motion or a friendly division, as was proposed in the resolution, as not a word was said about a reconsideration, and they rejected altogether the proposition for a friendly separation.

After the April meeting, this church pursued her regular course of meetings. The minority not only refused to unite with us in our prayer meetings, or in any others for worship, but commenced opposition prayer meetings, to convene at the

same time in the week with ours, which we had been in the habit of having since the commencement of the church; and they have continued them ever since. This spirit of schism and division extended to the appointment of opposition female prayer meetings, which commenced also immediately after the division, and have also continued to the present time.

At the May meeting this church met pursuant to her adjournment, and the minority met at the same time and place, as The first Baptist Church of Lexington. After the meeting was opened by the regular Moderator, and before one word was said about business of any kind, and before the minutes of the preceding meeting were read, one of the minority moved, by addressing the Moderator, that the former Clerk act as Clerk in reading the proceedings of the last meeting, in direct violation of the vote for the appointment of a Clerk at the previous meeting, in consequence of the former one refusing to act. This motion was opposed as irregular and improper.—The papers on which the church acted at the April meeting had not been in the hands of the former Clerk, nor out of the hands of the recently appointed one. The minority continued to urge the motion. The Moderator pronounced it out of order:—notwithstanding they persisted in pressing it with tumultuous vehemence. To get clear of the disorder, a motion was made and seconded that the church adjourn, or have a recess to a subsequent hour.—Against this motion the minority uttered not one word, and when the vote was taken there was not a single hand or voice raised against it. During the whole meeting, and previous to the actual adjournment, there was nothing whatever said about the reconsideration of the vote which changed the name of the church.

After the church had adjourned by a regular vote, and when a great number of the members had gotten out of the house, it was proclaimed at the door with a loud voice by one of the minority, that “the first Baptist Church of Lexing-

ton was about to sit and to attend to business, and the members of it were requested to attend." In the absence of the church the minority drew up, under the name of the first Baptist Church of Lexington, a resolution containing the following sentence: "Agreed by a vote of 49 members," a number of whom were African slaves, "to reconsider the resolution offered at the last meeting relative to the changing of the denominative name of this church," and concluded thus: "Done by order of the first Baptist Church of Lexington." We state this to show that they never did really submit to or recognize the act of the church of April, and determined to hold it at defiance, or to out-brave it by force. Seventeen of these forty-nine members never saw or heard the paper read on which the church acted at the previous meeting.

Since this church adjourned at the May meeting, the minority has not met with us,—and all their meetings have been disorderly and in violation of the rules of the church.

The above narrative of facts shows the mistake and error of the committee of helps, when they allege that the forty-nine members asked for a reconsideration of the subject, and were refused.—We repeat that they never did in *any* way or *form* ask for it.

We now proceed to prove that every meeting they have had, and all that they have done since this church adjourned at the May meeting, has been in violation of rule, and is disorderly.

The rule of the church relative to adjourned and called meetings, is the following:

"The church may adjourn from day to day, or call a meeting when in the judgment of her Moderator and Deacons it shall be deemed necessary."

John M. Hewitt had been appointed the stated Moderator of the church in the preceding winter, and was to act until the vote appointing him should be altered by an order of the church, which had not been done. There were six Deacons,

John M. Hewitt, Richard Vaughter, Jacob Cassel, A. S. Drake, James Beach, and Joel Wallingsford. In no instance were the Moderator or either of the three first Deacons consulted about the propriety or the necessity of calling a church meeting; and so far from considering any of them necessary or proper which the minority have had, they have uniformly condemned them as unnecessary and disorderly. And this has been the case of every meeting they have had since the third Saturday of May in the morning.

All these things taken together, viz: that they were a schismatick minority, and met without any authority from the church, and in violation of her rules, we ask, By what authority or with what colourable excuse could you reconcile it to yourself to publish to the world, that we, or any part of us, had been excluded from the church? There seems to have been much of ill-nature in all this. It would have been just as competent for the minority to have met as the Senate of Kentucky, and to have turned out of office the Judges of the Court of Appeals, as for them to have met as the church, and to exclude any of the members of it.

Lest Elder Vardeman should have acted ignorantly, or have had an excuse for his improper conduct, after preaching four weeks to the minority, this church appointed a committee to inform him of all the circumstances and facts relative to the division, which they did on the 28th of May, when he informed them of the call of helps which he had advised, and which had been done nearly a week before.

The Saturday after the committee of helps met, which was the 4th Saturday of June, this church prepared a letter of the most friendly character, which they requested the Moderator and Deacons to present to the minority at one of their meetings, the object of which was, if possible, to get them into a friendly state of feeling, that the difficulties might be adjusted in a way that would be mutually agreeable. But

they were not permitted to read it, neither would the minority receive it, by reason of the advice of Elder Wm. C. Buck, who insisted that our Moderator and Deacons, before being permitted to read the letter, or before the minority could receive it with propriety, ought to sign a paper which he drew up, that required them to acknowledge themselves of the dissatisfied part of *their* church, which they refused to do. The concluding paragraph of the letter we sent them was as follows:

“Dear Brethren and Sisters,—You have a deep and lively interest in our affections, and we are sure that with *our views* of the subject, you would rather see us led as Martyrs to the stake, than to renounce the *substance* of that paper which we adopted as a Manifesto of the denomination, order and style of this church.

“We entreat you, by the love of God and by the value of your souls and of ours, that the name of the Lord Jesus Christ be not an occasion of offence or of an unfriendly division between us.”

Our committee having been thus treated by the interference, influence and advice of Elder Buck, in return for our friendly endeavours to restore peace and union, this church sent the following letter to him, which we publish on account of its having been reported that it was an abusive one, and which we think will correct the misrepresentation.

“TO ELDER WILLIAM C. BUCK.

“Dear Brother,

“The Church of Christ on Mill-street in Lexington, having reason to believe, as she thinks, that you have been an adviser and abettor of the disorderly members who have broken off from this church, in their course of conduct since the committee of helps met, feel it a duty to inform you that if you continue your encouragement to them, it will be considered an officious intermeddling with the peace and order of this church.

“We desire this communication to be received in friendship. The obligation we feel to maintain the independence and order of the church of Christ, alone prompts us to communicate to you this letter. We regret the necessity of it.

"We cannot permit *foreign obtrusive* interference with the internal order of this church, without complaining.

"We have already been obliged to exercise discipline upon several members, on account of schismatick and disorderly conduct, in which they have been encouraged to persist, as we apprehend, by the influence of *bad counsellors*, and but for whom, we have no doubt that peace and harmony would have been restored among the members before this time, upon terms of mutual satisfaction."

We observed that the helps had done the minority great injury. That council having been called, as formerly alleged, to support them against this church, the minority interpreted its "*statements and advice*" as clothing them with church authority. To this interpretation they were probably assisted by the *suggestion* of some of the members, which they were unwilling to commit to paper. This we infer from what Elder Vardeman declared before the Association, who stated that the difficulty had been settled by the exercise of discipline on the part of the minority agreeably to the advice of a council of helps, and therefore the Association had nothing to do with this church. The *written* advice of the committee, which you have read in the 14th page of this address, did not hint any thing about the power or the propriety of exclusion.

The advice of the helps, with the aid of *other advice*, encouraged the minority to proceed in such a way, regardless of our expostulations and friendly conduct, as to compel this church, contrary to her inclination and desire, to rescind the vote which authorized them to exist as a church, and agreeably to her rules, to exclude several of them. Our object had been to conciliate them as far as possible, and to lay the subject before the Association, with a hope that she would recommend such a course of conduct, and have appointed a few discreet spiritually-minded brethren to have given their aid, as would have eventuated in restoring union and peace. This church would have cheerfully acquiesced in any scriptural measure for that purpose. That you may clearly perceive

our desire upon this subject, we transcribe the following paragraph from the letter we sent to the Association, and which you refused to read.

“To evince the disposition and feelings which we have all along possessed, and by which we have been influenced, we would suggest to the Association that we still have a desire to be united in fellowship with the minority of this church, and as a preliminary measure to an adjustment of all the difficulties that exist, we are willing to rescind at the same time with them, all the votes and resolutions that have passed in reference to each other, since the April meeting, and confer together, in the spirit of mutual forbearance and forgiveness, upon the various subjects involved, with the hope that the Lord Jesus Christ, who is head over all things to the church, will bless us with the spirit of love and union.”

In justification of what we say, when we declare to you that in what we have done we were not influenced by ambition, passion, party views, resentment, or love of novelty, but by love of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of his people and cause, we ask you to examine the paper we adopted at the April meeting, and the resolution tendering to the minority a friendly separation; also the extract from our communication made to the helps contained in the 15th page of this address, and the paragraph in the letter addressed to the minority by our Moderator and Deacons, and which, by the advice of Elder Buck, they refused to hear read; and also the above extract from the letter we sent to the Association, which you refused to read: examine also the rules of the church formerly exhibited, by which our proceedings were regulated, and we cannot but think that, upon a review of all these things, you will agree with us in the sentiment that, in what we did, our design was a good one, and that we acted orderly, and worthy of a church of Christ, and that the opposition to us has been such as to partake of the character, in appearance, of an organized combination against the freedom and independence of this church, and the reputation of her members, on account of the name of Christ!



SECTION 4.

We desire to say a few things to you on the subject of Reformation.

All reformations in religion will have to be reformed that stop short of God's system of truth as revealed in the gospel. That system is the result of infinite wisdom and goodness, and is susceptible of no change or alteration that will not injure it. It is in its own order, whether it relates to its operations upon the individual or social state of man, the very best; because, upon it the blessings of God are exclusively bestowed, for his own glory and the happiness of mankind. Error in religion consists in "not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God," by, and according to which, christians are made and kept, and by which the Lord Jesus Christ builds up and protects his church, and makes her glorious and happy, which is an holy temple in the Lord for the habitation of God through the Spirit.

In effecting these things, the Lord Jesus Christ claims the honour to himself, and hath purposed it to stain the pride of all human glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth who would dare to arrogate any portion of it to themselves.

In these things nothing can be done *right* that is not done *according* to the gospel, or done *effectually* which is not done by the *authority* and accompanied by the *blessing* of God. God must *do* the work, and *he has ordained the plan in all its parts*, and *directs the instruments by which he does it*. We ought, therefore, to *desire to know* and to *acquiesce* in his order and manner of doing it, and *submissively to concur* and *obediently to go along with it*; because God blesses men, to whom he has made a revelation of his will, in no religious service which he has not commanded. "In vain," saith our Saviour

(quoting from the prophet,) "do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

You profess to be very much concerned about "the name and character of the Baptist denomination," lest they "be essentially changed." You published to the world in your circular letter of 1825, the following account of the Baptist name and character, as far as related to the churches composing the Elkhorn Association. You say: "The present state of religion falls very far short of the standard of the gospel—the churches are below their privileges and duties—we all see and feel, that by the neglect of religious duties at home" in families "and in the churches, there is a want of the life and power of the religion of Jesus Christ in the soul, and in the same degree there is a want of christian happiness and comfort in professors." This was the character you gave *yourselves* in 1825. Permit us to ask you the following questions concerning it:—What have you done since that time to improve it? Are things *now* any better, or are they not *worse*, than they were then? What is the state of the *pastoral office* in the churches? Is there one *gospel* Pastor in your twenty-one churches? Is not the whole regular pastoral duty resolved into a *once a month preaching* to the churches? What have you done to promote and encourage the regular support of Pastors in the churches, that they may give themselves *wholly* to the work? Is it not usual for one preacher to have four or more churches to preach to, *if he can get them*? Is not this the actual state and character of the Baptist denomination in the west, which you seem so solicitous to perpetuate? How is the Lord's day spent usually? How many Baptist ministers, under the present order of things, have been driven off from the State by poverty, after having spent the prime and vigor of their lives in preaching, "to seek an asylum where they can find one" in New States and Territories, to obtain a support for them and their families in their declining years? Are not preachers, in the present

state of things, compelled to violate their marriage vows to their wives to nourish and cherish them, and by preaching the gospel, to lay their wives and children under the necessity of supporting them while they spend their time and labour, for the most part, in gratuitous services? How many have been driven to embark in speculations, to supply their wants, and often involved either in entire ruin or in reproach, to the injury of religion? Corresponding with this state of things, What is *now* the state of family religion? How many members of Society pray in their families? What are the means employed in bringing up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? Are things still in these respects as they were a few years ago? What is now done by ministers visiting the flock at their own houses, and instructing and encouraging them in their religious duties, and praying with and for them? What is done in their attending Bible classes, for the purpose of edifying the churches and instructing the sons and daughters of the members of the churches and of the congregations? What is done for the religious instruction of servants? Are they not often regarded by professors as not having immortal souls at all, which must be saved by the blood of Christ through the knowledge of him, or lost in eternal perdition, if their sentiments may be judged of by their conduct?

Is there not a great departure from Scripture order in many cases, in relation to the qualification for baptism; and is not this produced by the present plan of preaching, and which stands intimately connected with the state of religion in the churches, which *you say* demands reformation?

In reference to this subject, Are not the views, feelings, and emotions of the mind, which, for the most part, terminate in itself, or pass off, received as qualifications for baptism, and are afterwards succeeded by bigoted ignorance, a lifeless profession, or antinomian delusion, rather than faith in Jesus Christ, produced by Scriptural views of his character, accom-

panied with the approbation of the heart, and a spirit of obedience to him? And is not this state of things the effect rather of the custom of speculating and philosophising on human nature and religious doctrines, from texts in the pulpit, and of declamation, than preaching Christ and him crucified, as he is manifested in the Scriptures, in order to faith and salvation, and the duty of believers to observe *all things* whatsoever Christ hath commanded them in the book of the New Covenant? Does not the pastor spend his time on horse back in riding to the churches once a month, rather than in visiting the members of the flock, and feeding the lambs and the sheep every day? For their services, what do they receive? Renouncing the duties of the Pastoral office which Jesus Christ has appointed, Have they any claim to the benefit of the ordinance for their support as faithful servants of the churches? When they shall agree to submit to the service of *his* church as *he* has directed, Will he not make the churches feel the obligation and duty of the divine command, to minister to them of their Carnal things, as they do to them in Spiritual things?

In asking many of these questions, we feel deeply affected by the consciousness and the remembrance of our own deficiencies and neglect of duty. While our tears flow for these things, we pray God our Saviour, under whose care we have unreservedly placed ourselves, to enable us to act worthy of our high vocation unto all good works.

We further ask, Is there not in the gospel, authority for the office of Evangelists, whose duty it is to go and preach the gospel to every creature, as well as for the office of Pastor, whose duty it is to minister to the flock? And are there not manifestly gifts and qualifications now bestowed by the great Head of the Church, which suit men for these offices, in the exercise of which their labours would mutually operate in the edification of the churches, in converting sinners, and in improving the spiritual state of the members?

Would not the churches more heartily unite in supporting them than they do the present order of things?

In our plan of reformation, we have gotten clear of the Baptist church meetings for business, as they are called, and which, by the business they created, were, in a great measure, the cause of our difficulties. Our church meetings *now* are for the cultivation and improvement of the spiritual gifts and attainments of the brethren for the benefit of the church, and for the promotion of brotherly love and fellowship, and the doing of whatsoever Christ hath commanded.

And we cannot but think that if those individuals who have taken so much pains to exert a disturbing influence upon the minds of the members of the minority of this church, would retire to the churches where their duties and obligations are, and be diligent in the discharge of them in endeavouring to improve their state, as we desire to improve ours, and we are sure that they need it quite as much, and leave the members of this church to their own reflection, that union would be restored.—We feel nothing in our own hearts to prevent it. If we have done wrong we desire to know it, and will speedily correct it. We have no objects in view, or ends to answer that are not directly connected with the religion and glory of Christ and the happiness of his people.

In concluding this Section, we copy the following extracts from *your* circular letter of 1824, in which we heartily concur.

“The constitution, laws and ordinances of the gospel, are to be measured only by the words of institution, as they are explained and illustrated by Apostolic practice, in which there is no power or privilege for us to carry them any further, no man, church, association, council, general assembly, conference or convention, having a right to add to, or to take from the Statute Book of the Kingdom of Christ given to it by *the One Lawgiver*. As far as any church is constituted and governed by the laws and precepts of the New Testament, so far it is a church of Christ and no further.”——“There are no non-essentials in the New Testament,—every thing is necessary in its place,—to change or modify or abolish any

thing, will, in the same degree--marr the whole." "The Unity which all denominations of Christians ought to desire, will never be effected, until all agree in one standard of faith and practice." "



SECTION 5.

It is very common for individuals to express their surprise and even astonishment, and some of them their contempt, at our giving so much importance to "*the new name,*" as they call it, meaning thereby the name of Christ, as to disturb Society. In the present state of things, the disturbance that it makes is a favourable symptom, and, we trust, is the harbinger of much good. It is a fact, that this name, *in its Scripture developments and qualifications*, has been an occasion of disturbance and of offence, more or less, since man fell; and in every period of the Christian dispensation, it has been an offence to the errors and corruptions of Christianity, as it has been made *authoritatively* to bear upon them. It is immensely terrible to the schisms and divisions in the church of God, when *the Name of the King, the One Lawgiver, who is head over all things to The Church, which is his body*, is associated with them in *threatening* power.

We desire to give you some account of our views of the use and importance of the name of Christ and of his word in Religion itself, and in religious Society.

Without the knowledge of God, there cannot be any religion; for religion is either a system of truth of which God is the great subject, or a system of affections and conduct of which he is the supreme object.

In man's original state before he fell, religion was *natural* to him; it constituted a part of *the state* in which he was *made*. The knowledge of God, and of language on spiritual subjects, were co-eval endowments, bestowed upon man.

by his munificent Creator at the moment that he gave him existence. *God The Word*, made man in his own image. The principle of justification in this state of God's government with man, was *meritorious*: man was to stand by his own merit:—he needed no Mediator, and there was none.

When man sinned, religion ceased to be natural. The state produced by sin which constituted his *lapsed natural* state, made the image and knowledge of God which were co-eval endowments in his *first* estate, *supernatural* with respect to the *second*. God withdrew from him, and left his soul involved in spiritual darkness, with all his affections misplaced. But God had purposes of mercy, and in reference to man's recovery, under a new dispensation suited to his fallen condition, he promised the New Covenant, which was a new constitution, settlement, or establishment of things, wherein, by means of a Mediator, he was to reconcile and take sinful man into a friendly relation to himself, stipulate blessings and privileges to him, give him laws and ordinances as the rule of his obedience and the means of his correspondence and fellowship with him. Thus, when man fell, a new dispensation commenced; the Government was re-organized in the hands of a Mediator, and religion was published or made known by external revelation in accordance with the new covenant, which, in the fulness of time, was to be ratified by the blood of Christ. Hence Christ said, when he instituted the supper, "This is my blood of the new covenant."

It was in reference to this, that all the promises and revelations were made, and all the blessings were bestowed, from the fall of man, until the Word was made flesh. The principle of Justification under this dispensation, was and is *gratuitous*, that is by grace, and is essentially connected with the atonement in the blood of Christ.

The Divine Logos, who created all things, and man in his own image, and is the Deity of Jesus Christ, assumed the Mediatorial character, and is God our Saviour. In reference to

his incarnation, he descended according to the flesh from the Fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who is over all, God blessed forever, Amen. *So let it be.* In this character he is, and has been since the fall, the light of the world, by the Revelations he has made, and the influences of the Holy Spirit through him and by his word. He is called *the Son of God*, not *as God*, but in reference to the incarnation in the plan of redemption, in which God was manifest in the flesh. The term *Son*, therefore, has no reference to the *origin or mode* of the existence of the Logos in the Godhead.

Without him, in his Mediatorial Character, there has not been any religion in the world since man fell; all the communications have been made by him, and through him, and in reference to his incarnation. It was the Spirit of Christ that was in the prophets that spake. With his name, as the Messiah or the Christ, is necessarily associated all that is true in religion. No one who has not strictly attended to the use of names and words and sentences, as they are found in the word of God, and as they are necessarily connected in his own mind with ideas, perception, thought, knowledge, faith, affection, conduct, and character in religion, is prepared to estimate or to realize the above remark.

Words in religion, are the means of ideas and the instruments of thought; they, therefore, of necessity, did not originate in the human mind by the inventions of men, but in God, as the means by which he enlightens men's minds in the knowledge of himself, and by which he renews them after the image in which they were made. In this the spirit of God has used no improper, superfluous or unmeaning words in the revelation he has made, nor has he given to man the power, right or privilege to change them either in their meaning, order or connection, any more than he has to change natural light or the substances and laws of nature.

If there be no *non-essentials* in Beings, Things, Doctrines, Ordinances or Duties in religion, there cannot be any in the