

TO THE

BAPTIST CHURCHES

THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES,

WHO ADHERE TO THE INDEPENDENT OR CONGREGATIONAL FORM
OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT, AND TO THE DOCTRINES CON-
TAINED IN THE

CONFESSION OF FAITH

ADOPTED BY THE

Philadelphia Baptist Association,

SEPTEMBER 25, 1742.

THE CHURCH IS THE ONLY JUDGE OF HER OWN MEMBERS.—*Montanye.*

PHILADELPHIA :

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE CHURCH.

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TO THE BAPTIST CHURCHES, &c.

The First Baptist Church of Philadelphia, holding the same Confession of Faith, sendeth greeting:

DEAR BRETHREN,

IT has become our painful duty to address you on a subject that will be alike interesting to you and to us; for whatever is our case at this time, may be yours at a future period. In this affair you and we have a common STAKE which cannot be separated, and we feel ourselves impelled by the necessity of all the churches demand it. Refer to church history for the last sixteen centuries, and you will find almost every page stained with human gore. To what cause shall we attribute this? Doubtless to *innovations* on the primitive pattern given to the church of Christ, and to those innovations afterwards quoted as precedents, for the purpose of giving a colour to further innovations, and to sanction coercion, force and blood.

It cannot be unknown to you, that painful difficulties have long existed between this church and some of her members. These difficulties were in their nature inveterate; yet, we believe they would have been settled long ago, had it not been for the peculiar situation of the church at that time, and the support given to the opposition without the church, which has converted her lenity and forbearance into a cause of more direct defiance of her authority, and has resulted in acts of open rebellion.

The church held her stated meeting on October 3d, 1825, when there was laid on the table a letter addressed "To the

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members of the First Baptist Church who meet to transact the business thereof."

This address contained a flagrant insult to the church, refusing to acknowledge her as a church; and, being in accordance with the previous conduct of the opposition, was returned unopened.

On the forenoon of October 6, 1825, several of the members were called on by ministering brethren, then in this city, who stated they had been invited here by the opposition to sit in council. They inquired whether some of the members would not meet them; to which they were answered in the negative. On the next day (the 7th) two of the council called on a member and handed him a letter from the council, addressed to the First Baptist Church. About a fortnight after this, a letter was addressed to a member, by the leaders of the opposition, stating, that unless the church should meet before the 27th of October, 1825, and act on the letter from the council, they would consider the subject given up, and act accordingly—Although they had been previously informed by a member of the church, that there was a diversity of opinion among the members respecting the propriety of a council, and were deliberating on the subject, and that it was probable that the letter would not be opened until our regular meeting, to take place the 6th of November following.

On the 31st October, 1825, *which was before* the church had a meeting to open the letter from the council, the four deacons of the church received the following paper :

“ Philadelphia, 6th Oct. 1825.

“ Letters being addressed to several ministering brethren of the *Philadelphia Baptist Association*, and to a number of ministering brethren of the neighbouring Associations, signed by five of the deacons of the particular Baptist Church, commonly called the First Baptist Church of Philadelphia, with a view to sit in council.

“ The brethren invited, convened at the house of Joseph S. Walter, at 2 o'clock, and proceeded to business. Present, Rev. Wm. Parkinson, Spencer H. Cone, Daniel Dodge, James M'Laughlin, Stephens W. Wolford, Daniel D. Lewis, Thomas B. Montanye, Joseph Mathias, S. Smith, W. E. Ashton, J. H. Kennard, and H. G. Jones.

“Rev. Wm. Parkinson was called to the chair, and H. G. Jones appointed Secretary.

“The aggrieved members read a letter, from which it appeared, that due notice had been given to the acting majority of the Church, of the intention of the aggrieved, to call a council, which proved abortive owing to a refusal of the majority to agree to the same.

“The party aggrieved were then requested to state their grievances, which was fully done, by a minute written detail, read by brother Joseph S. Walter.

“A second written detail, containing numerous references to the minutes and proceedings of the First Baptist Church, was read by brother Silas W. Sexton.

“Whereupon, the council, after mature deliberation, unanimously agreed upon the following resolutions:

“*Resolved*, That having heard the allegations as stated, and distinctly proved, by the aggrieved part of the Church, it appeared incontrovertibly, that the acting majority of the particular Baptist Church commonly called the First Baptist Church in Philadelphia, have departed from some of the important principles in our confession of faith.

“*Resolved*, That the council do consider the aggrieved members, as the legitimate Church, and entitled to all the property, rights and immunities of the particular Baptist Church, commonly called the First Baptist Church in Philadelphia.

“*Resolved*, That a letter be written and signed by the members of the council, addressed to the acting majority of the Church, recommending them to choose six members of the Baptist denomination to sit in council, reserving to the aggrieved the right also of choosing six. The twelve, when met, to choose an umpire, before whom all matters in controversy may be exhibited and settled.

“*Resolved*, That should the acting majority of said Church refuse to accede to the peaceful measures recommended by the council, and continue to exercise themselves by *might*, then, and in that case, we recommend the aggrieved brethren, whose case was represented by George Ingles, John M'Leod, Hugh Gourley, Levi Garrett, and Joseph S. Walter, to publish and declare to all people, that they, the said aggrieved,

under the advice of the council, above mentioned, are the legitimate Church.

Signed,

WILLIAM PARKINSON, Chairman.

H. G. JONES, Secretary.

JAMES M'LAUGLIN,	DANIEL D. LEWIS,
THOMAS B. MONTANYE,	SPENCER H. CONE,
STEPHENS W. WOLFORD,	DANIEL DODGE,
WILLIAM E. ASHTON,	JOSEPH MATHIAS,
JOSEPH H. KENNARD,	SAMUEL SMITH."

The church in this place would direct the attention of the reader to the *warrant* for calling a council. It is found in the 27th chapter of the Confession of Faith, article 15, and runs thus:

“Cases of difficulty or differences, either in point of doctrine or administration; wherein either the churches in general are concerned, or any one church, in their peace, union, and edification; or any member or members of any church are injured, in or by any proceedings in censures not agreeable to truth and order; it is according to the mind of Christ, that many churches holding communion together, do by their messengers meet to consider and give their advice in or about the matter in difference, to be reported to all the churches concerned; howbeit these messengers assembled, are not entrusted with any church-power properly so called; or with any jurisdiction over the churches themselves, to exercise any censures either over any churches, or persons; or to impose their determination on the churches or officers.”

This article refers to Acts xv. 2, 4, 6, &c. for the example and authority of the call, and to the 2d Cor. i. 24, for the powers vested in the council when met together. We see by this chapter in our Confession of Faith and the above article, that the manner of bringing a council together is *alone* through the churches themselves taking up the case, and appointing messengers with powers and instructions as to the matter in hand; after which these messengers so appointed and instructed, are only to meet and give their advice about the “matter in dif-

ference," howbeit these "messengers assembled, are not entrusted with any church powers, properly so called, or with any jurisdiction over the churches themselves, to exercise any censures either over any churches or persons; or to impose their determinations on the churches or officers. By reference to 2d Cor. i. 24. the whole power of *even* Apostles is defined, by one of the Apostles themselves. It is not known to us that any church or churches have had the matter of our difficulties before them; if they have, it is strange they did not notify us of it, as the matter must have been viewed by them as a very serious undertaking, and not to be entered upon, except they felt urgently called upon to do so for the divine glory and the honour and good of the churches generally. If this had been the case, they would, no doubt, have weighed the subject with all due solemnity, as involving matters of the deepest interest to the cause of God and truth, and concerned with the prosperity, peace and happiness of all the churches, besides touching a sister church in a most tender point—her independence and good standing in matters of faith and practice. All these considerations would have admonished the churches to use great caution in approaching such a novel case, and which might possibly be their own at no distant period.

We further state it as our belief, that the churches would not have been hasty or rash in such a proceeding, but would have entered upon it with godly fear, with fasting and prayer, looking with great intensity to the Lord for his spirit to direct them in such a solemn undertaking, and to guard their minds from the contaminating influence of prejudice or preconceived opinions, founded on slanders spread by the enemies of such church. We further believe that such messengers coming together with their minds divested of prejudice, would have been very careful to avoid all circumstances likely to expose them to any undue influence from either party concerned, and would not be willing to locate themselves in the houses or families of persons interested, or in their houses to do business, thereby retaining that independence which is necessary to the impartial discharge of duties, deeply involving the interests and happiness of individuals, or public bodies, particularly the *church of Christ*, when we consider who is the master of the house.

This would be no more than men of the world do; for it is held to be very incorrect for jurors to mingle with, and subject themselves to influence from either party, in the most unimportant jury trials in temporal courts.

Having now, brethren, stated all the warrant we are acquainted with, or that is known to our Confession of Faith, for calling a council together, with its objects, manner of proceeding and powers, we submit the matter for your inquiry, whether the late council, that has taken such high ground and brought charges against us, was so called, and has so conducted itself, as to be free from the charge of violating some of the most important articles contained in our Confession of Faith, by attempting to invade the sanctuary of an independent church, in direct violation of her rights; trampling under their feet the palladium of those invaluable rights, the *Confession of Faith*, which is and ever has been so highly esteemed by this, and all the churches, not only because it is an excellent compendium of gospel truth, but also as a shield to their independence, rights and privileges. In order to bring this matter to light, we will take some notice of the proceedings of the late council, as they have been laid before this church by their friends, the opposition. From their minutes, proceedings and resolutions, it appears that they met, and sat to do their business, in the house of one of the opposition, who at that time was under the censure of the church. This circumstance would be viewed with a very jealous eye by parties in any temporal suit, and would probably render null and void all the proceedings connected with it.

The minutes of the council state that “the aggrieved members read a letter, from which it appeared that due notice had been given to the acting majority of the church of the intention of the aggrieved to call a council, which proved abortive, owing to a refusal of the majority to agree to the same.” This whole article is perfectly apocryphal. There is not a syllable of truth in it. No information of this kind had ever been made known to the church, or to the majority, by the opposition. Such matter may have been contained in the unopened letter returned on the 3d of the month, and the council met on the 6th; therefore if that letter had been opened, it could

not have informed the church of their intention to do an act, which had already been done ; for that the council had been called, was ascertained many days before, by information from a distance in the country. We refer this article back to the council and their friends for revision.

The next article states that "the party aggrieved were then requested to state their grievances." This, it appears, was done by Joseph S. Walter and Silas W. Sexton, who read minute details previously prepared. It does not appear, however, from the time of sending a letter to the church, the 3d inst. that they intended to give their opponents an equal opportunity of being prepared with *long written speeches*. This mode of offering testimony is rather dubious, and seldom, if ever, admitted in temporal courts.

The council then tell us, that "after mature deliberation," they "unanimously agreed upon the following resolutions. 1st. The allegations stated by the aggrieved part of the church, were distinctly proved," and secondly, that, "it appeared incontrovertibly, that the acting majority, &c. have departed from some of the important principles in our Confession of Faith." These two important assertions, by the council, present themselves to the mind; one is, that allegations were made and distinctly proved; what these allegations were, we are left to infer from what follows; but really, for the sake of their own credit, and to save appearances, the council ought to have been a little more cautious, and at least, to have done something in the way of inquiring from the opposite side, or from some impartial source, whether these things were so, before adopting the second proposition, which wears too serious an aspect to be a mere matter of pastime, as it may yet cause not a little commotion in civil and religious society. They then say, it appeared "incontrovertibly proved that the acting majority have departed from some of the important principles in our Confession of Faith." These important principles, whether in faith or practice, are left by them, in as undefined and dark a state, as the allegations and proofs that gave rise to them. It must be clear to every impartial reader, that in matters involving such very serious and important consequences, as the latter clause of this resolution does, the proof would

have been placed in the strongest possible light, if any had existed. It is to be presumed, that in all this, the council inferred, that their *ipse dixerunt* would be taken by the church and the religious public, for proof.

The council then proceed in the most summary way, to resolve that “the council do consider the aggrieved members, as the legitimate church, and entitled to all the property, rights and immunities, of the particular Baptist Church, commonly called the First Baptist Church of Philadelphia.”

This resolution is certainly a curious morsel!!! It is short, but it must have been very sweet to the aggrieved, and very likely exceeded their most sanguine hopes. This short resolution of four lines, may challenge all the volumes of ecclesiastical history for a parallel; the highest pretensions to papal supremacy, could not have claimed more in such a case. What! in one short breath, pronounce a small minority in an independent church, the *legitimate church*, and also endow her with many thousands of dollars at the same moment. How munificent, how generous and noble. Here was a liberality becoming the great, who seldom bestow empty titles, without a becoming benefice. Well might a plain plebeian open his house, and spread his tables, when he was entertaining guests clothed with such high prerogatives; far above any thing the apostles ever assumed, or pretended to assume. “And he said unto him, man, who made me a judge, or a divider over you?” *Luke xii. 14.* If the power had existed to carry this short resolution into execution, what short work would have been made in transferring a large property to the *legitimates*!! Softly friends! that, if ever done at all, must be done by another tribunal, whose acts are not quite so summary as yours, in bestowing other people’s rights and property. It is the guardian of those rights and properties, and is clothed with rather more respectability and power for these purposes. It is founded on the basis of justice, hence its *mature deliberations*; where *both* of the parties are heard, and where no testimony will be admitted but what is on oath or affirmation, and where unprejudiced judges and jurors alone can be participators in the trial, and where long written speeches by witnesses, will not be admitted. Really it is time for the churches to look to their affairs, when a self-constituted

council of ministers, with about as much power as the shadows that represent them, undertake to dispose of their name and property, with as much ease and indifference as a man puts on his hat or coat. The *legimates* could not have done the business more to their own minds, if they had acted without the ceremony of calling a council.

The next resolution, in the relation it stands to its predecessor, is a perfect anomaly, for after having previously disposed of the church and the property, they very civilly condescend to take some further notice of this heterodoxical body, and gravely resolve to write them a letter, signed with all their names, recommending them to join in an apparently conciliatory measure, that "all matters in controversy may be exhibited and settled." Well, really, this gives the proceedings an air of candour and fairness, and if nothing more had ever come to light than this, all might have been somewhat plausible, and it would have prevented much odium from being cast on the christian name; but men often commit themselves when they become "*busy bodies in other men's matters,*" and attempt to "*Lord it over God's heritage.*" "*Het hat passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears.*"—*Prov. xxvi. 17.* After all, the mind almost involuntarily associates something that savours of duplicity, with the act of sending an apparently conciliatory proposition to the church, after they had secretly done the most offensive and injurious things in their power against her, and had placed these things in the hands of her enemies. The honourable and ingenuous mind revolts at such conduct in the most profligate persons, but it is really appalling to see it done by men making a high profession of the christian religion, because it is directly opposed to its precepts, and is an insult to its divine author.

Their next resolution proceeds, "that should the acting majority refuse to accede to the peaceful measures recommended by the council, and continue to exercise themselves by *might, &c.*" The peaceful measures have been examined and by "*might,*" we suppose they mean majorities, for majorities have excited much attention in their resolutions, and it is well known, that nothing under the sun, is so offensive

to *legitimates* as majorities, for they are accustomed to do every thing by minorities, and sometimes by very small minorities, even one in a whole nation. But, what was to have been done, if the church had, by acceding to the "peaceful measures," blighted all your flattering hopes and golden harvests? Why, then, dictate a day for the church to meet and act on your business, and, if she does not obey, meet and "declare to all people, that you are the *legitimate church*," for such another council to do business with dispatch, clothed with such powers, and acting on such testimony, can never be brought together again. Having now, brethren, taken some notice of this very extraordinary council, and its more extraordinary proceedings, we will leave them, and their *legitimate offspring*, for your consideration, and to be more critically examined by competent counsel, should the matter appear before a temporal tribunal.

It was hoped that a decent respect for public opinion, and the feelings of the surviving relatives of the late Dr. Holcombe, if not a regard for themselves, would have protected his memory from any proceedings in the council; and so their written proceedings appear, and we should have so taken it, if a friend of theirs, one of the "*legitimates*," had not undeceived us, by stating, that the council had examined Dr. Holcombe's ministry, through the medium of his writings, which they had pronounced unsound, and, with him, the majority of the church, for giving support to his ministry, by passing resolutions approbatory of it; and the minority sound, because they had opposed the resolutions and his ministry; thus, he said, progressing after the example of arithmeticians, having found an error in the first proceeding, the whole subsequent product was vitiated.

The following are the resolutions referred to :

"Whereas, reports have of late been extensively circulated in the community, tending to injure the usefulness of the ministry in this church, and the reputation of its pastor, Henry Holcombe, D. D. imputing to him heterodoxy, or unsound doctrine.

"And whereas, silently passing over such reports, which

must have originated in misconception, would be highly derogatory to the character and standing of this church in the Christian world, as well as injurious to the cause of truth :

“Therefore, *Resolved*, That the doctrines taught in this church, by its present pastor, have uniformly been in strict accordance with the Baptist Confession of Faith, and the Holy Scriptures.

“*Resolved*, That this proceeding be entered on the minutes of this Church in the church book, as a testimony of our esteem for our Pastor, and as an act of justice to his faithfulness in declaring the whole counsel of God.

“*Resolved*, That the pastor of this church, be furnished by the clerk with a copy of the foregoing minutes, to be used at his discretion.”

This is to certify that the foregoing is a correct copy of the original, as adopted by the First Baptist Church of Philadelphia, April 6th, 1824.

JOSEPH S. WALTER, *Ass't. Clerk.*

This resolution says, that the doctrines taught in this church by its present pastor, have uniformly been in strict accordance with the Baptist Confession of Faith and the Holy Scriptures. Here both the Confession of Faith, and the Holy Scriptures are included, and the Confession of Faith itself, refers every point in doubt, in its own case, and all others, to the Holy Scriptures ; so that, it would behove the council to show some departure from the Holy Scriptures, to sustain their charge. Neither was it the public writings or private opinions of Dr. Holcombe, that the resolutions undertook to say were in strict accordance, &c. It was explicitly stated to be the doctrines taught in this church, or before this church from the pulpit, without reference to those opinions or writings. Dr. Holcombe's writings never were before this church, nor has she at any time criticised, or passed any vote upon them ; part of his lectures, called “Primitive Theology,” were delivered from the pulpit, and part were not ; they were all, after delivery, liable to erasures and interpolations, at the discretion of the author, without the knowledge or control of the church, which was not consulted, nor did she take any concern in the mat-

ter; she is, therefore, altogether unanswerable for their contents. The church has remained equally unconcerned with the opinions of Dr. Holcombe, and every other member, on the subject of civil government and carnal warfare. She has now, and always has had, members holding civil and military commissions under the government; and she has always had members holding peace principles; the late excellent deacon, Joseph Keen, was of this number. In both cases the church has left every member to the uncontrolled exercise of his own discretion and conscience, agreeably to the provisions in the 25th chapter of the Confession of Faith, protecting members from church censure, for engaging in civil or military employments, under the governments where they may reside. She has been equally unconcerned about her members joining societies. Some have belonged to Masonic Lodges, some to Fire Companies, Volunteer Companies, Bible Societies, Missionary Societies, Peace, Beneficial, Medical, Political, and other societies, and in no instance has this church ever concerned herself with her members, for the exercise of these private rights. The resolutions of April 6, 1824, were passed to contradict certain reports, that Dr. Holcombe had become a Swedenborgian, a Unitarian, an Arminian, and was becoming an Universalist. Some of the members who had personal differences with Dr. Holcombe, were known to have countenanced, if not originated, some of these reports; some persons at a distance in the country, who have repeated some of them, have given a member in the opposition as their author; and as the church believed them to be unfounded, she passed the preamble and resolutions, thereby giving Dr. Holcombe's enemies in the church, a full opportunity to sustain their allegations, if they were founded in truth. But in their opposition to the passage of said resolutions, &c., they did not attempt to sustain any charge against the soundness of his ministry, but the whole weight of their reasons for not supporting them, was founded on the argument, that these were mere "passing reports, unworthy of such a serious notice," and that the reputation of Dr. Holcombe and this church were too well established to require such a measure to support them, &c. &c. But in no instance did any individual attempt, in the most distant de-

gree, to reflect on the soundness of the doctrines taught by the pastor ; for it was only a short time before, that the leaders in the opposition, had, in the presence of Dr. Holcombe and many witnesses, declared themselves *perfectly* satisfied with him, after they had *entirely* failed to produce any charge whatever against his ministry. In these two, and numerous other instances, have Dr. Holcombe's enemies in the church, when face to face with him, failed to sustain even the shadow of a charge against the soundness of the doctrines taught by him, although one of their number told him more than once, that he sat and heard him as a critic. Thus we see his enemies in his lifetime, have utterly failed to produce any evidence of a departure from the doctrines of the gospel and those contained in our Confession of Faith. It was reserved for the theological acumen of the late council to *split the hair*, and detect this long sought for heterodoxy, and *that* after its author had been nearly eighteen months in his grave. Many persons, no doubt, will think it incredible, that even generous enemies could descend to attack the dead, when they had an opportunity of doing it in his lifetime. What a commentary on poor, fallen, depraved, human nature. It is a known fact, that the noblest creatures, whether men or lions, are exposed to the teasing of flies and insects, who escape danger by their agility ; but after death, when all resistance and danger are over, the crows and jack-daws begin to revel and chatter on the body of the once mighty dead, from whose presence, when alive, they would have fled to the thickest forests.

This church is utterly at a loss to account for the part taken in this business by Messrs. Parkinson, Dodge, Lewis, and Wolford, because they professed to be Dr. Holcombe's friends when living ; they must have been grossly imposed upon by some means ; surely they have not done him or themselves justice, or it would not have been so ; they have lent too credulous an ear to the assertions of his enemies, without critically inquiring whether they were facts or not ; they suffered their minds to be so prejudiced by *exparte* unexplained statements, as to close all the avenues to other information ; this was weak and ungenerous to a departed friend, and un-

righteous towards a living church, especially one that had shown every civility in her power to them, except tendering the pastoral office. It is noble to defend the virtues of those we loved in life, when their tongue is silent in death. How was it with you, when your old deceased friend was disinterred, in the house and company of his enemies, on the sixth and seventh of October last? Did you feel no compunctions when reflecting on the past? No small still voice saying, your dead friend is not here to defend himself, ought not *you* to be his defenders? He has defended one of *you* when living, although not present to defend himself. Alas! a purpose was to be accomplished, the church was to be assailed, and the means were the prostration of Dr. Holcombe's theological reputation. Machiavel teaches, that the end justifies the means, however base. "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." *Matt. vii. 2.*

We will now make a few remarks on the conduct of two members of the late council, Messrs. Parkinson and Dodge. The day the council met, they urged most strenuously on some of the members of the church, to be very patient and forbearing with the minority, to do nothing hastily or rashly in their cases; and when the intemperate and violent conduct of some of them was stated, instead of disapproving of it, palliatives were offered, such as, "respectable men were to be expected to be intemperate and violent on finding themselves going down," &c. This we conceive an excuse more becoming a political meeting, than a religious society, particularly if the offence were, threatening to "break a member's head." We may perceive by this, that some persons are to be regarded as legitimately entitled to *Lord it over God's heritage*, because they are *respectable*. On the following day, the 7th of October, 1825, after the council had separated, the same two gentlemen, Messrs. Parkinson & Dodge, after delivering a letter to a member from the council for the church, and stating its contents to be their advice, that the two parties should unite in the call of a council to settle all matters in controversy, being requested to say what points or matters were intended to be submitted for the decision of such a council, they replied, that the council had not taken these points and matters into consideration, as

they had considered it would have been premature. Now, reader, turn to the proceedings of that very council, within the preceding twenty-four hours, and see if you do not find they had taken up, and decided the whole matter. This certainly is not "*truth in the inner parts.*" It will be pronounced, by honourable and candid men, any thing but honourable and candid conduct. Why this disingenuous shuffling amongst the *teachers in Israel*? Why not come out openly and candidly, and declare their proceedings above board? The reason is obvious; they would not bear the light! they were ashamed of them! and well they might be, for their like has never been brought to light before, and we trust, after this warning, may never again appear. Another reason probably was, that they expected the prudence of their partizans in the church, would have rendered the exposition of these secret proceedings unnecessary; but if they had been as well acquainted as we were, with the rash and violent spirit by which their partizans in the church have been actuated throughout this contest, they would have been very cautious how they armed them with a weapon, that could be turned so fatally against themselves. It is worthy of notice in this place, that one of the late council, Mr. Dodge, wept over the corpse of Dr. Holcombe, with all the appearance of unaffected grief; and said, "indeed a great man has fallen in Israel." Before a crowded auditory of ministers and others, he said from the pulpit, that it was not a passing meteor that had been extinguished, but a star of the first magnitude. In this way he appeared to tax his imagination and memory for figures and words, to set in a just light, all the superior excellencies and worth of the subject of his eulogies. This was either a true expression of Mr. Dodge's views and feelings, in relation to the deceased, at that time, or it was dissimulation. He knew as much of Dr. Holcombe's opinions and public writings at that time, as when he was in the council on the 6th and 7th of October last, and the Doctor has neither uttered heterodoxy nor broken the peace, since that time.

We will now, brethren, direct your attention to a few plain, but important matters of fact. And,

1st. To us it appears conclusively, that the late council

came together without any warrant from the Holy Scriptures, the Confession of Faith, or the Discipline.

2d. That it was equally without a warrant, from the above authorities, for any one act it did while in session.

3d. It has boldly attempted to trample on the palladium of our rights, the Confession of Faith, and the Discipline, by violating those provisions contained in them, which are set as barriers against intruders on the rights and independence of churches.

4th. It has boldly charged one of the oldest Baptist Churches in this State, and second to none in the soundness of her faith, with having "departed from some of the important principles in the Confession of Faith," and that on *ex parte allegations*, made by her enemies, without the least inquiry from her, whether these *allegations* were founded on facts or not.

5th. It has done all this without any proof that could bear the light, for none has been offered. The council were as well acquainted as we were, with the fact, that there was no proof of any departure from the faith by this church, that could impeach her in the slightest degree, or it would have been exultingly placed in the strongest light.

6th. It encouraged the standard of revolt against the rightful authority of this church, by declaring a small minority, several of whom were under censure, and have been since excluded, the "*legitimate church*," thereby disregarding the barriers for maintaining order and discipline in the churches, and sowing the seeds of discord and disorder as wide as their maxims and examples can find advocates.

Now, brethren, the question is, which has departed from "*some of the important principles contained in the Confession of Faith*," this church or her accusers, the late Council?

The church will now, brethren, submit for your consideration a few more inquiries. And,

1st. Suppose a discontent should take place in your church, in which, one or more influential members, whether from age, office, or wealth, should take the lead, and pertinaciously refuse to submit to the will of the majority, by throwing obstacles in the way of the execution of that will on all occasions, constantly claiming a superiority and undervaluing the members

generally, by applying to them degrading epithets, such as, “puppies, birds of passage, aliens, porters, scoundrels, and even black-guards,” calling the church “a corrupt body,” and saying she was “rotten to the very core,” that she retained in her communion “liars,” &c.; charging the records of the church with being “a tissue of misrepresentations and falsehoods,” with much more of the same sort of language.

2d. After having borne with such conduct till forbearance ceased to be a virtue, and only invited to further acts of insubordination and resistance, you should be constrained for self defence, although continually threatened with the “civil law,” to suspend some of your members.

3d. Suppose a number of these members, in a discontented state, should combine with the suspended members and leave their seats, for the purpose of assembling with them in another place in time of public worship.

4th. Suppose these dissatisfied persons should spread reports against the church, charging her with unsoundness in the faith, and, to such an extent amongst the neighbouring churches, as greatly to prejudice the minds of their members against her.

5th. Suppose this kind of opposition were countenanced from without the church, by ministers, saying, they were “too respectable to be dealt with,” and that, “if they were excluded, other churches would receive them into their communion.”

6th. Suppose, after these prejudices have been excited, the minority should privately invite a number of such prejudiced ministers of other churches to meet together at one of their own houses, and proceed to lay before them, such a statement as they thought proper, highly impeaching the faith and standing of the church to which they belong.

7th. Suppose such council should patiently hear all the ex parte testimony, the minority should think proper to lay before them; and, in the short space of twenty-four hours, including the night, without the least inquiry from the church, as to the truth of the fact; should proceed to pro-

nounce the minority the "legitimate church," and bestow on them, her name, style, title, and property.

These are the facts which have really taken place; and you, brethren, can only judge of the case by making it your own. This church has been charged with a departure from "some of the important principles contained in our Confession of Faith." She boldly and fearlessly challenges the universe for the proof, that she has departed from *any* doctrine contained in our Confession of Faith and the Holy Scriptures.

It is presumed that the individuals composing the late council will not complain of any remarks in this address, as bearing hard on them. With them, as private individuals, we have nothing to do. It is their proceedings as a council, with which we are interested. Others may conceive, that we have treated them rather unkindly, considering their vocation. To such we say, they volunteered in this business, and have done us all the injury in their power. Their interference was as uncalled for, as it was unprovoked and unjust. They have thrown the gauntlet of war; not a war of reprisals, but of extermination. If, therefore, they should suffer under the law of retaliation, it will be to receive the reward of their works.

Their case may serve as a beacon to warn their successors of the danger of leaving their *legitimate* pursuits to officiate in unlawful things.

We close, dear brethren, by assuring you that it gives us pain to tax your time and feelings with this very unpleasant business, which ought to have been restrained from kindling a fire beyond the body it originated in, and would have been, but for the circumstances above detailed. We have been reluctantly forced into this course as a measure of self defence, imperiously called for by the nature of the very extraordinary and novel proceedings of the council, which, if not promptly discountenanced by the churches, will live to scatter discord amongst them, when its authors are slumbering in their tombs. We suppose you will feel some interest in this matter as well as us, for the rights of all independent churches are the same; therefore, when defending our own rights, we are defending yours.

We hope we shall not, on any loose, unsupported, and undefined *allegations*, made by the enemies of the church, lose your christian affections, fellowship, or correspondence, which, we highly value and anxiously hope you will continue, when, we assure you, of our strong and undeviating adherence to the faith, doctrines, and practice, set forth in the Baptist Confession of Faith, adopted by the Philadelphia Baptist Association, Sept. 25, 1742.

The minority and their council have made a departure from the *doctrines* contained in our Confession of Faith, the ostensible cause of the existing schism; but we may in our next communication, should another be deemed necessary, prove, "*incontrovertibly*," that it was not the *real cause*; all matters at variance on that head having been twice settled previously, and once subsequently to the death of our venerable, and much lamented pastor, as will fully appear from the minutes of the church, and other testimony.

Adopted, and ordered for publication by the Church, to be signed by the moderator and assistant clerk.

We remain affectionately your brethren, in gospel bonds,

JOHN DAVIS, Moderator.

THOMAS WATSON, Ass't. Clerk.

Nov. 21st, 1825.

To show the opinions entertained by the Rev. Wm. Parkinson, of Dr. Holcombe and the church, before his mind was prejudiced by their enemies, we insert the following letter without comment:

"New York, June 2, 1824.

To Wm. Duncan, Elijah Griffiths, Samuel }
Keen, and David Weatherly, Esquires. }

"Very Dear Brethren,

"Your letter, containing the melancholy intelligence of the illness of your so justly beloved pastor, Dr. Holcombe, did

not reach me, owing to my absence from the city, until on Wednesday after he was interred on Lord's day; consequently my compliance with your request was impossible. By the invitation given, however, I consider both Mrs. Holcombe and the church as having conferred on me a token of respect and friendship, which I cannot too highly appreciate; and although Mr. Weyman, as I understand, accounted to you, for my not going to Philadelphia on that very interesting occasion, I have thought it my duty, thus to reply to your kind communication myself.

"That I most tenderly sympathise both with the bereaved family and the bereaved church, neither, I presume, will doubt; but sympathy, alas! cannot repair the breach. Truly, "a great man is fallen in Israel;" but, let the afflicted widow and children, let the afflicted church, and afflicted friends, and let my own soul especially, hear while Israel's keeper proclaims to us all, "be still and know that I am God."

"How rarely has any church, in so short a time, been deprived of two ministers of such distinction as Dr. Rogers and Dr. Holcombe! But, on the other hand, what church has been favoured with two men, at the same time, of so much eminence and reputation? Nor should the church forget her obligations of gratitude to God for continuing them with her so long. Dr. Rogers had even surpassed his "three score years and ten," and Dr. Holcombe had nearly arrived at that period. While, therefore, we may lawfully mourn, let us try not to murmur. Nay, rather we ought even to rejoice that their trials and sorrows are ended, and that we have reason to believe that their precious souls are happily associated with "the spirits of the just made perfect." Besides, our bereavements, however painful, like all our other trials, are among the "all things that work together for good to them that love God."

"Since my return from the Association, I called to see Mrs. Weyman, and was truly thankful to find how the Lord had supported her under the loss of a father whom she most tenderly loved. She manifestly and deeply mourned; yet with astonishing composure and resignation.

“Please to assure the beloved church in Second street, and, in particular, our highly esteemed sisters, Mrs. Holcombe and Mrs. Rogers, that they are constantly interested in the sympathies and prayers of their and your very affectionate, though very unworthy brother, “in the kingdom and patience of our dear Lord Jesus.”

“WM. PARKINSON.”