

T H E
T R I A L
O F
JEREMIAH HILL, Esq.
F O R
H E R E S Y,
BEFORE THE CHURCH OF CHRIST
I N
B I D D E N F O R D

MAY 2, 1793.



"Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you."

Peter. 7

"They received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether these things were so."

Paul.

BEFORE I proceed, it will be necessary to give you the clue which led to this business.

Simon Wingate, one of the deacons of the Church in Biddeford, a rigid-Trinitarian, and a man of a violent temper, had for many years been endeavoring to stir up a church quarrel with Mr. Hill, on account of his catholic ideas, which he in conversation held up to view, when religion was the topic, influenced the Rev. Mr. Webster, pastor of said church, to invite him and Mr. Hill to meet at his house, and at the same time to invite a number of the church to be present. (Mr. Hill had, for a number of years, carefully avoided any conversation with Deacon Wingate respecting religion, on account of his rigid principles, and violent temper.)

Accordingly they met at the Pastor's on Friday, the 14th. day of September, 1792, and four other members of said Church. After a little conversation, Deacon Wingate proposed to Mr. Hill the following Questions:—

"Of whom was Jesus Christ the Son?"

To which Mr. Hill answered, "I am not fully satisfied in my own mind."—"Whom do you think he was the son of?" Answer: "I am inclined to think that he was the son of Joseph." After a considerable conversation respecting various texts of Scripture which speak of Jesus Christ, Deacon Wingate finding those present wished to drop the matter, expressed himself after this manner, "If you are all satisfied, I shall endeavour to make myself contented"—and each one returned to his respective home. The next sabbath, Deacon Wingate did not attend meeting, and it was currently reported that he exclaimed bitterly against the Pastor and Church, calling them as much heretics as Mr. Hill, and that he was conscience-smitten, and could not, or would not worship with them, &c.

Mr.

Mr. Hill, understanding that James Emery, another Deacon of said Church, was a good deal affected with the clamour Deacon Wingate had made respecting this conference, his agent, &c. wrote Deacon Emery a letter on the subject, expressing his concern for the difficulties and animosities that agitated the Church; that as rational creatures we ought to *reason* on religious subjects, as we did on other matters; that *reason* was a distinguishing talent which God had given men above the brutes, and adduced a number of texts of Scripture to shew the propriety of such an investigation of religious subjects; that the Apostles always exercised this noble talent in introducing the Gospel into the world; that we ought to use candour towards one another who made different constructions of the same text or that the Protestants did not believe the doctrine of transubstantiation because it was *unreasonable*, notwithstanding the Scriptures plainly said "this is my body—this is my blood"; that it was as unreasonable to believe that *three* were but *one*, and that *one* was *three*, as to believe that bread was flesh, or that wine was blood; that one great object of Christ's mission into the world was to enforce the doctrine of the resurrection to an immortal life, and to give an example as a full proof of the doctrine; that if Jesus Christ was in the order of beings superior to man, his resurrection would not prove *man's* resurrection any more than *man's* resurrection would prove the resurrection of a *brute*; and that concerning the divine conception (so called) he argued that Mary was espoused, that is, married to Joseph; that Joseph was called her husband, and Mary was called by the angel his wife; that if she had not been his wife, he could not possibly have meditated the putting her away; that being conceived by the Holy Ghost, signified that

the child which she had conceived, would be highly favored of God, would have much of the Divine influence, would be the Messiah, the same which the prophets had foretold was to come, would save the people from their sins, would bring life and immortality to light; that Joseph, in order to prove the event of his wonderful dream, declined to have any conversation with her as his wife from the time of the dream, till she was delivered; that Luke and other disciples and Apostles supposed him to be the son of Joseph as well as the scribes and pharisees, who were the teachers of the people in that day, and doubtless were men of information; that he did not see why we in this day might not suppose so too; that his being called the Son of God did not prove any *trinity*, any more than Adam's being called the son of God;—for all good men were called the sons of God; that if we quit reason and common sense, we, by enthusiasm, bigotry and superstition, might make *nothing* mean *any thing*.

Deacon Emery received this letter kindly; saw Mr. Hill a few days after, and with more than common cordiality took him by the hand, thanked him for the letter he had sent him, saying it had given him a good deal of satisfaction; that his creed was not so bad as he had heard, &c. Deacon Wingate borrowed this letter and shewed it to the Rev. Mr. Lancaster, of Scarborough, who, filled with enthusiastic zeal, passed his solemn sentence of condemnation upon it, calling it heresy, blasphemy, damnable doctrine, &c. This awful sentence being communicated by Deacon Wingate to Deacon Emery; he was much agitated, and by Deacon Wingate's influence, was induced with one other member of said church, to apply to the Pastor, requesting a church meeting, which was appointed to be held at the Pas-

tor's, January 17, 1793—At which meeting Deacon Wingate appeared, and entered his complaint against Mr. Hill, charging him with giving it as his opinion, that Jesus Christ the Messiah was not begotten by the miraculous power of the Holy Ghost, and that he was the real son of Joseph and Mary. Mr. Hill then desired the meeting might be adjourned, that he might have time to prepare himself for his defence, and that the meeting at the adjournment might be held at the meeting-house, and public notice given. Accordingly the meeting was adjourned to the first Thursday in May, then next following, to meet at the meeting-house at 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

On the first Wednesday in May the Association met at Mr. Webster's parish, and after lecture, the Church stopped, and agreed to ask counsel in this matter, of the Association. Accordingly the Church were all invited to meet the Association that afternoon at Mr. Webster's, which they did, and after a good deal of conversation, in which Mr. Hill freely and fully gave his opinion respecting the subject matter of dispute, and his reasons for forming such an opinion, fixing the whole on his Bible. The Church retired for some time, that the Association might consult among themselves. After some time, the Church were again invited in, and the Association delivered the result of their consultation, declaring that the tenet Mr. Hill embraced, was in their judgment erroneous, and that it ought to be testified and guarded against. The Church as well as Mr. Hill, were not satisfied with the result, because they had left the matter as loose as they found it, and the Church as much in the dark as ever. It must be remembered, that during all this time, Deacon Wingate withdrew himself from the social worship

ship and communion of the Church; that Mr. Hill had had two conferences with him before several witnesses, and expostulated with him on the unreasonableness of his conduct; that observing different creeds could not hurt their respective believers; that we are in a land of light and knowledge; that actions spoke louder than words; that Jesus Christ and his Apostles condemned mal conduct only; and that what we call *creeds* were not introduced into the Church till a long time after the Christian Era.

After Mr. Hill found that expostulations had no effect, he exhibited to the Pastor a complaint against Deacon Wingate, charging him with absenting himself from the social worship and communion of the Church for six months then last past; for his unchristian conduct towards those who did not construe the sacred Scriptures agreeable to his notion.—For being a railer, a tatter, and a busybody in other men's matters, contrary to the precepts and examples of Jesus Christ; for combining with others to defraud one David Hutchins in the sale of some iron-ore mines; for unchristian conduct towards him in calling him to a conference before witnesses, insisting on his answering some questions concerning Jesus Christ the Messiah, and then making his answers the foundation of an accusation before the Church; and for persecuting him for a private pique under the cloak of religion. Mr. Hill always supposed that Deacon Wingate carried on this matter out of revenge, because he enlisted his apprentice during the late war, contrary to his will, though his personal interest did not suffer by it, for the apprentice gave him one hundred dollars of his bounty.—On this account the Deacon often quarreled with Mr. Hill, and finding he could not get any advantage by quarreling in that way, he commenced the combat under

under the cloak of religion. Besides, Deacon Wingate was jealous that Mr. Hill assisted Mr. Hutchins in his law-suit against him concerning the iron-ore mines; for Mr. Hill, as a Justice of the Peace, took a number of depositions to be used in that action on both sides, and when Deacon Wingate came to him for his advice, respecting the matter, he candidly gave him his opinion, and the reasons why he formed such an opinion, which offended the Deacon, though the judgment of the court of reference proved to be the same. But to return,

The Church being met at the meeting-house according to adjournment, and the Rev. Doctor Hemmeway being present, the Church requested him to assist in the business before them, as a conciliator. The Doctor read a paper, which he said was agreeable to the minds of the Association, giving it as their opinion, that Mr. Hill's tenet was false, unsound, &c. and that the Church ought to bear their testimony against it; that they ought to deal tenderly with a brother who was in an error not voluntarily; that they ought to advise him to study the Scriptures more carefully, and to be careful in not advancing such doctrines, they being against the common tenets of the Churches in general, and this Church in particular.

Mr. Hill then desired liberty to answer for himself, and give the reasons publicly, why he formed such an opinion, a considerable number of persons being collected to hear the debates, &c. Mr. Hill then rose and delivered the following Address:

Friends, Brethren & Fellow-Citizens,

I think myself happy that I am permitted this day to answer for myself before this assembly, touching the things whereof I am accused, because I know

know that this is an age of free inquiry ; and I desire to thank my God, that by the constitution of this Commonwealth, "No subject shall be hurt, molested, or restrained, in his person, liberty, or estate, for worshipping God in the manner and season most agreeable to the dictates of his own conscience ; or for his religious profession or sentiments ; provided he doth not disturb the public peace, or obstruct others in their religious worship" : therefore I beseech you to hear me patiently.

I shall not pretend to deny the accusation, which is, 'for giving it as my opinion, that Jesus Christ the Messiah was not begotten by the miraculous power of the Holy Ghost ; and that he was the real son of Joseph and Mary ;' but shall endeavor to give you the reasons why I have formed such an opinion. In doing this I shall quote no authors but the holy men of God, who wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost ; neither shall I give their writings any private interpretation, but shall construe every text rationally, according to the gift of God that is in me. But before I proceed, I shall offer for your candid consideration three propositions, in which I think you will agree with me.

1. That the Scriptures are true.

2d. That Scripture is the best interpreter of Scripture.

3d. That God has made us rational creatures, and thereby distinguished us from the brutal creation ; therefore he requires us to act and think of him, his ways, his word, and his works, according to those rational powers and faculties, which if we neglect, we, like the slothful servant must be said to have hid this distinguished talent in the earth, and emphatically to call God Almighty a hard master. Were either of you to endeavor to persuade a Mehometan

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to embrace the Christian religion, would you not bid him use *reason* ? and argue the *reasonableness* of the system as a proof of its validity ? "Come now, let us *reason* together, saith the Lord, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." *Isai. i. 18.*—Which is as if he had said, tho' your sins be ever so aggravating, though they be of the deepest dye, yet if you will but *reason* with me on my ways, my word and my works, you will soon be convinced that I am your Almighty father, who gives you every good and perfect gift, and then you will be ashamed of your base conduct and ingratitude towards me, and return and repent of all your transgressions, and put away the evil of your doings from before my face, and I do then assure you that I will pardon all your iniquities, and your sins shall be remembered no more." Seeing God thus condescends to *reason* with us, surely then it is our indispensable duty to *reason* with one another. The same prophet says, *xliii. 28.* "Put me in remembrance, let us *plead* together" : also the prophet *Micah* says, *vi. 23.* "Hear ye, O mountains, the Lord's *controversy*, and ye strong foundations of the earth, for the Lord hath a *controversy* with his people, he will *plead* with Israel." "O my people, what have I done unto thee, and wherein have I wearied thee ? testify against me." Jesus Christ himself says, *John v. 39.* "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." What can possibly be meant by searching, if we are not to use our rational powers and faculties in judging or forming an opinion upon what we find ? And how can we judge or form an opinion but by exercising those powers and faculties which God has given us to distinguish us from the brutes.

brutes? All the parables which are so plentifully and beautifully interspersed in the four Evangelists, have a tendency to shew the *reasonableness* of the Gospel. The apostle Paul in all his epistles exercised these powers and faculties; and the Bereans are said Acts xvii. 11. "to be more noble than those of Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily whether these things were so": and in his defence before Felix, Acts xxiv. 25. he *reasoned* so strongly of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, as to make Felix *tremble*. So also on a like occasion, when he was permitted to answer for himself before king Agrippa, Acts xxvi. 1. his arguments were so forcible that Agrippa publicly confessed that he was almost persuaded to be a Christian. The whole system of the Christian religion was introduced into the world by the *reasonableness* of its precepts, and by that gained ascendancy over all other religions. If then we are to exercise our reason on subjects of this nature, a subject of the greatest importance to every one both here and hereafter, I claim your attention and candor to the reasons which I shall now offer in justification of the opinion whereof I am now accused.

In the first place I shall endeavor to shew, upon the principles before established, that Jesus Christ the Messiah is not, nor can be the *eternal Father* of all things, who is omniscient and omnipresent, God over all blessed forever. And for the support of which I shall appeal to the "law and the testimony: for if any man speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in him." The Scriptures teach us that there is but *one* God, who is himself the maker and governor of all things; that this *one* God is the sole object of worship; and

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that he sent Jesus Christ into the world to instruct mankind, empowered him to work miracles, raised him from the dead, and gave him all the power that he ever was or is now possessed of. The Scriptures contain the most clear and express declarations to this purpose. "Thou shalt have no other God before me." Again, "hear O Israel, the Lord our God is *one* Lord." Again, "to us there is but *one* God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." - Again, *one* Lord, *one* faith, *one* baptism, *one* God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. For there is *one* God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." It is no where in Scripture said that there are three persons in this one God, nor is the doctrine of a Trinity expressly laid down in any other direct proposition whatever. Christ himself indeed says "I and my father are one;" but he sufficiently explains himself by praying that his disciples might be *one* with him in the same sense in which he was *one* with the Father, John xvii. 21, 22. "that they all may be one, as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; and the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they all may be one, even as we are one." The apostle John, 1st. Epist. v. 7. says, that "there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one." By the Father I understand the creator of all things; by the Word, the power by which he spake; and by the Holy Ghost the divine influence which manifests the being of a God, and his providence to mankind; and are no more three distinct persons than the spirit, water and blood, which constitute every human being, make each man three men.

This

This one God is said to have created all things ; "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. God said let there be light, and there was light. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the hosts of them by the breath of his mouth. He spake, and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast. Thus saith the Lord thy Redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh all things, that stretcheth out the heavens alone, that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself." This same one God is called the *Father*, that is, the *author* of all things, as well with respect to Jesus Christ, as all other beings. "That they may know thee the *only true God*, and Jesus Christ, whom *thou* hast sent. Go to my brethren (says Christ) and say unto them, I ascend unto *my* father and to *your* father, to *my* God and to *your* God." He also expressly says that he is inferior to his Father, and that all his power was given him by the Father, and that he could do nothing without the Father, John xiv. 28, "My Father is greater than I. The son can do nothing of himself. The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doth the works. He received from God the Father honor and glory." Again, "the revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto him."

"It is said by some that Christ did not mean that he was inferior to the Father with respect to his divine nature, but only with respect to his human nature : but if such liberties be taken in explaining a person's meaning, language has no use whatever. Upon the same principle, it might be said that he never died, or that he never rose from the dead, secretly meaning his divine nature only, and there is

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no kind of imposition but what might be authorised by such an abuse of language as this."

Some things are said to be with-held from him : "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no not the angels, neither the son, but the Father. To sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give." So his dominion is said to be *derived* from the Father, and is *subordinate* to that of the Father ; "and when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the son also himself be subject unto him who put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

Seeing then Jesus Christ is not the eternal Father, who is he ? To the law and to the testimony. In the infancy of days, God told the serpent, that the seed of the woman should bruise his head ; is it then possible that the seed of the woman can be older than the woman herself ; and also co-equal and co-eternal with God the creator of the woman ? Also God told Abraham, that in his seed all nations of the earth should be blessed ; and this seed (saith the apostle) is Christ. Hear also what Moses said to his people, Deut. xviii. 15. "the Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee of thy brethren, like unto me, unto him ye shall hearken." The apostle Peter, Acts iii. 20. &c. speaks of Jesus Christ as being this same person who Moses foretold was to come, and says, that all the prophets, as many as have spoken have likewise foretold of these days. Luke in his genealogy has these words, iii. 23. "and Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph." The words *as was supposed* are in a parenthesis, which may be left out in reading, and the phrase would then stand thus "being the son of Joseph." This agrees with Mat. xv. 55. "Is not this the carpenter's son ? is not his mother called Mary, and

and his brethren James and Joses, and Simon and Judas : and his sisters, are they not all with us ? whence then hath this man all these things ? and they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, a prophet is not without honor, save in his own country and in his own house." The Jews always conceived that the Messiah would come from some distinguished family, with great pomp, and it gave them great offence to see so many of the people running after this carpenter's son, and calling him the promised Messiah, which led him to observe as he did, intimating that those whom they called low people, might have as great abilities, and be as highly favored of God, as those of more elevated stations, and seemed in an oblique manner to request their attention to Samuel, who sprang from no distinguished line according to their own genealogy, and to David, who was a man after God's own heart, notwithstanding his father's being a husbandman, and he brought up tending sheep. Also this agrees with what Philip said to Nathaniel, John i. 45. "We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth the son of Joseph." He often called himself the son of man ; so the woman of Samaria saith, "come see a man which told me all things that ever I did ; is not this the Christ ?" Jesus Christ also saith to the same woman, "ye worship ye know not what, we know what we worship : for salvation is of the Jews." With this agreeth the apostles, Acts ii. 22. 'Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of by God, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you.' Heb. ii. 17. "Wherefore it behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren." Heb. ii. 10

"it became

became him for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering." 1. Cor. xv. 21. "for since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead ; for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." So the apostle says, speaking of David, "that God had sworn to him, that of the fruit of his loins according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne." Paul speaks to the same purpose, Rom. i. 3. "concerning his son, Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh, and declared to be the son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Hence I think it appears pretty clear that the disciples and apostles did not conceive of him in any other sense than as a man divinely favored of God.

I ask your attention once more. It appears that the third day after he was crucified, two of his disciples went to Emmaus, and as they were talking and reasoning about what had happened, Jesus drew near and walked with them, and asked them what they were talking about : they asked him if he was a stranger in Jerusalem, and did not know the things that had happened ? and as they did not know him, they went on to tell him "concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God and all the people"; Luke xxiv. 19. and how he had been condemned and crucified, and that that it was then three days since this had happened, and that they had trusted that this Jesus would have redeemed Israel. Besides, they had heard strange stories about his being risen again. He then asked them if Christ ought not to have suffered, "and beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded

expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself." Now if this doctrine of his being more than a man had been true, or of so much importance as some would have it, why did he not teach it plainly to his disciples and apostles? but instead of this he told them that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, among all nations: therefore let God be true and every man a liar; that is, every man who contradicts him. But there are some texts said to be mysterious, and seemingly to contradict what has been before said: on these I shall now observe in their order.

John i. 1. &c. "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God, the same was in the beginning with God, all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." The evangelist appears to me to be here recapitulating the great work of creation, and the word manifests the power and energy by which he commanded all things into being: thus, "God said let there be light, and there was light. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the hosts of them by the breath of his mouth. He spake and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast." Eph. iii. 9. "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ." Col. i. 1. "For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in the earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him. Here it may be observed, that heaven and earth were not created by Jesus Christ, but all things in heaven and in the earth; that is, all things respecting the new world, or the Gospel kingdom.

Heb.

Heb. i. 1, 2. "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." Here the apostle uses the plural number, worlds: this intimates that these *all things* respecting the Gospel, of which he was appointed heir, would spread far and wide into various regions and countries. These are the only texts, which seem to favor the notion of Jesus Christ's being the creator of the world, and these I think, will bear a different interpretation, so as not to clash with other plain positive texts, which speak of God as the author of all things. It appears to me that the apostles are here speaking of the excellency of the Gospel dispensation, and of Jesus Christ as the creator, author, promulgator and finisher of this dispensation. Hence he is called the head of the body, the church, "who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things (respecting the church) he might have the pre-eminence; for it pleased the Father, that in him, should all fullness dwell." Also he is said to be made *so much better* than the angels, as he hath by inheritance *obtained* a more excellent name than they. John viii. 58. Jesus Christ says, "before Abraham was, I am." This text appears to me to be fully explained by St. John, i. 30. "this is he of whom I said, after me cometh a man who is preferred before me; for he was before me." To *prefer*, signifies to regard, esteem or value more than another, to exalt or raise to dignity. Thus Jesus Christ was preferred before Abraham, or any of his progenitors, for he was exalted or raised by God far above any of Adam's race, and in this sense was *before* them. Phil. ii. 6. Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be

be equal with God." Which I conftrue thus, that being a pattern of piety, and doing such things as none but God could do, does not rob God of any of his attributes. 1 Tim. iii. 16. "for without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." That is, as if he had said, there is no dispute but that the Gospel now delivered was in ancient days a mystery, which is now made known by this Jesus, a fleshly being, which was vindicated by the spirit of every man, who duly considered its beneficent effects upon the world of mankind, as it tended to promote good will and brotherly love among men, which the angels saw would tend to the glory of God; and this Gospel was promulgated among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and finally this same fleshly being was received up into glory. But he is said to be "the alpha and omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last." Very true, alpha is the first letter in the Greek alphabet, omega is the last; the gospel was promulgated to mankind in the Greek language, hence he is called the *first* and the *last*, *beginning* and the *ending* of the Gospel dispensation. But my brethren, saying and doing are very different things; to say well is good, but to do well is better. A certain man had two sons, one of their names was Jew, the other's name was Gentile: At harvest time the old gentleman called on his sons to assist him in his husbandry, and to work in his vineyard. Jew told him plainly he would not, but after reflecting a little on the matter, he went. Gentile, like a good boy, said I will go sir, but he went not. Which of the two think ye, did the will of his father? Methinks I hear some of you whisper, he that went. It is idle

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for any man to make a profession of the Christian religion and not to live agreeable to the precepts thereof. How diametrically opposite is it to the precepts and examples of Jesus Christ, the great author of the Gospel dispensation, to make it a business to go about from house to house tattling, making himself busy with every man's matters, railing at, slandering and persecuting his neighbor, reviling and backbiting those against whom he happens to have a distaste, and anathematizing those who do not form an opinion in religious matters agreeable to his notion: this is diametrically opposite to the precepts of that Gospel which he professes, which says, Mat. vii 1. "judge not that ye be not judged, for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again," and insists on taking a mote out of his brother's eye, without ever considering that there is a beam in his own, or taking the least thought of looking after it when he is told of it; or that he has no right to judge "another man's servant" but emphatically says, "come not near me for I am holier than thou"; "these (says the prophet Isaiah) lxx 5. are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day." A good tree, my brethren, cannot bring forth corrupt fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit, but every tree is known by its fruit; do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? These are the very characters whom Jesus Christ represents as shutting up heaven against men; they will not go in themselves, and those who would go in they hinder; who devour widow's houses and for a pretence make long prayers; who compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, make him two-fold more the child of hell than he was before. How opposite is this to the

the character of a Christian, who always endeavors to deal justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with his God; who performs all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless: full of pity and compassion to all men, and loves the brethren that all men may know that he is Christ's disciple indeed and in truth, fulfilling the very last point; for (as the apostle James says, ii 10.) whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all." To keep the whole law, that is, the code of moral laws, and yet break one of those laws, is a contradiction in terms: for if the whole were kept, no one could be broken.

A young man came to Jesus Christ in his day, and asked him what he should do to inherit eternal life: he answered keep the commandments, and told him which they were; that is, thou shalt do no murder, nor commit adultery, nor steal, nor bear false witness, but honor thy father and mother, and love thy neighbor as thyself. All these (says the young man) I have kept from my youth up; what lack I yet? If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor: that is, as if he had said, thou hast abundance of this world's goods, therefore thou oughtest to be more charitable to the poor and distressed, this is one thing wanting, and the apostle says, "though I speak with the tongues of men, or of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal: and though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long and is kind, charity envieth not, charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." This is the one point, which if any man neglect to keep, he is verily guilty of offending against the most important command contained in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

I shall now give you by way of conclusion a short schedule of the introduction of creeds into the Christian church; for in the days of Jesus Christ and his apostles, there was no creed required of Christians except "believe in God, believe also in me," that is, Jesus Christ. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved;" but they were cautioned not to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits, whether they were of God; because many false prophets had gone out into the world; and they were told how they should know the true spirit from the false ones: that is, "every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God." Constantine, Emperor of Rome, about three hundred years after Christ, having some remorse of conscience for some enormities he had committed, applied to the priests of the church of Ceres (then a heathen Church) for a pardon: They knowing his crimes, refused to grant his request. He took umbrage at their refusal, and immediately applied to the Christian Bishops, who embraced the favorable opportunity, and told him, they would grant his request—provided he would confess his faults, and take the Christian religion under his protection. He accepted their proposition, made a confession, received his pardon, and then issued a decree in favour of the Christian religion, declaring it to be the religion of his empire. Soon after, in order to establish a uniformity in religious matters, he called a council of the clergy to assemble at Nice, in which he attended himself, and after long altercations they brought forth what is now called the Athanasian creed; but a number of the clergy then dissented, and some others who complied, and subscribed the creed for the sake of conformity, went home, explained away the rigor of it, and taught their people a very different

ent doctrine.—This incorporation of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities has been the cause of oceans of blood being spilt in the Christian world, and chiefly to revenge private piques, and party quarrels, each party being always dubbed by the other with the title of *Heretic*. For near ten centuries after this incorporation, to keep the people in ignorance, the Bible was printed in a language unknown to the common people, as it is this day in Roman catholic countries, so that the people were under the necessity of taking their creed from the literati. About four hundred and forty years ago, it was first printed in England in the vulgar tongue, but still under the superintendency of these literati, and the least deviation from their construction was deemed heretical and dangerous to the lives and properties of those who dared to think for themselves: witness, John Rogers and thousands of others. But thanks be to God who has given us, the Inhabitants of these United States, the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ; and my earnest prayer is, that his word may have free course, run and be glorified.

To sum up the whole matter, must we not all judge of every thing, according to such powers and faculties as God has given us? Can there be two Supremes? Can any being *derived* be *undervived*? Can any being *begotten* be *unbegotten*? Can any being *proceeding from the first cause*, be *the first cause*? Was there any equivocation or exception in Peter's address, when he said, Acts x. 34. "of a truth I perceive, that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness, shall be accepted with him?" Is it not necessary for every Christian to endeavour to conduct himself agreeable to the precepts and examples of Jesus Christ, the great author of the Gospel dispensation?

penation? Does any man who (knowingly and willingly) lives in open violation of any known command of Jesus Christ, deserve the name of a Christian? Do not all Christians aim at the same thing, *Happiness*? Did not the apostles always endeavor to keep a good understanding between the Jewish and Gentile Christians? Is it not the duty of every man to read his Bible? Has not every man a right to *think* upon what he reads? Have I not as good a right to *think* on what I read and tell *my thoughts* as any other man? Can any of you, my brethren, put yourself in my situation (willing, nay, desirous to keep fellowship and communion with those of a different persuasion in some points, which are universally acknowledged to be mysterious,) lay your hand on your heart and condemn yourself? "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them; this is the law and the prophets."

Upon which Dr. Hemmenway, at the request of Deacon Wingate, made some cursory observations; and then the Church passed the following votes:

1st. "That it appears to the Church that brother Hill has professed and declared his opinion concerning the person of our blessed Saviour in the manner charged in the complaint."

2d. "That the tenet abovementioned is in their judgment false and unsound, repugnant to doctrine taught in the sacred Scriptures, subversive of the Christian religion, as taught, professed, and believed in the protestant reformed Churches, and in this Church in particular; that it is derogatory to the dignity and honor which is to be ascribed to our divine Redeemer; and that for any one to hold forth and propagate such sentiments is matter of just offence to the Church, tending to disturb and destroy the

the comfort, peace and edification of the Church, and corrupt the doctrine of faith which is the Bond of Christian communion, and the church think it their duty to give their testimony against it: but as brother Hill professes his serious and hearty belief of the Christian religion as contained in the sacred Scriptures, and his readiness to receive any farther light which may be offered to him from the word of God, charity disposes to hope and presume that he is not confirmed and obstinate in his mistakes, but that upon better consideration he will see reason to purge out that unsavory leaven, which gives offence to so many serious Christians: and it is our desire, in conformity to the Rules of the Gospel, to restore an offending brother in the spirit of meekness, and heal his wound with a tender hand: we do now earnestly exhort him humbly and prayerfully to search the Scriptures, to search his own heart, and keep his mind open to conviction, to guard against prejudices, and not think it any dishonor to give up any mistakes which he may have unwarily entertained, and it is our hearty desire and prayer that he and we may be guided and kept in the way of truth, and that our contending for the faith delivered to the Saints may be conducted with charity and patience; that we may beware of the devices of Satan and study the things which make for peace, and whereby one may edify another."

Then Mr. Hill, at the request of a number of his friends, and not being anxious to prosecute matters of this kind, withdrew his complaint against Deacon Wingate.

The Church meeting was then dissolved.

