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PRESBYTERIAN CONFESSION OF FAITH

The number of editions of this book, and its increasing demand, for several years past, indicate not only the enlargement of the society of whose faith it is the professed symbol, but likewise the prevalence of those sound and wholesome doctrines, which it inculcates. This fact also accounts for the increased and extended warfare every where waged, and carried on with incessant violence by its adversaries, who are not only very numerous, but likewise of every sort and of every tribe. In this embodied phalanx, as well as in every scouting party, we discover the *Natural man*, the *Deist*, the *Arian*, the *Socinian*, the *Pelagian*, the *Arminian*, the *Shaker*, with every *ist* and *ism* composing the fruitful list of error, and heresy, from old Cain down to the present day. All these, like so many platoons of an army, with every sort of weapon, but that of Truth, and in every mode of warfare, public and private, from the pulpit and the press, with the tongue and with the pen, are found in hostile array, and unanimously bent on the destruction of this Book. But of all the attacks which deserves the most serious notice, because of the low and under-handed manner with which it has been carried on of late, is that of the *Arminians*—particularly the *Methodists*. They have professed hitherto a great deal of brotherly love, and Christian fellowship, and at the very same time, were industriously carrying on, as if by concert, a most determined, and ungenerous war in disguise. I allude principally to the practice of attacking, misrepresenting, and denouncing the doctrines contained in this Book. It is well known that in almost every city, town, village and neighborhood, they have carried about this Book, selecting certain portions, disrupted from their connexion, and presented in the most hideous and terrific colors, for the purpose of affrighting the ignorant

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and prejudicing the sincere enquirer after truth. In this ungenerous course of proselyting, they have succeeded with many—increased their numbers, and confirmed the prejudices of the ignorant and unwary against the Presbyterians; who, as they are taught, and believe—hold doctrines “hatched in hell, and come from the devil.”

That the doctrines of the confession, are open to inspection and investigation, is a circumstance in which we rejoice; that the form of expression is in all cases, the best possible—is more than could be expected from any human production, especially considering the ever-changing nature of living languages. But we unhesitatingly maintain, it is the most faithful summary of the truths of the Bible, the world ever saw. We know persons who, from gross misrepresentation, were almost afraid to open that Book, upon a careful perusal and investigation, not finding as many horns, ghosts, and hobgoblins as they expected—so agreeably disappointed, they have most cordially embraced the doctrines and united with the church which held them, to the no small discomfiture of disappointed ambition, and the mortification of those who had almost certainly calculated on their enlistment under their banners against them.

But why do not these assailants look at home? They have had a book in use a number of years, entitled the “*Doctrine and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church;*” and strongly recommended by their former Bishops, Coke, Asbury, &c. who say in the preface, “We wish to see this little publication in the house of every Methodist.” That they “ought next to the word of God to procure the Articles and Canons of the Church to which they belong.” The 36th Section of this book, contains 25 “Articles of Religion,” taken principally, if not wholly out of the 39 articles of the Church of England. The 40th Sec. contains, an extract on the nature and subjects of Christian Baptism. The author of this work, if we are not mistaken, is Bostwick, an able, and evangelical Calvinistic divine, formerly of New-England. There is no credit given for the authorship. It is an excellent work, and confines the baptism of children, to those of believing parents *only*; contrary to the long established and general practice of the denomination who adopted it as their creed on that subject; who, yet without hesitation or distinction admit the profane and wicked, to “take God’s covenant in their mouth,” by admitting them, with his believing, covenant-people, to receive for their children the Holy Ordinance of Baptism.

But there are other sentiments embodied in that same book, and so highly recommended by their Bishops as the symbol of the Methodist Church, enough almost, to stagger credulity itself.

A few extracts and references shall be given to establish this assertion. In page 78 are the following words: "We believe that in the moment Adam fell, he had no freedom of will left." What was he then? A brute, or a block? He must have been in a worse condition than the devil, for he never lost the freedom of his will by his apostacy, up to the present moment. It is added, "But that God, when of his own free grace, he gave the promise of a Saviour to him and his posterity, graciously restored to mankind a liberty and power to accept of proffered Salvation." If man had no freedom of will left, when he fell, he must have been destitute of a capacity of *sinning*, and consequently, when restored must have been (according to this belief,) restored to a capacity of *sinning*,

Again; this book asserts that, "he who is a child of God to day, may be a child of the devil to morrow." It says that "one who is holy or righteous in the judgment of God himself," that "those who are grafted into the good olive-tree, the spiritual invisible church, who are branches of the true vine—who live by faith—who are sanctified by the blood of the covenant, &c. may so fall from God as to perish everlastingly." Now if this doctrine does not dishonor God, by impeaching his veracity, nulifying his promise and his covenant, and by destroying "the immutability of his counsel, confirmed by an oath, unto the heirs of promise," we are willing to be set down among those who have not judgment enough to know what doctrines are dishonoring to God, as well as contrary to scripture and reason, and subversive of the faith and comfort of his people. Surely there is none that can balance this in all that most terrible and abhorred book whose doctrines are said to be "hatched in hell, and come from the devil."

Again; this book (p. 123.) attempting to shew how "*Christ is the end of the law.*" Rom. x. 4. says, that the law here spoken of, is, "1. The Mosaic law—the whole Mosaic dispensation, containing three parts, the political, the moral, and ceremonial. 2. The *Adamic* law—that given to *Adam* in innocence, properly called *the law of works*;—this is in substance the same with the *Angelic* law, being common to angels and men. It required that man should use to the glory of God, all the powers with which he was created." It further states that, "this law proportioned to his original powers, required that he should always think, always speak, and always act precisely right, in every point whatever. He was well able so to do; and God could not but require the service he was able to pay." Very well: what then? Why, "*Adam fell*:"—and in consequencē

thereof, "it is as natural for a man to *mistake* (to sin) as to breathe: and he can no more live without the one than without the other. Consequently, no man is able to perform the service, which the *Adamic* law requires." And now, for the conclusion: "And no man is *obliged* to perform it: God does not require it of any man: for Christ is the end of the *Adamic*, as well as the *Mosaic* law. By his death, he hath *put an end to both*. He hath *abolished* both the one and the other, with regard to man; and the obligation to observe either the one or the other is *vanished away*. Nor is any man living, bound to observe the *Adamic*, more than the *Mosaic* law." p. 124

Here is the doctrine of a book so highly prized, and so much desired by their Bishops, to be found "in the house of every Methodist." The sum of it is this; Christ hath *abolished* the *Moral law*—a law which required that man should use to the glory of God, all the powers with which he was created,"—"That he should always think, always speak—always act precisely right." But by the fall of Adam, "it is as natural for a man to *mis'take*, (to sin,) as to breathe;" and that *consequently*, "no man is *able*; and no man is *obliged* to perform the service, the *Adamic* law requires." No man is now obliged "to use to the glory of God, all the powers with which he was created"—no man is now obliged to think, to speak, and act precisely right,—that Christ has "abolished," and "put an end" to the *moral law*, and freed us from all its requirements; that by his death, the obligation to observe, it 'is vanished away;' and that *no man living* is bound to observe the *moral*, more than the *ceremonial* law. Now this would seem to be a pretty tough pill for the most voracious *Antinomian*. But as it is found in a book unreservedly recommended to every Methodist, we take the liberty of recommending to those crusaders, who so freely enter a warfare against the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, first to look at home, and cast the beam out of their own eye, and heal themselves, and remove all difficulties out of their own road, before they attempt to assail their neighbors, by misrepresenting their sentiments and stigmatizing their doctrines. This request is but reasonable, and if complied with, it is quite reasonable to believe that the Presbyterians will obtain a considerable respite from this Methodistical warfare.

The above exhibits only a small specimen of the errors and inconsistencies of this highly recommended Book. Further animadversions may be made at a future period.

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