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[ Backus, Isaac ], 1724-1806.

Truth is Great.

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AAS copy.

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TRUTH IS GREAT, AND  
WILL PREVAIL.

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Buy the TRUTH, and sell it not.

*King SOLOMON.*

Speaking the TRUTH in LOVE.

*Apostle PAUL.*

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*By Isaac Backus of Middleboro.*

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Sold by PHILIP FREEMAN, in Union-Street, Boston.



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*Truth is great, and will prevail.*

**T**HIS maxim has been assented to in all countries, and in all ages; but the grand question has been, WHAT IS TRUTH? Pilate asked it, but waited not for the answer. So far from it, that the fear of man moved him to give sentence against the eternal SON OF GOD, who came into our world on purpose to *bear witness unto THE TRUTH*. Jews and Gentiles were confederates in this hellish act, and all nations and denominations ever since have been more agreed in opposing the truth, than in any other point: Yet truth prevails still.

That there is one supreme BEING, whose kingdom ruleth over all, is the first and capital article of truth, which no nation upon earth were ever able to erase entirely out of their minds; for no government could ever be established among themselves, without appeals to HIM for the truth of what was asserted, and to avenge injustice, and the violation of contracts and engagements.

That it is the indispensable duty of every man to love his creator and preserver with all his faculties and powers, and to love his neighbour as himself, is a truth inseparably connected with the other: For while JEHOVAH remains infinitely and unchangeably good, and we remain his offspring, our obligation to love him can never be dissannulled or abated; and his command, to love our neighbours as ourselves, is as immutable as his perfections are.

That all mankind, in their natural condition, are in a state of revolt from this heavenly ruler, is a truth as evident as the other; what need else could there be for these

these appeals and restraints? The attempts that have often been made against this truth, have always confirmed it, and have demonstrated the corruption of the authors of those attempts. Nothing can discover a more mean and dishonest disposition, than for a person to steal the property of another, and then to labour to adorn and exalt himself therewith, while he tries hard to sink the credit of the true owner, so as to set self above him: Yet this is the very practice of all those who set up their reason above divine revelation. The writings of the greatest men in Pagan countries are full of the intrigues, adulteries, thefts and murders, of their imaginary deities; which, by God's righteous judgment, and from their natural tendency, have produced like abominations in their worshippers; because *they changed the truth of God into a lie.* Rom. i. 18—32. And those who were favoured with the oracles of God, and yet did the *same thing*, thereby brought upon themselves a much greater condemnation than the others did. Rom. ii. 1—24. If so, then what advantage can it be to have those oracles? Answer, *much every way: For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? The thought is to be rejected with the utmost abhorrence. Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, that thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.* Rom. iii. 1—4. This is the exact state of the controversy. Men have assumed the judgment seat, and have arraigned the *sayings of God* to their bar. This practice began near the forbidden tree, Gen. iii. 1—6; and from that day to this men have been *ever learning*, and yet, of themselves, were *never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*; and that because the judge is the criminal, who cannot live in that way any longer than he is kept in darkness;  
for

for whenever the authority of truth takes place in his conscience, *sin revives, and he dies*; and his only way of relief is by faith in the perfect obedience and atoning sacrifice of our great surety, who *offered himself without spot to God*. Rom. vii. 1—12, Heb. ix. 14, and x. 1—14. Unassisted reason could never go any farther in this respect, than to move men to imbrue their hands in the blood of their own children, by offering the fruit of their body for the sin of their soul: Yet many are now guilty of stealing a finer dress for human nature, from the oracles of God, and then of improving the same against the authority of the book they took it from; so that instead of saying, let God be true, but every man a liar; their argument is, that every man is not a liar, therefore in several points God does not speak the truth! And it is a common thing for these reasoners, to claim a power for themselves which they deny to JEHOVAH; and daily to practise that, under his name, which, with reverence be it spoken, was never within HIS POWER to do! Num. xxiii. 19, John x. 35, 2d Tim. ii. 13, Heb. vi. 18.

They often insist upon it, that men cannot deserve praise for doing right, nor blame for doing wrong, unless they have power within themselves to act with motive or against motive, as they please. If their voluntary actions are not determined by what is within them, they say they are not free. Yet the same men are positive, that God's choice of some to salvation, while he leaves the rest to perish in their sins, must be determined by what he sees in them, and not in himself; or else, say they, he would be a respecter of persons. Thus self-determination is claimed for man, but is denied to God; directly in the face of Christ, and the inspired apostle. Matt. xi. 26, Rom. xi. 33—36. The evident cause of this horrid impiety, is a secret conceit,  
that

that there is a good to be obtained which is better than truth, and for which truth may be dispensed with, and contradicted; therefore, though it is impossible for God to lie, or to deny himself, yet men often do it, in hopes of obtaining that imaginary good. Indeed Christ, calls us to deny ourselves, and to take up our cross daily; but it is only that corrupt and delusive self, which is set up against the revealed will of God. He requires us daily to cross our lusts, and self-righteous conceits; while Satan tempts us to cross the truth, and the light of our own consciences; and can any rational soul hesitate a minute upon which of them is to be regarded!

That all men have a power within them to act in every case as then seems best to them, is a truth as fully given into by the advocates for divine sovereignty, as by any free-willer on earth. Perhaps Dr. Owen opened and defended the great doctrines of sovereign grace, as well as any man did in the last century; and he says, "to suppose that in all things of spiritual and eternal concernment, men are not determined and acted every one by his own judgment, is an imagination of men who think but little of what they are, or do, or say, or write. Even those who shut their eyes against the light, and follow in the herd, resolving not to enquire into any of these things, do it because *they judge it best for them so to do*.\*" And the greatest writer against a self-determining power in man, that our age has seen, says, "liberty is the power, opportunity or advantage, that any one has to do as he pleases, or to conduct in any respect according to his pleasure." And says he, "it is demonstrable, and I think has been demonstrated, that no necessity of men's volitions that I maintain is inconsistent with this liberty."

With

\* *Original of evangelical churches*, p. 101.

|| *Edwards on the will*; third edition, p. 23. *Appendix*, p. 2.

With which I fully concur ; for we can as easily put an end to our existence, as we can keep from choosing what we at present view or imagine to be best. Pharaoh did so in all his attempts to hold Israel in bondage ; and so he and his people did, when they *were glad to let Israel depart, with rich treasures* : And the Lord's design therein was, *that they might observe his statutes, and keep his laws.* Psalm cv. 37—45. Yet how unwilling are many, even in this land of gospel light, to yield their souls to this authority ? Being called by our churches to act as their agent in this great affair, I have had cause to know more of the aversion of many thereto, than most others have ; of which take the following plain account.

When a new plan of government was formed for the Massachusetts State, which took in their old taxing laws for religious teachers, I was called to meet our committee at Boston upon it, in February, 1778. And finding that said plan was to be established or set aside by our next General Court, we drew up a petition, directed to them, that it might be fixed, “ as a fundamental  
“ principle of our constitution, that religious ministers  
“ shall be supported only by Christ's authority, and not  
“ at all by assessment and secular force.” This was signed by many, in various parts of the State, which alarmed the ministers who were supported by tax and compulsion ; and one of them, who was called to deliver the election sermon to that Assembly, said therein,  
“ the fear and reverence of God, and the terrors of  
“ eternity, are the most powerful restraints upon the  
“ minds of men.—Let the restraints of religion once  
“ be broken down, as they infallibly would be by leaving the subject of public worship to the humours of  
“ the multitude, and we might well defy all human  
“ wisdom and power to support and preserve order and  
“ government



8. *Truth is great, and will prevail.*

“government in the State\*.” And a gentleman who had been one of our legislators, hearing that some of his townsmen were going to be baptized, on the 26th of June following, went at the head of a large mob, and violently interrupted their worship upon their own lands; for which breach of the public peace he was so far from receiving any punishment, that he was one of the Convention that formed our present plan of government, and is a member of the first legislature which has acted thereon. In September, 1778, a minister of the first church in Boston, hearing of the defeat of our army on Rhode-Island, delivered a lecture before many of our rulers, from the seventh of Joshua, wherein he tried hard to persuade them, that one of the *accursed things* which caused that defeat, was because a new law had not been made and enforced, to help ministers about their salaries. This sermon being printed, a writer appeared in Mr. Gill’s paper of October 8, with a high commendation of it, and declaring that the representation made therein, of the case of ministers, “was with  
“that noble plainness and fidelity which are among the  
“distinguishing characteristics of that gentleman. But  
“ (says he) although the General Assembly has now  
“been sitting for some time, no motion (as I can learn)  
“has as yet been made, or is likely to be made, for this  
“purpose.—Are the † clergy then to submit to this  
“treatment? Are they to remain subjected to injustice  
“and fraud!” Now observe how God takes the wise in their own craftiness. Ten years before, the same minister saw such danger of having his party all taxed to bishops, that he said, “we are in principle against  
“all

\* *Payson’s sermon, p. 19, 20.*

† *The word clergy signifies heritage; and to avoid the censure of lording it over the church, officers have usurped the name to themselves. See Dr. Gill on 1 Pct. v. 3.*

“ all civil establishments in religion. It does not appear  
“ to us, that God has entrusted the State with a right to  
“ make religious establishments.—Hath the State of  
“ England been distinguished by heaven by any pecu-  
“ liar grant, beyond the State in other countries? If it  
“ has, let the grant be produced. If it has not, all  
“ States have, in common, the same authority, in esta-  
“ blishments conformable to their own sentiments in re-  
“ ligion; what can the consequence be, but infinite da-  
“ mage to the cause of God and true religion! and such  
“ in fact has been the consequence of these establish-  
“ ments in all ages, and in all places†.” These, and  
other words of his, I, as agent for our churches, pub-  
lished in Mr. Willis’s paper, the very day that the above  
complaint against our legislature was published by Mr.  
Gill, in the same street, in Boston; though at that  
time I knew nothing of the publication of said sermon.  
A few days after I published the unanimous vote of our  
churches, wherein they say, “ we solemnly declare for  
“ ourselves, and believe we safely may for the whole,  
“ 120 Baptist churches in New-England, that we want  
“ nothing more in this respect, than to have what the  
“ before-named Dr. Chauncy says is their principle,  
“ concerning religious liberty, established in fact, and  
“ reduced to practice.” And there has never been  
the least degree of proof advanced since, to discover  
any want, either of consistency, or of sincerity, in this  
declaration, though the united craft and rage of learned  
teachers and lawyers have been vented against us there-  
for, to an amazing degree. Crafty and bitter pieces,  
in ten different news-papers, have since been published  
against me by name, by writers who have kept their own

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names

† *Chauncy against Chandler*, 1768, p. 152, 153.

names concealed\*. Whether this is most like to the heathen savages, or to the bloody court of INQUISITION, let the public judge.

At length a minister of Rowley has come out, and published an address, directed to the learned pastor of the first Baptist church in Boston ‡, and “to the other *regular* Baptist ministers in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and in Rhode-Island and Providence Plantations;” wherein he says of our churches in general, “do you, gentlemen, know this people in their several dispersions thro’ the country, what manner of men they are? I am so acquainted with some of them, and am so well informed of many more, that I can tell you, there are only a few, a very few of them, that appear to be serious Christians. The most of them are first Separatists from the churches in which they were *educated*, and that *uncharitably and irreligiously*, and not as Baptists, and then turn out Baptists, to save themselves from paying any thing to the support of the gospel where they live. They forsake our churches and parishes in such a manner, as to shew they pay no regard to church-covenants, or the most solemn contracts for the support of a pastor that has been set over them, by their own consent and choice.—As for their religion, I have long thought, from much observation, that the most serious part of it is that religion which Mr. Edwards, in his treatise on religious affections, describes as religion that is not connected with salvation. And what ministers have most of them, to shew unto them the way of salvation? No pastors to take the oversight

\* *Boston Gazette* of Nov. 2, and Dec. 28, 1778, Jan. 18, Feb. 1, and March 8, 1779. *Chronicle* of Feb. 10, and *Ledger* of May 22, 1780. *Providence Gazette*, April 15, 1780. *Boston Gazette*, Feb. 5, and March 5, 1781.

‡ Who, anonymously, has written much to good purpose for religious liberty.

oversight of them, but young, illiterate and bold itinerating preachers; such as make a great noise, and often rail stoutly against churches, and their ministers.—These disciples of yours have no church discipline; any body is received as a brother or sister, that turns Baptist, and cries up your party. Besides all this, there are many round the country, that are not Baptists, who yet join these your little churches. That is, they run to hear their preachers; they are advocates for the party, and all the religion they have, they expend with these people. These, most of them, are among the worst men and women in our towns and plantations: The greatest haters of ministers and churches; such as usually spend the sabbath at home, neglecting the ordinary *instituted* means of grace.—Alas! the consequence of the *prevalence* of this sect! They cause *divisions* every where. In the State of New-Hampshire, where there are many new towns, infant settlements, if this sect get footing among them, they hinder, and are like to hinder, their settling and *supporting* learned, pious and orthodox ministers. And so the poor inhabitants of those towns must live, who knows how long, without the ministry of the gospel, and of gospel ordinances? You do or you may know all these things. And they being so, let me ask you a serious question or two. 1. Whose cause are you serving, while you seek to promote this sect and party, in opposition to the churches in the land?—2. If you encourage, if you countenance and connive at such preachers as some among your people are, are you in no danger of being partakers of other men's sins, and guilty of the blood of souls?

“Should you ask me what evidence I have of your zeal to promote this sect or party, and of countenancing these unqualified preachers? I answer, beside other things (some of which we have had in print) you have  
had

had two grand Conventions (the second of them upon adjournment) within a few months past, at a town in the State of New-Hampshire, to serve and promote this cause. At which Conventions, these illiterate and unskilful preachers, and delegates from your little churches around, were members. And one thing I heard of as a part of your business at said Conventions was, to consult what measures you should take to make void in part our new constitution of government; that part of it which respects the public worship of God. And I heard that some of your people then and there declared, that if they could not obtain it, they would help no more in the war.—3. Don't you think, that if it should please God to revive pure religion in this land, answerable to the prayer and hope of *some* of his servants, this would confound your party-cause, as the clouds are driven before the wind? I am your's, wherein ye are Christ's, JAMES CHANDLER §."

*Rowley, December 23, 1780.*

This paper I received in Boston on February 13; and the same day received a little pamphlet, wherein I and my brethren, in our exercise of discipline, are accused of advancing fast in a way that will soon bring us, if a stop is not put thereto, "to outking all kings, "outbishop all bishops, and outpope all popes;" signed by two Baptist brethren\*. And whether these two parties of accusers do not fulfil the words of the inspired apostle (Acts xx. 29, 30) may be considered. It is a known fact, that a minister of the first church in Boston has, for many years, acted at the head of the teachers

§ Gill's paper of Feb. 8, 1781. N. B. Our Convention last fall was in this State; and we know nothing of the adjournment he speaks of.

\* Remarks on a council at Chelmsford, October 19, 1780, p. 12.

teachers who are supported by tax and compulsion, and has written the most to uphold that cause in New-England, of any man upon earth. And I am greatly mistaken if both he, and these Baptist accusers, have not openly pleaded for the worst error that ever was known in this world; namely, that perfect obedience to the moral law is not the indispensable duty of all the human race. I meddle not with their internal state, any further than their fruits discover the same; and shall begin with said minister in Boston.

After Robert Sandeman, with his satyrical pen, had, in a convincing manner, exposed the corruption of those who imagine, that reconciliation to God can take its rise from any thing good in man, Dr. Chauncy published a volume of sermons, in which he says, "it is  
" said by most Christian writers, that the first man was  
" so placed, under the natural or moral law of God,  
" as that he must work his way to life by perfectly  
" doing all things commanded by it; inasmuch that he  
" could not have obtained it, but by persevering obe-  
" dience in every point of duty, without the least  
" failure." But this is said entirely without book. The  
" scripture nowhere insinuates, that he was under *such*  
" *a covenant of works*. It suggests, on the contrary,  
" that God, in favour to him, did not put him upon  
" so *severe* a trial for life. His trial, if we may believe  
" the sacred record of it, was in a *single instance*, and  
" this not of doing, but of forbearing to do. Gen. ii.  
" 16, 17.—It would be the exact truth, should I say,  
" that the parents of men, while innocent, in common  
" with their posterity since the lapse, could have ob-  
" tained life in no way but that of *grace through faith* §." I will do this writer the honor to say, that he has here stated their sentiments with as much fairness and precision

§ His 12 sermons, 1765, p. 18—20.

son as any that I ever saw upon that side of the question. And the difference betwixt his ideas and mine about this matter is chiefly upon the following points.

1. He supposes that Adam was to work his way *to life*, after he was created; but I believe that the *image of God, in which he was created*, was his life.
2. I know that faith in God was as necessary then for the *continuance of life*, as it is now in Christ for the *recovery thereof*; but *grace*, in the gospel sense of the word, means relief to the guilty and miserable, in distinction from *works*, which innocent man was to have lived by, if he had continued in that state. Debt means the reward that is promised, which becomes due when the condition of it is performed; and that reward may then be claimed by law, whatever difference there is in value betwixt the work and the reward. The angels of light will ever acknowledge an infinite difference between their works and the reward they receive therefor; which at the same time is as distinct from free grace to sinners, as heaven is from earth. It destroys the nature, both of grace and works, to confound them together. Rom. xi. 6. God never fails to pay all his debts; and sooner or later he will make all to know his right to *give grace and glory* to whom he pleaseth, while he justly inflicts endless punishment upon impenitent sinners. How solemn and convincing is that demand, *is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil because I am good!* Matt. xx. 15. He is the fountain of all good; and the root of all error is a conceit that good can be had in some other way, better than in obedience to his revealed will. James i. 13—25.
3. This author supposes that perfect and persevering obedience, in every point of duty required by the moral law, would have been *too severe a trial* for life to innocent Adam; which in my view is so contrary to truth, that a turning there-  
from



from was his death. The forbidden tree was the test, to try whether or not he would regard God's sovereignty over all, and his property in all the creatures he had made; and by taking and eating of that fruit man rebelled against HEAVEN, and seized upon the earth as his own. And when our Saviour came, the Jews, from the same principle, said, *this is the heir, come let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.* Matt. xxi. 38. Every wise ruler will lay his plans so as to need as little alteration hereafter as may be, and never to be defeated or disappointed in his designs, if he can help it; yet those who firmly hold, and boldly assert, that JEHOVAH's plan is absolutely perfect in all these respects, so that *nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it*, are often looked upon and treated as the worst of men; and that because men are not willing to *fear before him.* Eccl. iii. 14. Our Saviour was so far from removing or abating this fear, that he greatly enforced it; and when Peter would fondly have prevented his dying for us, he rejected the attempt, with the same detestation as he would have shewn to the devil himself; and also assures us, that the only time for having our debts paid by him, is before we are *cast into prison.* Matt. v. 17—26, and xvi. 23. Nor can the conceit of those, who deny the endless punishment of such as die in an impenitent state, be true, till rebellion against HEAVEN shall become a finite evil, so that finite doings and sufferings, either in this or another world, can purge it away. Nor, indeed, till JEHOVAH shall become a *servant* to perishing worms, so as to go and come at their bidding or call. Job xxi. 14, 15, Isa. xxvii. 11, and xliii. 24, Jer. ii. 27, Acts iv. 12, Dan. xii. 2.

The case of the Baptist accusers, before mentioned, is as follows. On Sept. 8, 1767, a number of our elders and brethren met at Warren, and agreed upon an annual meeting,



meeting, under the name of the Warren Association; the design whereof they since published in these words, viz. "we are not insensible of the attempts that have been made by ministers, in various ways, to assume a classical power and jurisdiction over the churches; neither are we unaware of the evil and pernicious effects of their obtaining such a power; which therefore we desire we may always watch against. Yet, as it is certain that the churches in the apostolic age did, by messengers and letters, hold a friendly correspondence with each other, for mutual advice, help and comfort, and sometimes by the meeting of many of them together for that purpose; and as we are commanded to follow after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another, we have been convinced, that it is both warrantable and expedient for our churches, that are so much scattered through this land, and who have heretofore been so much unacquainted with each other, thus, to associate together for prayer, preaching of the word, mutual advice and endeavours to promote union and gospel order among them, and to guard against the contrary; as well as to afford what assistance we can to flocks that are destitute, weak or oppressed." This was published in Sept. 1771; and this plan has been so fully observed, that no *appeals* of any personal case of discipline in any church; nor *complaints* against any other community of Christians, have ever been admitted by the Association; and it stands on record in our church book, that the doing of any such thing would break the conditions that we joined them upon. They have been so far from it, that when a breach of communion once happened betwixt two churches in the Association, which affected others, and an attempt from thence was made to bring the case before this body, it was positively refused; and the contending parties were prevailed with, to agree in calling

calling a few judicious men, to hear and labour with them upon it; and such a blessing was granted upon these means, as entirely to remove the difficulty. Yet one Baptist teacher has discovered some dislike to our Association for ten years past, which might partly be caused by information, that by this means was spread, of his presuming to break bread to a minor part of a Baptist church, whom the majority had censured; this information being an impediment in the way of his preaching elsewhere. His mind has also been somewhat intangled with Sandeman's notion, of exalting the atonement in such a manner as to pay little or no regard to a divine work *within us*, of conviction by the law, and relief by the gospel. And, in preaching at Chelmsford last spring, he delivered such *questions about the law*, as greatly burdened the church who heard it; though one or two members were pleased therewith, they having privately propagated such questions there for some years. When said teacher came there again in the fall, the church refused to admit him to preach therein again, till he should give them satisfaction. Upon this two brethren got five or six sisters to join with them in openly withdrawing from the church, and setting up a separate meeting near by, to hear that teacher, without stating the principles they differed upon. A council was soon after called by the church, whereof I was scribe; and when we had gone through with hearing other cases, the church was desirous of laying this also before us. Said teacher and brethren were present; and though they were not active in calling the council, and were unwilling to submit any cause thereto, as such, yet they consented to discourse with us upon these affairs. This was done for about two hours; and then we said in our result, "it appears plainly, that they hold, that God the Father has given the govern-

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ment

ment of the world into the hands of his Son, in such a manner, that none of the human race are now under the curse of the law that was given to Adam; and that Christ's ministers are so far from being called to preach that law, and to tell any men that they are under the curse of it, that they questioned with earnestness, whether so to preach is not to preach a lie! Which opinion we fully believe to be contrary to the holy scriptures of truth, and of a very dangerous and pernicious tendency to the souls of men; and therefore we earnestly call upon these brethren to retract it, and warn all against it." Great relief was hereby given to the church, and two valuable men were baptized, and added thereto the next Lord's day. I gave no copies of our result to any but the churches immediately concerned; yet those two brethren, who signed this publication against us, say, "every Christian man's character is too sacred to be tost about at the pleasure of every one.—For a select number from several churches to undertake to judge such cases, may well alarm us to look about us, and see where our privileges are going; for we think it is not hard to see what such assuming councils are aiming at. This council have excommunicated two brethren—this solemn warning is like hanging them in gibbets.—But may indulgent heaven interpose for us, seeing vain is the help of man\*."

How far their passions have carried them beyond the truth, is left to consideration. They had assumed the power to make a schism in that church, and to write an account of it, by said teacher, to the pastor of another church, whom they hoped to have drawn to their party, before we met there in council; and we did no more to them than I have related, let them call it by what name they will. They own that they asked the question

\* *Remarks, p. 4, 11, 12.*

question we have mentioned, and also the following, viz. “if any of the human race are under the law, in the same sense, and upon the same conditions, as it was delivered to Adam, what will ever bring them from under it, seeing Christ dieth no more?” And they now say, “we hold, that mankind are not without law to God, but under law to Christ: Now the law of Christ, which mankind are now under, is for substance the same which was given to Adam, namely, to love God and our neighbour; but it is not given to me, nor are men holden under it upon the same terms and conditions as it was given to Adam §.”

In my view, this is so far from *rightly dividing the word of truth*, that it is really a *confounding* of law and grace together. They have taken words which are peculiar to the regenerate, 1 Cor. ix. 21, and have applied them to all the human race, which, alas! is too common through the world! Our Saviour plainly applies the moral law to mankind in general, and says, *This do, and thou shalt live.* Matt. xxii. 40, compared with Luke x. 28. And no one can be actually and personally *in the new covenant*, so as to be *under law to Christ*, till the holy spirit puts that law *into his mind*, and *writes it in his heart.* Jer. xxxi. 33, Heb. viii. 10. And says Dr. Owen thereon, “let this way stand, and “the way of man’s wisdom and self-righteousness perish “for ever†. Every soul is wedded to the law of do and live, and is *bound* thereby as much as any wife is to her husband, till by the work of the spirit in the soul she is made *dead to that law*, and it to her; and it is *adultery* to pretend to be married to the *living Saviour* in any other way. Rom. vii. 1—12. Many years after the death of Christ, the inspired apostle said, *as many*  
*as*

§ *Ibid.* p. 7, 9.

† Owen on the 130th Psalm, p. 247.

as are of the works of the law, ARE under the curse ; from which the only way of deliverance was, and is, by receiving the promise of the spirit through faith. Gal. iii. 10—14. Till then the elect are shut up under the law, and are slaves to sin and guilty fears, even as others. Gal. iii. 23 and 4. 1 Eph. ii. 3. This was as really the case before the death of Christ, as since ; only then it was taught more obscurely, now more plainly. The bloody token of circumcision, was a type of his being cut off for us, and also of our being cut off from any confidence in the flesh ; which great change is now openly to be declared by being buried with him in baptism. Rom. ii. 29, and vi. 1—4. Phil. iii. 3. Col. ii. 11, 12. Upon which scriptures Mr. Edwards says, “ that baptism, by which the primitive converts were admitted into the church, was used as an exhibition and token of their being visibly regenerated, dead to sin, and alive to God.—The saintship, godliness and holiness, of which, according to scripture, professing Christians and visible saints do make a profession, and have a visibility, is not any religion and virtue that is the result of common grace, or moral sincerity (as it is called) but SAVING GRACE†.” But for his embracing and holding this point, in opposition to the conceit of the Lord’s supper being a converting ordinance, other ministers separated him from his dear flock in Northampton, in June, 1750. Just fourteen months after I was buried in baptism, in which way I am greatly confirmed since.

The mercy-seat was just as long and broad as the ark, in which the moral law was kept whole, and into the side of which the ceremonial law was put. Exod. xxv. 16—22. Deut. xxxi. 26. Which was an eminent type of Jesus Christ, in whom mercy and truth have met together.

† On a right to sacraments, p. 20—23.

together. Psal. xl. 6—8, and lxxxv. 10, 11. Heb. x. 1—10. Here is our only place to *meet* and *commune* with God, which instead of abating, greatly increases our obligation to keep all his commandments; only before, the duty was required in order to obtain the blessing; but here the blessing is given, to enable us to perform the duty. The oldness of the letter makes every defect a bar against coming; the newness of the spirit makes the greatness of our evils and distempers a reason why we should come without delay. Psal. xxv. 11—14. The ark was to be carried upon the priest's shoulders, according to God's special direction. Numb. ix. 17—23. And when two priests refused to be content with the support that his influence procured, and presumed to take what they pleased from the people *by force*, the ark was so far from being any defence to them, that they were both *slain in one day*, and the ark was taken by the Philistines. But it proved so terrible, both to them and to their idols, that they put it into a new cart, and left it to the divine influence to carry it back to Israel again. 1 Sam. ii. 16, and vi. 7—12. Yet David paid so little regard to the right way, that he set men to *drive the cart* as they judged best, till an awful stroke from heaven, and divine teaching upon it, brought him into the *due order*. 1 Chron. xiii. 7—10, and xv. 13. And may the many strokes we have had teach us as much! Gospel order is *not to eat any man's bread for naught*. 2 Thess. iii. 5—10. Which rule is of equal authority upon rulers, ministers and people. And the officer who invades the rights of any, and the people or person that refuses to receive the gospel, or to treat those well that preach it, according to their ability and opportunity, are daily exposed to punishments, infinitely worse than man can inflict; and so are they who give countenance to men that *pervert the gospel*. Luke x. 3—12.

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1 Cor. ix. 1—14. Gal. i. 8, 9, and vi. 6, 7. 2 John x. 11. Therefore men can have no more RIGHT to judge for others in these affairs, than they have POWER to answer for them at the bar of God.

The gospel knows of no priests in the Christian church, but Jesus Christ, and the souls which are built by faith upon him, *by bearing his sayings and doing them*. This is the church which is the salt of the earth, the light of the world, and the *pillar and ground of the truth*. Matt. v. 13, 14, and vii. 24—27. 1 Tim. iii. 15. 1 Pet. ii. 5. Officers therein are never called priests, in distinction from other saints. And a great historian says, “baptism was administered, in the first century, “without the public assemblies, in places appointed and “prepared for the purpose, and was performed *by immersion* of the whole body in the baptismal font.” And of church government he says, “the people were undoubtedly the *first in authority*; for the apostles shewed by their example, that nothing of moment was to be carried on and determined, without the consent of the assembly. Acts i. 15, vi. 3, xv. 4, xxi. 22.—“A bishop, during the first and second century, was a person who had the care of one Christian assembly, which at that time was, generally speaking, small enough to be contained in a private house. In this assembly he acted not so much with the authority of a *master*, as with the zeal and diligence of a faithful *servant*.” But he informs us, that in the second century certain teachers affirmed, “that Christ had established a *double rule of sanctity and virtue*, for different orders of Christians. Of these rules the one was ordinary, the other extraordinary; the one of a lower dignity, the other more sublime.” And soon after



after some adopted, from the heathen philosophers, a maxim, “ that it was not only lawful, but even praise-worthy, to *deceive*, and even to use the expedient of a *lie*, in order to advance the cause of *truth* and *piety*.” In the mean time, about the middle of the second century, a notion was industriously propagated, that Christian ministers succeeded to the character, rights and privileges of the Jewish priesthood ; upon which bishops considered themselves as invested with a rank and character similar to those of the Jewish high-priest, while the presbyters represented the priests, and the deacons the levites. “ The errors to which it gave rise were many, “ and one of its immediate consequences was the establishing a greater difference between the Christian pastors and their flocks, than the genius of the gospel “ seems to admit\*.” It is as evident that Abraham, as he was father of the *members* of the Jewish church, was a type of Christ, as that Aaron, the head of the *priesthood*, was so. Eph. ii. 19—22. Rom. iv. 11, 12. Therefore in the beginning of the third century a controversy appeared about bringing infants to baptism. Tertullian, who first mentions it, opposed it ; but soon after Origen said, “ what is the reason, that whereas the baptism of the church is given for the forgiveness of sins, “ infants also are, *by the usage of the church*, baptized, “ when, if there were nothing in infants that wanted forgiveness and mercy, the grace of baptism would be “ needless to them ?—It is for that reason, because by “ the sacrament of baptism, the *pollution of our birth* is “ *taken away*, that infants are baptized §.” And Cyprian said, “ it is manifest where, and by whom, the remission “ of sins, which is CONFERRED IN BAPTISM, is administered.

\* *Ibid.* p. 139, 150, 155.—See Col. ii. 8—23.

§ *Clark against Gill*, p. 105, 111.



“**stated.**—They who are presented by the rulers of the church, OBTAIN BY our prayers, and imposition of hands, the HOLY GHOST.” These things were said in the third century, and in the fourth, Constantine the Great appeared to profess the Christian religion, and acted as head of the church for 24 years, without paying so much regard to the authority of Christ as ever to be baptized, till a few days before his death. Yet under his influence it was adopted as a maxim, “that errors in religion, when maintained and adhered to after proper admonition, were punishable with civil penalties and corporal tortures†.” Thus nature and grace, law and gospel, church and state, were *confounded* together, which is the very essence of *mystery Babylon*; who has made merchandize of *slaves and souls of men*, and by whose *sorceries all nations have been deceived*. Rev. xviii. 13, 23.

Her cruelties were such in all parts of Europe, as to move our pious fathers to fly therefrom into this American wilderness. Those who began the settlement here, in 1620, came trusting wholly upon DIVINE PROVIDENCE‡, without any royal grant from England to depend

† Mosheim, vol. 1. p. 236, 263, 287, 314.

‡ New-England Chronology, p. 3, 60. In the election sermon, Oct. 25, 1780, before the first General Court of our new constitution, it is said, “upon our present independence, sweet and valuable as the blessing is, we may read the inscription, I am found of them that sought me not. Be it to our praise or blame, we cannot deny, that when we were not searching for it, it happily found us.” This is strictly true; and infinite wisdom planted the root of it, when he first planted the country with a noble vine; whose noble sentiments were, “that the merits of saints may as well be mingled with the merits of Christ for the saving of the church, as the laws of men with his laws, for the ruling and guiding of it.” Saying to their oppressors, “since tithes and offerings were

*depend upon.* But on March 4, 1629, the Massachusetts Company received an ample grant of a vast tract of land in America, from the head of the church of England, who took their power from the head of the church of Rome, who received his from the old dragon. Rev. xiii. 2. The company that received said grant of lands called the church of England “our dear mother,” when they came from Europe, but contended, even unto blood, against having her worship introduced into America; for which she at last revoked that grant, and gave another, wherein she reserved an arbitrary power, to set over us what governors she pleased, and to demand as much of our property as she pleased for their support; and contentions about this point have now forced us to declare ourselves independent of her. In 1701 a large society was constituted in England, who have expended vast sums to propagate her worship in this land; and in a sermon before that society, on Feb. 20, 1767, it was said of the first adventurers here, “what reproach could be cast, heavier than they deserved? who, with their native soil, abandoned their native manners and religion; and e’er long were found in many,

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*were appurtenances unto the priesthood, and as the priesthood, both of Melchisedec and Levi, are abolished in Christ, as the shadow in the substance; and as the Lord hath ordained, that they who preach the gospel, shall live of the gospel; we willingly leave unto you both your priestly order and maintenance, contenting ourselves with the people’s voluntary contribution, whether it be less or more, as a blessing of God upon our labours, the fruit of our ministry, and declaration of their love and duty.”* Nor could others bring Plymouth rulers into compulsive measures in such affairs, till they had banished Governor Bradford, and had crowded two of their seven assistants out of office; and hanging of Quakers at Boston followed immediately upon it. *Baptist history*, p. 30, 32, 310—321, 329.

¶ *Baptist history*, p. 54, 59, 519. *Appendix*, p. 4.

ny parts living without remembrance or knowledge of God, without any divine worship, in dissolute wickedness, and the most brutal profligacy of manners. Instead of civilizing and converting barbarous infidels, as they undertook to do, they became themselves infidels and barbarians. And is it not some aggravation of their shame, that this their neglect of religion was contrary to the pretences and *conditions*, under which they obtained *royal grants* and public authority?—The want of bishops in our colonies, besides other disadvantages attending it, appears, in particular, to be the fundamental cause of the want of native ministers.—If these things are so, we may entertain hopes, that this benefit will flow to the church from our present most gracious Sovereign.—This point obtained, the American church will soon go out of its infant state; be able to stand upon its own legs; and, without foreign help, *support* and *spread itself*. Then the business of this society will have been brought to the happy issue *intended*.\* Thus the saying of our Lord is verified; *if thine eye be evil, thy whole body is full of darkness. If, therefore, the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!* This is the case of all who do not sincerely love their brethren as themselves, but hate them in their hearts, though they outwardly pretend the contrary. 1 John, ii. 3—11. And it is a most glaring fact, that all men who have been fond of supporting their worship by force, have never been willing to change places with dissenters therefrom. And when the Most High metes the same measures to them again, they loudly complain of the injustice and tyranny of those measures.

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\* *Bishop of Landaff's sermon before said society, p. 6, 7, 22, 24, 25.*

The year after Boston was planted, a law was made there, to exclude all from a vote in government but communicants in congregational churches. In the year 1636 they appointed a committee, of five rulers and three ministers, to make a draught of laws, agreeable to the word of God, to be the “fundamentals of this Commonwealth;” and in the mean time ordered their executive courts, “to hear and determine all causes, according to the laws now established, and where there is no law, then as near the laws of God as they can.” Two years after they made the first law, to support religious teachers and ordinances by assessment and distress, that ever was enacted in New-England. It was to enable freemen to compel those who were not freemen to contribute proportionably with themselves, for the upholding church ordinances, “whereof he *doth* or *may* receive benefit.” Harvard-College was founded that year; and one of their first class of graduates gave it as his mind, that he who should deny such an exertion of power, “is rather to be taught by *cudgel* than *argument*, as a denier of *first principles*.” The first Baptist church in America was constituted at Providence the year after said law was made\*. And that cause has been supported by *cudgel*, and ours by *argument*, ever since. And the latter is so much the strongest, that the aged minister who ventures to subscribe his name to accusations against our churches, says, “alas the consequence of the *prevalence* of this sect! they hinder, and are like to hinder, the settling and *supporting* learned, pious and orthodox ministers†.” And the writer of the ninth and tenth *learned* accusations against me by name, closeth the last of them with saying, “I must *petition* to conceal my real name, till I am become such a  
“salamander

\* *Baptist history*, p. 49, 79, 98—105.

† Rev. xviii. 10, 16. *They put learning before piety.*

“salamander in the moral world, that I can live no longer out of the fire.”—Is not this a surprizing event! that “illiterate, bold itinerating preachers,” should prevail so far as to vanquish all the learned teachers and lawyers in New-England, where religion, according to their account, has long been established by law, in the best manner of any part of the world? That their skill and courage should now fail them so much, that one who ventures to own his name and place of abode, yet should be afraid to name any person or community of the accused; and he who is so bold as to name one of them, yet *petitions* to have his own name concealed, lest he should be burnt up by them! Will not some people be apt to think, that these illiterate, bold itinerating preachers, are successors of some who lived above seventeen hundred years ago, against whom like complaints were made? John vii. 47—51, Psalm ii. 1—4, Acts iv. 5—22, and v. 17—40.—By these accounts it appears, that one great difficulty which then laboured among the learned, was a want of agreement among themselves about those teachers; some of them thinking it was not *lawful* to condemn a man, before they had heard him, and knew what he did. Another was, that the accusers were conscious that much good was done by the accused, so that it was a very difficult thing to convince the common people that they were bad men. A third thing was, that what these itinerant preachers said and did, laid great *bands* upon themselves; and when they enquired of their HEAD, by what authority he did it, and how he came by that authority, he quickly brought those *learned* men into such a dilemma upon that point, as they knew not how to get out of, but by pleading their own *ignorance*, Matt. xxi. 23—27. This last writer against us is so much mistaken in thinking to keep out of the fire, by concealing his name, that both of his publications

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prove him to be now in it; and that *compassion* is called for, to *pull him* and his confederates *out of the fire*, if possible, *bating the garment spotted by the flesh*; in which condition are all those who *have men's persons in admiration, because of advantage.* 1 Cor. iii. 11—15. Jude xvi. 22, 23. And that this is his character, is evident; for, speaking of acting upon *sinister views* in religious matters, he says, “in such instances, I know that  
“conscience would bite like a serpent, and sting like an  
“adder. And, as it is likely there are some such cha-  
“racters among every denomination, for my part I wish  
“the law might *be altered to the form* Mr. Buckus has  
“exhibited, or that the Warren Association would pro-  
“pose a form, agreeable to their minds and the third  
“article in our Bill of Rights, which we cannot consent  
“to have altered, or infringed upon, without violating  
“our consciences; for we have consciences, as well as  
“the Baptists, and hold these rights most sacredly.” The form of mine, here referred to, was only to inform strangers in a distant town of a plain fact, viz. that such a man, by name, “is a baptized member of the first Bap-  
“tist church in Middleborough.” This is all that was certified by the pastor of the church, without any other name to it, or its being directed to any place or person, which is as different from any certificate ever required by law in this government, as Joseph's wearing his garment in his master's house was from adultery. Yet the two last publications against me are built entirely upon a supposition of its being a *legal certificate*; and upon this supposition it is represented in the first of them, that either a *new revelation* or *necessity* had moved me “to  
“dispense with my sacred promises and conscience;” and the writer says, “I hope his laudable example will  
“be punctually imitated by all others of the same pro-  
“fession.” And he still pleads for this, in his last pub-  
lication,

lication, as the only way left for the securing their rights, claimed in the third article, which they hold “conscientiously and sacredly.” And he says, “if the practice of giving certificates be really such an intolerable burthen, and unpardonable sin, why was it for so long a time punctually complied with !”

In reply to him, I ask, why the *spirit of truth* does not guide us into *all truth at once*? John xvi. 12, 13. When *grace and truth* could be promoted by *circumcision*, Paul complied with it. Acts xvi. 3. But when it came to be contended for, in a way which obstructed that great and good end, he refused to *give place by subjection, even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might remain with the churches*; and he had no mercy to shew to *disimulation*, no not in Peter himself. Gal. ii. 4—14. And the word of truth shews, that the victory of the church, over that evil in him who pretends to be Peter’s successor, and his followers, will be gradual, viz. *over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name*, which is the number of a MAN. Be it in units, tens or hundreds, it is no more than *man* set up in God’s place. 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4, Rev. xiii. 18, and xv. 2. And that the power now contended for is of that nature, is most evident. For in the Boston Evening-Post of May 17, 1773, mention was made of their law to tax all members of the church of England in each town, with others, which the church minister, if they had any, was to draw out of the town-treasury; and then it was said, “had the same prudent precaution been taken with respect to Anabaptists, when they were exempted from being taxed towards the maintenance of the ministers of the churches by law *established*, those avaricious and dissolute persons, who get under water to wash away their ministers rates, without any expectation or desire of washing



“ washing away their sins, would have little or no temptation to declare themselves Anabaptists.” This, with other means, brought the Warren Association, in the fall after, to publish these five reasons, why we could not in conscience obey their certificate Laws any longer.

1. Because so to do would imply an acknowledgment, that civil rulers have a right to set one religious sect up above another, which they have not.
2. Because they are not our representatives in religious matters, therefore so to tax us, is to tax us where we are not represented.
3. Because this practice emboldens the uppermost sect to assume God’s prerogative, and to judge the secrets of others hearts.
4. Because the church is presented as a *chaste virgin to Christ*, and to place her love and trust upon any others for temporal support, *is playing the harlot* (Hos. ii. 5) and so is the way to destroy all religion.
5. Because this practice tends to *envy, hypocrisy, confusion, and every evil work*, and so to the ruin of human society &.

No answer has ever been returned to these reasons, better than railing, imprisonment, and spoiling of our goods. If said third article be compared with the amendments which the town of Boston voted to have made therein, all may see that it is the very scheme which was published in 1773, as I have related it. Neither have we any reason to think that the country would have adopted it, if Boston, with her deceitful arts, had not taken the public lead therein. Her chief teachers and lawyers have acted the part in this matter, which we have described in Matt. xxiii. 3, 4. The winter after the first taxing law for ministers was made, after their second charter was received, an addition thereto was passed, wherein it was said, “ that nothing  
“ herein contained is intended, or shall be construed to  
“ extend,



“extend, to *abridge* the inhabitants of Boston of their  
 “accustomed way and practice, as to the choice and  
 “maintenance of their ministers.” And this *partiali-*  
*ty* has been established here by law for eighty-eight  
 years; and our attempts to remove it has been the only  
 cause of the outcry which that party have made against  
 us for eight years past. And to their partiality in hu-  
 man laws, a noted minister of theirs has now added as  
 great an instance of partiality in the laws of God. In  
 his plan of grace, promises and precepts, privileges  
 and duties, are inseparably connected together; and to  
 expect one without the other, is to *tempt* him, in-  
 stead of *trusting in him*. Deut. vi. 16, 17, Matt. iv.  
 6, 7. And I fully concur, that the following words  
 are very applicable to the present state of this country.  
 Jer. xxx. 20, 21. “Their congregation shall be esta-  
 “blished before me, *and I will punish all that oppress*  
*them*. And their nobles shall be of themselves, and  
 “their governor shall proceed from the midst of them,  
 “*and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach*  
*unto me; for who is this that engaged his heart to ap-*  
*proach unto me? saith the LORD.*” Yet this text was  
 taken, with the omission of all the words here put in  
*italics*, and a very learned and polite election sermon  
 was delivered from the other part of it, on Oct. 25,  
 1780, at the “commencement of the constitution,  
 “and inauguration of the new government, by SAMUEL  
 “COOPER, D. D.” He is minister of a church in Bos-  
 ton, that is the first we know of in this government,  
 who in their first constitution expressed a dislike at our  
 father’s strictness, in requiring a credible profession of  
*saving faith*, of all persons that they received to commu-  
 nion at the Lord’s table\*. It may be of service to com-  
 pare

✿ *It was constituted in 1699.*

pare this with the address to the people of the compilers of our new constitution, to move them to receive it, p. 17; say, they, "your delegates did not conceive themselves to be vested with power to set up one denomination of Christians above another; for RELIGION must at all times be a matter between God and *individuals*;" which is given as the reason why they refused to exclude out of our future legislature such Roman Catholics as shall "disclaim the principles which are subversive of a free government." Yet all the power contended for in their third article is put into the hands of *communities*, who have the *exclusive right* in its exercise. Therefore they knew that RELIGION was not the *good* they aimed at therein.

The first founder of the town and colony of Providence Plantations had a plain sight of the deceitfulness of such claims, and contended earnestly for *impartial liberty* for the consciences of Papists with others, as to matters of worship; so far as might be consistent with the safety of government, and the rights of individuals; and that none but spiritual weapons should be employed against meer errors in judgment of any kind. But the fathers of the Massachusetts called this liberty "dangerous principles of separation\*;" and vented all their skill and rage, in trying  
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\* Baptist history, p. 156, 165—171, 297, 298. His argument then was, that civil rulers can have no right to any more or other power than is fairly given them by the people; and that the people, as such, had no religious power to convey to rulers; all which is now allowed to be truth, though many are trying hard to establish a power and practice, entirely of a contrary nature. We deny Mr. Chandler's charges against our churches, as to covenant-breaking; and if any person or community has done so, we stand ready to do what we can to rectify it, when it is properly pointed out. Government in church, as state, is founded in compact or covenant, implied or expressed; and they are equally binding upon officers and privates, to act towards each other according to the nature of the compact, as far as their ability and opportunity will admit of. And if any one, in a public or a private station, could gain  
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to *divide*, and conquer his little colony ; and all the disorders, which by these and other means were caused therein, have been a prevailing argument for tyranny in the Massachusetts ; and their tyranny has been a strong argument for the continuance of those disorders in the other State ever since ; and how far these two parties have now been confederates in trying to crush our attempts to remove that tyranny, and those disorders, I know not.

Some would have us look to Britain for help against these oppressors ; but we have no idea of any such thing. For their king, in a speech to his new parliament, Nov. 2, 1780, exclaims aloud against others "boundless ambition ;" and urges for such preparations and exertions, as, says he, "shall convince our enemies, that we *will* not submit to receive law from any powers whatsoever." And yet before this speech arrived among us, a declaration was received from his commissioners at New-York, which would fain persuade us, that the British parliament have received law from America, so as to give up more to us than we asked for before the war ; and thereupon they earnestly invite us to return under their protection, while in the same declaration they exhort those whom they call *the loyal*, "to persevere in *their integrity*, for the preservation of *their religion* and liberties." Compare this with the bishop of Landaff's sermon, and who can put any trust in such men ? Such men as a century ago accused Dr. Owen and his friends of favouring POPERY, because they refused to join in fellowship with the church of England, whose claims of arbitrary power soon after brought the nation to the brink of ruin. In answer to that accusation, Dr. Owen observed, that all the reformation from popery which any had attained to, was built

*the whole world, by making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, he would be an infinite loser by the bargain. Therefore let no man ever again attempt to deceive others, or give his vote for any who evidently do so, as he would escape such a shipwreck himself, and also the guilt of endangering the community he belongs to thereby.*

built entirely upon these three principles. 1. That the holy scriptures are our only rule in religious matters. 2. That each rational man has an equal right to judge of their meaning for himself. 3. That all church power, and office power therein, is derived from Christ, by his word and spirit, to each particular church. That the succession of ministerial power is secured, by his continuing, according to his promise, to call souls effectually by his grace, and to furnish men with *spiritual gifts*, fit for such offices as he has instituted, and making it the duty of the church to call them thereto and set them apart therein. And says he, "those who plead for a *successive ministry* without respect to these things, without resolving both the authority and office of it unto them, do but erect a *dead image*, or embrace a dead carcase, instead of the living and life-giving institutions of Christ\*."

This was emphatically the case with New-England, when God was pleased remarkably to pour out his spirit, and gloriously to revive religion therein, forty years ago. This Mr. Edwards, in his book of five parts, very plainly proved. But in answer thereto, the next year, Dr. Chauncy laboured hard to prove, that the *itinerant preaching*, which was the chief means of that work, was a thing of very bad and dangerous tendency, and that the first leader therein was guilty of very *rash and uncharitable judging*, for expressing his fears, that many, nay most of the teachers in the land, did not experimentally know Jesus Christ; therefore he raked this country, and even ransacked the church of Rome, for filthy stories to cast upon the instruments and subjects of that work. And to prove that the ministers of New-England had not then lost their character, he produced Dr. Cotton Mather's testimony in their favour, who said, "no man becomes a minister in our churches, till he first be a communicant; and no man becomes a communicant, until he hath been *severely* examined about his *regeneration*, as well as conversation." But when was it so? This testimony was published in 1696. But twelve years after, it was openly preached

\* *Original of evangelical churches*, 1681, p. 165, 291—297.

36 *Truth is great, and will prevail.*

ed up, that the Lord's supper was a converting ordinance, which doctrine had spread through the country before this revival began. And to guard against the increase of the Baptists in Boston in 1772, Dr. Chauncy said to the world, "the divinely appointed way, in which persons *become* members of the visible church of Christ, is utterly inconsistent with the supposition, that, in order to their being so, they must be the subjects of *saving faith*, or judged to be so." According to which opinion, the fathers of New-England were the uncharitable men, for severely examining into that matter, as much as the Newlights were for reviving that practice, or the Baptists for persevering therein; and it was an imposition upon mankind to bring that testimony, to uphold a cause that was and is contrary thereto.

TRUTH and MERCY shine with equal lustre, in the glorious kingdom of the Redeemer; and to his *works* of this nature he appeals, as his greatest *witnesses* against the powers of darkness. John v. 36, 37. Their united influence convey the *golden oil* into the church, to make her the *light of the world*. Zech. iv. 2—14. These witnesses have long prophesied in *sackcloth*; till of late it seems as if they had scarce any *entrance* into any administrations of civil government in the world, but rather to have *fallen in the streets*, so that he that *departeth from evil maketh himself a prey*. Isai. lix. 14, 15. But when the *spirit of life from God shall enter into them*, the kingdoms of this world will soon become *the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his anointed*; and the *ark of his testament will be seen again*. Rev. xi. 3—19. *Then the spirit that is upon him, and the words of his mouth, shall not depart from his seed for ever*. Isai. lix. 19—21. The magistrate's sword is to punish none but such as work ill to their neighbours. Rom. xiii. 1—10. And when the influence above described shall extend so far as to restrain those who would *hurt and destroy*, the sword will be entirely laid aside. Isai. ii. 2—5, and iv. 5, 6, and xi. 9, 10. Amen; even so, come Lord Jesus.

ISAAC BACKUS.

Middleborough, April 20, 1781.

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# A P P E N D I X.

**S**I N C E the foregoing pages were printed, I have seen a letter from a Baptist minister in Pennsylvania, who has lately been drawn into the opinion of the final restoration of all creatures to happiness; wherein it is laid down, as a rule to interpret scripture by, that “whatever is to be known of God is *manifest within*.” And his sentiments respecting the gospel he delivers in these words, viz. “God in his written word declares himself as the everlasting essential love: *He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love.* If God be love, emphatically so, abstractedly so, he can be nothing else; hence it necessarily follows, whatever he inflicts upon his creatures must have its rise and spring in love and in wisdom, however severe and terrible it may appear to the short-sighted creature. If in love, it must finally center in *their* happiness.”

This shews the weight of the apostle’s saying, *I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the SIMPLICITY that is in Christ.* 2 Cor. xi. 2, 3. The tempter’s argument with Eve was, that it could not be consistent with *truth* and *goodness* to take God’s saying in its literal sense. And to set up an interpreter *within man*, which shall construe the *written word* in a sense, that must finally center in the happiness of all  
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creatures, is making a regard *to them* the ultimate end of God's dispensations; which is evidently a *changing the truth of God into a lie*. Rom. i. 25. See what is before said thereon, p. 4, 5, 15, 23. Christianity is built upon these three points. 1. That God is self-moved in all his actions, and that no higher reason can be given for his shewing mercy to any, than because *so it seemed good in his sight*. Matt. xi. 26. Rom. ix. 8—23, and xi. 33—36. 2. That sin is an infinite evil, and can only be removed by the merits of God the Son, and by the renewing power of God the Holy Spirit. 3. That this salvation must take place upon the soul in time, or not at all, p. 15. But mystery Babylon was built by calling in heathen philosophy, to construe things in the opposite way, p. 22, 23. And let it be covered ever so artfully, I am bold in it, that to suppose that God's choice is determined by what he sees in the creature, and not in himself; and to hold sin to be but a finite evil, and that creature-sufferings can remove it, is antichristianism. And the fruits of it always shew the propriety of that remark; *he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?* 1 John, iv. 20. And a temper contrary to equity has ever been discovered in all sorts of men, who have been unwilling to let the *written* laws of Christ be their own interpreters; but have set up any thing *within man* above them. One candlestick was an emblem of the church which sprang from the twelve patriarchs; and two were so, of the church that was constituted by the ministry of the twelve apostles, from among both Jews and Gentiles. Zech. iv. 2—14. Eph. ii. 18—20. Rev. xi. 4. This church which is built upon, and governed by, the *writings* of the *apostles* and *prophets*, I believe is intended by the twenty-four *elders*, and its ministers by the *four beasts* or *living creatures*, who unite in high praises to God for  
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the displays of *redceming* grace to them, and of righteous judgments towards the impenitent. Ezek. i. 19—21, Rev. iv. 4—11, and v. 9, and vii. 11—14, and xi. 16, 17, and xix. 4. And the displays of TRUTH and EQUITY which the Redeemer makes in all these *works*, I take to be the *two witnesses* spoken of in Rev. xi. 3—12. And when a full victory shall be gained over the beast, the church will sing the song of Moses, lawgiver to the Jewish church, and of the Lamb, who is lawgiver to the Christian church. Acts iii. 22, 23. Rev. xv. 2, 3. And what follows, contains a demonstration of the impossibility of uniting truth and equity with the exercise of a legislative and executive power in civil States, as to the affairs of divine worship.

In the election-sermon last fall, it was said to our legislature, “we may rely that the present government will do all it fairly can, by authority and example, to answer the end of its institution, that the members of this Commonwealth may *lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all GODLINESS* as well as *honesty*. A government which is most certainly founded on the broadest basis of liberty, and affords *equal* protection to all\*.” Which is the very scripture that Dr. Mather made use of, with his father Cotton’s construction of it, in 1681, to justify the nailing up of the Baptist meeting-house in Boston: Only GODLINESS was not then set in capitals, and *honesty* in small letters, as has now been done. Bitter experience soon after convinced Dr. Mather, that what he had called *godliness*, in reality was *robbery*§. And perhaps the following facts may convince many, that the present generation have been no less mistaken about that matter, than their fathers were. In the fall of 1774, our churches were accused of an inimical de-

\* Cooper’s election-sermon, p. 37, 38.

§ Baptist history, p. 491—493, 521.



sign towards their country, because of their sending me to Philadelphia; therefore the true state of the case was laid before the Massachusetts Congress; from whom we received this answer, viz.

IN PROVINCIAL CONGRESS,  
*Cambridge, December 9, 1774.*

ON reading the memorial of Rev. Isaac Backus, agent to the Baptist churches in this government,

Resolved, That the establishment of civil and religious liberty, to each denomination in the Province, is the sincere wish of this Congress: But being by no means vested with powers of civil government, whereby they can redress the grievances of any person whatever, they therefore recommend to the Baptist churches, that when a General Assembly shall be convened in this Colony, they lay the real grievances of said churches before the same; when and where their petition will most certainly meet with all that attention, due to the memorial of a denomination of Christians so well disposed to the public weal of their country.

By order of the Congress,

JOHN HANCOCK, President.

A true extract from the minutes,

BENJAMIN LINCOLN, Sec'ry.

Accordingly we laid our case before the Assembly, which met at Watertown, September 20, 1775, to whom we said, "we humbly represent that our real grievances are, that we, as well as our fathers, have from time to time been taxed on religious accounts where we are not represented, and when we have sued for our rights, our causes have been tried by interested judges." Which

Which we went on plainly to prove; and toward the close said, "as we are persuaded that an entire freedom from being taxed by *civil* rulers to *religious* worship, is not a mere favour from any man or men in the world, but a right and property granted us by God, who commands us to *stand fast in it*; we have not only the same reason to refuse an acknowledgment of such a taxing power here, as America has the taxing power of the British Parliament; but also, according to our present light, we should wrong our consciences, in allowing that power to man, which we believe belongs only to God."

This memorial was read at three different times in the Assembly, and then liberty was granted for one of our brethren who belonged to it to bring in such a bill as he wanted to have passed in our favour. He did so, and it was read once, and a time was set for a second reading; but when that time came, other things were crowded in, and nothing more was ever done upon it, as we know of. And when the third article, now in question, came to be acted upon in the Convention, those old accusations, about the design of my going to Philadelphia, were again brought up to prejudice the Convention against all that the Baptist members could say for equal liberty. Being well informed of this injustice soon after, I published a brief state of the affair on Dec. 2, 1779, wherein I named our accusers, and challenged them to a fair hearing thereon; but have been denied it to this day. And Lieut. Elijah Ames, as hearty a friend to the American cause as any man in Bridgwater, with his brother Joseph, two baptized members of our church, were imprisoned for a ministerial tax, on the day that my challenge was printed in Boston; and two other of my hearers were fined for refusing to assist the collector in that iniquitous act. And on March 27, 1780, a cow was taken from Oliver Wetherbee, for a tax to a minister

minister he never had any connexion with; being a baptized member of our sister church in Harvard, before he removed into Lancaster, and still walked in fellowship therewith. The cow was the property of one of his brethren, who took lawful methods to recover her, and got her into his possession; but a band of men came and violently wrested her from him, and threatened to *kill* any Baptists that should attempt to take her again. But as Worcester Court gave judgment that the owner should be paid for his cow, Jonathan Kendall, the collector, aided by Capt. Haskal, who had before threatened life, seized brother Wetherbee on June 26; and though there was no appearance of any design to rescue him, yet he was conducted into Worcester gaol by a *drawn sword*. John Hawkes was also a baptized member of the same church, before he removed into Lancaster, and had done near four years service in this war; yet he, with Nathan Willard, one of that society, were seized on April 11, for taxes to the same minister, and all three of them were confined at Worcester till September. And the teachers and lawyers who oppose our claims of liberty, discovered no more *compassion* to them, than the priest and levite did to the man who fell among thieves. All civil officers, who received their power in the name of the Kings of Britain, long since quitted the exercise of it among us; but each of these brethren were imprisoned for the support of ministers who received their parish power in that name; and is not this a being *partial in the law*? Mal. ii. 9. Instead of *equal* protection, great numbers in our State are now daily exposed to spoiling of goods or imprisonment, for the support of teachers they never chose; one of whom is Mr. Eleazer Snow, of Bridgewater, who was baptized in September, 1761, and has walked in fellowship with our church ever since, being now  
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within three months of fourscore years of age; yet a ~~late~~ <sup>has</sup> lately been demanded of him, for a young teacher, from whom he never heard a single sermon.

I am not insensible of the prejudices of many against hearing any thing from me upon these matters; therefore I shall close at this time with a brief view of the reasons of the present publication. Ministers have told us that we were initiated into the covenant of grace in infancy; but forty years ago this month, the holy spirit took me in hand, and effectually taught me, that I was under the covenant of works, and in August following he brought me into the covenant of grace, by giving my soul such a revelation of the glory and excellency of the way of salvation by the Redeemer, as drew my heart gladly to quit all confidence in the flesh, that I might win Christ, and be found in him. Yet I was such a dull scholar in his school, that it took thirty-two years to learn me this short lesson; *one Lord, one faith, one baptism*. It was ten years before I came to see, that what men call baptism, which they have put before faith, is a *nullity*; and it took four more to bring me to refrain from communing with that *nullity* at the Lord's table. After which it cost the farther discipline of eighteen years to learn me so much as to treat all laws about worship as *nullities*, which come not from the *one Lord*. And his authority upon my conscience has constrained me, to improve what gifts and influence he has been pleased to give me, in attempts to propagate this lesson among my countrymen, it being the only way to obtain and keep the *unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*. Eph. iv. 1—6, xv. 25. The covenant of circumcision gave Israel a right to make slaves of such as were not in it; and the taking away that name which God gave to it (Acts vii. 8) and adding a name to it which he never gave, is the very way that the mother of barlots has taken

to make merchandize of slaves and souls of men. And the call from HEAVEN is, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Rev. xviii. 4, 5, 13, 20—24. If this call be duly regarded, we are well able to overcome every foe, and to go in and possess all the blessings promised in the gospel. And, as far as I know any thing of my own heart, the only reason of this publication is to promote this great good, and to clear my soul of blood guiltiness, whether others will hear, or whether they will forbear.

May 18, 1781.